

Lukasz Szulc

Domesticating the nation online: banal nationalism on LGBTQ websites in Poland and Turkey

**Article (Published version)
(Refereed)**

Original citation:

Szulc, Lukasz (2016) *Domesticating the nation online: banal nationalism on LGBTQ websites in Poland and Turkey*. *Sexualities*, 19 (3). pp. 304-327. ISSN 1363-4607

DOI: [10.1177/1363460715583604](https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460715583604)

© 2016 The Author

This version available at: <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/87155/>

Available in LSE Research Online: March 2018

LSE has developed LSE Research Online so that users may access research output of the School. Copyright © and Moral Rights for the papers on this site are retained by the individual authors and/or other copyright owners. Users may download and/or print one copy of any article(s) in LSE Research Online to facilitate their private study or for non-commercial research. You may not engage in further distribution of the material or use it for any profit-making activities or any commercial gain. You may freely distribute the URL (<http://eprints.lse.ac.uk>) of the LSE Research Online website.



Domesticating the nation online: Banal nationalism on LGBTQ websites in Poland and Turkey

Sexualities

2016, Vol. 19(3) 304–327

© The Author(s) 2016

Reprints and permissions:

sagepub.co.uk/journalsPermissions.nav

DOI: 10.1177/1363460715583604

sex.sagepub.com



Lukasz Szulc

University of Antwerp, Belgium

Abstract

In this article I examine the intersections of queer sexualities and the nation online. In particular, I employ Billig's concept of banal nationalism to investigate when and how the nation is flagged on the most popular LGBTQ websites in Poland and Turkey. The analysis focuses on both the mediation of nationhood through (re)producing the world as a world of nation and the mediation of particular nations through the coupling of queer symbolism with national symbolism. I conclude by proposing the concept of 'domesticating the nation online', which is a form of queering the nation via digital technology, though not to challenge hegemonic national discourses in a public debate but to make the nation more homely for queers themselves. Finally, I juxtapose the concept of banal nationalism with the US neo-imperial cultural logic to argue that domesticating the nation online plays an especially important role for queers beyond the USA.

Keywords

Internet, nation, Poland, queer, Turkey

Introduction

Generally, nationalism does not have a good reputation in LGBTQ studies.¹ It is usually considered as homogenizing and heteronormative or, in its homonationalistic version, as exploiting queer sexualities for nationalism's own harmful purposes. Exceptions are studies on sexual citizenship (e.g. Bell and Binnie, 2000; Oleksy, 2009; Plummer, 2003; Weeks, 1998), which articulate 'claims to sexual equality, rights and recognition within the context of national politics'

Corresponding author:

Lukasz Szulc, Postdoctoral Researcher University of Antwerp, Department of Communication Studies, Stadscampus, Sint-Jacobstraat 2, 2000 Antwerp, Belgium.

Email: Lukasz.Szulc@uantwerpen.be

(Weeks, 2011: 178). Still, studies on sexual citizenship concentrate on the political sphere of rights as citizens rather than on the cultural and social sphere of national identity and belonging. Additionally, the greater focus on globalization in the social sciences tends to take attention away from studies of the nation and nationalism. The same is true for LGBTQ studies. For example, in his article reporting on the first 10 years of the journal *Sexualities*, Plummer (2008) proposes that cosmopolitanism is one of the concepts with which sexuality studies should engage more in the future but he does not mention the nation or nationalism. Similarly, in *The Languages of Sexuality*, a book that is organized around keywords in sexuality studies, Weeks (2011) includes such terms as cosmopolitanism, globalization and multiculturalism, but makes no entries for the nation or nationalism. The recent discussions on homonationalism (Puar, 2005) suggest the revival of the theme of queer sexualities and the nation, yet from this very particular perspective only.

In this article, I want to look at the relationship between queer sexualities and the nation from the viewpoint of banal nationalism (Billig, 1995). Billig explains that nationalism tends to be associated with groups who struggle to create new nation-states or with extreme right-wing politics. Because of this association, nationalism is usually located on the geographical or social periphery rather than in the West's nation-states or social mainstream. Billig argues that this is quite a limiting view and asks us to recognize what he names banal nationalism, that is, 'the collection of ideological habits (including habits of practice and belief) which reproduce established nations as nations' (Billig, 1995: 6). Following Skey's (2014) call to make an analytical distinction between 'the mediation of nationhood' and 'the mediation of individual nations', we should acknowledge that banal nationalism refers to both 'a taken-for-granted framework that naturalizes a view of the world, as a world of nations' (Skey, 2014: 1) as well as the daily and mundane (re)productions of an individual nation, usually by a banal if constant indicating, or flagging, of the nation for its citizenry. Similar approaches to nationalism may also be found in a few works on sexuality, particularly in Sedgwick, who emphasizes 'the powerful familiarizing effect of nation-ness' (1992: 241) and in Binnie, who argues that 'nationalism's power and perniciousness lies in its very capacity for invisibility' (2004: 30).

Like many other key scholars of nations and nationalisms (e.g. Anderson, 1983; Gellner, 1983), Billig recognizes that mass media play a key role in creating and sustaining nations. Hence, the core of his empirical study consists of the analysis of media content, in particular a one-day survey of the British press. However, more recent studies point to the limitations of Billig's sample and argue that we should rethink the concept of banal nationalism in the light of new media. As Skey puts it:

It should be noted that in an era of new media technologies that often transcend national boundaries, the relationship between the media and the nation is being made ever more complex through the widespread use of the internet (Eriksen, 2007), satellite broadcasting (Madianou, 2005), mobile phones etc. (Skey, 2009: 336)

Although Skey (2009) becomes rightfully sensitive to the changing media landscape, his argumentation seems to suggest that new media are the media of globalization per se. Soffer (2013) challenges this assumption in his theoretical article on 'The internet and national solidarity'. He concludes that even though the ritual of the simultaneous consumption of traditional media, which has played an important constitutive and reproductive role in national experience, is decreasing online, banal national assumptions are still evident in the internet structure, web content and user preferences. In this article, I will build on the work of Soffer (2013) to empirically examine banal, as well as some more explicit, flaggings of the national in the self-representational discourses on LGBTQ websites.

Following scholars' recommendations for more cross-national research in sexuality and media studies (e.g. Döring, 2009; Sender, 2013), I will compare two national contexts, Poland and Turkey. I chose those two countries because, except for being underresearched in LGBTQ studies, they share a number of significant similarities and crucial differences, which I will explain in more detail later. One interesting parallel between the two countries is their shared geopolitical position 'at the semi-periphery of the "core Western Europe"' (Korkut and Eslen-Ziya, 2011: 390). Being parts of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and the Middle East (ME), respectively, Poland and Turkey are often conceived in the West as homophobic, at least more so than the West (İlkkaracan, 2008; Kulpa, 2014b; Szulc and Smets, 2015). Consequently, what seems to be the best thing that could happen to queers in Poland and Turkey is to escape to the West or the internet (for some of this discussion see Boston, 2014 and Gruszczyńska, 2007 for Poland and Gorkemli, 2012 and Wimark, 2014 for Turkey). Conversely, in this article, I will focus on the internet as a possible terrain of (re)negotiation of hegemonic national discourses from the perspective of queers in Poland and Turkey.

First, I will review the literature on queer sexualities and the nation with a special focus on the concept of queering the nation. Second, I will briefly discuss the positioning of queers in national discourses in Poland and Turkey. Next, I will describe my research methods and, in two subsequent parts, present the results of my analysis: the first of these parts will focus on 'the mediation of nationhood' (Skey, 2014: 1) through (re)producing the framework of the world as a world of nations whereas the second one will focus on the mediation of particular nations through the coupling of queer symbolism with national symbolism. Finally, I will offer some interpretations and propose the concept of 'domesticating the nation online'.

Queer sexualities and the nation

Hegemonic national discourses have long been criticized for their heteronormativity, which has been employed to render queer sexualities and national identity as mutually exclusive. Briefly discussing the literature in the field, Kuntsman rightly points out that:

Analysis of the relations between queer sexuality and the nation have predominantly focused on the ways in which gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgenders were excluded

from citizenship, national belonging and/or mobility across national borders (Alexander, 1997; Luibheid, 2002; Puri, 2004); or on the ways they could *queer* the nation, for example through various practices of citizenship such as marriage, military service, or consumption (Bell and Binnie, 2002; Berlant, 1997; Gross, 2000; Richardson, 2000). (Kuntsman, 2008: 144, emphasis in original)

Kuntsman (2008: 144) continues by referring to Puar's (2005) work on homonationalism to suggest that academics should 'move away from queerness as identity and "queering" as a transgressive practice' and instead account for the alignment of queerness and nationalism, that is, homonationalism. The concept of homonationalism is usually discussed in the context of the post-9/11 'war on terror' and most often refers either to a particular form of activism, which consists in the 'gay identity politics' embrace of patriotic, pro-military nationalism as vehicle for emancipation' (Amar and El Shakry, 2013: 332), or to the state's embrace of (some) gay and lesbian rights to use them instrumentally against the nations, cultures, religions and groups which the state renders as homophobic as well as against queers who do not comply with the state's national requirements.

The importance of studying homonationalism is clear. However, I argue that such an approach should not simply replace the earlier approaches listed by Kuntsman (2008) but rather complicate our understandings of the relationship between queer sexualities and the nation. So far, the concept of homonationalism seems to be of little use for non-western contexts. By and large, studies of homonationalism focus on western countries, usually on the Netherlands (e.g. Bracke, 2012; El-Tayeb, 2012; Mepschen and Duyvendak, 2012), the USA (e.g. Morgensen, 2010; Puar, 2007) and Israel (e.g. Kuntsman, 2008; Puar, 2011), but also Germany (e.g. Haritaworn and Petzen, 2011) and the UK (e.g. Raboin, 2013). However, in her recent article on 'Rethinking Homonationalism', Puar (2013) emphasizes the broader scope of the concept. She proposes to think about homonationalism as 'a facet of modernity and a historical shift marked by the entrance of (some) homosexual bodies as worthy of protection of [some] nation-states' (2013: 337). When understood as a more general historical shift, homonationalism triggers broader questions about the alignment of queerness and nationalism, also in relation to non-western contexts. For example, we may wonder how western homonationalisms influence the stance of non-western national discourses on queer sexualities. In the 'Introduction' to *Deconstructing Sexuality in the Middle East*, İlkkaracan suggests that:

the post-9/11 context has enhanced already existing antagonism towards the West in the region... particularly targeting the regulation of sexuality and gender relations... [including] the portrayal of sexual autonomy and homosexuality as products of the West that will undermine and degenerate Muslim societies. (İlkkaracan, 2008: 10)

Additionally, we may ask what kind of alignments between queerness and nationalism occur in non-western contexts, which undoubtedly have their own national others.

Those particular questions are beyond the scope of my article but they are useful here because they point to the broader global phenomena of employing queer sexualities symbolically as the main tool of othering, both in the West and non-West (for similar argument see Fassin, 2010). Already in the past, queer sexualities were deployed as an important axis of difference between competing geopolitical formations. For example, 'while in the USA, during the McCarthy era, homosexual people were accused of siding with communists, gay men and lesbians in the Eastern Bloc... were sometimes presented as traitors to the nation who collaborated with émigré circles in the West' (Szulc, 2011b: 160); or while in the colonialist era 'claims were made in the West that homosexuality was an Oriental or Muslim vice' (İlkkaracan, 2008: 1), in the post-colonial world homosexuality has been often considered as a western vice, for example by some political leaders in Africa and Asia (Altman, 2001). Still, referring to CEE and ME respectively, Kulpa (2014b) and İlkkaracan (2008) argue that it is only recently that sexuality in general, and queer sexualities in particular, have become employed as more crucial markers of difference between those deemed 'gay-friendly' versus 'homophobic' or 'corrupted' versus 'moral'. Such an approach allows us to recognize not only the 'queer sexiness' (Kuntsman, 2008) of some national discourses but also the still pervasive heteronormativity of other national discourses, with the potential of exposing the former and queering the latter.

Yet, the concept of queering the nation is not a clear one. In Amar and El Shakry's view, queering does 'not aim simply to locate homosexual or queer subjects where there were presumed to be none' (2013: 334). These authors argue that queer politics goes beyond identity claims, including national identity claims. From this perspective, queering the nation means rejecting national identity altogether. By contrast, in Hayes' view, 'queering the Nation brings back what the Nation has attempted to conjure away' (2000: 19). From the latter perspective, queering means opening up the category of the nation, even if only partially, by demanding recognition within it. For some of those studying homonationalism such a strategy is the opposite of queering because it involves buying into hegemonic national discourses, usually at the expense of other, less acceptable, groups and individuals. Still, other authors (Gopinah, 2002; Patton, 2002) demonstrate that the category of the nation does have a subversive potential and hegemonic national discourses can be opened up instead of being simply rejected. Boellstorff too shows that 'the relationship between *gay* and *lesbi* Indonesians and national discourse is one of resonances, borrowings, and transformations', rather than simply rejection (2005: 208, emphasis in original). Therefore, I believe it is possible for queers to adopt national discourses without inescapably falling into homonationalism. After all, as Kulpa judiciously asks, 'what is so necessarily wrong with a desire to be recognised as a part of the national community?' (2012: 77).

Queer sexualities and the nation in Poland and Turkey

I will now briefly contextualize the two analysed countries, trying to grasp some key similarities and differences between Poland and Turkey in relation to queer

sexualities and the nation. I understand the nation as an imagined community (Anderson, 1983) and a narration (Bhabha, 1999 [1994]) which is ‘discursively, by means of language and other semiotic systems, produced, reproduced, transformed and destructed’ (De Cillia et al., 1999: 153). Analysing the nation as a discourse, De Cillia et al. point out that ‘there is no such thing as the one and only national identity in an essentializing sense, but rather that different identities are discursively constructed according to context’ (1999: 154). Although I recognize this diversity, in this part I will primarily focus on the hegemonic national discourses which continue to render queer sexualities, to different degrees, as incompatible with Polishness or Turkishness.

Studying ‘The impact of conservative discourses in family policies, population politics, and gender rights in Poland and Turkey’, Korkut and Eslen-Ziya (2011: 391) point to the significance of conservative traditions in both national contexts. They explain that this tradition is rooted in the Roman Catholic Church in Poland and in the Kemalist ideology in Turkey. Furthermore, they emphasize that both countries underwent important transformations during the past 20 years: while Poland overthrew communism and started its democratization process in 1989, Turkey began the liberalization process of its political system in the aftermath of the 1980 military coup, which ended three years later with general elections. During the last two decades both countries have also much strengthened their relationship with the European Union (EU) and significantly adjusted their legal frameworks to the EU’s *acquis communautaire*, also in relation to gender equality and, to a much lesser extent and only in Poland, the implementation of anti-discrimination policies based on sexual orientation (Chetaille, 2011; İlkkaracan, 2014). We may also observe a rapid development of civil society, including women’s and LGBTQ organizations, in Poland and Turkey starting from the mid-1980s. These organizations have managed to make queer sexualities, particularly gay and lesbian sexualities, more visible and more often debated in public discourse.

In his doctoral dissertation, Kulpa (2012) examines the relationship between homosexuality and Polish national identity. Supported by an analysis of a 2003 presidential speech and two resolutions of the lower house of the Polish parliament (in 2003 and 2006), Kulpa argues that ‘in contemporary Poland, national discourse relies (partially, but intensively) on the exclusion of the figure of the homosexual’ (2012: 134). Already in the People’s Republic of Poland (1952–1989) homosexuality was perceived as a ‘foreign novelty, an imported disease or the bored Western bourgeoisie’s thing’ (Szulc, forthcoming). Yet, as Kulpa points out, at the beginning of the 21st century the figure of the homosexual becomes an ‘enemy within’, the role traditionally reserved for Jews in Poland (Czarnecki, 2007). Most recent state-sponsored discourse seems to be less exclusive of homosexuality. The Civic Platform Party, currently in power since 2007, has adopted a more tolerant discourse towards homosexuality. Interestingly, in January 2013 it has proposed a civil partnership bill, which would legalize same-sex relationships. Yet the bill was voted down and quickly disappeared from the party’s agenda, probably due to the conservative faction within the party as well as its coalition partner, the Polish

People's Party, which remains strongly conservative with regard to social issues. Even so, the national discourse that is now most exclusive of queer sexualities in Poland has become the domain of the main opposition party, the Law and Justice Party, in addition to Church leaders and nationalistic media and movements. In such national discourses, queer sexualities are often explicitly associated with the West, especially the EU, and queers themselves are positioned as aliens, cosmopolitans or traitors and therefore denied their Polishness (Graff, 2008; Mizielińska, 2001; Szulc, 2011b). The cartoon from the homepage of a Polish neo-Nazi group perfectly illustrates this point (Figure 1).

In Turkey, the exclusion of queer sexualities from the nation materializes in the discourse of the ruling party itself, though much more implicitly compared to Polish nationalistic discourses. The Justice and Development Party (AKP), currently in power since 2002, while often praised for advancing the democratization process in Turkey (especially for decreasing the role of the military in Turkish politics), preserves extremely conservative attitudes towards gender roles and sexuality. İlkkaracan points out that 'The AKP Government's policy towards LGBT people has ranged from non-recognition to absolute discrimination, in a rather



Figure 1. Cartoon from the homepage of a Polish neo-Nazi group. (Retrieved on 16 January 2014).

('Faszyści?' means 'Fascists?', 'Polacy?' means 'Poles?' and 'Gej jest OK' means 'Gay is OK').

increasingly hostile fashion' (2014: 171). Dönmez (2011) emphasizes the more positive initial attitude of the AKP government towards some of the traditional Others of the 'new Turkishness', such as Alevis and Kurds, which has then radically changed in the early 2010s (Çiçek, 2011). At the same time, Dönmez points out that during the AKP rule 'being Turkish began to be defined in terms of morality and to what extent individuals practiced their religion' (2011: 13). The discourse of morality emerges as the key element in the AKP's concept of Turkishness and is actively used against women (İlkkaracan, 2014) and queers (Ataman, 2011). Although there are no provisions in Turkey that illegalize homosexuality or LGBTQ activism, different laws and provisions regarding 'general morality' and 'family values', or the Misdemeanour Law (2005), are repeatedly used by Turkish authorities to file lawsuits against LGBTQ organizations (Szulc, 2011a), block or take down LGBTQ websites and hinder access to the .tr Top-Level Domain, a symbolic marker of Turkishness online, for the owners of LGBTQ websites (Szulc, 2014a).

Methods

As Livingstone points out, cross-national comparative research is both impossible and necessary. It is impossible because any deep contextualization precludes comparison, and yet it is necessary because all analysis is in fact comparative: 'implicitly or explicitly, research uses conceptual categories that assert distinctions' (2003: 483). Generally, Livingstone (2003) emphasizes the growing importance of and need for cross-national comparative research in communication studies to better assess the specificity and generalizability of research results (for the discussion of cross-national analysis at the crossroads of communication and sexuality studies see Döring, 2009 and Sender, 2013). Following those recommendations, I employ comparative methods in my own investigation. However, comparison is not my aim in itself. I do not seek to arrive at general comparative conclusions. Instead, I treat comparison as a methodological tool which helps me to 'see better', that is, to detect national and cultural specificities, which I might otherwise take for granted, and identify macro-level mechanisms, which I might underestimate while analysing only one national context.

Because of the immensity and ephemeral nature of the web (e.g. Schneider and Foot, 2004), it is impossible to circumscribe all LGBTQ websites created in Poland and Turkey, even if we limit our search to a particular point in time. Inspired by media scholars who theorize the web as an object of study (e.g. Brügger and Finnemann, 2013; Wakeford, 2004), I developed a three-step approach to locate popular LGBTQ websites in Poland and Turkey. Firstly, I conducted a systematic search of 15 key words, such as 'bisexual', 'homosexual', 'LGBT', 'queer' and others (in Polish and English as well as Turkish and English) in national versions of the Google search engine. I examined the first 10 results for each search and thus defined the first set of my sample websites. Secondly, I consulted online directories for LGBTQ websites, such as Hiacynt.pl in Poland and Escinselsitel.com in

Turkey,² and added new relevant websites to my sample. Finally, recognizing the networked character of the web, I examined the official links on the websites already included in my sample and updated the sample once again.

However, from the very beginning I adopted some exclusionary criteria. I decided to focus on the relatively popular portal-like and community-oriented websites. I deliberately chose this somewhat vague focus so as to avoid limiting my search too strictly. Importantly, this focus allowed me to exclude all personal websites such as blogs. Additionally, I did not include websites that were exclusively academic, pornographic or dating sites. Following my sample procedure, I came up with about 50 websites. Next, I spent some time on each of the websites to find out whom they are targeted at, how often they are updated and how popular they are (e.g. numbers of registered members, Facebook likes, Twitter followers). Drawing on this information, I chose my final sample of 15 websites in Poland and 15 in Turkey, which together cover a relatively diverse range of LGBTQ groups. Table 1 lists the websites included in my analysis. I was not able to locate any website specifically directed at bisexual people.

For the analysis presented in this article, I focused exclusively on the fixed elements of the websites' homepages, such as domain names, top banners, logos,

Table 1. The list of selected LGBTQ websites in Poland and Turkey.

Target group [†]	Poland	Turkey
LGBT	Homiki.pl	Eshsiz.com
	Kph.org.pl	Gabile.com
	Lambdawarszawa.org	Hebunlgbt.com
	Queer.pl	Kaosgl.org
	Queercafe.pl	Lambdaistanbul.org
	U-f-a.pl	Muratrenay.com
GAY	Gay.pl	News.turkgayclub.com
	Gejowo.pl	Turkgayclub.com
	Polgej.pl	Gayssofturkey.com
LESBIAN	Kobiety-kobietom.com	Lezce.com
TRANS*	Crossdressing.pl	Istanbul-lgbtt.net
	Transfuzja.org	Pembehayat.org
	Transseksualizm.pl	Siyahpembe.org
BEAR	Bearsofpoland.pl	Ayilar.net
	Miskowo.pl	Icimdekiayi.com

[†]The categorization is mine and approximate since not all websites fit neatly in the adopted categories.

side menus and footers. Those fixed elements are usually present on other subpages too and are changed only when websites undergo major redesign. Therefore, they could be considered as the building blocks of the respective websites' self-representational discourses. My methods of analysis were informed by different approaches to the qualitative analysis of text and image, particularly insofar as these are adopted in a multimodal framework for the analysis of websites (Pauwels, 2012). I explain how I analysed the websites in more detail in the next two sections, which report on my research results. The analysis was conducted in September 2013.

Mediation of nationhood on LGBTQ websites

In this first part in which I report on my results, I will focus on the 'mediation of nationhood' (Skey, 2014), that is, on how the world is being (re)produced (in a banal way), and thus naturalized, as a world of nations on LGBTQ websites in Poland and Turkey. As I already mentioned in the 'Introduction', Soffer (2013) suggests that banal nationalism is present on the internet on three levels: internet structure, web content and user preferences. Since I have no data about the users of the analysed websites, I will focus here exclusively on internet structure and web content.

One of the most striking features of the internet structure that brings to mind the concept of banal nationalism is *the Domain Name System* (DNS). Steinberg and McDowell emphasize the hybrid structure of the system, which combines generic Top-Level Domains ('gTLDs' such as .com, .org, .net) with country-code Top-Level Domains ('ccTLDs' such as .pl for Poland and .tr for Turkey), and thus (re)produces 'the territorial divisions of the world' (Steinberg and McDowell, 2003: 54). Although some ccTLDs have been commodified and disassociated from the countries they were supposed to signify, the majority of ccTLDs work as markers of nationality online (Hrynshyn, 2008). Therefore, by using ccTLDs, LGBTQ websites can mark their national identifications. Interestingly, in my sample the majority of websites in Poland (12) use the Polish ccTLD (.pl) while none of the websites in Turkey use the Turkish ccTLD (.tr). I investigate the Turkish case in more depth in a separate article (Szulc, 2014a), where I show that the process of allocation of .tr is strongly controlled, even if indirectly, by the Turkish authorities. The moralistic provisions governing the allocation process of .tr indicate that the ccTLD is envisioned as an online marker of 'respectable' Turkishness. The owners of LGBTQ websites in Turkey are not explicitly denied access to .tr but they are much discouraged to apply for it. Moreover, some of the owners refuse to use .tr as a way of opposing the particular national requirements embedded in the ccTLD. Compared to the application process for .tr, the one for .pl is less controlled by the state and much simpler bureaucratically, which influences the greater popularity of .pl in general (Christou and Simpson, 2009; for recent statistics see CENTR, 2014). Additionally, no ideological requirements regarding respectability are specified for obtaining .pl, which makes the ccTLD a vaguer, and thus more open,

marker of nationality online. Those are presumably the key reasons why the owners of LGBTQ websites in Poland adopt the national TLD more readily than their counterparts in Turkey.

Regarding web content, the use of *national languages* plays a key role in the banal flagging of nationality online. Heinz et al. (2002) analyse the content of Chinese, German, Japanese and US websites for LGBTQs and point out that 'If translations are offered on the Chinese, Japanese, and German sites included here, these translations involve English. If language fluency in a language other than the Web site's dominant language is presumed, that language competency is presumed to be English' (Heinz et al., 2002: 122). The results of my analysis are similar: while five websites in Poland and seven in Turkey use at least one language other than Polish or Turkish, all of those websites use English. Some additionally use Azeri (one website in Turkey) and Russian (three websites in Poland, out of which one also uses Spanish and another French, German and Esperanto). This confirms the hegemony of English on the internet, particularly in the content of LGBTQ websites, and may point to the more global character of the websites. Yet, the fact that almost all of the websites in my sample, except for one (Gaysofturkey.com), primarily use their national languages, is probably a more banal but important observation. Moreover, those websites that use Polish or Turkish as their primary language (all but one) most often provide very limited information in English and other languages: usually only the translation of the 'About Us' section and a limited selection of news pieces. In his book, Billig devotes an entire chapter to the relationship between banal nationalism and national languages and reminds us that 'the world of nations is also a world of formally constituted languages' (1995: 31). Hence, the everyday use of national languages on LGBTQ websites in Poland and Turkey is an important indicator of banal nationalism online.

Analysing British newspapers, Billig also directs our attention to prosaic words and images such as *deictic words* (e.g. 'we', 'here', 'now', 'home', 'the country') and *weather maps*, which play a far from innocent role in the daily (re)productions of nations. He explains that such words and images usually have national references, at least in the national media, and thus work to (re)produce the world of nations as the natural environment of today: 'they make the world of nations familiar, even homely' (Billig, 1995: 94). On the LGBTQ websites analysed here, we can find many examples of deictic words referring to Poland or Turkey. For example, those websites which provide news often divide this rubric into national and international categories, as on Homiki.pl and Kobiety-kobietom.com (categories 'Home' and 'World') or Eshsiz.com and News.turkgayclub.com (categories 'Turkey' and 'World'). Additionally, some categories listed in website menus take national references for granted. Examples include the 'How to Believe?' section on Homiki.pl, which refers exclusively to Roman Catholicism, the official religion of Poland; the 'Parties' and 'Places' sections on Gejowo.pl, which list parties and places in Poland; and the 'Law' section on Pembehayat.org, which focuses on trans*-related legal issues in Turkey. The sheer existence of certain

particular sections is nationally specific because the sections reflect heated national debates on queer sexualities. A good example is the section ‘Military Service’ on *Kaosgl.org*, which reflects the great controversy in Turkey about the recruitment of gay men into the army (Biricik, 2009). I found no military-service-related section on any website in Poland, which also reflects national specificity: the topic is non-existent in the Polish public debate (Sikora, 2013). Finally, Polish and Turkish maps are also adopted on some of the analysed websites. Most importantly, they are combined with queer symbols in the websites’ logos, which I will discuss more extensively in the following section. Still, country maps are also used in more banal ways, for example to indicate local branches of a national organization (*Transfuzja.org*) or to categorize personal ads by cities (*Gejowo.pl*).

Coupling queer symbolism with national symbolism

In this part, I will focus on ‘the mediation of individual nations’ (Skey, 2014), that is, banal flagging of nations on LGBTQ websites in Poland and Turkey. I will analyse more explicit national references in two crucially important self-representational elements on the websites, their names and logos. I consider such national references as banal because they normally do not attract special attention and therefore resemble a ‘national flag hanging outside a public building’ (Billig, 1995: 5). However, we should keep in mind that no national markers are essentially banal since all of them could become ‘recognized as of critical importance at particular times and by particular groups’ (Szulc, 2014a).

I start with the description of queer symbolism on LGBTQ websites in Poland and Turkey, which is by far the most popular theme in the websites’ names and logos. At the textual level, most of the websites use relatively explicit words in their names, such as ‘bear’, ‘crossdressing’, ‘gay’, ‘lambda’, ‘LGBT’ or ‘LGBTT’, ‘pink triangle’, ‘queer’ and different derivatives of ‘trans-’, both in Polish or Turkish and in English.³ Still, some websites prefer vaguer names such as ‘Kobiety Kobietom’ (women for women), ‘Kaos GL’ and ‘Gabile’. There are different factors which influence the choice of a particular website name. In the case of LGBTQ websites the issue of visibility management seems to be most crucial. While some authors prefer to mark their websites clearly as queer, in the spirit of online coming out, others adopt vaguer references in order to avoid outing their visitors. The authors of *Gabile.com* disclose that they first launched their portal under the domain name *Gayiz.biz*, which is a word play: although *.biz* normally stands for ‘business’, the full phrase ‘*biz gayiz*’ means ‘we are gay’ in Turkish. They further explain that ‘because our members refrain from typing domain names such as *gay* or *lezbiyen*, for example at work, we decided to change our domain to *(Ga)y(Bi)seksuel(Le)zbiyen.com*’ (email correspondence). Still, even when adopting vaguer queer names, the websites in my sample, including *Gabile.com*, usually make obvious queer references at the visual level. They extensively use international queer symbols such as rainbow flags, pink triangles, lambda signs, bear

tracks and gender signs along with rainbow and pink colours (also purple colours on trans* websites and brown colours on bear websites).

Some of the analysed websites additionally couple this textual and visual queer symbolism with national symbolism. At the textual level, the most common practice is to include the country name in the name or sub-name of the website. For example, in Poland we find websites named 'Bears of Poland' and 'Polgej.pl', and in Turkey 'Bears of Turkey', 'Gays of Turkey', 'İçimdeki Ayı: Turkish Largest Gay Bear Website' (where 'içimdeki ayı' means 'the bear inside myself') and 'Turk Gay Club: LGBTI Community in Turkey'. Some websites in Poland also use the Polish ccTLD (.pl) as a part of their official name and logo: Crossdressing.pl, Gay.pl, Homiki.pl, Polgej.pl, Queer.pl and Transseksualizm.pl. To use a TLD in the website name or logo is not a common practice. In my sample, it is done almost exclusively by websites with ccTLD (.pl) rather than by those with gTLDs (the only exception is *Lezce.com*). Additionally, some websites couple queer references with the names of cities, which probably points to stronger local rather than national identifications. For example, in Poland there is a website named 'Lambda Warszawa' and in Turkey 'Lambda İstanbul', 'İstanbul-LGBTT', 'Siyah Pembe Üçgen İzmir' (black-pink triangle İzmir) and 'Hebûn Diyarbakır'. The last example is particularly interesting since it refers to the city in south-eastern Turkey mainly inhabited by Kurdish people (Diyarbakır), and uses the Kurdish word 'hebûn', which means 'to come back into existence'. At the same time the whole website is available only in Turkish, with some articles in English. The choice of this name, coupled with the logo, which incorporates a rainbow flag and the symbol of Diyarbakır municipality (Figure 2), could be interpreted as the struggle for the recognition of being queer, Kurdish and a Turkish citizen at the same time.

National references on the analysed websites may also be found at the visual level, combined with text. Van Leeuwen identifies two main relations between text and image: the anchorage relation, when 'the text restates the message of the picture, but in a more precise way', and the relay relation, 'in which text and image are complementary' (2004: 11–12). On the analysed websites we can find different text–image relations. In the logo of *Kph.org.pl* (Figure 3), text and image complement each other: while the text points to the mission of the organization ('Campaign Against Homophobia'), the image specifies the country of its expertise (a rainbow-coloured map of Poland). In turn, in the logo of *Hebunlgbt.com*



Figure 2. Logo of *Hebunlgbt.com*. (Retrieved on 20 August 2013).



Figure 3. Logo of Kph.org.pl. (Retrieved on 20 August 2013).



Figure 4. Logo of Ayilar.net. (Retrieved on 20 August 2013).

(Figure 2), the image seems to anchor the text: while the latter communicates that the website is about coming back into existence in Diyarbakır ('Hebûn Diyarbakır'), the former specifies it is queers who are coming back into existence (the rainbow flag in the background). Finally, in the logo of Ayilar.net (Figure 4), the image restates the message of the text. The text, written both in English and Turkish, explicitly couples bear symbolism with Turkish symbolism ('Bears of Turkey'). The image does the same thing, though in a somewhat more implicit way: we see a bear track, an international symbol of the bear community, which is devoid of 'bear' colours (particularly brown but also black, grey, white and yellow) and instead, together with its background, takes on the Turkish national colours: red and white. Additionally, the bear track in the logo is placed above a red curved line, a combination that resembles the combination of the star and crescent on the Turkish national flag, rotated by 90 degrees counterclockwise.

Domesticating the nation online

The results of my analyses attest that the LGBTQ websites in Poland and Turkey do both take for granted the framework of the world as a world of nations and prosaically (re)produce their individual nations, albeit in different ways and to different degrees. I put the prefix 're' in parentheses because I agree with Billig (1995: 108) that flagging the nation is not only a result of the context but also constitutive of the context. This resonates with Bhabha's understanding of the nation as narration: 'In the production of the nation as narration there is a split between the continuist, accumulative temporality of the pedagogical, and the repetitious, recursive strategy of the performative' (1999 [1994]: 215). Bhabha argues not only that we are taught into the nation (the pedagogical) but also that we construct and reconstruct it on a daily basis and through repetitive acts (the performative). Such an approach acknowledges both the pervasive persistence and the subversive potential of the nation. Following this approach, I argue that the analysed LGBTQ websites do both: they reaffirm the world as a world of nations, particularly through taking for granted this specific framework of the world, but also subvert those national discourses which exclude queer sexualities from the nation, particularly through the more explicit coupling of queer symbolism with national symbolism. Building on the work of Hayes (2000), we could name this subversion a practice of queering the nation online, even if queering here means no more than laying claim to a particular national identity by a group that tends to be excluded from this identity.

Even so, the online form of this queering is not without significance. Scott argues that the move of queers from offline to online, while surely providing easier access to queer-specific information and social contacts, is also a sign of the 'new invisibility': 'Save for unintended search results, queer e-resources are typically only seen by those who look for them' (2011: 96). Indeed, the majority of the websites I am analysing here are made by LGBTQs for LGBTQs. By coupling queer symbolism with national symbolism, they barely challenge hegemonic national discourses. It seems more accurate to say that, on the web, they queer the nation for themselves. Still, the importance of this practice should not be underestimated. Billig (1995) emphasizes the persistence of the narrative of the world as a world of nations and, consequently, the difficulty of thinking about ourselves beyond the national. At the same time queers in Poland and Turkey are still often excluded from hegemonic national discourses. Therefore, queering the nation online for queers themselves may offer a way out of this impasse: its major function may be not to challenge hegemonic national discourses in a public debate but to domesticate the nation, so that queers too feel minimally at home within this overarching narrative. The internet becomes a new terrain where queers can 'make the homeland homely' (Billig, 1995: 108), just as they do occasionally offline, for example while participating in the national mourning after the tragic death of the Polish homophobic president (Kulpa, 2014a) or when taking part in the Occupy

Gezi movement: clearly visible as queers but fighting for what was not specifically a queer issue (Szulc, 2014b).

However, not all analysed websites employ banal nationalism to the same degree. Some rarely draw on explicit national symbolism and favour the symbols that refer web visitors beyond the national. The most striking examples are Eshsiz.com and Queercafe.pl, which both use in their logos a rainbow-coloured symbol of the globe. Additionally, Queercafe.pl uses a general name without qualification, does not bring the Polish ccTLD in its name or logo and does not divide its news pieces into 'Home' and 'World' categories. This may suggest that the two websites move more towards a post-national queer culture rather than cling to their national identifications. In fact, we could argue the same for other websites in my sample too because the great majority of them favour international queer symbols over national symbols. However, Billig reminds us that 'The nation is always a nation in a world of nations. "Internationalism" is not the polar opposite of "nationalism", as if it constitutes a rival ideological consciousness. Nationalism, like other ideologies, contains its contrary themes, or dilemmatic aspects' (1995: 61). While some LGBTQ websites in Poland and Turkey clearly identify themselves with an imagined global queer community, this does not mean that by doing so they challenge the framework of the world as a world of nations or drift away from their particular national identifications.

Furthermore, Billig (1995: 153) points to the importance of international power relations, and US cultural neo-imperialism in particular, for the extent to which different nations are expected to flag their nationality. As Billig convincingly illustrates, US-American cultural products often stay exnominated, that is, outside of naming, so they can easily become universalized:

Hollywood stars are not generally '*American stars*', in the way that a Depardieu or a Loren always remains a *French* or an *Italian* star: a Costner or a Streep drops the confines of nationality and is simply a 'star', a 'mega-star', a universal icon. (1995: 149, emphasis in original)

Similarly, it is not a coincidence that the most popular 'international' queer symbols are in fact symbols which were originally developed or adopted by the US LGBTQ movement: the rainbow flag was first used in a Harvey Milk campaign in San Francisco in 1977 and the lambda symbol was first adopted by the Gay Activists Alliance of New York in 1970 (Lambda.org). Additionally, the so-called 'international' LGBTQ websites, which are in fact US-oriented and English-dominated, such as Gay.com or Gay.net, are able to drop the confines of nationality. For example, they adopt international TLDs and do not use any US national symbolism. By contrast, the majority of LGBTQ websites in Poland and Turkey either use very specific names (such as 'Gejowo', 'Homiki', 'Miśkowo', 'İçimdeki Ayı', 'Eshsiz' and others) or else nationalize the more general names they use, for example by adding a country or city name (in such cases as 'Bears of Poland', 'Bears of Turkey', 'Lambda İstanbul', 'Lambda Warszawa') and by



Figure 5. Logo of Crossdressing.pl. (Retrieved on 20 August 2013).



Figure 6. Logos of Gay.pl and Queer.pl. (Retrieved on 20 August 2013).

bringing out national ccTLDs in their logos (in such cases as Crossdressing.pl, Gay.pl and Queer.pl; see Figures 5 and 6).

It becomes clear that while LGBTQ websites in the USA may universalize what is particular to their national context, LGBTQ websites in Poland and Turkey are expected to explicitly name their nationality. Therefore, it is not the dominant framework of the world as a world of nations alone, but its combination with the US neo-imperial cultural logic, which divides the world into the ‘universal we’ (the USA) and the ‘particular all others’, that makes it virtually impossible for the non-US LGBTQ websites to reject or go beyond their national identifications.⁴ Consequently, the practice of domesticating the nation online plays an especially important role for queers beyond the USA, particularly in the countries where queers continue to be excluded from hegemonic national discourses.

Conclusions

The analysis presented in this article indicates that the majority of LGBTQ websites in Poland and Turkey flag their nationality in a variety of ways. They do this both in a clearly banal way by using ccTLDs, national languages, deictic words and country maps, as well as in a somewhat more explicit way by coupling queer symbolism with national symbolism. The national symbols employed on the website homepages are limited to basic national references such as country or city names, national flags, colours and maps. None of the websites analysed here uses nationalistic symbols, popular among far right-wing movements, such as a wolf’s head sign or triple crescent flag in Turkey (Bora, 2003) and the hand with a sword emblem or the Piast Eagle in Poland (Pankowski, 2010). Therefore, I argue that the websites use national symbolism neither for nationalistic purposes,

to proclaim the supremacy of a particular nation, nor for homonationalistic purposes, to embrace 'nationalism as vehicle for emancipation' (Amar and El Shakry, 2013: 332). Following the thesis of Billig (1995) about the persistence of the narrative of the world as a world of nations, I rather interpret the presence of banal national assumptions on the LGBTQ websites as the practice of living the nation online and the more explicit coupling of queer symbolism with national symbolism as the practice of domesticating the nation online. The latter proves to be particularly important for queers beyond the USA, who are expected to explicitly name their nationality while, at least in some countries, continue to be excluded from hegemonic national discourses.

My research also supports Enteen's argument that 'the international gay male [as well as global queer] is a fictive construction that has no literal embodiment, nor is it manifest in all social, political, and cultural contexts' (2010: 124). This might be less evident while looking at more international LGBTQ websites, which employ explicit national symbolism less frequently or not at all. However, as Oswin (2006) reminds us, the global queer is usually the camouflaged western queer, if not simply the US queer. Even though the international LGBTQ websites refrain from using explicit national references, they arguably do flag their nationality in more banal ways as well as take for granted some of their national particularities, which they tend to universalize. This definitely requires further research, which would pay close attention to subtle ways in which national particularities are taken for granted, specifically in western and US studies of sexualities. I agree with Binnie who states that 'perhaps it is the invisibility of the American nation within lesbian and gay studies that requires the most urgent critical attention' (2004: 26, see also Szulc, 2014c).

At the end of this article I want to acknowledge some limitations of my research. First, my data were confined to the fixed elements of website homepages. As a result, this article presents only limited examples of how queers domesticate the nation online. Further analysis of website content may explore the manifold nature of the process, for example by examining how LGBTQ websites report on and frame national and international holidays, politics or sporting events. Second, the choice of sample websites was informed by the assumption that separate national webs do exist. Analyses of online queer communities which potentially have a more complicated relation to the nation, for example websites of international organizations such as ILGA or those directed at diasporic queers, would surely enrich the concept of domesticating the nation online. Finally, I only briefly point to the interrelation between nationalism and globalization, which is a result of my research focus on what is left of the supposedly discarded nation and nationalism on LGBTQ spaces on the internet. Therefore, the analysis presented here should not be read as evidence against globalization or queer transnational connections and flows. Instead, this article serves as a reminder of the persistence and importance of banal nationalism on LGBTQ spaces online and provokes scholars of sexualities to be more attentive to the national particularities of their own research.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank anyone who read and commented on the first drafts of this article, in particular, editors and anonymous reviewers of *Sexualities* as well as the members of LGBTQ reading group at the University of Antwerp.

Funding

This research was conducted within the scope of my PhD project funded by the University Research Fund (BOF) of the University of Antwerp.

Notes

1. LGBTQ stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans* and/or Queer. I use the abbreviation as an umbrella term for gay and lesbian (or LGBT) studies and queer studies as well as for the websites analysed in this article, which usually identify themselves as such or use a derivative or part of the abbreviation. In other cases I use the term queer with a broader reference to non-heterosexual sexualities and gender-non-conforming identifications.
2. Both directories are no longer available online but their previous versions could be viewed at Archive.org.
3. Even though those terms are clearly imported from English, they are always being (re)negotiated in non-English-speaking contexts and are usually used together with other, more context-specific terms. For a detailed discussion of names used by LGBTQs in Poland and Turkey see Szulc (2012) and Bereket and Adam (2006), respectively.
4. I want to thank an anonymous reviewer of *Sexualities* for pointing me to this argument.

References

- Alexander JM (1997) Erotic autonomy as a politics of decolonization: An anatomy of state practice in the Bahamas tourist economy. In: Alexander JM and Mohanty CT (eds) *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures*. New York: Routledge, pp. 63–100.
- Altman D (2001) *Global Sex*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
- Amar P and El Shakry O (2013) Introduction: Curiosities of Middle East studies in queer times. *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 45(2): 331–335.
- Anderson B (1983) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.
- Ataman H (2011) Less than citizens: The lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender question in Turkey. In: Dönmez RÖ and Enneli P (eds) *Societal Peace and Ideal Citizenship for Turkey*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, pp. 125–157.
- Bell D and Binnie J (2000) *The Sexual Citizen: Queer Politics and Beyond*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Bell D and Binnie J (2002) Sexual citizenship: Marriage, the market and the military. In: Richardson D and Seidman S (eds) *Handbook of Lesbian and Gay Studies*. London: SAGE, pp. 443–457.
- Bereket T and Adam BD (2006) The emergence of gay identities in contemporary Turkey. *Sexualities* 9(2): 131–151.
- Berlant L (1997) *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City*. Durham, NC: Duke University.

- Bhabha HK (1999 [1994]) *DissemiNation: Time, narrative and the margins of the modern nation*. In: Elliot A (ed.) *The Blackwell Reader in Contemporary Social Theory*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 211–219.
- Billig M (1995) *Banal Nationalism*. London: SAGE.
- Binnie J (2004) *The Globalization of Sexuality*. London: SAGE.
- Biricik A (2009) Rotten report and reconstructing hegemonic masculinity in Turkey. In: Çinar ÖH and Üsterci C (eds) *Conscientious Objection*. London: Zed Books, pp. 112–117.
- Boellstorff T (2005) *The Gay Archipelago: Sexuality and Nation in Indonesia*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Bora T (2003) Nationalist discourses in Turkey. *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 102(2/3): 432–451.
- Boston N (2014) Weak pegs: The media's discourse on homophobia and Polish migration to the United Kingdom. *Reviews and Critical Commentary*. Council for European Studies, Columbia University. Available at: <http://councilforeuropeanstudies.org/critcom/weak-pegs-the-medias-discourse-on-homophobia-and-polish-migration-to-the-united-kingdom> (accessed 13 June 2014).
- Bracke S (2012) From 'saving women' to 'saving gays': Rescue narratives and their discontinuities. *European Journal of Women's Studies* 19(2): 237–252.
- Brügger N and Finnemann NO (2013) The web and digital humanities: Theoretical and methodological concerns. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 57(1): 66–80.
- CENTR (2014) DomainWire stat report. Edition 7 – March 2014. Available at: https://centr.org/DomainWire_StatReport_2014_1 (accessed 12 June 2014).
- Chetaille A (2011) Poland: Sovereignty and sexuality in post-socialist times. In: Tremblay M, Paternotte D and Johnson C (eds) *The Lesbian and Gay Movement and the State*. Farnham: Ashgate, pp. 119–133.
- Christou G and Simpson S (2009) New governance, the internet, and country code: Top-level domains in Europe. *Governance: An International Journal of Policy, Administration, and Institutions* 22(4): 599–624.
- Çiçek C (2011) Elimination or integration of pro-Kurdish politics: Limits of the AKP's democratic initiative. *Turkish Studies* 12(1): 15–26.
- Czarnecki GE (2007) Analogies of pre-war anti-Semitism and present-day homophobia in Poland. In: Kuhar R and Takács J (eds) *Beyond the Pink Curtain*. Ljubljana: Peace Institute, pp. 327–344.
- De Cillia R, Reisigl M and Wodak R (1999) The discursive construction of national identities. *Discourse & Society* 10(2): 149–173.
- Dönmez RÖ (2011) Beyond state-led nationalism: Ideal citizenship for Turkey. In: Dönmez RÖ and Enneli P (eds) *Societal Peace and Ideal Citizenship for Turkey*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, pp. 1–26.
- Döring NM (2009) The internet's impact on sexuality: A critical review of 15 years of research. *Computers in Human Behavior* 25: 1089–1101.
- El-Tayeb F (2012) 'Gays who cannot properly be gay': Queer Muslims in the neoliberal European city. *European Journal of Women's Studies* 19(1): 79–95.
- Enteen JB (2010) *Virtual English: Queer Internets and Digital Creolization*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Eriksen TH (2007) Nationalism and the internet. *Nations and Nationalism* 13(1): 1–17.
- Fassin É (2010) National identities and transnational intimacies: Sexual democracy and the politics of immigration in Europe. *Public Culture* 22(3): 507–529.

- Gellner E (1983) *Nations and Nationalism*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Gopinah G (2002) Local sites/global contexts: The transnational trajectories of Deepa Mehta's *Fire*. In: Cruz-Malavé A and Manalansan IV F (eds) *Queer Globalizations*. New York, NY: New York University Press, pp. 149–161.
- Gorkemli S (2012) 'Coming out of the internet': Lesbian and gay activism and the internet as a 'digital closet' in Turkey. *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 8(3): 63–88.
- Graff A (2008) *Rykoszetem: Rzecz o Pleci, Seksualności i Narodzie* [Ricochet: Gender, Sexuality and Nation]. Warszawa: WAB.
- Gross A (2000) Sexuality, masculinity, military, and citizenship: Gay military service in I.D.F. in comparative view. *Pelilim* 2000: 95–183.
- Gruszczyńska A (2007) Living 'la vida' internet: Some notes on the cyberization of Polish LGBT community. In: Kuhar R and Takács J (eds) *Beyond the Pink Curtain*. Ljubljana: Peace Institute, pp. 95–115.
- Haritaworn J and Petzen J (2011) Invented traditions, new intimate publics: Tracing the German 'Muslim homophobia' discourse. In: Flood C, Hutching S, Miazhevich G and Nickels H (eds) *Islam in its International Context: Comparative Perspectives*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars, pp. 48–64.
- Hayes J (2000) *Queer Nations: Marginal Sexualities in the Maghreb*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
- Heinz B, Gu L, et al. (2002) Under the rainbow flag: Webbing global gay identities. *International Journal of Sexuality and Gender Studies* 7(2/3): 107–124.
- Hrynshyn D (2008) Globalization, nationality and commodification: The politics of the social construction of the internet. *New Media & Society* 10(5): 751–770.
- İlkkaracan P (2008) Introduction: Sexuality as a contested political domain in the Middle East. In: İlkkaracan P (ed.) *Deconstructing Sexuality in the Middle East*. Aldershot: Ashgate, pp. 1–16.
- İlkkaracan P (2014) Democratization in Turkey from a gender perspective. In: Rodriguez C, Avalos A, et al. (eds) *Turkey's Democratization Process*. Abington: Routledge, pp. 154–176.
- Korkut U and Eslen-Ziya H (2011) The impact of conservative discourses in family policies, population politics, and gender rights in Poland and Turkey. *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State and Society* 18(3): 387–418.
- Kulpa R (2012) *Nation queer? Discourses of nationhood and homosexuality in times of transformation: Case studies from Poland*. Doctoral dissertation, Birkbeck College, University of London, UK. Available at: <http://bbktheses.da.ulcc.ac.uk/20/> (accessed 5 November 2014).
- Kulpa R (2014a) On attachment and *belonging*: Or why queers mourn homophobic president? *Sexualities* 17(7): 781–801.
- Kulpa R (2014b) Western leveraged pedagogy of Central and Eastern Europe: Discourses of homophobia, tolerance, and nationhood. *Gender, Place & Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography* 21(4): 431–448.
- Kuntsman A (2008) The soldier and the terrorist: Sexy nationalism, queer violence. *Sexualities* 11(1/2): 142–170.
- Livingstone S (2003) On the challenges of cross-national comparative media research. *European Journal of Communication* 18(4): 477–500.
- Luibheid E (2002) *Entry Denied: Controlling Sexuality at the Border*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota.

- Madianou MM (2005) *Mediating the Nation: News, Audiences and the Politics of Identity*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Mepschen P and Duyvendak JW (2012) European sexual nationalisms: The culturalization of citizenship and the sexual politics of belonging and exclusion. *Perspectives on Europe* 42(1): 70–76.
- Mizelińska J (2001) The rest is silence . . . : Polish nationalism and the question of lesbian existence. *European Journal of Women's Studies* 8(3): 281–297.
- Morgensen SL (2010) Settler homonationalism: Theorizing settler colonialism within queer modernities. *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 16(1–2): 105–131.
- Oleksy EH (ed.) (2009) *Intimate Citizenships: Gender, Sexualities, Politics*. New York: Routledge.
- Oswin N (2006) Decentering queer globalization: Diffusion and the 'global gay'. *Environment and Planning D* 24: 777–790.
- Pankowski R (2010) *The Populist Radical Right in Poland: The Patriots*. Abington: Routledge.
- Patton C (2002) Stealth bombers of desire: The globalization of 'alterity' in emerging democracies. In: Cruz-Malavé A and Manalansan IV F (eds) *Queer Globalizations*. New York: New York University Press, pp. 195–218.
- Pauwels L (2012) A multimodal framework for analyzing websites as cultural expressions. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 17(3): 247–265.
- Plummer K (2003) *Intimate Citizenship: Private Decisions and Public Dialogues*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press.
- Plummer K (2008) Studying sexualities for a better world? Ten years of *Sexualities*. *Sexualities* 11(1/2): 7–22.
- Puar JK (2005) Queer times, queer assemblages. *Social Text* 23(3–4): 121–139.
- Puar JK (2007) *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*. Durham, NC: Duke University.
- Puar J (2011) Citation and censorship: The politics of talking about the sexual politics of Israel. *Feminist Legal Studies* 19(2): 133–142.
- Puar J (2013) Rethinking homonationalism. *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 45(2): 336–339.
- Puri JK (2004) *Encountering Nationalism*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Raboin T (2013) *Constructing a queer haven: Sexuality and nationhood in discourses on LGBT asylum in the UK*. Doctoral dissertation, University College London, UK.
- Richardson D (2000) Claiming citizenship? Sexuality, citizenship and lesbian/feminist theory. *Sexualities* 3(2): 255–272.
- Schneider SM and Foot KA (2004) The web as an object of study. *New Media & Society* 6(1): 114–122.
- Scott DT (2011) Queer media studies in the age of the e-invisibility. *International Journal of Communication* 5: 95–100.
- Sedgwick EK (1992) Nationalisms and sexualities in the age of Wilde. In: Parker A, Russo M, et al. (eds) *Nationalisms and Sexualities*. New York, NY: Routledge, pp. 235–245.
- Sender K (2013) Disorienting methods: Some challenges for transnational communication research in sexuality. *International Journal of Communication* 7: 2521–2532.
- Sikora K (2013) Homoseksualizm w wojsku – największe tabu polskiej armii [Homosexuality in the army: The biggest taboo of the Polish army]. *Na temat*. Available at: <http://natemat.pl/70501,homoseksualizm-w-wojsku-najwieksze-tabu-polskiej-armii> (accessed 12 February 2014).

- Skey M (2009) The national in everyday life: A critical engagement with Michael Billig's thesis of banal nationalism. *The Sociological Review* 57(2): 331–346.
- Skey M (2014) The mediation of nationhood: Communicating the world as a world of nations. *Communication Theory* 24(1): 1–20.
- Soffer O (2013) The internet and national solidarity: A theoretical analysis. *Communication Theory* 23(1): 48–66.
- Steinberg PE and McDowell SD (2003) Mutiny on the bandwidth: The semiotics of statehood in the internet domain name registries of Pitcairn Island and Niue. *New Media & Society* 5(1): 47–67.
- Szulec L (2011a) Contemporary discourses on non-heterosexual and gender non-conforming citizens of Turkey. *International Review of Turkish Studies* 1(2): 8–29.
- Szulec L (2011b) Queer in Poland: Under construction. In: Downing L and Gillett R (eds) *Queer in Europe: Contemporary Case Studies*. Farnham: Ashgate, pp. 159–172.
- Szulec L (2012) From queer to gay to Queer.pl: The names we dare to speak in Poland. *Lambda Nordica* 17(4): 65–98.
- Szulec L (2014a) Banal nationalism and queers online: Enforcing and resisting cultural meanings of .tr. *New Media & Society*. Published online before print. Available at: <http://nms.sagepub.com/content/early/2014/04/09/1461444814530096.abstract>
- Szulec L (2014b) Is it about the park? Queers and the Gezi Park protests in Istanbul. Paper presented at the conference of the International Communication Association, Seattle, WA. Available at: https://www.academia.edu/7262703/Is_it_about_the_park_Queers_and_the_Gezi_Park_protests_in_Istanbul
- Szulec L (2014c) The geography of LGBTQ internet studies. *International Journal of Communication* 8: 2927–2931.
- Szulec L (forthcoming) Review of the book *Gejeral*, by Krzysztof Tomasiak. *Sexualities*.
- Szulec L and Smets K (2015) Homonationalism and western progressive narrative: Locating 'conservative heartlands' with Zenne Dancer (2012) and its western reviews. *Asian Journal of Communication*. Published online before print. Available at: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01292986.2015.1007334#abstract>
- Van Leeuwen T (2004) Ten reasons why linguists should pay attention to visual communication. In: Scollon R and Levine P (eds) *Discourse and Technology*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, pp. 7–19.
- Wakeford N (2004) Developing methodological frameworks for studying the World Wide Web. In: Gauntlett D and Horsley R (eds) *Web.Studies*. London: Arnold, pp. 34–48.
- Weeks J (1998) The sexual citizen. *Theory, Culture and Society* 15(3–4): 35–52.
- Weeks J (2011) *The Languages of Sexuality*. London: Routledge.
- Wimark T (2014) *Beyond bright city lights: The migration patterns of gay men and lesbians*. Doctoral dissertation, Stockholm University, Sweden. Available at: <http://su.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2%3A713583&dsid=-1744> (accessed 5 November 2014).

Lukasz Szulec received a PhD in Communication Studies from the University of Antwerp (UA) in February 2015 and is currently associated with the UA's Media, Policy and Culture research group. His key academic interests include the cultural and social role of the internet, LGBTQ sexualities and (trans) nationalisms, especially in regard to Poland and Polish diaspora. He has recently published articles in

journals such as *Asian Journal of Communication* ('Homonationalism and western progressive narrative'), *New Media & Society* ('Banal nationalism and queers online') and *International Journal of Communication* ('The geography of LGBTQ internet studies'). His personal website is www.lukaszszulc.com and Twitter: @LukaszSzulc.