THE IMPACT OF STIGMATIZATION ON SOCIAL ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE LGBT-COMMUNITY

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Background: Attitude towards LGBT - is a tabooed theme in Ukraine. The reasons include the disinclination to openly discuss it (the consequence of the Soviet era); the fact of condemning of homosexual relations by the Church. These and other factors lead to a high frequency of manifestations of homophobia, stigmatization, discrimination and violations of LGBT rights. Ukrainian scientists have not focused on the aspect of stigmatization of LGBT yet.

Purpose: The analysis of the features of the phenomenon of stigmatization based on sexual orientation in modern Ukrainian society.

Methods: The study of this theme relies on the principles of structural functionalism (stigmatization is described in system terms); symbolic interactionism (stigmatization as a certain symbol bearing the usually negative content). The research is based on I. Goffman's concept of stigma (Goffman, E. 1963); and P. Byrne's interpretation of stigma (Shcherbakova A. 2011): "stigmatization" as an action - a certain mechanism that includes the outlined steps. General scientific methods: analysis and synthesis, comparative method, deduction. Empirical methods: in-depth interviews (to capture individual views about the problem of LGBT stigmatization and find out certain tendencies regarding the course of the process of imposing stigma in the Ukrainian society, in particular in Lviv), the method of focus-group research (to diversify information, reveal controversial moments, the most important factors influencing the stigmatization of the LGBT community in the Ukrainian society).

Results: Stigmatization is a process of imposing the stigma label. Stigma is the result of selective perception, the distinction between "we" and "they" groups (Goffman, E. 1963).

Sexual stigma (based on sexual orientation) ties to any non-heterosexual behavior, identity, relationship or community, it is a socially widespread perception of the underdeveloped homosexuality status comparing to heterosexuality (Teliti A. 2015).

Effects of sexual stigma include inequality between heterosexual and homosexual people, which is *expressed and fixed in the form of hierarchical relations within society, and correlates with discrimination*. Sexual stigma is characterized by consolidation at the institutional level, for example in medicine, religion, legislation. The problem is that nowadays any member of society can be attributed to this stigmatized group on the basis of having any external "attributes of homosexuality", as well as by frequent orientation concealment by representatives of the LGBT

community. Stigmatization also manifests itself in the absence of the necessary, adequate state support.

Analyzing the reports of social and public organizations, independent researchers for the years 2008-17 (Martseniuk T., 2010; Compliance with human rights 2009; Status and problems of LGBT movement in Ukraine, 2013; A New Beginning, 2018; Minorities Report, 2017; Basic principles and ways of forming of a common identity of Ukrainian citizens, 2017; Ukrainian society and European values, 2017), we found a tendency of increase of the tolerance level towards the LGBT community, but we cannot claim that the **real** Ukrainian level corresponds to the same indicator **in developed countries**.

Certain features of stigmatization practices in relation to LGBT: due to the dominance of gays' social activity, this group suffers the greatest stigma; LGBT movement in Ukraine is not well-organized: not enough activists and resources for effective activity - it cannot fully achieve its goals; an "homophobization" through manipulations, speculations on this topic; any social activity associated with LGBT is impeded. We found that Ukrainians are not quite ready to accept the LGBT community in any capacity (even as citizens of their country).

To study the features of LGBT stigmatization in the Ukrainian space, empirical research was compiled and realized. Through the in-depth interviews, some of the planned categories were confirmed and new indicators were discovered that allow us to talk about new LGBT attributes, including: changes in appearance (modifications), usage of cosmetics, HIV-tag. In addition, the reasons of stigmatization of LGBT are highlighted by the informants: lateness of state development, specific education, unwillingness to understand, social sentiment, lack of personal acquaintances. The manifestations of stigmatization of LGBT: Internet violence, labor inequality, ridicule, the need to remain silent (manifestation), glass ceiling, pity, latent stigmatization, lack of government support. The consequences of stigmatization of LGBT representatives: intercession, impossibility to create a family, spontaneous attitude, "hunting," the need to remain silent (consequence), LGBT publicity, pressure, "anti-homophobia". These newly highlighted indicators give us an opportunity to talk about the ***diversity and multifractality*** of the phenomenon of stigmatization of sex minorities in the Ukrainian space.

Focus-group interviews.. The category "Attitude": participants argued that the attitude towards the LGBT community is between the neutral (from the majority of young people) and sharply negative (from the side of mainly the older generation). This tendency is alarming because such attitude *leads to social splits* - the division of society into "us" and "they", which is a factor of conflicts, hostility, "loosening" of the social system.

By the "Attributes" category the participants approved the achievements of the previous study and added new ones: specific coloring, removing the borders of "male" and "female",

expressive self-presentation, weakness, tenderness, care, styling (the last four - for men), the frame of LGBT. These "Attributes" give us the opportunity to see stereotypes impact on "LGBT character".

Participants of focus-group discussions were supposed to fill in the sheet to get the **"cause-manifestation-consequences"** formula. Regarding features of the process in Ukraine, the participants identified the following elements. Reasons: the correlation of LGBT with HIV, a distorted image of [the LGBT representative] in the media, conservatism. Manifestations: "non-tolerant" questions, denial of religious rites, talking about non-acceptance in the family (for example, "if my son was a gay, I would give up from him"). Consequences: for LGBT: suicide, usage of the fact of orientation for mercenary purposes, emigration, decrease in self-esteem, apathy, mental disorders; for a society: a bilateral rally / struggle for rights (on both sides), a bad attitude of other states / perception of Ukrainian society as a "back-viewing" by other states; the transmission of negative attitude to the next generations, the spread of infectious diseases (due to the unwillingness of LGBT people to seek medical advice, to be aware of, etc.), the polarization of society, discrimination against people who support the LGBT community, xenophobia.

Keywords: stigma, stigmatization, sexual stigma, discrimination, LGBT, homosexuality, homophobia

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