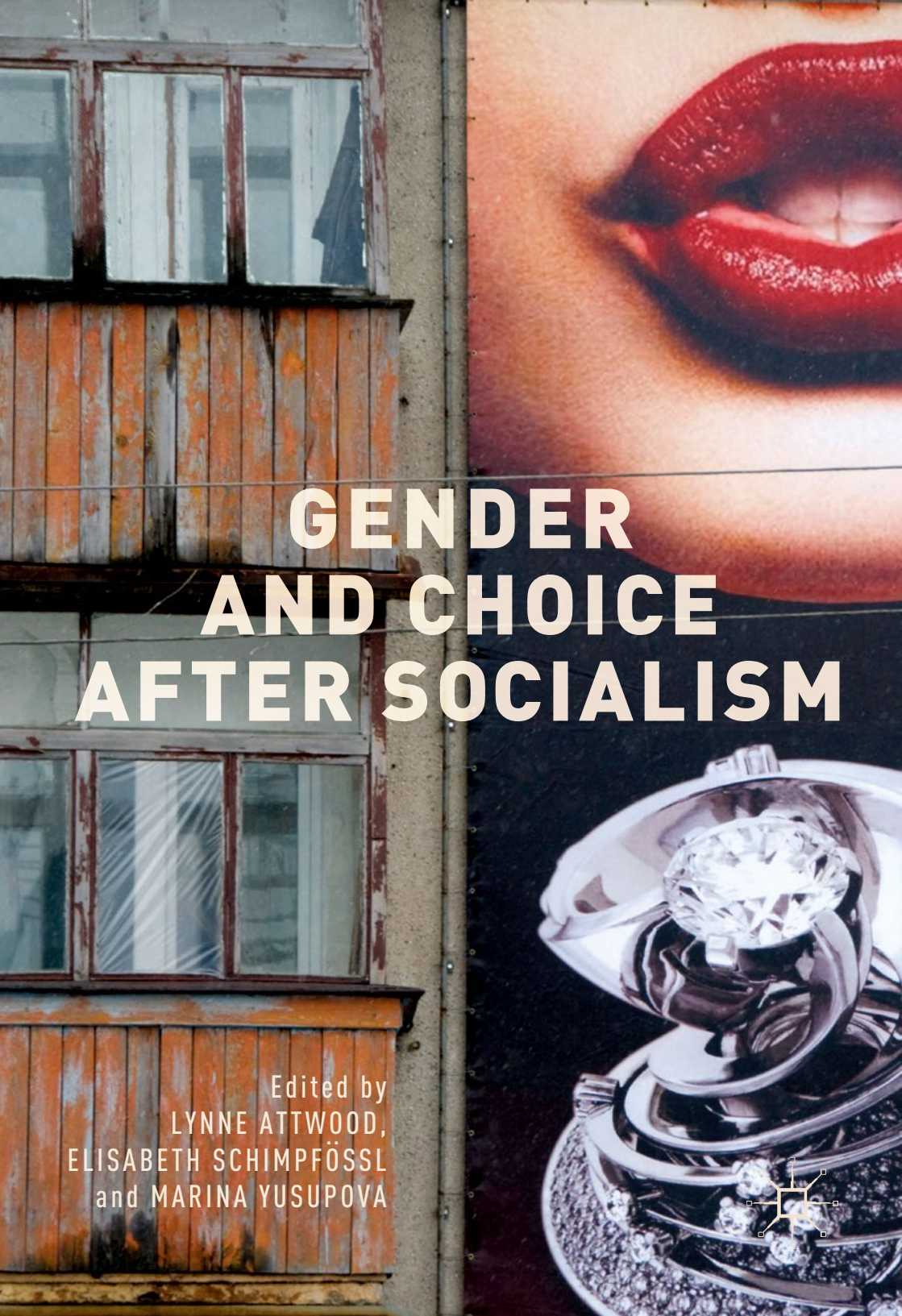

# GENDER AND CHOICE AFTER SOCIALISM

Edited by
LYNNE ATTWOOD,
ELISABETH SCHIMPFÖSSL
and MARINA YUSUPOVA

# Gender and Choice after Socialism

Lynne Attwood • Elisabeth Schimpfössl
Marina Yusupova
Editors

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*Editors*
Lynne Attwood
School of Arts, Languages and Cultures
University of Manchester
Manchester, UK

Elisabeth Schimpfössl
School of Languages and Social Sciences
Aston University
Birmingham, UK

Marina Yusupova
University College for Interdisciplinary
Learning, University of Manchester
Manchester, UK

ISBN 978-3-319-73660-0 ISBN 978-3-319-73661-7 (eBook)
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-73661-7

Library of Congress Control Number: 2018930251



Cover illustration: Iain Masterton / Alamy Stock Photo

Printed on acid-free paper

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by the registered company Springer International Publishing AG part of Springer Nature.
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

# Acknowledgements

Olga Isupova gratefully acknowledges the support she received from the Basic Research Program of the National Research University Higher School of Economics.

Both Olesya Khromeychuk and Elisabeth Schimpfössl would like to acknowledge that the research for their chapters was made possible by the Leverhulme Early Career Fellowship.

Nadzeya Husakouskaya acknowledges the financial and institutional support she received from the University of Bergen and the Centre for Women's and Gender Research (SKOK). Her fieldwork in Ukraine was made possible by the Meltzer Project Grant. She is indebted to Randi Gressgård for her supervision and her valuable comments on her chapter, and is grateful to Olena Shevchenko, the director of Insight, and other team members of that organisation for their collaboration. Very special thanks go to her friends in Ukraine, including Oksana Guz' and T*, who were indispensable in enabling her to get through her fieldwork in Kyiv.

Ira Roldugina wishes to express her gratitude to Arthur Clech and Asya Osnovina for their scholarly advice and friendly support.

Anna Shadrina would like to express her gratitude to all of the women who agreed to participate in her study. She would also like to thank Maria Teteriuk, Olga Plakhotnic, Elena Gapova, Julia Shimko, and Kinneret Lahad for their constructive feedback on an early draft of her chapter. She also extends her thanks to the editors of this volume for their useful com-

ments which helped her to see more in her data. The research for this chapter was supported in part by Open Society Foundations (OSF). However, the opinions expressed in the chapter are the author's own and do not necessarily express the views of OSF.

Anna Temkina and Elena Zdravomyslova would like to acknowledge, in particular, the help they have received from Ekaterina Borozdina, Viktoria Kuznetsova, Anastasia Novkunskaya, Michele Rivkin-Fish, and Anna Rotkirch.

Marina Yusupova wishes to express her gratitude to Adi Kuntsman for her insightful remarks, and Lynne Attwood and Lewis Ryder for their help in preparing the final version of the chapter. Yusupova's research was supported by the University of Manchester and the Centre for East European Language Based Area Studies (CEELBAS).

# Contents

# Notes on Contributors

**Lynne Attwood** is Honorary Fellow at the University of Manchester, having recently retired from her previous post as Senior Lecturer in Russian Studies at the University of Manchester. She is a specialist in gender issues in Soviet and post-Soviet society, and her work has explored gender in relation to child upbringing, education, the cinema, women's magazines and housing. She is the author of three monographs and editor/co-editor of two other books. She has also authored numerous articles in journals and edited collections.

**Nadzeya Husakouskaya** is a PhD candidate at the Centre for Women's and Gender Research, University of Bergen. She is also a board member and associate researcher at the Centre for Gender Studies at the European Humanities University, Lithuania. Her current research project deals with the problematisation of transgender politics in Ukraine. Her work focuses on gender and sociopolitical transformations in non-Western contexts (post-Soviet region and post-Apartheid South Africa).

**Olga Isupova** is a senior researcher at the Institute of Demography in the Higher School of Economics, Moscow. She received her PhD in Sociology from the University of Manchester. Her areas of interest include motherhood, marriage and cohabitation, childlessness and reproductive technologies, and how these relate to gender issues.

**Olesya Khromeychuk** is a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow at the University of East Anglia, where she teaches Soviet history and researches the participation and representation of women in military formations in the Second World War.

She is the author of *'Undetermined' Ukrainians: Post-War Narratives of the Waffen SS 'Galicia' Division* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2013).

**Ira Roldugina** is a feminist, activist and academic. Formerly senior lecturer at the Higher School of Economics in Moscow, she is now a DPhil candidate in History at Oxford University. She is currently working on a book entitled *Vernacular Queer and Shifting Power in Russia: From the Late Imperial Era Up to the 1940's*. Her research interests include the history of homosexuality in Russia, the history of marginal groups, AIDS in Russia and intimacy in the Gulag.

**Elisabeth Schimpfössl's** research looks into questions around elites, power and social inequality. Her book *Rich Russians: From Oligarchs to Bourgeoisie* will be published with Oxford University Press USA in May 2018. She has also conducted collaborative research into media and journalism, with a focus on self-censorship in post-communist Europe. Schimpfössl has a PhD from the University of Manchester and is currently a Lecturer in Sociology and Policy at Aston University.

**Anna Shadrina** is a PhD candidate in Sociology at Birkbeck, University of London. Her research explores women's experiences of the post-Soviet transformations in Russia. She has two books published by NLO, Moscow, in Russian: *Single Women: Sex, Love and Family Beyond Marriage* (2014) and *Dear Children: Fertility Decline and the Increase in "Price" of Motherhood in the Twenty-First Century* (2017). In her PhD project, Shadrina examines how the new system of social inequality that unfolded after the collapse of the USSR is experienced by ex-Soviet women of older generations living in Russia and in the United Kingdom.

**Anna Temkina** received her PhD in Social Sciences from the University of Helsinki in 1997. She is the Chair of Public Health and Gender and co-director of the Gender Studies Program at the European University in St. Petersburg. Her areas of expertise include gender, reproductive health, sexuality, feminist theory and gender relations in Soviet and post-Soviet societies. She is the author of two monographs: *Women's Sexual Life: Between Freedom and Subordination* (2008; in Russian) and *Russia in transition* (1997; in English). She is also author and co-editor, with Elena Zdravomyslova, of a number of edited collections in Russian.

**Marina Yusupova** has a PhD from the University of Manchester. Her current research explores the changing normative orders of masculinity in Russia from the late Soviet period. Yusupova has been a Fulbright Visiting Researcher at the State University of New York at Stony Brook and a Visiting Scholar at the

Center for the Study of Men and Masculinities at the same university. She has co-edited an interdisciplinary anthology *Sexualities: Identities, Behaviors, and Society* (2014) and has published a range of articles in peer-reviewed journals.

**Elena Zdravomyslova** is a professor at the European University in St. Petersburg, where she has from the day of it establishment in 1996. She is also co-director of the Gender Studies Program at the European University in St. Petersburg. She is the author of one monograph, *Paradigmy sotsiologii obshchestvennykh dvizhenii* (Sociological Paradigms of Social Movements' Research), and author and co-editor, along with Anna Temkina, of a number of edited collections. Her areas of expertise include gender relations in post-Soviet societies, sexual politics, feminist theory and sociology of ageing. Temkina and Zdravomyslova have also contributed to a range of English-language journals and edited collections.

# Introduction: Gender and Choice After Socialism

After the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the former socialist countries experienced various degrees of liberalisation and privatisation. This was accompanied by a new ideology that included the notion that the end of socialism would usher in a new era of choice. Indeed, the elimination of restrictions and the expansion of options did mean increased personal and political freedom. On the most basic level, free market reforms allowed more imports from the West, resulting in the range of available consumer products increasing beyond measure. For those who had felt trapped within the confines of the eastern bloc, a more significant change was that borders were opened, providing the chance—and the choice—to travel the world. Many life-constraining legislations were revoked, such as the ban on homosexuality, making it easier for people to make choices about their sexual lives. Changes in housing distribution, and the relaxation of official attitudes towards what constituted a 'normal' family, enabled people to choose how they wanted to live and with whom.

At first glance, all of these developments look unambiguously positive. The concept of choice is generally bound up with the concept of individual rights and, as such, is seen as a positive aspect of an open and democratic society. Indisputably, individual rights increased in the post-Soviet countries. However, in no society is choice ever entirely free; nor is it always in people's own interests.

## Theorising Choice

As far back as Ancient Greece, thinkers have tried to understand the relationships between free will, individual rights and choice. Most notably, Aristotle argued that '[t]he origin of action – its efficient, not its final cause – is choice, and that of choice is desire and reasoning with a view to an end. This is why choice cannot exist either without thought or intellect or without a moral state'.[1] However, the Greek word he used—*prohairesis*—is not the unambiguous equivalent of 'choice' but has also been translated as decision, commitment, purpose, preferential choice, established preference, pursuit and intention.[2]

In modern times, choice has been an important and difficult concept for scholars. The political economist and sociologist Max Weber wrote in the early twentieth century that the predictability of consequences made choice rational.[3] Jean-Paul Sartre took a step further. He wrote that people are nothing but their actions: we *are* our choices.[4] Many of Sartre's sociological contemporaries shared an interest in the question of choice in modern society; however, some, like Zygmunt Bauman, emphasised the inequality of choice—that some can choose more freely than others.[5]

For modernisation theorists, most prominently Anthony Giddens and Ulrich Beck, the unpredictability of consequences has rendered choice in modern society, in contrast to traditional society, individualised and free. No longer constrained by tradition, choices proliferate. Compelled to live in an ever-changing, flexible world where no 'default options' remain, and with access to diverse alternative sources of knowledge, people are now compelled to choose their lifestyles, sexuality and family structure and write their own biographies. Choice is, then, the single most important feature of our age.

In contrast to sociologists of modernisation, cultural sociologists such as Pierre Bourdieu view culture as something that structures and shapes individual choice. Specific cultural socialisation instils certain preferences, values, desires, affinities and tastes in people. As a result, any apparently free choice is driven by some degree of pre-determined dispositions which originate in society, social structure and, in particular, membership

of a particular social class. According to this understanding, free choice is almost an illusion. However, this illusion is an important aspect of capitalist ideology: it obscures inequalities and the class-based limitations on choice.

In specific socio-historical contexts, the concept of choice is a socially and culturally constructed phenomenon which is both enabled and constrained by the context in which it takes place. Drawing on the work of Ori Schwarz, we consider that our supposedly individual choices are highly influenced by the society in which we live and the social class to which we belong.[6] Culture shapes the relationship between personal, social and political freedom and personal, social and political choice. *How* people make choices is also influenced by their culture.

The promotion of the ideology of free choice is particularly important in periods of intense socio-economic change. The philosopher Renata Salecl makes the important point that the manipulation of choice in capitalist society works against democracy, arguing that choice 'is the basis … of any political engagement and of the political process as a whole. However, when choice is glorified as the ultimate tool by which people can shape their private lives, very little is left over for social critique'.[7] Exploring the problems relating to choice in West Germany in the years following the Second World War, the German sociologist Arnold Gehlen found, half a century before Salecl, that the obligation to choose can be highly problematic, even more so as more choice alternatives do not automatically lead to equal opportunities for making choices.[8] People responded to this with the feelings of loss and anxiety as well as individual self-blaming for failure.

Salecl's and Gehlen's work is concerned with Western capitalist countries in different eras. However, their observations are highly pertinent to the post-Soviet countries, which, after the supposedly classless Soviet Union disintegrated, in the 1990s experienced rapid social and economic changes at least as extreme as those described by Gehlen in post-war Germany and where choice is circumscribed in a variety of ways, both overt and covert. Choice processes in those countries have undergone extremely rapid change since the countries' planned economies were transformed into capitalism.

In the Soviet era, there was little leeway to choose; that is, choice was heavily restricted. Indeed, in accordance with what scholars of the sociology of modernisation call tradition, it could be said to be somewhat automated. The Soviet period was in many respects akin to what Giddens calls pre-modern tradition: there was a repressive state which controlled its people's right to choose and how to choose.

## Gender and Choice in the Post-Socialist Countries

In this book we explore the issues of choice and gender in two post-socialist Slavic states, Russia and Ukraine. The demise of state socialism has had a profound effect on the choices available to people in these countries. For those who found themselves at the lower end of the new hierarchy during the post-Soviet transformation, the collapse of the old social welfare institutions led to uncertainty, instability and insecurity, if not outright poverty.[9] The supposedly 'limitless choice' of capitalism has largely been meaningless; indeed, it could be said to have actually been working to silence structural factors and disguise rapidly growing social and economic inequalities. When people are expected to be active choosers and to make reflexive and responsible choices (assess risks, anticipate consequences and prepare themselves for best-case and worst-case scenarios), the lack of valuable achievements in life is routinely interpreted as a result of 'bad choices'.

In the context of post-Soviet transition, people's failure to survive and flourish in the labour market, as well as in their personal lives, has been individualised, with responsibility for failure placed on their own shoulders. The anxiety which resulted from extreme change, with growing disillusionment with the supposed freedoms of capitalism and an increasing awareness, to borrow Salecl's term, of the 'tyranny of choice', has led to a search for new authorities, as we can see today in the rise of populism and authoritarianism all over the region.

Against the background of growing economic inequality, a retreating welfare state and rising conservatism, the 'new' ideal of gender relations is

the long familiar bourgeois ideal, with a male breadwinner and a woman retreating into the private domestic sphere. Despite the fact that the practices, norms and values of the Soviet past and the 'working mother' gender contract remain highly influential for the majority of people, the 'housewife' and 'sponsored woman' have achieved cultural hegemony in media discourses and have become markers, in particular, of the new upper class. There is, all the same, more flexibility in gender practices and identities than there was in the past, when traditional understandings of masculinity and femininity, despite the rhetoric of equality, were largely unchallenged on more than a superficial level. Now there is some possibility of interpreting masculinity and femininity in a less rigid way.

Yet there are severe limitations on these possibilities, both in people's personal lives and in the political arena. While the situation is far from identical in Russia and Ukraine, there are similarities. For example, while homosexuality is legal in both states, LGBT citizens are likely to experience negative social attitudes towards them and their lifestyles, and they do not enjoy the same legal protections and state support as heterosexuals. New anti-gay legislation in Russia represses the lifestyle choices of non-heterosexual people. Increased media control and political repression have hindered citizens' right to choose how to express their opinions. This is the case not only in Russia but also in post-Maidan Ukraine. As Volodymyr Chemerys wrote for *Open Democracy Review*, 'something really has happened to us—Ukraine has changed after the last Maidan. From a country that stood out for its level of civic freedoms on the territory of the former USSR, it is transforming into a copy of the Russian Federation in terms of the suppression of those freedoms'.[10]

Just as strong as policy-based restrictions and media control are the influences on behaviour stemming from social norms and practices. In Russia, these are certainly reinforced by the Putin regime but are rooted in Soviet and post-Soviet history and society. A similar phenomenon can be observed in other former socialist countries. In Ukraine, for example, people are now able to change their gender—but how they do so is heavily constrained by institutional and medical means.

## This Volume and Its Structure

There is a large amount of recent scholarship exploring the political, economic and social transitions in post-Soviet countries and how these have transformed gender relations and gender and sexuality politics. These questions have, however, never been explored through the lens of choice. Similarly, the emergence of new choices and the concept of free choice in the post-Soviet countries have never been explored through the lens of gender and sexuality. We sought to bring these two fields into conversation with each other, focusing specifically on choice as an ideology of neoliberalism and gender as a tool of the class-formation processes in the post-Soviet context. We deal with the following questions: How is choice gendered, and how do choice and gender relate to each other? What is special about choice and gender in post-Soviet societies?

In this volume we examine how the new choices which became available to people after the collapse of socialism have influenced gender identities and gender relations in the region, understanding choice as part of the ideology of capitalism and the driving force of class-formation processes in former socialist countries. We analyse the origins and development of life choices in their historic, social and economic contexts. We ask how new choices have influenced gender identities and gender relations, how different groups with specific gendered characteristics perceive these choices and deal with them and how neoliberal interpretations of choice have become an integral feature of post-Soviet societies.

As is the case throughout the world, people's socio-economic positions determine to a large extent the choices available to them. What is specific about the post-socialist space is that many people have undergone profound changes in material wellbeing and social class within just one generation, with their positions in the social and socio-economic hierarchies undergoing sharp upward or downward mobility.

Many of the contributors explore the relationship between state, individual, gender and choice. We critically examine the impact of the neoliberal ideology of free choice from a variety of perspectives. These range from state policies addressing the apparent demographic crisis in Russia and government practices concerning transgender people to

social processes like the individualisation of aspects of life, social class, ageing and demilitarisation.

The volume consists of three sections. The chapters in Section 1 analyse external constraints to choices in the form of laws, state policies, state structures, the geopolitical agenda, homophobia and gender norms.

Ira Roldugina's chapter explores the roots of homophobia in Russia and explains how this infiltrated state structures, public consciousness and academic scholarship. Based on extensive archival research, including FSB files, the chapter reflects on the choices made by Russian and Western scholars working on the under-researched history of Russian sexuality. While scholarship on post-socialist non-heterosexuals is growing, very little work has been done on homosexuality in the Soviet period, despite the fact that plentiful archival material is available. This, Roldugina argues, is due to suppression of the subject both by the Russian academic community and by civil society. She links the repressed memory of Soviet homosexuality both with the Stalinist gender policies of the 1930s and the ambiguous and inconsistent processes of democratisation which took place in Russia in the 1990s.

Nadzeya Husakouskaya's chapter deals with the transgender phenomenon in contemporary Ukraine, showing how medical and state institutions work to normalise transgender citizens' bodies and standardise their identities and self-expression. Husakouskaya explains how Ukrainian law views transgender people as a problem to be governed and regulated. She demonstrates that when the majority of Ukrainians declared their desire for greater European integration, Ukrainian transgender (as well as LGB) activism was intensified by the promise and possibility of 'a European future'. Ukrainian NGOs working to protect LGBT rights aligned their work with Western donors' expectations and thus functioned as a guide for Western discourse on human rights and sexual diversity. This might ultimately result in a backlash against both the transgender community and LGBT activism.

In the chapter 'From the Maidan to the Donbas: The Limitations on Choice for Women in Ukraine', Olesya Khromeychuk explores the working of gender norms in Ukraine in relation to women's participation both in the Maidan protests and the military conflict in Donbas. In both cases their contribution was encouraged and welcomed but was restricted to

certain roles. In the military conflict, the limitations on women's involvement were based not only on the patriarchal perception of gender roles but also on legal restrictions on the positions open to them in the Ukrainian army. The chapter explores why women chose to participate in the military conflict in the first place, what roles they chose to take from the limited range available to them and how they challenged the restrictions imposed on them.

Section 2 is concerned largely with internal constraints on choice and the ways in which choice is to a large extent pre-determined by culture. While the authors may not directly refer to dispositional sociological theories inspired by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, all of them are to some extent compatible with the Bourdieusian approach, which strives to uncover cultural influences behind apparently individual choices. The chapters make it clear that while individuals seemingly have a growing number of options, the culture in which they live influences their choices by imposing its norms and expectations. Supposedly free choice, then, is to some extent an illusion—which, furthermore, legitimises inequalities.

Anna Shadrina's chapter looks at how older, unmarried Russian women account for their relationship status. While ageist attitudes, gender norms and men's premature mortality in Russia delimit the women's actual capacity to choose whether to be single, culture offers them discursive tools to frame their singlehood as choice and so avoid disempowerment. In a culture where women's 'late singlehood' is represented, as Shadrina puts it, 'as an inevitable move towards isolation, ageing and dying alone', the metaphor of individual choice becomes a vital resource for agency and self-respect.

Elisabeth Schimpfössl explores how choice plays out among upper-class femininities and masculinities in Russia. The chapter tries to make sense of the complexities of gendered identities among rich Russians, including gay masculinities, and asks to what extent the gender norms prevalent in Russia have affected the wealthy differently to the large majority of Russians. It also examines the ways and the life situations in which their choices are restricted.

Lynne Attwood and Olga Isupova explore the reasons women give for choosing whether or not to have children, against the background of the 'demographic crisis' in Russia. Analysing discussions between women on

various Internet sites on the subject of childbirth and, more broadly, the meaning of the family in contemporary Russia, they argue that although it is easier for women to make choices about this aspect of their lives than it was in the more prescriptive Soviet era, there are still social pressures, old and new, which influence their choices; these include the legacy of Soviet notions of compulsory motherhood, as well as post-Soviet demands that women now commit themselves to intensive motherhood. They make it clear that the possibility for choice in relation to motherhood has both increased and decreased in the 2000s. Their 'netnographic' study raises another important dimension for the sociology of choice: the role of Internet communities in shaping people's choices.

The chapters in Section 3 are roughly in line with the sociology of modernisation's approach to choice (Giddens and Beck). They are focused on the analysis of how people approach their choices by means of individual deliberations. Research participants are presented as reflexive choosers who carefully manage their self-representations and calculate the consequences of their choices.

Anna Temkina and Elena Zdravomyslova explore practices of choice in reproductive healthcare as a mechanism of class construction in contemporary Russia. They do this by analysing in-depth interviews with women in St. Petersburg who purchased private maternity services. The chapter reflects some of the insights of the sociology of modernisation, which analyses the transformation of intimacy in the late modern era and argues that the life of the modern self became a strategic project. It argues, in the authors' words, that for contemporary middle-class women in Russia, 'the "responsible" motherhood project starts before the birth of the child, and involves intensive pregnancy planning, attention to healthcare, and special effort in the organisation of childbirth'. Temkina and Zdravomyslova focus on culturally specific techniques of the choices their interviewees made—they use specific algorithms to search for information about maternity services, ask for advice from experts and former patients, invest their resources in getting personalised recommendations and consider the pros and cons of all aspects of the available services. For women with resources, the motherhood-planning project, the rejection of state-funded services and the discursive practice of differentiating

themselves from women who do not invest in their motherhood project work as mechanisms for obtaining and sustaining their social position.

Marina Yusupova explores changing attitudes in Russia towards army service. On a constitutional level, male citizens in Russia have no choice as to whether to serve. However, capitalism and the severe under-funding of the Russian army have unwittingly granted this choice to privileged and educated groups. The interviews Yusupova has conducted with Russian men suggest that the discursive framing of this choice is simultaneously influenced by capitalist rationality and Soviet militarist ideology, which creates unique tensions between the ideology of militarism and notions of masculinity. However, despite strong antimilitarist sentiments and the harsh critique of the contemporary Russian army, only a small number of the research participants in Yusupova's study expressed consistent antimilitary sentiments or considered military service to be unnecessary and pointless. Military and militarism remain a crucial symbolic terrain on which masculinity is contested and achieved, even for those who chose to evade the draft. The chapter shows that culture equips us with normative prescriptions for self-representation, and that at times individuals choose to follow such prescriptions even when it contradicts their own life projects and lived experiences.

Manchester, UK — Lynne Attwood
Birmingham, UK — Elisabeth Schimpfössl
Manchester, UK — Marina Yusupova

## Notes

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# Section I

## Choice and the State


# Half-Hidden or Half-Open? Scholarly Research on Soviet Homosexuals in Contemporary Russia

Irina Roldugina

This chapter explores the historical scholarship on sexualities in post-Soviet Russia, drawing on extensive archival research and scholarly experience on the history of homosexuality in Russia, both pre-revolutionary and Soviet, including the Federal Security Service (FSB) archive. It also reflects on the past and present choices made by Russian and Western historians in relation to the almost untouched history of Russian sexuality. While the scholarship on post-socialist non-heterosexuals is growing extensively, homosexuality in Soviet Russia, despite the availability of plentiful archival materials, continues to be greeted with silence and repression, both by the Russian academic community and by civil society. The only notable publication on the subject is Dan Healey's *Homosexual Desire in Revolutionary Russia*, written more than a decade ago. I argue that the repressed memory of homosexuals living through the Soviet era is deeply connected with the Stalinist gender and sexuality policies of the 1930s, as well as with the ambiguous and inconsistent process of democ-

I. Roldugina (✉)
Faculty of History, University of Oxford, Oxford, UK



L. Attwood et al. (eds.), *Gender and Choice after Socialism*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-73661-7_1

ratisation in the 1990s. The policy concerning access to sources relating to homosexuality in the Russian archives will also be analysed.

When I told a professor at one of Moscow's liberal universities, where I was studying to become an historian, that I wanted to write my diploma on the topic of homosexuality in Russia in the eighteenth century, she did not respond with open disapproval or homophobic rhetoric. What she did say, in a friendly manner, was: 'All of the archives that contain information on this phenomenon are located at monasteries, and that's the main difficulty'. There was no reason not to believe a professor with many years of experience. I wrote my thesis on a different topic, which was also related to sexuality and the transgression of social norms in Russia in the eighteenth century.[1] That work was based on unpublished and mostly unknown archive documents. The history of sexuality and corporality simply could not appear within the Marxist historiography, because such subjects were outside the official list of topics which Soviet historians could work on. Perhaps mainly due to inertia, in the 1990s, when it would have been possible to work on this subject, there was no apparent interest in doing so. This began to change in the 2000s, though the subject was still only a minor element in the huge amount of translated work on the history of everyday life, corporality and urban history. Later, after becoming an experienced archive researcher, I discovered that sources on the topic of homosexuality were scattered across federal and municipal archives, that they are numerous and that they have never been the focus of historians' attention.[2]

Why has the history of homosexuality, one of the most ambitious topics in the world's historiography, remained so underdeveloped in Russia? Which factors have contributed to the lack of knowledge and scientific interest in this field? What is the connection between this and the present-day homophobic rhetoric and archive policy of the state? In this chapter I will aim to explain, based on my own experience of academic work in Russia, why scholars have not made the 'choice' of addressing these topics, despite the lifting of formal restrictions on the work of historians after the collapse of the USSR; how this is related to the specific circumstances of the transition from socialism to capitalism in Russia; and the role which gender 'policy of identities' has played in this process.

I would argue that one of the main reasons why homosexuality in Russia is not considered a promising sphere of study for academic research is not just homophobia, but the absence of a notion of homosexual subject/historic actor. In addition, there is a specific division between 'private' and 'public' which was forcefully established in the 1930s and prevented a dynamically developing discourse on homosexuality from taking shape and moving into the spotlight of academic attention.[3]

## Producing (Non-)Knowledge

Soviet humanities were characterised by a range of censorship restrictions and omitted subjects. The history of homosexuality cannot even be included amongst these subjects, because it was not only prohibited, but had never been formulated as a subject for research. Russian scholars before the revolution were actively trying to comprehend the phenomenon of homosexuality, but exclusively in terms of medicine and law. This was firmly in line with the European trend of this time, as in the pre-Foucauldian era the topic of homo/sexuality was almost never singled out as a subject for historical research. As David Halperin has put it:

> Sex has no history. It is a natural fact, grounded in the functioning of the body, and, as such, it lies outside of history and culture. Sexuality, by contrast, does not properly refer to some aspect or attribute of bodies. Unlike sex, sexuality is a cultural production: it represents the appropriation of the human body and of its physiological capacities by an ideological discourse. Sexuality is not a somatic fact; it is a cultural effect.[4]

However, the period of the 1930s, and specifically of Stalin's repressive policies—the recriminalisation of the 'sodomy' article (1934), which was preceded by a secret campaign against homosexuals in Moscow and Leningrad,[5] and the ban on abortion (1936)—is extremely important for understanding present-day Russian homophobia and the specific features of Soviet humanities. It was not just homosexuality, but any subjects concerning intimacy and sexuality, which were not covered in the humanities field. Dan Healey describes the Soviet gender and sexuality regime as

being characterised by three distinctive features: 'discursive silence about sexuality, *beskonfliktnost'* (conflictlessness) in gender relations and *zhizneradost'*[6] in physiological arena'.[7] These features had a damaging influence on scholarship. For example, a revolutionary anthropological work by Soviet historian Boris Romanov, *People and Morals of Ancient Rus*, published in 1947 in Leningrad, provoked a heated debate within the academic community.[8] The author was rebuked for 'pushing forward the problems of sex more than was necessary'.[9] His response was that he had 'never aspired to the fame of Bocaccio'[10]; and in any case, his book did not touch upon matters of sexuality in any way.

In fact, in the Stalin era, consideration of intimate human experience was completely absent from the humanities and could be found only in the practical fields of knowledge, such as forensic medicine, and even then, only in a considerably reduced form. After recriminalization of homosexuality in 1934, the term 'homosexualism' appears only in *The Great Soviet Encyclopedia in* 1952.[11] In the Thaw period this discursive silence was to some extent overturned, but the subject was still addressed only in a limited way, and exclusively for practical reasons. The slight opening of the Soviet borders to Western tourists and the first organised foreign trips for Soviet citizens puzzled the Soviet leadership, as 'sexual morality' never reached the level desired by the authorities.[12] They believed that Soviet tourists were coming back to the USSR with 'damaged' morals, bringing in 'perverted forms of behavior', such as homosexuality, that they had glimpsed in the West. In contrast to the Stalinist concept of 'discourse silencing',[13] which was meant to ensure both an absence of knowledge about undesirable carnal practices, and the possibility of carrying them out, the Khrushchev era offered a new understanding of 'perverted behavior', which supposedly emerged precisely because of this previous lack of knowledge, and therefore an educational literature on sexual morality emerged to fill this gap.[14] Accordingly, a large number of textbooks on sex education appeared, in very large editions, and an expertise on the subject emerged which would have been unthinkable in the Stalin era.[15] 'It is necessary to talk with young people about questions of love, of the relations between guys and girls. We need to talk with youth about sexual hygiene, and we would like these questions to be at the center of Komsomol groups' attention'.[16]