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“Out of Sight, Out of Mind: Keeping Russia Closeted”

A Biopolitical Analysis of Non-Normative Sexualities in Russia

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The law ‘prohibiting the propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations’ in Saint Petersburg has received heavy international criticism with little academic inquiry to understand it and its mechanisms affecting non-normative sexualities. By using a Foucauldian biopolitical framework, this thesis investigates the law’s restrictions as an outcome of modern state practices. Biopolitics is a modern state practice geared at protecting life and ensuring the reproduction of life. Yet, there is a dark side to the life-producing biopolitical coin, in that it involves acts whereby superior and inferior forms of life are separated from one another, all geared at the normalisation of heterosexual conduct.

This thesis first examines the biopolitical rationalisations for the law. Then, it uses first person accounts of the repression of non-normative sexualities to analyse biopolitical government. The interviews have been conducted with the aim of understanding the ways in which non-normative sexualities mobilise the biopolitical discourse of homosexuality and govern themselves accordingly. As well as investigating the possibility for the discourse acting as a site of resistance against the biopolitical apparatus. This enables the thesis to pay attention to specific biopolitical techniques of visibility, normalisation, self-government and the way in which non-normative sexualities have been added to the trope of Russia’s enemies. Taken together, these discourses serve to connect homosexuality with the discourse of ‘Russia must be defended’.

The research conducted found that the laws represent biopolitical regulation, and that the discourses that circulate throughout Russian society are biopolitical in nature. Furthermore, it has found that biopolitical power is paradoxical in its nature, as it aims to produce life, yet causes violence, intimidation and mental insecurity for non-normative sexualities. This was supported with the interviews which yielded harrowing insights into personal emotive accounts of experienced violence. In essence, heterosexual life is elevated as legitimate and legal, and non-normative sexuality, whilst permitted is not protected. With the biopolitical paradox as a feature of biopolitical state practices, the controversial idea of life-producing violence has entered into Russia with regard to non-normative sexualities.

Key words:
LGBT, Russia, International Relations, Biopower, Biopolitics, Demographics, Foucault, Putin, Biopolitical paradox, Homosexual Propaganda, Saint Petersburg, Post-Structuralism
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1. Introduction

1.1 - Overview

“Tchaikovsky and Constantinovich must be rolling over in their graves. Such laws are simply unacceptable; if Russia isn't serious about respecting the European convention on human rights, it should simply call the bluff and leave the Council of Europe altogether and more than statements, these grave human rights abuses must have consequences for the EU-Russia relationship” (Sophie In't Veld MEP, in Banks, 2012).

This harsh rhetoric is a comment on the Russian laws prohibiting the propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations in Saint Petersburg that were passed in 2012. The law defines propaganda of homosexuality as “the targeted and uncontrolled dissemination of generally accessible information, which can damage the health, moral and spiritual development of the under-aged”. Under the law, non-traditional sexual relations propaganda is punished with a fine from 1,000 roubles to 3,000 roubles for individuals and companies would have to pay from 10,000 to 50,000 roubles (See Appendix One for full text). The laws cannot be rationalised from liberal perspectives of the dynamics of international society, and Russia thus risks exclusion. Nor do they make sense from that of universal rights based argumentation. Yet why would Russia risk losing its place in the Council of Europe and place restrictions upon non-normative sexualities? Understood from a biopolitical perspective the logic is clear, homosexuals do not produce offspring in the traditional sense and Russia is faced with an acute demographic crisis; their rationale is motivated and explained by biopolitics which sees the protection of biological life as a central element of sovereign power.

For Foucault (1978; 1988; 2003), biopower is a technology of power, which is a way of managing people as a group. The distinctive quality of this political technology is that it allows for the control of entire populations. It is thus an integral feature and essential to the workings of the modern state and capitalism. Biopower is literally having power over bodies; “an explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugations of bodies and the control of populations” (Foucault, 1978: 140). This power is no longer “directed at man-as-body, but at man-as-species”. In an era where power must be justified both rationally and politically, biopower is utilized by an emphasis on the protection of life rather than the
threat of death, on the regulation of the body, and the production of other technologies of power, such as the notion of sexuality. Regulation of customs, habits, health, reproductive practices, family, “blood”, and “well-being” would be straightforward examples of biopower, as would any conception of the state as a “body” and the use of state power as essential to its “life” (Foucault, 1978; 1988; 2003).

The thesis argues that anti-gay laws are a biopolitical technique and as such one of the main policy responses to the Russian demographic crisis. The demographic crisis has plagued Russia since the late Soviet period, with a sharp drop in life expectancy, a reduced birth rate and an increased mortality rate; Russia is haemorrhaging people. This lead to Putin declaring his number one priority was solving the demographic crisis. Putin stated that: “In Russia today, every person counts” and that the country needs “strong prosperous families with many children” (Moscow Times, 12.4.2012). Traditionally, the sovereign is the one who has the right to kill or let live. His power is the power to take things away. However, with modernity Foucault makes the remarkable observation that this is subordinated to another kind of power; biopower is not interested in taking life away, but instead wants to invest in life in order for it to become highly productive for the state (Foucault, 2003). The state wants to release and use the capacities of the bodies of its subjects. The more productive the bodies are, the more surplus value can be extracted from them. Essentially, sovereign power has been replaced by biopower which centred on administration, preservation and development of life (Foucault, 1978, 2003).

At first glance then, it would seem strange that the government, through laws, is restricting the rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transsexual persons (LGBT), denying their right to adoption, marriage and life in the public ‘space’, when these citizens have the capability to raise children and contribute to the growth of the Russian nation. Furthermore, they, along with other 'unsavoury' groups and persons, are marginalized and denounced as morally abhorrent or sexually perverted, culminating in the moral and spiritual bankruptcy of the Russian nation. The end result is a restriction of freedoms, increased emigration abroad and at worst, violence or suicide, for LGBT persons, or those labelled as such, in the Russian Federation. It is at this junction that the paradox of biopolitics becomes visible; whilst the objective of biopolitical regimes is to make life and let live, thus protecting life, biopolitical
regimes are actually marked by escalations of violence, an elemental component of biopolitical regimes. The construction of superior and inferior life, that leaves the inferior in the state of nature as it were, pervade the social sphere.

When studying any topic in earnest, it must be placed within a wider context to allow for additional discussion and to link its relevance to a global scale. As this study is conducted within the International Relations field, it must be linked back to the International. I will expand upon this further during Chapter Two, the theoretical framework, with a redefinition of the political, as understood from the post-structuralist school of International Relations: that being the personal is international, and the personal is the political. The ramifications for International Relations however are numerous. The recent laws that have been passed throughout Russia have come under fire from numerous governments and institutions. For example, on the 25 May 2012 the United States’ State Department annual human rights report stated that the majority of LGBT persons in Russia hide their orientation due to fear of losing their jobs or homes, as well as the threat of violence (Telegraph, 2012). If the current trends continue, Russia risks alienation on the world stage and hostile relations with other democratic countries. Russia has responded to such criticism earlier. Konstantin Dolgov, the Russian Foreign Ministry’s Commissioner for Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law, has called comments by the US State Department ‘incorrect’ and went on to say that, "We are perplexed by the American side's attempts to interfere in the legislative process in Russia, especially publicly. We consider these attempts inappropriate and inconsistent with the practice of interstate relations" (Russia Today, 29.11.2011). The frankness in the dialogue between the two countries points to frostier relations in the future. It is with this in mind that we turn to Russia and look at the case of the treatment of the Russian non-normative sexualities through Foucauldian lenses.

1.2 - Hypothesis and Research Questions

The framing argument of this thesis is that the laws banning the propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations and related events provide a fruitful site for an inquiry into the ways in why biopower is being employed in everyday Russia. Biopower is a modern state practice geared to safeguarding the collective majority, to protect life and ensure the reproduction of life. However, there is a dark side to the life-producing biopolitical coin, and that it involves acts
whereby *superior* and *inferior* forms of life are separated from one another, all geared to the normalisation of heterosexual conduct. I will use first person accounts of the repression of non-normative sexualities to analyse biopolitical normalisation. This enables me to pay attention to self-government and to the extent to which the examined discourse offers a site of resistance to biopower.

The time frame of this study is June 2012 - March 2013, and focuses on the reaction of non-normative sexualities in light of the regional laws that have been adopted across some Russian cities, the most notable being Saint Petersburg. As this research is based on Foucault’s problematising approach, the research questions it seeks to answer are more akin to guiding lights for directing the explorative and analytical nature of the thesis:

*To what extent can the law prohibiting the propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations be understood as a mechanism of biopolitics?*
*How does the biopolitical matrix gear the production of life in Russia and let die?*
*What effect does the biopolitical regulation have upon non-normative sexualities and how do they govern themselves in light of it?*

In light of these research questions, the study is divided into the following principle sections: Introduction, Theoretical Framework, Methodological Orientations, Analysis and the Conclusion. Chapter Two will establish the theoretical framework for the study from a post-structuralist school of thought, specifically biopolitics, gender and discourse analysis. Chapter Three outlines the methodological considerations of the interviews I conducted. The analytical section is split into three chapters; Four, Five and Six. Chapter Four explores the law prohibiting non-traditional sexual relations as a biopolitical mechanism to promote and foster life in response to the demographic crisis. Chapter Five examines the other side of the biopolitical coin, the power to make life and let die. Chapter Six explores individual biopolitical techniques of government, visibility, dynamics of normalisation, self-government and adding non-normative sexualities to the trope of Russia’s enemies. Finally, there the conclusion, which presents the findings and implications of the study.
1.3 - Data and the Methodological Toolkit

The data to be analysed is collected from 33 written, 50 question interviews with LGBT persons in the Russian Federation through the social network, VKontakte.com during the period June to September 2012. This was the best way to gather the data without risking the personal safety of the respondents or the researcher. All the respondents were given pseudonyms to prevent the dehumanization of the data and give them anonymity; a secure record has been kept of the original names and their corresponding aliases. Naturally choosing topics of interest from the interviews was not an easy task. Due to the limitations of the size and scope of this research, and the sheer volume of interview data, it would be impossible to use all of the material gathered in one piece of research, not least considering the wide range of topics that the interviewees were asked. Therefore, the interviews have been conducted with the aims of understanding the ways in which non-normative sexualities mobilise the biopolitical discourse of homosexuality and govern themselves accordingly. As power is ubiquitous, the way that the interviewees discuss issues about laws and other form of regulation is expected to yield some interesting insights on forms of government.

The primary concern of the thesis however, is to examine how biopower and biopolitical regulation produce discourses and then whether and how non-normative sexualities make sense of their sexuality with reference to these discourses. The word discourse is the general idea that language is structured according to different patterns that people’s utterances follow when they take part in different domains of social life (Williams, 1999: 2). Thus discourse analysis is the analysis of these patterns and there is not just one approach, but also a series of interdisciplinary approaches that can be used to explore many different social domains in many different types of studies (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002: 1). Throughout the analysis, discourses are understood to work to enable and to define, and to exclude and to silence, endorsing a certain regime of truth throughout the society, but making other modes of judging and categorizing meaningless, inadequate, impracticable or otherwise disqualified. The methodological orientations will be given further consideration in Chapter Three.
1.4 - Research Gap

As this work stems from the research gap in the academic literature, it is useful to present a brief critical overview of the literature that is currently available and objectively identify the niche that this research will fit. My approach is to combine the interviews that I have conducted, utilise academic sources and journalistic inquiry in order to research the topic thoroughly and make an appropriate analysis based upon a biopolitical understanding, in order to start to fill the gap in the literature. Furthermore, this thesis is also a contribution to the discussion over the extent to which Soviet / Russian state practices make sense in the context of modern state practices that have previously mostly been analysed in the 'western' context. This is something that I plan to deepen in further research. With this in mind, I turn to Treisman who claims that there are two particular predispositions in approaching the study of Russia:

'The first approach is to focus on the country’s dark side, to present Russia as a land of deformity … The second approach is to turn mystical when Russia is mentioned, to exult in paradoxes and wallow in the exotic. Russia, it is said, is unique and unknowable. It hides its secrets from social scientists and statisticians'

(Treisman, 2011: 1).

In much of the literature, contemporary academics analyse Russia through the binary of undemocratic and democratic. That is, that Russia is either authoritarian or democratic, swinging from one pole to another. Dealing with this binary reduces the quality of the analysis and enables a strong entry of academic bias into the text, furthering political agendas. Even dealing with shades of authoritarianism is not useful, as the processes and mechanisms through which Russia is segregating and marginalising non-normative sexualities can be understood clearly from a biopolitical perspective. Due to the fact that marginalisation of non-normative sexualities need not necessarily be a function of an authoritarian government, just like its protection is not necessarily natural to a democracy. It is with this in mind that I approached the literature, whilst adopting a critical approach to avoid academic bias.

It is worth illustrating here that there are strong debates in the literature with regard to the peculiar position of Russia on the world stage. Throughout various points in its history, it has
looked to the East and to the West, or chosen its own path of development. One of the consequences of this is that some Western writers and scholars believe that Russians do not recognise and inhabit exclusive sexual identities (i.e. gay or straight) as they believe these are Western conceptions of sexuality (Baer, 2002: 506). It is worth noting that Foucault has been criticised as being too Western-centric and that his observations have been based upon modern European states; however, the theory can be applied outside Europe as it regards the processes of control and biological regulation inherent in all states (Edkins, 1999: 9). In the theoretical framework, I bring in aspects of Russian history to show the similar development of biopolitics in Russia mirroring the West. Furthermore, one of the strengths of a biopolitical analysis is that it does not deduce issues from the so-called mystical Russian cultural matrix, an idea of a homophobic Russia, but examines events in Russia in conjunction to modern state practices.

One assumes that every state is interested in having the majority of its population being healthy, productive workers who produce enough offspring to ensure the survival of the state. Be that as it may, following the journey of the development of homosexuality in Russia, many similarities can be seen between the development of homosexual labelling, punishments, freedoms and restrictions, within Russia and Europe. There is some relevance to the idea of imported Western values: for example, Gay Pride marches are seen as Western by both the elites and the majority of the LGBT persons interviewed for this study.

In the *History of Sexuality Volume One: Will to Knowledge* (1978) Foucault identifies sexuality as one of the most important technologies of biopower. Then in *Society must be defended* (2003) Foucault sets out in great detail the nature of the biopolitical paradox. However, he did not deliver a complete set of works on biopower; rather it was spread across several volumes and lectures. Even his attempt to create a complete piece of work based on biopower became a diversion into a different topic of academic inquiry; *The Birth of Biopower* (2008) despite the title, only contained a few paragraphs on biopower and biopolitics. Foucault touches upon the technologies of biopower and how they were instrumental in creating the language of homosexuality that was then utilised to control the population through various technologies and punishments. One can postulate that had
Foucault the time to write a biopolitical genealogy, he would have produced a prolific body of work relating to homosexuality as a technology of biopolitical control.

Unfortunately, he died before he could publish a complete genealogy of biopower. However, the work he did publish has been more than sufficient for other writers and academics to take up the concept of biopower and utilise it in theoretical and practical applications in the academic literature. More than a quarter of a century after the introduction of this concept, surprisingly little work has been done to develop “Foucault’s own sketchy suggestions into a set of operational tools for critical inquiry” (Rabinow & Rose, 2006: 197). With regard to biopolitics and gender, Jemima Repo’s PhD thesis (2011) dealt extensively with linking biopolitical issues and theory to gender related concerns, particularly those relating to feminist inquiry. However, she does not engage so much with biopower and homosexuality, although the majority of the work she has produced can be applied to homosexuality.

There is a gap in the literature when it comes to studies on biopower and homosexuality. Specifically, whilst there have been attempts to build a genealogy of biopower and sexuality, there has not been a serious attempt to build a biopolitical genealogy of homosexuality. Furthermore, there is a lack of studies on the impact of the recent restrictive legislation affecting Russian LGBTs. The latter is not surprising due to the recent nature of the laws; however, it is peculiar that biopower / biopolitics and the legislating of homosexuals have been relatively ignored by academics, as they go together like the proverbial horse and cart.

Laurie Essig’s book *Queer in Russia* is often regarded as the definitive starting point for conducting research within the Russian Federation on homosexuality. However, the one of the key problems with this work is that it is now dated, as it was completed during the turbulent 1990s in Russia. Furthermore, as Stella (2010: 10-11) explains, there are darker Orientalist undertones within her work, which compares Russian gay and lesbian community life to that of American in the 1940s and 1950s, implicitly holding up Western ‘liberated’ sexualities and identities as the model Russians should follow in their path to emancipation. Whilst the work is useful as a starting point, the context from which it was written, the turbulent 1990s, cannot be forgotten.
Kondakov (2008, 2010 and 2011) has conducted extensive, emotive work on homosexuality in Russia; however, whilst his work engages with the discourses, the elite and deals with Foucauldian concepts of discourse, silence and lack, it is already rather dated as it does not directly deal with the recent homophobic laws that have been passed in many Russian cities, and his background is legal and sociological, rather than in biopolitics or International Relations. He focuses mainly upon issues of legal equal rights and the heteronormative discourse coming from the Russian state and society; his work however is not without merit, but it does not delve into biopolitics, nor does it seek to understand the reasoning or processes behind the restrictions implemented, rather it offers judgements from a Human Rights perspective.

There have been extensive surveys regarding democracy, human rights, civil society and the history of homosexuality in Russia conducted by journalists, commentators and some academics; however, homosexuality in Russia seems to be heavily fixated on human rights or from a historical viewpoint. Whilst there is some very good work from Kondakov, Stella, Baer, Healey, Essig, it is either dated or heavily focused on one specific niche. Moreover, there is a lack of work that tries to understand the processes and the reasoning behind the state’s actions. To paraphrase McCall (2005: 1783): The point is not to deny the importance – both material and discursive – of categories/labels but to focus on the process by which they are produced, experienced, reproduced, and resisted in everyday life. With this in mind, we notice a significant lack of this type of work.
2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 - Post-Structuralism

The theoretical background for this thesis comes from the post-structuralist school of thought, and specifically from Michel Foucault. Due to the contested nature of this school of thought, some thinkers have pondered if it is even International Relations at all; this section will first concern itself with establishing the link between post-structuralism and International Relations. One of the major criticisms of the post-structuralist school of thought is that it is so abstract, and the major exponents are either irresponsibly pluralistic and lacking in standpoint or their work is so unrelated to what we call the ‘real world’ as to be devoid of any useful application (Edkins, 1999: xi).

International Relations in the classical sense concerns itself with relations between states, especially those regarding great power relations. However, in the last few decades, a transformation has occurred that has caused us to redraw the divisions between what we consider to be traditional International Relations and the social realm. It starts from the division between what we consider to be politics, in a very narrow sense (for example: political parties, elections, state apparatus diplomacy and wars), and what we consider to be the political (Edkins, 1999: 1). In the past, the political was to be understood only as the political process, yet over the past few decades, particularly with the advent of the women’s rights movements, ‘the personal has become the political’ by examining power relations within the home and the country more broadly, and furthermore, along with the slogan ‘the personal is international’, the political is being redefined in a much broader way (Enloe, 2000: 6). In this much wider context, the political has to be understood, not just as political processes, but also as the establishment of that very social order which sets out a particular, historically specific account, of what counts as politics and defines other areas of social life as not politics. Essentially, the political is the space for the redefinition of politics (Edkins, 1999: 2).

The political is concerned with the constitution of the social space, of the form of society. A central link between the political and the social space is that of power, as the phenomenon of power lies at the centre of political analysis (Edkins, 1999: 3). It is this power that is capable
of obtaining generalized obedience and allegiance, and implies a certain type of society division and articulation, as well as a certain type of representation concerning the legitimacy of the social order (Edkins, 2009: 144). In other words, what is important about power is that it establishes a social order and corresponding form of legitimacy (Booth & Smith, 1995: 58). Post-structuralist thought, in its move from ‘politics’ to the ‘political’, attempts to provide the tools for thinking about the political in a new way; for example analysing these relations of power (Edkins, 1999: 5).

Furthermore, there is a link between power and the political, as Lefort explains: “the phenomenon of power lies at the centre of political analysis”, but this is not because relations of power should be seen autonomous and automatically defining “politics” (Lefort, 1986: 282). Rather, it is because “the existence of power capable of obtaining generalized obedience and allegiance implies a certain type of societal division and articulation, as well as a certain type of representation … concerning the legitimacy of the social order” (Lefort, 1986: 282).

What should be called into question are the conditions of possibility that produced or made conceivable this particular representation of power (Edkins, 1999: 6). The approach of contemporary thinkers is useful for two reasons. In the first place, it does not see subjectivity and the social order as separable or separate. Secondly, for these thinkers there is not a “real” community to be found somewhere (behind, underneath, beyond) the “fictional” communities that underpin political thought (Edkins, 1999: 3). Žižek, for example, believes what we call “social reality” has the status of fiction but is no less real for all that. Moreover, there is nothing behind it, which is concealed (Žižek, 1991: 193-195).

The challenge to International Relations comes not only from a realignment and re-examination of subjectivity that leads to a re-articulation of fundamental political questions but also from a reassessment of “the political” itself. It also leads to an analysis that acknowledges the importance of questions of language, discourse, and ideology to a consideration of the political (Edkins, 1999: 9). Much of what we call “politics” is in many senses “depoliticized” or technologised: the room for real political change has been displaced by a technology of expertise or the rule of bureaucracy (Edkins, 1999: 9). International relations as a discipline dissipates the concern with the political and substitutes, instead, a
fascination with the manifold globalised and globalizing technologies of order that have emerged to administer human beings (Edkins 1999: 9).

Essentially, what was traditionally understood as outside our borders and relating to state relations, for example the realist school of thought or attempts to bring in international organisations and institutions such as the English School, does reasonably well. However, with the increasing globalisation and border crossing that citizens of states now do, what was once understood as the internal political sphere, is now understood as the international political sphere. Examining the personal and societal relations of power, from a post-structuralist perspective, allow a broader picture to be drawn with regard to international relations. As Enloe (2000: 6) reminds us, the personal is political and in today’s globalised world, the personal is also international. People rarely exist without being exposed to external sources of information from outside their countries borders.

As Edkins, Pin-Fat, and Shapiro (2004: 1-2) explain, these borders are no longer impervious as they once were, and neither finance nor challenges to security are great respecters of frontiers. When I examine non-normative sexualities within Russia, it becomes clear that they have attempted to utilise the tools from the West to achieve emancipation and equal rights, or that they are dismissive of attempts to adapt these Western constructs to the Russian reality, in short, ideas and people cross borders. Furthermore, it is worth briefly considering the idea of the other here, confronted with the exigency of competition between states, the problem of government was refocused about the question of how to reinforce the state from within; in the past the other was outside the border, for the Soviet Union, this other was the capitalist West. Now, the other has been constructed as the homosexuals within Russia.

Thus, the realm of what we consider to be International Relations is not so clear-cut and straightforward. As our understanding about the construction of the social order changes, we realise, as Žižek so succinctly puts it, that the social order is always incomplete, but we hide this incompleteness with a symbol at the heart of social life (God, communism, the sovereign, the nation, the people). We think we are obeying an authority of some sort, one that has the force to make us comply, but what we are following is a symbol - and we need a symbol like this to conceal the emptiness, the meaninglessness, at the heart of social life (Žižek, 1993:...
1-3). Within this much bleaker context, we realise that if there is nothing at the heart of social life, if everything we believe is constructed and framed through language and society, then truly any power relations in society, in a globalised, interconnected world, is International Relations. As the boundary between the domestic and the international is insecure at best, we can no longer draw a line between politics within and anarchy without (Edkins, 1999: 6). It is within this critical thinking that the theoretical framework of this thesis will be understood.

2.2 - Gender and Identity

Within modern-day Western society, it is almost superfluous to say that there is a fundamental distinction between gender and sex. Sex relates to our biology, and often boils down to a binary of male and female. Of course this is unhelpful, as it fails to take into account the people who fall in between, intersex as it were, the most extreme example being hermaphrodites. Yet, considering the move beyond biology and to the social sphere, gender comes into play, and that is much more complex. Gender relates far more to a person’s sexuality, and society often has assigned typically acceptable roles for a person’s gender orientation (Butler, 1999). For example, the old English saying that "A woman's place is in the kitchen" places the woman at the heart of traditional family life, in the private sphere, out of sight from public, and most importantly at the time, political life. When dealing with non-normative sexualities, the terminology is often confusing at best, and there have been many attempts to solve the problem by creating more labels and definitions, without realizing the potential political ramifications of doing so.

Traditionally, the term for non-normative sexualities has been LGBT: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transvestites. However, these terms imply that sexual identity categories are taken for granted, known, stable entities, as opposed to objects to explore and unpack (Butler, 1999: 2). Therefore, one of the problems here is that not everyone is able to be clearly defined so simply, therefore queer theorists have added two more letters to the acronym, Q and I: Queer and Intersex (Mitchell, 2012: 1). For example, the sex defined as Intersex sex might not have anything to do with the person's gender identity. Many intersex people might identify with the gender assigned at birth, while some might think of themselves as transvestites, and others might identify as intersex. Q might stand for queer or questioning, queer being people who do not fit or do not want to position themselves into the heterosexist, binary social model of
gender and sexuality or whose attraction and/or gender identity changes. Traditionally, queer has also carried a more radical connotation, clashing with the increasingly homonormative nature of the other letters (Mitchell, 2012: 2).

To make matters more confusing, the latest acronym claiming to represent each and every one is QUILTBAG standing for Queer, Unsure (same as questioning), Intersex, Lesbian, Transexual, Bisexual, Asexual (as in people who don't experience sexual attraction, do not want to act on it, or are aromantic) and Gay (Mitchell, 2012: 1). However, this misses out on a great deal of other identities, such as pansexual, bigender, demisexual and so on. These labels are a direct consequence of biopower; according to Foucault a homosexual (or indeed any non-normative sexuality) is a historico-discursive construct arising within biologico-political networks of power (Foucault, 1978: 58). One very important reason it is retained is that it enables the management of a variety of sectors of the population — in part by defining them, in part by punishing them, and in part by frightening them by society at large, their loved ones, and themselves (Foucault, 1978: 58). As humans, we feel the need to label what we are, to define the basic truth of our sexuality, but these labels are nothing more than a historical discursive construction and that can be almost unpalatable. Therefore, we take sexuality to be one of our most fundamental self-truths (Wibben, 2009: 71). However, these labels are numerous and divide us into categories that we can identify with on a broader societal scale. For the purposes of this thesis, the label that I use more frequently, whilst being aware of the problems that labels give rise to, is that of non-normative sexualities, meaning, any sexuality that is not heterosexuality.

One of the problems of dealing with a small, but diverse 'social group' is that of terminology. It is to be expected that the problems facing transsexuals are not the same as the problems facing gay men or lesbian women, as they have different lived experiences. It is also problematic to group them all together as is often done in academic shorthand, by referring to the ‘LGBT community’, when they are not a homogenous entity. This pretence of ‘sameness’ often conveniently erases from the picture other inequalities based on gender, class and ethnicity (Stella, 2010: 10). It is with regret, and because of academic convention that when it is necessary to generalize and talk in broader terms about issues that affect non-normative sexualities, or the majority of ‘LGBT people’, or the 'community', academic shorthand is
sometimes necessary for stylistic reasons but in my research this does not imply a group of people with a shared lived experience.

Identity is an important concept because it is fundamental to the way we think of ourselves today; it gives us a sense of belonging and it is the marker of our tradition, history and heritage. Identity politics is comforting because it promises security and meaning. What is more, by identifying certain traits of belonging to a particular group it enables us to identify who the 'other' is (Wibben, 2009: 72). We cannot understand what it means to be inside without at the same time identifying who or what is outside. In addition to marking this boundary, those on the inside are privileged over those on the outside in a number of ways: they can decide what it means to belong and consequently who does not. They often enforce purity inside with the threat of being outside, thus marking what is outside as inferior to those traits identified within the group (Wibben, 2009: 72). For example heterosexuality in Russia is considered the norm and people with other sexual orientations will not only be excluded but also considered deviant, sinful or appalling in some other way. If the group, in this case heterosexuals, are in a hegemonic position they have access to important resources (economic, military and cultural), as well as control thereof. Important institutions (for example the education system) will be shaped to conform to its members' needs and to transmit their values. Thus, although the boundaries are ideological, they involve material (biological, legal, social) practices and therefore have material origins and effects (Yuval-Davis, 1994: 410).

Furthermore, it is through discourse that the official group is able to transmit their values, gain acceptance and retain control. One of the products of the critical turn is that identity is no longer understood as a static, fixed concept. Our subjectivity is always already a product of discourses - national, ethnic, racial, gender, class, sexual or religious - which circulate at any given time and place. From this perspective the possibilities for who we can be are not up to the individual, but set out in advance and also limited by society. Identification (the creation of subjectivity), then, takes place in the process of articulating the relationship between subjects and discourses - between ourselves and the principles, expectations and constraints of society. This means that who we are is always a matter of becoming rather than one of being
Essentially, what matters is that issues of gender, sex and identity are fundamental to our sense of self, and are not limited to one state.

2.3 - Foucauldian power

Before getting to the nitty-gritty understandings of biopower and biopolitics, it is first wise to discuss Foucault’s conceptualisation of power as it differs from the more traditional (for example the Realist school of thought) understanding of power as repressive and as something tangible that can be wielded and used. As Edkins explain, thinking of power in this simple, quantitative way, as some mysterious entity or substance that we cannot see but that can be possessed and exercised does not really help us very much. We talk about how much power a particular person, or state, (in this case, Putin or Russia) has, but when someone we think of as powerful - as having lots of power - doesn’t get what they want, then we simply admit that maybe they had less power than we thought (Edkins, 2009: 139).

“If power were never anything but repressive, if it never did anything but to say no, do you really think one would be brought to obey it? What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it does not only weigh on us as a force which says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms of knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than a negative instance whose function is repression” (Foucault, 1980: 119).

In other words, power is responsible both for creating our social world and for the particular ways in which the world is formed and can be talked about, ruling out alternative ways of being and talking. Power is thus both a productive and a constraining force (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002: 1). Power thereby becomes something that is not simply possessed but practiced. It is not simply a means of repression or coercion, but rather flows throughout society in networks (Neal, 2009: 163). In this way, power becomes decentred and pluralised. In order to function as a modern subject, every individual is disciplined and normalised through the exercise of meticulously detailed forms of power in institutions and in their relations with others (Edkins, 1999: 41). They then go on to exercise forms of power themselves in their daily lives, through their institutional professional and social relationships.
(Edkins & Vaughan-Williams, 2009: 163). Once power is considered in this way, it is very difficult to identify where it is located. Power comes to permeate society and to both objectify and subjectivate modern subjects (Neal, 2009: 163). Furthermore, Foucault argues that discourse, the subject and power are completely inseparable (Edkins, 1999: 41). For my case, the subject is the non-normative sexualities that exist within Russia and I will be examining, as stated the relations of regulation and disciplining through these power relations that are produced from the Russian government.

Therefore, Foucault argues that it is better not to talk of power at all, but rather to talk about power relations (Edkins, 2009: 139). In his effort to enable us to conceptualise power relations in a different, more decentred way, he complains that we still think of politics in terms of centralised power and the legitimization of particular forms of authority (Edkins, 2009: 139). However, he proposes that we consider more than notions of centralised validated authority, and instead that authority is constituted through numerous interactions and power relations without an independent, separate existence (Edkins, 2009: 140). The institutions that create the conditions for this conceptualisation and reproduction of this particular form of power are also linked by the operation of what Foucault calls power/knowledge, a global network of productive power relations that depend on the operation and extension of ever-more specialized forms of knowledge (Neal, 2009: 163).

These forms of knowledge are generated through what we consider to be truth-telling entities, such as the Russian government, the media and the education systems. Society obeys not only the central authority, but also rather numerous entities and people through power relations. The forms, techniques, and locations of power have become pluralized; changing across time and place, not according to a grand systematic logic, but only according to the requirements and opportunities that are local and particular (Neal, 2009: 164). This means not simply studying those who act, but those who are acted upon and trying to understand the ways in which their reactions, resistances and their practices of power, in turn, work to constitute wider relationships and networks (Neal, 2009: 168). In essence, relations of power and their intricate movements are what matter; in other words, not the power-ful and the power-less (Edkins, 2009: 143).
The fundamental political problem of modernity is not that of a single source of sovereign power, but that of a multitude of forces that act and react amongst each other according to relations of command and obedience (Lazzarato, 2002: 104). The relations between man and woman, master and student, doctor and patient, employer and employee that Foucault uses to illustrate the dynamics of the social body are relations between forces that always involve a power relation. Thus, it is rather simplistic to think of power as something that can be wielded and possessed. To put into context, Putin is often thought of as a powerful president possessing a lot of power, and he is able to do what he pleases, more-or-less. However, when we start examining relations of power, we see that there are other institutions, societal pressures and actors that are also affecting power relations and decisions made within Russia. Limiting our analysis to just powerful leaders is unhelpful and problematic within International Relations; instead, we must look at power relations more broadly, and problematise the entire picture.

2.4 - Biopower

Foucault analysed the introduction of “life into history” through the development of political economy. He demonstrated how the techniques of power changed at the precise moment that economy (strictly speaking, the government of the family) and politics (strictly speaking, the government of the polis) became imbricated with one another (Lazzarato, 2002: 101). Foucault developed the term biopower for this shift in the techniques of power, Foucault argued that biopower was the way in which capitalist states exerted control over people to better promote life, through statistics and probabilities (Foucault, 2003: 245). States analysed likely responses to actions by the government and ways in which people could most probably be controlled and directed in all aspects of life. Even in a democratic state, this marriage of the social sciences to political sciences affects a high degree of control over a population, as Foucault claims (Foucault, 2003: 245). Power such as that suggested in biopower is used for the good of the state to protect the lives of its people. Turning the attention to the Russian development of homosexuality, up to and after the Renaissance, a ‘homosexual’ still did not mean anything less than the physical act of male sodomy, and bisexuality in social terms was thoroughly acceptable. However, gradually, as the world neared 1700, a radical change took place; the idea crept in that men who enjoyed same-sex experiences were effeminate and criminal, and a homophobic society was born (Spencer, 1995: 10-11).
Biopower is what brings life and mechanisms into the realm of explicit calculation and makes knowledge/power an agent of the transformation of human life (Foucault, 1978: 140). At stake in the management of populations is the regulation of life itself. Hence, biopolitics attends to the biological processes of the collective social body. It is concerned with regulating phenomena such as reproduction and sexuality, the size and quality of the population, health and illness, living and working conditions, and birth and death (Foucault, 2003). It is these processes - the birth rate, the mortality rate, longevity and so on - together with a whole series of related economic and political problems, which in the second half of the eighteenth century became biopolitics’ first objects of knowledge and the targets it seeks to control (Foucault, 2003: 243). The goal of biopower, according to Foucault, is the optimisation of the life of the population as a whole.

Biopower as a term expresses how government has assigned itself the duty of administering bodies and managing collective life; thus it amounts to public politics taking charge of private life. Nonetheless, the governmental needs of the modern state connect the ‘public’ and the ‘private’ in a more organic way than acknowledged by liberal political philosophy (Foucault, 2003). Since controlling populations and the control of birth rates became pivotal to the function of modern states, this creates a condition for ‘sex’ to become an object of the state; we also see the beginnings of a state natal policy, plans to intervene in all phenomena relating to birth and mortality rates, and other issues of ensuring the survival of the state. Shifting the theoretical underpinnings to empirical history, the Russian state first turned its attention to the regulation of homosexuality in 1716, when Peter the Great employed German advisers to draft a military legal code. Sodomy between men became an offence only within the military, yet in 1832 Nicholas I extended the criminalization of male homosexual activity to the population at large (Healey, 1993: 28). The Russian state started to become interested in the labelling of homosexuals and slowly placed restrictions upon this social group in order to maximise life itself.

Foucault argues that over the past few centuries sexuality assumed major symbolic importance as a target of social intervention and organization (Foucault, 1978: 139). This differentiates the state’s relation to the person in this period from those preceding it, and
creates “sex” as a form of social regulation shaping the meaning of personhood, which he argues is the most powerful form of regulation in modern societies. He further argues that sex is not just condemned or tolerated, but managed and regulated by the state for what it claims is the greater good of all. For Foucault, discourses of sexuality are discourses of power and are expressed in the attempts to define, control and regulate bodies through modern societies’ production of science, policy and law (Foucault, 1978). In the Russian example, sexuality slowly transitioned to the State's realm of interest from the Orthodox Church; this is not to say that the Church gave up its interest in sexuality, but rather that the State's concern was demographic and economic growth. The punishment of homosexuality slowly moved from the realm of law to the medical sciences, a turn that was seen in the West as well as in Russia (Healey, 1993: 29). This is biopower at work. Foucault offers a move from a singular and centred power that threatens death to forms of plural and decentred power that promote life. As he argues:

“In the classical theory of sovereignty, the right of life and death was one of the sovereignty's basic attributes... To say that the sovereign has a right of life and death means that he can, basically, either have people put to death or let them live ... One of the greatest transformations political right underwent on the nineteenth century was the old right was complemented by a new right, which does not erase the old right but which does penetrate it, permeate it. This new right was established: the right to make live and to let die”

(Foucault, 2003: 240-241).

The rationale of myth-making and narrative in which Foucault states the fundamental difference between biopolitics and discipline is: where discipline is the technology deployed to make individuals behave, to be efficient and productive workers, biopolitics is deployed to manage population; for example, to ensure a healthy workforce. A second mode for seizure of power was invented and discovered; while this type of power was stochastic, this brand new version of power mutated from previous versions in the past which transformed into “massifying”, not individualising as in previous cases (Foucault, 2003: 242). Biopower contrasts differently with past traditional modes of power based on the threat of death from a sovereign. Unlike discipline, which is addressed to bodies, the new nondisciplinary power is applied not to man-as-body, but to the living man, to man-as-living-being; ultimately, to
man-as-species, understood within the context of the survival of the nation-state. According to Foucault: discipline tries to rule a multiplicity of men to the extent that their multiplicity can and must be dissolved into individual bodies that can be kept under surveillance, trained, used and if need be, punished (Foucault, 2003: 242-245). And that the new technology that is being established is addressed to a multiplicity of men, not to the extent that they are nothing more than their individual bodies, but to the extent that they form a global mass that is affected by overall processes characteristic of birth, death, production, illness and so on.

Biopower did not come about as a way for capitalist states to control population, but instead flourished due to the economic necessities of the time and the need for “docile bodies geared toward productive utility” (Foucault, 1977: 218). Consequently, biopolitics is the strategic coordination of these power relations in order to extract a surplus of power from living beings. Biopolitics is a strategic relation; it is not the pure and simple capacity to legislate or legitimize sovereignty. According to Foucault the biopolitical functions of “coordination and determination” concede that biopower, from the moment it begins to operate in this particular manner, is not the true source of power. Biopower coordinates and targets a power that does not properly belong to it, that comes from the “outside” (Lazzarato, 2002: 105).

A biopolitical genealogy of gender demonstrates how twentieth century demographic science marshalled gender as a new technology of biopower in the project of the reproduction of life (Repo, 2011: 9). Gender is profoundly different from sex. Moreover, gender as a concept, is biopolitical, since it was only in the last century that gender became a sex specific term bound to the modern understanding of the two biological sexes. If we accept Foucault’s argument that the modern understanding of sex is essentially biopolitical, gender, too, is implicated in the biopolitical project (Repo, 2011: 36).

“A set of processes such as the ratio of births to deaths, the rate of reproduction, the fertility of a population and so on. It is these processes-the birth rate, the mortality rate, longevity and so on-together with a whole series of related economic and political problems, which in the second half of the eighteenth century, became biopolitics’ first objects of knowledge and the targets it seeks to control. It is at any rate at this moment that the first demographers begin to measure these phenomena in statistical terms. They
begin to observe the more or less spontaneous, more or less compulsory techniques that the population actually used to control the birth rate; in a word, if you like to identify the phenomena of birth-control practices in the eighteenth century”

(Foucault, 2003: 243).

Starting with the problem of normalization, Foucault gives precedence to the maintenance and regulation of life over its purification and condemnation. Instead of the “irrevocable labelling of one part of the population”, the function of which is upheld by modern racism, the main mode of control operated through the “constant examination of the field of regularity within which each individual is constantly assessed in order to determine whether he conforms to the rule, to the defined norm of health” (Foucault, 2003: 47).

Deviance has at least two functions: to enable the study and establishment of “normality” and to justify normalization of multiple sectors of a population. These two functions are inseparable from one another (Foucault, 1978: 142), the conditions supporting reification of sexual practices in the nineteenth century; of greatest importance was the existence of power/knowledge regimes grounded in the notion of normed organic development (Foucault, 1978: 140). Non-normative sexualities are unthinkable apart from the discourses of development, maldevelopment, and developmental deviance and arrest, and they are invaluable within them as sources of new knowledge about development’s normal processes (Repo, 2011: 36). Further, in addition to serving as sources of knowledge, non-normative sexualities serve as targets for normalization, as the raison d’etre for biopolitical intervention in the lives of individuals (Foucault, 1978: 141).

According to Foucault, this process of controlling/regulating sexual practices through discourse started in the Victorian era, sexuality was confined and moved into the home; the conjugal family took custody of it, and absorbed it into the serious function of reproduction (Foucault, 1978: 2). On the subject of sex, silence became the rule. The legitimate and procreative couple laid down the law: the couple imposed themselves as the model enforced norm, safeguarding the truth and reserving the right to speak while retaining the principle of secrecy (Foucault, 1978: 2). One single form of sexuality was acknowledged in the social space as well as at the heart of every household, but it was a utilitarian and fertile one: the
parents’ bedroom (Foucault, 1978: 3). The creation of a public discourse is important as discourse transmits and produces power: it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it. In this manner, both silence and secrecy give a shelf for power, anchoring its prohibitions: but they also loosen its holds and provide for obscure areas of tolerance (Edkins, 1999: 54). Foucault gives the example of homosexuality. At one time it was not spoken of. When it became spoken, as part of the imposition of social controls, this also provided the possibility for homosexuality to begin to speak on its own behalf:

“There is not on the one side, a discourse of power, and opposite it, another discourse that runs counter to it. Discourses are tactical elements or blocks operating in the field of force relations: there can exist different and even contradictory discourses within the same strategy: they can, on the contrary, circulate without changing their form from one strategy to another opposing strategy”

(Foucault, 1978: 101-103).

Problematising the theory here for a moment, we notice Foucault’s focus upon Western sexuality, specifically that of Victorian sexuality. Therefore, a return to the Russian cultural historical specificity is needed. In a Union-wide decree of 17 December 1933, the offence of male homosexuality was added to the criminal code, with the passing of Article 121, consensual sex between men became punishable with up to 5 years of hard labour (Healey, 1993: 42). Same-sex relations between men were reconstructed as a crime against society, as sexual acts resulting from bourgeois inclinations associated with capitalism, and they were considered treasonous to the emerging proletariat and socialist state (Horne et al, 2009: 89). They were labelled as enemies of the people and much like today, homosexuality was created as the abnorm in society. As in previous time periods, women’s same-sex desire was treated differently to men’s; instead of criminalizing women of same-sex desire and behaviour, Russian medical and legal institutions were invested in to curing them. “Men who desired other men became criminals because they were citizens; women were treated as less than full legal subjects, weaker and therefore more susceptible both to perverse desires and their necessary correctives” (Essig, 1999). That does suggest that these are indeed competing political and medical discourses, and that men are more “political” subjects whereas women more “medical”, no doubt this is tied to a woman’s physical capacity to bear children. As a
result of the campaign to eradicate homosexuality in the 1930s and the application of Article 121, an absolute silence cloaked the issue of same-sex desire throughout the remainder of the Soviet era; the threat of imprisonment was all-powerful to submerge homosexuality through fear and mistrust (Essig 1999, Healey, 1993). The effect was an overall silencing of non-normative sexualities throughout most of the Soviet era, no evidence of them appeared in the public sphere (Horne et al, 2009: 89). This impact coincided with the general silencing of sexuality in Soviet society at that time, much like contemporary Russia. This was a trend that continued throughout the rest of the Soviet Union’s existence. Until the late 1980s, the same could be said of sexual life - in particular homosexual life - in Russia, where the Soviet regime “repressed sex as cultural language and commercial practice” (Baer, 2002: 499). Therefore, despite being Western-centric, biopolitics as a theoretical framework is suitable for the Russian case as its development mirrors the West to some degree.

As previously mentioned, according to Foucault and his theory of biopolitics, a homosexual (or bisexual or lesbian) is a historico-discursive construct arising within biologico-political networks of power (Foucault, 1978: 58). Far from being mere marginal characters ever threatened with annihilation by a homophobic society, homosexuals are central figures in a complex system of biopower that aims to administer sexually saturated, docile populations (Foucault, 2003: 249). This is not to say individual homosexual people are not harassed, beaten, excluded from jobs, killed and erased from cultural history. Society, both formally and informally, discriminates against and attempts to silence, injure and even eliminate individual homosexual people daily (McWhorter, 2004: 56). However, though these anti-homosexual social mechanisms look like a barrier system, they function like a system of incitement: they force homosexuality into closets so it can be tracked down and discovered or confessed; they enable the creation of lines of penetration into individuals’ lives; they incite discourse, and most importantly, they maintain sexuality as an epistemological issue, as a question of truth (McWhorter, 2004: 56). Queer theory has incorporated this concept of ‘deviant sexuality’ into itself, and it shows how Foucault’s work has influenced the development of other key theories, and can be used in a broader context (Repo, 2011). In Russia, the interesting divide with gender was with the treatment of homosexuality; for men it was viewed as a crime, whereas for women it was viewed as a mental illness, and was treated as such, if punished at all (Engelstein, 1995: 157).
In short, sexuality is concerned with the regulation of both the reproductive and productive potential of population. Sexuality was introduced as the index of a society’s strength, revealing of both its political energy and its biological vigour (Foucault, 1978: 146), thereby making it necessary to the forms and uses of individual sexual behaviour and then enabling control of its use. Heterosexuality was recognized as the sexuality that reproduces the fleshy, material objects of biopolitics, the species-body. To grasp and maximize control over this function, heterosexuality was normalized. This is why sexuality is not just a means of inserting the human body into the capitalist machine and ensuring labour capacity. It ensured the maintenance of their numbers, particular behaviours and reproductive capacities (Repo, 2011: 77). While there is no species without race, there is no survival without (hetero) sexuality. Neither one is of any use in the biopolitical control of population without the other (Rabinow & Rose, 2006: 200). Their mutuality in this respect deserves to be emphasized, for following the logic that there can be no biopolitical question of survival without the definition of species-population through race easily leads to the conclusion that the operation of race somehow singularly precedes, determines or overrides that of sexuality (Repo, 2011: 78).

By the end of the nineteenth century, medicine, which of course partakes of a discursive and practical tradition far older than biology, was securely framed within the discursive structure of the normalising life sciences. It was thoroughly normalised medical discipline that enabled the sub-fields of psychiatry and sexology, disciplines in their turn produced the “homosexual” (McWhorter, 2004: 47). There was a gradual change in the conceptualization and treatment of homosexuality, the arena of homosexual oppression moving from the law to medicine. For Russia, the medicalisation of homosexual acts was an international phenomenon, part of the process by which scientists supplanted clerics in Western nations as the interpreters of sexual normality. Russian scientists imported a range of new sexual categories from the West, including eventually the characterisation ‘homosexual’ to describe same-sex erotic behaviour (Healey, 1993: 28). Foucault made clear that sexuality is not just exclusively a question of production and vitality, but because it is also a fundamentally medical discourse, it operates on the basis of normalisation to the extent of rendering monstrous those that it consigns to the abnormal. The abnormal must be medically, physically, or psychologically corrected to be properly made to live, or, especially with the failure of correction, left to die. The state
permits such deaths to occur so that the life may continue to heterosexually reproduce itself (Repo, 2011: 79). Death is the final form of discipline for sexuality that does not behave itself. Not only, then, is the sovereign right of death preserved through modern racism, but also through sexuality. Moreover, this right is not reserved merely to kill others. It still operates as the old sovereign mode of punishment by torture and death in order to protect and discipline the population (Foucault, 2003: 250). The deadly mode of sexuality seeks to discipline bodies to reproduce, to enact the life function of biopolitics, whereas racism is essentially exclusion on the basis of being, homophobia excludes on the basis of misbehaviour, of how the body uses its sexualised organs (Repo, 2011: 80).

Returning to the case of Russia here, after the Soviet Union disbanded and Russia once again became a sovereign nation, President Yeltsin decriminalized male homosexuality in 1993, yet it was not until 1999 that the Russian Ministry of Health removed homosexuality as an official mental disorder (Horne et al, 2009: 90). Until that point, Psychiatrists used the old Soviet Reference Book of Illnesses that defined homosexuality as pathology and provided both appropriate techniques of diagnostics and treatment of this ‘illness’ (Kondakov, 2011: 11). Russian psychiatrists turned to classification of illnesses accepted by the World Health Organization (ICD-10). However, in that same year, the Russian Ministry of Health issued a clinical manual, Models of Diagnostics and Treatment of Mental and Behavioural Illnesses, approved by Order of the Minister of Health of Russian Federation No 311(Kondakov, 2011: 11). Section F65 of the Manual (Disorders of Sexual Preference) starts with the description of sexual norm, which, according to it, consists of heterosexuality; the manual does not provide any advice on treatment of the disorder (Kondakov, 2011: 11). This illustrates the absorption of Western norms of sexuality into Russia society and its formal institutions.

In order to utilize the reproductive capacities of sexual bodies, the heterosexual family was constructed as the main instrument to provide sexuality with the support from their extraction. Controlling the relations between opposite sexes entailed mechanisms like the calculation of birth rates, the medicalisation of sex, sexual behaviour and consumption (Foucault 1978: 100, 109). In essence, sexuality is a discourse of power that provided biopolitics with a complex means with which to calculate, order, rationalize and functionalize the reproduction of life (Repo, 2011: 30). The State is subordinate to biopower as merely a strategic effect of its
tactical manoeuvres; furthermore, biopolitics is the *modus operandi* of the liberal order of things (Repo, 2011: 14).

### 2.5 - Discourse Analysis

In discourse analysis, theory and method are intertwined and researchers must accept the basic philosophical premises in order to use discourse analysis as their method of empirical study (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002: 1). Discourse analysis itself traditionally belongs to the methodological approaches to analysing language, texts and images. Furthermore, there are no concrete guidelines indicating how to analyse the research material but rather the researcher has to piece together their own approach considering what is important for the particular research in question. Foucault is to many an invaluable methodological resource offering a ‘toolbox’ of concepts and techniques such as ‘archaeology’, ‘genealogy’, ‘discourse’ and ‘problematization’ (Neal, 2009: 161). However, with Foucault, discourse analysis also belongs as a theoretical approach due to his conceptualisations of power, and discourses as productive and destructive. Therefore, this section will present a broader overview of discourse analysis, and then go deeper by looking at discourse analysis from a Foucauldian perspective.

As Pin-Fat (2009: 23) explains, thinking about the world is not something that just happens in our heads, but rather we formulate and communicate ideas and thoughts by means of language. Language is public. It consists of shared rules and vocabularies and thus language gives us access to how we think about the world. Traditional theories of International Relations and the social sciences regard language and thinking as separate from the world, and thus we conduct our thinking independently from the world around us. Post-structuralist thought and theory acknowledges the link between the public language and our thoughts, and goes deeper by understanding that how we think, framed in language, impacts upon the world around us and actually changes the world (Pin-Fat, 2009: 24). Wittgenstein (1958: 114-15) implies that conceptualising reality is wholly dependent upon language in order to make sense of and understand the world we live in and if this is so, then language tells us *what* to think about the world or what we might call reality. The world is regulated by language and our thoughts are regulated by language; this is why our thoughts are deeds and practices, ways of being in the world.
Whilst language differs from discourse and the two involve different approaches to language, language pertains to the organisation or structure of any particular language, and is studied by reference to a variety of models, which treat the same linguistic phenomena differently, often focusing upon specific elements or processes. Discourse, on the other hand, involves the subjective and to the status and institutional setting of that statement (Williams, 1999: 5). Language, then, is not merely a channel through which information about underlying mental states and behaviour or facts about the world are communicated. On the contrary, language is a ‘machine’ that generates, and as a result constitutes, the social world. This also extends to the constitution of social identities and social relations. It means that changes in discourse are a means by which the social world is changed. Struggles at the discursive level take part in changing, as well as in reproducing, the social reality (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002: 1).

Language gives us access to the world around us and discourses are framed in language; both methods are applicable for this thesis. The interviews use language as snapshots of peoples' lived experiences and how they conceive their reality around them as altered by the power relations from the state through a biopolitical framework. In essence, these discourses in our heads, and the spoken discourses become the remit of post-structuralist theory and International Relations. They have the power to change the world, and this thesis will examine the power relations. Furthermore, public discourse by state entities and leaders enable the transformation of societies by discourse. For this thesis, this post-structuralist understanding and conceptualisation of language is treated as public, as it shapes our realities as well as serves as a tool to make sense of the world around us. This is why we need not delve too much into semiotics and classical discourse analysis theory. Here, snapshots of a person's lived experience and the public discourse are what matter.

A central element of Foucault’s work is the concept of discourse as the point of entry to a concern with language and the linguistic (Williams, 1999: 5). Post-structuralism has decentred the human being as a rational subject, and instead allows for the possibility that we are objects of social and political control. The difference here, between the orthodox and the post-structuralist approach, means that we must pay attention to the manner in which the infinite possibilities of language are transposed into meaning as the effect of discourse
without the orthodox emphasis upon the centred subject. That is, it involves focusing upon a social construction of meaning which does not rely upon the centred subject as the explanandum of that construction (Williams, 1999: 5). Foucault can be credited, at least in part, with bringing the idea of ‘discourse’ into the social sciences. This has been one of the most productive legacies of the ‘critical turn’ in International Relations, and now discourse analysis is a common methodological approach. It has become a means of gathering the things said and written on a particular group of people (often political elites) in order to try to interpret what is being done politically through statements (Williams, 1999: 5). Perhaps of more concern is when such studies focus exclusively on the statements of ‘sovereign’ leaders of political elites, going against the decentring aim that Foucault outlined, and perhaps also against the ‘dissident’ ethic that is arguably central to the critical project in International Relations (Neal, 2009: 166). It is also a shame that ‘discourse’ has become more or less exclusively associated with speech and text, as this rather narrows the diversity that Foucault hoped the concept would convey. These alternative centres of discourse could be images, films, or videos. Discourse is not just limited to written text. Foucault argues that discourses are ‘irreducible to language and speech’ and his focus on the micro-practices of power/knowledge in the institutions of modern societies bore this out (Neal, 2009: 166).

For Foucault, the notion of language as a neutral medium of communication is disputed, as is any possibility of objective “truth” or knowledge. With respect to knowledge, Foucault’s coupling of power and knowledge has the consequence that power is closely connected to discourse. Discourses contribute centrally to producing the subjects we are, and the objects we can know something about, including ourselves as subjects (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002: 1). Foucault made the close relationship between power and knowledge clear in his discussion of “power/knowledge”. Truth is produced through discourse: “truth is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extend it” (Edkins, 1999: 15). In this regime of truth, truth and meaning are produced discursively and are intimately bound up with the political, as the term “regime” suggests: “each society has its regime of truth, its general politics of truth” (Rabinow & Rose, 2006: 197). For Foucault, the subject and the social are constituted through processes of exclusion, separating the mad from the sane, or the criminal from the others (Edkins, 1999: 15). Foucault claims that it is not possible to gain access to universal truth since it is
impossible to talk from a position outside discourse; there is no escape from representation. ‘Truth effects’ are created within discourses. In Foucault’s archaeological phase, ‘truth’ is understood as a system of procedures for the production, regulation and diffusion of statements. In his genealogical phase, he makes a link between truth and power, arguing that ‘truth’ is embedded in, and produced by, systems of power (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002: 3). Because truth is unattainable, it is fruitless to ask whether something is true or false. Instead, the focus should be on how effects of truth are created in discourses. What is to be analysed are the discursive processes through which discourses are constructed in ways that give the impression that they represent true or false pictures of reality (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002: 3). In Russia, it is these processes of exclusion that have created the homosexual as the abnorm in society, and it is these processes, and the effect of these processes that I will later analyse.

The human sciences (linguistics, economics, and biology) suggest that that “man” as their object did not arise, or was not instituted, to study a pre-existing entity (Edkins, 1999: 45). Rather, “man” as the subject of science was constituted in the process, through the birth of the human sciences. Thus “man” is not a timeless eternal being but is produced as a subject of knowledge, an object of science, through discursive practices. Of course, as historically constituted, “man” as a speaking, labouring, living subject can be obliterated, “like a face drawn in the sand at the edge of the sea” (Edkins, 1999: 45). Discourse is constituted by the difference between what one could say correctly at one period (under common rules of grammar and logic) and what is actually said. Discourse is not a neutral, optional extra to the already existing “thing” or “thought”. In discourse something is formed, according to clearly definable rules, this something exists, changes, disappears, according to equally definable rules; in short alongside everything a society can produce (alongside; that is to say in a determinate relationship with) there is the formation and transformation of things, said (Edkins, 1999: 45-46). It is these discourses that have created and shaped power relations within Russia, and indeed other countries; discourses are more than just words, they are deeds and actions.

These concepts can make us uncomfortable: to realise that we are nothing more than a historical-socio-construction and that our identity is defined by others rather than ourselves. After all, as Wibben (2009: 71) explains, we are homo fabulans - storytellers. These
narratives, discourses, are the primary way by which human experience is made meaningful (Polkinghorne, 1988: 1). It is through this that we make sense of the world, produce meaning, articulate intentions and legitimize actions. Furthermore, the markers of identity are emphasized through narratives and discourses; and as the Foucauldian turn in the social sciences tells us, all of this is made possible through discourse, and these discourses shape our life experience and make us the objects of control. The post-structuralist school of thought recognizes the power of discourse to shape reality (both perceptions of reality and the concrete reality that is perceived). Discourse can produce sight of fictive objects, such as race or sexuality, or deny sight of real social relationships/objects, such as gender. In other words, at any given moment of theoretical understanding, we experience only limited aspects of the world and some of what we experience is based on falsehoods or perceptions embedded in some of the discourses we have learned (Wibben, 2009: 70).
3. Methodological Orientations

3.1 – Interview Methodology

Interviewing is a basic mode of inquiry for the Social Sciences; it enables people to express their lived experience through language, narratives and discourses (Seidman, 1991: 1). It has been the predominant way of recording human history over the past few centuries when dealing with personal issues of sexuality and oppression, in a society where it is not easy (or now legal) to discuss these issues in public or in the media (Seidman, 1991: 2). What lays at the heart of interviewing research is an interest in other individuals’ stories because they are of worth; however, it is never possible to understand another perfectly, because to do so would mean that the interviewer had entered into the other’s stream of consciousness and experienced what he or she had. If they could do that, they would be that other person (Schutz, 1967, quoted in Seidman, 1991: 3).

As the research conducted on contemporary Russian LGBT persons is at best patchy, and mainly limited to the field of journalist inquiry with the Western media, interviewing seemed like the most appropriate methodology to gather first-hand information about the effects of the recent laws and their lived experiences. Furthermore, it has the possibility to create a more detailed stream of information and from a broader spectrum of society (not just the people who are willing and able to talk to the media). As Seidman (1991: 5-6) explains, interviewing research takes a great deal of time and sometimes money. The researcher has to conceptualise the project, establish access and then make contact with the participants, interview them, transcribe the data and then work with the material and share what he or she has learned. Interviewing is especially labour intensive. Interviewing requires that researchers establish access to, and make contact with, potential participants whom they have never met. Furthermore, interviews ask participants to reconstruct their life history as it relates to the subject of inquiry. In the process a measure of intimacy can develop between interviewers and participants that lead the participants to share aspects of their lives which, if misused, could leave them extremely vulnerable (Seidman, 1991: 46).

It is with this in mind that the plausibility of doing in-depth interviews in Russia with LGBT persons started to be called into question. In the current atmosphere with laws being passed in
various cities against the promotion of homosexual propaganda a chain reaction of concerned questions began in the wake of its ambiguous wording. How was I going to find participants? How could I get them to open up in a climate of fear? Where could I interview them safely? What would happen if my data was stolen? The contextual exploration was likely to raise sensitive issues and the potential vulnerability of the participant and the researcher could not be calculated ahead of time. As Fowler (1984: 135) discusses the ethical considerations of researching and interviews (like all research that involves human subjects) the survey researcher needs to be attentive to the ethical manner in which the research is carried out. A basic guideline is that the researcher should make sure that no individual suffers any adverse consequences as a result of the survey. Moreover, to the extent that it is feasible, a good researcher also will be attentive to maximising positive outcomes of the research process (Fowler, 1984: 135). These questions and concerns led my research down a different path.

3.2 - Social Media

With Internet penetration rapidly growing and with increasing numbers of Russians using social networks such as Facebook.com and VKontakte.com, there seemed to be an opportunity with this new medium of communication. Particularly, as on the Russian internet domain people are free to express their opinions, and do so about a wide range of issues, without interference or regulation from the state; the Russian internet is substantially liberal in comparison to Western European States. During the late 1990s and early 2000s, most Russian internet users expressed their opinions freely on Livejournal, the internet blogging site. Whilst many still continue to do so, there has been a slow move over to VKontakte, a social networking service that has been described as a Facebook clone (Forbes, 27.2.2012). As of December 2012, VKontakte had at least 195 million accounts¹ and is the second most visited Internet site in Russia. Users of VKontakte can exchange public and private messages, listen to music, see updates from their friends, browse pictures and join communities of like-minded people. Furthermore, users set their own privacy settings and control what other people on the social network can see from their posts.

Investigating further into the online communities / groups that are on VKontakte, immediately five groups that focused on LGBTs in Russia and issues relating to LGBT persons appeared at the top of the search list. They are LGBT in Europe (2033 members - Closed community), Provokator (206 Members - Closed community), LGBT.World (3393 Members - Open Community), Yabloko Political Party LGBT Faction (813 Members - Open Community), and the LGBT Organisation “Exit” official group (8360 Members - Open Community). Whilst these numbers are unimpressive by Western standards, for example a search on Facebook reveals far more internet groups than Russia, there are too many to compare. For Russia, these communities represent a huge potential pool of people that are willing to join a group relating to LGBT issues and who could be willing to participate in research. What is even more useful is that the members of these groups are not geographically limited to the major urban centres of Russia, such as Saint Petersburg and Moscow, but spread across the entire country.

In order to test the willingness of these community members to take part in an interview, I posted (wrote) a public post in all five groups calling for volunteers to take part in an interview regarding issues facing LGBT persons in the Russian Federation (the posts were written in English and Russian). Furthermore, a public post was made on my profile on my VKontakte profile calling for interviewees; this was ‘shared’ by my ‘friends’ and then reshared by their ‘friends’. By the end of one week, I had received over 40 messages in my inbox from willing volunteers who wanted to speak regarding their lived experience as LGBT in Russia. This is otherwise known as the snowball method (Seidman, 1991: 6). After sifting through their contact information, it became clear that conducting personal interviews was not practical due to the geographical distribution of these people, not to mention the cost of funding such research. I therefore decided to take a different approach.

3.3 - Questionnaire design

I thought that the most efficient and practical way to conduct interviews was via social media. Social Media is an innovative tool that is just starting to be utilised by researchers, especially when it comes to interviewing people about sensitive issues (Lee & Lee, 2012: 114). Through this manner, there was minimal risk to the interviewee and interviewer, the interviews were conducted through the secure messaging feature and the interviewee could maintain their anonymity whilst being able to voice their opinions and experiences. The interviews were
conducted in a questionnaire style format, as a series of open-ended questions that the participant could freely answer. Furthermore, one of the benefits of a written questionnaire is that the interviewee can take time to fully think about their responses and check to see whether what they have written is accurate and true. It also reduces the risk that they have been misquoted, or information is lost in transcription, like spoken interviews. They are able to moderate or speak as freely as they feel comfortable with. Moreover, without the physical presence of the interviewer, they should be able to answer without worry of causing offence or feeling inferior or superior to the researcher (Fowler, 1984: 83). Deconstructing relations of power and positions of privilege between interviewer and interviewee is seldom necessary in the case of an online survey.

However, one of the problems of designing a set of questions for the questionnaire was deciding what kind and style of questions to ask. Unlike a spoken interview, there are not as many chances to allow a free-flow of information between the subject and the interviewer and rather than being able to follow up on questions immediately, the interviewer must read the completed set of questions and draft an email to ask additional information (Fowler, 1984: 103). This approach runs the risk of becoming tedious for the interviewee and causing a loss of interest; taking 30 minutes to answer a set of questions could soon become a back-and-forth exchange via instant messaging, leading, in social media terminology, to a quick ‘delete and block’ by the interviewee. Therefore, as Seidman (1991: 100) advises before writing a draft of a structured set of questions, it is often valuable to conduct focused discussions in which the questions are not structured fully. Efforts to talk with members of the study before designing a survey instrument can be fruitfully much more elaborate than the approach just described. Less formal efforts also can be valuable. Therefore, I conducted a handful of informal conversations over the messaging service on VKontakte with members of the LGBT community in Russia, in order to gauge what their everyday lived experience was like and what problems they faced in Russia as a result of the law, and more generally, what they thought about Russian society and homosexuality.

From these informal conversations, a vague, preliminary set of questions started to emerge and take form. After all, every questionnaire should be pretested, no matter how skilled the researcher. Virtually every questionnaire should be changed in some way to make it easier for
respondents and interviewers to meet the researcher's objectives. Obviously the closer the final instrument is to perfection, the better the research process (Fowler, 1984: 103). As with many things, formal pretesting is an invaluable part of the questionnaire design process. The first draft of the questionnaire was found to be unsuitable. It was tested with 5 people and the answers were short, confused and not useful. However, this was to be expected as the majority of the early versions of most questionnaires contain questions that are confusing, that cannot be read, and that are virtually unanswerable by anyone (Lee & Lee, 2012: 40).

Thus, a return to the so-called drawing board was needed, and the first steps were re-traced, understanding what the survey was supposed to accomplish and what should be measured to accomplish the goals of the project. In other words, these are not to be questions, but rather variables to be measured and then listed in categories that make sense. The result of this was the identification of ten distinct areas of inquiry, as follows: About you (about their sexuality and ‘coming out’), Relationships (meeting, and being with sexual partners and romantic relationships), Personal Safety (personal experience), Homosexual propaganda law (thoughts, opinions), Government (thoughts and opinions), Equal Rights (the possibility for achieving in Russia), Gay Pride marches (thoughts, opinions), Acceptance (being gay and accepted), Public opinion (views and thoughts), and finally any other comments. These ten areas are broad and diverse, and although they run the risk of a low answer rate, the information that would be possible to be gleamed from a fully completed questionnaire would tell a lot about a person's life experience and the attitudes of society towards homosexuals, as perceived by homosexuals.

After reading over the results from the prototype questions, and refocusing the areas of interest, a final set of questions was drawn up, numbering 50 in total. One thing that I was mindful of is the danger that the questions can be poor measures because they are unreliable (producing erratic results) or because they are biased, producing estimates that consistently err in one direction from the true form (Seidman, 1991: 20). Therefore, they were redrafted numerous times to ensure impartiality, and to try to encourage the participant to answer in as much detail as possible, without leading them to a predetermined answer. The questions were drawn up as open questions, without a list of responses, to enable a flow of narrative from the interviewee. As Fowler (1984: 87) explains, there are advantages to open questions. They
permit the researcher to obtain answers that were unanticipated. They also may describe more closely the real views of the respondent. Third, respondents like the opportunity to answer some questions in their own words. To answer only by choosing a provided response and never to have an opportunity to say what is on one’s mind can be a frustrating experience. Finally, open questions are appropriate when the list of possible answers is longer than it is feasible to present to respondents (Fowler, 1984: 87). Yet, when a completely open question is asked, many people give relatively rare answers that are not analytically useful. Therefore, a calculated risk was taken by asking open questions.

3.4 - Data Collection
The dangers of being out as LGBT in Russia can make it difficult for researchers without prior knowledge of LGBT communities to identify potential study participants. As previously mentioned, the interviewees were found on the VKontakte social network through the snowball method, and by being proactive in ‘posting’ in various LGBT communities on the website. The interview questions were posted in the communities and sent to the people that had shown an interest in wanting to be interviewed. This was done during June 2012 and the respondents were given until the end of August 2012 to reply. During these three months, I reposted the questions in the site on several occasions to encourage new interest in answering them. The questions were available in Russian and English and the participants were free to answer in English, Russian, or Finnish. Despite being a long questionnaire of 50 questions, I received 33 completed questionnaires by the deadline of the First of September 2012. From these responses, I was satisfied that I received a good and balanced sample size. However, due to the small number of responses from the transsexual categorisation, they have been removed from the focus of the study. See Appendix One for a full list of respondents: Pseudonym, Age, Gender, Orientation, Location, Education level and Occupation. However, for ease of reading, a short breakdown is included here:

Table One: Breakdown of Sexual orientation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gay</th>
<th>Lesbian</th>
<th>Bisexual</th>
<th>Transexual</th>
<th>Heterosexual</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Upon receiving a completed questionnaire the data was entered into a spreadsheet along with their biographical information, and they were assigned a pseudonym to protect their identity. There is one copy of this spreadsheet that is stored upon an encrypted USB-Flash drive; this ensures the security of the information. Once the data was entered and saved in the spreadsheet, the personal information was removed from the interview documents and the pseudonym added. As for the information transmitted through VKontakte, the questions were delivered in a RTF document format and deleted upon successfully downloading the information from the site, I also offered the option, should the interviewees wish, to email the file or encode it in another format. Therefore, I felt I had taken all the necessary steps possible to ensure the safety of the person's information and decrease the likelihood of a participant being identified. This is important as identification could make him or her vulnerable (Seidman, 1991: 52). Moreover, the participants were made aware that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time during the interviews or within a specified time after they were completed; in this case it was until the 1 January 2013 (Seidman, 1991: 53).

The interviewees were made aware of the purpose of the interview; that it would be used for a study regarding LGB persons in Russia for this Thesis and possibly additional work based upon the data. Furthermore, that by returning the completed questionnaire to me, they gave their consent for the data to be used and that I would take all necessary steps to ensure their confidentiality. Additionally, they were told that they would receive no financial benefit for completing the questionnaire. One thing that is important to note is that these interviews were done online; therefore there is no way of validating the veracity of the content of the interview, or the lived experiences that are described. However, this is also a problem with face-to-face interviews but online there is a greater potential to be more liberal with the truth. After the completed interviews were returned to me, I sent a follow up message to the participants asking if they felt their interview data fully represented the experience of being an LGB in Russia and if not they were given the opportunity to add more data. No one did. Furthermore, I asked if their answers were influenced by the fact that I was an outsider to their culture and a foreigner. They admitted that they felt that they could be more open and honest, (and critical to some degree) about their lived experiences in Russia. Furthermore, one could speculate that this is an avenue for them to be politically active in in response to the repressive conditions in Russia for non-normative sexualities. Considering the authenticity of
the responses I received, I am satisfied that they are accurate.

**3.5 - Translation concerns**

When dealing with data in a language that is not your mother tongue, it is important to consider how processing data in different phases of research differs from analysing data in the researcher’s mother language and what possible challenges that may cause and how to avoid them. As I draw on critical theory approaches, it is wise to reflect upon my position in relation to the language and culture the interviews represent. Furthermore, sufficient language skills are an unquestionable requirement for analysing data in a foreign language about another culture (Stella, 2010: 11). However, as language skills cannot be separated from acquaintance with the culture, I also need to be familiar with the local culture, habits and rules of face-to-face communication, particularly in the specific ‘sub-culture’ of LGBT in Russia. Whilst I am not a Russian citizen, I do have some familiarity with the culture and LGBT subculture that exists within Russia. This is not necessarily a disadvantage, nor does it make my work substandard; in reality as an outsider, I can critically assess the interviews from a distance and make dispassionate observations and analysis.

That being said, the issue with conducting interviews in a spoken format differs substantially from that of a written medium. With regard to the responses, I translated them as best I could, removed the personal information, and with the help of a Russian native speaker, translated the sentences I could not complete and checked my translations for accuracy. There were however, some issues with the responses to specific questions that did not arise during the pretesting (perhaps because the pretesting was conducted in English rather than Russian). The question regarding ‘LGBT as a positive or negative identity’ caused some confusion, it stirred some passionate responses regarding LGBT as a fixed identity and something that could not be changed, rather than perceived as a positive or negative identity. Interestingly, they all used Western categorisations of sexuality. Secondly, in response to the question is 'gay marriage a legal, political or religious issue?' the answer was a simple yes. Thirdly, for the difference between gay marriage and civil unions, the responses seemed not be coherent. Clearly, these were translation issues as they did not understand the questions, and will be noted for future studies.
Thinking about interview methodology is relatively straightforward within the understanding of this thesis. The data was fairly straightforwardly collected and due to the online, written nature of the interviews, the usual concerns about transcription speed, recording speech and painstakingly translating the data by re-listening to the interviews was avoided. The route through the discourse analysis methodology required a more detailed explanation of some concepts due to the critical turn in International Relations and the thin line between methodology and theory in the post-structuralist school of thought. After all, when studying discourses, one must be aware of the true nature of language, that it does have the potential to control and limit us, rather than enable us subjectively to make sense of the world around us, subjectively.
4. Laws as a Biopolitical Mechanism

4.1 - Saint Petersburg

The Legislative Assembly of St. Petersburg adopted the law prohibiting the propaganda of non-traditional relationships on February 29, 2012. It introduced into the Law of St. Petersburg on March 12, 2012, No. 273-70 "On administrative offences in St. Petersburg" the following changes:

*Article 7.1: Public actions aimed at propaganda of sodomy, lesbianism, bisexuality, transgenderism amongst minors incur an administrative fine for citizens in the amount of five thousand rubles; for officials -- fifty thousand rubles; for legal entities -- from two thousand fifty to five hundred thousand rubles.*

*Note. As public actions at propaganda of sodomy, lesbianism, bisexuality, transgenderism amongst minors in this article should be understood activities on purposeful and uncontrolled dissemination of information in a publicly accessible way that can be harmful to the health, moral and spiritual development of minors, including forming in their mind a distorted perception of social equality of traditional and nontraditional marital relationships.*

Examining the article above eludes two biopolitical mechanisms, visibility and normalisation: the first being that non-traditional relationships should be relegated to the private sphere, obfuscated and removed from public view; visibility, what is highlighted and what is left in the shadows. The second is to ensure the correct transmission of values to minors, thus being dynamics of normalisation. The reasons given for the law by the government are that homosexuality has negative effects on divorce rates, birth rates, strength of the army and family values (Beloborodov, 2011).

The perception of homosexuality in Russia appears to be that it is both a perversion of nature and a fashionable import from the West: "Something into which a man can slip if he has had a bit too much vodka, and as a posture one adopts to be cool" (Ioffe, 8.2.2013). Thus the reasoning for adopting a homosexual propaganda ban; homosexuality is seen as an aggressive
campaign that, traditionalists fear, will persuade impressionable young minds that being gay is not abnormal or abhorrent, but instead something to be emulated. When examining the draft federal law, and the explanatory note that was attached, this becomes clear.

Propaganda of homosexualism in Russia took a wide sweep. This propaganda is delivered both through the media and through active social actions that promote homosexualism as a behavioral norm. It is especially dangerous for children and youth who are not yet capable of a critical attitude to the avalanche of information that falls upon them every day. In this regard, it is necessary to primarily protect the younger generation from the effects of homosexual propaganda, and the present bill pursues this goal (Appendix Two)

The justification of the protection of children is something that is tied into the fabric of biopolitical government. This emphasis upon sexuality is rather extreme, but because it also has procreative effects, sexuality is also inscribed, takes effect, in broad biological processes that concern not the bodies of individuals but the element, the multiple unity of the population (Foucault, 2003: 251). Therefore, the societal body is at threat and a biopolitical discourse of protecting and ensuring the wellbeing of the children must be deployed, in order to encourage population growth and thus no non-traditional relationships are permitted. This is further expanded upon by the explanatory text to the draft Duma law, nationally prohibiting non-traditional sexual relations:

By itself, the prohibition of such propaganda as an activity of purposeful and uncontrolled dissemination of the information that could harm the health and moral and spiritual development, as well as form misperceptions about the social equivalence of conventional and unconventional sexual relationships, among individuals who, due to their age, are not capable to independently and critically assess such information cannot be regarded as violating the constitutional rights of citizens. (Appendix Two)

Dolgov, the Russian Foreign Ministry’s Commissioner for Human Rights, stated that the authority for the laws lies with the regional administration and is aimed at protecting children from that kind of propaganda. He explains that culture and moral values traditional for
Russian society, as well as the unacceptability of the discrimination of rights of one social
group by the encouragement of others were taken into consideration (Russia Today,
29.11.2011). When the Duma passed the first reading of the national bill by 388 votes to one
with one abstention, and applause rippled through the chamber: “We live in Russia, not
Sodom and Gomorrah,” Edinaya Rossia deputy Dmitry Sablin said before the vote “Russia is
a thousand-years-old country founded on its own traditional values – the protection of which
is dearer to me than even oil and gas” (Ilyas, 25.1.2013). Sablin’s political discourse is one
that relies on imagery with a strong emotional resonance, the comparison to Sodom and
Gomorrah brings up an image that Russia is under attack and must be defended; the task of
the biopolitical regulation is thus to safeguard the children. It is clear that there is an extreme
focus on traditional values, the defence of Russia, the protection of children and in turn,
procreation.

“Russia exists in a state of hysteria over demographics and the safety of children”

Anton (23, Straight Male)

Children give access to the biopolitical discourse of reproduction; this discourse is
instrumental for the defence of the national population and its reproduction. This comment
shows that the governmental discourse has permeated the society and that the majority of the
population accepted the discourse, needing to protect children and halt the demographic
decline. Foucault explains that biopower gave rise to comprehensive measures, statistical
assessments, demographics and interventions aimed at the entire social body, or groups taken
as a whole (Foucault, 1978: 146). Thus, the law can be interpreted as a biopolitical
intervention, and it is with this in mind that we turn to the biopolitical mechanism that
preceded the law, demographics and the demographic crisis.

4.2 - The Demographic Crisis

Before examining biopolitical discourses that surround the law prohibiting non-traditional
sexual relations it is first necessary to examine one of the mechanisms of biopolitics that
would lead to the deployment of the law. Demographics are more than just a motivation for
the regional laws; they are a biopolitical mechanism. Therefore, before examining the law
prohibiting the propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations, the biopolitical motivations
must be explored, followed by the examination of the law and finally the discourses that explain the law as a biopolitical regulation.

*Biopolitics will introduce mechanisms with a certain number of features that are very different from the functions of disciplinary mechanisms. The mechanisms introduced by biopolitics include forecasts, statistical estimates, and overall measures. And their purpose is not to modify any given phenomenon as such, or to modify a given individual insofar as he is an individual, but, essentially, to intervene at the level at which these general phenomena are determined, to intervene at the level of their generality. The mortality rate has to be modified or lowered; life expectancy has to be increased; the birth rate has to be stimulated. And most important of all, regulatory mechanisms must be established to establish equilibrium, maintain an average, establish a sort of homeostasis, and compensate for variations within this general population and its aleatory field* (Foucault, 2003: 246)

Demographics, the science of mapping the population, relates to changes in the size and composition of the population. Russia has been plagued with declining birth rates, rising infant mortality and declining life expectancy. Throughout the post-Soviet period, life expectancy in Russia has been remarkably low, particularly for Russian men. By 2002, life expectancy was 72 for women and 59 for men (Bacon & Wyman, 2006: 57). This represents the lowest life expectancy for males in any developed country, and the biggest gap between male and female life expectancy in the world (Bacon & Wyman, 2006: 57). In just eighteen years, from 1992-2010, the Russian population declined by more than 4.5 per cent, and removing compensating migration, the net decrease of the Russian population was 8.8 per cent in the same period (Beloborodov, 2011). To be concise, this reflects the general societal changes in the transition to a market economy, limitations of health care and social support, and rising levels of alcohol and drug abuse. To coin Foucault, through biopower, the State has entered the bedroom, and concerns itself with birth-rates and matters that typically, in a classical sense of sovereignty, are not its remit (Foucault, 1978: 3). One of the technologies of this power is demographic science, and through government incentives, laws and most importantly, for the scope of this work, discourses, it has been able to affect the lives of so many people in attempt to ensure the survival of the Russian nation.
Although biopower has been understood traditionally as a feature of modern liberal governments, it must be said that by the mid-1970s, the theorists’ very particular view of the family and gender relations, whilst far from being the only opinion on these matters within the Soviet social sciences, found favour with a government which was becoming increasingly concerned about the falling birth rate (Kay, 2006: 12). Whilst the birth rate remained high in Soviet Central Asian republics, it had dropped significantly in European areas. In Central Russia itself, the ageing population and the increasing frequency of the one-child family were giving rise to much talk of a ‘demographic crisis’. In this climate, the writings of the educational theorists were harnessed into a massive propaganda campaign aimed, in what became a dramatic shift in Soviet ideology, at encouraging women, in Russia above all, to see themselves first and foremost as mothers (Kay, 2006: 12).

Bringing the focus back to the present and to biopolitics, President Putin’s number one priority in his Address to the State Duma in 2012 was solving the demographic crisis. Yet, for a more telling example, in May 2006 during the State of the Nation Address to the Federal Assembly, Putin declared demographics as the main issue:

"And now for the most important matter. What is most important for our country? The Defence Ministry knows... What I want to talk about is love, women and children. I want to talk about the family, about the most acute problem facing our country today - the demographic problem" (Putin, 2006)

One of the things we notice first from this quote is that demographics are linked to the Defence Ministry, something that would not normally be the realm of security, but is classified as such. Furthermore, the link between demographics and love, women and children is rather strange at first. Firstly, it is a biopolitical discourse that is heteronormative in nature. Secondly, by naming women and children, he has excluded many other social identities, and is directing his speech at men, directly at heterosexual men. For they must love their women and produce offspring for the nation; it is their duty as citizens. Putin went on to cite a figure that Russia is losing 700,000 people per year (Putin, 2006). However, Foucault reminds us about the need to 'cut off the head of the king' in political analysis (Foucault, 1978: 121). That
is, we cannot and should not deduce technologies of power from the presumed intentions of political leaders, because of the centred nature of power and the importance of the wider bureaucratic state organs. However, whilst Foucault may succeed in cutting off the head of the modern juridical state sovereignty; he does not succeed in cutting off the head of the sovereign altogether (Neal, 2004: 380). Indeed, the ‘cutting off’ could only be the first step, after this it is necessary to address the following question: “How is it possible that this headless body often behaves as if it indeed had a head?” (Dean, 1994: 156). Sufficed to say, Putin’s remarks are an example of the sovereign announcing his task is to ensure the sexual and biological reproduction of Russian heterosexual life. A small paradox if you will.

**Figure One (Beloborodov, 2011): Birth and Mortality rates shown**

![Excess of deaths over births in Russia (1992–2010)](image)

We can see from the above chart that the mortality rate in Russia is 1.5 times greater than the birth rate. In numbers, 27,564.1 thousand live births were recorded in Russia in 1992–2010, while the number of deaths over the same time period was 40,674.5 thousand (Beloborodov, 2011). Russia’s birth rate, however, is well below that in most developed countries. This is due to a variety of reasons, mostly relating to issues of economic hardship, poor medical care and lack of confidence in the future, resulting in the number of children being born in Russia to be inadequate to prevent population decline (Bacon & Wyman, 2006: 58). This matters for a number of reasons; most obviously, because it means that an ever-smaller proportion of the population has to provide for a large pension sector. Aside from issues of pension provision,
the combination of population decline and the changing age-structure means fewer people contribute to economic growth. This is seen as particularly important in Russia, which is still apparently wedded to military conscription and a trained reserve, as there are fewer people to staff the armed forces (Bacon & Wyman, 2006: 58).

Understood from a biopolitical perspective, the Russian State has a clear interest in increasing the birth rate and curing the demographic crisis that is affecting Russia today (and over the past few decades). As Putin’s speech in 2006 explains, the greatest threat facing the Russian nation today is a lack of children, and a low birth rate. This aspect of biopolitics is not concerned with fertility alone as intervening in all phenomena relating to the birth rate can be understood as biopolitical measures, from the mapping of demographics to the implementation of biopolitical regulation (Foucault, 2003: 243).

4.3 - Until Death Do Us Part: Biopower and Demographics

After he was elected, President Putin turned his attention to Russia’s demographic implosion and prescribed the re-regulation of sexuality by putting the rapidly shrinking Russian population on the national agenda. He has marshalled support in the Duma, to promote family values and to boost marriage and the birth rate, and to stigmatize divorce, all traditionally understood as biopolitical technologies. Russia has accepted the decriminalization of homosexuality; even conservatives now reluctantly agree that homosexuals and lesbians are an undeniable if unpalatable fact of national life (Healey, 2010: 210). However, the question that should be asked is "are there any grounds for creating a link between homosexuality and the demographic crisis?" This appears to be an obvious question. A gay male couple cannot bear children physically, but this does not stop them from being physically able to either adopt children or gain children through alternative methods such as surrogacy. Furthermore, a heterosexual couple may choose not to have children, or there might be single people who simply do not want to have a family, or raise children, or are incapable of finding the right partner. In order to understand the regularisation of homosexuals as a policy response to the demographic crisis, a quick return to Foucault is needed.

Sexuality became one of biopower's first objects of knowledge and the targets it seeks to control. We tend to locate our sexuality, as one of the most ontological truths, and something
that belongs to ourselves, in the private sphere (Foucault, 1978: 35). Yet, biopower brings these truths into the public realm and makes them an explicit target of social intervention and organization. For Foucault, discourses of sexuality are discourses of power and are expressed in the attempts to define, control and regulate bodies through societies' production of science, policy and law (Foucault, 1978: 36). Therefore, we turn to one of the most telling attempts by Putin (who was Prime Minister at the time) in 2010, to publicly link homosexual issues to the demographic crisis in an interview with an American television show host:

**Larry King:** Something, Mr Prime Minister, I don't think you've ever been asked. We have quite a dispute about it in America. What is the Russian policy towards gays and lesbians in your military?

**Vladimir Putin:** I've tried to answer similar questions before. There is a rather acute demographic problem in Russia, as in the rest of Europe. We are making serious efforts to improve the situation, and we are having success. I think we have the best indicators in Europe in terms of the rate of improvement. For the first time in the last 10 to 15 years, we are seeing a sustainable trend of rising births, and the country's population has even increased somewhat this year.

As for same-sex marriages, they do not produce offspring, as you know. So we are fairly tolerant toward sexual minorities, however we think that the state should promote reproduction, support mothers and children, and look after their health.

**Larry King:** Are gays permitted to actively serve in your military and be able to say that they are gay?

**Vladimir Putin:** There is no ban on it. Sodomy was a criminal offence in the Soviet Union. It's not a crime under current law. There are no prohibitions. (Ria Novosti 2/12/2010)

At first glance, we start to think that there is certainly no ground with connecting demographics with the issue of regularisation of non-normative sexualities. For example, one thing that could solve the issue of LGBT suicides would be having rights to freedom of assembly and expression, but more importantly be permitted to live an ‘ordinary life’ (the normalized one in same-sex marriages, for example). On the contrary, by being able to enjoy life, they would have the desire to create families with children and work for the sake of the
state, to put it simply. However, Putin’s rhetoric operates in a biopolitical realm, where a poor demographic situation is indeed connected with homosexuality (Kondakov, 2010: 5). In a domestic press conference he replied to the following question:

Marina Lapenkova: Let’s begin with the one that is a little more cheerful. Do you agree with Iuri Mikahilovich Luzhkov’s opinion that the gay parade is the work of Satanists?

Vladimir Putin: My relation to gay parades and sexual minorities in general is simple – it is connected with my official duties and the fact that one of the country’s main problems is demographic. (Applause) But I respect and will continue to respect personal freedom in all its forms, in all its manifestations (Kremlin, 1.2.2007)

However, it is not justifiable to say that Putin is a homophobe, but rather as the sovereign he is concerned with the (sexual) reproduction of human life and, despite obvious homophobic rhetoric, homosexuality is rendered a problem from the point of view of the task of life’s reproduction in this example. Essentially put, Putin does not want to discriminate against homosexuals; he is thinking of the family and the children (by discriminating against homosexuals). The explanatory note attached to the draft Duma law further supports this; ‘In this case, administrative responsibility is established not for the sheer fact of the person’s homosexuality, but only for propaganda of homosexualism among minors’ (Appendix Two). In a biopolitical reading, the banning of homosexual propaganda makes sense as a policy response to the demographic crisis. Biopower enables the government to connect the public and the private spheres in a way that classical political theory does not allow. Furthermore, the creation of the discourse that sexuality is something that is chosen rather than an integral part of a person’s being serves the biopolitical needs of the state.
5. The ‘Biopolitical Paradox’

5.1 – Make live and let die

Russia is thus in a power that has taken control of both the body and life or that has, if you like, taken control of life in general in order to ensure the survival and wellbeing of the collective societal body (Foucault, 2003: 253). Essentially, the priority of biopower and biopolitical government is to make life and let live, as to ensure the biological survival of the species, in this case, the Russian nation. The argument put forth in the previous chapter was that Russia is henceforth motivated by biopower and that the laws prohibiting the propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations are biopolitical in nature. Then why does the Russian State, and society, tolerate homophobic violence towards its citizens? After all, violence against homosexuals does not aid the demographic situation; indeed one might suggest, with reasonable certainty, that it worsens it. Foucault himself has noted that the shift from the sovereign power to take life or let live to biopower to make live or let die, has not diminished the brutality of violence at all. On the contrary:

“Wars were never as bloody as they have been since the Nineteenth Century, and all things being equal, never before did regimes visit such holocausts on their own populations. But this formidable power of death now presents itself as the counterpart of a power that exerts a positive influence on life, that endeavors to administer, optimize, and multiply it, subjecting it to precise controls and comprehensive regulations. Wars are no longer waged in the name of a sovereign who must be defended; they are waged on behalf of the existence of everyone; entire populations are mobilized for the purpose of wholesale slaughter in the name of life necessity: massacres have become vital.” (Foucault, 1978: 136-137)

Rather it would be more prudent to say that, biopower is a regime that makes life and lets die. How does a power such as this kill, if it is true that its basic function is to improve life, to prolong its duration, to improve its chances, to avoid accidents, and to compensate for failings? Given that biopower’s objective is to make live, how can it let it die? (Foucault, 2003: 254) It is here, at this conjunction that we have the biopolitical paradox. When Foucault states ‘let die’, he is not just talking about a physical death, but a societal death as well; the exile to the state of nature, to that of a pariah. As indeed, Foucault states ‘when I say killing, I
obviously do not mean simply murder as such, but also every form of indirect murder. Increasing the risk of death for some people, or, quite simply, political death, expulsion, rejection and so on’ (Foucault, 2003: 256). I think here we can extend the link to violence as well, a force that does not purge society of the threat, but removes it from sight by force and intimidation. Furthermore, taken in a contemporary context, substituting death for violence and intimidation, leading to a social death has the same effect. Prohibiting the reproduction of the ‘subspecies’ thus ensuring the deformity stops there. This reproduction in the Russian context is aimed at emulation, assuming that without ‘propaganda’ homosexuals will cease to be a problem in Russia, whilst the fact is that homosexuality is a perfectly normal state of being for some humans, and eliminating them will not stop people being born with a non-normative sexuality. But at the same time, debauched, perverted sexuality has effects at the level of population, as anyone who has been sexually debauched, or different, is assumed to have a heredity component (Foucault, 2003: 252). Their descendants also will be affected for generations and thus the fear with protecting children from homosexual propaganda is made manifest. As Foucault states:

“The more inferior species die out, the more abnormal individuals are eliminated, the fewer degenerates there will be in the species as a whole, and the more I-as species rather than individual – can live, the stronger I will be, the more vigorous I will be. I will be able to proliferate. The death of the inferior race is something that will make life in general healthier: healthier and purer” (Foucault, 2003: 255).

Foucault elaborates that the state must install breaks within the fabric of life to distinguish between the lives to be invested in and what must die (Foucault, 2003: 254). Every state must delineate its jurisdiction in order to know what life is to be promoted and what life is to be neglected or abandoned. The state makes life and lets die. In the age of sovereign power these breaks only concerned the jurisdiction of the sovereign. They simply meant the limits of where a king could tax and where he could not. Nowadays, these breaks are invested in life itself. When power becomes directly concerned with life, the caesurae it creates are as much part of life itself. As a result, breaks emerge within the jurisdiction of the state, where they used to mark the borders of it. In the biopower system, in other words, killing or the imperative to kill is acceptable only if it results not in a victory over political adversaries, but
in the elimination of the biological threat to and the improvement of the species or race. Once the State functions in the biopower mode, racism alone can justify the murderous function of the State (Foucault, 2003: 256).

Whenever power concerns itself directly with naked life caesurae are created that abandon ‘unworthy life’ to a state of nature. The life of Russian homosexuals is left to itself as if abandoned by the state. The fact that non-normative sexualities are prohibited to express their sexuality in public means that in so far as they are homosexual they are exiled by the Russian state. This exile amounts to the state of nature as Thomas Hobbes described it. Life in the state of nature is ‘solitary, nasty, brutish and short’, since the violence of all against gays is a permanent possibility to be reckoned with (Hobbes, 1996: xxxi). Whenever someone admits to being gay, he or she can be beaten, raped and killed. It is with this in mind, that we move on to the interview responses, and examine them as an indirect consequence of the paradox of biopolitical government.

5.2 – Experienced Violence

In this section, I examine the interview data to explore the paradox of biopolitical government. Most of the interviewees have experienced some form of aggression, and/or disbelief when people have found out about their sexuality, either after the ‘coming out’ process or in society more broadly. What appears to threaten their mental security further is that they distrust the authorities and have little faith in the judicial process (Interviews: Isaak, 21 Gay & Olga, 20 Lesbian). The dark side of the biopolitical coin is explored here through the interview data gathered. In order to protect the heterosexual majority, non-traditional sexualities are exposed to greater risks. However, the demonization of homosexuality, and the violence experienced is a consequence of biopolitics.

According to Ria Novosti, Ivan Kharchenko publicly admitted his homosexuality at his 16th birthday earlier this year. His grandmother tricked him into going to a “witch” who unsuccessfully attempted to exorcize the “spirit of homosexuality” from him. Failing magic, his father ordered the teenager to go to the drug clinic and left him there, allegedly against his will, “I’d rather have you disabled or a vegetable than gay,” the boy’s father was cited as
saying. The formal reason for hospitalization was Kharchenko’s alleged drug abuse and alcoholism, but medics failed to confirm the allegations about his addictions. Eventually, Kharchenko was released to his mother, who mounted no strong objections to his homosexuality (Ria Novosti 25.04.2012). With news stories like this contributing to an atmosphere of fear for LGBT persons in Russia, there is a sense of understanding in their choice to stay closeted, and hidden in the private sphere. Bringing the focus to the interview data, Maria (28, Lesbian) tells a similar story: “Our families fail us. Their lack of support and tolerance, and doubts when we enter relationships cause us to doubt ourselves”.

The threat of violence, and the actual experience of violence, by friends and loved ones is something that the interviewees recount over again. As Dmitri (43, Gay Male) explains:

“That I fear for my safety and I have to hide my sexuality in public. One of my friends was killed and there are grounds for believing that it was motivated by hatred, but that it is also possible that one of them could have been careless and involved in indiscriminate sexual relations”

Hiding oneself and lying to friends and family is something that Yaroslav (35, Gay Male) had to do; he explains that when he was younger he had to constantly invent relationships with girls, lying to his family to meet secretly with men. Then, when he did come out, he suffered horrific verbal abuse from his family. Ivan (39, Gay) tells his story:

My friends accidentally found out about my homosexuality, which ended in humiliation and rape. I then concealed my sexual orientation for 15 years and met with no one (abstinence). But then I met someone who had awakened in me a sense of what I have not experienced ever before. And I could not hide these feelings. My friends have accused me of lying to them and announced their contempt for me. I realized that I cannot continue to live and decided to confess everything - not only to them, but to everyone. Although understood what I risked. I came out to my mum after I attempted suicide. She dissuaded me from being able to say it to anyone else. However it is never that simple and I was beaten three years ago on my way home
from work, I was hospitalized with a concussion, a broken finger and almost lost my sight.

Unpacking this emotive response from Ivan highlights the extreme danger and issues that non-normative sexualities face when coming out into the public space. He felt the shame and the burden of being different in society, and had to deal with society’s rejection of his difference, even from his friends and family. Nevertheless, repressed sexuality, living life in secret is unhealthy and potentially dangerous to their mental health. The alternative is potentially dangerous to their physical and mental health so when making the choice in light of the biopolitical regulation that exists in Russia, one can understand why it might be better to remain hidden as a strategy to deal with repression. Maria (28, Lesbian) believes that the law does not protect the interests of the child, as the politicians say, but instead it puts teenagers in a more vulnerable position. Vulnerable LGBT teenagers are not just a problem peculiar to Russia; however, the problem is more acute in Russia due to the homophobia and prejudice of society (Ioffe, 8/2/2013). The international project ‘It Gets Better’ explains on its website:

“Many young people face daily tormenting and bullying, leading them to feel like they have nowhere to turn. This is especially true for LGBT kids and teens, who often hide their sexuality for fear of bullying. Without other openly gay adults and mentors in their lives, they can't imagine what their future may hold. In many instances, gay and lesbian adolescents are taunted — even tortured — simply for being themselves.”

The biopolitical paradox is that the Russian lawmakers, by seeking to protect Russian children from homosexual propaganda, will do more harm than good for those children that have non-normative sexual identities. By denying a safe public space for homosexuality, Russian teenagers will hide intolerable features of their sexuality for fear of being branded as abnormal or deviant, during an incredibly difficult time of development for all children. Furthermore, at the extreme end, this could lead to an increased suicide rate amongst young

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adults due to feelings of isolation and fear of being different (Remafedi, Farrow, & Deisher, 1991: 869).

In regions where the law has already taken hold, gay rights activists have complained that vague wording means services like counselling for gay teenagers are now potentially illegal. In the northern city of Arkhangelsk, a medical clinic that worked to provide sexual health check-ups for young gay men cancelled the project, again fearing retribution from authorities (Walker, 25.1.2013). The potential ramifications of this are significant, as not only are non-normative sexualities denied a voice in the public space, but furthermore, it seems that the health and mental health services are now withdrawing counselling support for a group that are potentially the most in need. Not to mention the possibility of a surge in sexuality transmitted infections in the area.

This is a problem that extends to the work place, as there are no laws prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of sexuality. Yaroslav (35, Gay Male) warns about the dangers of being openly gay in the workplace. For example, one of his colleagues found erotic photos of a gay colleague and sent them to all the managers and people in the office. They describe how it could be dangerous to associate with gay or lesbian people, because of the omnipresent danger of being accused of dissent and then ostracised or institutionalised. Furthermore, as Galina (38, Lesbian) explains:

“That the external pressures on my relationship, such as discrimination at work, negative attitudes, abuse both physical and verbal, and the difficulties with adopting a child, have led me to question if it is worth pursuing happiness with another person in my current relationship. Whilst I love my girlfriend, these pressures and tension to remain hidden to deal with repression are becoming too much for me to deal with”

The feeling of pain and fear can be felt in her account, having to hide her relationships and her sexuality. Essentially, in order to remain tolerated by society at large, non-normative sexualities must remain hidden. However, being tolerated by being silent potentially imprisons people in a false, distorted, reduced mode of being, saddling people with crippling self-hatred. It is not so easy to live with mere ‘tolerance’ of what others see as your perverted
sexuality (Phillips 1999: 129). The tolerable subject keeps their intolerable features of identity in secret due to the acknowledging of deviance. As Phillips explains, tolerance reinforces inequalities between majority and minority groups, confirming the ‘normality’ of those who are dominant, defining the others (even to themselves) as ‘deviant’ (1999: 129). Hence, the difference may be accepted by the subject themselves in privacy, but it cannot be taken to the public to be accepted there because taking it into public domain politicises it. Anna (25, Lesbian) further explains the problems that exist for Russian gay couples:

“There are very many problems for Russian gay couples, walking along the street I am afraid to take my girlfriend’s hand, as I fear a backlash from people and because of the recently adopted law. The Authority is doing everything it can to infringe upon the rights of gays and lesbians. In our society, we live dangerously. Our parents do not understand our relationship and in order to maintain marital property we must make a will. I can only imagine the challenges we will face when we try to adopt”

Liza (34, bisexual) reiterates that one of the major problems for gay couples is that they need to hide themselves from the public, a tactic that they have adopted in order to deal with the biopolitical regulation. The heteronormative voice is the only legitimate one within Russia; all other mouths are sealed shut, through regulation or discipline. Furthermore, Anna (25, Lesbian) feels that society is not ready to give equal rights to non-normative sexualities. From the legal side, Russia has no laws that equalise the relationship; in terms of political power shifts all the problems are blamed on homosexuals, with accusations of debauchery, child molestation and low fertility rates.

Yana (26, Lesbian) feels that whilst her life has not changed in principle since the law was passed she feels more vulnerable and is aware that people on the streets are now more aware of what is in their society, people like her, and now she expects far more negativity in her town. Yana goes on to explain how she and her friends have been the victims of verbal insults and public ‘outings’. One of her close friends had her front door painted with her orientation. Coming out from the private to the public sphere with one’s sexual orientation is no easy task for most people. It is a time of trauma, uncertainty and apprehension regarding people’s responses and hoping for their approval. To be publically ‘outed’ in this manner is no doubt
traumatic and with the risks of being out in the public sphere in Russia, Yana continues explaining that her friend had to quit her job and move to a new city because there are no mechanisms for protecting non-normative sexualities in Russia. Isaak (21, Gay) explains:

“Homosexual couples are deprived of the basic conditions of being a real couple. Being placed in the position of outcasts and perverts with no social security, homosexuals are marginalised and only rarely stable pairs are formed”

As Boris (29, Gay) states:

“At the moment gay couples should have the basics – physical security. No one wants to die on the streets with a cracked skull. However, I think the major danger is deeper and is related to the way gay relations are understood by people. Here I mean the pressure of stereotypes, images and all the fluff that surrounds people and drives their lives: what to wear, how to look. This bullshit is probably the biggest threat and problem. People need deep support. Moreover they need support to cope with the implications and consequences of their abuses, be it emotional or physical ones that they have been through”

From Boris’ statement, we learn that there is no physical security for non-normative couples, let alone a support network for them. He highlights the immediate danger of violence, but also the need for support after being attacked or abused. Furthermore, the impact of societal stereotypes will go on to cause additional mental insecurity caused by the lack of education and awareness of the issues. With the homosexual left in the state of nature, it is doubtful that they will get the support they need; instead they are exposed to greater risks.

An observation from the interviews is the difference of reaction depending upon the sex of couple engaging in public displays of affection. Isaak (21, Gay Male) states that same-sex kissing will either result in abuse or outright aggression, or morbid interest, curiosity, similar to that of animals at the zoo. This is again repeated by Svetlana (31, Lesbian) who believes that there is a difference between two men kissing in public and two women; if it was the latter, she believes that a male observer, would, as she put it 'go through his fingers', a slang
term for masturbation. It seems that homosexual males are at the greatest risk of violence from heterosexual men, in fact, all of the interviewees assumed that males would be the ones having a violent reaction, and not one respondent mentioned a woman’s reaction to public displays of affection. Furthermore, Vadim (21, Gay Male) feels:

“I’m uncomfortable being myself in public. Last year I had a real problem with sexual harassment and violence from an acquaintance but I felt that I couldn’t go to the police regarding it; it would be unbelievable to do such a thing! I’m just waiting until I finish my studies so I can leave Russia. I love my homeland, but I cannot see a happy future here”

This feeling of fleeing Russia to be comfortable somewhere else, somewhere non-normative sexualities are not denied a voice in the public sphere. This is something that Boris (29, Gay Male) has experience of:

“I was bullied badly in school and despite trying to hide my sexuality, it’s not something that can be hidden easily. It’s a part of me. I did not feel comfortable until I left Russia and after being away for a while I feel healthy and happy. When I return to visit my friends and family, I still hide my sexuality, but it’s only for a short time”

The irony here is that the demographic crisis has motivated the biopolitical regulation and the restriction of the public space for non-normative sexualities in order to ensure that the heterosexual male-female pair is the only legitimate one in the public space, in order to increase the birth rate and thus, by extension, the population of the Russian Federation. These laws and societal attitudes are causing a brain-drain exodus of educated Russians. Due to the biopolitical paradox of exposing some groups to greater risks, this is perfectly logical.

One only has to look at the media reporting when unsanctioned Gay Pride marches have attempted to be held, as for example, when parades are attempted in St Petersburg, the police tend to stand by as the homosexuals are beating or harassed (Russia Today 17.5.2012). The attempt to hold Gay Pride events split the Russian LGBT community (most of the LGBT organizations refrained from taking part in unsanctioned street demonstrations); it gave
impetus to aggressive homophobic propaganda, for which no one anywhere was made to answer, and it strengthened anti-Western sentiments by making it possible to portray homosexuality as something that was being foisted onto Russian culture from outside (Kon, 2002: 57). These beliefs regarding Gay Pride marches as nothing more than Western imports and demonstrations of sin, illustrate the extent to which Russian society has internalised the official discourse demonising the non-normative sexualities. On the rare occasion those authorities sanction a gay parade; the participants are usually victims of violence or abuse. Anya (23, Lesbian) believes that:

“Gay pride marches bring out the ‘dumb redneck’ reaction from society and as a reaction to any abnormal stimulus, the societal body is trying to remove it. Society is simply not ready for gay parades”

This can be seen by what happens when Gay Pride Parades are sanctioned. According to news reports, on the 20 January 2013 the authorities of Voronezh permitted a Gay Pride event in the central square, where according to reports about 50 people planned to participate in the rally, but in the end, only 6 activists gathered in the centre of Voronezh. They were met by 150 opponents of the LGBT community who blocked their entrance to the square, after pelting the activists with snowballs they started to beat them. Police managed to get things under control, but only temporarily. After a while the beatings resumed and eventually, the protesters were driven away by the police (Ridus 20.01.2013).

Rather than punishing the violence aimed at the homosexuals who participated in the parade, the police removed the people that marched in the parade from the event. The Russian authorities have imposed a traditionalist view of Russia onto the country, and are sending signals to the police and everyone else, that crimes are not crimes if they are committed against gay people (Ioffe, 8.2.2013). This is evident from the discourse of insecurity regarding the interviewees, feeling that they could not attend Gay Pride marches for fear of negative, possibly violent repercussions. The toleration of such violence has been aggravated since the law against propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations was passed unanimously in the Russian parliament. The dark side of the biopolitical coin is one of violence, intimidation and mental insecurity, the paradox of life producing violence.
6. ‘Russia Must be Defended’

In this chapter, I examine four specific governmental techniques, visibility, dynamics of normalisation, self-government and the trope of Russia's enemies. Taken together, these governmental techniques serve to connect homosexuality to the discourse of ‘Russia must be defended’; a clear biopolitical formulation. It must be understood that although these are four aspects of a Foucauldian conceptualisation of governmentality, they are interlinked somewhat. For example rendering non-sexualities invisible in the public space, will have an effect on what people perceive as normal, and then will have an effect on how non-normative sexualities conduct themselves (self-government).

6.1 - Visibility

In this section I examine the interview material from the perspective of Foucauldian fields of visibility. What Foucault alludes to with fields of visibility is that what is highlighted (made visible) and what is rendered invisible are specific governmental techniques of biopower. The economy of visibility becomes an exercise of power, a power which is invisible and renders everybody visible; it creates individuality in the form of documentation, the power of writing to analyse the individual as a case, "as effect and object of power, as effect and object of knowledge" (Foucault, 1995: 192). Power is thus more anonymous, more functional, and more individualizing; examining what is left in the shadows, and what is made visible is a form of governmentality, and a feature of biopolitics. In this section, I examine the interview data, looking at the personal responses through the fields of visibility.

The argument of a rights based approach to non-normative sexualities is generally at odds with a biopolitical analysis. However, when examining the constitution for non-normative sexualities, it becomes clear that legally they are invisible; they have not been defined as a minority group.

“The state guarantees equality of human and citizen rights and liberties regardless of sex, race, ethnicity, language, origin, property status and official position, abode, religion, membership in social associations and other circumstances. Any forms of restraints of rights of citizens on the basis of social, racial, ethnical, linguistic, or religious belonging are prohibited” (clause 19.2) (Kondakov, 2011: 9).
The Constitution does not list sexual orientation among the prohibited grounds of discrimination. There is no clear reference to an individual as a subject to antidiscrimination regulations in the text. The Constitution is designed to include an unlimitedly wide amount of identities in the circle of those who are entitled to enjoy human rights. Whilst other laws are supposed to specify the conditions and the groups of rights holders the heteronormative discourse of law and politics constitutes citizenship boundaries which set certain obstacles for non-normative sexualities to be fully included in society. As a consequence, the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation regarding discrimination limits the discussed constitutional list. “Discrimination, that is violation of the rights, liberties or lawful interests of human and citizen on the ground of his sex, race, ethnicity, language, origin, property status and official position, abode, religion, beliefs, membership in social associations or any social groups, shall be punished...”(clause 136.1) (Kondakov, 2011: 9). Clause 63 of the Code lists circumstances aggravating punishment. Item “e” names hate crime, which is a “commission of a crime by reason of national, racial, or religious hatred or enmity, or by reason of hatred or enmity towards any social group”. As we see here from the Criminal Code and the Constitution non-normative sexualities are not excluded from equal rights, simply put, they do not exist in the Russian legal system (Kondakov, 2011: 9). As a form of government, sexuality has been confined to the shadows. Their right to protection is ignored because it has been rendered invisible.

In winter 2012, a Sochi appeals court upheld a lower court ruling denying registration to Pride House, a local gay movement, saying that it constituted a threat to Russia's sovereignty. The court stated that Pride House's goals undermined public morals and were at odds with the national policy on the family, motherhood and children. Furthermore, it justified this by stating that a non-traditional sexual orientation could spark social strife and lead to a decrease in the country's already low birth rate, thereby undermining the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Russian Federation (RiaNovosti: March 14 2012). The justification for denying a public space tugs at the population’s subconscious by using discourses of the defence of the nation, and the birth rate. These biopolitical rationalisations are cited for refusing to allow a local homosexual movement to establish, and thus restricting the public space available for non-normative sexualities; rendering them invisible. However, there are a handful of LGBT NGOs working out of St Petersburg and Moscow that are trying to raise
awareness of issues. Yury Gavrikov, the head of Equality, one of the gay rights groups in St Petersburg explains the implications of the law prohibiting non-traditional sexual relations:

"The tendency in Russia is toward limiting freedom of speech and freedom to gather, targeting any group that somehow stands up for its rights ... No one knows how the law will work ... The main goal seems to be limiting the rights of those who engage in social activity. But in its widest sense, it can mean limiting exhibits, plays, film showings – cultural activities" (Elder, 12.3.2012)

Reading this through a biopolitical lens divulges the attempt by the St Petersburg authorities to use the law as a way to deny a public voice to non-normative sexualities, allowing the heterosexual procreative voice to become the only visible and dominant voice in the public sphere. The vagueness about the particulars of the law allows it to be utilised by the authorities to suit their needs, regardless of whether children are present, as previously mentioned with Nikolai Alexeyev’s arrest. Moreover, Yaroslav (35, Gay Male) feels that the law has been passed hastily and is ill-thought out, perhaps on purpose, as any LGBT symbols, or any attempt to hold public events that draw attention to LGBT issues, are wrongly considered homosexual propaganda. The aim of this biopolitical regulation is to restrict the public space, rendering them invisible, for homosexuality, not to criminalise non-normative sexualities. The link between demographics, morality, and the family, is used to justify the public silence and the denial of a public space for homosexuals.

“I am not a supporter of gay parades. Often people get a distorted view of the gay community looking to similar processions. As a consequence, homophobia is only growing”

Pasha, 26, Gay male

Homophobia may well be increasing, but in Foucauldian terms, with the obfuscation of non-normative sexualities, homophobia has a stronger and louder voice in the public sphere, it is more visible because it is legitimised. Recent disputes over Gay Pride parades have shown that the political establishment refuses to concede public space to queer Russians. Gay Pride will be discussed in more detail in normalisation and the trope of Russia’s enemies, as all three governmental mechanisms are at work in the discourse, but a word about them and
visibility first, in light of the laws. In the realm of biopolitical thinking, the “protection of children” and public morality are linked with the public display of homosexuality, as explained in the rationale for the imposition of the laws that prohibit homosexual propaganda. With the passing of the anti-homosexual propaganda laws, homophobes are freer to express their opinions in public and the ruling elite need not justify the banning of Gay Pride parades, as the very nature of a gay pride parade in the public sphere would be prohibited if, of course, there were minors present. The laws function as a governmental mechanism that allows homophobic discourse more space and visibility in public discussion. There has been little change in the mind-set of the ruling elite and the parades; public displays of homosexuality have continually been banned as the public voice of homosexuality is denied. Roman (24, Gay Male) feels that:

“Gay Pride marches are under constant interdiction because of the remaining Soviet-era installation of homophobia in society, and the limited power of democracy. If I was to take part in a parade, then I could be arrested and if my employers saw my photograph in the news, there would be negative consequences”

As Anton (23, Straight Male) believes, Gay Pride marches in Russia have so far contributed to a political flow targeted at stripping gay people from all their rights. Whilst yes, gay pride may be aimed at achieving rights and benefits, still they currently bring the gay community more trouble than good. Furthermore, that Gay Pride marches, in Russia, actually reinforce the division between normative and non-normative sexualities as they are a public display of homosexuality. However, Yaroslav (35, Gay male) believes:

“At the moment the language from the government is unfortunately negative. Because all the stereotypical thinking: gay pride parade - it is always dressed in women's clothes and "men", showing naked ass and genitals, a demonstration of his sin, debauchery and lust. I think that they are banned for several factors. Homophobic policy of the state, the influence of the Orthodox Church, the negative stereotypes about gay pride, an unwillingness to recognize the rights of LGBT community. Furthermore in the current situation where the authorities are not allowed to hold pride of - yes, negative consequences are possible. I am not yet ready to participate in the uncoordinated actions”
As Yaroslav explained, he is not a supporter of gay parades as people get a distorted view of the gay community from these processions and that they only lead to the growth of homophobia. Yana (26, Lesbian) supports this, and feels that:

“Gay pride marches have some rather negative connotations associated with sex, perversion and other rubbish. People in Russia are not ready to accept gays as a legal fact or as a fact of memory, solidarity or respect. Instead, they want them removed from sight. I believe that attending a parade in Russia would have negative consequences for me, but I’m not quite sure what they would be”

In reality, Gay Pride events are banned in St Petersburg and across the country under various pretexts, but whenever politicians and state officials use such language, they infringe on people’s freedom of conscience and civil rights and not just those of particular minorities but of all the people (Kon, 2009: 64). Although after the passing of the law in St Petersburg, prohibiting homosexual propaganda, there is no need to justify the banning of Gay Pride parades, they can be simply labelled as promoting homosexuality, and the participants will be treated accordingly. Whilst the view of Gay Pride parades was in the majority negative, there are some that feel otherwise, and that they are the start of a public voice for homosexuality, although that voice needs to become louder and be adapted. In the Russian reality, something must be better than nothing. Galina (38, Lesbian) believes:

“If Gay pride marches were allowed to be carried out, with the protection of the police, then society would start to see there was absolutely nothing wrong with gays, besides their rather colourful exterior”

For example, Igor (33, Bisexual male) thinks that Gay Pride marches are better than nothing, but it is better to educate people through the promotion of films and public broadcasts either on the Internet, or television. Essentially, the problem is the lack of positive public relations and education. This is a view that is shared by Olga (23, Bisexual female) who says that gay parades are a positive thing as even if it causes rejection, it starts to create different ideas in the subconscious, possibly causing a change in attitudes over time. Returning to Foucault, when homosexuality becomes spoken about, as part of the imposition of social controls, this
also provides the possibility for homosexuality to begin to speak on its own behalf, thus creating an alternative discourse of power in the society, that has the potential to shape and change societal relations (Foucault, 1978: 101). Roman (24, Gay) believes that the best thing to do is to start having public meetings and discussing the topic to gain public tolerance.

Yana (26, Lesbian) believes that the answer lies not in direct confrontation or in the so-called “we’re here, we’re queer, get used to it” attitude. She believes Russia is not ready for that yet; instead the change should come from academics outside and inside Russia who present a source of reliable and objective information to the population and politicians. Furthermore, to explain to non-normative sexualities the right way to articulate their problems and issues in a cultured way, whilst working with NGOs and other organisations to promote awareness of LGBT issues, and in general, that being gay or lesbian is not a perversion. But most importantly, she believes that the change needs to come from the grassroots, from person-to-person meeting, proving that non-normative sexualities are just like ‘you and I’. They are not infectious nor are they criminals, but they are ordinary people. According to Yana through these small victories of acceptance, one-by-one, the future can change, she believes. However, with the government’s attempt to deny non-normative sexualities a voice in the public sphere, one wonders how this societal shift in attitude will occur, when being open in public about their sexuality, with minors present, would result in fines and arrests. The Russian government might have labelled and confined non-normative sexualities, but understood in Foucauldian terms, it might have allowed something else to happen in time, that being a strong voice emerging from the silence.
6.2 – Dynamics of Normalisation

This section deals with the Governmentality concept of normalisation; for Foucault, the norm is a norm. But it is one of those norms (e.g., sex and gender) that effectively presents itself not as a norm, but as a given and therefore outside of power – benign and closed to critical analysis. Refusing to simply accept what is presented as natural, necessary, and normal – like the ideas of sex and the norm itself – presents possibilities for engaging in and expanding the practice of freedom. Within a biopolitical context ‘the norm is an interplay of differential normalities; the normal comes first, and the norm is deduced from it (Foucault 1988: 67). Techniques of normation and normalization in turn function to ‘make normal’. In doing so such techniques perpetuate the power relations that the norm founds and legitimizes by reproducing norms within the political landscape to the point that they come to be seen not as produced at all but simply as natural and necessary (Dean, 1993: 156). Moreover, the norm provides the grounds not only for distinguishing ‘normal’ and ‘abnormal’ individuals and populations, but also for sanctioning intervention into in order to ensure conformity and also to effectively eliminate the threat posed by resisting individuals and populations (Dean, 1993: 157). Normalizing norms are potentially oppressive because, while they do in fact increase persons’ capacities, such an increase is achieved at the expense of other possible modes of thinking and acting.

The main framing argument of this section is that through biopower the Russian government has been able to take charge of the processes of life itself. By creating a norm and an opposing abnorm, the norm being heterosexuality and the abnorm being homosexuality in public discourses, the latter being illegitimate. The Russian state has attempted to normalise heterosexual, child-bearing relationships, for example, through financial incentives for those who want to have bigger families in 2006, and went on to say that the problem of low birth rates cannot be resolved without a general change in the attitude towards the issue of family (BBC, 10.6.2006). After all, heterosexual marriage was a product of a need to organize capitalist socio-economic units. Evidence of the success of such normalization can be identified in the fact that in the post-soviet era, the words ‘mother’ and ‘sacred’ have appeared in conjunction in the media with alarming regularity and, unsurprisingly, find themselves repeated in everyday discourse (Kay, 2006: 156). For example, whilst there is a logical reason behind the State's desire to promote a married, heterosexual couple over a non-married
couple, the demographic effect of cohabiting couples can be easily evaluated: the level of fertility in *de facto* unions is at least two times lower than in registered marriages (Beloborodov, 30.6.2011). However, this entry of politics into the bedroom shows the seriousness of biopower; the conjugal family has taken custody of sexuality and absorbed it into the serious function of reproduction (Foucault, 1978: 3).

As an indirect consequence of the law, all other couples and sexualities either have been placed in a *deviant* position, or exist in silence. Thus, homosexuality is excluded and appears as inferior or in a sickening position. Putin’s rhetoric enforces heteronormative borders within which a ‘natural’ order of things exists (Kondakov, 2010: 5). In this order, homosexuality is undoubtedly connected with demographic problems through its association with a threat to the family and the country. The family’s reproductive function is one of the pillars of heteronormativity that the Russian state guarantees to protect (Kondakov, 2010: 6). A leading force challenging gay rights is the Russian Orthodox Church, which officially describes homosexuality as a sin. As Patriarch Kirill, Russian Orthodoxy’s spiritual leader, said in 2009 “We are against equalizing homosexual relationships and natural relationships between men and women” (Ponomareva 15.2.2013). In essence, the heterosexual family has been constructed as the norm to control the population. As Foucault explains, it is nothing more than a discourse of power that provided biopolitics with a complex means with which to calculate the reproduction of life (Repo, 2011: 30). The discourse also acted as a source of social hierarchisation, exerting their influence on society, guaranteeing relations of domination and the hegemony of the traditional family.

Returning to interview data, Igor (33 Bisexual male) thinks that the law is idiotic; whilst he feels that you can prohibit the propagation of dangerous things to life and health, homosexuality is neither harmful nor illegal, and it is actually like trying to prohibit the promotion of wearing sneakers. Anna (28, Lesbian) feels that “the government believes that we are perverts and we need to be put on a stake”. To further strengthen the restriction of the public space for non-normative sexualities, as well as linking non-normative sexualities to a mental illness, the wording of the law draws the same punishments for the promotion of paedophilia. Non-normative sexualities have entered the Russian consciousness only through descriptions of abnormality and sickness. Isaak (21, Gay Male) states:
“One of the major problems of the law is that it puts LGBT on a par with paedophiles, and the law is setting a dangerous precedent for a secular state, that is slowly moving towards a more openly clerical ideology of Russian Orthodoxy. Furthermore, as a consequence it could mean a further violation of freedom of conscience.”

In a press conference, Vitaly Milonov, from the ruling Edinaya Rossia (United Russia) justifies the legislation by saying: "Children have to be protected from destructive information". According to Milonov, this information could be found in sex education classes where such values were "advertised" but what could he do when his city is drowning under "a wave popularizing sexual perversion". Milonov’s colleagues supported his law by stating that "Children maimed by paedophiles jump out of windows, they take their own lives!" (Ioffe, 2011). These quotes are from a press conference regarding the law prohibiting homosexual propaganda. It seems absurd to link paedophilia with homosexuality, yet from a biopolitical view, the logic is apparent. Whilst homosexuality is accepted as a general norm in most developed countries, the other, paedophilia is regarded as a mental illness. To link the two together in regulation does the same for the public perception in an attempt to create homosexuality as a societal abnorm, thus legitimising the heterosexual as norm. Furthermore, the linking of homosexuals to paedophiles can be identified from article 7.1 ‘prohibiting the propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations’. As, at the same time, article 7.2 was added to the Saint Petersburg legal code ‘Public actions aimed at propaganda of paedophilia’ with the same wording, and the same punishment as for non-normative sexualities. It matters not whether non-normative sexualities are actually paedophiles or not, what this has had the effect of doing is illegitimating their voice, and thus normalizing the heterosexual voice as dominant in society.

“Technically the law protects no one from anything. If we see it as following the desires of a number of Russian citizens to ban all things gay, so their children will grow up safely to deliver grandchildren”

Anton (23, Straight Male)

When homosexuality is represented as an abnorm it is presupposed that one becomes a homosexual, because somewhere along one’s developmental trajectory, the process of sexual
maturation veers away from the standards of organic functioning established by medical science (McWhorter, 2004: 52). Therefore, the state intervenes so that children might be saved from becoming auto-monosexualists, races might be purified and thus set on the road to progress (McWhorter, 2004: 53). The obsession with protecting children is best explained by Spencer (1995: 404): a society's anxiety over gender is visible in its intense obsession with sex and children. Their gender is important to society and society is very keen to thrust gender indoctrination on to children, whatever their own wishes on the matter. It is our fear of a natural growth into sexual maturity of one gender or another being abruptly halted or thrust into an alternative direction, which drives us into a panic, seeing the potential for sexual abuse everywhere and deviation from the heterosexual norm. Furthermore, children are not thought of as sexual beings; however, they are thought of very distinctly as boys and girls, and heterosexual. The labelling of one part of the population is to ensure the transmission of correct values to children, so they can then go forth and procreate, creating more life for the Russian Federation, and thus ensuring the survival of the nation. Due to the biopolitical discourse the majority in society consider gays and lesbians to be sick, sinful, perverse, unnatural, dangerous, contagious for children and shameful to the family (Spencer, 1995: 388). It is regarded as inferior to heterosexuality, particularly since lesbian and gay couples cannot procreate through traditional means, however they can of course procreate through surrogacy, sperm donation, and so on.

Reified sexual pathologies are unthinkable apart from the discourses of development, maldevelopment and developmental deviance. What is more, is that these reified sexual pathologies serve as targets for normalisation, essentially enabling the survival of Russians-as-species: this after all, is the raison d'etre for biopolitical intervention in the lives of individuals, to ensure population, to reproduce labour capacity, and to perpetuate the form of social relations. Thus issues relating to homosexual equality and a voice in the public sphere are denied by the rationale of biopolitics; that in order to improve the birth rate and the overall demographic situation, non-normative sexualities must be demonised as the abnorm in society; the biopolitical discourse used as a policy response to the demographic crisis has created or enforced the model of the heterosexual, patriarchal, reproductive family with offspring as the normal, and the homosexual relationships are denied normalisation.
6.3 – Self-government
In this section I examine the interview data from the perspective of self-government. By self-government Foucault refers to a form of power that literally informs how we guide our own conduct or exercise action upon our own actions. Given that political leadership is only one form of government among others, firstly, the dividing line the liberals draw between the public and private spheres, that is the distinction between the domain of the state and that of society itself becomes an object of study. In other words, with reference to the issues of government these differentiations are no longer treated as the basis and the limit of governmental practice, but as its instrument and effect. Secondly, the liberal polarity of subjectivity and power ceases to be plausible. From the perspective of governmentality, government refers to a continuum, which extends from political government right through to forms of self-regulation, namely "technologies of the self" as Foucault calls them (Foucault, 1988)

Some activists claim that there is no ‘LGBT community’ in Russia (Marchenkov, 2009). What this means is that it is impossible to mobilise gay men and lesbians for public activities and struggles on a mass scale that could spearhead political and societal change. Paradoxically, it appears that the activists are themselves responsible for this situation, that they have reacted to the discourse of their community as abnormal and thus seek to remain hidden in order to be tolerated, as individuals. The discourse is not functioning as a site of resistance. It is not that the LGBT community exists or not. It is that the public discourse makes people stay at home and conform. Coming-out from home (privacy) to streets (public) is a challenge to the self and the heterosexual norms (Kondakov, 2011: 15-16). Yaroslav (35, Gay Male) says that positive role models exist, but they are few and unknown to the masses. For example, there are gay activists who are engaged in education. However, he could not name any positive role models; he just believes that they are out there. In reality, the majority of the interviewees dismiss the very notion of a LGBT community, or subculture as they refer to it. This is best encapsulated by Vladimir (20, Gay Male):

“I, in no way identify with the LGBT subculture; I definitely do not support the behaviour of the subculture, Gay Pride and so on which is usually ascribed to all members of the LGBT community. I live by the principle that every man must be a man
regardless of their orientation (the same regarding girls). Therefore I live by the principle that I am ready to defend their rights and moral status in connection to sexuality, but I do not want to be referred to as a community just because I have the same orientation that they have. These activists cast a shadow upon me with the indignation of society.”

Furthermore, he seeks to distance himself from the other activists, the most notable example being Nikolai Alexeyev who is the public face of the Gay Pride movements in Moscow, and appears regularly in Western news coverage of Gay Pride events. According to Yandex.ru (24 May 2009), the Russian Internet search engine he is the most quoted gay activist regarding LGBT issues. This is reiterated by Roman (24, Gay Male) who speaks very badly regarding Nikolai Alexeyev. He believes that “he is not a good representation of LGBT people in Russia, and he unfortunately is doing more harm than good”. Even in his short answer, we can see that he chooses the word people rather than community. Non-normative sexualities in Russia define themselves as Russian and male or female, rather than seeking to divide themselves from the rest of society by being part of a social group; LGBT community. Yuri (23, Gay Male) explains, in this case, it is not appropriate to talk about being a member of a particular social group, because:

“Sexual orientation or skin colour may not be the basis for the division of society. Originally, I am a man, and my sexual orientation is not a characteristic that must be specified in my passport, therefore, I am one of LGBT but only as an informal group in society at large rather than a coherent social group”.

Dmitri (43, Gay Male) echoes this, “being part of the LGBT community; this is pure convention, unless you really are entered into a social organization”. Furthermore, Luka (34, Bisexual) states “I do not consider myself part of the LGBT community, I don’t understand what it is in reality, people tend to bunch up on some grounds, but I am not a bunch, I am an individual”. Yet for all the negativity regarding the absence of a feeling of belonging to a wider community, Oleg (21, Gay Male) eludes as to why “I do not feel part of the LGBT community, perhaps it is because the LGBT community in Russia is very fragmented”. They
treat their identity as a fact, something that cannot be changed or viewed as positive or negative. It just exists, explains Alexsei (38, Gay Male).

*Is it reasonable to be proud of your religion or nationality, especially if you did not choose them yourself? Nonetheless, people do cultivate such feelings. The underlying socio-psychological problem is that there are different ways to destroy a person. A person can be destroyed not only physically and legally but also morally. All it takes is to teach him the following from childhood on: we do not forbid you to exist, but you must at all times remember that you are depraved, an outcast, inferior, so just sit still and keep quiet and do not complain about anything. The child who absorbs this—a phenomenon called “internalized homophobia,” but the same thing was also done in the case of Jews, people of colour, women, and all kinds of others—will spend the rest of his life feeling scorned and hated. A person whose self-respect has been destroyed truly will end up being socially and mentally inferior* (Kon 2009: 55)

This rationality can be seen in the interviews and discourses that run throughout the non-normative sexualities. However, there are the beginnings of a community, as Isaak (21, Gay) explained. He feels as though he belongs to a community, a community of happy people that are united by common challenges and including the challenge of overcoming them. Furthermore, that belonging to the LGBT community in the oppressive conditions that exist today develops character and makes him think more about concepts of justice. He further explained that he met the community online and feels connected to a wider community through social media, which has become an emotional outlet for him to talk about his experience of being gay in Russia. This could be explained by his age and the fact that he comes from a small city in Russia, so there are not so many possibilities to meet like-minded people in his home region. Furthermore, the online sphere is a site of public expression and could potentially act as a site of resistance. The very act of responding to my interview questions over VKontatke could be seen as a political act of resistance. Paraphrasing Foucault for a moment, if homosexuality is repressed, that is condemned to silence; the mere fact that one is speaking about it has the appearance of a deliberate transgression. A person who holds forth such language places himself, to a certain extent outside the reach of power; he upsets established law; he somehow anticipates the coming freedom (Foucault, 1978: 6)
“I always feel the need to hide my sexuality in public and when around strangers”

Irina (21, Lesbian)

This is a common theme that was repeated time and time again throughout the interviews. Liza (34, Bisexual female) says that one of the major problems for gay couples is that they need to hide themselves from the public. Isaak (21, Gay Male) then explains that being placed in the position of outcasts and perverts, with no social security, marginalises homosexuals and, only rarely, stable pairs are formed. This external pressure upon non-normative couples clearly strains relationships and cannot be psychologically beneficial to these individuals. The couples that do try to make it, and attempt to live a normal life, are faced with numerous problems. Daria (24, Lesbian) explains:

“When I wanted to rent a house with my girlfriend, we had to lie and pretend that we were stepsisters and keep a separate bedroom made up in case of a visit from the property owner. The constant pressure of the landlord turning up adds so much strain onto the relationship and everyday life”

These excerpts from the interviewees explain how they must maintain strong privacy boundaries, not only in the public sphere, but also in the private sphere for fear of discrimination or homophobic attitudes, without strong legal support, they are left feeling helpless and alone. In addition these strong privacy boundaries must be maintained due to public confusion about non-normative sexual identities and the danger of disclosure. The lack of protection for non-normative sexualities in public life encourages them to hide what they perceive as intolerable features of their sexuality. Here, the tolerance discourse contributes to the construction of a conformist subject who tries on the mantle of deviance and tends to keep their ‘deviant’ sexuality private in order to be tolerable (Kondakov, 2011: 15).

“I must to analyse and control my emotions in public at all times, even when walking with my boyfriend” Alexandr (21, Gay Male)

In Russia there is an idea of a ‘good gay’, a homosexual that is tolerated by the majority simply because he is good, though he is still gay. As far as the argument goes, it turns out that
the ‘good gay’ is the one who publicly can never be distinguished from a heterosexual – and that is precisely why he is good (Kondakov, 2011: 15). As Phillips (1999: 127) explains, the toleration is offered at a price and keeping things private is part of the deal. Keep your head down, don’t draw too much attention to yourself, and do not generate a backlash by forcing others to deal with your difference. Thus a “tolerable homosexual” is the one who would carry out their private affairs with discretion and in secrecy controlling the external manifestation of morality in ‘visible’ conduct (Rose, 1990: 225). Russians’ degree of tolerance depends on a number of socio-demographic factors. As a rule, young people, with the exception of adolescent boys and young adult males, are more tolerant than older and elderly people, women are considerably more tolerant than men, better-educated people are more tolerant than uneducated people, and people living in Moscow, St Petersburg, and other megalopolises are more tolerant than villagers and inhabitants of small towns (Kon, 2009: 51). However, casting a critical eye over Kon’s explanation, it was in fact in St Petersburg that the ‘anti-homosexual propaganda law’ took force and was accepted by the population just a couple of years later.

“The rhetoric of privacy has historically functioned to perpetuate the oppressive politics of the ‘closet’: privacy is the ideological substrate of the very secrecy that has forced homosexuals to remain hidden and underground” (Bamforth, 2001: 37-38)

Moreover, they learn this from childhood, as Nikolai (37, Gay Male) explains that even in childhood, he knew that being gay was not good, shameful and humiliating and that he must hide it. Again, Roman (24, Gay Male) says he must not only hide his sexuality, but also find a cure for it. Clearly, a worrying sign as homosexuality is not a disease but a fundamental part of a person's psyche. Repressed sexuality is self-destructive, debilitating, and unhealthy; confession is healthy, liberating and self-affirmative (McWhorter, 2004: 46). If one is homosexual, the benefit of confession also has its price. Sometimes the price seems so high that one does begin to doubt; one begins to suspect that the demand for confession originates someplace else other than in a desire for liberation or that the liberation desired is liberation from, among other things, homosexuality (McWhorter, 2004: 46).
What is interesting is that the interviewees speak about first gaining tolerance, and whilst some want full and equal rights with heterosexuals, the majority just want to be able to live their lives like everybody else. Returning to the theoretical framework, the subject of the discourse then is an opportunist who is ready to conform to the heteronormative order to be accepted as a part of the society, thus governing themselves with reference to the biopolitical discourse that has been deployed to manage them. The tolerance approach provides for non-normative sexualities the way to be treated as a part of the whole society, but not to be accepted as equals (McGhee, 2004: 367). As long as the environment is homophobic, the subject will not be accepted to the society as its equal part. It is also true that as long as the subject does not contribute to the change of the environment, the situation is likely to remain immutable (Kondakov, 2011: 19). Thus they have internalised the biopolitical discourse and rather than it acting as a site of resistance, instead they choose to remain in the shadows, hidden and tolerated.

A few of the individuals interviewed explained that although they feel they need to hide their sexuality, they do not. For example, Vladimir (20, Bisexual male) shows some indignation with the new law, that although his life has not directly changed as a result of the law, he now lives with a constant sense of irritation that he cannot officially show affectionate gestures to his partner in public, although, honestly he says, that does not stop him. This is restated by Isaak (21, Gay Male) who believes that he should keep quiet about his sexuality but because of his rebellious nature, he does not. This has led to an incident where he was a victim of aggressive behaviour, but luckily, witnesses to the event were on his side and strongly condemned the behaviour of the aggressor, thus showing that not all of Russian society has accepted the biopolitical discourse that stems from the government. However, there is a further discourse here to be unpicked, that the idea about being open about one’s sexuality is equal to a rebellious nature, confirming that non-normative sexualities have incorporated the governmental discourse and accepted their place as the abnorm within society, as a way to cope with the repressive nature of society. Yet they seek to fight it on some level, rather than fighting for equality, they simply feel rebellious in the public space. As a personal choice about sharing one’s sexuality in the public sphere, a truth that is fundamental to every person’s very core, has now become a political act of resistance in Russia. This concept of a silent, tolerated homosexual is one that has been accepted by the homosexual community for
two reasons: the first being that they have been legally restricted from speaking about homosexuality in public, due the regularisation of homosexuality under the recent laws and secondly, that they must remain hidden for fear of violence. Essentially, it is a coping strategy to deal with repression in the public sphere.

6.4 – The Trope of Russia's Enemies

“For Russia it is important to have an enemy and that enemy is the LGBT community”

Svetlana, 31, Lesbian

Homosexuality has been identified as an enemy, thus a biopolitical drive to circulate aspects of the discourse conjures up an idea of Russia that must be defended. In essence, homosexuality has been added to the trope of Russia’s enemies.

Olga (20, Lesbian) believes the government has organised a witch-hunt, but the witches do not exist. She states that people feel the anger and the authorities need to pour it on someone, to anyone. The authorities are trying to pacify the discontent and anger that exists within Russian society, and direct it at the LGBT population in order for people to forget the anger directed at the government, simply by shifting it. Whilst non-normative sexualities have been segregated and hidden from sight, it is also because “People in the government are feeling disturbed over dwindling support, and in such a state one is more likely than not to resort to repressive and primitive decisions” (Mark Urnov, quoted in Ponomareva, 15.2.2013). This is supported by Roman (24, Gay Male) who feels that the laws are being produced to bring the conservative voters to Putin’s side and search for an ‘internal enemy’ to direct the power of popular discontent in a different direction, one of the legitimate reasons enabling the suppression of civil society and protest. Non-normative sexualities have been added to the trope of Russia’s enemies, and Russia must be defended from them.

Gleb (41, Straight Male) states that homophobia in Russia is an important element of anti-Western, anti-liberal, totalitarian ideology, moralistic traditional values. This is explained further by Maksim Shevchenko, a TV journalist and a Kremlin-approved crusader against liberalism, who wrote recently that “Russia and the West are at war…There is a growing feeling that most Western people belong to a different humanoid group from us; that we are
only superficially similar, but fundamentally different” (The Economist, 16.2.2013). This conceptualisation of Gay Prides as, almost, anti-Russian, or a Western import is a theme that ran through the interviews. This is also a common view in the Middle East and Africa. The demonization of homosexuality allows a discourse to emerge of an internal enemy, as they are a threat to the birth rate and therefore a linked to other threats. For example, in a press conference regarding the anti-homosexual propaganda law, Elena Babich a deputy from the Liberal Democratic party, said that the proposed penalties were too light against non-normative sexualities, as "What is a three-thousand rouble fine to a paedophile when they are supported by an international community?" (Ioffe, 2011).

Olga (20, Lesbian) states that the framing is done to further embitter the people against LGBT persons and get them to think of homosexuals as paedophiles; the biopolitical discourse, which seeks to normalize heterosexual relations, links homosexuals and paedophiles. Furthermore, it adds the element that paedophiles, and by extension homosexuals, are in Russia as foreign agents. Adding to the discourse of Russia must be defended. When examining discourses the facts are almost superfluous. What matters is the deployment of the discourse into the public domain and letting the discourse permeate society changing power relations. Thus, in order to “safeguard the children of Russia”, biopolitical security mechanisms need to be deployed; the mechanism in this case is the regulation prohibiting homosexual propaganda. Due to the vague definition of the law, it could be that a paedophile convicted of a paedophilic act could pay a fine instead of being disciplined with jail. Daria (24, Lesbian) explains that for most members of the government they cannot separate incompatible elementary concepts of paedophile and homosexual, so they use them interchangeably. This is no doubt a deliberate biopolitical attempt to link the homosexual subject to the trope of Russia’s enemies.

As previously stated, the lack of protection for non-normative sexualities and the discourse that demonises them in the public sphere is a clear reason why they would choose to remain in the private sphere and not utilise Gay Pride marches as a tool for raising awareness of their plight. Yet whilst the denial of a public space could be the rallying cry for equal rights and protest, for fear of the consequences most homosexuals tend to feel that it is better to remain hidden, and protect their jobs and livelihoods. What seems to be strange is the division of
opinion relating to Gay Pride marches within the gay community. For example, Boris (29, Gay Male) explains that:

"Basically, without being naïve, they provoke such an outrageously cruel reaction due to the fact that no one has tried to adapt these ideas to the Russian reality ... linguistically, to begin with. I don’t consider myself a patriot but I can assume that the term 'parade' might have a particular connotation in the Russian language. Yet no one did any work on adaptation of these essentially non-Russian phenomena”

He assumes that the term parade might have a particular connotation in the Russian language and that, unless they are adapted, they will only continue to promote a negative public stereotype of LGBT people in Russia. The view that Gay Prides have not been adapted to the Russian reality and do not work as the discourse that they have been represented with has been overwhelmingly negative. Furthermore they strengthen the anti-Russian sentiment that is attached to Gay Pride and thus, in turn, non-normative sexualities. Interestingly, differing from earlier research on homosexuality in Russia (Essig, 1999), the Russians interviewed had adopted Western categorizations of sexuality without question or even acknowledging the imported categories of lesbian (lesbiyanka), gay (gey), and so on. Previous research by Essig stated that Russians during the 1990s stayed away from fixed labels of sexuality, and preferred instead to talk about same-sex desire.

**LGBT opponents in Voronezh (Ridus, 20.01.2013)**
The slogans on the preceding image mirror some of the official discourse. A placard states “We are for morality”, illustrating the deviance of homosexuality, another explains that “Roosters belong to chicken coups” (“rooster” is a Russian slang term for homosexuals), in other words, out of the public life or in some form of institution. Finally, the last sign states that “We shouldn’t surrender to the constantly changing rules” (quote from a popular song) indicating that the general public believe that homosexuality is not a fact of human biology, but rather an imported Western identity. Furthermore, it seems that some of these sentiments already existed within Russian society but the discourses have been mobilised by biopower to link these sentiments with the technologies of biopolitics.

As Maria (28, Lesbian) states, gay parades provoke public discourse, and in this sense may be an occasion for public debate, but that the very idea of a gay parade in Russian society has more negative connotations (or rather formed the wrong way). She believes that if you tell people where the idea of a gay parade was from originally - being a human rights march and a protest against oppression, violence and discrimination - it could help. However, where the public perception is now, is that it has all the stereotypes of feathers, half-naked men and debauchery. This is a view that is echoed by Milonov, the author of the St Petersburg law that bans the promotion of homosexual propaganda:

"I am profoundly against gay parades because I am an Orthodox Christian and the demonstration of the sin of Sodom is repellent to me. If, God forbid, I happened to see a crowd of those people — like they do in Berlin, I've seen photographs where men with all sorts of dildos are running around semi-naked — it's natural that I'd try to take my children aside so they would not see this perversion. But I am a lawmaker, and I don't try to impose my personal and religious beliefs onto anybody. That's why I have no right to restrict the freedom of assembly, marches and demonstrations, because this freedom is guaranteed by Article 31 of the Constitution"

(Milonov, quoted in Chernov, 30 March 2012)

Milonov’s quote alludes to many different discourses, relegated to the previous techniques of biopolitics as normalisation, whilst the link with children establishes a connection to biological reproduction. However, the importance of this extract is the link with ‘enemies’ of
Russia. That being, he links the idea of Gay Pride with anti-Western discourses, and those of immorality, as he is a religious man. Furthermore, the Orthodox Church’s hostile attitude toward homosexuality is based not only on canonical but also political motives. Having made homophobia a kind of national religious idea, the church people are trying to rally conservative forces and faiths around itself not only inside the country but also worldwide (Kon, 2009: 46). Condemnations of temptation that are too strident can even result in “promoting homosexuality”; after all, if the fruit were not so sweet, who would ever talk about it so much? (Kon, 2009: 46). Moreover, due to the links to the West, they are portrayed as something that is forced onto Russia from outside, and un-Russian. For example, Dmitri (43, Gay Male) acknowledges the Western importance and explains that certainly it is an attempt to copy the Western experience, but thinks of such imports without negative connotations. However, he believes that Russia is not tolerant enough to permit such demonstrations, and many people are genuinely puzzled: “The criminal article was cancelled, what more do you want?” This illustrates that not only has the LGBT community internalised the public discourse from the government, but also, society at large remains intolerant of homosexuals, and that they should stay hidden and play their role as the deviant within Russia. Furthermore, the Gay Pride idea has been exploited by fascists, nationalists, and religious fundamentalists to serve as a pretext for carrying out mass acts of intimidation (Kon, 2002: 57). This serves the biopolitical need to link homosexuality in the publics’ mind with violence clashes, something that the heterosexual Russians need to be defended from.
7. Conclusion

This thesis has examined the biopolitical governance in Russia, from the way that the discourse of homosexuality forms part of the Russian state discourses, to the way in which non-normative sexualities govern themselves with reference to the discourses that permeate and shape society.

Throughout this thesis it has become clear that the state apparatus has deployed the law prohibiting the propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations as a policy response to the declining fertility rates and the demographic crisis, in order to foster the development of life. Measuring the results is not a matter for this thesis, what was important was how the discourses were framed and the justifications for the laws that have non-traditional sexualities as their target. Essentially put, sexuality has been introduced as the index of the Russian society's strength, and these discourses have entailed numerous control mechanisms: biopower with a complex means with which to calculate order, rationalise and functionalise the reproduction of life. The remarks from Putin and other key officials illustrate the insistence that they are not homophobic and they are not restricting the rights of non-normative sexualities, but that they are defending the family and promoting traditional pairings to stimulate the birth rates. The legitimate and procreative couple dominate the discourse; the Russian state has legislated only one single form of sexuality to be acknowledged within the social space as well as at the heart of every household. In this research I have analysed what is experienced as homophobia as an outcome/element/feature of modern state practices rather than as an outcome of the Russian cultural matrix. An analysis of the law in Saint Petersburg explained the link with the discourse of 'protecting children' was geared at accessing the biopolitical discourse of reproduction. Furthermore, this was supported with the official discussion surrounding the, at the time, draft Federal law which also established the idea that non-normative sexualities in Russia were harming the development of children. This would thus, limit their reproductive capacity in later life should they not be protected from homosexual propaganda.

The darkside of the biopolitical coin shows, violence has never been as prevalent as in the age of biopolitics. The biopolitical paradox is that the Russian lawmakers, by seeking to protect Russian children from homosexual propaganda, will do more harm than good for those children (and adults) that have non-normative sexual identities. The so-called paradox
exposes non-normative sexualities to greater risk in Russia and leaves them in the 'state of nature', without protection. The state apparatus has constructed notions of subgroups of Russians, for whom life is exposed to greater risks of violence than others. In essence, heterosexual life is trumpeted as legitimate and legal, and non-normative sexuality, whilst permitted is not protected. Yet, the rationale of biopolitics is not to repress anyone, but to foster life, however with state racism as a feature of biopolitical state practices, the controversial idea of life-producing violence has entered into Russia with regard to non-normative sexualities. This was supported with the interview accounts with non-normative sexualities which yielded interesting, albeit harrowing, insights into personal emotive accounts of experienced violence. Whilst the respondents have noticed that their lives have become more difficult since the passing of the laws, not one of them have encountered a person convicted under the new laws. The majority know of people who have been victims of homophobic abuse, but not anyone who has been prosecuted under the law for homosexual propaganda. This could be due to the fact that the laws are relatively new, however it shows that the power is not in the law itself, but the spirit of the law and how it has permeated societal discourses.

Finally, I conducted an inquiry into actual practices of biopolitical governance. Taking visibility first, I examined what is highlighted and left in the shadows. Essentially, with the law prohibiting non-traditional sexual relations, non-normative sexualities are denied a voice in the public sphere, and are confined to the shadows. Furthermore, this is supported by the legal invisibility that does not directly discriminate against them, but leaves them out altogether, thus concealing them without protection. This has had a further effect of allowing homophobes a more dominant voice in the public domain, which gives the impression that homophobic behaviour is tolerated, and on the increase because of these laws. Secondly, I examined in more detail the way in which normalisation discourses shape societal relations. I discovered that non-normative sexualities are likened to paedophiles and are constructed as abnormal in governmental discourses in order to ensure the transmission of heterosexual norms to the next generation. Thirdly, I looked at the concept of self-government and found that non-normative sexualities have, for the most part, internalised the discourses from the state apparatus and rather than seeking to fight the law, choose to remain hidden to be tolerated. This is further supported by the lack of a coherent LGBT community in Russia, as they feel their sexuality is not a basis for organising a movement. There are the beginnings of a discourse of resistance however; this is likened to rebellious behaviour in public rather than
a normal display of non-normative relations. Furthermore, it seems that the Internet is a domain where they are free to express their opinions and communicate with others. This could be a potential site of resistance in the future, but for now, rather than fighting the law, they just want to live in peace. Finally, I examined discourses that add non-normative sexualities to the trope of Russia’s enemies. Particularly strong here was the concept that homosexuality was a Western import, from Gay Parades to the specific sexual orientation. This could be seen from the linguistic point of view that Russians have more-or-less adopted the fixed Western categorisations of sexuality and the Western language of sexuality without an attempt to adapt them to the Russian reality. Taken together, these four specific governmental techniques drum up a comprehensive societal discourse that Russia must be defended from non-normative sexualities in order to ensure the survival of Russians-as-a-species.

Looking at the broader findings of this thesis. It appears that Russia is not willing to concede public space to non-normative sexualities; however, this should not be viewed exclusively as an authoritarian trend away from democracy and equal rights. The Russian government has never accepted that sexuality is grounds for what it views as special rights, privilege or protection. Legally, non-normative sexualities have not ever been a minority group in Russia. Theorising forward for a minute, the fact that it has now banned the propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations could be viewed as the first stepping-stone for achieving the emancipation of non-normative sexualities in Russia as it has legally defined them, albeit as an abnorm. The question then becomes, how can non-normative sexualities achieve the repel of this law and achieve minority status and protection? The Russian government might have labelled and confined non-normative sexualities, but understood in Foucauldian terms, it might have allowed something else to happen in time, that being a strong voice emerging from the silence.

This study has laid down some concrete foundations for further research of the topic of homosexuality in Russia as understood from a biopolitical perspective. However, this is only the start and there is a need for further research on the subject. With the passing of the national prohibition of propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations during 2013, the
biopolitical argumentation and reasoning needs to be explored in much more detail. Furthermore, the examination should be deepened to include a thorough analysis of the state apparatus’s biopolitical logic and discourses. By extending the research to cover discussions relating to the laws and additional technologies of biopower, thus, paraphrasing Foucault, completely cutting off the king’s head from the political analysis, and showing how this headless body acts as if it still has a head. Reading previous research through a biopolitical lens and building a more comprehensive framework of biopolitics, beyond that of Foucault’s own understanding would really benefit future research. It would also be interesting to further examine the role of homophobia as an outcome of modern state practices and its relation to the Russian cultural matrix in more detail.
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Appendix 1: Saint Petersburg Law Translated

Adopted by the Legislative Assembly of St. Petersburg on February 29, 2012

Article 1

To introduce into the Law of St. Petersburg on March 12, 2012, No. 273-70 "On administrative offenses in St. Petersburg" the following changes:

1. Add Articles 7_1 and 7_2 reading as follows:

Article 7_1. Public actions aimed at propaganda of sodomy, lesbianism, bisexuality, transgenderism amongst minors

Public actions aimed at propaganda of sodomy, lesbianism, bisexuality, transgenderism amongst minors incur an administrative fine for citizens in the amount of five thousand rubles; for officials -- fifty thousand rubles; for legal entities -- from two thousand fifty to five hundred thousand rubles.

Note. As public actions at propaganda of sodomy, lesbianism, bisexuality, transgenderism amongst minors in this article should be understood activities on purposeful and uncontrolled dissemination of information in a publicly accessible way that can be harmful to the health, moral and spiritual development of minors, including forming in their mind a distorted perception of social equality of traditional and nontraditional marital relationships.

Article 7.2: Public actions aimed at propaganda of pedophilia

Public actions aimed propaganda of pedophilia amongst minors incur an administrative fine for citizens in the amount of five thousand rubles; for officials -- fifty thousand rubles; for legal entities -- from five hundred thousand to one million rubles.

Note: As public actions aimed at propaganda of pedophilia amongst minors in this article should be understood activities on purposeful and uncontrolled dissemination of information in a publicly accessible way aimed at forming in the society a distorted perception of the consistency with the social norms of intimate relationships between adults and minors.

Article 2

The law of St. Petersburg takes effect 10 days after the day of its official publication.

Georgy Sergeyevich Poltavchenko
Governor of St. Petersburg
Saint Petersburg, Russia
March 7, 2012

Own translation from the Saint Petersburg internet archives with help of a native speaker: http://gov.spb.ru/law?d&nd=537913971&prevDoc=537913971&spack=010listid%3D01000000200%26listpos%3D0%26lsz%3D1146%26nd%3D888800018%26nh%3D0%26
Appendix 2: Federal Law

FEDERAL LAW On Introducing Amendments to the Code of the Russian Federation on Administrative Offences

The Code of the Russian Federation on Administrative Offences (Collection of Laws of the Russian Federation, 2002, No. 1, Article 1, No. 30 et al.) shall be amended as follows:

1) add Article 6.13.1 reading as follows: "Article 6.13.1. Propaganda of homosexualism among minors

Propaganda of homosexualism among minors -

is punishable by an administrative fine for citizens in the amount of four thousand to five thousand rubles; for officials – forty thousand to fifty thousand rubles; for legal entities – four hundred thousand to five hundred thousand rubles";

2) in Article 28.3, Section2, Clause 1 figures “6.13” shall be changed to “6.13.1”.

President of the Russian Federation


Propaganda of homosexualism in Russia took a wide sweep. This propaganda is delivered both through the media and through active social actions that promote homosexualism as a behavioral norm. It is especially dangerous for children and youth who are not yet capable of a critical attitude to the avalanche of information that falls upon them every day. In this regard, it is necessary to primarily protect the younger generation from the effects of homosexual propaganda, and the present bill pursues this goal.

Family, motherhood and childhood in the traditional, adopted from the ancestors understanding are the values that provide a continuous change of generations and serve as a condition for the preservation and development of the multinational people of the Russian Federation, and therefore they require special protection from the state.

Legitimate interests of minors are an important social value, with the goal of the public policy
toward children being to protect them from the factors that negatively affect their physical, intellectual, mental, spiritual, and moral development. Paragraph 1 of Article 14 of the Federal Law No 124-FZ of 24.07.1998 “On Basic Guarantees of Child Rights in the Russian Federation” directly states the obligation of public authorities of the Russian Federation to take measures to protect children from information, propaganda and campaigning that harm their health and moral and spiritual development.

In this connection it is necessary to establish measures to ensure intellectual, moral and mental security of children, including the prohibition onto perform any act aimed at the promotion of homosexuality. By itself, the prohibition of such propaganda as an activity of purposeful and uncontrolled dissemination of the information that could harm the health and moral and spiritual development, as well as form misperceptions about the social equivalence of conventional and unconventional sexual relationships, among individuals who, due to their age, are not capable to independently and critically assess such information cannot be regarded as violating the constitutional rights of citizens.

Given the above, a bill suggesting amendments to the Code of Administrative Offences was prepared to introduce administrative responsibility for propaganda of homosexuality among minors. In this case, administrative responsibility is established not for the sheer fact of the person’s homosexuality, but only for propaganda of homosexualism among minors.

This bill imposes the right to make records of administrative offences for public actions aimed at propaganda of homosexualism among minors on the law enforcement officials (the Police), and trial of cases of administrative offences– on the judges.

Retrieved from:
## Appendix 3: Interview Data

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Appendix 4 - Translation of Interview Questions

Thank you for agreeing to take part.
Please answer as many questions as you would like and in as much detail as you can.
By completing the interview you consent that the information gathered can be used as part of my Master’s Thesis at the University of Tampere. All replies will be confidential and the personal information will be removed from the Thesis.
You can respond in English, Finnish or Russian.

Mini Biography
Name:
Email address:
Age:
Ethnicity:
Current Location:
Where you are from:
Level of education:
Occupation:

About You
Are you Gay / Bi / Lesbian / Transgender / Straight / Other (please specify)?
When did you realise your sexual orientation?
Did you have a support network of friends?
Did you feel like you had to hide your sexuality?
Have you ‘Come out’ to your family and friends?
What is the reaction when you tell people about your sexuality?
Do you think a LGBT identity is positive or negative identity? Or something else?
Are there any positive LGBT role models in Russian Society?

Relationships
Is it difficult to meet sexual partners?
How do you meet them?
Are you in a Relationship?
What are the challenges facing couples in Russia?

Personal Safety
Have you ever suffered abuse (physical or verbal) because of your sexuality?
When you are in public do you have to hide your sexuality for safety?
Do you know of people who have suffered abuse because of their sexuality?
Promotion of Homosexuality Law
What do you think about the new law that bans the ‘promotion of homosexuality’ in St Petersburg on 17 March 2012?
Why do you think the Law is being passed in more cities?
Has your life changed since the law passed?
In your opinion is the law permitted by the Russian constitution?

Government
Do you feel you are represented by any political party?
Are there governmental ministers sympathetic to LGBT rights?
Does the Government use positive or negative language when talking about LGBT issues or people?
Are there any differences between city governors and the Duma on LGBT issues?
Do you think all the political parties are homophobic?

Equal Rights
Is 'gay marriage' a legal, political or religious issue?
How do you feel about the differences between Civil Unions and Marriage?
Why do you think there are no legal rights for LGBT to have a civil union?
Do you think legal equality will ever be achieved in Russia?

Pride Marches / Gay Parades
Are they a 'Western' import?
Do you think Pride Marches / Gay Parades help gain public acceptance of LGBT Rights?
Do Gay Parades promote a positive or negative stereotype of the LGBT community?
Why do you think they are continually banned?
If you attended a Parade what would the consequences be?

Acceptance
Can homophobic values / attitudes be changed in Russia?
How do you think the LGBT community can gain wide-spread acceptance?
What would you like the Government / Governors / Politicians do to change LGBT rights?

Your views on Russian Public Opinion (in general)
How do you think people view Homosexuality as Natural (Born Gay), Unnatural (a choice), an ‘illness’, Western Disease or criminal?
Do you think people would react differently to ‘a man and woman’ or ‘two men’ or ‘two’ women’ kissing in public?
Is the Russian public homophobic?
Are things getting better or worse in Russia?
Any other comments?