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# Family Values in Russian Foreign Policy: A Clash of Civilizations?

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Narrative Analysis of Russian Politicians'  
Statements on Sexual Minorities

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Respect for the rights and freedoms of Russian citizens belonging to LGBT (gay, bisexual and transgender people), is an important problem in modern Russia. According to human rights activists, the adoption of laws against the "promotion of homosexuality" has been the most disturbing development in recent years regarding the rights of LGBT people in Russia. Russian politicians explain the necessity of such laws with reference to the fight against debauchery and the desire to protect the health and morals of children. They evoke family values. The UN Committee on Human Rights has found that such laws violate the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. According to human rights treaties, the law banning "propaganda of homosexuality" violates the right to freedom of assembly, the right to freedom of expression and other rights. Moreover, the treatment of LGBT people in Russia has caused tension and foreign policy clashes in Russia's relations with other countries.

This thesis asks whether the foreign policy clash over the treatment of LGBT people makes sense in the context of Samuel Huntington's theory of the clash of civilizations, Does Huntington's theory work here? I will thus examine whether the narratives of Russian politicians discussing the treatment of the LGBT community in Russia can be treated as instances of civilizational identity building. As the narratives are not homogeneous it argued that this is not only confrontation between purely Western values and values unique to Russia but also a confrontation within the state, where citizens or mostly policy makers consider this issue from the different points of view.

The key primary sources of this thesis are Foreign Affairs documentations, comments and interviews by a set of Russian politicians. As a research method, the thesis uses narrative method. Several documents are compared with each other to find points of contact and separation, and the main task is to find whether a civilizational difference underlies this debate.

Key words: Russia, "Traditional values", LGBT, law banning propaganda of homosexuality, minors, Human Rights and freedom, family values.

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## 1. Introduction

The relevance of the question of the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (i.e. LGBT) people in Russia has arisen after the adoption of a law banning gay propaganda among minors.<sup>1</sup> The law was adopted in June, 30 2013. The sexual minority groups have considered this law to violate their rights. At the same time some of the Russian politicians think that this law is aimed solely at protecting children from sexual abuses. On this basis there is a debate between gay activists and their supporter from the one side and the politicians protecting this bill from another side about the competence of such law.

For many centuries in Russia, the "invisibility" of LGBT people was considered as normal. According to human rights activists it was linked to aggression, intolerance and political repression of LGBT people. However, in recent years, the situation began to change and the LGBT community of the country is becoming more open and visible, wanting to live in peace with the rest of society and to be happy. Human rights activists have pointed out that there is an attack on the civil rights of LGBT people, reduced space for the discussion of homosexuality, censorship in the media and persecution of dissidents. Also, the majority of Russian citizens still refer to the LGBT community in intolerant and disrespectful ways.

The Russian Constitution guarantees the equality of rights and freedoms of man and citizen. At the same time the Criminal Code does not contain any liability for homosexual relations.

The Russian leadership claims that there is no discrimination and violations of the rights of LGBT citizens. But according to human rights activists', discrimination against LGBT people in Russia is widespread and systematic, and in most cases remains unknown to the public. None of the Russian legislation explicitly mentions

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<sup>1</sup> Rossiyskaya Gazeta, 2013.

the ban on discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Russian authorities believe that there shall be no discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity as any other discrimination, and the rights of LGBT people are protected by existing legislative acts.<sup>2</sup>

Human rights activists have considered the adoption of laws against the "promotion of homosexuality" as the most disturbing developments in recent years concerning the rights of LGBT people in Russia. Russian politicians explain the necessity of such laws with reference to the fight against debauchery and the desire to protect the health and morals of children, i.e. family values. The UN Committee on Human Rights has found such laws violate the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.<sup>3</sup> According to human rights, bans "propaganda of homosexuality" violate the right to freedom of assembly, the right to freedom of expression and other rights. The adoption of the law also caused tension in Russia's relations with other countries. The Swedish foreign minister Carl Bildt, for example, vocally condemned the laws.<sup>4</sup>

The research topic of this master's thesis is *Family Values in Russian Foreign Policy: a Clash of Civilizations?* The time-frame of the work is 2013-2015. The work is based on Samuel H. Huntington's theory of the clash of civilizations. Thus, the thesis will research whether the foreign policy clash over the treatment of LGBT people makes sense in the context of Huntington's theory of the clash of civilizations? Does Huntington's theory work here? I will conduct a narrative analysis and examine whether the narratives can be treated as instances of civilizational identity building by way of narrative constructions.

In light of these research questions, the study is divided into the following main sections: Introduction, Theoretical Framework, Methodological approach, The anti-gay law overview, Analysis and the Conclusion.

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<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2014.

<sup>3</sup> The United Nations, 2013.

<sup>4</sup> Bildt, 2013.

Chapter Two defines the theoretical framework for the study of the issue from the perspective of theory of the clash of civilizations.

Chapter Three is devoted to narratives as the method of analysis.

Chapter Four is about persons who participated in the discussion on gay propaganda and their short characteristics.

Chapter Five presents an analysis of narratives. It is divided into three sections. The first one analyzes the quotations of politicians who are combined into a group supporting the restrictive law. The second subchapter analyzes the quotations of people who are against such law. And the third one analyzes the official position of the state towards the banning of gay propaganda.

Finally, there is a conclusion, which presents the results of the narrative analysis and discusses the narratives in relation to the theory of clash of civilizations. Do the narratives approve or disapprove of the idea of a clash? Are the narratives an instance of civilizational identity building?

The data to be analyzed consist of 53 quotations of the Russian politicians towards the gay issue. The quotes were chosen from various interviews given by the respondents for the Russian and Western media. They are seen to reflect the direct attitude of the respondents to homosexuality in general and this issue Russia in particular and to able a reconstruction of narratives.

It was difficult to include everything what politicians say on this occasion because of limited volume of thesis and therefore it was decided to use only representative key quotes that reflect the position of one or other existing warring parties.

## 2. Theoretical orientation

### 2.1 The clash of civilizations

In this thesis, I analyze whether the foreign policy clash over the treatment of LGBT people makes sense in the context of Huntington's theory of the clash of civilizations. Does Huntington's theory work here? This would mean examining whether the narratives can be treated as instances of civilizational identity building.

In the book *The Clash of Civilizations and Remaking of World Order* -Samuel P. Huntington supposes that human history is the history of civilizations. Throughout history civilizations have provided the broadest identifications for people.<sup>5</sup> And there are different perceptions of the term "civilization". The idea of civilizations was created by eighteenth-century French thinkers as the opposite of the concept of "barbarism". The distinctive features of a civilizational community from primitive society are in that, it was settled, urban, and literate.<sup>6</sup> Eventually this approach is considered outdated.

Civilizations can consist of a large number of people or very small number of people. They do not have to have clearly defined boundaries and no precise beginnings and endings. People can identify themselves differently, as the results the form and structure change in course of time. The cultures of nations interact with each other thereby its exposed transformation. The civilization is a long-term mechanism which can survive various political, social and economical shocks unlike many other governments.<sup>7</sup>

Samuel P. Huntington highlights eight civilizations: Sinic, Japanese, Hindu, Islamic, Slavic Orthodox, Western, Latin American, and African.<sup>8</sup> In this thesis, I will focus on the Orthodox Russian and Western civilizations, because they are relevant to the

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<sup>5</sup> Huntington, 1996, 40.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *idem*, 42.

<sup>8</sup> *idem*, 45.

topic of my work.

In addition to Europe and North America the Western countries include Australia and New Zealand. The ratio between the two main components of the West, however, changes over time. Over time and the history of the United States considered itself as a country that is very different from Europe. According to Huntington, if Europe was a place where there is a hierarchy, class conflicts and other oppression, the USA positioned itself as a country in which there is no place to oppression and this place is a land of opportunity and freedom. Until the late 19th century, such a statement was the place to be as the US pursued a policy of isolation towards all countries, including the European. Already in the following century, when the United States became more integrated into world politics they realized that the Americans are part of the West, and even began to consider themselves the engine of Western norms and values.<sup>9</sup>

The term "the West", as Huntington argues, "is now universally used to refer to what used to be called Western Christendom. Historically, the Western civilization is thus European civilization. In the modern era, Western civilization is EuroAmerican or North Atlantic civilization."<sup>10</sup> Huntington believes that the West is the dominant civilization at this point of time.<sup>11</sup>

According to Samuel Huntington the decline of the West has three major characteristics:

1. The process of decline of the West can take a long time as well as its formation. It is likely that this process can be accelerated. The West probably is in the first phase, but things can change, and then the process will go with the speed of light.
2. This decline will be uneven with short-term and long-term pauses. This is another assumption of Huntington. He argues that this is due to the fact that the West has

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<sup>9</sup> Huntington, 1996, 46.

<sup>10</sup> idem, 47.

<sup>11</sup> idem, 82.

great facilities for resumption.

3. In this parameter Huntington also introduces the concept of power. One state should have enough recourse which exceeding the resources of other countries (i.e. political, economical, military and so on) to influence its policies. This is an indicator of power. If resources are no longer sufficient, the state loses its influence on other states. The peak of US influence was observed in the 20th century, now it is steadily decreasing.<sup>12</sup>

Joseph Nye, the developer of the concept of soft power says that there is “hard power” which is based on military and economic levers of the state and there is “soft power” which includes an element of attractiveness of one's culture and values and ideology over another. And sometimes the second is more effective than the use of the first. Soft power works in conjunction with hard power. The country which has the political, economic and military power has the ability to manage a soft power more effective than a country with a smaller capacity. This is because culture and ideology seem more attractive to others if they can be protected by the political, economic and military bases. Thus, the state can more easily get the partners share its position and values.<sup>13</sup>

Russia has always been relatively open to ideas from the West. As a result, Russia's responses to challenges posed by the West were typically met with the use of ideas that had been originally generated in the West. In the case of LGBT society in Russia, the situation is the same. The LGBT activists accuse the authorities do undemocratic actions against them. However, Russian authorities consider they do everything relevant to gay minority in framework of the law and democracy.

When the state weakens, it finds it increasingly difficult to impose its ideas in various fields and the resistance increases from other countries. Here, Samuel Huntington introduced the concept of indigenization. The first phase is when a weak non-Western

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<sup>12</sup> Huntington, 1996, 84.

<sup>13</sup> Nye, 1990, 181-182.

state use Western values such as self-determination, liberalism and democracy as an excuse for its attitude towards the West. The second phase is when a country accepting Western norms and values becomes strong and more independent in the several positions, starts to criticize these values at a certain moment. As an alternative a state promote its own civilizational values. Thereby indigenization associated with the democratic paradox: Western countries encourage democratic institutions and at the same time they encourage anti-Western movements and nativism.<sup>14</sup> To based on Huntington's comments, it can be assumed that Russia has reached the second phase, when a country opposes their values to the Western values, and that the debate on the rights of the LGBT community makes sense in the context of it.

In the early 1990s Russia has turned toward religion again. Despite the fact that the Russian Church and the State have been separated from each other it can be seen that some religious views are strongly connected to the idea of traditional values which are guided by politicians in their positions with regard to non-traditional minorities also.

The processes of economic, political and social modernization occurred in newborn Russia. On the one hand, not all of these were related to religion. On the other hand, all of them made people turn to the faith, because it answered key human questions and gave them an identity code.<sup>15</sup> The Russian identity code, according some authoritative persons, forming with religion, does not accept homosexuality as a normal phenomenon of human living. It is worth noting that this is not the official state position which taking a more neutral stance. According to state position, restricting measures of gay propaganda are aimed only on child protection from "information promoting the negation of traditional family values"<sup>16</sup>.

In the 1990s, the world saw a huge reservoir of an identity crisis. It touched upon

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<sup>14</sup> Huntington, 1996, 94.

<sup>15</sup> idem, 97.

<sup>16</sup> Rossiyskaya Gazeta, 2013.

several newly formed countries. The questions of identity have been particularly intense in torn countries, among which Huntington includes Russia and where different groups of citizens belonging to different civilizations. It is always easier to cope with the crisis of identity when people believe in the same gods and have a common cultural and linguistic basis. It is certainly a fact that can bring people together.<sup>17</sup>

I hypothesize that Huntington's theory can be used to explore the conflict over the treatment of sexual minorities between Russia and the West for the reason that cultural commonality as part of cooperation and cultural differences as an element of conflict take place in the theory of a clash. According to Huntington there are five reasons for this<sup>18</sup>:

1. Each person has many identities. Some identities complement each other and at the same time conflict with other identities. Conflicts between different cultures are becoming more apparent as people identify themselves differently within different cultural groups.
2. Increasing significance of cultural identity is the result of social and economic modernization at the individual level, as well as at the level of society, where the growth of the power and influence of non-Western societies stimulates the revival of local identity and culture.
3. Identity is characterized by division into "us" and "them". These differences in intra- and extra civilizational behavior stem from: "feelings of superiority towards other people who are perceived as being very different, fear of and lack of faith in such people; difficulty of communication with them as a result of differences in language and what is considered civil behavior, lack of familiarity with the assumptions, motivations, social relationships, and social practices of other people".<sup>19</sup>
4. If conflicts between countries of different civilizations arising of any other

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<sup>17</sup> Huntington, 1996, 126.

<sup>18</sup> idem, 128-130.

<sup>19</sup> idem, 130.

reason than cultural issues, they can be resolved through negotiations and generally reduced to a compromise. But conflicts between cultural groups often affect cultural issues. It cannot be easy to decide in the case of the issue of culture.

5. One of the inherent human senses is hatred. In other words, haters gonna hate. For the self-determination and motivation people need enemies: competitors in any area. Naturally people do not trust those who are different from them and may harm them, and they see them as a threat. Resolution of conflict and the disappearance of the enemy lead to the appearance of conflict and other new enemies.<sup>20</sup>

Huntington considers that there are three conditions which must be performed in order to a torn country can successfully to redefine its civilizational identity. “Firstly, the government of the country should enthusiastically support this desire. Secondly, society must accept the redefinition of identity. Third, dominant elements must be willing to accept new convert state.”<sup>21</sup>

I argue in this thesis that Huntington’s theory of a clash of civilizations goes some way of explaining the conflict over LGBT issues between Russia and the West. For a long time Russia has been a torn state and after the disintegration of the USSR situation has not changed. Perhaps, it became more difficult. What is the most important, to stay Orthodox or to go in western direction? The complexity of a choice lies in the history of relations between Russia and the West. Huntington distinguishes four phases of bilateral relations.

The first phase is the phase from Kievan Rus till Peter the Great times (1689—1725). During this period, Kievan Rus and the West existed separately from each other. It important to notice, Russian civilization was formed on the basis of the

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<sup>20</sup> Huntington, 1996, 130

<sup>21</sup> idem, 139.

Byzantine civilization, and then Mongol yoke had huge influence on Kievan Rus. Due to these events, Russia remained aloof from important factors which served as formation of Western cultural identity. While Europe continued to develop the cultural heritage of the Greeks and Romans, Russia has failed to develop their Byzantine heritage as it has done in the West as a consequence of a long-term subordinate position of Mongolia.<sup>22</sup>

During the reign of Peter the Great, there was a shift in the modernization of Russia in the European manner and at the same time some eastern feature of government remained the same (tyranny). Peter created a torn country, for a long time Slavophiles and Westerners disputed over the fate of Russia. If to speak in general terms Slavophiles believed that Russia must eliminate Western influence and develop in its own way, as Westerners believed that it is necessary to adhere to the course of the Western states. Peter the Great was the hero for Westerners and a terrible disappointment for the Slavophiles. Nowadays, according to Tsygankov, Liberals represent the position of Westerners and Nationalists uphold the principles of Slavophiles in modern Russia.<sup>23</sup>

The Bolshevik Revolution presented a next stage of the relationship between Russia and the West. The new Russia changed course from royal regime to building a new form of living in society, i.e. communism. Remarkable theoretical developers of this concept were Western scholars such as K. Marx, F. Engels, and A. Saint-Simon etc. Lenin put this theory into practice. The newborn state sought to live in the present without looking back on tsar regime and other states especially on West countries, but at the same time it was hoped that the West will be on the way of communist revolution which change the capitalist reality. Now the dispute was in the West; whether can it resist the attractive charm to communism? The question became a

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<sup>22</sup> Huntington, 1996, 139.

<sup>23</sup> Tsygankov, 1999, 51-58.

great question after the finish the World War II.<sup>24</sup>

In the 1990-s the disputes about a future of Russia arose again. Slavophiles thought that Russia should keep the balance between East and West and Westerners decided that it will be better for Russia to follow the western style of live. The political elite of that time was also divided into groups who supported these two mainstreams. On the one hand were the Westernizers, "cosmopolitans," and on the other, the Slavophiles (they used to call themselves "nationalists," "Eurasianists," or "derzhavniki"). Without any doubt one can say that the beginning of the 90 Russia continued to be a torn country "with the Western Slavophile duality".<sup>25</sup> So, it is impossible to assess the impact of the West on Russia without back-story. In this way, we can see that the relations between two cultures were always not easy. All these historical twists and turns have also affected the current attitude to the LGBT community. In this case LGBT activists take on the role of Westerners and men in government – as Slavophiles.

Huntington once again points out in his work; Western culture has had a great influence on other cultures but this plays positive and negative roles. The ratio of other civilizational groups is the result of this influence. People will stick to their cultural attitudes, if the influence of the West declines. As a result, there can be disproportionate to what the West wants to impose to others, and whether it can implement it.<sup>26</sup>

Residents of non-Western do not miss a chance to point out the discrepancy between the principles and actions of the West. Double standards and hypocrisy are the price of pretension on universalism.<sup>27</sup>

If we talk about the situation of the Russian LGBT community as well as adoption of children from Russia or about the West's attitude towards these issues – then,

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<sup>24</sup> Huntington, 1996, 141-142.

<sup>25</sup> Tsygankov, 1999, 51-58.

<sup>26</sup> idem, 184.

<sup>27</sup> ibid.

according to Huntington's theory, this can be seen as a conflict at the macro level, the conflict between core states occur among the major states of different civilizations. This conflict is a classic one in international politics as it includes such points as values and culture, conflicts over which arise when a state attempts to promote or to impose its values on the people of another civilization. In this case the USA insist that Russia has violated fundamental human rights by introducing a law banning gay propaganda among minors.

Usually countries seek to enlist the support of third country thereby exacerbating civilizational contradictions. The conflicting parties have resorted to various measures to solve the problem, but it is unlikely that the core countries will use military force against each other.<sup>28</sup>

According to Huntington's concept, at present time, when confrontation between two major forces (the USA& the Soviet Union) sunk into oblivion, confrontation and alliances are formed on the basis of the presence of a particular identity. It is not difficult to guess that, if countries have very similar cultural code, they are likely to be allies, but if countries have a very few things or nothing collective, they are doomed to constant confrontation. The presence of a wide variety of civilizational differences thus casts doubt on Western culture as the universal culture for whole world.<sup>29</sup>

The LGBT conflict can be examined in the context of the West believing that people living outside of Western civilization are ready with great pleasure to learn Western values. If this tendency is not observed, it is considered that such people are (as Huntington writes) "the victims of false consciousness<sup>30</sup>". In the West legislation traced the idea that western norms and values are the embodiment of the high level of

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<sup>28</sup> Huntington, 1996, 208.

<sup>29</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *idem*, 310.

progress to which the man came for a long period of his existence.<sup>31</sup>

Such way of thinking is appropriate if a state is at the peak of its power, as Samuel Huntington rightly pointed out “culture always follows power<sup>32</sup>”. The era of Western dominance is gradually reaching back and to extend the supremacy of the West, it will be necessary to carry out more and more extension. However, the West no longer has the demographic and economic trump cards that would help to impose its will on other civilizations. If the West tries to expand its hegemony in spite of all of these, it would have to violate its own principles, such as democracy and freedom of choice.<sup>33</sup> All world civilizations sooner or later pass through all stages of existence: from the beginning to the end. The distinguishing features Western culture is that it gave the world a religion as Christianity, has developed the ancient idea of the rule of law, has become the cradle of democracy, etc. It is primarily important to understand these facts and try to save this great heritage instead of impose its own rules to one and all, because “the Western civilization is unique, but not universal”.<sup>34</sup>

Then the question arises whether it is possible to save Western civilization in the face of declining Western influence? Here Samuel Huntington offers the solutions to this problem. There are the only three points, but its are relevant to Russia and can be attributed to the issue of LGBT. Firstly, all states should not allow other non-Western states to play on the differences in views between Western countries to bring this it is important to synchronize in maximum extent all political, economy and military matters.

One thing is absolutely sure. All Western countries have shown remarkable solidarity with each other expressing disagreement with the policy pursued by the Kremlin against LGBT. Therefore there is a possibility; Western countries likely will have similar views on a social issue as LGBT problems.

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<sup>31</sup> Huntington, 1996, 310.

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> *idem*, 311.

The second, the West should realize, Russia has other civilization code, and it is the Orthodox core state, a significant regional player that has a legitimate reason to ensure the security of its borders. The third, Europe and the United States should be aware of the fact that interfering in the affairs of neighboring states, they are endangering stability in the world.<sup>35</sup> The situation regarding the LGBT community in Russia certainly does not break balance the situation in the world, but made some inconveniences in the political dialogue between these countries.

And finally last inscription from the creator of the theory the Clash of Civilizations Samuel P. Huntington. Cooperation between the leading civilizations can keep the peace in the world and give it stability. In the future, the ones that will win in the clash between civilizations and barbarism are those who will be cohesive with their partners. In the future, namely civilizational wars are the most dangerous and only international order is the most reliable way to prevent world war between civilizations.<sup>36</sup>

Summarizing the chapter, it is possible to argue that the situation with Russian LGBT people and the way in which some other states have reacted to it is a kind of clash of civilizations. This is not only the confrontation between purely Western values and values unique to Russia but also a confrontation within the Russian state, where citizens consider this issue from the different points of view.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union Russia became the state sharing western democratic norms as common rules for all its citizens. As argued by a representative of the Russian ministry for foreign affairs,

Human rights - is the foundation of democracy. Our approach to the promotion and protection of human rights shared by the majority of UN member states. Its

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<sup>35</sup> Huntington, 1996, 312.

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.*

essence lies in the fact that no one is allowed to violate the universal standards in this area.<sup>37</sup>

This is an example of a Western initiative, and one that Russia accepts, but Russia considers “this is unacceptable, the protection of human rights turns into its opposite when defending the rights of one group violates the rights of others.”<sup>38</sup> This postulate applies to the country's position in relation to the LGBT community. Thus, Russia is using arguments which are typical for Western countries when it tries to defend its position. This position consists of unique components specific to Russia, based on traditional, cultural and some religious components. In turn, gay activists and their supporters say that gay rights in Russia as a part of the human rights regime have been violated.

Thus, Russia as a part of the democratic world supports Western values (in particular human rights) and at the same time promotes its vision relying on its past, its cultural identity and religion and all of them have not the same background as the Western states. The situation inside the country is not smooth. If the official position of the state is based on traditional values, the opinion of the LGBT community and their supporters does not relate to such values. Does this mean that it is guided solely by international standards?

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<sup>37</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013.

<sup>38</sup> *ibid.*

## 2.2 Criticism of the theory

As this thesis attempts to apply Huntington's theory to analyze the conflict over family values and the LGBT situation, it is necessary also to take into account critiques of the theory. After Huntington's article's publication in 1993 many years have passed but still debate about the civilization theory does not lose relevance. The theory of the clash of civilizations was showcased in media around the world and prompted voluminous favorable and critical commentary. In this sub-chapter the views of some well-known experts on the theory of civilizations are presented.

In "The Summoning. But They Said, We Will Not Hearken" Fouad Ajami, from The Johns Hopkins University criticizes Huntington for considering civilizations as something integral and intact there. Ajami writes that during the Cold War, all of world civilizations had been forgotten, but after the collapse of the Soviet Union, they suddenly reappeared and began to set the tone for international relations. Also, according to him, Samuel Huntington confidently asserts where the borders of one civilization ends and another border begins. Ajami, however, disagrees with such affirmation.<sup>39</sup>

The author is surprised by Huntington's opinion about the states, and their place in his theory. Despite of the affirmation that states are the key actors on the international arena, they have no place in the theory. The main role is played by clashing civilizations. In Huntington's words, "The next world war, if there is one, will be a war between civilizations."<sup>40</sup>

Huntington believes that in the future people will with great zeal fight for their civilizational identity, and don not fight for market share and compete with each other in an infinitely mercantile world. In the contemporary world it is an ordinary practice to think that interests have won passions. Ajami says, "A man needs Sony,

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<sup>39</sup> Ajami, 1993, 33.

<sup>40</sup> idem, 34.

not soil<sup>41</sup>”. The author without doubting gives the example of the Russia in the 1990s. The most important thing for Russians of that time was a desire to survive in the wild inflation, but not a thought about Russia as Byzantine heir in Orthodox world.<sup>42</sup>

Fouad Ajami considers that plenty of nations which related with the great civilizations nowadays build their policies on the basis of economic and political interest unrelated to civilizational issues. But along with these factors civilizational point has to be real in Russian official position. I will discuss this in the narrative analysis.

Ajami, arguing against Huntington, writes that all of us live in the new era, but there is no place for civilization as an actor which can influence on international affairs. Civilizations and civilizational fidelities remain. Ajami argues that there is nothing more permanent than a civilization, but exactly the state is capable of controlling civilization and not vice versa.<sup>43</sup>

Ajami also fundamentally disagree with the statement of Huntington that the countries with similar civilizational values are combined into a group to protect these values. According to Ajami, we live at the time when only we can help us, and the days of collective assistance are long gone.<sup>44</sup> This thought can be attributed to the situation of the LGBT community in Russia. While in Europe gay pride parades and gay parties have been legalized, in Russia, a country that positions itself as a democratic country, a strict and conservative position against such parades has been taken by virtue of its reasons. Thus it turns out that Russia seems to be protecting this position while the rest of democratic countries attack it.

Another critic of Huntington’s worth discussing here is Kishore Mahbubani - Deputy

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<sup>41</sup> Ajami, 1993, 36.

<sup>42</sup> idem, 38.

<sup>43</sup> idem, 43.

<sup>44</sup> idem, 40,43.

Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Dean of the Civil Service College, Singapore. In his article named “The Dangers of Decadence: What the Rest Can Teach the West”, Mahbubani writes that, power is shifting among civilizations and Huntington was right. “But when the tectonic plates of world history move in a dramatic fashion, as they do now, perceptions of these changes depend on where one stands.”<sup>45</sup>

For this author it is important to draw the attention of Western audiences to the perceptions of the rest of the world. The West has been the dominant civilization for a long time and no one would benefit from its imminent collapse. According to the author, Western retreat can also be as dramatic as Western dominance.<sup>46</sup>

Kishore Mahbubani believes that, the era of the influence of the West, especially the United States, on the world has been relatively favorable. Paradoxically, the benign nature of Western domination may be the source of many problems. Great contribution to the aggravation of the situation was made by the Western media. Most Western journalists travel overseas with Western assumptions. They cannot understand how the West could be seen as anything but benevolent.<sup>47</sup> The same visual images can provoke diametrically different peoples’ emotions around the world.

The author speaks of the inability to reach an agreement due to changes in the role of the civilizations. Mahbubani describes two key suggestions in the work of Samuel Huntington that reflect this problem. Firstly, the civilization of non-Western countries are no longer under the pressure of Western colonization, now these countries have possibilities to join the West if they agree that the West will be a key driving force of history. Secondly, the West uses all possible international institutions, military and economic resources to run the world in such a way in which the West might not be quenched. With all that, the West supports only its own norms and values, and all of

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<sup>45</sup> Mahbubani, 1993, 45.

<sup>46</sup> idem, 46.

<sup>47</sup> ibid.

these can inevitably lead to disaster.<sup>48</sup>

However, at the same time the author wonders why civilizations which more or less peacefully coexist with each other have decided to challenge the world right now? The answer to this question poses a fatal mistake, because the West has created it. The West itself has placed the structural weaknesses in its rules and institutions. Also, a big problem produces the thing that the Western countries are not able to understand it. For example, recently it was thought that the story ended with the victory of the West and its value orientations.<sup>49</sup>

The idea of individual freedom is also loosing. It would seem that the era of slavery and oppression is over, and everything will be ok, but nowadays the idea gives only salvation of problems; it can also cause them.

There is no doubt that the West has retained the largest archive and historical legacy of the past. Western values positively influenced the advancement of human progress: the belief in scientific inquiry, the search for rational solutions and the willingness to challenge assumptions and so on. However, these bonuses are fraught with disadvantages such as the inability to foresee that the coin has the two sides. There are pluses, there are minuses. Someone should be outside the Western vision. Someone should see the whole picture of what is happening. Author decries Huntington for narrow view in his theory.<sup>50</sup> This also relates to the fact that the top leadership of Russia assures they do what they do because it meets the needs of the country, because most of population in the country show intolerance to LGBT people and it is necessary to make decisions on the basis of will of the people rather than something that Western partners requires.

In “The Modernizing Imperative Tradition and Change” Jeane J. Kirkpatrick et al.

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<sup>48</sup> Mahbubani, 1993, 46.

<sup>49</sup> idem, 49.

<sup>50</sup> ibid.

also challenge Huntington's theory. In his essay, Huntington asserts that civilizations are real and important and predicts that "conflict between civilizations will supplant ideological and other forms of conflict as the dominant global form of conflict." He further argues that institutions for cooperation will be more likely to develop within civilizations, and conflicts will most often arise between groups in different civilizations. Kirkpatrick et al think this is an interesting position but a bit doubtful.<sup>51</sup>

The authors argue that Huntington's classification of contemporary civilizations is questionable. His division of civilizations into groups: Western (Europe and North America), Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slavic-Orthodox, Latin American and "possibly African" is also doubtful. The authors wonder why separating Latin America from the West, if civilization is determined by such objective particles as religion, history, language and institutions.<sup>52</sup>

Kirkpatrick et al also think that Russia should also be attributed to the Western culture. It was appropriate to use terms the West/East in the context of the Cold War, but now in global view Slavic-Orthodox people are "Europeans who share in Western culture. Orthodox theology and liturgy, Leninism and Tolstoy are expressions of Western culture".<sup>53</sup>

Also the authors believe that the most conflict situations have been created inside civilization groups, when wars are within, but not between civilizations as Huntington writes (Stalin's purges, Pol Pot's genocide, the Nazi holocaust and World War II).

Huntington, who has contributed so much to our understanding of modernization and political change, also knows the ways that modernization changes people, societies and politics. He knows many answers why modernization is equivalent to

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<sup>51</sup> Kirkpatrick, 1993, 62.

<sup>52</sup> idem, 63.

<sup>53</sup> ibid.

Westernization. He knows that the westernization has both pluses and minuses. He also knows how the Western way of science, technology, democracy and free markets are powerful. He knows that the great question for non-Western societies is whether they can be modern without being Western. Kirkpatrick et al agree with the theorist, that society will look at advantages in modernization and traditional relations simultaneously. To the extent that they and we are successful in preserving our traditions while accepting the endless changes of modernization, our differences from one another will be preserved, and the need for not just a pluralistic society but a pluralistic world will grow ever more acute.<sup>54</sup>

Albert L. Weeks argues in “Do Civilizations Hold?” that Huntington has resurrected an old controversy in the study of international affairs: the relationship between “microcosmic” and “macrocosmic” processes. One group of which accept nation state as the basic unit, determining factor and other “macros” group on the other hand for whom civilizations play very important role and which nation states belong and by which their behavior is allegedly largely determined. Both schools began debating the issue vigorously back in the 1950s. Weeks criticized Huntington and his theory for failing to grasp the trends and opportunities to interpret events. Huntington is resurrecting the controversy of 40 years later which is symptomatic of the failure of globalism—specifically the idea of establishing a “new world order”. According to him, Huntington’s aim is to find new, easily classified determinants of contemporary quasi-chaotic international behavior and thus to get a handle on the international kaleidoscope.<sup>55</sup>

The author writes that Huntington’s mythology is not new. As early as in the 1940s Toynbee classified civilizations into several groups. Then Wright, likewise applying a historical method, classified civilizations as “bellicose” (including Syrian, Japanese and Mexican), “moderately bellicose” (Germanic, Western, Russian, Scandinavian,

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<sup>54</sup> Kirkpatrick, 1993, 65,67.

<sup>55</sup> Weeks, 1993,67.

etc.) and “most peaceful” (such as Irish, Indian and Chinese). In addition to this, it is necessary to say that Huntington recognized the primacy of the scientists in the classification of civilizations.

Huntington is also criticized for additionally conflating state borders on alleged civilizational ones. The boundaries of nation states coexist with civilization faults that do not always match with political boundaries. Huntington even violates his own concept of macro-level and these anachronistic fault lines are inevitable.<sup>56</sup>

In general, Week’s comments relate to the field of international relations theory and his concern that Huntington did not always consider a theory in their arguments.

Huntington's theory of clash of civilizations continues to agitate the minds of many scientists in the early 2000s.

Stanley Hoffmann argues in “Clash of Globalizations” that after September 11, the world has realized that it was on the verge of a new era in which one or two persons can cause substantial damage to the whole state, occupying a dominant position in the world. Despite all the achievements of globalization, it has also made it easier for those who want to do violence to do so. At the present stage, terrorism is a terrible link between intergovernmental relations and global society.

According to the author, someone has to create a certain concept of a new world view that would be able to respond to the current trend. Today there exist two conceptions which closely approach to the disclosure of this tendency.<sup>57</sup>

Huntington predicted that violence resulting from international anarchy and the absence of common values and institutions would erupt among civilizations rather than among states or ideologies. As the author notes Huntington's concept of what constitutes a civilization is extremely vague. The role of religion as a factor in the policy of non-western countries has been overstated. The theorist is also ignores the

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<sup>56</sup> Weeks, 1993, 68.

<sup>57</sup> *ibid.*

contradictions within non-Western cultures itself. It follows therefore that he could not clearly identify the relationship between foreign policy and civilization.<sup>58</sup>

Developing this idea it is important to say that the LGBT issue creates a discourse inside Russia (so-called Slavic-Orthodox Civilization) between people who speak against and people who support gays. It would be hard to say that there is a conflict within the country which has divided Russians with one civilizational identity into two parts. Nowadays this is just a discourse without bloody clashes. As for the Russian Orthodox Church, it of course plays an important role for many Russians, but it does not take part on the level of state decision-making, because the State and the Church in Russia are separate. It thus seems reasonable to hypothesize that the existence of the religious factor in the LGBT issue through the prism of the theory of the clash of civilizations is minimal.

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<sup>58</sup> Hoffmann, 2002, 86, 87.

### 2.3 Huntington's theory and Russian foreign policy discourses

Andrey and Pavel Tsygankov's article "Pluralism or Isolation of Civilisations? Russia's Foreign Policy Discourse and the Reception of Huntington's Paradigm of the Post-Cold War World" is a response to Huntington's thesis from the point of view of two major currents of Russia's foreign policy thinking, liberals and nationalists. Answers of civilizational identity are woven into the context of international relations theory. At least three influential groups can be identified in Russia's discourse of foreign policy thinking. These three can be seen as falling into categories of liberal and nationalist thinking about Russia's post-Cold War identity and the shape of the emerging world order.<sup>59</sup>

As for the Russian liberals, they are in the process of reviewing its relations blind following of the West. All this happened as a result of failed economic and political reforms.<sup>60</sup>

New Liberals do not fully agree with its pro-Western counterparts that the generally recognized rules and the protection of fundamental human rights must be seen as a purely Western achievement. Coping all parameters of the Western model is not the basic rule for the new liberals. First of all, they choose those elements which are would not be in conflict with the cultural characteristics of the country, something that will be acceptable for Russia. According to them, the ability to successfully combine the parameters of the Russian and Western perceptions can give tangible result such as access to global economic and political systems. They recognized, that Russia should use its entire accumulated cultural heritage to encourage people to fight with enthusiasm for reconstructing of economic and political institutions in the country.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Tsigankov,1999,51.

<sup>60</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> *ibid.*

According to the new Liberal philosophy, the main threats to the world order are coming from two directions, violations of basic human rights and disrespect for continuous cultural pluralism.

This group of people stands with the slogan unity in diversity. This wording implies that different civilizations and people advocate for an intensive dialogue in relation to each other as well as cooperation under the general rules, will be a constant process of development which in the course of the dialogue. Rules on the issue of culture and cooperation should be developed as well as the right for performance standards in the field of human rights. The key points for successful achievement of the result are the first, the world order should be stable, peaceful and legitimate and the second, the initiative of the negotiations and the negotiations themselves should occur from the bottom. The main players in this case will be a variety of cultures which are supported by and supporting global institutions. All this will take place with due respect of human rights and with respect a coordinated mode.<sup>62</sup>

Nationalist Statists see the world in terms of power and competition between states in particular the great powers. Their recipe is to maintain a balance is that Russia should remain a sovereign and powerful state to confront the other great powers. The question of civilizations is not in last place in this group. They tend to oppose Russia and the whole of Eurasia against the West due to the cultural similarities of the first two ones. National statist stay moderate views taking this or that decision. According to them, Russia is a self-sufficient state and its values are different from Western values, but cooperation between Russia and the rest of the West is possible. However, in this case Russia should not lose its sovereignty and must retain its cultural identity.<sup>63</sup>

Nationalist Neocommunists continue the traditions of Soviet thinking and brings

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<sup>62</sup> Tsigankov,1999, 51,52.

<sup>63</sup> *ibid.*

together some communist views with the views of the school balance of power. As the previous political forces, they believe that Russia is an independent state possessing their own civilizational identity. Moreover, neo-communists continue to regard the Russian Federation as a superpower, and they think it should remain so. Arguments about the fate of the country do not end. According to them, Russia is culturally distinct from other civilizations: it differs from them fundamentally, and should never be mixed with 'alien' especially Western - cultural, economic and political institutions.<sup>64</sup>

The interests of Russia and the West should not touch, as the state continues to be under the influence of the Soviet past. This baggage is now tightly linked to the cultural component of the Russians. According to this group, the West is the enemy representing a major threat to the country by its imperialist views. Russia should remain self-sufficient state, with a stable economy to counter this influence. Nationalists Statists and Nationalists Communists have some important differences, but they have a common point of view on the conflict picture of the world and they are extremely critical of the views of the Liberals.<sup>65</sup>

As a result, Nationalists appear to be generally united in their assessments of Huntington's paradigm of the post-Cold War order, and the main line of this in the Russian debate runs across Liberal and Nationalist visions, not within them.<sup>66</sup> While the Liberals have criticized the theory of a clash of civilizations for a never-ending search for enemies, nationalists, in turn, are worried about the sovereignty of Russia and the resumption of the activity of the West to crush Russia by itself using the internal fragmentation of the country.<sup>67</sup>

On the level of assumptions, the dominant mode of Liberals' dissatisfaction with Huntington's picture of the world was expressed by Igor Pantin, the editor of Polis

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<sup>64</sup> Tsigankov,1999, 51,52.

<sup>65</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> *ibid.*

(Political Studies). Pantin called for conceptual rethinking of the 'clash of civilizations' thesis and going beyond Huntington's paradigm rather than merely criticize him on his own ground or within his own theoretical assumptions. Like Huntington's security doctrine, Russia's Liberals proceed from certain assumptions about world politics which concern units, their goals, environment and ways of interacting with each other.<sup>68</sup>

Liberals insist that viewed from this perspective civilisations are not separated from each other, and one can make a strong argument in favours of an emerging world civilization, with shared norms and values across nations and local civilizations. Liberals are convinced that the interaction between civilizations takes place on the basis of the material in the framework of globalization. That according to liberals gives prerequisites for the creation of a new global civilization.<sup>69</sup>

In this case, the Liberals propose a new path for Russia, namely to rethink its perception of the world and to look at it from another angle, that would show that the opening of a new civilization will change the spirit of world history. It is not a conflict, but rather cooperation, the interaction and mutual enrichment of cultures and religions. Instead of viewing Russia as a torn country, one should pay attention to the advantages of multi-cultural and multi-religious communities. Such communities include a wide range of ideas and alternatives and are particularly susceptible to social creativity.<sup>70</sup>

According to the authors of the article, it is possible that liberals will not support Huntington's advice to reduce Western intervention in the affairs of other countries and civilizations. The reason is simple. The liberal view is that the world as we know today goes to a global level, in which the permanent cooperation, assistance and cooperation is a prerequisite. The most likely reaction of the liberals is their

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<sup>68</sup> Tsigankov, 1999, 57.

<sup>69</sup> *idem*, 58.

<sup>70</sup> *ibid*.

concern at the gross violation of human rights when they are violated by other civilizations groups.<sup>71</sup>

Liberals say that instead of considering the West and Russia as two aggressive blocs towards each other elements should be seen both as a kind of union seeking to achieve mutually beneficial goals in various fields such as economics and security. Liberals point out the fact that the concerns of Huntington's about incommensurability of Western values against Muslim or any other valuables were not justified. In contemporary world there is no one civilization irrespective of its contribution to global progress cannot have ability to be out of the global process regarding politics or economics.<sup>72</sup>

Nationalists agree with Samuel Huntington's assumption that civilizations are on a par with countries that are also major units in world politics. Also nationalists agree theorist at other moments such as civilizations' aims, its background and its way of interacting each other.

First of all, for them a civilization is a similar actor in world politics as a state which is fighting for resources and influence for economic and political opportunities. However, the conditions of the struggle are really going far beyond a description of liberals. If the Liberals say about the universal trend towards globalization and interdependence, the creation of new actors, the nationalists consider such a conclusion premature and detached from reality.<sup>73</sup>

However, when it comes to the future, Russian nationalists do not behave so categorically. According to them Russia should not be considered as torn state which is caught between East and West as the Huntington puts it in his conception. Russia should be attributed to Eurasia, and the civilization to which it belongs must be considered as a connecting bridge between Europe and Asia. The status of the

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<sup>71</sup> Tsigankov, 1999, 58.

<sup>72</sup> idem, 59.

<sup>73</sup> idem, 60.

LGBT community in Russia shows that the problem goes far beyond the internal affairs of the state. On the face of it, the issue has only social character, but a reaction of the rest world and especially Russian manner of answers on the critiques indicate that the problem has civilizational character. Considering the situation in this way, one should agree with Huntington and nationalists that civilizations become the fight for preservation of its influence in a field of clash.

The Western side considers adoption of a law on prohibition gay propaganda is not democratic and violative to basic human rights. The official Russian side says that it is preventive measure to protect children from harassment and in general, gay rights do not violated. In its decision, Russia is not ready to make concessions. The Kremlin's emphasis on fact that it comes from the country's cultural context and the decision will not be change. So, to say that Russia will build a bridge between East and West in this matter is impossible.

By the way, Russia was able to connect to its culture European Orthodox religion and Islam of East without much harm. This is the essence of Eurasianism in Russia. And there is a possibility that Russia will be expected the ethno-cultural diversity, dialogue between cultures and interaction within a single civilization, not a collision.<sup>74</sup> The nationalists however, will not be surprised by today's state of affairs with the LGBT community in Russia. I venture to suggest that the foreign policy against gays is quite justified in the eyes of the Nationalists.

Unlike Liberals, Nationalist theorists seek to respond to Huntington's policy recommendations within the same conflict paradigm.

In response to the call of Huntington that West should joined forces in the fight for the preservation of its civilization, Nationalists invoke Russia to consolidate its power over former Soviet Union countries and in the event of danger to fight back. They fully agree with the Huntington's position of non-interference of the West in

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<sup>74</sup> Tsigankov,1999, 61.

the affairs of other civilizations.<sup>75</sup> This point also reflects the government's position on the possibility of foreign countries to interfere in the internal affairs of the country especially in the case associated with the Russian LGBT community. Russia should find a foothold balancing between Western and other civilizations. Russia's Liberals and Nationalists, therefore, are critical of Huntington's picture of world politics, but in different ways. While Liberals are highly critical of Huntington's assumptions as well as the substance and policy prescriptions of his thesis, Nationalists in general criticize Huntington in a much milder way.<sup>76</sup>

So, to close the theoretical orientation chapter I would like to give brief summary of Huntington's theory, its critics and its relevance to my research.

Huntington in his theory explains a lot of facts which closely related with the term of civilization. He gives a definition of the process when the state passes a long way from adopting the Western civilization norms and values to the point where it starts to reject partially or completely these system of norms replacing them by its own values. He calls this process as indigenization. Also Huntington illustrates the role of religion as part of a civilized code. Religion is a powerful tool for uniting people of one group of civilization, and it has an indisputable superiority over the various fields in which humanity has made progress because it can answer the questions of life and be for a comfort in difficult times. The author also gives a historical overview of relations between the two cultures, Western and Slavic and all of them explain why sometimes these two cultures cannot reach a consensus. And of course in he gives some recommendations how to save influence of Western civilization in the world and particularly in Russia.

One of the main ideas voiced in Huntington's theory is the following: The country which possesses considerable resources in various fields such as politics, economics, and military affairs has the ability to impose its will on other countries. There are two options to achieve the desired results through the promotion or

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<sup>75</sup> Tsigankov, 1999, 61.

<sup>76</sup> *idem*, 62.

intimidation. Both options are effective as long as the country has appropriate resources to carry out it. But when resources are gradually depleted the country begins to lose its leverage over other countries and its impact in these countries is also reduced. In turn, other countries managed to strengthen its position often at the expense of cultural norms and attitudes of that country, and now oppose its cultural code against the first state because at this stage of development the culture of that country contrary to the culture of this country. This is a clash civilization. So I want to mention that the theory of Huntington is quite applicable to my research, it is confirmed by events. The situation with the LGBT community in Russia shows that the clash of civilizations in the modern world is possible.

Most critical articles on the theory of a clash of civilizations, represented in my work, were written in 1990 s. The researchers doubt that future wars may occur on the basis of civilizational clashes. Almost of them were surprised that his theory had no mention of the states as the main actors in international relations. Some of them criticized Huntington for a narrow view of his theory and drawbacks associated with civilization for instance why civilization is only now decided to throw a challenge to the world after years of relatively peaceful coexistence with each other? Or why Slavic civilization is not considered as the Western civilization? According to them, theory of civilizations is rather vague. Others said that Huntington did not discover anything new, civilizations, which he examined, were classified by Toynbee. Also they said the factor of religion is overvalued and so on. Tsyigankov's article "Pluralism or Isolation of Civilisations?"

Russia's Foreign Policy Discourse and the Reception of Huntington's Paradigm of the Post-Cold War World" showed opinions of two major parties in Russia liberals and nationalists. Liberals supported the idea of civilizational cooperation and the nationalists who have taken a neutral position, in relation to the theory, considering that Russia should become a kind of a bridge uniting the East and West. On the example of the situation of the LGBT community, I tried to prove that the clash of

civilizations is possible. Civilizational factor in the politics of states as well as religion take place to be in modern international affairs.

### 3. Methodological approach

#### 3.1 Definition of narratives

In this thesis, I will use narrative analysis to explore whether and how the divergence in views over the rights of the LGBT community makes sense in the context of the theory of clash of civilizations. I will analyze statements by a set of Russian politicians and identify the narratives that they use when discussing the LGBT community. This section of the thesis is devoted to describing the basic features of narrative analysis.

A large number of empirical data has a narrative character: interviews, diaries, literary works, the testimony of witnesses, advertising texts, news on TV, jokes and so on. The term of narrative mean any text which functions is to inform the addressee about the events. This specific type of presentation, which is in contrast to the descriptive or explanatory type, has *a plot*.<sup>77</sup>

It is presupposed that an that emplotted text is a storehouse of information valuable to the social researchers, who are primarily interested in how an author interprets and presents the information significant for his/her interlocutor.

The history narratives as a method of analysis began with Vladimir Popp and his publication *"The morphology of folklore tales"* from 1928. Many scientists have since developed the idea submitted by Popp, such as Mikhail Bakhtin, Donald E. Polkinghorne, Roman Jakobson, Tzvetan Todorov, Robert Scholes, Paul Ricoeur and others. In the 1970 s narrative analysis has become more known in many fields of knowledge, Walter R. Fisher (1984) pointed out the central role of narrative in politics and of narrative analysis in political sciences; Jerome Bruner (1986) and Donald E. Polkinghorne (1987) did the same for psychology; Laurel Richardson

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<sup>77</sup> Czarniawska, 2004, 3.

(1990) for sociology; while Deirdre McCloskey (1990) scrutinized the narrative of economic expertise. By the 1990s, narrative analysis had also become a common approach in science studies.<sup>78</sup>

Simply put, all the social life of the human being is a narrative, as it consists of a string of events and actions, where actions can be both intentional and unintentional.<sup>79</sup>

The task of a scientific text is to show and prove the differences and similarities of elements, but the task of narratives is just to tell the story of these elements without giving anything to analyze.

The plot of the narrative does not check on the truth or falsity. The power of narrative is the story.<sup>80</sup>

### **3.1.1. How stories are made**

A narrative is understood *as a spoken or written text giving an account of an event/action or series of events/actions, chronologically connected*.<sup>81</sup> For instance, the scientist and historian Hayden White inclined to argue that a more narrow definition of narrative more effectively shows the distinction between a narrative and a simple story. In his work he described how the writing of history in Europe has changed over time. If the annals only record events, dates of its beginning and the end without connecting information, chronicles describe some of the causes and consequences of this event. However, they have a big minus, they did not have structural plot. Only a description in the modern manner of historical events may be called as a story.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Czarniawska, 2004, 3.

<sup>79</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> *idem*, 15.

<sup>81</sup> *idem*, 17.

<sup>82</sup> *ibid.*

Any text which has in its composition a description of the characters and system of dates is a narrative not a story. In order for a text to become a story it should have a plot.

The story is a transition from one state to another. Ideally, the story should begin with any normal situation which was broken emergency action. Thus the situation is in suspense. To bring the situation back to a state of peace must be action that will break the situation. Then things again returns to normal, but it is not similar with the first situation. The curtain closes.<sup>83</sup> This is an example of constructing a story with a simple plot.

So, how pieces of texts became a story in my work? In 2013, adoption of a law on prohibition gay propaganda was caused a public outcry and international discussion. This is such emergency action which breaks a stable situation which was earlier. After an exchange of views between the Kremlin and Western governments, this fact was widely covered by media, I was interested in course of the arguments of the Russian authorities on the adoption of this law. After consulting with supervisors I have identified my theme as the family values in Russian foreign policy. Next my step was to watch the news on TV and the Internet and save all things that I thought were appropriate for my work in a special folder. Running ahead, I would like to say that my story does not end with happy ending because it does not have the action which would be to stabilize the situation as it was described previously. There are another ways of the emploting.

In modern stories are often emplotted with the help of classical *rhetorical tropes*. There are four classical rhetorical figures or master tropes: *metaphor*, *metonymy*, *synecdoche*, and *irony*. Tropes are figurative expressions. The word is of Greek origin and means turnover. The most common type of trope is metaphor. A metaphor is a figure of speech that identifies something as being the same as some

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<sup>83</sup> Czarniawska, 2004, 19.

unrelated thing for rhetorical effect, thus highlighting the similarities between the two: ‘the sun is like an orange.’ Metonymy is a figure of speech in which a thing or concept is called not by its own name but rather by the name of something associated in meaning with that thing or concept: the crown for the kingdom, the banner for the country. Synecdoche is a figure of speech in which a term for a part of something refers to the whole of something, or vice versa: hands for workers, brains for intellectuals. Irony is a rhetorical device, literary technique, or event, in which what appears, on the surface, to be the case, differs radically from what is actually the case.<sup>84</sup> In my research, I did not explicitly use rhetorical tropes to describe this or that phenomenon, but their influence can nevertheless be seen in the analysis. For example, I discuss how certain politicians in chapter of analysis use some metaphors and irony in their narratives.

### 3.1.2 Collecting Stories.

Czarniawska, in her book, offers three key types of collecting stories. The *first* is recording of spontaneous incidents of storytelling during prolonged field research. *The second* approach is eliciting stories. *The third way* of collecting stories is just to ask for them.<sup>85</sup>

In my case collecting of sufficient materials really took a long time. An obligatory condition for the work was the fact that all the materials for analysis have official character, I mean, comments, speeches and interview of the state officials. For this purpose, I went to the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia and found there large amount of materials which is not related to the topic of my research as I thought. Then I decided to narrow the search, and enter in a string certain phrase that could facilitate my searching. Such a phrase was “sexual”.

Finally, I got required documents. Also I used YouTube for searching interviews

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<sup>84</sup> Czarniawska, 2004, 20.

<sup>85</sup> idem, 40.

with politicians and activists of LGBT community. Website GayRussia relieved me from searching sought-for interviews in the online newspapers. To top it all, I looked up the social network of all involved parties. In this way I collected sufficient material for further analysis. With the help of the supervisor it was chosen the optimal theoretical orientation for research.

In the analysis of narratives, first of all I turned my attention to the most frequently used words and phrases of politicians and activists that reflects their opinion about the LGBT community in general and legislative initiatives in particular. I also paid much attention to the arguments of all participants and constructed a set of narratives on that basis. This helped me to emphasize certain segments which include people with similar views on the situation. In general, the arguments of the parties confirmed the efficiency of the theory in the context of my work that is civilizational differences between Russia and the Western countries in the field of traditional values exist.

#### 4. Overview of the anti-gay law

On June 11 2013, the State Duma passed a law establishing responsibility for "propaganda of nontraditional sexual relations among minors" in order to "protect children from information that promotes the negation of traditional family values".<sup>86</sup> The law came into force on 30 June 2013 after being signed by Russian President Vladimir Putin.

In the moment of discussing and then adopting the bill which will ban gay propaganda, figuratively speaking, the country was divided into supporters of the LGBT community and their opponents. Russian officials, politicians and other leaders did not stand aside. Many of them made statements regarding their attitude towards sex minority representatives. On the basis of all discussions about LGBT community, Russian politicians are sometimes divided into two groups, i.e. homophobes and supporters. But the situation is not as simple as it seems. It is actually hard to find a politician with clearly expressed intolerance of gays and lesbians and at the same time as "ardent" supporters of the LGBT community among Russian officials are also very few in number.

In this chapter, I will characterize and group into four groups Russian politicians who have commented on the LGBT community and gay propaganda. The first group consists of people who made legislative initiatives against gay propaganda among children. As I will show, they have different backgrounds for doing so. There are also officials who occupy a middle position on the matter. The third group includes persons who have actively supported the LGBT community. They may be referred to as activists fighting for gay rights on the basis of all people being equal. The fourth group is the highest echelon of politicians, actors of international relations. They express the official position of the state on this and other issues.

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<sup>86</sup> Rossiyskaya Gazeta, 2013 .

#### 4.1. Politicians against “LGBT propaganda”

The group of persons, who are strongly against LGBT propaganda, is the most well-known group at least in Russia mainly because of their legislative initiatives. According to the website GayRussia, most notable persons in this group are Vitaly Milonov, Yelena Mizulina and Alexander Chuyev.

These people can be attributed to the group of people with homophobic views, according to their actions and remarks.

Vitaly Milonov is Russian politician and member of the party "United Russia", deputy of the Legislative Assembly of St. Petersburg. He is also the member of the Parish Council of the Orthodox Church of St. Peter the Metropolitan of Moscow, regularly participates in worship. He is widely known for his extravagant legislative initiatives, the most famous of which was the law against homosexual propaganda in St. Petersburg. Also he is famous for its performances against the teaching of Darwinian Theory in schools, alleging failure to prove the origin and evolution of man by God. Milonov took the initiative to close the MTV channel for immorality and create a moral police in St. Petersburg of the Cossacks and the believers. Thereby he positions himself as an extremely religious person with high moral character.<sup>87</sup>

It is a surprising fact, that Vitaliy Milonov was Galina Starovoytova’s protégé. Starovoytova was a Russian politician and ethnographer known for her work to protect ethnic minorities and promote democratic reforms in Russia. In 1997-1998 Milonov was a public assistant to Starovoytova, who in 1998 nominated him for election to the Legislative Assembly of Saint Petersburg. She was a liberal political figure who to the question of “What should we do with minorities?” she answered “They need to be loved”.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Inrterfax, 2013.

<sup>88</sup> GayRussia, 2006.

Yelena Mizulina is Russian politician, member of the State Duma of the VI convocation of the party "Fair Russia" (*Spravedlivaya Rossiya*), and Chairwoman of the Duma Committee on Family, Women and Children. She is also famous as author of different political initiatives, leading to public resonance and even scandals. Among them are fighting against the gay parade, struggling against obscene language on the Internet, divorces and adoption children by foreign families.

In July 2013 Mizulina and her assistant on the Duma Committee Batalin applied to the court with a view to a criminal case against LGBT human rights activist Nikolai Alexeyev. According to Mizulina, Alekseev is the leader of the LGBT community, which organized a campaign to discredit her, to the detriment of Russia. She intended to ask for Alexeyev punishment "in the form of compulsory work in a place where he can not to engage in gay propaganda."<sup>89</sup> Representatives of the LGBT community have also asked the prosecutor's office to complain about the incitement of Mizulina's hatred towards homosexuals and infringement on her part of the rights of LGBT community.<sup>90</sup>

Elena Mizulina, a person defending traditional values, was also a member of the Russian liberal political party "Yabloko". One of the principles of the party is its position against all forms of discrimination. In an interview she explained her position: "(her) views on liberalism have undergone serious changes, when she became to engage in family. As applied to the family, relations within the family, here, liberal values are not always good".<sup>91</sup>

Alexander Chuyev is public figure and politician, member of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation of the third and fourth convocations. Now he is a member the Central Council of the party "Fair Russia" and the

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<sup>89</sup> Lenta.ru, 2013.

<sup>90</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> Week with Marianna Maksimovskaya, 2013.

President of ANO "Expert-Analytical Center for Modernization and Technological Development of the Economy", Advisor to the Chairman of the Federation Council.

The bill to ban the promotion of homosexuality proposed by a member of the State Duma Alexander Chuyev, became the first Russian bill of this kind, and submitted for consideration a total of four times. In the explanatory note to the bill in 2006 was noted the "special danger" homosexual propaganda to children and young people, especially through the media and educational curricula, "promoting homosexuality as a norm of behavior".<sup>92</sup>

#### **4.2. Politicians with a middle position**

The list of homophobes in Russian power and politics on the site GayRussia.eu is very long, but not all political figures occupy a strictly negative position in relation to gays. An overwhelming majority of them take a middle position. They did not accept fully positions supporters and oppositions of LGBT. On the one hand, they accept the fact that there are gays in Russia and do not have anything against gay's personal life and on the other hand, they do not support the LGBT community in their desire to show publicly who they are by their nature, for example, on the gay parades. Among the number of politicians who have an ambiguous attitude towards gays is Gennady Zyuganov, chairman of the Union of Communist Parties; Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, founder and the leader of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR); Sergey Mironov, he leads the faction A Just Russia in the Parliament of Russia; Dmitry Rogozin, Deputy Prime Minister of Russia, and many others. Arguably, this category of politicians is the biggest in Russian LGBT dispute.

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<sup>92</sup> K Istine, 2007.

### 4.3. Gay rights' activists

There also exists a group of Russian human rights activist, who think “the LGBT people have the same rights as other Russian minority”. One of the few who spoke in support of equal rights for LGBT people is Mikhail Prokhorov. He is a Russian billionaire, politician, independent candidate in the 2012 Russian presidential election, founder of political party “Party of Civic Platform”. He considers that adopted by the State Duma the law banning propaganda of non-traditional relationships violates international norms.<sup>93</sup>

On December 28, 2011 within the framework of the campaign for the presidential elections of Russia Anton Krasovsky, who is openly gay, headed the election headquarters of presidential candidate Mikhail Prokhorov. It later turned out that Prokhorov did not know about this fact. According to him it does not matter, “(for him) it is not a criterion, the criterion is only professionalism”. At the same time, Prokhorov did not explain why Anton Krasovsky is no longer working with him.<sup>94</sup> In addition to this it is necessary to say that he is also against gay parades as well as heterosexual parades. In this point Prokhorov is in solidarity with many Russian politicians.

A former candidate for mayor of Moscow, one of the leaders of the Russian opposition Alexei Navalny, spoke in defense of the rights of the LGBT community in the program "Sobchak live" on TV channel Rain (*Dozhd*) on the eve of elections. He talked about "liberal cities", which allow gay marriages. He also thinks that a gay pride parades should be allow everywhere, the only thing he spoke out against is the adoption of children by same-sex couples. Alexei Navalny also said that question about legalization of gay marriages depends on the people themselves and it should be put to a regional referendum. Everyone has the right to assemble so he would allow a gay parade in Russia, but main issue here is the

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<sup>93</sup> NTV News, 2015.

<sup>94</sup> *ibid.*

safety issue, how to ensure safety of everyone.<sup>95</sup> This seems to be the most liberal statement of Russian LGBT supporter.

It is necessary to include in this group, at least, one representative of sexual minorities. And it will be Nikolay Alexeyev, Russian human rights activist and an activist of the LGBT movement, founder of the human rights project GayRussia.Ru, head of the Moscow Gay Pride and obviously openly gay. Nikolai Alexeyev has become well known as an organizer of gay pride in Moscow, as well as through a number of lawsuits for human rights of LGBT. On October 21, 2010 Nikolai Alekseev won the case against Russia in the European Court of Human Rights, which unanimously ruled that banning gay prides, the Russian authorities had violated three articles of the European Convention on Human Rights: the right to freedom of assembly, protection against discrimination and to judicial protection.<sup>96</sup>

On May 4, 2012 Nikolay Alexeyev became the first person convicted on the basis of the St. Petersburg law banning propaganda of homosexuality, adopted in 2012. The magistrate fined gay activist 5,000 rubles per picket on April 12, 2012, two weeks after the law came into force, at the entrance to the Smolny - Administration of St. Petersburg with a placard on which was written a quotation legendary Soviet actress Faina Ranevskaya “Homosexuality it is not a perversion. Perversion is hockey and ballet on ice!” Nikolai Alekseev appealed against his attraction to the administrative responsibility of the European Court of Human Rights, where a decision is expected.<sup>97</sup>

#### **4.4. Position of the state**

And finally there is the official state position about the law against gay propaganda

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<sup>95</sup> Mayoral candidates, 2013.

<sup>96</sup> News.ru, 2013.

<sup>97</sup> Pryamoy efir, 2014.

among minors and Russian LGBT people which is represented by the President Vladimir Putin, the Foreign Minister of Russia Sergey Lavrov and Russian Foreign Ministry Commissioner for human rights, democracy and the rule of law Konstantin Dolgov at the international level.

In June 2013, Vladimir Putin signed a federal law banning propaganda of non-traditional relationships among minors, which caused indignation of many human rights defenders and LGBT activists worldwide LGBT boycott the Olympic Games in Sochi. Rallies for the abolition of Russian laws "gay propaganda" were held in 19 cities, including London, New York, Paris and St. Petersburg. On the opening day of the Olympics in Sochi, Google also chose to support the LGBT community. In response to all attacks, Putin said that Russia does not intend to violate the rights of homosexuals, but at the same time the traditional family is "a strategic choice of Russia"<sup>98</sup>. The law has a protective function in relation to underage children.<sup>99</sup>

Putin has also said that his attitude towards gay pride parades and homosexuals is simple and related with his work as the President of Russian Federation and one of the main problems for the state is demographical problem.<sup>100</sup>

Gay marriages, as it is known, do not produce offspring. Therefore, Russians are quite tolerant of sexual minorities, but still believe that the state should support the processes associated with childbirth, motherhood, childhood, and health care.<sup>101</sup>

It has repeatedly been mentioned that the law against homosexual propaganda among minors was adopted to protect children from the relevant information. Also the Russian president remarked that some European countries think that it is a wrong position and that he has no objection to such an opinion in Europe. Russia is not going to interfere in European affairs on the issue, Russia, in turn, will adhere

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<sup>98</sup> BBC News, 2014.

<sup>99</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> Korfuify, 2013.

<sup>101</sup> Videoskipe, 2012.

to its policy and it is not necessary intervene in the Russian regulation.<sup>102</sup>

Would it be correct to label Putin as a person who supports homophobic views? It makes more sense to designate this as a pragmatic point of view.

Sergey Lavrov, the minister of Foreign Affairs, also commented on the law against gay propaganda. He drew attention to the fact that Russia does not have an obligation to allow homosexual propaganda. Now homosexuals can be homosexuals. It is absolutely free and dispensable, in contrast to the Soviet era. The obligation of all states is not to allow any discrimination. It is unlikely that such obligations can be adopted by Russia, because the state has its own moral values, historical, cultural, religious traditions and Russian people follow them. Russia does not discriminate against gay and at the same time it does not want that one group of people impose to another group their moral values, which are not moral ones for second group and also obtrude them to children.<sup>103</sup>

In the next chapter, I will move on to analyze the narratives that these politicians have produced on the LGBT issue.

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<sup>102</sup> XPOM0COM, 2013.

<sup>103</sup> RT, 2013.

## 5. Analysis of the narratives

### 5.1 “The homosexuality is evil”

In this stage I will analyze the points of view and phrases of the above characterized politicians about sexual minorities and their ability to organize gay parades and the state position about this issue.

Let me first provide some representative examples of Vitaliy Milonov’s comments on homosexuality.

The "United Russia" is a party that does not make me go to a large number of compromises. And I never heard that Vladimir Putin approved of perverts. Moreover, after a visit to the Netherlands, he just said that this degradation is very dangerous for the society. Propagation of this vice as a norm is unacceptable, especially for children.<sup>104</sup>

The text presented to us shows a temporal nature of human experience. The first thing that catches the eye is Milonov’s verbal expressions which show a deep opposition to the gay movement Milonov asserts that the “United Russia” is not a party which compromises with the situation of the LGBT community in Russia. To confirm his words, Milonov says that the President Putin thinks such a situation, acceptable in another country, is very dangerous for the Russian society, it is not a norm and it is virulent for children. He gives an example of the position of the party and the president to the issue. In this way, we can indentify two narratives: the first is **the narrative of defending Russian norms and traditions** and the second is **the narrative which relates to the protection of children**.

Unfortunately, the history of modern Europe tells a different story. In Germany, in Europe, parades of perverts are considered as a norm, and nobody condemns them, but every year they are becoming more perverted forms. Moreover, this society of sick people from the category of an exotic group becomes into a full state component and requires changing the laws for themselves.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Ponomareva, 2013.

<sup>105</sup> *ibid.*

In this piece of text Milonov concedes the issue through his personal prism of perception of things. He is concerned that the LGBT community has become an influential force in Europe which is able to assert its rights in level of law and nobody prevents this phenomenon.

There exist parties and groups who believe that the Russian family and our traditional values is nothing and should be immediately destroyed. Why these political parties can afford to spoil our celebration of May Day? Who gave them the right to deploy their perversity slogans? To spit the direction of Russia's traditional family and to argue that the new format of the new family as European "Swedish" type shall be the same as our equivalent? Why do our children have to look at the disgusting men kissing each other?<sup>106</sup>

According to the Deputy Milonov, the traditional family values are subjected to defilement by LGBT community at present day. He was very surprised by the fact that gay people try to balance the traditional family relations and their relations. Also Milonov considers children should not see this form of relationship. This part of the interview discloses **a narrative of defending traditional family values** and **a narrative which relates to the protection of children**.

We trample our values, we trample that what has made a strong Europe and that's what has made America strong. Europe and America have become stronger thanks to the traditional Christian values. Due to "liberasts" and "tolerasts" Europe are degrading."

"What is a value for our society? Is it the family, the faith, the fatherland or something new? Or is it new neoplasm? Some people call it as propaganda of religious values; I believe the promotion of our values of the Russian state."<sup>107</sup>

Guided by his vision of the world, Milonov argues that the religious factor had a significant impact on the US and Europe. We see them as what they are now, thanks to influence of Christian values. And as for Russia, it still has Orthodox Christianity as a part of traditional values. For the first time, **a narrative of**

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<sup>106</sup> TV 100, 2015.

<sup>107</sup> *ibid.*

**religion** has sounded here.

For Gay movement I have fulfilled the role of a scalpel. We have in the body along with the healthy development an unhealthy development. And it was necessary to stop it. This question is the inflamed abscess but we probably fortunately begun to remove it.<sup>108</sup>

This quote has an element of allegorical tropes. Milonov represents himself as a tool used in medical treatment and the LGBT community plays a role of disease which must be removed for the improvement of the health of the society. Perhaps, this is the most tough assertion is made against gay movement by the Deputy Milonov. So, we have **a narrative which describes of LGBT community as an illness of contemporary world.**

It is clear, that Milonov, the author of the bill, banning gay propaganda among minors, is not a proponent of LGBT people and their activity. In Milonov's narrative, homosexuality is *degradation* and it *is not the norm*. These two words are the most repeatable in his interviews. Milonov does not always adhere to appropriate terminology calling people not homosexuals or gays but is using more emotional and even insulting words such as *perverts, evil, sick people* and so on.

Vitaliy Milonov applies to a theological vision of values. As a person who represents himself as a strong believer in God, and who thinks there should only exist traditional Orthodox values in Russia, Milonov's quotes thus evoke the narrative of religion. According to him, religion is one of the main forces which make states strong and solid. His narrative is premised on the idea that these values can help Russians to preserve their morality and not to lose their right path of development of the society.

He thus considers that gays and gay parades are parlous for society especially for children.

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<sup>108</sup> Pryamoy efir, 2014.

Summing up the analysis of Milonov's citations, I would like one again to indicate the narratives used by him. There are narratives of defending traditional family values, narratives relating children's protection, narrative of religion and narrative of the LGBT people as an illness.

Let us then turn to Elena Mizulina and take up some representative quotations from her.

There are viral advertising on the Internet, such obscene banners that pop up in the search. Every time I have these images popping up, I am frightened, as if I burn with boiling water. I do not like this, but it's some kind of imposition occurs. Yes, there is a deep question of tolerance of society, but any legislation should take into account the traditions, culture and tolerance. Russian society is not very tolerant. LGBT people try to go to a long way, just to force all people feels good about them.<sup>109</sup>

As the quote shows Mizulina is also basing her argument on **the narrative of traditional Russian values**. But it is also possible to identify quotations from Mizulina that pay special attention to the term tolerance and that form part of different narrative.

The LGBT have to work correctly, gradually accustomed society for tolerance, not to provoke, not to be aggressive. Otherwise they will only restore the society against him.<sup>110</sup>

LGBT people must remember that family culture is changing very slowly. We must follow the path of dialogue rather than confrontation.<sup>111</sup>

According to Mizulina's statements gradual actions and continuous dialogue between society and the LGBT community is the guarantee of peaceful coexistence. It is thus possible to identify in Mizulina's argumentation the **narrative of cooperation** of two opposing sides which can also improve the situation with LGBT movement.

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<sup>109</sup> Vinokurova, Ekaterina, 2013.

<sup>110</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>111</sup> *ibid.*

They should not touch our children. Children should grow up in normal conditions. They should get an idea of what is the norm in sexual relations. The norm is that allows humanity to survive and live and continue the human race. ...(about gay propaganda) Adults' choice is informed and critical choice, but for children it is the imposition.<sup>112</sup>

However, while she partly calls for a peaceful solution of the problem, that is a dialogue between gays and those who have a traditional sexual orientation, some other statements by her insist that children should grow up in traditional manner, or what the deputy refers to as “normal conditions”. This narrative puts the focus on children and their sexual upbringing. There is also an explanation of what she thinks is a norm. For her it is ability to live and reproduce, which may be said to continue a **narrative of reproduction**.

During to most of the interviews that I analyzed, including these quotations, Elena Mizulina refers to the sex minorities with the notion LGBT. This is a formal, polite and correct notion. But it is noteworthy that when it comes to homosexuals, their sympathizers and children, she separates gays as “they” and children with adding a pronoun “our”. Thereby, her rhetoric divides people into groups on the one side the LGBT and their supporters and other side “traditionalists” with the children. The next quotation is reaffirming that.

For whom this bill strikes? First of all it strikes for those who want to stick homosexual preferences among children, for those who want to put an equal sign between traditional and nontraditional sexual relations. These are not equivalent concepts.<sup>113</sup>

According Elena Mizulina's observation, the law banning gay propaganda makes it possible to protect children from sexual violence, and impossible to find a compromise between the traditional family values and non-traditional ones. So, here she combines the **narrative of the protection of children** and the **narrative**

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<sup>112</sup> Komsomolskaya Pravda, 2013.

<sup>113</sup> *ibid.*

### **of traditional family values.**

To sum up, Elena Mizulina uses in her speeches the narratives of traditional family values as well as that of traditional Russian culture, the narrative of protection of children as well as that of reproduction. Curiously, she also actualizes the more liberal narrative of cooperation, but it plays a relatively minor role in the overall logic of her argumentation.

How about Alexander Chuyev's argumentation?

As an Orthodox person, I believe homosexuality is sin of Sodom and unnatural relations I will fight with that people. They have not ability to promote their values.<sup>114</sup>

I have repeatedly spoken about it. The propaganda of all kinds of perversions in Russia should be limited by law. Such a bill is already there and I think in the near future it will be considered by the State Duma.<sup>115</sup>

I am absolutely not interested in the private life of homosexuals. But I believe that the public promotion of homosexuality acts demoralizing, it hurts, especially our children. No one will be promoted in the media drug use or alcoholism. But homosexuality is morally no better than the same pedophilia or drug addiction.<sup>116</sup>

Alexander Chuyev is obviously an antagonist of the LGBT community. He, as well as, Vitaliy Milonov above, actualizes **the religious narrative** when discussing the issue. We can identify this narrative from the way in which Chuyev claims that if something is a great sin in the heavens, it is necessary to maximally limit it in the earthly world.

Chuyev was the first Russian politician speaking with the initiative against public promotion of homosexuality, especially among children. As it turned out, the protection of children is a favorite narrative of all government officials who offer

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<sup>114</sup> Trubashev, 2007.

<sup>115</sup> K Istine, 2007.

<sup>116</sup> *ibid.*

bills against gay propaganda. But in this matter, Chuyev, a social democrat, takes a conservative position. Everything about homosexuality for him is an unnatural perversion. For this deputy, nontraditional sexual orientation stands alongside with such scourges of modern society as drug addiction, alcoholism and pedophilia. He also indirectly hints to the presence of certain propaganda of homosexuality on TV. This could be designated as **a narrative of decline and degradation**.

Above I have presented the views and narratives of three conservative people. All of them emphasize the importance of protecting traditions as well as children from informational “homosexual propaganda”. Both men represent themselves as strongly Orthodox believers and their narratives quite systematically represent the LGBT issue as something that is in contradiction with a set of Russian traditions.

As for Deputy Elena Mizulina, who promoted the adoption of the antigay law, her interviews contain some ambivalence toward gays, sometimes Mizulina is for constructive dialogue and salvation the problem, and sometimes she is firm in her claim that there will never be a compromise between the values of gays and values Russian people with traditional orientation.

## 5.2 “All people are equal”

In this section I will analyze the narratives of politicians who can be considered to support the LGBT community.

Let me start with Mikhail Prokhorov answering the question “Do you support a ban on gay propaganda?”

No, I do not support. My position is very simple. It is a private matter of the citizen. Who is sleeping with whom, this is a personal matter and what he is doing - it's a private matter. For example, I am against both heterosexual parades, advertising and against the gay parades. It is private. Do not need invade there.<sup>117</sup>

There are no miracles; you either think that the person is above the power, and then you know the rest or if you do not think so, do not be surprised. If you think that the authority is above the personality then do not be shy that you hero is Stalin. He created a state which suppressed individual freedom in the greatest extent. He is not my hero. This is exactly.<sup>118</sup>

As the quotations above show, Prokhorov’s position towards homosexuality is a liberal one. He speaks out against the anti-gay law on the basis of evoking privacy, individuality and individual freedom. In his speech the combination of words ‘private matter’ repeats three times. Prokhorov as a politician and businessman identifies himself as a person who believes that human rights especially freedom of the individual is standing above any authority. In this way, Prokhorov actualizes a **narrative of pluralism of opinions**. According to him, everyone has the right to do whatever they wish because this is his/her personal business and this right of person stand above any power, including a state.

Mikhail Prokhorov does not support the law on gay propaganda, considering that an individual is above the state. From his point of view, no one should interfere in the issue of homosexuality, because it is a private matter of the citizen. It is thus

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<sup>117</sup> NTV News, 2013.

<sup>118</sup> *ibid.*

difficult to find resonance between his words and the narratives that emphasize the role of tradition.

On the other hand, he is against any sexually oriented parades. So Mikhail Prokhorov has nothing against gays, but dislikes gay pride parades, because it does not concern him. He does not say that all people are equal and does not offer to change the current situation. This politician just expresses his liberal position on this issue. It is difficult to call him an activist for LGBT rights. Unfortunately for my analysis, I have found only these two quotes directly related to the topic of my research. But I think these narratives fully reflect Prokhorov position about LGBT people.

Aleksey Navalny in his election campaign attends to the problem of security of sexual minorities during gay parades. Perhaps he is the only Russian politician speaking for gay parades and expressing concern for the safety of such events:

Whether or not to allow the parade is not possible, such a parade in Jerusalem held a closed stadium. The first priority is that: citizens have the right to assemble peacefully and unarmed. But it is necessary to ensure their safety in view of the large number of conservative-minded people.<sup>119</sup>

He gives an example of how things stand with the gay parades and their protection in another state. And, in its turn, Navalny argues that such protection is necessary in Russia referring to intolerance majority of the population in the country. In this way, he also actualizes the **narrative of traditional Russian values**. His argumentation also resonates with the Article number 20 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights<sup>120</sup> and article number 21 of the International

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<sup>119</sup> Mayoral candidates, 2013.

<sup>120</sup> The United Nation, 2013.

Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,<sup>121</sup> and article 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights<sup>122</sup> which spelled out that Freedom of assembly is the right of a person to hold rallies, pickets, demonstrations, and gather in the premises; it belongs to the human rights.

Aleksey Navalny says that all citizens have the right to freedom of peaceful and unarmed assembly. He does not divide people into homosexuals and non-homosexuals, recognizing the fact that all people are equal and all of them have the rights. The oppositionist politician is concerned about the security of actions conducted by sex minorities referring intolerant of the population.

How about the position of a gay activist and lawyer Nikolay Alexeyev? Here are some representative quotes by him on the key issues of the LGBT community.

It so happened that all these organizations have appeared on the wave Moscow Gay Pride movement and on the wave of the activities which we have developed to raise awareness of this issue. They came after us and we are ready to cooperate with all of them<sup>123</sup>

I do not speak on behalf of the LGBT movement because as such the LGBT movement does not exist in Russia.<sup>124</sup>

It was a turning point in 1993 when Russia decriminalized homosexuality... I think that this was done early, because it's all been done on some general wave of democratization. Gay activists have not made any serious efforts and at that time there was no LGBT community as such.<sup>125</sup>

Here, Alexeyev explained the reasons why situation with LGBT community in Russia is so complicated. According to him, when in early 1990s there was a good opportunity to influence legislation, the phenomenon of LGBT community did not exist and now we have what we have. But now, it is still possible to change

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<sup>121</sup> The United Nations, 2013.

<sup>122</sup> European Court of Human Rights, 2013.

<sup>123</sup> Pryamoy efir, 2014.

<sup>124</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>125</sup> *ibid.*

attitudes towards members of sexual minority through amendments to legislation. Here, Alekseyev can be argued to use **a narrative of protecting the LGBT community**.

I think that there are some points in the legislation that require changes. I think if the law is prescribed general discriminatory provisions prohibiting discrimination on some grounds, that there should be included the concept of sexual orientation and gender identity.<sup>126</sup>

You need to understand that there is a common declaration and there is law enforcement practice. The law enforcement practice is such that gay rights are infringed in Russia.<sup>127</sup>

Solution to this problem lying by changes in laws and through the political will of the people who stand for this power.<sup>128</sup>

It is not a problem of the child, it is a problem of society, the problem of the state, if the state will create conditions order to this was perceived as an absolutely normal phenomenon, and no one will not be laughing on it.<sup>129</sup>

What a hypocrite? Do not like Gay Pride; do not like the fact that the death penalty is prohibited in Europe, well, leave from the Council of Europe! Then let's do so: we are an Orthodox country we have our own rules and so on.<sup>130</sup>

The quotations above actualize a rather liberal narrative where the state and legislation act as guarantors of rights and freedoms of individuals. The last two statements, however, evoke narratives which expose the authority in double standards: the anti-gay law is not aimed to protect children but to incite hatred against homosexuals as a result of which the membership of Russia in several European unions is selective. The narrative of traditional Russian values thus also forms part of the logic of Alexeyev.

Next four quotes disclose **narratives of an imperfection of the modern Russian**

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<sup>126</sup> Pryamoy efir, 2014.

<sup>127</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>128</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>129</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>130</sup> *ibid.*

**legislation**, because of which the rights of people belonging to the LGBT community are extremely violated. Alexeyev on his own example illustrates how this is happening.

All these laws are directed only to one thing to drive out a huge group of people from the public space. Just to say that they do not exist. Stay at home, do what you want, but in any way do not claim your rights. These are freedom of assembly, freedom of association, freedom of expression and so on. This is the main goal of these laws.<sup>131</sup>

I stood with a poster with a quote from Faina Ranevskaya near the entrance of St. Petersburg Administration. I was detained and the court finds me guilty of propaganda of homosexuality. What is idiocy?<sup>132</sup>

No one in Russia has done more for the development of the LGBT movement, for the establishment of the rights of sex minority than the most severe homophobes in this country operated for the past 5-10 years. These are Uriy Luzkov, Vitaliy Milonov, Aleksander Chuyev. The most important propagandists of homosexuality is the people who oppose it.<sup>133</sup>

I do not mix the human rights activities with political activity.<sup>134</sup>

The desire of the gay movement is to establish their rights on the legislative level. To make this argument, Alexeyev actualizes the narrative of traditional Russian values which he juxtaposes with the narrative of the state and legislation as a guarantor of rights and freedoms as well as the narrative of the imperfection of the modern Russian legislation. Alekseyev is thus accusing the authorities of slyness: the state, positioning itself as a country of democracy which protects the human rights and its citizens, in fact pursues its policy as a defender of traditions and religion not noticing the needs of some of its citizens.

Arguably, Russian traditional values are not affected by the representatives of sex minorities. They want to have equal rights with other minorities, to legally hold processions and parades, and to ensure that their rights are not infringed upon.

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<sup>131</sup> Pryamoy efir, 2014.

<sup>132</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>133</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>134</sup> *ibid.*

Nikolay Alekseyev affirms that there is no LGBT movement in Russia, because after the decriminalization of homosexuality in early 1990s, LGBT people had no wish to consolidate their forces and moreover it was not necessary. And he, as the first Russian gay activist, is ready now to cooperate with other small groups of activists and continue to work in this field. So, in his interview Alexeyev uses a narrative related to amendments to the legislation which will be able to legalize and secure a position of LGBT people in Russia, hence the narrative of the protection of the LGBT community.

As a person, who is well familiar with the legislation of the Russian Federation, Alekseyev offers quite specific steps to addressing the problem through the legal system. At the same time he stresses that amendments to the law alone will not change the situation with gay oppression. It is important that political will of the people will be changed too.

### 5.3 “It is none of your business!”

This chapter examines the official narratives constructed on the basis of the reactions of the Kremlin and Russian Foreign Ministry on the adoption the anti-gay law.

The narratives by the Russian president Vladimir Putin can be constructed on the basis of the following kinds of statements:

You know I can't answer the part of the question about whether homosexual are born or made. It is beyond my professional interest. I am just not qualified to respond. I would like to draw your attention to the fact that in Russia unlike one third world countries being gay is not a crime. In 70 countries there is criminal liability for homosexuality and in 7 of those countries they have the death penalty for homosexuality. We have recently passed the law prohibiting propaganda and not of homosexuality only but of homosexuality and child abuse, child sexual abuse. But this is nothing to do with persecuting individuals of homosexual orientation. There is a world of differences between these two things. So there is no danger for individuals of this nontraditional orientation.<sup>135</sup>

In law the church is separate from the state and has the right to its own point of view. Also I'd like to point out almost all traditional world religions agree with this topic. Is the position of the Holy See different from that of the Russian Orthodox Church? Does Islam treat individual with nontraditional sexual orientation differently? Actually it's even tougher.

Read our law carefully and pay attention to its name. It's called a ban of the propaganda of pedophilia and homosexuality. There are countries including in Europe where they debating the possibility of legalizing pedophilia publically discuss this in parliament. They can do what they want. But the people of Russia have their own cultural code, their own traditions. It seems to me that the law we adapted does not harm anybody. What's more people, homosexual people can't feel in fear here because there is no professional career social discrimination against them. And if they achieve great success for example Elton John is an extraordinary person distinguished musician and millions of our people

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<sup>135</sup> BBC News, 2014.

sincerely love him regardless of his sexual orientation.<sup>136</sup>

We do not ban anyone and anything; we don't detain people on the street. We don't hold anyone responsible for those relations unlike a lot of other countries in the world. That is why you can feel free, relaxed but leaves children in peace, please. We have our own traditions, our own culture. We respect any partners and we ask them to treat our traditions, our culture with similar respect.<sup>137</sup>

Constructing the narrative of President Putin it is clear that he supports this controversial law. He pays attention to the fact that this law is not directed to persons of homosexual orientation, but to propaganda of pedophilia and homosexuality among children. This is **the narrative of protection children** from sexual abuse. Putin also gives examples of different attitudes towards sex minorities in various countries this is a **narrative of pluralism**: from the countries where such minorities are punished to the countries where people can openly discuss the question about legalizing pedophilia.

However, for Russia due to its special traditions and its culture neither one nor the other policies towards this issue is acceptable. As Russia respects the positions of other countries, other countries should also be respectful of the position of Russia. This is **the narrative of defending traditional values and culture** of Russia.

Putin also emphasizes the fact that the view of the State is independent of the views of the church, because in law the church is separate from the state. The Russian Orthodox Church has its own opinion in relation to this issue. His argumentation cannot thus be said to resonate with the narrative of religion as such.

In several interviews, the president appeals to the age-old traditional values that underpin the Russia's policy towards the gay issue, but at the same time, he states

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<sup>136</sup> BBC News, 2014.

<sup>137</sup> MailOnline, 2014.

that for Russians it does not matter what sexual orientation a person has as the most important are his or her human qualities.

Konstantin Dolgov is the Russian Foreign Ministry Commissioner for human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

Dolgov explains the official position of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia on the traditional values question, gay issues and so on in the following way:

In addition to the traditional values besides family there are certain values related to freedom of religion, moral ideals that unite almost all, if not all people. But there is no common list of values.<sup>138</sup>

Dolgov also actualizes the narrative of pluralism as he suggests that each state has some common values which are shared by other countries, but there are also values which are very specific for only some states. According to him, the moral ideals are specific features for Russia:

Our partners have repeatedly told us: let us fight for all states to fulfill their obligations, for example, to protect the rights of persons with a different sexual orientation. When it comes to the protection of this group of individuals from discrimination, then it is part of our plans, and corresponds to the Russian Constitution. We have, under the law, prohibited any discrimination on grounds of sex. All citizens of Russia, regardless of gender, race, orientation, have equal rights and bear the same responsibilities to the state and society. And they are protected from discrimination.<sup>139</sup>

This quotation actualizes **the narrative of the state and legislation as a guarantor of rights and freedoms** as it suggests that the state should defend its citizens from any form of discrimination in accordance with the constitution and should not reject to fulfill its responsibilities, including gay discrimination. More specifically we can see here **a narrative of comprehensive authority** of law which is capable of protecting all groups of people from any kind of

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<sup>138</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2014.

<sup>139</sup> *ibid.*

discrimination. This is what distinguishes the official discourse from Alexseyev's narrative suggesting that the state legislation is weak and disable to protect LGBT people from unfair treatment of society and the state.

When they say, let's drop a deal with ethnic minorities, religious freedom, economic rights, xenophobia and neo-Nazism and instead of it we should unanimously make a deal only one specific isolated problem - we believe that it is wrong. It is artificial and energized. Another thing is that you cannot discriminate against nobody absolutely. Here two opinions cannot be.<sup>140</sup>

This statement contains something like a reproach to other countries that they are trying to narrow down the problem and to solve in only for the LGBT community. From the point of view of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia, this is a wrong position as it is not strongly necessary to deal with only one problem. This is definitely narrative describing existence of variety problems for solving in the world and policy makers should not focus only on LGBT problem.

Interference in the internal affairs of states is unacceptable. It is one thing when we talk about human rights, and another – when we talk about certain approaches (they can be called neo-liberal), which are often even alien to much of the country, which they are promoting. No one can impose such approaches, of course. When we talk about traditional values, we do not impose anything on anyone.<sup>141</sup>

The Foreign Ministry's **narrative of non-intervention** in the internal politics of the country completely coincides with the position of President Vladimir Putin, notably with the narrative of pluralism which he actualizes.

This law is not directed at the discrimination of sexual minorities, and is aimed solely at protecting children from information which is inappropriate and harmful for their age. It does not violate Russia's international obligations in the sphere of human rights. The only thing that prevents this document is the aggressive imposition of non-traditional sexual attitudes to minors. At the same time it provides for its violation an administrative rather

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<sup>140</sup> The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2014.

<sup>141</sup> *ibid.*

than criminal liability.<sup>142</sup>

Here, the narrative of protecting children from negative information such as propaganda of non-traditional values is in tune with narratives of such politicians as Vitaliy Milonov, Elena Mizulina, Alexander Chuyev. And also according to Dolgov, expressing the official position of the state, this anti-gay law does not violate the principal agreements with European partners and moreover a punishment for this one is rather lenient.

Those who are concerned about the safety and welfare of members of the LGBT community in Russia as a whole and in the course of the Sochi Olympics in particular, would like to recall that same-sex sexual relations are still criminalized in 76 countries. Russia is not among them.<sup>143</sup>

An identical answer was given by Vladimir Putin on the issue of the status of homosexuality in the country.

In addition, we would like to recommend guardians of sexual minorities' rights in Russia, before criticizing us, often pay attention to the situation in this field in your country.<sup>144</sup>

At the same time, however, there is an isolationist approach which forms part of the narrative of pluralism. Internal policy is an internal policy of a country and no other countries should not interfere in it. Instead of this other states should be engaged in its internal policy.

The quotes of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia Sergey Lavrov about LGBT people and their rights also actualize the narrative of pluralism:

No country can teach others how to live. Russia cannot teach the Netherlands and the Netherlands cannot teach Russia. The criterions for the discussion of these issues are obligations that are taken in the framework of universal or European institutions. We have no universal or European commitments to

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<sup>142</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013.

<sup>143</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>144</sup> *ibid.*

allow promotion of homosexuality.<sup>145</sup>

This is a subtle hint at the fact that not having any European commitments in respect of the gay propaganda, Russia has an ability to pursue its policy in its sole discretion. Without any commitment on this issue, no one has the right to tell what is the right and what is the wrong path to pursue. The matter concerns only the state itself. Russia, in turn, also has no right to impose their vision on this issue to other countries. This could be specified as **the narrative of sovereignty**.

As you know, homosexuality was a criminal offense in the Soviet Union. This article of the Criminal Code long time been abolished. And homosexuals can go about their business freely and with impunity. And it is the obligation of all states not to discriminate on any grounds.<sup>146</sup>

After the Collapse of Soviet Union Russia becomes a democratic state that does not tolerate discrimination of any kind signing and ratifying the relevant laws such as Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Today to be homosexual is not crime in Russia. What has been criminalized is engaging such “propaganda”.

I emphasize once again... [that] propaganda [...] is usually very, very aggressive, we have no such obligation. And they are unlikely to be accepted by us, even in theory, because we have our own moral values, its historical, cultural and religious traditions on which our society lives.<sup>147</sup>

This is another mention that Russia has *no obligation* to support the *propaganda of homosexuality*. This is again based on the narrative of Russia’s uniqueness, a historically developed worldview of its citizens.

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<sup>145</sup> Novosti Rossii, 2013.

<sup>146</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>147</sup> *ibid.*

We do not discriminate against anyone, but we do not want discrimination to occur in the opposite direction when one group of people gets the right to aggressively promote their rights at variance with a values of majority of the society and imposing their rights to children.<sup>148</sup>

On the basis of Lavrov's narrative, there is exists no discrimination against LGBT people in Russia, and at the same time the society does not wish to be discriminated by an assertive policy on the part of the LGBT community. It is possible to identify this as **the narrative of majority**. It allows Lavrov to places the responsibility for discrimination on the LGBT community and not on the society.

Gay rights in Russia are not infringed. But in our dialogue with European counterparts who pay very high emotional attention to the promotion of homosexuality, we draw their attention to the fact that there are much more flashy cases where rights are infringed in the obvious way. I cited the example of situation with Russian-speaking people without citizenship in Latvia and Estonia. There are many such examples. Our Western partners emotionally defend the rights of homosexuals to promote their style of life but they are silent about the infringement of citizens without citizenship in Europe, in contemporary Europe. I'll tell you once again that we are ready without any tear on the basis of facts to discuss who has obligations, what obligations and how these obligations apply.<sup>149</sup>

In this quotation Sergey Lavrov evokes **the narrative of double standards**.

According to the minister, instead of solving current problems such as to resolve the issue of citizenship, Russia's foreign partners walk away from it and emotionally polemicize the fate of homosexuals with the Russian authorities.

Summarizing this subchapter I would like to revisit the narratives that represent the official position of Russia on the international arena.

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<sup>148</sup> Novosti Rossii, 2013.

<sup>149</sup> *ibid.*

The narratives by the head of state Vladimir Putin contain several points which are related to the protection of children from sexual abuse. He also evokes the narratives traditional values and culture, the narrative of pluralism as well as the narrative of sovereignty.

The narratives of the Russian Foreign Ministry Commissioner for human rights, democracy and the rule of law Konstantin Dolgov include the narrative of pluralism, the narrative of effectiveness of the state legislation in protecting all groups from any types of discrimination as well as the narrative of traditional values.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia, Sergey Lavrov in his narratives also adheres to the official position: he actualizes the narrative of the protection of children from information considered harmful, the narrative of pluralism as well as the narrative of majority and narrative of double standards.

## 6. Conclusion

In the summer of 2013, in Russia a law was passed prohibiting “propaganda of nontraditional sexual relations among minors”. Around this decision there was a discussion about the validity of this decision. It was immediately followed the negative reaction of Western countries suggesting that the law oppresses the rights of LGBT people. The public opinion in Russia was not united on this issue and even among politicians, there was some disagreement on this situation. This thesis has examined the narratives that the pro and con sides in the Russian debate actualized.

The task of research was to find out whether the divergent positions of the Western countries and Russia can be explained with reference to Samuel Huntington’s idea of a clash of civilizations. In order to answer that question, statements by Russian politicians representing three groups were analyzed with the help of narrative analysis.

The first group consisted of politicians who speak about gays disapprovingly due to various reasons: In their argumentation I was able to identify the following narratives: religion, the narrative of traditional values (as well as family values). All members of this group think homosexuality is abnormal relations which destroying society and breaking down the psyche of children. Also the most frequently used narrative in their speeches was a narrative of the protection of children from inappropriate information.

The second group that I analysed consists of activists, people who support the position that all people are equal. Two persons are presented here: Aleksey Navalny and Nikolay Alexeyev. Their narratives are pluralism of opinions, a narrative of protecting the LGBT community and a narrative of an imperfection of the modern Russian legislation.

The third group consists of people who present the official view of authority within the country and abroad. From these interviews and the document I was able to identify the following narratives: a narrative of pluralism, a narrative of comprehensive authority of law, a narrative of non-intervention, narrative of majority and narrative of double standards.

What does all this mean for the research task of the thesis and the question of the clash of civilizations? In general, the narratives of the first and the third groups seem to support the idea of a clash between Russia and the West on the issue of gay rights. However, this does not mean that both of these groups consider that civilizations will make war among each others. Rather, the narratives evoked by the politicians belonging to these two groups are underpinned by an idea of belonging to a civilization that does not belong to the Western civilization, fully at least. This civilization has different cultural, religious and moral values than the Western civilization.

Huntington writes that, when non-Western societies felt weak in relation to the West, they invoked Western values of self-determination, liberalism, democracy, and independence to justify their opposition to Western domination. This was the case with Russia in the 1990s. Now that they are no longer weak but increasingly powerful, they do not hesitate to attack the very same values which they previously used to promote their interests.

The revolt against the West was originally legitimated by asserting the universality of Western values; it is now legitimated by asserting the superiority of non-Western values. As this thesis has shown, the Russian stance on the issue of the rights of the LGBT community makes sense in this context. After the collapse of

the Soviet Union, Russia has gone on a new path of development, but as it turned out, not all Western innovations have found a response among the majority of the Russian population. Russian politicians explain this by the reason of this phenomenon lies in the civilizational differences between Russia and the West.

There is a certain cultural code under which Russians live and changing it is not possible. . As the thesis shows, this is also one of the most common argumentations of Russian politicians on the question of prohibiting gay propaganda. But the thesis has also shown that this conviction meets opposition on the part of gay activists who suggest that this is not argument for pursuing a policy and it is necessary to equate gay rights with the rights of other citizens.

Huntington argued that with the end of the Cold War, Russia became a “torn” country with the reemergence of the classic struggle between Westernizers and Slavophiles.<sup>150</sup> It may be argued that the role of Westernizers is now taken by gay activists and their supporters while the position of the Slavophiles is taken by the Russian state and the politicians who stress traditional values.

Huntington also notes that the Western efforts to promote Western culture everywhere lead to a problem in the West's relations with the rest of the world. What is universalism to the West appears imperialism to the rest. Double standards have become an integral part of the policy of the West. Non-Western societies fundamentally disagree with this course of affairs.<sup>151</sup> In the quotations of politicians, this problem is visible. If for the Russian leaders the problems with the LGBT “propaganda” are not at the top of priorities which must be solved, then, for

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<sup>150</sup> Huntington, 1996, 142-143.

<sup>151</sup> *idem*, 184.

Western partners, the LGBT question in Russia seems to come first making other issues invisible.

Returning to the analysis of narratives, the narratives from the first and the third groups thus approve the idea of a civilizational clash. They include examples of civilizational identity building as a counterweight to values understood to be western. It is also worth noting that the second group of people, that supporting the LGBT community and its efforts, do not oppose themselves to the West but rather consider themselves to be bearers of Western ideals and values. This group argues that the Russian policy is in conflict with the LGBT rights because the country cannot protect gay rights. At the same time the Russian politicians from the third group consider that at issue here is not really a conflict because homosexuals are protected by the legislation prohibiting of any form of discrimination.

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