

QUEER (RESEARCH)

IN RUSSIA & POLAND

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HISTORICAL TIMELINE

2000s Second generation of activists in Russia-organisation of pride marches leads to controversies increased public visibility and politicisation on LGBT issues.

2010s Rise of traditional values in post-soviet countries lead to entangled LGBT politics in geo-political contestations over identity and regional influence.

2012 Foreign agent laws pass the parliament

2013 Putin's ban on propaganda for non-traditional sexual relations; (Federal Law No. 135-FZ, 29.06.2013) (- rise of nationalist conservative ideology, opposes LGBT rights, governmental propaganda of animosity towards Queer People, legitimization of gay bashers, clamping down on freedom of association, censorship of freedom of media that does not represent homosexuality in a negative way, stressing of traditional values of family politics—Russia as a guardian for conservatism).

2020 Constitutional amendments to the Russian Family Code were made, containing language defining marriage as between a man and a woman.

2000

2015

2020

2015 October: Polish President Andrzej Duda vetoed the Gender Accordance Act, to the dismay of activists in Poland and all over Europe

2018 April: Leader of the ruling Law and Justice party (PiS) Jarosław Kaczyński says in a local government campaign, that "no homosexual marriages will occur; we will wait peacefully for the European Union countries to sober up"

2019 February: Mayor of Warsaw Rafał Trzaskowski signs the Warsaw LGBT Declaration and introduces the Warsaw LGBT+ Charter – guidelines for Warsaw City Hall to improve the situation of LGBT people, i.a. by including LGBTIA* issues in anti-discrimination curriculums and sex education in all schools

March: Councillors of the Świdnicki County adopted the declaration "Świdnicki County Free from LGBT Ideology". Since then, over 105 cities and municipalities have adopted such "LGBT-free zone" declarations, with proposals and anti-LGBTI lobbying taking place in another 50

2020 February: A court in Wrocław ruled that a campaign linking LGBT and paedophilia is "informative and educational". The campaign, run by ultraconservative NGO Fundacja Pro, consisted of driving vans through city centres broadcasting slogans such as "LGBT lobby wants to teach children" and "stop paedophilia" showing a crossed-out rainbow flag

June: As part of his presidential election campaign, Polish President Andrzej Duda publicly signed the Family Charter in which he pledged, among other things, to defend the institution of marriage, no adoption of children by same-sex couples and to protect the family from so-called "LGBT ideology", which he called a foreign "ideology" worse than communism, and which he vowed to ban in public institutions

August: Arrest of Margot Szustowicz because of her actions of draping a rainbow flag over a public monument and damaging a van of the Anti LGBTQIA* campaign of Fundacja Pro

August: Poland's Catholic episcopate adopted an official "position on the question of LGBT+", which includes calls for the creation of "clinics to help people who want to regain their...natural sexual orientation" stating "any acts of physical or verbal violence, any forms of hooligan behaviour and aggression against LGBT+ people" as unacceptable



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INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THIS PROJECT

Our project deals with academics researching LGBTQIA* in Poland and Russia. The focus is on the influence of politics, which argues that this research is not part of the state ideology and values and destabilizes social and political cohesion. It seems that suddenly something as private as sexuality is becoming more and more a matter of national identity.

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

We are a group of students from the Institute for Eastern European Studies at the Free University Berlin, who started working on the brochure and our research in April 2021. Our aim is to find out which restrictions and challenges these scientists are exposed to on the part of politics and society and how this influences their research. With the help of guided interviews, we would like researchers to have their say. Our questionnaires paid special attention to networking, influences from politics and religion, the selection of research topics and the relationship between LGBTQIA* activism and research. We also wanted to find out whether the seemingly increased political pressure on this branch of science compounds problems in carrying out research. Finally, the results will be contextualised to the underlying social and political dynamics.

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WHY POLAND AND RUSSIA?

Since 2019, dozens of small towns in Poland have declared themselves as 'LGBT-free Zones' (Strefy wolne od LGBT) and as 'free of LGBTQIA* ideology'. Politicians of the ruling national conservative PiS party have long spoken out themselves against LGBTQIA* people since they took power in 2015, encouraging homophobic behaviour and actions. Up to date over 100 zones, mainly in the south-east of Poland, make up an area greater than the size of Hungary. The adopted resolutions against LGBTQIA* people here foster hostile behaviour and discrimination, forcing many to leave the region or country, or to hide.

Together with many other Eastern-European countries such as Hungary, Russia under Putin's rule is being tackled by growing homophobia amongst the citizens, inspired and promoted by Putin's enforced law against LGBTQIA*-propaganda, as well as the amendment regarding foreign-agents. By implying these sets of rules, grounds for conservative, anti-LGBTQIA* and nationalist activists are made: The freedom of expression and representation of the LGBTQIA* community is as far limited, as long as they are no visible grain in the anti-LGBTQIA* agent's eye.

But the growing homophobia in both countries does not only endanger the LGBTQIA* community itself, nor the activists fighting for them. It also gives ground to the repression of academic science condemned in Russian and Polish institutions, concerning the topic of gender or LGBTQIA*. In St. Petersburg, we have already seen the Russian government closing down an entire university, for not going by the applied set of official rules such as providing a leisure and practice swimming pool for students. The 'real' cause for this closure though, not reasonably available to anybody but the government itself, could be assumed to be the European University's liberal attitude in science and research, offering courses and modules such as Gender Studies or Queer Theory—topics displeasing the government.

INTRODUCTION

OUR AIM

Growing homophobia and rhetoric against LGBTQIA* persons in both countries thus not only endangers the community itself and the activists who fight for it. It is also the reason for the suppression of gender and queer studies scholarship and academic institutions in Russia and Poland. Our research project aims to show the importance of combining queer research and the study of queer issues in Poland and Russia in making structural discrimination visible within the two societies. Moreover, the possibility of unrestricted research can be seen as a compass for the direction in which the acceptance of the LGBTQIA* community in society is moving.

With this project we want to draw attention to the situation of the researchers and their work and give them and their work a place alongside the already known activists and organisations for LGBTQIA* rights.

We hope to have been able to contribute our part in drawing attention towards visibility and the dangers of scientists, researchers and activists, concerning LGBTQIA* in both Poland and Russia. We also hope this brochure will be able to illustrate those issues in an informative fashion to our readers.

Regards,
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LEGAL SITUATION IN POLAND AND RUSSIA

RUSSIA

Despite the liberalisation of some of its anti-LGBT laws after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, including the decriminalisation of homosexual relationships in 1993, LGBTQ people in Russia have faced “extensive legal discrimination, widespread homophobia and even massive violence” (Kosterina and Bashinova, 2017). Authorities routinely denied permits for Pride parades, condoned anti-LGBTQ statements by government officials, and intimidated and arrested LGBT activists and condoned anti-LGBTQ statements by government officials (Globalequality.org, n.d.). The two most impactful laws put in place for targeting LGBTQ people is the homosexual propaganda ban and the foreign agents laws.

HOMOSEXUAL PROPAGANDA BAN

“On Amending [...] certain laws of the Russian Federation with the view to protect children from information propagating the negation of traditional family values“.

6.21. Propaganda of non-traditional sexual relationships among minors (Code of Administrative Offences of the Russian Federation No. 195-FZ, dated 29 June 2013)

1. Propaganda of non-traditional sexual relationships among minors, expressed in the dissemination of information aimed at forming non-traditional sexual attitudes among minors, attractiveness of non-traditional sexual relationships, distorted image of social equality of traditional and non-traditional sexual relationships, or the forced imposition of information of non-traditional sexual relationships, which can attract interest to such relationships, if these actions do not make up a criminal offence, shall entail the imposition of an administrative fine... (Threefold Legal Advisors LLC 2018, 2021)

In 2013, “a substitute for the criminalisation of homosexuality” (Kondakov, 2013, p.13) has been found with the introduction of the so-called Anti-Propaganda Law. The law enforces the idea of traditional family values, while at the same time seeking to prohibit the exhibition, presentation or spreading of information of anything related to homosexuality or queer-ness. The explanatory note of the Anti-Propaganda Law in its bill form stated:

The promotion of homosexuality has sharply increased in modern-day Russia. This promotion is carried out via the media as well as via the active pursuit of public activities which try to portray homosexuality as a normal behaviour. This is particularly dangerous for children and young people who are not able to take a critical approach to this avalanche of information with which they are bombarded on a daily basis. In view of this, it is essential first and foremost, to protect the younger generation from exposure to the promotion of homosexuality [...] It is therefore essential to put in place measures which provide for the intellectual, moral and mental well-being of children, including a ban on any activities aimed at popularising homosexuality. (HDT, 2014)

FOREIGN AGENT LAW

“On Amendments to Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation regarding the Regulation of the Activities of Non-profit Organisations Performing the Functions of a Foreign Agent“ (121-FZ)

The foreign agents law requires NGOs that receive funding from abroad to register as foreign agents if they engage in any political activity. The legislation was a series of amendments to existing laws: changes were applied to the criminal code and the laws “On Public Associations,” “On Noncommercial Organizations,” and “On Combating Money Laundering and the Financing of Terrorism.” Consequently, authorities were given rights to deny registration to any organization whose “goals and objectives...create a threat to the sovereignty, political independence, territorial integrity, national unity, unique character, cultural heritage, and national interests of the Russian Federation”, and to prohibit the transfer of funds to local branches of foreign NGOs or the implementation of programs. Mentioned by the Venice Commission (2014), the term ‘foreign agent’ in the Russian historical context usually has been associated with the notion of a “foreign spy” and/or a “traitor” and thus carries with it a connotation of ostracism or stigma”.

In July 2020, further anti-LGBTQ amendments to the Russian Family Code have been proposed to the state дума by Russian Senators. As Ilga Europe, a non-governmental organisation dealing with LGBTQ rights worldwide states, the proposed bills seek to further “strengthen the family institute” (Ilga-europe.org. 2020).

1) A box indicating “sex at birth” will be included in birth certificates. Changes to this category will not be made possible and people who made changes will have to replace them with the original information by 2022. A mismatch or other far reaching consequences coming from incorrect birth certificates from people accessing legal gender recognition procedures is not excluded.

2) To register marriages legally, birth certificates are required. Same-sex marriages are to be banned, leaving homosexual and trans people with different gender markers on a birth certificate and passport at risk for implications.

3) Further barriers to equal family rights for LGBTI people are a further ban on same-sex marriage, complementing the old one. Also adoption/guardianship will be banned for foreign same-sex couples, and for unmarried foreign individuals in countries where same-sex marriages are possible.

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POLAND

One of the first things that is associated with the issue of LGBTQIA* rights in Poland is the fact that in Poland homosexuality was never considered a crime within the Polish legal system. It was the sodomy laws of Russia, Prussia and Austria that criminalised homosexuality in Polish territories after the country lost its independence in 1795. A new penal code in 1932 officially decriminalised homosexuality in Poland, the first country in twentieth-century Europe to do so. The fact that Poland was the first country in Europe to officially decriminalise homosexuality is now often used by politicians from the ruling right-wing conservative party Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (PiS) to portray Poland as a country without state homophobia, arguing that there is no tradition of criminalising homosexuals in Poland, unlike in the West.

Looking at the population of today's Poland one sees a divided country. Often the division is made between the supposedly liberal part of Poland consisting of the young educated atheist pro-European urbanites in the West and the supposedly conservative older Catholics living mainly in the rural East.

In Polish political nationalist discourse, those who do not conform to cis- and heteronormative society are seen as outsiders, destructive to Polish society, titled as being an ideology of the West. LGBTQIA* are received as part of a Western threat to Polish nationhood which is a fragile construct that only gained strength with the end of communist rule and the revolution that followed. The other player in this game of intolerance is the Polish Catholic Church, playing a major role in establishing Polish Nationalism and its perspective on sexual and gender minorities. The Church was ascribed both political and moral authority within the revolution. After gaining political and moral legitimacy, conservative Catholic morality found its place in Polish everyday life and was able to spread its views on sexuality and gender (among others) in society, creating a conservative environment of intolerance. In this new Polish society, LGBTQIA* persons are seen as conspirators and corrupters of the stability of the stable heteronormative Polish nation.

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With Poland's accession to the EU in 2004 and a pro-Western government, the situation of LGBTQIA* and other minorities in Poland initially improved. However, the economic boom that followed EU accession and the free capitalism based on the US model did not reach a great number of people in the country. There was a lack of social reforms, such that the pro-European economic liberal party Platforma Obywatelska (PO) had to admit defeat to the national-right conservative Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (PiS) party, which promised social reforms and largely delivered after the election triumph. The PiS party has been in power since 2015, and since then the government has been gradually trying to establish drastic judicial reforms, also trying to affect LGBTQIA*.

Current status of LGBTQIA* rights in Poland

SAME-SEX SEXUAL ACTIVITY:

Same sex sexual activities have been legal since 1932.

RECOGNITION OF SAME-SEX UNIONS:

There has been an unregistered cohabitation since 2012.

SAME-SEX MARRIAGE:

There is a constitutional ban for same-sex marriage since 1997 (Article 18 of the Constitution is generally interpreted as limiting marriage to opposite-sex couples).

Legal challenges have been made against limiting of marriage to opposite-sex couples e.g. in the European Court some legal challenges have been made of Human Rights and The Court of Justice of the European Union has also ruled that all EU member states must recognise the rights of same-sex spouse, but no new law has been passed yet.

ADOPTION BY SAME-SEX COUPLES:

LGBT individuals may adopt, but same-sex couples have no legal right to adopt children jointly or through second parent adoption under Section II of the Polish Family and Guardianship Code.

LGB PEOPLE ALLOWED TO SERVE OPENLY IN MILITARY:

LGB people are allowed to serve openly in the military.

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LAWS CONCERNING SEXUAL ORIENTATION:

The Equal Treatment Law bans sexual orientation discrimination in employment only. Since 2003 there has been an Anti-discrimination law in employment. This prohibition is also reflected in the new Equal Treatment Law of 2010.

LAWS CONCERNING GENDER IDENTITY/EXPRESSION:

Transgender people allowed to change gender but require undergoing medical treatment such as HRT or surgery. Court practice establishes that trans people can change their name and legal gender through a court ruling. All legal documents can be amended to show gender as 'male' or 'female', except for

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extended birth certificates, which can only be annotated. In order to obtain such a court ruling, the person needs to file a lawsuit against their parents under Article 189 of the Polish Code of Civil Procedure. Additionally, the person cannot be married. The court ruling can be used as a legal ground for justifying legal name change when filing an application for name change to the Head of the Registry Office. There are no provisions for nonbinary people.

CONVERSION THERAPY:

Conversion therapy in Poland is not banned.

BLOOD DONATIONS:

There are no restrictions in blood donations about gay sex.

CENSORSHIP OF LGBT ISSUES:

There are no laws restricting the promotion or discussion of LGBTQIA* topics.

EQUALITY:

Hate crimes based on sexual orientation or gender identity are not expressly considered aggravating circumstances in sentencing.

At the status of December 2020 concrete examples for the legal situation in Poland for LGBTQIA* persons is as follows:

Widespread anti-LGBTI rhetoric and hate speech from politicians by the central government and the clergy persist and are still a serious issue in 2020.

Trucks with homophobic banners claiming a link between homosexuality and pedophilia began driving in public spaces in 2020. In some cases, the trucks were protected by the police.

According to a report published in May 2020 by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, 15% of LGBTQIA* people in Poland had experienced a physical attack or sexual violence in the last five years. This was the highest rate in the EU. Most reported attacks on LGBTQIA* people resulted in no prosecution.

In July 2020, President Duda vowed to pass a Constitutional amendment before the election called the "Family Charter", which pledged to ban marriage equality, adoption of children by LGBTI people and LGBTI education in schools.

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The European Commission announced in July 2020 that given the current political climate, it would refuse to include and fund six Polish cities in its twin cities program. The Ministry of Justice provided financial compensation to one of those towns from the Justice Fund that is allocated to support victims of crime.

The Police arrested 48 LGBTQIA* activists in August 2020 during a peaceful protest against a prominent activist's pre-trial detention. They faced charges for "participation in an illegal gathering".

On 25 August 2020 the City Council of Zielona Góra adopted a statement against discrimination and hatred, followed by similar statements in Lubuskie Voivodeship and in Szczecin in November.

On 29 September 2020 the Warsaw District Court issued a judgement confirming that Polish law prohibits discrimination against transpeople in the workplace.

By the end of 2020, 94 local governments had declared that they are "LGBT-free zones" or "free from LGBT ideology", meaning that one third of Poland stood against LGBT people. About 40 of these administrative units adopted a 'Family Charter', initiated by the far-right Ordo Iuris.

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FACTSHEET RUSSIA

01 The first gay pride was organised by GayRussia initiative in 2006.

02 Sociologists in Russia noticed a decrease in homophobia in Russian society pre 2010's. 45,3% of Russians expressed support for a statutory bar on discrimination based on sexual orientation (based on a public opinion poll of the Levada Center in 2006). But while the LGBTQ community bloomed, homophobia increased following the years of 2012 and 2013.

03 Foreign same-sex couples are prohibited from adopting Russian children by law. The law also forbids any citizens — gay or straight — from nations with marriage equality from adopting Russian orphans.

04 Lady Gaga and Madonna stand with the Russian LGBTW community: they threatened to never return after being prosecuted for talking about LGBTQ equality during their concerts in 2013.

05 National homophobias' rise in Russia under the anti-LGBTW propaganda law puts many LGBTQ people at high risk for physical violence. Queer nightclubs are raided, prides in St. Petersburg and Moscow are attacked and participants are brutally beaten up.

06 LGBTQ people representing themselves as such are at risk of losing their jobs.

07 Some groups hunt on gay people via dating websites and groups in social networks. In 2013, neo-nazis allegedly Tortured gay teens for a "Anti-Pedophilia" campaign.

08 Sexual citizenship is informed by heteronormativity.

09 Russia does not recognise same-sex marriages, nor any other type of same-sex unions.

10 Conservative activists are reshaping Russia's queer academia:

"By organizing public campaigns against "propaganda" in the universities, they forced many queer scholars to leave their workplaces, and in some cases their country. One of the most noticeable cases involves a scholar with 30 years of research and education experience, Dmitry Isaev, who was forced to leave his chair at St. Petersburg State Medical Pediatric University by a Christian Orthodox organization." (Kondakov, 2016).

11 37% of the Russian people suppose that LGBT people should be medically treated and 18% supported an initiative on their legislative persecution (Levada Center, 2015).**12** Transgender people have difficulties receiving qualified medical assistance and protection.**13** Gender Centers considered foreign agents.**14** Smear campaigns before and during conferences and LGBT events are being executed by conservative activists.**Sources**

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FACTSHEET POLAND

01 Homosexuality has never been considered a crime within the Polish legal system. It was the sodomy laws of Russia, Prussia and Austria which criminalized homosexuality in Polish territories, after the country lost its independence in 1795. In a new Criminal Code, dated 1932, Poland officially decriminalized homosexuality, the first country in twentieth-century Europe to do so.

02 On 23 November 1985, the *Polityka* weekly published the first article 'Jesteśmy inni' (We are different) in the Polish mainstream media authored by an openly homosexual person. Dariusz Prorok, under the pseudonym of Krzysztof T. Darski, started the article with the assertion that 'AIDS arrived in Poland. It is clear that homosexuals are the most affected group by the disease'. In writing so, Prorok remained unapologetic, asking why, in this context, homosexuals should care about heterosexuals while the latter had never really cared about the former.

03 In March 1988 a group of activists appealed to Warsaw City Hall and filed an application to register the Warsaw Gay Movement. The Polish government refused it, and the decision – influenced by the Catholic Church – was made with reference to the alleged dangers of public morality. In 1990, after communism in Poland had fallen, members of the Warsaw Gay Movement participated in the creation of a new organisation called "Stowarzyszenie Grup Lambda" an LGBTIA* organisation with broader aims.

04 One of the first significant actions, which immensely influenced the Polish LGBTQ movement was the campaign *Niech Nas Zobaczą* (Let Them See Us) organized by *Kampania Przeciw Homofobii* in 2003. A part of the campaign involved displaying posters of 30 homosexual couples in the public space (photographed by Karolina Breguła). The campaign's purpose was to prove equality of same-sex couples vis a vis the heterosexual majority. Without having any controversial character it triggered wide public debate about the perception of homosexuality in Poland and about non-heterosexual people's rights. Some scholars refer to this action as the "Polish Stonewall" (Majka 2009) – the symbolic moment for a new age in Polish LGBTQ movement's existence.

05 Marsz dla Tolerancji (Tolerance March) in Kraków, Parada Równości (Equality Parade) in Warszawa, Marsz Równości (Equality March) in Poznań. The first Parada Równości was organized in May 2001 in Warszawa and attracted around 300 people. The following year the number of participants increased to 1000 whereas the third parade gathered a few thousands of gay and lesbian rights supporters from all over the country.

06 During the spring in 2004 the first edition of Dni Kultury dla Tolerancji (Days of Culture for Tolerance) took place in Kraków. The March through the city centre was planned as the culminating moment of the initiative. Before taking place it encountered a number of obstacles and problems.

07 Another consequence of “May 2004” were the legal problems encountered while organizing the Marches in other cities in Poland during 2004 and 2005. Other significant events which greatly influenced Polish LGBTQ movement took place in 2005 in Poznań. Despite the fact that the president of the city prohibited the March, many people decided to break the ban and attend the rally. The police intervention against the protesting people was very brutal and many of them were arrested. Change of the Polish Labour code in 2002 to forbid discrimination based on sexual orientation in employment—one of the conditions of EU accession—and joining of the EU in 2004.

08 In 2006 a group of queer theory scholars created the Internet-based academic journal *InterAlia*. Its editors—Tomek Basiuk, Dominika Ferens, Marzena Lizurej and Tomek Sikora—organized a series of annual conferences devoted to queer theory between 2000 and 2006.

09 According to research results from 2010, the majority of adult Poles expressed the view that homosexuality is a deviation from the norm (86% of respondents). At the same time, 63% of them believe that the phenomenon should be socially tolerated. However, 64% of adult Poles do not accept the public presence of gays and lesbians. Only just under a third admit that they have a right to it. At the same time, 64% of respondents believe that homosexual couples should not have the right to manifest their way of life in public, while only 29% of Poles have the opposite opinion.

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10 In July 2019 Gazeta Polska stated that they will start the distribution of free stickers “LGBT-free Zone” in their next issue, on July 25th the distribution was halted by a court in Poland, pending the outcome of a case filed by a human rights activist. In response Gazeta Polska instead distributed stickers with a new slogan: “LGBT Ideology Free Zone”.

11 18 December 2019, the European Parliament voted, 463 to 107, to condemn the more than 80 LGBTQ-free zones in Poland. July 2020, the Provincial Administrative Courts (Polish: Wojewódzki Sąd Administracyjny) ruled that the “LGBT ideology free zones” established by local authorities respectively are null and void, stressing that they violate the constitution and are discriminatory against members of the LGBT community living in those counties.

12 The first Białystok equality march took place on 20 July 2019 in Białystok. Approximately a thousand pride marchers were opposed by thousands of members of far-right groups, ultra football fans, and others who violently attacked the marchers. Following the attack, solidarity events were held in Poland.

13 In May 2019, Polish police arrested a civil-rights activist for putting up posters of the Black Madonna of Częstochowa with the halo painted rainbow colours for the charge of offending religious sentiment, which is illegal in Poland. The activist and other women are accused of having ‘publicly insulted an object of religious worship in the form of this image which offended the religious feelings of others’ If found guilty, the activists face up to two years in prison.

14 In August 2020 shortly after the re-election of right-wing populist Andrzej Duda as Polish president in July 2020, there was massive police violence against LGBTQIA* activists during queer protests in Warsaw. The events are referred to as the “Polish Stonewall”—a reference to the 1969 riots around the Stonewall Inn in NYC, which are considered the beginning of the modern queer movement.

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IN CONVERSATION

In this following section we will present our findings with you. All information presented is gained from interviews held with researchers and activists dealing with LGBTQIA*.

You will be able to find summarised content of the interviews with additional quotes from the three academics and researchers Alexander Kondakov (A. K.), Dimitrii Tolkachev (D. T.), Daniil Zhajvoronok (D. Z.), and Anonymous (Anonymous), who all focus and work with LGBTQIA* related topics in and around Russia. They all specialise in disciplines such as Law, Sociology and Political Science in the field of Gender and Queer Studies. Due to the limited number of researchers working on these topics in Russia, as well as their willingness to be interviewed, we worked with all participants willing to contribute to this project.

Alexander Sasha Kondakov, PhD, is currently an assistant professor at the School of Sociology, University College Dublin, Ireland, as well as editor for the Journal of Social Policy Studies published by the Higher School of Economics in Moscow, Russia. Having studied Sociology of Law, his work primarily focuses on law and sexuality studies, more specifically on queer sexualities. For his research on violence against LGBT people in Russia, he has received attention in the international and Russian media. Kondakov's studies were published in such journals as Sexualities, Social & Legal Studies, Feminist Legal Studies, and European Journal of Criminology. Alexander also was one of the only ones to teach a module on Queer Theory at the European University in St. Petersburg.

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Dimitrii Tolkachev is currently working on his PhD dissertation on the Russian propaganda law and how it's framed in authorities discourse and in public opinion, at the Higher School of Economics in Moscow. Holding an MA in Political Science he has also worked with Transparency International in the past.

Daniil Zhajvoronok is currently working on a study about monitoring of violence towards the LGBTQIA* community. Holding an MA in Political Science and Sociology at the European University in Saint Petersburg, he has also been publishing articles in different magazines such as "Arzamas", "Nozh", "Republic", "Bok o Bok" and many others. Besides academic journalism Daniil has been working as an activist and a freelancer researching about feminism, queer sexuality and pop culture in Russia. He is planning to continue his study (PhD) in Tampere and work there on a project about online feminism in Russia.

For our survey on LGBTQIA* research in Poland we were able to attract four academics as Interviewees. In selecting the interview partners, it was particularly important for us to gain as complex an insight into queer research as possible, so we decided to interview researchers from different universities (or other academic institutions) and who specialise in the following different main disciplines: Law, (Art-)History, Sociology & Culture in the field on Gender Studies. Two of these four researchers asked us to remain anonymous. The two others are Paulina Pilch (P. P.) and Paweł Leszkowicz (P. L.).

Paulina Pilch is a Doctor of Law. She wrote her dissertation on the issue of same-sex partnerships and marriages in a legal and comparative perspective. Since 2013 she has been teaching at the Polish Academy of Sciences in the field of Gender Studies on human rights in the context of protecting rights of members of the LGBTQIA* community. Paulina Pilch is a member of the legal group of the Transfusion Foundation.

Paweł Leszkowicz is an Art Historian, freelance curator and LGBTQIA* rights activist. He works as a lecturer and researcher at the Department of History of Art at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. Paweł Leszkowicz has written four books: "Helen Chadwick. The Iconography of Subjectivity" in 2001,

“Love and Democracy. Reflections on the Homosexual Question in Poland” in 2005, “Art Pride. Gay Art from Poland” in 2010 and “The Naked Man: The Male Nude in post-1945 Polish Art” in 2012. He has curated and co-organized several international queer exhibitions.

All interviews were held via online video-calls (WebEx and Zoom) and were recorded. Involved people in the interviews were part of our team and the interviewee. The information provided in the following is based on transcription records of our recorded interviews.

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Russia's social science scene, including Queer and Gender Studies, has undergone a huge visible transformation in the past 30 years – roughly speaking, from 1991 with its emergence until today's day. The fall of Marxism seems to have been a key event in the advent of Russian Social Sciences and astonishingly, the decriminalisation of homosexuality in 1993 did not play too much of a role here.

"Marxist ideology and its influence of the soviet interpretation of Marxism in the university. This all fell down. And it freed Russian, and I suppose other Social Union States' social science in a tremendous way. You don't need to follow Marxism anymore and you can pursue topics of research that are not confirmed by the communist party, you can do anything now. And that was very important. [...] Soviet sociology was basically nonexistent. It wasn't something that was taught in universities, it wasn't something that was part of the research agenda in the soviet academy of sciences. So basically, with the fall of the USSR, sociology in Russia emerged. And it emerged with many different topics, including gender and sexuality research, and the university and The Center for Independent Research were one of the first to jump on the train of this kind of research." A. K.

But with the fall of Marxism, another problem arose – the limitations of capitalism, which later appeared to play a bad role for Russian social sciences, as of the 2015 introduction of the foreign-agents law. Some re-

searchers and universities are monitored and persecuted by the government. It can be said that LGBTQ research in Russia takes place under constant fear. After the Foreign-Agents law came into force, some researchers have been called agents of the West who spread values that do not fit national and cultural identity. Because of this, they are summoned to court, punished, and some are forced to emigrate.

“When I was doing PHD at the European University in St. Petersburg, the European University was denounced for the homosexual propaganda and closed for a while. After it reopened, many courses and programs were cancelled, including my PHD program. My project was related to Feminist Research. Now when I write an article, I worry what will happen if someone reads this text and denounces me, accuses me of propaganda and will call me an international agent? One thing is clear, as long as this political regime and laws are not changed we will feel unsafe.” D. Z.

The lack of funding and dependence on Western countries' financial support was pointed out as one of the main problems:

“...if you wanted to do research, if you wanted to work in the university or academy of science, you needed money that wasn't there in the 1990's. The state was poor, the market was nonexistent, so your best bet would be to rely on foreign funding. And that played a crucial role in the 2000's and 2010's, when we already have been in established institutions and organisations whose existence depends on foreign funding. And those institutions were civil society institutions, academic institutions and organisations, all that. They all depended on and they all relied on only one source of funding: The source of funding from the outside. And it played a very bad role for them, because it was very easy for the government to say 'well, we simply prohibit to take money from the outside'. And all those institutions collapsed.” A. K.

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Overall, the field was 'flourishing' up until 2013, despite the few articles and books that had been published in Russia on the topic LGBTQIA*. But the 2013 introduction of the propaganda ban, giving legitimacy to discriminating behaviour towards LGBTQIA*, worsened the situation. Despite not being supposed to target academic research, it:

"works in a broader domain than it's supposed to. And this is exactly what happened. So even though gay propaganda law is not 'supposed' to influence academic research, it HAS influenced it, in many different ways. And one of the ways is less direct, for example self-censorship kind-of-things. You know, when the law is there, people start to think twice before they speak up about LGBT issues—even in the universities, even in academia". A. K.

This is making LGBTQIA* an unwelcome topic, giving one unnecessary attention and exposure. Consequences in academia are limitations: the academic involvement in the topic is very low. Only few scholars and few institutions, such as the biggest universities (e.g. Higher School of Economics, European University), remain researching and teaching topics related to Gender Studies as *"it is not something that is interesting and safe to do, so people don't do it"* (A. K.), and scholars leave the country – due to better payment abroad or due to less restrictions in their own field of interest and research. This leads to little institutional possibilities dealing with Queer Studies and a lack of specialists in the field.

"In Russia we don't have courses about these studies; the first one was in the European University with Sasha (Alexander) Kondakov, and the second one was my course at HSE, just for one year for Master students. And it was just experiments and I wasn't paid for that". D. T.

Additionally, the lack of specialists combined with low publishing requirements and low educational standards in universities lead to what our informants come to call 'falsification of research' or 'bigotry of academic work', promoted by the propaganda ban.

"We have a lot of people who work in universities and don't know what science really is, they don't know about methods or methodologies. [...] If we look through literature in Russian, we have a lot of journals where you can publish wherever you want, because you know the people who work with this journal or you can pay for the publication. They have no data, they have no empirical findings, and all of the articles are with some moralistic programs, that homosexuality is bad and same-sex marriage will kill us within the near future. [...] There are few people who are still in Russia and work with LGBT topics, but there are many people who are trying to add this topic to their courses." D. T.

"That can't be called research, but basically some kind of bigotry ... but still pretending that it's academic work. They were legitimised by the gay propaganda law, by the whole situation around, the rhetoric that the government uses to speak about sexuality and gender in Russia". A. K.

The propaganda ban also has an indirect influence on public discussion and academic involvement, as well as on communities wanting to stay protected and safe. *"The very idea of the law is to limit expression and the spread of information and ideas about homosexuality, about queerness, about LGBT issues"* A. K.

"This issue has become prominent, and people are discussing it more. The topic is also gaining relevance in the media. A demand has arisen in society about these topics. People are interested in the topic and want to read about it to learn more. A part of society has even started to show tolerance. I think it is a kind of side effect of this law. After the repression by the government, people have started to deal with the issue." D.Z.

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But the law also shows direct influences through exposure to the law. *"It's a tool for different actors, for different people in the field to use against you. If you research LGBT topics in the university, it means that you also expose yourself to the application of this law"* A. K.

A. K. shared a personal story about such an 'enemy' with us:

"I taught a course in St. Petersburg State University and it wasn't directly to LGBT issues. But one of the lectures was devoted to LGBT stuff and we discussed these kinds of things with the students. Now, when the module ended, [...], of course it was the time of evaluation. [...] But one of the students wasn't great, I couldn't grade them highly enough. And the student was upset with the final grade. So what they did, was to decide to denounce me to the prosecutor's office, they complained that I propagated homosexuality in the classroom. And so the prosecutors came to St. Petersburg State University, started a formal investigation... It didn't go anywhere, but still. I think it's an illustration of how a completely unrelated thing, a mark, grade, at university, can provoke people to use this tool—in quite a repressive way!" A. K.

During this interview we also found out about a 'list of state enemies of the Russian State', published by a 'civil society organisation'.

"...it's a database of these enemies of the state, and I'm in that database for some reason. It's created by supposedly activists, civil society activists who are really pro-state and against those enemies. I couldn't find any name, any kind of face of those activists. That part of the website, the part of the organisation that supposedly created the website is completely hidden. So who they are and where they come from, I'm not sure. But then I saw that Twitter banned this organisation, and it was all over the news in Russia. All state-owned TV channels reported about that. So I guess this civil society organisation was somehow very dear and close to the state, maybe it's created by the state. So the



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state uses this, but you can never pin these kinds of practices to actual governmental institutions that deal with creation of fake civil-society". A. K.

Another shared incident was, when a teenager was sent to a workshop in Perm by a 'civil-society organisation', which also dealt with LGBTQIA* topics. *"They wanted the teenager to be exposed to information about LGBT topics, so that they could report all of us organisers to the prosecutors"* (A. K.). Yet another story we heard confirms how dangerous and unpredictable an organization of just any regular scientific event can end.

"A teacher at the university somewhere in Russia [...] organized a lecture about psychological health in LGBT community, if I'm not mistaken. And she was exposed to some bad reactions from a homophobic activist. [...] As I think, they were filing complaints to the police about this event... just about the psychological health of LGBT people. Yeah, so [...] you just don't know from where you will be hit after something that you do".
(anonymous)

"The level of craziness in the government just doesn't know any borders now"—the researcher underlines. Other issues our informants were facing, e.g. are worries about their PhD's. Alexander Kondakov told us about his PhD dissertation having been under scrutiny for several years and having to be reviewed once again. Optimistically though he says "they had a chance to actually target me and, well, get me into a lot of troubles. But they don't do it!" A. K.

D.T. on the other hand tells us about his feeling to work harder than people in other fields of research.

"I should be better than others. For example, one of my colleagues has 40 interviews with correspondence, I have 70 interviews. So 70, it's not enough. But for my colleague 40 interviews is enough" (D. T.).

He also told us about his worries for his upcoming PhD: *"I had some fears about my PhD for example. Because I know that people who work at faculties that have some homophobic feelings, but it's not a problem if the research is not bad"* D. T.

An anonymous researcher shared another personal incident experienced during her bachelor studies, which ended in 'censorship'.

"One time, it was my last year in my Bachelor and maybe a month before a conference [...] I was presenting my... kind of homework. It wasn't related to LGBT in any way [...] but still... I had my rainbow T-shirt on me, and [...] I had a rainbow bag behind me just hanging there. After that presentation, my friend who was like a friend with the teacher, told me that the teachers are concerned about my performance and they don't want me to participate in the conference, just because they – as they said – like they cannot control me. Basically they were afraid that I would put on... something like an LGBT agenda while presenting my article [...] Yeah, I got banned. [...] So, basically, they just kind of censored me." (anonymous)

Furthermore, concerns about future obstacles which might occur, preventing oneself from working on the PhD dissertation about the LGBTQIA* issues in Chechnya are expressed. *"I just feel unsafe to do it here [...] because I don't know... like... they can get me anywhere in Russia, right?! And maybe they will not like it or something..."* (Anonymous).

All these issues and problems seem to have risen exponentially with the introduction of the propaganda ban. But what the propaganda ban also did, contradictorally, was to contribute greatly to attention around gender topics, and thus also to research. *"After the propaganda law, there's a wave of publications, and a wave of projects related to queerness and Russia, LGBT in Russia"* (A. K.). The phenomena is explained the following way:

"As any censorship law, the gay propaganda law provokes interest to what to censor. So if you ban, if you prohibit something, you actually produce interest, you

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actually make this thing very bad, very prohibited, even more interesting to people. [...] well currently, LGBT issues are of more interest to people in Russia more generally than before because of the whole hype, of the whole discussion about the gay propaganda law".

A. K.

"We have a better situation in Russia than it is described by researchers in Russia or outside Russia" (D. T.). Researching LGBTQIA topics in Russia IS possible, as some of D. T.'s students currently write on LGBTQIA* topics, as well as he himself, who has been working on topics such as sextortion in the past and now is working on his PhD on the gay-propaganda law "and how we can evaluate policies through discourses, and how we can use argumentative approaches to policy erosion on the case of propaganda law" (D. T.)*

"You can find places, I mean there's a view of them, but they exist. So it's another circumstance. If you do want to pursue these kinds of topics you can try and go to the Higher School of Economics, go to the European University, some kind of places that are considered more or less—liberal, freer—than the rest of the academic places. In that area you can pursue some kind of research in relation to LGBT topics. [...] so it's possible. But in a marginal branch of academic branch of academic institutions. And still it's going to be relatively hard anyway". A. K.

Research thus is being done from inside Russia, but also—and mainly—from outside. Through the limitations brought with the propaganda ban and the foreign-agents law, some researchers have left the country. Through modern means though, the creation of information from outside is possible.

"Even though many formal organisations and centres were closed or stopped producing research in relation to the LGBT topics, there are other people who can do that, like journalists for example, or researchers and academics outside of Russia! Those who found

a job outside like myself, those who always worked in universities in other countries. Research of those people is being published across Russia in mini-outlets that are not necessarily registered in Russia, so there are ways!". A. K.

Another important aspect which also plays a significant role in research is language. In non-English speaking countries the questions on the language in which the research results will be published influences the willingness of the participants to participate in the research, research results and determines the audience. As we found during our research, the fact that our research result is published in English made the interview process much easier. Researchers pay attention to who they discuss the topic with and how they discuss it.

"When you give an interview, you have to know where it will be published, with what conditions and in what format. Since I live in Russia I have to think about this. If the interview is published in German or English, it means that it will probably be read by very few people. And the ones who will read it will probably be my friends and colleagues or at least people who have a positive attitude towards the topic. If it was published in Russian, I would have probably paid more attention to what I would say, or I would have given the interview anonymously."

D. Z.

Regarding a possible connection to activism, we found different levels of co-working. A. K. for example has been asked to work for the Russian LGBT Network, as well as Coming Out LGBT NGO in St. Petersburg for some years, conducting small studies for statistics on violence and psychological issues, a report published yearly.

"I see a lot of connection here, between activism and academic work. It's happening in practice. But also of course, for me it's an ideological connection, too. I believe that these kind of research, like queer studies, LGBT studies, is something that must be done from a

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very clear political position. And the only position that I would accept would be the position of being part of the LGBT community". (A. K.)

Overall it can be said that queer and gender studies have had more and more complications and limitations to fight against, which left the field of study a rare occasion to find within the borders of the Russian Federation. Though the most recently introduced laws, the propaganda ban and the foreign-agents law have the potential to pose threats towards concerned individuals, a full-on persecution is not always carried out—instead, they seem to have an arbitrary and flexible character to us. Yet queer and gender studies do exist, and due to the propaganda ban they have gained even more attention, in Russia and internationally. *"It sucks to explain Russia (sighs)! There is no clear-cut answer"* (A. K.).



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Polish gender studies were not institutionalised for a long time. Apart from a few institutes at Universities, most of the research on gender and LGBTQIA* related issues is conducted within other academic branches, such as Literature or Social Sciences departments. Due to this interdisciplinary character of the discipline, scholars working on queer issues have to find a way to interpret them according to their discipline since they are supposed to publish in their discipline. Perception within the institution also depends on the subject-related context and influences the view on such research.

*" (...) looking from my perspective gender and queer studies, at least at [University Name] were maybe not always but usually part of different disciplines. So for example, I am situated at sociology and gender courses, lectures, or queer lectures and research that were or are still part of sociology and this is the solution that is actually present at different universities (...) so they are not separate programs but there are just merged with for example cultural studies and this is in a way to protect I would say gender and queer studies at Universities, because they are in a way less visible, because they are part of their own sub programs. So for example I remember a few years back there was, there is this far right organization in Poland Ordo Iuris which is responsible for all this s*** around abortion and so on and they actually sent out questionnaires to rector's of all universities to send them names of people who do gender and queer research, so because we have this law of public information, so you need to deliver public information to somebody who is asking, because universities are funded by the state so they have to*

give this information. So, what our university did at that time, they said that everything is public, because all the syllabuses are out there at the University website and also they said that it is impossible to give you names of people who teach gender or queer studies because gender is ... how did they frame it, that gender is part of almost every science, because it can be present everywhere (...)" (Anonymous)

Polish academia depends on neoliberal structures that influence research and publications, because it has implemented a performance-based research funding system increasing the pressure to perform due to education and science policy demands. Funding is linked to research outputs or might be generated indirectly in the form of grant-based competitive funding. Academics are accountable to their institutions and the research councils sponsoring their research, additionally a point system linked to a ranking list of academic journals determines the level of financial resources available.

The pressure on scholars to generate research and publications impacts the publishing of LGBTQIA* related research, not everything is forbidden but often funding is not approved and thus publications are prevented.

"(...) which means that we need as researchers [to] produce more and more papers with great impact factor and so on. From my perspective it is a negative shift especially for such fields like sociology or humanities or social sciences, because when you think about that all these journals with high impact factor are in English, it means that you cannot publish something in Polish and I think publishing something like queer stuff in Polish is also very important." (Anonymous).

"There is one polish journal in queer studies but you're not given points for publishing there, which kind of pushes Queer Studies or Gender Studies scholars to publish in English. I mean of course you might, but for example (...) one of his poems we read it with queer theory. And the first problem is that we don't really had

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a good place to publish it, because there is no Queer Studies journal for many points and we both need points. So, we tried with Polish site: Polish literary studies, but these people are startled, I mean some people love it, and give us great feedback that this is groundbreaking, but when it comes to publishing, this is not so easy. So now with one of the journals for some time, we don't know how it's doing. But we probably, I mean (...) it's probably that we will get rejected. Because Polish academia is not really used to querying Romantic poets." (Anonymous)

Another result of the neoliberalist structures influencing Polish research is that if funding is connected to publications in high ranking journals of which the majority are English speaking, research starts to lack information made available for the non-English speaking part of society interested in a field "(...) which means that queer becomes some foreign idea, not very accessible to people that do not speak English and in Poland. I mean, of course, many people speak English but not academic English and also not that many people speak English." (anonymous) On the other hand, it gives the opportunity to get access to the English speaking academia and by that adding up on the neoliberalist aspects set by the government for scholars.

"And of course publishing there is very difficult, especially for Polish scholars, but for those who are either young and kind of can play the game, or they speak English very well or they are familiarized with the English speaking academia and this is the case of many gender studies scholars who studies, especially those who are from the English Department or American departments. This actually allowed them to get good points and kind of good results." (Anonymous).

For Queer Studies this means that it becomes outsourced from the local discourse, still there is need for creating a distinct, Polish queer narrative

"(...) I am thinking a lot about language cause we have a lot of terms from like queer language coming into

Polish and they are not translated, they are just used as such. So maybe this is something we can work on to find our local terms for some English terms.”
(Anonymous).

“In fact we in many ways follow the topics or the issues that are discussed in the West because we want to be part of the discussion, and this is obvious, we don’t want to be excluded, but what I would say, that what is maybe specific for the region, that there are more and more studies focusing on how Post-state socialism influenced sexuality and gender order in the region, also in Poland, so for example the fact that there was this transition and it was only 30 years ago to capitalism and democracy and how we change, I mean how the past, actually, in a way shaped our thinking about sexuality and gender and probably what is more specific for Poland is state socialism past is also linked with the Catholic Church, so this is also something very specific for this research or studies in here (...) what studies from this region actually can maybe bring to a more global or Western discussion is actually to look from the perspective of semi periphery countries like Poland, so not being totally Western, but also not that Eastern. So, somewhere in between, I would say.”
(Anonymous)

Not all scholars working on queer issues in Poland, are located in the country, but many of them are connected via formal or informal networks. International networks play an important role in bringing the Polish queer academia into the international discourse and also in contributing to a non-Western queer academia.

“I think that for queers, it’s very important to build these links (...) I started to think that I know a lot about LGBT organizations from Western Europe (...) but I know nothing about queer organizations in Ukraine, I cannot name any, or I know nothing about feminist groups in Slovakia which is the closest country also in terms of



language to Poland. So, I remember this conference (...) I was talking with some researchers, like Romanian queer researchers and they were saying the same stories that we have in Poland, like for example, they believe that we are the chosen nation, because of our history we suffered so much, we are the most loved by the Mother Mary and so on, like the narratives that we have in the nation and they were saying we have the same that Romania is the most suffered country" (Anonymous)

Keeping these structural conditions in mind and taking a closer look at the concrete situations at the universities, we asked how researchers dealing with queer topics perceive the acceptance of their research. It showed that there are no consistent structural discriminations towards queer research(ers) but describing it as neutral also would not be appropriate, since homophobia is not steering clear of universities and hate speech and discriminatory behaviour exists. Nevertheless, in Poland big universities seen as liberal often take responsibility and show support towards the researchers dealing with this kind of transgressions.

(...) I have support from my supervisor, but also from the Institute, generally speaking, there are of course from time to time some of homophobic voices coming from some researchers from my institute, but there are in the minority and basically I think that I have support, but I know that from some of my colleagues for example, they do not feel comfortable even talking about their research, for example, during some meetings, because they are the only one in the institute, that do some queer studies and they are not very much welcome, I mean, they do not have the support so this is crucial and also for teaching I think, I mean not only for doing your research but also this feeling that you can propose some course and it will be accepted and also that it will be welcomed, so you do not have to explain yourself or justify yourself why this particular course is important." (Anonymous)

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Students involved in Gender Studies or interested in the field can be seen as divided between Conservative and Liberal views as it is the division that generally applies to Polish society.

"(...) I mean there are always some students who complain, for example, usually they complain when I teach about transgender issues. They never complained when I taught/teach about homosexuality or the male body, the eroticism of the female or the male body, even from the queer point of view but the conservative students, they do not like the subject of transgender, this is something very conservative in both, Hungary and in Poland. Sometimes, I have noticed complaints about this but only from individual students. But there are other stories that are happening. For example, in my university "Adam Mickiewicz University" student's complaint against teachers who are very homophobic. They wrote a letter to the Vice Chancellor condemning the homophobia of certain teachers. So, it means that the young generation, especially those people who are studying, they tend to be liberal, maybe not left wing, but definitely liberal, when it comes to the issue of sexuality, and they do not like this kind of very homophobic opinion voiced at the universities. They complaint to the vice chancellor at my university and at some other universities as well." P. L.

After overviewing the situation at Polish universities, we wanted to investigate how the extra-academic discourse was influencing queer research. In Poland the Polish Catholic Church has, especially in rural areas, a tight control on not only the societal and public discourse but is also connected to politics and is deeply inscribed in the Polish national identity.

“So, there are a lot of tensions, I would say between national identity (...) who are we? who are we as Poles? (...) like as a nation and this all what I am talking about, it is of course linking for example with thinking about sexuality, because it is always about the nation, who is important, who is just an outsider.” (Anonymous)

As our findings show Queer Studies and queer people are becoming a special target for the church's campaigns, which is, with the aid of right wing politics, making it a subject of national matter.

“They publish against gay rights. They teach against gay rights. There's a lot of information in the media about it.” (Anonymous)

“So, when we talk about homophobia, we are talking about social and cultural attitudes that are supported by the Catholic Church, that are used by the “Law and Justice” party and that are exploited by the global network of religious fundamentalists, which is everywhere nowadays.” P.L.

The Church is by indirect means influencing the work of scholars. This influence in combination with the current right-wing government that is currently reigning in Poland as the interviewees explained is putting the liberty of Polish academia under risk, leaving aside queer people's integrity.

“So for example a few years back there was this conference that we were invited to, me and my colleagues from the institute (...) and it was supposed to be on different faces of families today (...) so I suggested they will do this rainbow families or queer families and some other colleague said that then she will do like equal division of home responsibilities among men and women (...) And we sent it out and the program was published on the website and then they called us, and they told us, that because of my presentation, because they got a call from the church that they need to cancel

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my presentation. So, we said that if my presentation is cancelled then my colleagues also decided to withdraw from the conference. So, finally, the organizers decided to cancel the entire event because of this call from the church (...) this is important because they cannot be discriminated and this is Science, this is a huge thing.”
(Anonymous)

It seems like the Church and its agents in Politics are trying to permeate the academics by creating a sort of counter discourse: the establishment of Catholic Universities in Poland is growing and with them a new academia, which is supported by the Ministry of Education, allowing them to compete better than liberal universities in the competition for funding.

“They made their own categories, so to say. And Czarnek introduced several changes, for example he added points for journals which are published locally. And right now, for example this Catholic University of Lublin publishes journals which are worth 100 points, which is, as much as Impact factor (...)” (Anonymous)

“(...) this is getting very neoliberal In fact, you may do whatever you want as long as it brings points and indeed with the recent change it seems that it’s easier to bring points when you write about John Paul the second and how great he was, because many of these new journals which were introduced, these are basically not even scholarly journals, not even reviewed journals, when people write how great Polish catholicism is or how terrible gender ideology is.” (Anonymous)

The right-wing government and the statements of its politicians were perceived by all scholars as a general problem and potential threat, while the electoral behaviour and the division in Poland will determine the future of dealing with LGBTQIA* issues. Generally speaking, at present their influence is not strong enough that the freedom of academia is in danger.

"(...) So definitely the situation is much worse (...) I do not see it in the university level, but in the public life, yes, there it is much worse. On the other hand, some are shocked by this kind of hate speech, some are tired of this, it is like, really LGBT issues, it is not my main problem in life and they talk about it all the time, like this will be the biggest issue Poland has.." P.P.

"(...)we still have freedom at the universities. So, it means that we can teach queer issues or feminist issues, but the situation is getting worse as well (...) And so far, we still have freedom as a university, because universities are independent, there are like independent bodies. There is a minister of education, but still the vice chancellor has the power and many universities are kind of liberal places, but not all of them (...) but the changes that we experience at the University is, that under the current minister (...) the religious fundamentalists are overtaking power. So, under his ministry he proclaimed that there is a freedom of speech at the university, but the freedom of speech means that people who work at the university and teach at the university are also free to say and to teach homophobia." P.L.

"(...) but they would never be separate because they cannot exist without each other. So, it is a church, who is fighting for their ideal of the family and the politicians doing their business with the church, supporting this." (P.P.)

If the governmental homophobia rises it will affect the situation of LGBTQIA* persons in rural areas in the Eastern part of Poland, where it already is an issue. Poland is a divided country and the different treatments make it difficult to generalise the situation for LGBTQIA* related issues in societal aspects. But these growing concerns also have a positive side: the more the government is campaigning against LGBTQIA* the more it is arousing anger in the civil society.

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Queer Research and Queer Activism are not compulsory linked to each other. A scientist who does Queer Research is not automatically always an activist. The causes include a lack of time or the great difference between working as an activist and as a scientist.

“Many scholars are involved in activism and support organizations, and speak up in the media for the LGBT causes.” (Anonymous)

“So I have been involved in LGBT(+) activism in Poland for more than 25 years. But at the same time, I work as an art curator and as an academic, who has been doing queer research at the University for more than 25 years as well. So, my work as an academic and as an art curator, was always intertwined with my work as an activist (...).” P.L.

“Not really. I mean, activists are activists and researchers at the university or whichever institution, scientific institution are different. I think in the past there were some cases, there were some lectures given by activists. But as a general rule the studies are run by the researchers to deal with a given subject and they specialize in this field, but they are not necessarily activists, or I will say rather they are not.” P.P.

“(...) I am joking that I am an activist on vacation right now, because of my involvement in academia, I do not have much time for being active to be honest or being involved, in the past I was very much involved [...] but right now I am not that much, I mean, I am just going to protests of course to different marches, to parades, but I am not related to any group.” (Anonymous)

On the question of migration, two options are reported, one is to stay in Poland trying to improve the situation of LGBTQIA* and stay in their home country where friends and family are. The other option is to improve their own living conditions due to the option of migration abroad. It is important

to note that the researchers do not only take migration into consideration because of discrimination due to their research on LGBTQIA* or their own sexuality, but in particular they report about better conditions for academics abroad and a more adequate salary for their work. It is further stated that the political situation under the PiS party and a possible re-election victory is also regarded as a motivation for migration.

Still, the situation in Poland is perceived as not as bad as in Belarus or Hungary, even though there are some voices that consider a worsening of the situation as not unlikely. A comparison with Russia is not drawn upon by the researchers who conducted the survey.

“So you notice a narrative about maybe perhaps it would be better if we decide to leave Poland and do our research or just leave abroad is very visible, and of course many, many queers, but also many academics travel, or migrate to a different country, to just have a better salary, but also feel more comfortable, feel more safe and so on.” (Anonymous)

“The Law and Justice party has been in power since 2015 and the situation when it comes to democracy and civil and liberal democracy is slowly deteriorating in Poland (...) And who knows what is going to happen in the future, we really do not know, they may win the election again (...) So, it inspired my decision to leave Poland. I emigrated from Poland for a couple of years and then I came back for family reasons and now I emigrate again to Berlin, actually I still work in Poznań, but you know Poznań is close enough I can come and leave.” P.L.

“(...) on the one hand, if you are in Poland, so my advice is to participate in the civil society, to do something against the government, on your own level. You do not have to be immediately a politician or an activist, but you can do something on your own level and within your own possibility, but if you

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have the possibility to emigrate, emigrate, there is no reason to suffer for something so fictional as national identity.” P.L.

*“(...) I mean, I think everyone in this job thinks seriously about emigrating abroad in the west, the problem is that we are not that good, you know, I mean, when there is a postdoc position offered in the West, there are many people from Western countries who have better CVs than ours, which is also connected to the fact that we are in Poland overburdened with teaching, we do a lot of teaching and don't have so much time to publish and I mean everyone works 12 hours a day and still it's difficult to be as efficient in publications (...) which means that at the end of the day we stay here and struggle with this government. But whether they are going to stay kind of, it's very difficult to say.”
(Anonymous)*

Trying to draw some general conclusions we state that the general threat to Queer Research in Poland is the fact that *“the marriage between Catholic Church and the current right-wing government it is a toxic relationship”* (P.P.) contribute to a growing atmosphere of hate towards not only LGBTQIA* people, but all issues related to them. This naturally affects science. Until now, queer research is possible in Poland, but it seems only to be a matter of time until academia is subjected to such pressure or prohibited from receiving any funding that more academics start to leave the country and Polish queer research becomes the science of exiles.



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RESPONSES TO QUESTIONNAIRES FROM NGOS (FOUNDATIONS) AND ACTIVISTS

In order to give you an insight into the work of NGOs (& Foundations) and activists from Poland and Russia, and thus to provide an insight beyond the academic perspective we have sent questionnaires to activists and NGOs (& Foundations) asking them to answer them in written form.

Since we sent identical questions to all NGOs (& foundations) surveyed for Poland, and in order to avoid repetition as well as to make it easier for the reader to compare the answers, we have listed the NGOs (& foundations) in the answers by number.

ACTIVISTS RUSSIA

I DILYA GAFUROVA

→ LGBTQIA* Activist and member of the Charitable Foundation Sphere.

→ Since 2011, Charitable Foundation Sphere is the only organization-operator of the Russian

→ LGBT Network and implements all the programs of the Movement.

II DAVID SHARKOVSKY

→ LGBTQIA* activist & psychologist researcher

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QUESTIONNAIRES

CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT YOUR ACTIVISM WORK
AND YOUR MOTIVATIONS FOR BECOMING AN
LGBTQIA* ACTIVIST?

I I represent Russian LGBT Network and Charitable Foundation Sphere which is the former's operating organization. I head the Communications department and act as a spokesperson. It would not be a stretch to say that I am the kind of person one would never imagine as an LGBTQ+ activist back in the day. I graduated from one of the most statist and elite universities in Russia, and my future in government seemed set. However, I have always had a very strong belief in human rights and considered the very principle of their universality as society's moral compass to go by. I could not be a silent observer to the everyday violation of human rights going on in my country and could not simply avoid the matter by moving elsewhere as have so many of the people I know. Therefore I decided to make myself useful by applying myself and the skills I had learned in the field of human rights. First a journalist, then a researcher, I nonetheless appeared to never quite be able to find my place. Merely describing events or studying them at some point had stopped being enough, and I jumped headfirst into action. It could have been a women's rights organization, a civil rights one,—it was simply essential that I could relate to the aspect of human rights that I fought for on a personal level. LGBTQ+ rights also fit that description.

II I'm not sure I can be called an activist—I'm mostly a psychologist making researches in transgender psychology and having plans to work further with LGBTQ* audience (in closest plans—to adapt some couple therapy methods towards LGBTQ* families). But speaking about my motivations I'd select 3 points—first of all I'm a trans-gay man so I'm right "in the middle of the storm" and my interest in LGBTQ*

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psychology has sort of a personal note; another point is that working in LGBTQ* field is also sort of easier and more interesting for me since transgender and homosexual nuances and problems are close to me, thus it is easier for me to help people in this sphere; and the 3d point is that I have a willing to help people and LGBTQ* sphere is the field where in my opinion this help is really needed (both due to the lack of specialists and higher needs).

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE RUSSIAN LGBTQIA* COMMUNITY?

I Strong. In fact, it could be stated for a fact that the more hardship we have to face, the harder we fight for a change. Homophobic amendments to the Russian legislature were the tipping point for the LGBTQ+ rights movement in Russia, an unfortunate event that has not only brought a lot of pain and struggle to the queer community, but also consolidated us as a social group. But we, certainly, have a long way to go still. There is much that divides us. Even inside the movement many points present heated discussion: do we publicize what we do as activists and to what degree? What is the best way to counteract the so-called 'gay propaganda law', an all-out campaign that would attract too much unwanted – and dangerous – attention to us or through supporting the community from within and waiting out the storm? There is also a gap of sorts that exists between LGBTQ+ people living in the big metropolitan areas of the country, especially Moscow and Saint Petersburg, and in the regions, — the latter experience homophobia more often, are less accepted and understood within their community, and thus are more afraid of openness, even in their activism. Furthermore, the intersectional aspect to LGBTQ+ rights overall in Russia is less explored.

II Sorry, but it's quite a general question, so it's hard to answer. But the 1st word that comes to my mind is "distant". I mean it's hard to say that Russia actually has a community—I'd rather say we have several small communities and much more LGBTQ* people who communicate in small groups or even live in solitude (but that's only my opinion). We're not centralized at all—I think some people don't know about the opportunities to become part of the community and some might be afraid.

**CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THE LGBTQIA*
ACTIVISM IN RUSSIA IN GENERAL?**

I It could be said that this question has been answered, albeit briefly, in the previous section. Additionally, one might highlight that LGBTQ+ activism in Russia has long been out of the shadows. While it is true that the existing legislature puts restrictions on the work we do and consequently we have to apply some less direct, creative means of forwarding our agenda, it feels we are quite successful in doing so. In fact, in the last couple of years, according to various population polls, including governmental ones, the level of acceptance and understanding of the LGBTQ+ community has been gradually growing.

II As for activism we have very active and positive and qualified people (as I think) in this field. Several large LGBTQ* activist groups and many small niched groups (like for transgender people, non-binary people, homosexual, bisexual, pansexual men and women etc.)

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IS THERE A NETWORK BETWEEN EAST OR EAST-CENTRAL EUROPE LGBTQIA* ACTIVISTS?

I No doubt, there are organizations that act as a bridge between activists in aforementioned regions, for instance, ILGA. Russian LGBT Network itself could be named as one of such organizations as it is one of the biggest LGBTQ+ organizations in the region, it being an umbrella organization that does not only include individual members but also unites numerous regional organizations from all across the country. Moreover, it is in partnership or, at least, maintains consistent friendly relations with LGBTQ+ activists and initiatives from both East and East-Central Europe.

II Not very sure. But as far as I know there is.

BY WHOM AND BY WHAT MEANS ARE YOU SUPPORTED AS LGBTQIA* ACTIVISTS?

I We are a charitable foundation and ergo are supported through donations.

II I mostly work with the support of the community RESURS. But also try getting support from other communities, since the science researches need many respondents.

HOW CLOSELY DO YOU WORK WITH RESEARCHERS? DO YOU KNOW MANY RESEARCHERS WHO ARE ALSO ACTIVISTS? HOW CAN ACTIVISM BENEFIT FROM RESEARCH?

I I myself am such an activist and I know many others. I am convinced that activism and research benefit each other mutually: whereas the former provides the data for research and means of real-life application of certain theories, the latter contributes to presenting the 'bigger picture', so to say, to putting things in perspective not only for activists, but the society on the whole.

II Unfortunately I know very few researchers (and only 1-2 of them are activists). I do believe activism can benefit from research—at least in two ways. First of all research helps us understand LGBTQ* people, thus understand better how we can help. Second benefit is in clear ways of popularisation of the info—which is really needed for making everyone's lifes better.

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ANTI-HOMOSEXUAL PROPAGANDA LAW SEEMS TO HAVE PLAYED A BIG ROLE FOR THE LGBTQIA* COMMUNITY AND ACTIVISTS IN RUSSIA SINCE 2013. HOW DID YOUR WORK CHANGE AFTER THE EVENT?

I This law is an instrument of instilling fear into people and muzzling the entire queer community. It is seldom applied directly, the cases of when people were fined for 'propaganda', for example, are adding up to but a handful over the course of eight years. Surely, it has made our work that much harder. We are constantly under the threat of being dragged

to court, of our social media and other information sources – the foundation of how we are spreading awareness – being shut down. Yet the discriminatory legislature has also given us a sense of direction: Russian people, their political culture-wise, alas, are too trusting. If the government tells them it is alright to hate on a certain group and there is even a law to justify that, some of them, if not most, follow through. To change public perception of us, then, we must first combat this unjust law. That is precisely what Sphere is doing as a human rights NGO: this Pride month we have launched an entire campaign against the ‘gay propaganda law’, with a petition that has already gathered almost 60,000 signatures, films detailing different aspects to the law and our community being affected by it, and a children’s book about LGBTQ+ families, first of its kind in Russia, with an ‘18+’ label to emphasize the law’s ridiculousness. The legislature on ‘foreign agents’ does not aid us in the least bit either. Sphere has been operating under it since 2016. The law is also applied more so as an instrument of planting seeds of distrust toward human rights organizations and independent media within the population.

II Luckily my work didn’t change drastically—though when I was invited to lecture on gender identity in my University we made sure there’ll be no listeners younger than 18 years old. But I know I’m just the lucky one—because psychological research is the field where the law is very hard to implement.

HOW IS YOUR NGO ENGAGED IN REACHING
AREAS THAT HAVE SHOWN LESS TOLERANCE
TOWARDS LGBTQIA*?

I As has been stated above, Russian LGBT Network is an umbrella organization and is hence represented all across the country.

II As far as I know RESOURCE help some sort of research to find out where and how often LGBTQ* people come across intolerance. But it's hard to speak about reaching intolerant areas because even the spread of intolerance is hard to be indicated in Russia (I mean where we have more/less intolerance).

HAVE YOU MET PEOPLE WHO GAVE
UP ON LGBTQIA* ACTIVISM IN RUSSIA?
WHAT WERE THE REASONS?

I No grand secret here, people merely get tired, grow burnt out. They also simply want to live their life to the fullest and have the same rights as everyone else. Realizing that might not happen in Russia in their lifetime, or at least in their youth, they move away. The people I know, all those LGBTQ+ activists, are brilliant and courageous, and have given a lot for the queer community' advancement. It was not that they just up and left, gave up. As I see it, they have paid their dues and then made choices they felt were best for them at some point in their lives.

II Since I don't communicate with many activists I can't answer the question. But I believe the major reason would be plain fear—fear for one's own safety or the safety of their closest ones.

WHAT IS YOUR EXPLANATION FOR THE HOSTILITY TOWARDS QUEER PEOPLE IN PART OF THE POPULATION?

I It is always about the lack of information. General population in Russia frequently has a picture of queer people in their heads as someone almost otherworldly, freakish. It is hard for them to imagine that their children, parents, colleagues, neighbors – practically anyone – could be identifying as LGBTQ+. The law, of course, only adds to such a perception, paints queer people as the enemy, the product of the Western influence, 'propaganda' by definition. Nevertheless, the more we are out there, the more awareness we manage to raise about us as a community and simply human beings, the less is the hostility level.

II Also there are many reasons—but I think the major would be lack of info + stereotypes + high tense in Russian population (due to financial and other social problems) that needs to be realized somewhere (and in this case LGBTQ* people are the easiest sphere for many reasons) + lack of support from high above (our people really look up to the president and different media stars)

WHAT IS YOUR PERSONAL GOAL AS AN
ACTIVIST? WHAT WOULD YOUR ACTIVIST
COLLECTIVE HOPE TO ACHIEVE IN THE
COMING YEARS?

I Repealing the propaganda law is a collective goal, as I guess has become obvious at this point. Our campaign to fight it is the result of our team's aspirations and the difficulties we have had to grapple with over the years, both as individuals and as an organization. As for me personally, I just would like to grow as a professional. I want to contribute to making changes for my community in however small a way, but on a continuous cohesive basis. And, granted, it is my profound wish to witness Russian people as a free society, one where it is alright to speak your mind, openly stand up for your rights and love someone with no fear, whatever their gender might be.

II To bring at least some light into transgender psychology and help at least some people to make their lives better.

NGOS POLAND

I NGO - ANONYMOUS

The NGO has asked us to anonymise their data

II NGO - TOLERADO

For years, the LGBT Association “Tolerado” has been supporting the Pomeranian LGBT+ community, providing comprehensive assistance in the form of support groups, consultations, self-help groups and events to build knowledge and awareness of human rights. We organize the Tricity Equality Days and the crowning Tricity Equality March—one of the largest events of its kind in Poland. Since 2017 we have been marching under the patronage of the Mayor of Gdańsk, and since 2019 also under the patronage of the Mayor of Sopot. Answers by Piotr Jankowski.

III NGO - KULTURA RÓWNOŚCI

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IV FOUNDATION - FUNDACJA KULTURA DLA TOLERANCJI

The Culture for Tolerance Foundation was established in 2005 in Krakow as a foundation primarily to organise the

annual March for Tolerance (the first time the march passed through the streets of Krakow in 2004 and gathered several thousand participants), at the same time causing a wave of protests and discontent. The Foundation was created by a group of enthusiasts who wanted the words Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, and Transgender to be spoken openly in Krakow. Some of the people who formed the Foundation at that time are still connected to the LGBT activist community. Today, the Foundation is made up of new people who have the ambition to make the city they live in open to diversity and tolerance. Answers by Oskar Fusek, President of the foundation Culture of Tolerance.

V FOUNDATION - FUNDACJA WOLONTARIAT RÓWNOŚCI

The Fundacja Wolontariat Równości Foundation is responsible for the Equality Parade. Answers by Julia Maciocha-Chairwoman Volunteers of Equality Foundation

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QUESTIONNAIRE

TO BEGIN, COULD YOU TELL US ABOUT THE CURRENT WORK FOCUS OF THE NGO YOU WORK FOR?

I The Our organization is focused on providing professional psychological, legal and antidiscrimination support for members of the LGBTI+ community in Poland. As we are based in [city] our stationary services are available for people who are able to reach this city (but we are not excluding people from other urban centres). We conduct a [...] helpline for the LGBTI+ people and their families to reach as many people in need as possible.

We are also open for awareness building in various places like big corporations, small communities etc. Each year we prepare about 10 volunteers for activism with workshops and training.

II Currently, Tolerado is focusing on three mainframes of the activity. First—organising psychological support for our community, mostly from Pomeranian voivodeship. Secondly – cooperation and building long-term relations with local government units, especially with Gdańsk town hall and local authorities, to introduce and arrange city equality policy called Model for Equal Treatment (first local policy in Poland treating about LGBT+ community needs among the others). Thirdly, we have few judicial processes against the foundation responsible for hate campaigns with trucks called “homophobuses” which drive through polish cities and spread the disinformation that homosexual people more often committed paedophilia crimes, or want to teach 4-year old kids how to masturbate. Moreover, our association organises the Tri-city Equal March (Pride Parade) – the biggest Pride in northern Poland, and takes numerous other actions related to LGBT+ community matters.

III Our main goals for the next 3 years are: Integrating and strengthening the LGBTQ+ community in Wrocław and the region / Building a network of local allies (other NGOs in the city, local government, institutions)

Our most important activities: annual Wrocław Equality March and Equal Rights Festival since 2014 (in 2020-10 thousand participants), equal Place - LGBTQ+ Centre Wrocław (workshops, meetings, equal conversations, board games, library), cultural and educational projects: local network for LGBTQ+ acceptance (2020-2022), Cinema for dialogue, School without prejudice, Johanneum Novum (<https://kulturarownosci.org/projekty/>), psychological help (individual consultations, support and development groups), legal help and others, intervention room for lgbt+ in homelessness crisis, cooperation with corporations in the Proud@Work network (25 companies in the network, meetings once a quarter, trainings in companies, presence of companies at the march) (<https://kulturarownosci.org/szkolenia-i-warsztaty/>), cooperation with local government (Board of Equal Treatment, Women's Board that work with the President of Wrocław). We also react to the situation in the country and region (direct actions demonstrations, protests, collecting signatures for civic initiatives, supporting people in courts etc.)

IV Our focus as NGO for the recent couple of years is mainly to produce and prepare theatrical performances such as revues or stand-up's and through that bring a little bit of joy and entertainment, but also educate a bit Polish audience. Mainly we focus on working with Drag Queen performances in Poland and close countries (for instance Drag Queens from Hungary or UK). We're a producer of 'Drag Queen Variety Show' that is unique and the only such show across Poland (and this part of Europe), that is being played in Krakow in Theatre Nowy Proxima on 'Berlin Scene'.

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V My name is Julia Maciocha and I am the president of volunteers of the quality Foundation, which is the main organizer for the Warsaw pride, which we call the equality parade here in Poland, I will explain that later. So, the main focus of my NGO, is actually to prepare the pride, but currently we are mostly focusing also on supporting other organizations, especially smaller groups from regions in Poland, to prepare their own marches and to support them so they could start with activism because activism burnout is the main problem right now in Poland through the activist community.

HOW DO YOUR STRUCTURES IN THE NGO LOOK?

I Our work is based on the volunteer activity of people working with various projects. This is the background for all our activities. Each volunteer team has its coordinator—this is a person that is prepared to react to various problems during the process of project realization.

To summarize, we have a few teams—an antidiscrimination volunteer group, the Helpline group and psychologists (they are not volunteers). We have a few people working in the office that conduct the majority of activities in the organization.

II Our organisation has the Board (President, Vice-president and four Board Members) and the Revision Committee. Both were elected by the Annual General Gathering of the Association Members. Some of our members are designated to the local structures e.g. to the Equal Treatment Council next to the mayor of Gdańsk.

III We have 12 committed permanent staff, 2 part-time employees within 5 people board (people who have been active in the CoR for more than 5 years). We work by consensus, in non-hierarchical working groups.

IV We do not have a complicated structure as an NGO—we have our foundation board (3 people) and foundation council (3 people).

V Our NGO is not structured. It is mainly because we are not getting paid. So no one working for our NGO is receiving a salary or money in any way or at any time. We have a board, which contains three people, so it is me basically responsible for everything except for financial stuff that are dealt by Zuzanna Ciesielska the other person from the board, and legal staff that are made by Paulina Piechna-Więckiewicz the third person from our board. Despite that, all work is done by volunteers. And we have currently about 15 people in this core volunteering team, in our best times we had 50 People, in our worst times we had six. So, right now I would say we are kind of in the middle, especially due to COVID, of course, it was impossible to bring new people to the organization. But again, there are no structures, but the financial decisions are mostly made by me, because I am legally responsible for them, but in general we are trying to make decisions collectively and somehow find solutions that are okay in all of our minds.

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WHAT ARE YOUR NETWORKS WITH NGO/LGBTQIA* ORGANIZATIONS OUTSIDE OF POLAND?

I We are associated in the International Lesbian and Gay Association for Europe (ILGA-Europe)—that is the biggest organization that connects activists from various countries in Europe. Nevertheless we try to keep in touch with many organizations from other countries, but we are not associated in some bigger groups. In fact ILGA-Europe is the only bigger association that allows us to cooperate with other countries within a network.

II Besides some single corporations, we have long term cooperation with the CSD Bremen. Members of CSD Bremen are guests on our Equal Treatment March every year, and our representation goes on almost every CSD in this city.

III At the moment we are working closely with Warmes Wiessbaden (Germany). Wiesbaden is a twin city of Wroclaw and based on that our two NGO's started working together. We also collaborate with activists which are working on Drezden Pride. In a 2-years project "Local network for LGBT+ acceptance" founded by EOG funds we have a partner FRI—The Norwegian Organization for Sexual and Gender Diversity based in Oslo.

IV We mainly focus on working closely with other NGOs in Poland, for instance Equality Signs Federation that we're part of (one of the Krakow's and Southern Poland's biggest organization that bring together various smaller ones and coordinate the work), but also we're in touch with Campaign Against Homophobia. Outside of Poland we're in contact and we're part of the ILGA Europe organization (<https://www.ilga-europe.org/who-we-are/members>).

V I would say we are quite good with networking with organizations outside of Poland. We are part of EPOA, ILGA Europe and InterPride. We are mostly focusing of course on our region such as Hungary, Germany, Czech Republic, because they are the closest neighbours, and we can actually do some stuff together. So, yeah, I would say that the network thing is pretty good for us.

WHERE DOES THE FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR YOUR NGO COME FROM?

I The biggest part of our finances are donations from many organizations and institutions in Poland, but a bigger part of our supportive activity is financially donated by the City [our NGO is located in] local-governmental funds. We also realize some projects from the European Commission.

II Mostly from international grants, especially from Norway Funds. Sometimes we receive support from other European LGBT+ communities, e.g. a few weeks ago Club De Trut from Amsterdam gathered funds for us. Almost every year we are starting in local government contests for the public benefit activities such as organising equal and diversity training for school teachers or organising the volunteer team.

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III

- EOG (Norwegian) Funds - Active Citizens program
- National Fund, formerly: Citizens for Democracy - Tides grant (Google community) for psychological help and social campaigns;
- Donations (from individuals and corporations, where we run trainings)
- Grants from the City of Wrocław (for educational and cultural projects, but this is a small amount) In Poland we are unable to get any financial support from our government (eg. Ministry of Justice or Education or Culture) due to a very homophobic approach of our ruling party.

IV The support comes from other NGOs and from the Polish citizens through donations and crowdfunding events where we collect money. Also as our shows are ticketed we're covering the expenses through the earnings from selling tickets.

V The financial support for our NGO mainly comes from donors. So, some of the money we are getting from the region funds and some from embassies, but generally, the private sector so companies are supporting our events and everything that we are doing we are collecting money sometimes from people as a public gathering. We also have a shop online, but it is only enough to just run the organization, so to pay the basic bills like for the Office or materials, supplies, office supplies, but it is not enough to actually cover the Warsaw Pride.

IN THE PAST FEW YEARS LGBTQIA* RELATED ISSUES GAINED MORE ATTENTION, ESPECIALLY OUTSIDE OF POLAND. HOW DID THAT AFFECT YOUR ORGANIZATION?

I For last two years we observe that the LGBTI-related topics started to be more present in the medial and public space. While the number of homophobic speeches or opinions is growing, the number of supportive messages started to grow too. We head a big change in awareness of people. We know that more homophobic part of the Polish society started to be more active in the last 2/3 years. At the same time we—as an organization that focuses on providing support to members of our community—need to focus on responding to every public message by analysing risks and fears of LGBTI+ people in Poland. It means that during some critical moments we have even more work with ongoing activities and responding to current events.

II To be honest it depends on the point of view. Of course, thanks to an international interest we can have hope for a better future someday. However, we are living in a nowadays that is extremely unfavourable for our communities, especially in middle and small towns or villages. The situation in big cities may look better but still is away from the perfect and safe environment.

III Greater visibility = greater needs. Many organizations and institutions want to cooperate with us. Like many lgbtq+ organisations in Poland regardless of our activity profile for the past 1.5 years we have been focusing to a large extent on organising free psychological help for LGBTQ+ people and their relatives (searching for funds, cooperation with a team of psychologists and psychotherapists). We also organized support groups for LGBT+ people.

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IV I think that since Poland gained more attention, we are more often invited to different panels and different places, but it did not affect our organization, per se, so it does not mean that we have more financial support, or more donors. I would actually say that it did not change anything for our organization

V It did not affect in any direct way our organization. Since last year only the pandemic situation and government restrictions affected us in that way we could not have any shows as the theatres were closed.

IF POLAND IS SEEN AS A DIVIDED COUNTRY BETWEEN THE URBAN AND RURAL POPULATION AS WELL AS THE WEST AND EAST, HOW IS YOUR NGO ENGAGED IN REACHING THOSE AREAS THAT HAVE SHOWN LESS TOLERANCE TOWARDS LGBTQIA*?

I [The City we are located in] is one of the most popular destinations of internal migrations—a lot of LGBTI+ people from the whole country move to [the city] to start from the beginning. While a bigger part of that group decides to start living here, there is a minority of people who need to move (for example—if they were kicked out of their homes or if they wanted to escape from a homo- and transphobic environment, especially in the East of the country). We are not engaged in conducting any activities in regions that seem to be less tolerant due to our local focus. Nevertheless our Helpline has nationwide range.

II Tolerado operates mostly in Tricity (Gdańsk, Sopot, Gdynia) and the Pomeranian voivodeship, but of course, we are engaged in nationwide campaigns or coalitions. In our region, we are trying to support local leaders from smaller cities/villages and teach them how to build local equal policies and take other activities related to supporting the LGBT+ community in their regions.

III We are running projects to be more invested in rural regions of Poland: - Local network for acceptance of LGBT+ people - Active Citizens National Fund: people from Lower Silesia and neighboring provinces (group of 14) - 6 trainings (2 days, we're in the middle), 18 anti-discrimination events in the region (the first one starts in September in Kalisz, the whole from September 2021 to November 2022), - Social campaign in the region (2022).

IV Our main goal is to educate and entertain people through our shows and theatrical performances. We play a substantial role in changing perception of Drag Queen performances (that are mainly recognized as part of LGBT communities) within our audience in the theatres, but also across the internet and TV shows as some of our performances are working in the television. We do not want to double other organizations efforts and their operations in scope of increasing knowledge of Polish citizens about tolerance and working hard on some law aspects as there are bigger and more experienced organizations that are working with experts on helping people or engaging government in that part and since we're cooperating with other NGOs and organizations like Equality Signs Federation - we support their endeavour in that area, while they are supporting our cause.

V Poland is a divided country. But it is not only a division between urban and rural areas. It is also the division between eastern and western Poland. It is also the division between young and old people. It is also somehow the division between Christians and atheists. So, this division is more of a complicated issue than just urban and rural because we have a lot of people from very small regions that are actively fighting for LGBTQ rights. So, I would not say that it is fair to say that our only problem is that people from small villages are less educated or less open because sometimes it is really not true, especially on the western side of Poland. The

bigger division that I see is the division between eastern and western Poland since on Eastern Poland, even in big cities, the intolerance is something surprising. People are very close minded and also supportive of the right wing government and sometimes, let us say it exterminates LGBTQ people from Poland. So I would not say that the urban and rural division is fair to make. What we are thinking about this division is that we are actually not trying to reach these areas. We do not believe that we can change a small village (to?) Warsaw. It would be received pretty badly by local people. So what we are trying to focus on right now is how we can engage people that are already in this area that are living there, that are part of the local community, and that are tolerant and open, how we can engage them to start activism or how we can support their activism if they are already active. That is why we have a three year project right now, it is sponsored by Norwegian funds, focusing mostly on supporting regions, so how can we reach, train, and support people from the small villages and small regions in their activism, but we want to let them freely decide of what they want to do or what they do not want to do in the local areas because a march, like pride, sometimes it is not the best idea for a small community, sometimes the better idea is to debate a meeting film screening maybe. So we want to leave all of the decision making, to this activists, or people that are becoming activists in this small regions or places, but we want to make sure that they have all of the support that we did not have when we were starting, so we have money for psychological support, not for people in general, because other organizations have programs for that but especially for activists, we have money for legal support for activists and organizations, we have a training program, how to manage the volunteers, how to, collect money, how to make an inclusive event, so we want to train them, we want to give them as many tools as we can, but the decision making should stay on their side since they are living in these places so they know the local situation the best.

**WHAT WOULD YOU AS AN NGO LIKE TO ACHIEVE
IN THE COMING YEARS?**

I Our main goal is to extend the supportive activity that we have been conducting for the past 20 years. Each year is a new challenge for us. It forces us to look for additional resources and ideas of activities.

II Full and indisputable equality for our communities, related to same-sex couples marriages, kids adoption, transition refund, legal protection and many other. The goals are ambitious, but we don't have any other option than to realise our achievements. It must be done.

III Develop the offer of the Równe Miejsce - Centrum LGBT+ Wrocław (this was stopped by the pandemic) - both in terms of size and substance - increase the city's involvement in lgbtq+ issues (systemically, financially: social campaigns, psychological support, intervention housing)

IV Definitely we are going to produce new Drag Queen Variety Shows in the upcoming years and strengthen our cooperation with Budapest's Drag Queens as in their country the LGBT community is also being discriminated by government and the public opinion plays a substantial role while it comes to changing that but also in the future by choosing new governments - so our main goal is to educate people, that in regards to what some governments says about LGBT communities we're all human beings and shall have equal rights.

V So for the upcoming years, I think the most important thing for us is to actually focus on supporting other people to do great activism. We see that we are doing a great job in Warsaw but the job needs to be done in regions and we want to focus on helping these people that are already there. And we want them to keep within the activity path

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because many people are burning out. They are leaving the activism, but also they are leaving the country so we are trying to focus on supporting those who are staying and those who feel overwhelmed, but they still have the power to do great stuff. So, I think this is the idea for us for the next year, we will see how it will turn out. I love that we get to obtain funding for it, because without funding it would not be possible of course, at least it would be much harder and right now we just do not have to worry about supporting and finances.

ACTIVE NEWSPORTALS GLOBAL

EQUALDEX

Supplies an equality index to explore the progress of LGBTQIA* rights across the world. (<https://www.equaldex.com/>)

GLBT.HISTORY

Collects, preserves, exhibits and makes accessible to the public materials and knowledge to support and promote understanding of LGBTQIA* history, culture and arts. (<https://www.glbthistory.org/>)

Q*ASEES

Provides a list of LGBTQEast European & Eurasian Studies scholars. (<http://qasees.org/scholars/>)

QueerInTheWorld

Queer bars, hotels, clubs & events around the world. (<https://queerintheworld.com/>)

RAINBOW MAP EUROPE

A map that ranks all 49 European countries on a scale between 0% (gross violations of human rights, discrimination) and 100% (respect of human rights, full equality). (<https://www.rainbow-europe.org/>)

THEM

Provides news and commentary on topics ranging from culture and politics to style and entertainment through the lens of the LGBTQIA* community. (<https://www.them.us/>)

RUSSIA

GAYNEWS.RU (<http://www.gaynews.ru/>)

GAY.RU (<http://www.xgay.ru/>)

KVIR (<http://www.kvir.ru/>)

LESBI.RU (<http://www.lesbi.ru/>)

LGBT

History Online Museum in Russia (<https://lgbtru.com/>)

MEDUZA

(<https://meduza.io/en>)

NOVAYA GAZETA

(<https://novayagazeta.ru/>)

RADIO Liberty

(<https://www.rferl.org/Russia>)

RESSOURCE-CENTER FOR LGBT

(<https://center-r.com/>)

RESOURCE LGBTQIA MOSCOW

Centre for social, psychological and cultural projects Russia (<http://resourcerus.org/ru/glavnaya>)

Российская ЛГБТ-сеть (<https://lgbtnet.org/>)

STIMUL (<https://www.msk-stimul.eu/>)

THE MOSCOW TIMES

(<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/>)

THE VILLAGE (<https://www.the-village.ru/>)

POLAND

ATLAS OF HATE

Map of anti-LGBT resolutions in Poland (<https://atlasnienawisci.pl/>)

ENCYCLOPEDIA.LGBT

Scientific facts on queer topics in polish (<https://www.encyklopedia.edu.pl/>)

FOUNDATION Q

Virtual polish LGBTQIA* Museum (<https://fundacjaq.com.pl/>)

INTERALIA

Journal of queer studies (<https://interalia.queerstudies.pl/home/>)

LGBT.PL

First Polish LGBT Archive and News feed (<https://lgbt.pl/>)

NOIZZ.PL.LGBT

The LGBT section of NOIZZ.pl. (<https://noizz.pl/lgbt>)

PRIDENEWS.PL

LGBT-related web portal (<http://pridenews.pl/>)

QUEER.PL

Informational, journalistic & cultural LGBT portal (www.queer.pl)

QPOP.BLOG

Blog of pop culture from the queer point of view (<https://qpopdotblog.wordpress.com/>)

REPLIKA

Online LGBT magazine (<https://replika-online.pl/>)

RUCH.LGBT

Les, gay, bi, trans information portal (<http://ruchlgbt.pl/>)

STREFYWOLNEODLGBT

Information website about LGBT-free zones by famous LGBTQIA* activist Bart Staszewski (<https://strefywolneodlgbt.pl/>)

WYCHODZIMYZURYCIA

Information platform about coming out in polish society (<http://wychodzimizukrycia.net/>)

ZNAJDZ.LGBT

LGBT Information platform (<https://znajdz.lgbt/>)

QUEER (RESEARCH) IN RUSSIA & POLAND

REGISTER OF GENDER STUDIES / NGOS, FOUNDATIONS, ASSOCIATIONS & QUEER COLLECTIVES IN POLAND AND RUSSIA

RUSSIA

GENDER STUDIES IN RUSSIA

N/A There currently are no existing Gender Study Centres, study groups or university courses on Gender Studies. Though, centres and summer schools did exist in the past and were thriving from 1990 onwards up until the introduction of the propaganda ban in 2012. University degrees in Gender Studies are non-existent either. Only rarely a lecturer teaches Gender Studies courses or modules, one of them used to be A. Kondakov at the European University in St. Petersburg, in 2013. Apart from that, Gender Studies might be touched upon in one or two lectures, depending on the lecturer, his field of interest and the course.

NGOS, FOUNDATIONS, ASSOCIATIONS & QUEER COLLECTIVES

CHARITABLE FOUNDATION SPHERE - Благотворительный фонд «Сфера»
<http://bfsfera.org.ru/>

CHILDREN-404. ДЕТИ 404 (LGBTQIA* PROJECT FOR TEENAGERS)
https://vk.com/deti404_vk2

“COMING OUT” LGBT GROUP (VYKHOD)
<https://comingoutspb.com/> - contact@comingoutspb.ru

LGBT GRANI. Общественно-Политические Грани ЛГБТ
<https://vk.com/lgbt.grani>

LGBT LIBRARY
<https://lgbtlibrary.blogspot.com/>

MOSCOW HELSINKI GROUP. Московская Хельсинкская Группа
<https://mhg.ru/>

PARNI PLUS. ПАРНИ ПЛЮС
<https://parniplus.com/>

QUEERFEST в Петербурге
<https://vk.com/queerfestspb>

RAINBOW ASSOCIATION
<https://vk.com/radarus>

RAINBOW FUTURE. Радужное будущее
https://vk.com/rainbow_future

RESOURCE LGBTQIA MOSCOW CENTRE
<http://resourcerus.org/>

RUSSIAN LGBT NETWORK INTERREGIONAL SOCIAL MOVEMENT
<https://lgbtnet.org/> - info@lgbtnet.org

GLOSSARY OF GENDER STUDIES & ORGANISATIONS

SIDE BY SIDE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

Бок о Бок Международный Кинофестиваль

<https://bok-o-bok.com/en/>

“STIMUL” MOSCOW LGBT INITIATIVE GROUP

<https://www.msk-stimul.eu/?lang=en> - info@msk-stimul.eu

SQUEER

<https://vk.com/lgbtsqueer>

vk.com/lgbtsqueer

STRAIGHTS FOR EQUALITY. Альянс гетеросексуалов и ЛГБТ за равноправие

https://vk.com/straights_for_equality

“ВМЕСТЕ”, ЛГБТ+ сообщество РГГУ (ceased to exist during our time of research)

https://vk.com/rsuh_vmeste - equaltwoequal@gmail.com

VOICES OF THE WORLD. Молодежный проект “Голоса мира”

<https://worldsvoices.com/>

ZONT ZHURNAL. ЗОНТ.ЖУРНАЛ. ЛГБТ-культура

<https://vk.com/zontzhurnal>

INTERNATIONAL NGOS, FOUNDATIONS & ASSOCIATIONS

IGLYO

An international Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer & Intersex (LGBTQI) Youth and Student Organisation (<http://www.iglyo.com/>)

ILGA Europe

An independent, international non-governmental umbrella organisation bringing together over 600 organisations from 54 countries in Europe and Central Asia (<https://www.ilga-europe.org/>)

LGBT.Funders A network of more than 75 foundations, corporations, and funding institutions that is specifically devoted to LGBTQ issues. (<https://lgbtfunders.org/>) - info@lgbtfunders.org

OutRight Action International

Works alongside LGBTQI activists and organizations, diplomats and policymakers, and other key partners to advance community-focused solutions to create lasting legal and social transformation. (<https://outrightinternational.org/>) - hello@outrightinternational.org

RUSA.LGBT

Russian-speaking LGBTQ-association (<https://rusalgbt.com/>) - info@rusalgbt.com

TGEU

European & Central Asian TransGender NGO (<https://tgeu.org/>) - tgeu@tgeu.org

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POLAND

GENDER STUDIES IN POLAND

LODZ

Women's Studies Center, Gender Studies, University of Lodz, Lodz

POZNAN

Interdisciplinary Women's Studies Group, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznan

WARSAW

Gender Studies, Uniwersytet Warszawski, Warsaw

Gender Studies, Institute of Literary Research, Polish Academy Of Science, Warsaw

NGOS, FOUNDATIONS, ASSOCIATIONS & QUEER COLLECTIVES

ACCEPTANCE - AKCEPTACJA

<http://akceptacja.org/> - biuro@akceptacja.org

ASFERA ASSOCIATION - THE SPECTRUM OF ASEXUALITY

STOWARZYSZENIE ASFERA – SPEKTRUM ASEKSUALNOŚCI

<https://www.facebook.com/aseksualizm/>

CAMPAIGN AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA - KAMPANIA PRZECIW HOMOFOBII

[HTTPS://kph.org.pl/](https://kph.org.pl/) - info@kph.org.pl

CULTURE OF EQUALITY - KULTURA RÓWNOŚCI

<https://kulturarownosci.org/> - kontakt@kulturarownosci.org

DIVERSITY FOUNDATION POLAND - FUNDACJA DIVERSITY POLSKA

<https://diversity3city.pl/> - info@diversityhub.pl

DIVERSITY PRISM - PRYZMAT RÓŻNORODNOŚCI

<https://de-de.facebook.com/FundacjaPryzmatRoznorodnosci/>

DIVERSITY WORKPLACE ASSOCIATION - PRACOWNIA RÓŻNORODNOŚCI

<https://de-de.facebook.com/spr.lgbtq/>

EQUALITY FACTORY - FABRYKA RÓWNOŚCI

<http://fabrykarownosci.com/> - poczta@rownasie.pl

EQUALITY FOUNDATION - FUNDACJA RÓWNOŚCI

<https://rownosc.org.pl/> - info@rownosc.org.pl

EQUALITY VOLUNTEERS FOUNDATION- FUNDACJA WOLONTARIAT RÓWNOŚCI

<https://wolontariatrownosci.pl/> - kontakt@paradarownosci.eu

FOR THE VARIETY - DLA ODMIANY

<https://dlaodmiany.org.pl/> - kontakt@dlaodmiany.org.pl

“GIRLS BERLIN” - DZIEWUCHY BERLIN (POLISH QUEER FEMINIST COLLECTIVE)

<https://www.dziewuchyberlin.org/> - info@dziewuchyberlin.org

GLOSSARY OF GENDER STUDIES & ORGANISATIONS

HOMO FABER

<http://www.hf.org.pl/ao/index.php> - info@hf.org.pl

KDT FUNDACJA KULTURA DLA TOLERANCJI - CULTURE FOR TOLERANCE FOUNDATION

<https://www.facebook.com/kdtkrakow/> - kdtkrakow@gmail.com

LAMBDA WARSAW ASSOCIATION (HEAD OFFICE OF LAMBDA IN WARSAW) - STOWARZYSZENIE LAMBDA WARSZAWA

<http://lambdawarszawa.org/en/en-strona-glowna/> - warszawa@lambdawarszawa.org

LOVE DOES NOT EXCLUDE - MIŁOŚĆ NIE WYKLUCZA

<https://mnw.org.pl/> - kontakt@mnw.org.pl

QUEER INFIRMARY - QUEEROWE AMBULATORIUM

<https://queeroweambulatorium.wordpress.com/>

QUEER MAY ASSOCIATION - QUEEROWY MAJ

<https://www.queerowymaj.org/> - info@queerowymaj.org

RAINBOW ASSOCIATION - STOWARZYSZENIE TĘCZÓWKA

<http://www.teczowka.org.pl> - kontakt@teczowka.org.pl

RAINBOW POLAND

<https://de-de.facebook.com/rainbowparasol/> - rodziceigbt@gmail.com

SIGNS OF EQUALITY FEDERATION - FEDERACJA ZNAKI RÓWNOŚCI

<https://znakirownosci.org.pl/> - wsparcie@znakirownosci.org.pl

SILENT RAINBOW - CICHA TĘCZA

<http://cichatecza.pl/> - biuro@cichatecza.pl

SISTERS OF PERPETUAL INDULGENCE - SIOSTRY NIEUSTAJĄCEJ PRZYJEMNOŚCI

<https://siostry.org.pl/>

STONEWALL GROUP ASSOCIATION - STOWARZYSZENIE GRUPA STONEWALL

<https://grupa-stonewall.pl/> - kontakt@grupa-stonewall.pl

"STOP THE BULLSHIT" - STOP BZDUROM (POLISH QUEER COLLECTIVE)

<https://stopbzdurom.pl/> - poczpozta@stopbzdurom.pl

SUPPORT THE UNIONS - POPIERAM ZWIĄZKI

<http://popieramziazki.pl/>

TOLERADO - ASSOCIATION FOR LGBT PEOPLE

<https://tolerado.org/> - tolerado@tolerado.org

TRANS-FUZJA FOUNDATION - FUNDACJA TRANS-FUZJA

<https://www.transfuzja.org/> - kontakt@transfuzja.org

YES, WE LOVE FOUNDATION - YES, WE LOVE FUNDACJA

<https://www.facebook.com/yeswelovepolska/>

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Poland: Members. [online] Available at: <https://www.ilga-europe.org/who-we-are/members>
[Accessed 31 August 2021].
- Znajdz.lgbt (2021)
Kategoria Organizacje. [online] Available at:
<https://znajdz.lgbt/kategoria/organizacje/?post-Type=listing&listing--cat=103&postsPerPage=12> [Accessed 31 August 2021].



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Berlin



QUEER (RESEARCH) IN RUSSIA & POLAND

1716 Tsar Peter the Great enacted a ban on male homosexuality in the armed forces. The prohibition on sodomy was part of a larger reform movement designed to modernize Russia and efforts to extend a similar ban to the civilian population were rejected until 1835.

Homosexuality in Russia existed relatively openly on all levels of society and was not treated as a crime until Peter the Great's reforms to Westernize Russia imported homophobia into the country.

1832 Tsar Nicholas I added Article 995 which outlawed "muzhelozhstvo"—a ban on some forms of private adult voluntary homosexual behavior.

1917–1932 The Soviet government of the Russian Soviet Republic (RSFSR) decriminalised homosexuality in December 1917, following the October Revolution and the discarding of the Legal Code of Tsarist Russia. The legalisation of homosexuality was confirmed in the RSFSR Penal Code of 1922, and following its redrafting in 1926. The legalisation of private, adult and consensual homosexual relations only applied to the Russian SFSR and the Ukrainian SSR. Homosexuality or sodomy remained a crime in Azerbaijan (officially criminalised in 1923) as well as in the Transcaucasian and Central Asian Soviet Republics throughout the 1920s. Similar criminal laws were enacted in Uzbekistan in 1926 and in Turkmenistan the following year.

1933–34 Stalinist anti-homosexual campaign: criminalisation of sodomy; total silence about homosexuality in post-Stalin Soviet Union.

1980s Perestroika
broke this silence.

1990s 1. Wave of gay activism failed a lasting political movement but established queer infrastructure in larger cities.

1993 Decriminalisation of homosexuality.

1996 Return of criminalisation of homosexuality (homosexuality enters via Clause 132, which speaks of homosexual rape, and specifies that male and female ('lesbianstvo') homosexuality, performed with the application of violence, is punishable.

RUSSIA

1700

1780

1800

1830

1930

1940

1960

1980

1995

POLAND

1795 After the country lost its independence in 1795 it was the sodomy laws of Russia, Prussia and Austria which criminalized homosexuality in Polish territories. Before that Homosexuality had never been considered a crime within the Polish legal system.

1932 In a new Criminal Code Poland officially decriminalized homosexuality, the first country in twentieth-century Europe to do so.

1995 First Gay Pride Parade in Warsaw in. In 1996, the Lesbian Information and Counseling Center was established.

1998
In Warsaw the first attempt to organize a rally against discrimination of homosexual people took place; three men with covered faces stood in the city centre holding boards with the names of their professions.

1985–87 Akcja "Hiacynt": a secret mass operation of the Polish communist police. Its purpose was to create a national database of all Polish homosexuals and people who were in touch with them, the operation was aiming to detain, interrogate and register both actual and alleged homosexuals in order to create a kind of state "pink archive" The operation was relaunched at least twice, on 26–27 September 1986 and 16–17 November 1987. It is estimated that altogether the police forces gathered around 11,000 files.