



The rise of the Russian Christian Right: the case of the World Congress of Families

Kristina Stoeckl

To cite this article: Kristina Stoeckl (2020) The rise of the Russian Christian Right: the case of the World Congress of Families, *Religion, State & Society*, 48:4, 223-238, DOI: [10.1080/09637494.2020.1796172](https://doi.org/10.1080/09637494.2020.1796172)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09637494.2020.1796172>



© 2020 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.



Published online: 14 Oct 2020.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 6700



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



Citing articles: 18 View citing articles [↗](#)

ARTICLE

 OPEN ACCESS

 Check for updates

The rise of the Russian Christian Right: the case of the World Congress of Families

Kristina Stoeckl 

Department of Sociology, University of Innsbruck, Innsbruck, Austria

ABSTRACT

This article offers a case study of the Russian-American pro-family organisation the World Congress of Families, explaining its emergence, strategies, and religious and political agenda from 1995 until 2019. The article adds to a growing body of research that sheds light on transnational networks of conservative and right-wing political and civil society actors. It zooms in on Russian pro-family activists as connected to such networks and thereby takes an innovative perspective on the Russian conservative turn as part of a global phenomenon. The article also makes the argument that a specific Russian Christian Right movement, comparable to and linked with the American Christian Right and conservative Christian groups in Europe, is taking shape in Russia.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 22 October 2019
Accepted 10 July 2020

KEYWORDS

Russia; religion; traditional values; conservatism; right wing

Introduction

During the last decade, socially conservative political parties and civil society groups have been on the rise in Russia, across Central and Eastern Europe, and also in Western Europe and the United States. Such actors mobilise against LGBT rights, women's and children's rights, and reproductive rights in the name of the 'traditional family', and they use religious and cultural arguments to oppose liberalism, feminism, gender equality, and individual human rights (cf. Kováts and Pöim 2015; Kuhar and Paternotte 2017; Marzouki, McDonnell, and Roy 2015). The conservative backlash is frequently associated with nationalism, populism, and religious traditionalism (Bluhm and Varga 2018; Gingrich and Banks 2006; Ramet 1997). That right-wing and conservative groups are increasingly connected across national and denominational borders is often overlooked in single country case studies and work that focuses on nationalism or on single religious groups. Transnationally connected right-wing interest groups constitute, in the words of Clifford Bob, a 'global right wing', where the sharing of ideas and strategies is at least as important as the cultivation of national superiority and religious identity (Bob 2012).

One NGO studied by Bob in his book was the World Congress of Families (WCF), a transnational nongovernmental organisation that promotes a traditional, heterosexual family model and conservative gender roles. What Bob overlooked at the time was that this organisation had been founded as a transnational NGO by an American historian and

CONTACT Kristina Stoeckl  kristina.stoeckl@uibk.ac.at  Department of Sociology, University of Innsbruck, Innsbruck, Austria

© 2020 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.
This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, and is not altered, transformed, or built upon in any way.

a Russian sociologist, and that the Russian participation in the organisation was actually quite central. Bob and other scholars saw in the WCF first and foremost an exemplary case of the American Christian Right going global (Buss and Herman 2003). Yet, if we want to understand the transnational dynamics of the conservative backlash, the Russian 'founding moment' of the WCF and the intensified involvement of Russians in the organisation after 2014 merits closer attention. The first aim of this article is, therefore, to fill a gap in the literature and to provide a detailed account of the Russian role inside the WCF from its founding moment to the present.

The second aim of the article is to analyse the Russian participation in the WCF as a novel phenomenon inside the Russian religious field. The Russian chapter of the WCF is an organisation with close ties to business, politics, and the Russian Orthodox Church. Its leaders advocate conservative religious positions, but quite independently from the Church and Orthodox theology. Their strategies, from fundraising and lobbying to the organisation of international congresses, differ considerably from the more traditional workings of the Russian Orthodox Church and regular church diplomacy. They thus represent a new type of religious actor in the Russian context, a Russian Christian Right that is modelled on the strategies and manners of the American Christian Right.

The Russian involvement in the WCF has become the subject of investigative journalism (cf. Dornblüth 2019; Kane 2009; Levintova 2014; War is Boring 2014), and it has also been analysed in academic research. Christopher Stroop's research article (2016) mentions the American-Russian founding moment of the WCF; Russian involvement in the WCF since 2012 is explored by Kevin Moss (2017), Katharina Bluhm and Martin Brandt (2018), and by Anton Shekhovtsov (2017). Additional accounts of the WCF include Masha Gessen's reportage from the conference of the WCF in Tbilisi in 2016 (Gessen 2017) and several other articles that deal with particular aspects of the organisation (Parke 2015; Shekhovtsov 2014). The WCF has also been treated in the policy papers and reports of NGOs and think tanks, for example by Right Wing Watch, Southern Poverty Law Center, and Foreign Policy Centre (Blue 2013; Chitanava and Sartania 2018; Southern Poverty Law Center 2015, 2018; Stoeckl 2018b). This article goes beyond this literature inasmuch as it covers the entire lifespan of the organisation from 1995 until the present and draws on original, first-hand archival material and interviews with protagonists of the WCF (the interview with Alan Carlson is printed in Stoeckl and Uzlaner 2020), on non-participant observation at WCF events, and on WCF online material.

The Russian founding moment of the WCF

After the collapse of the Soviet Union and during the years of economic and political transition, economic consultants, policy advisors, religious missionaries, and business-people from the West were pouring into Russia. They all found an audience that was eager to take up their ideas. The American pro-family NGO Focus on the Family was active in Russia (Ward 1991), as were anti-abortion groups (Mancini and Stoeckl 2018) and a large number of religious missionary groups (Froese 2008; Glanzer 2002). In the American context, these groups saw themselves at the forefront of the American 'culture wars' (Hunter 1991), i.e. conflicts between social progressives and social conservatives over issues such as abortion, family values, school prayer, or homosexuality. With the end of

the Cold War, these culture wars started to globalise and to reach Russia. The founding moment of the World Congress of Families falls precisely into this period.

The founding moment of the WCF dates back to 1995.¹ In January of that year, the American college professor and pro-family activist Allan Carlson, then president of the Howard Center for Family, Religion and Society in Rockford, Illinois, travelled to Moscow to meet sociologist Anatoly Antonov, professor of family sociology and demography at Moscow State University. Antonov had reached out to his American colleague and proposed the meeting because he had read his works on family and shared his views. For Carlson, the purpose of the trip was to test the waters and to check out whether some form of collaboration between Russians and Americans on family issues was feasible. From the perspective of the American visitor Carlson, his interlocutors during the trip – Antonov and his colleagues – as well as his perception of a resurging Russian Orthodox Church placed Russia firmly on the conservative side of the culture wars divide. Whereas the Soviet Union had been a country of identification for the political left, post-Soviet Russia became a country of identification for the political right (Stoeckl 2019).

In his travel diary, presumably written for colleagues back at the Howard Center, Carlson gave a day-by-day account of his stay in Moscow, of the people he met, the topics discussed, and the agreements made (Stoeckl 2018a, 61–62). Antonov introduced Carlson to many people in Moscow, to academics, intellectuals, and politicians. He made him visit Moscow State University's Sociology Department and its Centre for Population Study, where the American guest received a warm welcome at the Russian Academy of Education's Research Institute for the Family (*Institut Sem'i i Vospitaniia Rossiiskaia Akademiia Obrazovaniia*) directed by Sergei V. Darmodekhin. Carlson's diary conveys pride when he writes: 'He [Darmodekhin] showed me a copy, in Russian translation, of my 1989 article, "A Pro-Family Income Tax", which had appeared two years ago in a social science journal. This article, he said, is having "great influence" among Russian Federation officials, as they labor to restructure the nation's income tax' (Carlson 1995, 5).² Darmodekhin invited Carlson to enter into a collaboration with the Moscow Research Institute for the Family. The Russian host had prepared a draft cooperation agreement between the institute and the Howard Center. The agreement included, according to Carlson's diary, the preparation of joint publications and translations in the area of family sociology, the development of a joint research project, the exchange of material and information, and the nomination of Carlson to the academic board of the Russian Research Institute for the Family (Stoeckl 2018a, 62).

But not only the Research Institute for the Family was interested in cooperation with Carlson; a Russian Orthodox actor also 'wanted to talk "business"' (Carlson 1995, 4). Carlson reported on a meeting with Ivan Shevchenko, who was introduced to him as an artist, chairman of the Orthodox Brotherhood of Scientists and Specialists 'Tabor' (*Pravoslavnoe bratstvo uchenykh i spetsialistov 'Favor'*),³ and a former candidate to the Duma (the lower house of the Russian Parliament). Upon meeting with Shevchenko, Carlson felt reminded 'of a young Solzhenitsyn' (Carlson 1995, 4). It appears to have been during this meeting with Shevchenko that Carlson developed the idea of organising a World Congress of Families. He had, he explained in his diary, been thinking about working to convene 'a conference of fairly compatible "pro family" groups from across the globe, to serve as a kind of informal Congress of Families with the purposes of (1) defining the common pressures on families in modern countries, vis-a-vis state and economy, and

(2) drafting an “appeal” or “declaration” to the governments of the world including common demands’ (Carlson 1995, 4). He promised to start to organise such an event by mid-1996. The first World Congress of Families took place in Prague in 1997 with the active participation of Shevchenko and Antonov.⁴

The four days spent by Carlson in Moscow in 1995, as reported in his diary, were entirely organised by Antonov. One episode in Antonov’s scholarly biography gives a hint as to the closeness he felt between his views and those of Carlson. During the late 1980s and early 1990s, Antonov was involved in a Russian-American project of family sociologists, initiated by the University of Minnesota. The results of the project were published in 1994 under the title *Families before and after Perestroika. Russian and U.S. perspectives* (Maddock et al. 1994). The project appears to have been a source of disappointment for both the American and the Russian sociologists involved (Stoeckl 2018a, 65).

Instead of a co-authored article, the volume reproduced at one point the transcript of a discussion between Antonov and an American family sociologist, Shirley Zimmerman. The discussion conveys fundamental disagreement between the two scholars. During the exchange, Antonov expresses the view that the role of the family is that of ‘a mediator between the reproductive interests of the personality and the society. The family is a social institution ensuring both demographic and social reproduction’ (Maddock et al. 1994, 197), to which the American sociologist replies: ‘You must admit that many professional colleagues, both in your society and in mine, do not place primary emphasis upon the family’s reproductive function as a cornerstone of family policy. That notion may have some logic from a demographic point of view; however, it is difficult to support from either a feminist or an environmental perspective’ (Maddock et al. 1994, 197). And she continues: ‘Given the differing histories of our respective societies, it is curious that in our dialogue, you emphasize individual motives while I emphasize social justice – an interesting switch from the traditional stereotypes of Soviet communism and American capitalism’ (Maddock et al. 1994, 197).

Antonov recalled the episode years later and said that in this project all the American scholars were ‘democrats, not republicans’. He had sent this publication to Carlson before their first personal meeting in 1995 so that he should understand ‘what they [the American sociologists at Minnesota University] criticise me for’ and in order to persuade Carlson that they were ‘thinking alike’ (Interview with Anatoly Antonov 2017).

The episode reveals an ideological alignment between the two founders of the WCF that is rooted in an experience of rejection from the academic mainstream in family sociology. Carlson’s work on family policy has received only parochial attention by academic scholars in the West, and has been labelled ‘Christian Right Social Sciences’ (Buss and Herman 2003, xxxiii). Carlson, instead, sees himself as a legitimate representative of an alternative sociological school which ‘ran sharply counter to the primary thrust of American sociology in this era [which was] neo-Marxist in orientation’ (Carlson in Zimmerman, Kurth, and Carlson 2008, viii). Antonov, in turn, also saw himself as a family sociologist grappling with the Marxist legacy. The views of the two scholars matched in terms of their anti-Marxism and their shared experience of exclusion from western mainstream family sociology.

The academic episode also reveals the main driving motive for Antonov’s interest in family sociology: demography. Already in the mid-1980s, Antonov had observed a decline in birth rate in the Soviet Union and advocated state support for the reproductive role of the family as a response. His 1985 article in the *Meditsinskaia gazeta* (*Medical Newspaper*)

was entitled ‘Dvukh detei malo’ (‘Two children is not enough’) (Antonov 1985).⁵ His anxiety about demography only increased when, in the mid-1990s, Russia’s economic and demographic crisis was unfolding at full speed (Field 2000). The accelerated decline in birth rate, the crumbling of the public health care system, and the dramatic decrease in life expectancy during the years of post-Soviet transition were blamed on the poorly controlled neo-liberal ‘shock’ reforms of the time and the ‘cultural revolution’ of Russian society that had become exposed to western consumer culture overnight. Antonov, who considered the family ‘a social institution ensuring both demographic and social reproduction’, was looking for western scholarly literature that would support his views and confirm his anxieties. He found this in the writings of Carlson.

Antonov and Carlson shared admiration for one scholar and intellectual, now considered a key thinker of the Christian Right: Pitirim Sorokin (1889–1968). Sorokin was a Russian emigre Harvard sociology professor, whose works on rural society, family, and civilisational decline from the 1930s to the 1950s had greatly influenced American conservative intellectuals. Carlson was also intellectually influenced by Carle Zimmermann, who had written books together with Sorokin in 1929. Sorokin’s ideas were largely unknown in the Soviet Union, but Antonov recalls clandestinely reading his works during Soviet times. Sorokin was ‘rediscovered’ in Russia in the 1990s and became a point of reference for Russian conservatives (Uzlaner and Stoeckl 2017).

The rise of a Russian Christian Right

The Russian founding moment of the WCF not only provides early evidence for Russia’s position on the right in the global culture wars, it also showcases the emergence of a new type of religious player in the Russian religious field. Throughout the 1990s, the Russian Orthodox Church was busy with the process of institutional recovery after decades of Soviet repression of religion. Its leadership, the Moscow Patriarchate, was fighting against the influx of other religious denominations into Russia and against the influence of liberals inside the Church (Knox 2004). An Orthodox type of civil society did emerge in those years, but it was not concerned with questions of social policy. One part of this Orthodox civil society was concerned with issues internal to the Russian Orthodox Church, for example questions about the role of the laity or liturgical language; these groups usually had liberal tendencies and might form around charismatic priests, like Father Georgii Kochetkov or the legacy of Alexander Men’ (Agadjanian 2013).⁶ Another part of Orthodox civil society formed around issues related to Russian culture and religion more generally, concerning the ‘spiritual rebirth’ of Russian society after communism; these groups were often conservative, fundamentalist, and anti-western in their ideology (Shnirelman 2019). The Russian chapter of the WCF differs from both of these tendencies. It is concerned with concrete social policy issues (family, abortion), it has policy goals outside of the Orthodox Church, and it is open to contacts with Christians of other denominations. The rise of this Russian Christian Right can be documented in considerable detail by the study of the WCF and its protagonists after 1995.

The WCF moves into the orbit of the Russian Orthodox Church

The Russian Orthodox Church did not initially play a role in the creation of the WCF in Russia. The only Orthodox contact during Carlson’s visit to Moscow in 1995 had been Ivan

Shevchenko, who was not an official representative of the Russian Orthodox Church. He later dropped out of the WCF meetings and Carlson lost touch with him. The Russian Orthodox Church and its leadership entered the orbit of the WCF only later, when a younger generation of pro-family activists took over from Antonov. These were Igor Beloborodov, Alexei Komov and his wife Irina Shamolina, and Pavel Parfent'ev. Bluhm and Brand have traced this generation-shift back to 2006, when Anatoly Antonov began collaborating with Beloborodov, a sociologist at the Russian Institute for Strategic Studies, and together they founded the Institute for Demographic Research (Bluhm and Brand 2018).⁷ It may well have been through this institute that Antonov – and with him the WCF – moved into the orbit of the Moscow Patriarchate's Commission for the Family, Protection of Motherhood and Childhood (*Patriarshaia komissiiia po voprosam sem'i, zashchity materinstva i detstva*), headed by Archpriest Dmitrii Smirnov. Smirnov, formerly responsible for the relationship between the Moscow Patriarchate and the Russian military (Richters 2013, 57–58), is a conservative cleric, but rather advanced in his communication. He runs a multimedia blog and a TV programme.⁸ It seems safe to say that without him taking an interest in the World Congress of Families, the organisation would not have become part of the Russian Orthodox Church's strategy on family.

Smirnov seems to have been instrumental in the intensification of Russian activity inside the WCF by involving Alexei Komov, who was not a sociologist and initially not even a pro-family activist but a business consultant. By his own account, Komov dates his first contact with the WCF back to 2008, when the financial crisis put him out of business as a consultant and he was advised by Smirnov, whom he calls his spiritual advisor, to contact 'this organisation, this World Congress of Families, to see whether we could work together' (Dornblüth 2019). In our interview, Komov presented his personal path to the WCF as an autonomous endeavour and the fruit of a religious awakening, in an extensive narrative that is worth quoting at length:

I converted to Orthodox Christianity in a deep way maybe eight or nine years ago [...] and decided to do something good in my life. [...] We were hearing a lot of alarming news from the West, that there are gay parades all over, you know [...] and I was wondering that there must be some remaining Christians still in the West [...] and so I bought a ticket and went to Colorado Springs, where they had this World Congress of Families Leadership Meeting and I said 'Hello, I'm Alexei Komov from Russia. I'm a business consultant and let us become friends and do a big World Congress of Families in the future in the Kremlin.' That was a big dream. I had nothing and that was just a dream and they looked at me and said, 'Who is this guy?' (Interview with Alexei Komov 2017)

In 2011, Komov set up his own pro-family foundation, the Foundation for the Support of the Family and Demography named after Saints Peter and Fevronia (*Fond podderzhki sem'i i demografii vo imia sviatykh Petra i Fevronii*) and, together with Pavel Parfent'ev, the Analytical Centre FamilyPolicy.ru. Komov and Smirnov initiated American-style fundraising when posting a plea to support Komov's foundation on Smirnov's blog.⁹

Thanks to Smirnov, the WCF drew closer to the Moscow Patriarchate's activities. Its pro-family agenda resonated with Russian Orthodox ideas about the family as a 'home church', a notion promoted by the late Archpriest Gleb Kaleda (1921–1994) (Kaleda 1998). Smirnov may be considered a student of this theological school of the family as a 'home church', and as the head of the Patriarchate's Commission for the Family he is in charge of formulating the Patriarch's policy line on the family. The Moscow Patriarchate

acted as a co-convenor of the Family Congress of 2014 in Moscow, members of the WCF have participated in Church activities like the annual Christmas readings (Pravoslavie 2018), and WCF activities started to feature regularly as news items on the Church's press service (Patriarchia 2018). A particularly clear example of the WCF's influence on Russian Orthodox Church policies was the official statement of the Patriarchate's Commission for Family against legislative changes in the area of domestic violence (Patriarchal Commission 2019), which cited an expert report prepared by the WCF (FamilyPolicy.ru 2019).

The political and business connections of the Russian WCF

The main sponsors behind the new generation of Russian participants in the WCF were two wealthy and well-connected businessmen, Vladimir Yakunin and Konstantin Malofeev. Yakunin is the former head of the Russian railways and the president of a number of organisations and initiatives, among them the Russkiy Mir Foundation, the Dialogue of Civilisations Research Institute, and the Saint Andrew the First-Called Foundation (*Fond Andreia Pervosvannogo*). This last foundation includes an organisation called Sanctity of Motherhood (*Sviatost' Materinstvo*), directed by Yakunin's wife Natalia Yakunina. Sanctity of Motherhood was founded in 2006 as a pro-life organisation, and its main aim is to counsel women against having an abortion. When the WCF organised a congress in Moscow in 2014, Sanctity of Motherhood was among the sponsors, and representatives of the organisation have also been present at subsequent congresses.

The second sponsor behind the Russian chapter of the WCF is Konstantin Malofeev. Again by his own account, Komov used his connections from his times as a business consultant to bring Malofeev on board for the organisation of a large WCF event in Moscow in 2014 (Dornblüth 2019). Malofeev is a businessman who owns the Saint Basil the Great Charitable Foundation (*Fond Sviatitelia Vasiliia Velikogo*), founded in 2007. The activities of the Foundation include an Orthodox private school and the TV station *tsargrad.tv*, which promotes Russian Orthodox statehood.¹⁰ Both Yakunin and Malofeev had (and still have) good connections with the Kremlin and the Moscow Patriarchate. In fact, Malofeev moved right into the centre of the leading circle of the Russian Orthodox Church in 2019, when he became vice director of the World Russian People's Congress (*Vsemirnyi Russkii Narodnyi Sobor*), an organisation of the Russian Orthodox Church directed by Patriarch Kirill himself.

Thanks to these wealthy sponsors and the clerical support of Smirnov, the WCF finally came to Russia in 2014, with the full support of the Russian government:

We managed finally to organise it in the Kremlin and in the Christ the Saviour Cathedral's congress hall, which is the official congress hall of Russian Orthodox Church. And we had a meeting at the State Duma, so our people went to State Duma, and we had the Kremlin given to us for basically a private party with a laser show in the ancient cathedral; that was amazing. (Interview with Alexei Komov 2017)

Komov beamed with pride when he said: 'Our American friends couldn't believe that there was, you know, a welcome on such a huge scale in Russia' (Interview with Alexei Komov 2017).

As a matter of fact, the Moscow congress took place in August 2014 no longer under the official tutelage of the WCF and despite numerous withdrawals of participants from the West. Russia had annexed Crimea just months earlier and was under international sanctions. The congress's main sponsor, Malofeev, was on the US sanctions list for financing Russian fighters in Eastern Ukraine (Southern Poverty Law Center 2018). Under these circumstances, many of the American participants withdrew from participation, and the Howard Center for Family, Religion and Society issued a press release according to which 'the situation in the Ukraine and Crimea (and the resulting U.S. and European sanctions) has raised questions about the travel, logistics, and other matters necessary to plan WCF VIII' (Christian Newswire 2014). The congress in Moscow took place nonetheless under the leadership of the Russian section of the WCF, the Patriarchate's Commission for Family directed by Smirnov, and with the participation of the Moscow Patriarchate. This was only a temporary and superficial blow to cooperation, which intensified again in 2016 and 2017, when the Russian chapter of the WCF was involved in hosting international congresses in two countries of the former Soviet Union, in Georgia and in the Republic of Moldova, with the active participation of western partners (see: Gessen 2017).

The Russian chapter of the WCF is related to business and to Russian politics in ways that are not transparent, but evident: Malofeev and Yakunin as official sponsors, a laser show in the Kremlin's main cathedral, the participation of influential members of the Duma, like Elena Mizulina, in WCF events. The connection with politicians like Mizulina, who was among those responsible for the restrictive Law for the Purpose of Protecting Children from Information Advocating for a Denial of Traditional Family Values (known as the Law against Homosexual Propaganda) in 2012 and other initiatives geared towards the legal affirmation of 'traditional values', puts the WCF in line with the broader phenomenon of Russia's conservative turn since 2012 (Makarychev and Medvedev 2015; Sumlennyi 2013; Wilkinson 2014). The case study of the WCF adds to our understanding of this recent conservative turn, inasmuch as it showcases the interaction between different types of actors, namely transnational civil society actors, Russian businessmen, politicians, and the Russian Orthodox Church. It also shows, however, that the Russian conservative turn has historical roots that pre-date the rise to prominence of 'traditional values' as a domestic and foreign policy goal, which is usually associated with Putin's third presidential turn around 2012 (Curanović and Leustean 2015; Stepanova 2015).

Strategies of the WCF

Through the WCF, ideas and strategies more commonly associated with the American Christian Right, for example interdenominational cooperation, have been imported into the Russian Orthodox milieu. The Russian WCF is open to contacts with Christians of other denominations, much in contrast to the widespread hostility to other Christian denominations inside the Russian Orthodox Church. The WCF stands for a type of interfaith cooperation which sees conservative Christians unite against common foes (liberalism, secularism, feminism etc.) while ignoring or taking a distance from the doctrinal and dogmatic efforts at reconciliation made by the official ecumenical movement as represented, for example, by the World Council of Churches (Stoeckl 2018a). In fact, Andrey Shishkov has spoken about the WCF as a type of 'conservative ecumenism' (Shishkov 2017).

The Russian chapter of the WCF has also imported social conservative practices that are commonly associated with the American Christian Right and constitute a novelty in the Russian Orthodox context. While the export of pro-life ideas from the United States to Russia has already been studied by some authors (Luehrmann 2017; Mancini and Stoeckl 2018), the dissemination of homeschooling in Russia is a very recent phenomenon. Komov and his wife are the founders of the Russian homeschooling movement and have translated a popular North American homeschooling teaching curriculum, 'Classical Conversations', into Russian.¹¹ In 2018, they organised an international Homeschooling Congress in Moscow and St Petersburg in cooperation with the American Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA 2018). Archpriest Smirnov again acted as a facilitator when he received American homeschool promoters in a recorded meeting available online (HSLDA 2017). Homeschooling is a characteristic practice among the American Christian Right (Dowland 2015) and its global spread can be interpreted in the framework of the globalisation of the American culture wars (Mourão Permoser and Stoeckl, *forthcoming*; Shimov 2019).

The declared policy goals of the Russian chapter of the WCF are not only domestic, but also transnational. Komov depicts his organisation as a conservative think tank that seeks to influence policymakers and he describes his transnational connections as 'networking for political values'. An example he gave in our interview was the protests against same-sex marriage legislation in Mexico, which were organised in Moscow:

When our Mexican friends ... I think it was this fall [2016] ... when their president tried to introduce same sex marriage on the federal level in Mexico ... our Mexican friends they asked us to make a big lobbying rally near the Mexican embassy in Moscow and we did it. With some posters. And we arranged it in Washington, in Madrid, in many countries around the world. (Interview with Alexei Komov 2017)

This, he said, was their activity on street level, and 'then we have the intellectuals level, the think tanks and then the decision makers, some friendly members of Parliament, etc.' (Interview with Alexei Komov 2017). Even though he is likely to be exaggerating the importance of his organisation, there is a clear picture of involvement in global Christian Right activism and Russian domestic politics through 'friendly members of Parliament' (by which he probably means parliamentarians like the above-mentioned Elena Mizulina).

The integration of the Russian chapter of the WCF into transnational networks of the Christian Right is facilitated by Komov's personal background. He studied in the United States, speaks several western languages, knows western politics, and he has adopted the habitus of American Christian conservatives. Komov also has contacts with politicians of the European populist right and conservative interest groups in Europe. In 2013 he spoke at the party congress of the Italian right-wing party Northern League (*Lega Nord*), erroneously introduced as the 'Russian Ambassador to the United Nations' (Video 2013).¹² He returned to Italy in 2019 for the organisation of the WCF in Verona, and he has regular contacts with the Italian organisation Pro Vita (Pro Vita 2015). Komov also freely admitted to having contacts with members of the right-wing Freedom Party of Austria (*Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs*, FPÖ) (Interview with Alexei Komov 2017) and Alternative for Germany (*Alternative für Deutschland*, AfD) (Janik 2019).

Finally, the Russian chapter of the WCF promotes its social policy goals in religious-moral language, but without actual theological content. The WCF started as an academic

and activist pro-family movement and only subsequently engaged with the Moscow Patriarchate; through the Patriarchate's Commission for the Family and its head Smirnov it has acted as an agenda-setter on family issues inside the Russian Orthodox Church. This is an important point to make, because traditional Orthodox theological positions on the family actually emphasise asceticism and celibacy over family life and parenting (Gallaher 2018). The lack of theological content in the WCF's agenda becomes evident when scrutinising the speeches of Komov, who has repeatedly elaborated a controversial narrative of Russia's moral salvation in the context of the global culture wars. The narrative is presented in detailed fashion in the source that I cite in this article (AVA 2014), but it has been repeated by Komov on many occasions at WCF events observed during fieldwork (for another rendering of this narrative, see: Moss 2017, 202–203).

Komov's narrative goes as follows: Russia is a bulwark of Christian values throughout the world and has a special role in the struggle against a global anti-family lobby. Komov explains that Bolshevism was a western imposition on the Russian people that aimed at destroying family values and national unity by introducing feminism and the right to abortion. The Russian people were saved by Stalin, who repressed the progressive Trotskyists and reinstated patriarchal authority and patriotic values. 'Stalin,' Komov says, 'brought down a destructive revolutionary wave. For this reason, the ideologists of Marxism moved to the West' (AVA 2014). In the West, the narrative continues, the Trotskyists embraced the programme of Antonio Gramsci of a 'long march through the institutions' and are now attempting to destroy the traditional family through popular culture and the dissemination of progressive ideas, in particular the idea of gender. 'This happened,' Komov explains, 'largely due to the activities of the so-called Frankfurt School of Neo-Marxism, which operated in the 1920s–1940s. The theorists of this school (Marcuse, Adorno, Horkheimer, Fromm) combined the ideas of Marx with Freudianism and gave rise to the concept of the sexual revolution of the 1960s' (AVA 2014). Western democracies, international bodies like the United Nations or the European Union, and also the philanthropists George Soros or Bill and Melinda Gates, are cited by Komov as the agents of this strategy. Komov cautions his audience against considering the West as an ideological monolith: 'In the West, there are liberals and conservatives. Western liberals are socialists and atheists, while conservatives advocate private initiative and Christian and family values.' And he ends: 'Russia has a real historical chance to become the universally recognised leader of this nascent "Pro-family" movement and regain ideological and moral leadership in geopolitics' (AVA 2014).

This highly problematic rewriting of the ideological history of the twentieth century in which Komov engages, here cited from one source of a published speech given in 2014, combines a series of Christian Right ideas – elaborated in the context of the American culture wars – with a positive evaluation of Stalin and of the Soviet period. The narrative confirms a dynamic described by Marlene Laruelle as ideological 'mirror games' between Russian and American conservatives (Laruelle 2019). It likewise lends support to those analyses that see Russia's turn to traditional values in a geopolitical key (Curanović 2019; Curanović and Leustean 2015), and as tied in with a narrative of Russia as 'true' Christian Europe against western liberalism and secularism (Grishaeva 2019). From an illiberal ideological perspective, it is a powerful narrative, not least because it presents Russia as

the true 'winner' of Cold War history, and it is evidently persuasive to a western audience, at least in the context of the WCF.

The Russian chapter of the WCF, I argue in this article, is a new type of actor in the Russian religious field, an actor that 'mirrors' the American Christian Right. It has, firstly, imported into the Russian Orthodox milieu arguments and strategies associated commonly with the American Christian Right in the context of the American culture wars. It is, secondly, open to contacts with Christians of other Christian denominations, much in contrast to the widespread hostility to other Christian denominations inside the Russian Orthodox Church. Thirdly, it is active transnationally and connected with populist right-wing groups in Europe. Fourth, it sustains an ideological agenda and view of history as a global culture war, without actual theological content.

Conclusion

This article has shed light on some of the more hidden facets of Russia's turn to traditional values. This turn is not completely homegrown, nor is it the work of the Russian Orthodox Church alone. The article has shown that the Russian conservative pro-family movement is closely connected with the American Christian Right, from which it has adopted key ideas and strategies. The analysis offers a corrective to the literature, which often attributes Russian conservatism exclusively to Russia's imperial past and Orthodox Christianity (cf. Bowring 2013). John Anderson, despite finding many parallels between conservative Christian politics in Russia and in the United States, nonetheless concludes that 'there is nothing comparable to the US Christian Right in Russia' (Anderson 2015, 15). This article argues, on the contrary, that a Russian Christian Right exists today at the intersection of religion, politics, and business. Not least because it is effectively recognised by American Christian Right groups as their valid counterpart, this new phenomenon in the Russian religious field deserves scholarly attention. More research on the topic would also need to explore the cogency of Christian Right ideas in the Russian public. In the United States, the Christian Right can count on a large constituency of conservative Evangelical Christians that regularly vote on the basis of their religious views. Whether the Russian Christian Right actually has a constituency of its own is a question that awaits sociological verification.

Notes

1. The headquarters of the WCF have always been in the United States, first at the Howard Center for Family, Religion & Society in Rockford Illinois, today in Washington DC. Since 2016, the NGO is called the International Organization for the Family (IOF), while World Congress of Families continues to be the 'brand name' for the international congresses organised by this group. Website: <https://www.profam.org/> (accessed 30 January 2020). The Russian chapter of the WCF is translated as *Vsemirnyi Kongress Semei* – in this article, I refer to it with its English name. Website: <http://www.familypolicy.ru/> (accessed 4 February 2020). Prior to 2016, the internet presence of the WCF was discontinuous, with sites created ad-hoc for congresses and then going offline.
2. Allan C. Carlson, 'A Pro-Family Income Tax', *National Affairs* 37, no. Fall (1989). Many of Allan Carlson's texts have been translated into Russian.

3. This brotherhood was registered in 1991 and existed until 2009. 'Favor' is a reference to Mount Tabor. In Eastern Orthodox Christian theology, the light of Tabor is that revealed on Mount Tabor at the Transfiguration of Jesus.
4. After this first meeting in Moscow and from the first congress in Prague in 1997 onwards, the WCF organised large international events in an irregular rhythm: 1999 Geneva, 2004 Mexico City, 2007 Warsaw, 2009 Amsterdam. Since 2012 international congresses have taken place annually: 2012 Madrid, 2013 Sydney, 2014 Moscow, 2015 Salt Lake City, 2016 Tbilisi, 2017 Budapest, 2018 Chisinau, and 2019 Verona.
5. I am grateful to the anonymous reviewer who drew my attention to this article.
6. Alexander Men' (1935–1990) was a priest of the Russian Orthodox Church with a reputation as an ecumenical theologian and Biblical Studies scholar. He became a popular voice of the liberal current within Orthodox Christianity in the late perestroika period, attracting large audiences to his sermons and public lectures. His parish in Pushkino outside Moscow was a meeting point for religious dissidents and liberal intelligentsia from the capital. Conservative Orthodox church circles were critical of Men' for his ecumenism and his openness towards the laity inside the Church, and Russian nationalists resented his Jewish origins. He was assassinated in September 1990 under circumstances that were never fully clarified.
7. A website of this name (www.demographia.ru) still exists today and runs news and information about the World Congress of Families.
8. Antonov and other members of this institute occasionally figured as interview partners in Smirnov's television programme *Pod Chasy* ('Under the Clock'), as did American conservative speakers who visited Moscow in the context of the World Congress of Families or homeschooling events.
9. Website: <http://www.dimitrysmirnov.ru/blog/donation/> (accessed 4 December 2018).
10. Website: <http://fondsvv.ru/about/> (accessed 14 May 2018).
11. Website: <http://classicalconversations.ru/> (accessed 5 December 2018).
12. The Lega Nord Congress of 2013 was an important event in the party's history, because Matteo Salvini was elected new secretary and Umberto Bossi, the founder of the Lega Nord, stepped back. Salvini's connections to Russia have become the subject of investigative journalism and are also discussed in Shekhovtsov (2017).

Acknowledgements

This article was written with the research support of Olena Kostenko. The author also wishes to acknowledge the helpful comments by Dmitry Uzlaner, Caroline Hill, Pasquale Annicchino, Andrey Shishkov, Clifford Bob, the journal editors, and two anonymous reviewers.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Funding

The research for this article has been supported by the European Research Council under the Horizon 2020 framework programme (POSEC, grant nr. 676894).

Notes on contributor

Kristina Stoeckl is a professor at the University of Innsbruck. She has a PhD from the European University Institute and in the past has held research and teaching positions at the University of Rome Tor Vergata, the University of Vienna, the Central European University, the Robert Schumann

Center for Advanced Studies, and the Institute for Human Sciences IWM (Vienna). Her research areas are sociology of religion with a focus on Orthodox Christianity, religion-state relations in Russia, and problems of political liberalism and religion. She is currently working on a book about the role of Russia in the global culture wars.

ORCID

Kristina Stoeckl  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-5043-2977>

References

- Agadjanian, A. 2013. "Reform and Revival in Moscow Orthodox Communities. Two Types of Religious Modernity." *Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions* 162: 75–94. doi:10.4000/assr.25058.
- Anderson, J. 2015. *Conservative Christian Politics in Russia and the United States. Dreaming of Christian Nations*. London, New York: Routledge.
- Antonov, A. 1985. "Dvukh Detei Malo." *Meditinskaja gazeta*, September 27.
- AVA. 2014. "Aleksij Komov v Kishineve: 'Pora postaviti posledniju točku v otnoshenii k kommunizmu'." *AVA News Portal Moldova*, April 12. Accessed 21 October 2019. <https://ava.md/2014/04/12/aleksey-komov-v-kishineve-pora-postavit/>
- Blue, M. 2013. "Globalizing Homophobia, Part 4: The World Congress of Families and Russia's 'Christian Saviors'." *RightWingWatch*, October 4. Accessed 29 January 2020. <https://www.rightwingwatch.org/post/globalizing-homophobia-part-4-the-world-congress-of-families-and-russias-christian-saviors/>
- Bluhm, K., and M. Brand. 2018. "Traditional Values' Unleashed: The Ultraconservative Influence on Russian Family Policy." In *New Conservatives in Russia and East Central Europe*, edited by K. Bluhm and M. Varga, 223–244. London, New York: Routledge.
- Bluhm, K., and M. Varga, eds. 2018. *New Conservatives in Russia and East Central Europe*. London, New York: Routledge.
- Bob, C. 2012. *The Global Right Wing and the Clash of World Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bowring, B. 2013. *Law, Rights and Ideology in Russia*. London, New York: Routledge.
- Buss, D., and D. Herman. 2003. *Globalizing Family Values. The Christian Right in International Politics*. Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press.
- Carlson, A. C. 1995. *Diary of Trip to Moscow and Prague*. Gift to the author (unpublished source).
- Chitanava, E., and K. Sartania. 2018. "Public Space: The Battleground in the Revanchist City." In *The Rise of Illiberal Civil Society in the Former Soviet Union*, edited by A. Hug. London: Foreign Policy Think Tank. Accessed 15 October 2018. <https://fpc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/The-rise-of-illiberal-civil-society-in-the-former-Soviet-Union.pdf>
- Christian Newswire. 2014. "Planning for World Congress of Families VIII Suspended." *Christian Newswire*, March 25. Accessed 23 June 2020. <http://www.christiannewswire.com/news/372773850.html>
- Curanović, A., and L. N. Leustean. 2015. "The Guardians of Traditional Values: Russia and the Russian Orthodox Church in the Quest for Status." In *Faith, Freedom and Foreign Policy. Challenges for the Transatlantic Community*, edited by M. Barnett, C. Bob, N. F. Onar, A. Jenichen, M. Leigh, and L. N. Leustean, 191–212. Washington: Transatlantic Academy.
- Curanović, A. 2019. "Russia's Contemporary Exceptionalism and Geopolitical Conservatism." In *Contemporary Russian Conservatism: Problems, Paradoxes and Dangers*, edited by M. Suslov and D. Uzlauer, 207–233. Brill: Leiden.
- Dornblüth, G. 2019. "Religiöse Recht in Russland un den USA." *Deutschlandfunk*, November 19. Accessed 29 January 2020. https://www.deutschlandfunk.de/netzwerk-konservativer-christen-religiose-rechte-in.724.de.html?dram:article_id=463836

- Dowland, S. 2015. *Family Values and the Rise of the Christian Right*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- FamilyPolicy.ru. 2019. "Pravovoi analiz proekta Federal'nogo zakona 'O profilaktike semeino-bytovogo nasiliia v Rossiiskoi Federatsii.'" *Website of FamilyPolicy.ru*, December. Accessed 4 February 2020. <http://www.familypolicy.ru/rep/rf-19-051-01.pdf>
- Field, M. G. 2000. "The Health and Demographic Crisis in Post-Soviet Russia: A Two-Phase Development." In *Russia's Torn Safety Nets: Health and Social Welfare during the Transition*, edited by M. G. Field and J. L. Twigg, 11–42. New York: Palgrave Macmillan US.
- Froese, P. 2008. *The Plot to Kill God: Findings from the Soviet Experiment in Secularization*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Gallaher, B. 2018. "Tangling with Orthodox Tradition in the Modern West: Natural Law, Homosexuality, and Living Tradition." *The Wheel* 13/14: 50–63.
- Gessen, M. 2017. "Family Values. Mapping the Spread of Antigay Ideology." *Harper's Magazine* February 2017. Accessed 11 June 2019 <https://harpers.org/archive/2017/03/family-values-3/>
- Gingrich, A., and M. Banks, eds. 2006. *Neo-Nationalism in Europe and Beyond. Perspectives from Social Anthropology*. New York, Oxford: Berghahn.
- Glanzer, P. L. 2002. *The Quest for Russia's Soul: Evangelicals and Moral Education in Post-Communist Russia*. Waco TX: Baylor University Press.
- Grishaeva, E. 2019. "'Making Europe Great Again': Anti-Western Criticism from Orthodox Conservative Actors Online." In *Contemporary Russian Conservatism: Problems, Paradoxes and Dangers*, edited by M. Suslov and D. Uzlner, 234–256. Brill: Leiden.
- HSLDA. 2017. "Why Homeschooling Is Gaining Respect in Russia." *Website of the Home School Legal Defense Association*, April 4. Accessed 4 December 2018. <https://hsllda.org/content/hs/international/Russia/201704040.asp>
- HSLDA. 2018. "Recordsetting Event Promotes Homeschooling in Russia and the World." *Website of the Home School Legal Defense Association*, May 30. Accessed 4 December 2018. <https://hsllda.org/content/hs/international/20180530-recordsetting-event-promotes-homeschooling-in-russia-and-the-world.aspx>
- Hunter, J. D. 1991. *Culture Wars. The Struggle to Define America*. New York: Basic Books.
- Interview with Alexei Komov. 2017. *Unpublished interview conducted in the context of the project Postsecular Conflicts (Moscow)*. The interview was conducted in English. Interviewer: Kristina Stoeckl.
- Interview with Anatoly Antonov. 2017. *Unpublished interview conducted in the context of the project Postsecular Conflicts (Moscow)*. The interview was conducted in Russian. Interviewer: Olena Kostenko.
- Janik, R. 2019. "Konservative aller Welt, vereinigt: Die US-russische Achse beim 'World Congress of Families'." *Addendum*, April 4. Accessed 4 February 2020. <https://www.addendum.org/news/world-congress-of-families/>
- Kaleda, G. 1998. *Domashniaia Tserkov'*. Moskva: Izd. Zachat'evskii Monastyr'.
- Kane, G. 2009 Winter /Spring. "Commentary: Exporting 'Traditional Values'." *The World Congress of Families*. *The Public Eye*. Accessed 03 November 2016. <http://www.publiceye.org/magazine/v24n4/exporting-traditional-values.html>
- Knox, Z. K. 2004. *Russian Society and the Orthodox Church: Religion in Russia after Communism*. New York, London: RoutledgeCurzon.
- Kováts, E., and M. Pöim, eds. 2015. *Gender as Symbolic Glue. The Position and Role of Conservative and Far Right Parties in the Anti-gender Mobilizations in Europe*. Brussels: FEPS in Cooperation with the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.
- Kuhar, R., and D. Paternotte, eds. 2017. *Anti-Gender Campaigns in Europe. Mobilizing against Equality*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Laruelle, M. 2019. "Mirror Games: Ideological Resonances between Russian and US Radical Conservatism." In *Contemporary Russian Conservatism: Problems, Paradoxes and Dangers*, edited by M. Suslov and D. Uzlner, 177–204. Brill: Leiden.

- Levintova, H. 2014. "How US Evangelicals Helped Create Russia's Anti-gay Movement." *Motherjones*, February 21. Accessed 09 October 2018. www.motherjones.com/politics/2014/02/world-congress-families-russia-gay-rights
- Luehrmann, S. 2017. "Innocence and Demographic Crisis: Transposing Post-abortion Syndrome into a Russian Orthodox Key." In *A Fragmented Landscape: Abortion Governance and Protest Logics in Europe*, edited by S. De Zordo, J. Mishtal, and L. Anton, 103–122. New York: Berghahn Books.
- Maddock, J. W., M. J. Hogan, A. I. Antonov, and M. S. Matskovsky. 1994. *Families before and after Perestroika. Russian and U.S. Perspectives*. New York, London: Guilford Press.
- Makarychev, A., and S. Medvedev. 2015. "Biopolitics and Power in Putin's Russia." *Problems of Post-Communism* 62 (1): 45–54. doi:10.1080/10758216.2015.1002340.
- Mancini, S., and K. Stoeckl. 2018. "Transatlantic Conversations: The Emergence of Society-protective Anti-abortion Arguments in the United States, Europe and Russia." In *The Conscience Wars. Rethinking the Balance between Religion and Equality*, edited by S. Mancini and M. Rosenfeld, 220–257. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Marzouki, N., D. McDonnell, and O. Roy, eds. 2015. *Saving the People. How Populists Hijack Religion*. London: Hurst.
- Moss, K. 2017. "Russia as the Savior of European Civilization: Gender and the Geopolitics of Traditional Values." In *Anti-Gender Campaigns in Europe. Mobilizing against Equality*, edited by R. Kuhar and D. Paternotte, 195–214. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Mourão Permoser, J., and K. Stoeckl. forthcoming. "Advocating Illiberal Human Rights: The Global Network of Moral Conservative Homeschooling Activists." *Global Networks*.
- Parke, C. 2015. "Natural Deception: Conned by the World Congress of Families." *Political Research Associates*. Accessed 03 November 2016. <http://www.politicalresearch.org/2015/01/21/natural-deception-conned-by-the-world-congress-of-families/#sthash.sABt36MU.dpbs>
- Patriarchal Commission. 2019. "Zaiavlenie Patriarshei Komissii po Voprosam Sem'i, Zashchity Materinstva i Detstva v Sviasi s Obsuzhdeniem Proekta Federal'nogo Zakona 'O Profilaktike Semeino-bytovogo Nasiliia v Rossiiskoi Federatsii.'" *Website of the Patriarchate's Commission for Family, Defence of Motherhood and Childhood*, December 3. Accessed 4 February 2020. <http://pk-semya.ru/novosti/item/7669-o-profilaktike-semejno-bytovogo-nasiliya-v-rossijskoj-federatsii.html>
- Patriarchia. 2018. "Predstaviteli Patriarshei Komissii po Voprosam Sem'i, Zashchity Materinstva i Detstva Priniali Uchastie v XII Vsemirnom Kongresse Semei." *Official Website of the Moscow Patriarchate*, September 18. Accessed 04 December 2018. <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/5269978.html>
- Pravoslavie. 2018. "Kratkaia programma XXVI mezhdunarodnykh rozhdestvenskikh obrazovatel'nykh chtenii." *Pravoslavie.ru*, January 24. Accessed 04 December 2018. <https://pravoslavie.ru/109064.html>
- Pro Vita. 2015. "Pro Vita e Komov: un ciclo di conferenze per la famiglia in Europa." *Notizie Pro Vita*, February 16. Accessed 16 March 2015. <http://www.notizieprovita.it/eventi-provita/pro-vita-e-komov-un-ciclo-di-conferenze-per-la-famiglia-in-europa/>
- Ramet, S. P. 1997. *Whose Democracy? Nationalism, Religion, and the Doctrine of Collective Rights in Post-1989 Eastern Europe*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Richters, K. 2013. *The Post-Soviet Russian Orthodox Church. Politics, Culture and Greater Russia*. London, New York: Routledge.
- Shekhovtsov, A. 2014. "A Rose by Any Other Name: The World Congress of Families in Moscow." *Anton Shekhovtsov's Blog*, September 15. Accessed 16 March 2015. <http://anton-shekhovtsov.blogspot.co.at/2014/09/a-rose-by-any-other-name-world-congress.html>
- Shekhovtsov, A. 2017. *Russia and the Western Far Right: Tango Noir*. London, New York: Routledge.
- Shimov, Y. 2019. "Soldaty Kul'turnoi Voiny. Druzhba Storonnikov 'Skrep' iz Rossii i SShA." *Radio Svoboda*, January 18. Accessed 21 October 2019. <https://www.svoboda.org/a/29717695.html>
- Shishkov, A. 2017. "Two Ecumenisms: Conservative Christian Alliances as a New Form of Ecumenical Cooperation." *State, Religion and Church* 4 (2): 58–87. doi:10.22394/2311-3448-2017-4-2-58-87.

- Shnirelman, V. 2019. "Russian Neoconservatism and Apocalyptic Imperialism." In *Contemporary Russian Conservatism: Problems, Paradoxes and Dangers*, edited by M. Suslov and D. Uzlaner, 347–378. Brill: Leiden.
- Southern Poverty Law Center. 2015. "Everything You Need to Know about the anti-LGBTQ World Congress of Families (WCF)." *Southern Poverty Law Center*. Accessed 03 November 2016. <https://www.splcenter.org/news/2015/10/21/everything-you-need-know-about-anti-lgbtq-world-congress-families-wcf>
- Southern Poverty Law Center. 2018. "How the World Congress of Families Serves Russian Orthodox Political Interests." *Southern Poverty Law Center*. Accessed 04 October 2018. <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2018/05/16/how-world-congress-families-serves-russian-orthodox-political-interests>
- Stepanova, E. 2015. "The Spiritual and Moral Foundations of Civilization in Every Nation for Thousands of Years: The Traditional Values Discourse in Russia." *Politics, Religion and Ideology* 16 (2–3): 119–136. doi:10.1080/21567689.2015.1068167.
- Stoeckl, K. 2018a. "Aktivisty vne Konfessional'nykh Granits: «konservativnyi Ekumenizm» Vsemirnogo Kongressa Semei." *Gosudarstvo, religiia, tserkov' v rossii i za rubezhom* 36 (4): 58–86.
- Stoeckl, K. 2018b. "Transnational Norm Mobilization: The World Congress of Families in Georgia and Moldova." In *The Rise of Illiberal Civil Society in the Former Soviet Union*, edited by A. Hug. London: Foreign Policy Think Tank, 73–75. Accessed 15 October 2018. <https://fpc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/The-rise-of-illiberal-civil-society-in-the-former-Soviet-Union.pdf>
- Stoeckl, K. 2019. "The Shifting Coordinates of the Conservative Worldview." *Berkley Center Blog "The Culture Wars Today"*, December 18. Accessed 9 January 2020. <https://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/responses/the-shifting-coordinates-of-the-conservative-worldview>
- Stoeckl, K., and D. Uzlaner, eds. 2020. *Postsecular Conflicts: Debates from Russia and the United States*. Innsbruck: Innsbruck University Press.
- Stroop, C. 2016. "A Right-Wing International? Russian Social Conservatism, the World Congress of Families, and the Global Culture Wars in Historical Context." *The Public Eye* 2016: 4–10.
- Sumlennyi, S. 2013. "Opasnye Sviazi. Elena Mizulina kak Provodnik Zapadnogo Vliianiia." *Slon.ru*, November 25. Accessed 06 April 2014. http://slon.ru/world/opasnye_svyazi_kak_evropeyskie_krayne_pervye_podskazyvyayut_idei_rukovodstvu_rossii-1020432.xhtml
- Uzlaner, D., and K. Stoeckl. 2017. "The Legacy of Pitirim Sorokin in the Transnational Alliances of Moral Conservatives." *Journal of Classical Sociology* 18 (2): 133–153. doi:10.1177/1468795X17740734.
- Video. 2013. "Congresso Federale Lega Nord 2013 - Ambasciatore Russo Nazioni Unite Alexey Komov." *Youtube Channel Lega Salvini Premier*. Accessed 21 October 2019. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DsgJtcNZZwQ>
- War is Boring. 2014. "The Kremlin Builds an Unholy Alliance with America's Christian Right." *Medium.com*, July 13. Accessed 16 July 2014. <https://medium.com/war-is-boring/the-kremlin-builds-an-unholy-alliance-with-americas-christian-right-5de35250066b>
- Ward, M. 1991. "Christian Broadcaster: Focus on Families - James Dobson Will Visit the Soviet Union in August and Try to Influence Policy There with Books and Videos." *Los Angeles Times*, July 4. Accessed 21 October 2019. <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1991-07-04-ga-2357-story.html>
- Wilkinson, C. 2014. "Putting "Traditional Values" into Practice: The Rise and Contestation of Anti-Homopropaganda Laws in Russia." *Journal of Human Rights* 13 (3): 363–379. doi:10.1080/14754835.2014.919218.
- Zimmerman, C. C., J. Kurth, and A. C. Carlson. 2008. *Family and Civilization*. Wilmington, Del.: ISI Books.