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**HOMOPHOBIA IN THE CONTEMPORARY RUSSIA: A  
QUEER POSTCOLONIAL APPROACH**

MA Thesis

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I have written this Master's thesis independently. All viewpoints of other authors, literary sources and data from elsewhere used for writing this paper have been referenced.  
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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis aims to investigate the phenomenon of contemporary homophobia in Russia as mutually inseparable foreign and domestic constitutive phenomenon as part of the complex interplay of Russian-West international relations. For this task, the thesis analyses homophobia through the lens of postcolonial framework and the queer critiques on notions of sovereignty as construction of sovereign knowable subject. The advantage of the postcolonial framework of analysis is precisely the possibility of a broad intersystem understanding of the phenomenon aligning domestic and systemic levels. The postcolonial is also particularly fruitful framework for case studies which deals inherently with the challenge to allow sufficient degree of generalisation that allows further comparisons and pays enough attention to the specific contextual location, postcolonial framework has enough degree of generalisation due to emphasis on the structure combined to sensitivity to the local context due to valorisation of local subject. In this context Russia should be seen as part of the postcolonial space, despite of fact Russia has never been formally occupied by any Western nation-state, Russia colonised itself on behalf of Europe in a self-orientalist process, since the Tsarist times Russia has an ambiguous relation with the West of being mutually othering and being othered by Europe.

The analysis of public Russian discourses on LGBT issues in the last 15 years, surveys legal texts and NGO reports about the situation of mass persecution of LGBT people in Chechnya suggest that the foundations of contemporary homophobia are constituted in this complex dialectical interplay between subaltern and imperial aspects of Russian international relations.

This situation of Russia as a former superpower in the recent past and then a state rendered as subaltern in the present in a Western hegemonic order leads to a perception of threat on its sovereignty, one key manifestation of this anxious with sovereignty is homophobia which represents to Russia not only a powerful symbol of negation of Western liberal normative order but also an attempt to subvert the chrononormative narrative of evolutionary development in which the West sits as the last point of evolution by setting

the West as decadent and degenerated because of acceptance of homosexuality and Russia as the real guardian of the real European values, now lost in the real Europe.

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## INTRODUCTION

The present research intends to investigate the phenomenon of the contemporary homophobia in Russia as a mutually constitutive and inseparable phenomenon of foreign and national politics. For this task, I demonstrate that the greater picture of the phenomenon is better understood through to the country self-identification process and its international position through the lens and the critiques of the postcolonial and the queer theoretical framework. The main question of the thesis is as follows: how does the homophobic discourse in Russia is articulated with Russia postcolonial identity? And how the queer critiques on sovereignty can contribute to shed some light on homophobia in Russia? I shall argue that the homophobic discourse in Russia has foundations on its postcolonial identity of a subaltern empire in a Eurocentric world (as analysed by Morozov) with relevant foreign policy and domestic consequences.

The bodies of literature on the field that focus on phenomenon as either part of domestic politics or as part of the realm of normative competition between Russia and the West and do not acknowledge subaltern side of Russian identity misses the greater picture of the story.

Domestic and foreign levels of analysis are understood as part of a mutually constitutive phenomenon, when they are separated it is only for analytical purposes. In the domestic level the homophobia works as part of gender norms as political tool for legitimisation and authority building (as conceptualised by Valerie Sperling) framed in the Putin's populist neoconservative ideology aiming to legitimise the regime, whereas as foreign policy homophobia represents the resentment of the subaltern empire which filled with anti-Western contours, but Russia has been fully incorporated into the Eurocentric order not offering an alternative modernity.

Why studying homophobia in Russia? There are social and academic relevance for this topic. The anti-LGBT persecution in Russia has attracted international attention and was condemned as a great Human's Right injuries with the recent Kremlin's condescendence on the homosexual's concentration camps in Chechenia (HRW, 2017). Although LGBT persecutions exist in many countries, Russia has the particularity of being one of the few countries to pass anti-LGBT legislation (the "gay propaganda law") without - not directly, at least - religious influence. Following empirical analysis, Russia is one of the most homophobic non-Muslim country in the world, with 74% of Russians believing that society should not accept homosexuality. (Gulevich *et al*, 2016) The anti-

LGBT political and social bias is considered as a matter of national identity and sovereignty, not religion, being perceived as a Western influence that threat to overthrow Russian cultural identity. (Idem)

Although the problem is of pressing concern and very revealing of Russian positioning in the international arena, many scholars on the field tend to dismiss the topic as Russia's homophobia is taken for granted as being just a traditional feature of Russia's society, being that statement an explanation in itself. The contemporary homophobia would be nothing deserving a seriously explanation, and the recent increase in it would be nothing more than a government attempt to gain popularity by addressing traditional values.

First, to say that Russian society is homophobic traditionally does not explain anything. Although, it still can be argued that Russian homophobia is nothing new, dating back to the Tsarists times, passing through all the soviet era – when 800-1000 men were yearly arrested because of their sexuality (Wilkinson, 2013) – the same may be said of Western liberal countries, as England, France and the U.S. All contemporary non-homophobic Western countries are all traditionally homophobic, once the acceptance of non-heteronormative sexual orientations is a very recent phenomenon. If these countries have gradually overthrown homophobia despite their traditional background, why the same has not happen to Russia?

Secondly, following the West, just after the fall of the USSR, in the 90's, it seemed that homophobia was going to get buried altogether with the Soviet times; in 1993 Russia took away the legal prohibition against homosexuality and in 1999 has accepted the worldly recognition that homosexuality is a not a pathological issue (Wilkinson, 2013). By this time, Russia has a traditional homophobic grounding, as any other country in the West, and along with the new liberal economic order, a new culture Western oriented was in full rise. However, twenty years later it has become one of the most homophobic countries in the world.

Since 2013, as reported by the Human Rights Watch (2014), homophobia in Russia is growing, the actual condescence on the purge on Chechenia being a greatly revealing symptom.

Thirdly, and more importantly, tradition is nothing in itself. Tradition, in the same manner as any past social memory is articulated and only makes sense in its actualisation in the present. As Calhoum (2007) puts it, tradition is a political project,

something being procedurally constructed in the present and not some static depository of fixed identities and events. In his famous thesis about history, Walter Benjamin has already argued that “to articulate what is past does not mean to recognise “how it really was.” It means to take control of a memory, as it flashes in a moment of danger.” (Benjamin, 2005, p.4)

What I intend in this work is to offer an analysis of how the “traditional” is constituted as such in the present, regarding specially the issue of non-heteronormative people in Russia. Then, my research question, instead of taking tradition as an explanation, focus on the present-day process of constitution of a traditional identity as a political tool of subaltern resentment and in its relation to the growing of homophobia in contemporary Russia.

By addressing such question, I will be able to cast some light about key features of contemporary Russia in its relation to the West. Homophobia in Russia in its anti-Western identification is an interesting feature of a large process that shapes contemporary Russian internal and external politics regarding not only minorities issues, but international positioning of Russia.

This thesis is a single case study and as such has the inherent challenge to deal with the balance between allowing a degree of abstract generalization capable of tracing comparisons and understand an international phenomenon at the same time pays enough attention the sensitivity of the specific local context.

In this aspect, postcolonial studies may be considered as general movement of “provincializing Europe” in Chakrabarty’s (2007) expression, in other words, a challenge to the Eurocentric normative hegemony and the inscription of the particular European values as the universal. In this sense, postcolonialism is any attempt to endorse the anti-historical (history meaning the theological progress-oriented image of the Eurocentric vision) memories and identities of the subaltern.

Russia figures out as a special case in this aspect. As Morozov (2015) argues, the Russian experience offers a case of “hybrid postcolonialism. Russia is a subaltern empire” meaning that it has being constituted as both a coloniser and colonised. The Russia’s elite identified with the West has compromised itself with a self-orientalisation, in which the low-class people were seen as a savage Other that needed to be brought to Civilization.



The consequence of this is that Russia has established its own identity in terms of a mirror image the West, in a colonising movement of its own people. Since its process of self-identification constituency has been made through an import of Western normative order, further extended into a civilizational mission regarding its own masses, the typical subject of the post-colonial emancipation strategy – the native, the indigenous – is absent, which leads to important political consequences. The holder of the national soul is nothing more than an empty spot, the “missing peasant” (Morozov, 2015) then filled with an opposition to the West as a national identity ground.

Moreover, following Morozov (Idem), in Russia this opposition keeps an intrinsic paradox: although opposite to the West, Russia’s identification process works through the self-assertion of the true heritage of Western values, now degenerated and corrupted in the actual West. Russia, then, accepts the core of the Western normative and hegemonic order even though its identity constitutes itself in opposition of it. The Russian postcolonial identity is oriented by the longing of being more royalist than the king, the longing of figuring truer Western than the West itself.

The queer framework shares with the postcolonial theory an emancipatory agenda and despite of somewhat different vocabulary, echoes to the postcolonial theory in addressing to the conflicts and complex relations that emerge from the imposing normalisation of the hegemonic structure on the deviant elements, postcolonial theory problematizes the previous unambiguous notions of fixed identities with a clean-cut ontological border between the coloniser and the colonised in which the oppression comes in an unilateral vertical way from the top to the bottom and alerts us about the hybrid condition of the postcolonial subject (Bhabha).

The most important contributions to of the queer theory to this thesis are the discussions around sexuality and sovereignty. The will to knowledge about gender, sex and sexuality is a sovereign will that presupposes a sexualized subject (Weber, 2015). What queer theorists say about queer is akin to what poststructuralist International Relations scholars have long argued about sovereignty (ibidem). What poststructuralists say about sovereignty is that it refers to practices to attempt to craft an agent in whose name political is authorised to govern, in the words of International Relations poststructuralist scholar Richard K Ashley a mancraft as a corresponding knowable pre-existent ahistorical statecraft (1989).

The condition of subalternity in Russia leads to a perception of a threat to its sovereignty, this anxious concerning sovereignty leads to a greater concern with the construction of mancraft which is manifested through homophobia, that LGBT populations are rendered as ill alien mancraft aiming to bring underdevelopment to stratecraft.

One key point of this analysis is also to go beyond the oversimplification of nationalist homophobic versus pro-LGBT western liberals in Russia. Both sides in discourse claim to be fighting for the “normalisation” of Russia, I aim to argue that in fact both sides guide themselves through the same Eurocentric normative crave for integration to a core position and they both operationalise through the same logic of feeling compelled to be assimilated by a hegemonic order.

In the first chapter I explain what the contributions, the level of analysis and of the methodology of the framework are chosen to study the phenomenon and how they are related. Then I move to a discussion with some widely cited literatures on the field to dialogue to point out what insights they bring to the study and what they lack, in the final chapter I deal with the empirical data.

The empirical sources for this investigation are derived from discourse analysis of the official speeches, human rights reports, legislation approved, survey opinion pools, press releases, interviews granted by the activist networks and what are the findings they provided under the lens of theoretical frameworks.

## **CHAPTER I – THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

This chapter will draw the epistemological landscape by offering an overview and a discussion regarding the main methodological frameworks chosen to study the phenomenon of homophobia in the contemporary Russia, outlining the main conceptual tools which will be operationalized in the analysis and the insights they may provide for the case studied.

### **1.1 METHODOLOGY, RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA SOURCE**

My research design is a case study oriented one. This choice should not be understood as a claim that the phenomenon of homophobia has some exclusive feature in Russia, but I demonstrate that the particularity hybrid position of coloniser and colonised deserves an in-depth analysis.

The inherent challenge to case study research design is the balance between a degree of generalisation that allows the research to beyond its level of analysis, in the case the unit of nation-state Russia, and trace further comparisons by similarity or difference, while it pays enough attention specificity of the local context.

In this sense, the postcolonial and queer frameworks are suitable options for the case study design. Both of the frameworks allow a certain degree of generalisation due to their emphasis on the structure at the same time they are sensitive to the specific context due to their valorization to the local experience.

Under this proposition of aligning generalisation with the local context I propose to analyse homophobia in Russia from an intersystemic level of analysis in which domestic and international levels are seen as integral part of the same constitutive phenomenon to the point that to does not make any sense to try to make an ontological distinction if homophobia in Russia has roots in the international or domestic politics of Russia, it has roots in the interplay of this co-constitutive phenomenon.

My empirical sources derive primarily from discourse analysis of politicians and public personalities in Russia such as TV presenters or religious leaders concerning the LGBT people in the local Russia and international media outlets.

These sources are particularly useful because what politicians and public personalities declare to the mainstream medias are precisely the official narratives they

want the public to read. It is the official speech that reveals more accurately the nature of forces guiding the politics.

I also examine reports produced by NGOs most notably the Human Rights Watch (HRW) and the local Russian LGBT organisation LGBT Network, these reports do not represent the official narrative of Russian politics, once they are embodied into an activist logic.

For this reason, the reports provide useful data analysis for the voices which are not present in the Russian hegemonic narratives, such is the case of LGBT populations Chechnya, it is thanks to these NGO reports and testimonies collected by them that the public could know in detail the situation of LGBT persecuted in Chechnya, once the local media is totally state-controlled and dissident voices tend to be silenced.

With base on Alexander Kondakov I get the analysis of legal texts in Russian law concerning LGBT population, his analytical method to read what the unsaid in legal texts is particularly useful to demonstrate how homophobia manifests Russia.

I also analyse the surveys from Yuri Levada Center considered to be an independent voice which provide important data how is the general perception about LGBT people by the Russian public.

I engage to a discussion with some main cited authors on the field of homophobia in order to highlight what their insights about the topic and what they lack, some of them focus on the law, others on the particular domestic politics or history of Russia and most of them focus on the imperial side of Russia. I aim to offer an analysis to cover homophobia in Russia in the realm of International Relations discipline, International Relations understood as the conjugated interplay of domestic and foreign politics and offer an interpretation focused on the subaltern side of the formula.

For that task I mobilise postcolonial work of Viacheslav Morozov, Russia as a Subaltern empire in which its is offered an innovative approach of postcolonial condition of Russia with emphasis on the subaltern side, the postcolonial critics of Ilan Kappor on the concept of development.

In the queer framework I reference to Cynthia Weber's Queer International Relations who offers a discussion around sovereignty and sexuality aiming to align the queer and international relations scholars, on the Foucauldian critiques of the postcolonialist scholar Achille Mbembe and his concept of necropolitics which explains expands the notion of biopower and sees sovereignty as the right to kill. I also refer to the

queer interpretations of queer politics discussed by scholars Jin Haritaworn, Adi Kuntsman and Silvia Posocco that are employed to examine the particular case of Chechnya.

## **1.2 POSTCOLONIAL FRAMEWORK AND HOMOPHOBIA: THE STRUCTURAL AND THE LOCAL**

The core International Relations rationalist approaches tend to undertheorize or overlook the phenomenon of homophobia in Russia. On the rationalist accounts this is a result of the country's backwardness unable to catch up with civilized world by embracing the Western values of tolerance, or the topic is dismissed by rationalist scholars as a topic of primarily domestic concern more interesting for cultural studies, anthropology, and little relevance to the understanding of international relations.

However, in this analysis the point of departure takes domestic and foreign dimensions as mutually constitutive phenomenon, this allows me to frame homophobia in Russia not as a cultural or traditional particularity of a nation-State but as part of a broader context: with foundations and resulted from the mutual interactions of Russia with the international arena.

For this reason, the postcolonial theory as a methodological framework can offer this vantage point of intersystemic approach: a degree of generalization due to emphasis on structure combined with sensitivity on the particular with a valorisation of local experience.

Following this proposition, the postcolonial theory can enable us to understand how in the history of international relations Russian identity was shaped by mutually othering and being othered by the West, in this context homophobia is not a result of cultural feature of the Russian people, as defended by some theories and by the regime itself but it is rather a consequence of this mutual othering between Europe and Russia.

For this analysis the thesis revises the recent work of Viacheslav Morozov, *Russian Postcolonial Identity: A Subaltern Empire in a Eurocentric World* (2015) as the title suggests, the author invites us to read Russia as a subaltern empire as a framework to understand the ambiguous position of Russia with the West, where the roots of contemporary Russian homophobia dwells.

Ilan Kapoor, who brings postcolonial analysis to the Marxist concept of development expanding the scope focused mostly on material and economic aspects of development overlooking its ideational and discursive side.

The main contribution of Kapoor for my analysis is the insight that homophobia in the postcolonial space has its origins in a dual movement of the West queering the postcolonial space, and the postcolonial desire to un queer itself.

The first task is to define what is understood as postcolonial in this analysis and to contend why Russia, which was never formally occupied by any Western state, should be seen as part of postcolonial spaces. It is mostly a problem of location.

The imperial and the postcolonial can co-exist(Morozov,2015), this claim revises critically some literatures which deal with the coloniser and the colonised as rigid and clearly marked distinction identities and spaces. Instead, the postcolonial Other is a product of European enlightenment, and therefore, postcolonial subject identity is hybrid.

As Said contends, the West invented the Orient. At the same time this process of othering was also fundamental for the shaping of European identity itself, so despite this process was led by the West, it had consequence for both sides, not on equal terms, however, once the knowledge about the Orient was constructed by the West as mean of power.

Morozov argues, that the location of postcolonial is not pre-defined by pre-existent essentialist marks such as the geographical location (Africa, Asia, Latin America, former European colonies), ethnicity, culture or economic status. The location of postcolonial is rather situational and relational, according the context, as the Russian case epitomises once the colonisers and the colonised were part of the same ethnic group, shared the same language and religion.

The understanding of colonial space as rigid may rise hesitation to consider Russia as part of postcolonial space, if postcolonial space is defined as the space that was formally and military occupied by European nations.

The fact Russia was not occupied military with permanent settles for centuries as some spaces of Africa, Asia and America does not prevent Russia for being colonised in another way.

Under the paradigm of self-colonisation, Russia was colonised by its own europeinised elites from the core to towards the periphery, being subject and object of colonisation in a self-orientalism process (Morozov,2015)

This notion of the location of postcolonial as situational and relational is what enables Russia to be perceived as a subaltern empire. Imperial in relation to its own peripheral space and subaltern regarding the global capitalism and Western normative order.

In order to understand that imperial and subaltern sides of Russian foreign policy is necessary to understand how the identity of postcolonial subject is constructed in a dialect way as hybrid by different mechanisms of subversion, mimicry and creation of hybrid spaces.

Homini K Bhabha, in his seminar the Location of Culture (1994) discusses in depth the hybrid constitution of the postcolonial subject. Instead of the epistemology of cultural differences as a study object, he suggests, the enunciation of the culture that produces a break in the performative present of the identity.

From the encounter between the coloniser and the colonised Bhabha calls a third space is created, in which both coloniser and colonised are locked in a relation where all the elements can be appropriated or discarded.

Once the knowledge of the colonised is denied, this one learns to speak the language of the master in a subversive way to be heard and claim its own demands inside the discursive space occupied.

In this sense, Russia has fully incorporated the Eurocentric vocabulary, the Russian discourse does not question the universal values, it is rather question the Western monopoly of them. In this regard, Russia is not analysed as an agent capable of offering a modernity different from the European one.

Even when its referred to the Soviet Union in terms of offering an alternative to the capitalist market economy oriented, the Marxist praxis and theory are undeniable part of Eurocentric modernity. There was nothing anti-historical native Russian about the Soviet experience. On the contrary, the Soviet Union represented an effort of Russia to join the modern narrative of historical evolution and try to bypass the West, once in Marxist view of history communist represented a stage of advancement in relation to capitalist stage of production.

As paradoxal as it seems the anti-colonial discourse of Putin regime makes even more evident the postcolonial condition of Russia as subaltern regarding the West. All the attempts and discourses on creation of multipolar world, the BRICS New Development Bank(NDB) in 2014, this “new” in the name expresses the wish of a

creating something different, Russia-China partnership to de-dollarize the economy, are actually good examples how dependent they are on the Eurocentric order.

In fact, behind the creation of BRICS New Development Bank is the resentment of countries labelled as “emergent” economies limited agency in the North America-EU dominated international Fora such as the International Monetary Fund(IMF) and World Bank

These attempts do not question the global capitalism, there is nothing alternative about the creation of a new international bank, the opposite, it reinforces global capitalism.

In Spivak’s formula the core feature to characterise the subaltern is to be spoken for or spoken about, the subaltern is understood as the individual or group whose agency is limited inside the hegemonic order, therefore he is spoken for and about in the discourse, when voices try to reproduce their conscience.

This formula warns us to be suspicious, then, about these who claim to speak in the name of the subaltern – there is a silencing in these who take the agency of the subaltern and claim to speak in name of them -and this is what Russia does all the time, to justify imperial repressive actions.

Russian homophobia epitomises this assertive. The homophobic discourse in Russia receives anti-colonial contours, the refusal to embrace western tolerance to non-heterosexual sexualities is presented as native resistance of Russia faced to Westerns colonial attempt.

Despite of this negation of universality of tolerance to non-heterosexual sexualities, Russia frames these justifications on the same Western language shared by the conservative Western counterparts – reference to the very vague concept of family values, misleading association of homosexuality to pedophilia. Russia is not capable of offering any other normative alternative but the Eurocentric one.

Morozov argues that subalternity of Russia has ideational and material aspects and these are not dissociated, but part of an integral phenomenon in which that they mutually shape each other not making any sense an ontological division. For this analysis he engages the postcolonial and neomarxist theories in complementary relation. The postcolonial alone cannot provide a full explanation of the origin of the ambiguity of Russia regarding the West, which lies on the peripheral condition of Russia in the capitalist core.



In the ideational dimension through the lens of postcolonial theory, Russian imperial facet is conditioned by its subalternity position. Russia is dependent on the Eurocentric language, even when it's aiming to challenge the West liberalism, this is done against the use of Eurocentric language as the strong emphasis on principle of sovereignty of the defense of family values as justification for homophobia, as its Western neoconservatives counter parts claim.

The conservative turn of Putin's regime in the aftermath of 2011-2012 protests, Mozorov defends, does not represent a shift from the Western normative order or an independent stand-point, on the contrary, this phenomenon should be perceived as a resentment of subalternity expressed as imperial pursue.

The emancipatory element of postcolonial space, the guardian of anti-historic memory untouched by the Western colonialism is nowhere to be found in Russia, which has fully incorporated Eurocentric normative order and incorporated into global capitalism.

Therefore, Russia cannot offer a positive agenda, instead the only identitarian horizon is negation of the West, the self as pure negation of Other. This conservative Russia is mirror-image of Western caricature of Russia. The absence of emancipatory peasant can only be filled with negativity of the West, as the only mean Russia finds to counter subaltern resentment.

The use of soft power devices by the regime materialized in TV channels such as RT TV, cultural institutes such as Rossotrudnices or Ruskij Mir Foundation, even when the regime advocates for an anti-liberal soft power to oppose western one, soft power is still an imported technology.

Homophobia plays a key role as power symbol in this anti-western liberal soft power, it is a tool of securing the former fragments of the empire and align to other subaltern countries sharing the same the resentment such as the Muslim world, China and Central Asia.

In beginning of Ukraine crisis in 2013 when Ukraine was ready to sign the Association Agreement with the EU, protesters were confronted with slogan "Association with the EU means same-sex marriage"

Kapoor in his article "The Queer Third World" (2015) aims to align the concepts of Third World and Queer in the common heritage of disparagement and promise of non-alignment. The Third World, he argues, has a sort of intrinsic queerness

since it is constituted in a projection of European Other in a similar manner as women, homosexuals and transgender are constituted as an Other regarding the heteronormative order. In a Lacanian framework Kapoor shows that the natural instability of identities – grounded in its dependency upon language – may function, in a “queer politics of the Real”<sup>1</sup>, as a common ground to post-colonial and queer theories, since both of them express and work through the fractures of the symbolic Eurocentric order.

Although it may be argued that the various postcolonial spaces endorse homophobic persecution in the name of its local identities, according to Kapoor, this is also can be considered a movement of becoming more royalist than the king. The technologies of oppression based on the heteronormative dispositive of power are European inventions and do not relate to the previous local power-relation.

This homophobic bias works as a self-unqueering move motivated by the incorporation, during the colonial process, of some features of Western “unqueering” mechanics directed to the intrinsic queerness of the non-European as such. Unqueering is a movement of “reaction to the humiliation and inferiority wrought by (neo)colonialism and Orientalism: the desire to be equal to one’s (former) master, perhaps even to imitate him; and hence the desire not to be different or queer.” (Kapoor, 2015, p.8) It is precisely the movement of becoming more royalist than the king. Moreover, queer, in this sense, relates to the Real as a fracture in the eurocentric heteronormative order, which can express both the sexual minorities and not-European cultures and ethnicities.

Unqueering is the name of the movement of saturation of this fracture, the colonisation of the Real with signifiers through power techniques (as biopolitics, for example). The point is that, although this is a European movement regarding its own normative hegemony, the subaltern sometimes, as is the case in Russia, embraces this same instance in its local identity affirmation move.

The particularity of Russian hybridism makes this question even more crucial; since the Russian ambiguity as a subaltern empire combined with its process of self-constitution through a self-Orientalising framed in the mirroring of the West makes the indigenous, native, anterior to the colonisation nothing more than an empty spot, the European heteronormative biopolitical mechanism has no previous aboriginal anti-

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<sup>1</sup> By this, Kapoor means a political call into the fracture of social normative order. The fracture is identified to the Lacanian concept of the Real, the domain that cannot be signified (Žižek, 2010). The queer, to Kapoor, in as much as it “represents the failure of hetero-normativity” and “threatens and fractures the social and in that sense – to echo Lacan – tends towards a politics of the Real.” (Kapoor, 2015, p.1621)

historical identity to oppose to it. In this sense, the homophobia in Russia express in a privilege way the more “royalist than the king” aspect of the Russian anti-western mirroring in as much as homosexuality is taken as a decadency of the Western civilizational values now dominant in the West. The postcolonial identity of Russia is, than, grounded in an essential self-unqueering movement.

### **1.3 THE QUEER FRAMEWORK: THE SOVEREIGN AND THE PERVERSION**

The Russian postcolonial situation described in the previous section combined with a strong resentment of former super power rendered now a position almost analogous to the third world countries in the international arena, despite of the veto power in the UN Security Council Russia is still seen an underdeveloped state needing assistance, led to a perception of threat among Russian people and the government.

Russia perceives its sovereignty under threat by the West, a threat to lose influence in its geopolitical periphery and to be incorporated into Western hegemonic order in a subaltern position. However, as discussed by Morozov, the lack of anti-historical identity, the missing peasant, left no other option to Russia but anti-Western opposition with no prepositive agenda.

Homophobia to Russia, thus, is presented as not only a powerful symbol of negation of Western normative order, but also a matter of statecraft development in a double movement of embracing and at the same time aiming to subvert the Western teleological narrative of historical evolution. To embrace because Russia does not offer any real alternative to this narrative but subvert to an understanding that inside this narrative of historical development the West became decadent when accepted LGBT rights as part of universal scope of Human Rights, while Russia held the rightful path of progress refusing the decadence and traces of underdevelopment.

The subaltern empire makes this question even more crucial in the Russian case. Whereas, for example, some other postcolonial spaces such in Latin American countries such Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Colombia and South Africa the lack of imperial legacy allowed them to understand the acceptance of LGBT rights from the First

World as placing them among the progressist line of development, Russian imperial legacy teases subaltern resentments which result in these attempts to subvert Western narrative of chronology.

At the same time Russian material and normative dependence does not allow it to offer any alternative to Eurocentric order, this resentment is mobilised to at least try to subvert this Eurocentric order into one that Russia figures as the protagonist instead of an assimilated subaltern element.

For this analysis important discussion about queer theory and sovereignty is held by Cynthia Weber in her original “The Queer International Relations” (2016).

In her book, Weber invites both scholars of International Relations and queer theory to engage in a conversation about sovereignty and sexuality, where she contends both IR and queer scholars can benefit from this conversation and reduce the gaps between these two fields.

The relevance of this discussion for the analysis is to frame the queer contributions to the field of International Relations, understand how queer perversion is understood as a threat by the sovereign State, specially one like Russia which claims big emphasis on the sovereignty principle in international relations and very often invokes categories of perversion as a justification for oppression and political mobilisation.

Cynthia Weber departs from the concept of queer described by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick – “the open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excess of meaning when the constituent elements of someone’s gender or sexuality aren’t made to signify monolithically” (1993, p 80).

The ingredients of Weber’s queer method consist of Foucault and how homosexual was put into the discourse, the concept of figuration by Donna Haraway, the work of poststructuralist Richard K Ashley of statecraft as mancraft and Roland Barthes instructions to read plural logic of and/or while simultaneous signifying as one thing and another thing.

The homosexual was put in the public discourse, as Weber argues with reference in the History of Sexuality by Foucault, through pathologisation, medicalization and correction. The Victorian era when created the perverse homosexual also created the normal Malthusian reproductive heterosexual couple.

The homosexual was brought into the discourse through the a male figuration, it is not the intention of Cynthia Weber is not to reify the homosexual as a male figure, but this is how the homosexual was knew in the Western discourse.

According to Dona Haraway figurations are dilations of meanings shared in form and image. They create powerful meanings. Figurations do not represent the world as something given and pre-existent, figurations condense diffuse imaginations about the world in specific images and forms. They emerged from material and discursive assemblage.

Figurations are the act of employing semiotic tropes to combine knowledge, practise and power. There are four key elements of figuration: tropes, temporalities, performativities and worlding.

Tropes can be understood as metaphors to express the reality, the temporalities imply a developmental time, with historical roots on Christianity, the time has a progressive line and teleological goal. The performativities are images that can be habited, it is not stable and can change according to the context.

Invoking the work of Richard K Ashley, the practise of statecraft as a mancraft(1989), Weber contends that modern statecraft needs a corresponding mancraft preexistent, singular and ahistorical authorising the power. Therefore, sovereign State produces binary sexualized subjects -the homosexual versus the heterosexual, the transgender versus the cisgender-these binary regimes of normality versus perversion are intertwined with regimes of normality and perversion around race, religion and other regimes of knowledge, argues Weber.

With base on Derrida, deconstruction is not something attributed to the text (or discourse in Foucault vocabulary), it is something inherent to the text. This is because the meanings in the text are already plural. The logocentric process of imposing one only meaning is always political and impossible.

In the traditional binary logic, the stracraft is constructed as an *either/or* (either normal or perverse –as or opposing) mancraft. The queer logic, however, exceeds this binarism, it is a plural logoi, as Weber argues, the mancraft is either normal or perverse while being at the same time normal *and* perverse.

The target of homophobia are the individuals perceived by Russia as a perverse mancraft working against the statecraft therefore needing to be object of correction for the sake of the sovereignty of the State and the nation.

Queer, then, is understood in this thesis as deviant, non-conformist, anti-identitarian and anti-essentialist intellectual and political movement which departs from the negativity – perverse, undeveloped, subaltern – and, instead of aiming to assimilate into the norm and become normal and developed, it embraces the negativity as a mean of politics.

Weber contends the homosexual is figured in the international relations by the will to knowledge in three different ways: as perverse, as normal or as perverse and/or normal at the same time.

Four figurations originated in the articulations figure of perverse homosexual participate actively of the International Relations: the undeveloped, the undevelopable, the unwanted im/migrant and the terrorist. These figurations allow the construction of the sovereign man as the imperial man civilizationally developed.

The figure of the underdeveloped was constructed in the Western discourse during the Cold War to avoid the alignment of the third world with the communist bloc. The undeveloped need to be object of attention from the developed world, figured as political primitive and ignorant, needing guidance to enter the civilizatory course.

As part of the formula of discursive figuration of the underdeveloped there is Samuel Huntington's Great Dichotomy, the structural sociology of Talcott Parsons and the stages of economic development of Walt Rostow.

The undeveloped and the undevelopable, then, are overlapping figures of perversion regarding the evolutive temporality. Weber contends, that the international orders are sexualised because they contain tropes of degeneracy and decadence, temporal perversions.

Queer theorist Neville Hoads demonstrate that through Freud's psychoanalysis and Cynthia Weber through Gabriel Almond's theorisations of modernity and development.

The undeveloped and the undevelopable are figured in narratives of biological, psychological, social, and political evolution through two temporal tropes: degeneracy and decadence.

The underdeveloped is the degeneracy, Hoads point out that in Freudian psychology homosexuality is a deferred stage of human sexuality, the heterosexuality as the evolutionary goal of development.

The homosexual degenerate is, at least, part of evolutive trajectory, is in process of evolution to heterosexuality, inasmuch, the undeveloped country is in process (emerging) as developed country.

While the homosexual decadent cannot exist. The degenerated one is at least allowed to exist in the past. Weber argues that the homosexual decadent was figured by Parsons while the undeveloped by Almond's teleological and evolutionary notions of development.

For Parsons the evolutionary biology is not an analogy to society, but what maintains society functioning. The nuclear family is what guarantees the continuation of society through the production of children to educated to embrace the dominant normative orders and values. The decadent homosexual is a dysfunctional vestige of underdevelopment, it is the promise of the death of development in itself.

Almond combined the Great Dichotomy of civilised versus primitive with implicit figurations of homosexuality through temporal tropes of decadence, creating sexualised international orders.

Weber contends that the decadent homosexual has three main purposes for Almond: reassert heterosexual cisgender reproduction and the heteronormative structures, figure the decadent homosexual as a minority of development and a minority of majority knowledge, the decadent homosexual marks the limit of development. And the third purpose is to serve as scapegoat: since the decadent homosexual failed to develop, it is no longer under management of biopolitics, but becomes management of necropolitics (Mbembe, 2003)

These figurations are not fixed, and they overlap. The division is mostly for analytical purposes. Freud's homosexual is both degenerate and decadent, despite of his effort to disassociate homosexuality from decadence, by setting all individuals and civilisations in the same universal continuum, he stigmatises the homosexual as decadent and the heterosexuality is set as the endpoint of evolution.

The unwanted im/migrant and the terrorist in the Western discourse are the underdeveloped and the undevelopable on move. These figures constitute the contemporary figurations of what Foucault called "the frozen countenance of the perversions" (1980,48).

The fears of the West about these figures, contends Weber, is due to fact these figures not only embody perversion, they embody perversions of developmental temporality on the move.

The underdeveloped and the undevelopable move beyond their assigned space in the Western developmental discourse.

The second figuration of the homosexual in the international relations is the normal homosexual figured as the gay right holder and the gay patriot. These figurations were, Weber argues, constructed in the Western discourse in Obama's administration, the empirical case of analysis of these figurations is the Hillary Clinton's speech Gay Rights Are Human Rights addressed at assembly at the United Nations in Geneva on December 6, 2011.

The figurations of normal homosexual can be used as with neocolonialist and imperialist means, as instances of mancraft as statecraft. In a binary logic of either/or, normal states versus pathological states, they participate of the regulation of international politics because they stablish sexualised international orders.

Weber points four movements taken by the Western states to include the homosexual as normal in the scope of Human Rights while preserving the figures of pervert homosexual – the undeveloped, undevelopable, the unwanted im/migrant and the terrorist. And so, the inclusion of the normal homosexual continues subscribing the sexualised orders.

The first movement is to abandon sexual desire as the axis of classification of sexualised subject as normal or perverse, as it used to be in Victorian era described by Foucault. Instead of sexual desire, what matters is if the desire is aligned or not to liberal values. The second movement is the homonormativity as conceptualised by scholar Lisa Duggan. The homonormativity consists in the depolitisation of LGBT subjects by domesticity and consumption. What is perverse is the desire of a politics, economic system and society different from the neoliberal one. The normal homosexual has the same desires of domesticity and consumption as the heterosexual.

The third movement is the refiguration of normal subject, in this scope the normal homosexual can be understood as a developed subject. The forth movement is the measure of individual not for his development from perverse into normal but by his desire for consumption and domesticity.



Cynthia Weber analysis the implications of Hillary Clinton's speech of Gay Rights are Human Rights and dialogue with the critiques of some queer theorists to this speech.

Jabis Puar contends that Human Rights, what she labels Human Rights industrial complex, works in favour of imperialism. She coined the concept of homonationalism, in which the homosexual is figured as docile patriot opposed to international anarchy, in a rearrangement of capitalism, states and sexual desire.

To Puar, homonationalism is not an opposition to modernity but a facet of it. She contends that behind the gay friendly facet of Hillary's speech there is a racialisation of Other, the non-white pathological states which does not treat well their LGBTs.

Rahul Rao also see imperialist nuances in Hillary's speech, setting the states that are against the gay rights as "embracing the wrong side of the empire".

Cynthia Weber, however, contends that these concepts should be taken with caution. The concept of homonationalism and homonormativity cannot be applied universally to any case, they are specific of USA and Europe in the 50's. These concepts are flexible. And not all claims for Human Rights should be understood as imperialist.

Weber contends that Gays Rights as Human Rights in practise and performance exceed the homonationalism, homonormativity and neoimperialism. She stands against the logic of either/or in which one thing can be normative or anti-normative essentially.

In her analysis of Hillary's speech, Weber contends that dichotomies of same versus different are created in space, time and desire. The key point of the speech is to equate gays right to universal Human's Rights of UN Declaration of Human Rights, 1947.

As spatial dichotomy Hillary creates legitim minority versus rogue individual, she reminds the audience that groups nowadays considered as minority were not originally mentioned in the UDHR. 85 countries supported her statement calling for an end of criminalization and violence against people on basis of their sexual orientation. Another spatial dichotomy is universal homosexuality versus western homosexuality. She contends to be homosexual is not a western creation or condition, but part of humanity.

In her speech, Hillary has an evolutionary notion of temporality. Neville Hoad contends that the USA likes to imagine itself in final process of development, when Hillary says "be on the right side of the history" she is tying evolutionary time to historical time.

In the desire, Hillary creates the category LGBT in the shadows. The homosexual that is not only victim of homophobia, he is also a permanent link with AIDS/HIV. The LGBT in the shadows are the ones that are left unregulated outside the scope of domesticity and governmentability. A very recurring figure in the discourses about public health. The homosexual that loves more homosexual sex than his nation. This figuration is important in the speech because it allows Hillary to create dichotomy between this dangerous homosexual carrier of disease and the domestic and patriot homosexual who embraced neoliberalism.

Clinton makes a reference to former president of Botswana when the LGBT is left the shadows there is no effective public health policy against AIDS/HIV.

By drawing a distinction between the reproductive LGBTs which is a figure of life versus the unregulated therefore dangerous fornicating LGBTs in the shadows, which is a figure of death, Clinton leaves the possibility open that the LGBTs in the shadows stay in the shadows because they did not embrace modes of domesticity and governmentability in neoliberalism, and hence, outside the universal human community.

The normal homosexual has rights to have rights because he is member of a minority in a universal human community, the homosexual in the shadows has no rights because he chose to be outside the scope of good sexual, political and economic practises, in the margins of universal community of Human's Right.

Puar sees this question as the biopolitics of the good queer versus the necropolitics of the bad queer. Clinton combines homonationalism with homointernationalism by developing the notion of modern homosexual. The modern homosexual is not the one which evolved from perverse homosexual to normal homosexual, but rather the homosexual who is domestic and a consumer as a neoliberal subject who works on behalf of the nation and capitalism.

Rahul Rao sees this issue as gay conditionality, in which the states determine about foreign aid to postcolonial

Puar questions that the same way that liberal feminism in the Women's Question need the native woman oppressed by brown or black people to reaffirm its trajectory with the question "how well you treat your women?" we can find amendments in the Homosexual Question (how well you treat your homosexuals?)

Weber concludes that Hillary Clinton makes three movements in her speech. She maps a new trajectory of development for this homosexual, she reassures this new

trajectory for the normal homosexual does not cancel the trajectory of the perverse homosexual and constructs sexualised orders in international relations that is if not neoimperialist at least is compatible with neoimperialism.

The third figuration of homosexual in the international relations is the homosexual that is either/or normal and perverse at the same time. A range of figurations exceed the binary logic of homosexual either normal or perverse.

The normal and/or perverse homosexual functions with a plural foundation, the queer logoi, the queer logic of statecraft. Weber analysis the case of Eurovision winner 2014 the queer subject Tom Neuwirth/Conchita Wurst.

Conchita Wurst was taken by many European leaders as a figure positive or negative of European integration, however the figuration of Neuwirth/Wurst exceeds the binary logic of either/or of mancraft as statecraft.

In this binary logic what is discussed is whether Conchita Wurst as a sovereign man of this new Europe should draw the line between normal integrated Europeans or improperly integrated perverse Europeans.

Weber defends that a reification between liberal Western Europeans, who mostly praised Conchita Wurst as a libertarian versus conservative Eastern who rendered Conchita Wurst as perverse, is not product reification. This is because some Western leaders embraced denunciation of Conchita Wurst as perverse, besides not only the governments but also the people divided in their figuration of Conchita Wurst.

For Weber, to mobilise Conchita Wurst for one side or another expresses already the will to knowledge in the classic binary logic of statecraft as mancraft, in which the sovereign man is ahistorical and singular. For Weber Conchita Wurst exceeds all this, being at the same time male and female, European and postcolonial (Colombian) subject, as normal and perverse at the same time in the same space, hence, it is more productive to see Conchita Wurst under the queer logoi.

Weber had the global North, US and Europe, as her primary empirical source of analysis, however these figurations can be applied to Russian context. Both Russia and the west engage to a chrononormative notion of temporality, space and desire. For the West and those who embraced the figure of normal homosexual as patriot and right holder tamed by desire of domesticity and consumption and therefore not threatening the continuation of community and global capitalism through the championship of LGBT

rights as most advanced line of temporal development, Russia works in the opposition direction, but also adopting the same chrononormative notion of temporal progress.

For the Russian context, the championship of LGBT rights as Human Rights and LGBT population of part of universal human community does not represent the temporal progress. Instead it represents a deviance from the right path of civilization, that now threatens Russian sovereignty through this foreign import which can pervert Russian mancraft as statecraft. To Russia, the progress is to uphold to Christian and traditional values of mankind. Traditional values of mankind, as understood by Russia, are nothing a compilate of Western conservative discourses.

From the point of view of Russian sovereignty concerns, LGBTs represent the undeveloped mancraft that can lead to an undeveloped statecraft if not corrected.

The case of Chechnya represents a more extreme position. The greater is the subalternity, the more extreme homophobia manifests. Chechnya due to its special condition of double subalternity regarding the West and Russian Federal government figured the homosexual as the undevelopable equated to terrorist.

As mentioned in this section, the undevelopable and the terrorist as the figurations based on tropes of decadence represent the limits of civilizatory trajectory and therefore they are left to die.

The notions of sovereignty in the concept of necropolitics discussed by Achille Mbembe (2002) in which politics is understood as the work of death and sovereignty as ultimately the right to kill can provide fruitful insights about the situation of gay concentration camps in Chechenia.

Sovereignty resides, to large extend, in the capacity to dictate who lives and who dies, and therefore, let live and die constitutes the limit of sovereignty.

The essay distances itself from traditional accounts of sovereignty which tend to localise sovereignty within the boundaries of the nation-state and institutions empowered by the states or by supranational entities.

Mbembe's approach to sovereignty is constituted in the critics of Foucault about notion of biopower and war. He defines sovereignty as the exercise of control over morality and the exercise of defining life as a deployment and manifestation of power, the domain of life in which power took control.

The essay aims addresses to central questions about the condition of the practices of the right to kill or let live or to expose to death and what such implementation

can tell us about the person “left to die” and what is the relation of enmity against the murder.

Mbembe contends that the notion of biopower is not enough to account the contemporary ways by which politics deal with fight against terrorism, war and resistance having the murder the enemy as the absolute objective.

In order to address such question Mbembe explores the relation amongst biopower, sovereignty and the state of exception, discussed by Giorgio Agamben.

The state of exception is often referred to discuss the relationship between Nazism, totalitarian regimes and concentration camps. The concentration camp is interpreted as the ultimate metaphor for sovereignty, the power of negative.

To Hannah Arendt the concentration camps represents a horror beyond human imagination because it stands outside life and death. To Agamben, the condition in the concentration camp is the bare life. In the concentration camp the state of exception ceases to be temporal to become permanent necropolitical spatial rearrangement.

Mbembe traces the origins of necropolitics back to early modernity and colonisation experience. In early modernity in its origin, argues Mbembe, had multiple concepts of sovereignty, despite of this multiplicity the political critique privileged normative theories of democracy and turned reason into the most component of modernity and sovereignty.

Reason was defined as the true subject of politics – understood as the exercise of reason in the public sphere. In this realm politics is twofold project: to achieve subject autonomy and agreement between collectivity and this autonomous subject through the communication and recognition, which would be opposed of war.

The exercise of reason as tantamount to the exercise of freedom, a key element for autonomy. Sovereignty therefore is defined as the twofold process of self-institution and self-limitation and the exercise of sovereignty is the social capacity of self-creation through social and imagined signifieds.

For Mbembe the figurations of sovereignty as instrumentalization of human existence and destruction of material human body and populations are not in contradiction with this reason paradigm that early modernity embraced.

Such figurations constitute the nomos of spatial politics. The contemporary experiences point that human experiences of destruction, exemplified by the world wars,

emerge when it is possible to develop a different reading of politics, sovereignty and subject from those inherited from philosophical discourse on modernity.

The essay deals with more tangible categories than reason: life and death. Mbembe offers a brief discussion of relationship among politics, subject, life and death found in Hegel and Bataille in order to present a reading of politics as the work of death.

Hegel's account of death focuses on a bipartite negativity. First, human negates nature and second human transforms the negated element through work and struggle. In this process, humans created the world, but they are also exposed to their own negativity.

In this paradigm death is result of conscient risks undertaken by the subject, in this risk the animal that constitutes the human subject is defeated. Thus, human becomes a subject (separated from nature, the animal) through labour and struggle and confronts death.

The upholding of work is death Hegel's definition of spirit. The life of the spirit is that one that assumes the risk of living with death. Politics is therefore defined as the death that lives in human life.

Georges Bataille offers critical insights how death structures sovereignty, politics and the subject. Bataille defines sovereign world as the world where death has no limits. Death is present in it and its presence defines the world of violence, but while death is present it is there to be negated.

Once the natural domain of prohibition includes death (among others), sovereignty presupposes the force to violate the prohibition to kill. Contrary to subordination which has roots on the alleged need to avoid death, sovereignty always presupposes the risk of death.

By treating sovereignty as violation of prohibition, Bataille reopens the question of the limits for the political. Politics in this case is not a forward dialectical movement, but rather is traced as spiritual transgression.

After defining politics as the work of death – human subjective separation from nature through labour and struggle- Mbembe analyses that sovereignty is mostly the right to kill.

Mbembe assesses that the trajectory of the state of exception and the relation of enmity became the normative foundation for the right to kill. Power refers to the state of exception and the state of emergency and requires a fictionalized enemy.

In Foucault's formulation biopower operates dividing people between those who should live and those who should die. This division constitutes the foundation of necropolitics, presupposing the division of peoples in populations, subgroups and establishment of biological caesura – racism.

To Foucault racism is above all a technology aimed to allow the exercise of biopower- the right to kill. This perception of biopower is inscribed in the functioning of all modern states. Racism regulates the distribution of death.

Hannah Arendt localises the root of race politics in the process of otherness, politics of race is the politics of death in last instance.

The premises of Nazism are found in the colonial imperialism and in the serialisation of technical mechanism to set people in death. Enzo Traverso argues that the concentration camp is culmination of lengthy process of dehumanisation and industrialisation of death and assisted by racist stereotypes that flourished in this process.

The link between terror and modernity can be found in a range of sources, some of them appear in the ancient régime through the tension between the public crave for blood and notions of justice.

The guillotine can be characterised as new phase of democratisation of the means available for dispose the enemies of the state. This right was prerogative of nobility and was extended to every citizen.

The modern Marxian subject, argues Mbembe, is fundamentally a subject aiming to prove its sovereignty through the fight until death.

Slavery is important institution for modernity and the first instance of biopolitical experimentation. The structure system of plantation and its aftermath manifests the paradoxal figure of the state of exception. The slave in this context has a triple loss of home, political right and right for his/her body. In the plantation world the slaved is treated as if he/she were a labour tool.

The colony represents the place where sovereignty is exercised outside the law. Mbembe indicates the basis of the understanding of the colony as a space of terror relies on the efforts of Europe to domesticate war through the creation of judicial orders based on two main postulates. The first postulate is equality among states, the right to wage war and conclude peace was understood as prominent function of every state, this led to the notion that the states can intervene beyond its borders. The second postulate is the territorialisation of sovereign states, therefore the public law assumed a form of

distinction between the part of the world available for colonial appropriation and Europe itself.

The public law prescribes about civilised states, but the colonies were not seen as states and their inhabitants were not seen as sovereign subjects entitled to a notion of citizenship.

Arendt contends that when Europeans massacred the colonies they were not aware of committing murdering once their inhabitants were not perceived as human.

The colonial space was the raw material for sovereignty and the violence that accompanied it, sovereignty meant occupation and occupation meant regularise the colonized in a zone between subjecthood and objecthood.

Mbembe argues that this colonial process is not lost in the past of early modernisation, but it remains present through similar colonial mechanisms of late modernity as epitomised by the case of Palestine and West Bank.

In Fanon's account the territorialisation was primary the division of the space in comportament, bouderies and internal borders. This is necropolitics operates: the spaces where the colonised is settled is a space of control where the colonised is managed to die. Sovereignty in this context was defined as who matters and who is disposable.

On contemporary war Mbembe argues that the phenomenon of war in late modernity can no longer be understood through theories of contractual violence such as those of just war and Clausewitz instrumentalisation of war. According to Bauman was in global era do not aim to occupy and annex a territory, but rather destroy the morality through a fast and unpredicted attack. Such were the examples of Gulf war and Kosovo campaign.

Contemporary warfare therefore has more to do with nomad strategy than those of sedentary modern nations. In words of Bauman, the superiority is settled in the fast movement and capacity to emerge from nothing and attack. Another new and important feature of contemporary war is that military operations are no longer monopoly of the state.

Under this paradigm, Mbembe defends that there is no more sense in dividing politics into external or domestic realm, as exemplified by the African continent where many states can no longer reclaim monopoly of violence due to intervention of private foreign mercenary.



Alongside with these new modality, there is also the war machine, as Deleuze and Guattari analysed. War machines borrowed functions of army while incorporated this rapid nomad mobility and adapted to deterritorialization.

The early modern colonisation form of governmentality based on commandment, techniques of police enforcement and discipline, choice between obedience and simulation is gradually replaces in late modernity by more extreme techniques due to technological power of destruction. New technologies of destruction became more tactic and less anatomic. If power relied on tight control over the body the new technologies are less concerned with discipline of bodies, now they are inscribed in the economy of massacre.

The lifeless bodies reduced to skeletons make the killing process more effective, faster and even more impersonal.

In the collection of essays organised by Jin Haritaworn, Adi Kunstman and Silvia Posocco entitled “Queer Necropolitics” the authors inspired in the works of Achille Mbembe and the insightful oeuvre of Jabis Puar with the same name, the authors offer a queer reading of the concept of necropolitics.

The authors examine the changes in queer politics that emerge in contemporary of racism, neocolonialism, war on terror, border enforcement, neoliberalism and imprisonment. Instead of dichotomies between repression versus visibility, oppression versus rights, the essays complicate the dominant understanding about politics denouncing how the sexual differences are incorporated by the hegemonic discourses in a way which accelerates the premature death of those considered unentitled for liberal rights.

Queer necropolitics is a tool that makes sense for the co-presence of symbolic life and death, manifested in the cleavage between rich and poor, valuable and pathological, queer subject invited to life and queer subject marked for death.

The distinction between war and peace is dissolved in the places of banalisation of death in zones of abandonment that accompanies also liberal democratic regimes, such as the mass incarceration of black people in the USA.

The queer necro politics is, this, a point of departure that underpin and sustain a range of unequal regimes of living and death, the authors contend also that the use of this term and enrich the vocabulary of queer experiences.

The authors point out that the queer necropolitics manifests under different forms, in some the violence brutality stays imperceptible due to banalisation so the deaths are ungrieved, while some others there are public rituals of mourning, others tackle regimes of captivity and technologies of control over multiple borders in order to exhaust the target subjectivities and populations.

Thus, queer necropolitics emerge as metaphor-concept that shed some light and make connections about different forms of killing and letting die, mundane or spectacular, while radically reimagine and map different meanings of queer as category of analysis and critiques.

## **CHAPTER II – ON A DISCUSSION ABOUT HOMOPHOBIA IN CONTEMPORARY RUSSIA**

In the previous chapter I outlined the theoretical framework and concepts which serve as my foundation to analyse homophobia in contemporary Russia. In this chapter I engage in a discussion about contemporary homophobia in Russia with some authors that are widely cited in this topic.

There is a plethora of approaches to understand the phenomenon of homophobia in Russia. Cai Wilkson sees it in the realm of Human Rights and a Russia attempt to subvert the Western application of Human Rights, Dan Haley also acknowledges the subaltern condition of Russia regarding Eurocentric order as foundation of homophobia and the particularity of Russian history that shaped this phenomenon, Alexander Kondakov analyses what are the strategies of homophobia and anti-homophobia in public discourse and Valerie Sperling mobilises the concept of gender norms to explain sexist and homophobic attitudes in Russia.

These authors have in common that they do not see homophobia an exclusive or unique feature of Russian regime, but they evaluate what are the particularities of this empirical case.

Cai Wilkson in her article “Putting Traditional Values into Practice: The Rise and Contestation of Anti-Homopropaganda Laws in Russia” (2014) offers an analysis for the main motivations that involved the Duma debates on the approval of the so-called Anti-gay propaganda bill of 2013 and the international and national responses to this.

According to her this anti-gay propaganda law can be perceived as a Russian attempt to relativize the Human Rights and to extend the notion of sovereign democracy into the realm of Human Rights as a reaction to international criticism and a position to challenge the US and the EU.

Russia does not deny the core assumptions of the Eurocentric Human Rights, instead it aims to subvert the notions of Human Rights by offering its own interpretation of the norms. This movement can be seen in Russian participation in different international fora advocating that LGBT rights cannot be Human Rights because it conflicts with traditional values. Between 2009 and 2013 Russia managed to approve 3 resolutions within the UN Human’s Right Council legitimising traditional values of mankind as basis for norms of Human Rights.

Wilkson denounces that the logic of moral sovereignty employed by Russia - in which Russia claims that the States have the right to interpret Human Rights according to the local understandings and values – can be pose dangerous to the universal applicability of Human Rights and the defence of citizenship.

Russian logic on homophobia is “prohibiting the sin, not the sinner”, to be a LGBT per se is not a crime provided that this group does not transgress the social order in public. This practise to reframe the role of the State in the maintenance of the Human Rights can lead to a serious relativization in which vulnerable social groups are not defended on basis of their human condition, but on merits of their individual behaviour and it places the Human Rights as contingent.

Wilkson also labels Putin regime as populist, the use of homophobia as a proxy for traditional values places homophobia as a threat to the sovereignty and therefore to Russian identity itself. The stimulation of moral panic and the discourse of homosexuality as a source of moral corruption finds echo in the anxieties of Russian population with demographic decline and the position of the country in the post-cold war world.

In this context, she acknowledges the role of homophobia as Slavophile political shorthand for national identity and traditional values. Proponent of the law in Saint Petersburg, Vitaly Milonov, explained in an interview for St Petersburg Times in March 2012 that what is good for Europe is not necessarily good for Russia, referring to LGBT rights.

With 86% of Russians believing they never met a homosexual person, the negative media portrayals on LGBT people and the condemnation of homosexuality by Russian orthodox church, the homosexual was figured on Russian society as an unfamiliar Other, an alien, and therefore sources of panic and anxieties. This panics and anxieties were capitalised by the regime to endorse a greater moral control of privacy and maintenance of the regime.

In the wording of the bill, homosexuality is not directly mentioned, instead is used a broad term “non-traditional sexual relations” and even though homosexuality was not officially banned, Wilkson points that episodes of violence and persecution emerged near the date the bill was approved.

She mentions the Occupy Paedophilia, Occupy Gerontophilia, the cases of the young Vladislav Tornovoi in Volgrad, Oleg Serdyk in Kanchatka, crimes that shocked

the public and authorities due to the extreme cruelty and violence but they were not acknowledged as hate crime or homophobia. Other consequences are the dismissal of people of their position on basis of their sexuality, such the journalist Anton Krasovisky, Oleg Dusanev from TV Channel Kultur, after he came out as homosexual in his facebook page, and polemics involving the state school biology teacher Ilja Kolmanovsky after anonymous complains regarding his sexuality.

As an opposition to LGBT invisibility she mentions the project Children 404 (Diet 404) in social medias such as, Vkontakte and Facebook, in which young LGBTs share their stories of victimization and persecution.

Cai Wilkson, then, frames homophobia in Russia in the realm of normative competition between Russia and the West in which Russia challenges the West by imposing its own view on the conceptualisation and application Human Rights by adding the component of moral sovereignty. While domestically capitalising anxieties and panics of the people for political gain and legitimisation in a populist tactic.

Her analysis informs relevant insights in the mechanisms mobilised by Russia aiming to subvert the Western dominated of Human Rights rendered as universal by offering its own interpretation.

However, Wilkson does not acknowledge the subaltern side of Russia and the foundation of contemporary homophobia as part of the complex dynamics of Russian subaltern position in the international relations.

Wilkson is assertive to argue that Russia perceives that equating Western notions of Human Rights with universal applicability can pose a problem of sovereignty, nevertheless, the greater picture is missing when subalternity of Russia is excluded from the formula as the roots for this attempt to subvert Human Rights.

On Bhabha's account, these attempts of Russia to relativise Human Rights can be perceived as the hybrid postcolonial complex interplay of mimicry and subversion, Russia has learnt the language of the Master not refusing the existence of Human Rights but claiming its right to apply it in a different way.

The historian Dan Haley in his very insightful book "Russian Homophobia From Stalin to Sochi" (2017) accounts a history of homophobia in contemporary Russia through nine cases. For the author contemporary homophobia has roots in the unique historical experience of revolution, political terror, and wars since 1917.

For the author contemporary homophobia has origins in the Gulag, the visibility of queer in Soviet cities after Stalin's death and the political battles of 1991 if LGBTs should be entitled of rights or not. Haley also launches an analysis on the memorylessness of the LGBTs and the obstacles they find to write their own history.

The focus of analysis carried by Haley is different from the one in this thesis, he searches for the origins of homophobia in the internal dynamics of Russian historic experience, while in the thesis I am more interested in finding homophobia in the international relations interactions and the contemporary populism that shapes Putin's political strategy rather than in the particularities of historical development of Russia.

Despite of different field of interest, in many aspects the findings of Dan Haley echoes theoretical framework chosen for this thesis, he does acknowledges the subalternity of Russia regarding Europe as an important source for contemporary homophobia and, especially in the part III of his book, he serves of a postcolonial wisdom to problematize the political strategies of Russian LGBT activists using Europe as a roadmap and he defends a sort of "native" historiography of Russian LGBTs as mean of empowerment and political tool for rights.

Harley argues that homophobia in Russia was shaped by experiences anterior to the 1917 revolution, by modernisation process of Russia following European model, relations with Europe, religious heritage and the XXth century politics.

One of the first written law that made clear reference of homosexuality as a crime is traced back by Europeanization efforts carried by the tsar Peter the Great in XVIIIth century banning sodomy in the army and the navy in the military code of 1716.

Nicholas I expanded the ban on sodomy to civilians in 1835 and this ban would remain until 20's. Siberia remained the place of exile of homosexuals during the XIXth until the penalty was replaced in the 1900's by prison instead of exile.

The modernisation process of XIX century in Russia, the same language of sinfulness, pathology and crime operated to construct homophobia in Russia, in an analogous manner, as the homosexual was figured in the discourse through pathologisation by the Victorians in England, as analysed by Foucault in History of Sexuality.

By these accounts provided by Haley, despite of presented as native element of Russian culture by the regime, homophobia in Russia was constructed in a copy process of the West, borrowing the same language of XIXth century psychiatry.

The revolution of 1917 and subsequent civil war 1918-1921 launched an intense cultural war between the Bolsheviks and the Russian Orthodox Church. The attack on the church only ceased with disintegration of the Soviet Union in 90's. For this reason, argues Haley, unlike in the West, where Christian church gradually accepted secular medical speeches, the church in Russia stayed for an extended period isolated from societal debates.

The recent embrace of the Russian orthodox Church to homophobia is a sign of ages of suspicious about sexualities. In the two first Putin's there is a movement of re-clerification of the State, with the Russian Orthodox Church being called to shape social policies and represent Russia abroad.

Homosexuality was banned and legalised along the XXth century in Russia. It is to be noticed that the law exclusively banned male homosexuality, while female homosexuality could be subject of medical correction and societal disapproval, it was not figured as a crime.

This figuration of male homosexuality in the criminal codes of Soviet Union, confirms Cynthia Weber's method that with base on Foucault homosexuality was figured in the discourse as a male figure.

After Nicholas I law in 1835 banning homosexuality in Russia, Bolsheviks made it legal again in the 1922-23 penal code reform, together with legalisation of abortion, secularisation of marriage, divorce was allowed and the status the women in the family and public life was equated to the man. On basis of secular values and antagonization to Church- until then considered the greatest enemy of communism.

However, under leadership of Stalin male homosexuality is banned again in 1932-33. In 1932 Stalin introduced the modern ostensive police patrol, with control of passports and under this new anti-sodomy law police checks on homosexual networks became frequent. In the 50's after death of Stalin in 1953, in the reforms on the ideology and reduction of political terror, legislators review the ban on male homosexuality but decide to keep it.

Between 60's and 80's LGBTs in Soviet Russia experience a brief period of flourishing. By this time most of Soviet people in Russia lived in urban areas in private housings, sex outside the marriage became more common. In this period urban LGBTs could experience relative freedom, even though male homosexuality was still illegal and female homosexuality subjection of medical correction.

In the 80's, Russian LGBTs aware of debates in the West with the beginning of AIDS crisis, feminism, gay liberation, tried to translate these debates into the Soviet society. More than just translate western debates, Russians LGBTs managed to make "Soviet Made" intellectual debate and social movement in Russia.

In the 90's with the disintegration of Soviet Union brought some LGBT visibility, sex could be spoken about in public discourses, local activists organised public debates and LGBT magazines flourished in this period. In 1993 Boris Yeltsin, more on the result of his in an anti-communist movement than as result of the activism, makes homosexuality legal again.

However, the economic crisis brought by market economy transition, lack of faith in western model of democracy, left the sexual debate aside. In 2011-2012 conservative turn under Putin leadership it would start a new wave of homophobia in Russia.

In this campaign for his third presidential term, after the fall down of his popularity with the protests of 2011-2012, religion and nationalism, consequently homophobia are mobilized for the recovery of Putin's popularity.

The first two Putin's presidential terms were marked by anxious concerning demographic decline in Russia and by gender gap in the population, more females than males, which could pose a potential problem to military contingent.

The conservative forces, however, involved in the debate about the demographic problem excluded the participation of the heterosexual man in the problem, such as male parental abandonment, instead the problematic elements were blamed to homosexuals, single mothers and youth sexuality.

In 2002 there was extensive debates at federal Duma with some conservative factions aiming to bring back Stalinist notions of moral control and homophobia. A proposed bill draft named "On Defence of Morality" sponsored by then Communist, Svetlana Goriacheva head of Duma Committee on Women, Family and Youth Affairs, the draft bill proposed a range of measures aimed to young people that had to protected from early sexuality.

Even though the bill was not approved it mobilized different conservative factions of Duma, each one emphasising a different aspect. Putin for his turn aimed a politics for youth not on a Western model of individual citizenship, but youth was seen as a State source that had to be managed for the gain of the State.



Goriacheva in order to continue her work on the bill changed her senior position in the Communist Party, to join Kremlin backed A Just Russian Party, so she could hold her position as head of Duma Committee on Women, Family and Youth Affairs.

The language of Goriacheva, due to her communist past, was secular and sociological, she aimed to justify her views about sexuality on medical grounds rather than religious. For that task she mobilised Soviet-trained psychiatrists to back her position such as Dr Viktor Ostroglazov. In his there is nothing natural and necessary about sexuality among teenagers, teenager sexuality is source of perversion and potential homosexuality.

Gennady Raikov, from small pro-Kremlin faction People's Deputies. gained media attention proposing a bill to restore 1934 Stalinist ban on homosexuality, extend the ban on the lesbians as well and turn masturbation into a criminal offence.

Even the most conservative factions of Russian politics were not able to accept such absurd bill proposed by Raikov, however these Duma debates were useful for the conservative factions to sophisticate their political language. Putin was not willing to abandon International Human Right treaties signed by Russia with an explicit ban on homosexuality and there was no appetite for persecution.

So, the new strategy consisted of instead of attacking LGBTs directly, attack the LGBT visibility. Before the approval of federal bill on anti-gay propaganda in 2013, earlier regional experiences worked as a laboratory for improvement of legal and political rhetoric.

In 2006, Riazan oblast' approves a local anti-gay propaganda law, in 2009 two LGBT activists are arrested on basis of this law, Irina Feodov and Nicolai Barev. In 2011 it's the turn of Arkhangelsk Oblast' approves its own anti-gay law. The call for a federal anti-gay propaganda came from Novosibirsk. The physic Sergei Dorofeev and Elena Muzilina from regional Novosibirsk Duma call for a federal law on anti-gay propaganda.

Finally, on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2013 Federal Duma approved for 388 votes the legal text of anti-gay propaganda bill. From the original text sexual orientation was changed by "practices of non-traditional sex". The final text is approved 11<sup>th</sup> June and sanctioned by Putin in the same month.

Dan Healey in the final part of his book echoes Morozov (2015) pointing out that Russian peripheral resentment plays a key role in the shaping of homophobia. He does not use the label subaltern empire, and this is not the main focus of his analysis, but he argues, Russia was the orientalised Other of Europe. Sitting somewhere between the metropolis and the colony in a colonial relation as described by Chakrabarty. Russia's position fits the "Waiting Room" of the history, pointed by Chakrabarty, in which Russia awaits to achieve the same stage of development of Europe.

In a movement of being "more royalist than the king" Russia presents itself as the real guardian of European values, now decadent in the actual Europe. According to Healey, Russia does not want to sit in the waiting room of history any longer, homophobia emerges as part of the peripheral resentment of Russia in Post-Cold War world.

On a critique of construction of LGBT memory and LGBT movement for rights Dan Healey echoes Cynthia Weber's critiques on figuration of the normal homosexual in the International Relations epitomised by Hillary Clinton's speech of Gays Right as Human Rights.

Europe and the USA, he contends, like to see themselves as the latest stage of development in a progressive concept of temporarily. This includes the championship of LGBT rights. These are main motives that the anti-gay propaganda bill shocks the Western notion of progressive temporarily, especially considering that Russians are white and therefore, according to the West, should sit in the same line of progress.

However, Healey warns that the particular European experience should not be taken as roadmap for the other cases. He makes a vital invitation for historians and Russian LGBT activists: the construction of a native Russian LGBT memory.

While in the West the memory of LGBT persecution is celebrated and also there are historical sources available for research, there is a gap in Russia. In 1985 the then president of Germany Richard Von Weizsaecker acknowledged for the first time the homosexual victims of holocaust. In the 90's this had become a common-place.

Russian, on the other hands, has very few archival materials available for historical research on the LGBT past. The state has released very few materials concerning LGBT persecution under Stalin anti-sodomy law, the persecution on LGBT during Stalin era barely participates of mainstream memories of persecution.

Healey mentions important attempts to construct a LGBT memory in Russia. The importance of this memory is not limited to the labour of historians, local Russians LGBTs need these memories to improve their political strategy.

The Memorial Society acknowledged the links between Stalinism and homosexual persecution. In 2016 in a conference in Saint Petersburg, feminist historians Irina Roldugina spoke LGBT persecution in Soviet Union based on documental research of FSB.

The Moscow Lesbian and Gay Archives curated by Elena Gusiatskaya, a retired scholar expert in French literature, served as base to flourish free intellectual network on LGBT issues, such as the magazine *Ostrov*.

In 2013 Irina Rodulgina and Nadia Plugian produced a booklet Published in Kivirfest in Saint Petesburg with an open call to include queer in the history.

One important attempt of reconstruction of LGBT memory came from Minsk in 2015, organised by curator Darya Treiden. In May 2015 to celebrate the international day of fight against homophobia, lesbophobia and transphobia local activists created the movement “We Exist” (My Est’): the unstraght museum. They recollected alternative, but not less real, memories of past LGBT through magazines, LGBT erotic albums and leaflets that circulated in secret during Soviet Times.

According to Darya Treiden, the queer history cannot be spoken in by the normative frameworks, because it is excluded from this framework. Instead, images, feelings, impressions can work as alternative historical sources.

As mentioned before, the conservative factions of Russia sophisticated their language on homophobia in years 2000’s by attacking LGBT visibility instead of directing persecuting LGBT population. These efforts to make LGBTs invisible also pose a problem to the construction of LGBT memory.

As example, Healey mentions the 2013 debates in the Ministry of Culture about a biography of Tchaikovsky if his homosexuality should be or not included in his biography. Haley also presents a comparison between the statue of Allan Turning in Manchester, UK, where it can be read “victim of prejudice” and the statue of Soviet homosexual musician Vadim Kozin unveiled in 2013 in Magadan. The homosexuality of Kozin was omitted from his official biography.

Healey contends that the Western criticism on Russia anti-gay laws in 2013-2014 came from a memoryless of their own homophobic past and the position of Russia

regarding Europe. The amnesia of the West about their own homophobic past cannot understand that Russia can have its own time to accept deviant sexualities, just like the West also took time to recognise them.

The accounts of Healey are important to acknowledge the historical origin of homophobia in Russia as precisely an effort of modernising Russia on behalf of Europe initialised by Peter the Great.

Healey however does not interpret Russian homophobia as an attempt to subvert the teleological developmental notion of temporality where the West sees itself as the final point of evolution. He suggests that the West lack of memory about their own homophobic past results in a less sympathetic position with Russia, as he argues West needs to understand Russia needs “its own time” to overcome homophobia, just like the Western needed. I agree to this statement to a certain extend.

I agree to extend that Western experience to achieve a “post-homophobic” society should not be taken as pre-defined road to followed, once the Western experience cannot always be applied to local contexts. However, I contend that main foundation of Russian homophobia is not only need of more time to “catch up” with the West, but the more subaltern Russia feels, the more imperial side if manifested through Western opposition. When it comes to chronological narrative, the imperial side teased by subalternity is the aim to present itself as the real Master, homophobia as revealing notion that Russia is the one in the final line of evolution resisting to the decadence that destroyed the Western trajectory of evolution.

Alexander Kondakov in his article “Resisting the Silence: The Use of Tolerance and Equality Arguments by Gay and Lesbian Activist Groups in Russia” (2013) juxtaposes the two discursive flows that deal with the homosexual subject in Russia: the government and LGBT activists. He also points out that current homophobic strategy in Russia is not the criminalization of homosexuality or psychiatric correction, it is the silence – “silence seems to be brought in action when prohibition cannot be enforced” (P.404).

Kondakov offers a discourse analysis of Russian laws texts concerning homosexuality in a historical trajectory in research for how the homosexual was figured in Russian discourse and what was the vocabulary that constructed the homosexual figure in the discourse.

And then in a further section he analyses the discourse of LGBT activist representatives in Russia to map the different strategies adopted by them to deal with the invisibilisation promoted by the government.

Kondakov contends that there was a shift in the vocabulary figurating the homosexual in legal discourse from Ivan the Terrible 1511 Council of a Hundred Chapters (Stroglavy Sabor) enacting prohibition of the sin of sodomy among the members of the clergy and Peter the Great 1711 ban on *muzhelovzhstvovat* in the army through his Military Codes.

According to the author, the text Ivan's 1511 Stroglavy Sabor was marked by strong biblical language and the meaning of sin of sodomy was broader than just homosexual intercourse. It could include masturbation and adultery as part of sodomy.

In Peter the Great's Military codes it emerged the word *muzhelovzhstvovat* which specifically referred to male homosexual intercourse, despite of a shift to a secular European language in the Codes, Kondakov argues that religious connotation was not gone, once the word "muzhelovzhstvovat" can be found in ancient Russian biblical texts referring to the sin of homosexual intercourse.

The new legal ban on homosexuality in Stalin's 1934 clause 154a prescribing five years of jail for homosexuality represented an effort to figure the typical soviet man as heterosexual and the homosexual as an alien class. This period is also highly marked by erasure of boundaries between private and public life, which the State aimed to have more control.

The Soviet psychiatry Marxim Gorky introduced in the medical discourse the new word *gomoseksualizm* which figures in the Big Soviet Encyclopaedia as a pathology. Hence, Kondakov defends that Soviet legislations and anti-religious propaganda managed to secularise the figure of *muzhelovzhstvo* by borrowing it from religion and inserting it in their own normative. Retaining, however, the religious connotation.

The first LGBT activism emerged in Russia in the 90's, two remarkable examples are NGO Krilija and Libertarian Party, their first direct goal was the legalisation of homosexuality.

Kondakov agrees with Dan Haley that the reasons that led Boris Yeltsin to decriminalise homosexuality are unclear and they were more a result of a decision coming from above than a product of the rising LGBT movement.

Despite of not being a direct product of activism, the emerging LGBT activism in the 90's engaged to an intense social debate and struggle for incorporation of LGBT in the cultural and public domain. These activists wanted new vocabulary to refer to themselves outside the penal and the medical scope. The LGBT vocabulary saw a moment of flourishing in this period with new words being incorporated such as gay, *goluboy*.

After the legalisation of homosexuality in 1993, the nascent Russian LGBT activism experienced a moment of cooling down by the end of 90's, most of the organisations left political activism and turned into gay business, such as night clubs, dating websites, tourism specialised in LGBT tourists, etc.

There were two remarkable exceptions mentioned by Kondakov, the Triangle organisation which tried to undertake an interregional LGBT organisation, gathering activists from different regions of Russia, but the initiative failed due to lack of budget and internal conflict among the member. The second exception was Lesbian and Gay Archives also mentioned by Dan Haley, that had a short but productive life as an intellectual network for production of LGBT thoughts and activism.

These organisations from late 90's was important as an attempt to "create" the homosexual in the Post-Soviet Russia outside the medical and legal realm once Russian government towards homosexuality along the history was one of silencing and invisibilisation. The homosexual only figured in the government discourse through the penal codes and psychiatric literature.

By 2005 onwards a second wave of LGBT activism emerged in Russia. This second wave is oriented towards Human Rights rhetoric.

With reference on Wendy Brown, Kondakov contends that homophobia in Russian discourse governmentality take two forms: the unsaid and the articulated part, one that flows from silence and other that goes together with the articulated part of the discourse. Silence organises the marginalised subject and the enunciative part shapes the marginalisation of these subjects.

Due to the difficulty of analysing the unsaid, Kondakov takes three analytical actions, by dividing the unsaid in three different domains: sub-discourse, lack and the unspeakable.

The sub-discourse is meant to be recognised and hence it is part of the normative order shaping what is left unsaid. Two meaningful examples offered are the

legalisation of homosexuality promoted by Yeltsin by modifying the penal code 121. The section 121.1 banning male homosexuality was excluded, however the section 121.2 of the law remaining, which regulates about homosexual rape. By categorising heterosexual and homosexual rape as different crimes in the law, homosexuality is maintained with an aura of illegality, despite of no formal prohibition and it is implied that homosexuality can never be equated to heterosexuality.

The second example came when Russia following the recommendations of World Health Organization in 1999 accepted to lift homosexuality from pathological categorisation but hastened a clinic manual entitled “Models of Diagnosis and Treatment of Mental and Behavioural Illness” approved by Russian Ministry of Health.

In this manual the criteria for sexual normality includes heterosexuality, paired relation among others. Therefore, homosexuality despite of legal and no more classified as a mental pathology still is not acknowledged as normal in the Russian medical register.

As an example of “lack” as analytical part of the unarticulated discourse, Kondakov examples with Russian Family law which does not mention any moment the LGBT subject but recognises only a union between a man and a woman as a family unit and states that only man and a woman can register for marriage.

The unspeakable realm are the ideas that are relevant but can be known only in a different context. Such as it is found in the Anti-Discrimination law. In this law there is no reference to LGBT, instead the law uses the broad term “social group” without specifying who could qualify as social group.

In 2007 LGBT activists tried to make the court interpret the LGBTs as social group, for that they sued the leader of Russian Muslim for discrimination. However, the court denied proceeding. Ombudsman in Russia does not include LGBT complaints in their report.

The articulated part of Russian government discourse homosexuality is shaped by hidden homophobia. Against that the LGBT organisations take two different strategies of inclusion and how to deal with silencing: conformism and resistance.

Kondakov, then, offers a discursive mapping of LGBT activism dividing them into two groups according to their political strategy and discourse: the ones who advocate for tolerance and take conformist attitude regarding the silencing by the government and usually have legal status and registration and the ones who advocate for

equality and take resistance as political attitude and usually lack legal recognition. This classification is made based on their strategy for same-sex marriage in Russia

In the first group he mentions 8 organisations, most of them based in Saint Petersburg: Vykhod (Coming Out, Saint Petersburg), Gender L (Saint Petersburg), Krug-Karelia (Petrozavodsk, Karelia Republic), Rakus (Arkhangelsk), Rainbow Syndrome (Rostov na Donu), Krilija(Saint Petersburg) LGBT Rights (interregional), LGBT Network (interregional).

Among them four are registered by authorities, Vykhod, Rakus, Krilija and Krug-Karelia. In order to illustrate the point Kondarov analyses the booklet “Family Rights of Gays and Lesbians in Russia released by LGBT Network.

This manual instructs gays and lesbians how to register their civil partnership within civil registration offices in an undercover way by devising written agreements that resemble a heterosexual marriage.

Hence, the strategy of this group is to de-sexualise marriage and set it as a contract between two people regardless of their gender or sexuality.

Vykhod is very active, besides many cultural events, they offer a hotline with psychological and legal services for LGBT population.

The second group mentioned includes 4 organisations: GayRussia(Moscow), Equality(Saint Petersburg), Marriage Equality (Saint Petersburg), Ural Positive (Perm and Yekaterinburg)

This group do not tend to create organisations or offer services, once their unique concern is public activism and challenge Russian legislation. Among them Moscow based GayRussia and Saint Petersburg based Equality are very active ones. GayRussia is responsible for the LGBT parade organisation in Moscow, while Equality also promotes the parade in Saint Petersburg. Ural Positive deals with assistance to HIV positive people and activism for better health service on this issue in the Ural region.

GayRussia adopts as strategy to travel to places in Russia where they perceive discrimination against LGBTs and if they are stopped by police they sue the State in the court. The purpose of that is to force a legal precedent. Equality also follows this strategy.

This group also encourages gays and lesbians to attempt to try to register their marriage in civil offices and take the case to a court after refusal or marry abroad and them try to have their marriage recognised in Russia as a mean to force a legal precedent or at least force the government to speak about the unspeakable.



To this group the sexuality and the gender of the parts getting married matters since this is precisely what is silenced by government.

The main contribution of Kondakov therefore is to reveal the discursive strategies adopted by the Federal government of Russia operationalised homophobia. The main strategy does not consist in a frontal confrontation and open persecution but invisibilisation but excluding at maximum any possibility of figuration of the homosexual in legal texts in the sense of negating their existence as a citizen subject.

Kondakov has a different than Dan Harley when it comes to an activist strategy. While Harley suggests that local Russian LGBT movement should seek for a native memory of their own persecution through collection of archives that could be used for historical labour and also political empowerment, Kondakov suggests that LGBT strategy for political gain should be to force visibility even when it comes in negative aspects.

A good illustration of this difference is their positions regarding LGBT parade. Whereas Haley suggests they bring more negative results than gains because Russian society is not ready yet for them because of recent Soviet legacy leading the parades to turn into unnecessary violence, Kondakov celebrates them as an attempt to break the invisibility and forces to open precedents.

Valerie Sperling in her “Sex Politics and Putin: Political Legitimacy in Russia” (2014) has as core argument that gender norms are used in Russia as a tool of political legitimisation. Homophobia derives from the use of these gender norms.

Sperling contends that the use of gender norms as a tool for political legitimisation is a common feature in different regimes, autocratic or democratic, and in various locations once they derived from patriarchy and misogyny ubiquitous in different political environments and historical and cultural contexts.

The use of gender norms is also due to its accessibility and resonance in society, the people can easily legitimise a norm that sounds familiar to them, that is why Sperling argues that the mobilisation of public misogyny and homophobia as a tool for political legitimisation also depends on the strength of feminist movement in the society.

There is a plethora of regional, country-level and global types of masculine hegemony. And a vast variety of application of gender norms as a mean of authority-building, therefore, it leads to believe that an attempt to craft a universal theory to explain

the operationalisation of gender norms and homophobia in political arena is not the best method. Instead, Sperling offers an in-depth analysis of the empirical case of Russia.

In her analysis, then, Sperling does not set homophobia as a cause of uniqueness feature of Russia, but she analyses the particularity of the Russian case.

As a method to explain why the use of gender norms blossomed in Putin's era, which it is widely used by both supporters and opponents of the regime, she uses the method of multiple opportunity structure model. There are four overlapping structure model opportunities in Putin era Russia that allowed the blossoming of gender norms in politics: political, economic, historical-political and cultural.

As a political structure opportunity there is a lack of a consistent feminist (and also LGBT) movement wide-spread in Russian society to oppose that. However, the existence of women's movement is not always enough to prevent measures against sexism in the political realm.

As an example, Sperling mentions that the USA despite of relative strength of feminist movement in its history could not prevent sexism in politics, for an instance Clarence Thomas nominated for the US Supreme Court after his alleged sexual harassment Anita Hill revealed in 1991.

However, the existence of strong women's movement can turn sexism unacceptable by big part of society. Feminist reputation in a society is an important factor to determine the use of gender norms.

In the Russian case feminism was demonized by decades by the Communist Party of Soviet Union regarded as a bourgeois ideology, besides the Soviet Union despite of rhetoric for equality had very well-defined role for genders, with women usually having double labour of paid work and household care. For that reason, a solid feminist movement could not emerge in Soviet period and this difficulty extended to post-Soviet Russia in the 90's.

As a result, in a survey conducted in 2001, Sperling shows, only 19% of Russian respondents knew the word feminism, 27% had heard about it and 41% had never heard about it before.

Feminism has a very negative image in contemporary Russia, even the local feminist activists in Russia avoid the feminist label due to negative connotation. In the Russian common-sense feminists are perceived as man hater or lesbians. The negative

reputation of feminism increased after media hysteria with Pussy Riot, associated with feminism.

Current government embraced a traditionalist view on genders. The anxious for of government with natality decline also contributed to hostilisation of feminism, once this movement defends reproductive rights and the right of women to choose not to be a mother. The return of Russian Orthodox Church to political sphere in Post-Soviet Russia fixed feminism as a threat to the family and to the nation.

According to a Russian feminist interviewed by Sperling, Polina Zaslavskaya, Putin's regime is vertical and therefore the demand for horizontal equality in feminism is perceived a threat. According to another feminist interviewed Zhenia Otto, salary equality would turn woman more expensive in the market and the government wants to increase natality without increasing life standards.

The second element of opportunity structure is the economy. In the market economy transition Russia was flowed with Western advertisement of glamour. The western glamour advertised was very sexualised and brought new models of masculinity and femininity, the Glossy Magazine in Russia was one of biggest diffusor of this new sexualised models.

The female market of clothes turned the somewhat puritan Soviet style into a more risqué one. For one side this new femininity could be an opportunity for more assertiveness and freedom of choice. Magazines such as Glossy might have empowered women, but this empowerment was surrendered by feelings of inadequacy.

Masculinity was also subject of change in this economic shift. In this new model of sexualised glamour, a successful masculinity derives from a financial success. However, the crisis in the 90's led masculinity to a crisis.

The sexualisation of economy also led this standard to the political realm. In this image-making politician also became sexualised product for consumption. Putin served of this new model mixing elements of the Russian ressignified peasant (muzhik) and western glamorous male.

A survey conducted in the first year of Putin in office found out that 3,500 out of 5,000 Russian women found Putin to be "the sexiest man in Russia".

In 2007 the word glamour won the award of Word of the Year. The middle class potential supporter of Putin regime, had to be ideologically constructed, as the proletariat was ideologically constructed as supporter of the Soviet regime. Hence, the

middle class was constructed under the sexualised glamour. Sperling mentions that it was not “homo glamuricus” but “hetero glamuricus” once this glamour had very defined and separated models of masculinity and femininity.

The political history structure opportunity is the component that explains how historical evolution in politics shaped the present. In this context, in the transition sex was started gradually entering the public discourse in Russia and capitalised by politicians.

Sperling mentions the politicians a well-known figure in 90's Vladimir Zhrinovskij from LDPR party, who brought sex into politics in a vulgar way. And the use of sex scandals as political strategy against opponents, as it started with Yeltsin against General Attorney Yuriy Skuratov.

The cultural components of structural opportunity are the traditional role gender and misogyny widely spread in Russia, which could be easily mobilised and legitimised as authority-building.

In this sense, Sperling acknowledges that at some extent Russia occupies a peripheral position regarding the international system, as its incorporation to market economy was marked by westernised models of sexualised glamour, which was readily used by politicians in their favour.

Sperling also discusses about the figure of the Russian peasant (muzhik) in the public discourse. With reference on the historian Esther Kingstom Mann, she assesses that the muzhik was rendered as counterrevolutionary in Soviet Union, the opposite of the praised urban worker. The feminine counterpart, the baba also had a pejorative connotation as narrow-minded woman.

The figure of muzhik, though, was ressignified in Post-Soviet period to shape the new model of hegemonic masculinity in Russia in opposition to the liberal feminine Western man. The muzhik is a patriot, prefers the local culture, defends the motherland and rejects the political correctness. For the muzhik sexism and homophobia are not perceived as a fault, but as a characteristic trait. The baba, on the other hand, kept the pejorative connotation.

Putin served himself with the image of muzhik masculinity, by the use of tough language and his shirtless public appearance.

The view of the muzhik by Sperling echoes the one in Morozov, for whom the muzhik is an empty spot filled with anti-western sentiment, for Sperling the muzhik is nothing more than an anti-Western masculinity.

Despite of the attempt to resignify the figure of muzhik in order to forge an anti-Western masculine model and failed attempt to give native Russian contours to this model, through the analysis of Sperling's work its clear the peripheral condition in which the transition to market economy was conducted in Russia.

The glamorous capitalist models of masculinity and femininity were dictated by the Western normative culture, local Russian magazines only had the role to promote these imported models. The fact that Russian population and even the government felt compelled to adopt follow these roles is a clear sign of Russian subalternity.

Sperling analysis focus more on the gender question than in homophobia in particular, homophobia is seen as a subproblem of gender question in Sperling's account. I do agree with the argument of Russian politics has a blossoming soil for the use gender norms as a strategy tool political legitimation and authority building, however I contend that only the structural opportunities model still does not cover the whole origins why Russian politics so fertile soil for the blossoming of gender norms.

Sperling does acknowledge at some extend the international interplays that lead to this situation in Russia, such as the already mentioned sexualisation of economy which was led by Western imports dictate of market economy transition, the participation of Russian Orthodox Church back to the political scenario opposing feminism, which is also a trait of traditional Western Christian churches and the incorporation of muzhik model of masculinity as an attempt to balance the Western glamorous model of masculinity rendered intentionally in the Russian discourse as feminine.

I also contend that Soviet political culture legacy of demonization of feminism is not enough to explain. South of Europe, for example Portugal, Spain, Italy also went through a political culture of demonization of feminism and rigid gender roles under catholic autocratic regimes that lasted almost three quarters of XXth century however they quickly incorporated the gender debates once the regime changed.

Political culture has an impact, but I argue that in the Russian case the main source of resistance comes from the imperial legacy of Russia and ambiguous position of Russia regarding Europe. While Portugal, Spain and Italy once changed the regime undergone a series of reforms to "catch up" themselves back to their unquestionable rightful place in Europe, Russia's ambiguous position regarding Europe left the country with no horizon to look for.

As already widely discussed in this thesis Russia and Europe relations since Tsarist times had been a relation of mutual othering and the fact that Soviet Union was a superpower with similar status as the hegemon USA during the Cold War made it more difficult for Russia to simply embrace and incorporate the whole setting of European normative order in a subaltern position of submissive assimilation.

## CHAPTER III – THE EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

In this chapter I analyse the main homophobic discourses in Russia in the last fifteen years, especially after the protests of 2011-2012 when the regime became more assertive. It is important to remark that I do not make a reification between institutional homophobia endorsed by the government or homophobic attitudes with more or less independent popular initiatives.

In this discourse analysis I aim to evaluate how homophobic is Russia, what are the rhetorical justifications for homophobia and how the homosexual is figured in the Russian public discourse using the concepts of figuration of the homosexual in international relations discussed by Cynthia Weber.

I argue that Russia cannot justify homophobia outside the Eurocentric language to the point that Russia sees itself as the guardian of real European values now decadent in the actual Europe because perversion. This perversion on the move from West to East threatens Russia sovereignty, once the perverse sovereign man of Europe can corrupt the normal sovereign man of Russia as a corresponding sovereign state.

By fearing a threat to its sovereign by the West, Russia also acknowledges its subaltern position, it is the West that can pervert Russia, not the other way around, therefore there is a highly blatant colonial resentment in Russian homophobic discourse. Homosexuality is taken as a trope that represents the West, this colonial resentment leads to an aggressive opposition.

My empirical sources derive from Human Right Watch reports, press releases both Russian and international and social media posts, twitter, vkontakte and facebook.

The case of Chechenia concentration camps due to its relevance and particularities deserve its own section. I use the concept of necropolitics discussed by Achivelle Mbembe in his insightful article “Necropolitics” (2003) and revisited by Jin Haritaworn, Adi Kunstman and Silvia Posocco in their collection “Queer Necropolitics” adding the queer element to the concept of Mbembe discussed in the chapter I.

The empirical sources for Chechnya persecution on LGBT population that emerged in the mass media in 2016 is derived from a detailed report conducted by Russian LGBT Network and Novaya Gazeta published in 2017 and updated in 2018. The report contains important interview and testimonials of survivals from the so called gay concentration camps.

### 3.1 STRAIGHTING RUSSIA

In 2006 for the occasion of 13 years of decriminalisation the then mayor of Moscow Yuri Luzhkov from the ruling party United Russia refused an application to authorise the gay parade scheduled for 27<sup>th</sup> March, the anniversary of decriminalisation, alleging that it outrages society, in particular religious people.<sup>2</sup>

In a meeting in February for a press conference in Berlin for the occasion of M4, meeting of mayors of London, Paris, Berlin and Moscow, Luzhkov insisted in his position that homosexuality is not natural.

The attitude of Luzhkov was not only celebrated by the then Russian patriarch Alexey II, who praised the mayor for protecting the Muscovites against sin, but also by the Vatican's representative in Russia Antonio Mennini and Russian top rabbi, Berl Lazar.<sup>3</sup>

Alexey Pushkov from Central Channel TV, channel run by the mayor Luzhkov, broadcasted a story asserting homosexuals have more limited intellectual capacities than heterosexual people.

In April the same year several hundred protesters ranging from neonazi and nationalist skinhead youngsters to elder orthodox religious attacked an LGBT party, "Open Party", the attacks included physical and moral harassment.

Four years later in 2010, Luzhkov repeated his discourses during a Christmas educational reading in Moscow reaffirming his will to ban permanently any LGBT public demonstration, he said "For several years, Moscow has experience unprecedented pressure to conduct a gay pride parade, which cannot be called anything but a Satanic act. We have prevented such a parade and we will not allow it in the future. Everyone needs to accept that as an axiom. "And more importantly, he advocated for the relativisation of Human Rights, as he added there should be no place for discussion of Human Rights as universal in these cases of moral degradation.

In 2012 Russian legislator Vitaly Milonov, author of the anti-gay law in Saint Petersburg approved on 17<sup>th</sup> March that year, made a speech remarking he is personally offended by LGBT public demonstrations: "I am profoundly against gay parades because

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<sup>2</sup> Available from <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2006/may/24/moscowbansgayprideparade>

<sup>3</sup> Available from [http://www.nbcnews.com/id/12803288/ns/world\\_news-europe/t/gays-russia-face-backlash-plan-protests/#.WvOveYgvzIU](http://www.nbcnews.com/id/12803288/ns/world_news-europe/t/gays-russia-face-backlash-plan-protests/#.WvOveYgvzIU)



I am an Orthodox Christian and the demonstration of the sin of Sodom is repellent to me," he said. "If, God forbid, I happened to see a crowd of those people — like they do in Berlin, I've seen photographs where men with all sorts of dildos are running around seminaked — it's natural that I'd try to take my children aside, so they would not see this perversion."

However, Milonov was careful to not harm the right of Assembly in his speech. As he mentions "But I am a lawmaker, and I don't try to impose my personal and religious beliefs onto anybody," he said. "That's why I have no right to restrict the freedom of assembly, marches and demonstrations, because this freedom is guaranteed by Article 31 of the Constitution."

Despite of this remark, Milonov declared to be working on the law enforcement to warn international singers in concert in Saint Petersburg, in particular the famous pop icon Madonna and the German rock band Rammstein. As he declares "I'll ask prosecutors to evaluate this [concert] and probably take measures against the promoter," Milonov said. "There was an imitation of a homosexual act on stage and a nonimitation of sexual exposure — with a demonstration of male sexual parts. Rammstein is a matter of taste — some like sodomites, some like satanists, some like punks. It's silly to give a legal assessment of tastes. But the problem is that children older than 14 were allowed into the concert. The promoter should have warned people that the concert contained scenes of an erotic nature and restricted admission for children under 16 or maybe even 18, but it wasn't done."

When questioned about if his law of banning gay propaganda in Saint Petersburg would violate Russian international Human Rights agreements, Milonov justified himself pointing out that his law is not unrelated to traditional European values and declared himself to be extremely European. He said, "I am fond of European culture, but I think that new things are emerging in Europe that are negative," he said. "European society emerged thanks to the Christians, to the Christian Democrats. Konrad Adenauer, Ludwig Erhard, Hanns Seidel — they would be horrified to see what values are presented now as the norm."<sup>4</sup>

In April 2012 Dmitry Kiselyov, well known Russian journalist TV presenter, in a discussion about the infamous anti-gay propaganda bill declared that is it not enough.

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<sup>4</sup> Available from <https://themoscowtimes.com/news/national-anti-gay-bill-submitted-to-duma-13667>

He added “I think they should be banned from donating blood or sperm, and if they die in a car crash, their hearts should be burnt or buried in the ground as unsuitable for the continuation of life.”<sup>5</sup>

However, there was a reaction a petition entitled “No Fascism on TV” called for dismissal of Kiselyov and several bloggers called on persecutors to investigate him on basis of laws banning extremism and hate speech.

Kiselyov defended himself saying “It is simply global practice, as followed in the United States, the European Union, Japan, and Arab countries. Practically everywhere except Russia,” he said, citing US regulations that ban donations from men who have had homosexual contact in the past 20 years.”

In an interview granted by Putin to the BBC on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2014, before the occasion of Sochi Olympic Games in the year the anti-gay propaganda law was approved and many LGBT organisations world-wide had called for a boycott, Putin spoke his mind about the anti-gay propaganda law.

“(…) I would like to draw your attention that in fact in Russia, unlike in one third of the world’s countries being gay is not a crime. In seventeen countries it is criminalized and in seven of those countries they have death penalty (..) in muslim countries the law is even tougher” when asked about the Russian orthodox church Putin replies “in the law the church is separated from the State and has the right to its own point of view. I would like to point out that most of the traditional world religions agree on this topic”<sup>6</sup>

In this extract of interview Putin makes very explicit references to the Eurocentric vocabulary such as the secular State, religious tolerance, rule of law, and so on. There is rather conciliatory tone in which Putin compares Russia to other countries-whose “laws are even tougher” and align the Russian Orthodox Church to other main religions in the world to point that Russia is not so distant of the West and not standing alone in the world.

Both Putin and Kiselyov seek for legitimation by comparing Russia to other countries, in a sign that they cannot simply ignore the international community despite of

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<sup>5</sup> Available from <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/russia/10240762/Russian-journalist-Dmitry-Kiselyov-defends-homophobic-comments-in-TV-debate.html>

<sup>6</sup> Available from <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-25785161>

Russia's constant effort within international fora for more emphasis on sovereignty and they do not want to see Russia isolated.

In October 2012, Anatoly Artukh from the People's Council accused a dairy product of Ppspi Co of subliminal gay propaganda because of a rainbow draw in the box of milk.<sup>7</sup>

The denounces of Artukh led State persecutors to analyse if the milk label indeed was promoting homosexuality to youth.

A concern for sovereignty and fear of Western threat is clearly expressed in the Russian law enacted in this year of 2012 requiring independent groups, the NGOs, to register as foreign agents if they receive any foreign fund or are engaged with broadly defined political activities as the NGO Human Rights Watch(HRW)

The HRW in their report, contended that agent can only be understood by the people in a negative connotation as spy or traitor compromising the work of these organisations. As it was epitomized by a graffiti on the building of hosting office of three Human Rights organisations in Moscow written "foreign agents! Love USA" one night before the law was enacted.<sup>8</sup>

The HRW denounces this law as an effort of Kremlin to stigmatise alternative views of Putin's government and to silence minority voices. The law disciplines that every NGO which receives foreign funds must register within the Russian Ministry of Justice as foreign agents with serious legal consequences for failure to comply with these requirements.

After criticism from several Human Rights organisations the then federal ombudsman Vladimir Lukin in 2013 challenged the law in the Constitutional Court alleging that the term foreign agent had a negative connotation and could discredit the work of the such organisations. However, the court denied the claim and upheld the law and declared that foreign agent designation was in line public interest and sovereignty.

In May 2014 the Duma approved an amendment which allows the Ministry of Justice to register groups as foreign agents without their consent. In 2016 Duma amended the law once more to expand the definition of "political activity" defining it as any attempt to influence policies.

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<sup>7</sup> Available from <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2012-10-14/russian-activists-gay-milk/4311912>

<sup>8</sup> Available from <https://www.hrw.org/russia-government-against-rights-groups-battle-chronicle>

In 2013 the neo-Nazi Muscovite Maxim Martsinkevich created the organisation Occupy Paedophilia. Despite of the name, Martsinkevich's organisation engaged to hunt and persecute not paedophiles but anyone considered of non-traditional sexual orientation as described but the federal anti-gay propaganda bill. The strategy to falsely equate paedophilia to consensual adult homosexual sex is also shared by many Western conservative discourses.

The HRW denounced in a 2013 report the modus operandi of the organisation. They set online dates with a fake profile with homosexuals online then kidnap the victims, they perform a ritual of torture and humiliate as a purge and post videos online of the actions to serve as an example.

On a contribution to invisibilisation, Russian authorities keep no records on LGBT violence which allow them to deny any serious investigation, no case of homophobic motivated violence was treated as hate crime, but instead as ordinary crime such as hooliganism. The report reminds that Russia is tied to international obligations through international human rights treaties signed, however little has been done to protect this persecuted minority.

In 2014 the victory of the bearded drag queen Conchita Wurst in the Eurovision song contest representing Austria caused a series of homophobic reactions in Russia both by politicians and spontaneous popular mobilisation expressing concerns and colonial resentments.

A petition in name of All Russian Parent Meeting, Tver regional branch, which collected around 50 thousand signatures, requested a ban on the broadcasting of Eurovision contest under the argumentation of defence of the children from deviant Conchita Wurst and Russia holding the true European values. As the text of the petition follows:

“Contestant at the Eurovision Song Contest-2014 from Austria became transvestite singer Conchita Wurst, who propagandizes a way of life unacceptable for the Russian society !!! A popular international competition, which will be watched by OUR CHILDREN, with the filing of European liberals became a hotbed of sodomy! Russia is one of the few countries in Europe that has been able to maintain normal and healthy family values based on love and mutual complement between the man and the woman !!! Therefore, we call for the Boycott of Eurovision-2014 and the ban on broadcasting the contest in Russia !!!If you share our views, and you are not indifferent to the spiritual

well-being of your children, support our initiative.” Tver Regional Branch "All-Russian Parent Meeting".

The text of petition makes clear that the Europeaness of Russia is not denied, the opposite, Russia is seen as part of Europe. According to the petition the Eurovision is corrupted by liberals aiming to impose homosexuality through the Eurovision contest.

Though this petition, Conchita Wurst is cast as the unwanted im/migrant putting Western European liberals condoning perversion from the West into normal Russia(Weber,2015)

Another reaction came from social media. In the twitter social the hashtag #Докажитотынекончита (prove that you are not Conchita) made the trending topics in Russian twitter in May 2014. Young people shared photos of themselves with their beard shaved to disassociate themselves from Conchita Wurst.

The quest of beard alludes to Peter the Great shaven man as an effort to modernize and Europeanise Russia. The participants of this twitter campaign aimed to show they are more European than Conchita Wurst, or more European than decadent West succumbed to perversion, and therefore staying frozen in the narrative of evolution, and Russia remaining in the evolution trajectory holding the true European values.

Putin pointed out that people should not “put up with a show” about their sexuality. He said at a dinner in Saint Petersburg “The bible talks about two genders, man and women and main purpose of union is produce children. For us it is important to reaffirm traditional values ... I personally am very liberal. People have the right to live their lives the way they want but they should not be aggressive or put it up for show”.

The position of Putin confirms the analysis of Cai Wilkson that the logic of Russian homophobia is “prohibit the sin, not the sinner”, the main strategy is not frontal ban on homosexuality but to create an aura of criminalization concerning public display of homosexuality. For Putin homosexuality should remain invisible existing on the margins isolated from society.

State Duma Valerij Pashkin from the Communist Party in an interview proposed Russia should withdraw from Eurovision and create an alternative “Eurasian Voice”<sup>9</sup>. "We are holding such world-class events as the Olympics, and we will be able

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.interfax.ru/russia/375813>

to organize such a contest, I think all the countries in the Eurasian space, and many others, will support us," he added.

Pashkin expressed concerns to secure the former Soviet periphery as regional zone of Russian influenced, which could be under threat of being conquered by the West through imposition of liberal values.

Milonov proposed a ban on Conchita Wurst to visit Russia for spreading non-traditional values. "We will seek a lifelong ban on the visit of this being to our country. And those who decided to invite this propagandist of unconventional values and the destroyer of traditional foundations, we will punish by the most severe laws - we will send to cut down the forest to Siberia"

Ultrationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, leader of LDPR party, declared in the live TV show Boris Korchevnikov that there are no man or women in Europe anymore, just "it". And added "fifty years ago the Soviet army occupied Austria. We made a mistake in freeing Austria. We should have stayed."<sup>10</sup>

In these anxious about Conchita Wurst in Russian society they seem to object how Europe succumbed to perversion and a colonial resentment that a cultural conquest of Europe moves from West to East (idem,2015).

Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin wrote on his twitter that the Eurovision result "showed supporters of European integration their European future: a bearded girl".

In 2016 for the occasion of the discussions regarding the violent incidents involving clashes between Russian and British football fans in the UEFA European Championship matches in France, the Russian spokesman for Investigative Committee, Vladimir Markin, declared in his twitter that "a normal man, as he should be, surprises them [the European leaders]. They're used to seeing man at gay parades"

This is a clear example of the use of gender norms as a source of legitimisation discussed by Valerie Sperling. Markin suggests that masculinity is corrupted in Europe because of gay parades, and that is why there is a criticism about Russian behaviour in Marseille, because Europe does not recognise a normal male behaviour.

In July 2017 television presenter Andrey Afanasyev from religious television channel Tsargrad TV offered in a provocative way tickets to California for LGBTs. He

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<sup>10</sup> Available from <http://novostink.ru/mir/69821-zhirinovskiy-o-evrovidenie-2014-pobeditel-konchita-wurst-borodataya-zhenschina-baba-transvestit.html>

claimed "Just recently, California - the most liberal state in the USA by the way - proposed to facilitate the granting of green cards to Russian perverts,"<sup>11</sup>

Despite the fact that Russia followed World Health Organization to mark homosexuality out of mental pathologies, Afanasyev added ironically that Tsargrad TV can offer, besides the ticket, medical certification proving to people that they are sodomites or other forms of perversion.

In beginning of 2018 two Russian gay man Pavel Stotsko and Evgeny Voytsekhovskiy got married in Copenhagen and got a confirmation of their marriage in Russia at a local office in Moscow of Ministry of Interior.

The couple shared their social medias photos of the stamps in their passport confirming their marital status. However, after sharing these images they become persona non-grata in Russia.

The government fired the employee who accidentally stamped their documents and made the couple's passports invalid. The couple also reported anonymous death threats.

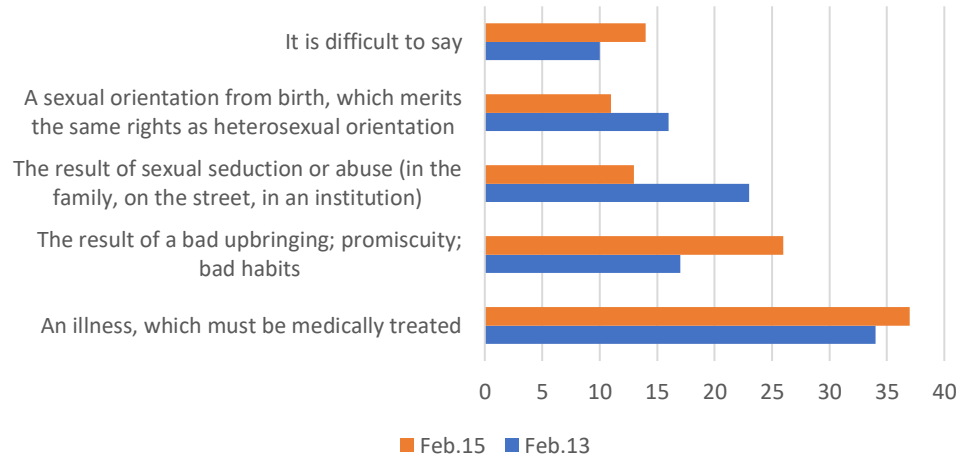
According to Russia LGBT network the police blocked the apartment where the couple live to avoid friends, activists and supporters to enter, cut off electricity and internet. Moscow police officer Andrey Zakharov negotiated with them to unblock the entrance of the apartment and take away administrative charges if they accepted to deliver their passports. Due to the pression, the couple left Russia.

In surveys conducted by Yuri Levada Center in 2013 and 2015 show that Russian society has a negative perception of homosexuality, as the graphics based on the data provided by the survey shows. It is possible to notice that between 2013 and 2015 the negative opinions increased, indicating that the approval of anti-gay propaganda bill reinforced negative perceptions in society.

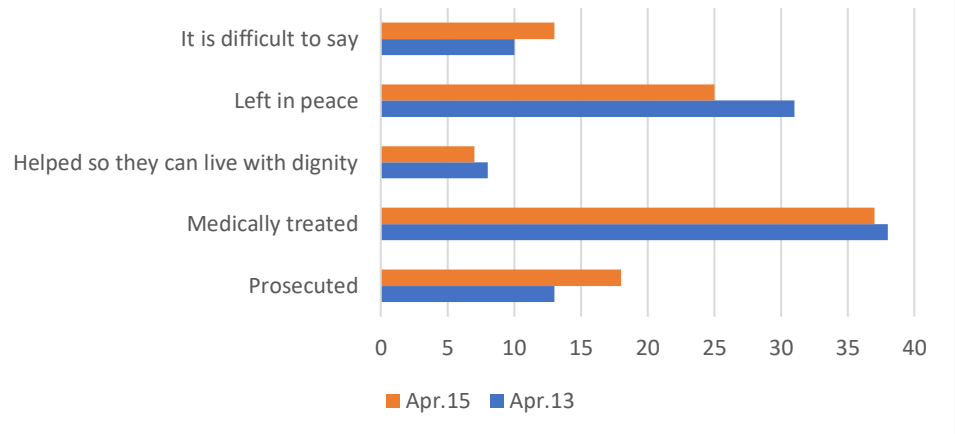
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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-news-from-elsewhere-40456443>

WHAT DO YOU PERSONALLY THINK: IN PRINCIPLE,  
HOMOSEXUALITY IS... (one answer)

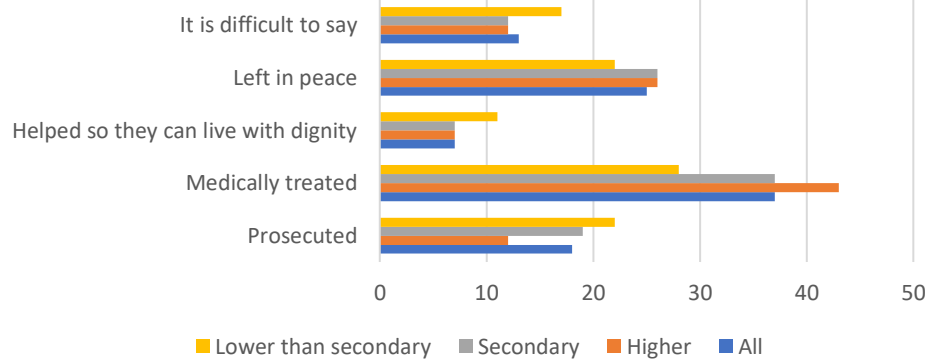


IN YOUR OPINION, HOMOSEXUALS SHOULD  
BE... (one answer)



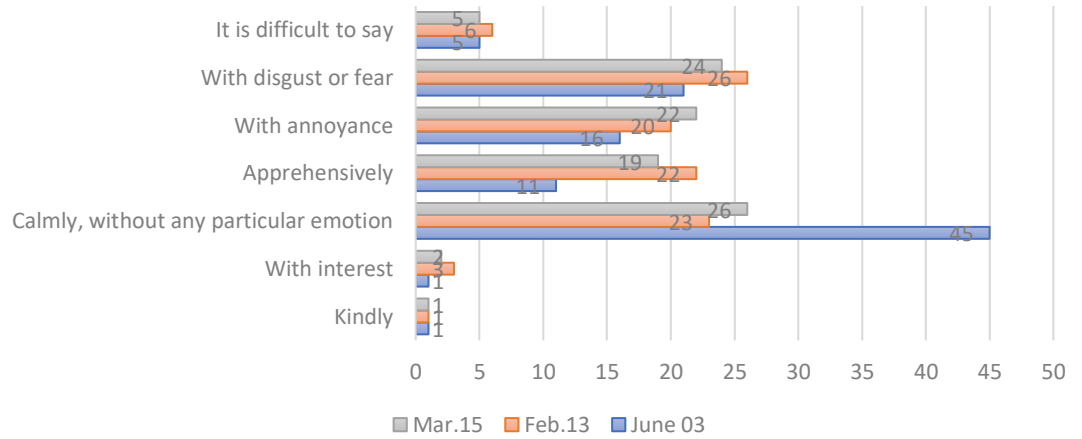


IN YOUR OPINION, HOMOSEXUALS SHOULD BE... *(distribution of answers based on respondents' education level)*

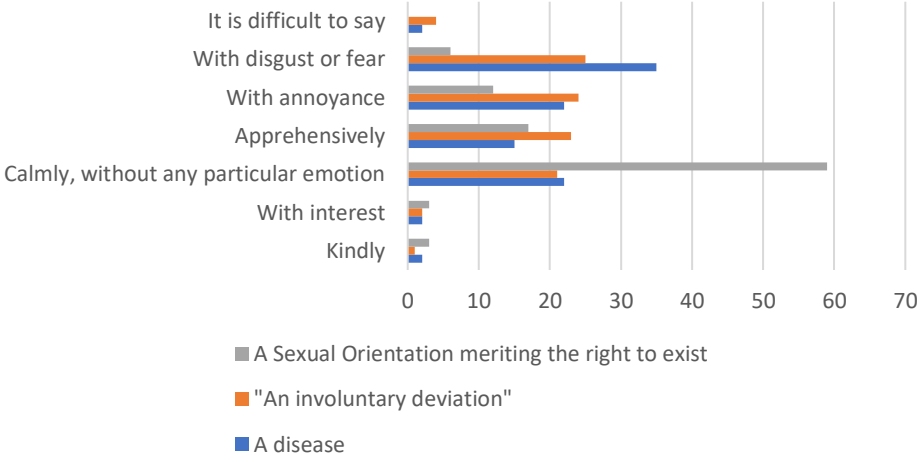


HOW DO YOU PERSONALLY RELATE TOWARDS HOMOSEXUALS AND LESBIANS? (one answer)\*

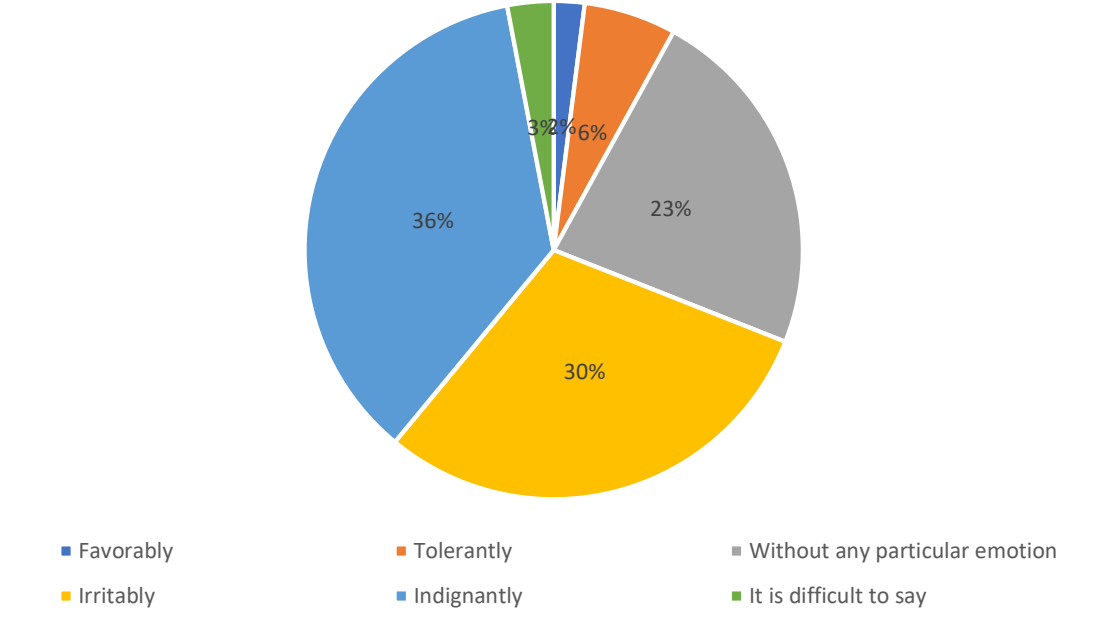
\*In 2003, research was conducted in cities with populations of 20,000 and more. Thus, in 2013 and 2015, the same conditions were met.



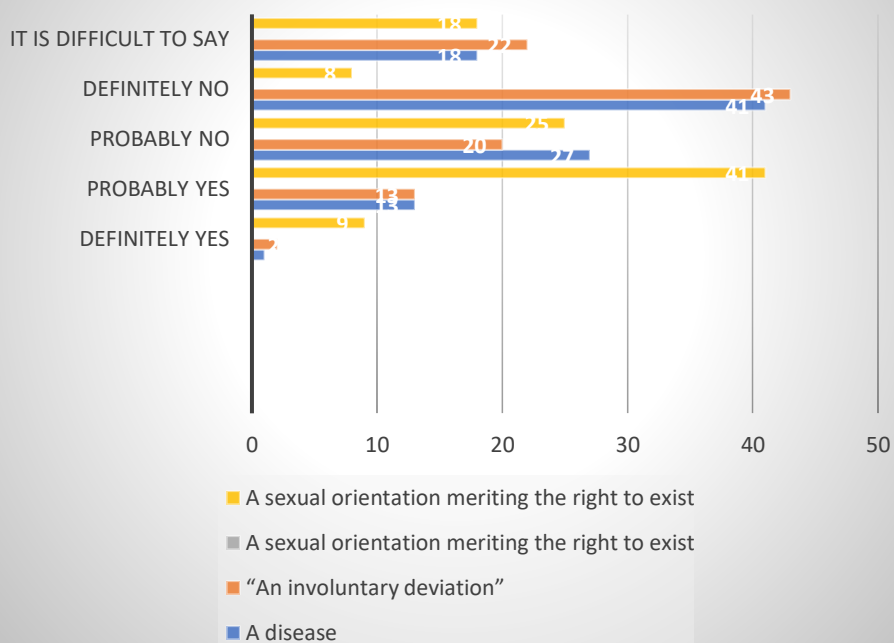
### Respondents, who consider homosexuality....



### HOW DO YOU PERSONALLY RELATE TOWARDS TRANSSEXUALS? On May 14

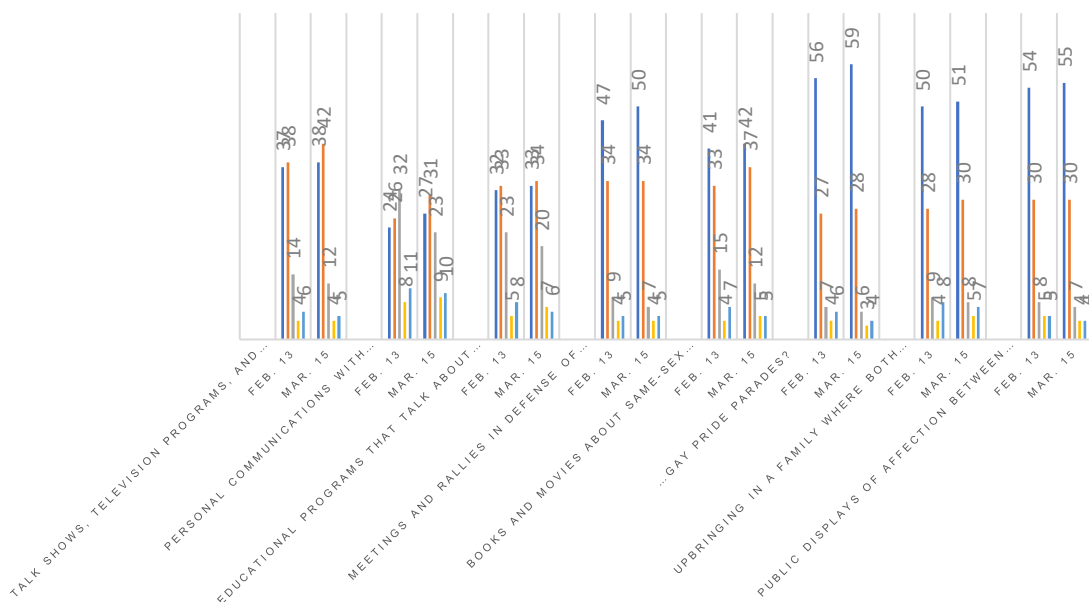


## Respondents, who consider homosexuality...



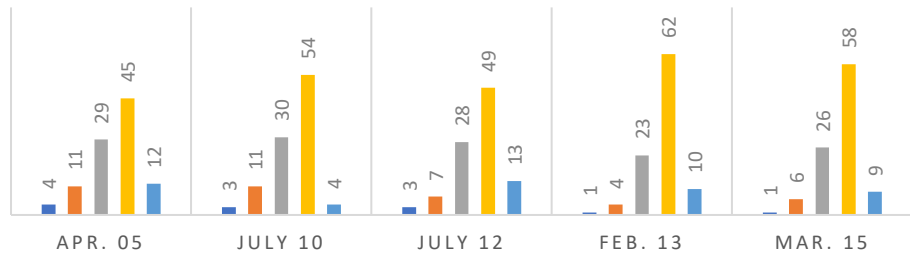
## IN YOUR OPINION, CAN THE FOLLOWING BE CONSIDERED HOMOSEXUAL PROPAGANDA:

■ Definitely yes   
 ■ Probably yes   
 ■ Probably no   
 ■ Definitely no   
 ■ It is difficult to say

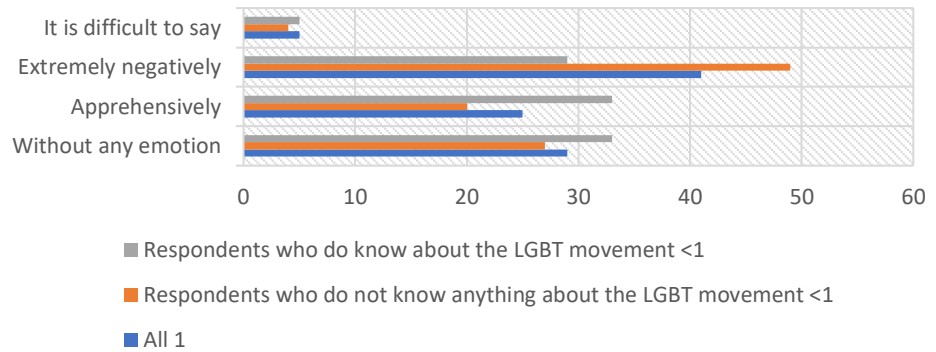


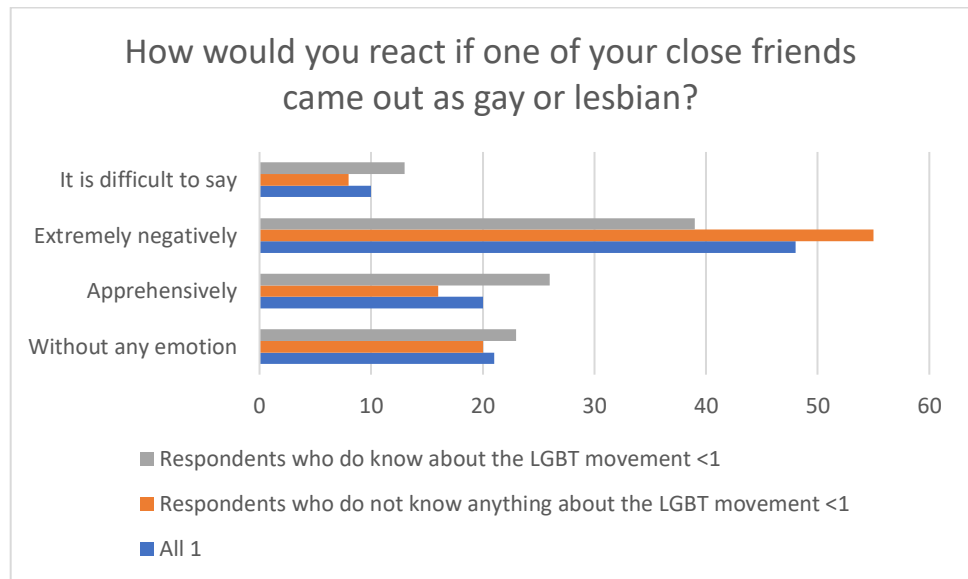
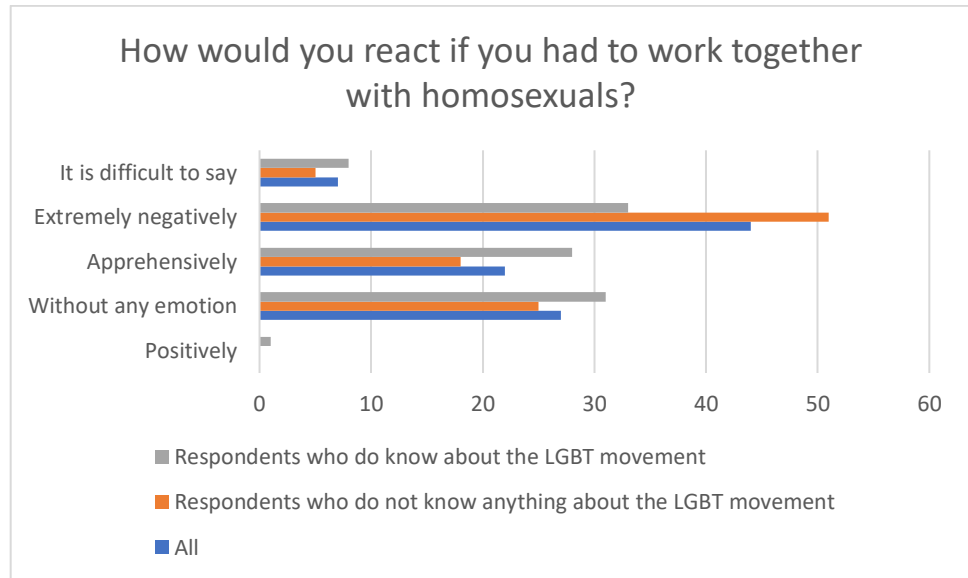
## HOW WOULD YOU FEEL IF SAME SEX MARRIAGES WERE PERMITTED IN RUSSIA?

■ Entirely positively    ■ Somewhat positively    ■ Somewhat negatively  
■ Entirely negatively    ■ It is difficult to say



## How would you react if a homosexual or lesbian couple moved in next to you?





The discourse analysis of this timeline of homophobia in Russia in the last fifteen years shed some light on many of arguments discussed in the previous sections.

First of all, the discourses point to an ambiguous position of Russia regarding the West, politicians and other public personalities of Russia tend to render homosexuality an irretrievably foreign figuration, an alien to the Russian social reality, as it is illustrated by speeches that claim that LGBT should move to the West, suggesting they do not belong in Russia, as exemplified by Andrey Afanasyev from television channel Tsargrad that he would distribute one way ticket to LGBTs move to California.

On the other hands, at the same time public speeches figure the LGBT as a foreign import, they very often evoke the West as a validation to their assertive, as exemplified by Putin's interview to BBC in 2014 in which Putin pointed out that main traditional religions in the world agree with him that homosexuality should be a matter of discretion, and it is confirmed by the position of Vatican representative in Moscow Antonio Mennini that agreed with the then mayor of Moscow Yuri Luzhkov to ban the city gay parade.

Legislator Vitaly Milonov goes more even more explicit when he evoked important European personalities, one of them celebrated as of the founding fathers of European integration, Konrad Adenauer, to justify they also would be against the idea of LGBT visibility as norm.

All this confirms the normative dependence of Russia. Public discourse cannot justify homophobia on grounds of a native element inherent of Russian identity, the discourse needs to mobilise a language that is understood by the Eurocentric order and it feels compelled to seek for validation in this same order they claim to oppose.

This situation of former super power in recent past and subalternity in the present leads to perception of threat to its sovereignty, this is precisely why the figurations of homosexual in Russia discourse of mancraft as a corresponding statecraft are the figurations of the perverse homosexual not only because these figurations oppose the Western liberal figuration of normal homosexual but also due to fact the figurations of perverse are inscribed in temporal tropes of deferred development – degeneracy and decadence.

The most recurrent figurations of perverse homosexual in these discourses are the figures of the underdeveloped and the unwanted im/migrant that is the undeveloped on the move from the West to East threatening to queer Russia and bring degeneracy (defer Russian development) as discussed by the debates generated by Eurovision song contest winner Conchita Wurst in 2014.

While in the Western discourse the figuration of unwanted im/migrant usually racialised as a moving border leaving its assigned space in the global South towards the global North, in the Russian context this figuration appears as the decadent and degenerated West that got lost in the civilizatory trajectory and now threatens Russia bringing this same degeneracy and decadence.

Another important indicator of subalternity is revealed by political and discursive strategy to deal with the LGBT question. Russia as member of UN, European Council is signatory of treaties on Human Rights, such as the European Convention on Human Rights.

As a result, the public discourse and legal texts do not frontally confront the LGBT rights and they do not question Russia participation on these treaties, instead the homophobic strategy is the invisibilisation.

As discussed by Alexander Kondakov, homosexuality in Russia is not formally forbidden and since 1999 Russia does not consider formally homosexuality a pathology, however different discursive strategies were taken to set LGBT as an invisible figure existing in the margins.

The temporally underdeveloped as a figuration of perverse homosexual is a trace of underdevelopment that is allowed to exist in the past, in the margins of the discourse, and it can potentially emerge to the stage of development (heterosexuality) if submitted to object of correction, this is exemplified with the cases of gay cure offered by Russian religious psychiatrics and orthodox priests, such as the psychologist Yan Golland from Nizhy Novgorod who claimed to have cure more than 78 homosexuals<sup>12</sup>, or the Nikotenko brothers that offer cure of homosexuality by hypnosis and priests of Russian Orthodox Church were also reported to promoted cure of young LGBTs on the demands of the families.

The Russian public discursive strategy of invisibilisation may not directly persecute LGBT population in central parts of Russia, but this invisibility contribute to a large extend to social discrimination and encourages popular violent initiatives as it can be seen in the graphics based on Yuri Levada Center survey on perception of homophobia in Russia.

The graphics not only show an increasement on the negative perceptions after the anti-gay propaganda was approved, which served as a validity for prejudices, but also that those respondents that claimed to not know about LGBT or do not know any LGBT person have a more negative perception.

The case of Chechnya represents a more radical situation. The position of double subalternity of Chechnya – regarding the West and regarding the Federal

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-39777612>

government- led to more extreme concerns about sovereignty and therefore more intense figurations of perverse homosexual as an ill mancraft aiming to defer the development of the corresponding statecraft.

In Chechen context the figurations more recurrent are the ones of the undevelopable and the terrorist. Those are part of the necropolitics realm because they represent the limits of development, they cannot be brought back anymore to civilizational discourse so they as disciplined to die.

### **3.2 ZOMBIES IN CHECHENIA: THE QUEER NECROPOLITICS AND THE BODIES MANAGED TO DIE**

“The empire of terror offers a stark choice to its object of power: incorporation or extermination. Its forms of sovereignty intend the taking of no survivors: loyalty or death” (Thobani, 2012)

In a report elaborated by the LGBT Network Russia, the NGO claims that in 2007 more than 200 people from Chechnya and other northern Caucasus Republics requested their assistance. The activists evacuated 119 people from the region and accommodated them in central parts of Russia.

The Network team in partnership with journalists from Novaya Gazeta interviewed survivors of gay concentration camps and documented more than 71 testimonials that confirm the persecution on basis of sexual orientation in the Republic and the active participation of regional authorities.

The report claims that the persecution can be dated back long before, but the systemic violence first started in December 2016 and went through until February 2017, the second wave happened in March and went through Holy Month of Ramadan, May. From June to onwards the persecutions are still reported.

Rzman Kadyrov became president of Chechnya Republic in 2007 and an important agreement was established with the federal government. Kadyrov compromised to eradicate terrorist separatist movements and terrorists from Chechnya and in turn he would get support, financial aid and autonomy to rule Chechnya apart from the federal government besides exemption from Russian federal law.

In this context, Chechnya became a fertile soil for the exercise of sovereignty by an autocratic regime with little legal restrictions, once in Chechnya despite of formally



submitted to Russian Federation Law and having its own constitution, customary traditions play a key role in Chechen society.

The report points that Chechen government used the shared method in their hunt for terrorists and separatists, by this method the families of those rendered as state enemy was become target of social and political repression.

The method of shared responsibilities has roots in Vainakh tradition in which people are taught to respect the kin and have social responsibility for the individual actions of a kin member. Chechen society is divided into teips and kinship clan structure.

In the last ten years since Kadyrov seized the power it was reported intense repression against those perceived as separatists, relatives of these people were taken as hostage, houses of relatives were burnt, and prisons without a proper legal trial with the right of defence.

The result of this persecution was effective, by 2011 separatist activity decreased in North Caucasus in the regions of Dagestan, Ingushetia and Kardino-Balkaria. However, the target of persecution expanded to anyone rendered as oppositionist and to the LGBTs and to Salafi muslims.

Kadyrov created then an ethnic profile for Salafi muslims, and target anyone who could fit in a stereotype based on clothes and appearance. Mass detention and filtration camps had already been put into test during the first and second Russian campaigns in Chechnya.

When the campaigns came to an end, amnestied Chechen militants joined police forces and former filtration camps was the base to create unofficial detention units.

After the persecution on Salafi muslims, Kadyrov turned this attention to those considered unhealth to Chechen society, which included the LGBT population and those accused of consumption of drugs or considered alcoholic.

In this sense, all the necropolitics apparatus of torture, unlawful detentions, extrajudicial killing and harassment to relative that had been mobilised to counter separatist activities was turned into LGBT people. In the discourse, LGBTs were equated to terrorists and therefore submitted to the same necropolitical management.

Under the guise of shared responsibilities, when detainees were released from illegal detention facilities, the relatives were invited to local police department for a ritual humiliation and shame. The detainees were then submitted to verbal and physical harassment in front of relatives and forced to confess their sexuality publicly.

The modus operandi of law enforcement officers in Chechnya is reported to be similar to those applied by neonazi groups in other parts of Russia such as Occupy Paedophilia. Police set-up trap dates for gay man and then blackmail them and ask money in change of silence or to take them in custody.

The testimonies of victims point that the arrests were by surprise and could take place anywhere, in the residence or at the workplace of “suspect” of being homosexual. Some LGBT were not preselected and even got by “accidentally” during police road raids or random checks when suspicious content was found in the mobile phone of target.

According to testimonies in the report the first wave of LGBT persecution started accidentally with a person identified by initials W.W who was caught by police in possession of drugs, in his phone police found evidences that he was homosexual. He was then detained and forced to collaborate with police to find other homosexuals in Chechnya. He became source of multiple detentions.

This became common tactic, as the number of detainees grew police had more informants to find other gays. According to reports, under torture people were ready even to share the name and numbers of closest friends from the local gay network. As the testimony of E.F illustrates: “one of the militants told me – ‘well, we will let you go now but under one condition- you will have to work for us. You will search for faggots, Syrians (those suspect of visiting Syria to join terrorist troops) and drug users (...)”

The testimonies confirm that LGBT detainees were set sometimes to the same prison units with terrorists and separatists militants. Inside the detention units, gays had lower status than terrorists and drug users. Terrorists and drug users had access to bunks to sleep, delivers from relatives and nutrition, while gay detainees had to sleep in concrete floor.

Torture applied to gay man in the cell ranged from sleep deprivation, malnutrition, lack of water, electric current shock, beatings and rape with objects. It was reported suicide attempts and deaths of gays who did not resist the prison conditions.

Active participation of regional Chechen authorities in these persecutions was reported by testimonies, the perpetrators were of Department of Internal Affairs, local division unit “Rosgvardia” known as the Special Division of First Respondents, and Terek -the local police and military divisions.

These following names of top representatives appear in the testimonies: Magomed Daudov, spokesman of Chechen Parliament, Aiub Kataev Head of Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia in Argun and Abuzaid Vismuradov had of the Special Division of First Responders.

In the rituals of humiliation and shame when detainee was released, authorities recommended relatives kill the ill member of the kin in order to clean the honour and also charged money from them to not reveal the reason why the relative was arrested so that family honour would not be compromised.

Many families were reported to perform honour killings, nevertheless some of the families were supportive, it was pointed in reports cases of fake funerals to pretend they had executed the LGBT relative in honour killing to undercover him/her from authorities.

Honour killing was particularly a common practise for lesbian women. The report claims that women could be subject of honour killing even because of unproved rumours about their sexuality. Despite of the fact male homosexuals were the main target of mass incarceration, victims also reported imprisonment of lesbians and tortures on grounds of their sexuality.

Another example of honour killing in North Caucasus region that was widely announced in the media outlets was the case of Raina Aliev, she had sex change operation in Moscow and married a man. She was found dead after her father made a claim on a TV station “bring him here and kill him in front of my eyes”.

When the denounces emerged Kadyrov took the same strategy of Russian federal government and denied existence of such persecution and mass incarceration, in an interview to HBO he declared “this is gibberish. We don’t have such people. If there are any – take them to Canada. For the sake of Allah. Then they would be far from us”

The press Secretary of the Head of the Chechnya Alvi Kerimov also denied: “(...) it is a complete lie. It is impossible to detain and oppress those who simply does not exist in the Republic”.

A member of the Human Right Council of Chechnya, Kheda Saratova claimed that she did not receive any formal application on the matter. But even if she received, she would not have processed it because according to her homosexuality is worse than war.

The federal government representatives endorsed this denial, Press Secretary of the President of Russian Federation, Dmitry Peskov affirmed “it’s not Kremlin prerogative to initiate any criminal proceedings in this regard”.

The official spokesperson of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Maria Zakharova said that the issue of illegal execution of LGBT people in Chechnya was not her topic.

LGBT Network and Novaya Gazeta filled formal complaints within Investigative Committee and Basmany Court Moscow, however their complaints were ignored. One of few representatives to give a little of attention on the issue was Tatiana Moskalkova, the Human Rights Ombudswoman of Russian Federation, she submitted personally a call for investigation with the Investigative Committee using the data provided by Novaya Gazeta and the Network.

However, the investigative committee claimed it was not found enough evidence to prove that people were persecuted on basis of their sexuality.

This case of LGBT abductions, murdering and imprisonment without a proper trial in Chechnya gives the queer necropolitics more realistic contours than a metaphore. The LGBT populations Chechnya are submitted to a zombie condition of dead-alive, alive in their vital functions of body but dead in the social and political realm. According to these reports inside the prison units the detainees were not entitled to have a minimum autonomy over their own bodies, they were managed by the prison administration even in the most private details: the managers would choose what time they could eat, sleep or even go to toilet.

## CONCLUSION

In most of the literatures on the field of homophobia in Russia the problem is addressed with strong emphasis on the imperial side of Russia as an autocratic country seeking to challenge the Western normative or even offer an alternative modernity, however I point out that foundations that constitute homophobia in Russia are more to be rooted on the subaltern condition.

First of all, Russia should be seen as part of the postcolonial space. Despite of the fact Russia was never formally and militarily occupied by any Western nation-state, under the paradigm of self-colonisation (Etikind, 2011), Russia was colonised by its own europeinised elites on behalf of Europe, from the core towards the periphery, being subject and object of colonisation in a self-orientalism process.

In fact, one of the first written documents banning homosexuality was the Military Codes compiled by the tsar Peter the Great in 1716 as an effort to set Russia in the same civilizatory trajectory of Europe.

The vantage point of postcolonial framework is particularly fruitful for single case study research designs because its emphasis on structure allows a safe degree of generalisation which can be applied for further comparative studies, balanced by enough valorization of the particularities of local context and therefore not forcing universal application in decontextualised case.

The postcolonial then can allowed an intersystemic approach to the phenomenon of homophobia in contemporary Russia with domestic and international analysed as constitutive part of an integral phenomenon.

Russia should be seen as a subaltern empire. Subaltern regarding Eurocentric normative order and global capitalism and an empire regarding its own periphery. The two sides cannot be read separately because they mutually tease each other to the point any ontological separation would not make a sense.

The status of a former superpower capable to rivalise with the most powerful hegemon in the international arena leads to a strong subaltern resentment in which in the post- Cold War world Russia does not want to be set in a subaltern position inside the hegemonic Western order.

This situation leads Russia to perceive a serious threat to its sovereignty, a threat that it may lose regional sphere of influence and to be incorporated into Western

hegemonic order in a subaltern position. However, the lack of anti-historical identity, the missing peasant, left no other option to Russia but anti-Western opposition with no prepositive agenda.

Homophobia to Russia, thus, is mobilised as a powerful symbol of negation of Western normative order, but also a matter of statecraft development in a double movement of embracing and at the same time aiming to subvert the Western teleological narrative of historical evolution. To embrace because Russia does not offer any real alternative to this narrative but subvert to an understanding that inside this narrative of historical development the West became decadent when accepted LGBT rights as part of universal scope of Human Rights, while Russia held the rightful path of progress refusing the decadence and traces of underdevelopment.

The queer theoretical framework and their discussions on sovereignty with basis on Foucault can engage in a fruitful dialogue with the postcolonial view of Russia as a subaltern empire.

The queer and the postcolonial can align in complementary relation since they both share this balance between structure and the context, they both emerge as a critical theory offering the local point of view usually excluded from the hegemon discourses and they concern about related topics such as subject identity, sovereignty, hegemony and structure.

The perception of a threat to its sovereignty by Russia manifested through the fear of being rendered as subaltern inside the Eurocentric hegemonic order led Russia to process of unqueering, as described by Kapoor, in this process Russia aims to get rid of any trace of underdevelopment, for these reasons the LGBT are figured as perverse mancraft threatening the development of the corresponding statecraft in the public discourses.

It was demonstrated through the analysis of public discourse in Russia in the last 15 years that the subaltern side of formula of Russia politics plays a definitive role in mobilization of homophobia in the public domain. The discourse in Russia needs to speak Eurocentric language to justify homophobia, not only that, the discourse seeks for validation among Western counter-parts, they are unable to provide any normative alternative outside the scope of Western hegemonic discourse.

The subaltern side of discourse becomes more clearly visible when the case of is examined at an intersystemic level of analysis taking in consideration the dialectical movement between subalternity and imperial legacy.

The figurations of perverse homosexual in discourse is not exclusive of Russia, it played important role in the history of the West and it is still at stake, as it was argued, even the Hillary Clinton's speech of Gay Rights as Human Rights that can be considered the final consolidation of the normal homosexual in the international relations leaves a possibility for the perverse figurations of those who do not desire assimilation through consumption and domesticity, therefore emulating the reproduction of capitalism and the nationhood.

The analysis of legal texts of Russian Federation law demonstrated that homophobia is manifested through invisibilisation, the lack of recognition of LGBT population as a social group, denial to acknowledge LGBT rights in the scope of the universality of human dignity in Human Rights. This strategy allows Russian Federal government to frontally compromise its commitment to international Human Rights treaties at the same aim to subvert them claiming a Russian interpretation of Western universalised ideas of Human Rights.

The figurations of perverse homosexual take the form of the racialised unwanted immigrant, the underdeveloped that moves from its assigned place in the Global South to the Global North bringing with them the temporal underdevelopment of their original civilization belongness that can threat the Global North if they do not assimilate hegemonic discourse of capitalism. Whereas in Russia this perverse figuration of homosexual takes the form of underdevelopment moving West to Russia bringing contemporary Western degeneracy with it.

The case of Chechnya explicits that the more radical is the subalternity resentment the greater is the concern for sovereignty which leads to more radical figurations of the homosexual as a threat to sovereignty.

Whereas in central parts of Russia homophobia manifests through tropes of undeveloped and unwanted immigrant figurations that are allowed to exist in the margins of discourse as a shadow figure, in Chechnya the figurations of undevelopable and terrorist are managed by the necropolitics, not allowed to exist and through they need to be managed to die for the sake of development of the sovereignty.

The necropolitics disciplinary management is also another Western technology mimicked and subverted by Chechnya, as discussed by Mbembe, the necropolitics had roots in the plantation system and in the process of making the colonies in the early modernity, these technologies of life and death are however not part of history of the West, they still persisted in late modernity in the new forms of militarism, transnational capital flow and power.

All in all, the case of homophobia in Russia is not a feature part of the uniqueness of Russian politics trait, homophobia is a subverted technology imported from the West ironically mobilised to oppose the Western normative order.

The queer critiques warn that any attempt sovereign state to build the figure of knowable sovereign man so he may function as a singular sexualised ahistorical who works for or against the sovereign state in a binary logic of being this way or that way, is necessarily political as a mean of power and impossible. These figurations operate in the regime of those who should live and die, for that the state need a knowable sovereign man, but the human subjective is always plural and historical – it can be crafted monolithically only artificially by the power of sovereign state.



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