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TWO COMPETING NORMATIVE TRAJECTORIES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE FIRST BALTIC GAY PRIDE PARADE IN LITHUANIA

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ABSTRACT

For a long time post-Soviet space has been perceived as homophobic and intolerant of LGBT persons. The three Baltic States – Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia – as former Soviet republics and current members of the European Union, represent the space where a strong homophobic post-Soviet atmosphere competes with pro-LGBT Western influence. This article examines how the first LGBT Pride Parade (which occurred in Vilnius in 2010) is reflected in Lithuanian media portals. The article also presents the broader context of LGBT issues by reviewing legal changes and Lithuanian political parties' programs. Our analysis of the media and other sources is based on three arguments: 1) that the LGBT pride parade in Vilnius became the most important event for reflecting LGBT issues in the media and society; 2) it might have not been possible without support and influence from external institutions; and 3) the LGBT parade revealed the division of two competing normative trajectories in Lithuania. The reconstructed trajectories in the article are based on the theoretical framework of new institutionalism, media analysis, interviews and focus groups. Construction of the LGBT campaign and counter-campaign seem delimited rather than approaching them as value normative consensus. However, the way in which LGBT persons are reflected within the Lithuanian media is remarkably different in comparison with the early post-Soviet period. The Baltic gay pride parade "for equality" and external (Western) support for it were highly visible in the media, influenced a significant debate on the topic not otherwise experienced in Lithuania, and (re)introduced a question about the perception of 'normality' within society. These debates also raise the question of how norms and institutions change and adapt within society.

KEYWORDS

LGBT rights, post-Soviet space, Baltic gay pride parade, media, competing norms, European influence

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INTRODUCTION

"Before 1989, the words 'gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender' were rarely heard in Lithuania. For a long time, homosexuality was a completely taboo subject, to be spoken about in only the most reluctant way."¹ Within Lithuania's Euro-integration processes the debate became more open as a consequence of the influence from the Western institutions. Despite Europeanization processes and Lithuania's membership in the European Union (from 2004) until now the legalization and the normalization of LGBT persons' rights remains a contested issue. Recently, as a reflection to the event "Baltic Gay pride parade for equality" (in 2010 in Vilnius), the question was raised to the highest political level on this topic that public discussions in Lithuania ever have been.

In the context of the other European Union countries Lithuania is small and homophobic. This kind of slogan is rather obvious, and it can be easily supported quantitatively by the opinion polls. From among 3 million inhabitants, 51.6 percent of the respondents in 2008 agreed they would have no wish to live in a neighbourhood with homosexuals.² More or less the same percentages (47 percent) were demonstrated in the polls in 2012³ But the relation between public opinion and the political decision making processes must not necessarily exist⁴ – especially, as a deterministic relation. At the same time, according to the reports of the Freedom House, Lithuania is a free country where basic civic and political rights are secured.⁵

The contemporary situation in Lithuania can serve here as an exclusive research object. In the other EU countries, including Lithuania's neighbours, LGBT parades are not an extraordinary event. In Riga, the capital city of Latvia, there have been a few parades, and in Poland they took place in a number of cities. In Moscow, on the contrary, they are simply banned, and have been for a hundred years, together with everything called "gay propaganda". But the analysis of the importance and impact of these parades in the closed neighbourhood of Lithuania is

¹ Artūras Tereškinas, *Ethnic and sexual minorities in the Lithuanian mass media: images and issues* (Open Society Institute: Central European University Center for Policy Studies, 2001), p. 4.

² *Tolerance. Representative poll of the inhabitants of Lithuania, 2008 03 06-11, N=1000*. "Vilmorus", Center of Public Opinion and Market Research. Conducted by the order of UAB "Idea prima". Vilnius, 2008.

³ *Valentinavičius V.: "Tolerance survey: Lithuanians grow more homophobic and resent Roma, but accept Russian-speakers"* (2013-01-17) // <http://www.15min.lt/en/article/culture-society/tolerance-survey-lithuanians-grow-more-homophobic-and-resent-roma-but-accept-russian-speakers-528-297541> (accessed May 15, 2014).

⁴ Miriam Smith, "Historical Institutionalism and Comparative Federalism: Lesbian and Gay Rights Policies in Canada and the U.S.," Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon (May 30 – June 1, 2007) // <http://www.cpsa-acsp.ca/papers-2007/Smith-Miriam.pdf> (accessed November 3, 2013).

⁵ 2012 Freedom House, "Lithuania" // <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2012/lithuania> (accessed May 13, 2013).

limited to mass media, and academic research is rare; while the same kind of the events in the Western countries have been analyzed rather comprehensively.⁶

The goal of this article is to analyze and reconstruct the main competing normative trajectories reflected and/or constructed within the Lithuanian media using the LGBT campaign context. Our research object involves the reflections and discourses of the LGBT campaign and counter-campaign in two main Lithuanian news media portals (delfi.lt and Lrytas.lt) during the period of 2006-2012. The analysis was executed with special attention to the first Gay Pride parade in 2010 in Lithuania. The broader context was also taken into account, such as the changes in legal bases and the programs of some of the mainstream Lithuanian political parties.

New institutionalism is taken as the main theoretical framework, which examines the problems of institutions, their formation and changes, taking into consideration certain dimensions of legal-legitimacy. We claim that the LGBT pride parade in Lithuania is a good illustrative case for a broader understanding of how institutional change could occur within society. How are the norms, institutions, ideas and values changed?

We argue that:

- a) the first LGBT pride parade in Lithuania was one of the most important events of the LGBT political campaign in the country and that the issue was highly reflected (i.e. discussed; visible) in the media;
- b) great support by external actors became an essential instrument of the LGBT campaign and without it the event might not have occurred;
- c) the first LGBT pride parade resulted into the division of two competing normative trajectories and (re)introduced a question of the perception of 'normalcy' within society.

Media monitoring and analysis are both our method and object. Media monitoring and analysis for the research of LGBT issues has been used by a growing number of scholars (Joe Bob Hester & Rhonda Gibson⁷; Sarah C. Gommillion & Traci A. Giuliano⁸; Stephen M. Engel⁹; Jeffery P. Dennis¹⁰). Gommillion and Giuliano noted that "...contextual factors, including the effects of

⁶ Amin Ghaziani and Delia Baldassarri, "Cultural Anchors and the Organization of Differences: A Multi-method Analysis of LGBT Marches on Washington," *American Sociological Review* 76(2) (2011): 184.

⁷ Joe Bob Hester and Rhonda Gibson, "The agenda-setting function of national versus local media: a time-series analysis for the issue of same sex marriage," *Mass Communication & Society* V. 10 (3) (2007).

⁸ Sarah C. Gommillion and Traci A. Giuliano, "The influence of media role models on gay, lesbian, and bisexual identity," *Journal of Homosexuality* 58 (2011).

⁹ Stephen M. Engel, "Frame spillover: media framing and public opinion of a multifaceted LGBT rights agenda," *Law & Social Inquiry* (2012).

¹⁰ Jeffery P. Dennis, "Gay content in newspaper comics," *The Journal of American Culture* Vol. 35, No. 4, (2012).

the media, should be considered when studying GLB identity.”¹¹ In the Lithuanian context similar scientific works have been completed by Artūras Tereškinas,¹² who analyzed how the LGBT was reflected in the Lithuanian media. Therefore, our work is the successor of previous media analysis. However, we include new elements of political campaigning and external support which have not been researched previously. Furthermore the concrete case – the gay pride parade in Vilnius – was analyzed mostly in media but not in academic journals. We stress the importance of this event for the political campaign of LGBT personalities in Lithuania. Therefore our methodology links relevant questions of LGBT rights, media (Michael P. Boyle & Mike Schmierbach¹³; Alicja Kowalska¹⁴), political campaigning (Joke Swiebel¹⁵) in post-Soviet space (H.Semetko, N. Krasnoboka¹⁶), and active demonstrations research. Similar to the latter point, various forms of mass rallies and political actions were analyzed by Remigijus Riekašius,¹⁷ but prior to this event.

Post-Soviet space research on the topic in question mostly examines various aspects of LGBT rights, visibility (Francesca Stella¹⁸, Cai Wilkinson & Anna Kirey¹⁹), representation (Brian James Baer²⁰; Kevin Moss & Mima Simic²¹), homophobia, pride marches (Roland Holz hacker²²). LGBT pride parades in other European cities were also examined by Enguix Begonya²³. In comparison to the latter, Eastern and Central European pride marches and LGBT movements are specific because of European influence within the Europeanization processes²⁴. O’Dwyer, who analyzed the Polish case, argues that “this reading of the development of Poland’s gay-rights movement offers a new perspective on how transnational actors such as the EU can

¹¹ Sarah C. Gommillion and Traci A. Giuliano, *supra* note 8: 331.

¹² Artūras Tereškinas, *Esė apie skirtingus kūnus. Kultūra, lytis, seksualumas* (Apostrofa, 2007).

¹³ Michael P. Boyle and Mike Schmierbach, “Media use and protest: the role of mainstream and alternative media use in predicting traditional and protest participation,” *Communication Quarterly* Vol. 67, No. 1 (January-March 2009): 2.

¹⁴ Alicja Kowalska, “Polish Queer lesbianism: sexual identity without a lesbian community,” *Journal of Lesbian Studies* 15 (3) (2011).

¹⁵ Joke Swiebel, “Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender human rights: the search for an international strategy,” *Contemporary Politics* Vol. 15, No. 1 (2009).

¹⁶ Holli A. Semetko and Natalia Krasnoboka, “The political role of the internet in societies in transition: Russia and Ukraine compared,” *Party Politics* Vol. 9, No. 1 (2003).

¹⁷ Remigijus Riekašius, *Politinis dalyvavimas: samprata ir tipologija* [Political participation: conception and typology] (Klaipėda: Klaipėdos universitetas, 2011).

¹⁸ Francesca Stella, “The politics of In/visibility: carving out queer space in Ulyanovsk,” *Europe-Asia Studies* Vol. 64, No. 10 (2012).

¹⁹ Cai Wilkinson and Anna Kirey, “What’s in a name? The personal and political meanings of ‘LGBT’ for non-heterosexual and transgender youth in Kyrgyzstan,” *Central Asia Survey* 29(4) (2010).

²⁰ Brian James Baer, “Body or soul: representing lesbians in post-soviet Russia culture,” *Journal of Lesbian Studies* 15 (2011).

²¹ Kevin Moss and Mima Simic, “Post-communist lavender menace: lesbians in mainstream East European film,” *Journal of Lesbian Studies* 15 (3) (2011).

²² Roland Holz hacker, “State-sponsored homophobia and the denial of the right of assembly in Central and Eastern Europe: the ‘boomerang’ and the ‘ricochet’ between European organizations and civil society to uphold human rights,” *Law & Policy* 2012.

²³ Begonya Enguix, “Identities, sexualities and commemorations: pride parades, public space and sexual dissidence,” *Anthropological notebooks* 15 (2) (2009).

²⁴ Conor O’Dwyer, “Does the EU help or hinder gay-rights movements in post-communist Europe? The case of Poland,” *East European Politics* 28 (4) (2012).

foster rights norms in 'difficult cases'.²⁵ Similarly to O'Dwyer's point and our statement, R. Holz hacker emphasizes the importance of external actors for the events of gay marches (right of assembly) in Central and Eastern European countries. He emphasizes that the "response of European organizations, in particular the Council of Europe and the European Union, as well as human rights nongovernmental organizations working in collaboration with local civil society organizations, have been critical to this progress."²⁶ He researched the issue as a "boomerang effect," while we are focusing on media analysis and institutionalism. We agree with Engel's statement, arguing that "a developmental perspective focused on media framing as one of many possible processes within the struggle to define political ideas may help us understand the dynamics of ideational development so necessary for institutional change."²⁷ The question of how ideas and institutions are changed within society is a core object.

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

As we claim that institutional changes of the main norms within society might occur by making pressure through media and involving people into the different, opposing discourses leading to legal change of institutional norms, we are following the theories of new institutionalism and media agenda framing.

They enable us to take into account political and social actors positioning themselves in the constantly changing institutional environment. This would shed more light on how and to what extent the LGBT issues are penetrated into political agenda and will help to evaluate the dynamics of the process. It would be also be worth understanding how and to what extent the LGBT issues have become important within political discourse (-s), and what kind of controversies it evokes.

The main concepts of the new institutionalisms (rational choice, historical, sociological, and discursive institutionalism) such as actors, agency, structures, ideas, norms, values, also the concept of *change*, are understood and explained differently by each of the institutionalisms (for instance, see Hay, 2008²⁸).

In the study related to our object, speaking about anti-discriminatory laws in the Central-Eastern European countries prior to their EU accession, Dimitrova and Rhinard rely upon a new institutionalism theoretical framework such as rational

²⁵ *Ibid.*: 348.

²⁶ Roland Holz hacker, *supra* note 22: 1.

²⁷ Stephen M. Engel, *supra* note 9: 29.

²⁸ Colin Hay, "From Historian to Constructivist Institutionalism" in: R. A. W. Rhodes, S. A. Binder, and B. Rockman, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

choice institutionalism and sociological institutionalism²⁹. In sociological institutionalism, the object of explanation is described as norms and culture, and the explanation is based on the "logic of appropriateness", where institutions are understood as cultural conventions, norms, and cognitive frames.

According to historical institutionalism, institutions are conceptualized as formal and informal procedures, routines, norms, and agreements. For historical institutionalism, institutions are the legacy of particular historical processes, i.e. the result of past political struggles. Institutions are understood as social constructs, meaning that they embody common understanding, becoming interpretative frames. The benefit of historical institutionalism is in explaining political changes through past political choices. Thus processes are explained by critical junctures and path dependency, and the object of explanation is structures and practice. Research variables may differ because "institutions structure actor's choices but are subject to change by actors themselves"³⁰; institutions may undergo changes but these changes are limited by the trajectories of the past; "past historical struggles will tend to have a constraining (though not determining) effect in the future."³¹ It is an important ability of historical institutionalism to take into account sequencing and timing. According to Thelen: "institutions as the legacy of concrete historical processes" allows to incorporate "issues of sequencing and timing into the analysis, looking specifically at the different patterns of interactions on institutional and other outcomes."³²

However, institutional changes tend to be explained by their exogenous nature through critical junctions, external events and crises, but not endogenously through internal choices and ideational changes made by actors. Explanation of change is formulated in this way: "for those who are disadvantaged by prevailing institutions, adapting may mean biding their time until conditions shift"³³.

In a paper by Vivien A.Schmidt³⁴, her previous works, and in a number of subsequent studies (Volkmar, & Schenner; Hope & Raudla³⁵), all three new

²⁹ Antoaneta Dimitrova and Mark Rhinard, "The power of norms in the transposition of EU directives," *European Integration Online Papers* 9(16) (2005) // <http://eiop.or.at/eiop/texte/2005-016a.htm> (accessed November 11, 2012).

³⁰ Sven Steinmo, "Historical institutionalism": 136; in: Donatella Della Porta and Michael Keating, eds. *Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences. A Pluralist Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

³¹ Rodney Benson, "News Media as a 'Journalistic Field': What Bourdieu Adds to New Institutionalism, and Vice Versa," *Political Communication* 23(2) (2006): 188.

³² Kathleen Thelen, "Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Perspective," *Annual Review of Political Sciences* 2 (1999): 388.

³³ *Ibid.*: 386.

³⁴ Vivien A. Schmidt, "Taking ideas and discourses seriously: explaining change through discursive institutionalism as the fourth 'new institutionalism'," *European Political Science Review* 2:1 (2010).

³⁵ Volkmar Lauber and Elisa Schenner, "The struggle over support schemes for renewable electricity in the European Union: a discursive-institutionalist analysis," *Environmental Politics* Vol. 20, No. 4 (2011); Mat Hope and Ringa Raudla, "Discursive institutionalism and policy stasis in simple and compound polities: the cases of Estonian fiscal policy and United States climate change policy," *Policy Studies* 33:5 (2012).

institutionalism theories are criticized for having only a limited power to explain changes and their genesis. "For the three older neo-institutionalisms, institutions are structures external to agents that constitute rules about acting in the world that serve mainly as constraints - whether by way of rationalist incentives that structure action, historical paths that shape action, or cultural norms that frame action."³⁶ However, according to Schmidt, through the composition of different institutionalism trends it is possible to better understand the problem. "By the same token, however, HI can add insight into DI <Discursive institutionalism>, by describing the formal institutional contexts that shape interactive patterns of discourse "using „the results of the HI investigation as background information."³⁷

In discursive institutionalism, ideas become empirical subjects. The understanding of "actors" and "institutions" also differs. "For DI, by contrast, institutions are internal to sentient agents, serving both as structures (of thinking and acting) that constrain action and as constructs (of thinking and acting) created and changed by those actors."³⁸ Discursive institutionalism takes into account ideational changes as endogenous factors, where institutions are understood not only as constraining but also constructing and changing by the actors, acknowledging coordinative, communicative, and interactive functions of the discourse. In our case, it allows for characterizing the discourse of the mainstream political actors and alternative discourses (discourses, opposing the mainstream actors views as it will be shown by further analysis), assuming "altering actors' perceptions of the policy problem, policy legacies and ,fit', influencing their preferences, and thereby enhancing their political institutional capacity to change"³⁹.

By analyzing media texts and contexts, by recognizing conflicts of meaning and different belief systems, and convergent or divergent value normative trajectories, we will try to explain the mainstream and alternative political discourses and developments. Our analysis follows both institutionalisms: historical and discursive. Historical institutionalism is helpful for explaining the 'path dependency' of the issue and the main political actors involved, while the discourse acquires its cognitive and normative functions through framing and counter-framing. We use as analysis objects both the content and context of discourse by concentrating on how they are reflected in the news media portals.

Further in our research we will define the groups of the actors such as mainstream political actors, then pro-LGBT groups of the political actors, and these

³⁶ Vivien A. Schmidt, *supra* note 34: 14.

³⁷ *Ibid.*: 16.

³⁸ *Ibid.*: 14.

³⁹ Vivien A. Schmidt and Claudio M. Radaelli, "Policy Change and Discourse in Europe: Conceptual and Methodological Issues," *West European Politics* 27(2) (2004): 188.

critical to the latter (calling them representatives of “tolerant” and “intolerant” discourses, and pro- and anti-LGBT actors). We would also like to note the limitations of our research, as we focus mainly on media monitoring and it does not necessarily reflect all the actors and reasons related to the issue. However, we are proposing that the main Lithuanian media portals that we selected reflect the key discourses and problematic aspects of LGBT issues within society. Here, media has a problematic status: it is at the same time an interested actor (or even, particular media is acting with different interests) conveying and structuring politics and determining standards of providing political news through setting agendas and framing issues.⁴⁰ Following concepts of agenda setting and framing, one can critically understand the inter-relations between, for instance, the reflection of the problem in the media and its political salience. The news can be seen “as an outcome of interaction between journalists and other political actors”⁴¹; “[...] news-making is one part of the overall process by which officials and other political actors communicate”⁴². By that, news media portals serve both as the object and the tool of the research.

2. RESEARCH METHOD AND THE LOGIC OF EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

The case study of the LGBT pride parade was undertaken using qualitative design methodology. Three basic research methods were used: media content monitoring, discourse analysis, document analysis and expert interviews.

In order to find the evidence for the statements, basic quantitative analysis of media coverage of events was conducted. For the monitoring of media content related to the issues of LGBT, two the most popular news media portals having the largest numbers of daily readers were selected, delfi.lt and lrytas.lt, in the hope that these portals may influence the wider public.⁴³ The monitoring was implemented for the period from 2007 to 2012. Sampling of the publications was done in the archives of the portals using these key words: homosexual, LGBT parade, LGBT rights. According to these key words in total more than 200 articles (lrytas.lt – 142; delfi.lt – 71) were found. After the selection of articles we tried to read and classify each of them according to the topic of the discussion related to the LGBT issues, the discourse actors and their arguments (for LGBT, against LGBT), and discourse instruments used in the discourses.

⁴⁰ Karen Sanders, *Communicating Politics in the Twenty-First Century* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p.189-190.

⁴¹ Timothy E. Cook, “News Media as a Political Institution: Looking Backward and Looking Forward,” *Political Communication* 23 (2006): 159.

⁴² *Ibid.*: 161.

⁴³ In total five portals (delfi.lt, lrytas.lt, respublika.lt, kdiena.lt and bernardinai.lt) were reviewed, but their analysis showed that only two media portals had an extensive constant coverage of the LGBT issues.

Further, reflections of LGBT pride parade in news media portals were analyzed. The publications were our research object as well as information source. They reflect public attitudes and at the same time influence these attitudes by being media as an active actor of the process. The discussion of the results is provided in the later sections of the article.

Besides the analysis of the media discourses, other methods of data collecting were used: focus groups and in-depth interviews. In total three focus group discussions were conducted helping us to re-construct patterns of collective thinking. The groups were formed in the three different geographic places – Vilnius (capital city), Kaunas (second largest city in Lithuania; it often claims itself to be the “most Lithuanian” city in the country), and Prienai district (rural area). The aim was to select different cases with different backgrounds. The focus group participants were selected according to their professions trying to invite the opinion leaders in their respective communities.

In addition, two interviews were performed with representatives of formally institutionalized groups representing two opposite discourses. First an interview with representative of LGBT organization was conducted, and a second interview with the representative of civic organization actively agitating against “the LGBT propaganda” was conducted. These interviews were used to seek a better understanding of the motives and arguments of both opposing groups.

Document analysis, including the programs of mainstream Lithuanian political parties, was important in trying to identify the positions of Lithuanian political parties on LGBT issues.

The long-term political and societal discussions since Lithuania’s independence from the Soviet Union and the positions of the main institutional actors such as mainstream political parties (the parties having parliamentary representation and being in governmental coalitions from time to time), are associated with the “mainstream” political discourse. This “mainstream” discourse is characterized by the established legal LGBT situation, its changes (or not changing), also taking into account positions and initiatives of mainstream political parties. This analysis might help to clarify whether the LGBT problems discussion can be associated with the mainstream, or just with marginal discourse(-s). The “marginal” discourse is characterized as a discourse which is associated with actors on the margins of politics, having no stronger support in society.

Besides the discursive aspect, we will try to reconstruct past political decisions following a path dependency concept, searching for political decisions made in earlier historical epochs that may have had a constraining impact on contemporary political decisions.

3. EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF MAINSTREAM POLITICAL DISCOURSE

The mainstream discourse on LGBT issues can be characterized by the analysis of the changes of the LGBT rights legal environment (chronological overview of the legislation related to the LGBT); parliamentary elections and program statements made by the main political parties; discourses on LGBT Pride Parade and other LGBT issues reflected in the main Lithuanian news portals. This section is divided into the three parts according to these variables, which characterize mainstream discourse on LGBT issues in Lithuania.

3.1. THE LGBT LEGAL ENVIRONMENT

Since the Soviet period, and until 1993, there was a Penal Code (of 1960) in force in Lithuania which punished sexual intercourse between males with imprisonment up to three years. Freewill homosexual relations were legalized on June 10, 1993, by Law No. I-180.⁴⁴

Another important package of legal acts was adopted in 2003. On January 1, 2003, a new Labor Code entered into force, providing "equality of the subjects of the labor law not regarding to their gender, sexual orientation ..."⁴⁵; (here and further, translation of the legal acts, their projects, and political programs are provisionally made by the authors of this article). According to the Article 129, "sexual orientation of the worker cannot be a reason for dismissal."⁴⁶ On May 1, 2003, a new version of the Penal Code entered into force equalizing the age of legal agreement for heterosexual and homosexual relations.⁴⁷ And, finally, in 2003 *Law on Equal Treatment* was adopted prohibiting discrimination for sexual orientation.⁴⁸ It was amended in 2005 and 2008. In such a way LGBT persons acquired the opportunity to defend their rights not only through judicial process but also by simply addressing Service of Ombudsman of Equal Opportunities.

Evidently, this move towards a basic package of LGBT rights was impacted by Lithuania's aspirations of becoming a Member of the European Union, and approaching accession referendum in May, 2003, and Lithuania's EU membership (May 1, 2004). Prior to the accession referendum in May, 2003, there was total, though rather general and abstract, agreement of parliamentary parties on the

⁴⁴ *Law on the Amendment and Supplementation of the Codes of Criminal Procedure, Criminal Code and Code of Administrative Violations*, Official Gazette (1993, no. 26-597).

⁴⁵ *Labor Code of the Republic of Lithuania*, Official Gazette (2002, no. 64-2569).

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Law on the Approval and Entry into Force of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Lithuania*, Official Gazette (2000, no. 89-2741).

⁴⁸ *Law on Equal Treatment of the Republic of Lithuania*, Official Gazette (2003, no. 114-5115).

integration to European Union as a positive move. Consequently, the referendum was won with an overwhelming majority.⁴⁹

Compared to a number of other countries in Eastern and Central Europe,⁵⁰ Lithuania avoided extensive discussions on LGBT problems. They had fallen unintentionally under a broader scope of issues that was understood as “democratization”; EU directives were transposed into the Lithuanian legal system perhaps without realizing full scope of their eventual consequences, and postponing them for the future. In terms of historical institutionalism, it created a kind of constraining effect for future developments.

As we will see further, by agreeing on this basic package, a kind of “common consensus” among the parties of a number of unsolved problems remained: partnership of the persons of the same sex, gender change, etc. This “common consensus” created the possibility for mainstream political parties to develop their nuanced statements on LGBT issues. But instead of starting discussions of the new essential legal acts, the result of further efforts of amendments to this “basic package” of legal acts is that the basic package of legal acts adopted ten years before remains, in general, unchanged.

Re-phrasing Hope, and Raudla, and Vivien Schmidt, two consecutive periods of “frozen landscapes of norms” might be reconstructed, one between 1993 and 2003, and another one after 2003, both corresponding to the periods of Lithuania’s democratic developments.

Sometimes political actors “behaving rationally often produce suboptimal decisions”⁵¹ – political outcomes of both aforementioned periods are likely to be “collectively suboptimal”. They are not made “for the future”. They tend to reflect value normative equilibrium of given political moment, and a point on which “mainstream” political actors can reach consensus. In 1990, LGBT issues were simply not heard among the noise of different democratic reconstructions. Retrospectively, coming back to the issue was inevitable. In the 90s only incremental changes were possible. The dimension of the international context was also important.⁵² After 1993, the issue remained on the margins for a long time.

Integration into the European Union was the new challenge for Lithuania. For the mainstream discourse considerations, the LGBT problem was understood rather as external (in a sense, “international”) than internal national political issue. The LGBT issues solving was treated as a condition for the EU membership, and

⁴⁹ Liudas Mažylis, Ingrida Unikaitė, and Romualdas Povilaitis, “Specifics of Mass Media Communication in European Voting Campaigns”; in: M. Sokołowski, ed. *Definiowanie McLuhana. Media a perspektywy rzeczywistości wirtualnej* (Olsztyn, 2006).

⁵⁰ See Antoaneta Dimitrova and Mark Rhinard, *supra* note 29.

⁵¹ Kathleen Thelen, *supra* note 32.

⁵² Artūras Tereškinas, “On the Margins: Representation of Sexual Minorities in Lithuanian Press (2000-2001),” *Sociologija/Sociology* (2002).

characteristic of democracy. Transposition of a huge number of European legal acts was long lasting, as long as a decade, and *acquis conditionality* was connected with much higher efforts and challenges for Lithuanian elites in the field of free market economy than *democratic conditionality* itself. Approaching Lithuania's referendum of EU accession in 2003, a need to change LGBT legal environment looked like mainly as "external push". The discussions of political parties were rather fuzzy. Now it would be difficult to reconstruct mainstream discourse on LGBT issues, and, moreover, discussions on broader context of the human rights issues. It fell into general societal agreement that Lithuania is on the democratic road of the development, *acquis* is successfully negotiated with the EU countries, and financial conditions of Lithuania's membership are acceptable for Lithuania. Situation was in a number of aspects different from a number of neighboring Central and Eastern European countries where issues of *democratic conditionality* were discussed much longer and in a livelier manner⁵³; whereas in Lithuania the problem of the LGBT rights was simply absent from the agenda in the early 2000.

Is the situation still the same or has it changed over a decade? As the further analysis of the content and context of news media portals shows, in terms of mainstream political discourse, "the second historical freeze" came after 2003. However, now the mainstream discourse is in some manner "touched" by the LGBT problems, and the LGBT Parade of 2010 particularly. The "frozen landscapes" of the norms are somehow "melted" by such events related to the LGBT parade as marching, guarding the parade, and some protesters at the parade jumping over the barriers. Taking this into account, mainstream political actors cannot distance themselves from the discussions of LGBT issues.

3.2. LGBT ISSUES REFLECTED IN THE PROGRAMS OF POLITICAL PARTIES

Lithuania's political system is to a large extent fragmented and can be assumed as undergoing further fragmentation. A 5 percent threshold in the recent 2012 parliamentary elections was overthrown by 7 political parties (see Table 1).

⁵³ Antoaneta Dimitrova and Mark Rhinard, *supra* note 29.

Table 1. Representation of political parties in the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania (Seimas), and typical phrasing of political parties' programmes on LGBT issues⁵⁴

Party	Typical program phrasing	Seats in the Seimas; majority/ opposition	
		2008-2012	2012-2016
Liberal Movement	"We will not allow any discrimination of the people due to their nationality, social status, gender, sexual orientation, creed, or believes."	M	O
Social Democrats	"Equal opportunities of all Lithuanian people, securing equal rights and fight with any form of discrimination are a duty of the State and necessary condition creating welfare state. Every person is valuable thus must feel full-rate member of our society independently on gender, age, disability, ethnicity, and sexual orientation." "Not to divide families into traditional and non-traditional."	O	M
Homeland Union/ Christian Democrats	"To our belief, freedom could not become a freedom to destroy moral norms and traditions of the society what internal order of the society is found on. We firmly believe that moral is not an individual choice but criteria of existence of the human being as human being formed in the Christian society through centuries."	M	O
Labour Party	"We will seek that nobody would be discriminated in a country according to age, gender, race, ethnicity, language, origin, social status, faith, disability, family status, belonging to political parties or society organizations."	O	M
Courage Way	"Person arising above natural and social circumstances by her entity's nature can and must freely decide upon her acts and actions following her mind and conscience and moral principles not contradicting classical understanding of inherent rights."	-	O

⁵⁴ Sources: Prepared by authors according to the following sources: Mažvydas Jastramskas, "Ką apie žmogaus teises sako Lietuvos politines partijos? Žmogaus teises 2012 m. Seimo rinkimų programose" [What do Lithuanian parties say on the human rights? Human rights in the programs of 2012 Seimas elections], Project financed by the Nordic Council of Ministers (Human Rights Watch Institute, 2012); Programme of Liberal Movement; Programme ("Long programme") of the Lithuanian Social Democratic Party; Programme (electoral) of the Labor Party; Programme of the political party Courage Way; Programme of political party Law and Order "Trecioji Respublika"; Programme of Homeland Union-Lithuanian Conservatives "Tevynės Sąjunga-Lietuvos krikščionys demokratai", Rinkimu programa 2012-2016 metais "XVI vyriausybės programa"; Programme of Electoral Action of Lithuanian Poles.

Order and Justice	"The State will support all the people protecting, fostering, or restoring traditional Lithuanian lifestyle."	O	M
Polish Electoral Action	"Post-modern culture dominating in Europe, denying objective truth, is increasing confusion in a spiritual and society life. Neglecting values such as life in its full cycle from beget until natural death, family as progeny of the love of man and woman, their responsibility for themselves and for the posterity, living like in absence of God, is preparing ground for different strange, extreme, amoral acts and addictions."	-	M

Thus the LGBT issue is neither an issue delimiting ideological cleavages, nor the factor most important for coalition formation; both in 2008-2012 and since 2012 Lithuanian parties easily form coalitions despite having totally contradictory positions on LGBT issues.

According to the conclusions of a paper⁵⁵, the most comprehensive and consecutive program on human rights and LGBT issues is that of the Liberal Movement; their entire Chapter IV is dedicated to "human dignity". It is the only party proposing a *Law on Partnership* (allowing persons of the same gender living together to register) and distancing themselves from the Homeland Union program. In the program of the Lithuanian Social Democratic Party, sexual orientation of the person is mentioned in the description of their understanding of "non-discrimination"; however, it is worth noting that there is a difference with the political initiative of one member of this party proposing *Law of Partnership* and the behavior of the party as an entity removing the question from the mainstream political discourse prior to the parliamentary elections of 2012. Moreover, the reluctance of this party became evident with LGBT issues after its entering into the governing coalition. In the coalition formation process they stressed clearly that *Law on Partnership* is not for persons of the same sex.

In the program of the Homeland Union (oriented not only towards legislative but also executive) they do not distance themselves from the narrow understanding of the family concept where family of same sex persons is not treated as family.

At first glance the program of the Labor Party seems very tolerant towards different minority groups based on gender, race, ethnicity, language, etc. However, deeper analysis indicates that it presents a closed list of non-discriminatory motives where sexual orientation (intentionally or not) is omitted.

The sentence in the program of Order and Justice about "traditional Lithuanian" sounds also rather abstract without any special remark to minorities'

⁵⁵ Mažvydas Jastramskas, *supra* note 54.

issues. Yet we should not forget that the parliamentarians belonging to this party prepared a proposal to amend the Article 28 of the *Constitution of Republic of Lithuania* in order to propose such a family concept: "family is created through marriage. It also comes from the maternity and paternity. Propaganda of homosexual relation is prohibited. Child adoption for homosexuals is prohibited ...".⁵⁶

According to A. Bielskis, the "'special conservativeness' of the Polish Electoral Action is not surprising."⁵⁷ We may find outwardly gratifying catholic fundamentalism in their program. The party also tries to attract pro-Kremlin Russian speakers of Lithuania who live in the information space of official Russian media. These Russian speakers are likely to support those who try "to forbid parades" as it was already done in Moscow.

Finally, some conclusions might be made about Lithuanian mainstream political parties. Positions on the LGBT issues go across both, conventionally constructed right-wing cleavage and factual executive coalitions; the latter was formed in 2008-2012 by the two parties called "right wing", Liberals and Conservatives. Their positions towards partnership legislation, family policy, and various LGBT issues remain rather contradictory. New coalition is formed in 2012 by Social Democrats, Labor Party, Order and Justice, and Polish Electoral Action. Positions towards LGBT issues are even more unequal than in the former coalition. Further discussions are needed, whether party programs are indeed "signaling what policy party will give priority"⁵⁸.

In Table 2, we categorize all eight Lithuanian political parties represented in the Lithuanian Parliament after parliamentary elections in 2012 into four categories according to their self-positioning on LGBT issues.

⁵⁶ *Seimui pritrūko balsų Konstitucijoje įteisinti tradicinę šeimos sampratą [The parliament lacked the votes to legalize the traditional conception of family in the constitution] //* <http://mobile.valstietis.lt/Pradzia/Naujienos/Lietuvoje/Seimui-pritruko-balsu-Konstitucijoje-iteisinti-tradicine-seimos-samprata> (accessed October 6, 2012).

⁵⁷ *Bielskis, A.: "Apie naują M.A.Pavilionienės, V.Uspaskicho ir P.Grazulio koaliciją" [Bielskis, A.: "On a new coalition of M. A. Pavilionienė, V. Uspaskich and P. Grazulis] //* <http://www.delfi.lt/news/ringas/lit/abielskis-apie-nauja-m-a-pavilionienes-v-uspaskicho-ir-p-grazulio-koalicija.d?id=60066749#ixzz2SbDvuP4v> (accessed October 7, 2013).

⁵⁸ Mažvydas Jastramskas, *supra* note 54.

Table 2. Lithuanian political parties' positions towards LGBT issues⁵⁹

Positioning themselves as "tolerant"	Positioning themselves as "traditionalists"	Intentionally or unintentionally "reluctant"	Positioning themselves as "intolerant"
Liberal Movement→ LSDP→	Homeland Union/ Lithuanian Christian democrats→	Labor Party→ Courage Way→	Order and Justice → Electoral Action of Lithuanian Poles

Thus, according to political programs, LGBT issues penetrate into mainstream political discourse, although there are not enough reasons to deny that the LGBT issues are still on the margins of mainstream political processes. The topic is only of limited importance for electoral decisions and seems fully unimportant for executive coalition building.

3.3. LGBT REFLECTIONS IN THE MEDIA: THE MAIN STAGES

According to public opinion polls, LGBT issues seem to be not highly relevant for the vast majority of Lithuanian society, as homosexuality still is assumed to be an individual and private problem, rather than the issue claiming public debate.⁶⁰ Only after various events or certain political speeches and debates related to homosexuality does the public consider it important to think about the values that lead the public to support one or the other side of the discussion.

However, the Lithuanian media constantly discusses the LGBT. The media itself for a long time did not show active involvement in the promotion of homosexual issues. It is possible to see higher flows of information about LGBT issues before and after the LGBT Pride parade in 2010 and when the discussion of the eligibility of legalization of partnership for homosexuals was initiated between the political parties in the parliament as well as in society. During the analysis period from 2006 to 2012 a number of publications appeared where the question of LGBT Pride parade was discussed in the context of the related LGBT issues (see Figure 1).

⁵⁹ Source: prepared by authors.

⁶⁰ In the survey where the question was whether a person is in favor of organizing gay parade in Vilnius, the results are as follows: 73.3 per cent of the respondents indicated that they do not support the decision of Vilnius municipality to give a permission to organize parade (for more information see *Apklausa: dauguma lietuvių yra prieš gėjų eitynes* [Survey: majority of Lithuanians are against the gay parade] (2010-05-06) // <http://valstietis.balsas.lt/Pradzia/Naujienos/Lietuvoje/Apklausa-dauguma-lietuviu-yra-pries-geju-eitynes> (accessed December 3, 2011).

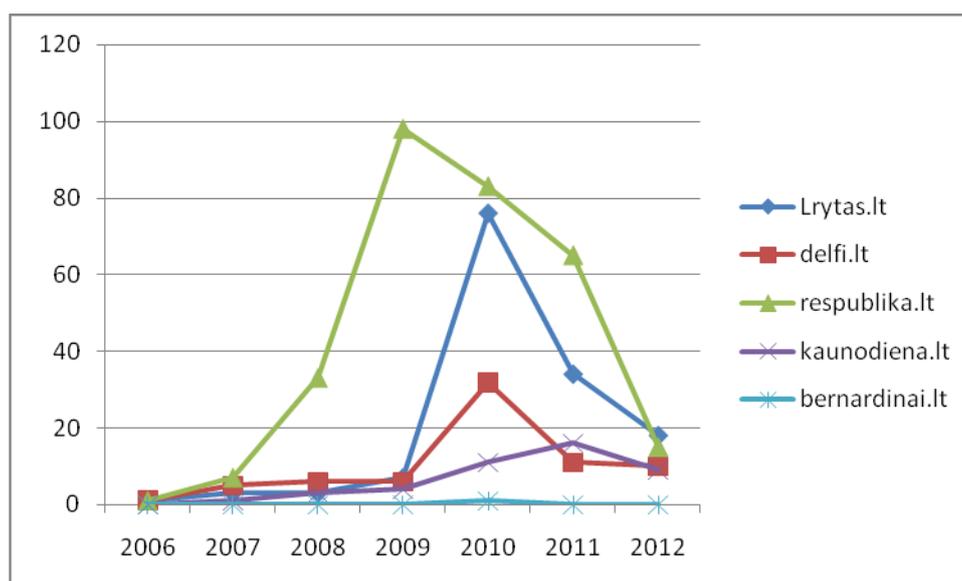


Figure 1. Dynamics of publications on LGBT issues in the Lithuanian news media portals in 2006-2012⁶¹

From the primary quantitative analysis of media publications in five media portals⁶² we may see that the media attention to LGBT issues has some “wave” periods. Monitoring data of news portals shows that since 2006 and until 2012 the greatest number of articles and online comments was published in two of them, www.respublika.lt and www.Lrytas.lt.⁶³ The first one was clearly expressing negative views towards LGBT, and the second one was expressing various views. The rest part of the portals, with the exception of delfi.lt (its coverage is constant, though not extensive), were rather passive. Their users were passively engaged in discussions and comments as well.

In the media reflections we may identify four different periods. During the first period of 2006-2007 the context of European homosexuals and the rights of homosexuals were discussed. For instance, in 2007 we may identify one popular discourse in the media concentrating on the LGBT rights and homophobic attitudes of Lithuanian society. The articles were discussing the stereotypic attitudes to the sexual minorities (“the homosexuality is a disease”, “being homosexual or not is a choice of a person (you are not born a gay or lesbian)”, “homosexuality is not a normal thing”) and possibilities for changing the situation.⁶⁴ The other articles were

⁶¹ Source: Unpublished materials of research project “Influence of non-electoral campaigns upon political processes in Lithuania”, MIP-017/2011, supported by the Lithuanian Research Council (group of the researchers Liudas Mažylis, Jovita Tirvienė, Ingrida Unikaitė-Jakuntavičienė, Bernaras Ivanovas, Sima Rakutienė, Ausrinė Jurgelionytė).

⁶² Data for the media analysis were collected during the project supported by the Lithuanian Research Council “Influence of non-electoral campaigns for political processes in Lithuania” (*ibid.*).

⁶³ According to the search engine in the media portals from 2006-2007 to 2012 number of publications in the portals is as follows: republika.lt – 302; lrytas.lt – 142; delfi.lt – 71; kaunodiena.lt – 44.

⁶⁴ *Samuolytė, J.: “Homofobijos apraiškos ir dvigubų standartų taikymas Lietuvoje” [Samuolytė, J.: “The homophobic manifestations and double standards in Lithuania”] (2007-05-23) //*

raising the issue of discrimination against homosexuals. One case was related to the decision made by the Mayor of Vilnius to forbid the information campaign "For Diversity. Against Discrimination" organized by The European Commission. The rhetoric of order and fear of unrest was used in the argumentations. The article was presenting a critique of this decision.⁶⁵ There was an attempt to present social advertising related to the issue of LGBT rights by claiming that homosexuals do not feel comfortable in their work places and using the slogans "gay men can serve in the police, lesbians can work at schools, and homosexual staff can be open in society".⁶⁶ That is why some discussion was initiated whether it is right to put this social advertising on the trolleybuses, and whether we may treat this advertising like propagation of homosexuality. The gay representatives and human rights specialists were trying to explain that this advertising is like an initiative for a dialogue with society while the other groups of society (some students and traditional values oriented groups) were against the advertising by arguing that homosexuals in such a way are creating "Sodom aggression", "gay dictatorship", "trying cynically to show their prominence", and to "impose their bedroom affairs discussion on the great majority."⁶⁷

The second period is associated with the organizing of the Gay Pride parade itself – the fight for permission to organize it in 2010. The liveliest discussion of LGBT issues was in 2010 when in January initially it was given permission to organize a gay parade in the space next to the Palace of Sport instead of a space in the old town.⁶⁸ First, political fights involving Lithuanian Parliament, Vilnius City Municipality, heritage preservationists, the Jewish community and the Lithuanian Gay League started, arguing where exactly in Vilnius the parade could take place, in central part of city or elsewhere. The Lithuanian Jewish community was outraged concerning the permission of the LGBT march in the place of the former Jewish cemetery (next to the Sport palace).

The Lithuanian Gay League demanded the right to go in the old town instead of the place where the municipality allowed.⁶⁹

<http://www.delfi.lt/news/ringas/lit/jsamuolyte-homofobijos-apraiskos-ir-dvigubu-standartu-taikymas-lietuvoje.d?id=13285379> (accessed October 6, 2012).

⁶⁵ Bielskis, A.: "Vilnius – homofobiškos kultūros sostinė" [*Bielskis, A.: "Vilnius – the capital of homophobic culture"*] (2007-05-24) // <http://www.delfi.lt/news/ringas/lit/abielskis-vilnius-homofobiskos-kulturos-sostine.d?id=13299227> (accessed October 6, 2012).

⁶⁶ Kodėl turiu apsimitinėti, kad nesu gėjus? [*Why I have to pretend that I am not gay*] (2007-05-21) // <http://pilietis.delfi.lt/voxpopuli/kodel-turiu-apsimitineti-kad-nesu-gejus.d?id=13259858> (accessed October 6, 2012).

⁶⁷ Samuolytė, J.: "Homofobijos apraiškos ir dvigubų standartų taikymas Lietuvoje", *supra* note 64.

⁶⁸ Vilniaus valdžia seksualines mažumas stumia prie Sporto rūmų [*Vilnius municipality pushes the sexual minorities to the Sport palace*] (2010-01-27) // <http://www.iryta.lt/-12645866381263054119-vilniaus-vald%C5%BEia-seksualines-ma%C5%BEumas-stumia-prie-sporto-r%C5%ABm%C5%B3.htm> (accessed October 16, 2012).

⁶⁹ Pečeliūnaitė, L.: "Konservatoriai susipešė dėl gėjų" [*Peceliunaite, L.: "The conservatives fought for gays*] // <http://www.alfa.lt/straipsnis/10313365/Konservatoriai.susipese.del.geju=2010-02-04> (accessed October 16, 2012).

Second, the media was writing about the support of some foreign politicians for LGBT parade. For instance, a visit by the Swedish minister of EU affairs to Lithuania coincided with supporting gays to organize the parade. She said: "I will be among the participants who deliver speeches. I encourage more people to participate. I will try to bring my colleagues, the Ministers, who support me ... [it is] important to stress that gay rights are not anything special – just human rights."⁷⁰

Third, enormous media attention was paid to the protests against the LGBT parade. There were protests in Vilnius and Kaunas against these people who permitted the parade.⁷¹ The opponents' discourse was dominated by such phrases as: "gays have to sit in their homes; such processions seem acceptable in America, but not in Lithuania; we are against any parades"⁷², and "For the preservation of the family tradition!", "This is not a family – it is a disease!", "let gays live their life, , but they should not show all the beauty to our youth", "equal rights for the people to express themselves, but expression should not contradict to moral values; this kind of public events is contrary to the conception of the morality of our democratic society."⁷³ In April, the Lithuanian Catholic Church announced that its members will protest against the Gay pride by the pray. The representatives of the church said: "The Church believes that it is very important to warn about the social dangers posed by erroneous theories of the human person deletes masculinity or femininity importance if it were only a biological issue."⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Švedijos ministrė: "Politikai, bandydami užkirsti kelią gėjų paradui, daro gėdą Lietuvai" [Swedish minister: "Politicians attempting to ban the gay parade make a disgrace for Lithuania"] // <http://www.lrytas.lt/-12694488841268399146-%C5%A1vedijos-ministr%C4%97-politikai-bandydami-u%C5%BEkirsti-keli%C4%85-g%C4%97j%C5%B3-paradui-daro-g%C4%97d%C4%85-lietuvai.htm> (accessed October 26, 2012); *Seksualinių mažumų eitynėse Vilniuje dalyvaus neščia Švedijos ministrė [In LGBT parade will participate pregnant Swedish minister]* // <http://www.lrytas.lt/-12677030091265852105-seksualini%C5%B3-ma%C5%BEum%C5%B3-eityn%C4%97se-vilniuje-dalyvaus-%C5%A1vedijos-ministr%C4%97.htm> (accessed October 26, 2012).

⁷¹ *Kaune ir Vilniuje plakatais nešini žmonės protestavo prieš sostinėje planuojamas gėjų eitynes [In Kaunas and Vilnius people with transparents were protesting against the planned gay parade]* // <http://www.lrytas.lt/-12698645641267958277-kaune-ir-vilniuje-plakatais-ne%C5%A1ini-%C5%BEmon%C4%97s-protestavo-prie%C5%A1-sostin%C4%97je-planuojamas-g%C4%97j%C5%B3-eitynes-nuotraukos-video.htm> (accessed October 6, 2012).

⁷² *Mitinge Vilniuje reikalauta mero atsistatydinimo ir rinkti parašai prieš gėjų eitynes [In the rally in Vilnius people were demanding the mayor to resign and collected the signatures against gay parade]* // <http://m.lrytas.lt/-12691901021267245444-mitinge-vilniuje-reikalauta-mero-atsistatydinimo-ir-rinkti-para%C5%A1ai-prie%C5%A1-g%C4%97j%C5%B3-eitynes.htm> (accessed in October 6, 2012); *Į gėjų parada su šautuvu grasinęs eiti P.Gražulis sulaukė atkirčio [P. Gražulis has threatened to go to the gay parade with a gun]* (2010-03-24) // <http://www.lrytas.lt/-12694285091267195884-%C4%AF-g%C4%97j%C5%B3-parad%C4%85-su-%C5%A1autuvu-grasin%C4%99s-eiti-p-gra%C5%BEulis-sulauk%C4%97-atkir%C4%8Dio-video.htm> (accessed October 6, 2012).

⁷³ *Kaune ir Vilniuje plakatais nešini žmonės protestavo prieš sostinėje planuojamas gėjų eitynes, supra note 71.*

⁷⁴ Šv. Sosto atstovas Vilniuje: "Bažnyčia prieštarauja gėjų eitynėms" [The representative from the Holy Seat in Vilnius: "The church is against the gay parade"] (2010-04-03) // <http://www.lrytas.lt/-12702999451267964644-%C5%A1v-sosto-atstovas-vilniuje-ba%C5%BEeny%C4%8Dia-prie%C5%A1tarauja-g%C4%97j%C5%B3-eityn%C4%97ms.htm> (accessed October 6, 2012); *Prieš homoseksualų eitynes monsinjoras A. Svarinskas kovos malda ir rožiniu [Monsinjur Svarinskas will fight against the parade of homosexuals with a pray and rosary]* (2010-05-04) // <http://www.lrytas.lt/-12729623411272521511-prie%C5%A1-homoseksual%C5%B3-eitynes-monsinjoras-a-svarinskas-kovos-malda-ir-ro%C5%BEiniu-papildyta.htm> (accessed January 18, 2013).

The third period was the most active and is associated with the LGBT Pride in Vilnius itself which took place in May 2010. At the same time the demonstrations of anti-homosexuals were organized. Both events attracted the attention of media. The news media portals were stating that many heterosexuals came to support the LGBT and that this shows that not all Lithuanians are homophobic: "one person carried a banner declaring that he is a Christian, heterosexual father of a family and promoting human rights. He explained that he wanted to support gays, 'Those people deserve confirmation that they have human rights'."⁷⁵

Although serious physical collisions were avoided, there were some attacks and protests. The most attractive for media was the intervention of the MPs (those who actively tried to prohibit the LGBT parade), who violated the area protected by the police. Later, after the parade, it became a symbolic depiction: almost all publications on LGBT issue were illustrated by the pictures of the two MPs "overcoming" the police cordon (see picture 1.).⁷⁶ These MPs in such a way were protesting against LGBT parade. A large number of publications were dedicated to the discussion of the behavior of those two parliament members – whether it is possible being a parliamentarian and fight with the police; will they be judged by the parties they belong to and by the court; etc. Both MPs were finally judged guilty, and given the punishment of a 200LTL fine in 2012.

⁷⁵ *Gėjus parade drąsino ir tradicinės orientacijos žmonės [The gays in the parade were encouraged by the people of traditional orientation]* // <http://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/gejus-parade-drasino-ir-tradicines-orientacijos-zmones.d?id=32078697> (accessed October 6, 2012).

⁷⁶ *Dviejų parlamentarų žygiai ir smerkiami, ir teisinami [The excesses of two MP's are condemned and justified]* (2010-05-11) // www.lrytas.lt (accessed October 6, 2012).



Figure 2. Two MPs jumping through police cordon⁷⁷

The fourth period, 2011-2012, is associated with the consequences of the aforementioned events. First, the case of two parliamentarians attracted the attention of media. Two MPs were accused of administrative offenses and their case had to be considered by the Supreme Administrative Court of Lithuania.⁷⁸

Second, the media was informing readers about the cases of provoking hate against homosexuals. For instance, there were two women in different regions of Lithuania who wrote comments on the articles about the LGBT. As news media portals inform, they “publicly ridiculed, driven by hatred and discrimination, violence and physical force against homosexuals, because of their sexual orientation.”⁷⁹

The other media discourse was dedicated to the discussion of LGBT discrimination issues. A few publications published articles about the four members

⁷⁷ Source: 2010 m. Lietuvos įvykių TOP 10 [TOP 10 Lithuanian events in 2010] // <http://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/2010-m-lietuvos-ivykiu-top-10.d?id=40201837> (accessed April 20, 2014).

⁷⁸ K. Uokos ir P. Gražulio byla teisme savo eilės gali laukti metus [The case of K. Uoka and P. Gražulis may wait its turn in the court for a year] // <http://www.lrytas.lt/?id=12934618251292359204&view=6&p=1> (accessed October 6, 2012).

⁷⁹ Nubausta interneto komentaruose prieš homoseksualistus smurtauti raginusi moteris [Women agitating in the commentaries of internet to fight against the homosexuals was sentenced] (2011-05-22) // <http://it.lrytas.lt/-13060823811305282414-nubausta-interneto-komentaruose-prie%C5%A1-homoseksualistus-smurtauti-raginus-i-moteris.htm> (accessed October 6, 2012); Rokiškietė teisme išteisinta dėl komentaro apie gėjų dėstytoją A. Zdanevičių [Court acquitted the women from Rokiskis for the commentary about the gay lecturer A. Zdanevičius] (2011-08-25) // <http://it.lrytas.lt/-13142787041313151929-roki%C5%A1kiet%C4%97-teisme-i%C5%A1teisinta-d%C4%97l-komentaro-apie-g%C4%97j%C5%B3-d%C4%97styt%C4%85-a-zdanevi%C4%8Di%C5%B3.htm> (accessed October 6, 2012).

of the EP group who were disappointed by the Lithuanian Seimas, who was preparing to consider the changes of the Code of Administrative Offences (CAO). They were interested in whether this replacement violates the rights of sexual minorities. It provides a penalty for homosexual relations advocacy/propagation.⁸⁰ However, the proposal proposed by active opponents of the LGBT had no support in the Lithuanian parliament.

Analyzing the year by year publications one may identify that the greatest salience of the homosexuality issues was in the period of 2009-2010. The monitoring of two major and most popular Lithuanian media portals (www.lrytas.lt and www.delfi.lt) shows that the attention of the media to the LGBT issues was fostered by the LGBT parade organization campaign.

According to how LGBT issues were reflected in the media, two of the most interested actors may be identified. The first one is a group of activists trying to inform and fight for LGBT rights. The most active among them are LGBT organizations with the Lithuanian Gay League at the forefront. Also some active supporters of homosexual rights in the Lithuanian parliament might be attached to this group, for instance, Aušrinė Povilionienė. The second active actor is a group of politicians claiming to represent a certain society group having "traditional" values and norms, actively opposing the LGBT parade and activity in securing their rights. For instance, one of the respondents of the interview, Kazimieras Uoka, mentioned that he represents an informal movement – a citizens group called "Uz dora ir tauta" ("For honor and nation"). Both sides have their own message and try to promote it persuading the public to support them. They try to convey a specific message to the public by supporting one of the interested sides in the discussions, actions and law proposals.

4. TWO COMPETING NORMATIVE TRAJECTORIES WITHIN THE NATIONAL MEDIA

Two different normative trajectories will be examined further here in order to show the opposing normative narratives. This part of the article puts forth two arguments. First of all, we state that external support was an essential element of LGBT political campaigns, and secondly, the pride march and its reflections in the media resulted in the division of two opposing normative trajectories.

⁸⁰ Urmonaitė, E.: "Strasbūras gina gėjus nuo Lietuvos politikų" [*Urmonaite, E.: "Strasbourg is defending gays against the Lithuanian politicians"*] // http://m.lrytas.lt/?data=20110120&id=akt20_a4110120&view=2 (accessed October 6, 2012); Samoškaite, E.: "Lietuvoje už homoseksualumo propagavimą siūlomos baudos EP prilygintos Stalinizmui" [*Samoskaite, E.: "The offered fines for the propagation of homosexuality in Lithuania are equated with Stalinism"*] // <http://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/lietuvoje-uz-homoseksualumo-propagavima-siulomos-baudos-ep-prilygintos-stalinizmui.d?id=40995265> (accessed in October 6, 2012).

Table 3. Competing normative trajectories and campaign instruments reflected in national media⁸¹

	LGBT campaign	Protesting campaign
Defended values and norms	Human rights, individual freedom, expression, tolerance, equality	Family, tradition, religion, virtue, nation
Actors	Lithuanian Gay League (LGL)	Informal social movement, Coalition of citizens "For the virtue and nation" and ad hoc civil/society coalitions
Form of campaign	Legal demonstrations	Counter-demonstrations (illegal action of the two parliamentarians)
Symbolism	Official LGBT rainbow flag (idiosyncratic demonstrations and clothing was not a feature of the parade in Vilnius)	Vulgar banners, mockery of LGBT personalities and the officials permitted parade
External dimension	Involvement of foreign embassies, EU institutions and other international actors	It was not reflected in the media
"Other" construction	Homophobic, intolerant, actively opposing to LGBT campaign	LGBT personalities, "Western organizations" and other actors supporting them

4.1. THE NORMATIVE TRAJECTORY OF THE LGBT CAMPAIGN: TOLERANT DISCOURSE

The gay pride parade organized in Lithuania has become one of the biggest stimuli for LGBT public discourse within Lithuanian society. According to the leader of Lithuanian Gay League who was one of the campaign's initiators, "this community, homosexual citizens ...<>... seek to be seen and heard...and without gay pride parade such a high level of discussion within society would not be possible in Lithuania."⁸² As the analysis of media portals showed, the event attracted the highest attention of media on this topic (LGBT rights and representation in Lithuania).

The normative trajectory of the LGBT campaign is based on human rights and individual freedoms, expression, equality and tolerance—all the norms and rights practiced in the West. The rights of LGBT personalities are involved in the European Union's⁸³ and international law and are defined as part of the human rights, which give the legal arguments and tools for legitimate political campaign for homosexual people in Lithuania. These norms and rights provided the legal instruments for the campaign's activities and the construction of 'normalcy' perception in the public space.

⁸¹ Source: analysis by authors according to Lithuanian media portals.

⁸² Interview with Vladimir Simonko, LGL leader, Interview by telephone (November 26, 2012).

⁸³ Markas Bellas, "Šeimos, partneriai, vaikai ir Europos Sąjunga" [Families, partners, children and European Union]: 51; in: *Šeimos politikos ir teisės iššūkiai Europoje* (Vilnius: LGL, 2004).

According to Enguix: "Those stressing protest adopt a casual wear to give a sense of normality in order to achieve social legitimation."⁸⁴ As the LGBT campaign's initiator put it, "our goal was to send the signal for the society, politicians, community that there is a need to strengthen human rights in our society...The parade has formed very strong message for the citizens."⁸⁵ In Lithuania the organized parade had no exclusive symbolic features of analogical events of the Western European or American cities like eccentric clothing⁸⁶—just the rainbow flag and the banners and posters with writing on them supporting values such as freedom, equality and tolerance. In this context the parade might be evaluated as a peaceful or even spare collection of people involving several well-known personalities in Lithuania (parliamentarian M.A. Pavilionienė) and foreign representatives and it had no exclusive features in comparison to other social events (except the specific colorful flags).

The external dimension in accordance with a normative trajectory became the essential element of the campaign. Western countries (like the USA), the EU, and other international institutions, played a crucial role in the pro-LGBT campaign in Lithuania. Firstly, legal norms and rights practiced in the Western societies provided a legal basis as well as moral support for the perception of 'normalcy'. In this context the most opposing activists were marginalized in the Lithuanian media. Secondly, several Western institutions, such as the European Commission, members of the European parliament, international organizations (Council of Europe⁸⁷, Amnesty International⁸⁸) and foreign embassies (Netherlands⁸⁹) and

⁸⁴ Begonya Enguix, *supra* note 23: 27.

⁸⁵ Interview with Vladimir Simonko, LGL leader, *supra* note 82.

⁸⁶ Lietuvos gėjai sako, kad nuogybių ir ekstravagancijos eitynėse nebus [Lithuanian gays say that there will be no extravagancy and nudity in the parade] (2010-05-05) // <http://www.lrytas.lt/-12730422291271614541-lietuvos-g%C4%97jai-sako-kad-nuogybi%C5%B3-ir-ekstravagancijos-eityn%C4%97se-nebus.htm> (accessed January 18, 2012).

⁸⁷ Europos Tarybos komisaras: "Būtina užtikrinti, kad seksualinių mažumų teises ginantys renginiai vyktų, net jei nepatiktų kitiems" [Council of Europe Commissioner: "It is necessary to ensure that the rights of sexual minorities defending events to take place, even if you dislike the other"] // <http://www.lrytas.lt/-12731490071273076990-europos-tarybos-komisaras-b%C5%ABtina-u%C5%B3-utikrinti-kad-seksualini%C5%B3-ma%C5%BEum%C5%B3-teises-ginantys-renginiai-vykt%C5%B3-net-jei-nepatikt%C5%B3-kitiems.htm> (accessed October 6, 2012).

⁸⁸ Gėjai įteikė skundą teismui, o 'Amnesty International' prezidentei – 14 tūkst. 500 parašų už gėjų eitynes [Gays complained to the court and 'Amnesty International' gave to President 14 thousand 500 signatures for the gay parade] // <http://www.lrytas.lt/-12731349741271886648-g%C4%97jai-%C4%AFteik%C4%97-skund%C4%85-teismui-o-amnesty-international-prezidentei-14-t%C5%ABkst-500-para%C5%A1%C5%B3-u%C5%BE-g%C4%97j%C5%B3-eitynes-2-video.htm> (accessed January 18, 2012).

⁸⁹ Homoseksualų eitynėse dalyvausiantis Nyderlandų ambasadorius J. Wijnandsas: "Žmogaus teisės nėra valgiaraštis, iš kurio galima rinktis" [To be involved in the homosexual march Dutch ambassador J. Wijnands: "Human rights are not menu from which you can choose"] // <http://www.lrytas.lt/-1272909511271886628-homoseksual%C5%B3-eityn%C4%97se-dalyvausiantis-nyderland%C5%B3-ambasadorius-j-wijnandsas-%C5%BEmogaus-teis%C4%97s-n%C4%97ra-valgiara%C5%A1tis-i%C5%A1-kurio-galima-rinktis.htm> (accessed January 18, 2012).

ministers (Swedish minister for EU affairs⁹⁰), were directly involved when seeking first LGBT pride parade in Lithuania.

The Lithuanian Gay League actively collaborated with the embassies of foreign countries in Lithuania and other international actors. In May of 2010 when Lithuania's court suspended the permission for the pride parade,⁹¹ many external actors applied pressure to Lithuania's institutions. The media was filled with the messages that international actors publicly protested against Lithuania's decision. The media gave the message that, for example, the ambassador of the Netherlands supports the pride parade. Amnesty International was against the parliamentary decision to forbid the parade, saying that it is "unacceptable that the members of Lithuanian Seimas wish to forbid the parade by argument based on the Protection of Minors Act, which Amnesty International also called homophobic. Amnesty International condemns MPs call for use of the recent homophobic law to ban 'the Baltic Pride', and asked the President of Lithuania to intervene."⁹² European parliamentarians representing the liberal parliamentary group expressed a concern about the wish to withdraw the permission: "We are sure that the President of Lithuania and the authorities will grant the march, to guarantee citizens' right to assembly and demonstration and march participants to ensure adequate protection. If not, I will propose to raise this issue in the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Council and act in order to protect human rights in Lithuania and the European Union"⁹³, signatures were collected in favor of the parade, and presented to the President of Lithuania in order that she would do everything to allow the parade. Commissioner for Human Rights from The Council of Europe, T. Hammarberg, expressed his opinion that the parade should happen even if some do not like it:

According to him, the events for equality bans are alien to a modern European country, and contrary to Council of Europe standards. ... This law applies to all persons, including lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT). The parties

⁹⁰ Švedijos ministrė: "Politikai, bandydami užkirsti kelią gėjų paradi, daro gėdą Lietuvai", supra note 70.

⁹¹ Teismas sustabdė leidimą organizuoti eitynes 'Už lygybę' [The court adjourned the permission to organize a march 'For Equality'] // <http://www.lrytas.lt/-12730474691270753039-teismas-sustabd%C4%97-leidim%C4%85-organizuoti-eitynes-u%C5%BE-lygyb%C4%99-video.htm> (accessed January 18, 2012).

⁹² 'Amnesty International' pasmerkė gėjų eitynes siekiančius uždrausti Lietuvos parlamentarus [Amnesty International has condemned Lithuanian parliamentarians seeking the ban on gay marches] (2010-03-18) // <http://bendraukime.lrytas.lt/?id=12689225621267248461&order=1&view=6> (accessed March 18, 2010); 'Amnesty International': "Lietuvos prezidentė privalo paremti seksualinių mažumų eitynes" [Amnesty International: "Lithuanian President must support the march of sexual minorities"] (2010-05-04) // <http://www.lrytas.lt/-12729982871271676220-amnesty-international-lietuvos-prezident%C4%97-privalo-paremti-seksualini%C5%B3-ma%C5%BEum%C5%B3-eitynes.htm> (accessed October 6, 2012).

⁹³ Europos Parlamento liberalai ragina Lietuvos institucijas leisti vykti gėjų eitynėms [Liberals of European Parliament agitate Lithuanian institutions to allow the gay parade] (2010-05-06) // <http://www.lrytas.lt/-12731237641271203186-europos-parlamento-liberalai-ragina-lietuvos-institucijas-leisti-vykti-g%C4%97j%C5%B3-eityn%C4%97ms.htm> (accessed October 6, 2012).

have a duty to ensure that equality festivals or defending LGBT rights events to take place peacefully and their participants are protected, even if it's not like, and are troubled by other people.⁹⁴

The European Commission expressed that it is "upset about the situation." In a letter from European Commissioner J. Faullo, who sent the letter to the permanent ambassador of Lithuania to the European Union, he states that:

European Commission is concerned for the last events in relation with Saturday planned "Baltic pride"/"For equality" parade in Vilnius⁹⁵, - <> According to J. Faullo, while European Commission has not the right to intervene member states public events but the right for the peaceful demonstration is involved into the European Union's basic rights convention and European human rights convention and it is one of the basic EU's principle. In the letter it was noted that the representatives of the European Commission are going to participate in the event as well.⁹⁶

The spirit of the letter and the reflections of it in Lithuania's media quite clearly formed the 'normalcy' perception of the gay campaign and normative, legitimate trajectory in the public space. The embassy of the USA in Lithuania has taken an active role as well. According to the ambassador: Secretary of State H. Clinton emphasized that: "Homosexuality is not a western product but the reality of humanity."⁹⁷ The Swedish minister for EU affairs was cited in the media saying that Lithuanian politicians seeking to abandon, cancel, or disallow the LGBT march bring shame on Lithuania.⁹⁸ These messages in the media and active participation of external Western actors supported the pro-Gay (LGBT) campaign's formation of normalcy across Lithuanian society.

The initiators of the event argued that their rights are very closely associated with democratic values and they equate it with the conditions of democratic system and civil society. As they said:

... we are not so naive to believe that we will achieve our goals alone. We know the western practices how people make the alliances and membership with other organizations and we make the coalitions as well. I could mention that we

⁹⁴ Europos Tarybos komisaras: "Būtina užtikrinti, kad seksualinių mažumų teises ginantys renginiai vyktų, net jei nepatiktų kitiems", *supra* note 87.

⁹⁵ Europos Komisija reiškia susirūpinimą dėl šiuo metu uždraustų seksualinių mažumų eitynių [The European Commission expresses concern at the time banned the march of sexual minorities] // <http://bendraukime.lrytas.lt/-12732128601270946385-europos-komisija-rei%C5%A1kia-susir%C5%ABpinim%C4%85-d%C4%97l-%C5%A1iuo-metu-u%C5%BEdraust%C5%B3-seksualini%C5%B3-ma%C5%BEum%C5%B3-eityni%C5%B3.htm> (accessed December 20, 2012).

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ Baigiamasis ambasadorės žodis Lietuvos Gėjų lygos rengtame seminare žiniasklaidos atstovams [Final word from the Ambassador for media representatives at the seminar organized by Lithuanian Gay League] // <http://vilnius.usembassy.gov/speecheslt2/baigiamasis-ambasadors-odis-lietuvos-gj-lygos-rengtame-seminare-iniasklaidos-atstovams.html> (accessed December 15, 2012).

⁹⁸ Švedijos ministrė: "Politikai, bandydami užkirsti kelią gėjų paradui, daro gėdą Lietuvai", *supra* note 70.

<Lithuania Gay League> are the member of human rights coalition and the participants of anti-discrimination forum. It shows that we find the alter ego and we are not marginals ... and it is very difficult for other groups of the society to marginalize us.⁹⁹

In the LGBT campaign, the 'other' is constructed and associated with the most homophobic part of the society, but not all of society. The "'Other' is the active part of the most homophobic part of society, which actively opposes LGBT events. Lithuanian civil society is understood as an object which should be educated and enlightened by various actions involving politicians, video clips, programs on TV"¹⁰⁰ and other strategies.

4.2. THE NORMATIVE TRAJECTORY OF PROTESTING AGAINST THE LGBT: INTOLERANT DISCOURSE

The anti-LGBT rights campaign in the Lithuanian media is positioned as reactive, as responding¹⁰¹ to LGBT campaigns and demonstrations. According to one respondent it has an informal, semi-institutionalized movement¹⁰² "for virtue and nation".

Protesting against the gay (LGBT) campaign is based on a normative trajectory, but with a different logic and values hierarchy in comparison to the pro-LGBT campaign. The actors of this contra-gay campaign underline national and traditional values like family, tradition, religion¹⁰³, virtue and nation¹⁰⁴. This protesting against the gay campaign coalition involves various religious groups and confessions which have a common goal to 'fight' against the aspirations of homosexuals and their defended 'normalcy'. One of the members of this coalition and former parliamentarian said: "the values we are defending are written in Lithuania's constitution"¹⁰⁵.

This anti-LGBT normative trajectory is based on the Lithuanian constitution, where family is named as the most important link in society. This essential norm and value—family and children—should not be released into the homosexuals' world.

⁹⁹ Interview with Vladimir Simonko, LGL leader, *supra* note 82.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ V. Šustauskas žada išdrąskyti gėjų eitynes – prokurorai bijo riaušių [V. Šustauskas promises to ravage gay march – prosecutors fear riots] // <http://kauno.diena.lt/naujienos/lietuva/v-sustauskas-zada-isdraskyti-geju-eitynes-prokurorai-bijo-riausiu-papildyta-277142> (accessed January 18, 2012).

¹⁰² Interview with Lithuania's parliamentarian Kazimieras Uoka, Vilnius (June 8, 2012).

¹⁰³ Prieš homoseksualų eitynes monsinjoras A.Svarinskas kovos malda ir rožiniu, *supra* note 74.

¹⁰⁴ P. Gražulis ir K. Uoka tikina per gėjų eitynes gynę Lietuvos valstybę [P. Gražulis and K. Uoka argued that during the gay parade they were defending Lithuanian state] // <http://tv.lrytas.lt/?id=12856935191285492131> (accessed January 18, 2013).

¹⁰⁵ Interview with Lithuania's parliamentarian Kazimieras Uoka, *supra* note 102.

Except for a small group of young liberals, most of the society defends the traditional normative trajectory. Initiators of protesting against the gay campaign emphasize that LGBT persons' "final goal is to legalize homosexual marriages and even worse- adopt the children... and when you explain this goal for the liberal people they understand that this is wrong."¹⁰⁶ The same discussion on LGBT rights related to the marriage and adoption of children was continued in the media articles about the rhetoric and speeches of the parliament members who are against the laws which forbid all kinds of discrimination (sexual minorities as well):

In June Seimas adopted the new version of the Law on Equal Opportunities, P. Gražulis spared no harsh words against homosexuals, as opposed to legislation to ban discrimination against them - non-discrimination MP treated as fostering homosexuality and homosexual bags with pedophilia, necrophilia and bestiality.¹⁰⁷

Some members of European parliament from Lithuania also show negative attitudes to the LGBT: "MEP from Lithuania Šarūnas Birutis was disappointed by the displayed gay pictures in the European Parliament (EP). The politician says that a sexual minority in the Parliament implements an aggressive policy." "The European Parliament, in particular active sexual minorities, lobbyists, [have the] implicit goal to legalize so-called permission for such families to adopt children."¹⁰⁸

In this way some people seek through public debate to retain the traditional perception of 'normalcy' and the normal family. According to Artūras Tereškinas:

Family remains an important symbol of absolute values, but in several contexts the traditional absolutism of the family is put in question. ... As moralists and conservative politicians say, we emphasize the crisis of family. ... That is why the concern about the family as the place of moral values and the representations of family in the media remains a critical topic.¹⁰⁹

In this context it is important to note that it is opposed not just to different norms but also to different trajectories (the Western world and Lithuania's way) by showing that the national constitution is legally more important than EU legislation, even though the EU has the principle of supranationality. In the contra campaign the 'other' is loosely constructed and associated with all Western culture, not just the LGBT community who sometimes gives the arguments that many homosexuals

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ *Samoškaitė, E.: "Seimo naujokai mokysis tolerancijos" [Samoskaite, E.: "The new members of parliament will be learning tolerance"] // <http://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/seimo-naujokai-mokysis-tolerancijos.d?id=18122485> (accessed October 6, 2012).*

¹⁰⁸ *Europarlamentarą papiktino gėjų nuotraukos [Member of European parliament was angered by gay parties] // <http://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/europarlamentara-papiktino-geju-nuotraukos.d?id=19694326> (accessed October 6, 2012).*

¹⁰⁹ Artūras Tereškinas, "Šeimos bei partnerystės formos ir šeimos politika Lietuvos žiniasklaidoje" [The forms of family and partnership, and family policy in Lithuanian media]: 17; in: *Šeimos politikos ir teisės iššūkiai Europoje* (Vilnius: LGL, 2004).

work in the European Commission and they support homosexuals' movement in Lithuania.¹¹⁰ In this anti-gay campaign, a symbolic fight against the Western world's unacceptable values, norms, and influence is declared.

However, protesting of the LGBT campaign was loosely organized and even marginalized in the Lithuanian media. However, their protected normative trajectory remains the typically held one in Lithuanian society. The fact that two parliamentarians were not condemned in Lithuania's parliament, when Lithuania's attorney general asked LR Seimas to repeal their parliamentary immunity for their illegal actions during the march, reflects very well the social and political situation.

CONCLUSIONS

As media analysis shows, for a long time the Lithuanian media did not show active involvement in the promotion of homosexual issues. Only the initiative of the first LGBT Pride parade in 2010 sparked media interest in LGBT issues. This event attracted the highest flows of information on LGBT issues in the Lithuanian media.

Two diverging value normative trajectories – tolerant and intolerant – are recognizable through the analysis of the reflections of LGBT issues in Lithuanian news media portals where the LGBT Pride Parade of 2010 is still the dominant event and discursive stimulus. The LGBT Pride Parade, as it thawed the "frozen landscapes of norms," became a discursive device, an icon in itself. Two members of Lithuanian Parliament, "intolerant-liners" who jumped over police cordons during the Parade, became an illustration and a dominant symbol of two contradictory positions (tolerant and not tolerant) in society. Two different institutional hierarchies (parliament and police) here symbolically collide through visualization by the media, still many months after the Parade in 2010.

These diverging trajectories allow us to position the Gay Pride Parade and reaction to it as a potential value normative shift, limited by recent institutional decisions. However, there are two critical junctures for attention to LGBT rights : the period of 1993 (de-Sovietization, decriminalization) and the period of 2003 (Europeanization). The LGBT Pride Parade in 2010 can hardly be treated as a critical juncture. It is more a turning point, evoking discussions and at the same time becoming more a symbol of the existing two contradictory patterns (let them/don't let them march) than a critical juncture. The LBGT Pride Parade also serves as an illustration of the aforementioned contradictory positions. This confirms the active exposure of the parade itself and LGBT issues in the Lithuanian

¹¹⁰ *Interview with Lithuania's parliamentarian Kazimieras Uoka, supra note 102.*

media. Monitoring the media discourse has revealed that the first normative trajectory defended by pro-LGBT activists was highly supported by international and external institutions and is based on human rights, tolerance, and other values practiced in the Western world. The second normative trajectory was seeking to defend traditional family values.

Turning to discursive institutionalism, formation of alternative discourses is the precondition for institutional changes. Ideas enable the production of discourse, and may lead to institutionalization. Lithuania's situation has undergone many changes. Explaining them exogenously, two critical junctures are to be reconstructed: the early 1990s (Lithuania's democratic choice) and European conditionality of early 2000. Explaining changes endogenously, two alternative trajectories are built around and after the LGBT Parade, penetrating into mainstream political discourse. Both are easily recognizable from the speeches, discussions, documents, and media coverage we have analyzed. Tolerance persists; and intolerance persists too.

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