



## Media and Marginalized Communities

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**Media discourses and discrimination against members of marginalized groups  
(drug users, sex workers, LGBT, people living with HIV)**

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## 1. Methodology

### 1.1. Research Goals

The media reproduces part of the daily discriminatory practices against members of marginalized communities, whether in derogatory, offensive and abusive texts or speeches, or by way of other strategies employed for marginalization and exclusion from media discourses. On the other hand, the media also produce discourses that strive to identify the problems regarding discrimination and social exclusion of members of marginalized communities. Namely, some media discourses reproduce the existing discriminatory practices, while others can be regarded as part of the social practices attempting to eliminate discrimination against marginalized groups, i.e. part of the fight for equal human rights.

“Media and Marginalized Communities” is a research of media discourses with a purpose to examine their role regarding (the fight against) discrimination against members of marginalized groups: drug users and drug addicts, sex workers, LGBT persons, people living with HIV. The term media discourses does not merely imply the manner in which reality is represented in the electronic and printed media, rather the manner in which reality is shaped by the media. One of the principal presumptions of this research is that media discourses have the power to not only present, but rather shape social practices pursuant to specific interests in a given context, in other words, media discourses legitimize and delegitimize specific social practices. For instance, some media discourses tend to legitimize non-heterosexual activities, while other tend to delegitimize it: some media present as positive the treatment from drug addiction or HIV, sex change, sex services for a profit, wearing clothes traditionally considered to be worn by the opposite sex etc, while others as negative.

“Media and Marginalized Communities” is a research striving to pervade through the ways in which media discourses construct “Macedonian reality” regarding the abovementioned social practices.

Hereupon, the research also takes into consideration the role of the media and media workers (mostly journalists): in constructing and sustaining inequality; in giving privileges and marginalizing certain citizen groups; in identifying the needs and problems of members of marginalized communities; in the fight against discrimination etc.

## **1.2. Research questions**

The researchers strived to encompass the following three groups of research questions:

1. How are members of marginalized groups called and indicated? Is the dignity and right to privacy of members of marginalized groups while reporting about them considered?
2. How do the media represent marginalized groups such as sex workers, LGBT people and drug users in the Macedonian Media context? What are the features, characteristics, qualities and distinctions ascribed to them? How do media discourses de-legitimize sex work, drug use, homosexuality etc? Do media discourses strengthen or re-examine the existing stereotypes and prejudices against marginalized groups?
3. How do media, journalists and editors treat problems of discrimination, stigma and social exclusion, hate speech and violence against members of marginalized groups? From which perspective and by way of which arguments is exclusion, discrimination, violence, hate speech and non-tolerance de-legitimized, including the fight for sex and health rights of marginalized communities?

### 1.3. Research Methods

1. Monitoring of selected media according to previously determined key words;
2. Quantitative analysis of media contents reached at as a result of monitoring;
3. Focus groups with journalists, working on previously prepared questionnaire (see Appendix 1), which further elaborates the research questions;
4. Qualitative (discourse) analysis of selected articles and editorials relevant to the discrimination against members of marginalized groups;
5. Case studies, with application of methods for critical analysis of discourses on current subjects;

### 1.4. Quantitative analysis

In the period from April 1st to June 1st 2011, the larger part of the electronic media were monitored in the Republic of Macedonia.<sup>136</sup> Monitoring of news and articles was carried out according to the following key subjects/terms:

- Sex work/prostitution – events mentioning sex workers, rights of sex workers, violence against sex workers, discrimination etc.
- Drug addiction, the Centre for Prevention and Treatment of Drug Abuse in Kisela Voda, the Centre for Prevention and Treatment of Drug Abuse at the Clinical Centre or specific events that mention drug users or drug addicts.
- Homosexuality, bisexuality, transgender persons, sex change, or specific events that mention homosexuals, lesbians, transsexuals, intersexuals, queer persons etc.
- People living with HIV/AIDS or events related to these people and this subject.

- Discrimination of marginalized groups, as well as all variants of the indicated discriminatory terms: “fagots”, “hookers”, “prostitutes”, “junkies” etc.

We selected 154 articles and editorials in the abovementioned period in total. Out of this number, 70 refer to subjects related to LGBT people or homosexuality, 46 refer to drug addicts and people using or addicted to drugs, 18 to sex work or sex workers, 15 to people living with HIV or subjects related to this problematic, while 5 of them encompass broader range of the indicated groups and subjects.

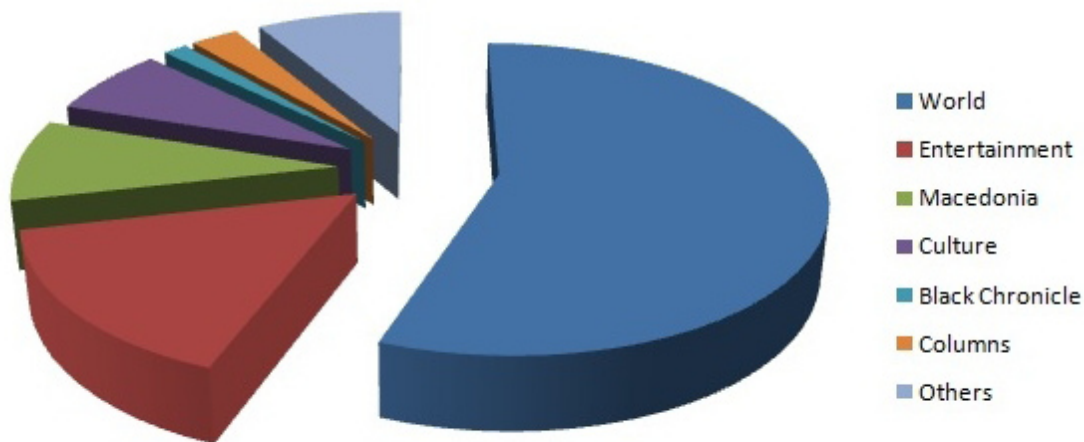
## Selected editorials and articles according to subjects





The chart indicates that the most common subjects related to the marginalized groups that were the focus of this research were subjects related to homosexuals, bisexuals, lesbians and transgender persons. When electronic or print media addresses a subject involving LGBT people it is mostly in the section *Svet* (World) or *Balkan* (and variations such as the *World is news*, *Crazy Planet* etc.). Further on is the section *Entertainment* (and variations such as *Interesting*, *Style*, *Life* etc.), and the sections and other sections.

### Editorials/ articles on LGBT according to sections

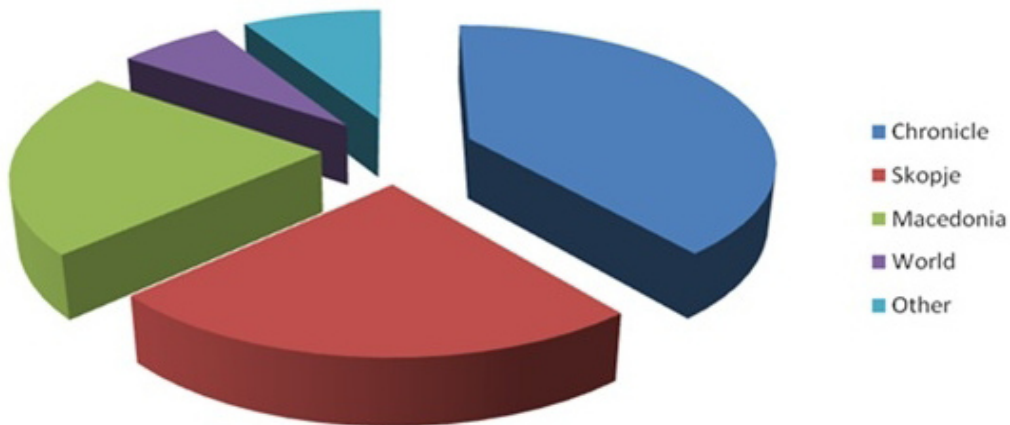


Most of these editorials were about homosexuals, gays, homophobia or gay parades. Bisexuals and intersexuals were mentioned in one article, i.e. in the text where the pride parade in Croatia is referred to as the pride parade of lesbians, homosexuals, bisexuals and intersexual people.

Lesbians, apart from the abovementioned article, are mentioned in only three other articles, two of which refer to the first lesbian wedding ceremony held in Napoli, while the third is the reported statement of Hollywood actress Liv Tyler, “I love lesbians”! The most sensationalistic coverage is dedicated to transgender person. We have detected five articles that refer to transgender people or sex change, two of which refer to the transgender singer Dana who participated in Eurovision, two refer to Macedonian showmen Boki 13, while one article was a column in which sex change was elaborated as a subject to further problematize other issues.

The following group in terms of being covered by the media are drug addicts and drug users. When electronic and print media treat a subject related to drug addiction or drug use most often these articles or editorials can be found in the section *Chronicle* (or variations such as *Black Chronicle*). The sections *Skopje*, *Macedonia* or *Current*, *World* and other sections follow.

### Editorials/ articles on addiction/drug use according to sections



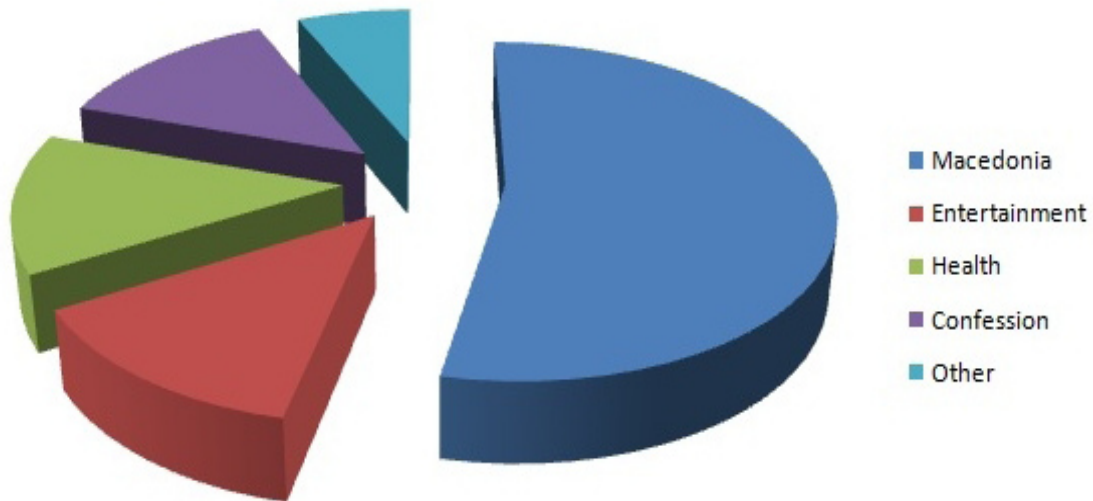
Sex work is a subject less covered by the media. Most often, it is present in the print media, and rarely in the electronic. Articles that treat subjects related to sex work in electronic and print media are found in sections like *Chronicle* (or the variation *Black Chronicle*), next are sections like *Entertainment* (or its variations *Crazy Planet*, *Fun* etc.), *Macedonia* or *Current* and other sections.

### Editorials/ articles on sex work according to sections



People living with HIV or subjects related to HIV/AIDS are the least covered by the media in comparison to subjects related to the other marginalized groups which were the focus of this research. Articles or editorials of electronic or print media related to a subject such as HIV are mostly found in sections like *Macedonia*. Then follow sections such as *Entertainment* (and variations such as *Glamour*, *Kaleidoscope*), *Health*, *Confession* and other.

### Editorials/articles on HIV according to sections



## 2. Linguistic Identification of Members of Marginalized Groups

Linguistic identification most often refers to evaluation and assessment, hence, the very use of certain terms implies a linguistic inclusion or linguistic exclusion of the identified persons. The most simple and common form of linguistic and rhetorical discrimination is to linguistically identify persons or groups with humiliating, offensive and derogative names. Linguistic exclusion is most often employed to conceal the persons responsible for certain discriminatory activities and bears obvious discriminatory consequences.<sup>136</sup>

During the media monitoring, the researchers concentrated on the following questions: How are members of marginalized groups called? How are they linguistically referred to? Which referential strategies are used by journalists and editors? Is the dignity and right to privacy of members of marginalized groups while reporting about them observed?

Members of marginalized groups are called and described in different manners depending on the context of the article/editorial. Regarding the linguistic identification of members of marginalized groups encompassed with our research, there is an obvious decline in the number of titles that explicitly employ humiliating, offensive and derogative names in comparison to previous years. However, although some journalists are of the opinion that there exists politically correct naming and description,<sup>137</sup> this optimistic attitude cannot be confirmed by the larger part of the analysis results.

### 2.1. Linguistic Identification of Drug Users and Drug Addicts

According to the journalists, drug users and drug addicts are mostly named in the media as “narco/drug-addicts” and this term is considered to be politically correct instead of the term “junkie” (‘наркоман’), which has been revoked from use by most editorial staff/desks. Journalists are aware that some media still use the term “junkie”, while they consider pejorative terms such as “druggie”, “dope-head“ and other similar terms to be present only in columns.

The research results indicate that most journalists and media still use the discriminatory terms “junkie” and “narcomania“, as well as the term “narco-addicts”, instead of the terms drug users and drug addicts. Most of the journalists are still not able to distinguish between drug addicts and drug users (even less so between users of soft and hard drugs), distinctions most often disregarded even in statistical reports of the Ministry of Interior.

### **Example 1: “Junkies drink methadone in a bus”**

On June 27th, 2011 the daily newspaper “Vest” published an article titled “Junkies drink methadone in a bus”, in which the use of the discriminatory term “junkie” dominates through out the text, even in the context of “Day centres for junkies”. Although the anonymous source at the Ministry of Health states that “the Ministry of Health has an idea to establish Centres for Prevention and Treatment of Drug Abuse in every municipality”, the journalist uses the discriminatory term “centre for junkies”. The text discloses the statement of a medical officer who quite explicitly refers to a patient; however the journalist doesn’t use the term “patient” for persons on methadone therapy anywhere in his text, but rather prefers the terms “junkies” and “narco-addicts”.<sup>138</sup> Such linguistic exclusion virtually conceals the persons responsible for discrimination (in terms of the failure to establish centres for methadone therapy in every municipality, which are not even mentioned in the text), but it presents the discriminated persons in a negative light, violates their dignity and their right to privacy (as patients). Drug users are further excluded by not having the opportunity to speak up in the media when subjects that concern the patients themselves are covered.

### **Example 2: “The number of children junkies grows...”**

On June 26th 2011 the television “Alfa” on the news broadcasted an editorial entitled “The number of children junkies is growing, as is access to drugs”. On April 4th 2011 “Vest” (in the section Black Chronicle) published an article with the title “The number of children junkies grows” and a subtitle “58 new narco-addicts in one year in Kumanovo”.

In the first editorial the journalist uses the discriminatory terms “junkies” and “narcomania”<sup>139</sup> disregarding the fact that none of the sources (not the interviewed “heroin addict”, nor the psychologist, nor the interviewed person from the Centre for Prevention and Treatment for Drug Abuse). The journalist also fails to distinguish between the terms “drug addicts” and “drug users”.

Regarding the article entitled “The number of children junkies grows” the editor decided upon the sensationalistic and stigmatizing term “junkies”, although the journalist in the text prefers the less discriminatory term “narco-addicts”, borrowing it from the statement of her only source.<sup>140</sup> The article concludes with the shocking information that “approximately one hundred registered narco-addicts have passed away in the last ten years in Kumanovo”. The use of the terms “junkies” and “narco-addicts” is an example of linguistic exclusion, which virtually conceals the responsibility of the health and state institutions on the death of hundreds drug addicts.

### **Example 3: “Nine thousands registered junkies...”**

The daily newspaper “Vecer” published a text entitled “Nine thousands registered junkies take heroin”, with a subtitle “Macedonia continues the fight against drugs” in the section Black Chronicle (March 30th 2011). The text relies mostly on police sources, the larger part of it referring to drug production (legal and illegal), drug trafficking, the fight against drug trafficking, also to criminal charges and confiscated amount of drugs etc.

A small portion of the text entitled “There are 9,000 narco-addicts in the country” suggests the Ministry of Health as a source stating that “9,000 drug users have been registered in the country”. The information that from “9,000 drug users” (including marihuana users, the “most often abused drug”) magically transformed into “9,000 narco-addicts”, while the main title states “9,000 registered junkies” who “take heroin”.

The sensationalistic title, the use of the discriminatory terms “junkies” and “narco-addicts”, ignoring and confusing the expression “drug users” (from the information given by the Ministry of Health) with “narco-addicts” intentionally, as well as suggesting the “number of registered junkies” in the context of police statistics on drug production, drug trafficking and fight against drug trafficking are examples of linguistic identification and framing, which strengthen negative stereotypes and prejudices that instigate discrimination towards drug users.

#### **Example 4: “NGO warns on the increase of narco-addicts”**

On April 4th 2011 the daily newspaper “Nova Makedonija” published an article entitled “NGO warns on the increase of narco-addicts”. The titular message in the article is based on sources from “non-governmental institutions for fight against narcomania”,<sup>141</sup> an expression allegedly borrowed from the representative of one such organization.<sup>142</sup>

The article informs the citizens on the state with drug addicts and illegal drug trafficking in the city of Skopje, without making a clear and essential distinction between these two completely different subjects. The article of this medium establishes a stigmatizing, insubstantial and based on prejudices correlation between drug addiction and crime.<sup>143</sup> At the same time, the article fails to make a clear distinction between drug dealers and drug addicts.<sup>144</sup>



The use of the stigmatizing term “narco-addicts” and naming the Association for promoting prevention, treatment and social inclusion of people using drugs as “non-governmental organization fighting against narcomania“ indicates on a deliberate sustenance of discrimination and social exclusion of people addicted to drugs and people using drugs. Failing to make a distinction between the criminal act - unauthorized production and trade of narcotic drugs - and drug addiction is an attempt to stigmatize and exclude the members of this already marginalized group by way of insubstantial criminalization of the drug addiction. Criminalization of the drug addiction in the media sustains the birth of fear from persons addicted to drugs among the general public and supports stereotypes and prejudices that present these people as criminals and bullies.

## 2.2. Linguist Identification of LGBT Persons

According to journalists, most often the media uses the term “homosexuals”, although as of lately they consider the term “gays” to be popular. The term “fagot” is rarely used, but the term “gay“ is used to describe negative aspects of different matters. One of the journalists stressed that sometimes when writing about these groups in a negative context the offensive term “warm brothers/sisters” is intentionally used. Journalists consider that transsexuals and transgender persons are rarely covered.

The results of this research indicate to numerous examples of the offensive use of the term “fagot”, as well as other referential strategies that violate the dignity of LGBT persons.

### Examples 1: “The first fagot discovered”

The web portal “Taratur” on April 7th 2011 reported sensationally: “The first fagot has been discovered”, referring to archaeological discoveries in the Czech Republic, where “the remains of the first man from the stone age believed to be homosexual” were excavated.<sup>145</sup> In the article, the archaeologists are quoted as experts for determination of sexual orientation of skeletons from the copper age: “It is very likely that this man had different sexual orientation, i.e. that he was either homosexual or transvestite”<sup>146</sup> (statement of the Head of excavations Kamila Remisova Vesinova).

In the article, the “skeleton” is stigmatized as being “a fagot” because he was allegedly buried “in a manner characteristic for the burial of women at that time” and because it was obvious that “the remains belonged to a man, considered to be a woman by the natives”. Such linguistic identification indicates that the journalist does not differentiate between sex and gender, or between sexual orientation and gender orientation (nor between the terms “transvestite” and “transsexual”), which as a consequence leads to discriminatory naming that strengthens the existing negative prejudices towards homosexuals and transgender people.

### **Example 2: “Fuckology”**

In the column “Fuckology”, published on May 30th, 2011 in “Vecer”,<sup>147</sup> the author Dragan P. Latas explicitly employs the discriminatory term “fagots” in humiliating context: “This time even the fagots won’t vote for him”. The homophobic discourse of Latas is “crowned” with the heterosexist explanation of the key term in the column title: “Fuckology” teaches us that it’s much better to sleep once with Snow White, than seven times with the dwarfs”. Such referential strategies by the editor of “Vecer” are an open attack to the dignity of homosexuals.

### **Examples 3: “Gays and “batons”**

The web portal “Plusinfo” published two sensationalistic titles: “400 batons for 200 gays!” (later re-titled as “400 police officers will secure the gay parade in Split”), and “Chaos in Split: The gays took out their batons! (later re-named as “Chaos in Split: Homosexuals attacked by an organized group - 11.06.2011). The sensationalistic titles and photographs, as well as the “humoristic” association of “gays” with “police batons”, defocuses the intention from the danger of violence (in the first title) and the real violence (in the second defocusing title), which misinforms that “gays” used violence (“batons”). The use of the term “parade” (in the context of “gay parade” or “pride parade”) conceals the fact that the participants in the parade of pride wish to practice freely, without discrimination their right to peaceful protest just as other people.

#### **Example 4: “Lepa Brena changes her sex”**

The author of the column published in “Vecer” (07.04.2011) in one paragraph mixes up completely “sex or sexual orientation“, sex change and “transvestites”:

“So I will support the state in the decision to participate financially in sex change surgeries. Following this logic, I think we should reach the option that Macedonia, which beyond question is feminine, bears the masculine Macedon, so that everyone could call this country Macedonia or Macedon according to his/her sex or sexual orientation. Thus, the problems with Greece, EU and NATO will be solved in a visionary manner and finally the country will go forward into the anus (I mean the annals...) of Europe on the crotches of the new transvestites...”

The author of the column conceals his discriminatory relation towards members of sexual minorities behind mockery, humiliation and failure to discern between sex and gender identity and sexual orientation, between transsexuals and transvestites. In other of his columns, in the context of similar derogative “humoristic” style he uses the derogative terms “warm brothers” and ”homos”.<sup>148</sup>

#### **Example 5: Dana- transvestite?**

In few editorials on the “Eurovision” the participant Dana International was labelled as a transvestite: “The journalist, intending to confuse him, asked Vlatko this question, thinking that he won’t chose Dana because she is a transvestite.”<sup>149</sup> Although in another article she was linguistically identified as an “attractive female transsexual”, in the title the female transsexual was renamed into “male transsexual” (“The male transsexual is back on Eurovision”, Utrinski Vesnik, March 11th, 2011)”. Not one of the articles mentioned that Dana’s current name is Sharon, while most of the articles linguistically identified her with her name before the sex change. Thus, the title “Jaron Koen has been a woman for 20 years” (Vest, May 9th, 2011), not only linguistically misidentifies Sharon (Dana), but rather confuses the readers by naming her Jaron Koen, misinforming them that “he changed his sex 20 years ago, he became a woman and since then uses only the artistic name Dana International”.

Failing to distinguish between a transsexual and transvestite and the sensationalistic identification of persons who have changed their sex solely with the name they had before the sex change strengthens the stereotypes and prejudices towards transsexuals and violates their dignity.

**Example 6: “Eva Longoria is a lesbian”, and “There are no ‘gay moments’ in “Romeo and Juliette”**

In the sensationalistic title “Eva Longoria is a lesbian!?”,<sup>150</sup> the actress was identified as a potential “lesbian” only because “she decided to act in a lesbian film”. The play “Romeo and Juliette”, in which the female roles are played by men, triggered controversial and sensationalistic titles: “There are no gay moments in Romeo and Juliet” (with the subtitle: the actor Oliver Mitkovski claims that the new premiere is straight)<sup>151</sup> and “We wear dresses but we are still men” (with the subtitle “Premiere of a completely male “Romeo and Juliette”).<sup>152</sup> Although the two media events aren’t related, the contrast and double standards are obvious. On one hand, the foreign actress is labelled as a “lesbian” only because she decided to act in a “lesbian film” (the comedy “No men”). On the other hand, the domestic play is identified as “straight” (in which “there are no gay moments”), although it is “advertised” with a sensationalistic conclusion: “Romeo will kiss a man instead of a woman!” By stressing and reinforcing the director’s statement “there is no relation between homosexuality and travesty in the play” and the statement of one of the actors “there was nothing vulgar, no signs of travesty or gay moments” the article reinforces negative stereotypes and prejudices that a play with “gay moments” and “travesty” would be considered “vulgar” and socially unacceptable.

### 2.3. Linguistic Identification of Sex Workers and Sex Work

According to the journalists, the expression “sex work” is rarely used in the media since it is not treated as a work, i.e. as an individual choice of work. The most often used terms are “prostitute”, “sluts”, and the term “hooker” is present in some columns.<sup>153</sup>

The results of this research indicate on few examples of linguistic identification that violate the dignity of sex workers.

#### **Example 1:** “A lair of prostitution discovered...”

“Utrinski vesnik” on June 22nd, 2011 published the article “A lair of prostitution discovered in Karposh”, relying on “information from the police investigation”, according to which “the apartment rented by a woman from Gostivar on Branislav Nushic Street has been a lair of prostitution for more than a year, where all kinds of clients dropped by”. The police expression “lair of prostitution”, intensified in the title, favours the police version of the event and neglects the key moment that the police was called to protect the victims of violence who were beaten up by persons wearing masks. Most of the titles in the media completely neglected the violence against the women, favouring the police version of the event: “A `brothel` discovered in the centre of Skopje”, “The `madam` of a Skopje public house arrested”, “A woman-pimp in Skopje `services` around 150 clients”, “The woman from Gostivar taken into custody for soliciting prostitution”, “Custody for the woman-pimp”...

The newspaper “Vest”, on June 22nd, 2011 published an article with a title “The police arrested bloody prostitutes” and a subtitle “A brothel discovered in an apartment in Karposh in Skopje”. Although in the first sentence, the victims of violence who sought help from the police are called “sex workers”, in the main title they are renamed as “bloody prostitutes”. The text fails to focus on the violence against the sex workers, it doesn’t question why the victims of violence were arrested after seeking police protection, but instead concludes paradoxically that “A brothel was discovered in an apartment in Karposh in Skopje”.<sup>154</sup>

The linguistic identification of “bloody prostitutes” in the context of a “brothel discovered”, conceals the police discrimination against the sex workers, who instead of being protected after reporting violence, were treated as criminals by the police officers.

The article “A woman from Gostivar owned a brothel in Skopje” (with the subtitle “Beaten prostitutes sought help from the state”)<sup>155</sup> opens with the information that “The police discovered a brothel after two men wearing masks beat up the owner and few prostitutes who ‘worked’ in a rented apartment...” The use of the term ‘worked’ in quotation marks defocuses the attention of the problem of violence against sex workers, who further in the text are not treated as victims of violence, but as “cunning girls” and accomplices in crime. In the separate section “cunning girls” are statements of eyewitnesses who heard the conversation between the “police officers and the girls” that derogate the statements of the victims, thus concealing the discriminatory relation towards the women-victims of violence from the police.

**Example 2:** “A prostitute attacked and robbed...”

On May 3rd, 2011, “Utrinski Vesnik” in the section *Chronicle* published a short information “A prostitute attacked and robbed in Skopje”: “A prostitute was attacked and robbed by clients in Skopje. The clients not only refused to pay for the service, but punched and kicked her because she asked them for money...” The short description of the case is based on information issued by the police, “which announced measures to discover the attacker”. The “Utrinski Vesnik” editorial policy provides the readers with a space to leave comments, most of which were sexist and humiliating towards “prostitutes” and “prostitution”, and defocus the attention from the problem of violence against the sex workers.<sup>156</sup> The comments questioning the linguistic identification of “prostitutes” were rare, i.e. comments that turn the attention towards the problem of violence and attackers most of whom remain unpunished.<sup>157</sup> Just as rare are titles in the section *Chronicle* that use the linguistic identification sex workers (“A sex worker beaten and robbed”, “Dnevnik”, 03.05.2011). In the title, “Prostitute robbed” (“Vreme”, 03.05.2011), the focus is on the act of robbery, which diminishes the act of violence (being beaten up after the sex worker refused a service): “he tried to violate her, but after she refused, he took 25 Euros from her

by force, after which he punched and kicked her body and head, and at end chased her out of his vehicle.”

**Example 3:** “The Parliament is a syphilitic divorcee...”

The column “The Parliament is a syphilitic divorcee wearing a democratic make up”, criticizes the work of the Macedonian Parliament with the following expressions: “The national syphilis that spread that whore...”, “The divorcee was an instrument for an institutional pogrom of the Macedonian existence...” (Globus, 19.04.2011, p. 82). Although by employing expressions such as “syphilitic divorcee” and “whore” the author linguistically identifies the Parliament, these labels violate the dignity of sex workers and contribute to stigma and discrimination against them.

**Example 4:** “Whores with dignity”

On April 6th, 2011 “Vecer”, in the section *Photo-finish* published few photographs from Routers under the title “Whores with dignity”. The photographs covered the event “Slutwalk Toronto“, showing participants in the women’s feminist movement that stood in defence of the rights of all women, in particular victims of violence, misogyny and homophobia. The linguistic identification of the protestants as “Whores with dignities”, without explaining the reasons why the protestants adopted the term “whores”, conceals the reason for their protest, which is presenting women victims of violence from man violators as “whores”.

On June 20th, 2011 “Nova Makedonija” published the article “‘The cheap’ protested from Montreal to London”, with a photograph of protestants holding banners “No means no”, followed by the following sentence bellow “A victim can never be guilty, the protestants said”. The article begins with the sentence “Thousands of women dressed cheap, like whores protested yesterday in many cities through out the world... because of a statement of a Canadian police officer, according to whom young women wouldn’t be victims of sex assaults if they didn’t dress like whores”.<sup>158</sup> The incorrectly paraphrased statement and the assessment “the negligent statement of the police officer”, diminishes the reported

statements of the protest participants that “the victim can never be guilty”. Despite the strengthened linguistic identification “The cheap” and “The prostitutes” and the sensationalistic representation of the protestants, both texts do not address one of the key demands of the protestants- resignation from the British Justice Secretary Kenneth Clark, because of his dubious distinction between “real rape” and “date rape”.

**Example 5:** “Dancers arrested”, “prostitutes taken into custody”

The title “Dancers arrested” (“Vecer” - 03.07.2011) suggests that the police arrested “two Bulgarian and one Macedonian citizen” for being dancers, although the content of the article clarifies that “they were arrested by the police for working illegally”.

The title “Gamblers and prostitutes taken into custody” (with the subtitle “The special police forces Alfa of the Ministry for Interior checked the identification papers of 6,000 citizens over a period of six months”)<sup>159</sup> refers to the statistics of the Ministry, which “reveals that 178 persons were taken into custody by the Alfa officers on the grounds of breaking the public order and peace”. Why the title places emphasis on gamblers and prostitutes is unclear, considering that from the 178 persons taken into custody, only “seven persons were detained for gambling, hazard games, prostitution and for use of a gun and pyrotechnics”.

This manner of linguistic identification and representation, which completely fails to pose the question why were persons taken into custody for breaking the public order and peace, strengthens negative stereotypes against sex workers as criminals.

## 2.4 Linguistic Identification of People Living with HIV

Media constructions of concepts and the notion of HIV and AIDS depend a great deal on the manner of naming and the terminological distinction. Some of the journalists do not have a highly developed



sense as to the meaning of the processes of naming and terminological distinction for people living with HIV. The journalists rarely clarify the meaning of the acronyms HIV<sup>160</sup> and AIDS,<sup>161</sup> while often the word “aids” is used in small letters, as if it wasn’t an acronym. In order to describe people living with HIV the following words are used most often: “people with HIV/AIDS”, “persons with HIV/AIDS”, “persons infected with HIV”,<sup>162</sup> “diseased with HIV and aids”, “the ill from HIV and AIDS”, “patients diseased with HIV/AIDS”,<sup>163</sup> “carriers of the HIV virus” etc.

Bio-medical terminology often creates confusion among journalists, which is being reproduced via the power of the medium.

**Example 1:** The text “Refused treatment because of HIV positive status” (Vest, 6.04.2011), reports that our Coalition indicated to “the case of a 32-year old heavily ill drug addict, who wasn’t admitted in any hospital because of being HIV positive.” However, the Coalition’s report contained no information on the HIV status. We indicated on a case when a medical care was not offered, and was conditioned with the demand for a medical confirmation of HIV status.

The gravest confusion is caused by media discourses that make no distinction between HIV and AIDS, or between a person with an HIV positive status and a person living with AIDS. Some texts may leave the impression to the reader that there is a disease called “HIV Aids” and that this disease is contagious like malaria or tuberculosis.

**Example 2:** The article “UN warns against the danger of non-contagious diseases” (section “Health”) says: “Although the attention of the world public is turned towards contagious diseases such as HIV Aids, malaria and tuberculosis, new information indicate that non-contagious diseases in 2008 took 36 million human lives.” Articles that allow professionals to clear the distinction between HIV and AIDS are rare.

**Example 3:** The article “Let’s free ourselves from prejudices: “We aren’t a plague”” (“24 Casa Zdravje”, 23.05.2011, p. 9) contains a special frame “From HIV to AIDS in 7 to 10 years” disclosing the statement of Dr. Milena Stefanovic: “According to world statistics, it takes 7 to 9 years for the infection of an HIV-virus to develop into the stadium called AIDS”.

### 3. Inclusion/Exclusion, Positive and Negative Stereotyping /de(legitimization)

Journalists and editors use various strategies for media representation of members of marginalized groups. During the monitoring of media contents, the researchers were focused on the following groups of questions, according to three types of media strategies:

- **Inclusive/exclusive strategies:** Are members of marginalized groups given adequate space in the media and are the reports on them sensationalistic? Are members of marginalized groups included or excluded when journalists write about them or about subjects closely related to them? What kind of strategies of media exclusion or marginalization can we identify?
- **Predicative strategies:** What kind of features, characteristics, qualities and distinctions are prescribed to members of marginalized groups (drug users, sex workers, LGBT-people, people living with AIDS)? During their presentation, are positive or negative features, characteristics, qualities and distinctions dominant? What is the perspective when expressing such attributes and are they intensified or weakened?
- **Argumentative strategies and (de)legitimizing strategies:** When reporting about members of marginalized groups, which are the prevalent arguments (or schemes of argumentation): those that legitimize the fight against discrimination, or those that justify or legitimize exclusion, discrimination and suppression of drug users, sex workers, LGBT people, people living with HIV? From which perspective are these arguments and (de)legitimizing strategies expressed and are they intensified or weakened?

### 3.1. Inclusive/exclusive strategies

Although the media in 2011 broadcasted a considerable number of contents, directly concerning human rights and the needs of members of marginalized groups, the voice of LGBT people, drug users, sex workers and people living with HIV wasn't adequately represented in the media. The journalists pointed that when writing for members of marginalized groups most often they take statements from the spokespersons of the Ministry of Interior, sociologists, psychologists, human rights experts and

activists or representatives from the NGO sector, while it is very difficult to receive statements from members of marginalized groups. Journalists think that subjects related to marginalized communities are represented in the media only on special occasions (when presenting results from a research or press-conference of some NGOS's), if writing in a negative context, or if an incident has happened or the story is sensationalistic.<sup>164</sup>

#### 3.1.1. Sensationalistic representation and threatening

Although, in principle, the manner of reporting on members of vulnerable groups should be free from sensationalism, according to the journalists, the sensationalistic approach is customary and inevitable whenever writing about members from marginalized groups. Some journalists claim that sensationalism is not necessarily a reason for negative representation of these communities.<sup>165</sup> On certain occasions, the sensationalistic approach is noticeable whenever writing about diseases or court proceedings, despite Article 8 from the "Codex of the Journalists of Macedonia" which entails that "the manner of informing in cases of (...) diseases, court proceedings has to be freed from sensationalism".

#### Sensationalism towards LGBT people

##### Example 1: pre-election sensationalism

At the official start of the election campaign, on May 15th 2011, the newspaper "Vecer" sensationally published the cover story on the front page: "Shekerinska won't open factories, but will protect the

homosexuals”!<sup>166</sup> The sensationalist media attacks at politicians who defend the rights of homosexuals encourage discrimination and social exclusion.

**Example 2: Pre-Eurovision sensationalism**

On the front page of “Vest” (09.05.2011), the cover title under the photography of the singer “Dana International” is the statement of the Macedonian representative at the Eurovision Vlatko Ilievski: “I won’t forgive even Dana”.<sup>167</sup> The sensationalistic representation of Dana’s sexuality, followed by a sensationalistic focus on her birth name (before the sex change), and the ignorance of her personal name

(Sheron Koen), strengthens the negative stereotypes towards transsexuals and encourages disrespect towards their sexual privacy and the right to change of the personal name, as a human right.

**Example 3: “Boki 13 changes his sex “**

After the sensationalistic title “Lepa Brena changes her sex” (column in “Vecer”- 07.04.2011), on May 09th 2011, many media sensationally announced the news “Boki 13 changes his sex”, published in “Netpres”, distributed by the Serbian newspaper “Blic”. The same day, the portal “Kurir” published the news “Boki 13 changes his sex, only not in female”. The sensationalistic identification of transsexuals with transvestites encourages transphobia towards transgender people, as obvious by the published non-tolerant comments on the electronic edition of “Vecer”.<sup>168</sup>

**Sensationalism towards sex workers**

The sensationalistic titles ““A lair of prostitution discovered in Karposh” (Utrinski vesnik, 22.06.2011) and “A brothel discovered in the centre of Skopje” (Nova Makedonija, 22.06.2011), prefer the police version of the event, ignoring the violence on the sex workers that asked for protection from the police after the incursion of two bullies wearing masks in their apartment. On the other hand, similar sensationalistic approach occurs in the article “A brothel discovered in the center of Ohrid, “A Madame from Bulgaria detained (“Vest”, 8.03.2011), and in the editorial “A Bulgarian woman had a brothel in the centre of Ohrid” (Sitel, 07.03.2011). In these media contents, the sensationalistic approach neglects the crucial differences (between prostitution, intermediating in prostitution, forced prostitution and man

huffrafficking) and encourages stigmatization of sex workers.

### **Sensationalism towards drug addicts**

Using discourses of fear and shock while thematizing the drug problem influences the construction and formation of public perception of addicts. The media production of discourses on the evil, danger and mortality, as well as ignoring the successful personal stories and experiences from cure and treatment of former addicts strengthens the stereotypic image of the drug addicts and users as “lost souls” and supports the famous myth on the impossibility to cure addiction. Examples for such sensationalism can be found in the article “The number of children junkies grows”<sup>169</sup> as well as the article with sensationalistic title “The youngest drug addict is just 11 years old”.<sup>170</sup>

### **Sensationalism regarding HIV/AIDS**

The manners in which AIDS is constructed by the media as a disease, often followed by sensationalistic representation and threatening.<sup>171</sup> Although the sensationalistic representation and threatening wasn’t noticeable as in the previous years, few examples can be numbered. The sensational title “The risk of heart diseases grows with HIV”,<sup>172</sup> refers to scientific study which demonstrated “the relation between HIV and heart failure...”. Although the short informative text resembles other texts written in a “scientific-educational” style, the conclusion is threatening: “During the seven years of research, 186 respondents had heart failure”.<sup>173</sup>

The sensationalistic article “A new cure against aids” begins with an exclamation sentence “Aids can be cured too!”, a news which “of course will bring joy to million people around the world”. After the dogmatic encouraging claims at the beginning of the article,<sup>174</sup> follow discouraging information: the medical procedure is “a difficult surgery, demands for a corresponding donor and carries a certain death risk”, and “... experts aren’t quite sure that Braun is 100 percents cured...” In the conclusion of the short text, HIV is described sensationally as the “cholera of the modern times”, while the confusing identification of HIV with AIDS culminates in the final “consoling” point: “not every person carrier has to necessarily to be diseased with this disease”.

### 3.1.2. Ignoring by the media and harassment

Very often the problems and needs of members of marginalized groups remain in the zone of media invisibility because of intentional ignoring by the journalists or the media. Although journalists and media should not ignore the problems and needs of members of marginalized groups, particularly in cases when there are serious incidents of violation of their human rights, media ignoring is a common occurrence.

#### **Example 1:** Media ignoring and marginalizing of the calls for fight against homophobia and transphobia

The statement by the Macedonian Helsinki Committee “Homophobia became a state politics in the Republic of Macedonia”, published on May 17th, was ignored by the larger part of the media.<sup>175</sup> Inconsiderable part of the media reported about the Coalition’s press conference at the Macedonia Square, on the occasion of the International Day for Fight against Homophobia and Transphobia, followed by an outdoors exhibition, “Images against Homophobia”.

Although the message, “Homophobia is the state politics in Macedonia” was reported during promotion of the report of the Council of Europe on June 2011 (“Discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity in Europe“), only one medium reported the message,<sup>176</sup> while the disturbing information on the condition in Macedonia were ignored by the media.

#### **Example 2:** Patients treated from addiction ignored by the media

Most of the media reported on the pre-electoral intentions of the Mayor of Kisela Voda Municipality on the dislocation of the Centre for Addicts in Kisela Voda and the construction of a new community centre that would treat only patients from Kisela Voda.<sup>177</sup> All published articles reported the mayor’s statement, the citizen’s opinions, or opinions of experts, however not one article reported the opinion of the persons treated in Kisela Voda. The patients’ voice from the Centre of addictions in Kisela Voda didn’t reach the media even after an inconsiderable part of the media reported on the citizens’ petition against the idea of the day centre in Kisela Voda near a school and kindergarten.<sup>178</sup> Not one of the patients concerned with the project “dislocation”, nor the NGO’s that deal with harm reduction, were consulted by

the journalist, one of the rare who dared to do research on why the projected addiction centres aren't opened in the Skopje municipalities.<sup>179</sup>

**Example 3:** Marginalization of death cases of prisoners treated from addiction

Within the research period, part of the media reported the news of two death cases of addicts in the Skopje prison “Idrizovo”. The first death case was reported by the daily newspapers Shpic<sup>180</sup> and Utrinski Vesnik,<sup>181</sup> while Shpic<sup>182</sup> published an interview with the father of the deceased prisoner afterwards. The second death case was reported by the daily newspapers Vreme,<sup>183</sup> Vecer,<sup>184</sup> Utrinski Vesnik,<sup>185</sup> Dnevnik,<sup>186</sup> Nova Makedonija,<sup>187</sup> Lajme,<sup>188</sup> Coha.<sup>189</sup>

The media coverage of both cases in the greatest part was simply a short coverage of the news, without any interest in the problematic circumstances of the death, as well as the responsibility of the competent institutions and subjects. The bigger part of the media articles and journalists did not pose the question how is it possible to overdose in a prison, with a therapy that should be administered in strictly controlled conditions and quantity, and how is it possible that there is an illegal drug market in a penitentiary.<sup>190</sup>

Unfortunately, the journalists rarely problematize official reports and statements in which very often death circumstances are marginalized, while information on the criminal and medical files of the convicts-patients are pointed out. Even less often do journalists dare to ask the key questions and ask for responsibility in the cases of suspicious death of prisoners-patients on methadone therapy.<sup>191</sup>

**Example 4:** Ignoring the sex workers regarding subjects that highly concern them

Sex workers are ignored by the media even in articles on subjects that mostly concern their rights, such as “legalization of prostitution”. The statement of sex workers, or their registered associations “Star”, are absent even in the cover title “Buy a studio apartment in one month with prostitution” (Globus, 17.05.2011), even though there was the remark “Legalization of this activity is mostly talked about in the circles of prostitutes”. Even in the cover title “Third attempt to legalize prostitution” (Vest, 25.08.2011) on the subject of the draft-law proposed by a member of parliament, statements from a sex worker and the citizens’ association are missing.

### **Example 5:** Ignoring the problems of people living with HIV

People living with HIV in the Republic of Macedonia with great pleasure welcomed the written address of the President of the Republic of Macedonia, Mr. Gjorgje Ivanov to the Macedonian public in the column “Macedonia is prepared to contribute to the global intentions for dealing with aids”.<sup>192</sup> In the column, the President supported “the efforts for strengthening the national response to HIV and aids”, promising to give his most “honest efforts and contribution to the fight against stigma and discrimination towards persons living with HIV and aids”. He called all the citizens to “have understanding and give hand to the carriers of HIV or have aids and help them in leading a normal and productive life”.

Unfortunately, the journalists didn’t dip their quills in the challenges, disappointments and numerous problems<sup>193</sup> indicated by the persons living with HIV in the open letter, although it is a perfect start for a investigative and engaging journalism.

### **3.1.3. Media Inclusion**

Although the media more and more consider (themselves) to be agents of social inclusion, in our country media contents that strive to present in non-sensational manner the problems of members of marginalized groups are very rare.

#### **Example 1:** Confession in: “In someone else’s skin”

Although the subject of “sex change” has become favourite target of the media sensationalists, the article “In someone else’s skin” (Forum, 12.08.2011) attempts to present the problems of Macedonian transsexuals from their view point, while respecting the ethical code (which enforces that the manner of informing about medical cases be void of sensationalism). The problems with violence and discrimination that the Macedonian citizens are facing upon a decision for sex change are emphasized with the personal stories, while the photographs include two key points: “Surgical sex change is not performed in Macedonia”, and “Society has rejected sex change”.



**Example 2:** “Confession; living with AIDS”

The journalist of the publication “24 Casa Zdravje“ in two sequences successfully privileges the viewpoint of people living with HIV, disclosing their problems by a combination of confession, experts’ statements and experiences of activists of “Zaedno posilni” (the first working group for support and self-help of people living with HIV, within the frames of the NGO HERA).

**3.2. Predicative Strategies****3.2.1. Criminalization of drug users and sex workers**

According to the journalists, the interest in arrests manifested by editors and the general public is the main reason that sex workers and drug users are discussed in a negative context, after every raid carried out by the police. In this way, the media distinguish themselves, and also maintain the negative stereotypes, because drug users and sex workers are portrayed as criminals or persons breaking the law.<sup>194</sup>

Sex work is not treated as work by the media (i.e. an individual choice of work), rather most often as a form of crime. Although prostitution (as well as leasing apartments for prostitution) is not a criminal act, but a violation against the public order and peace,<sup>195</sup> the journalists most often reveal the police reports in which sex workers are presented as criminals. Although “taking narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances” is also only a violation against the public peace and order, when informing the police reports, journalists very often portray drug users, even patients-drug addicts as criminals.

A concerning factor is that the journalists rarely attempt to question the police reports in which drug users and sex workers are presented as criminals, even when seeking protection precisely by the police in cases when their rights are violated.

**Example 1:** Criminalization of addicts

The daily newspaper Vreme, on 20. 04. 2011, in the section Chronicle published an article entitled, “The youngest narco-addict is only 11”. The subject of the article is the increasing trend of “narco-addicts” and the decrease in their age, while the possibilities for addiction treatment aren’t a subject at all. The following passage is very concerning: “Narco-addicts, according to the experts, when in a stadium of

crisis are very often the perpetrators, motivated by the need for money. According to the police last year there were 590 criminal acts carried out by addicts”.

The criminalization of the addiction by way of such discriminatory discourses has serious consequences on health and social politics, above all to the public perception of the drug related problem, which is alarming problem that should be dealt with by the police, not the health or social system. This media article introduces a correlation between drug addiction and crime, which is stigmatizing, insubstantial and prejudiced based. Drug addiction is not a criminal act, but an addiction disease, classified as a disease according to the World Health Organization, therefore, drug addiction should be dealt with by health and social workers, not police officers.<sup>196</sup>

Identifying addicts with criminals is a discriminatory strategy and speech that stigmatized and excludes the members of this marginalized group. Drug addicts are persons in need of health protection, and under no circumstances should they be stigmatized negatively as criminals.

### **Example 2: Criminalization of sex workers**

The article “The police arrested bloody prostitutes” (“Vest”, 22.06.2011) portrays sex workers as criminals that should be arrested, even though: 1) they are victims of violence who sought protection from the police; 2) it isn’t a case of arrest on the ground of “prostitution” (which is a violation, not a criminal act), but for suspicion of “intermediating in prostitution”. Some media completely ignore violence against sex workers and their appeals to the police, reporting only the police version according to which “A team of the Skopje police forces, after having undertaken prior operative measures and documented information, arrested a 37- years old woman from Gostivar on the ground of a crime related to intermediating in prostitution” (“A brothel discovered in the centre of Skopje”, Nova Makedonija, 22.06.2011). The media portrayal of victims of violence as criminals, and the media-police ignoring the problem with violence against sex workers is reflected in a reader’s comment regarding the article “Beaten prostitutes sought help from the state: A woman from Gostivar owned a brothel in Skopje”: “It isn’t important that they were beaten up- what’s important is that they were prostitutes.”

### 3.2.2. Pathologization/De-pathologization of homosexuality

Last year there was an aggressive trend of pathologizing homosexuality, instigated by the media highlighting the statements of members of parliament, the medical “experts” of VMRO-DPMNE (“homosexuality is a disease” –Ginev, MD.) and the lawsuit of the “experts” in “Pedagogy” against Irena Cvetkovic (prompted by the public criticizing of their textbook where homosexuals and lesbians are portrayed as participants in a “degenerated, not natural and ...abnormal sex life...persons with psychological difficulties and impediments”).<sup>197</sup>

We can say that the trend of de-pathologization of homosexuality began in 2011, prompted by the media reactions after the court decision, which dismissed the lawsuit by the authors of “Pedagogy”,<sup>198</sup> particularly after the decision of the Commission for Protection against Discrimination, which recommended that the disputed excerpts of the textbook be changed.<sup>199</sup> Although most media focused on the decision to revise the textbook,<sup>200</sup> some attempted to distort the information: “The CPD demanded an immediate revision of the textbook for third year-students: from the entire “Pedagogy” they are frustrated only by the sex” (“Vecer”).

For change in the discourse- from aggressive homophobic discourse attacking the attacked,<sup>201</sup> to discourse that analyzes the attitude of aggressive homophobes- contributed not only the court decision and the decision of the Commission for Protection against Discrimination, but also certain articles of specialized medical persons. For instance the author of the article “When you hate someone irrationally”<sup>202</sup> gives advice to homophobes (persons that irrationally hate homosexuals) to seek expert’s psychological help in order not to allow irrational hatred, which is an “unhealthy emotion” to “pass into aggression and manifest itself towards people that did nothing to cause this aggression”. The author of the analysis “The establishment convinced that homosexuality is a disease” (“Focus”, April), considers homosexuality as normal, attempting to make homophobia pathological.<sup>203</sup>

### 3.2.3. Stereotyping and (de)legitimizing HIV/AIDS

Media presentation of AIDS as the “cholera of the modern times” resembles the early reports from few decades ago, which misled the readers to believe that AIDS is very contagious disease and it is transmitted like the flu.<sup>204</sup> Associating AIDS with deadly diseases (“cholera”, “plague”), is related to the public prejudice addressed in the title: “Let’s free ourselves from prejudices: We aren’t a plague”.<sup>205</sup> Still, not only uninformed journalists contribute to negative stereotyping and mythologizing, rather some experts who are granted space in the health sections of the newspapers. For example, in the section “Dermatology” there is inadequate and incomplete information on the preventive measures for protection from “Diseases transmitted by sexual intercourse”, among which are “viral infections such as those caused by the human immunodeficiency virus HIV”: “Preventive measures of protection is the best way to deal with STD- infections, i.e. to avoid sexual intercourse with infected person”.<sup>206</sup>

Regarding such incompetent advises for prevention of STD, the media articles that recommend use of condom as means for prevention are welcomed. For example, in the article “To health with a condom”<sup>207</sup> a popular singer stresses that: “For four years now I’ve been spreading the word of using condoms” and that “it is stupid to propagate sexually reproductive health and not take care of yourself, right?” In this context, particularly important are the de-mythologizing articles, which state that the responsibility for using measures for prevention is on the part of everyone practicing sex, independently from the HIV-status.<sup>208</sup>

### 3.2.4. Moralizing

According to journalists, traditional moral values originating from religion, but also traditional practices (such as marriage and reproduction), encourage marginalization, discrimination and social exclusion of members of some marginalized groups. According to them, the right conservative ideology influences the establishment, strengthening and maintaining negative stereotypes and prejudices.

Example 1: Discriminatory moralizing over Christmas and Easter

The surge of Christian moralizing discourse had a strong response in the media after the Christmas

“evolutionary” messages of the archbishop of the Macedonian Orthodox Church<sup>209</sup> and the “news” that “MOC has a cure for homosexuals” (Nova Makedonija, 03.02.2011).<sup>210</sup> however, the media ignored the explicit discriminatory messages from the Easter Gospel of the metropolitan Petar, published in the websites of MOC.<sup>211</sup>

**Example 2:** Addiction treatment in a monastery for nuns

The Christian moralizing discourse is predominant in the article “St. George the Conqueror cures a narco-addict”,<sup>212</sup> while the monastery is promoted as a successful healing place for drug addiction, which is portrayed as the “Flood”.<sup>214</sup> The monastery is presented as a “clinic” that offers “salvation from drug addiction” and “resurrection” for the cured girls.<sup>215</sup> Taking drugs is presented as a “sin”, and the sister explains the successful therapy by “repenting”.<sup>216</sup>

The article does not question the practices of “treatment” in the monastery, and the question of whether the monastery is a competent institution to cure addictions or a place where the criminal act quackery is practiced does not arise at all.

**Example 3:** “Fight against the vices”

The conservative moralizing discourse warning against the danger of “vices” is increasingly present in the media. For example, in the article “How it feels to be young in 2011” (Nova Makedonija, 12.08.2011), reaching for drugs, alcohol and prostitution is described as “deviant occurrences” and “yielding to vices”. In the article “Ohrid gradually becomes Amsterdam” (Nova Makedonija, 29. 04. 2011) “the contact with drugs in Ohrid” is described as a vice “lurking over pupils from elementary schools”. In the article “Replace the syringe with a shovel” (Utrinski vesnik, 11.04.2011) drug addiction is described as the entrance to the claws of evil, taking a detour from the right road- a vice that must be left behind. The moralizing media discourses against “vices” are related to the political discourse of eliminating the vices of the ruling conservative party.<sup>217</sup>

Such moralizing discourses strengthen the negative stereotypes towards members of marginalized communities and encourage stigmatization and social exclusion.

### 3.3. Argumentative and (de)legitimizing strategies

The relation between stereotyping and argumentation is not always clearly distinguished. On one hand, stereotypes and prejudices can be detected as cases of false generalization, and on the other hand, often we can identify prejudices as premises used in the process of deduction. Consequently, most of the cases we analyzed in the second chapter can be examined also as examples for argumentative or (de) legitimizing strategies.

#### 3.3.1. Sensationalistic argumentation for “legalization of prostitution”

The front cover article “Buy a studio apartment in one month with prostitution” (Globus, 17.05.2011) lists number of arguments for legalization of prostitution, as well as gains from the legalization. The key argument is financial (“the topos of finances”)<sup>218</sup> from the viewpoint of the state interests, which are endangered with the fact that the state is forced to go into debt, instead of acquiring the money in a form of taxes from prostitution. According to the author, those against prostitution manifest “false moral, because legalization of prostitution does not mean it being approved or stimulated”, rather it is “the only way that this social occurrence can be placed under control and the state can fight with the crime in this subculture”.

The author cites number of alerts from experts (without citing their names) “that legalization of prostitution can have a great benefit”: it will become possible to establish health control of persons working as prostitutes, the number of illegal persons will decrease...the population will be protected from sexually transmitted diseases, most of all aids, the children will be protected from sexual exploitation, the budget expenses for fight against prostitution will decrease because the activity will be legally regulated.”

The front cover article “The parliament member Samka Ibraimovski with a draft-law: Third attempt to legalize prostitution” (Vest, 25.08.2011), also exposes the arguments of the proposer, who introduces the fact that “it is better to control and monitor prostitution than simply be silent about it and pretend it does not exist”: “According to Ibraimovski, the benefit of legalizing prostitution will be multiple, because the state will control it, collect tax, and the workers will have regular medical examinations.”

The author of the text elucidates the contra-arguments of the representatives of the ruling party, stating why “such thing will never pass in the Parliament”: “according to them, legalizing prostitution will lead to increase in the white slavery trading and other criminal acts.”

Both texts were published on the front cover, without an attempt to reach deeper in the subject, without explaining what sort of legalization is discussed, and what would the consequences be from such legalization.<sup>219</sup>

### **3.3.2. Sensationalistic generalizations of individual cases**

The sensationalistic article “Junkies drink methadone in a bus” (Vest, 27.06.2011) draws a conclusion that refers to junkies, although a patient was seen and photographed taking therapy in a city bus in Skopje in only one case.

Contrary to the sensationalistic conclusion of the title, the conveyed analogy on the NGO’s representative is not intensified, although it is the voice of criticism towards the tendency of taking therapy in public place to be stigmatized: “The fact that the addict drank methadone in a bus is nothing to worry about. It is similar to diabetic taking insulin in a public place”.

### **3.3.3. In search of responsibility for not opening day centers for treating addicts**

The article “Local authorities avoid to determine locations for day centres: They run from the addicts like from a plague” (Vreme, 05.05.2011) is one of the rare research articles to follow the scheme of argumentation “topos of responsibility”.<sup>220</sup> Following the case “dislocation”, the article is a serious attempt to forcibly open the abovementioned question on treating addicts, bearing in mind the greater picture, not only in Kisela Voda. The beginning opens with information of the Ministry of Health to all the municipalities to find an object on their territory “in which a day centre for treating narco-addicts will be established”, a call to which none of the Skopje municipalities have answered. Furthermore, the journalist had contacted relevant persons from seven municipalities within the city of Skopje and reported their statements, which clearly express the tendency to avoid responsibility and the invalid arguments for not implementing the decision. The most common arguments are that the municipalities

do not have appropriate spaces, but not one of the municipality did not argue on the impossibility to find an appropriate space for establishing a day centre for treatment. Some of the mayors attempted to transfer responsibility to central level or to the city of Skopje. Some suggested other ways for realizing the treatment. The reported statements undoubtedly portray the lack of concern of the local authorities for part of their population which is in need of medical care.<sup>221</sup>

### **3.3.4. Media accent on discrimination against homosexuals**

The key conclusion in the title “90% of the citizens against homosexuals” (Vest, 23/24.05.2011) of the article derives from the survey of the Macedonian Centre for International Cooperation (MCIC) that “Homosexuality in Macedonia is not justified by 90% of the citizens “.

The conclusion “90% of the citizens against homosexuals” stands no ground in the survey,<sup>222</sup> as the sensationalistic title-conclusion can be interpreted as a form of argumentum ad populum. Hereupon, it is quite unclear why the percentage relevant to the homosexuals is accentuated in the title, when the content clearly conveys that the percentage of disapproving other occurrences is larger in the survey: “According to the survey the biggest disapproval is towards suicide (98,5%), taking light drugs (96,7%) and prostitution (94,8%).“

Taking out of context and accentuating statistic information from surveys and research, without any critical review of them, often contributes to strengthening the negative stereotypes and discriminatory attitudes of the hetero-patriarchal majority towards sexual and other minorities.

### **3.3.5. Media minimization of violence and delegitimizing the victims of violence in the “gay parade” in Split**

The article “First, and maybe last parade in Split: Violence with fascist salutes!” (Vecer, 12.06.2011) begins with reporting the following police statistics: “In the first gay parade, and maybe the last in Split, ten people were hurt, two of them police officers and two journalists, while 137 persons, 25 of whom



are under-aged, stated the local police, which managed to prevent true violence and bloodshed.” With such media presentation, “two police officers and two journalists” are presented as victims of violence, while ignoring the fact that the main victims of violence were the persons with different sexual orientation and those who supported their right to peaceful gathering and protest. The journalists legitimize “the local police, which managed to prevent true violence and blushed”, suggesting that what happened was not “true violence and bloodshed”. Such strategies minimize discrimination and violence over persons that practiced their human right to peaceful gathering, while they themselves are not presented as victims, rather as instigators of violence.

### **3.3.6. Legitimization of the fight against violence over homosexuals**

The article “Stop violence over homosexuals” (Vest, 18.05.2011) begins with the conclusion that “Macedonia is on the very bottom on the list of European countries regarding respect of equality of homosexuals”. The text refers to “the street exhibition on the International Day against Homophobia”, publishing photo with the caption: “With photos in the hands demonstrating the violence over this population, the citizens were asked to accept them as equal”.

Apart from the web portal “Okno”, which covered the entire exhibition (“International Day for Fight against Homophobia and Transphobia, 17.05.2011), a few other media focused on the ironic presentation of the plaques for gratitude.<sup>223</sup>

### **3.3.7. Delegitimization of methadone therapy**

The article “They replaced strong brandy with light drugs” (“Nova Makedonija”, 28. 04. 2011) reports the following information from the police: “Heroin is less sold on the black market in Tikvesh. According to information issued by the police, the decreased demand is due to the established methadone centre, where the narco-addicts receive daily free therapy”.

Placing the word therapy in quotation marks delegitimizes the methadone addiction treatment, promotes methadone therapy as a replacement for one drug with another and thus delegitimizes drug addicts

as patients. Such arguments strengthen the negative stereotypes towards drug addicts as “criminals”, encourages discrimination towards patients on methadone therapy and undermine the medical efforts for successful treatment.

### **3.3.8. Attempt for media legitimization of homophobia**

The article “Seventh issue of the “moto-festival” in Skopje: Kale is going to resound with motors and music” (Vreme, 10.06.2011), in its sub-title “We don’t discriminate, these are only messages and jokes”, the journalist gives space to the festival organizer to “explain” the signs on the poster that “prohibits gay-sex, cattle, dogs”. According to the journalist, the organizer explained how “the signs are used on the poster not with the goal to discriminate, rather they should convey a message and jokes”: “The sign that certain people interpret as homophobic should in fact clarify that people have to act seemly on this event. We don’t intend to interfere in someone’s private life.”

Framing “We don’t discriminate, these are only messages and jokes”, privileges and legitimizes the viewpoint of the festival organizer, who has already stated before discriminatory and homophobic contents on a poster.<sup>224</sup> In other words, discrimination is legitimized by transforming the act of discrimination into a “joke”, and ignoring the official reaction from the City of Skopje, who “after the publication of the promotion posters for the motor-festival reacted immediately to the organizer of the manifestation, demanding that the quoted examples of discrimination be removed”.

### **3.3.9. Media focus on discrimination and violence against transsexuals**

After the cover story “A man from Tetovo is the first Macedonian to change his sex: I will kill myself if I don’t become a woman” (Vest, 22.08.2011), there was a sequel “Violence over the first Macedonian transsexual who spoke publically that from a man wants to become a woman: Ivana beaten up in a Tetovo park” (“Vest”, 31.08.2011). In the first article the journalist focuses on the problem of discrimination, and in the second on the problem of violence that had occurred after the cover story was published: “The transsexual from Tetovo, who told his life story for “Vest” under the pseudonym Ivana, was

beaten up”, and that “the attacker confessed the incident”. Still the article legitimizes the police explanation that “the suspected for violence” had a “motive for the fight”.

The Coalition salutes the journalist’s efforts for police protection of members of marginalized groups in cases of violence.

### 3.3.10. Deligitimizing homophobia

In the article “The establishment is convinced that homosexuality is a disease” (Focus, April), the author attempts to give arguments for the thesis that homosexuality is not dangerous for personality, rather that society is dangerous for the health of LGBT citizens. The author uses argumentation strategy with scientific arguments to pathologize the aggressive political will that insists on pathologizing homosexuality, also with the use of scientific arguments.<sup>225</sup>

### 3.3.11. “Acknowledgement“ from Janko Ilkovski

The motive behind the column “Spasiba” is the ironic gratitude that the Coalition paid to its author Janko Ilkovski for best column in which he defended “the cause that the state pays participation in sex change surgeries”, for the column “Lepa Brena changes her sex.” The column, intended to be an ironic reaction, attempts to underestimate the process of making a political issue from sexual orientation with the help of argumentation schemes:

1. The fact that on the action that took place on Square Macedonia on May 17th appeared less gay people than the number of those he himself knows personally, the author of the column uses as a proof for the insufficient problems of the LGBT population in Macedonia.<sup>226</sup>
2. Sexual orientation is not a public, but a private question: “I ask my gay friend who joined me at a table with his boyfriend why he didn’t go to the protest. And he says to me, are you out of your mind? It’s embarrassing and rude to tell someone what I do in the bedroom, it is my private matter.”

**3. Homosexuals (the author's friends) do not need activists and visibility because:** a) the Law is equal for everyone ("the right to court access, and whoever errs will be judged. The law is equal for everyone, right?") b) they do not want to be politically abused and manipulated ("...we are no fools to be in someone else's agenda, we are not to stupid").

For more exhausting discursive analysis of Ilkovski's argumentation strategies (the attempt to de-legitimize LGBT activism, and legitimate his personal homophobia) see in the analysis "De-legitimization of Activism and the Dilemma of Integration or Assimilation".

## NOTES

<sup>135</sup>The following television stations: A1, Sitel, channel 5, Alfa, Telma, Alsat, MTV 1 and MTV 2, as well as the websites that publish news related to our subject of interest. The following print media were monitored: the daily newspapers Dnevnik, Utrinski Vesnik, Vest, Nova Makedonija, Vecer, Shpic and Vreme and the weekly magazines Forum, Fokus and Globus.

<sup>136</sup>See in referential and predicative strategies: Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, p. 45.

<sup>137</sup>Some of the journalists-participants in the first focus group emphasized the hypocrisy of their editors, but also of the journalists regarding “political correctness”. Namely, according to them, some journalists and editors professionally abide by the standards when writing on these subjects, still their private attitude is completely different, mostly non-tolerant and discriminatory. It is precisely because of this that subjects related to marginalized groups are rarely researched or thoroughly investigated in the media.

<sup>138</sup>“Skopje has no day centers for treatment of narco-addicts”.

<sup>139</sup>“Narcomania in the Tetovo region is increasing, while the age range is decreasing”.

<sup>140</sup>“The largest increase of narco-addicts is at the age of eighteen, which is something to be concerned about. One child is not even 15 years old, while 9 persons were minors, in the age range from 15 to 17 years. From 912 in total, 564 are Macedonians, 222 Albanians and 130 belong to the other nationalities. The most common use is that of heroin”, stated Violeta Bogdanovska, Chief of the Department for Prevention at the Sector of Interior in Kumanovo ”.

<sup>141</sup>“The quantity of seized narcotics in Skopje is a signal that the police fail to discover and prevent drug trafficking, the NGO’s for fight against narcomania stated”.

<sup>142</sup>“What is lacking is an organized systematic approach of the problem and coordination and communication between the institutions and NGO’s for fight against narcomany”. (Keti Todorova, “Doverba”).

<sup>143</sup>Drug addiction is not a criminal act, but disease of addiction classified as a disease by the World Health Organization.

<sup>144</sup> Drug addicts are persons in need of health care and cannot be mistaken for persons who perform criminal act- unauthorized production and circulation of drugs.

<sup>145</sup> <http://www.taratur.com/node/22342>

<sup>146</sup> In another article instead of the term “transvestite”, the term “transsexual is used” (“In Neolithic grave remains of homosexual or transsexual were discovered”), <http://www.mia.com.mk/default.aspx?vId=82673000&IId=1&pmId=.>)

<sup>147</sup> The column was published in the height of the pre-election campaign, with the intention to besmear the leader of the opposition and his hetero-sexist bursts during the campaign

<sup>148</sup> “Well, I was almost a victim of warm brothers once...” “I was warned by a domiciled Belgrade citizen, a par excellence dude, the most informed mother fucker I have ever met. He explained to me that Gadafi’s boys are homos, almost all of them”. (Janko ILKOVSKI, “A Libian story from the army”. <http://www.vecer.com.mk/default.asp?ItemID=190E51568DC286418CC8C262BE029C6D>).

<sup>149</sup> “I won’t forgave even Dana”, Vest, May 9th, 2011. The label transvestite is found in the editorial “Dana International- will she do it again?”, A1, March 10th, 2011: “Any way, no one is going to be shocked again by the appearance of a transvestite on Eurosong”.

<sup>150</sup> Kurir, July16th, 2011, <http://www.kurir.mk/magazin/scena/36517-Video-Eva-Longorija-e-lezbejka>

<sup>151</sup> Vecer, June 8th, 2011.

<sup>152</sup> Nova Makedonija, June 8th, 2011.

<sup>153</sup> A journalist indicated that the term “hooker” refers only to sex workers from the outdoors, those from the streets, while terms like VIP prostitution, prostitutes etc. are used when referring to sex workers who work indoors and whose services are considerably more expensive.

<sup>154</sup> The article opens with “Two persons wearing masks broke in an apartment in Karposh in Skopje two days ago and beat up few young girls, who run from the apartment in panic and all bloody asking help from the police, which arrived in front of the building immediately and established that the attacked were in fact sex workers offering sex services to clients found by madam Elizabeta E. (37) from Gostivar”.

<sup>155</sup> “Dnevnik”, June 22nd, 2011, p. 10 (Chronicle).

<sup>156</sup> For instance: “Anyway, this young woman is much cheaper than my wife who takes my entire salary, and sometimes a month passes without sex with her”.; “If you don’t pay a prostitute, is it a robbery or rape”?; “Just as a man is afraid of the authorities, he should be afraid from a prostitute, for you never know what she might do to you”.

<sup>157</sup> For instance: “Is there a punishment for these criminals?! The girl chose her own profession so refrain from vulgar comments if you please. The right to choose a profession does not allow you to judge anyone. It’s your own business, maybe your wives at home satisfy your neighbors for no money! Sex Work is Work!”

<sup>158</sup> The following statement was in question: “...women should avoid dressing like sluts in order not to be victimized.” (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-13320785>) In the article “’Prostitutes’ protest” (Shpic, 21.06.2011), the statement was paraphrased: ‘according to him women would be victims of violence in smaller degree- if they “don’t dress like prostitutes”’.

<sup>159</sup> Vecer, July 4th, 2011, p. 12 – *Black Chronicle*.

<sup>160</sup> Doctors are exceptions: “viral infections like those caused by the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)...” (“Diseases transmitted through sexual intercourse”, Nova Makedonija, 07.06.2011, p. 30 (Dermatology, Dr. Gordana Dubrovic Stojanovic, specialist dermatovenerologist)).

<sup>161</sup> The meaning of the acronym AIDS is explained only in one context: “Because of lack of proper treatment and therapy for HIV up until 2005 most of these people died from diseases typical for the Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS)”. (“The desire for life is greater than fear of death”, 24 Casa Zdravje, 16.05.2011, p. 8.)

<sup>162</sup> “The risk of heart diseases grows with HIV”, A1, 27.04.2011

<sup>163</sup> “The sick from HIV and aids are discriminated”, Nova Makedonija, 17.05.2011, p. 7

<sup>164</sup> Journalists stressed that there is always interest in writing on these subjects, provided that a member of the target groups whose human rights have been violated speaks. However, they are not motivated to publish positive or successful life stories of these persons. “Only bad news sells”- stated one of the journalists. In this way, the journalists consciously support negative stereotypes on members of marginalized groups.

<sup>165</sup> According to them, sensationalistic approach is most used for titles with the purpose to sell the story, while in the text, the sensationalistic approach is avoided: “the title has to be sensationalistic in order to sell the story to the audience” (focus group with journalists).

<sup>166</sup> The sensationalistic title does not correspond to the content of the text in which different answers to the questions by the candidate for Prime Minister of SDSM on her facebook page are analyzed. Only one sentence mentions that “Shekerinska promises an independent judiciary system, encompassing the homosexuals in the Law on Anti-Discrimination, but she fails to promise opening of factories, rather help those doing this”.

<sup>167</sup> The sensationalistic presentation of Dana as if she was still a man (“...actually, her name is Jaron

Koen”) continues in the text as well, “The Israel representative at Eurovision went crazy over the Macedonians: Dana likes Vlatko, but sends kisses to the dancers as well”, (Vest, 11.05.2011).

<sup>168</sup> <http://www.vecer.com.mk/default.asp?ItemID=3988D1F0287C294FA707EC8527734725> (You consider the guy in this section to be a star? I would place him in a section called “Disturbed Fagot”, I apologize but this guy doesn’t look like a man, he now looks like a transvestite or at least fagot, a real man doesn’t wear anything tight on him and doesn’t have a fagot smile like this guy...)

<sup>169</sup> Vest, 04.04.2011, section Black Chronicle. The article covers the Kumanovo platform “Youth against Drugs” and ends with the sentence “during the last 10 years in Kumanovo around 100 registered narko-addicts have passed away”.

<sup>170</sup> Vreme, 20. 04. 2011, in the section Chronicle. In this title dominates the discourse of fear and shock, which additionally is intensified emotionally by relating the problem precisely with the young population. The possibilities for drug treatment aren’t a subject of this article at all.

<sup>171</sup> According to Mei Li Lean, „the representation of AIDS instilled a lot of fear among the readers for two main reasons: to educate the public using fear tactics, and to encourage people to change their sexual lifestyle.“ (p. 23).

<sup>172</sup> “Danger of heart diseases grows with HIV”, A1, 27.04.2011

<sup>173</sup> The text previously contains the information that the research was carried out over 8,500 adults, while there is no information how many percents are 186 from 8.500 (around 2.2%).

<sup>174</sup> That the patient Timothy Ray Braun “was treated” successfully after the transplanted bone marrow (which “can be taken only from a person immune to this virus (HIV) and is transplanted in the patient diseased from aids”).

<sup>175</sup> Notwithstanding few rare examples (like the agency Maksfaks and “Voice of America”), the media ignored the message from the Helsinki Committee that “Our aspirations for full membership in the European Union are incompatible with the coefficient 2 from the Map & Index of ILGA Europe, coefficient that is not in the same category with states from the Far and Middle East”.

<sup>176</sup> “The report on discrimination against LGBT population presented: Strasbourg against sex stigmatizing”, Dnevnik, 23.06.2011.

<sup>177</sup> *The Addiction center is moving to Bardovci*, Vest, 19.04.2011, section Skopje, *Addicts from Kisela Voda are moving to Bardovcki*, Shpic, 19.04.2011, section Skopje, *The addiction hospital to be dislocated*, Utrinski Vesnik, 19.04.2011, section Skopje, *The elections stirred the municipalities*, Vreme, 19.04.2011, section Skopje, *The hospital for addicts to be dislocated from Kisela Voda*, Nova Makedonija, 19.04.2011, section Skopje, *They run from addicts like from plague*, Vreme, 05.05.2011, section Skopje, *Kisela Voda gave up the Centre for Addicts in “October 11th”*, Dnevnik, 05.05.2011, section Metropol...



<sup>178</sup> “The citizens from Kisela Voda submitted a petition against the day centre: Addicts stay away from the kindergarten”, *Vreme*, 04.05.2011

<sup>179</sup> *They run from addicts like from plague*, *Vreme*, 05.05.2011, section Skopje

<sup>180</sup> *Another prisoner passed away in Idrizovo*, *Shpic*, April 22nd-25th 2011, section Chronicle

<sup>181</sup> *A convict passed away in Idrizovo*, *Utrinski Vesnik*, April 21st- 22nd 2011, section Chronicle

<sup>182</sup> *Who gave drugs to my son in prison, who killed him?* *Shpic*, May 17th 2011, section Chronicle

<sup>183</sup> *A prisoner died*, *Vreme*, June 8th 2011, section Chronicle

<sup>184</sup> *A prisoner died*, *Vreme*, June 8th 2011, section Black Chronicle

<sup>185</sup> *A prisoner died in Idrizovo*”, *Utrinski Vesnik*, June 8th 2011, section Chronicle

<sup>186</sup> *A prisoner died in Idrizovo*, *Dnevnik*, June 8th 2011, section Chronicle

<sup>187</sup> *A prisoner died in Idrizovo*, *Nova Makedonija*, June 8th, section Chronicle

<sup>188</sup> *A 29 year-old prisoner died*, *Lajme*, June 8th 2011, section Macedonia

<sup>189</sup> *A prisoner passed away in prison*, *Coha*, June 8th 2011, section Current and *Death from overdose*, *Coha*, June 9th 2011, section Current.

<sup>190</sup> In both cases the explanations for the death are identical, i.e. official reports speak that both prisoners got sick at a certain time and were transferred to Emergency in Skopje where death was confirmed. Only the newspaper “*Shpic*” published an interview with the father of one of the deceased prisoners, and he demanded an answer: “Who gave drugs to my son, who killed him”? (*Shpic*, May 17th 2011, section Chronicle).

<sup>191</sup> Only the article in *Shpic* (“Another prisoner died in Idrizovo”), apart from the official report of the Directorate of Execution of Sanctions quotes prisoners, according to who the convict died because of untimely medical care. In the article in “*Coha*” (“A prisoner died in prison”) the journalist quotes “unofficial sources from the prison” according to which there is doubt that the convict “overdosed from subscribed pills and passed away”.

<sup>192</sup> “Concern for HIV for the first time from highest level”, (“*Nova Makedonija*”, 7.7.2011), motivated by the column “Macedonia is prepared to contribute to the global efforts for dealing with aids” (“*Nova Makedonija*”, 27.06.2011).

<sup>193</sup>“... the number of available therapy possibilities is limited, often there are no tests for monitoring the infection... a big number of cases of discrimination, even not offering medical care by private and state health institutions and cases of discrimination by other state institution...”

<sup>194</sup> A journalist stressed that precisely the MOI’s reports sometimes accentuate the negative stereotypes related to this category, i.e. often the statements of the Ministry’s spokesperson warn that these persons

are dangerous, that they are violators, but also that they come from dysfunctional families.

<sup>195</sup> The table “Types of violations against the public order and peace for which there has been a request for initiating a misdemeanour procedure in the period of 2001-2010“, for 2010 there is only one case in the column “Prostituting, leading or intermediating in prostitution Article19”.

<sup>196</sup> Unfortunately most of the journalists never asked the question on the ground of what authority do the employees in the MOI give medical information on the registered addicts, and why isn’t such information given by the Ministry of Health (results from focus groups).

<sup>197</sup> An occasion for the editors to pathologize homosexuality in Macedonia were the results from a research in Croatia: “Survey among highschool students: Homosexuality is a disease, the majority against membership in EU”, (“Vecer”, November 22nd 2010).

<sup>198</sup> For example: “The professors lost the case with the column writer Irena Cvetkovic: There is no slander in the case of homophobic citations in a textbook” (Vest, 10.03.2011).

<sup>199</sup> “The Commission for Protection against Discrimination demands urgent changes in the Pedagogy textbook for third year students. The textbook claims that homosexuality is a disease, and labels people with this particular sexual orientation.” (Telma, According to a Pedagogy textbook homosexuality is a disease, 18.07.2011)

<sup>200</sup> For example: “CPD: Urgent revision of the Pedagogy textbook (for third year students)” (Maksfaks, A1), “The Pedagogy textbook for third year is to be changed on the ground of discrimination against homosexuals” (Kanal 5), the Pedagogy textbook to be changed because it perverts homosexuals. (PLUS-INFO).

<sup>201</sup> Unfortunately, electronic media provide proclamation of aggressive homophobic comments, which pathologize homosexuals.

<sup>202</sup> Vest, 03.06.2011, sub-section “Life”, section “Health”, <http://www.vest.com.mk/default.asp?ItemID=6C53A4A8037A924D834A348CC2CEBAFC>

<sup>203</sup> For more on this article see the study of Stanimir Panajotov „Delegitimization of Activism and the Dilemma of Integration or Assimilation“.

<sup>204</sup> Early reports on AIDS have made many readers believe that AIDS is highly contagious and is airborne like the flu.

<sup>205</sup> “24 Casa Zdravje”, 23.05.2011, p. 9

<sup>206</sup> “Sexually transmitted disease”, Nova Makedonija, 07.06.2011, p. 30 (Dermatology, Gordana Dubrovic Stojanovic, MD, specialist dermatovenerologist)

<sup>207</sup> “Health with a condom” (Rock singer Dani Dimitrovska with a personal example in the campaign against AIDS), “Vest”, July 5th, 2011, p. 21 (section “Sex corner“)

<sup>208</sup> For example, the statement in the article “Let’s free ourselves from prejudices: “We are not plague””, (24 Casa Health, 23.05.201): “In a relation between an HIV-positive and HIV-negative person, the responsibility for using a condom belongs to both parties.” In the same article, the journalist gives an opportunity for the opinion of people living with HIV, and publically share their concern in cases of unprotected intercourse: “It might sound strange, but HIV-positive are the ones in graver risk because of the possibility of co-infection with another sub-type of HIV, which can seriously disorder the health and disrupt the treatment, says Aleksandar, the coordinator of the support group and self-help of persons living with HIV “Stronger Together”, within the NGO HERA”.

<sup>209</sup> “Marriages between people of same sex are unnatural, and society, the state should care for homosexuals, says Father Stefan”. “Society to take care of homosexuals- suggests the Archbishop”, <http://www.kanal5.com.mk/default.aspx?mId=37&eventId=69628>

<sup>210</sup> The title of the text stresses that MOC-POA pathologizes homosexuality, explaining that “Homosexuality, an illness of the passion, can be surpassed with prayers and dedication to God” and “There are many examples of people who do not turn to same sex anymore, thanks to their faith in God.” On the other hand, the statement of Koco Andonovski from the Helsinki Committee is in the sub-title: “If MOC-OA offers to cure someone from something, then they act in the capacity of pseudo-doctors, which is a criminal act in our legal system”.

<sup>211</sup> In his gospel, Metropolitan Petar warns that “We live in dangerous and difficult times of globalization, when fundamental human rights are treaded upon...”, while, “the law allows to terminate life-pregnancy; to kill children in mother’s wombs; to conclude unnatural- homosexual marriages; homosexuals adopt children; addicts are allowed to use drugs in small quantities; addicts are not responsible for their violations; pedophilia and family violence is tolerates...” Easter gospel – Metropolitan Petar, <http://www.mpceanz.org.au/veligdenska-poslanica-2011/>

<sup>212</sup> *Saint George the Conqueror treats narco-addicts*, Nova Makedonija, June 24th, 2011, section Chronicle

<sup>213</sup> “This ancient sanctuary that opens its doors like a second ship to save the youth from the “Flood”...”

<sup>214</sup> “When I heard from a friend about the monastery I thought it was a clinic and I was skeptical. They opened my eyes here. I was resurrected...”

<sup>215</sup> “They acknowledge what sin is here and the great mercy of God. We help them find themselves and the dark side of their personality and repent, feel sorry for what they have done. We prepare them to understand this by revealing the essence of the sin and getting closer to God.”

<sup>216</sup> According to Article 209 of the Criminal Code, “Whoever deals with healing or giving medical assistance without prior professional training, shall be punished with a one-year prison sentence and a penalty fine.”

<sup>217</sup> Member of Parliament Gjrochev in Kochani- the New Sport Pavilion in the elementary school “Nikola Karev” will be finished by September, <http://radiokocani.com/>: “While some people stand for legalization of drugs, we offer alternative solutions for elimination of this vice. We guide the youth towards the real values by building sport objects.”

<sup>218</sup> „The top of finances can be characterized by the following conclusion rule: if a specific situation or action costs too much money or causes a loss of revenue, one should perform actions that diminish the costs or help to avoid the loss.“ (p. 78)

<sup>219</sup> Above all, on human rights of sex workers, whose arguments are ignored, although it is a question that directly concerns them.

<sup>220</sup> This scheme can be summed with the following formula: “because the state or a group of people is responsible for the appearance of certain problems, it or they should act to find solutions for these problems”.

<sup>221</sup> At the end, the journalist asked all the mayors an important question: “How many of their citizens are registered as narco-addicts”? Not one of the mayors knew the answer, which stressed the neglect even further, but it also emphasized the ignorant attitude of the local authorities towards persons treated from addiction. The article ends impartially, pointing that there are 5,035 registered drug addicts in the capital, and only two institutions where addicts receive therapy.

<sup>222</sup> Because in this context, the question does not concern homosexuals, but homosexuality, and citizens are not asked whether they are for or against, but whether they justify it or not.

<sup>223</sup> “Awarded the “gay friendly” plaques of gratitude” (A1 - 17.05.2011); “A Plaque of Gratitude” for Janko Ilkoski’s column- Lepa Brena changes her sex” (Plus Info - 17.05.2011), “Lambe received “a gay friendly” Plaque of Gratitude (Press24 - 17.05.2011)“.

<sup>224</sup> Last year, the poster contained a discriminatory message, “Forbidden for fagots”, which was withdrawn after the poster was torn in public, in front of the journalists, after the Coalition’s reactions.

<sup>225</sup> For more see the analysis “De-legitimization of Activism and the Dilemma of Integration or Assimilation”.

<sup>226</sup> “...why is it that the false and declarative concerned parties for the rights of gay population cannot gather more gay population even during a meeting, not to mention such events, than the number of those I know personally and my friends from the gay scene? Where are the tough musicians, stylists, artists, which I personally know, and which are gay, and their support?”

## De/legitimization of Activism and the Dilemma of Integration or Assimilation

### *Representation of LGBT in Macedonian Media (April-June 2011): General Conditions and Case Studies*

*Stanimir Panayotov*

#### **General tendencies for the monitored period**

In this article I am making a mutual reading of both traditional (print) and new (electronic) media for the outlined period and how both types of media tend to represent and comment issues of sexual difference and non-normative sexualities. Through the method of discourse analysis (Fairclough), in order to analyze the level of progress or decline in reporting homosexuality and non-heterosexual sexualities, I try to discern the collective pattern and preoccupation in the way the media reflect sexual difference. The specific thread of analysis I work on is the ways sexual orientation is de/legitimized and how that relates to visibility of LGBTs in Macedonian society. I include analytical case-studies of several articles that utilize strategies for political delegitimization and a blog that, in contrast, reveals opposite political sentiment in order to politically legitimate the very cause of equal sexual citizenship.<sup>227</sup>

While in most of the countries in the region and more generally in Europe the cause of LGBT activism is implemented either by way of staying “within the discourse and fight for rights” or by “rejecting the premises of the discourse altogether” (Downing and Gillett 2011: 2), and sometimes both, Macedonian media seemed in this period to subscribe to neither of these. Generally, they behaved in a third and somewhat expected way – providing floor for virtually the entire spectrum of homophobic attitudes, although with lower intensity, masking this with the sign of “media pluralism” which has the effect of total relativization of the said social problem – homophobia and effective politics of excluding sexual citizenship from present-day political agenda in Macedonia. What is more, some of the articles I analyze reveal that the cosy posture of relativizing and obscuring the LGBT issues is more or less essential

ized within the media domain.

Ever since there is an expert eye on the Macedonian media and the way they reflect, report, and represent LGBT people there is sustained evidence that the quality of the contents produced highly varies. So far, the analyses produced (see Coalition 2011)<sup>228</sup> prove that the media (by and large the so-called “traditional” ones) succumb to popular notions and stereotypes<sup>229</sup> for LGBTs and are prone to uncritically reproduce these as truth claims rather than asses, object and deconstruct the agreed representations (regardless whether there is a de facto imbrication between their own language and the reality they claim to represent). The overall tendency outlined so far has been one that gives space to the representation of personal opinion as public perception (or moral); endorses negative, hyper-sexualized images of LGBTs on subjective grounds; and uncritically allies LGBTs (and more precisely their public advocates) with the political opposition in the country. If only in sensational titles that have very little in common with sexual difference per se, this motif reappears on different occasions (be it in the areas of entertainment or politics<sup>230</sup>) and is therefore sustained in the monitored period.

As opposed to all this, in considering the monitored period (April-June 2011), there is one more facet that is generalized and needs to be mentioned: the Macedonian media show a sustained interest in reporting on LGBT issues both domestically and internationally (albeit in a selective way). They seem to be aware that sexual difference/homosexuality is one of the cries of the day and being so aware utilize the subject-matter in order to, allegedly, be recognized as professional and up-to-date. What defines them as professional, of course, is not the very fact that they convey these issues on a continual basis; but very few, if any, examples could be provided on the basis of sustained editorial policy on the subject. In this regard, there seems to be no difference as compared with the monitoring in 2010 as to *how* media represent LGBTs. For example a media that traditionally proffers a progressive and supportive/inclusive attitude towards LGBTs is *Forum*, while on the opposite side stands the daily *Vecer*. Based on all of the considered publications in the period, there is no sustained evidence that the editorial policies and tendencies in reporting LGBT issues to earlier periods are substantially changed.

Here we cannot overburden implicitly the media with questioning their own subjective eye on “significant” LGBT-related events. However, it should be noted that what is missing from a certain discourse (on discourse and discourse analysis, see Kuhar 2003: 17) is still able to define it, which is very much the case with Macedonian media. There is an ideological momentum in what is missing, for “discursive practices may have major ideological effects” (Fairclough and Wodak 1997: 258) and what is missing is precisely such an effect. In our case the reporting of some events and the unreporting of others can “produce and reproduce unequal power relations between (for instance) social classes, women and men” (ibid.), including sexual minorities. Since the media discourse is always selective, what is missing gives it the freedom to be judgemental and commonsensical or at best “neutral” just as when a representation is in effect, “discourse may, for example, be racist, or sexist, and try to pass off assumptions (often falsifying ones) about any aspect of social life as mere common sense”.

In their being selective (something to which we need not be critical in advance), the majority of the media prefer to merely convey and re-publish information from the international info exchange in translation. (In the monitored period, therefore, it is more important to think in what ways are media selective of events, instead of asking if they are.) The events of relevance that dominate the period both domestically and internationally<sup>231</sup> are reported and mentioned in the majority of the media. Quantitatively, most of the (daily) media provide information on these events; however, qualitatively, they circulate one and the same information which they seem to copy from one another with little and of-no-significance changes. Comments by journalists, public leaders, opinion-makers, and op-eds on these events are rarely noticed, and when they are, they have no positive endorsement (on the contrary, commentaries in the period are made by proponents of anti-gay sentiments, e.g., in Vecer). In fact we can say that when it comes to *events of defining social relevance*, the public awareness brought about in media is the result of reproducing info from the international info exchange.<sup>232</sup> Outside the scope of the media remained significant events or public endorsements (such as the Court’s ruling on the Cvetkovic case in her favor and its significance, or the MEPs’ criticisms against the Macedonian anti-discrimination legislation which excluded sexual orientation as a discrimination ground) which suggests that either the media and their editorial policies are not able to recognize “an event,” or that they lack the journalistic potential to analyze certain developments. There is a third possibility which should not be excluded:

namely, that the interpretative potential of the media could be defined and limited by the political conjuncture of the powers that be and their neoconservative policies, even though there might be enough critical journalistic resource and editorial will in Macedonian media.<sup>233</sup> In fact, if we consider as analytical indicator commentaries in the media, we will see that much more is done when a given media or journalists comment issues and ongoing events that have either sensational or generalized value.<sup>234</sup> Thus, it seems that the media behave as if they do have the capacity and will to provide comments (analyses) mostly when homosexuality could boost their circulation, or else they provide information in order to remain on the surface of relevance (on market condition as factor for development of media's social responsibility, see Bervar 2002: 21).

### **Different media: different preoccupations?**

I have divided this analysis in two parts – de/legitimization in new/old media, although I try to track the way similar issues are being commented in different ways. Although they can both be characterized as propounding similar views (based on the online content, which includes both articles and comments), the crucial difference that produces different kinds of contents (and analytical output) is that while for the old media user comments do not characterize the media's attitudes (except for the way these are being moderated, if they are), new media's essence is based on users' comments and attitudes. The second and defining difference, hence, is that while in old media the contents is bound to (at least editorial) authority, in new media it is still debatable whether contents is authoritative, for very often the discourse and freedom of opinion is explicitly tied to independence from authorities (i.e., online users have at least dubious, flexible attitude towards "authority"). Seen from that angle, within the monitored period both kinds of media produced very different perspectives. While traditional media could be characterized with neutral-to-hostile stances<sup>235</sup> (save for the comments, many of which grossly judge the media and society at large as conservative), new ones include the entire spectrum from affirmative to negationist behaviors. It is for these reasons that both should be treated relationally at best, because they produce two different kinds of typology of expressing attitudes.



### 3. Politics and delegitimation of activism and equality

It is hard to describe the period as dominated by specific LGBT-related events or issues. The bulk of the materials refer to events such as the celebration of IDAHO day in Skopje, Euro Pride in Rome, Split Pride, and others. Part of media's journalistic behavior in that respect should be read in line with the parliamentary elections immediately following the monitored period. Sexual orientation is a dividing line in Macedonian society and its politics, but this was not entirely visible in the period within the media.<sup>236</sup> Defending equal rights for LGBTs is normally associated with the political opposition party UDFM,<sup>237</sup> although this is not because of sustained policy, but is rather based on occasional mentioning of the subject in parliamentary discussions and individual position-making. As a left-oriented opposition, it normally expresses itself in terms of a wider social equality, which includes LGBTs *in principle*. However, it is because of the lack of such sustained position-making that it seems suspicious that the opposition is so easily tied to the LGBT agenda by all of the media that provide floor for rhetoric against equality. UDFM's support for LGBTs, because it is not a continual policy, is too easily aligned with the stakes of the still nascent movement, since there has not been any political cooperation between both. The implication I see is that the paralleling of the political opposition and the movement/the activism is a form of delegitimization of both, based on the recent government's conjuncture of family values neoconservatism and nationalism.<sup>238</sup>

The best example of such associative obsession is the writing of journalist and opinion-maker Janko Ilkovski in his columns in *Vecer*. It provides an insightful revelation about how Macedonian journalism and opinion-making is in concert with Europe which "seeks to limit the most baleful of its consequences while endorsing the thinking that produces them" (Downing and Gillet 2011: 2), that is, the conflict between mentality changes and the necessary transposition of EU legislation. In this article (and elsewhere) the author seeks to create a link of political dependency between activists and the opposition. The occasion for which the article<sup>239</sup> appeared – the publication of the Coalition's 2010 annual report and the press-conference in relation to it – has nothing to do with any of the existing party ideologies at present. In this article it is obvious how one can submit anything to the idea of blackmailing political opponents: as this is the case, the discourse present has little to do with the Coalition itself, but at the

end the author's thinking has to do with delegitimizing its activities as insincere and tied to party agenda.<sup>240</sup> This is done by suggesting the stereotype of homosexuality as gender transgression, albeit in a presumably subtler way via metonymic chains of associations. The publication is ripe of allusions circling around the report's presentation, trying to extrapolate details as significant facts. This material is symptomatic for the para-militaristic rhetoric of "defending society from the defenders." (The author in no way means to be the defender of anyone but LGBTs; rather, he is trying to make the case that the present defenders/activists have no bearing and legitimacy.) Ilkovski makes a parallel between the party ideology of UDFM and homosexuality as transgression and masquerade. This is followed by implication of lack of substantiality and true grit implying that heterosexuality is the standard-bearer of human reason. More significantly, the article aims at unmasking the only organized group for protection of sexual minority rights as inferior and not high enough to meet the cry of the day in its own right - indicative language such as the attributes "covetous" and "malicious" are to downgrade LGBTs to manipulative puppeteered agents. Because of this "quality", the Coalition is rendered politically dependent by today's opposition: it is said that it only pretends to defend the interest of sexual minorities only to extract profit from them. A final suggestion is that the social problems reflected and analyzed by the Coalition are imaginary by-products of a commerce sub-class of self-employed activists. In addition to that, the final argument is that the activists are a sort of external (parasitic) body in society whose purpose is not to serve those discriminated against but merely the nomenclature's interests (the technocratic elite in politics, which thus appears as a model for the civic activist's corruptedness). The conclusion is that the organization itself serves as toll for political mobilization of sexual minorities. At the end, the author suggests that efforts to bring in issues of LGBT community in publicity is so strong that it might not be anything else but financial interest that drives such an organization forwards.<sup>241</sup> With this a second "foreign body" is introduced: the figure of the funders, which is seen as the other moving force (besides the political opposition) behind the activist agenda.

The argument against organized sexual dissidence by way of financial support from extra-national bodies is a strong and definitely not new one. It is another reactionary and peculiar local form of explaining one's homophobia. Due to the low social support which reflects fear of not being seen as homosexual or supportive (and in Macedonia's case as politically colored), it is very easy to impose that social indif

ference and/or invisibility is a natural state of affairs.<sup>242</sup> This already builds upon the fact that the state has never arbitrated the social tensions surrounding sexual orientation and its “contraversiality”. Such argument is also not new in Macedonia either and is continually used to detach issues of homosexuality as non/anti-state, illegitimate matters for the social agenda and policies at large, subscribing it to the political enemy and devoiding the public advocates of the weight of their own social engagement, thus widening the abyss between acceptance and aggression in society.

In another column<sup>243</sup> the same author targets the activists. Provoked by being given a “honor” mention in the Coalition’s annual gay “prizes”, Ilkovski gives vent to similar arguments with a cunning twist to further delegitimize social activism. It is difficult to say that the author actually talks about existing equality, or homosexuality, or even the activists. Everything is subjected to the idea that activists are depending upon the same obsession mentioned above: the political opposition, which in the author’s mind is equal to everything from traitors to communists to anti-family values proponents. Ascribing characteristics such as opacity and moral/financial corruption to both opposition and activism makes a case for the author to claim that these are the ways to force the essentially conservative society to accept sexual difference. In line with this, there are three defining arguments that make a case against the very existence of political activism centered round issues of sexuality.

According to the first argument the lack of social support (e.g., lack of civic presence upon public occasions such as the IDAHO day, that is, visible support) is not the result of fear (such as being seen as gay) or the result of internalized homophobia. On the author’s thinking, the lack of support reflects the fact that LGBTs in Macedonia have no pressing issues with intolerance and discrimination. What is more, secondly, the proof for lack of LGBT issues in Macedonian society is the alleged fact that “the author’s gay friends” deem homosexual visibility unacceptable. That Ilkovski himself admits of having gay friends, whether true or not, is a symptomatic argument itself: the author comes to show that *even* the homosexual males and regular citizens denounce visibility activities/activism and that *even he* has gay friends. This itself does not prove the lack of such issues, but re-introduces in a purely populist way the notion of internalized homophobia by a homophobic discourse which pretends to be homophobic (if only not to be seen as proponent of hate-speech, a strategy that will further delegitimize opponents)

just because he happens to have self-oppressive/assimilationist gay friends. Accordingly, the sexualisation-through-privatization of sexual difference is logical: “[i]t is shameful and uncultured to publicly say to someone what do I do in my bedroom – this is my own business”. Not only is assimilationism hailed, but homosexuality is re-reduced to sexualization; with this in this very discourse no other consequences seem to arise for LGBT people and particularly activists. Their only trouble, apparently, is that they want to share to society what do they do in bed. The third argument, related to this, introduces a worry that there might be in fact some problems for the LGBTs, but there is a blind and just judicial system out there which does not need specific attunement to such issues – there is and there always have been court and laws where the LGBT citizens could always seek legal protection. Activism is thus the opposite of such existing justice, and allegedly the gay people are not “simpletons to be included in someone’s agenda, well, we are not that stupid”.

In these two exemplary materials the whole argumentation not only reaches to delegitimize activists, but seems protective to the recent political status quo<sup>244</sup> trying to mask itself as universally unbiased because blind. What is concerning is that even the delegitimization of activism is not as important as providing some “common sense” to prove that we live in a just and normal, tolerant society.<sup>245</sup> Since activists are targeted as parasitical structure, it seems that they appear as an element between structural lacks in the legislation and the citizenry’s lack of awareness. Both these lacks are denied. This denial, which could be tracked in the public mindset in Macedonia, has potential devastating effects.<sup>246</sup> It appears that the “lesser evil” in delegitimizing activists is to correlate them with political corruption implied for the opposition; even being a “tool” of this opposition does not seem so potentially dangerous as the argument that the author denies the existence of sexuality-based violence.<sup>247</sup> He does so through the argument of corruption, that any such violence is but a product of the activists’ imagination which has to produce an imaginary state of conflict in order to protect social entities which does not exist, all in order for the activists to exist as a closed and malicious circle of profiteers.

In reality, the whole strategy of delegitimization could be reduced to externally ascribed party-political over-determination of the issues of LGBT citizens in Macedonia. But the higher end is to delegitimize the political opposition (and this is why the kind of “homophobia” which the author professes could

seem even sympathetic from assimilationist perspective). Yet, ultimately we cannot separate political and sexual orientation: clearly “having gay friends” does not mean that you mean well to those, mostly because for the author the mutual representation of homosexuality and opposition is complementary and in itself discrediting. (Thus it remains to be seen whether on that argument the author would be ready to discredit his “gay friends” if they do not share his own politics).

I have used dramatic words (such as “obsession” and “cunning”) so far because the influence of such argument is dramatic as well: it means that by equalizing political activism and political opposition, political and sexual orientation as purely derivative it is possible to represent and delegitimize civic activism as inauthentic and to *turn upside-down its own social-political praxis with a reverse sign*. (“They [the LGBTs] do not pay attention to you because they are wise and because you want to use them for political and individual material ends”). Thinking pace Marcuse, we can say that under such arguments the liberatory potential of minorities is transformed into repressive control of the equal basic freedoms – even before some of them are introduced as such. The cunning, the perverted here lies in the fact that the silences, the invisibility of LGBTs and their issues are not seen as the result of (internalized) homophobia but are reintroduced in order to further sustain it while jettisoning activists off the board of the social arena. It is in this way that such an argumentation could render a willing homophobe more “gay-friendly” than LGBT activists in the public eye: ultimately, LGBT activism is obsolete and inane if society permits such interpretation. But what is even more striking is that the whole analysis I have attempted at here does not explain itself the “normalized homophobia” such as the one of Ilkovski and his likes: in fact the strategy of delegitimization is not a mere denouncing of activism as a third, bothering element in the perfect world of political representation between the powers that be and the people. It serves the function not merely to delegitimize activists and political opposition, but to *depoliticize* them. The example of Ilkovski shows how easy is to do this by resexualisation, but the case as I have tried to show is much more complex. Also, it is complex because the power of such resexualisation implies that there is or have been a counter process of de-sexualisation, that is, one of the most important aspects of LGBT activists’ work.<sup>248</sup>

To conclude, **first**, the case is exemplary in that it is implied that there could be no politics outside (formalized representative) politics; **second**, and related to the first, there could not be independent agents of public policy and emancipatory politics because what is defining for this kind of thinking is that everything is consumed and defined by the representative political framework. It is for these two reasons that the necessary effect of delegitimization of activism equals its depoliticization, much before a politicization/politics of sexuality has successfully taken place. The counter-force of delegitimization via unsound arguments of corruption and co-dependency (which in Macedonia's case is not self-implied only because of the fact the opposition is left) only proves that there is much to be done in the domain of politicizing gender and sexuality.<sup>249</sup>

The background behind this is the hidden layer of a folk notion of equality. As in other countries in the region, Macedonia regularly advertises itself as naturally tolerant. However, this notion of tolerance is historically determined in that it refers to ethnicity, and not sexuality, but it is nonetheless used in the wider discourse of tolerance. (Also by the general rhetoric of the now re-elected neoconservative government, and is uncritically used by the NGOs. Thus equality is also delegitimized through an arrested state of essentialized, sedimented form of tolerance).

The delegitimization of equality through tolerance in media is realized through an inclination to marry homosexuality with Europeanization. The figure of the sexual deviant advertises a supra-political illegitimacy of the EU by comparison with a national apostate that is abetted and funded by some imagined irredentists of an internationalist pan-EU gay motley. The real subject of mockery, from the neocon perspective, is of course “the EU”, its funds, its gay-lesbian MEPs, and the classy NGO experts as the epitome of imported western fornication scheme.<sup>250</sup> Articulated in public, this conspiracy scenario serves as symbolic alleviation for the general public and society whose depoliticized state is further sustained by the knowledge that some – at least moral – corruption is possible in the ivory towers of EU politics. By providing such alleviating conduit of re-routed social anger, the media (here *Vecer*) looks somewhat heroic for some purported resistance against western debauchery just because it gives release to “minoritarian dictatorship”, whose result could be summed up with the following comment (from 2009):

“Everyone cares about homosexuals and their rights and no one cares about my or your right (us and them – those with straight sexual orientation). I, as millions like me, feel unenfranchized in that through pressure we are forced to live with such idiosyncrasies.”<sup>251</sup>

While some lament the loss of heterosexual certainty, after all the real LGBT citizens remain under the ruined representation of the delegitimator. It is as if the whole reactionary discourse is prompted as a counter-reaction to some assault of normalcy which is (a) *illegitimately* scrutinized under Western eyes and (b) *consciously* penalized for being what it (thinks it) is – tolerant, but is being accused of bigotry and double standards constructed by homosexual activists and “the EU”. Hence the very low level of interest in civic activist and the lack of trust in the third sector.<sup>252</sup> As if tolerance, largely considered a natural, not just *ethnic* quality of the citizen, of Macedonianness, is stuck between its roots, derived from the Ottoman Empire period, and the prospect of heterogeneous, EU model of tolerance in the national body, whose notion of tolerance runs counter the “natural tolerance” of Macedonians. (There is clearly the sense of a troubling widening of the notion of tolerance, not to mention equality.) A third way – integration and mentality and legislative changes – is negated. This discomfiting ethnicized tolerance resists its civic remodeling and the arguments about activism as financial corruption and corporativism prove this.

### **De/legitimization with a “positive” sign?**

In her article “The power persuades that homosexuality is a disease”<sup>253</sup> Adrijana Georgiev has compiled a set of arguments properly opposed to delegitimization of homosexuality.<sup>254</sup> The author emphasizes from the very outset that a successful strategy to fight for equal rights is to *delegitimate* homophobia, as a converted form of (fear of) homosexuality and hence (institutionalized) hatred.

There is, however, a problem in explaining homophobia and pathologization of homosexuality in psychoanalytical terms: sometimes this could look as a reactionary response<sup>255</sup> which provides a discourse very similar to pathologization of sexual difference. It merely mirrors the same strategy to delegitimate the opponent through established medical norms and truths (that is, monopoly of knowledge).

Of course, the key difference that we need to account for is that “the truth” lies square with the existing standards which exclude homosexuality as mental illness – accepting socialized scientific certainties<sup>256</sup>. Being aware of this, Georgiev does not reduce her argumentation as a delegitimation strategy only to this point. This is why we have to note that the very article is quite self-reflective of its authorial discourse in that it provides a distinction between the hosting media (*Fokus*) and the remainder of Macedonian media. This self-reflexivity is crucial because it makes clear that there already is counter-discourse in Macedonian publicity against the hegemonic force of homophobic delegitimization. In line with such an emancipatory discourse what is made clear is that the only reason which hinders Macedonian political will to go through a reasonable debate about sexual orientation matters is the representation of personal misconceptions as normalized ones.<sup>257</sup> The author reveals that within the discourse of anti-discrimination sexual orientation (male homosexuality by and large) is discussed in a way that is to reflect the folk psychology regardless whether the equalization of political representation and popular belief discriminates against (and in fact maybe precisely because of this homology).<sup>258</sup>

Also, in this material there is again, although in a different way, equalization between political representation and equality/the struggles for activism. The author fears that, by discussing the stated personal characteristics and backgrounds of the anti-discrimination commission’s members, this body will be a political tool, manipulated one, which itself might lead to discrimination. Even “anti-stereotypic” representation, however, such as this one, refers back to the original stereotypes through a “manner that draws our attention to the absence of the ‘expected’ attributes” (Gross 2002: 14), that is, through a negative anticipation from the reader’s point of view.

Although for different reasons, the suspicion of merging between politics and activism (in the second case, activism is implicitly involved in as much as reporting of cases on the excluded ground of sexual orientation could be regarded by the body) is indicative of a similar fear with different consequences. It is clear that both authors use the strategy of delegitimization. What is interesting is that while the first one condemns activism and the second the ruling political class, they both reach out to a rhetoric of homologized manipulation: in the first case it is based on providing the mark of similarity between activists, political opponent, and corruption, in the second case between state protection



(the Commission), MPs, and psychoanalytic pathologization. The crucial difference is that Georgiev assumes the (pre-)existence of the social problems of LGBTs and seeks to prove the hindrances in front of these as stipulations for integration (at least of non-stereotypic, de-medicalized perception), while Ilkovski submits everything to denying such problems with the wider politic aim to lay obsolete politicization of sexual difference in order to favor (heterosexual) assimilation. But the other and more important difference is that while in the first case the entire argumentation is set against the activism (and the negation of the social relevance of LGBT issues is a mere byproduct of the specific argumentation), in the second case the resistance against the ruling party's attitudes is to legitimate the notion of homophobia while delegitimizing members of that class all in order to make a case for equal LGBT rights.

#### **4. Attempting affirmative discourses in the info pool**

In this part of the analysis I would try to analyse the contents of a gay-themed blog that is politically engaged and passionate as rarely happens in Macedonian publicity. I then try to read together the way the authors considered so far try to legitimate their own views and delegitimize the other's.

A clarification on the blogosphere and other new media as the alternative of traditional media is needed here. As mentioned above, a key difference that predetermines our understanding of the contents in new media is that their discourses rely explicitly on subjective knowledge. (This itself is not an obstacle of legitimacy of knowledge; rather, what appears important is that there is the recognition of subjectivity. However, often there is the double bind that while much users in blogs and forums recognize this, they could also stand for the universality and thorough validity of their arguments.)

Although bloggers and commenters bring about significant pluralization in media distribution of knowledge (practices such as hyperlinking, translations, etc.), multimedia journalist culture and opposition to stereotyping in both old and new media (the latter having the minute power of literally aggregating hypertextual sensationalism), we have to regard the demographic isolation in readership which does not allow us to conclude that for example pluralism or visibility are on the go and are effective. While

bloggers tend to monitor and comment themselves old media<sup>259</sup> as medium that more often reproduce stereotypes, and the lack of social justice awareness, there is no reverse process of readership: old media readers do not so much rely on blogs' information (when they do, they do it in comparative and reflexive mode). This also only increases visibility to the extent to which it is questioned but the quality of its establishing remains open. If new media bring about pluralization, it is effective for an isolated readership which is already supportive of the said stances; in this way it could be said it is ineffective both towards raising visibility and countering *stereotypes in demographic terms*. The profile of the blogger itself is an isolated one: upper middle class, middle-to-large size urban denizens, with higher education (see for example the arguments of Nejkova 2009; also, Lovink 2007). Bloggers tend to cite and criticize the negative anti-gay rhetoric by employing the anti-power discourse (which is often the trade mark of traditional media), but from a civic and often apolitical first-person perspective. (Even if bloggers are being monitored by old media and cited – that is, instances when they could become authoritative - this is mostly in the context of representing what “the people” think, and normally in other forms of new media). The level of expertise which makes part of the blogosphere's legitimacy is easily washed away; and all the more so if the discourse is “first person citizen”. This has positive consequence for relatively non-biased readers, but the point is that it involves neither authority, nor any social weight considering the fact that no reverse readership is observed in general so long as the vectors are relatively classy, stratified, and demographically non-transgressible. Perhaps the only positive effect is that bloggers produced a mere, albeit a marginal one, “discursive alternative in content” (see Ditchev 2009). In short, LGBT visibility in the new media is considerably non-productive phenomenon for Macedonia. LGBT issues are tossed among the blogging community and forum users by provoking argumentative climaxes and debates and it is only in that respect that it is a fruitful conduit of mentality changes.

The crucial aid of the new media is the kind of symbolic capital of visibility. The blog I have considered has a rather activist mindset to it, and is thus able to question itself as a media and its own conditionality, which should be effectively questioned every time a communication is taking place, because “[o]ur appearances are almost invariably in the context of some controversy centering on our right to pursue our lives in ways that heterosexuals take for granted” (Gross 2002: 252). With the gradual media

permeability caused by new media, and also partially caused in traditional ones through regulations or professional standards inevitable in terms of EU-integration and the setting of legislative conditions for minorities protection, the interest to LGBTs and visibility of advocates and activities has not increased, though the result in the monitored period is a more neutral approach. This is why we have to draw distinctions between media types and vectors of information. One such flexible vector of pluralization is blogging.

In the monitored period there were only two active LGBT-oriented blogs. One of them (*Mystery*, <http://mystery.blog.mk>) is a new one and is a personal diary which does not engage with LGBT issues from explicit social perspective and discusses intra-communal problems and frustrations; it has several entries which do not provide material for analysis. The other active blog (*Gay & The City*, <http://outboy.blog.mk>), however, is styled as a community and commentary media which both serves as news hub and platform for the author's opinions on ongoing debates of sexual orientation in Macedonia, the region, and world-wide.

Within the blog all of the mentioned LGBT-related events defining the period are covered plus numerous others that are not present in mainstream media. In the pre-election context, the blog undertakes controversial issues such as the relation between the ruling party VMRO-DPMNE and its homosexual electorate/functioneers. This is an important shift of the attention, because it introduces homosexuality on the ground of the recent re-elected and homophobic government. In one of the postings<sup>260</sup> the author creates the profile of the repressed homosexual party member. In essence, this profile does not so much differ from the regular profile of closeted LGBTs in society. The key difference – and perhaps the moral of this – is that because of careerism and party membership one is willing to suffuse one's own sexuality behind a heterosexual life and remain in the closet for mainly political reasons, with the second reason being social pressure. The contradiction between sexuality and party ideology is crucial here. One example that is given is this:

“And so, the members, voters and sympathizers of VMRO-DPMNE with homosexual orientation believe their political idols and successfully hide their disease. They do not grasp how the prime minister

allowed himself to be so base as to meet the minister of foreign affairs of Germany, Guido Westewelle, by the way openly declared homosexual from the Demo-Christian party of Merkel, the sister-party of VMRO-DPMNE”.

The blog is particularly interesting to monitor because it provides criticisms directed at various social strata. For example, further contradictions and misapprehensions are outlined, not only related with the ruling party. As for the latter, a problem related with homosexuality is noted in the blog, such as providing double standards in legislation: the exclusion of sexual orientation as discrimination ground, as the author notes, was defended by Xhelal Bajrami as reasonable due to incoherence with Macedonian legislation, as opposed to the presence of sexual orientation in the labour law.<sup>261</sup> The author is then able to criticize both the ruling elite and the opposition and thus makes a case defying the claim that (LGBT) activism and the opposition are entirely synonymous. In the blog’s discourse there is an implied complementarity rather than oppositionality between both parties.<sup>262</sup>

In line with the desire to find a political analog of the author’s own sexual politics, the blog also tried to promulgate to the LGBT readership and others the program of the Liberal-Democratic Party in the pre-election period. The blogger has presented for a period of time both the program of LDP and a promisory hope for change (more akin to hope of *some* rather than prevailing adequate representation) and appeals to both the LGBT citizenry and other supporters and liberals in the wide sense of the word. Albeit disidentifying with party membership, the proviso for political representation on grounds of sexual equality is strongly emphasized. The appeal to vote for LDP is characterized by an argument about “selfishness” and again by strong anti-government sentiment.<sup>263</sup> However, even here we can find essentialist and irrational arguments that seem to oppose the proffered kind of political mentality. The posting from which I cited ends with the politically theological exclamation “Let God protect the state and the free Macedonian citizen in it”. As opposed to this, the blogger could find himself in incoherence; in a different posting from the period he cites at length an opinion by a fellow online user on the matters of same-sex marriages where he seems to agree with the atheological analysis provided.<sup>264</sup>

The spectrum of political hope and investment shown ends with a posting devoted to a sense of isolation and political loneliness developed after the course of the elections and converted in a fierce

criticism, which the author correctly verbalizes, against the LGBTs stating that they have no political maturity to stand for their rights. This is another criticism from a different angle, totally opposite to the one of Ilkovski and his likes: from this perspective there is a legitimacy of sexual citizenship<sup>265</sup> and dissidence, but the LGBTs have not risen to what is their own – equal rights, and rather opt for their own delegitimization. In this case we can see why the thesis of authors such as Ilkovski could gain legitimacy in delegitimizing non-normative sexual orientations: the blogger makes clear that it is such civic passivity which makes it possible to be delegitimized and systematically addressed as a second-grade citizen. As the author says:

“this is why, fellows of mine, prepare yourself to face the consequences: for four more years you will be the “sick” in the state, you will serve as a one-off condom when some right-wing politician would like to heal his own complexes with you.”<sup>266</sup>

### **The dilemma of de/legitimization: a comparative conclusion**

It is obvious that a comparison between the sets of discourses I have underlined – that of Ilkovski, Georgiev, and the blogger – leads to discern different strategies of information about or de/legitimization of sexual orientation. What they do share is the existing political conjuncture and their own respective *positions* inside it. What divides them is their *opposition* within that conjuncture: while Ilkoski and *Vecer* oppose the discourse of emancipation in various ways, the other discourse analyzed oppose not the structural homology proposed by Ilkovski and so popular in Macedonia today but the legitimization of homophobia which opinion-makers such as Ilkovski denies to have common with. It seems that even in the apex of delegitimizing social activism homophobia is potentially grasped as uncivilized and unbecoming way of thinking (that is, even though the alleged subject of attack is not LGBT people but their representatives, equalizable to a corrupted political blizzard). But the bone of contention where these discourses cannot meet in attempting their strategies is the question of assimilation which I outline as a dilemma in terms of the de/legitimization I considered:

On Ilkovski's view, even assimilationism is not needed since social inequality of LGBTs is imaginary activist strategy of profiteering. On the other authors' discourses, any non-recognition of homophobia could lead to assimilationism which will continue social exclusion. That is, integration is possible only if it is preceded by recognition of homophobia and exclusion, otherwise changes in mentality are impossible. Only through recognition is equality approachable.

At the same time, the media share of the LGBT visibility remains somewhat neutral (that is, perhaps un-decisive). Activists and their work do not coincide with change of representations in media.<sup>267</sup> On the other hand, the integrationist view for affirmative sexual politics in Macedonia seems challenged by what we can see here as conscious and concealed demonizing of both "the EU" (integration) and LGBT people (bottom-up politics and activism attending to integration) in the context of experiencing oneself as tolerant: but this should be read only as a reaction to being seen barbaric and non-European on the side of Macedonian society. Activists are reduced to the local deprecators of some traditional, pre-existing Macedonian openness to the other which they try to shatter as if to prove nothing other than recognition of oppression by demanding sexual equality. This demonization realizes the need to relive the already socially chaotic order of the disabled social body by expelling the very same legitimacy (the EU integration) that brings forth the political normalization of the pathologized (as homophobic) and othered Macedonian populace. The price for pro-European political legitimacy which Macedonian media still have the pretension to support is to shatter not normalcy, but tolerance – it is the truly contested terrain of "integration". This can be proven precisely by unveiling the media's imperviousness of socially significant issues and LGBT issues in particular in terms of their analytical impotency.

What remains to be seen is whether the agent that needs to appear and address this dilemma – namely, the state – could influence this process of reasoning about integration. But while this still has not happened, the work that Macedonian media do in giving space to (crypto-)homophobic views will be all the more defining for social attitudes towards sexual difference and the sort of implied assimilation whose cost is to shatter the entire project for emancipation and consciousness-raising of the (LGBT) population in Macedonia.

## NOTES

<sup>227</sup> In general, this analysis provides evidence that the media domain cannot be regulated by procedures of media ethics, self-regulation, etc., but by inter-subjective relationship and (party-)political determination, in turn represented as authority discourses of truth.

<sup>228</sup> It is impossible to include and at the same time not to mention the ridiculous study of the NGO “Horizon” from 2010 for the simple reason that it gained significant media attention and proved that Macedonian media have a very wide info filter. For a refutation of this “study” which claimed to have made a demographic sample of the LGBT population in Macedonia, see <http://outboy.blog.mk/2011/04/19/anketi-i-cirkuzanti>, which also has an anti-government twist (providing comparison of the use of “statistics” by the state) and ultimately derides science-based manipulation sold by “Horizon”.

<sup>229</sup> We have to keep in mind that a stereotype (as per Lippman) always includes not only the pre-characterization, but also the evaluation of a given subject; that is, it is always already judgemental to what it refers, whence the “bias”; see Kuhar 2003: 48.

<sup>230</sup> See for example *Vecer*, 20.05, <http://www.vecer.com.mk/default.asp?ItemID=61AF015A7A20BC48B1E62C276984076C>.

<sup>231</sup> Mostly gay prides in the world and in the region; the case against activist and writer Irena Cvetkovic; the publication of the Coalition’s 2010 monitoring; the event on the occasion of the IDAHO international day – May 17th; the critique of the EC and Michael Cashman and Ulrike Lunacek against the voted bill on anti-discrimination by the Macedonian Government (see <http://www.vlada.mk/?q=node/4919>). To my knowledge the only media that reported this official criticism was the blog *Gay & The City*, where Lunacek’s words are cited: “The politics of sawing fear by way of disinformation which is led in Macedonia is wrong and goes in an unwanted direction” (see <http://outboy.blog.mk/2011/04/16/evropa-ja-povikavladata-na-vmro-dpmne-da-go-promeni-zakonot-za-antidiskriminacija>).

<sup>232</sup> It should be noted that there are in-depth comments surrounding some of the events mentioned but they fall outside the monitored period in late 2010 and early 2011; see for example Alex Lambevski, in *Okno*, <http://okno.mk/node/8487>, 29.11.2010; and Katerina Kolozova, In *Dnevnik*, <http://www.dnevnik.com.mk/default.asp?ItemID=A7E8A48BC657B843938193B2F196970F>, 5.11.2010.

<sup>233</sup> This potential has been further undermined in this very period: it is not irrelevant that three daily

newspapers were jettisoned out of the news market, which reduces the Macedonian publicity to less resources of relevant information, including one covering LGBTs.

<sup>234</sup> See for example the positive output given by Milka Ololiska, “Koga iracionalno mrazite nekogo” [“When you hate someone irrationally”], *Vest*, 03.06.2011.

<sup>235</sup> The observed predominance of neutral materials - most of them short ones – might be read as related to the pre-elections period, although only hypothetically so. As Gojko Bervar says, “the supervisory role of a free press also ensures a greater or lesser balance in electoral competitions” (Bervar 2002: 16), sexual orientation is indeed not omitted, but it was not elevated to a political subject during the pre-election period either, which poses a question on the freedom of affirmative opinion on LGBT issues within media. Unfortunately, here we can only speculate whether it is the weak analytical potential or some editorial politically-influenced pressure – or simply lack of interest? - that led to the predominantly neutral representation of sexual orientation matters in the period.

<sup>236</sup> But it appeared as such immediately after the period and the elections in an article which is likely to be read as opposition party’s unconscious homophobia, see Petar Arsovski, “Ace, Bejbi”, in *Utrinski vesnik*, <http://www.utrinski.com.mk/?ItemID=1EE62FDE341CA54C88DFDBB26F8665AE>, 08.07.2011.

<sup>237</sup> This is not a recent association and is quite popular. Consider, for example, the statement: “Friends from UDFM, the EU accepts you as faggots, but not as Macedonians”, referring to the presumed willingness of UDFM to compromise Macedonia’s constitutional name in the name of EU-membership which imposes legislative changes bringing about equal rights for LGBTs ( see: <http://kzzz.blog.mk/2011/01/18/prijatelji-od-UDFM-vo-eu-ve-prifakaat-kako-pederi-no-ne-i-kako-makedonci>).

<sup>238</sup> As noted by Downing and Gillett (2011: 7), “[v]ery often, nationalists tend to be conservative and allied to homophobic institutions such as the Church. For obvious reasons, the nation has investment in the family; and the family, as the locus par excellence of reproductive heteropatriarchy, is inimical to queer” as long as family is defined as a union between representatives of two opposites sexes. The latter is a political cause and propaganda of the recent government and understandably is not to extend any proviso for the redefinition of the union, although the rhetoric which could be tracked in political speeches by the prime-minister Gruevski is always one of all-inclusiveness. Due to the lack of any manifested political will so far, that “for-all-the-citizens” rhetoric obviously excludes in itself and its own volume sexual difference.

<sup>239</sup> See *Vecer*, 08.04.2011, <http://www.vecer.com.mk/default.asp?ItemID=979BBD8B1AF75143BD211E18550FE2FE>.

<sup>240</sup> A similar course of blackmailing could be traced in more complex but easily politicized cases. Recently, within the frames of the monitored period, a Macedonian version of WikiLeaks leaked news with



audio about the earlier opinion of an opinion-maker close to the prime-minister, rendering him “to me he is a faggot” (see: <http://www.makleaks.com/2011/06/gruevski-za-latas-e-p>). In another case (in 2010), Ljubco Georgievski, former leader and member of VMRO-DPMNE, in reaction to continuous black-mailing campaigns against him before the elections said: “It remains to only label me a faggot” (see: *Zurnal*, <http://www.zurnal.mk/content.asp?id=17610161922>, 17.06.2010). The connotation in both cases, although different, implies negative characteristics – homosexuality as the worst trait of a politician and the highest instance of insult. Such fragmentary knowledge serves to consider that negative labeling is contextual and depends on the political conjuncture, if only to remind us that political orientation is always stronger than sexual orientation, or so it seems in Macedonian context.

<sup>241</sup> Such claims could be found in various comments that grossly associate activism with the “EU” and therefore funds and opacity proceduralism, for example: “sometimes it’s all about projects, so in order to account the money you should be doing something: a protest, pride parade, seminar, workshop, whatever”, see <http://outboy.blog.mk/2011/05/07/vmro-dpmne-i-homoseksualcite>.

<sup>242</sup> In the monitored period there is only one article which relies on the assumption that LGBT emancipation depends upon growth in visibility, and it is not related with Macedonia, but with Montenegro and the failed pride parade this year. The author Nela Lazarevik states that visibility is important to prove that there is a social pressure stating that “[t]he little number of registered homophobic accidents in Montenegro does not has to be interpreted as a sign of tolerance”, a course of thinking that will rarely be found in media: see *Vest*, <http://www.vest.com.mk/?ItemID=7E464E45F59AAF4BA908410D00852289&arc=1>, . However, this text is the product of an journalistic program stimulating awareness, subsidized from abroad, and is not the product of Macedonian journalism. Again, one of the few affirmative articles which have the value of commentary is a reproductive knowledge, and not the product of Macedonian media reflexivity.

<sup>243</sup> See *Vecer*, 20.05.2011, <http://www.vecer.com.mk/default.asp?ItemID=8C07AA184069C94486E2D38A1DDBB0B5>.

<sup>244</sup> That is, the government and the institutional structure promoted by it, and all this should be read in the light of the discriminative anti-discrimination legislation; see the comment by DW at <http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,,5217541,00.html> earlier in 2010.

<sup>245</sup> As I underlined earlier, what is missing from the discourse defines the power of the “common sense” proposed. In this case if the implication is that Macedonian society is by itself – by nature/common sense – tolerant, the missing is the exercise of tolerance. But if we follow this homophobically triggered thinking the paradox is that the exercise if tolerance is itself proof of intolerance. That is, active (promotion of) tolerance is unacceptable because it already projects inferiority in the people, as well as denial.

The battle of this paradox happens on the ground of heterosexism masked as assimilationism: under its regime, sexual difference could serve as a pillar of compulsory heterosexuality.

<sup>246</sup> In the article on Montenegro Lazarevik states: “Since alternative sexual orientation remain heavily kept secrets, homosexuality is often used for extortion”. Here it could be said, projecting this on a more general level, that the sort of extortion which Ilkovski uses is to prove that, because of the generalized invisibility, tolerance and equality should be given up before they are considered. This is so because of the paradox I outlined in the previous note. See *Vest*, <http://www.vest.com.mk/?ItemID=7E464E45F59AAF4BA908410D00852289&arc=1>.

<sup>247</sup> “Well you say they are physically attacked? This is so funny and they [the LGBTs] themselves know that you do nothing but manipulation and twaddle in the NGO sector in order to snatch out money”.

<sup>248</sup> Re/sexualisation means only that homosexuality is read as negative of heterosexuality; for example, see Kuhar 2003: 72.

<sup>249</sup> Importantly, a final effect of such rhetoric is that it successfully avoids to *actively* victimize and stigmatize LGBTs and leads us to believe that it is the activists that should take the brunt of self-victimization. The stigma of exclusion (on stigmatization, see Jugovic, Pikić & Bokan 2008: 348-350), it is suggested in this kind of thinking, is caused by the corrupted motivation of NGO-led gay elite which prefers a politics of difference instead of one of similarity/assimilation. Of course, preference for the latter means that socialized notions of normality would not change and thus a politics of assimilation according to heterosexual sociality would perpetuate exclusion.

<sup>250</sup> See Ilkovski’s earlier posting at <http://jadiburek.blog.mk/2009/08/20/shishanje-kurvi>.

<sup>251</sup> See <http://www.macedonians.tv/showthread.php?t=3628>.

<sup>252</sup> Significant numbers about this were presented in the 2009 study done by the MCMS agency: “For citizens, the civic organization are misused by political parties or political parties hide behind them. However, rarely they can illustrate this with a case”, see *Vecer*, <http://www.vecer.com.mk/?ItemID=0AD2D22A261DC8488D2FC264264FBF0F>, 12.10.2007.

<sup>253</sup> See *Fokus*, April 2011.

<sup>254</sup> This time as illness; for example, pronouncements such as Dr. Jovan Ginev’s: “Homosexuality is a disease caused by psychophysical aberration since childhood, and the source of the disease lies in the chromosomes”. A comprehensive list of quotations from the time Ginev aired his opinion could be found at <http://outboy.blog.mk/2011/05/22/vmro-vska-homofobija-vo-sobranieto>

<sup>255</sup> See, in relation to this, the feverish rant of rapper Stihoven Kalibar against psychoanalytical arguments, <http://stihovenkalibar.blog.mk/2009/05/26/ja-sum-pedofilofob>, where he directly relates the psychoanalytical argument with “pro-western perverse ideologies”.

<sup>256</sup> Why Macedonian media do not compare existing medical standards with the proposed medicalizing thinking of representatives is a separate question, which cannot be properly assessed here. One possible answer is that media could consensually – that is, in a kind of silent contract in-between them – activate a discourse in “neutral” way by “mere” representation, which lends them “the right of non-accountability”, itself possible by virtue of stereotypes. The “right to information” of the readers to know what the representatives think in the media could coincide with the unexpressed editorial and journalistic attitudes. That is, media are able to secretly support what is neutrally relayed to society; since “as a rule, no medium wants to adopt of its own free will any media accountability system, either external or internal” (Bervar 2002: 44), it could reach to “neutral” reiteration of political attitudes while not engaging its analytical potential.

<sup>257</sup> So in this way, by psychoanalytically pathologizing and thus delegitimizing political authorities of the day, the author proves in a roundabout way that the personal is in fact political: “Dr. Ginev tried to represent his own homophobic conceptions to the commission’s members...”.

<sup>258</sup> In this context we need to note that the popular reinscription of the rhetoric of natural tolerance implies by itself the ability of tolerance in folk psychology. If there is a natural ability to tolerate, than equality is self-secured by default.

<sup>259</sup> One such example in the period is given by the blog *Gay & The City* that I have observed, where the blog criticized a TV station that it obscured the gayness of Elton John and his partner as a couple; see <http://outboy.blog.mk/2011/04/30/elton-dzhon-i-kralската-svadba-tabu-na-mrtv>.

<sup>260</sup> See <http://outboy.blog.mk/2011/04/14/za-kogo-ke-glasaat-pederite-vo-vmro>

<sup>261</sup> See <http://outboy.blog.mk/2011/05/07/vmro-dpmne-i-homoseksualcite>.

<sup>262</sup> As he states: “Will the Social-Democratic Union of Macedonia ever have the intention to clearly, decidedly and specifically address the problem of organized institutional and systemic legal discrimination against the LGBT population and to promise problem solution immediately upon taking up the power (if it ever comes to it, that is), or it will continue with perfidious hypocritical games of dizzing, lying and utilization of this part of the electorate?”. See <http://outboy.blog.mk/2011/04/25/levanka-vs-desanka-i-UDFM-gluvi-po-prashanjeto-za-homoseksualcite>; also <http://outboy.blog.mk/2011/05/08/UDFM-i-homoseksualcite-i>; while in the former posting there is a sense of collective responsibility implied, in the second the names of politicians appear, which indicates that the author is more willing to suggest political responsibility to those that could better represent him.

<sup>263</sup> “I urge all of you that tomorrow you be selfish. Think about you... Be selfish and prove that your friends mean much more than their monuments, museums and churches”; see <http://outboy.blog.mk/2011/05/22/ldp-im-veti-na-homoseksualcite>, and respectively <http://outboy.blog.mk/2011/06/04/pos->

leden-apel-do-gej-populacijata-nivnite-bliski-i-prijateli.

<sup>264</sup> See <http://outboy.blog.mk/2011/04/30/stav-na-chlen-od-mk-forum-na-tema-za-homoseksualnite-brakovi>: “Gay relationships are immoral and do harm to the holy institution of marriage. – Who says so? The Bible? I think that the freedom OF religion means equally freedom FROM religion as well. The Bible cannot dare to be linked with the civic laws (something which the Macedonian Orthodox Church tries to change). No one has the right to suggest rules to the other because he or she consider this is said so in the Bible”.

<sup>265</sup> On the notion of sexual citizenship, see Bell & Binnie 2000: 35-7.

<sup>266</sup> See <http://outboy.blog.mk/2011/06/10/izbori-gej-populacijata-pokazha-celosna-politichka-nezrelost-2>; In the other blog Mystery a similar note addressing the right to proper information and developing an own LGBT culture appears, which relates to an already defunct blog: “... kudos to the guy, one can see he works to make a difference for all of you who are gay, bi, or les although most of you cannot appreciate this!”, see <http://mystery.blog.mk/2010/06/19/zapoznavanje-i-voved>.

<sup>267</sup> A reason for this is certainly the disintegrating media market, the cycles of deprofessionalization and yellowization, not to mention political pressure.

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## Appendix 1

Questions for focus groups with journalists

- Can you say what is implied by marginalized groups/communities?
- According to you, which groups/communities can be discerned as marginalized, discriminated against and vulnerable to social exclusion?
- Does your medium often write about human rights of members of marginalized groups/communities?
- How are members of marginalized groups/communities presented?
- Which are the terms used by your medium when writing about persons that are arrested or persecuted for prostitution?
- Which terms are used by your medium when writing about persons suspected of drug use or drug possession?
- Which terms are used by your medium when writing about persons who are treated for drug addiction?
- Which terms are used by your medium when writing about persons with sexual orientation other than heterosexual?
- Which are the most prevalent themes for your medium regarding sex workers/LGBT persons/drug users?
- Who decides on the covered subject matter mostly - the journalists or the editors? What is the editors' attitude when the journalists initiate the subject of sex workers/LGBT people/drug users?
- Which sections/shows cover most often relevant editorials?
- Most often, who is the speaker/interviewee when writing about human rights of members of marginalized groups/communities?
- Is taking a statement from the concerned sex workers, LGBT people and drug users or drug addicts a problem, when writing about them?
- In which context are members of marginalized groups/communities covered- positive or negative?
- Which of the subjects regarding human rights of members of marginalized groups/com

munities according to you are the most ignored by the media?

- Which positive or negative stereotypes and prejudices can be identified when writing about persons who offer commercial sex services?
- Which positive or negative stereotypes and prejudices can be identified when writing about drug users or drug addicts?
- Which positive or negative stereotypes and prejudices can be identified when writing about LGBT people?
- Can we speak of non-tolerant and discriminatory speech when writing about human rights of members of marginalized groups/communities?
- Do you think that sensationalism is often present when writing about sexuality and the rights of members of marginalized groups/communities?
- Which traditional moral values and practices instigate marginalization, discrimination and social exclusion of sex workers, LGBT people and drug users and drug addicts?
- Is the subject of violence against sex workers, LGBT people and drug users and drug addicts present sufficiently in the media?
- In your opinion, is the current legal regulation sufficient for protection against discrimination of sex workers, LGBT people and drug users and drug addicts?
- Are state institutions transparent when you require information on sex workers, LGBT people and drug users and drug addicts?
- Are citizens' associations transparent when you require information on sex workers, LGBT people and drug users and drug addicts?
- Does your medium publish photographs, video or audio recordings without prior consent from the sex workers, LGBT people, drug users and drug addicts?
- Does the Codex for Journalists of the Macedonian Association of Journalists contain efficient provisions on prohibition of hate speech and instigation of violence and of discrimination on any ground?
- Has your medium ever written about the subject of double discrimination?
- Have you ever attended a course in human rights?
- Do you feel the need for additional training on human rights of LGBT people, sex workers and drug users and on the role of the media in the fight against discrimination?





**Coalition “Sexual and Health Rights of Marginalized Communities”**