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MEDIA CONSTRUCTION OF LGBT PRIDES IN RUSSIA: FRAMING DYNAMICS AND FRAME RESONANCE

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The article analyses representation of LGBT-movement activity, namely Saint Petersburg LGBT prides, in Russia. Framing theory, which views the media as an arena in which groups of interest promote their frames, or interpretations of the discussed issue, is used. Frames juxtapose elements of the text in such a way as to provide the audience with a scheme to perceive the message. Social movements are viewed as a group of interest that introduces new frames in the public deliberation.

Two types of frames can be distinguished, namely collective action frames and status quo frames. In this study, usage of two collective action frames were examined (equality frame and victim frame), and two status quo frames (morality frame and propaganda of homosexuality). Additionally, the sources of quotes used in news stories were analyzed. The study focuses on articles dedicated to Saint Petersburg LGBT prides in years 2010-2017 in the most popular local Internet websites.

The analysis shows that the coverage of LGBT prides can be divided into two distinct periods: 2010–2013 and 2014–2017. In the first period, LGBT activists dominated the coverage, quoted about twice more actively than government officials. Equality and victim frames were prevalent. In the second period, activists were cited significantly less often, with the propaganda of homosexuality frame dominating in the discourse. However, contrary to findings of previous studies on social movement representation, across the whole period under consideration LGBT activists were quoted more actively than government representatives. This finding calls for further exploration of the conditions which allowed for such coverage in the context of political heterosexism and homophobia.

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LGBT movements all over the world strive to promote and defend the rights of gays, lesbians, bisexual and transgender people. Russia is not an exception from this trend, although it has a specific context in which the movement functions. First and foremost, its very existence in the public space has become possible only since the abolishment of the article 121 criminalizing male homosexual intercourse. While the criminal charges disappeared, the stigma surrounding homosexuality, portraying of LGBT people as deviant, silencing of their problems was left intact (Kon 2010; Kondakov 2013; Isaev 2013). "Homosexuality was erased from the law, but its aura of illegality, of being prohibited and censored, was not dismantled" (Kondakov 2013).

The beginning of public discussion on LBGT issues is documented slightly earlier than the decriminalization of homosexuality happened. The evolution of LGBT movement in Russia can be grouped into five stages. *First*, with the new possibilities for free expression of opinions that appeared with perestroika and glasnost', academics and journalists became involved in debates on the issue in 1987. *Second*, in 1990 - 1993, LBGT people themselves joined the movement, human rights rhetoric was elaborated, first LGBT organizations and information resources were created. June 1993 marked the beginning of the *third* stage with the aforementioned homosexuality decriminalization. Since then, the struggle against homophobia and for equality, formation of a new homosexual culture started. (Kon 1997) During *fourth* period, between 1996 and the middle of the 2000s, the movement entered its abeyance phase, when it did not function actively. The *fifth* stage started in 2006 and is still ongoing. The movement revitalized as a reaction to adoption of laws banning propaganda of homosexuality in several regions of Russia. These legislature proposals contributed to the development of the movement in at least two ways. First, they solidified presence of LGBT issues in the public discussion, even if presented with negative connotations. Second, the initiatives served as a common enemy for activists, against which the movements needed to consolidate (Lapina 2014). Legislature on "propaganda of homosexuality to the minors" introduced on a federal level in 2013 is interpreted as an attempt to "silence homosexuality back" (Kondakov 2013), but once the issue has been introduced in the public debate, it is cannot be undone so easily.

Although Moscow LGBT prides and the figure of Nikolay Alekseev in particular have received attention of researchers (Stella, 2013), much activity of LGBT is taking place in Saint Petersburg. The city is regarded by many as "the gay capital of Russia" (Efimov 2012). LGBT movement has been frequently allowed into the public space on equal terms with other social and political groups. Since 2013, LGBT column participated in the traditional annual May 1st rally devoted to the celebration of International Worker's day, a tradition continuing since the Soviet times (Yankelevich 2013), with the exception of 2016 when the LGBT symbolic at the rally was prohibited by local authorities (Avramenko 2016). There have also been instances when LGBT prides occurred without problems with the authorities or provocations, for example, in 2014 (Lobkov 2014).

Saint Petersburg LGBT prides are held annually in the summer months. Since the first pride in 2010, activists organized the rally every year, irrespective of permission of local authorities. These events made it to the news on occasion. As a report from a Saint Petersburg LGBT organization suggests, in 2011-2012 LGBT started attracting interest of news agencies as news makers (Sozaev 2013). However, participants in the parades are still relatively few in number, let alone the fact that LGBT issues still cease to appear on the federal agenda. Cases like

Sochi Olympics, when the international public drew attention to the fact that Russian ban on homosexuality display is contrary to the spirit of Olympics, and the authorities needed to justify their position on the issue, constitute rather an exception than a rule.

Several studies explore the characteristics of media discourse on homosexuality in Russia. They have found that homosexuality is stigmatized in both legal and media discourse. It is often described as sinful and deviant behavior, and only rarely as a normal sexual orientation (Pronkina 2016; Tolkachev 2016). Research attention has been drawn to examining discourse in general, which is clearly dominated by traditionalist interpretations of homosexuality. However, none of the studies concentrated on media representation of events that have a potential for media portrayal of LGBT movement in a positive, constructive manner. This article fills the gap by considering images constructed by the media in coverage of prides: rallies designed to promote claims of LGBT to their rights and dignity, an important way of appearing in the media in a positive way. The article also draws attention to the changes in media discourse over time as changes in representation of annual LGBT prides. Moreover, I attempt to apply the concept of frame resonance to explain the lack of support for LGBT movement despite its presence in the media.

In this study, framing theory is employed to provide an explanation for the lack of social change despite the presence of the LGBT movement in the public sphere. In order to achieve this, media coverage of Saint Petersburg LGBT prides held in 2010 – 2017 is considered. Namely, two hypotheses derived from the literature on media framing of protest events are examined. The first has to do with media underrepresentation either of the protest events or of the claims promoted during these events. The second hypothesis supposes that frames, or interpretations of the issue's essence, of the movement have less potential for appealing to the broader public than status quo frames.

Social movements and the media

In order to achieve the primary goal social movements pursue, social change, they need to attract widespread support for the problematized cause. The public's attitudes about a social movement are rarely constructed in interpersonal interactions with its representatives, in most cases they are mediated by images presented in the media. This is the main reason why media representation is of utmost importance for the movement's success. "Media define the public significance of movement events or, by blanking them out, actively deprive them of larger significance" (Gitlin 2003). Merely appearing in the news is, however, insufficient for promotion of the movement's claims. Only favorable coverage allows the movement to "mobilize members, construct a viable public identity, or to build a public policy agenda" (Barker- Plummer 1995).

Social movements, as well as other groups of interest, participate in the process which scholars have labeled "struggle over meaning" (Gamson, Wolfsfeld 1993), "meaning work" (Benford, Snow 2000), "the politics of signification" (Hall 1982), "struggles for cultural supremacy" (Tarrow 1994). In essence, it implies that various actors construct cultural meanings of social reality and thrive to promote and make them prevalent over the other interpretations. Mass media are the arena where these symbolic contests are carried out (Gamson, Wolfsfeld, 1993).

To promote preferable meanings, social movements, countermovements, governments, business and other interest groups produce meaning structures called frames. Frames are defined as "persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis, and exclusion, by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse" (Gitlin 2003). According to Entman (1993), framing entails selection of certain issue aspects and raising their salience "in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described". Journalists then construct news articles, both reproducing meanings relayed to them by the interest groups, and contributing with their views on how to better package the story (Brüggemann 2014). This way media frames are produced, defined as "a central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events" (Gamson, Modigliani 1987).

Status quo frames vs collective action frames

Frames structuring media discourse can either support the prevalent cultural understandings of certain phenomena or challenge these dominant perceptions. *Status quo frames* represent the first type, and the latter are called *collective action frames*. There is ample evidence that news media tend to support the state of affairs when representing social movements (Entman, Rojecki 1993; Gitlin 2003; Smith et al. 2001). Status quo can be promoted through construction and promotion of alternative frames and/or by the means of undermining the movement's claims. The first type is found in the same-sex marriage debate, where claims to equal rights are countered with the morality frame interpreting marriage in exclusively heterosexual terms (Hull 2001). On the other hand, the movement's credibility can be challenged by emphasizing violence employed by the protesters, their marginalization in terms of their insufficient numbers or the nature of their claims, portraying protesters as immature and childish (Kenix 2011).

A distinct type of status quo frames is produced by various government structures and groups affiliated with the power elites (Noakes 2000). These frames are fairly pervasive, since standard routines induce journalists to quote official sources, as they are reliable and increase the efficiency of journalists by providing commentary quickly (Gans 1979; Sigal 1973). Concentration of cultural, material and political resources in the elite members' hands makes framing contests fundamentally unfair, leaving the challengers with fewer opportunities to promote their claims. At times the issue is constructed disregarding social movements' perspectives entirely, when only sources supporting status quo are quoted (Altheide, Grimes 2005; Reese, Buckalew 1995).

Nevertheless, in most cases, struggle over the definition of social reality remains a dynamic process where status quo frames do not dominate entirely (Noakes 2000). Movements construct *collective action frames*, or "action-oriented sets of beliefs that inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns of a social movement organization"(Benford, Snow 2000). Snow and Benford (1988) distinguish three main framing tasks that the movements have: diagnostic, prognostic and motivational framing. The first two tasks are inherent in all frames, constituting what Entman (1993) names "causal interpretation" and "treatment recommendation". The motivational task, however, is a distinctive feature of collective action frames, as social movements strive to attract new members and supporters and strengthen their position in the public debate. An inherent component of the motivational task success is frame resonance.

Frame resonance

Frame resonance occurs "when there is cognitive alignment between a movement's ideology and the beliefs of an adherent or constituent" (Kubal 1998). Providing motivation for the movement's current members (back region frames) and acquiring support from broader public (front region frames) prove to be different tasks (Kubal 1998). This study concentrates on the public, or front region, frames as the movement aims to influence broader public when being represented in the media.

Benford and Snow (2000) suggest that the ability of a proffered frame to resonate depends on its *credibility* and *relative salience*. The first condition rests on three pillars: frame consistency, empirical credibility and the credibility of the claim-makers (Benford, Snow 2000: 619). *Frame consistency* is defined as the lack of contradictions both within the movement's ideas, and between framings and the actions. The second factor, *empirical credibility*, "refers to the apparent fit between the framing and events in the world" (Benford, Snow 2000: 620), thus the appeal of a frame is dependent on how culturally believable diagnostic and prognostic claims are. *Credibility of frame articulators*, namely, the movement's participants, is important as well, the greater status/perceived expertise the speakers have, the more resonant are the promoted frames. This factor explains the strategy of engaging celebrity supporters in campaigns often employed by the movements (Lester 2006). Such a speaker raises the movement's trustworthiness in the eyes of the potential supporters. As research has shown, a conventional strategy for undermining a movement's claims and activities is based on questioning this last component, portraying the movement adherents as aggressive, violent, radical or childish (Gitlin 2003; McLeod, Detenber 1999).

The second aspect affecting the probability of frame resonance is the *salience* of the issue aspects highlighted in the movement's rhetoric. Salience is characterized by three dimensions: centrality, experiential commensurability, and narrative fidelity (Benford, Snow 2000). *Centrality* refers to how close the beliefs and values expressed in the frame are to those of the target population. *Experiential commensurability* captures how congruent the framing is with everyday experiences of the public. The last factor, *narrative fidelity*, is the degree to which the frame resonates with cultural narrations, "myths" of the target population.

Framing LGBT movement in Russia

What frames can one expect to witness in the discussion on LGBT rights in Russia? It has been suggested that in efforts to promote their position social movements have frequently elaborated the civil rights master frame, in which the responsibility injustices experienced by the group are attributed to structural imperfections (Noakes 2000; Snow, Benford 1992). The two frames that have been identified in Russian LGBT organizations' representation are rhetorics of *tolerance* and *equality* (Kondakov 2013). Proponents of the first promote the strategy of adjustment towards the existing order, helping LGBT people overcome their difficulties without challenging the status quo. Moreover, organizations promoting tolerance frame explicitly spoke out against holding LGBT prides (Kondakov 2013: 421). Thus, the tolerance articulation cannot be regarded as a collective action frame. The *equality frame*, on the other hand, is used by organizations striving for politization of LGBT issues, who claim that "homosexuality should be equally respected by law" (Kondakov 2013: 421). Therefore, the current state of affairs is

questioned, social change is promoted with this collective action frame, which is likely to be prominent in coverage of LBGT prides.

The issue of hate crimes and other kinds of abuses towards LGBT is recognized as a problem by activists and organizations (Dubrovskiy 2013). This makes plausible the use of the *victim frame* in claims aimed at the wide audience. Victim frame is a kind of rhetoric focusing on identification of victims of the unjust status quo and amplifying their victimization (Benford, Snow 2000). It has been noted that victimization is highlighted in discourse of LGBT activists in order to provide a link to human rights discourse (Pronkina 2016).

Status quo frames, on the other hand, oppose articulations of problems provided by the movement seeking social change. It is noteworthy that, in the case of LGBT movement, status quo frames can be promoted by countermovements, which also strive to provide a motivational incentive for their targeted population. Thus, they fall under the definition of collective action frames. However, in this study frames opposing LGBT movement's claims will be regarded as status quo frames, regardless of the actor promoting them, whether they are government-related structures or countermovements.

Having noted this, two possible ways in which opposition to equal rights claims can be constructed are discerned. First, there is a revival of religious discourse in Russian public sphere, giving "platforms for religious leaders who opposed LGBT communities on moral grounds" (Pearce, Cooper 2016). The government has also developed and promoted traditional values concept positioned as inherent for the very survival of the Russian nation (Wilkinson 2014). These characteristics suggest the presence of the *morality frame*, which "puts the event, problem, or issue in the context of religious tenets or moral prescriptions" (Semetko, Valkenburg 2000).

The second way opposition to LGBT movement's claims can be constructed is *propaganda of homosexuality frame*. It defines the actions of the LGBT activists as propaganda of the so-called non-traditional sexual orientations. Its use is predetermined by the availability of this frame in public discourse in the ongoing discussion of bans on public display of homosexuality. The debates on this legislature started at the regional level in the middle of 2000s, and culminated in adoption of a federal law in 2013. The frame is thus predicted to become increasingly prominent over time, most actively employed in 2013 when the discussion was at its peak.

It could be argued that the propaganda of homosexuality frame resembles the morality argumentation. Indeed, the justification for this kind of evaluation of LGBT visibility lies in moral and religious judgments. It is, however, specific in two senses. First, it appeals to the letter of the law as well as to moral authority. Secondly, it includes the notion that homosexuals intend to influence the public, namely minors, in such a way that observers turn homosexual. It is intriguing to trace the use of this highly context and issue-specific frame in the battle over social meanings of LGBT prides.

As discussed above, LGBT activists generally lose the battle over meaning to their opponents, as indicated by a relatively small number of people appearing at prides and lack of attention to LGBT issues at the federal level. Two possible explanations of this phenomenon can be identified. The first deals with underrepresentation of the movement or its claims. If the

protest events receive no coverage, their potential to influence the public and potential supporters declines dramatically (Gitlin 2003). I attempt to establish if the Saint Petersburg prides received a substantial coverage, allowing the activists to relay the meaning of their actions and claims. The second possible explanation lies in the nature of frames that vary in the degree of resonance they may cause when presented to the broader public (Benford, Snow 2000). Collective action frames and status quo frames are explored in terms of their capacity to gain supporters in the Russian context.

Method

Sample

The research focused on news items published on the Internet. This choice is justified by the fact that the majority of publications about homosexuality are found online, and not in print media (Semykina 2017; Sozaev 2013). Most popular information portals, which are based or have an editorial office in Saint Petersburg, were examined. The sample was drawn from 11 websites[2]: *Rosbalt Peterburg*, *Fontanka.ru*, *Metro, Baltinfo* (Baltic information agency in Saint Petersburg), *Moi raion* (My district), *TheVillage*, *Gorod 812* (City 812), *Argumenti i fakti* (Arguments and facts) in Saint Petersburg, *Echo Moskvi* (Echo of Moscow) in Saint Petersburg, *Vedomosti* in Saint Petersburg, *Sankt-Peterburg.ru*. The website of Echo Moskvi enables to access publications since 2010.12.09 only, Gorod 812 and Vedomosti did not publish any articles about LGBT prides.

The websites were searched by keywords "gay pride", "gay parade", "LGBT pride". Only publications devoted to the prides in Saint Petersburg were selected, excluding articles about LGBT prides in general or in other places. As a result, 364 news items were collected and analyzed.

Coding

Analysis involved discerning two types of text segments: citations and frames. Both citations formulated as direct and indirect speech were coded. All citations were assigned to the group whose representative was quoted. 6 groups of commentators were distinguished:

1. LGBT activists/NGOs
2. Supporters
3. Government officials
4. Religious activists
5. Opposition
6. Other

Secondly, the four collective action and status quo frames described in detail above were distinguished in these citations. Table 1 summarizes coding guidelines for identification of frames in the texts.

Table 1. Coding guidelines.

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[2] Popularity was measured as the rating in Yandex catalogue of Saint Petersburg press <https://yaca.yandex.ru/yca/geo/Russia/Northwest/Leningradskay_oblast/Petersburg/cat/Media/>

Equality frame	Claims to the same rights as other citizens have; Citing ways in which LGBT are treated unequally.
Victim frame	Mentions of grievances caused by the current order; Emphasizing cases of derogatory and violent actions towards LGBT.
Morality frame	References to morality, God, or religious tenets; References to traditions of the society.
Propaganda of homosexuality frame	Evaluations of prides as promoting propaganda of homosexuality.

Visibility of prides and LGBT movement claims

Figure 1 shows the number of articles published about each LGBT pride in the period of interest. The overall trend is towards a decline in interest toward prides among journalists. This may be due to the fact that each event in the sequence is less valuable than the first events. A major exception from this trend is 2012 with a record number of 95 articles devoted to the pride. It can be explained by two factors. First, a ban on propaganda of homosexuality in Saint Petersburg, proposed by the local legislative assembly and signed by the mayor, entered into force in March 2012. This could have caused more interest towards the rally. Secondly, the 2012 pride was marked by unusual behavior of the Vasileostrovskiy district administration. It granted permission to hold a rally for the first time in the history of Saint Petersburg prides. The activists informed media of the first official permission, but the administration decided to overrule this decision. Since there is no legal procedure of rejecting a previously given permission to rally, much criticism appeared in the media. This description shows how many factors influence coverage of LGBT prides or the lack of it. One trend is obvious: prides do not stay completely silenced. Let us continue with the consideration of whether LGBT activist and organizations are given the opportunity to voice their claims in media messages.

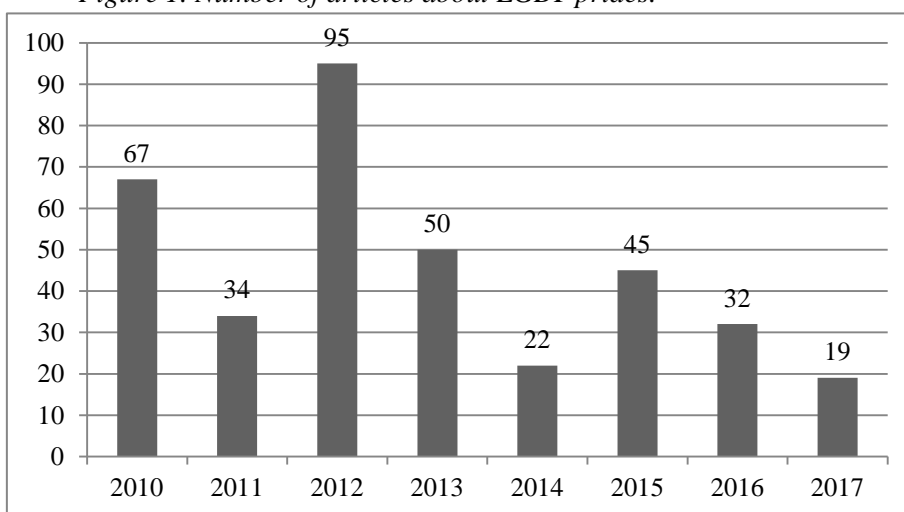*Figure 1. Number of articles about LGBT prides.*

Table 2 shows the groups cited in the coverage of LGBT prides. The table illustrates dominance of two groups in the discussion: LGBT activists and organizations, and government officials. 76% of articles (276 out of 364) mention the position of activists on the issues discussed, and 40% (145 out of 364) cite government actors. Supporters of the movement were

quoted rather rarely. Those opposing LGBT claims to equality had a word more frequently, but still played a less important role than the two dominant actors. Religious activists commented on the issue of LGBT prides in only one article.

Overall, the evidence suggests that the movement is regarded by journalists as a reliable source of information. In fact, every year activists were quoted more willingly than government officials. Therefore, we cannot establish underrepresentation of activists at this level. There is still a possibility that despite quoting LGBT movement representatives, journalists failed to promote the frames constructed by activists, quoting them solely for the purpose of relaying factual information, or the phenomenon of "frameless quotes" (Benson, Wood 2015).

Table 2. The number of articles where groups were quoted.

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total
LGBT activists/NGOs	63	25	81	32	13	28	26	8	276
Supporters	7	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	9
Government officials	15	15	53	17	7	21	15	3	145
Religious activists	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Opposition	2	0	5	7	3	5	1	2	25
Other	1	1	20	2	1	1	0	2	28
Total	128	53	225	87	35	76	68	22	694

Note: Total number of articles in this table exceeds the number of articles analyzed (N = 364), as one article could cite several groups and was put into several categories.

Table 3 presents data on the number of articles mentioning one of the frames considered in current analysis. First, it is noticeable that only 196 out of 364 articles (54%) feature at least one frame. This points to factual nature of most of the articles, where no commentary or sources are provided. In other cases, sources are cited, but only in order to provide factual information on the newsbreak, excluding any interpretations. Nevertheless, the data demonstrates that when interpretations are used in the articles, most prominent frames are equality frame, featured in 25% of texts, and propaganda of homosexuality frame, 18% of texts. The other collective action frame, victim frame, and the status quo morality frame are less prominent.

The coverage of LGBT prides seems to be divided into two periods: 2010 – 2013 and 2014 – 2017. In the first period, LGBT activists take the lead by introducing equality arguments and victimization amplification into the discussion. In 2011, only collective action frames were featured. Even in 2012, when the debate of bans on propaganda of homosexuality was at its peak, the movement's interpretations dominated twofold.

The second period is marked by less publication activity on the topic of LGBT prides. Activists are cited significantly less often, with the propaganda of homosexuality frame dominating in the discourse. Morality frame is cited only in 3 articles during this period. It could be explained by the fact that propaganda argumentation partly contains claims to morality, but also entails a legal justification of the speaker's position. Increasingly available in the discourse and powerful in the sense of combining two logics amplified by the power of a legal statute, propaganda of homosexuality rhetoric made pure morality claims redundant.

Returning to the question of availability of collective action frames in the media, it appears that they are used in news stories rather often. Despite the decreasing media coverage of prides and increased number of status quo frames, equality and victim arguments were still accessible in media discourse for a rather long period of time. Thus, the question of quality of these frames and the counterframes is still important to completely understand the nature of reporting on prides and the public's reaction.

Table 3. The number of articles mentioning frames.

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	**Total**
Equality	26	11	33	9	3	1	7	0	**90**
Victim	3	1	8	6	1	2	0	5	**26**
Morality	4	0	4	3	0	2	1	0	**14**
Propaganda	5	0	16	4	6	15	18	2	**66**
Total	**38**	**12**	**61**	**22**	**10**	**20**	**26**	**7**	**196**

Note: Total number of articles in this table exceeds the number of articles analyzed (N = 364), as one article could cite several groups and was put into several categories.

Frame resonance in the discussion of Saint Petersburg prides

Empirical analysis conducted in this article can assist in accounting for frame resonance only partially. To understand it completely, references to broader social context are necessary. Thus, this section can only suggest general notions on the context in which collective action and status quo function, leaving more systematic explanations of frame resonance for further research. The systematization of is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Frame resonance of collective action frames and status quo frames (author's estimation)

Frame resonance indicator		Collective action frames	Status quo frames
Frame credibility	Frame consistency	+	+
	Empirical credibility	?	?
	Credibility of claim-makers	-	+
Frame salience	Centrality	-	+
	Experiential commensurability	-	-
	Narrative fidelity	-	+

Frame resonance is measured through frame credibility and salience (Benford, Snow 2000). *Frame credibility* entails three aspects. First, *frame consistency*, or absence of contradictions within the frames or between frames and actions. Empirical data analyzed in this study did not provide evidence for incongruity in claims and actions of either proponents or rivals of social change. *Empirical credibility* refers to the degree to which framings offer "culturally believable" empirical evidence (Benford, Snow 2000). It is hard to establish whether the evidence presupposed by frames in the pride reporting are believable. Victim frame was supported with events during prides, when the activists faced provocations, aggression, attacks, eggs and smoke bombs throwing. Status quo frames could present less evidence, as LGBT activists did not act in extravagant ways. One exception is the activist who held a poster "Sodom

is sweeter than honey" during the rally in 2014, and was arrested for propaganda of homosexuality. However, from this information it is impossible to establish whether the public finds this evidence convincing, sweeping statements in this regard should be avoided. Thirdly, *credibility of claim-makers* is connected with the image of the group promoting a certain frame. Status quo frames are advocated predominantly by government officials, who constitute a powerful and commonly respected source for the population. While official sources are, as a rule, initially credible, social movements need to create and sustain this reputation. Regarding LGBT activists who organized Saint Petersburg prides, few sources of credibility were engaged. No celebrities publically claimed support of activists; local ombudsman's support was requested and cited infrequently. In general, the credibility of the movement can be considered as low.

Frame salience is the second aspect affecting frame resonance. Its first component, *centrality*, refers to the degree to which values expressed in framings resemble beliefs of the target population. Cross-cultural value surveys such as World Values Survey show that Russians share survival values, which emphasize economic and physical security, rather than self-expression values, such as freedom of speech and assembly, equal participation in decision-making (Inglehart, Welzel 2014). Equality and victim frame are based on self-expression values, far from sentiments of the population. Morality and propaganda frames, on the other hand, refer to sustaining traditional values, strengthening the sense of security. *Experiential commensurability* concerns how close framings are to everyday experiences of the audience. It is estimated as low for both collective action and status quo frames. In a recent survey, only 8% of Russians reported that they knew a homosexual person (WCIOM 2015), therefore claims for equality for LGBT do not concern experiences of most people. The same happens with propaganda of homosexuality: 6% of people encountered this kind of propaganda, in real life or on TV (WCIOM, 2012). Finally, *narrative fidelity*, the ability of a frame to resonate with "cultural myths" of the population is important as well. LGBT activists' argumentation is based on comparisons of the conditions of lesbians and gay men in Russia with those in other parts of the world, where LGBT people are granted equal rights" (Kondakov 2013: 421). As a result, "the community is seen as 'a group that's an import to Russia, a group that doesn't belong to Russian culture" (Disser 2014). Status quo frames, among other characteristics, contain an element linking LGBT prides and the movement's activity in general to European values and frame them as opposing Russian values.

Conclusion

Overall, the analysis showed that LGBT prides and their organizers' claims are present in the media. First, Saint Petersburg prides consistently attract media attention, inducing varying amount of publications every year. Secondly, position of LGBT is rather prominent in the coverage. Journalists ask LGBT activists and NGO representatives for comments most intensively. Government officials are the second most popular source of information and opinions about the prides, but they are quoted in half as many articles as activists are. Thirdly, although less frequently over the last four years, media messages succeed to communicate the equality frame, in which most of activists' claims are formulated, and the victim frame. Its close contestant, propaganda of homosexuality frame, is also present and has been prevalent lately, but is by no means a universal way of understanding LGBT prides presented to the audience.

Morality frame can be regarded as a prerequisite of the propaganda frame, as its use was reduced heavily after the legislature banning propaganda of homosexuality was introduced.

This evidence shows that the key to understanding the modest effect of LGBT movement's efforts does not lie in the nature of its coverage, evidently favorable, as the results of this study suggest. Status quo frames on LGBT prides appear to be more powerful than collective action frames in multiple aspects which affect frame resonance. Credibility of claim-makers is higher for status quo frames as they are promoted predominantly by government officials. These framings also resemble the values of Russians to a larger extent, and resonate with their cultural myths.

Whereas LGBT movements' frames are not resonant with most of the population, LGBT people that agree to equality and victimization arguments could be convinced by them. However, sexual orientation or gender identity is not linked to shared values. The movement could suggest another interpretation of connection between LGBT and national culture which includes LGBT in Russian traditions. For example, homosexuality of culturally important figures could be amplified to place LGBT within the cultural legacy. This kind of arguments appeared in activists' quotes, which shows that these meanings are produced inside the movement, but they are not prominent in the media. This may offend some citizens striving to assure purity of Russian culture, but might attract more supporters among LGBT and friendly heterosexuals.

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