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# SOCIAL MARKETING AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA IN LITHUANIA. A Way to the Behaviour Change?

MASTER'S THESIS



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## ABSTRACT

This Master's thesis investigates how homophobia can be addressed by social marketing, filling in a gap of scholarly knowledge in this field. Homophobia, a relevant social problem, threatening society's well-being, is a matter dependent on a particular national, cultural and political environment. Hence, this research was focused on the context of Lithuania, one of the most homophobic countries in the European Union.

The empirical investigation included netnography of Lithuanian online homophobic discourse, qualitative interviews with the representatives of Lithuanian pro-LGBT NGOs and content analysis of their social marketing initiatives. These methods led to the identification of a group of cultural images of homosexuality, playing role in the presence of homophobia, and understanding of the ways social marketing initiatives are constructed in Lithuania. Subsequently, this knowledge was employed in adapting traditional theoretical social marketing models in order to use them to change homophobic behaviour.

The theoretical framework of this thesis was mainly based on the implications of social marketing theories (Andreasen, 2005; Gordon, 2013; Lefebvre, 2011, 2013), that were combined with the theory of normative social behaviour (Mabry & Mackert, 2014; Rimal et al., 2005).

The findings suggest that anti-homophobic social marketing initiatives have to be systematically applied towards both policy makers and society (upstream and downstream). The design of these initiatives should be focused on the target audience's benefit in order to induce their voluntary behaviour change. Moreover, the persuasive messages should be directed at the cognitive moderators (injunctive norms, outcome expectations, group identity and ego-involvement) and oppose (or reconstruct) the cultural images of homosexuality that play role in the presence of homophobia.

Accordingly, these findings might be applicable to other national contexts provided that the cultural images of homosexuality, inherent to a particular country, are properly identified.

**Keywords:** social marketing, homophobia, cultural images, behaviour change, Lithuania.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community is now more visible than it has ever been (Burgess & Baunach, 2014). Human rights organisations, pro-LGBT legislation, as well as mass media and entertainment industry contribute to their growing public representation. Yet, even though the number of laws supporting sexual minorities grew significantly during the past century (Equaldex, 2015), the tolerance towards them is still very unequally divided around the world (Pew Research Center, 2013). According to do Amaral Madureira (2007), homophobia has numerous cultural, social, historical and psychological implications.

## 1.1. Problem Area

This Master's thesis takes its point of departure looking into the issue of homophobia as a matter dependent on a particular national, cultural and political environment. The results of the Pew Research Center (2013) Global Attitudes Survey show broad acceptance of homosexuality in North America, Western Europe, and most of Latin America, but equally widespread rejection in Muslim nations and in Africa, as well as in Russia and parts of Asia. Moreover, the survey approved that acceptance of homosexuality depends on the factors such as religiosity, economic situation, age and gender of the respondents. As all cultures have their own values regarding appropriate and inappropriate sexuality, do Amaral Madureira (2007) argues that homophobia has deep collective historical-cultural and affective roots, based on the efforts of social institutions (such as school, family, law and religion) in different societies to promote certain values, duties and prejudices. Therefore, willing to fight homophobia, it is important to articulate diverse strategies against it and consider the specificities of the different cultural contexts (*Ibid.*).

As follows, there are numerous tools that are commonly employed seeking to reduce homophobic attitudes and behaviour, such as: raising awareness through education (Srivastava & Fancis, 2006), empowering community activism (Faulkner & Lindsey, 2004), promoting research projects on homophobia, adaptation of public services to meet specific needs of sexual minorities, disseminating information about the rights of sexual minorities (Québec, 2011) and others. However, the focus of this Master's thesis is directed towards social marketing and its capabilities of fighting homophobia, which were scarcely investigated by previous scholars.

Following an early definition of social marketing by Kotler & Zaltman (1971) (as cited in Lefebvre, 2013, p. 20), it uses marketing to influence “*the acceptability of social ideas*”. Later, Lefebvre & Flora (1988) (as cited in Lefebvre, 2013, p. 38) focused on the way social marketing can affect “*population-wide changes in targeted risk behaviours*”. Since then, social marketing has been suggested as a tool for developing solutions for social problems, informing and supporting policy development, and disseminating evidence-based interventions (Lefebvre, 2013).

Accordingly, it can be assumed that social marketing can be employed in order to influence acceptability of homosexuality and to change homophobic behaviours. However, previous research in the field of social marketing has mainly explored its applicability in solving the issues of public health (such as obesity, alcohol abuse, smoking and sexually transmitted diseases) (French et al., 2009; Hastings et al., 2011; Lefebvre, 2013; Wymer, 2010), environmental consciousness (such as pollution, overconsumption and poor recycling practices) (Lefebvre, 2013; Peattie & Peattie, 2009; Takahashi, 2009), and some social problems (such as racism and violence against women) (Lefebvre, 2013; Madill & Abele, 2007; Potter et al., 2011). Meanwhile homophobia – a relevant issue, threatening the well-being of some societies, is only scarcely mentioned in the context of social marketing.

The most in-depth research on the use of social marketing principles to reduce homophobia was made by Hull et al. (2013), who analysed the social marketing campaign aimed to increase acceptance of gay men of colour as means to combat HIV/AIDS epidemic experienced by this group. However, due to the primary focus on the public health issue, this case does not fully reveal the potential of social marketing in fighting homophobia as a distinct social problem. Thus, as the employed social marketing strategies are determined by their aim (a particular behaviour change) (Lefebvre, 2013), this lack of research on the use of social marketing against homophobia is seen as a gap in the scholarly knowledge which this Master’s thesis intends to fill.

## **1.2. Context**

The Annual Review of the human rights situation of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual and intersex (LGBTI) people in Europe by ILGA-Europe (the European Region of the International LGBTI Association) provides a closer look into the differences between the situation of sexual minorities within the European Union (EU). The so-called Rainbow Map (ILGA-Europe, 2015a) reveals that numerous violations of LGBTI people’s rights occurred in Lithuania, proving this country to be one of the most homophobic/transphobic societies in the EU. Of

course, as tolerance is part of a democratic learning process, it is not surprising that citizens of long-standing democracies generally show higher levels of tolerance than those of the newer democracies in Eastern Europe; attitudes towards people of different sexual orientation change gradually over time (Duvold & Aalia, 2012). Still, even in the context of post-communist states, Lithuania rather significantly lags behind regarding the respect to LGBTI rights (ILGA-Europe, 2015a).

Recent LGBTI rights violations in Lithuania included numerous cases of bias-motivated speech, promotion of a family concept excluding any homosexual relations, strong political opposition towards the ‘Baltic Pride’ event<sup>1</sup>, violations of the right to freedom of expression (ILGA-Europe, 2014; 2015b). Moreover, two social advertisements created by the Lithuanian Gay League for the pride event were partially censored in application of the controversial Lithuanian Law of the Protection of Minors against the Detrimental Effect of Public Information (ILGA-Europe, 2014). According to the pronouncements of some of the Lithuanian politicians and public figures, sexual minorities must lead strictly compartmentalised private and public lives – homosexuality is acceptable only as long as it remains private (Tereškinas, 2007). Here, a contradiction arises, as it seems like the visibility of lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) individuals in the media stimulates homophobia instead of decreasing it, contrarily than intended by the respective social marketing campaigns.

In this context it is none the less important to acknowledge the role of the Internet, which encourages freedom of self-expression and empowers individuals to become active creators of public discourse (Lyzenko, 2014). Its anonymity, immediacy and an easy access makes internet an ideal tool for hate promotion (Banks, 2010). Hence, hate speech online is one of the common manifestations of homophobia in Lithuania (Okunevičiūtė Neverauskienė, 2011) and shall be investigated in the course of this Master’s thesis.

### **1.3. Problem Formulation and Research Questions**

Acknowledging that intolerance towards non-heteronormative sexualities cannot be explained by a single factor but is the cumulative effect of a range of social influences (Mole, 2011), the above considerations lead to the following problem formulation:

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Baltic Pride’ is an annual event gathering together LGBT people and supporters from the Baltic States. It takes place by rotation in Tallinn, Riga and Vilnius.

*How can an empirical investigation of online homophobic discourse and current social marketing content in Lithuania shed light on the possible ways to address the issue of homophobia by social marketing?*

This problem formulation encompasses the following research questions:

1. What cultural images of homosexuality, playing role in the presence of homophobia, can be observed in the Lithuanian online discourse?
2. How are current Lithuanian pro-LGBT social marketing initiatives constructed and what cultural images of homosexuality do they address?
3. How can traditional theoretical social marketing models be adapted in order to use them to change homophobic behaviour in Lithuania?

## 1.4. Terminology

### 1.4.1. LGBT and LGB

LGBT is a commonly used acronym for Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals and Transgender people, however literature of the field includes several similar acronyms and their combinations, such as: LGBTI (including Intersex people); LGBTQ (Q for Queer or Questioning one's sexual identity and/or gender); and LGBT+ (A for Asexual or Ally).

The acronym LGBT is used by the scholars whose work will be cited further (Burgess & Baunach, 2014; Hull et al., 2013; Tereškinas, 2007), and is common to the practise of the Lithuanian LGBT rights organisations (Lithuanian Gay League (LGL)<sup>2</sup> and Tolerant Youth Association (TYA)<sup>3</sup>). Despite this, keeping in mind that this Master's thesis is focused on the issue of homophobia (not transphobia), in many cases a shorter acronym LGB (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual) will be used in order to emphasise that there is no relation to transgender people.

### 1.4.2. Homophobia

Encyclopaedia Britannica describes homophobia as a “[...] *culturally produced fear of or prejudice against homosexuals that sometimes manifests itself in legal restrictions or, in extreme cases, bullying or even violence against homosexuals [...]*” (Britannica Academic, 2015, ‘Homophobia’).

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<sup>2</sup> Official website of Lithuanian Gay League: <http://www.lgl.lt/en/>.

<sup>3</sup> Official website of Tolerant Youth Association: <http://www.tja.lt/index.php/en/>.

According to do Amaral Madureira (2007), one's deep feelings of discomfort (anxiety, fear, hate) that are related to other people having affective and sexual relations with same sex partners, are built by affective meaning making – a collective historical-cultural construction. This makes homophobia different from other phobias (which are usually resulted by irrational feelings, constructed only from individual history) (*Ibid.*). Importantly, homophobia can be expressed in multiple forms, such as:

- *Internalised/personal homophobia*: fear or hatred of homosexuality that exists in one's mind, leading to making effort not to appear queer (Frost & Meyer, 2009; Raja & Stokes, 1998).
- *Interpersonal homophobia*: speech and actions of an individual towards LGB persons (violence, physical harassment, name-calling, hate crimes) (Raja & Stokes, 1998).
- *Institutional homophobia*: actions of government, church, business, educational and other organisations, systematically discriminating LGB people (anti-LGB legislation prohibiting same sex marriages or their adoption possibility, career limitations, etc.) (*Ibid.*).
- *Societal homophobia*: popular stereotypes of LGB people and their exclusion from representation in popular culture (*Ibid.*).

This Master's thesis will mainly focus on the issues of interpersonal, institutional and societal homophobia, leaving the internalised/personal homophobia out of the research, due to its psychological and enclosed nature, which makes it invisible in the public discourse.

## **1.5. Structure of the Master's Thesis**

After having introduced the topic of the thesis, this section maps out the remaining chapters in order to provide a general overview.

In *Chapter 2*, the methodological framework is presented. It elucidates ontological and epistemological considerations as well as the methods of data collection and analysis in relation to each other.

*Chapter 3* gives a background understanding of prevailing explanations of homophobic behaviour that are incident to the Eastern European region. This knowledge is further employed in the identification and analysis of the cultural images of homosexuality within homophobic discourse in Lithuania.

In *Chapter 4*, the theoretical framework is introduced. Correspondingly to the problem formulation of this thesis, it consists of two major units: (1) cultural discourse theory and (2) theoretical social marketing models, which were complemented with the behaviour change theory.

*Chapter 5* deals with interpretation and analysis of the data that was collected throughout the research in the light of the cultural discourse theory and theoretical social marketing and behaviour change models.

Finally, *Chapter 6* concludes on the analysis and all the above together.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

According to Guba (1990, p. 18), researchers make claims about what is the nature of ‘knowable’ or ‘reality’ (ontology), what is the nature of the relationship between the inquirer and the knowable (epistemology), and the process of finding the knowledge (methodology). Hence, the problem formulation and the direction of the research are closely related to the ontological and epistemological positions that are outlined further in this chapter alongside with the adopted research design, data collection methods and analytical considerations.

### 2.1. Philosophy of Science

Every researcher has a paradigm lying within them, representing “*a basic set of beliefs that guides action*” (Guba, 1990, p. 17). Looking from the academic point of view, this particular action is meant to be “*disciplined inquiry*” (Guba, 1990, p. 18). Hence, the question differing one paradigm from another is whether the social sciences can/should be studied using the same principles as the natural sciences (Bryman, 2012).

Being of an ontological position of constructivism/constructionism, I believe that there is no ‘ultimate truth’, as realities are being constructed and re-constructed by people and therefore are relative (Guba, 1990; Jonassen, 1991; Bryman, 2012). And, differently from the followers of the positivist stance, who believe in the use of the principles of natural sciences, I do not intend to predict or control “*the real world*” or discover “*how things really are*” (Guba, 1990, p. 25, 27). Particularly in this research, looking into the homophobic discourse, I seek to reveal certain people’s personal and interpersonal cultural constructions of realities, intending to employ gained knowledge in finding a way to use social marketing as one of the tools to fight homophobia.

The epistemological issues revolve around understanding the origin of our knowledge (Jonassen, 1991). Hence, epistemological approach of this thesis is a subjectivist one. This means that I, as a researcher, am a part of the construction of knowledge (Guba, 1990; Murphy, 1997) and am aware of the subjectivity of this research, as subjective interaction is the only way of accessing the constructions held by the individuals.

Methodologically, the constructivist position leads to identifying a variety of constructions and through interpretation bringing them to as much consensus as possible (Guba, 1990). Moreover, the hermeneutic approach used in this study allowed for interpreting within the

context of the research and determined a continuous revision of the interpretations, constantly weaving back and forth between theory and gained knowledge (Bryman, 2012).

## 2.2. Research Design

Creation of an appropriate research design first of all implies choosing suitable means for approaching the subjects of investigation – methods of data collection. In line with the before discussed attitudes of the constructivist philosophical stance, qualitative research is relevant because it enables the researcher to explore multiple constructed realities, informal and unstructured linkages (Marshall & Rossman, 2006), as well as to study the meaning of people's lives and explain human social behaviour (Yin, 2011). And even though the option of combining qualitative and quantitative methods remains (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Bryman, 2012), in case of researching cultural images within the homophobic discourse quantitative methods would not bring a wanted result. Employing them, a scientist focuses on the production of objective and systematic analysis (Bryman, 2012) and *“[...] by coding the social world according to operational variables, destroys valuable data by imposing a limited worldview on the subjects [...]”* (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 54). Meanwhile the applicable research questions require the opposite – revealing subjective cultural images of homosexuality, understanding people's articulations, underlying perceptions behind their homophobic behaviour, and the ways to change it. Accordingly, there is no intention to produce statistical data or any measurable variables as it would happen using quantitative methods.

There are several ways of collecting qualitative data (Bryman, 2012; Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Yin, 2011) and in order to strengthen the validity of the study, more than one of these data collection methods were used in this research. The principle of triangulation was employed, as three data sources verifying the researched phenomenon were reported in this study (Yin, 2011). By triangulating the methods of data collection, the research gained a more versatile and diverse data, which subsequently increased the possibility for carrying out a decent analysis.

Following the three adopted research questions, the research was divided into three parts (see Figure 1). The first part was set to explore the Lithuanian online discourse in order to identify cultural images of homosexuality, playing role in the presence of homophobia. This was done through netnography in both virtual anti-LGB communities and commentary of online media. The second part was aimed to analyse the current social marketing content in Lithuania in order to see how it is constructed and how it addresses the previously identified

and other cultural images. This was implemented through the analysis of online pro-LGBT social marketing material, as well as qualitative interviews with the representatives of pro-LGBT NGOs about their social marketing initiatives. Having all this knowledge, the third part of the research was aimed at uncovering possible ways to address the issue of homophobia by social marketing in the Lithuanian context. In order to do this, the knowledge of pro-LGBT social marketing experience in Lithuania and the knowledge specific homophobic cultural images was incorporated into the traditional theoretical models of social marketing. Hence, differently from the first two parts of the research, where analysis was based on the interpretation of the collected qualitative data, in last part, the newly gained knowledge was approached and analysed through the perspective of social marketing and behaviour change theoretical models.

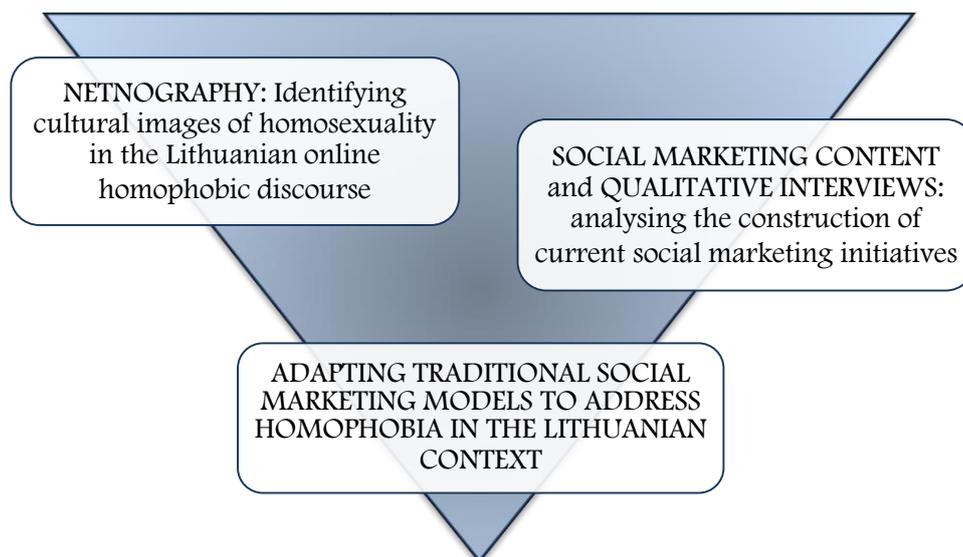


Figure 1: Research Design

### 2.2.1. Netnography

The problem formulation of the thesis has directed the choice of netnography as one of the data collection methods, aiming to reveal cultural images of homosexuality, playing role in the presence of homophobia in the Lithuanian online discourse. Netnography “[...] adapts ethnographic research techniques to study of cultures and communities emerging through computer-mediated communications [...]” (Kozinets, 2006, p. 128). The key context, in which netnographies are pursued, is formed by the interaction between social and technological conceptions of the Internet (Hooley et al., 2012). Accordingly, this method has its advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, the diffuse and networked nature of

online relationships can make particular communities difficult to identify and analyse (*Ibid.*). On the other hand, netnography gives the researcher a chance to look at people's naturalistic communications in the context (Kozinets, 2010) and any personal data is easier to reach due to the specifics of technological and social practices of the Internet (Hooley et al., 2012). This reduces the possible financial and time-related costs compared to using other data collection methods (Kozinets, 2012).

The initial step of conducting netnography is the identification of particular online forums that are appropriate to the research goals (Kozinets, 2002). Due to the constantly increasing popularity of social media, as well as high levels of self-disclosure and social presence of its users (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010), anti-LGB communities, embedded in social media, were chosen to be investigated as one of the online forums of homophobic discourse. As follows, research conducted in Lithuania shows that the most popular social networking sites there are 'YouTube' (used by 77% of Internet users) and 'Facebook' (used by 68% of Internet users) (TNS, 2014). However, even though 'YouTube' has a bigger auditory, 'Facebook' users are more involved (46% of Internet users connect to it every day) and frequently use it as an interpersonal communication tool (*Ibid.*). Accordingly, in order to choose relevant anti-LGB communities, an exploratory netnography was carried out on 'Facebook' and 'YouTube'. Using certain keywords in Lithuanian (such as 'no to gays/homosexuals', 'against gays/homosexuals', 'for a traditional family', etc.) in the search engines of these social networking sites, communities with anti-LGB focus were found. Then, after a general evaluation of the meaningfulness of their content and activity, the following communities were chosen for the data collection:

1. *NE homoseksualų eitynėms Lietuvos miestų gatvėse* ("NO to the marches of homosexuals in the streets of Lithuanian cities"<sup>4</sup>), Facebook community, having 3084 likes (Facebook, 2015a);
2. *Man nepatinka tolerastija ir "politkorektiškumas"* ("I do not like tolerance/buggery and political correctness"), Facebook community, having 968 likes (Facebook, 2015b);
3. *Už tradicinę šeimą* ("For a traditional family"), Facebook community, having 3796 likes (Facebook, 2015c);

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<sup>4</sup> Translations from Lithuanian to English here and further are made by the author.

4. *Būk budrus* (“Be watchful”), YouTube channel, having 52 subscriptions and 17791 views (YouTube, 2015).

In order not to confine netnography solely to the discourse of social media and seeking for more versatile data, the research was subsequently expanded to the online news media and its commentary. According to Tereškinas (2007), media not only creates but also reflects collective understanding, resistance and conflicts, existing in the Lithuanian culture. Moreover, comments on the news websites contribute to the development of a genuine democratic dialogue and are forming debate communities (Noci, 2012). Hence, anonymous commentary under the news articles on LGB issues serves as a public debate forum and forms pro-LGB as well as homophobic discourse.

One of the most popular news websites in Lithuania, having more than a million visitors per month (Gemius, 2014) – 15min.lt<sup>5</sup> was chosen for conducting netnography as it has an embedded possibility to thematically and chronologically sort its articles and in this way facilitates data collection. Using this tool, 49 articles related to LGB issues, published in the recent half a year period (15th November, 2014 – 15th May, 2015), having an average of 89 comments each, were extracted.

Importantly, netnography as a data collection method is controversial looking from the ethical point of view as, according to Hooley et al. (2012), its use opens up new ethical challenges and reframes the ones existing in the ‘traditional’ research. This is mostly due to little consensus being present on what is private and what is public in the online sphere (Kozinets, 2002, 2006, 2012; Driscoll and Gregg, 2010) and, subsequently, the question of the necessity of informed consent (Hooley et al., 2012). In this research the argument that informed consent was implicit in the act of posting the message in the public area (Sudweeks & Rafaeli, 1996) was followed. Moreover, being aware of the sensitivity of the researched topic, the precautions were taken to provide anonymity to the Internet posters, and hereby ethics of the research were ensured without the informed consent (Kozinets, 2002).

Different types of articulations were taken into account during the netnographic data collection (written comments and discussions, pictures, video material). In order to get an overview of all the emerging cultural images of homosexuality, playing role in the presence of homophobia, the data from the netnography was interpreted and analysed using the

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<sup>5</sup> News website 15min.lt: [www.15min.lt](http://www.15min.lt)

framework for cultural discourse analysis, suggested by Carbaugh (2007)<sup>6</sup>, and put into a meta-matrix (Miles & Huberman, 1994) (see Appendix 1). In the meta-matrix the online anti-LGB communities and media commentary were listed on the horizontal axis, and the emerging cultural images (some of them as subcategories of the prevailing explanations of homophobia in Eastern Europe<sup>7</sup>, others – as newly identified) on the vertical axis. This helped to schematise the knowledge gained from each source, and to clearly distinguish the key themes that came to light throughout the research.

### **2.2.2. Social Marketing Content Online**

As previously outlined, the second part of the research was directed towards current pro-LGBT social marketing content in Lithuania. Content analysis is a method of analysing written, verbal, as well as visual communication messages (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). The qualitative technique of content analysis enables the researcher to look into the characteristics of language and communication by forming a coding scheme based on the specific research questions and the review of relevant literature (Harwood & Garry, 2003). In this way, through interpretation the identification of data units is done, they are categorised, compared and contrasted in order to reach a certain conclusion about the content of communication (*Ibid.*).

The content analysis in this particular research aimed for a better understanding of the construction of social marketing in Lithuania when addressing the issue of homophobia in general and the previously identified cultural images in particular. Importantly, social marketing content that is available online consists mainly of social advertisements that were created as parts of bigger social marketing initiatives. Therefore, the qualitative analysis of online social marketing content was focused on the following poster and videos, created by the LGL, as social marketing initiatives that received a considerable amount of attention from the society:

1. Video on tolerance and diversity in the Lithuanian society, 8293 views (see Appendix 7);
2. Official Baltic Pride 2013 Vilnius promotional video, 23434 views (see Appendix 8);
3. Promotional video for the campaign CHANGE IT!, 7778 views of the English version and 36285 of the Lithuanian one (see Appendix 9);

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<sup>6</sup> Cultural discourse analysis framework is outlined in the Theory chapter (see section 4.1.1.).

<sup>7</sup> See Chapter 3. Prevailing explanations of homophobia in Eastern Europe.

4. Poster for the campaign CHANGE IT! (see Figure 15, p. 55).

### 2.2.3. Qualitative Interviews

Conducting semi-structured interviews in the last step of data collection, gave an opportunity to deeper explore the concepts and processes that were observed during netnography and through social marketing content analysis. This method by simply drawing on the everyday practises of asking and answering questions (Rapley, 2004) helps to uncover participant's views on the phenomenon of interest (Marshall and Rossman, 2006). Moreover, semi-structured interviewing “[...] tends to be flexible, responding to the direction in which interviewees take and perhaps adjusting the emphases in the research [...]” (Bryman, 2012, p. 470), which is useful researching such a complex issue as the use of social marketing against homophobia.

As stated above, analysis of current social marketing content was focused solely on the data that is available online – social advertisements. Hence, in order to reveal ‘a full picture’ of the social marketing initiatives in Lithuania, this data was complemented by conducting qualitative interviews with the representatives of pro-LGBT nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) and learning more about their social marketing efforts. The participants were approached by contacting Lithuanian Gay League (LGL) – the only NGO in Lithuania exclusively representing the interests of the local LGBT community, and Tolerant Youth Association (TYA) – Lithuanian human rights organisation active in the field of LGBT issues, presenting the aim of this Master’s thesis and inviting them to contribute to the research.

The key concepts and issues, distinguished during netnography were complemented with the theoretical knowledge, gained from the social marketing literature review, and turned into the basis for qualitative interviewing (see Interview guide in English, Appendix 2). The first interview was conducted with Jūratė Juškaitė, chairperson of TYA, on 22<sup>nd</sup> June, 2015 and took 30 minutes. The second interview was conducted on 24<sup>th</sup> June, 2015 with Tomas Vytautas Raskevičius, LGL human rights policy coordinator, and took 30 minutes as well. As there was no possibility for meeting in person, both interviews were conducted via the telecommunications application software ‘Skype’. Moreover, the interviews were conducted in Lithuanian, which helped to ensure the flow of conversation since the informants were Lithuanian. They were recorded (see Interview Recordings, Appendices 3-4) and transcribed (see Interview Transcriptions, Appendices 5-6). In the course of analysis relevant quotes were translated to English. Similarly as when doing qualitative content analysis, the data collected during qualitative semi-structured interviewing was interpreted and analysed using coding

(Bryman, 2012). Following this method, the raw data was gradually refined into the key concepts based on the theoretical framework, at the same time identifying the themes that were not previously outlined in this framework.

### **2.3. Choice and Use of Theory**

The theoretical framework of the thesis is based on three sets of theory: Cultural Discourse Theory (Carbaugh, 2007), social marketing theories (Andreasen, 2005; Gordon, 2013; Lefebvre, 2011, 2013) and Theory of Normative Social Behaviour (Mabry & Mackert, 2014; Rimal et al., 2005).

The Cultural Discourse Theory was employed as a basis for the analysis of the data collected during netnography in virtual anti-LGB communities, as well as in commentary of online media. Following the constructivist paradigm, this theory was used as a framework for the empirical investigation of online discourse in order to reveal the ways cultural images are constructed by the people.

However, the main focus of the thesis was directed to the social marketing theory and its implications regarding the ways social marketing initiatives can be constructed. Importantly, as the third research question entails, behaviour change is considered an important variable seeking to fight homophobia. Therefore, this thesis suggests a combination of social marketing models and behaviour change theory (the Theory of Normative Social Behaviour). By combining these theories, the principles of social marketing are complemented with the implications of social norms. According to Kenny & Hastings (2011), these norms powerfully influence behaviour, sometimes even to a greater extent than other important demographic factors; they are regularly misperceived and correcting these misperceptions can potentially bring positive behaviour change. It is important to note though, that the Theory of Normative Social Behaviour is prescriptive resting on a psychological epistemology, rather than constructivist. Despite this, it was operationalised in the context of this thesis to provide an insight into the social norm perceptions, their formation, influence on behaviour, and the effects of manipulating them.

### 3. PREVAILING EXPLANATIONS OF HOMOPHOBIA IN EASTERN EUROPE

As mentioned in the introduction, homophobia is a relevant social problem threatening society's well-being. Being able to better understand what drives homophobic prejudices raises the possibility to intervene and act against this antisocial phenomenon (Plummer, 2014). Hence, the further outlined overview of prevailing explanations of factors having influenced the shaping of attitudes towards homosexuality in Eastern Europe gave a starting point for the identification and analysis of cultural images of homosexuality within the Lithuanian homophobic discourse.

#### 3.1. Religious Affiliation

Religion is one of the most commonly cited causes of homophobia (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992; Ayoub, 2014; McDermott et al., 2014; Mole, 2011; Whitley & Bernard, 2009). Indeed, the words of St Paul<sup>8</sup> (Romans I: 26-27) and the narrative of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis: 18-19) are often referred to willing to condemn same-sex practises (Mole, 2011). According to the Catholic Church homosexuality is sinful as it does not serve as a procreation practise:

*“Basing itself on Sacred Scripture, which presents homosexual acts as acts of grave depravity, tradition has always declared that “homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered.” They are contrary to the natural law. They close the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity. Under no circumstances can they be approved.”*

(Catechism of the Catholic Church: 2357)

The Russian Orthodox Church similarly condemns *“the perverted manifestations of sexuality”*, calling them *“a sinful distortion of human nature”* (Moscow Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church, The Basis of the Social Concept, XII. 9).

As follows, even though most religions teach tolerance, certain approaches to religious doctrine are key predictors of homophobic prejudice (McDermott et al., 2014). Altemeyer & Hunsberger (1992), who investigated the relationships between right-wing authoritarianism,

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<sup>8</sup> “Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error.” (Bible Gateway version, [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com))

various indices of religious orientation and prejudice, discovered that religious fundamentalism is linked with prejudice towards a wide variety of minority groups. Moreover, religion connects to nationalism, as religious institutions are a feature of nation, having an authoritative voice regarding the issues of homosexuality and playing role in domestic LGB politics (Ayoub, 2014).

However, according to McDermott et al. (2014), the degree by which some religious fundamentalists denigrate homosexuals is greater than one that could be explained by their religious affiliation, meaning that homophobia can be a product of religious fundamentalism intersecting with other nonreligious factors.

### **3.2. Sexual Nationalism**

The nationalist point of view regarding sexuality focuses on the biological reproduction of the nation and therefore assumes it to be heterosexual (Mole, 2011). According to Charles & Hintjens (1998) (as cited in Mole, 2011, p. 548), nationalist ideologies, originating from late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Europe, supported specific gender division of labour, appropriate sexual behaviour and sexual orientation, and thus heterosexuality became a dominant group norm, against which actions and beliefs can be judged.

Explaining the nationalist context of homophobia, Mole (2011, p. 548) argues that presence of LGB people threatens the patriarchal gender order, central to the nationalist discourse, as their inability to reproduce is perceived as leading to the extinction of the nation:

*“Nations that seek to define themselves in ethnic terms, emphasising a shared bloodline and common descent, are more likely to have a patriarchal gender order and absolute rules on sexuality, enforced even more strictly in contexts of cultural pluralism and perceived threats to the continued existence of the nation, or in times of social and political upheaval.”*

The collapse of communism in Eastern Europe triggered strong social, political and economic upheaval. Among other issues, a sudden decrease in birth-rates was recorded across the region, strengthening the perceived national vulnerability. Thus, anything unfamiliar (such as homosexuality) is presented as encroaching on stability, emphasising absolute rules and familiar norms trying to maximise the predictability in an uncertain world (Mole, 2011).

### 3.3. Gender Role Conflict

Previous studies and surveys indicated homophobia to be primarily a men's issue, as they express more negative attitudes towards LGB individuals than women (Few Research Center, 2013; Stark, 1991; Whitley & Bernard, 2009). According to McDermott et al. (2014), this is likely related to the fact that the heterosexual masculinity is perceived as a dominant form of masculinity and people (especially men) are pressured to conform to this norm. This implies that internalizing strict, traditional gender role stereotypes may lead to perceiving homosexuals as threatening these heterosexual conceptions.

The gender role conflict theory by O'Neil et al. (1986) suggests that when men strictly comply with the feelings and behaviours traditionally associated with the male role, this results in one (or more) of the patterns of gender role conflict: (1) restrictive emotionality, (2) homophobia, (3) socialised control, power and competition, (4) restricted sexual and affectionate behaviour, (5) obsession with achievement and success, and (6) health care problems.

However, the research examining the relationships between the concepts of gender role conflict and homophobia often does not adequately explore the cultural variables that may affect men's adherence to traditional masculine roles (McDermott et al., 2014). Hereby, understanding the influence of the cultural spheres on the phenomenon may be important in order to prevent homophobic attitudes and behaviours (*Ibid.*).

### 3.4. Lack of Personal and Community Contact

According to Altemeyer (2002), the stereotypes held by the majority group members are challenged and disproved through their equal status contact with the minority group members. Previous research proves that heterosexuals' more positive attitudes can be associated with closer relationships and more frequent contact with the LGBT people (Altemeyer, 2002; Anderssen, 2002; Burgess & Baunach, 2014; Smith et al., 2009).

In addition to this, Burgess & Baunach (2014), who researched heterosexuals' alliance with the gay community, found that heterosexuals having both personal and community contact (knowing at least one LGBT person and having gone to LGBT bar, attended a gay pride event, or belonged to LGBT organisation, etc.) are far less likely to have negative attitudes towards LGBT people than heterosexuals having solely personal or community contact and no contact with the LGBT community. In other words, levels of sexual prejudice negatively correlate the

intensity of both personal and community contact; implying that homophobia is a fear of the unknown.

### 3.5. Legacy of Communism

An absolute majority of the former communist states in Europe fall under the European average regarding the national legal and policy human rights situation of LGBTI people (ILGA-Europe, 2015c). Hereby, the impact of legacy of communism needs to be taken into account when examining causes of homophobia in Eastern Europe.

The situation of LGBT individuals and attitudes towards them in Soviet Union slightly fluctuated throughout the period, but was mainly negative. Even though Lenin insisted that there was no place for homosexual behaviour in the party and proletariat, homosexuality was decriminalised in 1922 (Mole, 2011). However, due to the change of party elites, the attitudes became increasingly intolerant and homosexuality was recriminalised in 1933 (*Ibid.*). According to Attwood (1996) (as cited in Mole, 2011, pp. 544-5), the Marxist-Leninist discourse promoted the image of men and women as *‘two indivisible halves of a whole’* and as homosexuality went against this image, it was seen as a *‘dangerous sign of individualism’*, threatening the collective society.

Greater intolerance was expressed towards lesbians than gays, as the existence of female sexuality was denied and women were condemned for prioritising their sexual interest over motherhood and the interests of their families (*Ibid.*, p. 545). Moreover, attempts of communist regimes to deindividualise the personality were hostile to sexuality in general, so state-sanctioned homophobia was never publicly challenged (Mole, 2011).

### 3.6. Post-communist Transition

The period of transition after the collapse of communism was featured by several outcomes which have influenced further development of attitudes within the societies. The implications of population decline and the desire for stability were previously discussed in section 3.2. Sexual Nationalism.

In addition, Mole (2011, p. 546) argues that in many post-communist countries the rejected communist past was held up as the opposite of *‘the golden age of inter-war period’*, willing to construct an ethno-national identity based on the traditional values and norms. Hence, traditional is assumed to be normal, and the traditional gender roles are seen as *“an important aspect of the nostalgia for ‘normality’”* (Watson, 1993, p. 473). However, homosexuality is

threatening this traditional order as normality is defined in purely national, Christian and heterosexual terms (Mole, 2011). Even though the 'abnormal' behaviour may be tolerated in the private sphere, public appearance of LGBT people, especially in the context or places of national and religious significance, is perceived as an alien threat to the existence of the nation (*Ibid.*).

## 4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The word ‘theory’ has a number of lay and technical connotations, yet here it is used in its scientific meaning as “[...] *a set of concepts and their interrelationships that attempts to explain the occurrence of or changes in the phenomenon under question*” (Donovan, 2011, p. 15). Accordingly, the concepts can be operationalised and thereby the theory is empirically testable. Following the adopted research questions, the further-presented theoretical framework consists of two major units: (1) cultural discourse theory, and (2) theoretical social marketing models complemented with the behaviour change theory.

### 4.1. Cultural Discourse Theory

Respectively to the first research question, the first section of the theory chapter deals with the cultural discourse theory which will further be employed in the analysis, aiming to reveal cultural images of homosexuality that are present in the homophobic discourse in Lithuania.

According to Carbaugh (2007, p. 169), cultural discourse can be defined as “[...] *a historically transmitted expressive system of communication practices, of acts, events, and styles, which are composed of specific symbols, symbolic forms, norms, and their meanings*”. This means that by interpreting certain communication practices the researcher can identify cultural features and images that are present in the context.

Previous scholars have suggested several culturally inclusive approaches to discourse: Critical Discourse Analysis (Blommaert, 2005), Cultural Approach to Discourse (Shi-xu, 2005) and Cultural Discourse Theory and Analysis (Carbaugh, 2007; Carbaugh et al., 2011). As Scollo (2011) points out, these approaches have similarities and differences in their definitions, objectives, methods, and the role of critique. However, the fact that Carbaugh’s theory can be utilised for the analysis of mediated communication (*Ibid.*) determined the choice of it as a theoretical framework for this study.

Cultural discourse analysis focuses on “*communication as a practise and culture as emergent in practises*”; hence culture is assumed to be an integral part as well as a product of discourse (Carbaugh, 2007, p. 169). Carbaugh conceptualises culture as a system of interrelated cultural discourses, involving conceptions of personhood and social relations (Scollo, 2011). In other words, when people communicate, they are not only saying things literally about what is being discussed, but they are also saying things culturally about who they are, how they feel and their relationship to each other and the environment. Hence, this approach sees

communication as a socially situated practice which involves a rich semantic web of presumed knowledge.

#### 4.1.1. Framework for Cultural Discourse Analysis

Carbaugh (2007, pp. 170-177) created a cultural discourse analysis model, consisting of five basic modes of inquiry:

1. *Theoretical Mode*. The researcher takes a basic theoretical orientation to the study, as a specific conceptual framework that guides the inquiry (the prevailing explanations of homophobic behaviour in Eastern Europe, outlined in the previous chapter, provided the basis for the conceptual framework, guiding inquiry of homophobic discourse in Lithuania).
2. *Descriptive Mode*. The researcher explores the communication acts, records them, and subsequently creates a descriptive corpus of multiple instances for study.
3. *Interpretive Mode*. Through interpretation the researcher identifies the meanings, values, and beliefs that are active in the communication practice. Interpretive analysis aims to recognise explicit and implicit messages, related with five radiants of meaning:
  - *Personhood and identity* (How is identity reflected at a cultural, social and personal level?);
  - *Relationships* (How does the communication practice relate people?);
  - *Action and practice* (What meanings do the people attach to their actions?);
  - *Emotion and affect* (How the feeling of this practice and its tone is structured and conveyed?);
  - *Place and environment* (Where are the people and how are they related to those places?).
4. *Comparative Mode*. Here the researcher investigates similarities and differences of the communication practice compared to other cultural discourses.
5. *Critical Mode*. The task of this mode is to evaluate the practice using explicit ethical criteria or a standardised ethic.

Importantly, Carbaugh (2007) suggests that only the first three modes are necessary for cultural discourse analysis, whereas the last two are optional. Hence, keeping in mind the aim of this Master's thesis, comparative and critical modes will not be further exercised, as the focus of the research does not require a comparison of several cultural contexts or a critical reflexivity.

## 4.2. Social Marketing and Behaviour Change Theory

Respectively to the second and third research questions, this section aims to create a framework combining traditional theoretical social marketing models with the behaviour change theory, so that in the course of analysis it can be adapted for the use against the particular issue of homophobia in the Lithuanian context.

Social marketing as well as commercial marketing is concerned with changing the behaviour, attitudes and intentions of the target audience; the difference is that commercial marketers focus on the benefits to the self, whereas social marketers focus on the benefits to society (Dibb & Carrigan, 2013). Social marketing is making use of traditional marketing insights to address social behaviours and can be defined as:

*“[...] the design, implementation, and control of programs calculated to influence the acceptability of social ideas and involving considerations of product planning, pricing, communication, distribution, and marketing research.”*

(Kotler & Zaltman, 1971, as cited in Lefebvre, 2013, p. 20)

In other words, at its essence, social marketing uses commercial marketing to improve social conditions through the change of behaviours, environments and policies (Lefebvre, 2013). As it is increasingly being applied in new settings and to new behaviours, deepening of social marketing's capacity of behaviour change is an ongoing process (Dibb & Carrigan, 2013). Though, in order to expand social marketing's capacity in the new context of homophobia, first of all it is important to understand its traditional models, strategies, tools and the contexts they were used in.

### 4.2.1. Education, Law and Marketing

Rothschild (1999) proposed a conceptual framework where marketing along with education and law are viewed as strategic tools for the management of behaviours related to the social and public health issues. In this framework, *education* refers to any type of messages that use information and/or persuasion to influence a voluntary behaviour change; *law* involves coercive practises to achieve certain behaviour in a non-voluntary manner; *marketing* refers to attempts to manage behaviour by offering incentives and/or consequences in an environment welcoming voluntary exchange (*Ibid.*).

The model of information processing of advertising in which *motivation, opportunity and ability* (MOA) influence consumers' level of processing was created by McInnis et al. (1991, as cited in Rothschild, 1999, p. 31) for developing advertising campaigns. Rothschild (1999)

modified the components of this model for the management of public health and social issues and created eight strategies for behaviour change that are dependent on whether people do or do not have the *motivation to adopt*, the *opportunities to engage* and the *abilities to perform* new behaviours. Figure 2 presents an overview of relationship between: targets (prone, resistant or unable to behave), their MOA, and the use of tools of education, marketing and law.

MOTIVATION		Yes		No	
OPORTUNITY		Yes	No	Yes	No
ABILITY	Yes	1 Prone to behave <i>Education</i>	2 Unable to behave <i>Marketing</i>	3 Resistant to behave <i>Law</i>	4 Resistant to behave <i>Marketing, Law</i>
	No	5 Unable to behave <i>Education, Marketing</i>	6 Unable to behave <i>Education, Marketing</i>	7 Resistant to behave <i>Education, Marketing, Law</i>	8 Resistant to behave <i>Education, Marketing, Law</i>

Figure 2: Applications of Education, Marketing and Law (Rothschild, 1999, p. 31)

According to Lefebvre (2013, pp. 44-5), this model makes three key assumptions:

1. Motivation can be moderately increased through marketing and slightly by education. Law is only used when people cannot be motivated for voluntary behaviour change.
2. Opportunity can only be created through marketing and indirectly through law.
3. Ability is developed through education and strengthened with marketing.

Even though education and law are perceived as separate disciplines from marketing, Lefebvre (2013) argues that this should not imply their exclusion from marketing strategy – having a large toolbox which enables to understand and influence the determinants of human behaviour maximises the potential of social marketers.

#### 4.2.2. An Integrative Model of Social Marketing

*“The desired outcomes of public health and social change programs are usually ambitious and extend beyond individual behavior change; the people we focus on extend beyond “consumers” or “at-risk” groups to policymakers, health care and service providers, NGO and non-profit leaders, and even corporate marketers; the products and services*

*are often complicated to access and use; the behaviors that we seek to alter are among the most personal; demand is diverse; the groups we attempt to serve are often unaware of the risk in which their current behaviors place them; we usually work with and through intermediary organizations; political, cultural, and structural factors shape the ways problems are defined and the types of solutions that are feasible to pursue [...]*"

(Lefebvre, 2013, pp. 49-50)

Recognising this variety of wicked problems that need to be confronted, and the solutions that need to be designed to address them, Lefebvre (2011) suggests a comprehensive framework for social improvement – an integrated social marketing approach. Importantly, two features distinguish this model: (1) focus on people, their wants, needs, aspirations and lifestyles, respecting their freedom of choice; and (2) prioritizing aggregated behaviour change (targeting population and markets, not individuals).

As shown in Figure 3, an integrative model of social marketing encompasses four interrelated tasks that circle around the benefit for target market/priority segment of the population. The explanation of each of the tasks is given further.

**The audience benefit.** Clearly identifying and understanding the priority group is the important first task – clear selection and segmentation establishes the basis for the subsequent marketing activities (Lefebvre, 2013). The next step is capturing the benefits, focusing on the consumers' realities and what they value (*Ibid.*) and tapping into and satisfying the underlying motivation of the audience (Lefebvre, 2011).

**The desired behaviour.** The focus on the particular behaviour change is the bottom line of social marketing initiatives. As shown in Figure 3, placing behaviour change as an outcome of interest requires addressing particular sets of behavioural issues. According to Lefebvre (2011), social marketing approach embraces the understanding of *determinants, context* and *consequences* of current and desired behaviours from the point of view of the audience. Importantly, when conceptualizing and operationalizing this triad, social and community variables need to be considered (some of them may fall under 'context') (*Ibid.*). Moreover, Lefebvre (2013) argues that the insights into current behaviours and the ways to shape more socially beneficial ones need to reflect their relevance in people's everyday lives and be explicitly embraced by social marketing programmes.

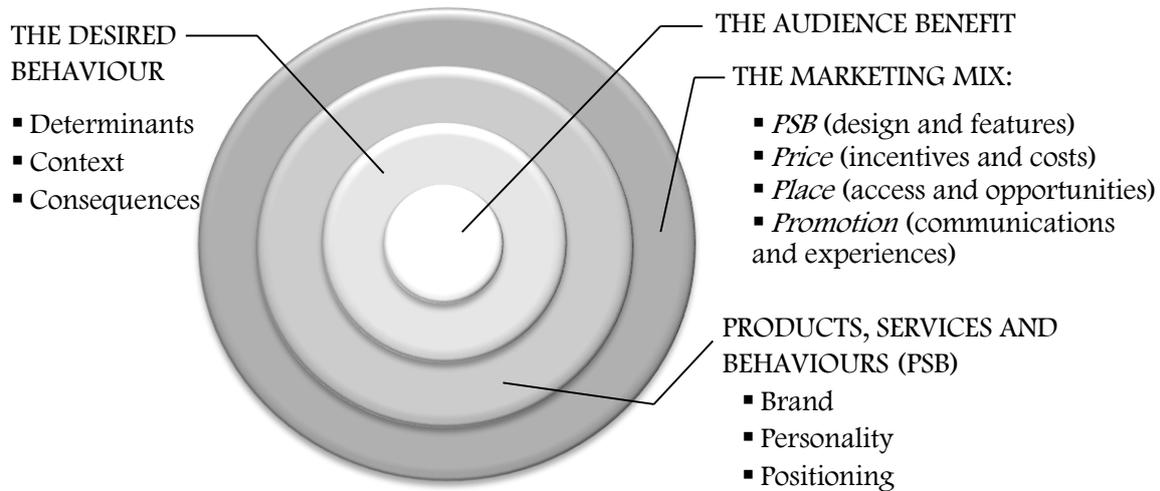


Figure 3: An Integrative Model of Social Marketing (Lefebvre, 2011, p. 59)

**The marketing mix** or 4Ps (Product, Price, Place, Promotion) approach was directly inherited from commercial marketing and is often referred to as a central element of social marketing (Lefebvre, 2013; Peattie & Peattie, 2011).

*Products, services and behaviours (PSB).* Integrative model of social marketing sees products as products, services and behaviours which are offerings that are designed to best serve the priority group people (Lefebvre, 2013). No matter if the offering is a behaviour one engages in or a product or service that supports the behaviour change, the ideas of *branding* (the meaning of the behaviour, programme and sponsor to the priority group), *personality* (image or tone) and *positioning* come into play (Lefebvre, 2011). Importantly, Lefebvre (2011) suggests not relying on behaviour change as the only product offering and embracing the development and marketing of products and services, supporting the behaviour change, to be one of the core competencies of social marketers.

*Price.* From the point of view of social marketing, price is understood not only as a monetary cost, but also as psychological, social, geographical, etc. rewards and punishments for particular behaviours (Lefebvre, 2013). Understanding the consequences of behaviour and behaviour change allows us to evaluate the levels and types of prices of current and alternative behaviours as they are seen from the perspective of the audience and subsequently develop programmes that resonate with people's perceptions (Lefebvre, 2011).

*Place.* One of the conditions for a successful adoption of new behaviours is presence of opportunities to practise and sustain them (Lefebvre, 2011). People must have access to the information necessary to make informed choices in ways, places and times that correspond

to the literacy, cultural and other qualities of the audience (*Ibid.*). Lefebvre (2013) argues that the communication messages might increase the existing gaps in the audience's knowledge and well-being instead of reducing them, if careful considerations are not given to the ways the audience can access, understand and act on the information.

*Promotion* in social marketing is concentrated on the communication of value proposition of the programme offering, its price and accessibility to the priority audience attracting their attention, inspiring them to act, and facilitating them to try the product, service or behaviour (Lefebvre, 2013). Moreover, in the light of cultural and technological revolutions it is vital that the adopted communication models include the use of social networks and dynamic, reciprocal communication patterns (Lefebvre, 2011).

#### **4.2.3. Upstream Social Marketing**

From the time when the scholars offered the initial definition of social marketing, most of its research and application was focused on strategies influencing the behaviour of the target market (Dibb & Carrigan, 2013). The shift happened when Andreasen (2005) proposed the division of social marketing practises into: (1) *Downstream* (focused on target market behaviour change, corresponding the original approach to social marketing); and (2) *Upstream* (focused on influencing organisations and institutions shaping the determinants of desirable or undesirable human behaviour).

Social marketers find upstream social marketing very challenging due to the need of approaching a great number of opposing organisations and convincing them to take part in accomplishing “*a large positive social purpose*” (Dibb & Carrigan, 2013, p. 1381). However, Gordon (2013) suggests that unlocking the potential of upstream social marketing requires systematic application of social marketing principles (similar to downstream, albeit with different audiences and in a different environment):

- *Behaviour (and structural/environmental) change* (influencing voting behaviours, activity in policy debates and meetings, judgements, corporate policies, applications of legal principles, etc. of politicians, policy makers, decision makers, civil servants, educators and the media);
- *Consumer research* (identify and understand relevant stakeholders, key market segments and their needs; create motivational exchanges);
- *Insight* (understanding the drivers of the behaviour of decision makers, identifying the key factors relevant to influencing them);

- *Theory* (using behavioural theory to understand, predict and alter the behaviour of target audiences);
- *Segmentation and targeting* (with the help of consumer research identifying audience segments and develop targeting strategies);
- *Marketing mix* (either applying traditional 4Ps model<sup>9</sup>, or employing alternative marketing tools, such as advocacy, relationship building and stakeholder engagement);
- *Exchange* (putting emphasis on a voluntary behaviour change and a symbolic exchange of physiological, social or other intangible benefits);
- *Competition* (being aware that some side factors influence decision makers' behaviour and act as competition to the desired change).

Solving many of the challenging contemporary society's social issues requires multi-component, holistic packages of legislation, enforcement, interventions and initiatives (Rothschild, 1999). Thus Gordon (2013, p. 1542) argues that social marketing has an important role to play both upstream and downstream, and it can “*interface between education, marketing and law*”, moving beyond Rothschild's (1999) model<sup>10</sup>.

#### **4.2.4. Implications of the Theory of Normative Social Behaviour**

The understanding of social norm perceptions, their formation, influence on behaviour and the effects of manipulating them, is important when engaging in both upstream and downstream social marketing efforts (Kenny & Hastings, 2011). The conceptualisation of normative behaviour based on the *subjective norms* construct (perceptions about whether referent others would approve or disapprove of a certain behaviour), embedded in the Theory of Reasoned Action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980) and the Theory of Planned Behaviour, (Ajzen, 1991) is widely used in health communication (Mabry & Mackert, 2014).

However Cialdini et al. (1990) suggested that it is more accurate to conceptualise subjective norms as two separate constructs: *descriptive norms* (the perception of how most people behave – what is normal), and *injunctive norms* (the perception of what behaviour influential people approve or disapprove – what ought to be done). Following this distinction, Rimal et al. (2005) developed the Theory of Normative Social Behaviour (TNSB), suggesting that examining how certain cognitive factors moderate the relationship between descriptive

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<sup>9</sup> See Section 4.2.2. An Integrative Model of Social Marketing.

<sup>10</sup> See Section 4.2.1. Education, Law and Marketing.

norms and behaviour may help to increase the effectiveness of social marketing campaigns (Mabry & Mackert, 2014).

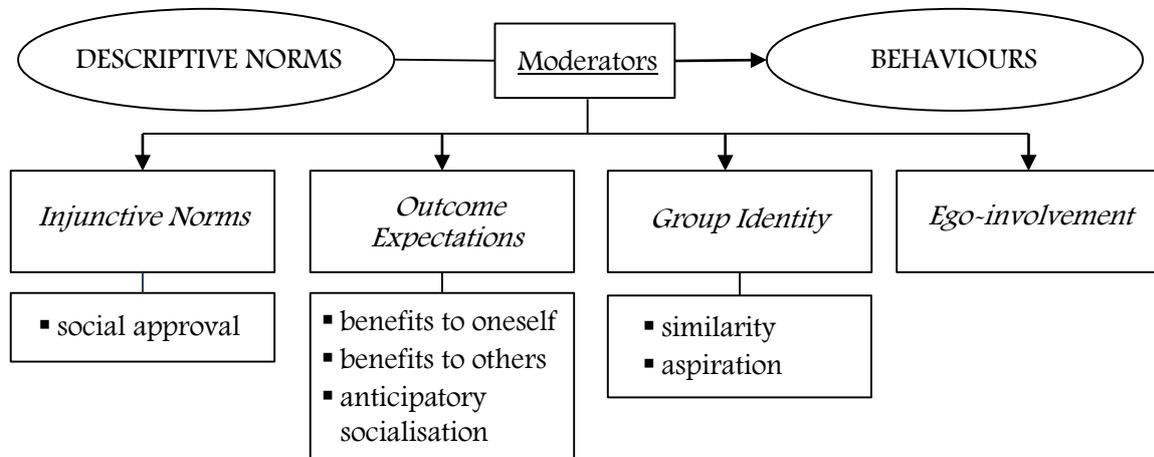


Figure 4: Cognitive mechanisms in the TNSB as the moderators of the influence of descriptive norms on behaviours (Rimal et al., 2005, p. 436)

As shown in Figure 4, the TNSB proposes that there are four key moderators of the relationship between descriptive norms and behaviour. *Injunctive norms* refer to one's perception of appropriate behaviour based on a degree of peer approval and the social sanctions associated with a failure to behave in (what is perceived as) the right way (Rimal et al., 2005). Next, *outcome expectations* are defined as beliefs that one's actions will lead to benefits to oneself, influential others or bonds with one's peers (anticipatory socialisation) (Rimal & Real, 2005). The third cognitive factor, *group identity*, is construed as individual's aspirations to emulate the particular referent group and a perception of similarity to it (*Ibid.*). Lastly, *ego-involvement* refers to the extent to which one's self-concept is tied to the enactment of the behaviour (Rimal et al., 2005).

TNSB was mainly used to examine drinking behaviour, but its recent application to other behaviours indicated its amenability in a wider variety of pro-social situations (Mabry & Mackert, 2014). Hence, to further increase its practical utility, Mabry & Mackert (2014) suggested a theoretical extension, incorporating external media effects into the TNSB. As shown in Figure 5, the Mabry & Mackert (2014) add three new constructs to the proposed extension of TNSB:

1. *Indirect media effect*. As most people assume that mass media influences others considerably more than themselves, this so-called 'third-person effect' influences prevalence perceptions (i.e. descriptive norms) and indirectly influences behaviour.

2. *Direct media effect.* Even though currently many social marketing campaigns direct their norms-based persuasive messages towards target audience’s descriptive norms, TNSB suggests that they should be focused on the cognitive moderators directly, in this way reducing the influence of perceived descriptive norms.
3. *Media involvement.* This moderating construct adjusts the impact of direct media effect on the cognitive moderators depending on the level of involvement with the medium that the individual has (it might depend on personal factors, physical characteristics or context).

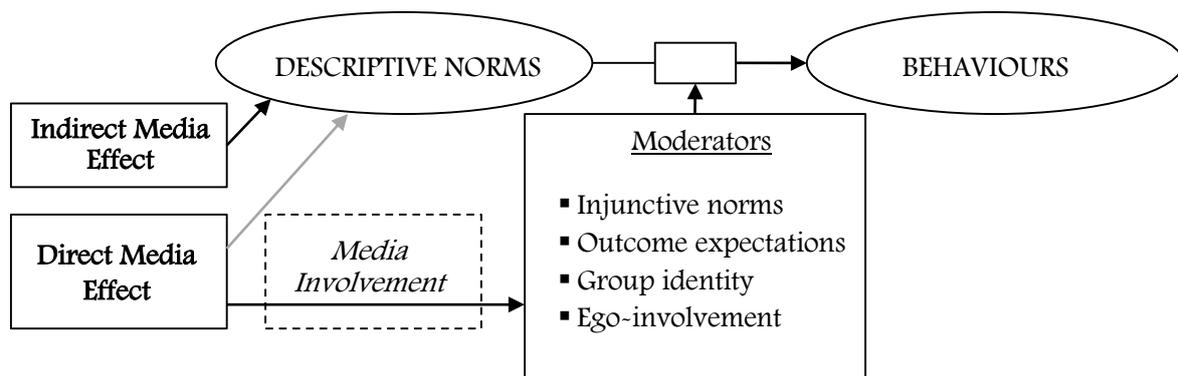


Figure 5: Extension to the TNSB incorporating media influence (Mabry & Mackert, 2014, p. 136)

Explicitly incorporating media effects into the TNSB enhances the knowledge of how both internal and external mechanisms function in the norms-based communication campaigns and can be utilised as a framework for developing persuasive normative messages in social marketing (Mabry & Mackert, 2014).

#### 4.2.5. Social Marketing and Behaviour Change Theory: Visual Recapitulation

Based on the existing literature within the scholarly field of social marketing and behaviour change that has been reviewed in this chapter, Figure 6 visualises the interrelated elements present in the theoretical framework.

As the model depicts, upstream and downstream social marketing are operationalised in very similar ways but with different audiences and in different environments, which causes certain inequalities between the two. Upstream social marketing is targeted at certain priority group within institutions and organisations, seeking to change their attitudes and behaviour in a way which would cause changes in the structural and environmental conditions within the society (including law and education). In order to do that, upstream social marketing uses some commercial marketing tools as well as advocacy, relationship building and stakeholder engagement.

Downstream social marketing aims for a certain behaviour change of the priority group within the population in exchange to an audience benefit. Likewise upstream social marketing, it employs commercial marketing tools, such as marketing mix and designs products, services and behaviours as offerings to best serve the priority group.

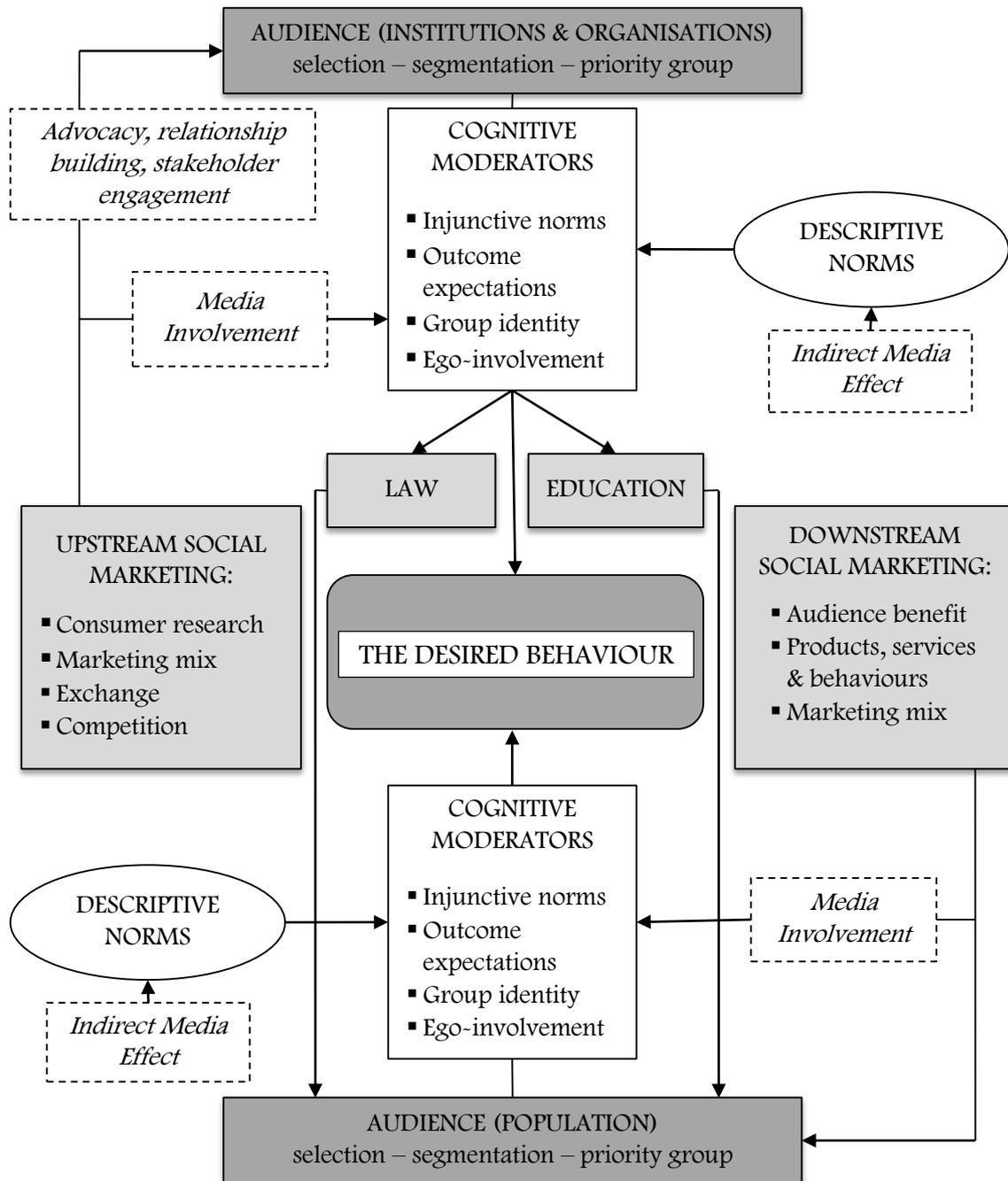


Figure 6: Social Marketing and Behaviour Change Theoretical Framework (self-made, 2015)

Both upstream and downstream social marketing employ behaviour change models in order to understand and alter the behaviour. As the TNSB suggests, social marketing efforts are directed to the cognitive moderators through media involvement, alleviating the influence of descriptive norms on behaviours. Last but not least, descriptive norms are affected by the indirect media effect.

As follows, the suitability of this setting of social marketing and behaviour change theory in case of dealing with the issue of homophobia in the Lithuanian context will further be analysed in line with the collected empirical data.

## 5. ANALYSIS

In continuation with the previous chapter, this chapter aims to empirically investigate online homophobic discourse and current social marketing content in Lithuania in order to shed light on the possible ways to address the issue of homophobia by social marketing. The analysis is divided into three parts: (1) identifying cultural images of homosexuality in the Lithuanian online discourse; (2) understanding the construction of current pro-LGBT social marketing in Lithuania; and consequently (3) finding a way to adapt traditional social marketing and behaviour change models to address the issue of homophobia in Lithuania.

### 5.1. Cultural Images of Homosexuality in the Lithuanian Online Discourse

Following the first research question, this section gives an outline of the cultural images of homosexuality, playing role in the presence of homophobia, which emerged during the netnography of virtual anti-LGB communities in social media, as well as commentary in online news media. The collected data is analysed according to the framework of cultural discourse analysis (Carbaugh, 2007). The subsequent division of cultural images originated from the prevailing explanations of homophobia in Eastern Europe<sup>11</sup> and other themes that newly emerged during the netnography (see Meta-matrix, Appendix 1).

#### 5.1.1. Homosexuality goes against God's Will

Following their religious affiliation, many people referred to homosexuality as a practise, breaking the law of God. Formation of this cultural image is based on several beliefs. First of all, some individuals think of homosexuality as a sinful practise, where one gives up to the evil temptation:

*“All these perverts are obsessed by Satan, and God is the only one who can save them from this perversion.”*

(Facebook, 2015a)

This quote, similarly as Figure 7, supports the pure division of the world into good and evil, white and black, God's and Satan's. Dualism of this manner is common to many religions, including Christianity (Bianchi, 2015). In this context, homosexuality is strictly ascribed to the evil side and is opposed to heterosexual love:

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<sup>11</sup> See Chapter 3. Prevailing Explanations of Homophobia in Eastern Europe.

*“At its essence, this is the fight between the good and the evil. So, who represents what? Everyone has to decide. The decision should, first of all, be based on the Decalogue, because everyone will have to account [for their actions] in front of God.”*

(Facebook, 2015c)



Figure 7: Picture<sup>12</sup> (Facebook, 2015b)

Moreover, religious affiliation determines the belief in marriage of a man and a woman, based on their ability to procreate. This is especially relevant talking about the possibility of LGB people to adopt children, which is strongly criticised even by the people who approve homosexual relationships:

*“Family is a marriage of a man and a woman. It was made so by God and nature, that only a family like that can have children and raise them. Everything else is debauchery and perversion. [...] If you want to be partners, be partners, but leave the institution of family alone. Children should only be raised in the families where they can be born.”*

(15min.lt commentary)

Hence, an image of homosexuality as a practise opposing God’s will is embedded in Lithuanian culture. It portrays homosexual relations as a sin rather than an expression of affection between two persons, objects homosexual marriage and adoption possibility, in this way playing role in the presence of homophobia.

### 5.1.2. Homosexuality is a Threat to the ‘Traditional’ Family

As follows, other people perceive homosexuality as a direct threat to the so-called ‘traditional’ or heterosexual family. This cultural image could be assigned to the nationalist point of view of sexuality<sup>13</sup>. According to one of the members of the Facebook community “NO to the marches of homosexuals in the streets of Lithuanian cities”, relationships of LGB individuals are getting increasingly empowered and promoted, in this way endangering heterosexual family:

<sup>12</sup> Translation of the text in the picture: “Black is not white. A sin is not love.” Under the picture: “Stop pretending! Let’s call things their real names”.

<sup>13</sup> See section 3.2. Sexual Nationalism.

*“Traditions are changing when the time goes. By looking at the current tendencies, [it seems that] after some 50 years ‘traditional’ family will be any other, but the one of a man and a woman.”*

(Facebook, 2015a)

Similar message is passed on by the drawing (see Figure 8), which was posted along with the question: “Soon in Lithuania too?”. Picturing a gay couple, covering their son’s eyes when a heterosexual family with two children is passing by, this drawing exchanges the current positions of homosexuals and heterosexuals, when some heterosexuals try to protect their children from homosexual images or information about them. This scene implies that homosexual families became ‘traditional’, whereas heterosexuals are the ‘abnormal’ minority. Thinking of it as a soon-to-happen situation, intimidates and threatens people, who value the ‘traditional’ family.

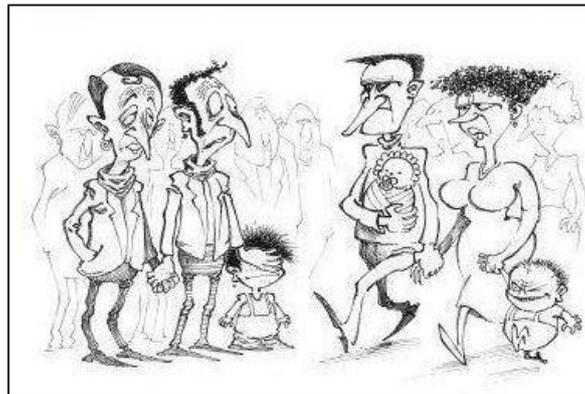


Figure 8: “Soon in Lithuania too?” (Facebook, 2015a)

Moreover, as the concept of family is closely related to having and educating children, people expressed their concern about the negative influence from the environment (homosexual parents or accessible information about homosexuality) for the children when they are growing up:

*“I am not against, I am FOR the rights of normal families... and the future of children. Children have a right to grow in a biologically correct environment...”*

(Facebook, 2015c)

*“My daughter is asking me: ‘Why do boys love boys and you love dad, not a girl?’ It is difficult to explain such things to a child. When I was growing up, gays didn’t need any rights and children didn’t know that they exist. I am sad that our children live in this abnormal world.”*

(15min.lt commentary)

These quotes show that some people perceive presence of homosexuality in the environment of the children as ‘biologically incorrect’, ‘abnormal’ and possibly influencing children’s sexual orientation. Thereby, the perspective of their children becoming homosexual is one of the factors triggering the image of homosexuality as a threat to the ‘traditional’ family.

### 5.1.3. Homosexuality is a Threat to the Society, Culture and Traditions

Another cultural image of homosexuality, which emerges in the Lithuanian online discourse and belongs to the theme of sexual nationalism is its perception as a threat to the Lithuanian nation, society, its culture and traditions. As the following quote shows, homosexuals are seen as intruders bringing in alien values, which are completely different from the ones that the society is built on:

*“The majority of our society starts feeling pressure and encroachment on our families, children, personal lives as well as our morality and faith that we have cherished for so many years.”*

(YouTube, 2015)

Having similar arguments, LGB fight for equal rights is questioned, arguing that respective changes in legislation would conflict Lithuanian constitution:

*“Sexual minorities aren’t fighting for their rights. As citizens of the country they have plenty of rights. They want rights that contradict our law and constitution, that are neither usual nor natural to our culture, but are imposed on us by other countries.”*

(Facebook, 2015c)

In addition to this, the possible extension of homosexual rights in Lithuania is perceived as a threatening issue, putting the society in danger, as it may provide homosexuals (whose lifestyle should be kept private) with too much publicity and lead to the spreading of sexual minorities:

*“First of all, homosexuality, as a strategy aiming for extraordinary rights for sexual minorities, is harmful to the society. This is because homosexuality turns from a personal problem or an intimate choice into a spreading habit, pressingly demonstrated in the streets.”*

(Facebook, 2015b)

Furthermore, Figure 9, capturing a group of pregnant women, dressed in rainbow-coloured dresses and marching through what-looks-like an old Lithuanian village ridicules and

criticises ‘Baltic Pride’ march in Vilnius. Contrary to the LGBT pride, where rainbow flag symbolises diversity of sexual orientations, pregnant women in this picture send a message: “[...] *let’s return rainbow to the children!*” and in this way advocate heterosexual relations. The use of certain symbols (such as the ancient barn in the background and the flower crowns worn by the women) could possibly refer to the Lithuanian culture and traditions, as things to take pride in, rather than a sexual orientation.



Figure 9: “An idea for an alternative march through Gediminas prospect<sup>14</sup> – let’s return rainbow to the children!” (Facebook, 2015c)

Hence, it can be implied that the cultural image of homosexuality as a threat to Lithuanian society, its culture and traditions is mainly built on the fear that the unrestrained freedom, propagated by homosexuals, would become more important than the conservative values of the nation.

#### 5.1.4. Homosexual Ideology is imposed on Lithuania by the Western World

Lithuania’s transition from a former communist state to an independent country and a member of the EU seems to have affected cultural image of homosexuality in its society. Even though homosexual behaviour might have been tolerated in the private sphere, public appearance of LGB people and their requirements for equal rights was not a usual thing during the transition period. Hence, netnography of homophobic discourse revealed that many people perceive homosexuality and its values to be imposed on Lithuania by the Western World (mostly the EU) in this way violating its independence:

*“We are Lithuanians. More than 20 years ago we regained our independence. In 2003 we chose to become a full member of Europe and joined the European Union, hoping to protect our families, future and independence of our state. But did we truly become free?”*

<sup>14</sup> Gediminas prospect is one of the main streets in Vilnius where gay pride marches during ‘Baltic Pride’ events took place.

*Today's propaganda of social values, coming from the neighbouring Scandinavians and Central Europe, divided our society. [...] EU legislation contradicts the constitution of our state, as well as the rights of the nation that are embedded in it."*

(YouTube, 2015)

As Figure 10 shows, influence of the EU is compared to the one of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), calling actions of both systems "brain-washing". It implies that the EU is using some kind of propaganda to achieve its goals, just like the USSR did (even though it is admitted that the goals are different). Figure 11 clarifies the meaning of the EU "brain-washing": in exchange to financial support, Lithuania (and other European nations) agree to neglect their ethical norms and follow the ideology offered by the EU. In the context of anti-LGB community, where these pictures were posted, they portray homosexuality as an intrusive ideology, limiting people's right to live according to their personal values.



Figure 10: Picture<sup>15</sup> (Facebook, 2015b)



Figure 11: Picture<sup>16</sup> (Facebook, 2015b)

The following quote sends a similar message, emphasising that the actions of the EU regarding children's sexual education are violating Lithuania's autonomy:

*"Sovereignty of Lithuania is further impudently violated and the Sirs from Brussels are telling us what kind of family we can and cannot educate our children about."*

(Facebook, 2015a)

### 5.1.5. Homosexual 'Propaganda' aims to change the Society

The perception of homosexuality as an ideology imposed on Lithuania by the Western World is related to another cultural image that was observed in the Lithuanian online discourse:

<sup>15</sup> Translation of the text under the picture: "The same brain-washing. What has changed is the kind of washing powder and washing programme".

<sup>16</sup> Translation of the text in the picture: "So, we have a deal – we give our morality up and you give us the money?". Under the picture: "The EU goals in practise or mass euthanasia of European nations".

homosexual ‘propaganda’ is aimed at a certain change in the society. This image seems to be formed through the increasing public representation of LGB issues. The quote above expresses a fear that the propagation of homosexual values in the mass-media would manipulate the society and would take its true identity away:

*“Through the propaganda of rotten values in the mass-media, society is accustomed to certain norms, completely unacceptable to Lithuanians. After losing one’s self-consciousness, culture, customs and morality, a human being becomes vulnerable and easy to manipulate. Then, one easily buys a wanted item and adapts to the mass-formed opinion.”*

(YouTube, 2015)

Moreover, Lithuanian pro-LGBT organisations are criticised, accusing them of seeking to profit from the financial support they get, as opposed to an unbiased representation of LGBT community. Once again, these thoughts are stimulated by the public demonstration of sexual orientation that is condemned by many people:

*“Homosexuality is a deviation and it shouldn’t become a tolerated norm. Anyway, I am sure that Lithuanian LGBT activity is purely commercial. If they didn’t care about the support from abroad and only represented their community, they would try avoiding such misdemeanour as homosexual pride. Why would one annoy the society and risk to incur its anger?”*

(Facebook, 2015a)

Netnography of the homophobic discourse also revealed some notions of people feeling as if the public space was controlled by the homosexuals. It is likely that the limitations of hate speech evoke this perception even stronger:

*“To find out who rules over you, simply find out who you are not allowed to criticise.”*

(Facebook, 2015b)

*“Did you ever wonder who rules mass-media that only represents a single side? Whoever rules mass-media – rules the society.”*

(Facebook, 2015a)

The above shows that the society is very sensitive to the information about LGB issues that appears in the public sphere. As it often contradicts their personal values, this information is

considered to be an outcome of some conspiracy between the LGB community, mass-media and politicians, seeking to manipulate the society for their own good.

### 5.1.6. Homosexuality diminishes Natural Gender Differences

Unsurprisingly, Lithuanian online discourse has some perceptions of homosexuality as a phenomenon, diminishing natural gender differences. Even in the modern society, where there is no strict gender role division or it is very liberal, biological gender differences are regarded:

*“Yes, I am cooking when I want. I know how to darn my socks [...]. I even know how to use a sewing machine, as my wife can use a drill or a saw. Despite all this, it doesn't change my perception of gender. And that is how I will educate my child. After all, both genders were formed different during millions of years, and this is how it should be. Maybe nowadays some of these differences are not as relevant, but artificial suppression of gender differences is not good.”*

(Facebook, 2015b)

In this context, homosexuality is seen as disregarding and suppressing these gender differences. More than that, homosexuality is often associated with transgenderism, which clearly breaks the traditional gender role order and overrides biological gender differences. Figure 12, capturing a male person dressed in female clothing and pushing a stroller, illustrates the assumed disrespect to the natural gender differences.



Figure 12: “Soon in Lithuania too”  
(Facebook, 2015a)

### 5.1.7. Homosexuality is Perversion or Mental Disorder

One more cultural image of homosexuality that is present in the Lithuanian online discourse is its perception as an expression of perversion or mental disorder. Countless individuals see homosexuality as similar to paedophilia, zoophilia, and necrophilia. The quotes below show how this cultural image leads to perceiving homosexuals as not worthy of any rights:

*“Paedophiles love children, zoophiles love animals, and necrophiles love corpses. So maybe we should arrange a pride to all of them? Everybody has a right to love.”*

(Facebook, 2015a)

*“Homosexuals have some mental disorders, just like paedophiles, zoophiles, and others. [...] They shouldn’t be given any rights, they should be treated.”*

(Facebook, 2015c)

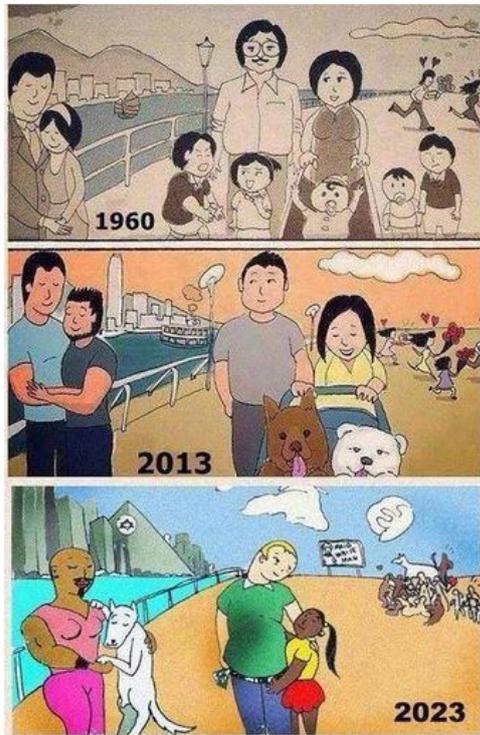


Figure 13: Picture (Facebook, 2015a)

Figure 13, posted in one of the anti-LGB communities in the social media, shows an imaginary timeline of sexual orientation development, leading from solely heterosexual relationships in 1960, multiple homosexual relationships in 2013, and coming to the spread of paedophilia and zoophilia ten years later. This drawing portrays the fear that tolerating homosexual behaviour today will lead to society tolerating even ‘worse perversion’ in the future.

Even though homosexuality was removed from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* by the American Psychiatric Association back in 1973 (APA, 2015), this decision is still often questioned, arguing its validity:

*“Did the sickness disappear after homosexuality was crossed out from the list of mental disorders? If so, we should cross out all the other terrible sicknesses and there will be no more patients left in the world.”*

(Facebook, 2015a)

*“Homosexuality should be immediately included back in the group of perversions where it belongs and then criminalised. Gay bars and other places undermining public morality must be closed. P.S. If gays are committing suicides more often, that is not a problem, it only proves that they have a mental disorder.”*

(15min.lt commentary)

Hence, it can be implied that in the cultural context, where normality is defined in solely heterosexual terms, emphasizing traditional Christian values, the society tends to consider every manifestation of homosexuality as abnormal and therefore threatening. This leads to

assigning labels, such as ‘pervert’ or ‘mentally disabled’, to the people who, in this way, can be excluded from the society.

#### **5.1.8. (Homo)Sexual Relations are supposed to be kept Private**

The last cultural image observed during the netnography is a belief that sexual relations (and especially homosexual relations) are supposed to be kept private. The below given people’s articulations show their conservative view regarding the public showing of any intimacy, feelings or, particularly, sexual orientation:

*“Love whoever you want, but there is no need to demonstrate it in front of other people.”*

(Facebook, 2015a)

*“How can we be tolerant when they show off publicly? We are normal people, married man and woman and we aren’t showing off our feelings. So why do they have to do it and we have to be tolerant to them?”*

(Facebook, 2015b)

Moreover, the LGBT initiatives requiring equal rights for everyone (such as gay pride events) often are of a provocative manner, seeking to attract much attention from the society. However, some people find these actions disturbing and even humiliating their own ‘normal’ beliefs:

*“Bullying will end once LGBT will stop requiring all the possible attention. Do normal people create unions of normal people? Be gays, be lesbians if you like, but don’t raise it above creed of normal people.”*

(15min.lt commentary)

Summing up, it can be implied that the outlined cultural images of homosexuality are present in the minds of many of the individuals in Lithuanian society and play an important role in forming their homophobic attitudes and behaviours. However, it needs to be emphasised that most of these cultural images are interrelated by affecting one another and cannot be entirely separated; the division here was made for the sake of structure and clarity.

## **5.2. Construction of Current pro-LGBT Social Marketing in Lithuania**

Following the second research question, this section gives an overview of the ways current pro-LGBT social marketing is constructed in Lithuania. It is based on the analysis of data

collected during the qualitative interviews with the representatives of Lithuanian pro-LGBT NGOs as well as the analysis of the social marketing content online.

### 5.2.1. Up- or Downstream?

In alignment with the division of social marketing practises into downstream and upstream by Andreasen (2005)<sup>17</sup>, qualitative interviews with the representatives of Lithuanian pro-LGBT NGOs revealed the choice of activity direction to be an important issue. To begin with, both interviewees agreed that there is a big difference between the attitudes of society and the political elite towards the sexual minorities in Lithuania. According to them, the society is more open to LGBT friendly initiatives than the politicians:

*“[...] there is a big gap between the political establishment and the society in general. We manage sending out messages to the society and it seems like the number of our allies is constantly growing. [...] However, political parties and even the president are still more appealing to the conservative voters that are not ready for a change.”*

(Chairperson of TYA, Juškaitė, Interview, 2015)

*“On the institutional level, I think, the situation changes to the wrong side because there is no progress at all and there are objective criteria showing that the situation of LGBT in Lithuania becomes worse. On the society level, however, public discourse that is filled with information about the problematics of LGBT [...] positively contributes to the inclusion of LGBT community into the society.”*

(LGL human rights policy coordinator, Raskevičius, Interview, 2015)

Despite seeing the situation similarly, the interviewees have very different views on the interaction between the views of the society and the politicians. According to the chairperson of TYA:

*“Until society changes, they [political parties] will not become progressive leaders. Society has to change first and then politicians will follow them.”*

(Juškaitė, Interview, 2015)

Meanwhile LGL human rights policy coordinator expressed a completely opposite point of view:

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<sup>17</sup> See Section 4.2.3. Upstream Social Marketing.

*“In most of the countries the acknowledgement of LGBT rights was first of all embedded in the legal system and then there came the support from the society. So I would say that the politicians have to be one step ahead and they have to create a certain tone which would then be followed by the society.”*

(Raskevičius, Interview, 2015)

These differences in the view of the society and the political system partially determine the different ways these NGOs construct their social marketing activities. As LGL is the only organisation in Lithuania working exclusively in the field of LGBT rights, they are acknowledged as experts of the field and direct most of their activity upstream to the political level. To support this activity, they only recently have started downstream initiatives towards the Lithuanian LGBT community and the society in general:

*“We only started developing the community component in the end of 2012, as due to the limited human resources earlier we only worked at the political level. But with the time there came an understanding that we cannot perform effective political representation if we don’t have the community behind our backs.”*

(Raskevičius, Interview, 2015)

This quote shows that even though the main focus of LGL is directed towards the political level, downstream activities are as well playing a role when aiming for a change in the homophobic society. Meanwhile the chairperson of TYA Juškaitė, according to whom society is the priority audience of their organisation, expressed the concern that the few pro-LGBT politicians that are present in Lithuania are marginalised in their parties, and this is an issue complicating the upstream activities:

*“We clearly have certain politicians to whom we can present our ideas or suggest necessary amendments in the law. [...] The problem is that because of their views they are marginalised within their parties. [...] So, of course, working with them is important, but society in this case is more important to us. Changes in the society are more important to us.”*

(Juškaitė, Interview, 2015)

However, ‘Liberal’s Movement’, a Lithuanian political party that is officially declaring support for LGBT individuals, received a significant number of votes during the election of municipal councils this year. Referring to this case, Juškaitė expressed hope that it could help to motivate changes in other political parties:

*“For example, the liberals [Liberal’s Movement] had realised that this is quite a good option and that they can attract these voters [pro-LGBT voters] by showing their progressiveness and modernity. But this is a case of an exceptional communication and we would care about changes in the parties such as the social democrats [Lithuanian Social Democrat Party] and the conservatives [Homeland Union – Lithuanian Christian Democrats].”*

(Juškaitė, Interview, 2015)

In addition to this, looking through the perspective of the framework of law, education and marketing proposed by Rothschild (1999)<sup>18</sup>, the interviews also revealed a certain ambiguity. Even though both interviewees see law and education as closely related, as the content of education is usually formed by legislation, their points of view regarding marketing differ. As homophobia is an issue of human rights violations, LGL human rights policy coordinator finds it ideologically problematic to fight it using tools of commercial marketing:

*“Human rights are not some kind of product that you can buy at a supermarket. [...] Every citizen of the Republic of Lithuania has human rights – they are constitutional rights. They are not some special rights, they are common to everyone. So, of course, when trying to increase society’s understanding regarding these issues, marketing may be effective. But again, in the ideological level, I would have certain personal concerns if we tried to sell ourselves wrapped in some nice little paper [...].”*

(Raskevičius, Interview, 2015)

This quote shows the perception of marketing as a sales tool, using which is humiliating when fighting for human rights that ought to be everyone’s. Hence, this perception questions the ideological suitability of the use of social marketing against homophobia. Whereas according to the chairperson of TYA, the change in society is the key to necessary changes in both education and legal system and social marketing can contribute to this change:

*“I think that, in this case, changes in the society are the most important as we will not get through to the education system until there is an agreement in the society [...]. Until then, until there is a certain movement, neither politicians, nor educational system (which depends on politicians) will change. [...] Here our social marketing and outer communication is very important.”*

(Juškaitė, Interview, 2015)

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<sup>18</sup> See Section 4.2.1. Education, Law and Marketing.

Summing up, it is clear that Lithuanian pro-LGBT NGOs are directing their activities both up- and downstream. However, the focus on a particular direction varies depending on the actual position of the NGO. Importantly, the use of social marketing as a tool against homophobia may cause certain ideological issues which will be further discussed in section 5.3.

### 5.2.2. Addressing the Cultural Images of Homosexuality

Both interviewees were asked what cultural images they see in the Lithuanian society as affecting the homophobic attitudes and behaviour. As follows, the cultural images mentioned by the representatives of Lithuanian pro-LGBT NGOs confirmed some of the ones observed during netnography of virtual anti-LGB communities in social media and commentary in online news media.

The chairperson of TYA Juškaitė (Interview, 2015) distinguished the following images:

1. Homosexuality goes against God's will (*"[...] people, who in a certain way relate themselves to the Catholic Church [...] imagine that homosexuality as such is unnatural and sinful."*);
2. Homosexual ideology is imposed on Lithuania by the Western World, homosexuality is a perversion or mental disorder (*"Another message is 'LGBT equals pervert Europe', pervert values that lead Europe to self-destruction."*);
3. Homosexual relations are supposed to be kept private (*"Then there are a little bit more moderate people, who are saying: 'Exist, but don't show off'."*).

However, asked whether TYA tries to address these cultural images of homosexuality through their social marketing initiatives, the interviewee expressed her reserved position:

*"To these groups of people [1 and 2] we practically do not address our communication, we think that the last group [3] can somewhat change the others. We, as such, will never have authority over these people, we will never be the ones who can form their opinion, especially those who say that this is a sin, a perversion or so... So in this case we work with the more progressive society [...]."*

(Juškaitė, Interview, 2015)

This quote shows a careful position of TYA, only aiming their activities at the least homophobic individuals. Assuming that they are likely to change their position easier and become allies of LGBT community, these individuals are expected to subsequently encourage changes in the other groups of people.

Meanwhile LGL human rights policy coordinator Raskevičius (Interview, 2015) thought of the following images, causing homophobia:

1. Homosexuality is an unfamiliar phenomenon due to lack of personal and community contact (*“The main reason of any phobia is that people do not know and do not see these people. And then they make up a lot of interesting things about these people.”*);
2. Homosexual ideology is imposed on Lithuania by the Western World (*“[...] it is interesting to look at the LGBT rights in our geopolitical context. They are far more developed by the western democracies than by our eastern neighbours. Having in mind our proximity to the Russian cultural and information settings, there is a lot of anti-LGBT propaganda coming from the east and there is no opposition to it.”*).

Here it is worth noticing that even though the image of homosexuality as an unfamiliar phenomenon was not observed during the netnography, it is one of prevailing explanations of homophobia<sup>19</sup>. It is likely that the manner of communication in virtual anti-LGB communities and homophobic online commentary would not endorse individuals who directly or indirectly admit that they lack personal or community contact with LGB individuals. This might be the reason why no references to this cultural image were observed during the netnography.

As follows, the interviewee confirmed that some of the LGL activities address the before-mentioned stereotypes:

*“Well yes, of course, we use counter arguments responding to these stereotypes that are spread in the society. [...] For example, [...] it is important that people don’t know LGBT individuals. So, showing real people, increasing their visibility is one of the most effective strategies when fighting these stereotypes.”*

(Raskevičius, Interview, 2015)

Supplementing this quote, the following section gives an analysis of LGL social advertisements, revealing that even more cultural images of homophobia are actually being addressed.

### **5.2.3. Construction of Social Advertisements**

LGL, as the only NGO in Lithuania exclusively representing interests of the local LGBT community, is actively creating social advertisements, encouraging tolerance for LGBT

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<sup>19</sup> See Section 3.4. Lack of Personal and Community Contact.

individuals. The construction of several of them is further analysed from the perspective of the TNSB (Rimal et al., 2005; Mabry & Mackert, 2014)<sup>20</sup>, keeping in mind the cultural images of homosexuality which were observed in the Lithuanian online discourse<sup>21</sup>.

The first social advertisement, called ‘Video on tolerance and diversity in the Lithuanian society’ (see Appendix 7), was created by the LGL in preparation to the Baltic Pride 2013 event. Interestingly, this video was censored by the Lithuanian National Radio and Television (LRT) as unsuitable to minors, and it had to be shown after 9 pm with a recommended viewing age of 14 and older (ILGA-Europe, 2014). The social advertisement is based on the following slogan: *“Diversity is a benefit for the society, not a disadvantage!”*. The audio part of the advertisement consists of a text that starts with *“This is us – Lithuanians...”* and lists the positive features of the Lithuanian nation, such as their openness, diversity, wisdom, experience and uniqueness. Then it states: *“We are not alone, we are rich, because we are loving. We are at home. We are Lithuania.”* Not having a specific reference to homosexuality, this text could simply be interpreted as encouraging patriotic feelings and a general inclusion of the society. Similarly, the visual part of the video starts with panoramic views of Lithuania, its capital Vilnius and some captures of the people there. However, along with the previously quoted words about Lithuanians being rich because loving, a couple of two women holding hands is shown (see Figure 14), as a hint to the homosexual love.

Looking from the perspective of the TNSB, this social advertisement is clearly focused on affecting not the descriptive norms themselves, but one of their moderators – group identity. It elaborates on the positive features of the identity of Lithuanian nation, constructing it in a way that encourages individual’s aspiration to behave similarly to prove one’s belonging to the group. This approach is especially relevant having in mind that one of the cultural images of homosexuality, as observed in the Lithuanian online discourse, is its perception as a threat to the society, culture and traditions. Hence, it can be implied that the creators of this social advertisement have directly addressed this cultural image by arguing that society benefits from tolerance to homosexuals rather than loses its original identity.

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<sup>20</sup> See Section 4.2.4. Implications of the Theory of Normative Social Behaviour.

<sup>21</sup> See Section 5.1. Cultural Images of Homosexuality in the Lithuanian Online Discourse.



Figure 14: A capture from ‘Video on tolerance and diversity in the Lithuanian society’ (LGL, 2013a)

Another social advertisement that was created by LGL is the promotional video for Baltic Pride 2013 event in Vilnius (see Appendix 8). This video, similarly the previous one, was declared to be unsuitable to minors, therefore it had to be shown after 11 pm with a warning of unsuitable content for minors (ILGA-Europe, 2014). With the goal to promote LGBT rights and to encourage more people to join the march, the video shows LGBT individuals as well as heterosexuals giving short statements about the widespread stereotypes and the issues faced by sexual minorities, such as: *“It is foolish to be afraid of things about which you do not know anything”*, *“It is not true that these people do not exist in Lithuania”*, *“We do not claim for special rights”* and *“My hair is short not because I want to look like a man”*. In the end of the video everyone is invited to say goodbye to the unsubstantiated fears by joining the march for equality.

Differently from the previously analysed ‘Video on tolerance and diversity in the Lithuanian society’, this social advertisement shows LGBT individuals openly talking about their sexual orientation. Moreover, the way their messages were intertwined with the messages of heterosexuals emphasises the fact that everybody is an equal part of the society. Looking from the perspective of the TNSB, we see that the persuasive message of this social advertisement is directed towards target audience’s descriptive norms, trying to influence their perception of what is normal behaviour (i.e. all the people despite their sexual orientation support Baltic Pride march). In addition, even though this video openly challenges the cultural image of (homo)sexuality as something that is meant to be kept private, it does not include any visually provocative messages (differently from what is often considered to be typical in the LGBT pride events). This may as well be interpreted as a try to prove that sexual minorities are ‘normal’ people, not requiring any special attention or rights, only equality.

The third social advertisement example is a poster (see Figure 15) which was created by the LGL last year as a part of the social marketing campaign ‘Change it!’. The creation of this campaign was influenced by the fact that only 12% Lithuanians declare to know at least one gay, lesbian or bisexual, and just 3% declare to know a transgender or transsexual individual (LGL, 2014c). Hence, through the use of photographs and drawings, the poster shows that these groups of people are only partially seen who they really are. Moreover, according to LGL (2014c), *“The poster reveals that after looking carefully into the people around us, we will not only see all the rainbow colours, but will also be able to look into the world through their eyes.”*

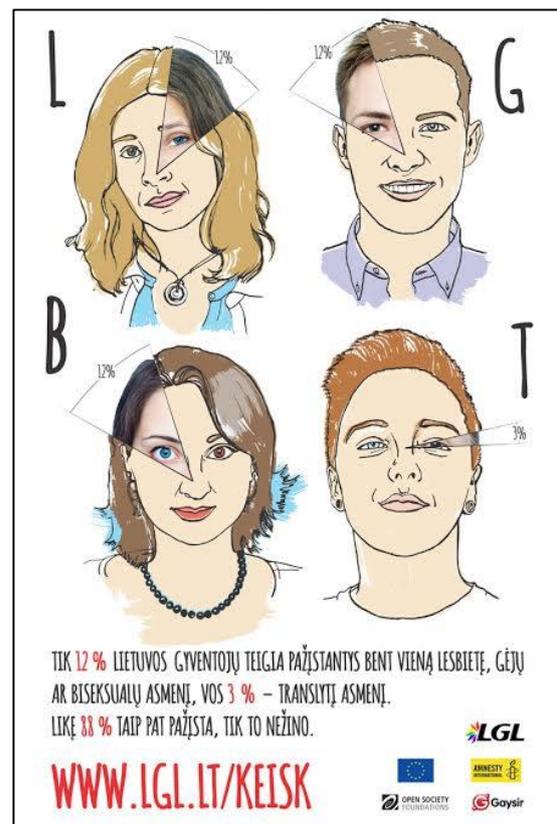


Figure 15: Poster<sup>22</sup> (LGL, 2014b)

Looking from the perspective of the TNSB, this social advertisement is again directed to the descriptive norms, not to their moderators. In other words, its persuasive message tries to convince the audience that they underestimate the number of LGBT people around them, but it does not relate to any benefits, social approval or group identity that would be formed in case audience’s attitudes and behaviour changed. It can be implied that this poster addresses the image of homosexuality as an unfamiliar phenomenon. As mentioned previously, even though it was not observed during the netnography, the lack of personal and community contact is a widespread explanation of homophobic behaviour<sup>23</sup>; it was also mentioned by the LGL human rights coordinator Raskevičius during the interview<sup>24</sup>.

As a part of the social marketing campaign ‘Change it!’ LGL also created a video (see Appendix 9), which captures actual LGBT persons living their daily lives and fights the widespread

<sup>22</sup> Translation of the text in the poster: “Only 12% of Lithuanians declare that they know at least one lesbian, gay or bisexual person, just 3% - transgender person. The remaining 88% also know them, but are not aware of that”.

<sup>23</sup> See Section 3.4. Lack of Personal and Community Contact.

<sup>24</sup> See Section 5.2.2. Addressing the Cultural Images of Homosexuality.

stereotypes. Once again, this video was declared to be unsuitable to minors and had to be shown after 11pm with a warning of unsuitable content for minors (ILGA-Europe, 2015b).

As portrayed in Figure 16, this social advertisement negates some of the assumptions made by the society (*“They are so different from us”, “It’s not love, it’s just a phase”*) and confronts certain questions that are often asked by the heterosexuals (*“How am I going to explain this to my children?”, “How can you call this a family?”*). This is done through showing basic every day practises of homosexuals that are no different from the ones of heterosexuals.

The video ‘Change it!’ addresses several of the cultural images of homosexuality that were observed during netnography, such as: a threat to ‘traditional’ family and a perversion or mental disorder. Creators of the video argue that LGBT individuals are ‘normal’ people, living their lives like everybody else, however, they finish the video with the following statement: *“61% LGBT persons in Lithuania feel discriminated against”*. Looking from the perspective of the TNSB, this social advertisement, similarly as the previous one, is directed at the descriptive norms of the society, trying to change their perception of who LGBT people are and how they behave. However, none of the cognitive moderators are addressed; no audience benefit is referred to.



Figure 16: Social advertisement video construction (self-made, based on LGL, 2014a)

#### 5.2.4. Successful Campaigns

Based on the data collected during the qualitative interviews, this section describes a few of the social marketing campaigns considered to be successful by their organisers, Lithuanian pro-LGBT NGOs – LGL and TYA. Subsequently, these campaigns are analysed through the perspective of the integrative model of social marketing (Lefebvre, 2011)<sup>25</sup>.

To begin with LGL, their human rights policy coordinator considers the poster campaigns organised in 2013 and 2014 as successful. The campaign in 2013 was launched before the ‘Baltic Pride’ event in Vilnius. During this campaign posters picturing a rainbow-coloured heart with the text *“this is a human right”* under it (see Figure 17) were put up in 80 public places all around Vilnius city (LGL, 2013c). According to Raskevičius (Interview, 2015), this campaign received a lot of negative attention, which he considers to be a positive sign:



Figure 17: Poster (15min.lt, 2013)

*“I think that this campaign was very effective because there were lots of negative reactions from the society about the poster. It actually caught their attention and during the first night when the posters were put up 80% of them were damaged, broken or drawn over. So of course it could seem like quite a negative reaction, but I think that this is a good reaction as it shows that society is engaging with the marketing you do.”*

The campaign in 2014 with the posters that were analysed in the previous section (see Figure 15, p. 55) is also considered successful due to the emotions it evoked in the society:

*“The reaction wasn’t as strong as in 2013, but I was observing commentary in the online space [...]. People talked, expressed their opinions. I had an impression that this seeing of real LGBT individuals and the reproach that the number of these individuals is bigger than people expected was catchy and stirred the emotions [...]. I think that it was effective*

<sup>25</sup> See Section 4.2.2. An Integrative Model of Social Marketing.

*because it created a certain moment of self-reflexion. And as it was noticeable in the online space, the same must have happened in the heads of the passers-by too.”*

(Raskevičius, Interview, 2015)

Looking from the perspective of the integrative model of social marketing, these LGL poster campaigns did not fulfil the main task suggested by the theoretical framework – they did not have a focus on the audience benefit. The campaigns emphasised the existence of the LGBT individuals within the society and their right to be granted the same rights as everyone else, however, they did not offer anything that could be valued by the target audience. This LGL strategy is based on their before-mentioned belief that commercial marketing tools should not be used when changing homophobic behaviour:

*“I think that the pure marketing strategies (when one tries to promote human rights in exchange to something) may even be harmful to the human rights discourse itself.”*

(Raskevičius, Interview, 2015)

However, as suggested by the integrative model of social marketing, the two poster campaigns approached the desired behaviour and addressed particular sets of behavioural issues. Whereas the first campaign (2013) referred to a very general issue of not considering LGBT rights to be human rights, the second campaign (2014) was aimed at a particular problem of homosexuality (and transsexuality) as an unfamiliar phenomenon due to the supposed lack of personal and community contact.

In addition to this, neither of the campaigns were built in accordance with the marketing mix approach. The behaviour change in both cases could be considered as the only product offering, not embracing developing of other products or services that would support the behaviour change. Moreover, the posters do not include any notions showing that the audience’s perception of the price of the changed behaviour was evaluated and addressed. The aspects of place and promotion in this case worked together – as the target audience was the whole society, the posters were put up in public places without a particular targeting pattern.

The TYA chairperson Juškaitė reflected on their project encouraging LGBT friendly environment in Lithuania as an example of a successful social marketing campaign. Initiating this project, TYA created the Cooperation Memorandum for the Creation of LGBT Friendly Environment in Lithuania (see Appendices 10, 11) and invited various companies, organisations and institutions to sign it, in this way declaring that they will not support any

homophobic or transphobic policies and will create a safe environment for their employees. At the end of the campaign the memorandum was signed by 65 organisations. TYA used several arguments promoting this campaign, emphasizing its benefits to business and society:

*“First of all, as you probably have employees like that [LGBT] yourself and by improving their environment, you increase their productivity. Secondly, we tried to position the presence of LGBT people as a market segment in Lithuania and LGBT allies as a market segment that can be formed. [...] If you are LGBT friendly, LGBT community will buy from you, even if your products are more expensive. So this is beneficial for the business. Thirdly, in this way you can contribute to the modernisation of Lithuania as such; you can be the modern flagman, bringing Lithuania ahead, caring about the future of the state [...].”*

(Juškaitė, Interview, 2015)

In addition to the social capital that was offered to them, the participants of this campaign were given diplomas that they could hang up in their offices and share on social media. TYA as well promoted the campaign on its website and social networks; later on it caught the attention of mass media:

*“Social networks let us to attract more people, popularise the project, what afterwards let us go to the national media. They started inviting us to some discussions about LGBT rights, where a starting point was this particular project.”*

(Juškaitė, Interview, 2015)

This TYA social marketing campaign fulfils most of the tasks suggested by the integrative model of social marketing. First of all and most importantly, it has a clear focus on the audience benefit. Different organisations (the target audience) are motivated to join the campaign, as in this way they can not only contribute to a certain change in the society, but also receive some tangible benefits for themselves in return. The desired behaviour is clearly the creating of LGBT friendly environment. However, the campaign does not directly address the determinants, context or consequences of the undesired homophobic behaviour. As follows, when creating this TYA campaign the marketing mix approach was followed rather generally. As suggested by Lefebvre (2011), homophobic behaviour change here is not the only product offering, the campaign also offers social capital as a product supporting the behaviour change. The price here is evaluated only as a reward for the particular behaviour (i.e. benefits for the business), however none of the possible punishments (e.g. losing the homophobic customers) are addressed. As the campaign was aimed at a wide range of

organisations, companies and institutions, the information about it was accessible online, making it easily accessible to everyone. Lastly, the promotion and communication of the campaign was organised through the use of social networks, websites and mass media.

### **5.3. Discussion: Adapting Traditional Social Marketing Models to Address Homophobia in the Lithuanian Context**

Following the third research question, this section combines the knowledge of pro-LGBT social marketing experience in Lithuania, as well as the knowledge of present cultural images of homosexuality and discusses the ways to incorporate this knowledge into the traditional theoretical models of social marketing and behaviour change.

To begin with, the empirical investigation revealed certain ideological issues of the use of social marketing tools when fighting homophobia that were not previously considered in the theoretical framework. Even though social marketing differs from commercial marketing, as it focuses on the benefits to society instead of the benefits to a particular business, it uses the same principles (Dibb & Carrigan, 2013). Qualitative interviewing revealed that basing social marketing campaigns on the principles of commercial marketing can cause a certain ideological discrepancy. Due to the fact that marketing has a strong connotation to sales, when used to fight homophobia it can be understood as branding, promotion and selling of human rights, undermining the concept of human rights as universal, inalienable and fundamental values. Accordingly, this point of view does not approve of the use of marketing principles as a tool to change homophobic attitudes and behaviour. However, social marketing theories do not include concerns of this nature. Moreover, the empirical investigation has also revealed the presence of ways to successfully employ social marketing against homophobia. Herewith, it can be implied that the previously explained ideological considerations should not prevent the further development of social marketing activities in the field of LGBT rights. However, they should encourage social marketers to be aware of the sensitivity of this topic and to find ways of representing LGBT community without commercializing the concept of human rights.

Another important issue that needs to be discussed is the choice between upstream and downstream social marketing. As mentioned previously, the empirical investigation showed that both directions are important, but it is common to focus on one of them, believing that either politicians are capable of inducing social change in the society, or vice versa. Investigating the reasoning behind these beliefs is beyond the scope of this research. However, following the theoretical implications by Gordon (2013) we can argue that when fighting

homophobia the role of both upstream and downstream social marketing is important and none of these activity directions should be left out, as each of them focuses a certain behaviour change (the upstream aims for support to pro-LGB legislation, the downstream – seeks to increase society’s tolerance to LGB individuals). The experience of frequent censorship of pro-LGBT video advertisements in Lithuania also suggests that in order for downstream social marketing to work, there have to be certain actions taken upstream. Only through a systematic application of social marketing principles both upstream and downstream necessary changes can be induced in the legislation and in the attitudes of society.

As outlined throughout this thesis, a focus on a particular behaviour change gives basis to social marketing activities. According to Lefebvre (2011), employing social marketing requires understanding and operationalizing the determinants, context and consequences of current and desired behaviours, considering social and community variables from the point of view of the audience. However, the traditional theoretical models of social marketing and behaviour change do not include any particular notions to these contextual issues. The empirical investigation let us identify a number of cultural images of homosexuality, playing role in the presence of homophobia<sup>26</sup>. Addressing them through social marketing campaigns is likely to encourage reconstruction of these cultural images in a way that can subsequently reduce homophobic behaviour.

As follows, it is important to discuss a potential ways of addressing these cultural images, which can be done on the basis of TSNB (Rimal et al., 2005; Mabry & Mackert, 2014). As explained in the theory chapter, TSNB suggests that four key moderators (injunctive norms, outcome expectations, group identity and ego-involvement) influence the descriptive norms and can lead to behaviour change. Even though the empirical investigation showed that pro-LGBT social marketing campaigns are often directed towards target audience’s descriptive norms, TSNB suggests that they should be focused on the cognitive moderators, in this way reducing the influence of perceived descriptive norms. Hence, it can be implied that the persuasive messages should oppose one (or few) of the cultural images of homosexuality and should be formed in a way that refers to one (or few) of the moderators. Accordingly, injunctive norms can be referred to by presenting pro-LGBT views of peers or influential others of the target audience; outcome expectations can be fulfilled by emphasizing certain benefits to oneself due to a changed behaviour; group identity can be addressed by portraying

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<sup>26</sup> See Section 5.1. Cultural Images of Homosexuality in the Lithuanian Online Discourse.

certain pro-LGBT features of a group that an individual feels (or wants to be) a part of; lastly, ego-involvement can be referred to by encouraging reconsideration one's self-concept.

Another important issue to discuss is the construction of social marketing campaigns, as defined by the integrative model of social marketing (Lefebvre, 2011). The empirical investigation showed that the social marketing campaigns organised by the Lithuanian pro-LGBT NGOs tend to miss some of the important tasks that are suggested by this theoretical model. Looking downstream, the analysed social advertisements and social marketing campaigns (with the exception of TYA campaign, encouraging LGBT friendly environment) were constructed without a focus on audience benefit and disregarding the marketing mix approach. This approach is defined as the core element of social marketing (Lefebvre, 2011; Peattie & Peattie, 2011; Dibb & Carrigan, 2013), hence neglecting it is likely to transform these initiatives from social marketing to general public communication campaigns. Accordingly, it can be implied that it is of utmost importance to include the marketing mix elements in the construction of pro-LGBT social marketing campaigns in the Lithuanian (or any other) context.

As follows, the empirical investigation revealed that the upstream social marketing activities of Lithuanian pro-LGBT NGOs are constructed as an ongoing advocacy and representation of LGBT issues, rather than a set of particular campaigns directed at organisations and institutions. However, this does not contradict the theoretical social marketing models. We can imply that these activities include a focus on the audience (politicians and political parties) benefit, which can be related to the potential positive voting behaviour of pro-LGBT electorate. Other principles of upstream social marketing suggested by Gordon (2013), such as identifying relevant stakeholders and understanding drivers of their behaviour, are as well employed, as this enables the NGOs to target their messages effectively.

Summing up the before discussed aspects, Figure 18 visualises a possible way of combining traditional theoretical social marketing and behaviour change models and adapting them for changing homophobic behaviour. Even though this model is based on the empirical investigations of the Lithuanian context, it does not specify the country-related issues (e.g. particular cultural images of homosexuality), and therefore could possibly be used in other national contexts.

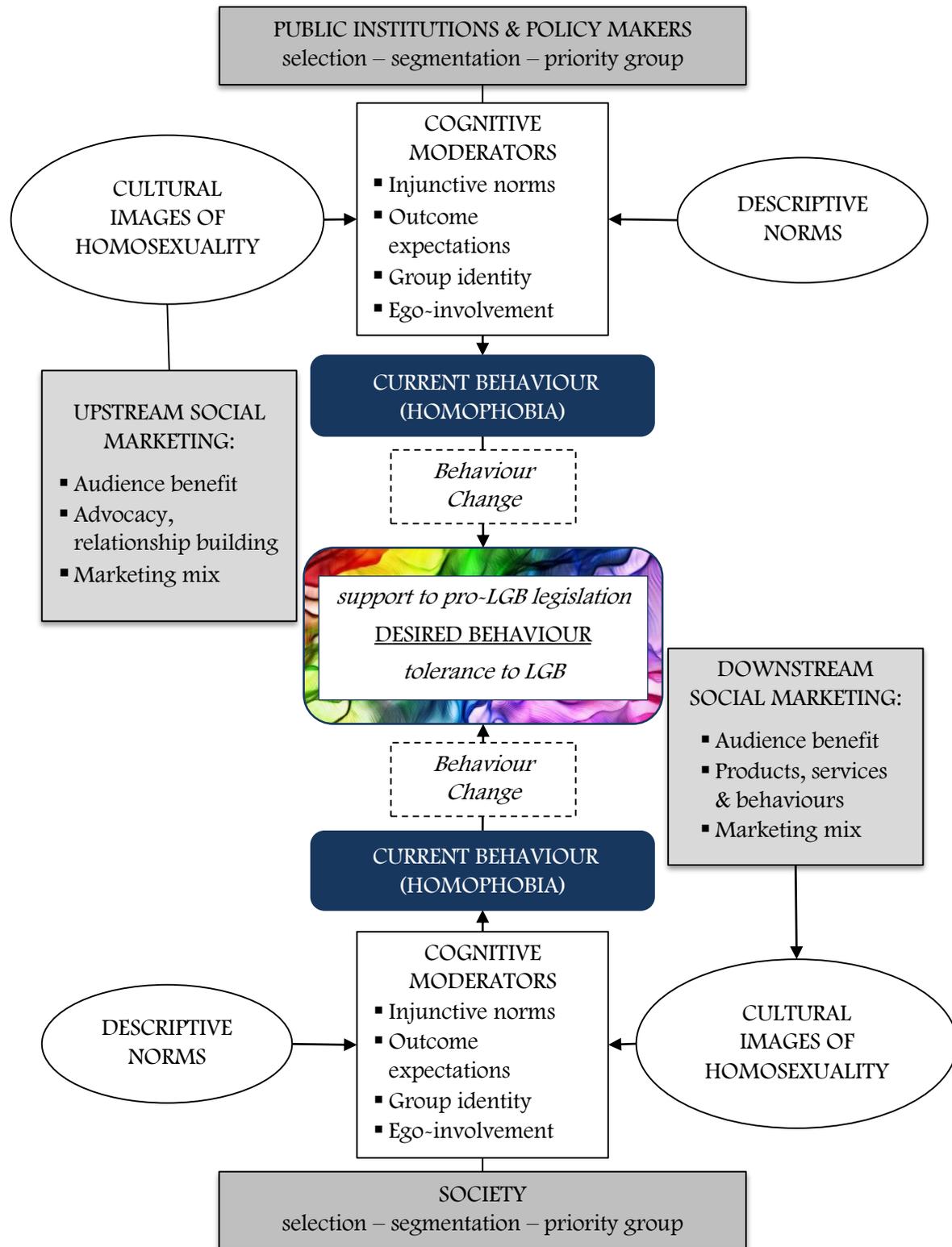


Figure 18: Adaptation of Theoretical Social Marketing and Behaviour Change Models to address the Issue of Homophobia (self-made, 2015)

## 6. CONCLUSION

This Master's thesis was set out to shed light on the possible ways of addressing homophobia by social marketing. It was done through the investigation of online homophobic discourse, current pro-LGBT social marketing content and its construction in Lithuania. Before concluding, it is purposeful to reintroduce the research questions:

1. What cultural images of homosexuality, playing role in the presence of homophobia, can be observed in the Lithuanian online discourse?
2. How are current Lithuanian pro-LGBT social marketing initiatives constructed and what cultural images of homosexuality do they address?
3. How can traditional theoretical social marketing models be adapted in order to use them to change homophobic behaviour in Lithuania?

Through the netnography of virtual anti-LGB communities in social media and commentary in online news media a number of cultural images of homosexuality that are playing role in the presence of homophobia were identified. Some of these images can be related to the prevailing explanations of homophobia in Eastern Europe, which were outlined in one of the chapters of this thesis. These cultural images include the following: the perceptions of homosexuality as going against God's will, as being a threat to the 'traditional' family and to the society, its culture and traditions, as diminishing natural gender differences and as being imposed on Lithuania by the Western World. Other cultural images of homosexuality that emerged during netnography were not previously referred to in the literature of the field. They include seeing homosexuality as a perversion and mental disorder, believing that (homo)sexual relations are supposed to be kept private and, last but not least, perceiving homosexual 'propaganda' as aiming to change the society. It is important to note though, that most of these cultural images are interrelated by affecting one another and cannot be entirely separated.

The qualitative interviews with the representatives of Lithuanian pro-LGBT NGOs LGL and TYA and their social marketing content analysis gave an insight into the ways current pro-LGBT social marketing activities are constructed. Interestingly, the empirical investigation showed that the two NGOs have rather different approaches when it comes to choosing the target audience and the way of constructing their persuasive messages. As follows, LGL focus most of their activities upstream, at the political level, whereas TYA keep society their priority

audience. Moreover, LGL initiatives do not have the focus on the audience benefit and are usually constructed to affect the descriptive norms (the perception of how most people behave). This strategy can be related to their unwillingness to use commercial marketing tools to promote human rights, as this could cause an incongruence with their ideological beliefs. TYA, on the other hand, has organised a successful campaign, which had a clear focus on the audience benefit and employed the marketing mix approach, just as suggested by the integrative social marketing model.

As follows, the representatives of Lithuanian pro-LGBT NGOs approved some of the cultural images of homosexuality, as they were identified during netnography (such as that homosexuality goes against God's will, is imposed on Lithuania by the Western World, is a perversion and mental disorder and is supposed to be kept private). In addition to them, another cultural image of homosexuality as an unfamiliar phenomenon due to lack of personal and community contact was mentioned. However, there is little consensus present among the NGOs on whether all of these images should be addressed through social marketing. While LGL supports the practice of addressing them and trying to oppose some of the widespread stereotypes, TYA chooses a more reserved position, directing their activities at LGBT allies and the least homophobic individuals.

In order to adapt the traditional social marketing models to use them to change homophobic behaviour in Lithuania, the above knowledge was incorporated together with the implications of the behaviour change theory. This adaptation suggests that social marketing activities have to be systematically applied both upstream and downstream in order to induce necessary behaviour changes in policy makers and society. Moreover, when constructing social marketing campaigns against homophobia, it is important to focus on target audience's benefit and apply the marketing mix approach. In this way, campaign offerings can be designed to best serve the target audience and to induce their voluntary behaviour change. However, it is important to note that having in mind the sensitivity of the topic, social marketing activities should be manoeuvred in order to avoid commercialisation of human rights.

Last but not least, employing social marketing requires understanding and operationalizing the determinants and context of current and desired behaviours from the point of view of the audience. Accordingly, the adaptation of social marketing models with the implications of behaviour change theory suggests that the persuasive messages should be focused on the cognitive moderators (injunctive norms, outcome expectations, group identity and ego-

involvement) and oppose (or reconstruct) the cultural images of homosexuality that play role in the presence of homophobia.

### **6.1. Delimitations and Implications for Future Research and Practice**

As explained in the introduction, homophobia is a multidimensional phenomenon, having deep cultural and historical roots within a society. Hereby, it is necessary to make it clear that there are numerous actions that can be taken against it. This Master's thesis does not suggest social marketing to be the most effective or the most suitable measure, it rather seeks to explore its capacity regarding the issue of homophobia in this particular environment.

In addition, it is important to notice, that the cultural images, which were identified through the investigation of online discourse, are mainly representing Lithuanian population's attitudes. As the political discourse was not separately researched, these cultural images were implied to be common to both, the Lithuanian population and the policy makers, considering them part of the population. However, if future research focused on the constructions by the Lithuanian politicians and policy makers, it might reveal new cultural images of homosexuality, playing role in the presence of homophobia. This would increase the possibility of appropriately addressing the determinants of homophobic behaviour by social marketing. Moreover, as this thesis was focused on the Lithuanian context, future research should investigate the applicability of social marketing and behaviour change theory in fighting homophobia in other national contexts. The main variable that should be considered in this case is the cultural images of homosexuality inherent to a particular country.

Lastly, the qualitative interviews with the representatives of Lithuanian pro-LGBT NGOs revealed that the construction of social marketing initiatives is usually intertwined and overlapping with other activity spheres of these organisations, and are formed by regular staff rather than by professional social marketers. Hence, by shedding light on the potential of social marketing in fighting homophobia, this research suggests that more attention should be paid at a systematic implementation of the principles outlined throughout this thesis.

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## APPENDIX 2: Interview guide in English

INTERVIEW STAGES	QUESTIONS	THEORIES AND CONCEPTS BEHIND THE QUESTIONS
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I introduce myself, explain the topic of the thesis and the purpose of the interview, which is to gain more knowledge about the pro-LGBT social marketing initiatives, organised by the NGOs of the respondents.</li> <li>- I ask whether the respondent agrees that the interview will be recorded for later use.</li> </ul>	
Entry questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What is your previous experience with pro-LGBT social marketing?</li> <li>- What is your opinion about the role of social marketing in changing homophobic attitudes and behaviour?</li> </ul>	
LGBT and Lithuanian society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What, in your opinion, is the current situation in the Lithuanian society regarding tolerance to LGBT individuals?</li> <li>- Are people motivated, able to, do they have opportunities to demonstrate their tolerance?</li> <li>- What is the role of respectively: (1) education, (2) law, and (3) marketing in seeking to reduce homophobia?</li> </ul>	‘Law, education and marketing’ (Rothschild, 1999; Lefebvre, 2003)
Constructing social marketing initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can you estimate, to which direction it is more important to work, wanting to reduce homophobia: the society or the political sphere/legislation?</li> <li>- To which of these directions is your activity linked more?</li> <li>- What are the challenges in affecting society’s position and politician’s position?</li> </ul>	‘Upstream and downstream social marketing’ (Andreasen, 2005; Gordon, 2013)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How do the tools you use differ when working with the politicians and with the society?</li> <li>- Tell me about some of the successful pro-LGBT social marketing projects that you run at the moment or have done before.</li> <li>- Who is the target audience of your projects?</li> <li>- How do you construct and promote your messages to reach them?</li> <li>- What arguments do you use to convince people that being tolerant to LGBT individuals is beneficial?</li> <li>- What do you offer to your target audience through the social marketing projects (certain products, services or simply the behaviour change option)?</li> <li>- Do you evaluate the people's perceived costs of the changed behaviour (psychological, social, etc.)?</li> <li>- What are the main channels you communicate your messages through?</li> </ul>	<p>'An integrative model of social marketing' (Lefebvre, 2011; 2013; Peattie &amp; Peattie, 2011)</p>
Social marketing content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What cultural images/stereotypes are present in the Lithuanian society thinking of homosexuality?</li> <li>- How do you address them through your social marketing initiatives?</li> </ul>	<p>'Cultural images' and 'Cultural discourse' (Carbaugh, 2007; 2011; Scollo, 2011)</p>
Behaviour change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What do you think determines homophobic behaviour in Lithuanian context?</li> <li>- Would you agree that it is affected by the manner of thinking "everybody hates LGBT" or "my friends hate LGBT" when homophobia seems to be a norm, or do you have other ideas?</li> </ul>	<p>'Normative social behaviour' (Cialdini et al., 1990; Rimal et al., 2005; Mabry &amp; Mackert, 2014).</p>

	- When forming your persuasive messages, how do you address these social norms?	
Closure	- Would you like to add something that you believe should be more elaborated on?	

## APPENDIX 11: English translation of the extract of the Cooperation Memorandum for the Creation of LGBT Friendly Environment in Lithuania (made by the author)

EXTRACT

### Cooperation Memorandum

#### For the Creation of LGBT Friendly Environment in Lithuania

This document is a signing party's declaration, an expression of its will, based on knowledge and understanding, showing that Lithuania has to make rapid steps, willing to embed human rights in Lithuania, as well as that everyone of us, as a person, a representative of a company, organisation of any other union, has to contribute by expressing our support and by implementing anti-discrimination initiatives.

Aiming for the respect and implementation of human rights Lithuania, we agree with the provisions of the initiative by Tolerant Youth Association and its social partners. Through this cooperation memorandum we support this kind of cooperation and by acting together from the day of signing the memorandum we will aim to:

- express oral and written support to human rights not excluding LGBT individuals on our (person, company, institution, etc.) behalf;
- make this document public in the company, institution, organisation or union;
- not support discriminating initiatives or projects; invite our employees and/or co-workers to do the same;
- create the environment that reflects the aim to avoid discrimination in the environment we represent;
- cooperate in order to increase people's knowledge about the nature, achievements and significance of human rights, as well as about the harm of discrimination to the goals of a person, institution, company, organisation or union and the state;
- not discriminate LGBT individuals, but contribute to strengthening their rights through the offered or publicly presented products or services of the company, institution, organisation or union;
- support public initiatives, predicating human rights.