

## 5 A Cold War for the twenty-first century

### Homosexuality vs. Heterosexuality

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#### Introduction

In the lead up to the Sochi Olympics in 2014, Cold War rhetoric was reinvigorated in the US and Russia among politicians, journalists and LGBT activists. Like an earlier Cold War discourse that posited a free and democratic America against an authoritarian Soviet Russia, the new Cold War was also spelled out in the language of freedom versus control. The difference, however, was that the new Cold War was not shaped around economic systems but sexual economies. Rather than capitalism and its handmaiden democracy fighting against communism and authoritarianism, the new Cold War erupted as a battle over sexual citizenship (see Richardson, 2000). On one side stood those who support sexual citizenship for gays and lesbians, at least in the form of marriage and the ability to serve in the armed forces. On the other side stood those who argued that full citizenship can only be extended to those who actively engage in heterosexuality. We call these two ideological camps 'Homosexuality' and 'Heterosexuality'. In what follows, we lay out these ideologies and use political discourse in the US and Russia to show how Homosexuality and Heterosexuality structure this new Cold War. The argument we are laying out does not mark the US as 'liberated' and Russia as 'oppressed' but tries to trace the highly complex circulations of Homosexuality and Heterosexuality between Russia and the US, modernity and tradition.

In Russian, the term 'homosexuality' implies a set of Western perversions that can be imposed on anyone and thus a threat to supposedly traditional sexual and gender values. For instance, Alexander Dugin, a nationalist thinker and a man described as Vladimir Putin's 'brain' (Barbashin and Thoburn, 2014), marks homosexuality as a Western form of corruption that puts emphasis on the individual and undermines collective belongings such as national, religious or gender identities (Open Revolt, 2014). In this chapter, we use Homosexuality with a capital 'H' to signal that this is in a more formalised ideology and different than the one used in Russian political discourse. By Homosexuality we mean a set of ideological claims backed by the state that associate certain legal rights, like same-sex marriage, with overall freedom, democracy and well-being, even while ignoring the more complicated experiences of LGBT persons as both citizens and non-citizens.

Homosexuality has a lot in common with what Jasbir Puar named homonationalism. For Puar, homonationalism signifies the way in which 'sexuality [can] become a crucial formation in the articulation of U.S. citizens across other registers like gender, class, and race, both nationally and transnationally' (Puar, 2013, p. 336). In other words, the West's 'gay friendly' status marks it not just as 'modern' but also obligated to intervene elsewhere to 'save' supposedly primitive others (ibid.). Within both homonationalism and Homosexuality, a 'good' sexuality is limited to married and potentially procreative or at least child-rearing couples. Queer and non-native figures engaged in sexual acts are pushed out of the role of citizen, while primarily white and well-off lesbian and gay couples, who are often reproductive as well, act as signifiers of national superiority. Yet Homosexuality also differs from homonationalism in that it is always part of a binary relationship and always in opposition to Heterosexuality. Puar's homonationalism is in opposition to the queer assemblages of terrorist bodies (Puar, 2007), whereas our Homosexuality works in opposition to 'traditional' or 'backward' Heterosexuality (Essig, 2014).

Like Homosexuality's close relative homonationalism, Heterosexuality shares some conceptual language with an already established term: heteronormativity. If heteronormativity, as outlined by Michael Warner (1993), includes all the norms that enforce heterosexuality and the gender binary upon which it rests, then Heterosexuality represents the addition of state-sponsored norms where heterosexuality becomes central to citizenship. Heteronormativity exists at the level of forgetting: forgetting to include a multitude of sexualities and genders. Heterosexuality is an ideology backed by the state that remembers to both privilege straightness and also to actively work to eliminate all other sexualities through state policies, religious proclamations and even acts of terrorism against queer bodies.

As an ideology of nationalism, Heterosexuality insists on the superiority of heterosexuality as the only 'natural' sexuality and creates national pride through procreation (marked as white/Slavic in Russia) that then reproduces the nation. Just as Homosexuality helps citizens feel they belong to the most advanced state that guarantees rights and freedoms (even) to lesbians and gay men, Heterosexuality communicates to citizens that they belong to the most advanced state as everything but heterosexuality is excluded from the 'natural' social order. Both Homosexuality and Heterosexuality regard same-sex desire as exceptional, yet diverge in how to respond to this exception: tolerate or suppress. Heterosexuality and Homosexuality both insist on the superiority of their own forms of sexual citizenship as a way of reinforcing their sense of national pride.

By employing Homosexuality and Heterosexuality, we want to stress that these ideological constructions have less to do with the sexualities that they are supposed to represent than international and domestic politics. These are imaginary sexual economies employed by various authorities (official and unofficial) to communicate ideas about what makes a society 'good' or 'bad'. Homosexuality and Heterosexuality do interact, support and sustain each other in the same way that notions of Capitalism and Communism sustained the Cold War. By

focusing on certain global currents of Homosexuality and Heterosexuality, we intend to provide a vision of process, *not* progress. Though many see sexual politics as progressive, with notions of 'it gets better' narrating a future in which all states will eventually recognise the rights of LGBT citizens (see Bernstein and Taylor, 2013), we trouble this notion in two ways. First, Homosexuality and Heterosexuality exist in both Russia and the US and therefore cannot be said to belong easily to one or the other. Second, we insist that a limited amount of citizenship rights for lesbian, gay and sometimes trans persons **cannot possibly** be interpreted as a final stage of progress. We need only **consider how the** right to an abortion for women in the US has been so **thoroughly undermined** that there is now a hostile legal climate for nearly 70% of women of reproductive age (Guttmacher Institute, 2016). The contradictory nature of LGBT rights in the US will no doubt become even clearer under the new conservative-controlled government. Because sexual citizenship, like reproductive rights, is not a unilinear progress narrative (Weeks, 1985), we offer here a less sharp and clear-cut division than what the metaphor of a New Sexual Cold War seems to offer. We are not arguing that the West is good and Russia is bad when it comes to LGBT rights but rather that there are ideologies that present real and present dangers to queer citizens around the world. In what follows, we try to offer a third path, a troublesome and queer way of thinking about sex and nation.

Clearly it is usually better for LGBT citizens to live in conditions of Homosexuality: tolerance is a far less cruel fate than open opposition. However, we are interested in how Homosexuality and Heterosexuality play out in international relations where they are used to promote national supremacy, making them far more similar than they are different. Together Homosexuality and Heterosexuality speak of a normative order. These analytic notions help us to highlight important features of the ideologies that we study: their imaginary character as opposed to 'actually existing' practices; active participation of certain political institutions or agents in producing these ideologies as opposed to the **more quotidian and performative mechanisms** of homo- or heteronormativity; **and the zero-sum game that necessitates 'choosing sides'** when speaking of sexualities and nations. **This latter aspect produces an 'either-or' debate** that is of particular interest to us as scholars of the new Cold War.

In an effort to think through this new Cold War, Foucault's accounts of colonialism may be useful. He argued that history was never a straight path. Instead, power circles back and forth in unexpected ways. In a lecture in 1976, Foucault turns to the Norman invasion of England to think through how colonising practices have a sort of 'boomerang effect' on the coloniser:

It should never be forgotten that while colonisation, with its techniques and its political juridical weapons, obviously transported European models to other continents, it also had a considerable boomerang effect on the mechanisms of power in the West and on the apparatuses, institutions and techniques of power. A whole series of colonial models was brought back to the

West, and the result was that the West could practise something resembling colonisation or an internal colonialism on itself. (Foucault, 2003, p. 103)

Although Foucault's 'boomerang effect' has most often been used to examine policies of internal colonisation, like mass incarceration or hyper-policing in the US (see, for example, Graham, 2011), we would like to use it here as a way to examine how both Homosexuality and Heterosexuality are themselves boomerang effects of imperialist nations (Foucault, 1978, pp. 92, 103–105). Homosexuality and Heterosexuality are the outcome of the long-standing colonising practices of the US and Russia and the internal sexual colonisation of their citizens. In the US, the notion of American exceptionalism in the realm of sexual citizenship justified the suppression of polygamy in Utah by the US army as well as the colonisation of distant lands like the Philippines in order to save sexually 'primitive' groups like the Igorots. In Soviet Russia, sexual subjects were strictly controlled after Stalin consolidated power. From that point until the early 1990s, queer sexuality was marked as 'foreign', 'disease' or 'criminal' (see Canaday, 2011; Vaughan, 1996; Kon, 2010; Essig, 1999). Indeed, the current Sexual Cold War is the result of colonising impulses, whereby both political and religious leaders in the US and Russia can imagine themselves as exceptionally good and ready to lead the rest of the world. It is this colonising impulse that seduces Russian politicians into adopting American Christian conservative rhetoric, American conservative leaders into praising their Russian counterparts and a global gay rights movement into limiting its demands to state recognition in the form of marriage.

In the following sections, we describe Homosexuality and Heterosexuality as they are represented in the US and Russia. In this chapter, we consider various discursive contexts, specifically international politics, news media and the law to examine how certain utterances about sexual citizenship and national belonging can enact the New Sexual Cold War by reiterating an 'us vs. them' rhetoric. Much of the rhetoric of the New Sexual Cold War focuses on what acts and actions are legal in a particular place. As many queer and feminist writers have noted, we must pay attention to the law since it communicates the state's desire to control and administrate sexuality (Leckey, 2015; Cossman and Fudge, 2002; Butler, 1997). We focus on negotiations about the legality of particular forms of sex because this produces a normative position wherein a country is either 'advanced' or 'traditional'. In the US, this discussion often engages in a form of Homosexuality, whereby a certain form of homosexuality – white, cis-gendered and male – is used to erase the diversity of queer lives by labelling dissent, even dissent from queers, homophobic and therefore in opposition to the progress of the nation. In Russia, nationalism and Heterosexuality are coupled to promote an ethnically pure nation. Narrowly defined heterosexuality has become Russia's principle ideological stand (see Nartova, 2008) and is deployed to revitalise discourses of ethnic purity and moral supremacy. We have assembled a queer archive (Przybylo and Cooper, 2014) of texts that (i) express a particular form of

authority and (ii) promote a Cold War dichotomy. In the concluding part of the paper we show how the speakers are connected with each other to break down the vision of clear-cut division between the US and Russia that is unintentionally reproduced when describing these two ideologies.

It should be clear by now that we are *not* arguing that the world is divided into a New Sexual Cold War, with 'Western' countries (represented mostly by the US) promoting Homosexuality and Russia Heterosexuality but rather that there are discursive regimes in both places that perform this polarised space. Since these ideological formations are so clearly dispersed in space, we caution readers not to think of the New Sexual Cold War as geographically located and therefore not a way to divide the world further into an 'us vs. them'. Not only are Homosexuality and Heterosexuality not reduced to geography but also they can appear in arguments between individuals, parties or groups, and so the ideologies are not limited to international relations. Yet we believe it is worth thinking through this metaphor of a New Sexual Cold War, of Homosexuality vs. Heterosexuality, because it so clearly exists at the discursive level. Dividing the world into two camps, again, can only be resisted to the extent that we understand the nature of sexual citizenship. As the history of sex shows, citizenship can turn on a dime, bringing entire regimes of national superiority and sexual longing into a sudden state of disarray.

### **Homosexuality**

As noted above, Homosexuality is regarded as an ideology of supremacy, which rests on the idea that 'progress' and 'modernity' are best served by providing sexual citizenship in the form of same-sex marriage. Homosexuality is imagined as in opposition to 'tradition', which is associated with – as Stephen Fry summed up – '[t]orture ... [i]nquisition ... [i]lliteracy ... [d]isease' (Juzwiak, 2015). This ideological stance was promoted at the highest political level in the US. Former President Barack Obama said in his second inaugural address that:

Our journey is not complete until our gay brothers and sisters are treated like everyone else under the law. For if we are truly created equal, then surely the love we commit to one another must be equal as well.

(Tumulty, 2013)

Homosexuality is enacted in many different contexts and by many different actors but the first person to utter the phrase 'gay rights are human rights' was then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in 2011. Clinton did not just retool her 1995 'women's rights are human rights' aphorism but backed her words with millions of dollars from the State Department and laid out what was now to be US foreign policy (Patel, 2015). This policy was central throughout the Obama presidency. As Vice President Joe Biden argued in 2016, 'gay rights are the civil rights issue of our time' (Lambert, 2016).

This state-sponsored Homosexuality meant that the US and other allied nations felt the need to respond when Russia took an aggressive stance in favour of Heterosexuality, particularly through the passage of a federal 'homosexual propaganda' law. Although the first 'propaganda law' was adopted back in 2006 on regional level, it was the passage of federal legislation in 2013 that attracted greater attention both in Russia and abroad (Pronkina, 2016). Western news reports revealed the systematic targeting of gay men by groups like Occupy Paedophilia legitimised by the 'propaganda law'. Writing in the *New York Times*, the popular playwright Harvey Fierstein demanded a boycott of the Olympics in Russian Sochi, comparing the Putin regime to that of Nazi Germany (Fierstein, 2013; Savage, 2013).

Western politicians lined up to beat the new Cold War drums. According to an article in the UK's *Sunday Times*, the leader of Germany Angela Merkel was able to negotiate with an Imperialist Russia but not a homophobic one. Putin had annexed Crimea and sent his forces into Eastern Ukraine but the moment when Angela Merkel finally became convinced that there could be no reconciliation with Vladimir Putin was when she was treated to his hardline views on gay rights (Pancevski, 2014).

British Prime Minister David Cameron pushed Putin at a G20 meeting in September of 2013 to recognise full equality for LGBT citizens. Foreign Secretary William Hague said that Britain must challenge Russia on its anti-gay laws since the treatment of homosexuality is wedded to democracy:

Britain is most comfortable with itself when we are saving lives, standing up for human rights overseas. So we should do that in conversation with Russia and other countries. It would say something terrible about Britain if we were reluctant to do that. We are one of the world's oldest democracies. We are clear about our values. We must not retreat.

(Charleton, 2013)

Not to be outdone in the contest to show the West's moral superiority, American politicians waxed poetic about the rights of LGBT citizens. Appearing on the 'Tonight Show' with Jay Leno, who said about Russia that 'This seems like Germany, let's round up the Jews, let's round up the gays', Obama responded that he has 'no patience for countries that try to treat gays or lesbians or transgender persons in ways that intimidate them or are harmful to them' (Dovere, 2013). Democratic Senator Barbara Boxer wrote a letter to Putin to write that:

As the Chairman of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee dedicated to the protection of human rights, I urge you to work to repeal recent laws and policies that severely infringe upon the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals in Russia. These efforts – including legislation you recently signed banning 'homosexual propaganda' – are not only an affront to fundamental principles of equality, but also

contradict the rights enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Russia is a party.

(Boxer, 2013)

Even Republican Senator John McCain, who opposes same-sex marriage, spoke out against the anti-gay laws as part of the larger tyranny of Putin in an editorial in *Pravda* (McCain, 2013). For many, Russia's law against 'homosexual propaganda' was yet another sign of the West's exceptionalism and superiority. The West's 'gay friendly' status marks it not just as 'modern', but like all nationalist sentiment, having an obligation to intervene elsewhere to 'save' others, hence claiming global political domination, in which issues of homosexuality become just a side-effect of imperialism in the same way that 'saving women' became a reason to invade Afghanistan under George W. Bush (Puar, 2007, 2013, p. 336).

For Russian politicians, the West's Homosexuality may have served as a catalyst for promoting Heterosexuality. As Igor Kon points out, Russia and the US/West both de-criminalised and de-pathologised queerness in the second half of the twentieth century but, in the twenty-first century, they took two very different paths. In the West, legal rights became the site of contestation, whereas in Russia LGBT populations became increasingly public but with little or no recognition legally. Increasingly, demands for state recognition were seen as a Western imposition. As Kon points out, '(t)he fact that at the beginning of the new millennium Russia and the West began to develop in opposite political and ideological directions in no way depends on sexual minorities, but it does have a powerful effect on their position' (Kon, 2010, p. 20). Russia's unease with the legal protection of LGBT rights became a site for establishing national sovereignty, of 'bringing Russia off its knees'. Long before legislating anti-gay laws on the federal level, Russian representatives in the United Nations argued for the passage of 'traditional values' globally to confront Western states' attempts to impose their version of sexual citizenship on other countries. Cai Wilkinson (2014) traces Russia's de-universalising arguments around human rights to show how Russia challenged the discourse of universal human rights, including LGBT rights, as a form of cultural imperialism. This challenge rested on the notion that homosexuality was created by the West whereas heterosexuality is 'natural'. This argument is at the core of ideology of Heterosexuality, to which we now turn.

### **Heterosexuality**

'Is Your Washroom Breeding Bolsheviks' was a popular 1930s Scott paper products campaign that urged employers to stock high quality paper towels like theirs since 'wiping your hands six days a week on harsh, cheap paper towels or awkward, unsanitary roller towels' could lead to unhappy workers who might just turn communist (Sharp, 2010). A similar notion of homosexual practices as something that can travel from one person to another has been promoted in Russia. Russian lawmakers talk about perfectly 'healthy' people

becoming infected with homosexuality. As anti-gay campaigner and Head of the Legal Committee of the Legislative Assembly of Saint Petersburg, Vitaly Milonov said:

If a person tries a same-sex relationship as an experiment, there's nothing upsetting about that. But only ONE time. As the criminologists who study maniacs and homosexual criminality say, after the second or third contact with the [same-sex] partner, something in the gender psyche of the person changes and he consciously becomes gay.

(Balagurova, 2012)

It may seem as if Heterosexualism exists in some sort of anachronistic time before science or human rights became sources of truth. For instance, the 'science' behind Russia's anti-gay laws is often just a bizarre collection of myths mixed with completely baseless statistics. One such document that played an important role in the passage of anti-gay legislation in Russia was a document with origins in the US. Discredited American psychologist Paul Cameron was the source of many of the document's 'statistics' (Seddon and Feder, 2013). The Russian version, 'Statistics on Homosexuality' from the Movement for the Protection of Family, Childhood and Morality claimed that:

37% of homosexuals practice sadomasochism, and as a result die in many cases. In San Francisco, lectures were organized to teach homosexuals how to behave in order not to kill their partners ... 21% of lesbians die by murder, suicide or car crash, this number is bigger than the mortality rate of normal women by 534 times.<sup>1</sup>

According to this document, the most heinous crime that homosexuals commit is recruiting children:

Homosexuals cannot reproduce in a natural way, and this is why they tend to recruit children. During gay-parades it is frequently heard how homosexuals chant: 'Ten percent is not enough, recruit! Recruit! Recruit!' A group called 'Lesbian Avengers' is proud for recruiting young girls. Their zine reads: 'Recruit!' Some homosexuals are less open about this, but they are trying to get in communities or to positions where they would have access to children (for example, priests in the USA, teachers, Boy Scout leaders and so on).<sup>2</sup>

Russian politicians used this claim that homosexuals recruit children over and over again in the lead up to the passage of a federal law 'for the purpose of protecting children from information propagandizing non-traditional sexual relations to minors'.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, after the enactment of the law against 'homosexual propaganda', Russian scholars offered a variety of arguments to support the ban in their scholarly publications. In Russia's premier university, Moscow State,



sociologist Elena Novoselova analysed the 'homosexual movement' and confirmed that same-sex marriages are a 'dead-end for humanity' (Novoselova, 2013, p. 85). Her analysis is driven by the fear of children finding themselves in a society of the future where homosexuality is promoted while heterosexuality is violently oppressed (ibid., p. 102). Considered oppositional and 'liberal', Higher School of Economics' Senior Professor Leonid Ionin believes that as a result of 'homosexual propaganda' the world will be conquered by homosexuals (together with migrant workers and the political opposition) and eventually decay to totalitarianism (Ionin, 2012, pp. 232–233).<sup>4</sup> Sociologists Oleg Bozhkov and Tatiana Protasenko from the Russian Academy of Science (perhaps the country's most important research institution) argued that there is a mismatch between the number of 'natural homosexuals' and the number of LGBT persons around the world. They conclude that this is due to queer being fashionable. As they put it, 'it is simply improper today to be normal' (Bozhkov and Protasenko, 2012, p. 158).

Certainly the 'science' of Heterosexualism is fairly widespread among Russian scholars (Novitskaya and Johnson, 2015) but there is also widespread homophobia among ordinary Russians. According to the Levada Centre polling, 84% of Russians are opposed to same-sex marriages and 77% of Russians felt positive about the law banning 'homosexual propaganda' (Levada Centre, 2015). This popular and scientific homophobia is aided and abetted by the Russian Orthodox Church, whose leaders have consistently cast queer relationships and identities as spiritual pollution produced in the imaginary landscapes of 'modernity' and 'the West' (Stepanova, 2015). Given the way homophobia is embedded in so many aspects of Russian culture and society, it is no surprise that the anti-homosexual propaganda law passed through the Duma without a single vote against it in June 2013 (Russian LGBT Network, 2013). These scholars represent important Russian academic institutions and that is why they represent the intellectual context in which the 'propaganda law' was passed. Certainly, the Russian academy is far from monolithic in its thinking about homosexuality.<sup>5</sup> Yet, scholars who are not advocating Heterosexualism would hardly find an audience with the politicians in power. This is the effect of Heterosexualism as an ideology that also provides fertile ground in which to grow popular and populist arguments that sustain the New Sexual Cold War rhetoric.

Russian Heterosexualism connects sexuality to the map of the world like Homosexualism does. Heterosexuality as a 'natural' and 'traditional' form of sex is regarded as superior and advanced, while homosexuality is seen as a sign of social decay. 'Natural' heterosexuality is concentrated in Russia and other countries that promote Heterosexualism and the West is marked as a highly polluted space of gayness, symbolised with words like the 'Gayropa' for Western Europe. Putin's supporter, the head of Republic of Chechnya, Ramzan Kadyrov, expresses this idea most straightforwardly:

Unfortunately, a significant portion of Russians want to be like the Europeans, enjoy their way of life, though the majority of the Europeans actually

have no culture, no morals. They praise all that is inhuman. They think same-sex marriage is a norm. It's so scary to even talk about it. Me personally, I do not want to be a European. I want to be a citizen of Russia.<sup>6</sup>

The rationale behind Russian Heterosexualism is not simply to protect itself from cultural imperialism but also to ensure defeat of the West in an imagined population race. The logic of many Russian politicians and family experts is that once Heterosexualism is promoted and all other kinds of sexuality are prohibited, the people of Russia will automatically engage in procreation. Homosexuals are believed to be an obstacle on this path. Yelena Mizulina, the author of the anti-gay propaganda law, former head of the Duma's Committee on Family, Women and Children and now a member of the Upper House, the Federation Council, rationalises discrimination as a necessary step in increasing the birthrate in Russia:

if we want to resolve the demographic crisis, then we need stricter policies in relation to moral values and information for some years, in order to provide for full childbirth and childrearing. In this regard Russian traditions are very important. And what are same-sex marriages? We shall see if the French will be happier after legalization of same-sex marriage and whether they will have such a high birthrate for one woman as they have now (they have a very high birthrate). Because same-sex marriages.... What influence does this phenomenon have? A family is supposed to be complete, they want to bring up children. But where would they get children from? They cannot produce them themselves. So, there are orphans. Are they [same-sex families] interested in orphans? Yes.

(Pervy Kanal, 2013)

Mizulina is clear that she does not want to see homosexuality 'between adults' outlawed again but she also does not want same-sex relationships to have the same sort of governmental support that is provided for heterosexual families. This argument has long served a major rhetorical construct for the promotion of Heterosexualism in Russia (Kondakov, 2014, p. 164). Putin has said that the 'propaganda law' does not prohibit homosexuality per se but rather merely protects children from harmful information because 'a society that cannot protect its children has no future' (Gay Russia, 2014). This negation of any discrimination despite evidence to the contrary as well as the connection of homosexuality to the 'inability' to reproduce is Putin's mantra, a stance he always repeats when asked about the ban on homosexual propaganda:

We do not have a ban ... of non-traditional forms of sexual interaction between people. We have a ban against propaganda of homosexuality and paedophilia among minors.... These are absolutely different things: one is a ban of certain relations, and another one is a ban against propaganda of these relations.... We do not prohibit anyone ... anything, we do not grab people on the streets, we do not have any sort of criminal consequences for

such relationships, contrary to other countries in the world [meaning some states of the US]... So you can feel yourself peaceful and comfortable here – but just leave the kids alone, please!

(RT na Russkom, 2014)

The political connections between demography, traditional Russian values and heterosexuality have been translated into legal decisions in Russia. Even before the ‘propaganda law’ it was used in the Constitutional Court to exclude the possibility of same-sex marriage in Russia. In 2006, when a claim of two men arguing against discrimination by marriage registrar was filed, the court ruled that marriage could be registered only if two opposite sex persons were involved in the procedure (Kondakov, 2013, p. 416). Later, in response to legal challenges of the ‘propaganda law’ by gay and lesbian activists, the Supreme Court ruled that:

Federal legislators considered information harmful to the health and development of children that kind of information that denies family values, including propaganda of homosexuality as it relates to the aforementioned legal rationale.

(Supreme Court of Russia, 2012a)

In accordance with national traditions and international norms, federal legislators do not include homosexual relations, bisexuality and transgenderism in family values.

(Supreme Court of Russia, 2012b)

According to historian and legal scholar Marianna Muravyeva (2014, p. 631), the Russian courts refer to ‘an ethnographic fantasy rooted in the Bolshevik/Soviet criticism of pre-revolutionary traditional (rural) society’, when speaking about family values. Muravyeva concludes that the legal and policy definition of family today does not rely on any actual empirical knowledge of the everyday practices and relationships in families in Russia. Instead, the ‘traditional family’ is a fairly recent political construct created to promote certain ideas in the law, while suppressing others.

What is perhaps most interesting about the use of ‘traditional’ family values in Russia is that it was imported from the conservative Christian discourse that took centre stage in American politics in the 1990s for the exact same reason that ‘traditional values’ are being utilised in Russia today: fear of societal collapse. There was a fair amount of agreement among many conservative commentators that the US was, in the words of conservative judge Robert Bork, ‘slouching toward Gomorrah’. Christian conservative politicians and religious leaders such as Newt Gingrich and Pat Robertson posited ‘traditional values’ as a critique of everything from divorce to homosexuality to abortion. These values were revitalised under the current conservative Tea Party movement as a way to ‘save’ American culture from its imagined imminent collapse and, under the Trump presidency, motivate much of the law making and political speech at both

national and local level (Ashbee, 2001; Dochuk, 2012). This is where both colonising and anti-colonialist discourses rather perversely get into bed together. Russia fights against Western sexual imperialism by adopting the language of America's populist and highly conservative Christian movement, while American conservatives attempt to model US sexual citizenship on Russia. In order to fully unpack how colonising and anti-colonialist rhetoric can interact in unexpected ways and with unintended effects, it is worth turning to the global exchange of ideologies between the US and Russia.

### Boomerang

Although the Sexual Cold War is *imagined* as spatially located in between 'The West' and 'Russia', its discourse *actually* moves around geographical locations and cultures without residing permanently in any particular place. As Jonathan Symons and Dennis Altman point out, national stances are usually *contradictory* and always already globalised:

As both homosexual affirmation and homophobia are globalized, strange coalitions are forming between conservatives and religious fundamentalists of all kinds, and between right-wing opponents of Islam and gay rights advocates.

(Symons and Altman, 2015, p. 82)

Similarly, Michele Rivkin-Fish and Cassandra Hartblay point out that although Russia and the US have different models of justice, the US legal landscape is a *contradictory* space where anti-gay laws exist alongside public censure of Russia's anti-gay laws (Rivkin-Fish and Hartblay, 2014, p. 107). For now, this contradictory landscape is primarily located in the American neo-conservative movement, where Cold War sentiments mingle with a certain admiration for the Russian authorities' strong stance against gay rights. Prior to the 2016 election, the US neo-conservative movement seemed marginal. Yet now there are many conservative politicians in the US with power who would like to see *Heterosexualism* motivate domestic and foreign policy. Republican National Committee member Dave Agema admired Russia's anti-propaganda law as 'common sense' (Ring, 2014). Many Republican candidates for president in the 2016 election insisted that same-sex partner rights and marriage rights are against Christianity, unconstitutional, and intolerant of 'religious freedom'. Scott Walker has opposed health care for same-sex partners and supported a constitutional amendment that would have defined marriage as between one man and one woman. Walker also supported the Boy Scout ban on gay troop leaders saying it 'protected children' (Woodruff, 2015). Ted Cruz insisted that:

If you look at other nations that have gone down the road towards gay marriage.... It gets enforced against Christian pastors who decline to perform gay marriages, who speak out and preach biblical truths on marriage.

(Berenson, 2015)

Jeb Bush released a video right before the Supreme Court ruling on same-sex marriage insisting that:

We need to make sure that we protect the right not just of having religious views, but the right of acting on those views.... This conscience should also be respected when people of faith want to take a stand for traditional marriage.... It's got to be important over the long haul, irrespective of what the courts say.

(Costello, 2015)

Furthermore, the ability of Donald J. Trump to appoint at least one Supreme Court justice during his term and to defund State Department initiatives that made both gay rights and women's rights central to foreign policy may very well make Heterosexuality the basis of future US policies.

Heterosexuality exists in the US not just in politics but in the law as well. Anti-gay bills in the US include Indiana's 'Religious Freedom Restoration Act', Arizona's 'Religious Freedom Restoration Act' and Mississippi and Kansas' 'Religious Freedom Act' that allow businesses to refuse LGBT customers, Florida's 'Single-Sex Public Facilities Act' that would have charged anyone using a public bathroom for a gender other than the one assigned at birth, Oklahoma's 'Freedom to Obtain Conversion Therapy Act', which would have legitimised homosexual conversion therapy, despite unanimous professional consensus that it does not work (see Ayres and Eskridge, 2014; Ippolito, 2014). The legal drama that played out around Kentucky clerk Kim Davis shows that the fear of queer oppression is strong among US Christian conservatives. When Davis was jailed for repeatedly refusing to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples, her lawyer Mat Staver likened Ms. Davis to Jew in Nazi Germany. As this and other legal cases make clear, gay rights are far from settled in the US (Tashman, 2015). The recent passage of state laws that discriminate against LGBT citizens indicates just where US policy might be heading. According to the Human Rights Campaign, '[t]he wave of anti-LGBT bills filed across the country continues to swell. As of today, lawmakers have introduced more than 85 anti-LGBT bills in 28 state legislatures' (Human Rights Campaign, 2015).

Many Western religious leaders also support Heterosexuality. The head of the Catholic Family and Human Rights Institute, Austin Ruse, agreed that 'you admire some of the things they're doing in Russia against propaganda' since 'there is no human rights to teach children about sexual practices, neither is there a human right to parade sexual preferences and practices down public streets' (Ruse, 2013). The Catholic Church's support of Russia's campaign against Homosexuality is part of a larger war against 'Gender Ideology'. Gender Ideology includes gender studies, feminism and queer studies as part of a concerted attack on 'traditional gender roles'. The Catholic Church's fight against Gender Ideology began over a decade ago, as Judith Butler makes clear in *Undoing Gender* (Butler, 2004, p. 181). Yet even the supposedly progressive Pope Francis believes that gender studies can be dangerous (Squeaker, 2015). In a typical blog

on the Catholic *Life Site*, Hilary White relates homosexuality and gender studies to Soviet communism:

A close cousin to radical feminism and grandchild of Marxism, Homosexuality was developed out of the politico-academic pseudo-field of 'gender studies' and has, for 30 or 40 years, been pushed on a mostly unwilling public, through 'anti-discrimination' and 'equalities' legislation by a coalition of lobbyists, NGOs and politicians on the extreme left, and in increasingly powerful international circles.

(White, 2013)

Similar words were espoused by the previously mentioned Russian politician Milonov, who in response to a TV journalist's question about his attempts to revoke the accreditation of the European University at St. Petersburg, replied that teaching gender studies was polluting students' minds. According to Milonov:

When they study gender issues – i.e. a fake field, a deadend research – naturally, these students embrace the universe of false values of post-European civilization. This is why we are concerned about these kinds of pseudo-disciplines as they influence students' worldview.... Gender issues cannot be studied in a university, it's like opening a department of extra-sensory perception, for example.... It's crap, it's fake, it's been created – I am reluctant to say this – by smoking lesbians with short haircuts from the European system, feminists, lefties, and other trash.

(RBK, 2016)<sup>7</sup>

The fact that Milonov's words are so similar to right-wing religious figures in the West makes clear that there is no 'us vs. them', Homosexuality vs. Heterosexuality, because ideology can no longer be confined within national borders and thus circulates globally. The tangled roots of Russia's 'homosexual propaganda' ban are to be found in Illinois. The Howard Center for Family, Religion and Society, headed by Allan C. Carlson, is located there. Carlson visited Moscow in 1995 and became friends with Anatoly Antonov, the Chair of Department for Sociology of Family and Demography at Moscow State University, who in 2007 testified in court that 'sexual minorities' belong to deviant groups such as drug addicts and henceforth may not seek legal protection within anti-discrimination laws (Kondakov, 2013, p. 417). Carlson is also co-founder with Antonov of the World Congress of Families, which promotes 'traditional family values' globally and organises events to recruit local promoters, including Duma Deputy Mizulina (Mizulina, 2013). We are not trying to argue that homophobia originated in the American heartland and then was exported to Russia. Rather we are, following Christopher Stroop, pointing out that there is a long and complicated exchange of homophobia between Russia and the US. According to Stroop,

It's no coincidence that the idea to found WCF was hatched in Russia in 1995, as the result of discussions between Allan Carlson, then president of the Rockford, Illinois-based Howard Center for Family, Religion and Society, and Anatoly Antonov and Viktor Medkov, two professors of sociology at Lomonosov Moscow State University. Nor is it coincidental that Carlson was heavily inspired in the first place by the Russian-born conservative sociologist Pitirim Sorokin, longtime head of the Sociology Department at Harvard.... It is a mistake to think of U.S. and Russian social conservatives as having a one-way relationship.

(Stroop, 2016)

Another major American promoter of 'traditional values' in Russia is Scott Lively, who visited Russian regions just before the first anti-gay propaganda law was enacted in Ryazan. He wrote a letter to the Russians outlining the danger of the gay movement after his visit. In his letter, Lively described the purpose of his visit to Russia as

a warning about the homosexual political movement which has done much damage to my country and which has now taken root in Russia. This is a very fast-growing social cancer that will destroy the family foundations of your society if you do not take immediate, effective action to stop it.

(Lively, 2007)

In a talk on another conservative activist's – Bryan Fischer's – radio broadcast, Scott Lively cheered Putin's ban of homosexual propaganda by saying: 'I indirectly assisted in that, and it's one of the proudest achievements of my career' (Mantyla, 2013). Not content to just infect Russia with his brand of Evangelical Christianity, Lively turned to Uganda as well where a 'kill the gays' bill was directly credited to his work (Center for Constitutional Rights, 2015).

Yet another American whose work shapes Russian policy is Paul Cameron. The 'Statistics on Homosexuality' cited above that were used in the passage of Russia's anti-propaganda law in Saint Petersburg heavily relied on the work of Cameron. Cameron is a psychologist whose work was so controversial that the American Psychological Association revoked his membership in 1984. The American Sociological Association adopted a resolution in 1985 to publicly respond to Cameron's work because it has 'consistently misinterpreted and misrepresented sociological research on sexuality, homosexuality, and lesbianism' and because Cameron himself used these misrepresentations to 'campaign for the abrogation of the civil rights of lesbians and gay men' (Cameron, n.d.). Like Lively, Cameron has travelled the globe to spread his message that gay sex (and feminism) will result in social collapse (Southern Poverty Law Center, n.d.).

In Moscow, the deputies referred to the University of Texas at Austin sociologist Mark Regnerus' research published in *Social Science Research* in 2012. Regnerus claimed to find that adult children of gays and lesbians were more likely to have negative outcomes such as depression, unemployment and

substance abuse (Regnerus, 2012). Regnerus' research has been widely criticised and recently debunked in an article in the same journal for its many methodological flaws (see Cheng and Powell, 2015).<sup>8</sup> That did not stop Regnerus from speaking to a Russian newspaper in February 2013, as the Duma discussed the results of his study. In Russia, many lawmakers, including Evgeni Makushin, a psychologist for the Russian Ministry of Health and Social Development, used Regnerus' work to talk about 'threat' to the children of gay and lesbian parents (Blue, 2013a, 2013b). In this way, American conservative Christian academics and activists come together with their Russian counterparts to create 'traditional' family values (Mizulina, 2013).

In the US, this academic homophobia has deep roots in Evangelical Christianity's sense of moral and mortal doom from sexual acts outside the conjugal bed. In Russia, this homophobia is easily traced back to nineteenth-century religious traditions that attempted to save Russia from modern life with spiritualism. Homosexuality's rhetorical claim that the West must lead the world on gay rights, despite the obvious limitations of the current legalistic model rubs up against the claim of many conservative Christians that Russia must lead the world to Heterosexuality. As Larry Jacobs of the World Congress of Families said: 'the Russians might be the saviours of the Christian World' (Blue, 2013b). We can almost hear the air moving as ideologies boomerang back and forth, between East and West, Homosexuality and Heterosexuality, then and now.

### Conclusion

At first glance, it could appear that the New Sexual Cold War is a fight between a modern 'us' and a backwards 'them'. Certainly, this simplistic division is far more complicated. Research that attempts to divide countries on a traditionalist-modernist scale<sup>9</sup> shows that Russia is situated among the most 'modernist' of all conservative countries in Europe (Fabrykant and Magun, 2014).<sup>10</sup> These surveys equate positive attitudes toward gay marriage with progress and thus ignore the high rates of hate crimes and a variety of discriminatory legal arrangements that coexist in these 'progressive' states (Walters, 2014). In various contexts, states become valued for their formal recognition of sexual citizenship in the form of same-sex marriage, which reproduces the false dichotomy of 'us vs. them'. One part of the world consists of most European states, the US and a majority of South American countries. The other, more 'backward' part of the world includes Russia, many Middle Eastern states and 37 out of 54 African countries. The global debate over sexual citizenship has resulted in what some political observers call 'norm polarization', a state of affairs where competing norms pull states to take positions that are not easily or even ever reconcilable (Symons and Altman, 2015).

Ultimately, what we see is not a geographically located 'norm polarization' but a globally circulating one. The newly revitalised Cold War rhetoric obscures the constant boomerang effect that happens in the exchange of ideologies. In our examples, in both the US and Russia, sexuality has been a central concern of



state politics since at least the beginning of the twentieth century. In the US, there was a proliferation of laws related to homosexuality, prostitution and age of consent (see Canaday, 2011). In Russia, there was a brief moment of not regulating sexuality by the new Soviet state but then 'the straight state' returned in the mid-1930s (Essig, 1999; Healey, 2001). Today, it might seem as if the good sex of marrying gays is the culmination of gay civil rights but it is in fact just separating the 'good' and monogamous gays from the 'bad' queers, as the recent state crackdown on gay sex sites shows (Gira Grant, 2015) and it also obscures a variety of urgent issues in the sphere of sexuality such as hate crimes, gay teen poverty and violence.<sup>11</sup> As Gayle Rubin pointed out in her seminal essay, 'Thinking Sex',

Modern Western societies appraise sex acts according to a hierarchical system of sex. Marital, reproductive heterosexuals are alone at the top erotic pyramid.... All of these hierarchies of sexual value function ... in much the same ways as do ideological systems of racism, ethnocentrism, and religious chauvinism. They rationalize the well-being of the sexually privileged and the adversity of the sexual rabble.

(Rubin, 1984, pp. 151–152)

In other words, sex is a battlefield and it is on this battlefield that the New Sexual Cold War will be fought.

In *Regulating Aversion: Tolerance in the Age of Identity and Empire*, Wendy Brown (2008) points out that tolerance both sustains a hierarchy, whereby some must be tolerated, and creates a new category of abjection: the intolerant. Suzanna D. Walters (2014) in *The Tolerance Trap: How God, Genes and Good Intentions are Sabotaging Gay Equality* provides a rigorous critique of the discourse of Homosexuality for LGBT citizens in the US. According to Walters, instead of providing 'robust integration' for LGBT Americans, the discourse of tolerance has trapped them in a world of 'born this way' that allows for rights only to the extent they are based on biology. Both authors show how simplistic and rigid discourses obscure queer experience and contribute to an overly simplistic notion of 'progress'. Binary ideologies of the New Sexual Cold War produce the same effect. However, interrogating the current discourse of Homosexuality vs. Heterosexuality can provide us with a queer escape from the rhetorical trap of the New Sexual Cold War.

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## Notes

- 1 'Statistics on Homosexuality' was distributed as a leaflet at the 'public hearings' before the adoption of the bill and is available from one of the authors on request. Various electronic versions may be found: 'Nekotorye statisticheskie dannye o gomo-seksualizme i ego posledstviyakh' ('Some statistical Data on Homosexuality and Its Effects'). [Online]. [Date accessed: 5 September 2015]. Available from: [www.blagoda.com/social/4247.html](http://www.blagoda.com/social/4247.html); and 'Facts and Statistics About Homosexuals'. [Online]. [Date accessed: 5 September 2015]. Available from: [www.consumingfirefellowship.org/Homosexual%20Fact%20Sheet.htm](http://www.consumingfirefellowship.org/Homosexual%20Fact%20Sheet.htm).
- 2 *Ibid.*
- 3 Federal Law of the Russian Federation no. 135-FZ of 29 June 2013 on Modification of Article 5 of the Federal Law 'On Protection of Children from Information Harmful for Their Wellbeing and Development' and Other Normative Acts of the Russian Federation for the Purposes of Protection of Children from Information that Promotes Negation of Traditional Family Values' (Federal'nyi zakon Rossiyskoy Federacii ot 29 iyunya 2013 g. N 135-FZ-g). 'O vnesenii izmeneniy v stat'yu 5 Federal'nogo zakona 'O zashhite detey ot informacii, prichinyayushhey vred ih zdorov'yu i razvitiyu' i otdel'nye zakonodatel'nye akty Rossiyskoy Federacii v celyah zashhity detey ot informacii, propagandiruyushhey otricanie tradicionnyh semeynyh cennostey').
- 4 As the author himself reassures, Ionin uses the concept 'totalitarianism' in Musso-  
lini's terms (*ibid.*, p. 234).
- 5 For a deeper analysis of the Russian social science embracement of queer topics, see Nartova, 2007 and Kondakov, 2016.
- 6 Kadyrov obvinil evropeytsev v otsutstvii kul'tury (Kadyrov Claimed the Europeans Are Not Educated). 2013. *Trud*. 13 September 13. [Online]. [Date accessed: 5 September 2015]. Available from: [www.trud.ru/article/13-09-2013/1299932\\_kadyrov\\_obvinil\\_evropeytsev\\_v\\_otsutstvii\\_kul'tury.html](http://www.trud.ru/article/13-09-2013/1299932_kadyrov_obvinil_evropeytsev_v_otsutstvii_kul'tury.html). See also Ryabova, T. and Ryabov, 2013.
- 7 Perhaps it should be noted that Milonov may have been referring to the authors of this chapter since we both have taught courses in gender theory and queer theory at the European University.
- 8 There has been a concerted effort by many sociologists, one of the authors included, to point out the many flaws in Regnerus's article, including a highly suspect review process that seems to have been timed to influence the Supreme Court decision of *Windsor v. United States*. Much of that criticism has been collected here: [www.facebook.com/pages/Sociology-for-the-Public-Good/555499004470737](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Sociology-for-the-Public-Good/555499004470737).
- 9 There is a whole industry of 'values surveys' that locate states according to the answers given by their citizens to questionnaires, which is considered to be an adequate source of information about 'democracy', 'freedom' and 'justice'. One of the major examples would be Inglehart and Welzel, 2005.
- 10 The calculations show that the Russians expressed more 'tolerance' to issues of homosexuality in 2014 than before, being on the margin between 'conservative' and 'progressivist' European countries. This might in fact be an unintended consequence of the promotion of the ban against 'homosexual propaganda'. Another study indicates that lesbians and gay men have felt more support from those around them since the state campaign against 'propaganda' was initiated. See Soboleva and Bakhmet'ev, 2014.
- 11 These words are written just on the day when Orlando massacre at Pulse Gay Club took place. (See '2016 Orlando nightclub shooting'. *Wikipedia*. [Online]. [Date accessed: 13 June 2016]. Available from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2016\\_Orlando\\_nightclub\\_shooting](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2016_Orlando_nightclub_shooting).) This terrible event shows once again that sexual rights are better protected by legislation that confronts the use of weapons rather than the one that legalises personal forms of cohabitation. In order to live in a new society, we have to start thinking of sexuality in new ways.

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