Aalborg University

Tourism – Master's degree programme

Master's thesis

HOLIDAY DECISION MAKING PROCESS IN RAINBOW FAMILIES

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ABSTRACT

This research deals with unexplored tourist segment, gay and lesbian families. The lack of literature addressed to this tourist segment is the main reason for choosing the topic. There are many studies dealing with family tourism and growing number of studies focused on gay tourism. However, gay families from tourism point of view have not been researched even though it is a growing market. Therefore, this thesis attempts to research specific characteristics of the segment and present how much this tourist segment differ in holiday decision making process.

The study looks for an answer to following questions looking into specific role distribution and strategies used to reach holiday decisions as well as into factors and preferences influencing such decisions:

1) *What characterizes holiday decision making process in gay and lesbian families?*
2) *What is the role distribution and decision making strategies used in holiday decision making process in gay and lesbian families and why?*
3) *What are factors specific to gay and lesbian families which influence holiday decision making process before holidays?*
4) *What are factors specific to gay and lesbian families which influence holiday decision making process during holidays?*

The first question is the main research question. The following questions are sub-questions supporting the research to lead to answering the main research question and bring even better understanding of decision making process in gay and lesbian families.

The thesis is an exploratory study which takes a constructivist approach and employs qualitative research methods for data collection. The analysed data is gathered through 5 individual in-depth interviews. Moreover, netnography is performed before these interviews for the purpose of preliminary research, which is used as a base for subsequent main research interviews. The results from individual interviews are analysed within the theoretical framework.

The analysis of gathered data shows that general theories dealing with holiday decision making in family tourism are more applicable to gay family tourist than theories dealing with holiday decision making process of gay and lesbian couples. Moreover, another finding

brought by the analysis shows that there is a difference between decision making process, respectively used strategies, performed in lesbian and gay families. While lesbians tend to reach decisions together, in gay families it is the dominant partner who makes the main decisions. On the other hand, in both cases it is always a child who has the most influence on holiday decisions.

The thesis also reveals that a label "gay family friendly" is not important for gay and lesbian families. However, the factor which plays the influential role when choosing destination and accommodation is homophobic perception of the destination or accommodation provider. Gay and lesbian families rather look into whether the destination has anti-gay laws than whether it is gay family friendly.

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1 INTRODUCTION

"*Once upon a time there was a family, but it was not a typical family, it was a gay family. This family wanted to go for holidays but the family members were confused. They were confused because it seemed that there is no tourism company who would understand their decision making process; understand why and how they make holiday choices. In other words, there was no company that knew who to approach (who is the decision maker) and what to offer them...*"

(*This story is a fiction created for the purpose of this thesis*)

Almost half of the population in the Western countries is accounted for by families with dependent children (Schänzel, Yeoman, & Backer, 2012). The families represent an important fast growing tourism market segment (Yesawich, 2007). However, in the last three decades the world witnessed significant changes in the concept of family (Cabrera, Tamis-LeMonda, Bradley, Hofferth & Lamb, 2000; Gavriel-Fried, Shilo & Cohen, 2014; Nam, 2004) due to social, economic, techno-scientific and ethical changes in the post-industrial era (Gavriel-Fried, Shilo & Cohen, 2014). Especially in the Western countries, the traditional definition of family, "*a unit or set-up involving a couple - usually a man and a woman - running a household and producing and raising children together*" (Powell, Bolzendhal, Geist, & Steelman, 2010), has been challenged as the concept of family has experienced a development in the structure and composition. This resulted in establishing a diverse range of non-traditional, "post-modern" families. By the term "non-traditional family" the literature labels single-parent family, stepparent family, polygynous family, same-sex parented family, and cohabitation (Gavriel-Fried, Shilo & Cohen, 2014).

However, even though the world has experienced a change in a concept of something as fundamental as family is, it seems that "non-traditional" families are still often ignored in family holiday researches, especially gay and lesbian families (Schänzel, Yeoman, & Backer, 2012, Huges & Southall, 2012). Using a little bit of exaggeration the ignorance could lead to the story mentioned at the beginning of the chapter. Moreover, it seems as a shame not to perform a research on such families in holiday context, especially in the time when it is almost crucial for tourism destination and tourism companies to focus on niche segments in order to face the fierce competition on the market (Hughes, 2005; Rushbrook, 2002). This thesis, thus, aims to look closely at a recently emerged niche tourism segment of gay and

lesbian families. Even though one could argue that the size of the gay and lesbian family segment might seem insignificant for conducting a research or considering this segment interesting. The fact is that the number of gay and lesbian families is not known with certainty. Nevertheless, with legislation of gay and lesbian adoption the number is significantly growing and, therefore, the segment can have market potential soon (Huges & Southall, 2012).

Maybe one would expect that the thesis predominantly focuses on income levels, travel patterns and holiday spending as most of the studies on gay and lesbian tourism do (Therkelsen, Blichfeldt, Chor & Ballegard, 2011). None the less, first we need to understand if gay and lesbian families (for purpose of this thesis, gay and lesbian families are meant with at least one dependent child) can be considered as a specific segment worthy of deeper research. However, already on first sight is evident that gay and lesbian families possess some specifics. The parents are of the same gender, which challenges theories on role distribution and decision-making strategies in holiday decision making process as these theories are based on the gender difference of parents. Does same gender parenthood means, for example, that both women have role of mother in decision making process or one of them takes a usual role of father in the process?! Do they use the same strategies to make the decision and fulfil their holiday wishes as heterosexual families? Another specific of the segment is homosexuality as a reason for social non-acceptance, meaning that some people tend to discriminate, assault or scorn homosexuals. This of course can play a role during holiday decision making process and have an effect on several holiday choices. Therefore, the purpose of the thesis is to explore what characterizes holiday decision making process of gay and lesbian families. The gained knowledge could be seen as an opportunity for tour operators, travel agents, destinations, and accommodation providers to understand why and how gay and lesbian families make holiday choices, what are their preferences, who to target and what to offer them.

On the other hand, one could argue that there is not much difference between gay and heterosexual families as they might have probably the same motivation for travelling and therefore they should not be considered to be a specific segment. However, the worldwide discussion whether or not same-sex couple should be allowed to adopt or raise children indicates there is some difference. It shows that there is a significant number of people who are against this kind of non-traditional concept of family. The literature identifies the motion which leads these people to exclude same-sex families from social discourse and perceive

them deviant as a hope of perpetuating the heteronormative notion of family (Gavriel-Fried, Shilo & Cohen, 2014; Powell et al., 2010). It needs to be stated that the purpose of this thesis is not to judge whether or not gays and lesbians should be allowed to adopt and raise children. Nevertheless, the disunity in the opinion about same-sex families influences the travel experience of these families as well as it can significantly affect their decision making process when choosing holidays (Huges & Southall, 2012). Taking destination choice as an example, gay and lesbian families may tend to avoid a destination where they would be discriminated based on their sexuality and/or even prefer destinations which would be only for gay and lesbian families, or they might not to be influenced by these factors at all. Therefore, this thesis should bring more understanding into how much such factors influence holiday decision making process of gay and lesbian families.

1.1 Problem Formulation

As it follows from the abovementioned, there is a lack of scientific research on gay families as a relatively new tourism segment. More preciously, even the knowledge whether or not gay and lesbian families should be considered as a specific segment is missing. Therefore, the purpose of this thesis is to make a contribution to understanding of this possible tourism segment and subject this research area to critical reflection and academic rigor. This master thesis aims to explore holiday decision making process of gay and lesbian families in order to understand whether and what influence their sexuality and the fact that parents are of the same gender have on the process. These findings should help family tourism suppliers to understand what roles individual members in gay and lesbian families play in holiday decision making process and what might be the factors specific to them which influence such a process. Therefore, the main research question is formulated as following:

What characterizes holiday decision making process in gay and lesbian families?

The variety of complex answers different from person to person, family to family can be expected. Therefore, the data collection will be performed from various sources such as interviews, forums, and blogs. The gained data should give insight into roles of individual members in decision making process, strategies used in order to make holiday decisions, what and how factors specific to gays and lesbians influence decision making process before and during holidays. In order to guide the research, the following research sub-questions are asked:

What is the role distribution and decision making strategies used in holiday decision making process in gay and lesbian families and why?

As Therkelsen (2010, p. 765) points out, holiday decision making is often about "*conflicting interests and resulting negotiations taking place between father, mother, and children*", who play different roles (e.g. decision maker, influencer and information seeker) and using different strategies in order to come to conclusion. Moreover, as in gay and lesbian families there is no gender difference between parents, the research can reveal what are the main features of the decision maker. Furthermore, Huges & Southall (2012) suggest to research how much influence has a child in the decision making process since there is an indication that children in gay and lesbian families can have significant say in terms of holidays in order to protect them from particular difficulties they may face on holidays.

What are factors specific to gay and lesbian families which influence holiday decision making process before holidays?

This sub-question is meant to characterize what are the factors specific to gay and lesbian families, or general factors specifically related to gay and lesbian families, which influence their holiday decision making process before holidays. Moreover, the main focus is placed how these factors influence the decision making process. The sub-question can reveal what influence main holiday choices of gay and lesbian families such as destination choice, accommodation choice, and travelling individually or with tour operators.

What are factors specific to gay and lesbian families which influence holiday decision making process during holidays?

Unlike the previous sub-question, this sub-question aims to characterize the factors specific to gay and lesbian families, or general factors specifically related to gay and lesbian families, (if there are some) which influence their holiday decision making process during holidays. These factors are explored as holiday decision making process continue as well on holidays and make the form of the holidays complete.

1.2 Structure of the thesis

This master thesis is divided into five chapters. The introduction is the first one followed by methodology chapter which explains the research design, paradigmatic stance under which the thesis is written, methods used in order to answer the main research question, and

evaluation of the research. The third chapter combines and discusses theories used in this master thesis in order to better understand the studied matter. The theories mainly focus on family holiday decision making process, their role distribution and decision making strategies used by family members as well as theories on gay and lesbian tourism, and gay and lesbian family specifics are used. After theory chapter the analysis chapter follows. The chapter provides in-depth analysis of collected data, which is critically analysed and compared with theoretical framework provided in theory chapter. The fifth and last chapter concludes all the findings and the main research question is answered. Moreover, suggestions for further research are provided.

2 METHODOLOGY

The academic purpose of this thesis is to get better understanding of holiday decision making process of gay and lesbian families, which could be used by providers of holiday services in order to understand what influence such families to make their holiday choices and the final purchases. This chapter explains the methodological choices which were made in order to fulfil the purpose of the thesis as well as it discusses the application of constructivist point of view in the research process.

The chapter begins with introduction into research design and explanation of the selection and usage of the applied qualitative methods, which were chosen as a relevant tool for answering the research questions. Later, the paradigmatic stance is presented and explained how the constructivist point of view influence the thesis.

2.1 Research design

This section aims to logically structure and describe the data gathering and analysis process which is followed in order to achieve answering the main research question in the most successful way (Bryman, 2012). The importance of a research design is given by literature (Berg, 2009; Bogdan & Taylor, 1975; Kumar, 2011); it describes a good research design as the outline of the research process. As Boeije (2010) points out, a well-prepared research guideline functions as an essence of the thesis. Therefore, the research design is visualized at Figure 1 in order to help the reader with better understanding of the thesis.

As Boeije (2010) states it is difficult to determine a definite framework of research because researchers usually face the challenge of finding a balance between individual phases of the research. It means that different phases of the research process continuously overlap (Kothari, 2008) and it is needed to go forth and back in the research as well as during the thesis writing in order to ensure consistency of the research and the written text. In other words, this thesis is a hermeneutic study for which is important my reassessment of and reflection on my own choices and ideas for the thesis in order to keep the thesis as developed as possible. This needs to be borne in one's mind when going through the Figure 1, as the figure does not illustrate the hermeneutical cycle.
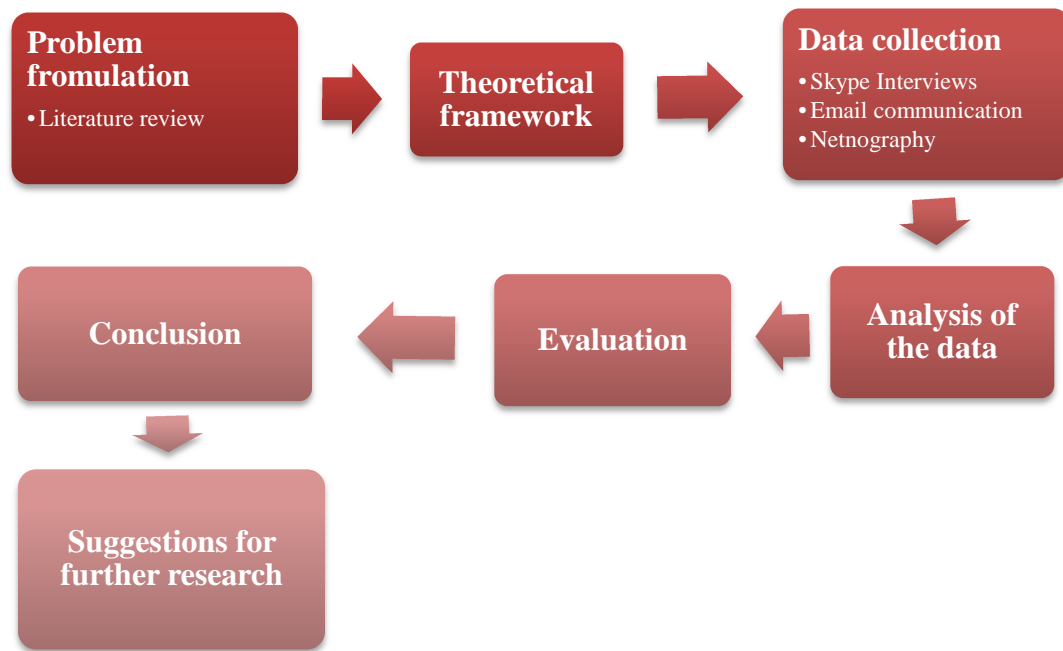
Figure 1: **The research design** *(created for the thesis)*

The starting phase of the research is the selection of the topic which defines the theme of the research as well as the problem formulation, which is being subsequently adjusted based on the gained knowledge (Fink, 2000). The research focuses on characterizing gay and lesbian family's holiday decision process with extra attention to roles and strategies used during the process as well as factors specific to gay and lesbian families which influence the process. In order to be able to formulate problem statement, the preliminary literature review is performed. It reveals that there is a gap in the knowledge of gay and lesbian families in the tourism field (Schänzel, Yeoman, & Backer, 2012). The literature review also shows that the specifics of gay and lesbian families such as being a minority on which the opinions of the society vary (from positive, through negative, to death penalty) and the gender sameness might strongly influence the holiday choices as well as the way how these choices were made. This helps to narrow the further literature study and the theoretical framework which is discussed in the third chapter. This was followed by interview guide creation as well as performance of interviewee sampling.

The data collection phase follows right after. The data collection is performed from different sources: blogs of gay and lesbian family travellers, in-depth interviews with gay and lesbian families and, in one case, an e-mail communication with such a family. The data collection is consequently followed by analysis of the gained data. As it is suggested by Fink (2000), not

all data needs to be used and it is up to the researcher what is transcribed and analysed. This depends on the relevance of the gained data to the specific problem. The analysis performed in this thesis identifies and compares patterns in relation to the research questions. As Fink (2000) points out, it should be stressed that all findings of the analysis are constructed based on the subjective reality and interpretation of the researcher, me. Even though the subjectivity is inevitable as I am influenced by my experience and background, I use different sources in order to gain proper knowledge about discussed phenomenon and handle my subjectivity. After the analysis the findings are summarised, discussed and concluded in relation to the main research question. Moreover, it should be again emphasized that the always present phase of the research is my reflection on my own actions and decisions which results in suggestions for further research.

2.2 Data Collection – Qualitative Research

This and the following sections aim to give the reader understanding how and why the data are collected in order to answer the main research question. It is explained which qualitative research methods are applied and why. Moreover, their strengths and bottlenecks are discussed as well.

The research is performed under social constructivist paradigm (the paradigmatic stance is discussed in the section 2.8 Philosophy of science) and applies methods of qualitative research. Qualitative research methods are chosen because they enable researchers to gain various in-depth perspectives into the researched matter (Jenning, 2005; King & Horrocks, 2010). Therefore, they seem to be the most suitable for the research in this master thesis since the purpose is to get in-depth insights of gay and lesbian family travellers into their preferences and decision making process. As Fink (2000) points out, the gathered data in qualitative research are subjective since they express opinions of individual participants. Moreover, the interpretation of the data is influenced by researcher (what influence is brought by me as a research to the thesis you can read in the section 2.9 Researcher) who does not have necessarily the same social background or understanding of events linked to the participants' answers (Fink, 2000). However, as Boeije (2010) claims the main purpose of qualitative research is not to obtain objectivity, but to find deeper understanding and insights from participants in order to be able construct the searched knowledge.

It is recommended by Guion, Diehl & McDonald (2011) to perform more than one method in order to increase validity of the study. Therefore, in order to gain the deeper understanding

and insights from gay and lesbian family travellers, the research applies two methods of qualitative research, netnography and qualitative in-depth interviews including e-mail communication. These methods are more precisely described in following sections.

2.3   Netnography

Netnography is a term describing ethnography in online environment (Kozinets, 2010). It pays attention to cultural, symbolic information insights which allow analysing online free behaviour of individuals (Del Fresno, 2011). As Kozinets (2010) points out netnography "*is faster, simpler, and less expensive than traditional ethnography, and more naturalistic and unobtrusive than focus groups or interviews*". In the particular case of this master thesis netnography is applied in order to gain basic knowledge about gay and lesbian family travellers and what influence their decisions. This contributes to better preparation for interviews and understanding the theories. The search is performed at gay family forums and gay family travel blogs (see Appendix A).

However, the limitation of netnography is the anonymity of a blogger or a contributor on these websites. Not knowing their background can make me wrongly understand their comments and thoughts, which could be also perceived as a limitation of this method. Therefore, netnography is used mostly as a supportive tool for the research in order to better understand gay and lesbian family travellers and mainly their decision making process before performing actual interviews with them.

2.4   Interviews

The thesis applies semi-structured in-depth interviews as the main and the most suitable research tool in order to collect the main part of the needed data. The interviews are chosen as a research tool based on the Kvale's argument that conversation is one of the most effective methods how to gain more in-depth insights into any phenomena (Kvale, 1996). Moreover, interviews are perceived as the most common practice in qualitative research in majority of researched fields (Holstein & Gubrium, 1997). It applies also for tourism, as Finn, Elliott-White & Walton (2000) states that interviews are a highly recommended research method for studies related to tourism industry.

The semi-structure form of interviews is chosen because it allows researchers to be flexible and at the same time keep a control over the interviews and follow the topics the interviews focus on (Ayers, 2008; Bryman, 2012). In other words, via semi-structured interview I am

able to dig deeper into topics and areas that I perceive important because "*there is no fixed range of responses to each question*" (Ayres, 2008, p. 811), which would be very limited if structured approach is chosen. Moreover, the created semi structure, which is represented by an interview guide (see Appendix B), helps me to ensure that I collect a data for the focus areas, which unstructured interview approach does not ensure. For this research three different types of in-depth interviews are chosen. The reason for such a variety of interviews is the need to adjust to individual interviewee as the research is challenged by a low number of interviewees. Furthermore the semi-structured approach is applied for all types of in-depth interviews: skype interviews, face-to-face interviews and e-mail conversation.

2.4.1 Skype interviews

The advantage of skype interviews is that interviewer is enabled to interact with interviewee in real time even though they are far away from each other due to possibility of using a web camera and microphone (Sullivan, 2013). Moreover, an interviewer is able to see and hear immediate reaction to the question. Furthermore, applying this method allows researchers to save cost on travelling to interview subjects (Bryman, 2012). On the other hand, the limitation can be found in the fact that modern technologies are still not flawless and skype interviews can face challenges such as low internet signal, jerky sound and/or video, and transmission drop-out. The bad quality of the call can make interviewees easily demotivated or disinterested in continuing the interview (Sullivan, 2013). Therefore, I avoid all unstable WiFi connections and use LAN cable internet which is perceived more stable, the interviewees are asked for the same. Nevertheless, I use them as the main research tool in order to gather relevant data. This method is the most suitable based on the sample (see section Sampling of interviewees) for the research, as almost all interviews come from outside Denmark.

2.4.2 Face-to-face interviews

The advantage of face-to-face interviews is very similar to skype interviews. Interviewers can easily interact with interviewees in real time which enables them to immediately react on answers and dig deeper into studied matter (Bryman, 2012). Moreover, it allows interviewers to observe body language of whole body, which is not usually possible when skype interviews are applied. Such an observation helps to recognize how the interviewee feels about their answer and give a signal that there might be something the interviewee hides (Kvale, 1996).

On the other hand, applying face-to-face interviews can cause that some interviewees feel pressured and cannot give more elaborated answer as they would need more time to think

about it (Bryman, 2012). Having this in mind, the interviews are conducted the way that the interviewees are encouraged to take time to think about their answers properly. Moreover, I help interviewees by asking questions related to the answers in order to get more elaborative answers. However, this type of interview is conducted only with one participant, Giorgio.

2.4.3 E-mail interviews

The e-mail in-depth interviews, also known as online asynchronous interviews, are a semi-structured interaction between the interviewee and the interviewer via multiple e-mails (Meho, 2006). The advantage of this kind of interview is that there is no need to schedule a physical or online appointment, which is convenient especially when interviewer and interviewee are separated by significant time difference or are have tight schedules (Meho, 2006). Moreover, e-mail interviews enable interviewees to think more about their answers and, therefore, give deeper and thought-through answers (Bampton & Cowton, 2002). However, e-mail interviews do not allow interviewee to see immediate body or facial expression to asked question, which face-to-face or skype interviews allow (Bampton & Cowton, 2002). Furthermore, during e-mail conversations some communication issues can occur such as misunderstanding the questions or answers, and delay in the answers. Therefore, I do my best to be as clear as possible in the e-mail correspondence as well as read at least twice the received messages and ask about part I do not understand clearly. However, this approach is applied only for Thomas, who claims to be very busy and this way is the most convenient way how to give his answers to studied matter.

2.5   Sampling of interviewees

The aim of this section is to provide information based on which conditions and how the research participants are selected. As Bryman (2012), Lærd (2012) and Palys (2008) recommend, the purposive sampling is applied for this qualitative research. This kind of sampling is described by Palys (2008, p. 3) as *"series of strategic choices about with whom, where, and how one does one's research"*. It enables me to recruit for this research participants which I believe are most suitable and can provide me with needed data.

The sample is already limited by the main research question, which limits the sample to gay and lesbian families who travel. In order to have fresh memories, I limit the sample even more to gay and lesbian families who travelled in last 3 years. By gay or lesbian family, it is meant a gay or lesbian couples raising at least one child. The sample is very specific and not easily approachable as there are gay and lesbian families who do not want to be exposed, or do not

want to be interviewed as they would not like to positions such families in the role of something different. Moreover, the way to find and approach gay and lesbian families is not easy as, for instance, to stand next to ZOO entrance and approaching any family. This reflects also on the amount of participants. There are 5 interviewed family members (see Figure 2), which in total represent 3 gay families and 2 lesbian families. The sample does not seem to be large. However, I believe the sample is big enough to provide insights into gay and lesbian family holiday decision making process and discover patterns in the researched phenomenon. It needs to be stated that the sample covers only participants from Italy, Spain, England, Poland and the Czech Republic. Therefore, it can be said that all the participants contribute to the research by "Western" perspective. Moreover, the participants are approached via my personal network, various LGBT Facebook groups, gay and lesbian travel blogs and gay and lesbian forums.

Name	Country	Type of interivew
Agata	Poland	Skype interview
Giorgio	Italy	Face-to-face interview
Lyndsey	England	Skype interview
Ondra	The Czech Republic	Skype interview
Thomas	Spain	E-mail interview

Figure 2: *Interviewees*

2.6 Interview guide

As mentioned in the section 2.4 Interviews, the interviews are conducted by following an interview guide. Applying an interview guide into research as a significant help for the researcher is suggested by many authors (Bryman, 2012; Kvale, 1996; Morgan & Guevara, 2008). The guide ensures that the semi-structure of the interviews is followed and the interviews are still related to the topic. Moreover, the interview guide is based on the problem formulation described in the introduction.

The interview starts with introduction into the topic of the thesis and gathering general information about the interviewee, "facesheet" information (Bryman 2012). The actual guide is divided into 3 themes with suggested questions. The themes are decision making process – role distribution and decision making strategies, factors influencing a holiday decision making process before holidays, and factors influencing a holiday decision making process during holidays. The interview guide does contain only a few specific questions for each theme in

order not to limit the interview. This gives me as a researcher a power to influence the overall flow and dig deeper into answers which I perceive important towards the main research questions (Boeije, 2010). The interview guide can be found in the Appendix B.

As it is mentioned, the interview guide is structured in order to lead to answer the main research question as well as the sub-questions. Therefore, the themes are also discussed in the theory chapter. Thus, each suggested question for a theme is based on particular knowledge discussed in the following chapter (see Appendix C). The language of the questions is chosen to be easily understandable also for people from non-academic sphere in order to make sure that the interviewees understand and feel at ease (Bryman, 2012). Moreover, four interviews are performed in English and one in Czech. The interview conducted in Czech is transcribed in English.

2.7 Data processing

The methodology chapter has discussed so far how the data are gathered. However, the crucial task of a qualitative research comes with data analysis (Bryman, 2012), which is described in this section.

In order to be able to analyse face-to-face and skype interviews, the interviews are recorded and transcribed (Bryman, 2012). All records, in total 105 minutes, are attached to the thesis on USB as Appendix D. However, it must be stated that the transcripts are reduced and unimportant parts are left out. During transcribing the attention is paid to the meaning of the gained information rather to transcription word by word. Thus, some irrelevant sounds, emotions and grammar are corrected or left out (Fink, 2000). The reason is not to edit or false the main points and meanings, my intention, instead, is to make the transcription more understandable and appealing to the readers. However, as Kvale (1996) underlines, despite the most thorough transcription process, it still happens to make mistakes or misinterpretations. Therefore, the reader can listen to the recording in Appendix D and read the transcriptions in Appendix E, which can be also found at the attached USB. All names are replaced by the first latter of the name and my name is replaced by "I" as an interviewer.

Even though the transcription is created as a tool for simplification of the process of analysis (Kvale, 1996), the transcription itself serves as a preliminary data analysis as researchers revise the data and are able to identify or distinguish individual interviewees (Bryman, 2012). After transcribing all skype interviews and gathering and revising text exchanged via an e-mail interview, a qualitative data analysis process called open coding is applied (Creswell,

2013; Kothari, 2008). This means that I as researcher go through all transcribed and gathered data again in order to identify and classify consistencies and differences into conceptual categories, as Kothari (2008) suggests. Furthermore, the data from netnography are analysed by method called a meaning condensation approach (Kvale, 1996), when the meaning of the blogs or comments are abridged into brief statements and also organized into previously mentioned categories. These categories are based on the theoretical framework discussed in the theory chapter and sub-questions. As Creswell (2013) points out, a categorization like this is subjective and it depends on researchers how they understand the piece of information and where they categorize it. Some data can be present in more categories. This kind of categorization is supposed to help to discover common patterns and insights among the interviewees and data gained from them (Esterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Lowe, 2002). The categories in relation with presented theories are discussed in the Analysis chapter.

2.8 Philosophy of science

This thesis aims to research what characterizes gay and lesbian family holiday decision making process, meaning why and how they decide as they do and what influences their decisions. However, the conclusion can be achieved by many ways as each researcher have different believes and is driven by different motivation. Therefore, this section is meant to present and explain the paradigmatic stance which is taken in this thesis and influence each of my decision and action taken in order to answer the main research question (Creswell, 2013; Guba, 1990). Thus, the reader can also understand why particular actions are taken.

The paradigm under which the thesis is written needs to be taken at the beginning of the research process (Guba, 1990) as it represents the set of basic beliefs and values (Creswell 2013; Guba, 1990; Guba & Lincoln, 1994) which express how the researcher perceives the world functioning and how reality is formed (Boeije, 2010). The paradigmatic stance applied in this thesis is social constructivism. As Guba (1990) points out, by undertaking social constructivist paradigm, I as a researcher admit that I form a part of the world and I influence the research process as well as writing by my presence (Guba, 1990; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Paradigm is better described by answering ontological, epistemological and methodological questions (Guba, 1990; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Answering these questions is performed at following subsections.

2.8.1 Ontology

The ontological question deals with a matter of existence. It questions the nature of reality as well as the nature of human being in the world (Creswell, 2013, Guba, 1990; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Ontology addresses the paradigm with questions *"What is the nature of reality?"* and *"What kind of being the human being is?"* (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 12). As Guba (1990) states, ontological stance of social constructivists mostly correspond with relativist ontology, and I am not an exception.

Relativists hold the view that there is no definite truth. Instead, they believe that *"realities are multiple and they live in peoples' minds"* (Guba, 1990, p.26). In other words, relativist ontology follows the opinion that realities are shaped and co-constructed by individuals based on individual perceptions and experience (Creswell, 2013). It means for this thesis, that I, as a researcher do not look for an ultimate definition of gay and lesbian family holiday decision making process nor do I believe the gay and lesbian families go always through the same process. Therefore, conclusions made within this thesis should not be generalized, even though there can be found a similar view into researched matter among participants (Guba, 1990). All conclusions only represent found patterns in individual opinions of their holiday decision making process based on in-depth qualitative research.

As it is mentioned, relativists believe that reality is co-constructed by individuals. Therefore, researchers also play they role in shaping the reality due to the subjective nature of human beings (Kvale, 1999). Thus, the conclusions of this thesis are influenced by my presence in the interviews as well as my interpretation of theories and gathered data.

2.8.2 Epistemology

The epistemology deals with the knowledge, its nature, creation and limits (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Guba, 1990; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). It addresses question as *"What is a nature of the relationship between the knower and the known?"* (Guba, 1990, p. 18). It reveals how researchers know what they know. Researchers under social constructivist paradigm usually adopt subjectivist epistemology (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Guba, 1990; Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Subjectivists believe that knowledge gained during a research is co-created during interaction between researchers and research participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Guba, 1990; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). For this thesis it means that the knowledge is mostly co-created through the unique relationship established during interviews. Therefore, it is the interviewer as well as

the interviewees whose experience and interpretation shape the understanding of the researched matter and create the outcome of the research. Thus, there is included the section Researcher, where the reader can find more about what shapes me as a researcher and what my relation to the researched topic is.

Moreover, as Creswell (2013) points out, it is important that researchers spend time in the field by preliminary research as they need to be able to interpret interviewee's thoughts and feelings. The researchers need to be able to put themselves in the interviewees' position and analyse the gained data correctly. It requires empathy and ability to understand interviewee's background stories, even though it might seem it is not directly connected with the research question (Guba, 1990).

As Bryman (2012) argues, the most convenient way how to set connection between interviewer and interviewee is to perform face-to-face interviews. However, as it is mentioned in the section Interviews, the majority of interviews is performed via Skype, which could be seen as one of the limitations of the thesis. Moreover, it has to be stated that based on the sample of the interviewees the thesis cover only "Western" perspective. It means that only participants from Western countries take part in the knowledge creation, which could be considered as another limitation.

2.8.3 Methodology

The methodology as a part of philosophy of science deals with the issue what the best way to obtain the searched knowledge is. Referring to Guba (1990, p. 19), the methodology part addresses the question "*How can the knower go about obtaining the desired knowledge and understandings?*". Moreover, Guba & Lincoln (1994) mention that researchers working under social constructivist paradigm primary apply qualitative research methods. Being more specific, dialectical research adopting hermeneutical methodology is commonly applied by social constructivists (Guba, 1990; Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Dialectical research is described as a form of exploratory research striving for developing an understanding of the research matter instead of proving or disproving a hypothesis. It aims to achieve conclusion by analysing and interrogating different perspectives and ideas (Berniker & McNabb, 2006). Therefore, this thesis does not aim to set and approve any hypothesis. Instead, it aims to characterise gay and lesbian family holiday decision making process based on different perspectives of gay and lesbian families.

Furthermore, application of hermeneutic methodology ensures that researchers are driven not only by effort to reveal the data but they also strive for deep understanding of the meaning behind the data (Guba, 1990). Therefore, I study literature connected with gay and lesbian family holidays as well as gay and lesbian family social integration. This makes me also to be more connected and interested in the background stories of the families. Hermeneutics also means to go back and forth within the research and thesis writing when a new piece of information is discovered in order to ensure that all parts of the thesis are updated and most to the point. I have started writing this thesis without any proper knowledge about gay and lesbian family tourism and during whole 3 months spent on the research and writing, it is obvious that the understanding and perception of this kind of tourism is changed.

2.9 Researcher

This section describes my background, motives and influences on this thesis. The section Researcher should allow the reader to understand why I have chosen this topic and how my experience can support as well as limit myself (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

The motivation to choose a topic about gay and lesbian family holiday travels comes from my working experience in tourism industry, especially in hotels. I have experienced working with gay and lesbian families as well as I have experienced heterosexual families complaining about presence and negative influence of gay and lesbian families. This made me realize what kind of challenge it must be for gay and lesbian families to go for holidays and positively enjoy the experience. Therefore, I assume the process to choose the right holidays must be seen more crucial and difficult for them. Thus, I decided to look more into the problems of gay and lesbian family tourism, especially holiday decision making process. My motivation to define such a process has increased even more when I realized there is not much written about it in present literature. Moreover, the fact that this thesis could contribute to current academic literature as well as holiday providers drives my motivation even more.

The only academic experience I have had with this topic is my Bachelor thesis focusing on market potential analysis for gay and lesbian tourist segment in Prague. However, this thesis makes me realize how different gay and lesbian tourism is from gay and lesbian family tourism. Therefore, I would describe myself as a researcher without in-depth knowledge in the studied matter.

2.10 Evaluation of the research

As it is mentioned, this research is performed under social constructivist paradigm. Therefore it is difficult to evaluate the outcome of the research objectively, as researchers and researched subjects have different perceptions (Creswell, 2013). Thus, there are applied four alternative criteria proposed by Guba & Lincoln (1994) in order to evaluate quality of this piece of science. These criteria are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

2.10.1 Credibility

It is crucial to ensure credibility of the study as it is a criteria determining the believability of the presented results (Bryman, 2012). As Lincoln & Guba (1985) mention, credible results are results agreed by the person who provided the data for the research. Therefore, once the analysis chapter is made, it is sent to the participants to ensure they agree with the interpretation of their input. All parts of the analysis are agreed on with the participants.

Moreover, another method how the credibility can be achieved is triangulation (Stake, 1995). In this qualitative research, there are used more methods of gaining data. Even though the main method for the research is qualitative interviews, the data were also collected through blogs of gay and lesbian family travellers in order to get different insights into the researched phenomenon. As Patton (2002) states it makes the data more credible when they are collected through different methods, mutually compared and confronted.

2.10.2 Transferability

The criterion of transferability indicates whether and till what extent the findings of the research are transferable to other contexts (Trimble, Trickett, Fisher & Goodyear, 2011). As the research is limited on gay and lesbian families, the results can be transfer mostly only in the context of gay and lesbian families. However, the sample is not limited by age neither a country of origin. Thus, the data can be transferred in international context, or at least in "Western" contexts. The specific sample of the research is described in section 2.5 Sampling of interviewees. Understanding the sample and being able to compare its characteristics with characteristics of a sample of an external research determines to what extend the findings are transferable (Trimble et al., 2011).

2.10.3 Dependability

As Bryman (2012) states, the dependability of the study is not possible to measure since the study represent a confrontation of many realities and different experiences of every person

make them to perceive researched matter differently. It means that different researchers are not able to reach the same findings, even though the methods and data are the same. However, as Guba & Lincoln (1989) suggest, in order to increase dependability, this study ensures easy access to all data and details about the conducted research. Recordings, transcripts of the interviews, and a file of the blogs are on the USB in Appendix D and E.

2.10.4 Confirmability

Guba & Lincoln (1989) suggest assessing a research by an external auditor in order to ensure confirmability of a paper. Such an auditor would evaluate if the research is carried out in the best author's beliefs as the researcher should avoid drawing conclusions based on his or her personal feelings. Even though the objectivity cannot be reached completely (Bryman, 2013), I carry out the research in my best faith and try to keep objectivity and be critical to my own findings. Nevertheless, the external audit is not performed due to lack of time.

3 THEORY

The purpose of the Theory chapter is to present, combine and critically discuss theories and notions, which, as I believe, can contribute to answering the main research question: "*What characterizes holiday decision making process in gay and lesbian families?*". As this thesis aims to explorer features of holiday decision making process which are characteristic for gay and lesbian families, a specific conceptual framework, which is supposed to reveal these features, is created (see Figure 3).
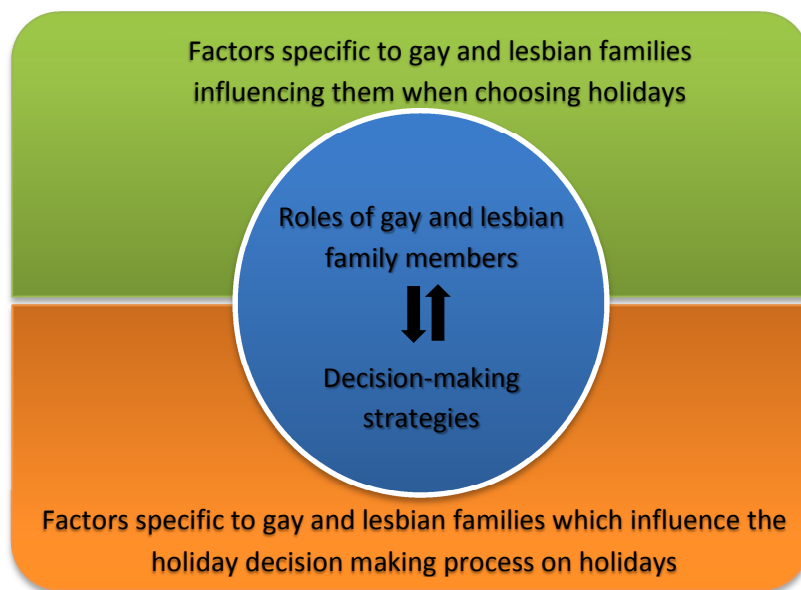
Figure 3: Holiday decision making process in gay and lesbian families.
(*Created for this thesis*)

More precisely, the thesis aims to understand holiday decision making process of gay and lesbian families by exploring the role distribution among family members and their decision making strategies used for reconciling different needs and wishes in order to reach a decision; different factors specific to gay and lesbian families which influence the holiday decision making process before holidays; and factors specific to gay and lesbian families which influence the holiday decision making process on holidays. The conceptualized knowledge is meant to help tour operators and other tourism marketers to gain understanding who and how influences and makes holiday decisions in gay and lesbian families and which decisive factors play a specific role for such families.

The conceptual framework proceeds from various studies (Koc, 2004; Therkelsen, 2010) which stress that understanding of role distribution and decision making strategies is a core

for understanding holiday decision making process, since it gives an insight into who makes and who influences decisions. Moreover, this framework also admits that there are factors which specifically influence gay and lesbian families during holiday decision making process. As some studies (Thornton, Shaw & Williams, 1997) show the factors differs based on the progress of holidays, i.e. there is one group of factors having influence in decision making process before holidays and another group influence the process during holidays. Nevertheless, the theories of role distribution and decision making strategies apply to both stages of holiday decision making process. However, this framework does not contain sociocultural factors which unconsciously influence the decision making process such as media, social networks, societal structures and holiday conventions (Therkelsen, 2010), as it is not an aim of the research.

As there is a lack of literature on gay and lesbian family tourism and gay and lesbian family holiday decision making process, the theory used for working with the conceptual framework needs to be created and combined through various theories. The chapter combines academic literature related to family holiday decision making process with theories focusing on gay and lesbian holiday decision making process as well as gay and lesbian family's decision making process in order to create a theoretical framework (see Figure 4) for gay and lesbian family's holiday decision making process.
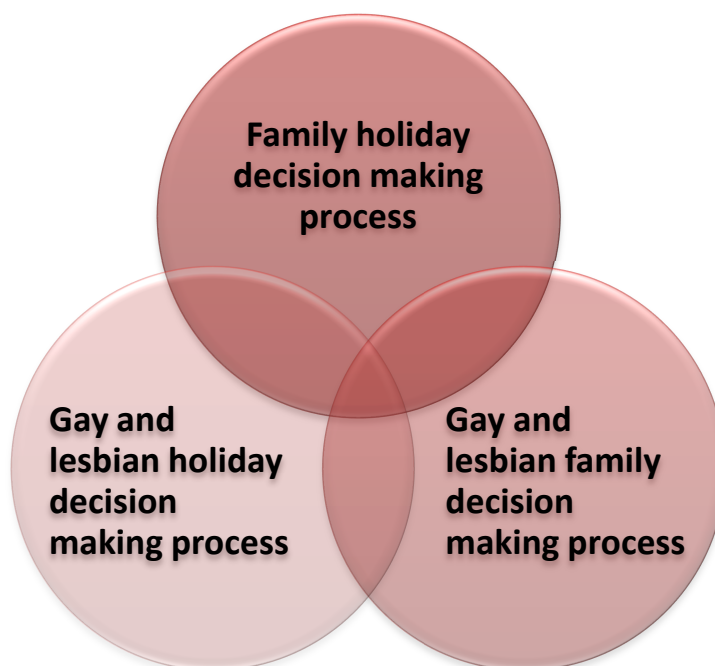
Figure 4: Theoretical framework for gay and lesbian family holiday decision making process

3.1 Role distribution and decision making strategies

The literature on family holidays indicates that decision making process before and during holidays is a tough process for a whole range of families (Kozak, 2010; Southall, 2012; Therkelsen, 2010). Purchase decisions in families are rarely done by one person. Instead, several people seeking fulfilment of their holiday needs act and decide together. Moreover, the fact that the role of children has been changed during past decades and now they are considered to take a more active part in decision making process (Lindstorm, 2003) makes the process even more complex. It means the family contains at least 3 members who want to participate in the decision making in order to push through their personal interest and needs. Thus, the process is usually accompanied with negotiation, compromises and conflicts (Therkelsen, 2010). As Therkelsen (2010) points out, this requires various strategies and communication skills as well as other skills for individual family member. This applies for heterosexual as well as homosexual families. However, gay and lesbian families can differ in extent of possessing these skills as well as use of various strategies since some skills and tactics are predominant features of specific gender (Koc, 2004; Mackey, O'Brien, & Mackey, 1997).

One could argue that decision making process of gay and lesbian families is the same as decision making process of any other family. However, Hughes & Southall (2012) argue that the holiday decision making process can very differ. The argument is based on the matter that literature (Therkelsen, 2010) dealing with family decision making process usually conclude that the contribution to the process, the role, of individual family member differs based on their gender. Taking into account that in gay and lesbian families the parents are of the same gender, it could be assumed that the decision making process differs from heterosexual families and could be more egalitarian (Hughes & Southall, 2012). Moreover, the different position of children in gay and lesbian families can have also significant influence on decision making process (Hughes & Southall, 2012). Therefore, this section aims to provide discussion on role distribution in holiday decision making process in gay and lesbian families as well as usage of different decision-making strategies in such families. For this purpose there are combined theories on roles and decision-making strategies of family members in holiday decision making process and knowledge of studies on roles and negotiation styles of gay and lesbian families in general decision making process, as there is no significant knowledge of holiday decision making process of gay and lesbian families.

3.1.1 Different roles in decision making process

As it is mentioned above, individual family members usually play different roles in decision making process. Assael (1995) define these roles as *information gatherer/seeker* (a person who seeks, gathers, process and controls information. The person chooses which information is exposed), *influencer* (a person which gives an input of his/her wishes, or whose needs influence the decision), *decision maker* (a family members which decides on purchase), and *purchasing agent* (a member which make the purchase), and *consumer*. In holiday decision making the roles usually overlap and are also dependent on who has the budgetary power (Koc, 2004).

Role of parents

Various studies (Brassington & Pettitt, 2003; Mottiar & Quinn, 2004; Therkelsen, 2010) show that the main role of mothers in decision making process is to be usually initiators of the process and information seekers. This makes mothers to have high influence on the holiday decisions as they have the power of filtering information and delimitating the choices (Mottiar & Quinn, 2004). The involvement of women in holiday planning and preparation is more significant and evident than in case of men (Mottiar & Quinn, 2004). Men are perceived more as those who participate in final decision making and as those who perform the purchase as they usually keep eye on the budget (Gram, 2005), thus, they are one of the decision makers. However, Therkelsen's (2010) research challenges the common theories about mother's role by findings that the initiator and information seeker role of mothers is predominant only in cultures where women are full-time or part-time housewives and, thus, they have more time to take care of holiday planning. On the other hand, Gram (2005) argues that mothers who have their own income have even higher decision making power than women who are housewives.

Applying the described role of mothers in decision making process into case of lesbian families, which are described as a family with two mothers (Powell et al., 2010), it indicates that lesbian families consist of two holiday planning initiators and information seekers. This indication is supported by Mackey, O'Brien, & Mackey (1997), whose study shows that both women in a lesbian family are resourceful information seekers in terms of important decisions which affect both. Moreover their decision making process is described as more systematic but slow because lesbians tend to discuss each piece of information and share their feelings and opinions. Processing of decision making experience such as reflecting upon, sharing and learning from their interpersonal experiences is characteristic for lesbian relationship (Mackey, O'Brien, & Mackey, 1997). Lesbian parents tend to process decision making

experiences as they want to reach consensus together, unlike gay men tend to "*attend to the decisions themselves and not so much to the method of arriving at decisions*" (Mackey, O'Brien, & Mackey, 1997, p. 74). In other words, gays do not usually spend time on processing their decision making experience and do not see important if the consensus is achieved together or one partner just convinced or even used his dominancy over the other one (Mackey, O'Brien, & Mackey, 1997).

Role of children

As it has been mentioned before, the literature has recently recognized a significant role of children in decision making process (Dunne, 1999; Gram, 2005). Their power to influence decision is not related only to children's products but also to other products (Lindstrom, 2003), thus, also to holidays. Thornton, Shaw & Williams (1997) point out that the kind of children's influence on holiday decisions depends on their age. Children in age of 0-5 years have mostly indirect influence, as parents need to take into consideration demands of such young children such as regular sleeping hours, security, food on time, and facilities for them. Older children are perceived to have mostly direct influence as they express their wishes and needs directly to parents and actively participate in decision making process. However, parents still take into consideration what they think it is good for their children no matter age they have; thus, older children have also indirect influence (Dunne, 1999).

Moreover, several studies (e.g. Johns & Gyimothy, 2002) show connection between satisfaction with holidays and children inclusion in the process. Parents usually want to fulfil children's needs and wishes so much that their own holiday wishes are perceived secondary (Johns & Gyimothy, 2002). Some of them argue by "*When children are happy, we are happy*" (Johns & Gyimothy, 2002), which indicates that satisfaction of children determines parents satisfaction with holidays. This demonstrates that even though parents are those who make the final decision and purchase, children have a very significant say about holidays. Thus, they can be perceived as the main influencers in the decision making process.

The role of children in gay and lesbian families in holiday decision making process can be even more substantial. As Hughes & Southall (2012) point out gay and lesbian parents tend to include children into decision making process even more in order to avoid difficulties the children can face as children of gays and lesbians. Moreover, gay and lesbian parents can feel a need to show the children that being gay and lesbian family is "normal" and they do things as any other family. Therefore, the need for family holidays in family resorts can be higher

Hughes & Southall (2012), which indicates an indirect influence of children in holiday decision making process.

3.1.2 Different strategies in decision making process

Scholars (e.g. Bokek-Cohen, 2008; Lee & Collins, 2000) point out that as there are different roles of individual family members in holiday decision making process, there are also various decision-making strategies they use in order to influence or convince each other. These strategies have also influence on how much children are involved in decision making process. Lee & Collins (2000) created a framework of five such strategies, which are applied also in this thesis: experience, bargaining, coalition, emotion and legitimate (Therkelsen, 2010).

The **experience** strategy is based on research and evaluation of alternatives. It means that family members look into various websites, brochures and experiences of their friends and relatives. Once they gather all needed data, they proceed with evaluation at family meetings. They usually tend to reach joint decisions as family, which gives also significant position to children. Quoting Therkelsen (2010, p. 768), "*children are encouraged to participate and form their own opinions on consumption issues, which open up for negotiations and differences of opinions in families*". Based on previous subsection and formation of theory of lesbian parents' role, it could be assumed that this strategy is often applied in holiday decision making process in lesbian families.

The decision making strategy called **bargaining** is based on trade-offs. Family members offer something in return for getting their wishes through. Using this strategy the family members admit that there is a conflict and competitive atmosphere among family members (Lee & Collins, 2000; Therkelsen, 2010). Taking a practical example, it means that children can agree on going for a visit to history museum if the family will visit an amusement park the other day.

The **coalition** strategy represents a way of uniting two or more family members into subgroup with the same wish or need in order to isolate members they disagree with. Very often children are in a coalition with one of the parents in order to convince the other one (Bokek-Cohen, 2008). For example 7 year old boy is used by his father to convince the mother to go to a race car exhibition. On the other hand, coalition between parents can be used in order to eliminate children from decision making process (Therkelsen, 2010).

The strategy called **emotion** uses emotive appeals. Emotive appeals such as crying, sulking and nagging are typical for children (Therkelsen, 2010). However, also adults can use emotive appeals when they base their decision on basic intuition or play with feelings of their partner.

The strategy **legitimate** represents a direct control of parents over children in decision making process. They use their role as parents to exercise power. This can be demonstrated by an example when parents decide to take their children to a museum in order to increase their history knowledge, even though the children do not want. In this case, the parents take role of educators of their children because they feel also responsible for their intellectual development (Therkelsen, 2010).

It is important to bear on mind that the usage of decision making strategies and also the role distribution varies based on socialcultural context. Moreover, a critique of above mentioned strategies is that the strategies and roles can change during the life cycle of the family (Therkelsen, 2010). Furthermore, a research of Mackey, O'Brien, & Mackey (1997) shows that the way of negotiation and deciding in gay couples change during the years of relationship. However, families with dependent children are considered to be a specific part (three stages) of family life cycle (Slatter, 1999), which narrows the research and partly avoids the differences based on different stages of life cycle. Nevertheless, as it has been mentioned, it needs to be taken into account that the distribution of roles and usage of different strategies in decision making process is influenced by the age of children, which refers to family life cycle.

3.2 Factors influencing gay and lesbian families when choosing holidays

This section aims to discuss individual factors which influence gay and lesbian family holiday decisions. However, it needs to be stressed that it focuses only on factors which are specific for gay and lesbian families. By specific to them I mean they are either connected to gay identity of gay and lesbian families or to the fact that the parents are of the same gender which challenges contemporary theories in family tourism. Therefore, for instance, this discussion does not include price or financial situation as this factor is common for any kind of family and the previously mentioned aspects of the families does not have any or only little influence on it (Hughes, 2005). Based on gay and lesbian tourism literature (Blichfeldt, Chor & Milan, 2011; Hughes, 2005; Hughes & Southall, 2012; Therkelsen, Blichfeldt, Chor & Ballegard, 2013) and literature on family holiday decision making process (Gram, 2005; Kang & Hsu, 2005; Kozak, 2010; Schänzel, Yeoman, & Backer, 2012; Therkelsen, 2010) the selected and

explored factors are previous holiday experiences and gay family friendliness. As Hughes & Southall (2012) states previous holiday experiences can have much higher influence on gay and lesbian families when choosing holidays, especially negative experiences connected to their gay identity. Gay family friendliness is a factor which is connected to destination and accommodation choices as well as decision to use or not services of tour operators or travel agents.

3.2.1 Previous holiday experiences

Gram's (2005) study on family experiences shows that previous holiday experiences play a significant role in holiday decision making process. Moreover, most of the studies on holiday decision making process (e.g. Gram, 2005, Schänzel, Yeoman, & Backer, 2012; Therkelsen, 2010) point out that decision making process of future holidays starts already on previous holidays when the family reflects upon the current experiences. However, one could ask how previous holiday experiences as a decisive factor differ from homosexual families to other kind of families and, thus, why they are discussed in the thesis. Hughes & Southall (2012) stress that previous holiday experiences of gay and lesbian families can have more significant effect on holiday decision making as there is a higher probability for gay and lesbian families to go through negative experiences. Therefore, this subsection aims to more deeply explore how previous holiday experiences can influence holiday decision making process of gay and lesbian families.

Hughes & Southall, (2012, p. 133) points out that "(Gay and lesbian) *families with children face particular issues in public acceptance*". The issue with public acceptance can negatively influence the holiday experience as well as it can impact the family preferences in terms of their holiday choices, "*gay friendly*" vs. regular choices (see following subsection). The more the children are put in scorn or disrespect, or just feel weird, the more negatively they value the holidays. This indicates that gay and lesbian families could prone to have a lower satisfaction with their overall holidays. By these situations it is meant for example questioning sexuality of their parents by other children, other children not being allowed to play with them by their parents, or inappropriate comments from other guests towards the children or their parents (Hughes & Southall, 2012). These confrontations can happen due to the fact that homosexual families and adoption by homosexuals is still considered to be abnormal or even deviant (Marks, 2012). This can cause that gay and lesbian parents wish to spend future holidays with other gay and lesbian families in order to reassure children of the "*normality*" of their situation (Hughes & Southall, 2012).

Nevertheless, holidays for gay and lesbian families seem to have also generally positive effects on family dynamics and children' development, no matter which sexuality other guests are. This is based on argument of Hughes & Southall (2012, p. 134) that „*holidays do have the potential to benefit relationships and to contribute to a sense of "being like others" which may have particular significance for children of gay or lesbian families*". Therefore, it could be assumed the satisfactory experience of children is even more crucial for gay and lesbian families (Schänzel, Yeoman & Backer, 2012). Thus, if children of gay and lesbian families are satisfied with particular holidays and they speak about them again and again, gay and lesbian parents can tend to repeat the holidays even more than the heterosexual ones (Hughes & Southall, 2012).

3.2.2 Gay family friendliness

This factor is related to labelling tourism providers as something friendly, e.g. child-friendly, family-friendly and gay-friendly). Even though "gay family friendly" is not a common label, it shows that there are some tourism providers which realize that gay and lesbian families might have different preferences. However, do they really look for such providers? This subsection aims to provide discussion how much gay family friendliness can influence destination and accommodation choices as well as decisions to use services of travel operators or travel agents. Moreover, the subsection also discusses what else influence these choices in gay and lesbian decision making process.

Destination choices

A high number of studies paying attention to holiday destination choices (e.g. Blichfeldt, Chor & Milan, 2011; Kang & Hsu, 2005) shows that a destination choice plays a very important role in holiday decision making process as it shapes the holiday experience (Gram, 2005). From these studies it is also evident that each tourist segment has different requirements and preferences for their holiday destinations. This obviously applies also for families. Moreover, Blichfeldt, Chor & Milan (2011) and Hughes & Southall (2012) indicate that gay and lesbian families can differ in their requirements and preferences from the heterosexual ones. For instance, as it is mentioned in previous subsection, they can tend to travel to destinations where they can meet other gay and lesbian families in order to reassure their children that to be gay or lesbian family is not abnormal (Hughes & Southall, 2012). Another specific preference discussed by various authors (Blichfeldt, Chor & Milan, 2011; Hughes, 2005) is avoidance of travelling to countries where homosexuality is not accepted, illegal or even criminal. Therefore, these specific preferences are discussed more deeply as

the purpose of the research is also to evaluate how much these factors are really involved in holiday decision making process in gay and lesbian families.

As it is mentioned at the beginning of this subsection, the first factor related to destination which might be included in decision making process is so called "*gay family friendliness*", i.e. one of the family members can wish to choose to travel to destination which has this label. However, there is hard to find any literature dealing with this destination label from marketing or any other point of view, even though some destinations label themselves this way nowadays. It can be assumed that destination labelled as gay family friendly combines features of family/child friendly and gay friendly destinations. Therefore, theories on family/child friendly destinations and on gay friendly destinations are combined.

Family friendly or also known as child or kid friendly destinations are destinations which provide enough activities and facilities for children as well as parents (Fleming, 2009). It means that they are able to satisfied children' needs for active holidays as well as parents' needs for relax and rest and at the same time bring feeling of togetherness to whole family (Gram, 2005). On the other hand, gay friendly destinations are described as destinations which allow gays and lesbians to escape from hetero-normative society and be themselves (Blichfeldt, Chor & Milan, 2011). It means their sexuality is fully accepted in the destination, they do not have to hide they are gays, and they can meet other gays and lesbians. These destinations usually also offer a lot of gay facilities such as gay bars and sex clubs (Hughes, 2005). Gay friendly destinations are also usually connected with sex activities (Hughes, 2005). Therefore, they are not considered to be child friendly. However, it can be assumed that gay and lesbian families would not prefer the sexual aspect of the destination as the parents have already partner. Therefore gay family friendly destination could be characterised as a destination which provides activities and facilities which fulfil needs of children as well as parents and at the same time it allows gays and lesbians feel to be fully accepted by the environment and be themselves.

Thus, it could be assumed that gay family friendly destination would be sought by families who had a negative experience related to their gay identity or do not want to risk any negative experience. Moreover, such a destination might help with reassurance of their children that it is normal to live in gay and lesbian family.

However, a study of Blichfeldt, Chor & Milan (2011) discovers that gays and lesbians do not usually search for gay friendly countries. Instead, they take into consideration countries where

they would not be arrested for being homosexual. It means that gay and lesbian tourists consider rather risk avoidance than gay friendliness. However, it does not necessarily mean that it applies also on gay and lesbian families but it indicates that beside aspects of destinations which are common for any kind of family (e.g. weather, what activities, etc.), gay and lesbian families need to also consider social and juridical conditions for them at destinations (Hughes, 2006). Therefore, it can be said that this consideration helps them to limit their choices of destination during holiday decision making process (Blichfeldt, Chor & Milan, 2011). However, this does not apply only for destinations where homosexuality is illegal; this is also related to destinations where homosexuality is legal but which are known for general intolerance towards homosexuals, as they can face prejudice, discrimination and/or social disapproval (Blichfeldt, Chor & Milan, 2011; Hughes, 2005). As Hughes (2005) states, the risk that they could feel uncomfortable because of inappropriate reactions to homosexuality or being assaulted is taken seriously by gays and lesbians into account when making a destination choice.

Moreover, there is a risk that gay and lesbian families can be assaulted also in countries where is already a certain level of tolerance to gays and lesbians, as there is still a high intolerance or condemnation of gays and lesbians raising children (Powell et al., 2010). It could be assumed that this aspect is even more considered by gay and lesbian families as it would be even more difficult for children to face such inconveniences. However, some gays and lesbians feel comfortable to conceal their sexuality in order to visit interesting destinations (Blichfeldt, Chor & Milan, 2011). Nevertheless, if gay and lesbian families would conceal their sexuality, they would go against the reassurance of "*normality*" for their children (Hughes & Southall, 2012).

Gay family friendly accommodation
The purpose of this subsection is to give an insight why there are gay family friendly accommodation providers and why gay and lesbian families might consider them during their holiday decision making process. As the reasons are very similar to those pointed out in previous subsection, this division is brief.

As it is mentioned in previous subsection, gay and lesbian families can face discrimination, assaults, and/or restrictions in the destination from locals or other tourists. However, this also applies for accommodation. The families can face in accommodation the same from other guests as well as the personnel (Hughes, 2005). There are noticed cases when accommodation

providers have policies that same-sex couples get automatically twin beds or the personnel does not know how to behave towards such couples or families (Hughes, 2005). Therefore, a label "*gay family friendly*" used for accommodation can be a decisive factor for gay and lesbian families who would like to be sure that their family will not face any inconveniences related to their sexuality and will find there also facilities for whole family. Moreover, being a gay family friendly accommodation provider does not necessarily mean that the facilities are only for gay families. The label should just ensure that gay and lesbian families are welcomed and the personnel know how to deal with them.

3.2.3 Tour operators and travel agents

During the holiday decision making process almost each family consider whether to use services of tour operators, travel agents or to make their holidays on their own (Schänzel, Yeoman & Backer, 2012). Nevertheless, even in this case the homosexuality of gay and lesbian families might differentiate the holiday decision making process from heterosexual families (Hughes & Southall, 2012).

Hughes & Southall (2012) raise the concern that gay and lesbian families may tend to avoid going for travels organized by mass tour operators as they might tend to avoid travelling in groups with strangers, who could not accept them. On the other hand, they might seek services of tour operators or travel agents specialized in gay family friendly holidays as they can help them to create gay family friendly holidays (Hughes & Southall, 2012). Therefore, such travel providers can be perceived as a support for gay and lesbian families which does not expose them to negative experience.

Nevertheless, several studies (e.g. Therkelsen, Blichfeldt, Chor & Ballegard, 2013; Ballegard & Chor, 2009) on gay and lesbian tourism show that there is no strong common pattern among gays and lesbians using services specifically of gay friendly tour operators. The studies point out that gay and lesbians do not mind to travel with mass tour operators or they even try to avoid gay tour operators as they want to avoid travelling with other gays. This might or might not be applied also to case of gay and lesbian families. The argument for considering that gay and lesbian families can differ in this case from gay and lesbian tourist is that families are the segment which very often uses tour operators and travel agents in order to ensure positive experience for whole family (Schänzel, Yeoman & Backer, 2012). Therefore, as mentioned before, it could be assumed that gay and lesbian families might seek services of tour operators or travel agents who would provide them with gay family friendly holidays.

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3.3 Factors influencing gay and lesbian family decisions on holidays

Holidays are formed based on several decisions the family needs to make. The decisions are made before as well as during holidays (Gram, 2005). It means that even though families arrange their holidays and create a holiday plan before their departure, there are several factors which can make them reconsider their plans (Gram, 2005). Moreover, some families react spontaneously and crate their holiday plan when they are at the destination (Schänzel, Yeoman & Backer, 2012). As Gram (2005) point out, there are several factors which may be taken into consideration by families during decision making process on holidays. However, this section deals only with one, stress factor, as it might to significantly differ from heterosexual families. The difference is based on the fact that stress is experienced differently based on the gender (Backer & Schänzel, 2012) and, thus, each partner in heterosexual family influences decision making process differently under stress. Therefore, this indicates that the influence of stress on holiday decision making process in gay and lesbian families during holidays might be significantly different and, thus, this division aims to look into stress as an influential factor more deeply.

Stress

Even though holidays are perceived as relief of everyday stress and demands, most families admit that holidays are still a stressful occasion (Backer & Schänzel, 2012; Gram, 2005; Urry, 1990). Stress mostly comes with the effort to fulfil the desired holiday image and satisfy all involved family members, which is sometimes very hard as it has been mentioned previously. Stress can influence decision making process of daily activities or can make family members to revise their decisions when they see the holidays do not go as planned (Backer & Schänzel, 2012).

It is usually women who experience most of the stress as they tend to facilitate and ensure quality time for others at the first place and then for themselves (Backer & Schänzel, 2012; Kinnaird & Hall, 1994). It means that family holidays can be a symbol of satisfaction as well as frustration for women (Clough, 2001). As Chaplin (1999) and Selänniemi (2002) explain, this phenomenon happens because women often experience holidays through relationships, i.e. they emphasis of interacting with others and making everybody involved happy and satisfied. Therefore, it could be said that mothers experience never-ending emotional and physical work of motherhood on their travels as well as home. Backer & Schänzel (2012, p. 108) express the problematic very clearly stating: "*In ensuring the enjoyment of others, women sacrifice their own holiday time to plan activities that will create lasting memories*

and feel dissatisfied when conflicts and difficulties exist between family members on holiday.".

On the other hand, men rather emphasis on themselves and actual action, which means that they enjoy being free of their everyday responsibilities (Chaplin, 1999; Selänniemi, 2002). However, it does not mean that men do not care about others' holiday experiences; they just usually do not get themselves stressed out about it. Moreover, as Backer & Schänzel (2012) point out, men usually take the responsibilities of moderating the stress of their partners and make effort so that women have also enjoyable experience.

The provided discussion of family tourism literature shows that family holidays may cause parents stress. However, it seems that the level of stress varies based on the gender (Backer & Schänzel, 2012). Therefore, the question is whether and how gay and lesbian families experience stress from family holidays since there is no difference in gender between parents. From a research performed by Zwicker & DeLongis (2010), who focus on coping with stress by different genders and minority groups, it follows that lesbian couples could tend to experience more stress than gay couples during family holidays. The reason behind this assumption is that stressors of lesbian couples are family based, thus, it is important for them that everybody enjoys the holiday experiences. On the other hand, stressors of gay couples are identified as related to violence and harassment, which is not usually connected with family holidays. Therefore, one could assume that gay families can experience even less stress than heterosexual families. Nevertheless, Zwicker & DeLongis (2010) add that gay and lesbian families generally experience more stress, so called chronic social stress, as members of less powerful minority. It means gay and lesbian families can experience stress from wondering how they will be accepted on their holidays and get easily stressed out when they have feeling that they are not accepted in the destination. This can lead in sudden decisions of changing the destination, accommodation or holiday trips (Hughes & Southall, 2012). Moreover, a research of Iwasaki & Ristock (2007) claims that gays and lesbians represent one of the most stressed groups in society.

4 ANALYSIS

This thesis aims to answer what characterizes holiday decision making process in gay and lesbian families and the analysis chapter is the chapter which tends to provide such an answer. The chapter presents thorough qualitative analysis of the collected data. The analysis part of this paper represents a crucial point of the research process as it reveals and describes key findings.

This chapter is constructed in the following major concepts of analysis:

Role distribution and decision making strategies – this section concentrates on providing an analysis of specifics in role distribution in holiday decision making process in gay and lesbian families and strategies used for holiday decision making. The section is structured based on the roles introduced by Assael (1995) and strategies described by Lee & Collins (2000). As both parents are of the same gender, the analysis focuses on what are the specifics which characterize individual role takers, as many studies name gender as one of the main influencers for role distribution. Moreover, the section discovers differences between strategies used in gay families and lesbian families.

Factors influencing gay and lesbian families when choosing holidays – the second section focuses on what the factors taken into consideration before deciding on holidays are. More precisely, this section concentrates on what gay and lesbian families need to consider specifically because of their homosexuality before they choose holidays. Special stress is put on label "gay family friendly" and its importance. The section is divided into what factors are important for deciding on *destination*, *accommodation*, and *travel agencies*.

Factors influencing gay and lesbian family decisions on holidays – the third section focuses on what role stress factor plays in decision making process when the gay and lesbian families are on holidays.

4.1   Role distribution and decision making strategies

The aim of this section is to analyse what are the specifics in role distribution in holiday decision making process in gay and lesbian families. The discussion in the theory chapter reveals that the roles usually vary based on gender, time availability and income individual parents bring. These theories are challenged in this analysis section at least by the fact that in gay and lesbian families the parents are of the same gender. Moreover, this section also aims

to evaluate answers regarding strategies used in order to reach holiday decisions. As the discussion provided in the theory chapter indicates due to the fact that both parents are of the same gender, the strategies might significantly vary between gay and lesbian families.

4.1.1 Role of the parents

As it is mention in the introduction into this section the theory chapter points out that the role of individual parent in holiday decision making process might vary based on gender and income. This subsection is structured with intention to elaborate on each role identified by Assael (1995) and reveal what characterizes the parent who hold such a role in the decision making process.

Initiator

Various authors (Brassington & Petitt, 2003; Mottiar & Quinn, 2004; Therkelsen, 2010) state that it is usually women who are the initiators of the holiday decision making process. However, the research shows that gay and lesbian parents consider both partners initiators of the process. Agata and also Giorgio point out that the holiday decision making process is initiated by both partners as there are deadlines till when they need to announce their holidays at their workplace.

"*I think it is usually a common decision because we know we need to announce holidays in the work at the similar point of year, so we just sit and plan.*"

(Giorgio)

While Agata and Giorgio with their partners start planning approximately 6 or 7 months before the actual holidays, Lyndsey with her partner Carley together initiate the holiday decision making process already when they get back from the previous holidays.

"*We start planning as soon as we get home from the last one. Straight away.*"

(Lyndsey)

No matter when the process starts, the research reveals a pattern that there is not an individual initiator of the process but both parents initiate the process together. This applies for gay as well as lesbian researched families.

Information Seeker

As Mottiar & Quinn (2004) point out, that it is mostly women who are perceived to be the information seekers in the decision making process in heterosexual families. Therefore, in

heterosexual families there is one main information seeker. According to the research among gay and lesbian families, the role of information seeker is either split between both of the partners or only one of them actively seeks information. Therkelsen (2010) states that women are the main information seekers in heterosexual families only when they are full-time or half-time housewives since they have more time to look for information. However, answers from Ondra and Thomas indicate that it is not time availability which makes them to be the information seeker but it is their previous experiences.

"Because of my work (related to tourism / travelling) I tend to have more knowledge on destinations etc. Therefore I tend to take more initiative to look and search."

(Thomas)

Ondra and Thomas also do not follow the opinion that information seekers are those who have more time in the family as both stated that they had busier job than their partners. In case of Agata and her partner Laura it is not about the time either. The information seeker in this family is Agata as she is more familiar with computers and an internet search.

"I think it is most of the time me because I am better with computer. Laura does not like spending time on this. So it is normally me."

(Agata)

While Agata's, Thomas' and Ondra's family have one main information seeker, Lyndsey and Giorgio claims that both partners participate actively in information seeking. In Giorgio's case, the partners divide responsibilities what to seek for, while Lyndsey and Carley like to look for information together.

"No we usually split the information seeking. I am more into looking into the attractions, museums and all activities we could do. But it is because I like it. There is no fix role I guess, we say ok you check the flight tickets I will check the accommodation."

(Giorgio)

Even though in case of Giorgio's and Lyndsey's families both partners are information seekers, the reason is different. Giorgio and Philip are both information seekers from more practical reasons as it saves time, whereas Lyndsey and Carley wants to look together as they like spending time together. The case of Lyndsey and Carley corresponds to the theory of

Mackey, O'Brien, & Mackey (1997) that lesbian couples tend to process decision making experience together.

From above mentioned, it follows that information seekers are either both partners or the partner who has more experience in tourism or internet research itself. This challenge the theories which assign the role of information seeker to the parent who has more time.

Influencer

Assael (1995) describes a role of influencer as a person who gives an input of his/her wishes, or whose needs influence the decision. As this part of analysis focuses on parents, the obvious role of children as influencers is described in following parts. Based on the gathered data, the influencers can be divided into two groups: influencers coming from the family; and influencers coming outside the family.

As Therkelsen (2010) points out, if there is only one information seeker in the family, he or she has the power of choosing what information will be transmitted to the rest of the family and by that significantly influence the decision making process. In this case, I assume that an information seeker turns into influencer as well. This is visible in case of Ondra who purposefully hide or adjust presented information.

"I give them such information that they want to go there where you want them to go and I avoid such information as that we need to fly there 18 hours for example."

(Ondra)

However, Ondra is the only one of the interviewees who admitted such behaviour. The rest claimed that they do openly share all the information. The influencers from outside the nuclear family are present in decision making process of Lyndsey and Carley. Such influencers are their friends as Lyndsey and Carley choose destination also based on where they friends go so that their children could play together. Applying theories of Hughes & Southall (2012), it could be assumed that they do it for the reason to ensure that Frankey is in contact with other gay families. However, their friends are not necessarily gay families. Therefore, such an assumption would be misleading. The rest of interviewees stated that they do not feel influenced by any other people and the decision making process is fully dependent on them.

This part of analysis does not provide with in-depth characteristics of a person who hold a role of influencer. It can be only stated that from the above mentioned the influencer is a family member or friend who can increase level of satisfaction of children on holidays.

Decision maker

Decision makers described by Assael (1995) are those family members who make the final decision to make the purchase. The literature applied in the Theory chapter (Mackey, O'Brien, & Mackey, 1997) discovers that there might be a difference between decision makers in lesbian families and gay families. While in lesbian families both parents tend to make the decision together, in gay families the dominant parent is the decision maker (Mackey, O'Brien, & Mackey, 1997). A similar pattern can be found in answers of interviewed families.

Lyndsey's family prefers to make the decision making as an event when all family is together having nice time and deciding where they will go for holidays. This could be connected to statement of Mackey, O'Brien, & Mackey (1997) that lesbians tend to experience each moment of decision making process and want to reach the decision together.

"*We are sitting all together, we discuss it and we decide. We are having food and meals and we discuss everything.*"

(Lyndsey)

As Lyndsey and her partner Carley are both information seekers, it seems natural that both are the decision makers. There is also example of lesbian family which tend to reach decision together despite the fact that the information seeker is only one of the parents. Such a family is a family of Agata. In her case the parents decide on a few final destinations where the family could go and the last decision is made by children at the end. So it could be stated that the decision makers are children in this case.

"*When I find things, we try to select the right place together, first I speak with my partner and we make pre-selection together. And afterwards we also involve children to pick the place they like the most.*"

(Agata)

However, analysing responses from gay families, one might notice a beginning of a pattern that it is the dominant partner who at the end makes the final decision. Ondra clearly stated

that it is him who makes the decision because he is the person who pays most of the expenses. As it was mentioned before, he also likes to adjust the given information in order to ensure that the rest of the family will agree with his decision.

"Since it is me who earns money much more money, it is me. Of course I take into consideration wishes of the others. Nevertheless, when we go to scuba diving, I fully choose the destination. And if we go in summer somewhere I choose based on what the rest wants."

(Ondra)

On the other hand, Giorgio thought that the final decisions are made together and both partners are decision makers. However, in the conversation it turned out that it is him who past years has needed to compromise and been convinced by his partner. Therefore, it can be deduced that both parents in lesbian families are decision makers but gay families have one decision maker who the dominant partner is.

In terms of the other roles, purchasing agent and consumer, defined by Assael (1997), no specific pattern is discovered. All parents do the purchase together. Only Ondra stated that it is him who pays majority of the expenses on holidays due to higher income. As all family consume holidays, it is natural that each family member is a consumer.

4.1.2 Role of children in decision making process in gay and lesbian families

After a subsection dealing with the roles parents play in the decision making process, this subsection reveals what role children play in a holiday decision making process in gay and lesbian families. As it is mentioned in the theory chapter, children play a significant role in a holiday decision making process. They act mostly as influencers who influence the process either directly or indirectly depending on the age of the child. The same phenomenon is present in the answers of interviewed gay and lesbian families.

Giorgio and his partner Philip are influenced by needs of their child. However, Marcus, their child, does not have any say into holiday decision making process as they do not think he is able to say what he really wants. It is based on the fact that he is only 3 years old.

"A lot, I would say all the decisions are based on his [Marcus'] *needs. It really influences us a lot. We cannot go to some destinations where we cannot really feel there are some attractions for children."*

(Giorgio)

Similar pattern can be found in Ondra's answer. When he also decides together with his partner on behalf of Petr based on assumed needs. The only difference is that Petr is included in the final decisions so that he can feel he decided on holidays as well.

"As he is only 7 years old, he usually agrees with everything. He loves flying by plane. So he officially decides on the destination as well but just for the sake that he can have the feeling that he is part of the decision."

(Ondra)

Comparing answers of gay families (Ondra's and Giorgio's families) with answers of lesbian families (Lyndsey's and Agata's ones), it can be noticed that lesbian families involve let their children to have even higher influence on decision making process. Moreover, they even let them decide under certain conditions. As Agata says they do choose several places which fulfil the main needs of the family and the final decision is done by children.

"We do not tell them about everything of course as they are not bothered about accommodation for example. We show them the places and tell them what kind of activities they can do there. [...] They decide we want the hotel with waterslide or where we can ride a horse or play tennis. So it is mostly about attractions and facilities for them."

(Agata)

Lyndsey's answer contains a similar pattern when she says that the decision is made purely on what Frankey wants.

"He influences us; we basically based the decision on him by what he wants."

(Lyndsey)

However, children do not influence only selection of destination but every day decision making process during holidays.

"Every day we take into consideration first what would be the need of Marcus. What he would like and then we choose according that one."

(Giorgio)

It is hard to say whether children in gay and lesbian families get more space to influence the holiday decision making process than in heterosexual families as it is assumed by Hughes & Southall (2012). However, from above stated analysis it follows that children and their needs are main influencers in holiday decision making process of gay and lesbian families.

4.1.3 Strategies in holiday decision making process of gay and lesbian families

This part looks into what strategies gay and lesbian families apply and in which part of the decision making process they are used. The framework for decision making strategies by Lee & Collins (2000) mentioned in the theory chapter is also applied when analysing the used strategies.

Looking into the ways of how lesbian families and gay families reach the decisions, one can notice that there can be found slight differences. Analysing interviews with Lyndsey and Agata there can be found a pattern that both families strive to reach a decision through experience strategy. It means that both families expressed that they do proper research, evaluate alternatives, tend to reach the decision together and let children to actively participate in the decision making process. The effort to include whole family is distinct in Lyndsey's answer which expresses that all holiday participants of her family gather and discuss the holidays together while having a meal.

It [the decision] *depends on everyone meeting,* […] *We are sitting all together, we discuss it and we decide. We are having food and meals and we discuss everything.*

(Lyndsey)

As Agata points out in order to be successful using such a strategy both partners need to bare on mind what the other partner wants when searching for options.

"*We normally both know what we want, what we are looking for. We always are having that in mind. So it is not like I want that and that and I do not care what Laura wants. I normally have in my mind what she wants when I am doing the search. And if some of the things I found she does not like. We try to seek together or she seeks on her own and we decide together.*"

(Agata)

If the decision cannot be reached by experience strategy, Agata mention that bargaining strategy is used. Such a strategy is used mostly in order to agree on destination or

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accommodation. It means that they agree that this year they will go to a place which one of them prefers and the other year to a place which is favourite of the other one.

"*Maybe sometimes we do not agree where to go from the beginning, what place, what country. That is sometimes different for us. When I want to go for example to Greece, and she wants to go to Portugal. So we say this year Portugal next year Greece.*"

<div align="right">(Agata)</div>

Analysing what strategies are applied in gay families, it reveals that only Thomas' family strives for applying experience strategy.

"*We take pride in deciding through open communication, share and deliberate opinions and come to 1 single final conclusion. It takes some time, but overall we always agree on the final conclusion where to go.*"

<div align="right">(Thomas)</div>

However, there is hard to find a pattern of used strategies also among the other gay families. It could be stated that Giorgio's family mostly use bargaining strategy. Giorgio and his partner often negotiate about the place and a form of accommodation as well as attraction visited.

"*So we try to find a compromise. So we go to museums in the morning and during afternoon we do something more relaxing, we go to park, beach or eat something nice. […] We negotiate, like in the morning we will do what I want and in the afternoon we do what Philip wants.*"

<div align="right">(Giorgio)</div>

While Giorgio applies rather bargaining strategy, Ondra's way of reaching decision is more similar to legitimate strategy. Ondra uses his power, which he gains as he is the person whose income is much higher and, thus, pays majority of the expenses, over whole family to go where he wants to go. He claims he takes into consideration wishes of the others. However, it is him who decides at the end.

"*It is me who earns money, much more money, so it is me* [who makes the decision]. *Of course I take into consideration wishes of the others. Nevertheless, when we go to scuba diving, I fully choose the destination as Marek does not do scuba diving. And if we go in summer somewhere I choose based on what the rest wants.*"

<div align="right">(Ondra)</div>

The only way how his family fights against his decision is using a strategy of coalition, which happens when they really do not agree with the destination decided by Ondra.

"*Sometimes it happens that they are really against some destinations.*"

<div align="right">(Ondra)</div>

In order to sum up this section devoted to role distribution in holiday decision making process and strategies applied in this process, the main specification related to gay and lesbian families are stressed. The first subsection of the analysis part shows that the distribution of information seeker role is not dependent on either income or time availability as some authors assume. The main factors deciding who will be information seeker in the family (if not both parents) are experience with travelling and tourism itself; and familiarity with online research. This analysis also discovers a beginning of pattern in distribution of role of decision maker in gay and lesbian families. It corresponds with theory of Mackey, O'Brien, & Mackey (1997) that lesbians reach final decisions together while in gay families it is the dominant parent who at the end decides. The second subsection, which deals with role of children in the holiday decision making process, reveals that children have high influence on the decision taken, either directly by their say or indirectly by their needs. The pattern shown in the analysis is that parents subordinate their needs to needs and preferences of their children. However, the analysis does not prove the assumption of Hughes & Southall (2012) that children in gay and lesbian families influence the holiday decision making process than those in heterosexual families. The interviewed families do not mention that there would be any specific need of children which is related only to children of gay and lesbian families. The third subsection discovers a beginning of pattern that lesbian families mostly use experience strategy to reach holiday decisions. It means that they tend to reach the decision together without compromising. Moreover, their decisions are based on proper research. On the other hand, there was not found a pattern in decision making strategies applied by gay families.

4.2 Factors influencing gay and lesbian families when choosing holidays

This section deals with analysis how much previous holiday experiences and gay family friendliness of tourist facilities influence the decision making process in gay and lesbian families before leaving for actual holidays. This part brings insights into how negative or positive holiday experience or a fear of having negative holiday experience effect the decision making process. Moreover, the different perceptions about labelling tourist facilities gay family friendly are discussed as well as other factors influencing the holiday decision making process.

4.2.1 Previous holiday experiences

This subsection analyses what effect previous holiday experiences have on holiday decision making process in gay and lesbian families. Moreover, it looks into whether negative experiences or positive experiences have higher influence. The intention to look deeply into the effect of previous experiences comes from assumption of Hughes & Southall (2012) that gay and lesbian families might have more negative experiences than heterosexual families and this might result in returning into places where they, especially their children, have had positive experiences.

Even though the outcome of Lyndsey's interview corresponds with the assumption of Hughes & Southall (2012) when she reveals that they go back to places where Franky likes it. She does not confirm that it would be due to avoiding negative experiences at other places.

"*Franky does, he wants to go back to places where he has been before and we go*"

(Lyndsey)

Moreover, similar pattern is not found in any response of other interviewees as everybody say that they rather prefer to change the place where to go. The other respondents do not change necessarily the holiday destination every year but if they do stay in the same country they change at least resort or hotel.

Such answers can be influenced by the fact that none of the interviewed families state that they would have negative experience due to their sexuality at holidays. Some of them such as Thomas confess that they experience weird sights from other guests but they do not consider it as negative experience. It is still considered normal:

"Yes, it is still clear in the 21st century that there are still people who have the opinion that children should be raised by a woman and a man. We never experienced practical challenges, only bad looks and behind-the-back comments."

(Thomas)

However, there is found a pattern in the answers of the families which could contribute to the reasons why the families have not had negative experience based on their sexuality. Each of the family state that they do avoid places where is likely to experience something negative due to the fact that they are gays or lesbian couples. This factor is elaborated more in the following subsection.

"We try to choose destination where we would not face any problems with our sexuality."

(Ondra)

4.2.2 Gay family friendliness

This subsection of analysis chapter analyse how much gay family friendliness can influence destination and accommodation choices as well as decisions to use services of travel operators or travel agents. Moreover, the subsection also reveals what the other factors influencing these choices in gay and lesbian family holiday decision making process before leaving on holidays are. The structure of this subsection is divided into four parts. The first one analyses factors influencing destination choices, the second deals with factors influencing accommodation choices, the third one is devoted to factors influencing whether or not to travel with tour operators and the last one looks into whether the gay and lesbian families research on destination and its safety for gay and lesbian families.

Destination choices

This part begins with analysing the perceived importance of destinations being gay family friendly. However, one needs to bear in mind that such an expression is not known much for any of the interviewees. Therefore, the analysis looks rather into how important the interviewees perceive is whether the destination is suitable for children and whether the destination offers gay facilities. Moreover, it also analyses the point of views of interviewees in terms of assumption of Hughes & Southall (2012) that gay and lesbian families might tend to travel to destinations where they can meet other gay and lesbian families in order to reassure their children that to be gay or lesbian family is not abnormal. Furthermore, in

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previous part mentioned risk avoidance is analysed in this part as a factor influencing destination choices.

In the interviews there can be found a pattern that the fact whether the destination is child friendly or not is very important for gay and lesbian parents. This is apparently a consequence of already discussed importance of children's satisfying experience, which parents value more than their own experience.

"The most important is, however, if the destination is child-friendly because we have 2 children so the most important for us is that they have fun on holidays."

(Agata)

Moreover, throughout the interviews it is mentioned that if the destination is child-friendly, it means that the parents have also more time for their own activities. Therefore, one could think they would look also for destinations with gay friendly facilities where parents can spend their free time. However, the analysis does not discover any pattern of parents perceiving important whether the destination has facilities for gays and lesbians. Nevertheless, what is important for them is that the destination is perceived as tolerant towards gay and families or at least is not perceived as intolerant towards them. Moreover, as Ondra points out, some destinations which are friendly to gay and lesbians are not always officially labelled as gay friendly destinations.

"We prefer places which are gay friendly even though we do not look for gay friendly hotels. For us it is more important that the locals are more open towards homosexuality. For example, even though that in Philippines it is not officially gay friendly but when you come there it is the most gay friendly destination I have ever been. So this is very important for us."

(Ondra)

The analysis discovers that gay and lesbian parents consider important to avoid a risk to travel to destinations which are known for not being opened towards gays and lesbians rather than searching for specifically gay family friendly destinations. This is aligned with finding of a study of Blichfeldt, Chor & Milan (2011) which discovered the same pattern for gay and lesbian tourists.

"You really need to look at the safety. For example, United Arab Emirates, it is so amazing destinations but when you go there as gay family, it is not very much safe. It is enough when you kiss a girl on street and not speaking what would happen when gays would kiss."

(Ondra)

However, as Jen points out being a travelling lesbian family bring more risks in certain country than for just lesbian couples. She points out that they can face legal issues in the countries were their marriage is not recognized, for example if something happens to their child. The families are also recommended by her to take birth or adoption certifications as they might not be allowed to take medical decisions on behalf of their children.

"Being lesbian moms requires some additional considerations, too. In addition to the possibility of having to deal with discrimination, harassment, and persecution during what should be a relaxing getaway, we need to deal with the practical fact that our legal marriage isn't recognized in most states or foreign countries."

(Jen)

The study of Blichfeldt, Chor & Milan (2011) also discovered that gays and lesbians can conceal their sexuality in order to travel to destinations which are perceived as intolerant towards gays and lesbians. However, the research in this thesis discovered a beginning of an opposite pattern in answers of the interviewed gay and lesbian families. The families mention that concealing their sexuality in front of children would send a wrong message to their children about their family.

"No, you know we are family, children know we are family. We love each other. So if we start act different while on holidays in front of our children, they would think that it is not good to be gay family, what we are doing. So we always act as family."

(Agata)

Moreover, the assumption of Hughes & Southall (2012) that gay and lesbian families might more tend to travel to destinations where they can meet other gay and lesbian families is not proved in the research. There can be found an opposite pattern in the interviews. The parents do not see importance to be only with gay and lesbian families. Moreover, it seems to them as a separation which could have a negative effect on children.

"We really do not want them to go only for gay and lesbian family holidays were only gays and lesbians are over around. Because they can feel that they need to be on special place because our family is different. We want them to be a part of the community, not only gay and lesbian one but also we want them to know straight families as well."

<div align="right">(Agata)</div>

However, Ondra and Jen, a blogger, understand that sometimes going to destination where the majority is gay and lesbian might be revealing, especially for those who have experienced some kind of discrimination.

"Sometimes it feels good to be surrounded by families like our own in a place we know for certain will be discrimination-free."

<div align="right">(Jen)</div>

From all above mentioned it follows that the interviewed families do not specifically search for a destination which is labelled gay family friendly. Therefore, such a factor does not have a significant influence on holiday decision making process. Moreover, for some families such a label is even offensive and absurd.

"I think this is absurd. There is still a tendency of putting people into boxes. Why should they brand facilities as gay friendly? They don´t brand them as heterosexual friendly either."

<div align="right">(Thomas)</div>

This part of analysis reveals that it is very important for the parents that the destination is child friendly as it gives a promise of higher satisfaction of children as well as it might bring more free time for parents to relax. On the other hand, none of the parents is interested whether there are some gay friendly facilities in the destination. Moreover, labelling a destination gay family friendly is not seen important or it is perceived even offensive by some of the families. As it is stated in the previous part gay and lesbian families avoid countries which have anti-gay laws or are just known as not being open towards gay families. However, the analysis also shows that some destinations are more risky for them then for gay and lesbian couples. First, gay and lesbian couples are not so obvious in the destination as gay and lesbian families. Second, at some countries even their official adoption would not be recognized. Moreover, while gay and lesbian couples might conceal their sexuality and

pretend that they are only friends in order to avoid risks at some destinations. The parents of interviewed gay and lesbian families do not support such an idea as it would give wrong message to their child that their sexuality is not normal. However, the assumption of Hughes & Southall (2012) that gay and lesbian families might tend to travel with other gay and lesbian families in order to reassure their children that to be gay or lesbian family is not abnormal is not proved. The opinion of the families on whether to travel to destination with other gay and lesbian families varies. Nevertheless, it is not found as an important factor.

Accommodation choices

Very similar pattern as in destination choices can be found in gay and lesbian families' points of view on accommodation. The interviewed families state that they do not search specifically for accommodation with a label gay family friendly. The most important for them is whether the accommodation is child friendly. As Kyle states at her blog, from her experience any child friendly accommodation has accepted her family without problems.

"*I found that any place that's child-friendly will be welcoming to us.*"

(Kyle)

Also the factor of risk avoidance is present when choosing accommodation. In this case factors which could indicate that the family can experience discrimination are considered. Lyndsey reveals that they try to avoid hotels where old people can be present as she finds them homophobic.

"*I would not go to hotel which would be full of old people who probably would be against lesbians*"

(Lyndsey)

Ondra points out that accommodation with a label gay family friendly is searched in his opinion by families who have negative experience with discrimination and want to avoid it or who need to show everybody they are gay.

"Well, some families might prefer to spend their holiday in a hotel full of gay and lesbian families in order to prevent any possible discrimination. We just go to hotel and if somebody has problem with us it is their problem. However, we are not such a couple that we need to show it to others that we are gays."

<div align="right">(Ondra)</div>

As mentioned in the previous part, the families tend to choose a destination which they see less risky for gay and lesbian families. This might be the reason why the factor of gay family friendly accommodation can have less importance.

Tour operators

Even though Schänzel, Yeoman & Backer (2012) point out that families often use services of tour operators, there is not such a common pattern in responses of interviewed families. Some families do use such services, some not at all, and other sometimes. However, the results of the research also does not correspond with a concern of Hughes & Southall (2012) that gay and lesbian families avoid travelling with tour operator in order to avoid travelling with strangers. Thomas and Giorgio state the preference of searching online for holiday offers as the reason for not using services of tour operators. Agata's answer agrees with them and adds that the offers of tour operators are limited as it is complete package and her family wants to decide on many aspects on their own.

"We prefer to plan our holidays ourselves. […] We do not like to be limited; with travel agency you cannot choose many things on your own as it is already in the offer. This way we can choose what we really want."

<div align="right">(Agata)</div>

On the other hand, the research reveals that the interviewed gay and lesbian families do not use specialized tour operators for their segment. They express that they do not see a need for travelling with such a travel agency. Moreover, Agata mentions that she would not even travel with such a travel agency as it gives a weird feeling for her family that they are not like others.

"I know there are some but for us as I said it is important that our children can see that our families are like other families. So we really do not want them to go only for gay and lesbian

family holidays were only gays and lesbians are over around. Because they can feel that they need to be on special place because our family is different."

Ondra is the only one who expressed that understands that gay family tour operators could bring a value to gay families, even though he does not use their services. He sees that they can attract those families who want to avoid risk. Moreover, his assumption is that they focus on wealthy families and, therefore, they offer nice destinations. Thus, he thinks he could look for their services one day.

I am not saying it is not needed but I think that it still an offer which might find it is target and make life of gay and lesbian families easier. […] *I think that most of these agencies focus on more wealthy tourists, which probably reflects that we gays do like to spend our money. Therefore, they might have very nice offers.*

Research

It follows from the research that the families do not look for a label gay family friendly or a similar label. However, they still admit that they look for a destination or accommodation where they would be accepted and minimalize the risk of avoidance. Therefore, it seems important to me to also analyse how the interviewed family find out whether they will be accepted in the destination or accommodation. In the answers, there can be found two sources mentioned frequently, TripAdvisor and gay intuition.

While TripAdvisor is a renowned tourist portal, gay intuition cannot be seen as actual research on destination and accommodation. From the answers of the families and blogs, the gay intuition could be interpreted as a common sense combined with experience. However, it could be assumed that gay intuition is used in all cases as all families stated that their research on destination or accommodation does not contain some specific research whether the place is gay (family) friendly or not.

"*Well, we check TripAdvisor but for common information but not specifically if the place or hotel is gay family friendly.*"

As this research is not focused on the ways how gay and lesbian families research on holiday destinations in order to figure out their safeness for gays and lesbians, there is not more about gay intuition found. However, it is suggested for further research to look into what gay intuition is characterized, how much it is used in relation with holidays, and how accurate such an intuition is.

As a summary of this section, which deals with gay family friendliness as a possible factor influencing holiday decision making process in gay and lesbian families and its importance, it needs to be stated that gay family friendliness is not seen of high importance when deciding on holidays. At some cases labelling destinations or tourism service providers "gay family friendly" is perceived even as undesirable. The main factor which gay and lesbian search for is child-friendliness as child friendly destination and tourism service providers should bring higher satisfaction for their children as well as more time for relaxation for the parents. Instead of looking for gay family friendliness, gay and lesbian families avoid countries where homosexual community or specifically homosexual parents are not tolerated. In order to know which country to avoid, they use mostly their "gay intuition" and/or search at TripAdvisor.

The assumption of Huges & Southall (2012) that gay and lesbian families my tend to travel with other gay and lesbian families in order to assure their children that it is normal to have two fathers or two mothers does not match with answers of interviewed families. The research shows that the families see such travelling as showing their children that they are not normal and need to travel with other gay and lesbian families. On the other hand, the need for travelling to destinations or accommodation facilities where other gay and lesbian families are might appear when a family have experienced discrimination or any other negative experience connected to their sexuality.

4.3   Factors influencing gay and lesbian family decisions on holidays

The discussion in theory chapter reveals that there is one main factor which might influence specifically gay and lesbian families when making decisions on holidays. The factor is stress. The subsection 3.3 Factors influencing gay and lesbian family decisions on holidays deals with studies (Backer & Schänzel, 2012; Kinnaird & Hall, 1996) which show that stress varies based on gender. From the discussion provided, it follows that lesbians could experience their holidays more stressfully as they are both women and, moreover, it is intensified also by the presence of children. On the other, according to the literature (Chaplin, 1999; Selänniemi, 2002) gays should experience more relaxed holidays.

However, the analysis of the interviews does not reveal any sign of patterns similar to findings in the literature. Focusing first on lesbian representatives in the research, the research shows that they do not notice that they would experience stress on holidays. As Agata says, they sometimes need to change plans or accommodation in order to ensure the right experience on holidays, on the other hand she is not aware that they would experience more stress on holidays. Lyndsey agrees when she does not understand why there should be stress on holidays when holidays are about relaxation.

"You have holidays to relax. So why stress."

(Lyndsey)

On the other hand analysing interviews with representative of gay families, various insights are found. Giorgio points out that holidays are stressful for him as the presence of their child is challenging. The fact that their child is young and gets easily tired makes Giorgio and his partner change their plans several times.

"He is very young so he cries a lot, especially when he gets tired. […] So it happens that you need to get back to the hotel from the other end of the city and it is stressful. That is the biggest stress."

(Giorgio)

Thomas also points out that the only stress factor is their child. He mentions that they get stressed when they lose their daughter from sight. However, one would assume that each parent would get stressed by that. On the other hand, Ondra does not see their child as a stress factor. He thinks that his family does not experience any stress on holidays due to the fact that they do not have any strict plan for holidays and, thus, they are more flexible and can do what they feel as right for their mood. Out of the recordings he also adds that he does not think that stress is dependent on gender as some gays are more effeminate and the other way around.

However, the question important for this research is how much stress on holidays influences their decision making. As the families mostly state that they are not aware of experiencing any noticeable stress on holidays, they do not perceive that stress would be a factor which would make them make or change their decisions. As it was stated, Agata is the only one who speaks more about changing their decisions but she does not see stress as the factor which makes them to change their decisions. In case of Giorgio, it could be interpreted that he is

getting stressed because he is forced to change their plans due to unpredictable needs of the child.

Summing up this subsection of analysis chapter, it can be stated that due to the presence of the child the stress is present on gay and lesbian family holidays. However, the research shows that the families usually do not see the holidays being stressful, which differs from studies with heterosexual families (Therkelsen, 2010). Moreover, there is not discovered any pattern which would demonstrate that stress influence holiday decision making process in gay and lesbian families on holidays.

5 CONCLUSION

5.1 Conclusion of the research

The purpose of this Master's thesis is to provide an answer for the main research question: "*What characterizes holiday decision making process in gay and lesbian families?*" The analysis performed in the scope of this Master's thesis reveals that based on the conducted qualitative research; there are specific characteristics for holiday decision making process in gay and lesbian families. However, they are not as many as I thought when choosing the topic.

As in the case of role distribution in gay and lesbian families, the marketeers cannot rely on classic literature dealing with decision making process since such literature base role distribution mostly on gender. The analysis reveals the main characteristics of gay and lesbian who takes the role of information seeker and the role of decision maker. In contrast to other authors who find a distribution of the role of information seeker based on income and time availability, the research performed in this thesis shows that either both partners become information seekers or the role is taken by the partner who has more experience in travelling and internet search itself. On the other hand the distribution of decision maker role is different in gay and in lesbian families. While in lesbian families the conclusion needs to be made together, the decision in gay family is made by the more dominant partner. From this follows that marketeers should focus on lesbian family as a whole, while they need to pay special attention to the dominant partners in gay families. For the other roles, there has not been any specific pattern discovered. Therefore, it can be concluded that this research does not reveal any specific characteristics.

Moreover, as studies of family tourism show, parents subordinate their needs to the needs of their children. This study reveals the same also in terms of gay and lesbian families. The needs and preferences of their children are the main decisive factor when choosing holidays and on holidays as well. This makes children to play a very significant role in holiday decision making process as influencers. However, it cannot be concluded that the role of children would be more significant in gay and lesbian families than in heterosexual families as some authors (Hughes & Southall, 2012) assume. There has not been any indication that the parents would pay special attention to the needs of children just because they are children of gays and lesbians.

Regarding decision making strategies, the research does not find a common pattern in strategies used by gay families. This might be caused by the small size of a sample. On the other hand, it can be concluded that lesbian families tend to reach conclusion together without negotiating and compromising. The experience strategy would be the most applicable in this case.

The research also reveals factors important to gay and lesbian families which are considered before choosing holidays, more specifically choosing destination, accommodation and travel agents. In general it can be concluded that the families do not see importance in labels such as "gay friendly" or "gay family friendly". This might be important for families who have experienced any negative treatment on holidays due to their sexuality. The families are interested whether the destination or accommodation provides children facilities; there is no indication that they would also seek for facilities designed for gays and lesbians. The specific factors influencing a destination choice is risk avoidance. For gay and lesbian families is important that the destination does not have any anti-gay laws or are not perceived as homophobic destination. Even though gay and lesbian couples can pretend they are only friend when traveling to such destination, gay and lesbian families would send a wrong message to their children by such behaviour. Moreover, gay and lesbian families need to check whether the adoption of their children is also valid in the destination where they travel.

On the other hand, no specific factor related to sexuality of families is revealed in terms of accommodation choices. For the interviewed gay and lesbian families it is important that the accommodation is child friendly and offer facilities for children. There might be a perception that as they already choose a destination which is supposed to be safe for gay and lesbian families, the accommodation is also safe regarding any negative experiences connected with the sexuality of the parents.

There has not been found any common pattern in terms of travel agent choices. Some of the families prefer to design their own holidays while the others travel rather with travel agent because it is more convenient for them. However, any of the reasons mentioned for any of these choices are not related to sexuality of the family. On the other hand, the families do not see necessity to travel in a group of other gay and lesbian families as it brings a feeling of expulsion from the society. Therefore, gay family travel agents would not be probably a choice for them whether they did not have any negative experience on holidays related to their sexuality.

The gay and lesbian families do also to a preliminary research on holiday destinations and accommodation. However, they do not pay much attention how much the destination or accommodation provider is gay friendly. For this matter they use their "gay intuition", which has not been defined within this research.

Stress has been identified as a factor which could be more influential in relation with gay and lesbian families once they are on holidays and need to make decisions. However, the research shows that the families usually do not experience stress on holidays. Moreover, stress is not a factor influencing decision making process. It is found more as a consequence of changing decisions due to external factors.

All in all, it can be concluded that in terms of holiday decision making process in gay and lesbian families, general theories on family holiday tourism can be applied as there are not many specifics, preferences and differences based on the sexuality of the families. However, the few characteristics mentioned above in this text should be considered when approaching this niche market.

5.2   Suggestions for further research

During performance of the study, I as researcher realize that there are more ways which the study could go but not all of them could have been performed as the thesis tries to be narrow as much as possible. Therefore, this section provides suggestions for further research related to the topic. Moreover, during the research I reflect on my own actions and realize that the research might have been conducted differently. Such reflections are also mentioned in this section.

The study is conducted with a sample of gay and lesbian families. However, it shows that gay and lesbian families may differ a lot in terms of decision making process. Therefore, I would suggest focus only on gay or lesbian families, when conducting such a research. However, if the purpose of the study would be compare gay and lesbian families in terms of holiday decision making process, more participating families from each category is recommended.

Moreover, this study is looking for characteristics of gay and lesbian families in holiday decision making process and the data are confronted only with general literature. It might more beneficial if there is simultaneously performed the same research on heterosexual families and the data are compared. I believe in this way more specifications for gay and lesbian families might appear.

Moreover, a research on definition of "gay intuition" used during decision making processes is suggested. It should be studied what such an intuition is based on or if it is only different name for common sense.

Furthermore, a research on the supply side is recommended. Even though this research shows there is not much interest in services labelled "gay family friendly", there are tourism service providers who used such a label. Therefore, research on whom they target and why they see their businesses relevant should be conducted.

Finally, it must be mentioned that a research on higher scale would bring better results and could discover patterns which are not clear due to limited number of participants.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A – Data for netnography

Name	Website
Gay Family Trips	http://www.gayfamilytrips.com/ - Accessed 1/4/2015
Rainbow Family Holidays	http://www.rainbowfamilyholidays.com/ - Accessed 1/4/2015
Kyle	http://myfamilytravels.com/content/11389-resources-planning-gay-family-trip - Accessed 1/5/2015
Jen	http://www.familiesgotravel.com/2013/05/5-travel-tips-for-lgbt-parents/ - Accessed 1/5/2015
Gay Star Travel	http://www.gaystarnews.com/article/rainbow-families-how-get-your-vacation-right190314/ - Accessed 1/5/2015

Appendix B – Interview guide

Gay & Lesbian family travels – interview guide

The purpose of the interview is to gain understanding of decision making process of gay and lesbian families before and during holidays. More precisely, I would like to gain understanding whether and how the sexual orientation of the family influence the decision making process in general, what are the factors which influence gay and lesbian families before holidays and during holidays in their decision making process and who makes decisions.

Personal Information
Names (if they want to provide them)
Relationship status
Age
Number, gender and age of children
Last time you were at holidays

Decision making process
Who usually decides how the holidays will look like? Why?
Who seeks for the information? Why?
Do you perceive each of your family play different role in the decision making? Why? What roles?
Do you involve children in the decision making process? Why? (if so) How?
If you (also) decide on behalf of them, why? Which factors do you usually consider?
What ways do you use as family to achieve a conclusion?
Do you think somebody influence the decision? Why? Who? How?
Do you think your sexuality has influence on your decision making process? Why?

Before
What kind of destination do you prefer for family holidays? Why?
What kind of accommodation and facilities do you prefer for family holidays? Why?
Do you use services of tour operators/agents? Why?
Do you think your sexuality has influence on your preferences?
There has been an opinion that there are family destinations and gay-friendly destinations but not gay family friendly destinations. What do you think about branding tourism destinations or facilities gay family friendly? Why?

How and how much your previous experiences on holidays have impact on your decisions?
Have you experience some challenges on holidays due to your sexuality?

During

Do some of your family members experience stress on holidays? Why?
Do you do some changes in your holiday plan once you are there? Why? Who?

Appendix C – Interview question + related theories

Theme	Questions	Theory
Personal Information	Names (if they want to provide them) Relationship status Age Number, gender and age of children Last time you were at holidays	Facesheet information Bryman, 2012
Decision making process – role distribution and strategies	Who usually decides how the holidays will look like? Why? Who seeks for the information? Why? Do you perceive each of your family play different role in the decision making? Why? What roles? Do you think somebody influence the decision? Why? Who? How?	Assael, 1995; Brassington & Pettitt, 2003; Kozak, 2010; Mottiar & Quinn, 2004; Therkelsen, 2010
	Do you involve children in the decision making process? Why? (if so) How? If you (also) decide on behalf of them, why? Which factors do you usually consider?	Dunne, 1999; Gram, 2005; Thornton, Shaw & Williams, 1997
	What ways do you use as family to achieve a conclusion?	Bokek-Cohen, 2008; Lee & Collins, 2000
	Do you think your sexuality has influence on your decision making process? Why?	Mackey, O'Brien, & Mackey, 1997; Hughes & Southall, 2012
Decision making process – factors considered before holidays	What kind of destination do you prefer for family holidays? Why? What kind of accommodation and facilities do you prefer for family holidays? Why? Do you use services of tour operators/agents? Why? Do you think your sexuality has influence on your preferences? How and how much your previous experiences on holidays have impact on your decisions?	Blichfeldt, Chor & Milan, 2011; Gram, 2007; Kozak, 20110; Therekelsen, 2010
	Do you think your sexuality has influence on your preferences? There has been an opinion that there are family destinations and gay-friendly destinations but not gay family friendly destinations. What do you think about branding tourism destinations or facilities gay family friendly? Why? Have you experience some challenges on holidays due to your sexuality?	Blichfeldt, Chor & Milan, 2011; Hughes, 2005; Hughes & Southall, 2012

Decision making process – factors considered on holidays	Do some of your family members experience stress on holidays? Why? Do you do some changes in your holiday plan once you are there? Why? Who?	Backer & Schänzel, 2012; Gram, 2005; Urry, 1990; Zwicker & DeLongis, 2010

Appendix D – Recordings and **Appendix E – Transcriptions** can be found at attached USB