**Transphobia as a weapon of war: reporting on Russia's trans community amidst heightened regulation, censorship and propaganda**

**Wendy Sloane**

**Orcid:** 0000-0001-5918-7664

**Abstract**

In the wake of President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, global attention has been focused on the atrocities committed there, overshadowing the repression of minoritised groups within Russia, including the LGBTQ community. Restrictions on the press have exacerbated the situation. This chapter explores the latest crackdown on the very existence of LGBTQ Russians, particularly those in the trans community, and the resultant impact of new legislation that curtails their rights. It also examines expanded laws that criminalise journalists and others reporting positively on LGBTQ issues, causing many to practice self-censorship by avoiding the topics entirely or framing them according to state-approved narratives. Using the Hierarchy of Influences framework and historical and comparative methodology, this chapter demonstrates how state policies towards Russia's LGBTQ community, coupled with reporting restrictions, work together to strip it of previously held freedoms, and make it impossible for journalists to maintain autonomy when reporting on LGBTQ issues.

**Keywords:**

Russia, transgender, transphobia, LGBTQ, queer, gay propaganda law, human rights, journalism, censorship, hierarchy of influences

State-sanctioned homophobia and transphobia, bolstered by the Russian Orthodox Church (Luxmoore 2022) and influential public figures, are becoming increasingly pervasive in Russia. The queer community is scapegoated as a symbol of Western 'evils' and cited domestically and abroad as one of the pretexts to invade Ukraine (Young 2022). LGBTQIA+ (referred hereafter as LGBTQ) individuals face escalated persecution,

and new repressive laws criminalise reporting positively on queer issues. Journalists who do so may be fined and encounter threats, harassment, and physical violence from both state authorities and private individuals, resulting in a climate of fear that stifles open reporting on these topics.

By exploring these dynamics through Shoemaker and Reese's Hierarchy of Influences (HoI) model (Reese 2019), this chapter will show how censorship and state repression of LGBTQ issues in Russia are intricately connected to broader political strategies and societal influences. The HoI model, a key theory in journalism studies, identifies five levels of influence - organised from micro to macro level - which shape news content, providing a continuum of parameters to analyse how news is made (ibid). As such, it permits 'researchers to identify influences on news production while noting constraints on the actual act of constructing news' (Ferrucci 2018). The levels include the individual characteristics of journalists, their work routines, organisational concerns, institutional issues, and larger social systems (Reese & Shoemaker 2016).

This chapter will show that under Putin's administration, all five levels of this model - from individual to societal – clearly are working in concert, exerting a profound influence over the shaping of media content related to LGBTQ issues. This strategy is executed through a combination of legal measures, media ownership control, regulatory enforcement, and societal pressures. The framework illustrates how the layers of influence have converged to create a perfect storm, making it exceedingly difficult for journalists to report on LGBTQ topics freely and independently. By analysing the context of media freedoms in Russia today through the framework, this chapter demonstrates how state control, ideological pressures, and organised constraints significantly hinder journalists and media outlets from covering LGBTQ issues.

Employing historical and comparative research methods, data for this chapter was collected through recent news reports as well as anonymised interviews in both Russian and English with nine journalists and five Russian queer activists interviewed via Telegram or Zoom (not all are quoted here). The triangulation of journalistic articles, interviews with journalists, and interviews with queer activists provided a rich breadth of historical material and lived experience in a situation where information is limited, and people are risk-averse to talking openly. The anonymity of all research subjects was maintained throughout to address data protection issues and risks to participants and their families in Russia.

This chapter starts with an outline of the laws that target LGBTQ people and those who publicly provide information on them, including journalists, and then presents its findings categorising them by levels of influence.

**Political homophobia enshrined in law**

In December 2022, a new law expanding the 2013 'gay propaganda' law (Reuters, 2022) banned the dissemination of any information on non-traditional gender identity and forbade the portrayal of non-heteronormative relationships in the media. The 2013 law, (For the Purpose of Protecting Children from Information Advocating a Denial of Traditional Family Values), made it a punishable offence to portray anything LGBTQ-related positively for audiences which include minors, and new regulations banned 'depictions of gay lifestyles' - both positive and neutral - (MacFarquhar 2023)) for all audiences. This ban resulted in a 'rise in both court cases against gay people and violence targeting them' (ibid). The new legislation means that providing information about homosexuality is 'legally on a par with pornography or promoting suicide, violence and criminal or extremist behaviour' (Martirosyan 2022). The latest development labelled 'the LGBTQ movement' as extremist, which serves a dual purpose, according to Human Rights Watch: appealing to conservative supporters before the March 2024 presidential vote and further paralysing the work of LGBTQ rights groups (HRW 2023). Journalists - and others - can face fines for violating these bans, and media outlets can be shut down (Reuters 2022). In addition, draconian legislation introduced in July 2023 prohibited gender reassignment surgery and hormone replacement therapy, banned changing gender on legal documents, annulled marriages involving a trans partner, and outlawed adoptions by trans parents (State Duma 2023). This 'abominable transphobic legislation' shows an 'utter disregard' for human rights (Zviagina 2023). For further context, Table 1 details a timeline of key legislation concerning LGBTQ people in the USSR and Russia.

| | |
|---|---|
| December 1917 | Homosexuality is decriminalised in the wake of the October Revolution. Two Criminal Codes that followed – in 1922 and 1926 – no longer mention that homosexuality was illegal |
| March 1934 | Under Josef Stalin, Soviet Article 121 outlaws (male) homosexuality, making it punishable by up to five years of hard labour |

| | |
|---|---|
| 1993 | Male homosexuality is legalised following the collapse of the USSR |
| 1997 | Trans people can change gender markers on legal documents with a certificate confirming physical transition issued by a medical organisation |
| 2012 | 'Foreign agent' law comes into effect, including anyone whose activities 'contradict Russia's national interests' (Buyantueva, 2023) |
| 2013 | Russia's 'gay propaganda' ban is enacted, designed to 'protect' children under age 18 |
| 2018 | Trans people can change gender markers on legal documents without needing surgery or hormone replacement therapy |
| February 2020 | Putin announces he will never legally recognise same-sex relationships |
| September 2020 | Teachers authorised to search students' online social media presences to report support of LGBTQ causes |
| Late 2021 | LGBTQ organisations added to the list of 'foreign agents' |
| December 2022 | New law expanding the gay propaganda law, banning the dissemination of any information on non-traditional gender identity and forbidding portrayal of non-heteronormative relationships |
| July 2023 | Putin approves anti-trans legislation stopping hormone therapy and gender reassignment surgery, dissolving trans marriages, and banning adoptions by trans parents |
| November 2023 | Putin and the Supreme court brand the LGBTQ movement as 'extremist', with people who align themselves with it facing fines or imprisonment |

Table 1. Timeline of LGBTQ-related legislation in USSR and Russia.

According to Freedom House, the Kremlin's continued crackdown on queer rights - including restrictions on reporting - is part of its long-term strategy to 'maintain power and influence at the expense of its own citizens' fundamental rights' and a 'significant shift in using legislation to foster a sense of national identity' at their expense (Kurtanidze 2021). The restrictions, 'which render life precarious for LGBTQ individuals in Russia, have a much more ambitious purpose—to consolidate conservative support at home and position Russia as the defender of "traditional values", in opposition to

“the west”’ (Reid 2023). It also reflects a broader agenda that ‘seeks erase the community altogether’, according to a former Moscow reporter (Anonymous A 2024).

**Social Systems level - blame it on the gays**

Putin is trouncing on minority rights to bolster national unity and divert attention from ‘issues that show the weaknesses in his presidency’, said a former Moscow-based journalist, ‘He blames the West for contaminating Russian culture and values, for waging an ideological war against Russia and supporting Ukraine in its fight against Russia’ (Anonymous B 2024). Indeed, Russia’s invasion of Ukraine coincided with Putin’s pledge to crack down on ‘Western’ values within the country, with new regulations designed primarily to ‘unleash a campaign of hatred’ (Alexander 2023). This ties in with the HoI Social Systems level, in which the media reflects and reinforces the prevailing structures of power, and in which ideology shapes the way media content is made (Shoemaker and Reese, 2019).

Critics of Putin’s policies say the rhetoric is also an attempt to have a ‘common enemy’ (Reid 2023) and divert the public from losses on the battlefield. During a speech about the annexation of four regions of Ukraine - Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson, and Zaporizhzhia - Putin ‘painted the war in Ukraine as a just and defensive war against harmful Western liberal values, including gender norms and LGBTQ rights’ (Buyantueva 2023). He said:

Do we want to have here, in our country, in Russia, a parent number one, number two, number three instead of mum and dad? Do we want perversions that lead to degradation and extinction to be imposed on children in our schools? To be drummed into them that besides women and men, there are supposedly some other genders? To be offered to undergo sex change surgery? (ibid.)

As Putin’s speech indicates, Russia’s invasion of Ukraine ‘cannot be understood in isolation from the politics of gender and sexuality’, with the Kremlin constructing a ‘pernicious ideology of homophobia as geopolitics’ (Edenborg 2023).

Beyond journalism, talking about gay and trans identities in schools is now illegal, and portraying non-heteronormative characters in films and TV is a fineable offense and could also result in authorities blocking the service (Amnesty International 2023). This means films like *Brokeback Mountain* and *Call Me by Your Name* have disappeared from Russia's streaming services while other films are seeing 'gay' scenes being deleted and books censored (Vernon 2023). News organisations 'must function within the ideological boundaries set by the larger society,' with content largely influenced by 'economic, political, and cultural forces' (Reese 2007). This is an example of the HoI 'social systems' (originally called the 'ideological') level, which Reese says is the sum of all levels working together to produce an ideological result (ibid.). If it is illegal to write about the LGBTQ community in the media, not only will that be a deterrent for journalists who want to evade punishment, but it also removes LGBTQ people from the conversation - so there is nothing to write about.

**Social Institutions level – pressures on the media**

Reporting from inside Russia has never looked so bleak. In the World Press Freedom Index, Russia has dropped from a previous low ranking of 155th out of 180 countries to a 2023 ranking of 164th, creating a terrain that 'has been favourable for an increase in propaganda' (RSF 2023). According to Reporters Without Borders, Russia is waging a 'massive disinformation campaign to justify the [Ukraine] conflict' (Human Rights Online 2022). More than 4,000 Russians - and some foreigners - were prosecuted for criticising the invasion in the first ten months (Weir 2022), with many thousands more detained. For journalists reporting on LGBTQ issues, the task is made even more formidable, considering the 2022 version of the 'gay propaganda' law renders any objective coverage of the issue impossible.

Putin's recent enactment of anti-trans laws is a 'craven political move' that 'endangers the lives of those in the trans community as well as the journalists who report on them,' said a foreign reporter covering Russia (Anonymous C 2023). The expanded foreign agent law classifies anyone who 'even expresses opinions about Russian policies or officials' conduct' as a foreign agent (HRW 2023). As Reese (2007) argues, strategies such as this reveal that journalistic content primarily exists to 'maintain the status quo'.

Most journalists writing about queer issues are now based outside of Russia, leading to news articles published inside Russia that either follow Putin's narrative or simply recite facts, such as when the latest legislation was enacted (Anonymous E). In-depth interviews with trans activists are hard to obtain unless the individuals have emigrated

with no plans to return, as speaking openly is dangerous [ibid]. ‘When you ban coverage of controversial issues, there is no opportunity to normalise them,’ said a reporter who covered Russia for a U.S. publication, ‘Without coverage, LGBT folk will be terrified to come out of the closet. Representation matters’ (Anonymous D 2023). Independent Russian-language media based outside the country, such as Meduza, Mediazona, and the Moscow Times, can report freely. However, their content is primarily accessible only through VPNs or end-to-end encrypted apps such as Telegram. And now, as these news outlets have been designated ‘undesirable organisations’, both the journalists who write for them and the people who access them from inside Russia can face criminal prosecution for doing so (Moscow Times, 2024).

Uncensored news reported from outside Russia can sometimes backfire. When Mediazona, now based in Latvia, published an article detailing how trans women can avoid conscription following Putin’s decree on partial mobilization in September 2022, it attracted unwanted attention from state authorities. ‘It sounded like a good thing, but all trans organisations were unhappy as it attracted a lot of attention,’ said a Russian queer activist now based in Europe (Anonymous E 2023).

**Media Organisations level - marching to the level of the state drum**

Media organisations that operate now within Russia are controlled or fully owned by entities with close government ties, or their business interests are tied in with toeing the government line. As a result, they impose strict guidelines that preclude LGBTQ coverage, or demand that all reporting aligns with state policy. Russian activists who have emigrated abroad and published pro-LGBTQ material to help those still in the country say they cannot now go back to Russia for fear of arrest (Anonymous E 2024). ‘It puts at risk anyone in the country who is discovered to be writing for them,’ the former Moscow-based journalist said (Anonymous A 2024). Indeed, as the HoI framework points out, ‘tensions at the organizational level are particularly revealed during times of social change’ (Reese and Shoemaker 2016). For example, self-censorship increased in Hong Kong following the handover to mainland China, putting more pressure on local media organisations, many of whom ‘had business ties to the mainland’ (ibid). Therefore self-censorship can also be seen as a consequence of pressure on the media organisation level.

Self-censorship, whether out of self-preservation or economic interest, is prevalent. Even before the invasion, the level of self-censorship amongst Russian journalists

working in the country was high, as the media organisations they work for routinely expected them to know their publication will allow them to publish (Schimpfossl and Yablokov 2014). Many, also, 'consciously distanced themselves from covering political issues, working in fields that are politically less sensitive, which allows them much greater freedom'. (ibid) Now, that self-censorship has been amplified – and the LGBTQ community is just one group paying the price. 'Not being able to write about LGBTQ people will make it even harder for violence against them to be addressed, for them to get medical and psychological care. It is one step short of making it illegal for them to exist,' the journalist said (Anonymous A 2024). Russia thinks that by 'not covering something it doesn't exist. And in some ways it doesn't, because if you cannot speak about a problem you cannot address all the issues that are important to that group of people' (ibid).

**Routine Practices level – when you don't have the language to cover a story**

Journalists in Russia feel compelled to comply with the standard practices of their media organisations which, in the HoI model, means establishing a 'pattern of practices that serve the needs of the organization, adapt to requirements of information sources, control the workflow' (Reese and Shoemaker 2016). In the context of reporting on LGBTQ issues, this often means excluding or downplaying stories of LGBTQ interest to avoid repercussions or opting to write stories that portray them negatively. The only positive coverage Russians read about the community comes from international sources. But positive media coverage is crucial, as it plays a vital role in shaping public perception. It's not just about representation: it's about providing hope and visibility to those who already feel isolated and marginalised – and it could even help change the laws. As the Russian queer activist said, 'I have a dream that [the Russian] parliament will see the coverage and do or say something regarding what is happening with queer people' (Anonymous E 2023).

Currently, however, even the language the mass media uses to cover trans issues is often outdated and harmful. The same activist noted that, even before the crackdown, few journalists understood LGBTQ concerns and often reported in ways that inadvertently cause harm. To combat this, guidelines were published to help Russian journalists refer to the LGBTQ community accurately and respectfully. These guidelines included avoiding terms like 'people of non-traditional sexual orientation' in favour of 'gay,' 'bi,' or 'non-heterosexual orientation' and saying 'transgender/trans' and 'transition' rather than 'transexual' and 'sex change.' Journalists were also urged to avoid using the term 'homosexualist' (LGBT Resources Centre 2019). Another guide suggested scrapping the term 'homosexualism' because the suffix implies pathology and deviation from the norm (LGBT International Human Rights Film Festival 2013). The HoI framework underscores that journalists can inform public opinion and shape news not

only through the information they share but through the language they choose (Zamith 2022). ‘Media content provides valuable indicators of social phenomena and vary in systematic ways - whether we call that bias, frames, balance, or impartiality - and those properties are explainable’ (Reese and Shoemaker 2016).

Press censorship further exacerbates these challenges by silencing LGBTQ voices and erasing their representation in the media. Young gay Russians are deprived of role models and accurate information, further entrenching feelings of isolation and hopelessness. Censorship legitimises societal discrimination and violence, making it difficult for young LGBTQ individuals to find acceptance and support. The lack of visible, positive LGBTQ role models and affirming information contributes to internalized homophobia, misinformation, and increased mental health risks. These combined factors create a hostile environment, hindering the personal development and safety of young LGBTQ people in Russia. Queer Svit, a UK-based charity founded in 2023 to help Russian, Ukrainian and Belarusian LGBTQ people affected by the war, has helped more than 1,000 people flee their countries to more accepting environments. Within Russia, organisations such as Center-T and the Russian LGBT Network, are working to support the community.

**Individual level – lack of representation**

Under Putin's regime, the demonisation of the queer community has been relentless. As one former foreign correspondent who spent years in Moscow noted, the government is doing ‘almost everything it can to demonise the queer community, apart from banning homosexuality completely’ (Anonymous F, 2023). This environment has led to widespread self-censorship among journalists reporting on LGBTQ issues in Russia. The threats, and harassment they face have created a climate where even discussing LGBTQ topics is seen as subversive and unpatriotic. Yet, it's crucial to recognize that not all journalists resist this narrative; some align with Putin's stance, believing in and perpetuating the state’s anti-LGBTQ rhetoric. As Shoemaker and Reese (2016) observe, media work is inherently influenced by the agency of individuals, whose actions are both constrained and enabled by the surrounding structures.

Indeed, Putin established his anti-LGBTQ agenda early in his presidency, setting the tone for a society increasingly hostile to the queer community. A 2020 survey by the Russian Levada Center found that one-fifth of Russians support the idea of ‘eliminating’ the queer community, viewing them as people who deviate from traditional norms (Maurice 2020). The survey also revealed that most Russians (56%) have negative opinions of LGBTQ people, with 31% saying they would sever ties with a friend if they were LGBTQ. Anti-LGBTQ sentiment has only grown, as evidenced by a Levada poll

conducted a year later, showing that 69% of Russians now disagree with the notion that ‘adults have the right to enter into same-sex relationships by mutual consent’ (Moscow Times 2021), a significant increase from 60% in 2013 when the gay propaganda law was first enacted.

For LGBTQ Russians, the situation is dire. They are forced to ‘do everything they can to stay off the authorities' radar,’ as the journalist remarked. This individual-level self-censorship among journalists, driven by fear and state propaganda, contributes to the mounting exclusion and persecution of the LGBTQ community. The resultant lack of accurate or positive information about LGBTQ lives not only distorts public perception but also exacerbates the marginalization and suffering of the community.

**Conclusion**

Vladimir Putin’s regime is blaming queer Russians for adopting Western ‘deviance’, to garner support for the invasion of Ukraine both in Russia and abroad and strengthen his already mighty electoral base. Reporting restrictions banning what is deemed as ‘LGBTQ propaganda’ means that ‘any act or public mention of same-sex relationships is functionally being outlawed’ (Sauer 2022). As this chapter has shown, influences on all levels of Shoemaker and Reese’s model (Reese, 2019) affect how journalists are able to cover – or not cover - LGBTQ topics. Reporters in Russia are prevented from holding those in power to account, and those who continue to report within Russia are largely reproducing Putin’s homophobic narratives, using homophobic and transphobic language, and failing to challenge his harmful ideas. To summarise, influence from all five levels of the hierarchy of influence models modify the current state of reporting on LGBTQ issues in Russia, where the government-controlled narrative takes precedence.

The hard-line legislation enacted by Putin and his allies against the queer community has made life increasingly difficult for gays and lesbians and nearly impossible for trans individuals. Trans Russians live in fear of abuse and harassment without recourse to police protection, and families with trans or non-binary parents fear state intervention that could lead to their children being taken away. These fears are well-founded: in May 2023, Jan Dvorkin, a trans activist who adopted a disabled boy, saw the child forcibly removed after a neighbour reported that Dvorkin was an unfit parent due to being transgender and gay (MacFarquhar 2023). Additionally, the ban on gender-affirming care has opened the door to unregulated hormone production and backroom surgeries, according to activists. The Russian queer activist said that the new laws have forced many trans people into dangerous sex work or illegal drug sales, as living authentically becomes too perilous (Anonymous E 2023).

LGBTQ activists and journalists interviewed for this chapter spoke of their fear of staying in Russia. They cited organised violence on the part of hate groups who target LGBTQ

individuals. ‘What’s important is that it feels that these actions are supported by the government’ (Anonymous D 2023). Trans people, especially those who do not ‘pass’, face especially hard challenges, according to interviews. Trans healthcare ‘did not really exist before but people had trans-friendly doctors. Now it’s unclear how that will be regulated,’ the Russian activist explained (Anonymous E 2023). Transfeminine people also worry they could be forced to serve in the military (Meduza 2022), where they could face mental and physical abuse if their status is known. The suicide rate among young trans Russians is already rising. A recent study showed that 12.6 percent had already attempted suicide, with 82.4 percent diagnosed with depression (Solovieva, Makarova & Kremenitskaya 2023).

Some members of Russia’s LGBT community have now been forced into hiding to protect themselves both mentally and physically. A trans man who is a Moscow university student said new anti-trans laws have made him ‘more aware’ when he is outside his home, as he fears his appearance could put him in physical danger (Anonymous G 2023). Many want to emigrate, but many specify that they only want to do it to survive: ‘There are a lot of people who want to stay as they can feel they can help the community here, but I can’t build a life for myself in a country that hates me and wants people like me dead’ (Anonymous H 2023).

Another trans man – a 38-year-old successful photographer – said he thought he was safe as he can ‘pass’ easily. But he was forced to flee Russia in 2022 with his cis-gender wife and two young children, as he feared authorities would take them away, much like they did with Jan Dvorkin. While his mother supports his transition, his in-laws remain unaware that their daughter is married to a trans man and that his children are biologically hers but not his. ‘I am not sure what their reaction would be,’ he added, saying they are safer unaware he is trans since they still live in Russia (Anonymous I 2023). A 22-year-old trans woman has spent the last six months engaged in activist work in Berlin. She too can easily ‘pass’, she said, but she worries about those who cannot. ‘It will be very hard for trans people to get work [in Russia], unless they go back into the closet,’ she said. She also worries about people who married after they transitioned. ‘Unfortunately, those married couples will be destroyed,’ she said. ‘Maybe that is the main goal of the transphobes’ (Anonymous J 2023).

Reporting on Russia’s trans community is increasingly challenging as new legislation criminalises journalists and others who produce positive coverage. President Putin is weaponising homophobia and transphobia as tools of oppression, leading many journalists to practice self-censorship by avoiding the topics or framing them along government narratives, and, as this chapter has shown, this pressure can be observed on all levels of influence. This climate of fear not only silences vital voices but also perpetuates the isolation and marginalisation of the trans community.

**Reference list**


Alexander, R. (2021). *Red Closet: The Hidden History of Gay Repression in the USSR*. Manchester: Manchester University Press. pp.243-244

Amnesty International. (2023). *Russia: moves to ban LGBTQ+ film characters will increase homophobia*. Available: https://www.amnesty.org.uk/press-releases/russia-moves-ban-lgbtq-film-characters-will-increase-homop (Accessed 20 June 2023)

Andersson, J. (2022) *Russia passes 'Answer to Blinken' gay propaganda law*.BBCm, 24 November. Available: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-63747732 (Accessed 23 August 2023)

Anonymous A (2023) Interview with the author.

Anonymous B (2023) Interview with the author.

Anonymous C (2023) Interview with the author.

Anonymous D (2023) Interview with the author.

Anonymous E (2024) Interview with the author.

Anonymous F (2024) Interview with the author.

Anonymous G (2024) Interview with the author.

Anonymous H (2023) Interview with the author.

Anonymous I (2023) Interview with the author.

Anonymous J (2023) Interview with the author.

Baska, M. (2023) *Russia adds LGBTQ + human rights group to controversial list*. Pink News, 7 May. Available: https://www.thepinknews.com/2023/05/07/russia-lgbtq-human-rights-nc-sos-crisis-group-foreign-agents/ (Accessed 23 May 2023)

Buyantueva, R. (2023) *A history of LGBTQ rights in modern Russia: From progress to despair*. LSE Blogs. Available: https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/2023/02/21/a-history-of-lgbtq-rights-in-modern-russia-from-progre (Accessed 20 July 2023)

ECCHR. (2021) *Chechnya - Repression - LGBTQ*. ECCHR. https://www.ecchr.eu/en/case/persecution-lgbtq-chechnya/ (Accessed 23 April 2023)

Feder, J. (2024) *Wear it or we will beat you to death*. The New York Times, 15 March. Available: https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/15/opinion/ukraine-russia-putin-crimes.html (Accessed 20 March 2024)

Ferrucci, P. (2018) Networked: Social media's impact on news production in digital newsrooms. *Newspaper Research Journal*. 39(1), pp.6-17.

Frankel, D & Shvets, D. (2023) *Russia's renewed push to stop VPNs. Bypassing website blocks will become increasingly difficult, experts warn*. Mediazona, 8 August. Available: https://en.zona.media/article/2023/08/08/vpn (Accessed 23 August 2023)

Human Rights Watch. (2018) *No Support: Russia's 'Gay Propaganda" Law Imperils LGBT Youth*. Available: https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/12/12/no-support/russias-gay-propaganda-law-imperils-lgbt-youth (Accessed 23 April 2023)

Human Rights Watch. (2023) *Russia: Supreme Court Bans 'LGBT Movement' as 'Extremist'*. Available: https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/11/30/russia-supreme-court-bans-lgbt-movement-extremist (Accessed 4 July 2024)

Kondakov, A. (2021) The influence of the 'gay-propaganda' law on violence against LGBTIQ people in Russia: Evidence from criminal court. *European Journal of Criminology*. 18(6), pp.777- 959.

Kurtanidze, E. (2021) *Dismantling LGBT+ rights as a means of control in Russia*. Available:. https://freedomhouse.org/article/dismantling-lgbt-rights-means-control-russia (Accessed 23 April 2023)

Lemon, J. (2022) *Russia in 'Holy War' in Ukraine Against 'Satanic' West, LGBT: Commander*. Newsweek, 17 July. Available: https://www.newsweek.com/russia-holy-war-ukraine-against-satanic-west-lgbt-command (Accessed 23 April 2023)

LGBT International Human Rights Film Festival (2013) Kak korrektno pisat o geyah, lesbiyankah I transgenderah. Available: https://issuu.com/dpetrovsky/docs/bob2013-smi2a (Accessed 23 April 2023)

LGBT Resources Centre (2013) Ya pishu I govoru korrektno. *Yekaterinburg*. Available: https://drive.google.com/file/d/15HlnoQc6QSQEDjb-K0RDms5TPqATXWmU/view at (Accessed 23 April 2023)

Luxmoore, J. (2022) *Russian Orthodox Church backs anti-LGBT legislation*. Church Times, 4 November. https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2022/4-november/news/world/russian-orthodox-church-backs-anti (Accessed 23 April 2023)

MacFarquhar, N & Birger, G. (2023) *Putin's Crackdown Leaves Transgender Russians Bracing for Worse*. The New York Times, 1 August. Available: https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/01/world/europe/russia-transgender-ban.html (Accessed 23 August 2023)

MacFarquhar, N. (2023) *Putin signs a harsh new law targeting transgender people in Russia*. The New Yoprk Times, 24 July. Available:

https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/24/world/europe/putin-transgender-transition-surgery-russia.html (Accessed 23 August 2023)

Martirosyan, L. (2022) *Explainer: What does new 'gay propaganda' law mean for LGBTIQ+ Russians?* OpenDemocracy, 24 November. Available: https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/5050/russia-gay-propaganda-law-amendments-explainer (Accessed 23 April 2023)

Maurice E. (2020) *One in five Russians are in favour of 'liquidating' and wiping out the LGBT+ community, terrifying study finds*. Pink News, 20 April. Available: https://www.thepinknews.com/2020/04/20/russia-lgbt-attitudes-survey/ (Accessed 20 June 2024)

Meduza (2022) *How Russia's mobilization affects women and transgender people*. Meduza, 24 September. Available: https://meduza.io/en/feature/2022/09/24/the-only-good-thing-is-that-they-won-t-grab-me-off-the-street (Accessed 23 April 2023)

Moore, M. (2020) *Nearly one in five Russians wants to eliminate the LGBT community*. Gay Times, 26 April. Available: https://www.gaytimes.co.uk/life/nearly-one-in-five-russians-want-to-eliminate-the-lgbtq-community/ (Accessed 23 April 2023)

Raza-Sheikh, Z. (2020) *Vladimir Putin signs constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage*. Gay Times, 8 April. Available: https://www.gaytimes.co.uk/life/vladimir-putin-signs-constitutional-amendment-banning-same-sex-marriage (Accessed 23 April 2023)

Reese, S. (2007) Journalism Research and the Hierarchy of Influences Model: A Global Perspective. *Associaco Brasileira de Pesquisadores em Jornalismo*. 3(2), pp 29 – 42

Reese, S. (2019) *Hierarchy of Influences.* International Encyclopedia of Journalism. John Wiley & Sons.

Reese, S. and Shoemaker, P. (2016) A Media Sociology for the Networked Public Sphere: The Hierarchy of Influences Model. *Mass Communication and Society*. 19(4), pp.389-410.

Reid, G. (2022) *Progress and Setbacks on LGBT Rights in Africa — An Overview of the Last Year*. Available: https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/06/22/progress-and-setbacks-lgbt-rights-africa-overview-last-year (Accessed 23 April 2023)

Reid, G. (2023) *Russia, Homophobia and the Battle for 'Traditional Values'*. Available: https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/05/17/russia-homophobia-and-battle-traditional-values (Accessed 23 August 2023)

Reuters (2022) *Russian parliament passes law banning 'LGBT propaganda' among adults*. Reuters, 24 November. Available: https://www.reuters.com/world/russias-

parliament-passes-law-banning-lgbt-propaganda-among-adults-202 (Accessed 23 April 2023)

Sauer, P. (2022) *Russia passes law banning 'LGBT propaganda' among adults*. The Guardian, 24 November. Available: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/nov/24/russia-passes-law-banning-lgbt-propaganda-adults (Accessed 23 April 2023)

Schimpfossl E and Yablov I. (2014). Coercion or Conformism? Censorship and Self-Censorship among Russian Media Personalities and Reporters in the 2010s. *n Demokratizatsiya The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization*. 22(2), pp.295-311.

Simon, S. (2022) *Russian law bans journalists from calling Ukraine conflict a 'war' or an 'invasion'*. NPR, 5 March. Available: https://www.npr.org/2022/03/05/1084729579/russian-law-bans-journalists-from-calling-ukraine-conflict (Accessed 23 April 2023)

Solovieva,N, Makarova E, and Kremenitskaya S. (2023) Transgender population in the Russian Federation: diversity and trends. *European Journal of Tranlational Myology*. 33(2)

State Duma Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation. (2023) *State Duma Bans Sex Change in Russia*. Available: http://duma.gov.ru/news/57524/ (Accessed 09 June 2024)

The Moscow Times (2021) *Most Russians Oppose Same-Sex Relationships – Poll*. The Moscow Times, 15 October 2021. Available: https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2021/10/15/most-russians-oppose-same-sex-relationships-poll-a75304 (Accessed 20 June 2024)

The Moscow Times (2024) *Russia outlaws The Moscow Times as 'undesirable' organization*. The Moscow Times, 10 July. Available: https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2024/07/10/russia-outlaws-the-moscow-times-as-undesirable-organizatio (Accessed 12 July 2024)

The Moscow Times. (2021). *Most Russians Oppose Same-Sex Relationships – Poll*. The Moscow Times,15 October. Available: https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2021/10/15/most-russians-oppose-same-sex-relationships-poll-a7530 (Accessed 23 April 2023)

Vernon, W. (2023) *Russia: Putin's Kremlin targets LGBT in new crackdown*. BBC, 23 January. Available: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-64345693 (Accessed 23 April 2023)

Weir, F. (2022). *In Russia, critiquing the Ukraine war could land you in prison*. Christian Science Monitor, 5 December 2022. Available:

https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Europe/2022/1205/In-Russia-critiquing-the-Ukraine-war-could-land-you (Accessed 23 April 2023)

Weir, F. (2023) *Kremlin's anti-trans law leaves many Russians asking, 'Who's next?'*. Available: https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Europe/2023/0804/Kremlin-s-anti-trans-law-leaves-many-Russians-askin (Accessed 20 August 2023)

Weir, F. (2024) *For Kremlin, divide with West isn't just geopolitical. It's moral.*. Christian Science Monitor, 20 January. Available: https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Europe/2024/0130/For-Kremlin-divide-with-West-isn-t-just-geopolitical (Accessed 20 July 2024)

Young, C. (2022) *Blaming the Ukraine Invasion on ... the Gays?*. Available: https://www.cato.org/commentary/blaming-ukraine-invasion-gays (Accessed 23 April 2023)

Zamith, R. (2022) *The International Journalism Handbook*. Amherst, MA: UMA Amherst Libraries.

Zviagina, N. (2023). *Russia: Adoption of transphobic legislation a horrendous blow to human rights*. Available: https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/07/russia-adoption-of-transphobic-legislation-a-horrendous-blow-to-human-rights/ (Accessed 20 August 2023)