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Currently I am in the final stage of my doctoral dissertation on Russian-speaking GLBT immigrants in Israel, provisionally entitled 'Figurations of violence and belonging'. This research looks into the relations between nationalism, migration, violence and sexuality and the ways they constitute the community of Russian-speaking GLBT immigrants.

Over the last 15 years more than a million people have immigrated to Israel from the former Soviet Union, welcomed by the Israeli 'Law of Return'. Yet Russian-speaking immigrants occupy an ambivalent position in Israeli society. As Jews they are welcomed by the Zionist ethos of national homecoming, but at the same time they are stigmatised as racially and culturally 'impure' Jews that must be turned into proper Israelis. Ethnically, Russian-speaking immigrants are Ashkenazi (of European origin), light skinned, and many among them have higher education – as such, they are desirable for the Zionist project of Israeliness as white middle-classness and Europeanness. And yet they are often seen as not being of the right kind of Europeans, coming from supposedly backward and undemocratic Eastern Europe. In the years following their arrival in Israel, many immigrants have mobilised their European origin and their cultural capital to position themselves as part of the Ashkenazi Israeli elite and distance themselves from other marginal groups with whom they often share the margins of the Israeli labour market: the Mizrahi Jews (Jews of Oriental descent) and the Palestinians. The latter have been repeatedly and mockingly presented in the immigrant media as backward 'Orientals'. Orientalist and racist discursive practices of immigrant elite also link them to the globalised 'West' fighting the evil of Muslim terrorism. Yet the sexual politics of immigrants' Orientalism have yet to be interrogated. In my research I explore the complex relations between fantasies of Europeanness, nationalism and gender and sexuality. I also look at the relations between different forms of violence and the ways the constitute GLBT immigrants' sense of belonging: homophobic hate speech, on-line flame wars, racism, Orientalist fantasies, militarism and war.

On a theoretical level, this project brings together gay and lesbian studies; post-colonial and feminist theorising of nation, nationalism and diaspora; and anthropological and media research on violence.

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