

Gay Rights and Europeanization Processes in Eastern Europe: the Case of Bill 2342 “On Amendments to Some Legislative Acts of Ukraine Concerning the Prevention and Combating of Discrimination in Ukraine”

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The study examines the political framing of Bill № 2342, which proposed the prohibition of discrimination based on sexual orientation in the labor sphere in Ukraine. Nineteen distinct frames developed by key political actors and interest groups were identified, united into four master-frames. The failure of the proponents of Bill 2342 to make their frames dominant in the public discussion is explained by the lack of consolidation within the pro-camp. The most resourceful proponents (political elites) shared the opponents’ assumptions about homosexuality and LGB rights, which limited their ability to construct alternative frames. Heterogeneous frames developed by LGBT and human rights organizations did not provide any coherent response to the strong “traditional values/norms” frame used by the opponents from churches and the religious right. The study contributes to understanding the conditions for effective political framing strategies and their role in establishing and maintaining an anti-gay consensus on civil and economic rights in post-communist countries.

Keywords: gay rights, discrimination, framing, political discourse, Europeanization, Ukraine

Introduction

In recent decades, post-socialist countries have experienced continuous difficulty ensuring civil and economic equality for their homosexual citizens. Violent attacks on gay pride marches in Poland, Latvia, Hungary, and Serbia, and bills against “propagation of homosexuality” in Lithuania and Ukraine are the most significant examples of this. Some researchers consider the rise of homonegativity¹ in Eastern Europe, which is often linked to post-Soviet reinforcement of nationalist ideologies and religious movements, to be a recent phenomenon (Renkin, 2009: 21). Others suggest

1 The term “homonegativity” is used in sociological studies to define a negative attitude towards homosexual people and high level of social distance from them (Štulhofer & Rimac, 2009). Its equivalents are “homophobia”, “heteronormativity”, and “heterosexism”, each of which preserves connotations from the research tradition of its origin. “Homophobia” relates to psychological aspects of individual negative attitudes towards homosexuality. The term “heteronormativity” originated in queer-theory, where it is used in analyses of discursive reproduction of the homo/hetero binary. Finally, the term “heterosexism”, is used in social sciences to define complex social structures which sustain inequality through institutions, discourses, and everyday practices (Adam, 1998). In this paper I use “homonegativity” as a general term for negative social attitudes towards homosexuality, and terms “homophobia”, “heteronormativity”, and “heterosexism” depending on the context (to stress individual attitude, discursive structure, and the whole system of social domination, respectively).

that political area of gay rights² is still influenced by the heritage of the Soviet Union, where the existing social taboo on same-sex desires was enforced by criminal prosecution of male homosexuality (O'Dwyer, 2012: 332). Attitudes towards homosexuality have created a cultural divide between Western European countries, the first members of the European Union, and Eastern European countries, which joined the EU later (Štulhofer & Rimac, 2009: 24).

The implementation and protection of the civil and economic equality of minority groups in Eastern Europe is highly influenced by the politics and policies of the European Union. Together with shared beliefs, norms and procedures, EU legal standards are adopted by candidate member states and neighboring countries in Eastern Europe, either through external incentives (EU benefits or sanctions) or socialization mechanisms (Schimmelfennig, 2010). When driven by external incentives, anti-discrimination standards often face resistance as “foreign norms”, which may grow into political backlash and threaten rights (O'Dwyer, 2012: 333). Thus, sexual conservatism even increased in Poland and Latvia after these countries joined the EU, which became apparent in problems with the practical realization of legally guaranteed protection of gays and lesbians from discrimination, the inclusion of supporters of anti-gay policies into the political mainstream, and the spread of aggressive anti-gay rhetoric in the public sphere (O'Dwyer & Schwartz, 2010).

The recent legislative attempt to secure the right to non-discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in Ukraine provides another example of external incentives' failure to provoke democratic transformations in Eastern Europe. In order to conclude a visa liberalization agreement with the EU, Ukraine should have adopted comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation including explicit prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation. The Bill № 2342, which mandated such a prohibition in the labor sphere, was debated in 2013 but never appeared on the parliament's agenda due to the resistance of some parliamentary parties and the united lobbying efforts of churches and rightwing grassroots religious movements. Despite comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation not being passed, Ukraine still officially proceeded to the second phase of the “Visa Liberalization Action Plan” in June 2014 on the recommendation of the European Commission and endorsement by the European Council (Delegation of the European Union to Ukraine, 2014). The Ukrainian government established thereby a precedent which might be applied by other countries in their further political relations with the EU. It is worth noting that Moldova and Georgia, which were preparing to conclude visa liberalization with the EU at the same time as Ukraine, did pass the explicit legal prohibition of sexual orientation discrimination—despite similar resistance from the church and conservative politicians (Civil Georgia, 2014; Roudik, 2012).

In this paper I seek to explain why the alliance of radical politicians, churches, and the religious right succeeded over proponents from the political elites and LGBT-movement in the discursive struggle over Bill 2342, despite initial support of the bill by such powerful political actors as the Ukrainian government and the EU. Relying on data gathered from the internet websites of key political actors and interest groups who took part in debates, I examine how the bill was framed in Ukrainian political discourse. I was particularly interested in understanding the conditions for the effectiveness of the framing strategies used by the opponents and proponents of the bill, and how the conservative consensus over LGB rights in Ukraine might be undermined.

My own political position on LGB rights is “anti-homophobic” and “integrative” to use Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's (1990) terms, which means that I am not only committed to equality between homosexual and heterosexual people, but I also believe that to achieve such equality we should overcome the very homo/hetero binary itself and accept another understanding of sexuality, at least as a continuum, or at its best as the totality of heterogeneous manifestations of a fluid desire (as in the schizoanalysis of Deleuze and Guattari (1988)). This political position comes into conflict with the very term “gay rights” which mean civil and economic rights of the homosexual minority and thus imply the homo/hetero binary. Nevertheless I have retained here the term “gay rights”, which is common in research related to anti-discrimination legislation (O'Dwyer, 2012; O'Dwyer &

Schwartz, 2009, 2010) because struggle for sexual rights³ in Ukraine grounds on identity politics, which means that political activism and legal initiatives take the existence of (homo-/bi-)sexual identity as a starting point for further strategies and demands. As long as Bill 2342 referred only to sexual orientation but not to gender identity, it did not, in fact, protect transsexual rights; therefore, use of the more common term “LGBT rights” would be misleading. Recognizing that bisexual people may also be affected by discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and subsequently would have been protected by Bill 2342, I will also use the term “LGB rights” alongside and interchangeably with “gay rights”.

Heteronormative hegemony and political elites in Eastern Europe

Queer-theoretical studies of the discursive construction of sexuality reveal that homosexual and heterosexual identities are defined as mutually excluding; heterosexuality is the privileged part of the binary, related to nature, health, and morality; homosexuality is defined as unhealthy, unnatural, immoral, and subsequently exposed to social sanctions— stigmatization, discrimination and restrictions (Rubin, 1984). This opposition between heterosexual and homosexual is strengthened by the construction of the national identity and citizenship as implicitly heterosexual (Keinz, 2011; Nagel, 2000; Renkin, 2009). The complex of discursive mechanisms which sustain the homo/hetero binary is named “heteronormativity”. The institutionalization of heteronormative discourses results in homonegative state policies, and their circulation on the level of interpersonal interactions sustains homophobic attitudes in society. However, heteronormative hegemony is not eternal and inescapable. As Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (2001) point out, meaning in discourse is never totally fixed. Political subjects are involved in the endless struggle over the (re)definition (“(re)articulation”) of key discursive elements.

Two case studies of public debates on homosexuality in Romania and Poland may serve to illustrate the discursive struggle over the heteronormative status quo in Eastern Europe, in which various political actors (political elites and interest groups such as churches and the LGBT movement) take part. In Romania, the decriminalization of public manifestations of homosexuality in 2000 was preceded by a 5-year debate over the correspondence of homosexuality to moral, religious, medical norms as well as norms of public behavior, in which the Orthodox Church was actively involved. The ban on homosexuality was abolished only when Romania started accession talks with the EU under pressure from the European Council (Turcescu & Stan, 2005). In Poland, religious and nationalistic discourses have equated democracy with “normalcy”, defined as “traditional” gender roles and heterosexuality which should be followed by individuals in order to claim full citizenship and national identity. The contesting definition of democracy, as introduced by gay rights and women’s NGOs, and which relied on universal standards of equality, has failed to become dominant in Polish society (Keinz, 2011).

Political elites play a prominent part in sustaining heteronormative hegemony. Drawing on an analogy with van Dijk’s conceptualization of the role of politicians in the reproduction of racism (van Dijk, 1997), it may be suggested that within the system of heterosexism, political elites occupy a position of double domination. As an empowered class, politicians who identify themselves with the heterosexual group sustain heterosexual privileges through homonegative articulations of sexual norms. Access to media platforms allows political elites to dominate the public discourse. Also, politicians may consciously manipulate homophobic attitudes in society in order to disqualify political opponents and mobilize electoral capital, as in Thatcher’s UK governance (Smith, 1994) and contemporary Belarus (Usmanova, 2002).

3 Sexual rights include rights to sexual conduct, self-definition and the development of individual identities (e.g. gay, lesbian and bisexual identities), and for the public validation of various forms of sexual relations. For the concept of “sexual rights” see more: Richardson, D. (2000). Constructing sexual citizenship: theorizing sexual rights. *Critical Social Policy*, 20(1), 105–135.

Recent studies of anti-gay social movements and sexual politics in Ukraine indicate the existence of a conservative nationalist and religious consensus on gender and sexuality issues. The Ukrainian government has tended to adopt statements from the general moralizing discourse produced by anti-gay non-governmental organizations, churches, and the right-wing Svoboda (Freedom) party, which has led to a fixation of far-right rhetoric on the state level (Chermalykh, 2012). Homophobic media buzz created by anti-gay NGOs (some of which were founded and are governed by parliament members) has been represented as “concerned voices of civil society” and is used by parliamentarians to justify the initiation of anti-gay bills (Pahulich, 2012). In 2011–2013, three bills were introduced aiming to prohibit the “propagation of homosexuality” i.e. any positive mention of homosexuality in public among adolescents (Bills № 8711 and № 10290) and in the public sphere in general (Bill № 10729) (Human Rights & Governance Cluster, HIV/AIDS Group, UNDP New York & UNDP Ukraine Country Office, 2012; Zinchenkov & Kravchuk, 2013). In public discussions over the mentioned legal initiatives, Svoboda, churches and the religious right developed complex argumentative strategies against gay rights, organized around the conspiracy theory of a “gender-gay dictatorship”, suggesting that homosexuality was being promoted by Europe and “the West” in order to destroy the Ukrainian nation (Pahulich, 2012).

Although Chermalykh and Pahulich established an academic framework for the investigation of political discourse on gay rights in Ukraine, their research lacked an examination of such important political actors as the government, parliamentary parties other than Svoboda, and gay-rights NGOs. Since political discourse is relational, i.e. actors frequently refer to statements produced by other actors (Leifeld, 2014: 1), it is necessary to examine the discursive interventions of all political actors involved in the public debates and the relations between them to fully understand mechanisms of the establishment and maintenance of an anti-gay consensus on civil and economic rights. Particularly the political strategies elaborated by LGBT organizations require special attention since the LGBT movement is the prominent local agent for potential change in the political area of LGB rights.

Social and political context of Bill 2342

The level of homonegativity in Ukraine as well as in other post-Soviet countries remains high. In the recent social survey conducted by the Sociological Institute of the National Scientific Academy of Ukraine, 59% of Ukrainians consider homosexuality to be socially unacceptable (Pryvalov, Trofymenko, Rokytska, & Kasianchuk, 2013).

Unfortunately, there is no systematic monitoring of discrimination against gays and lesbians in Ukraine. The only available statistics on discrimination and hate crimes against homosexual people is based on unrepresentative internet surveys conducted by the LGBT center “Nash Mir” (Kravchuk, 2013; Nash Mir Center, 2013; Zinchenkov & Kravchuk, 2013). These studies show 61% of respondents have faced violations of their rights at least once during the past three years; among those who did not conceal their sexual orientation, the discrimination rate reached 89%. Most cases of discrimination were found in the spheres of private relations and relations with the police. The police remain the state institution most intolerant of homosexual people: 23% of respondents faced police prejudice, violations of search-and-seizure procedure, blackmail, and demands for information about other homosexuals. Discrimination in the labor sphere was experienced by 16.8% of respondents. The main forms of discrimination in the workplace were the “glass ceiling”, unequal pay, and psychological pressure.

A study of attitudes towards homosexuality by Štulhofer & Rimac (2009) proves that the predominant religious tradition and level of economic development are the main factors which influence the level of homonegativity in European countries. Religious tradition predicts the level of social distance to homosexual people, whereas negative attitudes are related to the level of economic development. In Ukraine the dominant religious confession is Orthodox Christianity, which according to Štulhofer and Rimac predicts a higher level of social distance than in the case of

other Christian denominations. The level of economic development in Ukraine remains quite low. In 2013, the country occupied the 108th position in International Monetary Fund's world ratings of GDP. Low economic growth and declining living standards create feelings of insecurity in society which are often channeled into aggression against marginal groups, and particularly against sexual minorities (Adam, 1998). The findings of Martsenyuk et al. (2014) obtained from an analysis of the European Social Survey (ESS) support this suggestion: the negative attitudes of Ukrainian respondents towards homosexual people correlated with their dissatisfaction with the economy, government, education, and medical services.

Whereas negative attitudes towards homosexuality block bottom-up changes in the political area of gay rights, the under-institutionalization of the Ukrainian party system prevents top-down reforms. O'Dwyer and Schwartz point out that low electoral barrier in countries with under-institutionalized party systems enables radical newcomers to enter the parliament easily; subsequently, fragile parliamentary coalitions have to rely on radical parties to preserve their power (O'Dwyer & Schwartz, 2010). In Ukraine, the radical nationalist party Svoboda got 8.4% of seats in the Verkhovna Rada (Ukraine's 450-member unicameral parliament) in the 2012 elections and formed a coalition with more centrist parties, e.g. the Block of Yulia Tymoshenko (BYUT) and the Ukrainian Democratic Alliance for Reforms of Vitaliy Klychko (UDAR). The latter had to cooperate with Svoboda in order to oppose effectively the pro-governmental parliamentary majority formed by the Party of Regions and the Communist party.

Proceedings over Bill 2342

The emergence of the bill against discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in this homonegative social climate was due to preparations for two important agreements between Ukraine and the European Union: the "Association Agreement" and the "Visa Liberalization Agreement". The Association Agreement, aimed at political association and economic integration, including the creation of a free-trade area, should have replaced the existing Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between Ukraine and the EU of 1994. Visa liberalization should have established a visa-free regime for short-stay travel between Ukraine and the EU. With the conclusion of the two agreements, president Victor Yanukovich probably expected to gain sympathy among the electorates of the pro-European Central and Western regions of Ukraine before the next elections (Kudelia, 2014: 26–27).

The Association Agreement and visa liberalization may be considered as external incentive mechanisms promoting human rights and freedoms in Eastern Europe. The "Association Agreement" specified protection from discrimination only on grounds of nationality, whereas the "Visa Liberalisation Action Plan" introduced the general requirement of comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation ("EU-Ukraine visa dialogue Action Plan on Visa Liberalisation", 2010). A number of European officials monitoring Ukraine's progress in implementation of reforms required for the Visa Liberalization Agreement specified that the comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation should include explicit prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity (LGBT-vektor Ukrainy: sbornic otchetov po monitoringu, 2013: 23–29). However, the EU had only a limited legal basis for exercising pressure on Ukraine, since the EU law, the Equal Treatment Directive 2000/78/EC, only prohibits discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in the labor sphere (Kantola & Nousianen, 2009). The project of a directive aiming to extend protection from discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation outside the place of employment (European Commission, 2008) was still being debated in the European parliament at the moment of publication of this article. And neither the Equal Treatment Directive 2000/78/EC nor Directive 2006/54/EC on gender equality in occupations explicitly mentions gender identity as possible grounds for discrimination.

Subsequently, Bill 2342—"On Amendments to Some Legislative Acts of Ukraine Concerning the Prevention and Combating Discrimination in Ukraine"—developed by the Ukrainian Ministry of Justice to satisfy requirements of the Visa Liberalization Action Plan, only proposed to add an explicit prohibition of discrimination based on sexual orientation to the Labor

Code. Besides this, the bill introduced number of general changes to the Law of Ukraine “On Principles of Prevention and Combating Discrimination”, including specification of types of discrimination, de-legalization of discrimination, transfer of responsibility for substantiation from complainant to defendant. The bill was submitted to parliament by Prime Minister Mykola Azarov on 19 February, 2013.

The crucial shortcoming of Bill 2342 was its lack of penalties for discrimination. As stated in the yearly report of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Human Rights, even in those spheres where discrimination was already prohibited in Ukraine (on grounds of gender, ethnicity or religion), rights protection was not realized in juridical practice because of the lack of legal mechanisms (Secretariat of the Ukrainian Parliamentary Commissioner for Human Rights, 2013: 199). Therefore, even if Bill 2342 had been accepted, it would have been unlikely to produce real changes in the lives of homosexual people in Ukraine. However, as it was, even the symbolic prohibition of sexual orientation discrimination in state legislation provoked political controversy.

On 14 May, 2013, when the bill should have first been considered by the Verkhovna Rada, it was postponed on the parliament agenda because of the lack of support for it among all factions. The parliamentary parties Svoboda and BYUT introduced alternative anti-discrimination bills (2342-1 and 2427 respectively) instead, neither of which actually included prohibition of discrimination based on sexual orientation. At the beginning of the new parliamentary session in September 2013, the Conciliation Board of the heads of the parliamentary factions again could not reach a consensus, and Bill 2342 was again not put to a vote. By July, parliamentarians had developed a plan to avoid the acceptance of an explicit prohibition of sexual orientation discrimination, on which the Constitutional Court would provide an official interpretation that discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation was already prohibited by Ukrainian law. This plan was not presented on official party websites, but was widely reported in the media. On 6 November the Parliamentary Committee on European Integration organized parliamentary hearings on visa liberalization; the resolution of the hearings recommended that the Verkhovna Rada accept the Bill 2342 among other bills required for the Visa Liberalization Agreement (Verkhovna Rada Ukrainy, 2014).

Just before the Eastern Partnership Vilnius Summit, during which the Association Agreement and Visa Liberalization Agreement were initially to be signed, President Janukovych, followed by his government, suspended negotiations with the EU and supported Russia’s Eurasian Economic Union project (the Customs Union). Serhij Kudelia (2014) explains this sudden reorientation with the high political and economic risks for Janukovych of signing the agreements, such as the loss of support in the pro-Russian Eastern parts of the country, economic sanctions imposed by Russia, and the EU’s demand to release his most dangerous opponent, Julia Tymoshenko. Rejection of Ukrainian integration into the European Union was followed by massive protests in Kyiv, which became known as Euro-Maidan⁴. After Janukovych left Ukraine, pro-European opposition parties formed a temporary government. The subsequent presidential (May, 2014) and parliamentary (October, 2014) elections fixed the predominance of pro-European actors in post-Maidan Ukrainian politics.

In May of 2014 the temporary pro-European government introduced, and the Verkhovna Rada accepted, Bill 4581 which largely reproduced the content of Bill 2342—except for the prohibition of discrimination based on sexual orientation. In the same month, the High Specialized Court of Ukraine for Civil and Criminal Cases provided appeal courts with information in a letter in which it explained that the lists of prohibited grounds for discrimination in the labor sphere in the Constitution of Ukraine, the “Law of Ukraine On Principles of Prevention and Combating Discrimination”, and the Labor Code are open-ended, and sexual orientation is protected as one of the “other grounds” mentioned in these legal acts. The public controversy over the issue had calmed

4 For further reading on reasons, course, and geopolitical context of Euro-Maidan see, for example, the section “Maidan and Beyond” in the *Journal of Democracy*, Volume 25, Number 3, July 2014.

even earlier, since public attention was fully occupied by Euro-Maidan, the subsequent annexation of Crimea, and the establishment of the unrecognized Luhansk and Donetsk “Peoples Republics” in the Eastern districts of Ukraine. However, the issue of anti-discrimination legislation may be returned to the public agenda in the very near future: While this paper was being prepared for publication, the Ukrainian Ministry of Social Policy published a revised Labor Code bill which included the explicit prohibition of discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Theoretical and methodological framework

This study was conducted within the framing approach. The concept of the frame reveals ideological aspects of meaning-(re)production, but also suggests a certain degree of intentionality of the framer (Reese, 2007: 148) which takes into account the goal-orientedness of political communication. The idea of frames and framing originated in Goffman's symbolic interactionism. Goffman (1986: 21) defined frames as interpretative schemata which guide individuals' understanding of the world. Further definitions developed in framing research fall into two large groups. The first situates frames in the cognitive realm, as “mentally stored principles for information processing”, and the second, in the discursive realm, regarding them as textual schemata or “attributes” found in media and political texts (Entman, 1991:7, cited in Scheufele, 1999; Entman, 1993). The major shortcoming of the cognitive perspective on frames, which is especially important for analysis of political communication, is the “neglect of power” (Carragee & Roefs, 2004, cited in Reese, 2007: 149). The cognitive perspective ignores the role of frames in the reproduction of relations of domination in society and focuses on “psychological structures as coping devices for message elements” instead (Reese, 2007: 149). For this reason, I rely on the constructionist and critical ontological assumption that frames are *discursive* structures which guide meaning and power (re)production in society.

The core framing operations are selection and salience (Entman, 1993: 52). Among all possible meaningful aspects of an issue, some are included and others are omitted by the frame. The selected aspects are made “more noticeable, meaningful, or memorable to audiences” through repetition or association with culturally familiar symbols (Entman, 1993: 53). The resulting “view” on the issue established by a frame may include (all or just some of) four key elements: problem definition, casual interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation (Entman, 1993; Matthes, 2012). Frames operate on issue-specific, domain-specific (related to a particular area of life, such as social relationships or social statuses), and global levels (Snow, Rochford Jr, Worden, & Benford, 1986). Finally, “master frames” should be specified as frames “extended in scope and influence such that they color and constrain the orientations and activities of other movements within cycles of protest” (Snow, 2004: 390).

Social movement theory contributes to the framing approach with the interpretation of frames as discursive resources which can be used in a political struggle alongside institutional and physical resources (Hull, 2001). The introduction of the framing perspective into political analysis has enabled researchers to step away from materialistic assumptions and regard symbolic means of political action as an important factor in its own right. As empirical studies show, even weak actors with little administrative and material resources may be successful in political struggle if they manage to construct effective frames (Haunss & Kohlmorgen, 2009: 108).

Political actors use frames strategically to get public support for their goals and provide coherent responses to claims made by other actors. Haunss and Kohlmorgen (2009) define two general framing strategies which may be referred to as (conter-)framing and reframing. In the first, an actor develops “a coherent master frame that has the potential to ideologically integrate a heterogeneous set of actors” (Haunss & Kohlmorgen, 2009: 109). For Snow et al. (1986), such a frame “aligns” with frames already used by potential supporters through “frame bridging” (appeals to close social/political identities), “frame amplification” (relating a frame to potential supporters' “values” and “beliefs” which are directly relevant to the framed issue), and “frame extension” to values and beliefs which are not directly relevant to the issue (i.e. broadening an actor's agenda in order to mobilize other values and beliefs of potential supporters, besides those which are directly

relevant to the issue). Among the political actors who rely on this strategy, the one who develops a stronger counter-frame succeeds. The second framing strategy takes place when political actors try to change and transform (reframe) the hegemonic meaning within one master frame. Haunss and Kohlmorgen (2009) argue that this strategy may be as effective as the first one, especially when the problematic issue cannot be easily associated with any of the normative values considered to be under threat.

Following Matthes (2012), and Hänggli and Kriesi (2010), I operationalize frames as topics of argumentation which incorporate several arguments used both by opponents and proponents of Bill 2342. For example, the frame “EU agreements” included two arguments of the supporters and two symmetrical arguments of the opponents. Supporters’ arguments were: “Acceptance of Bill 2342 will have a positive impact on the course of the Association Agreement”, and “Acceptance of Bill 2342 is necessary to fulfill requirements of the Visa Liberalization Action Plan”. Opponents’ arguments were: “The legal prohibition of discrimination based on sexual orientation is not necessary for conclusion of the Association Agreement”, and “The legal prohibition of discrimination based on sexual orientation is not necessary to fulfill the requirements of the Visa Liberalization Action Plan”. Each explicit or implicit argument for or against the bill expressed in the text was coded according to its main topic. An argument was defined as any statement which provided reasons to support/oppose the bill. For example, the opponent statement “Ukraine is an Orthodox state” was interpreted as condemnation of homosexuality according to religious norms and thus an implicit argument against the bill. Also coded for each text were the date, the overall position on the bill (positive/negative), and its source (political actor). The coding was realized with Atlas.ti software.

Coded segments for each frame were examined in detail with the instruments of critical discourse analysis (CDA). Such a combination of methods is possible since frames constitute one of the ideological instruments considered in CDA. Norman Fairclough defines frames as representations of entities which “can figure out as a topic, or ‘subject matter’, or ‘referent’ within an activity” (Fairclough, 1996: 158-159), such as types of person or animate beings, inanimate objects, processes, series of events, or abstract concepts. Formal features of the text, such as vocabulary, grammar structures and textual structures, provide textual cues which evoke certain frames in the interpreters’ cognition. Relations between textual cues and frames are dialectical: frames in turn set up expectations about discourse type, in the light of which textual cues are interpreted. Alongside with schemata (representations of particular types of activities which correspond to textual structures) and scripts (representations of subjects involved in the activities presented by schemata and their relations), frames contain assumptions about culture, social relationships and identities which are determined by power relations in the society or institution. Social actors might use frames in a “normative” way when acting in accordance with power relations or in a “creative” way when transforming them and, subsequently, transforming power relations. Creative use of frames occurs when social struggles are intensified and temporary stabilized power relations come into crisis.

The methodological procedure of CDA includes description, interpretation and explanation stages. At the stage of description textual features such as vocabulary, grammar structures and textual structures are considered to reveal knowledge/beliefs about the world, social relations and social identities of the text producers. At the stage of interpretation, the relationship between text and social structures is considered. The aim of the analyst at this stage is to reveal background assumptions of the discourse participants. Finally, the third stage of the CDA procedure, explanation, is concerned with relationship of discourses to social struggles and power relations in the society (Fairclough, 1996: 140-141). When applying this procedure to the case under study, I describe textual cues related to the frames of Bill 2342, giving most attention to ideologically significant meaning relations (synonymy, hyponymy, antonymy) between them, representation of agents and agency, and intertextual references; then, I reveal assumptions which underlie each

frame; and finally, I explain relations between framing strategies used by political actors in the debates on 2342, and (heteronormative) power relations in the society.

The hermeneutic approach to framing analysis, in which frames are defined as holistic entities identified in the text, is often criticized for its lack of reliability (Matthes & Kohring, 2008). There is a risk that frames will be identified arbitrarily, or according to the researchers' already existing preconceptions about the object of study. However, quantitative approaches to framing analysis which satisfy positivist requirements of reliability and validity are only able to provide a general overview of the most important frames, but can neither associate actors with the frames, nor reveal dynamics of the political struggle. Since it is the framing strategies and the conditions of their effectiveness which are the main object of interest in the present study, I focus on the qualitative exploration of interrelations between frames, without frequencies.

Data and sample

In the primary selection of political actors, I relied on previous studies which suggest that the government, parliamentary parties, churches, right-wing grassroots religious movements, and LGBT organizations were the key political actors and interest groups in the public policy debates over anti-discrimination legislation in Ukraine and other Eastern European countries (Chermalykh, 2012; Keinz, 2011; O'Dwyer & Schwartz, 2010; Pahulich, 2012). In the secondary selection of particular actors and organizations who took part most actively in the discussion of Bill 2342, I relied on a preliminary analysis of Ukrainian media coverage and an interview with the speaker for the Coalition Against Discrimination, Iryna Fedorovych. Altogether, in order to analyze the political framing of Bill 2342, I examined statements produced by the government (the President, Prime-Minister, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Foreign Affairs⁵), the five main parliamentary parties which won the elections of 2012 (the Communist Party, PR, BYUT, UDAR, Svoboda⁶), the three major churches (Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate, Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate, Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church⁷), and the All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations⁸, two anti-gay non-governmental organizations

5 The governmental actors selected for the analysis had the greatest power over the decision-making process concerning the bill: The President has veto power (can refuse to sign a bill, and return it to Parliament with proposed changes. The Prime Minister was the formal author of the bill. The Ministry of Justice developed the text of the bill and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs contributed to negotiations and preparation of agreements with the EU.

6 The Party of Regions (PR) (41.5% of all seats in the Parliament) and the Communist Party (7.1%) formed the pro-government majority in Parliament after the 2012 elections, and the opposition coalition was formed by the parties UDAR (Ukrainian Democratic Alliance for Reforms of Vitaliy Klychko) (8.9%), Svoboda ("Freedom") (8.4%), the BYUT faction (Block of Julia Tymoshenko, formed of a number of smaller parties, most prominent of which were Bat'kivshchyna (Fatherland) and Front Zmin (Front of Changes)) (22.6%). The Communist Party and Svoboda represented themselves as left-wing and right-wing (nationalist) parties respectively, whereas other parties positioned themselves as moderate centrist democrats. I also considered statements of the Parliament Committee on Human Rights which provided expertise on the bill, and the Committee on European Integration.

7 In 2006, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate was attended by 39.8%, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate by 29.4%, and the Ukrainian Greek Catholic by 14.1% of all the religious respondents (Razumkov Centre, 2006).

8 The All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations was created in 1996 to coordinate cross-confessional relations and to cooperate with state authorities on legal initiatives which touch upon interests of religious groups. At the beginning of 2012 the Council included 18 churches which altogether represented 95% of the country's network of religions and all major confessions in Ukraine: Orthodox, Greek Catholic, Catholic, and Protestant strands of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam.

(LPG, Narodnyj Sobor⁹), and five human rights and LGBT organizations (Tochka Opory, Gay Forum of Ukraine, Gay Alliance of Ukraine, Amnesty International in Ukraine, the Coalition Against Discrimination in Ukraine¹⁰).

The research period covered 10 months, from 1 February, 2013 to 30 November, 2013. Between submission of Bill 2342 to Parliament (19 February, 2013) and the Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius (30 November, 2013), the main frames were developed and most of the political actors involved in the discussion reached a consensus against the bill. This conservative consensus was strong enough to persist even after the Euro-Maidan revolution. The framing of Bill 2342 and its successor, Bill 4581, during and after Euro-Maidan is beyond the scope of the present study.

All texts published on official internet websites of the selected actors during the study period were searched. As the Gay Forum website did not have regular updates, I searched its Facebook page instead. Besides websites, the transcripts of the parliamentary hearings on visa liberalization, and materials from two round tables on Bill 2342 (one held by opponents and one by proponents) were considered. Material from round tables and parliamentary hearings was reduced to statements by individual actors, each of which was considered a separate text. Data was collected through Google searches and internal searches on selected websites by keywords: “2342”, “2342-1”, “2427”, “anti-discrimination”, “discrimination”, “sex”, “sexual orientation”, “gay”, “lesbian”, “tolerance”. Articles which contained any references to Bill 2342 and its alternatives № 2342-1 and № 2427 were saved for analysis. Altogether 217 texts were found.

Actors and political action in the 2342 controversy

A simple structure of two distinct pro- and con-camps does not fully reflect the complexity of the debates over Bill 2342. By taking into account the actors' positions on European integration, three groups may be defined: (1) supporters of both Euro-integration and Bill 2342 (the government; part of the PR; UDAR; individual members of BYUT; LGBT and human rights organizations); (2) supporters of Euro-integration who [however] opposed the bill (all the churches, Svoboda, individual members of the PR, individual members of UDAR and BYUT); (3) opponents of both Euro-integration and the bill (the Communist Party, part of the PR, and anti-gay NGOs¹¹).

It is remarkable that opposition to Bill 2342 united both pro-European and pro-Russian political actors in the Verkhovna Rada who were opposed on a number of other issues: nationalist Svoboda and the Communist party, members of the oppositional BYUT and the pro-government PR. At the same time the Euro-integration issue and Bill 2342 in particular caused a split within the pro-government coalition (PR and the Communists). The pro-Russian part of the coalition,

9 The two organizations were selected since they are tied to different religious confessions. “Love Against Homosexuality” (ukr. *Liubov proty homoseksualizmu* or LPG), which Lesia Pahulich named “the most famous anti-gay organization in Ukraine” (Pahulich, 2012), is connected to protestant religious groups, and Narodnyj Sobor is connected with the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate.

10 The Coalition Against Discrimination in Ukraine was founded in 2011 to unite human rights organization and civil society efforts in favor of comprehensive anti-discrimination measures and the improvement of the knowledge and practical skills of different social and professional groups promoting anti-discrimination initiatives. All other selected gay and human rights organizations are also members of the Coalition.

11 Among the two studied religious-right organizations, Narodnyj Sobor expressed unambiguous pro-Russian and anti-European views, whereas LPG officially announced its neutral position on Euro-integration. However, the official website of the later NGO provides numerous negative evaluations of Euro-integration, and supports legal restrictions on gay rights in Russia; thus, LPG can be defined as an implicit opponent of Euro-integration.

including the Communist Party and the powerful opposition group within the PR opposed Euro-integration in favor of closer relations with Russia and the Customs Union, and subsequently rejected the bill. The majority of PR actors supported the Euro-integration aspirations of the government. Individual members of the PR such as Iryna Bohoslovska supported Euro-integration but expressed concerns about Bill 2342. Subsequently, the PR did not develop a common position on the bill, and the head of the party Oleksandr Jefremov announced that each deputy would vote on it individually.

Interest groups actively tried to influence the political elites in the decision-making process. Churches and the religious right used both internal and external lobbying strategies to obtain the removal of the bill from the parliamentary agenda. They sent an overwhelming amount of individual letters and collective petitions to members of parliament and the government. The Citizen Appeals Unit of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (2013) stated that the majority of appeals concerning actions of the central executive government received from January to September demanded rejection or dismissal of Bill 2342. LPG claims that by the end of May, 394 appeals were received by the Presidential Administration and 1355 were received by the Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights (Press-tsentr LPG, 2013, May 27). The churches also criticized the bill during a number of meetings with government and parliamentary representatives. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate and the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church mostly communicated with Svoboda and BYUT, whereas the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate aligned with the Communists, pro-Russian members of the PR, LPG and Narodnyj Sobor. The All-Ukrainian Council of Churches met with President Janukovych and the head of the Verkhovna Rada Volodymyr Rybak. External lobbying took place in a number of common protest actions by churches and the religious right in Kyiv, Odesa and Dnipropetrovs'k¹². The most notorious one, reported by all major Ukrainian TV channels, was held at the Verkhovna Rada on 14 March, when Bill 2342 should have been considered for the first time. Protests at the Verkhovna Rada were repeated when the parliamentary factions discussed returning the Bill to the parliamentary agenda for September. Also, the LPG sued the Cabinet of Ministers for not providing for public discussion of the bill before setting it on the parliament's agenda, and demanded its dismissal. The trial court rejected the suit, but the appellate court satisfied it partly and stated that the Cabinet of Ministers had acted illegally by not providing the bill for public discussion.

The lobbying efforts of LGBT and human rights organizations gained less public visibility. Unlike the churches and the religious right, LGBT and human rights organizations did not have powerful supporters in parliament. Previously their protests and official statements had been often ignored, particularly during consideration of "anti-propagation" bills (Chermalykh, 2012). This time the Ukrainian authorities provided LGBT and human rights NGOs at least a formal opportunity to influence the decision-making process (this was probably due to their recognition by EU officials monitoring Ukraine's progress in fulfilling international agreements). The "Coalition Against Discrimination" succeeded in forming a working group within the Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights and tried to promote their own draft of an anti-discrimination bill which proposed a general prohibition of discrimination—not only discrimination based on sexual orientation, but also

12 The more common English forms of the names of these Ukrainian cities, Kiev, Odessa and Dniepropetrovsk, were borrowed from Russian language during Ukrainian colonization by Russian Empire and Soviet Union. Spelling Kyiv which corresponds to Ukrainian language geographical name is still hardly recognized by English speakers, despite being a standardized Roman-letter spelling of the capital city name used in legislative and official acts in Ukraine. Change of spelling on the international level is another way to overcome implications that Ukraine is a part of Russia or the so-called 'Russian World', which is extremely important in the light of annexation of Crimea and unrecognized Russian intervention to the Eastern part of Ukraine during 2014—2015. Subsequently, in this paper I write the names of the cities, as well as other proper nouns, according to Ukrainian transliteration rules.

gender identity—in all spheres of social life. Also, human rights NGOs, unlike the churches and the religious right, were invited to the parliamentary hearings on visa liberalization, particularly the executive director of “Tochka Opory” Bohdan Hloba, whose speech was celebrated by the gay community as the first speech ever given by an openly gay person from the speaker’s platform of the Verkhovna Rada (“Persnyi vystup vidkrytoho heia z trybuny Verkhovnoi Rady”, 2013). However, the Ministry of Justice ignored the Coalition's draft of an anti-discrimination bill when drafting the final version of Bill 2342 (I. Fedorovych, personal communication, October 7, 2013). At that moment, the rights of transsexual people were excluded from the discussion. Despite the Coalition Against Discrimination’s continued criticism of the bill for its lack of penalties (unlike other LGBT organizations which expressed uncritical support), the absence of an explicit prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of gender identity was not problematized in their texts.

The Coalition and other LGBT and human rights organizations focused their efforts on lobbying for the government’s Bill 2342 in parliament through information requests and individual appeals to parliament members. However, as Zorian Kis' from Amnesty International mentions (personal communication, September, 20, 2013), the lobbying campaign organized by churches and the religious right was much more intense: “Parliament members received 2 or 3 letters against 2342 per week – in support of 2342 only two during the whole of 2013”. Also, LGBT organizations tried to influence Ukrainian political elites indirectly through the EU officials. They sent letters in support of Bill 2342 to the EU Ambassador to Ukraine Jan Tombinski (Gay Forum), to the Polish Parliament and the European People's Party (Tochka Opory). Whereas Gay Forum asked the EU officials to be persistent in demanding anti-discrimination legislation, Gay Alliance expected that Euro-integration would benefit gay rights in Ukraine in any form, and supported the conclusion of visa liberalization and the Association Agreement even in the case that Bill 2342 was not accepted.

Four master frames

Altogether, 18 frames were identified in this debate which I named using either original wordings from the articles or my own labels. They were generalized into four master frames: the “rights” frame, “values”/“norms” frame, “public opinion” frame, and “Euro-integration” frame. The “rights” master frame concerned political, social, and juridical (in)equality between homosexual and heterosexual citizens and included seven sub-frames of rights and discrimination: “human rights”, “civil rights”, “minority rights”, “discrimination against homosexual people”, “special privileges”/“reverse discrimination”, and “propagation”/“child protection from propagation”. Since concepts of rights and discrimination are highly interrelated (discrimination is a violation of rights), separate frames within this master frame often intersect. The “values”/“norms” master frame concerned the compliance of homosexuality to social norms, rather than the Bill 2342 itself. The “values”/“norms” master frame included two contesting frames of “traditional” and “European” values/norms. The former embraced a number of narrower frames of “national”/“cultural”, “family”, “moral”, “religious” and “gender” values/norms, which often intersect in phrases like “traditional family values”, “traditional religious values of the Ukrainian nation” and the like. Together with the “values”/“norms” master frame, I discuss the issue-specific “medical”/“demographic” frame, since it also focuses on homosexuality and assumed relations between homosexual conduct and the health of the population. The “public opinion” master frame establishes causation between public opinion and political decisions. Finally, the “Euro-integration” master frame situated Bill 2342 in the perspective of relations between Ukraine and the EU, and included four issue-specific frames: “EU agreements”, “other international agreements” with Ukraine, “legislative standards of the EU”, and “EU interests”.

The “Euro-integration” and “Traditional values/norms” frames were strong counter-frames developed by the pro- and con-camps respectively. Both proponents and opponents tried to reframe the strong master-frame used by the opposite camp. The “Rights” master frame turned into an arena of intense political struggle in which multiple frames were developed by both camps. The “Public opinion” frame was initially developed by the opponents in line with their lobbying strategies

(protest actions, petitions) and was later reframed by the proponents. In the following passages I describe how opponents and proponents used each frame, while highlighting differences between pro-Russian and pro-European positions within camps where they occur.

The “Rights” master frame: human, civil and minority rights, and discrimination

Both opponents and proponents of Bill 2342 expressed disapproval of *discrimination*. A strategy of positive self-presentation, as in “we are against any discrimination, but...” (like those discovered by van Djik (1997) in the racist discourses of European political elites), was used by churches and parliamentary parties to create an image of themselves as reasonable supporters of democracy who are far from any radicalism. However, the bill’s opponents constantly denied that homosexual people suffered discrimination in Ukraine, arguing that there was therefore no need for a specific prohibition of behaviors which are absent anyway. The bill’s proponents by contrast provided evidence of discrimination. Since reliable statistical data about discrimination can be collected only when anti-discrimination laws are already in place and it is possible to count the number of corresponding court cases, members of LGBT organizations (Gay Forum, Tochka Opory) referred to their personal or shared experiences of gay community members who they represented; an exception was Amnesty International, which has conducted its own monitoring of discrimination and hate crimes against homosexual people.

Proponents defined LGBT rights as *human, civil, and minority rights*. The *human rights* frame was almost exclusively used by proponents from LGBT and human rights organizations; opponents only made some critical references to human rights. Proponents defined the right to not be discriminated against because of sexual orientation as a universal human right in the phrases “availability of human rights to LGBT”, “LGBT rights are human rights” and the like. Appeals to universality in the *human rights* frame enabled them to outweigh local “traditions”, to which the opponents frequently appealed (see the next chapter for the *traditional values/norms* frame). However, “human rights” are only general, internationally recognized instructions used by national states to create particular institutionalized rights and mechanisms for their protection (Bellamy, 2005). For example, a right to justice is specified in institutionalized rights that define types of evidence that can be used by police, the composition of courts, or trial procedures. Only in one Gay Alliance text were human rights interpreted as a precondition to obtaining institutionalized citizens’ rights.

Proponents used *civil rights* and *minority rights* frames as complimentary, i.e. all the LGBT and human rights organizations represented gay rights as an integral part of civil rights, arguing that the homosexual minority needs special legal protection from discrimination in order to achieve civil rights equal to those of the heterosexual majority. Gay Forum and Gay Alliance emphasized that homosexual people fulfill their civic duties (e.g. pay taxes and serve in the military). However, the scope of the civil rights brought into relation with the bill varied by LGBT organization. The Coalition Against Discrimination argued that the bill protects the rights of all citizens, including homosexuals; whereas Gay Forum and Gay Alliance gave priority to the rights of homosexual people and did not refer to other kinds of discrimination or groups experiencing discrimination. The *civil rights* frame situated gay rights within the framework of particular institutionalized mechanisms of rights protection; however, it retained the heterosexual majority/homosexual minority binary rooted in the anti-gay discourses described later in this chapter.

Proponents did not explicitly build their rights framing on either constructionist or essentialist interpretations of (homo)sexuality. Only Gay Alliance published a few texts with essentialist interpretations of homosexuality in the cited expert commentaries. Produced by medical professionals, these contextually gay-friendly commentaries in fact implied that homosexuality is an inborn deviation, a “biological problem”.

Usually the bill’s opponents talked about the institutional civil rights of the heterosexual majority and the rights of the gay minority as if the two were mutually exclusive. However, gay minority rights could be incorporated into civil rights whenever it looked advantageous for the bill’s

opponents. This double bind made “civil rights for gay people” impossible as separate discursive construct. On the one hand, bill opponents claimed that Ukrainian law, particularly the Constitution, already protects all citizens from all kinds of discrimination, so there is no need for an additional prohibition of discrimination in the labor sphere on grounds of sexual orientation. At the same time, concerns that Bill 2342 would introduce the term “sexual orientation” into Ukrainian law for the first time, as expressed by Svoboda, churches, and the religious right, revealed that Ukrainian law does not in fact acknowledge homosexual citizens; otherwise the introduction of “sexual orientation” into legal discourse would not have been problematic. On the other hand, when homosexual people actually tried to enjoy their “equal” civil rights guaranteed by the Constitution, those rights were represented as “special privileges” which violated “majority rights”. Opponents claimed that Bill 2342 violated a number of civil rights: freedom of religion (since the bill “restricts promotion of [anti-homosexuality] religious views”); freedom of speech (since it “prohibits public critique of homosexuality”); and finally, freedom of conscience (since it “prohibits expressions of negative evaluations of homosexuality”). Denial by opponents of the reality of discrimination implied that equality between homosexual and heterosexual citizens was already achieved, which enabled them to reframe any further claims for equality by the LGBT community as seeking “special privileges” and as “discrimination against the majority”.

The most common strategy of *special privileges/reverse discrimination* frame usage among opponents was the misrepresentation of the bill's statements. Svoboda, churches and the religious right repeatedly stated that the bill introduced *all* possible kinds of legal responsibility (including criminal) for *all* types of direct and indirect discrimination against homosexual people in *all* social spheres. These claims would have been partly valid in the case that sexual orientation had been introduced in the Ukrainian law “On Principles of Prevention and Combating Discrimination”, which regulates wide range of social spheres (public and political activities, public service and local authorities, health care, education, social services, housing, access to commercial goods and services), but it was proposed to include it only into the Labor Code. Moreover, neither Bill 2342 itself, nor the Labor Code, nor the above-mentioned law specified any penalties for the act of discrimination.

Accusations of “reverse discrimination” were integrated into the “homodictatorship” myth, which is actually an inversion of the existing heteronormative social order and reflects the inability of the conservative imagination to conceive of society without oppression: the only alternative to heteronormative domination it is able to produce is homonormative domination. The following paragraph gives a brief summary of the “homodictatorship” myth in the original wording:

(Pavlo Unhurian, BYUT): As the first step, LGBT usually push the idea of protection from discrimination, compelled by the idea of universal human rights which is embedded in the Word of God, but they manipulate these concepts. The second step is a powerful wave of public events, gay-parades, “prides”. The next step is the change in educational standards: the introduction of education which is tolerant of alternative sexual lifestyle for children, adolescents, and children in kindergarten. The next step is the legalization of same-sex marriage and child adoption by same-sex partnerships (which has already happened in France). And the fifth, most dangerous step, is [reverse] discrimination and persecution of dissent. This has happened for example in the United Kingdom, the Scandinavian countries and others. Though we are now standing only before the first step, we must understand that no one will stop at that (Kolesnichenko, 2013).

The “homodictatorship” myth appeared to be an effective strategy for confronting the political struggle of the LGBT community and its supporters. It defined the struggle for equal rights, civil partnerships and child adoption as seeking authoritarian domination. Intimidated by the influence of this myth, LGBT organizations began to avoid raising their voice against other kinds of inequality in order not to provide evidence for the “homodictatorship” plan. While the religious right and churches frequently represented the bill as giving the “green light” to same-sex marriage and child adoption by homosexuals—since inequalities in marriage and child adoption might also be interpreted as discrimination—none of the bill’s proponents in fact went so far. The only exception

was Gay Forum, which explicitly stated that homosexual people need “legitimation of their relationships” and defined non-recognition of same-sex marriage as a civil inequality.

The accusations that minorities attempt to explain their problems as the effect of discrimination, and that they misuse resulting anti-discrimination laws, are found in conservative discourse on gay civil rights in the US (Schacter, 1994) and in racist discourses of European political elites (van Dijk, 1997). Van Dijk admits these accusations to be groundless, having been refuted by sociological studies which prove that people who belong to out-groups, on the contrary, tend not to express even just accusations of discrimination, in order to avoid charges of oversensitivity. In Ukraine, the more obvious reason for underreporting personal experience with homophobia, and even hate crimes, against gay people is that state institutions themselves remain highly discriminatory (Nash Mir Center & Inter-Regional Center for LGBT Research “Donbas-SocProject”, 2011).

Besides the *special privileges* frame, Svoboda, the churches and the religious right also developed a counter-version of the *minority rights* frame. First, Svoboda contrasted homosexuals to other social groups who required even more protection both in public discourse and the legal domain. “Ukrainian nation” (which was equated to Ukrainian ethnicity in the ethnonationalistic discourse of Svoboda) appeared as the most vulnerable “minority group”. In order to protect it, Svoboda proposed an alternative anti-discrimination bill, № 2342-1, which prohibited a special kind of discrimination: “ukrainophobia”, manifested in “decisions, actions or inactivity aimed at the humiliation of the Ukrainian state, nation, culture, language, history or traditions”. The same bill proposed to explicitly exclude sexual orientation from the open-ended list of prohibited grounds on incitement to discrimination. The expression of an opposition between the Ukrainian nation and the homosexual minority brought this strategy close to the above-discussed “majority/minority” binary that was common in the opponents’ discourse. Second, homosexual people, represented as a group which chooses its lifestyle freely, were contrasted to minorities discriminated against because of inborn features (skin color, age, disability) or on the grounds of “highly esteemed values” (such as freedom of religion, philosophical or political beliefs). Only minorities of the second type were guaranteed protection from discrimination. This strategy was found only in the resolution of the opponents’ round-table “A European choice for Ukraine through same-sex relationships?” (Kolesnichenko, 2013); however, the representation of homosexuality as a learned behavior was manifested frequently in the opponents’ discourse.

All of the opponents framed Bill 2342 as *propagation for homosexuality*. The idea of the *propagation* frame is that the “natural” heterosexuality of children and young people becomes distorted and replaced by the homosexual “lifestyle” (equaling “sin” or “perversion”) under the influence of positive opinions about (or even the simple presence of) homosexuality in public. Homosexual people were represented as a constant danger to children. The religious right expressed concerns that the bill would enable gays and lesbians to work in schools and kindergartens, which masked the fact that homosexual people already work in education, as well as in other spheres of employment, but have to remain closeted. With the frequent use of the term “perversion”, bill opponents established a chain of equivalence between the religious and medical discourses. In the religious discourse, “perversion” was defined as a perversion of the divine nature of the human being, whereas in the medical one—as a perversion of natural, heterosexually oriented sexuality. As Ann-Marie Smith points out, the concept of the “promotion of homosexuality” actually undermines the idea of inborn heterosexuality in conservative discourse: If sexuality were fixed at birth, no “promotion” of any sexuality would be possible. To overcome this contradiction, conservative discourse “fuels an obsessive concern for the production of normalcy” (Smith, 1994: 202): the “natural” heterosexuality of children and adolescents must be actively nurtured through social norms.

Jane Schacter, criticizing the distinction between “inborn” and “behavioral” features implied in strategies of comparing minorities (generalized under the term “discourse of equivalences”), admits that it sustains existing inequality and blocks the development of civil rights theory. She argues that there is no clear boundary between “inborn” and “behavioral” features because, first, discrimination by “inborn” features is often a response to certain behaviors (“afro” hairstyles, or

wearing a hijab). Second, the social construction of certain features does not mean the individual can choose them freely at any moment. Finally, some legally recognized grounds for discrimination, such as religion, marital status, language, accent, or certain types of disability, are mostly behavioral and can be changed, but that is not a reason to reject legal protection from discrimination on these grounds (Schacter, 1994: 307–311).

It is remarkable that proponents of the Bill 2342 in the parliament and government shared assumptions about rights and discrimination with the bill's opponents. They denied the existence of discrimination against homosexual people in Ukraine, claimed that gay rights were already protected in Ukraine, and expressed negative opinions on same-sex marriage and child adoption by homosexuals. Proponents among political elites always attributed the right of non-discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation to "human rights" or "minority rights" and never defined it as a civil right. The only "civil right" to which proponents from the political elites appealed in debates on the bill was a "right" of Ukrainian citizens to travel in the EU without a visa.

The "Public opinion" master frame: reproduction of social hierarchies

The opponents' discourse of the heterosexual majority/homosexual minority binary was reinforced by the concept of democracy as the legitimate rule of the majority over the minority. The Svoboda deputy formulated this view unambiguously: "When the rights of minorities interfere with the rights of the majority, we cannot meet these minority rights" (Gay Alliance Ukraine, 2013, October 13). By contrast, LGBT and human rights organizations defined democracy as the institutionalized protection of minorities from the tyranny of the majority. This controversy over the understanding of democracy has a long history in political philosophy. "Natural rights democrats" prioritize the natural rights of humans over majority rule, while "majority rule democrats" consider systems other than majority rule as leading to privileges of some groups over others (Sarker, 2006: 169). Contrasting understandings of democracy influenced the use of the *public opinion* frame by both camps.

Bill opponents appealed to negative attitudes towards homosexuality as a sufficient reason to dismiss 2342. Either "Ukrainian society" was represented as "not ready yet" (PR, UDAR at the final stage of the discussion); or the "Ukrainian public actively opposes" (LPG) the bill; or public opinion was "highly polarized", so that acceptance of the bill would lead to tensions within society (PR, Churches). Opponents' appeals to the *public opinion* frame were supported by their extensive strategies of outside lobbying. The religious right and opponents among political elites referred to protest actions, collective petitions, and letters initiated by churches and the religious right as representative manifestations of negative public opinion about the bill.

Proponents from political elites and LGBT organizations suggested that public opinion on the issue was not a given fact of reality, but an alterable construct. UDAR members said it was necessary to educate a public which lacks an understanding what discrimination is. LGBT organizations established a reverse causation between the public opinion and political decisions: politicians should form public opinion, not follow it uncritically. Thus the authorities, in the discourse of LGBT organizations, were represented as initiators of top-down social changes. Domination by political elites was justified by their intellectual potential: administrators know what the real common good is and should reveal to the people their true interests. When political elites care mainly about their positive image instead, they betray the public good and may be accused of populism and political speculation. Thus, both the discourse of bill opponents and that of LGBT organizations reproduced the existing social hierarchy. The opponents justified the rule of the majority over the minority, and the proponents supported the domination of political elites over "the people".

The "Values/norms" master frame: between "traditional" and "European" values

Both the pro-Russian and pro-European opponents of Bill 2342 defined the Ukrainian social space as a nation. The Pro-Russian opponents situated the Ukrainian nation within the Slavic cultural entity up to the point of the complete absence of boundaries between them. The Communist party referred to Ukraine as the part of “Slavic civilization uniting all East-Slavic peoples”. Narodnyj Sobor appealed to the myth of three “fraternal peoples” of Ukrainians, Belorussians, and Russians, and named the Slavic socio-cultural entity the “divided Rus”. Pro-European opponents (churches, Svoboda, part of the PR) represented Ukraine as an independent nation. Both pro-Russian and pro-European opponents relied on the ideology of cultural nationalism which defines a nation by its unique culture, history, religious tradition, “mentality”, and “national values”, except for Svoboda, which embraced an ethno-nationalist ideology in which the Ukrainian nation was equated to Ukrainian ethnicity: “Ukraine is a mono-ethnic state with a titular Ukrainian nation” (Press-sluzhba Vseukrains'koho ob'jednannia Svoboda, 2013, November 12).

The social space of the Ukrainian nation in the discourse of opponents was subordinated to “traditional” values which were “national-cultural”, “family”, “moral”, and “religious”, all of which excluded homosexuality, defined as a “non-traditional orientation”. Despite the fact that the word “tradition” refers to a certain historical duration, history was erased from the construct “traditional values”. In the opponents discourse, “traditional values” were determined by timeless essential features of the Ukrainian nation such as “mentality” and a “specific spiritual mode”. This construct was intended to block social change: the valuation of universal and timeless “values” implied that any societal changes were dangerous.

In the opponents’ discourse, the Ukrainian national identity was constructed as exclusively heterosexual. Heterosexual, procreative marriage was represented as the only normative form of social/sexual partnership within the Ukrainian nation. Other forms of relations were either excluded from the discourse (non-marital and/or non-procreative heterosexual partnerships) or explicitly condemned (homosexuality). To differentiate between the “real” family and homosexual “simulacra” which tries to take its place, opponents, when referring to homosexual partnerships, used the words “marriage” (often) and “family” (always) within quotation marks. The key difference between a “real” heterosexual and “simulated” homosexual family was the apparent “inability” of homosexual people to procreate. Child adoption was referenced as the only option for homosexual people to have children. (Predictably, opponents were against child adoption by homosexual people and supported Bill № 2133/P, introduced in 2013 by members of UDAR, PR, and the Communist party, which proposed the prohibition of adoption of Ukrainian children by foreign same-sex partnerships). The fact that many gays and lesbians in Ukraine raise their own biological children was never mentioned.

Whereas the normative heterosexual family preserved “traditional” patriarchal gender norms, homosexuality was repeatedly represented as gender transgression (in all cases male femininity was mentioned). Opponents associated gender equality with “propagation for homosexuality”, claiming they both threatened marriage and procreation: “For example, in Sweden, where legislation on gender equality was adopted [...], the birth rate fell sharply, the country is dying out. It [the birth rate] is only 10 infants per 1,000 people in the population, while the world average is 20. Stockholm is recognized as the first postfamily city where 70% of people do not want to marry” (“Evropejskij vybor Ukrainy: Cherez odnopolye otnosheniya?”, 2013). If gender equality is supposed to destroy marriage, then the marriage under examination is a patriarchal one, in which a man dominates a woman.

Medical/demographic frame. On the system level of the society, homosexuality in the opponents’ discourse was represented as a threat to the health of the population. Homosexuality was brought into relation with harmful practices: prostitution, drug addiction, crime, and above all,

AIDS¹³. The harm supposedly caused by homosexuality to public health and thus to the reproduction of the entire social system was an argument in support of preservation of inequality within the mechanisms of the state: “Principles of international law recognize that the law may and sometimes must limit individual rights, if it is necessary to protect national security, public order, public health, and public morals” (“Evropejskij vybor Ukrainy: Cherez odnopolye otnosheniya?”, 2013).

Proponents confronted the *traditional values/norms* frame with a strategy of relativization in three forms: historical relativization comparing contemporary social norms with norms accepted in the past; “social” relativization comparing norms shared by different social groups; and cultural relativization comparing norms of Ukrainian society with those of other societies. This reframing of traditional values was proposed predominantly by LGBT and human rights organizations. It was not a unified response, as each organization developed its own set of arguments.

Historical relativization stressed historical changes in Ukrainian society which have made “traditional values” inappropriate as rules for contemporary life. In a government report on parliamentary proceedings on human rights, acceptance of Bill 2342 was justified by reference to “social and cultural changes due to ‘processes of development’ which are taking place in our society” (“Pro parlamentski slukhannia na temu: ‘Stan dotrymannia prav liudyny v Ukraini’ 12 chervnia 2013 roku”, 2013). A more explicit historical relativization was provided by the Coalition Against Discrimination: the “trajectory of this logic [of appeals to ‘traditional values’] towards early feudalism was recently illustrated eloquently by Nikita Mikhalkov. The famous Russian filmmaker and guardian of traditional values claims that serfdom appears to be the ‘wisdom of the people’ and a form of ‘patriotism’” (Tokmak, 2013). By this comparison with the medieval institution of serfdom, the concept of “traditional values” was associated with stages of archaic and unjust social development. The operation of relativizing social norms as historically determined and subject to change was the reverse of “naturalization” of social norms in the opponents’ discourse.

The historical relativization of social norms was combined with social relativization by Gay Forum: “In the context of the erosion of traditional norms of morality and the parallel existence of various systems of moral norms which people adhere to depending on their belonging to different social groups, the concept of harlotry becomes meaningless, since standards of sexual behavior disappear” (Gay-Forum of Ukraine, 2013, September, 12). In this quotation, Ukrainian society is represented as a heterogeneous entity of social groups, among which conservatives and religious people constitute not a majority, but just one group among many. Finally, cultural relativization was supported through comparison with politically and culturally familiar Eastern European countries, particularly Moldova and Georgia, which had already accepted anti-discrimination legislation.

Unlike the authority of cultural and moral norms, the authority of the religious norms in the discourse of proponents was not questioned. Instead, proponents reframed religious norms in a way which normalized homosexuality and enabled homosexual people to be included in the religious community. A reframing of religious norms by pointing out the contradictions within the religious discourse (such as in the churches’ positive stance toward Euro-integration and civil equality, and disapproval of discrimination) was undertaken by Gay Forum. Gay Alliance amplified religious norms by asserting that Christian values incorporate tolerance towards homosexuals and even support for gay marriage. The Coalition Against Discrimination appeared to be more critical of religious norms. The author of the newspaper article reprinted on the Coalition website responded thus to a claim by a PR member that Ukraine was an “Orthodox country”:

13 The association of homosexuality with AIDS originated in the 1990s when (male) homosexuals were commonly represented in the media as the main risk group and vector of the HIV infection. In the 2000s, with educational campaigns among journalists, the association of homosexuality with AIDS became marginal in public discourses and has remained so up to now (Semigina & Kishkina, 2006).

“How does this statement relate to the Constitution of Ukraine, which guarantees the right to freedom of religion? (Or is the Constitution of Ukraine not law for parliament representatives?) And where does the Rep. Smitiuh intend to put the 7.7% Greek Catholics, 1.1% Protestant, 2.4% ‘other’, and the 4.8% for whom it is ‘hard to say’ [what religious denomination they belong to]?” (Tokmak, M., 2013).

What is remarkable about the mentioned statistics, the source of which was not indicated, is that it even excluded people who do not support any official denomination (atheists and agnostics)—who constitute the majority (62.5%) [of the population] of Ukraine (Razumkov Centre, 2006).

The *European values* frame was used by the proponents as a counter-frame to *traditional values*. LGBT organizations established an opposition between Europe—the democratic and liberal “West”—and Russia, emblematic for “Eastern” authoritarian despotism. Proponents often used the *European values* frame as self-evident, and only several brief explanations were made about the specific content of these values: respect for individual freedoms and tolerance. Pro-Russian opponents associated “European values” with individualism as opposed to “communitarianism, collectivism, and solidarity” of the “Slavic” nations (Kryuchkov, 2013). Pro-European Svoboda and the Greek Catholic church tried to redefine the European space as a space of distorted norms which have to be corrected by Ukrainian traditions after conclusion of the Association agreement. They tried to create a definition of Europe which will not contradict “traditional values”: a Europe which had “forgotten” that it was built upon “Christian morals” but would “remember” them with the help of Ukraine. Ukraine, in their discourse, appeared to be even “more European” than Europe itself, since it preserved the “original” European traditions.

As in the case of the “rights” master frame, bill proponents from political elites shared the opponents’ assumptions about social norms/values. They reproduced a discursive opposition between homosexuality and family, considering homosexuality a non-normal practice. Thus, member of the Parliament Committee on Euro-integration Iryna Herashchenko from UDAR maintained that the family is necessarily reproductive and heterosexual: “Does anybody think we have problems with family values? Yes, I agree. But in this case the authorities should support families, popularize family values, support young families and childbirth, but not worry about what’s in people’s trousers” (Gay Alliance Ukraine, 2013, September, 12). A parliament member from BYUT, Borys Tarasiuk, proclaimed: “in case the question of non-discrimination of sexual minorities is put to vote, I will vote “yes”. The reason is not that I share these views or behavior, but the fact that I am against any form of discrimination” (Gay Alliance Ukraine, 2013, November, 12). Here the ambiguous phrase “I do not share such views” may mean that the politician himself is not homosexual (but in that case “I do not share such behaviors” would have been enough). But rather “these views” refers to the acceptance of homosexuality as a norm, which the speaker tries to dissociate himself from.

The Euro-integration master frame: external incentives vs internal preconditions

Most proponents of Bill 2342 gave priority to external reasons for the prohibition of discrimination based on sexual orientation in Ukraine over internal ones. The expected benefits from the EU often appeared as the first argument in proponents’ texts in support of the bill. However, the use of issue-specific frames revealed differences between political elites and LGBT and human rights organizations. The government and parliamentary parties often used the visa-free regime, development of democracy and economic growth expected from European integration¹⁴ as the only arguments in support of the bill. Sometimes the political elites represented visa liberalization as a

¹⁴ Since previous discussions had already established knowledge about the Europeanization process, both proponents and opponents of Bill 2342 in their texts frequently omitted detailed explanations of the consequences of the EU agreements for Ukraine and relied instead on glittering generalities such as “the democratic future of our country and its economic prosperity”.

necessary precondition to the Association Agreement. Unlike the political elites, LGBT and human rights organizations defined promotion of European values and protection of human rights as the main benefits of European integration and ignored the wider political and economical consequences of the agreements. Besides Visa Liberalization Action Plan and the Association Agreement, they invoked other international rights-agreements concluded by Ukraine, particularly to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights, alongside with internal reasons for the bill's acceptance (the prevalence of discrimination and hate crimes against gay people in Ukraine). However, the Coalition Against Discrimination was the only actor who explicitly posited the protection of Ukrainian citizens from discrimination as the reason for the bill's acceptance that was more important than the EU's external requirements (Gay-Alliance Ukraine, 2013, October, 13).

Opponents responded to proponents' *Euro-integration* frames with both reframing and counter-framing. The main counter-frame used by both pro-Russian and pro-European opponents was the *values/norms* frame. Opponents claimed that protecting traditional values and norms was more important than any benefits from the EU. Reframing strategies varied. Pro-Russian Communists and Narodnyj Sobor redefined Euro-integration benefits, concluding that political association with the EU would destroy the Ukrainian economy and weaken political and economic ties with Russia. The pro-European Svoboda denied that Bill 2342 was necessary to Euro-integration by emphasizing that approval of anti-discrimination legislation was not required by formal or informal documents regarding relations with the EU (the Association Agreement, the State program of adaptation of Ukrainian law to European law, "Füle's list"), and by passing over the fact that the bill was necessary for visa liberalization. Both pro-European and pro-Russian opponents consistently denied there were internal reasons for adoption of Bill 2342 and claimed that the EU requirements were the only motive for its proposal.

The mechanism of external incentives used by the EU was represented by bill opponents and proponents in different ways. Opponents defined the EU's promotion of human rights in neighboring countries as an illegitimate violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and a manifestation of EU colonial politics. Both pro-Russian and pro-European opponents represented the European Union government as an active subject applying aggressive pressure on passive Ukrainian society: "...the European Union imposes [the bill] on us..." (Svoboda), "they require or even urgently demand of us..." (PR), "...the aggressive imposition of unacceptable..." (the Communist Party), "...the government of the European Union has demanded the adoption of degenerate Bill 2342..." (Narodnyj Sobor). Proponents from LGBT and human rights organizations made counter-claims: that the EU was defending Ukrainian sovereignty from Russian influence, and that the reason it insists on prohibition of sexual orientation discrimination in Ukraine is to protect itself from an influx of illegal immigrants who may seek a better life in the EU, being oppressed in their native country. However, they shared with the opponents' representation of the EU as an active actor forcing Ukraine to accept Bill 2342. Proponents from the political elites did not provide any interpretations of EU interests; the only model of justification they suggested for external incentives was a reference to European legal standards implementation in order to improve Ukrainian law.

Conclusion

The negative framing of Bill 2342 by the alliance of parliamentary parties, churches, and the religious right appears to have been more effective than the framing of the pro-camp made up of individual parliament members and LGBT and human rights organizations. Azarov's government supported the bill as long as president Janukovych intended to sign agreements with the EU, but opposed it as soon as the Ukrainian geopolitical course turned towards the Customs Union with Russia. A consensus against the bill among political elites persisted even when most of the actors

from the opponents' camp (members of the government, the Communist party, and part of the PR) were excluded from mainstream politics after Euro-Maidan.

The ineffectiveness of the proponents' framing resulted from the lack of consolidation within the pro-camp. The most resourceful actors among proponents (the government and members of parliamentary parties) shared many assumptions and framing strategies with the opponents, including the reproduction of the citizens' rights/minority rights binary, the contradiction between homosexuality and family, representation of homosexuality as non-normative practice, and the denial of the existence of discrimination against homosexual people, which limited their ability to respond effectively to their opponents' framing. Eventually, their framing activities were limited to several arguments within the "Euro-integration" frame which implied that there were only external reasons for supporting the bill's acceptance. In fact, proponents from among political elites supported legislative protection of civil and economic rights for homosexual people only in order to obtain benefits from the European Union. After the Janukovych/Azarov government rejected Euro-integration and before Euro-Maidan, proponents among political elites were divested of their main framing resource. Proponents in LGBT and human rights organizations developed a greater range of frames than that of the political elites. There was no unified position among these organizations: each suggested its own arguments in response to the opponents (often relying on close analysis of the opponents' texts and providing long quotations from them). They used heterogeneous set of frames (*human, civil, minority rights* frames) within the "rights" master frame and developed a set of relativization strategies to oppose the *traditional values/norms* frame. The heterogeneous frames and framing strategy enabled them to make more flexible and quick responses to opponents' arguments, but this was also an obstacle to the development of a strong, coherent master frame.

Opponents of the bill developed common framing strategies despite their conflicting views on Euro-integration. Within the "rights" master frame, opponents consistently rejected the internal reasons for a prohibition of discrimination based on sexual orientation in the labor sphere in Ukraine. They reframed the discrimination against homosexual people through comparison with other disadvantaged groups, and by making accusations of reverse discrimination. Claims of reverse discrimination were exaggerated into the complex myth of a "homodictatorship" in which the struggle for equal civil rights for the LGBT movement was represented as a struggle for domination over heterosexual people. Opponents strongly framed "traditional values" which embrace national, gender, religious, and moral norms; discursively excluded homosexual people from society; and constructed a border between the Ukrainian social space and European social space regulated along "European values". Similar to the Thatcherite discourse of the "promotion of homosexuality" (Smith, 1994), the Ukrainian heterosexual, patriarchal, orthodox society of the opponents' discourse was represented as a homogeneous and safe space of social normality which faced internal and external threats from a subversive homosexual element. Homosexuality was represented as a threat to the procreative family (level of biological reproduction), public health (level of social reproduction), and thus to the whole Ukrainian society. The internal subversion of social norms occurred as the "natural heterosexuality" of the society's members was distorted by "propagation". External subversion came to the "normal" Ukrainian social space from the European Union in which the "homodictatorship" had already been established and was now being aggressively "imposed" on Ukrainian society. The internal subversion was supported and stimulated by an external one—through mandating anti-discrimination policies, the EU provided the Ukrainian homosexual community with more opportunities for "propagation".

The difference between the pro-Russian and pro-European opponents' use of the *traditional values/norms* frame was that pro-European opponents claimed that the social space of distorted European norms might be corrected under the positive influence of Ukraine, whereas pro-Russian opponents used "traditional norms/values" to oppose Ukraine and Europe, following the Russian "traditional values" discourse. In the Russian Federation, protection of "traditional values" has gradually become a kind of state ideology justifying to Russian society the return to fundamentalist

autocracy and the growing confrontation of Putin's government with the liberal democracies of "the West" (Shevtsova, 2014). Thus, the geopolitical confrontation between Russia and "the West" should be considered an important factor in further studies of sexual politics in Ukraine.

As Elisaveta Blagojevich points out in her analysis of a similar case of anti-discrimination controversy in Serbia, identification with Europe is an important factor in the success of Europeanization (Blagojević, 2011). In the case of Bill 2342, sexual norms were a point beyond which identification with the EU became impossible. Antagonism between Ukraine and Europe was most apparent in the discourse of the pro-Russian religious right, churches and the Communist party, but to some extent it also emerged among pro-European opponents and proponents when it came to sexual norms, when "European values" appeared to conflict with the "specific mentality of Ukrainian people" and "traditional values".

The debates over Bill 2342 revealed many similarities to corresponding debates on gay rights in the US and UK: denials of discrimination against homosexual people, accusations of reverse discrimination, references to "propagation" (Schacter, 1994; Smith, 1994). The homonegative discourse of the Ukrainian political elites and religious right also shared some features with racist discourse among European political elites, as studied by van Dijk (1997). At the same time the Ukrainian anti-discrimination controversy showed some differences to these. Unlike the US gay movement, Ukrainian LGBT organizations did not rely on the "ethnic identity" concept, and sporadic essentialist interpretations of sexuality found in texts of LGBT organizations did not constitute the basis for a coherent political strategy. Opposition between the majority (who have full citizenship) and minority (attributed minority rights) was more apparent in the opponents' discourse than in a "discourse of equivalences" as described by Schacter (1994). A peculiarity of the homonegative discourses in the Ukrainian situation before Euro-Maidan was that they were used by pro-Russian political actors to provide a popular explanation for why Ukraine should seek closer relations with Russia and keep away from the EU.

An analysis of the political communication over Bill 2342 remains insufficient without a consideration of the media representation of the debates. Media coverage, the main source of citizens' information about political controversies, is crucial to the formation of the public agenda and public opinion. But the media are not transparent transmitters of political discourse: they produce their own frames and may give unequal coverage to contradicting positions in political debates (Callaghan & Schnell, 2001). In the case of Bill 2342 it will be worth exploring in future research how and to what extent the pro- and con-camps acquired access to media platforms, and particularly, which actors in the pro-camp got more space in media representations—conservative political elites on the one hand, or LGBT and human rights organizations on the other.

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