# Is Trump learning his homophobia from Putin?



Was it a demonstration of the global influence of Russia's anti-LGBTQ+ policies when President Donald Trump asserted that the United States government would recognise only two genders - male and female - at his inauguration? The implications of Trump's announcement suggest a direct correlation with Russia's strategic manipulation of social issues to consolidate political power, a tactic that has gradually seeped into American policy-making.

The current political landscape in the United States echoes a narrative that has been meticulously crafted over the past decade, originating from the Kremlin itself. According to Coda Story, which has extensively reported on this trend, Trump's articulation of anti-transgender policies as protective measures for women and his characterisation of gender-affirming care as “mutilation” are consistent with language and techniques pioneered by Russian leaders.

Historically, Putin’s government needed to divert public attention from mounting internal discontent, largely centered around corruption. This opportunity arose in 2012 following a performance by the feminist punk group Pussy Riot, which prompted Putin to pivot the national conversation to themes of traditional morality. The ensuing Russian propaganda campaign vilified the West, framing Europe as “Gayropa,” a term that played to conservative sentiments.

Although Putin himself is reported to have a relatively open attitude towards homosexuality in private circles, his regime recognised the potential of homophobia as a political tool. The 2013 "gay propaganda" law, which prohibited the promotion of "non-traditional sexual relations" to minors, blossomed into a legislative exemplar that would find imitators in former Soviet states and beyond. Similar anti-LGBTQ+ laws soon appeared in countries such as Lithuania and Latvia, often using language that closely mirrored Russian statutes.

This cross-border movement later gained traction through international conferences that connected Russian family value advocates with right-wing groups in the United States and Europe. These interactions facilitated the export of anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric, which eventually influenced political dialogue in nations including Brazil, where President Jair Bolsonaro echoed similar sentiments to solidify support among conservative constituents.

The ramifications of this rhetoric have proven hazardous. In various regions, including Indonesia and the former Soviet republics, the adoption of such laws has legitimised violence against the LGBTQ+ community. As illustrated by Lyosha Gorshkov, a gay Russian professor who fled to the United States, the consequences of these policies are dire, with the rhetoric enabling attacks against individuals based on their sexual orientation.

Recent developments in the U.S. reflect the formalisation of these Russian-inspired ideologies. Legislation in states such as Iowa and Georgia has begun to strip away protections based on gender identity and restrict access to gender-affirming care. Trump’s declarations resonate profoundly within this broader context, as his rhetoric continues to find fertile ground in a political environment increasingly receptive to conservative family value discourses.

As history demonstrates, the narratives surrounding protection and traditional values have evolved into mechanisms of control, allowing authoritarian agendas to flourish under the guise of societal integrity. The patterns evident in Trump's remarks highlight how pronounced these influences have become, marking a worrying milestone in the journey of authoritarian governance that traverses borders and takes root in diverse political landscapes.

The repercussions of this transnational exchange of rhetoric and policy cannot be overstated, as they continue to shape the lives of countless individuals across differing regions. The story is no longer confined to the peripheries but has emerged as a central theme in the complex relationship between politics and human rights in the 21st century.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/us-policy-will-only-recognise-2-genders-says-trump-during-1st-address-7519919> - This article corroborates Trump's assertion that the U.S. government will recognize only two genders. It highlights Trump's inauguration speech where he announced policies targeting gender identity policies.
* <https://www.coda.media/articles/topic/russia/lgbtq-plus/russia-lgbt-propaganda> - This article provides context on how Russia's anti-LGBT policies have influenced international rhetoric and policy, echoing the narrative that Trump's recent announcements fit within a broader trend influenced by Russian propaganda.
* <https://www.courant.com/news/connecticut/hc-op-homophobia-russia-20210121-jtjbo7snkrcbdn5ser3i5xhypm-story.html> - This article discusses how Putin used homophobia as a political tool, creating a precedent for similar laws in other countries, which is relevant to understanding the cross-border influence of anti-LGBT policies.
* <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/trump-administration-acknowledge-persons-gender-assigned-birth-officials/story?id=117894092> - This article supports the claim regarding Trump's executive orders aimed at recognizing the gender assigned at birth and their implications for transgender Americans.