
III. VISUOMENĖS SAUGUMO PRAKTINĖS PRIELAIDOS IR PROBLEMATIKA PRACTICAL PREREQUISITES FOR PUBLIC SECURITY

FUTURE LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS SEXUAL MINORITIES

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Annotation. Lithuanians seem to have rather negative attitude toward various minority groups and it may reflect general intolerance. Police and law enforcement officers should not take up discriminatory position related to some persons as this can affect the professional interactions negatively. The purpose of the study was to evaluate law enforcement students' negative attitude and homophobic reactions toward sexual minorities. A modified Negative Attitudes Toward Gay Men questionnaire (Davies, 2004) was used to survey 174 future law enforcement officers. Results revealed that law enforcement students tend to have a very negative attitude towards sexual minorities and male participants have an extremely negative reactions toward gays compared to lesbians. Personality traits play minor role while the law enforcement officers' gender may play the main role in stereotyping and having an extremely negative affective reactions towards gays and tendency to infringe their civil rights – this tendency is 2,7–4,6 times higher when the future law enforcement officers are male.

Keywords: attitudes, homosexual persons, gender differences.

INTRODUCTION

Discrimination and intolerance are often based on/or justified by prejudice and stereotyping of people and social groups, doing this consciously or unconsciously. People may be discriminated against because of many factors – age, disability, ethnicity, origin, political belief, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation and on many other grounds. Discrimination has direct consequences on those people and groups being discriminated against, but it has also

indirect and deep consequences on society as a whole. A society where discrimination is allowed or tolerated is a society where people are deprived from freely exercising their full potential for themselves and for society (Council of Europe).

Homophobia is often defined as "an irrational fear of and aversion to homosexuality and of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, based on prejudice, similar to racism, xenophobia, antisemitism and sexism" (European Parliament resolution on homophobia in Europe, 2006). In many parts of the world, homosexual and bisexual people are subjected to different forms of violence that range from verbal attacks to physical attacks or being murdered.

Lithuanians seem to have rather negative attitude toward various minority groups and it may reflect general intolerance. The number of researches on the sexual minority topic rather small in Lithuania. However, social phenomena as negative stereotypes and intolerance concerning homosexual, bisexual, transsexual persons (LGBT) are reflected actively at community as well political level in our country – intolerant statements by politicians and religious leaders have been reported in recent years, while public demonstrations in favour of LGBT rights have often met with resistance from the authorities (as illustrated by difficulties encountered by the organizers of the Baltic Pride events in Lithuania) (Bakowski, Liliencamp, Shreeves, 2015). But there is no evidence about such attitudes in law enforcement institutions. Police and law enforcement officers should not take up discriminatory position related to some persons as this can affect the professional interactions negatively.

The quality of police–community relations depend on effective communication and trust based interaction. However police officers may have many barriers to communication because of their position and authority, nature of their work, power they may demonstrate in relations with citizens, and the image they convey (these barriers include use of jargon, lack of feedback, failure to listen, prejudices and stereotypes). One of the most challenging things in our increasingly diverse society is discrimination. Prejudice is an attitude, discrimination is a behavior. According to researchers and professionals who work in practice, it is critical to recognize prejudices and stereotypes in order to avoid discrimination (Miller, Hess, Orthmann, 2011), and it is very important for every law enforcement system.

Police officers, lawyers, educators, employers agents are the professionals who should ensure right to equality of any person despite his/her belonging to certain group, as well belonging to sexual minorities. So it was important for us to explore this point of attitudes.

The purpose of the study was to evaluate law enforcement students' negative attitude and homophobic reactions toward sexual minorities.

METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

Participants. 174 students of Mykolas Romeris University Public security Faculty from Law and Police Activity program participated in the study, 104 (59,8%) of them are female. The age range of the students is 18 to 39 years with mean $M=21,8$ ($SD=3,1$) years.

Methods. A Negative Attitudes Toward Gay Men questionnaire (Davies, 2004) was used in the study – items were modified and we used 26 Likert type items to get participants' opinion of gays as well of lesbians and their civil rights.

Questionnaire consists of 4 domains: Civil rights scales (gays and lesbians) and Affective reactions scales (gays and lesbians). Sexual minorities Civil rights items represent participants' attitudes that homosexual persons should have the same civil rights as others in society and participants do not mind having friends who are homosexual (4 items concerning gays and 4 items concerning lesbians rights, Cronbach's alphas 0,74). Higher score reflects more negative attitude toward homosexual persons civil rights. Affective reactions to sexual minorities scales represent opinion that homosexual behavior is morally wrong, disgusting, is a perversion and a threat to the safety of children (9 items related to affective reactions to gays and 9 items to lesbians, Cronbach's alphas 0,88-0,90). Higher score for these scales reflect more negative affective reactions towards homosexual persons.

For personality traits evaluation we used the Big Five inventory (BFI; John, Donahue, Kentle, 1991; John, Naumann, Soto, 2008) that consists of 44 items that are distributed among the five personality dimensions: Openness to Experience (10 items, Cronbach's $\alpha=0,51$), Conscientiousness (9 items, Cronbach's $\alpha=0,66$), Agreeableness (9 items, Cronbach's $\alpha=0,63$), Extraversion (8 items, Cronbach's $\alpha=0,66$), and Neuroticism (8 items, Cronbach's $\alpha=0,61$). Higher scores on each scale represents more expressed personality facets. Extraversion represents personality gregariousness, assertiveness, activity, excitement-seeking, and positive emotions. Agreeableness represents trust, altruism, compliance, and tender-mindedness. Conscientious person is efficient, organized, thorough, not impulsive. Neuroticism as personality trait represents anxiety, angry hostility, impulsiveness, and vulnerability. Openness to experience represents wide interests, unconventional values, imagination and curiosity.

Also students were asked about their sociodemographics: gender, age, parents family status (lived with both parents, with single parent but was interacting with both of them, lived with single parent), siblings (no/yes), living place in early years (city, town, village place,

countryside), financial strain of parental family during early years of live and personal financial situation during studies (sufficient–lack).

Procedure. The questionnaires for participants were anonymous. SPSS 22.0 package was used for statistical analysis and empirical data (paired samples t test and Chi-square test).

RESULTS

According to results, attitudes toward homosexual persons civil rights and reactions to sexual may depend on homosexual person’s gender as well participant’s gender. In our study future law enforcement officers have more negative attitudes toward gays compared to lesbians (Figure 1).

Female participants gained statistically similar scores on gays and lesbians Civil rights scales ($t= -0,656$, $p=0,513$). However male participants have more negative attitude towards gays civil rights compared to lesbians civil rights ($t= -4,337$, $p<0,001$). Female and male participants have more negative affective reactions to gays compared to lesbians ($t= -3,052$, $p=0,003$ (female participants), $t= -11,371$, $p<0,001$ (male participants)).

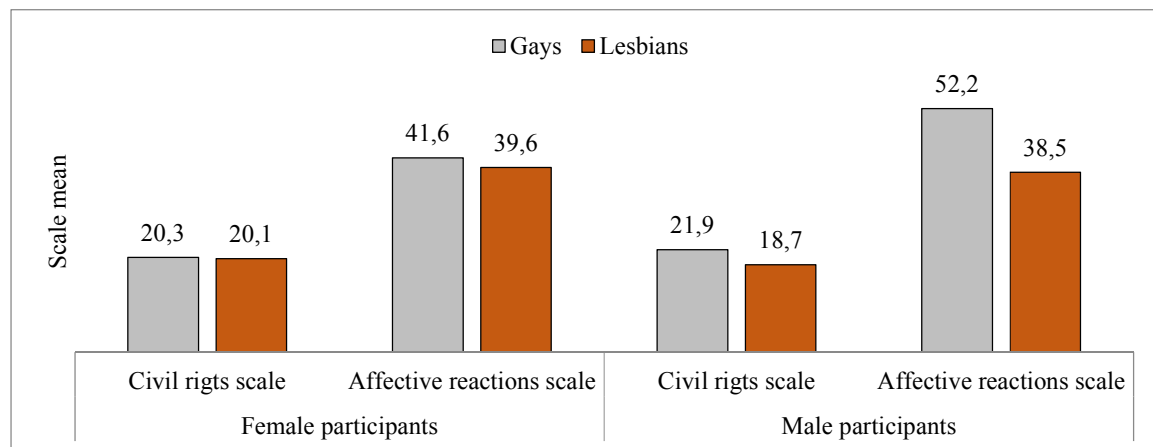


Figure 1. Negative attitudes and homophobic reactions: Gender differences

Also it is valuable to evaluate whether students of Law and Police Activity program have extremely negative attitudes towards sexual minorities. For this purpose a theoretically possible score range for each domain was divided into the categories: up to 80th percentile labeled as “normal attitude”, above 80th percentile labeled as “extremely negative affective reactions and attitude towards sexual minorities and their civil rights”. Results revealed that law enforcement

program students tend to have a very negative attitude towards sexual minorities and tend to approve the infringement of homosexuals' rights (Figure 2).

There are no statistically significant differences evaluating the rate of “normal attitude” and “extremely negative attitude” between male and female participants when analyzing lesbians and gays Civil rights domain ($\chi^2=0,441$, $p=0,506$ (lesbians domain); $\chi^2=0,441$, $p=0,506$ (gays domain)), as well Affective reactions to lesbians domain ($\chi^2=0,122$, $p=0,727$). Male participants have extremely negative affective reactions to gays more often compared to female participants ($\chi^2=12,741$, $p<0,001$).

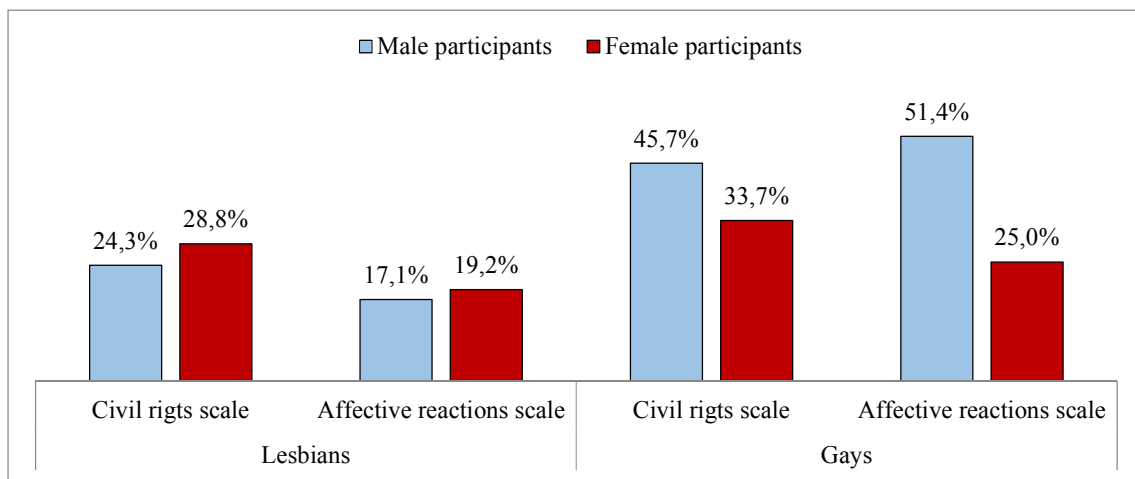


Figure 2. Extremely negative attitudes and homophobic reactions: Gender differences

We have performed several binary logistic regressions in order to determine which sociodemographic and personality variables may predict extremely negative attitudes toward homosexuals civil rights and extremely negative affective reactions toward gays and lesbians. In order to control some variables and evaluate group of variables impact on dependent variable, elements were added to regression analysis in blocks. We added participant's gender variable to the 1st block of regression analysis, participant's age, parents family status, siblings (no/yes), living place in early years, financial strain of parental family during early years of live and personal financial situation during studies (sufficient–lack) to the 2nd block. Personality domains of BFI were included to the last block of regression analysis.

According to results, none of three logistic regression models predicted extremely negative attitudes toward lesbians' civil rights statistically significant. The final model with all independent variables was not statistically significant ($\chi^2=20,393$, $df=19$, $p=0,371$, Nagelkerge $R^2=0,162$). However Conscientiousness and Agreeableness are statistically significant

variables in the model – lower scores on agreeableness ($\text{Exp}(B)=0,891$, $p=0,011$) and higher scores on conscientiousness ($\text{Exp}(B)=1,110$, $p=0,028$) may predict extremely negative attitudes toward lesbians' civil rights.

None of three logistic regression models predicted extremely negative attitudes toward gays' civil rights statistically significant. The final model with all independent variables was not statistically significant (but there was a statistical tendency: $\chi^2=28,566$, $df=19$, $p=0,073$, Nagelkerge $R^2=0,208$). All the variables in the model were not related to dependent variable statistically significant except the participants' gender ($\text{Exp}(B)=2,719$, $p=0,014$) – having an extremely negative attitudes towards gays civil rights are 2,719 times higher when the future law enforcement officers are male.

On the contrary expected, none of three logistic regression models predicted extremely negative affective reactions towards lesbians statistically significant. The final model with all independent variables was not statistically significant ($\chi^2=18,001$, $df=19$, $p=0,522$, Nagelkerge $R^2=0,161$). All the variables in the model were not related to the dependent variable statistically significant.

According to results, law enforcement students' gender may predict the extremely negative affective reactions towards gays statistically significant ($\chi^2=13,869$, $df=1$, $p<0,001$, Nagelkerge $R^2=0,106$) – about 10,6 percent of dependent variable's dispersion change may be explained by participant's gender variable. For participant's gender odds ratio is $\text{Exp}(B)=3,375$, $p<0,001$. Other sociodemographic and personality variables were not statistically significant for next prognostic models, however the gender remained statistically significant in all regression models (final regression model $\chi^2=31,171$, $df=19$, $p<0,001$, Nagelkerge $R^2=0,227$, $\text{Exp}(B)=4,605$, $p<0,001$ for participants' gender – having an extremely negative affective reactions towards gays are 4,605 times higher when the future law enforcement officers are male).

CONCLUSIONS

International study revealed that 61% of young gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons from 37 European countries claimed that they experienced prejudice and/or discrimination in school, and 51% in their family. 38% of respondents said they had experienced prejudice and/or discrimination in a community they belonged to and 30% did so in their circle of friends (Council of Europe). Results of Jankauskaite's research (2003) also revealed that Lithuanian students also tend to be homophobic and discriminate homosexuals' civil rights.

Lithuanian police and law enforcement program university students also seems to have very negative reactions towards homosexual persons, and this tendency is particularly typical when giving opinion about gays compared to lesbians civil rights and homophobic reactions. In our study up to 28,8% students tend to extremely approve the infringement of lesbians' civil rights and up to 45,7% of participants – gays civil rights. Perhaps these results should not be surprising as police officers also may be homophobic – 51% of participants (Reingarde, Zdanevicius, 2007 study) agreed that homosexual persons should not work at police and law structures (compared to 46% of participants who said that homosexuals should not be employed in military area). According to Reingarde and Zdanevicius (2007), about 7% of participants in their study absolutely disagree (18% disagree) with legal acts that protects homosexuals' rights in labour market. Regrettably, homosexual persons avoid to reveal their sexual orientation to police officers after the violence attacks because are afraid of discrimination of the law enforcement professionals in Lithuania. Most of them also stated that police officers reactions to them as a victim were discriminant, intolerant and humiliating after violence incidents (Platovas, 2003).

Law enforcement officers' gender may play the main role in stereotyping and having an extremely negative affective reactions towards gays and tendency to infringe their civil rights – this tendency is 2,7–4,6 times higher when the future law enforcement officers are male. Comperative studies show that European and Lithuanian women more often have positive attitude towards homosexual persons compared to men (D'Amore et a., 2014; Reingardė, Zdanevičius, 2007; Tereškinas, 2003).

In this study we have found that lower agreeableness and higher conscientiousness of future law enforcement officers predicts extremely negative attitudes towards sexual minorities, however personality impact was very minor. Results of other studies reveal that legal (state policy, especially legal restrictions on same-sex marriage) and social context (public opinion on homosexuals, has contacts with homosexuals, resides in state with homosexuals marriage or civil unions) may be more important than personality in predicting opinions on gay and lesbian rights (Redlawsk, Tolbert, 2012). So education and tolerance training may have a huge impact on homophobic reactions, attitudes toward and dealing with sexual minority group members. According to Council of Europe recommendations, educational programmes that raise awareness about the mechanisms of prejudice and intolerance and how they contribute to discriminate and oppress people, and on the appreciation of diversity and promoting tolerance, may be most effective. Educators recognize the need to develop in every person a tolerant, non-

discriminatory attitude and create a learning environment that acknowledges and benefits from diversity instead of ignoring or excluding it (Council of Europe).

To summarize, male law and police activity program students have more negative attitude towards gays civil rights compared to lesbians civil rights. Females' attitude towards gays and lesbians civil rights are similar. Law and police activity program students (both male and female) have more negative affective and homophobic reactions to gays compared to lesbians.

Law enforcement program students tend to have an extremely negative attitude and homophobic reactions towards sexual minorities (concerning lesbians – up to 19,2 % of participants, gays – up to 51,4% of participants) and tend to approve the infringement of homosexuals' rights (lesbians civil rights – up to 28,8% of participants, gays – up to 45,7% of participants). Male gender, lower agreeableness and higher conscientiousness of future law enforcement officers predicts extremely negative attitudes towards homosexual persons civil rights and extremely negative affective reactions towards these sexual minorities.

Results of this study are pessimistic – other researchers has proved that negative attitudes toward homosexuals and elderly people, Blacks (as well representation of racism), women (as well representation of sexism), prejudice toward mentally disabled persons are highly correlated and form one single factor (Ekehammar and Akrami, 2003; Ekehammer et al., 2004). These assumptions we will test in our prospective research.

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BŪSIMŲ TEISĖTVARKOS PAREIGŪNŲ POŽIŪRIS Į SEKSUALINES MAŽUMAS

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Santrauka

Diskriminacija ir netolerancija dažniausiai remiasi sąmoningu arba nesąmoningu stereotipizavimu ir išankstiniu neigiamu nusistatymu tam tikrų žmonių ar socialinių grupių stžvilgiu. Žmonės gali būti diskriminuojami dėl įvairių priežasčių – amžiaus, negalios, etniškumo, kilmės, politinių įsitikinimų, rasės, religijos, lyties, seksualinės orientacijos ar kitu pagrindu. Homofobija – vienas iš tokių diskriminaciją skatinančių jausmų, kuris apibūdinamas kaip „iracionali baimė ar antipatija homoseksualumui ir gėjams, lesbietėms, biseksualams bei translyčiams asmenims, kuri remiasi išankstine neigiama nuostata panašia į rasizmą, ksenofobiją, antisemitizmą ir seksizmą (Europos parlamento rezoliucija dėl homofobijos Europoje, 2006). Negausių tyrimų duomenys rodo, kad Lietuvoje egzistuoja gana neigiama nusotata į įvairias mažumų grupes, tame tarpe ir į seksualines mažumas (Reingarde, Zdanevicius, 2007, Platovas, 2003, Tereškinas, 2003). Policijos ir piliečių bendradarbiavimas priklauso nuo efektyvios komunikacijos ir tarpusavio pasitikėjimo. Todėl labai svarbu pašalinti kliūtis sėkmingam bendravimui, ir viena iš jų yra išankstinės pareigūnų nuostatos ir stereotipai. Šiame darbe siekėme išsiaiškinti būsimų policijos pareigūnų nuostatas ir homofobines reakcijas seksualinių mažumų atžvilgiu. Tyrime dalyvavo 174 Mykolo Romerio universiteto Viešojo saugumo fakulteto studentai, būsimieji policijos pareigūnai. Jie užpildė Neigiamų nuostatų į gėjus vyrus klausimyną (Davies, 2004) bei Didžiojo penketo asmenybės bruožų testą (Big Five, John, Neumann, Soto, 2008). Tokiu būdu siekėme išsiaiškinti ne tik nusotatų į seksualines mažumas pobūdį, bet ir patikrinti, ar jos susijusios su tam tikrais asmenybės bruožais. Net pusė apklaustųjų turi neigiamą požiūrį į vyrus gėjus, lesbiečių atžvilgiu tiek vyrai, tiek moterys nusiteikę palankiau. Tyrimas atskleidė, kad studentai vyrai turi žymiai neigiamesnę nuostatą gėjų pilietinių teisių atžvilgiu negu lesbiečių atžvilgiu. Moterų požiūris tiek į gėjų, tiek į lesbiečių pilietines teise yra panašus. Asmenybės bruožų įtaka neigiamų nusotatų seksualinių mažumų atžvilgiu pasireiškimui yra labai nežymi, bet buvimas vyru, žemas Sutariamumas (polinkis kritikuoti, jausti priešišumą, mažesnis kito žmogaus užjautimas ir supratimas) bei aukštas Sąmoningumas (savidrausmė, pareigingumas, apdairumas, tvarkos siekimas) siejasi su būsimų policijos pareigūnų neigiamomis nuostatomis į seksualines mažumas bei jų pilietines teises.

Pagrindinės sąvokos: nuostatos, homoseksualūs asmenys, lyčių skirtumai

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