

REFLECTAREA TEMATICII MINORITĂȚILOR SEXUALE ÎN PRESA DIN REPUBLICA MOLDOVA. ÎNTRE ACCEPTARE ȘI DISCRIMINARE

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Problema abordării echitabile a subiectelor privind discriminarea categoriilor sociale din țara noastră rămâne a fi una dintre cele mai discutate în cadrul diverselor dezbateri publice, seminare, training-uri etc. În acest context, presa rămâne a fi unul dintre instrumentele-cheie de ghidare asupra corectitudinii reflectării tematicii discriminării pe baza diverselor criterii. Prezentul articol urmărește să elucideze modul în care unul dintre cele mai discriminate grupuri sociale din această țară, precum cel al minorităților sexuale, este abordat în materialele jurnalistice. Recent, în presa din țara noastră, au apărut tot mai multe articole care reflectă situația și problemele acestui grup social, dar modul în care jurnaliștii reușesc să prezinte subiectul, nu poate fi întotdeauna considerat în concordanță cu aspectele deontologice ale profesiei. Astfel, ne propunem să elucidăm în materialul de mai jos, modalitățile în care este reflectat subiectul minorităților sexuale și problemele cu care se confruntă jurnaliștii în procesul de abordare a subiectului, greșelile pe care le fac aceștia, precum și să oferim câteva recomandări de evitare a acestor greșeli, prin care presa riscă să fie considerată ea însăși un instrument de manipulare și discriminare în raport cu această categorie socială.

Cuvinte-cheie: minorități sexuale, deontologie, discriminare, hărțuire, legislație media, tradiție, toleranță.

THE REFLECTION OF THE SEXUAL MINORITIES THEME IN THE OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA PRESS. BETWEEN ACCEPTANCE AND DISCRIMINATION

The issue of equitable approach to issues related to discrimination against certain social categories in our country remains one of the most discussed in various public events, such as public debates, seminars, trainings, etc. In this context, the press remains one of the key - tools for guiding society, on the correctness in which the issues of discrimination are reflected on the basis of various criteria. The article below seeks to elucidate the way in which one of the most discriminated social groups in this country, such as that of sexual minorities, is approached in journalistic materials. Recently, more and more articles have appeared in the local media, reflecting the situation and problems of this social group, but the way in which journalists manage to present the subject, cannot always be considered in accordance with the deontological aspects of the profession. Thus, we aim to elucidate in the material below, the ways in which the subject of sexual minorities is reflected and the problems they face, the mistakes that journalists make in the process of covering the topic, as well as to offer some recommendations to avoid mistakes, through which the press could also be considered an instrument of manipulation and discrimination in relation to this social category.

Keywords: sexual minorities, deontology, discrimination, harassment, media legislation, tradition, tolerance.

LE REFLET DU THÈME DES MINORITÉS SEXUELLES DANS LA PRESSE DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE MOLDOVA. ENTRE ACCEPTATION ET DISCRIMINATION

La question de l'approche équitable des questions liées à la discrimination contre certaines catégories sociales dans notre pays reste l'une des plus discutées lors de divers événements publics, tels que des débats publics, des séminaires, des formations, etc. Dans ce contexte, la presse reste l'un des acteurs clés - des outils d'orientation de la société, sur la justesse dans lesquels les problématiques de discrimination se reflètent sur la base de divers critères. L'article ci-dessous cherche à élucider la manière dont l'un des groupes sociaux les plus discriminés de ce pays, comme celui des minorités sexuelles, est abordé dans le matériel journalistique. Récemment, de plus en plus d'articles sont parus dans les médias locaux, reflétant la situation et les problèmes de ce groupe social, mais la manière dont les journalistes parviennent à présenter le sujet ne peut pas toujours être considérée en accord avec les aspects déontologiques de la profession. Ainsi, nous visons à élucider dans le matériel ci-dessous, la manière dont le sujet des minorités sexuelles est reflété et les problèmes auxquels elles sont confrontées, les erreurs que commettent les journalistes dans le processus de couverture du sujet, ainsi qu'à proposer quelques recommandations pour éviter des erreurs, par lesquelles la presse pourrait également être considérée comme un instrument de manipulation et de discrimination par rapport à cette catégorie sociale.

Mots-clés: *minorités sexuelles, déontologie, discrimination, harcèlement, législation des médias, tradition, tolérance.*

ОТРАЖЕНИЕ ТЕМЫ СЕКСУАЛЬНЫХ МЕНЬШИНСТВ В ПРЕССЕ РЕСПУБЛИКИ МОЛДОВА. МЕЖДУ ПРИНЯТИЕМ И ДИСКРИМИНАЦИЕЙ

Вопрос справедливого подхода к темам, касающимся дискриминации социальных категорий в нашей стране, остается одним из самых обсуждаемых в различных общественных дискуссиях, семинарах, тренингах и т.д. В этом контексте, пресса остается одним из ключевых ориентирующих инструментов по правдивости отражения темы дискриминации по различным критериям. В представленной ниже статье осуществлена попытка выяснить, как в журналистских материалах обращается к одной из наиболее дискриминируемых социальных групп в нашей стране, каковыми являются сексуальные меньшинства. В последнее время в прессе появляется все больше статей, отражающих положение и проблемы этой социальной группы, однако то, как журналистам удается подавать тему, не всегда можно считать соответствующим деонтологическим аспектам профессии. Таким образом, в представленном ниже материале мы стремимся осветить способы отражения темы сексуальных меньшинств и проблемы, с которыми сталкиваются журналисты в процессе подхода к теме, ошибки, которые они допускают, а также предложить некоторые рекомендации, как избежать этих ошибок, из-за которых пресса рискует оказаться инструментом манипуляции и дискриминации по отношению к данной социальной категории.

Ключевые слова: *сексуальные меньшинства, деонтология, дискриминация, преследование, медиа-законодательство, традиция, толерантность.*

Introduction

In May 2012, in the Republic of Moldova, the law on ensuring equal opportunities came into force, which was initially called the anti-discrimination law, according to which a legislative framework was to be ensured that would not allow discrimination on the basis of religion, age, gender, ethnicity, etc.

In a deeply conservative society like the Moldovan one, the law, being still at the draft stage, has aroused several dissatisfactions among political actors, the church institution and religious associations, because of the phrase "sexual orientation". Later, the text of the law was revised. The phrase "sexual orientation" was not excluded from the text, but it

is found only in an article that establishes that no person can be discriminated against in the workplace on the basis of his sexual orientation. We must admit that in a community where the terms of equality and democracy work together effectively and where this law, like many others, would have “value”, the phenomenon of discrimination would not be so obvious based on the most diverse criteria (not only in the basis of sexual orientation), as it is in Moldovan society, or those brave attempts, and in the opinion of many fellow citizens defiant, to organize rallies for several years in a row in support of LGBT people, have demonstrated that Moldovan society is far from being informationally and morally unprepared to accept this category of people at work, in educational institutions, as friends, family members, etc.

The acronym LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) first appeared in the English language to identify the sexual minority group. This term is intended to highlight the diversity of sexuality based on culture and gender identity. The LGBT community, in addition to the rights and obligations they possess along with other citizens, is also distinguished by the fact that they have managed to identify their own flag with a special color that embodies all the colors of the rainbow, symbolizing diversity and acceptance. This fact has aroused controversy among many citizens, including public figures, which often fuels the negative perception of these people even more. Thus, one of the leaders of the Chechen republic in the Russian Federation, Ramzan Cadârov, mentioned in a reply offered to the American president urging the Russian authorities to tolerance that “there are no cuckoos in Chechnya” [1] (a verbal insult usually attributed to gay people) Unfortunately, the discriminatory attitude towards LGBT people influences their lives in all social areas. In their opinion, they cannot benefit from quality healthcare for themselves or their partner, hesitate to present themselves in environments where heterosexuality is considered

implicit, rarely meet LGBT representatives in the media field, who would openly declare their sexual orientation, not - they can formalize their partnership relations under an accepted legal form, etc. [2, p. 28] This attitude towards LGBT people has caused them to put into practice, for self-protection purposes, the strategy of invisibility in order to survive in a society where their rights are openly or openly violated, and by those more often - unrecognized. People with a different sexual orientation are attacked in various ways, but most often they are attacked verbally, in front of the public. The data show that young people (the most sensitive category) are subjected to verbal and physical attack more than other age groups, and this is because society believes that it can still influence the change of young people’s mentalities, while influencing those of an advanced age it is ineffective.

Content

It is known that the press in a democratic community is the essential pillar that should continuously and transparently mediate the most current and important types of information from the immediate reality. Thus, in recent years it has been demonstrated that the reflection of the topic of social discrimination of sexual minorities would represent a topic more than current in the domestic and even the international press/ The media system is a priori a platform that supports the democratization of a community and reflects the problems of society in an equidistant manner. The media should correctly express the identity of LGBT people, so that they are not afraid to express their sexual orientation and feel free in the environment where they live with people who have a normal sexual orientation. Through the issues addressed, the mass media contributes as much as possible to the creation of an environment not only for people with mental-moral and physical disabilities, but also for people with a different sexual orien-

tation. Moreover, these people also contribute to the consolidation of a society, in which their opinion and involvement is equally valuable, and sexual orientation should not represent an impediment to professional growth in the chosen field.

It would not be news if we stated that the problem of the emergence and development of the phenomenon of discrimination constituted an object of research for many scientists, starting from their concerns for the origins of the phenomenon, its causes, as well as the forms and consequences of discrimination for all humanity. Discriminated people are the same independent social entities with equal rights and obligations before the law as well as before the community in which they integrate. Irina Moroianu Zlătescu reminds us about the fact that discrimination involves a different treatment of some people depending on their physical appearance, religion, nationality, sexual orientation in the volume *Protection against racism and Discrimination*. The author records in her work that “Discrimination means a different treatment applied to a person by virtue of belonging, real or supposed, to a certain social group” (trans. from English) [3, p.35]. With this definition, the author aims to highlight the fact that discrimination is an individualistic action, which denotes the total sum of attitudes and behaviors through which certain people are denied the rights and opportunities enjoyed by other individuals and groups within the same political society. In the same work, the author divides the phenomenon of discrimination into two types: direct discrimination, which occurs when one person is treated less favorably than another, has been or could be treated in a similar way, for reasons of race or ethnic origin, on when indirect discrimination is a circumstance where an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice has placed certain persons at a disadvantage compared to others. LGBT personnel, in the Republic of Moldova, represent one of the most discriminated categories of persons [4, p.35].

They face serious problems on a daily basis, which, in fact, represent a serious impediment to their development as individual personalities and a multi-dimensional progress. Although they carry out various campaigns to combat discrimination and legally demonstrate their rights and actions in community life, society tolerates less the existence of such an occurrence in daily life. If internationally, most states have adopted certain legal norms regarding the acceptance of same-sex marriages and the tolerance of the LGBT phenomenon, then in the Republic of Moldova, that situation cannot be accepted as reality. The authorities in our country support the fact that our citizens are part of families that highlight the traditional style, which is based on marriages between opposite sexes and hetero sexual orientation.

In recent years, in line with the evolution of the LGBT phenomenon, several European countries offer open support for people with non-traditional sexual orientation to feel more comfortable in their own community. The European Commission and European Union agencies have encouraged EU member states to share promising practices that promote respect for LGBT people.

In the Republic of Moldova, however, the situation is different. Up to now, issues about homosexuality are mostly addressed as a pathology, including, in the opinion of many. According to existing European statistics, 10% of a country's population consists of LGBT people. In the Republic of Moldova, following a study carried out by the organization GENDERDOC-M, the institution that propagates and defends LGBT rights in our country, the degree of moral acceptance of homosexuality in the Republic of Moldova was measured on a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means that it is not justified at all, and 10 means that it is fully justified.

“The conservative position is overwhelming: 85% of respondents in 2008 and 87% in 2016 reject homosexuality” [5].

The subject of sexual minorities is a current theme, addressed relatively often in the media in the country and very often in the media abroad. We recognize, however, that for the public in our country the subject can still be considered a sensitive one, but nevertheless this phenomenon exists and is practically impossible to hide, that is why the periodic press comes with topics that develop the phenomenon for the consumers of information in our country. One of the latest topics that has sparked more discussion in society, including through the media, is the topic of the gay soldier who deserted from the national army due to harassment based on his sexual orientation. On November 10, 2021, on the website of the television station TV8, the title of the material on the above topic appears: A soldier refused to return to the unit, after being harassed because of his sexual orientation [6]. In the same context, another news website publishes on the same topic the material with the title The young man who allegedly deserted cannot be hired because he is gay [7]. The publication Ziarul de Gardă also uses a reprehensible title addressing the army institution *Army from which recruits flee* [8]. PRO TV was also quick to publish a material with a detailed title that refers to the intolerant attitude in such an important state institution as the National Army: A young man who performs his military service in a unit in the capital, complains that he was harassed in the last 6 months by his colleagues, after it was found out that he is homosexual [9]. We notice that the majority of media institutions have addressed a situation condemning the phenomenon of discrimination based on sexual orientation, found in such an institution. However, we recognize that the press still finds it difficult to take precautions to protect the identity of the person. Thus, PRO TV preferred to blur the soldier's face, to protect him from possible persecution in other circumstances

based on his sexual orientation. TV 8 preferred to publish the image of the soldier, based on the fact that the person is an adult and probably gave his consent for his identity to be made public. Ziarul de Gardă published the name and surname of the soldier who deserted due to harassment based on his sexual orientation, also publishing images of him, but protecting the identity of other soldiers, who deserted from the National Army, for various reasons. The latter publication focused more on the phenomenon of general defection from this institution, rather than defection due to harassment based on sexual orientation, although the latter topic was also addressed in the investigative material. Most of the media institutions that have addressed the subject indicate that social discrimination based on a person's sexual orientation is worrisome. In recent years, a series of events that took place in EU member states and outside the community, such as the banning of parades of sexual minorities, hate speech by politicians and statements of intolerance by religious leaders have sent alarm signals and have triggered a new debate regarding the dimensions of homophobia and discrimination against lesbians, homosexuals, bisexuals, transsexuals worldwide.

Conclusions

As we mentioned before, discrimination based on sexual orientation is the most common in the Republic of Moldova, and this is confirmed by the public statements of politicians, public officials, church representatives, etc. Thus, the ex-president of the country, Igor Dodon, during the speech he gave at the inauguration of the World Congress of the Family in 2018, and exercising the function of President of the Republic of Moldova at that time, declared that sexual minorities represent a danger to traditional families, which are formed "exclusively between a man and a woman", and LGBT community festivals should be outlawed [10].

For his part, Metropolitan Vladimir mentioned in an interview on the subject that “sexual minorities cannot claim equality with the people who live on this earth, for whom the church is holy, for whom faith in God is part of their life” [11]. Such opinions appear frequently in the public space, in particular, during some electoral campaigns, with the aim of denigrating electoral competitors with a more tolerant attitude towards this segment of the population.

We recognize that media overseas are more tolerant and open to broadcasting LGBT material. By comparison, we affirm that the local press is not well documented on this subject, it does not have specialists and experts in the field, on the basis of which it could disseminate qualitative materials, while the international press openly talks about the phenomenon of sexual minorities in the world within broadcasts, newscasts and talk shows, with expert guests, specialists and representatives of sexual minorities, which gives credibility. Journalists from the international press demonstrate that they are well-documented about the LGBT community (call for tolerance, references to legislation, statistics regarding the application of legislation, LGBT issues, etc.).

Unfortunately, journalists in our country are less well-documented regarding the LGBT phenomenon in the country. The proof would be, for example, the lack of a unique position in demonstrating the image of the character of the report or the covering of his face. We see fewer materials that would also include neutral sources, such as experts, psychologists, specialists in the issues regarding the phenomenon of discrimination. These sources would give the materials originality, uniqueness, and in turn, the public would have been qualitatively informed, if they had been used. Often only sources such as personal involved in the conflict, the authorities of the institutions where the harassment or discrimination took place are used, and that’s it.

Almost all materials in the domestic press have a minimum time, i.e. 2-3 minutes and are informative. One reason for this is the lack of information and video images intended to complement the material to be broadcast. At the same time, we note that the involvement of local journalists in the creation of materials about sexual minorities is minimal. Often the reporter does not perform a stand-up in the report, which could lead the public to the idea that the reporter would not want to be identified with the supporters of the phenomenon, and this fact feeds the position of intolerance and non-acceptance of LGBT people, the media indirectly marginalizing them through ignoring.

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