

SOCIAL FORCE

**Research of the Cultural
Heterosexism and Individual
Sexual Prejudice**



Dr. iur. Jovan Kojičić
John M. Barac

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LGBTIQ Social Centre
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Dr. iur. Jovan Kojičić
John M. Barac

*Dedicated to the decade of work of the LGBTIQ Social Centre,
to the Montenegrin LGBTI community that lives surrounded by hatred,
and to Zdravko Cimbalević, who started the changes.*

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About the Author – Dr. iur. Jovan Kojičić

Jovan Kojičić is a law professor. He is a visiting professor at the Centre for Medical Law at the Faculty of Law of the University of Göttingen and the Jean Monet Chair for European Politics at the University of Passau, FR Germany. He is a scholar of the Williams Institute at the University of California School of Law (UCLA), in the United States of America. His research in health and health policy is supported by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD, 2023).

Kojičić received his Doctorate of Law at the European University Viadrina in Germany (2001-2005). During his doctoral studies, he was awarded a prestigious scholarship from the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). He completed his postdoctoral studies at Lund University in Sweden, on the topic of the relationship between law and social changes, with a profile at the intersection of law and social sciences and with an emphasis on policy development, distributive justice, institutional reforms, and practice (2008-2010). He worked as an international consultant at the UCLA School of Law – Williams Institute in Los Angeles, California, United States of America, and as a researcher and development expert at *Egale Canada Human Rights Trust*, in Canada. He was a visiting assistant professor at the Department of European, International Public and Public Law at the Faculty of Law of the University of Leipzig, FR Germany (DAAD, 2008).

Since 2006, he has been involved in the project “Justice in the Balkans: Equality for Sexual Minorities”, which has grown into an international movement of renowned professors, lawyers, public figures, and representatives of civil organisations. Dr. Kojičić is a member of the DAAD Alumni Club Montenegro, the European Commission for Sexual Orientation Law (ECSOL) for Montenegro, and the main organiser of the international conference “Justice in the Balkans”. He is the author of numerous scientific articles, books, book chapters, and theses in his area of expertise.

About the Author – John M. Barac

John M. Barac has been the Executive Director of LGBT Forum Progress since 2016. He has considerable experience in activism, as well as in the fields of communications, public relations, and research. For his academic achievements, he was awarded the Global UGRAD scholarship in the United States, where he spent a year at Montclair State University, improving in the field of marketing. He is also an alumnus of Global Innovative Advocacy Summit programme, which is realised by the distinguished American organization Human Rights Campaign.

He is an author and co-author of numerous analyses and data collection publications in the field of hate speech, human rights, elections, and antidiscrimination. He is a member of various expert teams that report internationally on the status of human rights of LGBTI persons in Montenegro, as well as the national Team of Trust between the LGBTI community and the Police Directorate. So far, he has been involved in dozens of national and international projects in the areas in which he is professionally engaged.

At the beginning of his career in the civil society, he actively worked on the promotion of Montenegro's accession to NATO. Through cooperation with OSCE/ODIHR, ILGA-Europe, Atlantic Council of Croatia, Montclair State University, and other international organisations, he had the opportunity to improve his professional knowledge and skills. He also participated in several Model United Nations (MUN) conference in the Western Balkans region.

He is a member of the Council of the Statistical System of Montenegro, the Working group for the preparation and management of negotiations on the accession of Montenegro to the European Union for the area of the acquis of the European Union related to the negotiation chapter 18 – Statistics, and the National Commission for HIV/AIDS. He is also a One Young World Ambassador. He speaks Montenegrin (native), English (C2) and German (A1) languages.

Introduction

Despite certain shifts in public opinion and politics in Montenegro, the LGBTI community is still dominantly stigmatised. After ten years of commitment, the result is insufficient. The reason is that the Montenegrin authorities have not fulfilled their promises and systematically harmonised the human rights policy. This is how cosmetic variants of public policies were created, and the LGBTI community was used as a cover in the processes of Euro-Atlantic integration. Restrictions on LGBTI people to realise themselves and live freely are widespread.

The situation is similar for other marginalised social groups, which complicates the assessment of the community's position in society. This makes the consequences of multiple discrimination even greater. This is indicated by numerous opinions and research, but also by the report and publication dedicated to the opinions of citizens on the presence of stereotypes, prejudice, and social acceptance of LGBTI persons. The report provides an overview of sexual prejudice and confirms the findings of other national surveys that point to internalised stigma.

The multi-year avoidance of the Montenegrin authorities to systematically adjust the human rights policy and properly direct the transformative processes reinforces the arguments about heterosexism and sexual stigma at the institutional level, but also explains the power component. This is why the LGBTI community is still dominantly invisible in society.

Dr. iur. Jovan Kojičić
John M. Barac
The Authors

Review

Social force is an important and instructive research that illustrates the state's failure to respect, protect and promote the human rights of the LGBTQI+ community. The authors illustrate the reasons that lead to an extremely high percentage of respondents who believe that homosexuality is deviant, a mental illness, that it represents a choice, that it can be cured and that it justifies corporal punishment. Such deep-rooted attitudes are explained by institutional discrimination, heterosexism as an ideology and prejudices as a social force, which lead to the fact that the position of these persons does not fundamentally change, despite the cosmetic variants of processes aimed at obfuscating the existing situation and false commitment to European values and integration processes. This, on the other hand, results in daily challenges, living in poverty and preventing access to the rights of LGBTQI+ people.

Montenegro is a party to numerous international conventions, including the European Convention on Human Rights. In the case of *Beizaras and Levickas v. Lithuania*, the European Court of Human Rights very clearly emphasised that the state must take into account the development of society and changes in the perception of social, civil status, including the fact that there is not only one way or one choice in the sphere of leading and living a family or private life. Thus, the state assumes the obligation to use all available means to influence the reduction of social distance towards LGBTQI+ persons and change the consciousness of citizens to create a more tolerant society in which their rights are respected. However, this research shows that Montenegro undermines the mentioned process by supporting deep-rooted homophobia in society, and the result of this research can be applied to other countries in the region that treat LGBTQI+ people in the same or similar way. This is where the importance of this research is greater, giving a bare picture of the situation and the reasons that lead to it, which are explained in an educational way in the text, with reference to relevant academic works that explain the situation in more depth.

Prof. Dr. Ivana Krstić

Full professor at the Faculty of Law, University of Belgrade
Director of the Centre for Human Rights at the Faculty of Law

Methodology

Method

It was intended that the research would cover between 200 and 400 citizens of Montenegro who are 18 years of age and older and live in Montenegro. Based on previously developed research and instruments, the main researcher, in cooperation with the research advisory group of the LGBTIQ Social Centre, designed a survey. The approach used is a research design, and the research instrument was completed electronically.

General Goal

The general goal was to analyse the data based on the conducted survey and gain a possible insight into the current state of human rights of LGBTI persons, including an overview of sexual prejudices.

Participation and Sampling Criteria

People aged 18 and over and living in Montenegro took part in the research. The study sample included all persons who met the inclusion criteria and agreed to participate. Respondents were provided with information about the research and issues related to confidentiality and anonymity. A total of 284 questionnaires were returned.

Survey Design

The author designed the survey in cooperation with the research advisory group of the LGBTIQ Social Centre. The survey consisted of 6 closed questions and included a multiple-choice category. The questionnaire was designed based on a number of previously developed instruments, such as the homophobia scale, social distance scale and social acceptance.

Testing

The content and validity of the survey were tested in a pilot survey with three respondents. Respondents were recruited by the LGBTI Social Centre in Podgorica, and all respondents met the criteria for participation. To improve it, each respondent was asked to fill out a survey and provide suggestions. Feedback from respondents was mostly positive, describing the survey as useful, meaningful, and appropriate. Several suggestions were made to change the wording of the questions in the interest of easier filling. The feedback was taken, and the final survey was created.

Recruitment and Data Collection

The survey instrument was developed for online completion. A recruitment strategy was employed to promote the survey and increase the number of people who might hear about the research. The survey was distributed electronically through relevant channels, which ensured a wide reach and coverage of the research itself.

Demographics and characteristics

For the purposes of this research, basic demographic data were collected—gender, age of the respondents and the region in which they live—to be able to compare the data according to these criteria. In relation to the gender of the respondents, 57% of them indicated that they were male, while 43% of them indicated that they were female. There was no statement in relation to the other available categories in this matter. When we look at the region in which the respondents live, 46% of them stated that they live in one of the municipalities of the central region, 33% of them that they live in one of the municipalities of the southern region, while 21% of them stated that they live in one of the municipalities of the northern region. Montenegro. Finally, in the domain of the age structure of the respondents, the largest number stated that they are between 18 and 35 years old (33%), then between 36 and 45 years old (26%), between 46 and 55 years old (24%) and finally between 56 and 65 years old (17%). There were no respondents who stated that they were over 65 years old.

By the closing date of the survey, a total of 284 questionnaires were collected. The research lasted 2 months. There were no surveys that were removed from the dataset due to non-eligibility or incompleteness. Therefore, a total of 284 surveys were included in the analysis.

Cultural Heterosexism

Key Ideologies

This publication focuses on the connection between cultural heterosexism and individual sexual prejudice of the Montenegrin general population towards the LGBTI community through the prism of the Report on the attitudes of Montenegrin citizens on the presence of stereotypes, prejudice, and social acceptance of LGBTI persons in the public. In the obtained data, we recognised three key components of ideologies that express heterosexism, namely (1) sexual stigmatization, (2) conformity of gender roles and the association of the general population with prejudice and stereotypes, and (3) personal-public polarisation. It exposes the model of traditional Montenegrin masculinity, which is unequivocally woven (from) and strengthened by the ideological foundations of cultural heterosexism and thereby strongly supports individual anti-gay attitudes, establishing a dominant value system based on prejudices and stereotypical beliefs.

Homophobia

The term homophobia first appears in the American press in 1969 by American psychologist George Weinberg. He used the term to criticise social scrutiny of sexual orientation and defined it as “heterosexuals' fear of intimacy with homosexuals”, including homosexual self-loathing (Weinberg, 1972). A few years later, a new term appeared – heterosexism. This term is analogous to the notions of sexism and racism and was first introduced into the literature by Morin. He describes it as beliefs and attitudes that do not equally value the lifestyles of the same and different sexes, and he defines heterosexual bias as “a belief system about heterosexuality as superior and/or more natural than homosexuality” (Morin, 1977). For Professor Herek, homophobia represents hostile reactions towards sexual minorities and implies a “one-dimensional construct of attitudes” that express irrational fear (Herek, 1984). Herek also emphasizes that it is important to distinguish attitudes towards lesbians from those towards gay men (Herek, 1984).

Heterosexism as an Ideology

Research psychologist and American professor Gregory M. Herek, who is the most internationally recognised authority on prejudice against sexual minorities and a pioneer in the scientific study of heterosexual prejudice against lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgender people, argues that heterosexism represents a **social ideology** and patterns of institutional oppression of non-heterosexual people, and that it defines anti-gay attitudes and behaviours (Herek, 1990). According to Herek, hate crimes occur in a wider cultural context and are imbued with heterosexism at the level of an ideological system that “denies,

denigrates and stigmatises any non-heterosexual form of behaviour, identity, relationship or community”, and works by making homosexuality **invisible** (Herek, 1990). If it does not succeed, Herek claims, then it is “trivialised, repressed or stigmatised” (Herek, 1990), and such an ideology works through a *double* process of invisibility and attack (Herek, 1990). Rye and Meaney argue that the conditions that lead to hostile reactions more accurately describe both terms. In the case of homophobia, it is fear, while for heterosexism it is *shared beliefs* (Rye & Meaney, 2010: 158). Both terms (homophobia and heterosexism), as well as the term sexual prejudice, denote negative attitudes towards homosexuality (Rye & Meaney, 2010).

Prejudice as a Social Force

In the Montenegrin governance practice, there are too many examples that deny, oppress, denigrate, and ultimately stigmatise the LGBTI community at the level of social ideology and patterns of cultural heterosexism. One such example is the alleged five-year dedication of the Montenegrin authorities to the Law on Same-Sex Unions. At the same time, the international community, which strongly supported these processes, was manipulated. First, the adopted law is not harmonised with binding international standards because it was (deliberately) shaped and created using nomotechnics that are not typical of similar laws (e.g., family law). Second, it is intentional, because the highest government officials at the discussions regarding the Law decisively emphasised that “the family is sacred” and that the Montenegrin law cannot be structured in the way that the Croatian law was done. And thirdly, three years after its adoption, the Law is still not fully harmonised with other laws. Thus, the foundations of the ideology of cultural heterosexism were conveyed as a political message to the LGBTI community (“this much is enough for you”), and prejudice about the “sacred” were transformed into a social force by the mechanisms of political and institutional force. The Montenegrin constitution, laws and binding international standards, and the concept of the rule of law were trampled with the same force.

Negative Influences

The obtained data and negative values in this study, with more than two-thirds of the sample, indicate that homophobia is deeply rooted and widespread in Montenegrin society. Heterosexual and cisgender norms and assumptions are dominantly represented at all levels, which conditions everyday life and the adoption of norms with ideological bases of cultural heterosexism and efforts to justify prejudices—that they are “natural” and “normal”. Therefore, the expression of individual prejudice undoubtedly has various psychological and social impacts on the Montenegrin LGBTI community, which is conditioned to constantly seek help from international organisations and governments. These are precisely the conditions that determine subtle heterosexism, which is conditioned by culture and the work of institutions, established and built on such ideological foundations (Berkman & Zinberg 1997: 320).

Stigma and Ideology

Stigma and Ideology

The discussion of homophobia challenged traditional thinking about homosexuality and focused attention on anti-gay prejudice and stigma. This led to new research and learning in this area, as well as new scientific knowledge. Three conceptual frameworks have been defined (Herek, 2004):

- ♦ sexual stigma, which is the knowledge of society's negative attitude towards any non-heterosexual behaviour, identity, relationship, or community,
- ♦ heterosexism, as a cultural ideology that expresses sexual stigma, and
- ♦ sexual prejudice, which are negative attitudes towards sexual minorities.

According to Professor Herek, stigma is conditioned by a culturally widespread ideology, implies an inferior status, and has a hostile and negative attitude towards sexual minorities (Herek 2010: 13).

Subtle Heterosexism

This explains why, for a whole decade, the Montenegrin authorities have not fulfilled **the promise** made to the international community, that they will structurally and systematically work to respect the legal content and proclaimed standards of human rights of the LGBTI community. Among the key topics, these are: access to justice, the law on same-sex unions that had to fully meet binding international standards, the right to health and access to health services, social support services, social policy and access to employment, discrimination in the workplace, and thematic research and the formation of a database with the aim of more efficient planning and monitoring of transformative processes. All of this has been pending for a full seven years, and human rights policies, to cover it up, have taken on cosmetic variants and character. Legal contents exist only on paper, and interpretations of such contents in public policies are incomplete, distorted, or balanced, or do not exist at all (as in the case of health disparities or discouragingly slow—supposedly “urgent” cases of discrimination before the courts, as for example regarding the lawsuit for discrimination against the state of Montenegro (see page 15).

Power in the Service of Heterosexism

All of the above...Political and institutional **power** and heterosexual assumptions about the family as sacred and a cultural pattern of behaviour (and constitutional guarantees and written laws should be letters on paper); Approaches on the occasion of the adoption of the

Law on Same-Sex Unions—from the second try, with strong international pressure (and just when the freedom of LGBTI people should be encouraged, things are problematised as a deviation and explanations are sought); Cosmetic variants of human rights policies, which do not recognise or balance the actual legal contents; Structural restrictions for the LGBTI community at all levels, in access to justice, health, social and support services, employment, and other; Persistently evasion of authorities, seven full years to fulfil expectations... All of these are at the core of the ideological foundations of cultural heterosexism and are attributes of heterosexual behavioural bias (Ray & Parkhill 2021).

Sexual Prejudice

Prejudice expresses bigotry and dislike (Ahmed, AM & Hammarstedt, M., 2009: 588-597), expresses a bias that devalues people (Abrams, 2010: 8), includes different beliefs, and consists of several components: about the target group (cognitive component), dislike, evaluation, and repulsion (affective component) and the tendency of negative behaviour (conative component) (Dovidio et al., 2010: 5; Kojičić 2021: 95). In the context of stigma, sexual prejudice represents all negative attitudes towards an individual about his or her sexual orientation (Herek, 2010).

Society associate gender and sexuality with biological sex (male and female), assumes that traditional gender roles are desirable and consistent, and expected necessary behaviour should be aligned with assigned categories (Felmlee et al., 2010: 227). Identifying the nature and content of such gender stereotypes do not reveal the differences themselves, but also prescribe what “men and women should be and how they should behave in different life domains of life” (Ellemers, 2018: 276). In this regard, Herek emphasizes that among heterosexual men, sexual prejudices are closely related to attitudes about masculinity and heterosexuality, while heterosexual masculinity is also defined by what a man must not be – that he is not feminine and that he is not of homosexual orientation (Kojičić, 2014).

Negative Business Environment

In Montenegro, there is still a significantly high rate of general distance towards issues concerning human rights and the position of people who belong to less represented sexual orientations and/or gender identities (Barac, 2023). Related analyses in the United States show that nearly one in ten LGBTI people are unemployed and at a much higher risk of poverty than straight and transgender people (Human Rights Campaign Foundation, 2020). Even in cases where people manage to overcome barriers, they are systematically discriminated against in the workplace, suffer bullying and harassment for being LGBTI, receive reduced workplace benefits and may even be fired simply for being LGBTI (Du Plessis & Galil, 2020).

Moral Disgust

The data in the study clearly point to a dominant cultural ideology that expresses sexual stigma and encourages sexual prejudice in society. The vast majority of Montenegrin citizens

in the study agree that homosexuality is not natural and not normal, and that it is a mental illness (80%). Significantly more than half of the sample (62%) indicates that LGBTI persons are dangerous for children, and approximately as many (61%) that they should not be allowed to adopt children. The fact that even 22% of the sample declared that homosexuals should be physically punished is also worrying. This suggests that the government's years-long avoidance of truly confronting the effects of homonegativism, and stigma has left multiple negative and multidimensional consequences for the LGBTI community, their safety and exposure to discrimination, which can have serious harmful implications for physical and mental health (Kojičić, 2023).

Although concepts of “ideal nature” resemble and are strongly influenced by meanings of “real nature”, they differ significantly from the latter in explicitly presupposing that “nature” is “good”. [...] Anything which is truly vicious or evil must be “unnatural”, since “nature” could not produce evil on its own. Concepts of “ideal nature” are strongly conditioned by observation of the real world, but they are ultimately determined by cultural values. [...] Behavior which is ideologically so alien or personally so disgusting to those affected by “ideal nature” that it appears to have no redeeming qualities whatever will be labeled “unnatural”, regardless of whether it occurs in (“real”) nature never or often, or among humans or lower animals, because it will be assumed that a “good” nature could not under any circumstances have produced it. (Boswell, 1980: 13).

Personal-Public Polarization

The results of the study on the mental health of LGBTI persons in Montenegro show that 46% of LGBTI persons have not disclosed their sexual orientation to anyone, while 45% of them have done so at least to one person. The dominant majority of respondents (83%) answered that they did not communicate their sexual orientation and/or gender identity at the workplace (LGBTIQ Social Centre, 2023). More than three quarters of LGBTI persons (77%) state that they are afraid that they will be rejected and/or discriminated against if others find out about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity (Kojičić, 2023).

More than a quarter of LGBTI people did not disclose their sexual orientation and/or gender identity to any of their family members or friends (27%), while slightly more than half did so to a parent or guardian (55%). The largest number of LGBTI persons disclosed this part of their identity to a friend, 65% of them (LGBTIQ Social Centre, 2023). The data unequivocally indicate that LGBTI people have the most trust in people from their immediate environment (family, friends) and that they can be partially free with them.

However, in relation to the interactions of LGBTI persons with the wider social community, we have a significantly different picture of reality. More than half of the respondents (51%) stated that they “try to be less obviously visible” in public, so that people do not think they are part of the LGBTI community. As many as 57% of respondents stated that they actively “hide” their identity in public places (college, gym), 48% of them “do everything necessary” in order not to be “noticed”, while 44% of them pointed out that he has to hide “because of the social environment” (LGBTIQ Social Centre, 2023).

Hostile Environment

Inequalities

Classical and recent psychology theories indicate that inequalities are based on prejudice, and this conditions social **differences** (North & Fiske, 2014: 245). North and Fiske claim that prejudice primarily affects status inequalities in society, regardless of the fact that they are not the only psychological explanation for such phenomena (North & Fiske, 2014: 245). From a classical psychological point of view, prejudice is “an antipathy based on faulty and inflexible generalisation [...] directed towards a group or an individual of that group” (Allport, 1954: 9; cf. North & Fiske, 2014: 245). Prejudice is a complex concept, there is no single definition, and they should be understood as processes within a set of relationships (Kojičić, 2021: 95). Leading world experts suggest the following definition of prejudice (Dovidio et al., 2010: 7; cf. Kojičić, 2021: 95):

“Prejudice is an individual-level attitude (whether subjectively positive or negative) toward groups and their members that creates or maintains hierarchical status relations between groups” (Dovidio et al., 2010: 7).

Devaluation of Identity

If we consider the decade-long advocacy for the human rights of LGBTI persons in the context of the described socio-political currents, then it is clear that the dominant effects of stigmatisation and discrimination of the LGBTI community in Montenegrin society could not have persisted in such an intensity if they were not supported by the component of power that is recognised in subtle and/or manipulative pandering to the cultural ideology of heterosexism. From the perspective of time and expected content, the decade of commitment to the LGBTI community reminds of the results of 45 years of advocacy for the principles from Alma-Ata in the health sector (Kojičić, 2023: 34). In both cases the results are limited, balanced or non-existent. Indeed, it is not an irony, but a warning—such facade governance approaches will cause the community to remain at a “dead end” even after 45 years of commitment to LGBTI issues. Such institutional, social, and cultural approaches encourage prejudices and lead to social exclusion, devaluing identities of people and condition psycho-social stress, but also the marginalised position of LGBTI persons in society (Schrimshaw et al. 2013; Perez- Brumer et al. 2019; Kojičić 2021: 184).

Myths

The research findings in this study show that the Montenegrin general population predominantly has negative ideas about LGBTI people, namely:

- ♦ Homosexuality is deviant, not natural and not normal (80% of respondents agree).
- ♦ Homosexuality is a mental illness (80% agree) and should be treated (65% agree).
- ♦ Homosexuality is a choice, not something we are born with (68% agree).
- ♦ Homosexuality can be cured (52% agree).
- ♦ Homosexuals are dangerous for children (62% agree) and society (44% agree).
- ♦ Homosexuals are not like all other people (31% agree, 25% undecided).
- ♦ Homosexuals are carriers of various diseases (43% agree, 30% undecided).
- ♦ Homosexuals can turn children into homosexuals (51% agree, 13% undecided).
- ♦ Homosexual persons (and couples) are not as good parents as heterosexual persons (and couples) (73% agree, 10% undecided).
- ♦ Homosexual people should not be able to adopt children like heterosexual people (61% agree, 14% undecided).
- ♦ There are many things that are bad in a sexual relationship between two people of the same sex (53% agree, 22% undecided).
- ♦ Homosexuals should not be accepted in society (43% agree, 13% undecided).
- ♦ Homosexual people should not have the same rights as heterosexual people (42% agree, 15% undecided).
- ♦ Homosexuals should be physically punished (22% agree, 19% undecided).
- ♦ Homosexuals should be ridiculed and treated with less respect (20% agree, 11% undecided).

Socially Repressive Forces

Heterosexism and sexual stigma are also significantly expressed at the institutional level. This is recognised in the socially repressive forces that are a consequence of cosmetic variants of public policies. Montenegrin authorities have avoided structurally defining public policies and making the content of the human rights of LGBTI persons real for seven years. The dominant repressive forces are homophobia, sexual discrimination, and limited access to health services. There are data that unequivocally point to this (Bešić 2020: 34 and 35, cf. Kojičić 2021: 183; Kojičić, 2023). The fourth socially repressive force that can be sensed is poverty. In the demographic picture of the mental health survey, the vast majority of the sample (43%) of the Montenegrin LGBTI community lived on the edge of existence, of which 28% had no monthly income (Kojičić, 2023).

These are troubling data that suggest serious restrictions on educational and professional opportunities for members of the LGBTI community. However, little is known about the actual situation of the LGBTI community because the state does not generate data and avoids encouraging research. Nothing is known about the physical and/or mental health of LGBTI people, nor about the relationship between discrimination and health outcomes. Even less about the specific factors of discrimination that affect health, behaviour and risk within the community. Moreover, authorities have avoided acknowledging health disparities for LGBTI people for a decade. Such governance cannot be justified, and public policies are arbitrary

and cosmetic variants. In contrast, the community's exposure to minority stress is dominant in the environment, and this can have negative consequences on blood pressure, psychological stress, mental health disorders and general mental and physical health, which is also associated with risky behaviour (Kojičić, 2023).

Consequently, it can be said that the Montenegrin LGBTI community experiences institutional and social discrimination in all areas and at all levels, especially in access to justice, health institutions and services, education, employment, and sports activities.

Hostility

The data shown indicate that the levels of personal hostility of Montenegrin citizens towards homosexuals are dominant and suggest significant levels of institutional hostility. Such attitudes are rooted in myths, stereotypes and misinformation and are recognized as such in the scientific literature (Boswell, 1980; Herek, 1991; Maddon, 1997; Simon, 1998; Meyer, 2003; Glick et al., 2007; Felmlee et al., 2010; Cook & Cottrell, 2021). For example, the stereotype of predatory sexual tendencies (Bernstein 1997; Herek 1991; Simon 1998), or the stereotype of violating an acceptable gender role (Maddon 1997; Glick et al. 2007), or the stereotype of sexual promiscuity (Herek 1991; Cook & Cottrell, 2021).

Moreover, a huge sample of the general population in this study, **significantly more than two-thirds (79%), believes that discrimination based on sexual orientation is present in Montenegro**, of which 13% of the sample believes that it is very present, and the remaining 64% that it is present. Also, a significant number of respondents (46%) declared that they believe that discrimination is also present based on gender identity, of which 43% of the sample was not sure how to answer, which suggests a lack of knowledge. All together determines that the Montenegrin LGBTI community lives in a dominantly hostile environment, and it is assumed that the same is conditioned by the traditional cultural model of Montenegrin masculinity which is based on the tribal structure (Banović 2016: 188), and everything is supported by the effects of subtle heterosexism on which state institutions and the practice of public governance are founded (Kojičić, 2022; Kojičić 2023).

Hostile Work Environment

In Montenegro, there are no data related to sexual orientation and/or gender identity in the business sector. There are also no data for the LGBTI community and LGBTI persons in this regard. The lack of data means that it is practically impossible to know where and to what extent discrimination is present (Barac, 2023). Research from the United States of America clearly indicates that the trend of discrimination among LGBTI employees is significant, so one third (33.8%) of gay and lesbian employees reported that they had experienced at least one form of discrimination at work (being fired or not being employees) because of their LGB status at some point in their lives, compared to a quarter (24.4%) of bisexual employees (Mallory, Sears, & Flores, 2021). In the Montenegrin cosmetic variant of reality, it is assumed that discrimination against LGBTI persons in the workplace is 0%.

Defects of One Logic

Distrust in Institutions

All that has been shown are the roots of heterosexual ideology, while research on a representative sample shows that the dominant majority of Montenegrin citizens (66%) believe that LGBTI people are sick, perverted, mentally disturbed and should be treated (Bešić 2020: 34 and 35, cf. Kojičić 2021: 183). Furthermore, the latest research on a representative sample of 1,000 adult Montenegrin citizens, conducted from August 25 to September 15, 2023 by the Centre for Democracy and Human Rights (CEDEM), shows that citizens' trust in the institutions of the system has a negative value (excluding the police, which has an index of 1.9), namely: the Government (-16.9), the Judiciary (-15.7), the Parliament of Montenegro (-14.2), the Army of Montenegro (-5.6), and political parties (-47.5) (CEDEM, 2023). Three quarters of people in Montenegro do not trust other people, the level of authoritarianism is very pronounced, the level of nationalism is very high, and the level of democratic values is very low (CEDEM, 2023). In relation to European countries, the lowest level of democratic orientation is the highest level of anti-democratic orientation (CEDEM, 2023). This suggests that the benefits of social capital are severely limited in Montenegrin society and dominantly threatened by party influences.

Cosmetic Variant of Rule (of Law)

If for many years there is a governance intertwined with the ideological foundations of cultural heterosexism that hinders the expected transformative processes, then it is clear that the reach of such policies towards the general public is limited and slow. It is quite clear that...

- ♦ Annual lamps and rainbow lights on the building of some institution cannot replace legal content in public work and public policies, which, in reality, does not exist in the lives of the LGBTI community (e.g., the right to health).
- ♦ Announcements cannot replace the (non)work and (non)commitment of the administration (e.g., community support services, which, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, have been seriously neglected by those responsible for human and minority rights).
- ♦ Cultural patterns of heterosexual bias and “family as sacred” cannot replace the rule of law (access to justice and years of waiting for the first hearing on a discrimination lawsuit that is supposed to be “urgent” for action).
- ♦ Cosmetic variant of public policies cannot solve problems when they are not acknowledged and recognised in public policies in order to actually be solved (e.g.,

the right to health, environmental conditions and pollution, social policy and employment, discrimination in the workplace and others).

- ♦ Resources are wasted, including financial ones, community distrust in institutional care is almost absolute, and nothing happens ...

Repression and Community Invisibility

This is an important component of comparative research, as it indicates how bad governance corresponds to widespread (demonstrated) prejudice in society. Cognitive processes are biased, and the built-up knowledge about LGBTI issues is insufficient. Information that confirms stereotypes is dominant and manifests as sexual prejudice. It represents the real understanding of the world of Montenegrin citizens and their interaction with the environment. Therefore, it can be said that the authorities, by avoiding the expected obligations, hindered the integration processes and slowed down the expected changes. This prolonged the agony, but also the reactions and hostile attitudes towards the LGBTI community. Disgust, pathogenicity, or moral disgust are the emotional reactions hypothesized to have the strongest association with violations of heteronormativity and hostility directed toward homosexuals (Ray & Parkhill 2021). That is why the Montenegrin LGBTI community is dominantly hiding and is dominantly invisible (Kojičić, 2023).

Force as a Coefficient of Governance

If we rely on Putnam's definition of social capital as *"the features of social organisation, such as trust, norms and networks, that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions"* (Putnam, 1993; cf. Alpino & Mehlum, 2023: 255), then we realise that CEDEM's representative survey data is such that key attributes of amenity are lost. CEDEM's research establishes a clear connection with the attitudes of the general population in this study, as it helps us to understand policies, politicians, and political behaviour in such a socio-political perspective in the context of political psychology. For example, the emphasis on the heterosexual assumption that the family is sacred and, in this connection, numerous scenarios of a long evasion of the authorities to meet the standards and fulfil the promises and expectations towards the LGBTI community. Second, CEDEM's representative research supports the findings in this study, because from the perspective of political sociology it reveals to us the inequalities between groups that influence politics and how public opinion, ideology, politicians, and different political currents direct formal politics. In other words, how social dynamics and structures of dominance have influenced the processes and facade policies that the LGBTI community is still dominantly invisible in society. If we add to that the indispensable philosophical content about the connection between law and morality, but also the connection between thought and political action, then the humanistic coefficient of decade-long governance (expressed in the relation: idea ↔ tendency ↔ activity ↔ result) is negative (Kojičić, 2024).

Flattery in the Service of Integrations

If the Montenegrin authorities were really dedicated, if they had fulfilled the promises made and integrated real (and not cosmetic variants) interpretations of legal content into public policies, if they had really dedicated themselves to work and expectations (and not to flattering the world and political privileges), the transformative processes would have happened much (much) faster and to the benefit of the community and the whole society. This way, there was no use. The international community recognised, back in 2017, in the sea of other examples (and failed expectations), the illogic when the integration processes were slowed. The overall result for all is negative. Therefore, one can talk about political deception and the use of the LGBTI community as a cover for Euro-Atlantic processes.

Degree of Social Distance

Disagreements

Research in the study shows that the degree of social distance of Montenegrin citizens towards the LGBTI community is extremely pronounced. It is also significantly expressed towards all other marginalized groups. When asked to what extent they would not like to have them as neighbours for each of the mentioned groups, 68% of the sample in the study declared that they would not like them to be LGBTI people, while only 18% had nothing against it. The highest degree of social distance was shown towards HIV-positive people (86%), towards the Roma and Egyptian population (82%), drug users, convicted persons and migrants (79%), while the LGBTI community was in fourth place. They are followed by poor people (64%) and alcohol users (34%), while in the case of elderly people and families with children, the value of the sample is significantly lower (18% and 13%) (see Figure 1) .

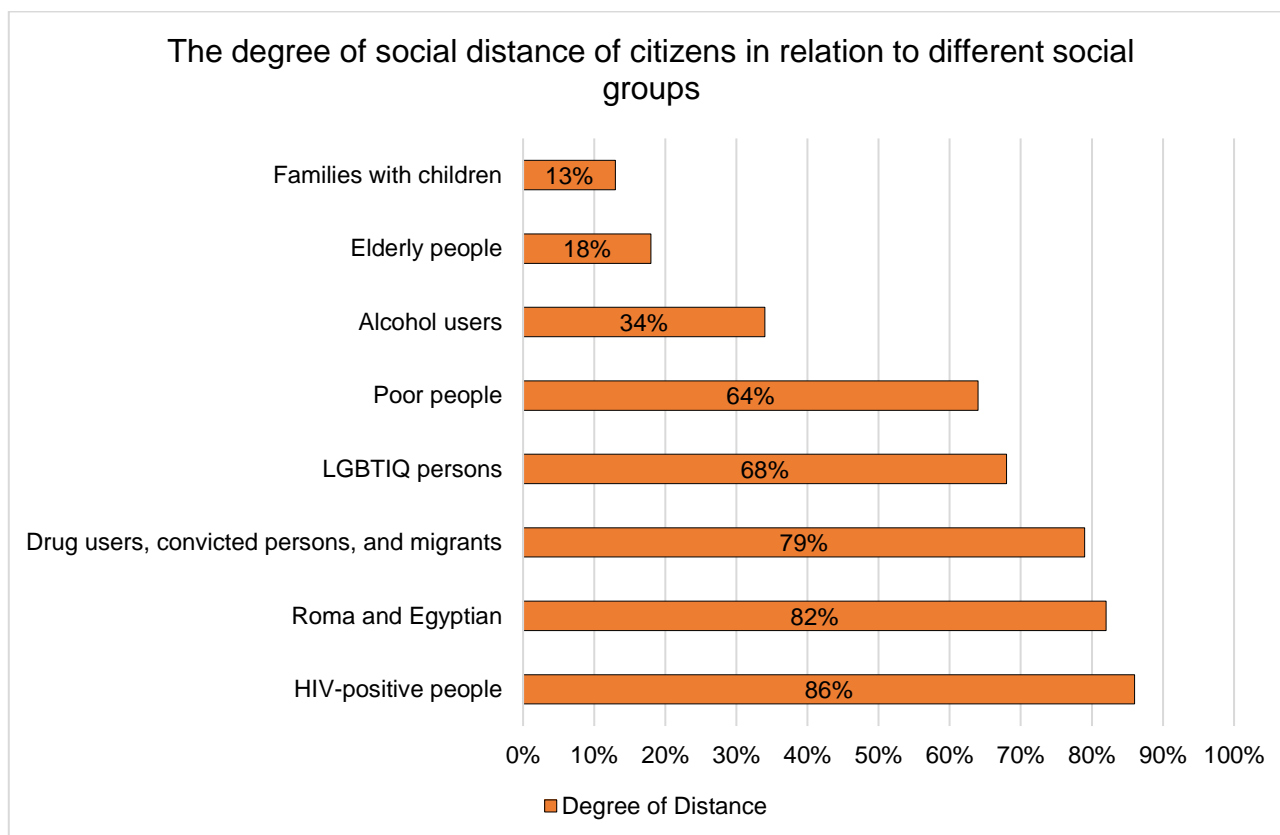


Figure 1: Data on the degree of social distance of male and female citizens (Kojičić and Barac, 2023)

Such cultural ideology puts marginalized social groups, including sexual minorities, at a disadvantage. However, in the conceptual understanding of cultural heterosexism, this also singles out same-sex couples, whereby they are equally not understood as expected, even in the context of equal marriage laws (Thorne et al., 2021: 654). Such prejudices are “natural”, and homosexuality acquires various meanings. This allows for the expression of negative individual prejudices and should discouraged the community (Herek, 1990). In this way, homonegativism encourages negative attitudes towards the community and is characterised by the fact that the demands of the LGBTI community to change their status and improve their rights are understood as *illegitimate or unnecessary* and that they actually *exaggerate* the importance of their own sexual preferences, for which the community itself is to blame, because they prevent themselves from fitting into the dominant *mainstream* culture (Rye & Meaney, 2010). Therefore, the dominant majority of Montenegrin citizens do not support the marriage of same-sex partners (81%), of which 44% of the sample believes that any type of this right should not be legally recognised, and the remaining 37% that some type of right should be legally regulated, but not to marry (see Figure 2).

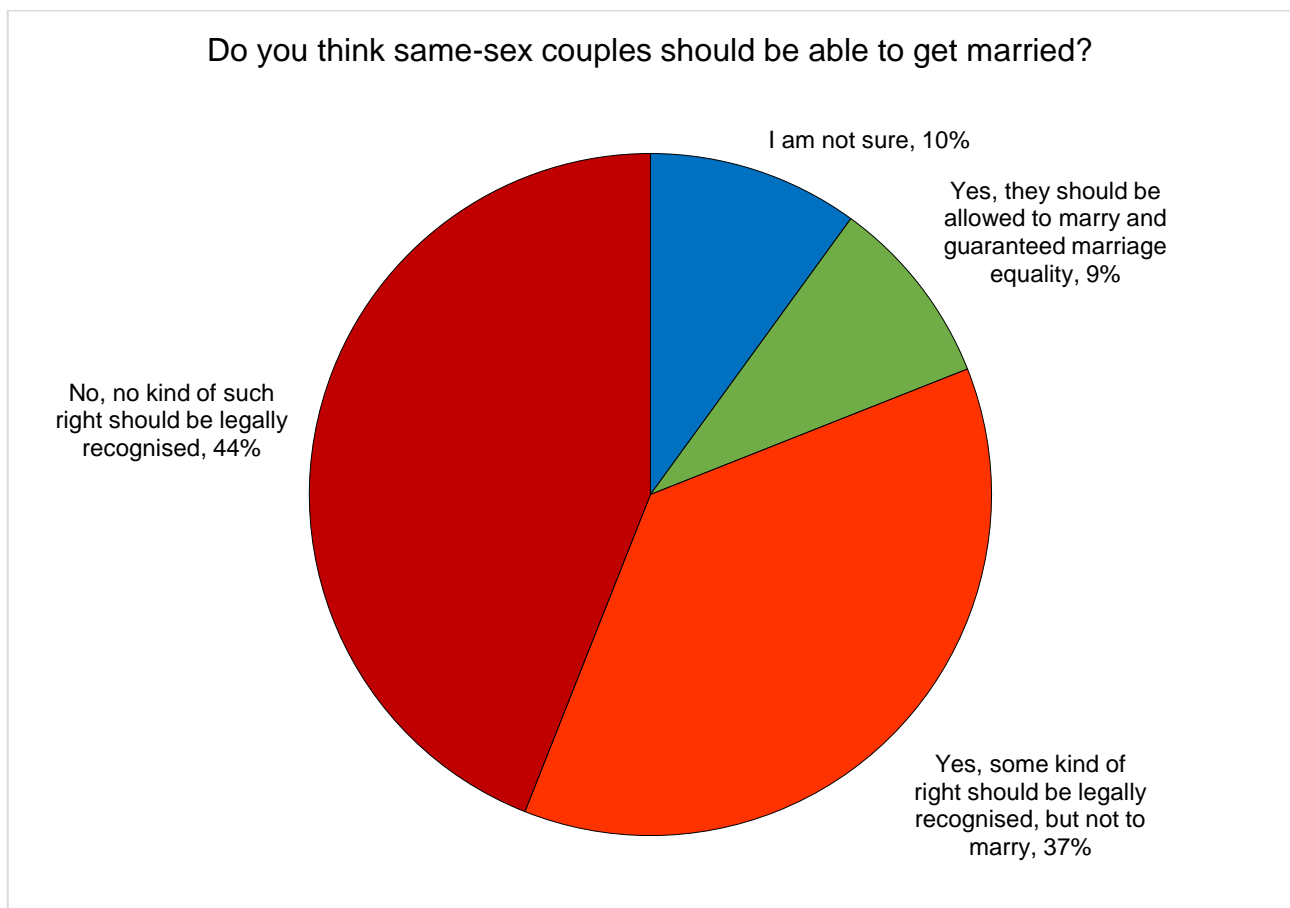


Figure 2: Data on the attitudes of citizens in relation to marriage equality

Conclusion: Absurdity of One Logic

Profile of One Logic

Montenegrin public policies continuously show the inability to accept historical changes and truly understand the transformative processes to explain in public policies the legal content of the principle of non-discrimination, respect for human rights and human dignity, and to show real historical changes in how society considers homosexuality. Inappropriate interpretations of legal content reflect the primary concern we place on performance when evaluating public policies and social relations and considering the position of the LGBTI community. The absence of methodology and the lack of facts are seen as indicators of the incompetence of public policies, while the dominant hostile environment towards the community and limited approaches to LGBTI persons in all areas (justice, health, employment, discrimination, and others) and the complete neglect of data and research are recognised as effects.

Instruments of Governance

The difference between real and arbitrary content in public policies determines the sexual stigma that mediates institutional care for the LGBTI community. The authorities' excessive emphasis on advocating for the inclusion and improvement of the position of the LGBTI community in society defines the delusion into which they lead the international community and their own citizens and reveals their penchant for flattery. The enormous self-confidence of the authorities that they are correct leads to risky outcomes, which are reflected in the wrong social reproduction. For example, the health sector is in a "dead end", access to justice is limited, homophobic environment is dominant, corruption is widespread and others. In this way, instead of mechanisms that are recognised in real democracies, the result is the clear exclusion of entire groups from social flows, and authoritarianism and dominance of power as instruments of governance.

Facade Democracy

If we look at CEDEM's representative research in the context of the problems of the LGBTI community (see page 15), then the key question is how it is possible to establish a functional democracy and improve the efficiency of society, which would have to be reflected in coordinated actions. It is precisely in this that the institutional carelessness regarding (facade) governance is recognized when numerous efforts of civil society and the community are not recognised by the system. Systemic solutions are not planned or established that will actually respect the legal contents, but also the demands for social changes. The reasons for such antagonism are various and multidimensional. They are determined by systemic anomalies

that are conditioned by authoritarian rule, dominance of power, corruption, control of social processes, but also personal and party interests (Kojičić, 2024).

Exclusion

In such conditions, the effective and joint action of people to achieve a common purpose or goal is seriously limited. This explains the claim why every activity is “beyond belonging” to the definition it is striving for and without the possibility of communication and action (Kojičić, 2024). Therefore, social capital as a social resource in Montenegro is defined by limitations and/or difficult access of people, including LGBTI persons, to economic and natural resources. Their exclusion from society is an essential issue of human rights, but also the foundation of their health and well-being (McCabe et al., 2010). Talking about inclusion on the basis of essential exclusion, when public policies do not recognise and do not provide systemic responses to violence, harassment, discrimination, exclusion, stigmatisation and prejudice, represents the absurdity of one single logic and governance, and confirms the absence of methodology and cosmetic variants of approaches in the promotion of LGBTI human rights.

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