SAME-SEX RELATIONSHIPS:
WHY DO MANY LATVIAN POLITICIANS RESIST THEM?

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Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations

The authors use abbreviations in the text:

- Civil unions - we use civil unions to comprise any denotations of it, like, civil partnerships, registered partnerships, registered unions, etc.
- LGBT - for the simplicity of the reader, we will further use Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) to encompass Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer or Questioning (LGBTQ), Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex (LGBTI) and any other denotation of the community, except when it is in the name of a book, in a quote, etc.
- LR - literature review
- RQ - research question
- Saeima - Latvian Parliament
- SSCU - same-sex civil unions.
- SSMCU - same-sex marriage and/or civil unions.
- SSM - same-sex marriage.

Other specifications:

- Homosexual - the term is not used with the intent to offend LGBT representatives. In this thesis "homosexuals" or "homosexual couples" denotations are used as synonyms to "same-sex couples". Even though the "gay" or "same-sex couples" term is used when possible, in some places there is a need to use "homosexual". For example, when citing another author or when highlighting the distinction between heterosexual and homosexual individuals.
- Gay is used to replace *homosexual* and denominates both gay men, gay women, bisexual men, and bisexual women.
- English names of political parties are represented in Appendix E.

Abstract

Latvia has the second-lowest Rainbow Index in Europe and is among six European Union countries where neither same-sex marriages nor civil unions are legal (ILGA-Europe, 2020b). There were multiple petitions signed by 10,000 people to initiate the legalization of these laws, however, they were all rejected by Saeima. That is why we decided to understand the rationale behind Saeima politicians' resistance to pro-LGBT laws (more specifically same-sex marriage and civil union), and whether such resistance is strong.

First, we performed document analysis: identified arguments of 114 politicians against same-sex marriage and civil union (SSMCU) legalization from the publicly available sources and semi-structured interviews. We concluded that all the arguments we identified could be summarised into eight categories: unnaturalness, traditional Latvian family values, religion, demographics, Constitution, rejection of discrimination, social reluctance and immoral. We discovered that there are differences between the most common arguments in the world and Latvia, as well as the most common argument expressed by Latvian politicians is about traditional Latvian family values. Second, we implemented moral analysis to determine how strong each of the arguments is. To prepare these arguments for our moral evaluation, we reformulated each of them for strengthening their soundness. After the evaluation, we concluded that all eight arguments voiced by politicians are not strong, based on their moral content and fact-based evidence against them.

Regarding further implications of our thesis, it could be researched *why* politicians have these arguments and what factors could affect it. Besides, it would be beneficial to conduct comprehensive research on society's stance about SSMCU legalization.

1. Introduction

The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Association or ILGA-Europe, for short, offers a Rainbow Index which ranks states depending on rules of the government that influence the LGBT community on a percentage scale (0% - extreme violence against LGBT members, 100% - full equality and freedom) (ILGA-Europe, 2020a). This year the rainbow index score for Latvia is 17% which is not only the lowest among Baltic countries but also the second lowest in the EU after Poland with 16%. (ILGA-Europe, 2020a). Slowly, but surely, countries all over the world are allowing same-sex couples to form civil unions, get married, or even realize joint child adoptions (Zatat, 2018). There are 18 countries in Europe that allow same-sex couples to get married and 9 countries that have legalized civil unions (Appendix A). Latvia, however, has been slow in recognizing same-sex marriages and civil unions (SSMCU) which raises the question – what are the reasons why Latvian politicians are not changing the legal system to benefit LGBT citizens?

In 1993, the first LGBT organization strived to legalize same-sex marriages while the most recent attempt to legalize civil unions was in October of 2020 which illustrates the almost 30 year-long fight towards equality and basic human rights of LGBT people, yet not obtaining any significant changes in the legislation (Vērdiņš & Ozoliņš, 2015). Once the government modified Article 110 in the Latvian Constitution (Satversme) from "country supports and protects marriages" to "country supports and protects marriages between woman and man" in 2006 (after the first LGBT Pride), it became clear that achieving same-sex marriage legalization will not come before civil union legislation (Saeima, 2006b). Moreover, since 2015 there were multiple proposals (in 2015, 2018, 2019, 2020) to legally recognize civil unions that would allow both homosexual and heterosexual couples, who are not married, to form civil unions (ILGA-Europe, 2018b). Portal "Manabalss.lv" collected a minimum requirement of 10,000 votes for Saeima (Latvian Parliament) to consider the "petition for the introduction of partnership legislation", but it was already rejected multiple times (ILGA-Europe, 2018b).

The rising number of votes in favour of introducing the civil unions, openings of a variety of LGBT establishments, joyful Prides where the number of supporters has risen from 70 participants (in 2005) to 8,000 (in 2018), demonstrate the increasing support towards LGBT from the society (Ruduša, 2018). These facts make us question what are the reasons why the majority of politicians are against SSMCU legislation. To investigate this issue, we decided to dig deeper

into the politicians' stance against SSMCU legalization and evaluate the strength of these arguments, therefore, the **research questions** of this paper are the following:

How do Latvian politicians justify their rejection of same-sex marriage and civil union legalization? How strong are their arguments?

This thesis aims to look at LGBT rights in the context of SSMCU in Latvia through the lens of politicians' arguments from 2018 to 2021 February. In 2007 there was a study on a similar topic: *Homofobiskā runa Latvijā: Politiķu monitorings (Homophobic speech in Latvia: Monitoring the Politicians)* by Mozaīka (Mozaīka, 2007). However, there was no recent study that would capture politicians' arguments against SSMCU, and there was no study in Latvia that would evaluate the strength of these arguments.

The contents of the paper are: Abstract, Introduction, Literature Review, Methodology, Discussion and Results, and Conclusions. The Literature Review familiarizes the reader with the LGBT movement, its origins, legal matters, and supporting instances mostly in Latvia and Europe, as well as explains the main terms for explicit understanding. The Methodology includes the main methods - qualitative analysis, namely, document and moral analysis, and data collection procedure and sources - publicly available information and semi-structured interviews. The Discussion and Results section describes arguments voiced by politicians, how these arguments were reformulated and reveal which arguments based on moral analysis were strong and which were not.

2. Literature Review

Literature review is presented in the following form. First, we touch upon LGBT in the World. Second, we take a closer look at LGBT and political parties in Latvia. Third, we mention the existing categories of arguments against SSMCU in the world which will be used as a comparison to Latvian specific arguments in the results and discussion part. And last, we mention the existing Latvian research in this field.

2.1. LGBT in the World

In history, there are numerous occurrences of acts and love between people of the same sex - it dates back to Ancient Greece (Pickett, 2021). The West eventually came in contact with reports of same-sex love in foreign documents and found it disturbing, increasing the thought that homosexuality was "other, foreign, savage, a medical issue, or evidence of a lower racial hierarchy" (Morris, 2009). Many years passed until the first movements to demand equal rights for LGBT arose.

2.1.1. LGBT Movement

Movement can be defined as "a series of organized activities working toward an objective" ("Movement", n.d.). In 1897, the first gay rights movement in Europe was created in Berlin, which was called the Scientific-Humanitarian committee, by Doctor Magnus Hirschfeld. The committee's purpose was to repeal the 175 penal code in Germany, which prohibited relations between men arguing that they were unnatural. The committees' goal was also to publish books, brochures that would educate people about homophobia and homosexuality. When WWII was approaching and far-right political parties gained popularity and control, this, and other gay rights organizations, were disbanded, and participants punished. Later, new committees and organizations supporting the rights of gays and lesbians emerged in the Netherlands, France, United Kingdom. (Schlagdenhauffen, 2020).

In the United States of America, movements developed only later, around 1950, however, there were studies about homosexuality already before. The first important movement for gay rights was founded in 1950. One of the first important steps was done after the presentation of Evelyn Hooker's paper on how there is no difference in adjustment between gay and straight men in 1956 - since 1973 the American Psychiatric Association (APA) no longer classifies

homosexuality as an "illness". Until then, gay persons could face jail, lose custody of children, and other precautions limiting their rights, because "courts and clinics defined gay love as sick, criminal or immoral". (Morris, 2009).

The first gay rights march in the USA happened on 28th June 1969, in response to police raiding a gay club *Stonewall Inn*, after which the riots were named - Stonewall Riots. On 28th June 1970, there were 3 Pride marches happening at the same time - in New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles, which sparked the first Pride marches the following year in three European cities - London, Dublin, Oslo. More countries followed the example, resulting in the first EuroPride in 1992, which later even reached Eastern European countries. (Staff, García & Ranz, 2019).

2.1.2. Legislation

As mentioned before, the first move in the USA was that since 1973 homosexuality is no longer classified as an illness (Morris, 2009). Sweden was one of the first supporters in Europe - in 1972 they were the first to offer free sex reassignment therapy, since 1979 they no longer classify homosexuality as a mental illness or disorder (Staff, et al., 2019). Denmark was first to offer an alternative to marriage for same-sex couples - in 1989 the Registered Partnership Act was passed (Staff, et al., 2019). In 1990, the World Health Organization (WHO) took homosexuality off the mental illness list (Staff, et al., 2019). In 1994, the above-mentioned Article 175, which declared relations between men unnatural, was discarded by Germany (Staff, et al., 2019; Schlagdenhauffen, 2020). In 2001, the Netherlands became the first country to allow same-sex marriage (Staff, et al., 2019). Over time, more states and countries have introduced laws that support LGBT rights. Since 2000 it is illegal in the EU to discriminate against someone based on their sexual orientation (European Commission, n.d.). A large step towards LGBT rights recognition was made in 2011 when the United Nations Human Rights Council declared that LGBT rights are human rights (Chaffee & Thompson, 2011).

Before we move on, we need to establish what is the difference between marriage and civil union. A **marriage** is a legal union between two people in a relationship that is recognized and protected by the government, which in some countries is "specifically a union between a man and a woman" ("Marriage", n.d.). A **civil union**, also known as a registered partnership, civil partnership, etc., is a union between two people, usually of the same sex, that gives the couple similar rights and recognition that of a married couple ("Civil union", n.d.). Heterosexual couples can also form civil unions. We can see from Appendix A that there are 30 countries in

the world where same-sex marriage is allowed and 10 countries where civil unions are allowed, while in Europe there are 18 countries that have allowed same-sex couples to get married and 9 countries that have allowed civil unions between same-sex couples (Appendix A). We can conclude that in terms of the general consensus, EU countries are more progressive than the rest of the World in LGBT matters.

2.1.3. Sexual orientation discrimination and homophobia

Discrimination is defined as treating someone unfairly and/or hurting them because of their race, sex, gender, disability, etc. ("Discrimination", n.d.). In the context of LGBT, it is treating a person differently because they are a part of the LGBT community - they are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transsexual - they are discriminated against based on sexual orientation or gender identity (Singh & Durso, 2017). Our focus is SSMCU, thus we will concentrate more on discrimination because of sexual orientation. According to the Equality and Human Rights Commission (2016), there are four main sexual orientation-based discrimination types: direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation (Appendix B).

Homophobia is a person's "dislike or prejudice against gay people", where gay people is gay, lesbian, and bisexual people ("Homophobia", n.d.). Homophobia can be seen in many different behaviours and emotions - starting with simple distrust and ending with fear and hatred (Planned Parenthood, n.d.). Homophobia still is very divided in the world (Poushter & Kent, 2020). Acceptance for homosexuality has risen in the last two decades, in some countries, however, Western European countries, such as Spain, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Sweden remain the most supportive (Poushter & Kent, 2020). The most homophobic remain countries in Eastern Europe, Africa, and Asia (Poushter, & Kent, 2020).

2.1.4. Supporting organisations

To increase awareness about an issue, there have to be supporting organisations that organise Prides, help pass laws, make research, surveys, etc. There are many organisations that operate to support and educate about the LGBT community.

One of the most popular ones both in the World and in Europe is ILGA-Europe. ILGA-Europe was established in 1996, as a legal entity that brings together 600 organisations from 54 European and Central Asian countries (ILGA-Europe, n.d.b). The main pillars of their work are (1) "advocating for human rights and equality", (2) "strategic litigation", and (3) "strengthening

the LGBT movement" (ILGA-Europe, n.d.b.). ILGA-Europe is responsible for the well-known "Rainbow index".

2.1.5. Rainbow index

The Rainbow index is created by ILGA-Europe every year since 2009 (ILGA-Europe, 2009; ILGA-Europe, 2020a). The measuring technique has changed over the years, but since 2013 the index is a percentage scale that indicates how protective are the laws and policies of a country regarding LGBT rights (ILGA-Europe, 2013; ILGA-Europe, 2020a). This year the rainbow index for Latvia is 17% on a scale from 0% to 100%, while both Estonia and Lithuania are doing better, scoring 38% and 23%, respectively (ILGA-Europe, 2020a).

Latvia has the second-lowest Rainbow index from the EU countries in 2020 (ILGA-Europe, 2020b). The EU country with a lower index than Latvia is Poland with 16% -a percent lower than Latvia (ILGA-Europe, 2020b). The progress of countries can be seen in Appendix C. Appendix C also displays that since 2013, there are some countries, like, Luxembourg and Malta, who both have increased their indexes by more than 50%, but there are also some developed countries that have either stagnated or even decreased their indexes, like France, Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, etc. Latvia falls in neither of these countries - Latvia has decreased its index from 20% in 2013 to 17% in 2020 (Appendix C). Similar Rainbow indexes characterize Bulgaria (20%), Romania (18%) and Poland (16%).

According to ILGA-Europe (2020b), there are 69 different criteria by which the support for the LGBT community is measured, and of these 69, Latvia fits 13 criteria which can be seen in Appendix D. The 13 criteria bring Latvia's score to a low 17% on a scale from 0 to 100%. Latvia's index has not changed much over the years, which is worrying, considering that neighbouring countries have implemented more laws protecting LGBT rights, hence, increasing their score (Appendix C). (ILGA-Europe, 2020b).

2.2. LGBT in Latvia

This section introduces the reader with the beginning of the LGBT movement in Latvia which transitions into the discussion on Prides which highlighted the development of the first LGBT organizations. Next, we look at discrimination and homophobia in Latvia and a description of the legal system, continuing with supporting instances and political parties.

2.2.1. Movement

According to Kristīne Garina, the history of LGBT in Latvia started even before Latvia became independent because LGBT people were always there, also in Soviet times (LGBT House Riga, 2020a). The presence of gay people in the USSR is extensively described in the books *Forced Underground: Homosexuals in Soviet Latvia* by Rita Ruduša (2014) and *LGBTI vēsture Latvijā pēdējos 100 gados* by Ineta Lipša (2018). Books demonstrate the existence and struggle of gay individuals in times when, firstly, homosexuality was illegal and, secondly, was considered an illness. (Vērdiņš & Ozoliņš, 2015). During the Soviet times, the only literature and public discourse regarding homosexuality were presented in the negative form or not published at all due to censorship, for instance, famous Latvian sexologist Jānis Zālītis wrote a book *Mīlestības Vārdā* (1982) where he was spreading the idea that homosexuality is a result of poor sexual education, and, accordingly, it provokes perversion and diminishes the natality (Vērdiņš & Ozoliņš, 2015).

At the beginning of the 1990s, the first LGBT organizations appeared in Latvia. One of such was "Latvijas Associācija Seksuālai Vienlīdzībai" (LASV) (Latvian Association of Sexual Equality) which was officially registered in 1993 (Vērdiņš & Ozoliņš, 2015). Their main goal was same-sex marriage legalization, but they gained no support from politicians. (Vērdiņš & Ozoliņš, 2015). In 1997 the first Centre of Homosexuality was established, and in 1999 it invited to enforce partnership legalization regulation, but Saeima rejected it (Vērdiņš & Ozoliņš, 2015). The year after another organization is founded - "Gay Support Group" which created a gay trust hotline. One of the most significant publications was the portal "Gay.lv", created in 1999, which served as a forum to share news, announcements, and experiences. (Vērdiņš & Ozoliņš, 2015). In 2003, "ILGA Latvija" was formed and officially registered in 2004. The organization made the first big step towards change by organizing the first Riga Pride. (Vērdiņš & Ozoliņš, 2015).

2.2.2. Pride

Pride is a demonstration of unity, equality, fairness, and tolerance among the LGBT community's members in the form of a parade ("Gay Pride", n.d.). Latvia hosted the first pride in 2005, then the next in 2007 and 2008. Afterwards, Latvia teamed up with Estonia and Lithuania to establish the Baltic Pride which took place each year in one of the capitals - Riga,

Vilnius, or Tallinn starting with Riga in 2009. The next Baltic Pride Riga occurred in 2012 and afterwards in 2015 which was part of the EuroPride, and the last one was held in 2018. (Kitto, 2015). Pride in 2005 was the turning point in LGBT history in Latvia. The parade almost got cancelled, but the city court finalized the decision to allow the event to take place. Around 70 participants gathered for the pride parade, and about 3000 homophobes showed up to protest this movement. Police were poorly equipped to protect event members from the attack of protesters. (Kitto, 2015). Māris Sants stated that during the parade people threw eggs and stones (Personal communication, July 16, 2020). Kaspars Zālītis (current Mozaīka board member) declared that Jānis Iesalnieks, the former parliamentary secretary of the Ministry of Justice, pushed him during the pride (Kitto, 2015). This was far from the cheerful fest that was in other European countries.

The next two Riga prides in 2007 and 2008 were organized by Mozaīka. Again, the heads of Riga attempted to forbid the event, but Mozaīka managed to create demonstrations that made the event happen. These parades gathered around 800 participants and about 1000 protesters. (Kitto, 2015). 2009 pride was organized as part of Baltic Pride but still faced opposition from the city's authorities. 2012 Pride was the first one that faced no resistance from state authorities. Still, Mozaīka planned to excel in the previous parades and bring the parade to another level in 2015. In reality, it was challenging to attract an event of this scale to relatively small Riga. Eventually, the idea came true and EuroPride Riga in 2015 is remembered as the largest Pride in the history of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia. The latest pride in 2018 was a 100-day chain of cheerful events to celebrate equality and human rights with a record-high number of 8,000 participants. This pride was marked as the "first" time for various instances: Accenture was the first company to take part in the parade, never had three political parties joined the celebration, and so many local firms supported the event by promoting LGBT symbolics in a form of store decorations or even creating special LGBT product lines. (Ruduša, 2018). Yet even this year there were protesters, but they were only calmly advertising their conservative beliefs (Ruduša, 2018).

With every next pride, the group of supporters became bigger, the crowd of protesters smaller, and not only Prides helped to raise the LGBT community's visibility, but it also was a way to unite Latvian society. Nonetheless, discrimination and homophobia still remained an issue.

2.2.3. Discrimination and Homophobia

Discrimination towards the LGBT community has existed since the beginning of the LGBT movement until today but in different intensities. The homophobic attitudes originate from the Soviet times when the communistic mindset made "homosexuality a taboo topic" (Weiss & Bosia 2013, p. 103). Only after regaining independence, Latvia altered several laws to meet anti-discrimination requirements to join the EU, however, that did not change the rooted negative opinions towards gay people (Weiss & Bosia, 2013).

The Riga Pride in 2015 turned hidden non-acceptance of homosexuality into hate speech, homophobic attacks, and public discrimination which are still present nowadays and weakly protected by the law (Vērdiņš & Ozoliņš, 2015). Māris Sants, one of the first to publicly reveal his sexual orientation, shared how difficult it was to live in Latvia at the beginning of the 2000s when you do not feel safe and accepted in your homeland. Physical and verbal assaults as well as expulsion from the church and workplace led to the decision to leave Latvia and move to the UK in 2008 (personal communication, July 16, 2020).

The 2009 and 2010 survey results demonstrated that Latvian society's acceptance of LGBT members was one of the lowest compared to other European countries (ILGA-Europe & Mozaīka, n.d.). More than 30% of those who answered the survey admitted that their opinion would change negatively if they got to know that the person is gay, from these people, one fifth would communicate with the person less and around 5% would act to make the person leave the workplace (ILGA-Europe & Mozaīka, n.d.). In the previous sections mentioned violence during the Riga Pride, hate speech in public media, and the homophobic attitude of many Latvians is a sign of discrimination and homophobia.

2.2.4. Legislation

Gay individuals have weaker legal protection compared to heterosexual people. This section familiarizes with laws that are in place to defend or not defend LGBT representatives and describes recent developments in legislation.

Laws in favour of LGBT personas

- In 1992 homosexual activity is decriminalized by the initiative of the Latvian Association of Sexual Equality (LASV) (Lavrikovs, 1999). From that date, Article 124 (1) of the Criminal

Code was removed and voluntary intercourse between adult men became legal while Article 124 (2) of the Criminal Code remained in force.

● In 2006 Vaira Vīķe Freiberga, the former Latvian president, insisted to include the non-discrimination clause based on sexual orientation in the work environment in the Latvian Labour Law (Saeima, 2006a). Modifications were made in Article 7 and Article 29 in the Labour Law by adding a "sexual orientation" point (Kitto, 2015).

● The other regulations that are inclusive for LGBT people include the following:

- There is no Article in the Military Service Law that would prohibit gay people to serve in the military (Saeima, 2007).

- According to Article 37 "other additions to the birth register entry", residents can change their gender and it is legally accepted. However, the law just allows changes in the birth register and creates ambiguity on its further implementation. (Līvmane, 2017).

- Sexual and Reproductive Health Law does not forbid lesbians to do artificial insemination (Equaldex, n.d.a)

Limitations in legislation for LGBT people

The previously mentioned laws do not protect gay people from a range of other instances. There is no law allowing same-sex individuals to marry or legalize their relationship, there is no law that would allow two partners of the same sex to adopt a child (ILGA-Europe & Mozaīka, n.d.). Until 15 December 2005, the Latvian Constitution stated in Article 110 that "country supports and protects marriages, family, parents' and children's rights" (Osipova, 2020). After this date, the new Saeima changed Article 110 to "country protects and supports the marriage between woman and man, family, parents' and children's rights" (Saeima, 2006b). These changes were provoked by the dramatic pride on 23 July 2005 which caused the splash of homophobic anger (Metuzāls, 2011).

There are also many other issues not being tackled by the law. According to ILGA-Europe and Mozaīka (n.d.), no studies are conducted by the state authorities to supervise the LGBT situation in Latvia regarding health issues, assaults towards LGBT members, bullying in schools. (ILGA-Europe & Mozaīka, n.d.). According to the same report, Latvian Criminal Law does not take into consideration homophobic or transphobic intentions when choosing the punishment which could decrease the number of homophobic attacks and does not consider hate speech towards gay people as a ground for judgment. In the past several politicians included hate

speech towards the LGBT community even in their election campaigns while nowadays hate speech is not sufficiently regulated in social media about LGBT-related topics. (ILGA-Europe & Mozaīka, n.d.)

Recent events regarding LGBT related laws

In 2015 the deputy Veiko Spoilītis submitted a proposal to Saeimas's Legal Commission about partnership law enforcement (Petrova, 2015). This initiative involved partnership legalization in the Latvian Civil Law's Family Rights sections, and it would not have altered the 110 Article in the Civil Law but still would provide protection to all couples including same-sex partners. However, this proposal was rejected. (Petrova, 2015). n 2015, the portal "Manabalss.lv" (MyVoice.lv), initiated by Juris Pūce, started collecting signatures to vote for enforcing partnership legalization (Pūce, 2015). Even though the requirement of 10 thousand votes was collected, the majority in the Saeima voted against this action, and the proposal was rejected in 2018. (Satori, 2020). In 2019 there was another attempt by "Attīstībai/Par!" and "Jaunās Vienotības" party deputies to bring up the proposal, but it was rejected in the same year (Satori, 2020).

The new signature collection process started again on 9 March 2020 and 1600 people voted on the first day of the release, however, this proposal was not even forwarded to Saeima discussion (Apollo, 2020b). The new signature collection restarted the day after the first news about the decline of the initiative - on the 1st of October (Stabiņģis, 2020). On 29 October Saeima rejected the petition signed by 10 392 people about same-sex partnership registration (Saeima, 2020).

Recent discussions about change in the definition of "family" in article 110

The Latvian Constitutional court announced that until 2022, the new regulations should be established to also protect same-sex couples (Klūga & Spundiņa, 2020). On 12 November 2020, the Latvian Constitutional Court ruled that not allowing the child's mothers female partner to take paternity leave at her job is not in accordance with Article 110 of the Constitution, thus ordering Saeima to work on this issue and pass legislation that will support same-sex partners (Laizāne, 2020). This created a lot of agitation in the society, dividing people in two camps - those who support the decision and those who do not. Neither party has clearly expressed their stance - whether they support this decision or not - however, further developments regarding this issue reveal their stances.

After this ruling *Nacionālā Apvienība* party came up with legislation that Article 110 in the Constitution should specify that a family is a union between a man and a woman, thus discriminating against same-sex couples and families (LSM, 2021). Even more - this new ruling would also discriminate against families that do not consist of a father, a mother, and a child, however, *Nacionālā Apvienība* denies this (LSM, 2021). On January 13th, Saeima voted on whether they should address this initiated legislation, and from the votes, we can understand the stances of the parties. As can be seen from Appendix F, all, except 3, politicians from the *Jaunā Konservatīvā Partija* voted in favour of continuing discussions on this matter. From *Zaļo un Zemnieku Savienība* all, except 2, voted for a continuation of discussions, from *Par cilvēcīgu Latviju* All, except 1, politicians voted for the continuation of discussions, and from *Nacionālā Apvienība*, the party that initiated this legislation, all voted for the continuation of discussions. Those who did not vote for continuing to discuss did not vote at all. In this vote, *Saskaņa* did not vote at all, *Attīstībai/Par!* and *Jaunā Vienotība* (except one who did not vote) voted against looking at this legislation further. (Appendix F).

2.2.5. Supporting organisations

Nowadays there are two main instances that engage in LBGT related activities in Latvia: ILGA-Europe at the European level and Mozaīka at the Latvian level. *ILGA-Europe* was founded in 1996 with the mission to live in a "world where dignity, freedoms and full enjoyment of human rights are protected and ensured to everyone regardless of their actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics" (ILGA-Europe, 2019c). Its work is concerned with assisting countries to adopt policies and laws to facilitate LGBT people's rights, employ European courts to embrace equality, and support the movement by educating, creating reports, organizing campaigns, and many more (ILGA-Europe, 2019b).

Even though *Mozaīka* currently is under the ILGA-Europe umbrella, it was established independently from it in 2006. Mozaīka is currently the oldest non-profit LGBT organization in Latvia with a similar vision as ILGA-Europe but particularly focused on Latvia and Baltic Region. (Mozaīka, 2011). Mozaīka has also established a youth group "Skapis" which is currently most active on Facebook with the goal to provide a platform for communication and collaboration for LGBT people, their friends, and family. It defines itself as the "safe space" where one can look up information about LGBT related topics, express themselves and support each other. (Skapis.eu, 2020). Some of the other organizations that deal with LGBT rights

protection and spread awareness in Latvia: Youth Organization "Protests" and LGBT House Riga (LGBT House Riga, 2020b).

2.2.6. Latvian political parties and their stances

It is essential to give a brief overview of Latvian political parties' stances on LGBT questions, as the core of our thesis is to discuss the arguments used by politicians in Latvia. To better describe the current situation in Latvia, we investigated the programs of political parties that participated in the Latvian 13. Saeima elections. Appendix E illustrates that the majority of the parties do not support same-sex marriage and civil union legalization. Here are their stances, summarized from Appendix E:

Stance	Parties
Support LGBT and their rights.	*Attīstībai/Par!, Jaunā Vienotība, Progresīvie*
No explicit stance revealed, however, the policies they have based their whole party on are against any kind of discrimination.	*Saskaņa*
Very outspoken about being against same-sex partnerships, civil unions, and LGBT altogether.	*LSDSP/KDS/GKL, No Sirds Latvijai, Latviešu Nacionālisti, Rīcības Partija, Latvijas Centriskā Partija, Jaunā Konservatīvā Partija, Nacionālā Apvienība*
Have not explicitly mentioned that it is against LGBT, SSMCU, but state that they support traditional families and values.	*Latvijas Reģionu Apvienība*
No specific opinion/stance stated.	*Zaļo un Zemnieku Savienība, Latvijas Krievu Savienība, Par Alternatīvu*
Their stance is that the Cohabitation Act should be resolved with the help of a referendum.	*Par Cilvēcīgu Latviju*

Table 1. Made by the authors using information from Appendix E.

Overall, we can conclude that the majority of parties does not support LGBT rights, including SSMCU, however, there are a few allies of the LGBT community among political parties.

2.3. The most popular arguments against same-sex marriage and civil unions

There are arguments that are aimed more at LGBT as a whole, not particularly as anti-SSMCU. However, these arguments work in the same way for opposing marriage/unions. A lot of the arguments that are used against the LGBT community's rights altogether can be considered as against SSMCU. There are arguments that are based on beliefs, social science, and other backgrounds, however, there are also arguments that are not academically backed. In the next sections, we list the most popular arguments against SSMCU in the world. We look at the arguments in the world to later compare them to the results obtained from Latvia.

2.3.1. Unnatural and immoral.

One of the most popular arguments against SSMCU, and even LGBT altogether, is that homosexuality is unnatural and immoral. Homosexuality goes against natural law[1], natural law would stipulate that it is counter-nature (i.e. does not exist or violate some deep natural principles), thus it would be unnatural (Macedo, 2015). One of the main "goods" of the natural law is "the marital good" (p.516), which in itself includes procreation and friendship (Macedo, 2015). This is just one of the basic goods that are included in the new natural law. Catholicism, Protestantism, and other religions are in support of traditional natural law (Macedo, 2015). Natural law does not have any clear definition, but most variations of it include marriage for procreation (Macedo, 2015). And this is where homosexuality does not comply with natural law - same-sex couples cannot procreate, thus they are not natural and should not be granted marital rights. This is where usually homosexuality is linked with PIB - polygamy, incest, bestiality. The main link is - if SSMCU are allowed then PIB and other non-traditional relationships will demand to be granted marital status too. With linking gay people with PIB, most are trying to show that same-sex love is immoral and unnatural. (Corvino, 2005).

2.3.2. Sickness.

As mentioned before, homosexuality used to be classified as a sickness by WHO until 1990, however, Rettman (2016) states that still in some countries in the EU, doctors see homosexuality as a mental sickness (Staff, et al., 2019). Rettman (2016) reports that the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) has found that "Bulgaria, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Romania and Slovakia"

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[1] Natural law - there is no clear definition of natural law, however, it is said to be derived from nature and inherent right and wrong values, not from societal rules. (Britannica, 2019; Macedo, 2015).

are the worst in terms of doctors' opinions and behaviours towards gay persons. These doctors and nurses sometimes even deny service or mock gay individuals who have been brought to the hospital (Rettman, 2016).

2.3.3. Traditional family values and morality.

A well-known argument against same-sex marriage is that it goes against the traditional marriage definition - a union between a man and a woman - and this argument is mentioned in most sources on SSMCU (Benson, et al., 2011; Carpenter, 2005; Corvino, 2005; Family Research Council, 2004; Macedo, 2015; Pope, 2004; ProCon.org, 2019).

The Family Research Council[2] (FRC) (2004) has mentioned multiple "social sciences" arguments that are mostly based on traditional family values:

- A child needs both parents because of the different emotional traits that they have/can nurture the child with.
- No feasible evidence that being brought up by same-sex parents does not affect the child.
- Same-sex couples are not as faithful.
- The procreative meaning of marriage would be lost, as same-sex couples cannot become parents on their own, that children who are brought up by parents of the same sex are prone to experience "disorders" regarding their gender and sexuality, etc.
- There are also arguments that state that men are better husbands and fathers when married, or that marriages work best if there are clearly executed gender roles.

As the previous reference is quite old, we review a more recent source, to see whether these arguments have persisted. In 2019, the ProCon.rog website created pros and cons list on whether gay marriage should be legal. The arguments were similar to the previously stated ones, and there were new ones: allowing same-sex marriages would create a pathway for PIB (polygamy, incest, bestiality) and other non-traditional relationships, and that it would threaten the already weakened institution of marriage (ProCon.org, 2019).

2.3.4. Religion.

The Church's "sacramental doctrine infuses marriage with a religious meaning that radically transcends its function in civil society" (Pope, 2004, p.555). Therefore, marriage is seen more as

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[2] Family Research Council - is a non-profit organization that does researches and lobbies family-centered pro-life and pro-marriage content since 1983 (Family Research Council, n.d.)

a part of religion and Church, and not as a right. Weiss & Bosia (2013) wrote that "Christianity as a whole provides a new rationale for religiously sanctioned homophobia" (p.89), which means that religion provides a reason or an excuse for being homophobic. Religious people[3] who are not supportive of homosexuality, explain it with their belief in God, with religious upbringing, that it offends their religious beliefs, that God did not make two men and two women, that it is not traditional, etc. (Weiss & Bosia, 2013). Religious communities and religious countries often blame the West for homosexuality: they say that homosexuality is foreign, and it is also common for religious groups to consider homosexuality "immoral" (Weiss & Bosia, 2013). The Magisterium uses multiple arguments against homosexuality: it is immoral, it goes against individual dignity, that gay people do not have the right to be married, and that marriage has benefits as a social institution on men (Pope, 2004). It is apparent that religion is one of the sources of anti-LGBTI arguments.

2.3.5. *Demographics.*

This argument goes hand in hand with the traditional values argument as it is stated that marriage is created with procreation as one of its main purposes (Macedo, 2015). The argumentation for SSMCU being a demographic crisis is that same-sex couples cannot create children on their own - they either need a surrogate, a sperm donor or they can adopt - but either of those actions cannot be done with the two of them (ProCon.org, 2019). Hence, there are arguments that SSMCU will hurt the demographics of the country in which they are allowed because same-sex couples are not able to reproduce as easily as heterosexual couples (Carpenter, 2005). Weiss & Bosia (2013) also state that demographics has been used as an argument to limit LGBT rights.

2.4. Previous research on homophobic speech of politicians

Mozaīka's 2007 research on homophobic speech among Latvian politicians found arguments made by Latvian politicians that were against LGBT between 2005 and 2006 at the time of the homophobic upsurge. These arguments were divided into these categories - traditional values and morale, homosexuality will create a demographical crisis, foreign debauchery, a conspiracy theory that has been made up to "homosexualise" (p.9) the Latvian society, denial of

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[3] Not all religious people are against homosexuality, in US in 2015, 54% said that homosexuality does not go against their religious beliefs (Pew Research Center, 2015).

discrimination, nationalism, that it is a sickness, it is against religion and its values, proceduralism to support discrimination, marginalisation and purposeful wrongful use or manipulation with facts. Our main reason for mentioning this study is to recognise that there has been research similar to the one that we are trying to carry out in this thesis, but still different in terms of timeframe, methods, and execution.

3. Methodology

This section provides the description of the research design which is a plan for how to answer the research questions. In the next subsection, the two methods used in the research are described, namely, document analysis and moral analysis. Afterwards, the two data sources used are introduced, and, lastly, possible limitations are identified.

3.1. Research Design

In order to answer the proposed research questions, the research design is qualitative. We employed separate methods for each RQ, and the process of the methodology is visualised in Figure 1. The first method, namely, document analysis helps to identify Latvian politicians' arguments against SSMCU legalization, and answer the first RQ - How do Latvian politicians justify their rejection of same-sex marriage and civil union legalization? As part of document analysis, we collect data from two sources - publicly available sources (e.g. press releases, social media, Saeima sitting recordings) and semi-structured interviews. The second method which is moral analysis is used to evaluate the strength of the arguments, and will answer the second RQ: How strong are their arguments? *Strong* can be defined as "how well its premises support its conclusion" (IEP staff, n.d.). As a result, we will conclude whether the arguments voiced by Saeima politicians are strong or not strong.
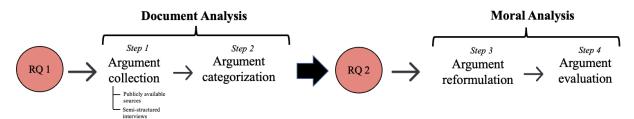

Figure 1. Made by authors. The methodology process scheme.

3.2. Methods

3.2.1. Document Analysis

The first part of the research methodology is devoted to document analysis which is the basis for the second method of our research. Glenn A. Bowen (2009) describes document analysis as a "systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents - both printed and electronic

material" (p.1). Its procedure involves analyzing, comprehending, and explaining the information that could be taken from visual and textual sources and can be presented in diverse formats (more about it under "Data" section). Document Analysis was selected as a tool for this paper because this method has few characteristics that fit our critical analysis. It consists of collecting data (i.e. claims) from a plurality of sources (Bowen, 2009). In our case, we gather politicians' views and arguments against legalizing SSMCU from a variety of sources (news articles, press releases, etc.). This method also includes classifying the information into different groups, in our case- views and arguments are categorized according to their theme.

The steps that are undertaken to implement the document analysis:

(1) Reviewing the data sources (news articles, press releases, etc.) and identifying the politician's views and arguments against the legalization of SSMCU;

(2) Categorizing these views and arguments into groups according to their theme (eg. unnaturalness, religion, traditional values etc.).

3.2.2. Moral Analysis

After document analysis is completed, we implement the moral analysis. Ruwen Ogien (2015) calls general moral analysis a "thought experiment in ethics" which helps to "identify our moral intuitions with a view to testing the validity of the great moral doctrines" (p.18). While according to Louis G. Lombardi (1988), moral analysis is simply questioning rules, norms, or arguments, and finding reasons and factors behind them. Torbjörn Tännsjö (2002) describes moral analysis through the "Model of applied ethics" that encompasses three components: "Moral principle", "Account of the relevant facts", "Practical conclusion" (p. 4). The author explains that by using this model, you can both understand the actions that should be undertaken and what are the reasons to do so (Tännsjö, 2002). According to John Dewey (1891), moral analysis is performed to ensure the behaviour is moral, and "that it may meet all the demands of the relationships involved, instead of being one-sided" (p. 191). Taking into account literature on moral analysis and its various interpretations, in the context of this thesis, moral analysis is a process of evaluating the strength of the politicians' arguments by questioning their validity.

To give more flesh to the theoretical background we mobilize for our moral analysis, we present John Deigh's (2010) *Introduction to Ethics*. According to Deigh (2010), there are two notions of morality - conventional and rational - however, only the latter, in his opinion, is a subject to ethics. In Deigh's opinion, conventional ethics, while being the society's common

beliefs about what is good/bad, right/wrong, may "promote cruelty and inflict indignity" (2010, p.8). However, rational, or reasonable ethics is the type of self-reflective, critical, morality that includes in itself making decisions based on reason, analyzing arguments and facts, altogether, representing a "universal ideal" (Deigh, 2010, p.10). In ethics, there are three main theories. First, consequentialist, which morally evaluates decisions and states of the world based on the consequences stemming from such actions, second, deontological, which morally evaluates decisions and states of the world looking at the nature of the act itself, not its consequences (e.g. which kind of principles it follows), and virtue ethics, which morally evaluates decisions and states of the world based on the question "what kind of person ought I to be?" (Tännsjö, 2002, p.91). In our thesis, we will use a mix of the first two theories to answer our research questions (Deigh, 2010; Tännsjö, 2002).

The moral analysis was selected for this research because it evaluates the robustness and moral acceptability of arguments, for our research, arguments that are against SSMCU. In other words, after the reconstruction/reformulation of arguments opposing SSMCU, the second step of our thesis is to evaluate them morally. Therefore, this *applied moral analysis* would answer the second part of the research question - whether the argument is logically and morally robust or can be refuted. We are approaching politicians' arguments to appreciate if the current restriction of SSMCU in Latvia is just and supported by facts.

To provide a clearer explanation of this method, we will illustrate it with an example. Let us shortly analyze the following statement against SSMCU legalization: "homosexuality is an illness". By critically looking at this statement, a number of questions could be asked: "Is it morally acceptable to discriminate people based on illness", "What is the evidence that homosexuality is an illness?", "In which countries is it considered as an illness?", "Who determined that it is an illness?", etc. which will help to question the validity of the claim. According to the previously described moral analysis procedure, in order to prove that the statement is not moral, there is a need to find proof that the opposite of the statement is true (e.g. prove that homosexuality is not an illness). As a result, we can find evidence that the World Health Organization has removed homosexuality from the list of diseases, therefore, the initial argument is not true. Besides, even if it was an illness, we can argue that this is discrimination of some form to not let ill people get married or form civil unions. By applying this method to other arguments, we will conclude that the politician's argument is strong if we cannot find proof

that his/her argument is false and conclude that it is weak if we find evidence that his/her argument is partially or fully false or if its argument leads to morally unacceptable conclusions. To specify, it is not a full-fledged moral analysis executed by philosophers, but an evaluation of whether the arguments are factually and ethically coherent.

According to Ogien (2015), the process of moral analysis should be the following:

1. Construct and formulate statements or arguments (the author calls them "moral intuitions") to test them in the next step.

2. Find evidence that the inverse meaning of the statement is true or false. Consequently, arrive at the conclusion whether the initial statement is moral or not.

The moral analysis in this paper will be based on the Ogien (2015) plan but is adjusted to meet the objectives of the thesis. After identifying the main politicians' arguments in the document analysis part, the following steps in the moral analysis will be undertaken:

1. Reformulating the extracted politicians' arguments from various materials (e.g. news articles, Saeima sitting recordings) in order to build consistent arguments. It is necessary, because some opinions of politicians might not be arguments, and need additional information or improved formulation in order to discuss them further. According to Damer (2005), the argument should be reformulated to be "expressed in the strongest possible version that is consistent with the original intention of the arguer" (p, 5). This stage will include looking at similar arguments from other countries (described in section 2.3 in LR) and academic sources to strengthen and back the initial arguments to amplify the meaning of the initial, "raw" argument. The process of argument reformulation is conducted in a structured way - by identifying premises and conclusions. Each premise contains a reason and is backed up by evidence and then premises form a conclusion. (Swatridge, 2014). This structure will help us to construct strong arguments.

2. Discussing the strength of the arguments in order to accept them, propose stronger versions, or refute them. Evaluation of the strength will be based on finding that the inverse statement is true or false, similarly as described in the previously mentioned example. The sources to find information that would assert that the argument is strong or not strong are books and papers that are concerned with marriage, moral values, and other topics depending on the type of the argument and we also look at arguments expressed

27

in other countries when defending the legalization of SSMCU, especially in countries that have already legalized SSMCU.

It is important to note that we look at the arguments in isolation - it is not in our interest to analyze whether they were made strategically, where they come from, and whether those who vote for the party agree with the argument. This thesis observes arguments as they are without deepening in the underlying motives expressed in this argument.

3.3. Data

Background research

To better assess the topic we conducted several interviews with experts in LGBT topics and discrimination of same-sex couples in Latvia. Even though information taken from these interviews was not used in the analysis itself, it helped to determine the angle to focus our research on and provided us with insights about the historical development and current situation of LGBT in Latvia. Preliminary stage interviews are summarised in Table 2.

Expert	Topic of the interview
Māris Sants *An openly gay Latvian priest, psychotherapist, mathematics teacher, LGBT rights activist, one of the first ones in Latvia to reveal his sexual orientation*	Beginnings of the gay revelation in Latvia, pride in 2005, sexual orientation and religion
Kristīne Garina *LGBT rights activist, one of the founders and Chairperson of Mozaīka, President of EPOA*	Establishment of first LGBT communities in Latvia, work of Mozaīka, activities to spread awareness about LGBT in Latvia
Rita Ruduša *Journalist and editor, author of the book "Forced Underground: Homosexuals in Soviet Latvia" (2014)*	Motives for the book release, view on discrimination towards LBGT community, Soviet mentality, and its consequences nowadays

Table 2. Table was made by the authors. On the left side of the table are the names of the interviewees. On the right side are the interview topics.

Data for analysis

For our thesis, the data needed for the analysis are arguments against SSMCU expressed by politicians. To obtain Latvian politicians' arguments against same-sex marriage and partnership

legalization, we review two types of sources: publicly available information and semi-structured interviews. Both data collection methods are summarised in Table 3.

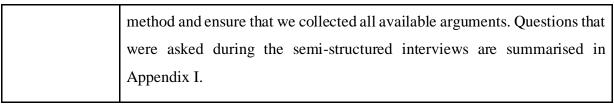| Data source	Description
Publicly available information	Includes news portals (TVNET, Delfi, LSM, Diena, etc.), press releases, books, reports, journals, Saeima sitting video translations and transcripts, social media, and other relevant sources released from 2018 to February 2021. This time period was chosen because we want to reflect the arguments of the 13th (current) Saeima which started its operations on November 6th in 2018 (Saeima, 2018). In this way, we can capture the most recent and relevant arguments against SSMCU. We investigate the arguments of politicians (including ministers) working in the current 13th Saeima because deputies are the ones who make the final decisions regarding the laws. Even though ministers do not vote in Saeima, some of them are the leaders of political parties and are members of political parties that is why all ministers who are working in Saeima are also included in our research. Altogether we reviewed publications of 114 politicians.
Semi-structured interviews	According to Bernard (2011), semi-structured interviewing is based on guidelines to ensure that interview evolves in the right direction, however, it also allows for flexibility to add or remove questions and change their order. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to fill in the gap of information that cannot be found in publicly available sources. For the interviews, we invited those politicians whose stance regarding SSMCU legalization was not known or ambiguous. Altogether 41 politicians were invited to the interview, but only 4 responded. We conducted four interviews - with Nikolajs Kabanovs, Evita-Zālīte Grosa, Māris Možvillo, and one other anonymous politician. The reasons for a low response rate were already predicted beforehand (mentioned in 3.4). However, it does not affect the quality of the research because interviews are only an additional tool used to capture the information that was not obtainable from the first

	method and ensure that we collected all available arguments. Questions that were asked during the semi-structured interviews are summarised in Appendix I.

Table 3. Made by authors. Description of data collection methods.

3.4. Limitations

There are several limitations to the proposed research methodology. During the data collection stage, we might accidentally extract false information, because sources that we will use to obtain arguments that are not academic or proven because often arguments are expressed in informal platforms, such as Twitter, Facebook where information is sometimes not over-proofed. However, document analysis diminishes the issue because it requires looking at multiple sources and finding evidence that information is true and not misinterpretation of a single source.

Another possible limitation is the rejection to participate in the interview from politicians' side due to sensitivity of the topic or their busy schedule. However, we do not rely on the interviews in our research, and in the case of a low interview response rate, we will base our findings on publicly available materials. Moreover, interviewees might not reveal their true opinions and hide some information, causing biased interview results. In order to overcome this limitation, interview questions are formed to be neutral, in order to not express any stance and to not prime the interviewee to any answer.

Lastly, arguments expressed by politicians might not be their true beliefs and there could be different reasons why they voiced such an opinion (to hide another controversial stance, to win elections, and other motives), yet this thesis explores arguments available in isolation and does not research what is the rationale behind a politician's stance.

4. Results and Discussion

This section shows eight categories of arguments against SSMCU legalization based on the claims collected from Latvian politicians. Afterwards, each category is reformulated into premises and conclusions for facilitating our evaluation. As a result of argument evaluation based on its moral and logical strength, we conclude how strong is each argument.

4.1. Argument Categorization

After reviewing publicly available sources and conducting semi-structured interviews, we identified politicians' arguments and categorized them into eight categories:

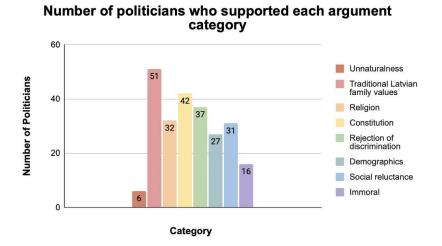| Argument	Description
Unnaturalness	Same-sex relationships are unnatural because same-sex couples cannot reproduce, create families 'naturally' and do not adhere to the natural law.
Traditional Latvian Family Values	Same-sex couples violate traditional family values in Latvia which are based on heterosexual couples and families.
Religion	According to religious values and principles, same-sex unions are unacceptable.
Demographics	Legalizing SSMCU would not increase the low birth rate and tackle Latvia's population decline.
Constitution	SSMCU's legalization is against Article 110 of the Latvian Constitution.
Rejection of Discrimination	Same-sex couples are not discriminated against and are already protected by the legislation, therefore, there is no need to legalize SSMCU
Social Reluctance	This argument includes several claims: the majority of the citizens do not favor the legalization of LGBT related laws; society is not ready to accept these unions in Latvia; 10'000 signatures collected (in ManaBalss.lv) is not a strong reason for SSMCU legalization; this matter should be dealt with the help of public voting.
Immoral	Legalizing SSMCU will lead to unfavorable consequences, such as polygamy, marrying robots, or other types of 'unacceptable' unions.

Table 4. Made by the authors, summarizing data from Appendix F and using the same data sources that were used to make Appendix F.

Altogether we have investigated 114 politicians (Saeima members and Ministers) and seven political parties, and the results are summarized in Appendix F that indicates how many politicians support each argument. During the research, we have encountered arguments both from politicians individually and from political parties. Therefore, we will distinguish these two groups and specify if it was said by politicians, or it is assumed that the politician has the same opinion as his/her political party. Appendix F also indicates if the argument was said directly by the politician or it is assumed that he supports it because of his party's stance.

Compared to the most popular arguments against SSMCU listed in Literature Review (section 2.3.), some topics overlap, while some topics are new. *Unnaturalness, Immoral, Demographics, Religion,* and *Traditional Family Values* categories are the same as discussed in LR part 2.3, while *Social reluctance, Rejection of Discrimination,* and *Constitution* categories are new. Besides, the topic *Sickness* has not been discovered in this research while it is mentioned as one of the five popular argument topics in LR. The reason for this could be that either this opinion is not held by Latvian politicians or this is an opinion that they hold but fear to express because of possible backlash.

Graph 1 provides a visual illustration of argument distribution among eight topics. In order to illustrate each topic with the example, we have provided several citations from politicians or political parties depicted in Appendix G. From the graph it can be seen that 51 politicians expressed the argument about traditional Latvian family values. The second most popular argument is about Constitution Article 110 which was supported by 42 politicians. While the least popular argument (six politicians) is about the unnaturalness of the SSMCU. Appendix F indicates how many other politicians and parties have voiced a similar opinion or argument. Besides, from Appendix F it could be seen that 38 politicians agree

Graph 1. Made by authors. Number of politicians who supported each argument category where each politician can support multiple argument categories. On Y axis: number of politicians. On X axis – respective category. Data used to create this graph is from Appendix F

that LGBT legal issues should be addressed, 35 politicians support LGBT legal rights, while 35 politicians voted against LGBT laws but have not expressed any opinions in the media.

4.2. Argument reformulation

The next step after collecting arguments and categorizing them is *reformulation*. It is necessary to build as strong and consistent arguments as possible, for preparing them for further strength evaluation. If this step is skipped the evaluation will be biased, weak, and easy to debunk. Therefore, reformulation is crucial for this research. (More about the importance of this step is described in the methodology section 3.2.2.). Reformulation means both summarizing arguments from several politicians by isolating, clarifying the main claims with similar views, and backing them up with credible sources. In the next subsection, we discuss the process of argument reformulation for each category and arrive at the reformulated statement. In Appendix J we have summarized the final reformulated arguments.

4.2.1. Unnaturalness

This argument against same-sex marriage and civil unions was expressed by six politicians (Appendix F) - two individuals, who are not a part of any party, two from *Jaunā Konservatīvā Partija*, and two from *Par Cilvēcīgu Latviju*. However, Ramona Petravica recently resigned from the Saeima and now is serving full-time as the Minister for Welfare (Dēvica, Līcīte, LSM, 2021). Usually, the arguments characterize "natural families" as consisting of a man, a woman, and their children (a statement used by many politicians). Beitnere Le-Galla said, "this is not the norm" about same-sex relationships (Līcītis, 2020), meaning that same-sex relationships are not considered "normal" by society. However, as mentioned before, these claims are not fact-backed arguments, thus, in the next paragraph, we reformulate this argument in order to support it with credible sources and strengthen it for further evaluation. The reformulated argument is:

> **Premise 1:** According to Pickett (2021), natural law poses that a sexual act is considered natural/normal if done with the purpose or possibility to reproduce.
>
> **Premise 2:** A sexual act done without the purpose/possibility to reproduce does not comply with natural law (Pickett, 2021).
>
> **Premise 3:** Same-sex couples cannot reproduce 'naturally' - on their own and without the help of adoption, surrogacy, etc. (Pickett, 2021).

Premise 4: Natural law states that only a marriage that includes within itself the ability to procreate is 'natural' (Pickett, 2021).

Conclusion 1: Homosexual acts and same-sex relationships do not comply with natural law because they cannot procreate.

Conclusion 2: Same-sex couples should not be allowed to get married/form civil unions.

4.2.2. Traditional Latvian Family Values

The 'traditional family values' argument is one of the most popular ones among politicians - it is used as the official stance by three parties - *Nacionālā Apvienība, Jaunā Konservatīvā Partija*, and *Zaļo un Zemnieku Savienība*. Hence, the argument is the partisan stance of 51 Latvian politicians, 19 of them have individually expressed this opinion (Appendix F). In the context of Latvia, this section includes arguments, such as, conservative values, traditional values, family values that are passed down from generations, that marriage is a union between a man and a woman, children need both a mother and a father, and other variations of such. Also, this category includes arguments which state that legalizing SSMCU would diminish the uniqueness and value of the term "marriage" and would harm Latvian cultural values. Politician Dagmāra Beitnere-Le Galla says that a "traditional heterosexual family is a conservative value" (Līcītis, 2020). The argument that allowing same-sex marriages or civil unions would diminish the value of what a family as an institution is (and with it the family values, traditional values, etc.) is very popular not only in Latvia but in other countries too (Koppelman, 2014). The reformulated argument is the following:

> **Premise 1:** Traditional values in Latvia are alike with conservative values where one of the values is a "traditional family" or "traditional marriage" (Jaunā Konservatīvā Partija, n.d.; Nacionālā Apvienība, n.d.).
>
> **Premise 2:** A "traditional" family or marriage is "essentially gendered" (p.60) and consists of a man, the father, a woman, the mother, and their child(ren) (Macedo, 2015).
>
> **Premise 3:** Same-sex couples consist of persons of the same sex[4].
>
> **Premise 4:** Same-sex couples cannot provide children with both gender roles (Family Research Council, 2004).

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[4] We use *sex* instead of *gender* as the argument expressed in this section is touching upon a person's biological sex, not gender.

Premise 5: In "traditional"/conservative views only persons of the opposite sex are allowed to get married.

Conclusion 1: Same-sex couples cannot create a "traditional" family or marriage by definition.

Conclusion 2: Conservative values and the conservative image of marriage is against same-sex couples (Jaunā Konservatīvā Partija, n.d.; Nacionālā Apvienība, n.d.).

Conclusion 3: Same-sex couples should not be able to register marriages or form civil unions because they contradict traditional Latvian family values, and they are not traditional families.

4.2.3. Religion

Another argument expressed by 32 Saeima members is that homosexuality is incompatible with religious values. It is the partisan stance of *Nacionālā Apvienība* and *Zaļo un Zemnieku Savienība's* members, and the individual stance of four individual Saeima members, three *Par Cilvēcīgu Latviju* members and one *Saskaņa* member (Appendix F). This argument mostly expresses the belief that homosexuality is against religious Christian values.

As mentioned before, Pope (2004, p.539) says that the main arguments used by the Magisterium[5] against gays are that homosexuality is immoral/a sin, that it is against an individual's own honor, that gay people do not have the right to be married, and that marriage has benefits as a social institution on men. Considering the literature and collected arguments from politicians, the reformulated argument is the following:

Premise 1: The most practiced religion in Latvia is Christianity - Orthodoxy, Lutheranism, and Catholicism (LSM, 2015; Eurydice, 2020)

Premise 2: Christian religions in Latvia accept only heterosexual relationships (Urdze, n.d.; Latvijas Nacionālā Fronte, 2020a; Latvijas Nacionālā Fronte, 2020b).

Premise 3: According to religious values in Latvia - same-sex relations are a sin, same-sex couples oppose religious values, like, family and virtue (Urdze, n.d.; Latvijas Nacionālā Fronte, 2020a; Latvijas Nacionālā Fronte, 2020b).

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[5] Magisterium - "teaching authority especially of the Roman Catholic Church" ("magisterium", n.d.).

Premise 4: Only heterosexual couples should be allowed to get married, according to Latvian religious leaders (Latvijas Nacionālā Fronte, 2020a; Latvijas Nacionālā Fronte, 2020b).

Conclusion 1: Same-sex couples do not comply with Christian values in Latvia.

Conclusion 2: Same-sex couples should not be allowed to get married/form civil unions.

4.2.4. Demographics

The demographics argument is used by 27 members of Saeima. It is the partisan stance of two parties - *Nacionālā Apvienība* and *Zaļo un Zemnieku Savienība* - and it is expressed by two more individual politicians, and one *Jaunā Konservatīvā Partija* member. (Appendix F). Aldis Gobzems said that "Latvia is the most rapidly depopulated country in the world" (Gobzems, 2020) and Dagmāra Beitnere-Le Galla said that "there cannot be children as a result of a homosexual relationship" (Līcītis, 2020). Jūlija Stepaņenko said that "the surest way to reproduce, to develop, is only a family that consists of a mother, a father and a child…" (Latvijas Vēstnesis, 2020). The reformulated argument is:

Premise 1: Natural population increase rate (births - deaths) in Latvia is negative (INED, n.d).

Premise 2: Latvia has a high population decline rate[6] (Statista, 2019).

Premise 3: Same-sex couples cannot reproduce on their own.

Conclusion 1: Same-sex couples impair the natural population increase rate and the population decline rate, as these individuals cannot reproduce in their couples.

Conclusion 2: Same-sex couples are threatening/undermining the survival of the country/population.

Conclusion 3: Same-sex couples are not eligible to receive the protection the marital or partnership status would give because they undermine the country's demographics (Carpenter, 2005).

4.2.5. Constitution

Recently there have been many discussions regarding Article 110 of the Latvian Constitution. Article 110 states that marriage is a union between a man and woman, and recently the *Nacionālā*

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[6] Population decline rate is the natural birth rate that includes migratory rate.

Apvienība political party proposed to specify that family is also a union between a man and a woman (section 2.2.4 in LR). Therefore, many politicians claimed that same-sex unions contradict the Constitution, which is the basis of all rules and norms. This argument is a partisan stance against LGBT rights by three parties - *Nacionālā Apvienība*, *Zaļo un Zemnieku Savienība*, and *Jaunā Konservatīvā Partija*, and additionally expressed by one politician from *Saskaņa* and two individual politicians (Appendix F). According to Appendix F, 42 politicians share this argument from whom 11 have individually mentioned this argument as a reason why they are against either LGBT rights or same-sex marriages and civil unions.

The Constitution, which was made more than 100 years ago, does not allow same-sex relationships to have a legal form and protection of the country. We do acknowledge that it is possible that this specific argument is used as a justification to be against SSMCU, not as an argument itself. The reformulated argument is the following:

> **Premise 1:** In Latvia, the Constitution is "the basic legal document that sets the state order" (Bebre, Ceica & Gjortlere, 2007).
>
> **Premise 2:** Article 110 of the Latvian Constitution allows marriage between a man and a woman. (Saeima, 2006c).
>
> **Premise 3:** There is no possibility to form civil unions for homosexual or heterosexual couples in Latvia (ILGA-Europe, n.d.c).
>
> **Conclusion:** The Latvian Constitution does not allow for same-sex relationships to be formed legally in the form of a marriage or a civil union.

4.2.6. Rejection of discrimination

This argument is voiced by parties *Jaunā Konservatīvā Partija* and *Nacionālā Apvienība* as their partisan stance and mentioned by seven politicians - one from *Nacionālā Apvienība*, one from *Saskaņa*, one from *Jaunā Konservatīvā Partija*, one from *Par Cilvēcīgu Latviju* and three independent politicians. Altogether, it is the stance of 33 politicians. By supporting this argument politicians expressed that either same-sex couples do not face any discrimination compared to heterosexual couples or that current laws already protect same-sex couples, therefore, there is no need for additional laws to be enforced. Gaidis Bērziņš (2018) listed ways how Civil Law can solve multiple issues for unmarried couples already now. For example, Civil Law deals with mutual property relations, inheritance, life and accident insurance, medical treatment

authorization, etc. (Bērziņš, 2018). By summarizing politicians' opinions and arguments collected, we can arrive at the reformulated argument:

Premise 1: Latvian laws protect all its citizens and all partnerships (Bērziņš, 2018).

Premise 2: Same-sex couples are part of Latvian citizens.

Conclusion 1: Latvian laws do not discriminate same-sex couples.

Conclusion 2: There is no need to legalize SSMCU because same-sex couples are already protected.

4.2.7. Social reluctance

This argument was mentioned by 12 individual politicians - one independent, two from *Nacionālā Apvienība*, five from *Par Cilvēcīgu Latviju*, four from *Saskaņa*, and is a partisan stance by party *Nacionālā Apvienība* and party *Par Cilvēcīgu Latviju*. This argument involves a belief that most of the Latvian citizens do not support SSMCU legalization: "A minority wants to impose its views on Latvian society" (Bērziņš, 2018). Besides, this argument also captures the opinion that society is not ready for official recognition of legal same-sex partnerships: "This issue really divides society more than unites them. Apparently, our society is not ready at the moment" (Ramona Petraviča quoted by Spundiņa, 2020).

Another argument included in this group is the view that this is not a question to be decided by politicians but rather by society itself. Moreover, a referendum is needed for revealing the true social preference: "It is not a question of politicians, but a question of the majority of society about understanding culture. Therefore, the only solution, in this case, would be to hold a referendum" said Atis Zakatisovs (Apollo, 2020a). Also, here we included the arguments when politicians specified that 10'000 signatures collected to legalize LGBT-related laws are not enough to legalize SSMCU and it does not prove the support of the majority. By analyzing all the arguments, we can conclude the following:

Premise 1: According to Saeima (n.d.), as elected representatives, politicians (are required/should) act and make decisions to strengthen the society's trust in Saeima.

Premise 2: Enforcing controversial laws such as SSMCU might lessen society's trust in Saeima

Premise 3: Politicians vote according to the majority's position to represent society's stance.

Premise 3: According to politicians, the majority of Latvian society does not support the legalization of SSMCU or its stance on this matter is unclear.

Conclusion: Deputies should not grant to same-sex couples the right to get married or form civil unions.

4.2.8. Immoral

This argument is voiced by four politicians - one from *Par Cilvēcīgu Latviju*, two from *Nacionālā Apvienība*, one individual, and is the partisan stance of *Nacionālā Apvienība* party. This category summarizes arguments that claim that legalizing SSMCU will lead to unacceptable consequences such as polygamy, bigamy, or other unconventional types of unions. Sandis Ģirģens (Ģirģens, 2019) expressed his opinion about legalizing SSMCU: "We live in the 21st century, some men and women are already starting to form relationships with robots. Shouldn't this family be formed and expanded in this aspect as well, by moving to human relationships with robotic beings?". The main concern in this argument is that legalizing SSMCU will open the doors to the new unacceptable forms of partnerships. Considering the collected arguments we can reformulate the argument to:

Premise 1: Saeima does not approve laws that will result in the development of immoral and unacceptable consequences.

Premise 2: Polygamy, polyandry, and other uncommon partnership types are immoral and unacceptable.

Premise 2: According to several politicians, legalizing SSMCU might cause the development of polygamy, polyandry, and other uncommon partnership types.

Conclusion: SSMCU legalization is disapproved because it will result in the development of immoral instances.

4.3. Evaluation of argument strength

Reformulated arguments are prepared to be challenged and questioned. In the next paragraphs, we discuss each argument and justify why the argument is strong, semi-strong, or weak.

4.3.1. Unnaturalness

The argument of same-sex relationships being unnatural is of deontological structure - politicians argue that because same-sex relationships contradict natural law and its meaning/content. However, Macedo (2015) in his book *Just Married* states that "natural law arguments fail to provide a reasoned basis for excluding same-sex couples from the civil institution of marriage" (p.13).

One of the main Macedo's (2015, p.25) claims is that just because same-sex couples cannot have "natural" childbirth (where the couple are both the biological parents of the child), it does not mean that same-sex couples should be shamed, punished, and disrespected. Macedo insists that if this kind of statement would be considered as a righteous, then the sexual relations between "sterile men and postmenopausal women" should also be considered unnatural, immoral, and perverse.

Second, natural law states that marriage is something that people should aspire to and that it benefits the society, which Macedo agrees with. However, he argues that this is not exclusive to the natural law. Moreover, he stresses that there are marriages that are cut short by divorce, death, or other reasons. There are also "blended families" (p.41) that come from a couple having children from previous marriages (Macedo, 2015). So, why do these natural law advocates understand these marriages and why, in their understanding, same-sex marriages are "not simply wrong but impossible" (p.41) and why couldn't the concept of marriage be extended to include same-sex marriages (Macedo 2015)? This leads us to conclude that there are inconsistencies and the problem of double standards in natural law[7], which leads us to the conclusion that natural law is not a good evaluation metric.

4.3.2. Traditional Latvian Family Values

The argument has both deontological and consequentialist roots. First, we evaluate the argument from the viewpoint of consequentialist theory - argument implies that allowing same-sex couples to get married or form civil unions will undermine the value of marriage in society. According to the Latvian University's Anthropological study director Aivita Putniņa, a big part of the

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[7] Double standard in natural law - sexual relations and marriage between sterile heterosexual couples is not only allowed but also considered good. However, the same standard does not hold for same-sex couples (Macedo, 2015).

Latvian society (no matter with which sexual orientation) sees no substantial difference between marriage and unregistered partnerships (Leitāns, 2015). It was observed already in 2015 that the meaning of marriage in the eyes of the Latvian society had decreased so far that people no longer see the meaning of getting married and choose to live in unregistered partnerships (Leitāns, 2015). Also, a traditional marriage cannot be a value, as marriage is simply an institution.

Another point worth discussing is whether allowing same-sex marriage would devalue the meaning of marriage. Macedo (2015) argues that "gay marriage further entrenches gender equality; in that respect and others, it changes the public meaning of marriage for everyone for the better" (p.196) because granting the same rights to gay and lesbian couples does not "undermine(s) the moral norms against sexual activity among close family members" (p.196). Extending rights to same-sex couples would be better for society, as marriage is good, and the larger part of society has it, the better off the society is (Macedo, 2015). Therefore, from the consequentialist viewpoint, this argument can be deemed as not strong, as allowing same-sex marriage does not decrease the meaning of the institution of marriage.

Second, we analyze this argument from a deontological viewpoint - the argument mainly stands on the premise that same-sex couples cannot create traditional families of marriages, namely, that Latvian traditional family values are against these couples. The traditional family values the politicians are drawing on are mostly conservative values that perceive marriage as a union between a man and a woman - an essentially gendered form of marriage (Macedo, 2015). This argument is a bit similar to the unnatural one, as it also draws on the fact that marriage is a union between a man and a woman.

Here, we can apply the same facts expressed under the unnatural argument - if the only family acceptable/valuable is the one that consists of a man, a woman, and their child(ren), then this statement forces us to deem families that do not adhere to this standard as not traditional (Macedo, 2015). These families include - single parents and their children, grandparent/-s who raise their grandchildren, blended families - those where in a family not all children have the same mother/father (they were born during previous marriages/relationships), etc. There are also families where relatives of the same sex raise a child (e.g. child, the mother, and grandmother), and those families are not considered unnatural.

However, natural law theorists say that same-sex couples and their marriages cannot succeed, as they do not have these gendered roles fulfilled (Macedo, 2015). Also, those who

agree with the natural theory, mention that heterosexual marriages are better for children and their well-being. However, Bos, Knox, van Rijn-van Gelderend and Gartell (2016) find that there is "no difference to children's overall wellbeing and future prospects" (p.67) between children raised by same-sex and opposite-sex parents (Macedo, 2015). Another point to consider is whether it is "good" to stick to old traditions and values if they do not reflect society's modern beliefs and choices, compared to updating the cultural principles according to their relevance and appropriateness.

Therefore, we can conclude that, first, allowing same-sex couples to get married does not threaten heterosexual marriages and the institution of marriage in general. Second, not allowing same-sex couples to get married and create families is not justified, as they do not differ, for example in terms of parenting, from heterosexual couples.

4.3.3. Religion

The core of this argument states that the main religions in Latvia, Catholicism, Lutheranism, and Russian Orthodox, and their values do not support same-sex marriages. The argument is based on deontological theory - it is derived from the fact that same-sex relationships contradict religious values in Latvia (in this case it is "strong" marriage (Latvijas Nacionālā Fronte, 2020b)). Hence, same-sex couples should be granted recognition in neither the form of marriage nor civil unions. There are many articles mentioning Christian or religious values, but no one has properly defined them. Christian values in general, do not mention anything about same-sex couples, as their core values are biblical values - generosity, courage, love, respect, hope, peace (Compassion, n.d.). None of these values mention marriage or same-sex couples. Therefore, we find discrepancies in this argument.

If we think about religions, we would expect each of them to teach the same lessons and values in any church, in any country, by any religious leader, the same way that the Bible is the same everywhere. However, it is not the case. For example, "the Lutheran-affiliated Church of Sweden, to which roughly three-quarters of all Swedes belong, has offered blessings for same-sex partnerships since January 2007", and since 2017 the Norwegian Lutheran-affiliated Church has expressed support for same-sex marriages (Pew Research Center, 2019). Also, if we take a look at a research in the US, there is increasing acceptance of same-sex relationships among the religious from 2003 to 2013, except for Catholics, and especially white Catholics (a decrease of 1 and 9 points (of 100 in total) in support, respectively) (Pew Research Center, 2013). In

conclusion, there are different opinions by the religious leaders of the same religion and those affiliated to the religion.

Another discrepancy concerning the religion argument is that Latvia is a secular country - Article 99 of the Latvian Constitution states that the Church is separated from the state (Latvijas Republikas Satversme, 1994). Hence, religious beliefs should not impact the state legislature. Since there are various religions in Latvia, imposing one's religious' values on citizens who either belong to another religion or are atheists, could be considered wrong and immoral. According to LSM, 43.8% do not associate themselves with any religion, while 55.1% consider themselves Christian (Eurydice, 2020). Hence, considering religious values while making legislative decisions would only favor the 55.1% of Latvian society, and would impose their values on the other non-religious part of the Latvian society.

Moreover, what makes the religion argument weaker is that Bible does not in fact condemn homosexuality (Richie, 2009). Two terms in the bible - *malakoi* (the youth) and *arsenkoitai* (the older man) - have been misinterpreted, leading the Bible verse to be translated that it condemns relations between persons of the same sex (men), while the actual meaning of this verse is that it condemns paedophilic actions - those happening between the young and an older man (Richie, 2009). Richie (2009) says that this "inaccurate translation" has caused a lot of damage and "should not be tolerated in the English Bible, any more than it should be used to persecute adult homosexuals who engage in legal and consenting relationships" (p.728). Hence, we conclude that religion is not a strong argument against SSMCU because there are discrepancies in the religious values in different countries, Latvia is a secular country, where the Church is separated from the state, and the Bible has not been translated accurately.

4.3.4. Demographics

The argument is based on consequentialist theory - if the Latvian legislation would allow SSM or SSCU, the outcomes will worsen or not improve these demographic statistics. The overall consensus of the demographics argument against SSMCU is that same-sex couples are not improving the birth rate and depopulation rate of Latvia, which are already quite grim. Hence, the main argument is that by allowing SSMCU, these population statistics will not improve, thus it is not in the interest of the country to legalize these marriages or civil unions.

However, if we look at the birth rates and depopulation rates of European countries, we can see that allowing SSMCU on average does not impact either of them (there is no clear trend

visible). Looking at Appendix H, we can analyze that there is no visible trend/pattern in birth rates and population change after the respective legislation has been passed. There are countries whose demographics have improved after allowing either SSM or SSCU (e.g. Belgium, Spain) (Appendix H). However, there are also countries whose demographics have remained the same/have followed pre-existing trends (e.g. Denmark, Estonia) or whose have decreased (e.g. Iceland, France) (Appendix H).

Another aspect, which flows from the argument's consequentialist nature, is that, if we look at it from a deontological perspective, a question arises whether it is moral to evaluate a person's ability to have rights (to marry or form civil unions) depending on his/her fertility, ability to procreate and improve demographic statistics. Overall, there is no observable trend that would characterize what happens to these two demographic measures after SSMCU legislation has been introduced. These findings contradict the politicians' statements that allowing SSMCU will worsen or not improve Latvia's demographic statistics. Therefore, we conclude that this argument is *not strong* - it is not backed by facts.

4.3.5. Constitution

This argument is based on deontological theory - it is derived from the Latvian Constitution. As Article 110 says that marriage can only be between a man and a woman, hence, same-sex couples should not be allowed to get married or form unions according to the Constitution, thus, the politicians make the decision to not support SSMCU. However, this argument may be questioned by the fact that the Latvian Constitution has been changed multiple times, including Article 110 (Satori, 2021). This implies that there are double standards among politicians. They are eager to change the Constitution when it is convenient for them and are in accordance with their views. However, when a change in the Constitution or in the interpretation of its Articles is not in accordance with their views, they are quick to resist it by using excuses that it is an old and important document that we should remain as it is (Appendix G).

By definition, a Constitution is "the basic principles and laws of a nation, state, or social group that determine the powers and duties of the government and guarantee certain rights to the people in it" ("Constitution", n.d.). Therefore, the Constitution has to reflect the rights of the people in this country - not depending on their sexual orientation. We can question the morality of supporting and protecting only certain part of the society (heterosexual couples) while not granting the same rights to other citizens (gay couples). According to the definition of the

constitution, it should be updated to reflect the current situation to protect all state citizens. If the Constitution argument were considered strong, it would mean that the Constitution should not be changed from the moment it is written. Hence, multiple laws that have been made or reversed would still be active, for example, slavery would still be allowed, gender equality would not exist, and other things that are not considered normal and acceptable in the 21st century. Therefore, just because same-sex marriages and civil unions are not legal in Latvia, does not mean that it is morally acceptable not to protect a certain part of society.

Also, there are countries over the world that have changed/amended their Constitution (or declared that the current law already supports same-sex marriage) for it to support same-sex couples getting married - Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, the United States, Ireland, France, Portugal, South Africa (Pew Research Center, 2019). Further on, this argument seems to be a cover-up or a justification to be against SSMCU, not a standalone argument itself because it does not state any explicit reason to be against - Constitution can be changed, thus it cannot be considered a reason for being against SSMCU. We conclude that this argument is not strong.

4.3.6. Rejection of Discrimination

The structure of this argument is deontological because politicians believe that there is no discrimination towards same-sex couples, thus no additional laws to protect them are needed. To determine the strength of this argument we, firstly, define what is meant by the term "discrimination" in the case where it is morally unacceptable. Secondly, we look at counterarguments voiced by Marija Golubeva to determine whether there is morally unjustified discrimination towards LGBT representatives in Latvia.

According to Eidelson (2015), the discrimination is unacceptable if it follows the framework: "X discriminates against Y in dimension W on the basis of P if and only if: X treats Y less favorably in respect of W than X treats some actual or counterfactual other, Z, in respect of W; and a difference in how X regards Y P-wise and how X regards or would regard Z P-wise figures in the explanation of this differential treatment" (p. 17). This formula might be complex to comprehend from the first site, hence, we apply it to our case: Laws discriminate same-sex couples in certain situations[8] on the basis of their sexual orientation if only and if: laws treat

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[8] Situations such as access to employment, inheritance, adoption, housing, healthcare, etc.

same-sex couples less favorably with respect to certain situations than laws treat heterosexual couples with respect to certain situations; and a difference in how laws regard same-sex couples sexual-orientation-wise and how laws regard heterosexual couples sexual-orientation-wise "figures in the explanation of this differential treatment" (Eidelson, 2015, p.17).

During the Saeima sitting on October 29, 2020, Marija Golubeva named several instances where same-sex couples are treated differently than heterosexual couples (Latvijas Vēstnesis, 2020). The Social Affairs Commission found examples of inequality, including 60 times higher fees for testamentary heirs compared to spouses, thus, the fact that it is possible to settle everything with a notary is not true. Also, there are significant tax implications if one person passes away, the other one might face huge monetary obligations. Same-sex couples also tend to have children, when a biological parent passes away, the other parent legally becomes a stranger. (Latvijas Vēstnesis, 2020). This evidence proves that same-sex couples are discriminated against in a morally unacceptable way because Latvian legislation should protect all its citizens, however, same-sex couples are citizens, yet they do not have the same treatment in certain situations due to their sexual orientation, thus the argument is not strong.

4.3.7. Social reluctance

From the ethics perspective, this argument is based on the deontological theory - it is based on the belief that the majority does not support the legalization of SSMCU, and politicians should act in accordance with the majority's position. In order to question this argument, one can ask whether it is moral to enforce any law if the majority of the society is in its favor? For example, according to Nigel Pleasants (2010), although slavery is commonly known to be morally unacceptable, it was existing for centuries and was objected to only at the end of the 18th century. People considered it as a norm and did not question whether it was "right" or "wrong" which led to the suffering and death of millions of people. While the majority enjoyed the benefits of the slave society, the minority was repressed (Pleasants, 2010).

Another way to analyze this argument is by viewing the major threat of the majority voting in the democracy which is the tyranny of the majority. Tyranny of majority occurs when the majority of the voters attain their goals at the cost of minority's interests (Mill, 1864). In our case, if the majority of the society is against SSMCU legalization and it is translated into legislation, LGBT personas will be repressed by this decision. Therefore, it is possible to doubt

that society's readiness is a strong reason to impose or not impose a law (legalization of SSMCU) at the expense of some part of the population (same-sex couples).

Another point for discussion is whether the majority of the society is indeed against the legalization of SSMCU. In 2020, Mozaīka initiated research on society's stance on LGBT personas and the extension of the term "marriage" (LGBT House Riga, 2020c). The study revealed that 59% of respondents support the legalization of civil unions in Latvia. Even though in several questions of the survey the majority of respondents were less supportive for LGBT specific laws, the research showed the trend towards increased supportiveness and tolerance towards LGBT people comparing the years 2018 and 2020 (in 2018 34% was in favor of laws supporting same-sex couples, while in 2020 - 38%) and this trend could become even stronger in the future. (LGBT House Riga, 2020c).

Several politicians suggested that this question should be solved with the referendum because society's stance is unclear. This could potentially reveal society's position and there are examples of countries that have used public voting to determine society's position in terms of the legalization of SSMCU. In 2015, Ireland turned to be the first country to achieve same-sex marriage legalization by referendum (Caollaí & Hilliard, 2015). In 2017, Australian citizens voted in favor of same-sex marriage legalization in a referendum (Pew Research Center, 2019). However, this is only one possible course of action and not necessarily a strong point against the legalization of SSMCU, and it does not change the previous aspects mentioned about the weakness of this argument.

Based on the moral and factual perspective of the analysis of this argument, we are inclined towards rejecting the strength of this argument by questioning the morality of enforcing the law based on the majority of the voters, as well as providing the evidence that some laws are already favored by the majority of the society or their support is increasing.

4.3.8. Immoral

This argument should be based on consequentialist ethics because it implies that the legalization of SSMCU is the wrong action because of the consequences it may cause. The root of the argument establishes the causality that legalization of SSMCU will lead to polygamy, marrying robots, and other immoral types of relationships. Here we focus on polygamy (the biggest concern of the politicians who supported this argument), however, it could be also applied to other types of untraditional unions. The first implication is whether these

47

unconventional partnerships are indeed immoral? Macedo (2015), argues that more than two adults can love each other and deliberately consent to be in a relationship where family conditions could be even better than in traditional families. Whereas there can be heterosexual families in abusive relationships. This in turn makes us question who or what determines if the relationship is immoral. Besides, this raises the question whether the state has anything to do with what happens in people's private lives and treat person differently depending on his sexual relations (CBC Radio-Canada, 1967). This argument did not provide any basis for considering such unions immoral (even though depending on the source and type of union it indeed can be so).

Another implication is the slippery slope fallacy[9] which assumes that SSMCU legalization will necessarily result in the emergence of unconventional unions. According to Volokh (2005), legalizing SSMCU may affect some people's attitude about polygamy towards considering it more acceptable, however it depends on the principles each person lives by and cultural background, thus 100% causality cannot be established here. Even if polygamy could be the next step after legalizing SSMCU, why is it considered as a "bad" outcome if that is what society wants and no one gets harmed?

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[9] Slippery slope fallacy - "occurs when the arguer assumes that a chain reaction will occur but there is insufficient evidence that one (or more) events in the chain will cause the others" (Howard-Snyder, Howard-Snyder & Wasserman, 2013, p.185)

5. Conclusions

The purpose of this thesis was to identify arguments expressed in publicly available sources by the current Latvian Saeima politicians who oppose same-sex marriages and civil unions and determine whether these arguments are strong. As a part of the document analysis, the collected arguments were pooled into eight categories. From the results, the most common arguments among the politicians were from the categories *Traditional Latvian Family Values* and *Constitution*, while the least common categories were *Unnaturalness* and *Immoral*. Then, using the moral analysis method, arguments were reformulated, to construct stronger, backed by facts, and more sound arguments. Afterward, we tested how strong are the evaluated arguments by questioning each premise of the initial argument. It turned out that all eight arguments were not strong. The lack of strength stemmed from the moral evaluations of the arguments and fact-based evidence that the initial argument was not correct. Table 5 summarises our findings regarding argument evaluation and concludes whether the argument is strong or not.

This thesis could help to raise the standards for arguments against SSMCU and make common arguments easier to object to both in informal debates as well as for political discussions. Politicians would be demanded to provide higher quality arguments during the opposition of SSMCU legalization when considering state regulations that involve serious limitations of individual freedom, thus, the bar for justification should be put high. We hope to provide people with an alternative view and help to critically evaluate arguments against SSMCU that are addressed. The results of this thesis could potentially help the members of society and politicians to broaden their knowledge and perceptions about SSMCU legalization, raise awareness and increase conversation about the LGBT community in terms of their discrimination and legal rights. This thesis could help to address the preconceptions that people have about SSMCU legalization.

There are also several areas this thesis did not cover due to its limited scope. This thesis did not observe the changes in the stances about SSMCU legalization throughout the years and observe the evolution of the arguments since the emergence of the LGBT movement in Latvia. In the future, it could be beneficial to research the underlying motives of politicians when they express the argument. Besides, more attention could be given to society's stance on SSMCU

Argument	Argument Description	Evaluation	Conclusion
Unnaturalness	Same-sex couples should not be allowed to marry and form civil unions because they are unnatural, cannot procreate, and contradict natural law.	Other non-standard families are acceptable under natural law therefore, same-sex couples are discriminated by natural law.	Not strong
Traditional Latvian Family Values	Same-sex couples cannot create "traditional" Latvian families and they contradict conservative values and the conservative image of marriage therefore, they should not be allowed to get married or form civil unions.	Similarly, other non-traditional families are considered acceptable, parenting of same-sex and opposite-sex couples does not differ, and same-sex couples would not decrease the meaning of marriage.	Not strong
Religion	Religious values in Latvia are against same-sex marriages and civil unions.	Latvia is a secular country therefore religious values should not be considered.	Not strong
Demographics	Allowing same-sex couples to get married or form civil unions would threaten and impair the natural population increase rate and population decline rate.	Other countries that have allowed SSM or SSCU, do not show any trend in their natural population increase rates and population decline rates, therefore, the trend is not predetermined.	Not strong
Constitution	The 110th Article of the Constitution does not allow for same-sex couples to get married or form civil unions.	Other countries all over the world have changed their Constitutions to allow SSM or SSCU. The Constitution should reflect society's current views.	Not strong
Rejection of discrimination	Same-sex couples are not discriminated, thus, there is no need to legalize SSMCU.	Evidence of morally unacceptable discrimination towards same-sex couples is found.	Not strong
Societal reluctance	The majority of the society does not support SSMCU; society is not ready; this matter should be dealt with the help of public voting.	Enforcing laws based on the majority rule can lead to a tyranny of the majority and is not morally justified. There are surveys that prove that in some cases, the majority of the society does support LGBT laws.	Not strong
Immoral	The legalization of SSMCU will lead to unacceptable consequences.	There is no explanation why such consequences as polygamy are immoral. There is a slippery slope fallacy in the argument	Not strong

Table 5. Made by authors. Summary of argument evaluation.

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7. Appendices

Appendix A - Countries where same-sex marriage and civil unions are legal

Countries where same-sex marriage is legal + years	Countries where civil unions are legal + years
Europe: The Netherlands (2001), Belgium (2003), Spain (2005), Norway (2009), Sweden (2009), Portugal (2010), Iceland (2010), Denmark (2012), France (2013), England & Wales (2013), Scotland (2014), Luxembourg (2015), Greenland (2015), Ireland (2015), Malta (2017), Germany (2017), Finland (2017), Austria (2019), Northern Ireland (2020), Andorra (2020). *Rest of the world:* Canada (2005), South Africa (2006), Argentina (2010), Brazil (2013), Uruguay (bill passes - 2013, legalized - 2014), New Zealand (2013), United States (2015), Colombia (2016), Australia (2017), Taiwan (2019), Costa Rica (2020), in parts of Mexico (2020).	*Europe*: Czech Republic (2006), Switzerland (2007), Hungary (2009), Croatia (2014), Estonia (2014), Cyprus (2015), Greece (2015), Italy (2016), Slovenia (2017). *Rest of the world:* Chile (2015)

Table A.1. Made by the authors (Agence France-Presse, 2019; Coulter, 2020; Equaldex, n.d.b; Equaldex, n.d.c; Equaldex, n.d.d; Euro-family, n.d.; Felter & Renwick, 2020; ILGA-Europe, 2014b; Maurice, 2020; Popper, 2015; Povoledo, 2016, Shkurko, 2020; Vivanco, 2020).

Appendix B - Description of sexual orientation-based discrimination

Type	Definition/description
Direct discrimination	When a person is treated differently than someone else because of their sexual orientation, for example, when a person is denied service or a job.
Indirect discrimination	When an organisation/business has policies/operates in such a way that discriminates against people who have a different sexual orientation. However, to have such a policy/to discriminate, the institution has to have a legitimate reason for it.
Harassment	When a person feels offended, humiliated, and degraded by an action in a workplace. If such an action takes place outside of the workplace, it is no longer harassment, but it is direct discrimination.

Victimisation	When a person who has reported/supports someone who has reported discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is made to feel bad about this action.

Table B.1. Definitions of different types of sexual orientation-based discrimination types, information is taken from Equality and Human Rights Commission (2016).

Appendix C - Rainbow index from 2010 to 2020

Country	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Albania	2	2	6	38	38	41	34	33	33	31	31
Andorra	7	4	3	21	21	32	32	35	35	28	35
Armenia	0	-2	-4	8	9	9	7	7	7	7	8
Austria	3	6	12	43	52	52	62	56	56	50	50
Azerbaijan	0	-2	-4	8	7	5	5	5	5	3	2
Belarus	-1	-3	-1	14	14	14	13	13	13	13	13
Belgium	9	10	17	67	78	83	82	72	79	73	73
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2	1	5	20	20	29	29	31	31	31	37
Bulgaria	2	2	6	18	30	27	24	23	24	20	20
Croatia	4	6	10	48	56	71	67	62	51	47	46
Cyprus	0	-2	1	20	20	18	32	29	29	23	31
Czech Republic	3	3	9	35	35	35	32	29	29	26	26
Denmark	7	9	9	57	60	68	71	68	68	68	68
Estonia	2	2	2	29	35	34	36	33	39	35	38
Finland	6	6	11	47	45	62	67	68	73	69	66
France	5	5	6	64	64	65	67	71	73	63	56
Georgia	1	-1	1	21	26	36	30	26	26	30	30
Germany	5	10	20	54	56	56	55	54	59	47	51
Greece	1	2	2	28	31	39	58	47	52	49	48
Hungary	4	7	14	55	54	50	51	45	47	41	33

Iceland	8	9	12	56	64	63	59	47	47	47	54
Ireland	3	5	9	36	34	40	55	52	52	47	52
Italy	1	0	2.5	19	25	22	20	27	27	22	23
Kosovo	3	1	2	14	17	18	32	30	33	28	35
Latvia	0	0	1	20	20	18	17	17	16	17	17
Lichtenstein	0	-2	-1	16	18	19	18	18	18	14	18
Lithuania	2	1	3	21	22	19	18	17	21	23	23
Luxembourg	4	4	8	28	28	43	50	46	47	70	73
Malta	1	0	0	35	57	77	88	88	91	90	89
Moldova	-1	-3	-4.5	10	17	16	14	13	13	14	19
Monaco	0	-2	-3	10	10	11	11	10	10	11	11
Montenegro	1	2	8	27	47	46	45	39	38	36	62
Netherlands	9	10	16	60	70	69	66	64	60	50	62
North Macedonia	0	-2	-4	13	13	13	16	16	14	11	25
Norway	9	10	15	66	68	69	65	78	78	68	68
Poland	0	1	2	22	28	26	18	18	18	18	16
Portugal	5	10	15	65	67	67	70	69	69	66	66
Romania	3	2	6	31	28	28	23	21	21	21	19
Russia	-2	-2	-4.5	7	6	8	7	6	11	10	10
San Marino	0	-2	-3	14	14	14	14	12	12	13	13
Serbia	1	2	6	25	30	29	32	30	30	28	33
Slovakia	2	1	9	27	31	29	29	28	29	30	30
Slovenia	4	5	9	35	35	32	32	44	48	40	42
Spain	9	12	20	65	73	69	71	67	67	61	67
Sweden	10	12	18	65	65	72	65	60	60	62	63
Switzerland	4	4	6.5	29	29	28	33	31	38	31	36
Turkey	-1	-2	-3	14	14	12	9	9	9	5	4

Ukraine	-2	-4	-4	12	12	10	13	19	21	22	22
UK	8	12.5	21	77	82	86	81	76	73	66	66

Table C.1. This table was made by the authors. (ILGA-Europe, 2010; ILGA-Europe, 2011; ILGA-Europe, 2012; ILGA-Europe, 2013; ILGA-Europe, 2014; ILGA-Europe, 2015; ILGA-Europe, 2016; ILGA-Europe, 2017; ILGA-Europe, 2018a; ILGA-Europe, 2019a; ILGA-Europe, 2020b).

Appendix D - Rainbow Index 2020 country table

Figure D.1. Rainbow index interactive map for European countries for 2020 made by ILGA-Europe (2020b).

Appendix E - Table of Latvian 13th Saeima election political parties and their stances on LGBT matters.

Attīstībai / Par! (Development / For!) - A/P!	*Attīstībai/Par!* has always expressed strong support and has fought for the LGBT community, which can also be seen in their political program. Their program states that they will support the ratification of the Istanbul convention (which is against violence

74

	against women, domestic violence, discrimination on any basis, etc. (Council of Europe, 2011)) will work to achieve the protection of all families and the possibility to register same-sex partnership. (Attīstībai/Par!, n.d.).
Nacionālā Apvienība "Visu Latvijai!" - "Tēvzemei un Brīvībai/LNNK" (National Alliance "All For Latvia!" – "For Fatherland and Freedom / LNNK") - NA	*Nacionālā Apvienība,* according to their party program, does not explicitly state their stance on same-sex marriage and civil unions, however, they state that the party supports and will enforce traditional family values and the importance of marriage (Nacionālā Apvienība, n.d.). However, due to recent developments in regard to the Article 110 of the Constitution, National Alliance shows that it is against same-sex civil unions (LSM, 2021).
Jaunā Vienotība (New Unity) - JV	*Jaunā Vienotība* together with *Attīstībai/Par!* initiated the Cohabitation Act which would support same-sex civil unions. However, it was later rejected by Saeima. Edgars Rinkēvičs, who is openly gay, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs is a part of New Unity. (BNN, 2019).
Jaunā Konservatīvā Partija (New Conservative Party) - JKP	The *Jaunā Konservatīvā Partija* has clearly stated that one of their values is a traditional family and a marriage that consists of a man and a woman. They do not support any other form of unions and state that in their opinion same-sex couples have all issues sorted out with other laws. (Jaunā Konservatīvā Partija, n.d.).
"Saskaņa" (Harmony) - S	*Saskaņa* has not mentioned anything clearly about their party's stance on LGBT matters, however, there are numerous unnamed delegates from the party who are said to be LGBT supporters (Vikmanis, 2018). However, in the PES (The Party of European Socialists) Principle Declaration, that they have attached to their party, says that they support equality of people, no matter what their sexual orientation or gender identity is (Saskaņa, n.d.).
Par Cilvēcīgu Latviju (For a Humane Latvia) (formerly known as Kam Pieder Valsts (KPV LV)) - PCL	This political party does not recognize the Cohabitation Act as a political matter and advises to call a referendum in this matter (Latvian Public Broadcasting, 2018).
Zaļo un Zemnieku Savienība (Unions of Greens and Farmers) - ZZS	*Zaļo un Zemnieku Savienība* does not clearly state their stance on same-sex marriage and civil unions (Zaļo un Zemnieku Savienība, n.d.).
Rīcības partija	The party is very outspoken about not supporting Baltic Pride

(Eurosceptic Action Party)	events and the ratification of the Istanbul convention (Centrālā vēlēšanu komisija, 2018b).
"Latvijas Krievu Savienība" ("Latvian Russian Union")	We could not find any specific information of this party expressing their stance on LGBT matters, and their official program does not state anything either (Centrālā vēlēšanu komisija, 2018a).
"Latvijas Centriskā Partija" ("Latvian Centrist Party")	They propose rejecting same-sex marriage and unions and supports only traditional family values and virtue (Centrālā vēlēšanu komisija, 2018c).
"LSDSP/KDS/GLK" ("SKG Union")	*LSDSP/KDS/GKL* is strictly against same-sex marriage, civil unions, and "pseudo" gender identities (Centrālā vēlēšanu komisija, 2018d).
No Sirds Latvijai (For Latvia from the Heart)	This political party is against the legalization of same-sex marriage and the ratification of the Istanbul convention (Centrālā vēlēšanu komisija, 2018e).
"Progresīvie" ("The Progressives")	*Progresīvie* have expressed their support for families of all kinds, and support for the ability to form civil unions between same-sex couples as their main values (Progresīvie, n.d.).
Latvijas Reģionu Apvienība (Latvian Association of Regions)	A clear statement could not be found in their program, only the support for a traditional lifestyle, and they are resonating with the views of National Alliance (Centrālā vēlēšanu komisija, 2018f; Lasmanis, 2020b).
"Latviešu Nacionālisti" ("Latvian Nationalists")	A party which no longer exists, wanted to make the 110. Article of the Constitution irreversible. This article states that a marriage is a union between a man and a woman. Thus, they did not support same-sex civil unions and marriages. (Centrālā vēlēšanu komisija, 2018g).
Par Alternatīvu (For an Alternative)	Their program does not explicitly state their stance on LGBT matters (Centrālā vēlēšanu komisija, 2018h).

Table E.1. Table was made by the authors. On the left side of the table are party names. Party names in English are in bold and italics, while party names in Latvian are in italics. On the right side are the stances of parties on LGBT matters.

Appendix F - Saeima politicians and Ministers, and their stances/votes regarding SSMCU.

Politician	Party	Vote: on 29.10.20.	on 13.01.20.	Unnaturalness	Traditional Latvian family values	Religion	Constitution	Rejection of discrimination	Demographics	Social reluctance	Immoral	Does not support, no arguments	Agrees that issue must be addressed	Supports LGBT rights
Juris Jurašs	JKP	-	-		+		+	+					+	
Krišjānis Feldmans	JKP	-	-		+		+	+						
Linda Medne	JKP	-	NV		+		+	+				+		
Dagmāra Beitnere-Le Galla	JKP	-	NV	+	+		+	+	+				+	
Gatis Eglītis	JKP	-	-		+		+	+						
Juris Rancāns	JKP	-	-		+		+	+				+		
Sandis Riekstiņš	JKP	-	-		+		+	+				+		
Anita Muižniece	JKP	-	-		+		+	+				+		
Jānis Butāns	JKP	-	-		+		+	+				+		
Uldis Budriķis	JKP	-	-		+		+	+				+		
Evita Zālīte-Grosa	JKP	-	-	+	+		+	+					+	
Reinis Znotiņš	JKP	NV	NV		+		+	+				+		
Normunds Žunna	JKP	-	-		+		+	+						
Jānis Cielēns	JKP	-	-		+		+	+				+		
Eva Mārtuža	JKP	-	-		+		+	+				+		
Ilga Šuplinska*	JKP				+		+	+						
Tālis Linkaits*	JKP				+		+	+						

Name	Party													
Jānis Bordāns*	JKP				+		+	+						+	
Uldis Augulis	ZZS	NV	NV		+	+	+		+			+	+	
Raimonds Bergmanis	ZZS	-	-		+	+	+		+			+		
Armands Krauze	ZZS	NV	-		+	+	+		+			+		
Jānis Dūklavs	ZZS	-	-		+	+	+		+			+		
Edgars Tavars	ZZS	-	-		+	+	+		+					
Gundars Daudze	ZZS	-	NV		+	+	+		+			+		
Jānis Vucāns	ZZS	-	-		+	+	+		+			+		
Janīna Jalinska	ZZS	-	-		+	+	+		+			+		
Māris Kučinskis	ZZS	-	-		+	+	+		+			+		
Viktors Valainis	ZZS	-	-		+	+	+		+				+	
Aldis Blumbergs	Indep	+	+											+
Vjačeslavs Dombrovskis	Indep	+	+											+
Aldis Gobzems	Indep	-	-		+	+	+	+	+	+				
Artuss Kaimiņš	Indep	+	+											+
Andris Kazinovskis	Indep	-	-		+									
Evija Papule	Indep	+	-											+/-
Inguna Rībena	Indep	-	-	+	+	+		+			+			
Karina Sprūde	Indep	-	-		+	+								
Jūlija Stepaņenko	Indep	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+					
Didzis Šmits	Indep	NV	NV											+/-
Ļubova Švecova	Indep	NV	-									+		

78

Name	Party														
Atis Zakatistovs	Indep	-	NV										+	+	
Marija Golubeva	A/P!	+	+												+
Krista Baumane	A/P!	+	+												+
Mārtiņš Šteins	A/P!	+	+												+
Gatis Zamurs	A/P!	+	+												+
Aigars Bikše	A/P!	+	+												+
Vita Anda Tērauda	A/P!	+	+												+
Inese Voika	A/P!	+	+												+
Andris Skride	A/P!	+	+												+
Dace Rukšāne-Ščipčinska	A/P!	+	+												+
Inese Ikstena	A/P!	+	+												+
Mārtiņš Bondars	A/P!	+	+												+
Juris Pūce	A/P!	+	+												+
Ilmārs Dūrītis	A/P!	+	+												+
Daniels Pavļuts*	A/P!	+	+												+
Artis Pabriks*	A/P!														
Artūrs Toms Plešs*	A/P!	+													+
Ināra Mūrniece	NA	-	-		+	+	+	+	+	+	+				
Raivis Dzintars	NA	-	-		+	+	+	+	+	+	+				
Jānis Dombrava	NA	-	-		+	+	+	+	+	+	+				
Romāns Naudiņš	NA	-	-		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+			
Jānis Iesalnieks	NA	-	-		+	+	+	+	+	+	+				

Rihards Kols	NA	-	-		+	+	+	+	+	+	+			
Janīna Kursīte-Pakule	NA	-	-		+	+	+	+	+	+	+			
Aleksandrs Kiršteins	NA	-	-		+	+	+	+	+	+	+			
Edvīns Šnore	NA	-	-		+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	
Ritvars Jansons	NA	-	-		+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	
Edmunds Teirumnieks	NA	-	-		+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	
Ilze Indriksone	NA	-	-		+	+	+	+	+	+	+			
Kaspars Gerhalds*	NA				+	+	+	+	+	+	+			
Nauris Puntulis*	NA				+	+	+	+	+	+	+			
Iveta Benhena-Bēkena	PCL	-	-							+			+	+
Aivars Geidāns	PCL	NV	-		+	+				+				+
Kaspars Ģirģens	PCL	-	-							+				+
Ieva Krapāne	PCL	-	NV							+			+	+
Janīna Kursīte	PCL	-	-							+			+	+
Ēriks Pucens	PCL	-	-		+	+				+				+
Ivars Puga	PCL	-	-							+				+
Ralfs Nemiro	PCL	NV	-							+				+
Māris Možvillo	PCL	-	-	+				+		+				+
Sandis Ģirģens	PCL	-	-	+	+					+	+			+
Ramona Petraviča*	PCL	-	-		+	+				+				+
Jānis Vitenbergs*	PCL									+			+	+

80

Jānis Urbanovičs	S	NV	NV						+			+		
Valērijs Agešins	S	NV	NV		+	+			+			+		
Sergejs Dolgopolovs	S	+	NV									+		
Ivans Ribakovs	S	-	NV									+		
Igors Pimenovs	S	+	NV									+		+
Boriss Cilevičs	S	+	NV								+	+		
Artūrs Rubiks	S	-	NV									+		
Jānis Ādamsons	S	NV	NV									+		
Ivars Zariņš	S	NV	NV						+			+		
Inga Goldberga	S	+	NV								+	+		
Nikolajs Kabanovs	S	NV	NV		+							+		
Ivans Klementjevs	S	NV	NV								+	+		
Andrejs Klementjevs	S	-	NV								+	+		
Jānis Krišāns	S	-	NV								+	+		
Edgars Kucins	S	-	NV								+	+		
Regīna Ločmele	S	+	NV									+		+
Vladimirs Nikonovs	S	-	NV								+	+		
Vitālijs Orlovs	S	A	NV								+	+		
Jānis Tutins	S	-	NV	+					+			+		
Ainars Latkovskis	JV	+	+											+
Inese Lībiņa-Egnere	JV	+	+											+

81

Name	Party												
Arvils Ašeradens	JV	+	+										+
Aldis Adamovičs	JV	NV	NV										+
Andrejs Judins	JV	+	+										+
Atis Lejiņš	JV	+	+										+
Ojārs Ēriks Kalniņš	JV	+	+										+
Rihards Kozlovskis	JV	+	+										+
Anda Čakša	JV	+	+										+
Aldis Blumbergs	JV	+	+										+
Krišjānis Kariņš*	JV												+
Edgars Rinkēvičs*	JV												+
Jānis Reirs*	JV												+
Count				6	51	32	42	37	27	31	16	35	38	35

Table F.1. Made by the authors. Party abbreviations can be seen in Appendix E. Vote on 29.10.2020. was about Cohabitation initiative (see section 2.2.4.), and vote on 13.01.2021. was about specifying "family" meaning in the Constitution (see section 2.2.4.) (Parvaipret.lv, 2021; Saeima, 2020). Votes section input meaning: "+" - in support of LGBT rights, "-" - not in support of LGBT rights, A - abstained, NV - no vote. * - the person is/was/became minister during the 13th Saeima. Argument section value meaning - "+" - politician has expressed this argument, "+" - this argument has not been expressed by the politician individually but is the stance of his/her party. (Jaunā Konservatīvā Partija, 2021; LSM & Kincis, 2020; LSM, Kincis & Līcīte, 2021; Spundiņa, 2020; Līcītis, 2020; Plauka, 2020; NA Jaunatnes organizācija, 2021; Zaļo un Zemnieku Savienība, n.d.; Saeima, 2020; Tavars 2021; Melkina, 2021; Bērziņš, 2018; Upleja, 2021; Latvijas Vēstnesis, 2020; Gobzems, 2020; Valainis, 2021; Līcītis, 2018; LSM & Semjonova, 2019; Delfi, 2015; LSM, 2018; Bērtule, 2019; Atjaunotne, 2014; Spektrs, 2015; Vanags, 2012; Delfi, 2012; Streips, 2013; Gobzems, 2021; Puriņa, 2019; Stepaņenko, 2020; Šmits, 2021; Lasmanis, 2020a; Kols, 2018; Kols, 2021; Kozins, 2020, Saeima, 2018, Petrovics, 2020; Izdevniecība Santa, 2020; Puriņa, 2020, LETA, 2020; Parvaipret.lv., 2021; RīgaTv 24, 2020; Petraviča, 2020; Lapsa, 2021; Sputnik, 2020; Tutins, 2015; Pūce, 2015; LSM, 2014; Līcīte, 2014; Anstrate, 2020; NRA.lv Redakcija, 2020).

Appendix G - Quotes in Latvian from Latvian politicians on the discussed arguments.

Topic	Citation in Latvian	Citation in English
Unnatural	"Ļaujiet mums palikt pie īstām un dabiskām vērtībām!" - I. Rībena, individual politician (Delfi, 2012). "Konservatīvā sabiedrības daļa mobilizējas dabiskas ģimenes aizsardzībai, izveidojot domnīcu - Asociācija Ģimene" - J. Stepaņenko, individual politician (Stepaņenko, 2020)	"Let us stay with real and natural values!" - I. Rībena, individual politician (Delfi, 2012). "The conservative part of the society has mobilized and created a think tank - Association Family - to protect natural families" - J. Stepaņenko, individual politician (Stepaņenko, 2020).
Traditional Latvian family values	"Ģimenes pamats ir tēvs un māte, kā arī bērni ... Šis ir vērtību jautājums, par kuru mēs iestājamies. Runa ir par vērtībām, kas izturējušas laika pārbaudi. ... Viena no šīm vērtībām ir arī izpratne par ģimeni, kuras pamatu veido tēvs un māte – vīrietis un sieviete –, un viņu bērni." - *Nacionālā Apvienība* party stance (NA Jaunatnes Organizācija, 2021). "Tradicionālā heteroseksuālā ģimene pieder konservatīvām vērtībām, un Satversmē ierakstītā laulība ir starp vīrieti un sievieti. Varbūt pat nepietiekami tiek akcentēta un novērtēta ģimene, kurā dzimst bērni." - D. Beitnere-Le Galla (Līcītis, 2020). "Jo valsts ir tik stipra, cik stipras ir tradicionālās vērtības. Un, jo vājākas ir tradicionālās vērtības, jo valsts kļūst vājāka, laikam ejot. Un tā ir taisnība, jūs varat tikai vēsturi paskatīties. Un tā nav... tas nav nekas personīgs, tā ir vēsture." - A. Gobzems (Latvijas Vēstnesis, 2020). "Jā, es esmu konservatīvu uzskatu pārstāvis un tāds laikam arī palikšu." - A. Kazinovskis (Latvijas Vēstnesis, 2020).	"The core of the family is a father and a mother, as well as children... This is about the values that we stand for. We are talking about values that have stood through time... One of these values is understanding that a family's core is made of a father and a mother - man and a woman -, and their children" - *Natcionālā Apvienība* party stance (NA Jaunatnes Organizācija, 2021). "Tradiotional heterosexual family is conservatice values, and it is written in the Constitution that a marriage is between a man and a woman. Maybe we are not accentuating and valuing families, where children are born, enouhg" - D. Beitnere-Le Galla, *Jaunā Konservatīvā Partija* (Līcītis, 2020). "A country is as strong as its traditional values are. And the weaker the traditional values, the weaker the country is becoming over time. And it is true, you can just look at the history. And it is not... it is not personal, it's history" - A. Gobzems (Latvijas Vēstnesis, 2020). "Yes, I am a conservative value representatiove, and I will probably stay one" - A. Kazinovskis (Latvijas Vēstnesis, 2020).

Religion	" Izpratni par ģimeni kā vīrieša un sievietes radītu savienību nosaka arī Satversmes preambulā minētie pasaules uzskati – latviskā dzīvesziņa un kristīgās vērtības. To savā aicinājumā valsts augstākajām amatpersonām decembra beigās uzsvēra arī 13 Latvijas reliģisko konfesiju vadītāji" - *National Alliance* party stance (Upleja, 2021).	"Understanding of family as a union between a man and a woman is also mentioned in the views of the world in the Constitutions preamble - Latvian life message and Christian values" - *Nacionālā Apvienība* party stance (Upleja, 2021).
Constitution	"Mēģinājums ieviest Latvijā viendzimuma pāru tiesības reģistrēt kopdzīvi būtu pretējs Satversmei. Tas ieviestu tiesisko haosu. " - *Nacionālā Apvienība* party stance (Bērziņš, 2018). "Mūsu Latvijas Republikas Satversmē, uz kuru jūs atsaucaties, piemēram, dārgā koalīcija, tad, kad ir jānotur Saeimas attālinātās sēdes, ka tas ir Satversmes gars un ka tā Satversmē ir paredzēts. Tur melns uz balta ir rakstīts... Es aicinu jūs ievērot Satversmi. Kamēr Satversme nav mainīta. To, protams, var mainīt, bet, kamēr tā nav mainīta, aicinu izlasīt par to, ko Latvijas Republikas teritorijā saprot ar laulību, ar ģimeni." - A. Gobzems, individual politician (Latvijas Vēstnesis, 2020).	"The attempt to introduce rights for same-sex couples to register civil unions would contradict the Constitution. It would create legal chaos."- *Nacionālā Apvienība* party stance (Bērziņš, 2018). "In the Constitution of the Republic of Latvia, to which you, for example, our dear coalition, refer to, when we have to hold remote Saeima sittings, that it is the Constitution's spirit and that it is meant to be like that in the Constitution. It is written black on white... I ask you to folow the Constitution. Until it is changed. You can, of course, change it, but while it hasn't been changed, I ask you to read what a marriage and a family is in the Latvian territory" - A. Gobzems, individual politician (Latvijas Vēstnesis, 2020).
Same-sex couples are not discriminated	"Tas nebūt nenozīmē, ka kāda sabiedrības grupa tiek diskriminēta. Šis likumprojekts nediskriminē netradicionālas orientācijas pārstāvjus, nē, bet iestājas par dabisku uzdevumu sadali... Ja personas nevēlas laulāties un uzņemties pienākumus, kas izriet no laulības noslēgšanas, tad valsts jau šobrīd piedāvā privātas vienošanās ceļā	"It doesn't mean that a part of the society is being discriminated. This legislation does not discriminate non-traditionally oriented people, no, but it stands for natural division of tasks... If individuals do not want to get married and take the responsibily of marriage, then the state already offers to arrange many different civil nature questions through a private arrangement. To

	vienoties par dažādiem civiltiesiska rakstura jautājumiem. Lai risinātu savstarpējās mantiskās attiecības, Civillikums paredz dažādus tiesiskos mehānismus, kā divas kopā dzīvojošas personas var regulēt savstarpējās mantiskās attiecības, slēdzot dāvinājuma, pirkuma, pilnvarojuma, nākotnes pilnvarojuma un citus līgumus. Valsts atzīst un aizsargā laulības institūtu ne jau tādēļ, ka tas ļauj cilvēkiem viņu kopdzīvē justies pēc iespējas komfortablāk, bet gan unikālā un fundamentālā labuma dēļ, kuru tas dod mūsu valstij, sabiedrībai un visai cilvēcei. Citiem vārdiem sakot, šīs atzīšanas un aizsardzības pamatā ir kopējais labums, nevis individuālu egoistisku iegribu apmierināšana. Latvijas tiesību sistēma jau garantē vienlīdzīgas tiesības visiem cilvēkiem bez jebkādas diskriminācijas: latviešiem un nelatviešiem, bagātiem un nabagiem, kreiļiem un ar labo roku rakstošiem, homoseksuāļiem un heteroseksuāļiem, utt. Taču no tā nebūt neizriet, ka valstij ir pienākums atbalstīt homoseksuālu dzīvesveidu." - *National Alliance* party stance (Bērziņš, 2018).	solve mutual property issues, the Civil law provides many legal mechanisms as to how two people who live together can regulate their mutual properties, by making donative, purchase, authorization, future authorization contracts and other contracts.The government recognizes and protects the marriage institute not to help people who live together to feel more comfortable, but for the unique and fundamental benefits it gives for the country, the society, and the whole humanity. In other words, this recognition and protection is based on mutual benefits, not individual egoistic need satisfaction. Latvian legal system already grants equal rights for all people without any discrimination: Latvians and non-Latvians, the rich and the poor, left-handed and right-handed, homosexuals and heterosexuals, etc. But it does not mean that the government has the obligation to support homosexual lifestyle" - *Nacionālā Apvienība* party stance (Bērziņš, 2018).
Demographics	"Ģimenes galvenais uzdevums ir radīt pēcnācējus un nodrošināt bērniem labvēlīgus augšanas apstākļus. ... Ne tikai latviešu kultūras būtība, proti, dainas, bet arī atzīti psihiatri kā Viesturs Rudzītis ir pamatojuši, ka iepriekšminētos apstākļus spēj nodrošināt tikai tēvs (vīrietis) un māte (sieviete). Bērna acīs nekas nevar nevar aizvietot tēvu un māti.	"The family's main task is to create offsprings and to ensure them with favorable conditions for their childhood... Not only Latvian cultural essence, that is, *dainas,* but also recognized psichiatrists as Viesturs Rudzītis have justified that the aforementioned factors can only be provided by a father (man) and a mother (woman). In a childs eyes nothing can replace a father and a

	Tomēr pats svarīgākais šī jautājuma risināšanā ir fakts, ka viendzimuma pāri nespēj radīt pēcnācējus savā kopdzīves laikā" - *National Alliance* party stance (Melkina, 2021). "No divu sieviešu vai vīriešu attiecībām dabiskā ceļā bērni nerodas, bet kā sabiedrība esam ieinteresēti, lai dzimstība pieaugtu." - D. Beitnere-Le Galla (Līcītis, 2020). "Latvijā bērni negrib piedzimt, Latvija ir pasaulē straujāk depopulētā teritorija. Un tāpēc šodienas apstākļos ir godīgi pateikt - prioritāte nevar būt viss. Prioritāte ir un tai ir jābūt ģimenei ar bērniem." - A. Gobzems (Latvijas Vēstnesis, 2020). "Mēs par prioritāti uzskatām Latvijas cilvēku skaita negatīvās bilances apturēšanu, nevis dažu populistu vēlmi virzīt priekšplānā otršķirīgus jautājumus." - A. Gobzems (Gobzems, 2020).	mother. However, the most important fact in solving this issue is that same-sex couples cannot create offsprings during their relationships. " - *Nacionālā Apvienība* party stance (Melkina, 2021). "Naturally, children do not come from the union of two women and two men, but, as a society, we are interested in the growth of population" - D. Beitnere-Le Galla (Līcītis, 2020). "In Latvia, children do not want to be born, the territory of Latvia is the most quickly depopulating territory in the world. And that is why in the current circumstances we can honestly say that everything cannot be a priority. The priority is and has to be families with children." - A. Gobzems (Latvijas Vēstnesis, 2020). "We consider stopping the negative balance of Latvian population, not the wish of a few populists to push forward secondary issues" - A. Gobzems (Gobzems, 2020).
Society is not ready	"sabiedrības IZTEIKTS mazākums vēlas savu pasaules redzējumu uzspiest Latvijas sabiedrības vairākumam. Iniciatīvas autoru mērķis ir sabiedrības pārveidošana ar likuma palīdzību, bet šāda mākslīga sabiedrības modifikācija un "uzlabošana" nebūtu pieļaujama." - *National Alliance* party stance (Bērziņš, 2018). "Kā var redzēt sociālajos tīklos, šis jautājums tiešām sabiedrību šķeļ vairāk, nekā vieno. Acīmredzot, mūsu sabiedrība šobrīd nav gatava" - Ramona Petraviča (Spundiņa, 2020)	"A PRONOUNCED minority of the society wants to puch their view of the world onto the majority of the Latvian society. The ai of the authors of the initiative is to remake the society with the help of legislation, but this kind of artificial modification and "improvement" of the society shouldn't be permissible" - *Nacionālā Apvienība* party stance (Bērziņš, 2018). "As it can be seen in the social media, it divides the societymore than it unites it. As we can see, our society is not ready at the moment." - Ramona Petraviča (Spundiņa, 2020)
Immoral	"Ja likumdevējs ievieš tiesību sistēmā viendzimuma pāru	"If the legislator introduces into the legal system same-sex couple

kopdzīves reģistrācijas institūtu, tad zūd jebkāds pamats noraidīt poligāmijas (daudzsievības vai daudzvīrības) tiesisko atzīšanu." - *National Alliance* party stance (Bērziņš, 2018). "Mēs dzīvojam 21. gadsimtā, daži vīrieši un sievietes jau sāk veidot attiecības ar robotiem. Tad vai nevajadzētu veidot un arī paplašināt šo ģimenes formu arī šajā aspektā, jau pārējot uz cilvēka attiecībām ar robotizētām būtnēm? " - S. Ģirģens (2019).	cohabitation registration institute, then any basis to reject poligamy's legal recognition." - *Nacionālā Apvienība* party stance (Bērziņš, 2018). "We are living in the 21st Century, some men and women are already in relationships with robots. The shouldn't we make and extend the family form in this aspect too, already entering human relationships with robots?" - S. Ģirģens (2019).

Table G.1. Made by the authors.

Appendix H - Birth rate and population change in European countries that have allowed same-sex marriage or same-sex civil unions

Year	Belgium	Denmark	Germany	Ireland	Spain	France	Luxembourg	Malta
1990	19,646	2,507	-15,770	21,674	68,283		1,163	2,623
1991	21,775	4,777	-81,226	21,413	58,298		1,242	2,427
1992	20,574	6,905	-76,329	20,158	65,232		1,128	2,574
1993	14,024	4,560	-98,823	17,156	46,125		1,438	2,455
1994	12,735	8,567	-115,058	17,307	31,906		1,651	2,128
1995	10,645	6,644	-119,367	16,528	17,242		1,624	1,905
1996	12,167	6,595	-86,830	18,932	11,177		1,794	2,279
1997	12,362	7,750	-48,216	21,194	19,514		1,576	1,983
1998	9,664	7,721	-67,348	22,406	4,682	225,056	1,485	1,652
1999	9,266	7,064	-75,586	21,316	9,028	229,171	1,789	1,324
2000	11,493	9,098	-71,798	23,398	37,241	267,532	1,969	1,451
2001	11,925	7,120	-94,066	27,642	47,733	262,868	1,740	1,053
2002	7,454	5,539	-122,436	30,820	51,642	248,253	1,601	912
2003	**6,966**	7,108	-147,225	32,455	58,076	231,302	1,250	904
2004	16,039	8,803	-112,649	33,307	83,608	280,651	1,874	881
2005	16,344	9,320	-144,432	33,112	**79,755**	269,580	1,750	726
2006	20,942	9,507	-148,903	36,937	111,904	303,252	1,748	563
2007	23,437	8,478	-142,293	43,272	107,889	288,332	1,611	654
2008	22,618	10,447	-161,925	46,899	134,305	286,577	2,001	770
2009	23,344	7,946	-189,418	47,174	110,508	276,875	1,983	808
2010	24,948	9,043	-180,821	47,213	105,018	282,285	2,114	888
2011	24,413	6,482	-189,643	45,577	84,536	279,042	1,820	898
2012	18,975	**5,591**	-196,038	42,488	52,226	251,858	2,150	712
2013	16,272	3,403	-211,756	39,450	35,840	**242,978**	2,293	796
2014	20,259	5,530	-153,429	38,043	32,342	259,893	2,229	921
2015	11,733	5,650	-187,625	**35,409**	-1,976	205,864	**2,132**	883
2016	13,799	8,790	-118,761	33,174	503	190,320	2,083	1,134
2017	10,024	8,136	**-147,371**	31,507	-30,772	163,635	1,911	**748**
2018	7,626	6,244	-167,351	29,882	-54,326	149,452	1,956	756
2019	7,345	7,209	-161,430	28,330	-57,355	140,620	1,947	662

Greece	Cyprus	Italy	Croatia	Switzerland	Estonia	Czechia	Andorra	UK	Norway	Iceland	Sweden	Finland	Portugal	Austria	Netherlands
8,099	5,778	27,509	3,217	20,200	2,773	1,398		156,565	14,918	3,064	28,777	15,491	13,553	7,502	69,141
7,122	5,367	10,798	-3,003	23,566	-302	5,064		146,088	15,885	2,737	28,535	16,101	12,417	11,201	68,707
5,850	6,152	24,132	-4,830	24,608	-2,088	1,368		146,561	15,378	2,890	28,138	16,887	14,286	12,140	66,847
4,380	5,725	-490	-2,311	21,250	-6,033	2,840		103,045	13,081	2,870	20,990	13,838	8,010	12,710	57,953
5,956	5,455	-20,961	-898	20,992	-8,036	-10,794		122,844	16,021	2,724	20,413	17,231	9,995	11,731	62,140
1,337	4,934	-28,714	-354	18,816	-7,319	-21,816		86,089	15,102	2,357	9,467	13,787	3,622	7,498	54,838
-22	4,680	-24,225	3,175	20,370	-5,778	-22,336		96,858	17,067	2,450	1,164	11,556	3,380	8,019	51,960
2,300	4,102	-22,412	3,537	17,745	-5,995	-22,087		96,877	15,206	2,307	-2,824	10,221	8,155	4,613	56,660
-1,774	3,447	-34,936	-5,243	16,380	-7,278	-18,992		87,718	14,240	2,357	-4,243	7,846	7,186	2,894	61,926
-2,661	3,435	-20,499	-6,774	15,905	-6,022	-20,297		67,914	14,128	2,199	-6,553	8,229	8,131	-62	59,958
-1,952	3,092	-12,463	-6,500	15,930	-5,336	-18,091		70,664	15,232	2,487	-3,020	7,403	14,644	1,488	66,092
-277	3,340	-12,972	-8,559	11,067	-5,884	-17,040		66,855	12,715	2,366	-2,286	7,639	7,682	691	**62,226**
-346	2,715	-19,195	-10,475	10,604	-5,354	-15,457		62,563	10,969	2,228	806	6,137	8,125	2,268	59,728
-1,109	2,888	-42,405	-12,907	8,778	-5,116	-17,603		84,364	13,980	2,316	6,196	7,634	3,720	-265	58,361
713	3,084	15,941	-9,449	12,902	-3,693	-9,513	533	132,914	15,751	2,410	10,396	10,158	7,286	4,676	57,454
2,454	2,818	-13,282	-9,298	11,779	-2,966	-5,727	552	139,886	15,524	2,442	9,636	9,817	1,935	3,001	51,508
6,566	3,604	2,118	-8,932	13,088	-2,439	**1,390**	583	176,339	17,292	2,512	14,736	10,775	3,459	3,619	49,685
2,031	3,184	-6,868	-10,457	**13,405**	-1,634	9,996	596	197,558	16,505	2,617	15,692	9,652	-1,020	1,625	48,314
10,323	4,011	-8,467	-8,398	15,458	-647	14,622	638	214,686	18,785	2,848	17,852	10,436	314	2,669	49,498
9,617	4,426	-22,806	-7,837	15,810	-318	10,927	566	230,587	**20,358**	3,024	**21,721**	10,547	**-4,943**	-1,037	50,680
5,682	4,698	-25,544	-8,735	17,641	35	10,309	589	245,605	19,943	**2,887**	25,154	10,093	-4,572	1,543	48,339
-4,671	4,118	-46,842	-9,822	18,717	-565	1,825		255,544	18,827	2,506	21,832	9,376	-5,990	1,630	44,319
-16,297	4,496	-78,697	-9,939	17,991	-1,394	387	434	243,946	18,263	2,578	21,239	7,786	-17,771	-484	35,146
-17,660	4,200	-86,436	-10,447	17,770	-1,713	-2,409		**203,413**	17,747	2,172	23,191	6,662	-23,767	-196	30,096
-21,591	3,834	-95,768	-11,273	21,349	-1,933	4,195		**207,068**	18,607	2,326	25,931	5,046	-22,476	3,470	35,958
-29,336	**3,311**	-161,791	-16,702	18,953	-1,336	-409	No data	175,474	18,139	1,951	23,963	2,980	-23,039	1,308	23,376
-25,890	3,984	**-141,823**	-14,005	22,919	-1,339	4,913	324	178,731	18,164	1,725	26,443	-1,109	-23,447	7,006	23,523
-35,948	3,233	-190,910	-16,921	20,410	-1,759	2,962		149,006	15,859	1,833	23,444	**-3,401**	-23,604	4,363	19,622
-33,856	3,561	-193,386	-15,761	20,763	-1,384	1,116	208	116,605	14,280	1,974	23,647	-6,950	-26,031	1,560	15,162
-41,202	3,309	-214,333	-15,659	18,392	-1,302	-131	238	108,078	13,811	2,177	25,757	-8,336	-25,214	**1,566**	17,795

Slovenia	Hungary
3,813	-19,983
2,259	-17,607
649	-27,058
-219	-33,211
104	-31,291
12	-33,377
168	-37,858
-763	-39,084
-1,183	-43,569
-1,352	-48,565
-408	-38,004
-1,031	-35,136
-1,200	-36,029
-2,130	-41,176
-562	-37,355
-668	-38,236
752	-31,732
1,239	-35,325
3,509	-30,878
3,106	**-33,972**
3,734	-40,121
3,248	-40,746
2,681	-39,171
1,777	-37,153
2,279	-33,013
807	-39,440
656	-31,737
-268	-37,231
-900	-37,780
-1,260	-36,792

Figure H.1. Table of countries in Europe that have allowed SSM (in white) and SSCU (in light green) and their respective population changes from 1990 to 2019. Thick borders indicate the year the legislation was passed (Appendix A). Conditional formatting shows how population numbers have changed (darker green - larger increase, whiter - larger decrease). Made by the authors using Eurostat (2021).

Austri	Netherlands	Malta	Luxembourg	France	Spain	Ireland	Germany	Denmark	Belgium	Year
1.0	4.6	7.4	3.0		1.8	6.2	-0.2	0.5	2.0	**1990**
1.4	4.6	6.7	3.2		1.5	6.1	-1.0	0.9	2.2	**1991**
1.5	4.4	7.0	2.9		1.7	5.7	-0.9	1.3	2.0	**1992**
1.6	3.8	6.6	3.6		1.2	4.8	-1.2	0.9	1.4	**1993**
1.5	4.0	5.7	4.1		0.8	4.8	-1.4	1.6	1.3	**1994**
0.9	3.5	5.0	4.0		0.4	4.6	-1.5	1.3	1.1	**1995**
1.0	3.3	6.0	4.3		0.3	5.2	-1.1	1.3	1.2	**1996**
0.6	3.6	5.2	3.8		0.5	5.8	-0.6	1.5	1.2	**1997**
0.4	3.9	4.3	3.5	3.7	0.1	6.0	-0.8	1.5	0.9	**1998**
0.0	3.8	3.4	4.2	3.8	0.2	5.7	-0.9	1.3	0.9	**1999**
0.2	4.2	3.7	4.5	4.4	0.9	6.1	-0.9	1.7	1.1	**2000**
0.1	**3.9**	2.7	3.9	4.3	1.2	7.1	-1.1	1.3	1.2	**2001**
0.3	3.7	2.3	3.6	4.0	1.2	7.8	-1.5	1.0	0.7	**2002**
0.0	3.6	2.3	2.8	3.7	1.4	8.1	-1.8	1.3	**0.7**	**2003**
0.6	3.5	2.2	4.1	4.5	1.9	8.2	-1.4	1.6	1.5	**2004**
0.4	3.2	1.8	3.8	4.3	**1.8**	8.0	-1.8	1.7	1.6	**2005**
0.4	3.0	1.4	3.7	4.8	2.5	8.6	-1.8	1.7	2.0	**2006**
0.2	2.9	1.6	3.4	4.5	2.4	9.8	-1.7	1.6	2.2	**2007**
0.3	3.0	1.9	4.1	4.5	2.9	10.4	-2.0	1.9	2.1	**2008**
-0.1	3.1	2.0	4.0	4.3	2.4	10.4	-2.3	1.4	2.2	**2009**
0.2	2.9	2.1	4.2	4.4	2.3	10.4	-2.2	1.6	2.3	**2010**
0.2	2.7	2.2	3.5	4.3	1.8	10.0	-2.4	1.2	2.2	**2011**
-0.1	2.1	1.7	4.0	3.8	1.1	9.2	-2.4	**1.0**	1.7	**2012**
0.0	1.8	1.9	4.2	**3.7**	0.8	8.5	-2.6	0.6	1.5	**2013**
0.4	2.1	2.1	4.0	3.9	0.7	8.2	-1.9	1.0	1.8	**2014**
0.2	1.4	2.0	**3.7**	3.1	0.0	**7.5**	-2.3	1.0	1.0	**2015**
0.8	1.4	2.5	3.6	2.9	0.0	7.0	-1.4	1.5	1.2	**2016**
0.5	1.1	**1.6**	3.2	2.4	-0.7	6.6	**-1.8**	1.4	0.9	**2017**
0.2	0.9	1.6	3.2	2.2	-1.2	6.1	-2.0	1.1	0.7	**2018**
0.2	1.0	1.3	3.1	2.1	-1.2	5.7	-1.9	1.2	0.6	**2019**

89

Switzerland	Slovenia	Hungar	Cypru	Italy	Croati	Greece	Estoni	Czechia	Andorra	UK	Norway	Iceland	Sweden	Finlan	Portugal
3.0	1.9	-1.9	10.0	0.5	0.7	0.8	1.8	0.1		2.7	3.5	12.0	3.4	3.1	1.4
3.5	1.1	-1.7	9.0	0.2	-0.6	0.7	-0.2	0.5		2.5	3.7	10.6	3.3	3.2	1.2
3.6	0.3	-2.6	10.1	0.4	-1.1	0.6	-1.4	0.1		2.5	3.6	11.1	3.2	3.3	1.4
3.1	-0.1	-3.2	9.1	0.0	-0.5	0.4	-4.0	0.3		1.8	3.0	10.9	2.4	2.7	0.8
3.0	0.1	-3.0	8.5	-0.4	-0.2	0.6	-5.5	-1.0		2.1	3.7	10.2	2.3	3.4	1.0
2.7	0.0	-3.2	7.6	-0.5	-0.1	0.1	-5.1	-2.1		1.5	3.5	8.8	1.1	2.7	0.4
2.9	0.1	-3.7	7.1	-0.4	0.7	0.0	-4.1	-2.2		1.7	3.9	9.1	0.1	2.3	0.3
2.5	-0.4	-3.8	6.1	-0.4	0.8	0.2	-4.3	-2.1		1.7	3.5	8.5	-0.3	2.0	0.8
2.3	-0.6	-4.2	5.1	-0.6	-1.2	-0.2	-5.3	-1.8		1.5	3.2	8.6	-0.5	1.5	0.7
2.2	-0.7	-4.7	5.0	-0.4	-1.5	-0.2	-4.3	-2.0		1.2	3.2	7.9	-0.7	1.6	0.8
2.2	-0.2	-3.7	4.5	-0.2	-1.5	-0.2	-3.8	-1.8		1.2	3.4	8.8	-0.3	1.4	1.4
1.5	-0.5	-3.4	4.8	-0.2	-2.0	0.0	-4.2	-1.7		1.1	2.8	8.3	-0.3	1.5	0.7
1.5	-0.6	-3.5	3.8	-0.3	-2.4	0.0	-3.9	-1.5		1.1	2.4	7.7	0.1	1.2	0.8
1.2	-1.1	-4.1	4.0	-0.7	-3.0	-0.1	-3.7	-1.7		1.4	3.1	8.0	0.7	1.5	0.4
1.7	-0.3	-3.7	4.2	0.3	-2.2	0.1	-2.7	-0.9	7.1	2.2	3.4	8.3	1.2	1.9	0.7
1.6	-0.3	-3.8	3.8	-0.2	-2.2	0.2	-2.2	-0.6	7.1	2.3	3.4	8.2	1.1	1.9	0.2
1.7	0.4	-3.2	4.8	0.0	-2.1	0.6	-1.8	**0.1**	7.3	2.9	3.7	8.3	1.6	2.0	0.3
1.8	0.6	-3.5	4.2	-0.1	-2.4	0.2	-1.2	1.0	7.3	3.2	3.5	8.4	1.7	1.8	-0.1
2.0	1.7	-3.1	5.1	-0.1	-1.9	0.9	-0.5	1.4	7.6	3.5	3.9	9.0	1.9	2.0	0.0
2.0	1.5	**-3.4**	5.5	-0.4	-1.8	0.9	-0.2	1.0	6.7	3.7	**4.2**	9.5	**2.3**	2.0	**-0.5**
2.3	1.8	-4.0	5.7	-0.4	-2.0	0.5	0.0	1.0	7.0	3.9	4.1	**9.1**	2.7	1.9	-0.4
2.4	1.6	-4.1	4.8	-0.8	-2.3	-0.4	-0.4	0.2		4.0	3.8	7.9	2.3	1.7	-0.6
2.2	1.3	-3.9	5.2	-1.3	-2.3	-1.5	-1.1	0.0	5.6	3.8	3.6	8.0	2.2	1.4	-1.7
2.2	0.9	-3.8	4.9	-1.4	-2.5	-1.6	-1.3	-0.2		**3.2**	3.5	6.7	2.4	1.2	-2.3
2.6	1.1	-3.3	4.5	-1.6	**-2.7**	-2.0	**-1.5**	0.4		**3.2**	3.6	7.1	2.7	0.9	-2.2
2.3	0.4	-4.0	**3.9**	-2.7	-4.0	**-2.7**	-1.0	0.0	No data	2.7	3.5	5.9	2.4	0.5	-2.2
2.7	0.3	-3.2	4.7	**-2.3**	-3.4	-2.4	-1.0	0.5	4.5	2.7	3.5	5.1	2.7	-0.2	-2.3
2.4	**-0.1**	-3.8	3.8	-3.2	-4.1	-3.3	-1.3	0.3		2.3	3.0	5.3	2.3	**-0.6**	-2.3
2.4	-0.4	-3.9	4.1	-3.2	-3.9	-3.2	-1.0	0.1	2.8	1.8	2.7	5.6	2.3	-1.3	-2.5
2.1	-0.6	-3.8	3.8	-3.6	-3.9	-3.8	-1.0	0.0	3.1	1.6	2.6	6.0	2.5	-1.5	-2.5

Figure H.2. Table of countries in Europe that have allowed SSM (in white) and SSCU (in light green) and their respective birth rates from 1990 to 2019. Thick borders indicate the year the legislation was passed (Appendix A). Conditional formatting shows how population numbers have changed (darker green - larger increase, whiter - larger decrease). Made by the authors using Eurostat (2021).

Appendix I - Questions for semi-structured interviews

Interviews were conducted in Latvian and are translated in English. The interview questions in English are the following:

1. Are you for or against legalizing same-sex civil unions?
2. If you are against what are the reasons for it? If you are for it, why is it not reflected in the voting?
3. Are you for or against legalizing same-sex marriages?
4. If you are against what are the reasons for it? If you are for it, why is it not reflected in the voting?

These were the main questions to obtain the needed information about interviewees, however, there were also multiple questions to guide the conversation in the desirable direction or specify certain aspects.

Appendix J - Reformulated arguments

Unnaturalness	**Premise 1:** According to Pickett (2021), natural law poses that a sexual act is considered natural/normal if done with the purpose or possibility to reproduce. **Premise 2:** A sexual act done without the purpose/possibility to reproduce does not comply with natural law (Pickett, 2021). **Premise 3:** Same-sex couples cannot reproduce 'naturally' - on their own and without the help of adoption, surrogacy, etc. (Pickett, 2021). **Premise 4:** Natural law states that only a marriage that includes within itself the ability to procreate is 'natural' (Pickett, 2021). **Conclusion 1:** Homosexual acts and same-sex relationships do not comply with natural law because they cannot procreate. **Conclusion 2:** Same-sex couples should not be allowed to get married/form civil unions.

Traditional Latvian family values	**Premise 1:** Traditional values in Latvia are alike with conservative values where one of the values is a "traditional family" or "traditional marriage" (Jaunā Konservatīvā Partija, n.d.; Nacionālā Apvienība, n.d.). **Premise 2:** A "traditional" family or marriage is "essentially gendered" (p.60) and consists of a man, the father, a woman, the mother, and their child(ren) (Macedo, 2015). **Premise 3:** Same-sex couples consist of persons of the same sex. **Premise 4:** Same-sex couples cannot provide children with both gender roles (Family Research Council, 2004). **Premise 5:** In "traditional"/conservative views only persons of the opposite sex are allowed to get married. **Conclusion 1:** Same-sex couples cannot create a "traditional" family or marriage by definition. **Conclusion 2:** Conservative values and the conservative image of marriage is against same-sex couples (Jaunā Konservatīvā Partija, n.d.; Nacionālā Apvienība, n.d.). **Conclusion 3:** Same-sex couples should not be able to register marriages or form civil unions because they contradict traditional Latvian family values and they are not traditional families.
Religion	**Premise 1:** The most practiced religion in Latvia is Christianity - Orthodoxy, Lutheranism and Catholicism (LSM, 2015; Eurydice, 2020) **Premise 2:** Christian religions in Latvia accept only heterosexual relationships (Urdze, n.d.; Latvijas Nacionālā Fronte, 2020a; Latvijas Nacionālā Fronte, 2020b). **Premise 3:** According to religious values in Latvia - same-sex relations are a sin, same-sex couples oppose religious values, like, family and virtue (Urdze, n.d.; Latvijas Nacionālā Fronte, 2020a; Latvijas Nacionālā Fronte, 2020b). **Premise 4:** Only heterosexual couples should be allowed to get married, according to Latvian religious leaders (Latvijas Nacionālā Fronte, 2020a; Latvijas Nacionālā Fronte, 2020b). **Conclusion 1:** Same-sex couples do not comply with Christian values in Latvia. **Conclusion 2:** Same-sex couples should not be allowed to get married/form civil unions.
Constitution	**Premise 1:** In Latvia, the Constitution is "the basic legal document that sets the state order" (Bebre, Ceica & Gjortlere, 2007). **Premise 2:** The Article 110 of the Latvian Constitution allows marriage between a man and a woman. (Saeima, 2006c). **Premise 3:** There is no possibility to form civil unions for homosexual or heterosexual couples in Latvia (ILGA-Europe, n.d.c). **Conclusion:** The Latvian Constitution does not allow for same-sex relationships to be formed legally in the form of a marriage or a civil union.

Rejection of discrimination	**Premise 1:** Latvian laws protects all its citizens and all partnerships (Bērziņš, 2018). **Premise 2:** Same-sex couples are part of Latvian citizens. **Conclusion 1:** Latvian laws do not discriminate same-sex couples. **Conclusion 2:** There is no need to legalize SSMCU because same-sex couples are already protected.
Demographics	**Premise 1:** Natural population increase rate (births - deaths) in Latvia is negative (INED, n.d). **Premise 2:** Latvia has a high population decline rate (Statista, 2019). **Premise 3:** Same-sex couples cannot reproduce on their own. **Conclusion 1:** Same-sex couples impair the natural population increase rate and the population decline rate, as these individuals cannot reproduce in their couples. **Conclusion 2:** Same-sex couples are threatening/undermining the survival of the country/population. **Conclusion 3:** Same-sex couples are not eligible to receive the protection the marital or partnership status would give because they undermine the country's demographics (Carpenter, 2005).
Social reluctance	**Premise 1:** According to the Saeima (n.d.), as elected representatives, politicians (are required/should) act and make decisions to strengthen the society's trust in Saeima. **Premise 2:** Enforcing controversial laws such as SSMCU might lessen society's trust in Saeima **Premise 3:** Politicians vote according to the majority's position to represent society's stance. **Premise 3:** According to politicians, the majority of Latvian society does not support legalization of SSMCU or its stance on this matter is unclear. **Conclusion:** Deputies should not grant to same-sex couples the right to get married or form civil unions.
Immoral	**Premise 1:** Saeima does not approve laws that will result in the development of immoral and unacceptable consequences. **Premise 2:** Polygamy, polyandry and other uncommon partnership types are immoral and unacceptable. **Premise 2:** According to several politicians, legalizing SSMCU might cause the development of polygamy, polyandry, and other uncommon partnership types. **Conclusion:** SSMCU legalization is disapproved because it will result in the development of immoral instances.

Table J.1. Summary of reformulated arguments.