A photograph of a person with light blue eyes and dark hair, looking directly at the camera. Their face and torso are covered with numerous white strips of paper, each with a handwritten Slovenian slur in black ink. The slurs include 'KRIPEL' on the forehead, 'CIGANKA', 'PEDEK', 'MUSLIMAN', 'ČEFURKA', 'RASICA', 'TOPLJODAR', 'KMETICA', 'SLOVENCEK', 'NOREC', 'LEZBA', and 'ČRUH'. The background is a textured, grey wall.

Roman Kuhar

At the Crossroads of Discrimination

Multiple and Intersectional Discrimination



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At the Crossroads of Discrimination

Multiple and Intersectional Discrimination

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Contents

Discrimination beyond categorisation	9
1 Discrimination as a practice of inequality	15
1.1 Typological approach to discrimination	18
1.2 The functioning of discrimination	19
1.3 Language and discrimination	20
1.3.1 Negative Other-presentation	21
1.3.2 Exclusion	22
1.3.3 Non-linguistic forms of less favourable treatment	24
1.3.4 Discriminatory objectification	24
2 Intersectional and multiple discrimination	27
2.1 The sum or a new content of discrimination?	30
2.2 Types of intersectionality	33
2.3 Intersectional and multiple discrimination	34
2.4 Thematising intersectional discrimination in European Union policies	36
3 Discrimination and intolerance	41
3.1 Micro ideologies of everyday life	42
3.1.1 Stereotypes	42
3.1.2 Prejudices	45
3.2 Modern prejudices and stereotypes	49
4 The extent of discrimination in Slovenia and beyond	53
5 Research on (intersectional) discrimination	59
5.1 The course of the research and methodology	61

6 When will you run out of glue?	67
7 Attribution as a basis for discrimination	71
7.1 Attribution based on visible traits	73
7.1.1 Language as a visible trait	77
7.1.2 Name as a trait which becomes visible	81
7.2 Attribution based on non-visible, imagined or unknown traits	83
8 Stigmatised identity	89
8.1 Discrimination as a reaction to stigmatised identity	89
8.1.1 (Un)covering the stigma	91
8.1.2 Stigma as a contagion	92
9 The mode and place of discrimination	97
9.1 Discrimination through use of negatively connoted expressions	97
9.2 Discrimination at work	100
9.1.1 Disability and the workplace	100
9.1.2 Religious affiliation and the workplace	104
9.1.3 Ethnicity and the workplace	107
9.1.4 Gender and the workplace	108
10 Intersectional discrimination in everyday life	111
10.1 Intersection of gender and ethnicity	113
10.2 Intersection of gender and religious affiliation	115
10.3 Intersection of gender and disability	117
10.4 Intersection of gender and sexual orientation	118
10.5 Intersection of sexual orientation and ethnicity	119
10.6 Intersection of sexual orientation and religion	120
10.7 Intersection of sexual orientation and disability	121
10.8 Intersection of ethnicity and disability	121

11 Methods of stigma management	125
11.1 Destigmatisation of stigma	126
11.2 Rationalisation and “justifying” the stigma	128
11.3 Relativisation of stigma	128
11.4 Concealing the stigma	128
11.5 Mirroring the stigma	130
11.6 Stigma as an advantage	131
11.7 Resignation	133
12 Consequences of stigmatisation and discrimination	135
12.1 Social exclusion	136
12.2 Self-stigmatisation	138
12.3 Deteriorating health condition	139
12.4 Additional discrimination	141
Instead of the conclusion: discrimination and compassion	145
References	149

Discrimination beyond categorisation

Being active in the area of (non)discrimination, one can often hear objections, such as why is the issue of discrimination so often emphasised, why are there so many seminars on discrimination countermeasures, why all the posters and other campaigns that draw attention to the matter, since this is not supposed to be such a serious issue after all. The problem nonetheless exists, but hidden, because its victims are often reluctant to talk about it or they do not even recognise they are being discriminated against, they are condoning it and perceive it as a completely normal and generally admissible behaviour. Individuals and groups particularly exposed to discrimination do not realise that by being silent and by condoning discrimination they are helping to maintain a situation in which it seems acceptable to endure discrimination (which in no way means that they themselves are guilty that discrimination happened in the first place).

By adopting legislation which prohibits various forms of discrimination¹, an agreement has been reached on its unacceptability and inadmissibility; now further efforts are needed to enforce the legislation more effectively and more often. This primarily means raising awareness on what discrimination is, in what forms it manifests itself, who its most frequent victims are and how to prevent it. We also need to become bolder when it comes to applying various means that are at our disposal in the event of discrimination, from non-formal means, such as warning the offender or alerting the media, to more formal means, like reporting the offence to the Human Rights Ombudsman, to the Advocate of the Principle of Equality or to the competent inspectorate,

1 If we list only the most basic sources, this legislation in Slovenia includes the Implementation of the Principle of Equal Treatment Act, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Disabled Persons Act, Articles 6 and 6a of Employment Relationship Act, Articles 131 and 297 of the Penal Code of the Republic of Slovenia and Article 20 of the Protection of Public Order Act.

or bringing an action before a competent court. Despite the awareness that increasing repression is not the right way to solve social problems, prosecution of criminal offences, such as violations of equality or hate speech, it is also needed to send a clear message to the public on where the boundaries of admissibility are. It is hard to comprehend that in Slovenia offenders have so far been convicted of perpetrating the criminal offence of hate speech only twice² and that nobody has ever been prosecuted on account of perpetrating a criminal offence of violation of equality.

This is particularly hard to imagine when reading this study, from which it is evident that numerous and very diverse groups of people are being discriminated against. The study namely provides a detailed overview of various forms of discrimination in Slovenia, which are demonstrated with actual practical examples. The reader may recognise herself or himself in some of the situations that happened to our interviewees, as well as participants in focus groups. This book has been prepared in the framework of Progressing Towards Equality (PROTECT): An Intersectional Approach to Anti-Discrimination project, which is supported by the European Commission and implemented in partnership cooperation of the Društvo Informacijski Center Legebitra (Association Information Centre Legibitra), Društvo za razvijanje prostovoljnega dela Novo Mesto (Society for Developing Voluntary Work Novo Mesto), the Legal Information Centre for Non-governmental Organisations (PIC) and YHD – Association for the Theory and Culture of Handicap, and is headed by the Peace Institute. As apparent from the project title, the special added value of this book is the detailed discussion about issues relating to multiple and intersectional discrimination; for this reason, several chapters are dedicated to those subjects alone.

One of the most important observations made about multiple and intersectional discrimination is that it is even harder to perceive due to its multiple

² See the Judgement of the District Court of Ilirska Bistrica, Ref. No. K 50/99, of 31 December 2001, by which a president of a local community was convicted for collecting signatures against the immigration of a Roma family, and the Judgement of the District Court of Lendava of 27 December 2005 which convicted a person who, on one of the web forums, posted a call to kill people of Roma ethnicity.

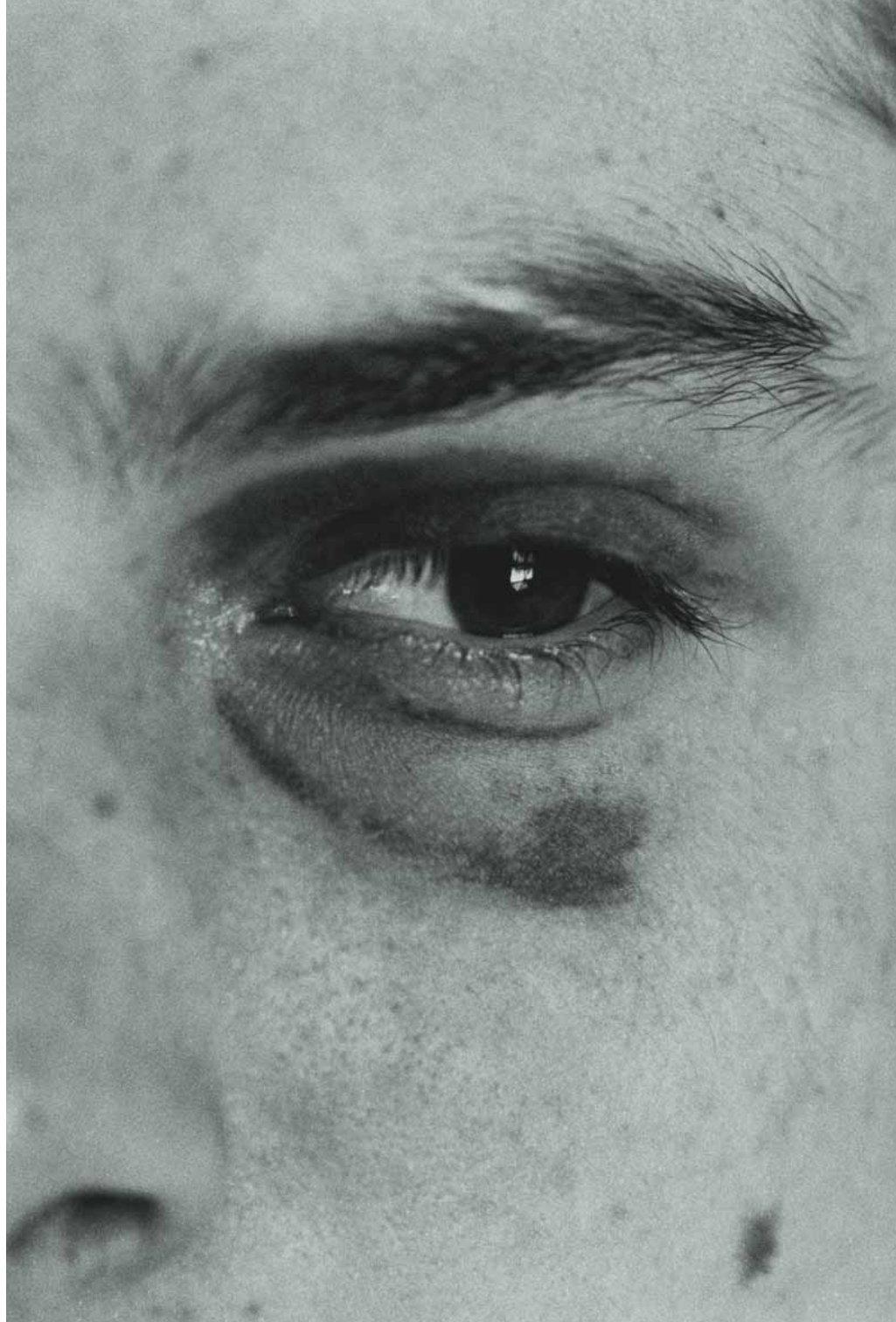
dimensions; its existence is additionally complicated from a legal point of view, since most legal instruments are focused on one-dimensional forms of discrimination – discrimination based on one personal circumstance. I can confirm this observation with two of my own personal experiences. I recall that I participated in a simulation of a court hearing (so called *moot court*) in Budapest, for the first time; the case was from the area of asylum law. We heard a hypothetical case of an asylum seeker who claimed he left his country because of persecution that he suffered as a member of an ethnic minority and as an active member of one of the political opposition parties. Our argumentation – I participated on the side of the seeker's counsel – was based on the statement that government authorities were persecuting him because of both personal circumstances. They did not persecute all who were politically active on the side of the opposition or all who were members of the ethnic minority, but the combination of both circumstances lead to him being more interesting for the authorities than others who did not have one or the other personal circumstance. The judge rejected our argument and we were advised to choose one or the other personal circumstance. But we believed we could only defend the case by emphasising the combination of both circumstances which made the asylum seeker particularly vulnerable and together put him into a new, third situation. The other case is recent and arose from the initiative to review the constitutionality of the Registration of a Same-Sex Civil Partnership Act, which I co-wrote. In the initiative, the two initiators claimed that Article 22 of the Act was discriminatory because it regulates the inheritance for registered same-sex couples differently from the Act on Inheritance, while the difference in treatment was not objectively justified. As the grounds for different treatment they indicated gender and sexual orientation. As it is known, the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Slovenia granted their complaint and repealed Article 22 of the Act on the grounds that this was discrimination based on sexual orientation. However, the court never commented on gender, although it is clear that the Act regulated inheritance differently based on both personal circumstances: sexual orientation and gender. Namely, if the complainants were of opposite genders, in the event of one of them dying, inheritance would occur in accordance with the Act on Inheritance. They would not need to register, since they

would be allowed to marry; or even that would not be necessary because, if the couple was heterosexual, the cohabiting partners would have equal rights to married couples. This was obviously a case of intersection, but the Constitutional Court simplified its otherwise excellently argued decision and left the personal circumstance of gender out of its argumentation and by doing so missed the opportunity to use the concept of intersection in the constitutional-court judgement.

Although clarity and simplicity are crucial for understanding otherwise complicated social phenomena and legal concepts, intersectionality and multiplicity are the forces dictated by life. Each of us is of a certain gender, nationality, has a certain citizenship, skin colour, health situation, age and sexual orientation, many also have a disability and other circumstances. This is why we must not allow ourselves to, by simplifying, overlook various forms of discrimination that cannot be easily classified.

Neža Kogovšek,

Editor



Discrimination as a practice of inequality 1

Discrimination is one of the most often used terms in the context of discussions about human rights, inequality and protection of minorities. Political speeches, media texts and products, sociological writings, legal studies – the issue of discrimination can be found in all these discussions.

Etymologically, the word originates from the Latin word “discriminare”³, which means “to divide between”. The original meaning of discrimination is to divide between different options; it means to have preferences towards a certain choice, either a person or an object.

In the modern meaning of the word, discrimination is generally understood as “making inappropriate distinctions”, and the legal meaning of the word is “unacceptable differentiation”. The act of discrimination is thus negatively valued, even though in theory (and of course practice) there is also the so called positive discrimination or positive measures, where making distinctions results in benefits for a certain individual or a group. This is a temporary measure with which vulnerable social groups are, compared to others, put into a more favourable position in order to ensure that they have the same opportunities or to even out the starting positions. One such example is the policy of active employment that involves hard-to-employ persons, such as the Roma, elderly women, people with disabilities and similar. But regardless of this exception, the consequences of discrimination/differentiation are negative for the discriminated individual or group. It can be said that discrimination is the practice of inequality.

3 Taken from: Harper, Douglas, *Online Etymology Dictionary*, 2001, www.etymonline.com.

Discrimination functions based on categories or affiliations with certain groups. These are various personal circumstances which unite individuals into a separate social group. The list of personal circumstances can be almost infinite, thus, various anti-discrimination clauses in legislations often end with an open definition "... and other personal circumstances". One such case is Article 14 of the Slovene Constitution which stipulates that all citizens of Slovenia are equal before the law, regardless of "national origin, race, gender, language, religion, political, or other conviction, material standing, birth, education, social status, disability⁴, or any other personal circumstance".

This text primarily discusses personal circumstances that are addressed by various documents of the European Union. According to Verloo (2006: p. 212), in the last thirty years in Europe, anti-discrimination legislation has been adopted which primarily balances the inequality between men and women, but the attention to inequality in the last ten years or more has been broadened to include other personal circumstances. The turning point in this context was the Treaty of Amsterdam of 1997⁵ with which the members of the European Union undertook to prevent all discrimination based on six personal circumstances:

gender,
racial or ethnic origin,
religion or belief,
disability,
age,
sexual orientation.

- 4 Slovenian experts from the field of disability or handicap are not yet in agreement on how to use the terminology regarding disability (Slov. *invalidnost*) or handicap (Slov. *hendikep*). In general in this text, we use the term "hendikep" (engl. *handicap*), but where the quoted works and interviewees used the term "invalidnost" (engl. *disability*), we did not change the term used. Both terms denote the same personal circumstance which is mentioned as one of the six personal circumstances in Article 13 of the Treaty of Amsterdam (the word used in English and throughout this translation is: disability).
- 5 The Treaty of Amsterdam, http://www.svz.gov.si/fileadmin/svz.gov.si/pageuploads/Primeri_zakonodaja/Amsterdamska.pdf (10 October 2009).

The above-mentioned circumstances are related to the deeply-rooted prejudices, and the distinctions that they establish are “the fabric of the strongest ideological systems” (Ule, 2005). As a matter of fact, we could be referring to the ideological model of the western man that is set up as a norm:

“This is a heterosexual man, white, belonging to the western urban culture, professing liberal Christianity and is a member of the middle or the higher social class. All leading ideologies in modern, developed societies are inclined towards these criteria and aim at this “model”. In modern western societies, most prejudices are made precisely in relation to these criteria and differences, and are also very deeply rooted: prejudices towards non-male, non-white, non-heterosexual, belonging to non-western societies, non-Christian, non-healthy, non-rich.” (Ule, 2005: p. 27)

In the past, the one to draw attention to the image of a “normative human” was Goffman (2008 [1963]) with his WASP (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant) concept, used in his discussion on stigma. Non-conformity to the normative model – be it the WASP or the broader version, as defined by Ule – is definitely a basis for discriminatory treatment of all who deviate from this normative model and actually enable it with their deviation, since it can only be established as a negation of its binary opposite.

Methods of discrimination vary. The most general form of discrimination is social exclusion of certain individuals or groups. Legally, discrimination can be defined in comparison with another person or a group as an unequal, prohibited treatment of a person or a group on account of one or more personal circumstances; in a broader sociological sense, discrimination is a form of social practice which is generally based on prejudices and stereotypes, deeply rooted in a society's culture. Such practice results in formal or informal forms of segregation, marginalisation or social exclusion of an individual or a group. In other words, this means that discrimination is any practice that prevents certain individuals or groups the exercising of their rights and freedoms and, compared to other members of a certain political or social entity, puts them

in an unfavourable situation and pushes them to the edge of society, either physically or symbolically.

There are various forms, modes and practices of discrimination.

1.1 Typological approach to discrimination

One of the possible categorisations of discrimination is related to personal circumstances. Most often we talk about (1) *ethnic or racial discrimination* and (2) *gender based discrimination*. Historically speaking, these two discriminations were – by way of racist politics (as for example segregation of whites and African Americans in the United States of America), the system of patriarchy and the related sexism – most often the subject of various politics, including identity politics. Besides those, we can also distinguish between (3) *age discrimination*, (4) *religious discrimination*, (5) *discrimination based on disability*, (6) *sexual orientation* and similar.

In her discussion on everyday racism that is related to ethnic and racial discrimination, Philomena Essed (1991) makes the distinction between three forms of racism that are interwoven. First, there is (1) *marginalisation* of those who, in the sense of ethnicity and nationality, are established as the *Others*, namely, people that are different from the majority. Related to this is also (2) *the problematisation of their culture* or their identity, and also characteristic for everyday racism are (3) *strategies of repression or resistance* which cripple minority groups or oppose their demands. We believe that these forms – marginalisation, problematisation of identity and opposition – can be expanded to other types of “everyday discrimination”, such as sexism, homophobia, gerontophobia and similar.

The functioning of discrimination

1.2

Manifestable forms of everyday discrimination, as presented by Essed in the example of racism, are actually an interconnected system, which represents one of the forms, methods or practices of discrimination. According to Kogovšek and Petković (2007), (1) *direct* and (2) *indirect* forms of discrimination are the most basic forms of categorising discrimination. Direct discrimination is a form of exclusion where an individual or a group are *directly* treated unequally and less favourably due to personal circumstances, be it on account of gender, religion, ethnic origin or any other personal circumstance. Indirect discrimination is a practice where *seemingly neutral criteria* are used, but they nonetheless result in placing an individual with a certain personal circumstance in a less favourable situation.

Besides direct and indirect discrimination, we can also make the distinction between (3) *individual discrimination* and (4) *systemic discrimination* (sometimes also called institutional or structural discrimination). These forms of discrimination are practices of exclusion and unequal treatment and are embedded in the system itself or in the rules of a certain social institution's system of functioning (for example, discrimination embedded in a law), while the individual discrimination is its opposite and is discrimination practised by a person/group in relation to another person/group and is not related to social institutions.

Beside these forms, there are also practices of discrimination that are essentially an inexhaustible source of various activities, the consequences of which are social exclusion of individuals or groups. The most frequent practices of discrimination include (5) *harassment*, (6) *victimisation*, (7) *ethnic profiling*, (8) *discrimination by association* and similar. Harassment is a form of undesirable activities related to an individual's personal circumstance (e. g. gender) and is offensive, degrading or hostile to the individual. Victimisation denotes the practice of activities where an individual is exposed to adverse consequences for seeking aid because of discrimination. It thus relates to discrimination which occurred in the past. Persons afraid of victimisation are, for

example, those who were sexually harassed at work, but who do not wish to report it because they are afraid of the consequences of such actions. Ethnic profiling is ranking groups based on their ethnic or racial (and also religious) affiliation and attributing certain attributes to such categories of people. This includes a priori attribution of criminality, lesser capabilities, certain (negative) characteristics and similar, and acting based on these grounds. Discrimination by association denotes circumstances where a person or a group is discriminated against due to a personal circumstance which is not their own but of another person or a group that are associated with them. If for example, a woman loses her job because it has been revealed that her husband is infected with HIV, she is being discriminated against because of her husband's medical condition.

Another form of discrimination is (9) *providing instructions for discrimination*. This is a form where a certain person instructs other persons on how to discriminate against a certain person or a group, or how to segregate and marginalise them. This form of discrimination relates to future discriminatory behaviour (by contrast to victimisation which relates to discriminatory behaviour that occurred in the past). A common form of discrimination, closely related to discursive discrimination discussed below, is (10) hate speech. In this case, it is necessary to emphasise that hate speech is not any opinion that is not to our liking or which we find rude or disrespectful for certain individuals and groups, but only speech which contains a certain intention or purpose. Such intent or purpose must be clearly stated. Hate speech is speech which calls for exclusion, marginalisation of a certain group or an individual, or inciting physical or verbal attacks and similar against certain groups or individuals (Kogovšek, Petkovič, 2007: pp. 15-25).

1.3 Language and discrimination

A special set of discriminatory practices is related to language or different discursive forms of exclusion. Kristina Boréus (2006) talks about *discursive discrimination* exercised through the use of language. These are linguistic

means which are used to treat certain groups or individuals, which we suspect are members of a certain chosen group, less favourably. As demonstrated by this study, the latter is a significant element in discrimination, because our interviewees often mentioned that they were designated as “Bosnians” even though they were not of Bosnian nationality. They were recognised as members of a group, that is established as the *Others* in Slovenia and is less favourably treated, which consequently made them victims of this type of (linguistic) discrimination. Protection against this kind of discrimination is also provided by the legislation, which states that discrimination *on the grounds of personal circumstance* is prohibited and it is thus not required that the discriminated individual has this personal circumstance, but allows the possibility that the circumstance is merely attributed to them.

Boréus makes the distinction between four basic types of discursive discrimination: (1) *negative Other-presentation*, (2) *exclusion*, (3) *non-linguistic forms of less favourable treatment*, (4) *discriminatory objectification*.

Negative Other-presentation

1.3.1

The grounds for the negative representation of *Others* are essentially the same as the basis for prejudice and stereotypes. This means that a distinction between “us” and “them” is made, where generally our group is praised and the rest are labelled as *Others* (less worthy, threatening, etc. – more on this in the “Discrimination and intolerance” chapter).

According to Boréus (2006: pp. 410–413), the first type of discursive discrimination can manifest itself in different ways. The first is the conscious (1) *use of expressions with negative connotations*. Instead of using politically correct expressions, we can exclude and degrade a certain individual or a group on purpose by using a derogatory term. Discursive discrimination can also occur when (2) non-offensive and degrading expressions are not available. Boréus stresses that these are a deeply-rooted discursive discrimination. It can often occur that expressions, previously neutral, acquire a negative connotation due to the discrimination of certain groups that the expressions denote. Two

examples are characteristic of this, in Slovenia, for example the word “cigan” (gipsy), instead of which the word Roma is used in formal discourse; in America, a similar word is “nigger”, which at first only denoted a black person and later acquired a negative, racist meaning.

The third type of discursive discrimination mentioned by Boréus can be identified by the manner of describing individuals and groups. Mostly, this is a case of (3) *attributing typical characteristics and behaviours*. In other words, it could be said that this is stereotyping, manifesting itself through media discourse. A statement which is very indicative is one by the Swedish journalist Oivvia Polite and shows how the continued usage of negative presentation can lead to discursive discrimination:

“When I as an individual journalist write about a young immigrant lad who is on his way into serious criminality because he feels excluded from society, then I relate something that is true, but if many of my colleagues write similar articles and if that kind of article is the only kind we write about young immigrants, then we jointly produce a lie.” (Polite, 1998, quoted in Boréus, 2006: p. 411).

Therefore, the problem is that, from a multitude of facts about a certain group, the representations of a group always reproduce only a single fact.

1.3.2 Exclusion

Exclusion as a discursive discrimination is related to social exclusion which results in the individuals or groups not having an equal access to goods, including economic resources and education. Boréus (2006: pp. 413-416) makes the distinction between two basic types of discursive exclusion: (1) *exclusion of voices* and (2) *invisibility making*.

Exclusion of voices is related to the non-existence of certain types of voices in a discourse, in media texts and similar, or to the fact that these voices are only summarised, marginal and coincidental. For example, the study on

media representations of Muslims in Slovenia, conducted during the time of controversy regarding the caricatures of the prophet Mohammed, showed that the most heard opinions regarding this issue were those of politicians, who, in the media, were introduced with a name, while the voice of the affected was narrowed down to “the voice of the Muslim world”, made uniform into a single opinion and often equated with the voice which seemed to be the most radical (cf. Kuhar, 2006).

Boréus (2006) states that exclusion of voices does not result merely in the silence of certain groups, but also silences alternative views on the issues and alternative solutions to those issues. This is especially important in the context of intersectionality (the intersection of various identity positions; more on this can be found in the “Intersectional and multiple discrimination” chapter), since groups, which represent only one of the intersections of an individual, do not pay attention to special situations created in the intersection with other identities. Thus, for example, specific issues experienced by gays with disabilities are addressed neither by the gay nor the disability organisations.

The other form of exclusion is making certain individuals or groups invisible. Not only do they not have a voice in the mass media, but there is also no reporting in the media about them or their culture, or the invisibility is established by reporting about them in exclusively negative contexts. Invisibility is thus established by excluding positive presentations.

This type of exclusion is closely related to the concept of (multi)cultural citizenship (Kymlicka, 1995) which states that an individual has the right for their culture to be represented in a certain environment, where the individual is a citizen, even though it is not a majority culture. An example of rights arising from cultural citizenship are for example radio and TV shows that the RTV Slovenija radio and television broadcasting service produces for the Italian, Hungarian and Roma minorities.

1.3.3 Non-linguistic forms of less favourable treatment

Even though all the above-mentioned forms of discursive discrimination can have consequences that can lead to exclusions which surpass the boundaries of language, Boréus (2006: pp. 416-417) mentions non-linguistic forms of less favourable treatment separately. Among these are also discursive practices that do not exist solely on the level of language, but can cause damaging consequences in the psychological, physical or social sense. Among these, Boréus mentions (1) *argumentation* as a typical form of speech activity that can lead to the exclusion of certain groups (for example, argumentation includes proposals on how to treat certain individuals or groups).

1.3.4 Discriminatory objectification

The fourth form of discursive discrimination is discriminatory objectification. It manifests itself when a group or individuals are discursively treated as if they were objects. Such discourse (1) robs the group of subjectivity. An example of discriminatory objectification can be found in Slovenian legislation; by using the term "registration", the *Registration of a Same-Sex Civil Partnership Act* establishes same-sex partnership as a kind of an object that needs to be registered, similarly to a passenger vehicle.



Intersectional and multiple discrimination 2

Historically speaking, the discussion on intersectionality or discrimination, based on several personal circumstances, has its origin in feminist analysis of black (female) authors, who drew attention to how racism substantially affects the gender experience. As an example, Hernández (2005: p. 327) mentions stereotypes that have been applied to black and white women in American culture from slavery onwards. Black women were sexualised and seen as “whores by nature”, while white women were seen as decent and pure. Another such example mentioned by Hernández (2005: p. 329) also demonstrates the joint effect of gender and race: the comparison of the sexual harassment experiences of white and black women showed that sexual harassment is not merely a violation of an individual’s right over their own body where race plays no role, but race also substantially marked the sexual harassment experiences of white and black women. The latter stated that the perpetrators of the criminal offence used racist adjectives when addressing them during sexual harassment; this was not reported by white women with the same experience.

The concept of discrimination, which addresses the above-mentioned examples, originates from identity politics, mostly from the mid 1980s onwards. Politics based on identity are focused on interests and perspectives of certain social minorities or marginalised groups, that are united or connected in a group by the same experiences of personal circumstances, either gender, religious affiliation, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability or similar. The groups take their identity as the basis for political activities and request recognition or protection of their rights based on this, and at the same time question their situation and oppression in the wider society. Identity politics are thus closely related to social movements, such as the feminist movement, which is definitely the most well known example of identity politics.

One of the most common criticisms of such politics, from which the concept of intersectionality developed, is the unifying nature of identity politics. Politics in general are always implemented “on behalf of someone”. Roma politics are thus connected with issues that the Roma face, gay and lesbian politics with issues that gays and lesbians face, women politics with issues that are related with women, and so on. What is common to all these adjectives – female, Roma, gay, lesbian – is that they leave an impression of a unified group on behalf of which certain policies are performed. Thus, there are politics on behalf of a Gay, with a capital initial letter, a Woman, with a capital initial letter, and so on. It is assumed that members of a group, on whose identity the identity politics is based, face the same problems and see the same solutions to these problems. Identity is therefore the source of the problem, and at the same time, the policies based on this identity contain the solution to the problem.

Although we do not claim that such unified experiences are not possible – Judith Butler (1993), for example, wrote that what is common to all gays and lesbians in their diversity is the experience of homophobia, – the identity politics is still mainly based on an “imaginary identity” of a group. This means that people with an experience of a certain identity are members of a group, but these experiences can also vary, since the experiences are also influenced by the differences between individuals in the group or other identities/circumstances that comprise the individual’s subjectivity. The experience of revealing the sexual orientation of a gay who lives in a liberal environment is certainly a lot different than the experience of a gay living in an environment where politics and culture are closely interwoven with religion, embedded with non-acceptance of homosexuality. In other words: certain individuals do share an experience of a certain identity, but these individuals are also different compared to one another. Precisely these differences within certain groups, which are politically organised based on a certain identity, are not articulated in these policies. In the feminist movement it soon became clear that the political demands reflected the needs of only certain women – for example, middle-class white women – while specific intersectional positions, such as black women, lesbians, etc., were not represented and thematised.

Similar exclusions have also occurred (and are still occurring) in other identity politics. As mentioned above, politics are always implemented on behalf of someone – that someone is, as is shown by the practice of identity politics, always modelled in accordance with the strongest members within a certain minority group. At the same time, identity politics are often not sensitive to other personal circumstances that can affect certain social phenomena jointly.

Essentially, there are two interrelated issues occurring in connection with identity politics:

- a group unification,
- b one identity covers the remaining identities of an individual.

The two above-mentioned issues were the basis of the discussion on intersectionality. The concept of intersectionality was established in 1991 by Kimberle Crenshaw (although various versions of this concept have appeared before) who, besides the critique of identity politics, also mentions case-law and legislative practice. The latter generally sees the individual through a single category – the individual has either gender or ethnicity or sexual orientation or disability – rarely does it happen that these categories are treated in courts or in the anti-discrimination legislation as intersections. In this manner, such legislation or case law could address several sources of discrimination that can have a simultaneous effect. Based on a series of case-law studies related to discrimination at work, Hernández (2005) found that in these cases non-white women were at a disadvantage because the judicial system only considered one-dimensional discrimination, although their cases were mostly a combination of discrimination they experienced due to their sex and skin colour. But if they claimed racial discrimination the judges did not wish to simultaneously consider the effect of gender, or vice versa: if they sued for sexual discrimination at work, the judges did not simultaneously consider the colour of their skin. They overlooked the fact that the issue of sexism is not exclusively related solely to gender, the same as the issue of racism is not exclusively related to race and similar.

Crenshaw's thesis (1991) is that the key issue of identity politics is that such politics often conceal or ignore intra-group differences. Thus, policies that only address violence against women usually only consider the gender dimension, although other dimensions of their identity, such as race, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc., can also have an influence on violence against women (or they can even be the main cause of such violence).

2.1 The sum or a new content of discrimination?

The key question posed when thematising intersectional discrimination is, whether it is possible to simply sum different inequalities that occur based on different personal circumstances and address them as such in policies, or are these socially and culturally constructed circumstances in mutual interaction, which means that, at the intersection of various personal circumstances, new contents and new realities are generated that are not a simple sum in the sense of gender + sexual orientation + disability. In other words: if we wish to address discrimination of black women, do we simply address the discrimination she is experiencing due to her skin colour and discrimination she is experiencing due to her gender, or is intersection of these two personal circumstances a new "reality" that does not correlate to the "reality" of a black person and the "reality" of a female person simultaneously.

Crenshaw's (1991) answer to this question is clear: intersection establishes a "new reality" or a new content: an individual that is discriminated against due to several personal circumstances simultaneously cannot be politically addressed according to individual personal circumstances or in the sense of summing discriminations, but through an authentic, new reality of discrimination established at the intersection. This means that, for example, race and gender cannot be addressed separately if we wish to understand the inequality experienced by a black woman. Crenshaw (1989) explains the concept of intersection with an example of a traffic junction:

“Discrimination, like traffic through an intersection, may flow in one direction, and it may flow in another. If an accident happens in an intersection, it can be caused by cars travelling from any number of directions and, sometimes, from all of them” (Crenshaw, 2000: p. 149).

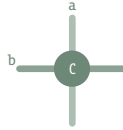
Socially constructed categories related to our identity (and which are simultaneously a constitutive element of identities) do not function independently from one another, but are interwoven, are in intersection. Or, according to Rosenblum:

»Black women face discrimination both as Blacks and as women. They also face discrimination specific to their subject position, which cannot be analyzed merely from a 'Black' perspective or from a 'woman's' perspective.« (Rosenblum, 1994: p. 88)

Intersection of identities and the related issue of discrimination can be graphically depicted with a cross-section (see picture 1). Although the picture below shows a simple model of two identity positions, this of course does not preclude three or more identity positions occurring at an intersection.

The vertical line represents experiences related to one identity and the horizontal line represents the experiences related to the other identity. The cross-section represents an intersectional identity which neither corresponds to identity A, nor identity B, neither is it a sum of identities A+B, but is an entirely new identity reality C, associated with a potential intersectional discrimination. In other words: if a person with identities A and B is treated merely as a person who has identity A or B, by doing this, we lose the specificity of the person's identity C that is created at the intersection between identities A and B. In identity politics, such policies can reflect only a part of the experience related to one of the identities, it generally does not address the specific position created due to intersection of identities.

Picture 1

Intersection of identities ($c=a+b$)

It seems that the concept of intersection according to Crenshaw only addresses the second part of the identity politics issue. Intersectional approach ensures that various identities are not combined and covered up with one identity, but at the same time it does not completely resolve the problem of a unified group. Even though the concept of intersectionality addresses two or more social categories in intersection, it seems once more that it is inclined towards forming unified groups, with the exception that these groups are not formed merely one-dimensionally, but instead take into account several dimensions of personal circumstances. Under the “mega” denotation of a “woman”, the distinctions between “black women” or “black lesbians”, and so on, are thus no longer blurred, but it is still not entirely clear if the distinctions within these smaller or fragmented intersectional-identity groups can also be considered. But it seems the process of fragmenting identity groups ends only when the subject of the politics becomes the individual himself/herself. In the context of modern “representative democracy”, this would pose a big problem, since such political systems are founded primarily on the principle of representing groups and not the individual, who would be the subject of political intervention.

The only way out of this conundrum is Rosenblum’s proposal to perceive identity as a continuum. She refers to the Adrienne Rich’s concept (1993) of lesbian continuum⁶, and in the context of gay and lesbian politics suggests that queer continuum should be used, which represents “the range of sexual

6 Rich (1993) believes that, by equalizing lesbianism with male homosexuality simply due to the fact that both identities are stigmatised, the reality of gender integral to lesbian identity is thus erased.

identities which subvert the compulsory heterosexuality" (Rosenblum, 1994: p. 90). Using some kind of "identity continuum" concept would prevent unified and fixed identity positions to be established and would at the same time also address the issue of identity intersection.

Types of intersectionality

2.2

Crenshaw (1991) makes the distinction between three types of intersectionality: (1) *structural intersectionality*, (2) *political intersectionality* and (3) *representational intersectionality*.

With structural intersectionality she denotes the need to address the structural context of a certain identity position to fully understand the manner in which discrimination and exclusion occur. Crenshaw thus draws attention to the fact that all interventions for the prevention of discrimination against women will have a limited reach if they do not also specifically address the economic, social and political contexts in which these women live. Social structure is therefore always in intersection with the individual's identity. Or, according to Verloo (2006: p. 213), structural intersectionality is an issue of reinforcement. The question is thus, how and in what manner does racism "reinforce" sexism, how do class structures "reinforce" homophobia, how does homophobia "reinforce" racism and so on.

Political intersectionality addresses various policies formed by groups that an individual can be a member of simultaneously. Policies of these groups can even be in conflict with each other or are exclusive and do not reflect the positions of those within a group that are in intersection with other identities. A homosexual person, who is also religious, definitely faces such a conflicting situation. While, for example, the issue of same-sex marriage is often placed at the top of the political agenda of gay and lesbian organisations, a religious group's top political agenda can be the opposition to such marriages. In the context of political intersection, Crenshaw mentions black women who are, on the one hand, placed in the context of anti-racist political strategies

– which are usually formulated and lead by black men – and on the other hand, faced with anti-sexist politics highlighted by women's organisations. In the latter case, their politics are defined by white women. The specific position of black women can thus be excluded from either side.

In contrast to structural intersectionality, to which she attributes reinforcement of certain exclusions, Verloo (2006: p. 213) characterizes political intersectionality as marginalisation of certain exclusions. Thus, these are questions on how feminism marginalises the issue of ethnicity, how the criteria that address equal opportunities for women marginalise the specific position of lesbians and so on.

While the first two forms of intersectionality are related to social structures and political agendas, the intersectionality of representations addresses structure, as well as politics, through discourse. Crenshaw calls attention to the fact that when a type of discourse does not recognise the importance of another type of discourse, the positions of power, against which both discourses are directed, are reinforced. A good example of this are the media representations of gay and lesbian communities which are increasingly presented through the views of same-sex (married?) couples; meanwhile, this discourse does not simultaneously address issues of racism and sexism even though they are both constitutive parts of homophobia. The latter cannot be fully understood if we perceive it narrowly and address it merely through the perspective of sexual orientation. This is why some are calling attention to the fact that basic homophobia is essentially a question of gender, not sexual orientation.

2.3 Intersectional and multiple discrimination

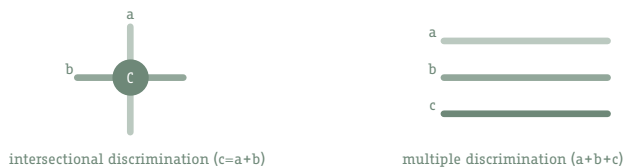
The title of this chapter purposely combines intersectional and multiple discrimination. Some authors make no distinction between the two (and are probably right to do so), some authors state that they are the same thing, with the exception that intersectional discrimination is the more commonly

used term in academic discussions, while activists who deal with human rights more often use multiple discrimination, but they are all referring to the same thing.

In this discussion we wish to make a distinction between the two discriminations. In contrast to intersectional discrimination, multiple discrimination does not speak about “new content” established at the intersection of several personal circumstances, but perceives various forms of discrimination, which an individual faces, as a sum. A person with disabilities faces discrimination due to their disability, but if the person is also religious it can also be the basis for discrimination. Therefore, they have to face both discriminations, which does not mean that the combination of both experiences establish new content. According to Makkonnen (2002b: p. 9), multiple discrimination has mathematical connotations of a sum, which makes it unsuitable for situations where discriminations are in effect simultaneous and not separate. Graphically, the difference between multiple and intersectional discrimination could be demonstrated as follows:

Intersectional discrimination and multiple discrimination

Picture 2



Thus, the key difference between intersectional and multiple discrimination is the fact that intersection takes into account the cross-section of discriminations (the cross-section is the new content of discrimination), multiple discrimination on the other hand refers to the sum of discriminations. In reality, it is of course sometimes hard to make the distinction between the two forms of discrimination.

2.4 Thematising intersectional discrimination in European Union policies

In his comparative study on the analyses of European directives, Mark Bell (2004) mentions three main issues or dilemmas that relate to anti-discrimination directives and the endeavours of the European Union to prohibit or prevent discrimination based on various personal circumstances. The first dilemma is related to the question of whether all personal circumstances are mutually related to the extent that they could be treated according to the same criteria and policies. Can sexual orientation be addressed in the same way as, for example, religious belief or ethnicity? Concerning this question, Verloo (2006: p. 221) mentions three dimensions – (1) *the dimension of choice*, (2) *the dimension of visibility* and (3) *the dimension of possibility and probability of change*.

With the dimension of choice, Verloo draws attention to the fact that certain personal circumstances can be chosen (e. g. it is potentially possible to choose our religion), while others cannot (e. g. we cannot “choose” our age). The dimension of visibility indicates various nuances of personal circumstances, where some can be concealed to a point (e. g. sexuality), while others cannot (e. g. skin colour). The third dimension – possibility and probability of change – shows how certain personal circumstances always have to be considered in relation to the social context and how they as such are related to the issue of power:

“We have all been young, and will – hopefully – all become old, while all of us can become disabled and some will even change sex or ethnicity. This also illustrates that these social categories can be unstable and contested: what counts as race or ethnicity in specific contexts, what counts as young or old, is intertwined with power in many ways” (Verloo, 2006: p. 221).

Bell (2004) states that non-thematisation of the power relation in European anti-discrimination directives is frequently criticised. At the same time, the problem is also that different personal circumstances appear in different

policies, which means that attention is not devoted to all circumstances equally and that the concept of equality is perceived differently in different policies.

The other two dilemmas mentioned by Bell are related to the issue of political intersection. It is a concern that there is a competitive relation of a sort or a hierarchy between two different personal circumstances or forms of inequality, which results in the above-mentioned problem of unequal treatment of different inequalities. Moreover, inequalities are not thematised through intersectional perspective: new "contents" arising from the intersection of different inequalities are not thematised, or there is an understanding that they can be addressed by simply summing individual inequalities. At the same time, this is related to various social positions that are occupied by groups organised around certain inequalities.

The third problem, mentioned by Bell, is the absence of a structural approach to inequality. It seems that the European Union addresses inequality that is based on various personal circumstances, primarily on the personal level of the discriminated individual, while overlooking the wider, structural elements of inequality, starting with different positions of groups which, based on certain circumstances, are treated unequally.

European anti-discrimination policies are often referred to precisely because they only consider one dimension, even though discrimination is a combination of various inequalities and exclusions. Such policies exclude all other dimensions, which limits their range. At the same time, the question posed is whether the same mechanisms for preventing inequality (such as *gender mainstreaming*) can be simply transferred to other categories mentioned by the European anti-discrimination recommendations and directives. Therefore, Sandra Fredman (2005: p. 14) finds that the more an individual deviates from the norm, the greater the possibility that they will be exposed to intersectional discrimination and the lesser the possibility that they will be provided protection. Her thesis is also substantiated by the text of the so called "Race Directive" (2000/43/EC) which states that members of the

European Union should strive to remove unequal treatment based on race or ethnicity and strive to establish equality between men and women, since “women are often victims of multiple discrimination”. Even though the text of the Directive mentions and recognises “multiple discrimination”, it does not establish any special mechanisms to combat it. All anti-discrimination policies – also in other directives – continue to be based one-dimensionally and do not thematise multiple or intersectional discrimination.



Discrimination and intolerance

3

As mentioned in the introduction, discrimination is a phenomenon with many guises and a great number of transformations. Besides that, it is also closely intertwined with questions of intolerance and hatred. In the book *Mi in oni: nestrpnost na Slovenskem* (Us and Them: Intolerance in Slovenia), Leskovšek (2005) defines intolerance as ideas and convictions that “include the submission of others, or their goal is to prevent their rightful participation in society, which is achieved by declaring them unsuitable, barbaric, stupid, lazy, exploitive, criminal, immoral, in short, potentially dangerous for the majority” (Leskovšek, 2005: p. 9). This definition is almost identical to the definition of discrimination. Intolerance and discrimination are thus closely related and, so to speak, are each others conditions. If intolerance is a demeanour towards other people, then discrimination is the subject of this demeanour.

The reasons for discrimination are concealed within reasons for intolerance. Basically, the reasons are related to social characterisation that is mentioned in the title of the above-mentioned book: us and them. Intolerance (and discrimination with it) is related to establishing dissimilarities between “us” and “them” and to the value classification of these binary categories. In other words: we attribute positive characteristics to “us”, to “them” we contribute negative characteristics in order to establish ourselves as good or better in comparison with them. Prejudices and stereotypes play a key role in this.

3.1 Micro ideologies of everyday life

Stereotypes and prejudices are forms of cognitive or mental schemes with which we manage the diversity of everyday life. According to Mirjana Ule (2005), prejudices and stereotypes are “micro ideologies” (in contrast to macro ideologies, such as religion, mythology, politics, etc.) that help us to fictitiously organise our world. However, on the social level, dominant ideologies can arise from these micro ideologies, where authoritative structures permit prejudice and base their policy on them.

3.1.1 Stereotypes

Stereotypes are typified judgements, which means that they do not consider the dissimilarities between individuals, but that they classify such dissimilarities based on partial and superficial judgements into individual groups. Stereotypes can thus be a form of mental judgements obtained based on partial information. One could say that stereotypes are mental compartments into which we classify people and the things happening around us. But stereotypes are judgements that are too generalised and too typified, thus by applying them we overlook the diversity of the world and the nuances within it.

Stereotypes are formed on the basis of generalisation, insufficient facts, generalised information or even disinformation. Regardless of this, stereotypes are a part of our cognitive economy; stereotypical notions serve the purpose of managing the heterogeneity of the world we live in. The world provides so much information and stimuli that we cannot process it all. Because of this, stereotypes enable us to simplify complex phenomena. Stereotypes are not our personal judgements, but are communicated to us by social interpretation. As early as the 1920s, Lippman (2004 [1922]) in his book *Public Opinion*, stated that “we define first and then see. In the great blooming, buzzing confusion of the outer world we pick out what our culture has already defined for us, and we tend to perceive that which we have picked out in the form stereotyped for us by our culture” (Lippman, 2004 [1922]: p. 44).

Alongside the cognitive function of stereotypes, Henri Tajfel (1981) also mentions four other functions that stereotypes perform. Besides reducing the heterogeneity of the world ((1) *cognitive function*), stereotypes maintain and represent important social values of a certain group ((2) *motivational function*), create group norms and beliefs ((3) *normative function*), explain social phenomena ((4) *explanatory function*) and of course maintain the differences between groups for the benefit of one's own group ((5) *differentiating function*). In other words, this means creating and maintaining the binary us-them oppositions, which supposedly originates from the need to positively self-evaluate one's own social identity.

Stereotypes result in two types of errors: we treat people who we perceive with stereotypical notions, as more similar to the group, which they are a member of, and as more dissimilar to members of other groups than they actually are. The other error, which is at the same time the basis for discriminatory treatment, is that we generally evaluate our group as being better than the groups which we do not belong to. The most common are definitely ethnic stereotypes that can be found in abundance in our everyday language. Exactly such stereotypes were at the heart of the *Entropa* installation art in Brussels, created to mark the occasion of the Czech Republic's presidency of the European Union at the beginning of 2009. The purpose of the exhibition was to use stereotypes as art and by doing so to increase sensibility towards the issue of barriers that stereotypes can draw between member states of the European Union. The official motto of the Czech presidency was "Europe without barriers", and stereotypes are, as was written in the official statement "barriers to be demolished".⁷

The functions of stereotypes, including cognitive economy, are of course no "excuse" to use stereotypes when these are the basis for discrimination. The use of stereotypes is not only a psychological process that we use to reduce

⁷ Germain, Nicolas, 'Czech presidency pokes fun at EU members', *France 24 International News*, 2009, <http://www.france24.com/en/20090113-exhibition-stereotypes-sparks-controversy-czech-republic-art-brussels-european-union>

heterogeneity of the world around us and to fulfil the need for positive self-image, but is at the same time also a political process. Ranking of certain groups in a society is always political, at least in its consequences. This means that human cognition is not something entirely individual or private, but is also sensitive to group influences, social norms, values and similar. As mentioned by Lippman (2004 [1922]), the process of information processing does not occur outside the social context. On the contrary, an individual's actions (even in accordance with stereotypes) are always (also) socially communicated. When explaining the causes for intolerance and discrimination, one has to be careful not to reduce the explanation to the issue of psychological characteristics of certain (intolerant) individuals. Intolerance and discrimination are not merely a psychological issue but are also political. It is apparent from state policies, in legislations, in providing (or the failure to provide) social and economic possibilities for all, and similar.

Lippman (2004 [1922]) describes stereotypes as selective, self-fulfilling and egocentric judgements. The self-fulfilling "nature" of stereotypes (and also prejudice) is key, since, as noted by Ule (2005), the most tragic result of using stereotypes and prejudice is the fact that victims identify with the content of the prejudice. In this regard, this is a self-fulfilling prophecy:

"The content of prejudices, directed at them (minority groups, author's note) also becomes the content of their self-image and their practices. This leads to the familiar "self-fulfilling prophecy", where victims of prejudices themselves legitimise the prejudices with their behaviour. The circle is closed. Those expressing prejudices are given excuses for their actions, and arguments for this are obtained from the victims themselves." (Ule, 2005: p. 39)

The quote above discusses the combined issue of stereotypes and prejudices which in everyday speech are generally mentioned as one. But how do prejudices differ from stereotypes?

Prejudices

3.1.2

In the case of prejudices, mental judgements that represent stereotypes are emotionally coloured. Thus, when prejudices are concerned, cognition and cognitive economy are no longer in the foreground; instead emotions and emotionally coloured judgements, made in advance, are at the forefront. Prejudices are therefore reinforced especially in times of crisis when the distinction between *us* and *them* is made even more apparent. Victims of prejudices and stereotypes make for convenient scapegoats, social groups that we blame for our own low spirits, bad economic status and similar. A typical example of such a reaction occurred in summer of 2009 when the government of Slovenia announced they will be including a legal regulation of same-sex partnerships and the adoption of children by same-sex couples into the new Family Code. The response of the adversaries was emotional and one of the arguments used was that, in time of crisis when workers are losing their jobs, the government is focused on an unimportant minority. The truth is that the adoption of the announced family code would in no way solve or additionally endanger the situation of the unemployed in Slovenia. But the crisis situation, often abused by populist demagogues, has led to a situation where the already angry and hurt people, under the guidance of a demagogue, unleashed their aggressive ethics on the scapegoat who is supposedly responsible for their problems. By using prejudices we thus legitimise the aggravation of the dissimilarities between *us* and *them* – namely those we falsely believe to be the cause of our problems.

Mirjana Ule (2005) explains that we are often unaware of prejudices displayed through jokes, ambiguities, disrespectfulness, intolerance and similar, because they seem commonplace. But Ule cautions that prejudices can “quickly become the social binder of masses” and can spread like a virus. “At that point, prejudices turn into an instrument of aggression; they are the announcement of lynching, the excuse for any discrimination, persecution or abandonment of the endangered groups to their own ‘fate’.” (Ule, 2005: p. 27).

Allport (1954) mentions five scales of showing prejudices. The first level is (1) *antilocution* which is mostly expressed through humour (jokes) about other groups. The second scale is (2) *avoidance* or keeping a social distance from groups that we judge with prejudice. Allport calls the third group (3) *discrimination*. Compared with our definition of discrimination, his definition is narrower. Discrimination as an expression of prejudice is, according to Allport, the act that is aimed directly against other groups, to which we are denying equality (e. g. in accessing certain goods). The fourth scale is (4) *physical attack* which is related to physical threats made against groups, the fifth and the most extreme form of showing prejudice is (5) *extermination*.

The power of prejudice is dependent on several factors – personal as well as social. At the social level, we have already mentioned crisis situations (e. g. economic recession) which generally reinforce prejudices and stereotypes with which we judge certain minority groups. Such groups become scapegoats. At the same time, prejudices are stronger if they are embedded in the (political) culture of a certain community. If in a certain country, the death penalty is provided for homosexuality by law, then this “system prejudice” is definitely reinforcing (and legitimising) the prejudice against homosexuals. Similar examples are countries where the legislation is full of racist policies.

Primary socialisation is very important for prejudices to be generated and perpetuated on a personal level, during which we obtain our first generalised judgements of the world. The correlation between prejudices that parents have and prejudices that their children hold is therefore generally very high. Secondary socialisation is also extremely important, since stereotypical information or information full of prejudices is obtained through the so called “hidden learning curriculum”. The analyses of basal readers, for example, often show how women and men are represented in exclusively stereotypical notions, full of sexism (cf. Hrženjak, 1999). Besides socialisation, personal crises and dissatisfactions are also important. Generally, the more frustrated and dissatisfied individuals are with their own life, the faster this results in acceptance of prejudices that are not necessarily conscious. The British *Pro-*

*files of Prejudice*⁸ study, conducted in 2001, showed that people that hold prejudice towards any ethnic group are twice as likely (in comparison with the general population) to also hold prejudices towards gays and lesbians and four times as likely to also hold prejudices towards the people with disabilities. Moon (2006) defines this relation with prejudices as “intersectional prejudice”.

Displaying prejudice can be “therapeutic” for individuals who are dissatisfied with the situation they find themselves in. For example, if we blame a certain group for our problems, if we label them as lazy and harmful, we cleanse ourselves on a symbolic level and position ourselves or our group above *them*. This is one of the functions of showing prejudice, as defined by Herek (1991).

Herek otherwise discusses the functions of homophobia and the psychological benefits that an individual acquires if they speak in favour of a (homophobic) viewpoint. His functionalist scheme can be generalised as displaying various prejudices that lead to phenomena such as xenophobia (fear of foreigners), homophobia (fear of homosexuals), islamophobia (fear of Muslims or Islam), racism (rejecting a certain person due to their skin colour or race), gerontophobia (fear of the elderly or of growing old), nationalism (emphasising the superiority of one’s own ethnicity), sexism (emphasising the superiority of men over women) and similar. These phenomena lead to individual, as well as structural and institutional discrimination.

Herek makes the distinction between (1) *experiential-schematic function*, (2) *self-expressive function*, where we can make the distinction between *value-* and *social-expressive functions*, and (3) *defensive function*.

The experiential-schematic function of prejudices gives meaning to past experiences with certain individuals or groups and manages future behaviour.

8 The study was conducted by the MORI research group on behalf of the Stonewall organisation on a sample of 1183 individuals. The summary is available at: www.stonewall.org.uk/documents/profiles.doc.

If past experiences were negative, this merely reinforces the prejudice – and vice versa: if experiences related to the so called contact strategy⁹ are positive, the prejudice loses its power or breaks. The experiential-schematic function is the only one based on experience.

Self-expressive function, which is related to displaying prejudice, consolidates an individual's self-image in two possible ways: through expressing (and consolidating) values at the centre of the individual's understanding of themselves and through expressing viewpoints for which the individual receives support within their family, circle of friends or in the broader society. Considering the first case, Herek talks about value-expressive function. Displaying prejudice towards homosexuals can, for example, be a form of consolidating religious convictions and values. Similarly, all who express racist views consolidate their value-viewpoints regarding the superiority of the white skin colour (namely, their own superiority).

In the second case, Herek speaks about social-expressive function which is shown in confirmations that an individual gets when displaying certain prejudices. Displaying prejudices towards immigrant groups can, for example, consolidate an individual's position within a group of friends where rejecting immigrants is seen as a value. Therefore, violence that often originates from such expression of prejudice and stereotypes is not only the expression of an individual's intolerance, but also a consequence of social intolerance, since many social groups still allow or even reward such actions.

As mentioned above, the third, the defensive function of displaying prejudice, reduces the feelings of uneasiness and anxiety that a certain group can trigger in an individual. By showing prejudice towards these groups, the individual

9 While researching prejudices and stereotypes, several strategies on how to eliminate prejudices and stereotypes were developed. One of the most familiar strategies is the *contact strategy*. It includes active contact with people that we judge based on prejudices. It has been demonstrated that personal experience can substantially help eliminate the prejudice; the experience however, has to be long-term and positive. Momentary (and uninterested) contacts do not eliminate prejudice. Also, the contact strategy does not necessarily eliminate prejudice – in some cases it even reinforces it.

establishes some sort of a defence against these groups and at the same time can, on a symbolic level, deal with the aspects of themselves that they find unacceptable and are not necessarily conscious, but are projected onto groups that they judge with prejudice. In case of homosexuality, which is Herek's starting point, anxiety is often related to the individual's conflicting position regarding their own sexual orientation.

Herek believes that the most effective way to combat prejudice and manifestations of prejudice is to take into account the primary psychological function the purpose of which the expressions of prejudice serve.

Modern prejudices and stereotypes

3.2

Several authors (Kuzmanić, 2002, Ule, 2005, Renner, 2008) draw attention to the fact that the contemporary expression of prejudices and stereotypes differs from the traditional. According to Kuzmanić (2002: p. 17), for example, in present times, we can speak about cultural racism and xenophobia that is no longer based on biological and physical structures but on culture and cultural differences. Racism and xenophobia are thus no longer based in nature but in culture. A similar conclusion is drawn by Ule (2005: p. 21) who draws attention to qualitative changes in showing prejudice. They are no longer explicit and direct, but hidden and symbolic and are expressed in a passive rejection of the *Others*. External or surface dissimilarities between people are no longer crucial, what is key are the increasingly deeper cultural differences that cannot be seen at first sight, for example the level of education, health status, life style and similar.

Ignorance and distance as modern forms of exclusion have replaced open physical violence, which means that in present times we are facing, according to Benokraitis and Feagin (1986, in Ule, 2005), hidden and symbolic discrimination or, according to Renner (2008), the cultivation of violence which as such strives to be generally accepted. Not only is such "cultivated" or "symbolic" violence or discrimination harder to "grasp" and fight, but also such violence

seems justifiable and admissible and that victims, for example the Roma, deserve it.

According to Renér (2008: p. 24), explicitly sexist, racist and similar speeches practically no longer occur in public, or if they do, they are an excess, since such speech is penalised. It has been replaced by political correctness. The consequence of this change can be seen not only in the restriction of hate speech, but also in the fact that those who are still bold enough to use excluding language despite this change are applauded. People see them as someone that still dares to tell it like it is. Renér (2008) and Ule (2005) also state that new social groups are coming into the forefront as targets of prejudice and stereotypes (for example, smokers, the obese and similar), which does not mean that the “old social groups” are no longer victims of prejudices, stereotypes, discrimination and violence.

Renér (2008) mentions three consequences of the above-mentioned changes. The first is related to establishing the idea of excessive equalities. The modern expression of prejudice and stereotypes is no longer related to the question of whether certain groups deserve equality, but to notions that they have already achieved this equality and that they are actually trying to achieve excessive equality, more rights than they are entitled to. The other consequence is related to establishing a selection of *Others*; despite the fact that generalisation is a part of the basis of stereotypes, in present times one can see that members of certain minorities are selectively evaluated. This, for example, means the distinction is made between the good and bad members of a certain group, which establishes a discord within the group itself. In contemporary society, we make the distinction between the good and the bad Roma, and such selection is also made by the Roma themselves: the Roma blame other Roma for not assimilating. Similarly, gays are blaming other gays for acting too effeminately, which is supposed to shed a poor light on the entire gay community. By doing so, they actually adopt the discourse of those speaking from the position of power and thus put the blame for exclusion from society on their own group.

"Choice and selection are risky, since they fragment perfidiously: from the position of power they lure in the weak, the less hardened or the more vulnerable members of the "other". The rewards they offer, if we recognise ourselves in choice and selection, are not small, but the risks if we reject them are great, therefore, it is not surprising that exhaustive internal tensions occur precisely when pressures from outside are the strongest and solidarity is most needed" (Renner, 2008: pp. 24-25).

The third consequence of these changes from the "traditional" to the symbolic discrimination is related to the ideology of security, within which discrimination is in a way established as rational and excusable. This is evident from statements such as "I have nothing against them, but ...", where the second part of the statement justifies discrimination, either for the purpose of ensuring safety, out of fear of lowering educational standards, or the fear of lowering a certain real estate's value and so on. A good example of this change were statements of certain political parties after the GLBT community was attacked in front of *Café Open* in summer of 2009. The political representatives condemned such homophobic violence, while some also added the word "but". These were grounds for reiterating that they do not agree with same-sex marriages and even less with the adoptions of children by same-sex couples. Such statements are a basic example of "cultivated discrimination", where at first one takes the side of the minority, but then – for the purpose of security (same-sex marriages could endanger families; adoptions are dangerous for children in such relationships, etc.) – they reproduce the discussion which originally leads to the hostile expression of homophobia.



The extent of discrimination in Slovenia and beyond

4

Because discrimination manifests itself in different forms there are no common statistics of various discriminations that occur at different levels of everyday life. Below, therefore, are shown some fragmented data on discrimination that originate primarily from the context of research on discrimination in the European Union (e. g. the Eurobarometer study, studies by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights and similar) and from the results of the targeted research project "Posledice diskriminacije na družbeno, politično in socialno vključenost mladih v Sloveniji" (Švab et al, 2008) (The Consequences of Discrimination on Social and Political Integration of Youth in Slovenia).

The Eurobarometer study, "Discrimination in the European Union"¹⁰, which in Slovenia was conducted on a representative sample of 1003 respondents, older than 15 years of age, contained questions on personal experiences of discrimination or awareness of discrimination against people close to respondents (family members, friends, acquaintances), during which the researchers considered the following circumstances as the cause of discrimination: religion, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender, race or ethnicity or any combination of these categories.

On the European level, most of the respondents never experienced discrimination: two out of ten experienced discrimination or knew somebody among their acquaintances that was discriminated against. Among those that were discriminated against or that knew somebody that was discriminated against,

¹⁰ Flash Eurobarometer 232 (The Gallup Organization), *Discrimination in the European Union: Perceptions and experiences of discrimination in the areas of housing, healthcare, education, and when buying products or using services*, European Commission, 2008.

the most frequent cause for discrimination was ethnicity (19 %), age (or a combination of age and ethnicity) (16 %), followed by gender and disability (each 14 %), religious belief (11 %) and sexual orientation (8 %).

The chart below shows the data about the experiences of discrimination in Slovenia in comparison to the European Union average.



Personal experiences with discrimination, including being aware of discrimination against people the respondent is familiar with, show that in all points, except in the case of religious affiliation, the percentage of discrimination in Slovenia is lower than the European average. The two main differences are related to the experiences of multiple discrimination and discrimination based on ethnicity, which on average is 6 or 7 % higher in the European Union than in Slovenia. Slovenia is closest to the European average in cases of discriminatory experiences based on age, while the reported cases of discrimination in

Slovenia based on religious belief exceed the European average. We cannot indicate what type of religious affiliation was discriminated against, since the study did not question the respondents about their religious affiliation.

A Slovenian study among Muslims (Bajt, 2008), conducted on a sample of 129 members of the Muslim religion, showed that 42 % of respondents do not perceive intolerance in their environment, but 34 % believe that the environment where they live is intolerant towards Muslims. 60 % of the respondents have at least once experienced negative reactions from society due to their religious affiliation, 16 % of respondents have already denied or concealed their Muslim religious affiliation in certain circumstances to avoid such reactions.

The EU Midis¹¹ research conducted on a Muslim sample showed that in the European Union, 34 % of male Muslim respondents and 26 % of Muslim women have experienced discrimination due to their religious affiliation in the last twelve months. Those discriminated against have on average experienced 8 cases of discrimination in the last twelve months. It is interesting to note that the study concludes that wearing visible signs of religious affiliation (such as a headscarf) did not affect the individual's experience with discrimination.

Data from the Slovenian sample of the previously mentioned study show that, in the last twelve months, 15 % of the Muslim respondents who live in Slovenia experienced discrimination. On average, they mentioned more than three cases of discrimination.

25 % of the Muslim respondents in the European Union reported that they have been stopped by the police in the last twelve months. 40 % of those believe they were stopped because of their ethnicity. Data for Slovenia are substantially different from the European average: 33 % of Slovenian Muslims stated that they were stopped by the police in the last twelve months, but the

11 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey: Data in Focus Report 2: Muslims*, 2009. Muslims from former Yugoslavian republics were included in the Slovenian sample.

majority, 93 %, believed that it was not a case of ethnic profiling and that the police did not stop them because of their ethnicity. 5 % of the interviewed Muslims reported ethnic profiling, which in the European context represents the smallest portion. 74 % of Muslims from North Africa, living in Italy, believe that they were stopped and searched by the police due to their ethnicity.

On average, 79 % of Muslims in the European Union, participating in the study, did not report discrimination. 59 % believe they would achieve nothing by filing a complaint, and 38 % believe that discrimination that they experienced was nothing out of the ordinary and that they face such exclusion all the time.

A similar study on discrimination against the Roma in the European Union (EU Midis – The Roma¹²), that was conducted in only seven countries (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia), showed that every second Roma who participated in the study was discriminated against in the last twelve months. On average, they experienced 11 cases of discrimination during this period. Between 66 % and 92 % of the discriminated Roma – depending on the country – did not report the discrimination, primarily because they believed that reporting the discrimination would not change anything (78 %), because they did not know how to report discrimination (52 %) or because they believed that the discrimination was too trivial and because they are used to the fact that this happens to them everyday (44 %).

Similar data on unreported cases of discrimination and violence was obtained by the study on violence and discrimination of GLBT persons in Slovenia (Kuhar, Magić, 2008)¹³, which showed that the majority of respondents, 92 %, who experienced violence or discrimination did not report it. Proportionally, the largest portion (36 %) of respondents minimised the violence and dis-

12 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey: Data in Focus Report 1: The Roma*, 2009.

13 The sample includes 149 GLBT respondents and is not representative.

crimination they experienced and thus never reported it. 27 % believed that they would not achieve anything by reporting it.

The study showed that 68 % of GLBT persons experienced various forms of discrimination in the past because of their sexual orientation. In most cases, it was a type of verbal discrimination, such as insults (80 %), next are exclusion and ignoring (35 %), threats with physical violence (32 %) and so on. A similar study on everyday life of gays and lesbians (Švab and Kuhar, 2005, N=443) showed that more than 53 % of respondents have already experienced violence due to their sexual orientation.

The study among the people with disabilities in Slovenia (Boškič, Žakelj, Humer, 2008)¹⁴ has shown that 19 % of respondents were victims of violence and exclusion because of their disability. Most often they were victims of verbal discrimination, such as abusive language, insults and humiliation, physical and sexual violence was a lot less common.

A study conducted among immigrants in Slovenia by the Institute for Ethnic Studies (Komac, 2007) has shown that 41 % of respondents have already experienced discrimination at work (unequal treatment), 31 % were unequally treated when seeking employment, and 20 % were unequally treated by the police and similar. The study has shown that Bosnians, Muslims and Serbs are the minorities which are most often discriminated against at work. A third of respondents have previously found themselves in a situation where they found it better to hide their ethnicity. 5 % of respondents confirmed that they have changed their name to something more similar to Slovenian names for the same purpose, and 15 % have considered this.

¹⁴ The study was conducted via the Internet, which mainly excluded the visually impaired and those without access to a computer. A portion of questionnaires was also sent to people with disabilities in a printed form. The final sample included 164 respondents.



Research on (intersectional) discrimination 5

The prevailing approaches in the research of individual's personal circumstances and the social position that these circumstances (co)create are one-dimensional. Generally, individuals are treated as if they are defined by a single personal circumstance (e. g. studies of Roma, research on people with disabilities etc.) that, as demonstrated by our exploratory research, usually stands out or is the principal circumstance. We asked our respondents about several personal circumstances/identities, but they usually had no difficulty in determining which identity was the most important for them and according to their opinion, affected them the most. As stated by Ransford (1980), people hold several social positions that in their intersection create a distinctive social space. This social space, which is the result of intersectionality, cannot be interpreted and explained with only one social position (or, in our case, personal circumstance). But according to Bowleg (2008), when conducting research, it is hard or nearly impossible to ask questions about intersectionality without simultaneously asking questions that relate to various personal circumstances separately or in addition. According to Bowleg and also demonstrated by our own research, respondents in studies on intersectionality usually ranked their identities – they were able to arrange them on a scale from the most important to the least important. In other words, this meant that they did not think about their identities in the sense of intersection, but additively.

Research of intersectionality, or more explicitly, discriminatory incidents that are the result of several personal circumstances, is difficult because personal circumstances are perceived as additions. It is entirely possible that a particular discrimination is the result of a combination or the joint effect of various personal circumstances, but because one of these prevails, it covers the rest and it thus seems that the prevailing personal circumstance is the direct or the only reason for discrimination.

It seems that individuals are often not aware of the intersection of identities, especially in cases of discrimination, and attribute discriminatory incidents to the identity that they believe is the most important to them or the most conscious. But this does not mean that intersectional discrimination does not exist even if the individuals do not recognise it as such. In a comment on a media article in the *Dnevnik*¹⁵ newspaper on the PROTECT project (Progressing Towards Equality: An Intersectional Approach to Discrimination), in the framework of which this study was conducted, and based on the fact that many people are not even aware they are intersectionally discriminated against, a poster on a forum replied that if the individual is not aware of the discrimination based on personal circumstances, then such discrimination does not exist. This, of course, is not true. Bowleg (2008) mentions an interesting case of a study among black women that explains how dominant identity covers other identities. The research showed that these women most often mentioned the colour of their skin and thematised racism, while they made almost no mention of sexism. Bowleg stresses that it would be wrong to conclude that black women have no experiences with sexism, but that sexism in the lives of black women is inseparably intertwined with racism. Therefore, only a few black women participating in the research talked about sexism separately from racism. Therefore, when we try to determine the causes for discrimination and in our contemplation about intersections, which often have an (joint) effect on the structural level, we are always on the slippery slope of interpretation.

5.1 The course of the research and methodology

Based on her quantitative and qualitative studies of intersectionality, Bowleg offers three methodological conclusions: (1) if you are asking additively about identities you get additive answers; (2) it is problematic if intersectionality

15 Čepin Čander, Maja, 'Nevladne organizacije proti večplastni diskriminaciji tudi s plakati: Kdaj ti bo zmanjkalo lepila?' *Dnevnik*, 12 June 2009, <http://www.dnevnik.si/novice/slovenija/1042273709>. (NGOs against multiple discrimination, with posters: When will you run out of glue?)

is measured with additive approaches; (3) ask precisely what you want to know.” (Bowleg, 2008: p. 314). She admits that even if the researchers are asking about the intersection of identities, the respondents are often inclined to separate the identities and discuss them in an additive manner. The experiences during our research were identical.

The purpose of this research was exploratory. We wanted to find out to what extent the individuals who encounter intersection of personal circumstances – we took into account the six circumstances defined by the Treaty of Amsterdam –, contemplate the intersection of those circumstances as a potential basis for discrimination or exclusion, and if they have ever experienced discrimination based on such intersection.

The sample was formed by the snowball method. The starting point were personal contacts of seven people who conducted the interviews and whose social networks in general do not overlap. In this way, we identified starting respondents (representatives of all participating non-governmental organisations were searching for potential respondents, primarily from the fields that they engage in), the next step was to ask respondents about additional potential participants for the study. By doing so, we could not avoid defining intersection in advance: we invited potential respondents to participate by telling them that we were interested in a number of their personal circumstances. This approach could be very problematic, since identities in intersection (namely, personal circumstances) were determined/recognised externally, but all our respondents recognised themselves in the identities because of which we invited them to participate in the interview. They defined themselves as we perceived them “externally”.

We conducted 21 semi-structured interviews, lasting between 40 and 90 minutes. 21 % of respondents were male and 79 % were female. This gender unbalanced sample was the result of the fact that we generally perceived the female gender as the primary potential basis for discrimination. The average age of the participants was 35.5 years; the youngest was 23, the oldest 59.

Other personal circumstances are represented in the sample with the following proportions: disability (14 %), ethnicity (76 %), religion (29 %), sexual orientation (38 %), skin colour (10 %) and age (4 %). Intersections of personal circumstances of the respondents were in general double, 6 respondents mentioned three intersecting personal circumstances. Personal circumstances “connected” in various combinations: the most common was the intersection of gender and ethnicity (33 %), followed by the intersection of sexual orientation and ethnicity (14 %), intersection of gender, ethnicity and religious affiliation (14 %), next was the intersection of sexual orientation and religious affiliation (9 %), the sample also included one case (5 %) of sexual orientation and skin colour, one intersection of gender and sexual orientation, intersection of gender, ethnicity and skin colour, one intersection of disability, religion and ethnicity, an intersection of disability, age and ethnicity and one case of intersection of disability and sexual orientation.

By using Bowleg’s advice, that additive perception of identities in semi-structured interviews is almost impossible to avoid, the semi-structured interview in the first half was organised for the purpose of examining a single personal circumstance, then the second or the third circumstance and finally, we asked the respondents to simultaneously evaluate both/all three identities and their joint effects.

In some cases, the respondents themselves called attention to the intersection of identities during the first part of the interview, but in general they reflected on their identities additively. This could also not be entirely avoided in the last part, since the respondents were constantly inclined towards separate contemplation about one or the other identity, while generally, one of two identities was more prevalent and somehow covered the other identity or identities.

During the semi-structured interview, the respondents were asked to explain what it meant to have a certain identity in a social environment where they lived, what their experiences were regarding this identity and what did they believe other people’s experiences were with this identity. We asked them about concrete examples of discrimination experienced by themselves or by

people they knew with the same identity. We were interested in how they reacted to discrimination, how they felt because of the discrimination and what “preventive measures” they used or use to avoid discrimination based on a certain identity or a personal circumstance. We separately focused on discrimination at work, in school, offices, in the family environment and their circle of friends. At first, we posed questions separately for one identity, then for the second or the third.

During the third, “intersectional part” of the interview, we asked them about experiences of exclusion and discrimination due to both (or several) identities simultaneously. Our questions were met with silence for the most part, since such cases were not many. But additional questions did reveal that such discriminations do occur, only “hidden” behind a single personal experience. We instructed the respondents to put themselves in a hypothetical situation. We asked them to imagine what their life would be, mainly in the context of discrimination, if they did not have one or the other identity or if they did not have both identities at the same time. This question proved to be appropriate, because respondents were put in a situation where they had to think about the intersection of identities and about what they had experienced because of both identities, even though we obtained only “hypothetical answers”. In some cases, the respondents remembered discriminatory incidents, which were the result of an intersectionality, only after they were put in these hypothetical situations.

In the fourth part we asked them about their position within their minority group. We were interested in what were their experiences in one minority group due to the fact that they also had another identity at the same time. With the exception of the gender issue, it was demonstrated that in Slovenia, in general, there is not enough critical mass which would enable “institutionalisation” of intersectional positions; while we are aware of associations and non-governmental organisations that for example merge Roma women, lesbians and similar, in Slovenia there are no societies for same-sex oriented persons with disabilities, Muslims with disabilities, gay and lesbian Roma societies, etc.

We also asked the respondents about potentially discriminatory policies that they might have been aware of and which did not address their specific positions. This means that, for example, they only addressed one of their identities while not being sensitive enough to intersection. Unfortunately, we established that most of our respondents did not think about such policies or did not know them at all.

The next research step was to organise six focus groups for representatives and users of non-governmental organisations that engage in various aspects of personal circumstances on which discrimination could be based. The groups were organised in Novo mesto, Ljubljana, Kranj, Nova Gorica and Maribor, participating in these groups were 35 individuals that engaged in issues of ethnicity (mainly the Roma), mental health, development disorders, gender (e.g. violence towards women), sexual orientation and disabilities.

After an introductory lecture on discrimination, in the framework of which we did not discuss multiple and intersectional discrimination, we carried out a focus group with the participants, which, content-wise, was done with a sample similar to that in the individual interviews. We incorporated two viewpoints: external and internal. The external view on (multiple/intersectional) discrimination was provided by experts who engaged in issues of an individual personal circumstance, the internal view was provided by those that made use of non-governmental organisation's services where the focus groups were conducted. In some cases, the individuals provided the external as well as the internal view, since they were simultaneously active in a non-governmental organisation (expert) and personally as potential victims of discrimination due to personal circumstances which were the focus of that non-governmental organisation (e. g. gays and lesbians active in non-governmental organisations for homosexuals).

Participants in the focus groups were asked about their perception/definitions of discrimination and forms of discrimination, with which their users are confronted. We particularly focused on schools, education, work, offices, families, the circle of friends and similar. We were interested in how individual

non-governmental organisations addressed the issue of discrimination, how they combated it, what examples of good practice they were familiar with and to what extent they were familiar with EU recommendations, resolutions and directives from this field and if these were helpful in their work. The last set of questions was related to their understanding of multiple and intersectional discrimination and their experiences with it.

All interviews and focus groups – the total number of respondents was 56 – were recorded and later transcribed.

Methodologically, when analysing interviews and focus groups we took as our basis the analytical approaches of Grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1968). The transcriptions of interviews and primarily the descriptions of discriminatory practices were first categorised into general types of discrimination, which in subsequent steps were categorised in more detail, paying special attention to (potential) intersections. In this way, we obtained the basic categories of intersectional discriminations into which we distributed the experiences of our respondents. At the same time, during the interviews, we also took notes on a series of discriminatory situations that by their nature are not intersectional. Because we believe that such material is important, we did not exclude it from the following analysis. This means that in this analysis we have presented intersectional discriminatory practices and experiences of our respondents, as well as cases that can be categorised only as one-dimensional discrimination.

The results of this study can in no way be generalised. The study is to be understood as a descriptive incision into the field, which remains poorly researched in Slovenia and to which not enough attention is paid to, primarily by various policies.



When will you run out of glue? ¹⁶

6

"The world is shaped according to the criteria of a white male, who is in top physical shape. Everything not in accordance with this is discrimination."
(Nina, EX¹⁷)

"The system is always shaped according to some levelling factor. When minorities come in conflict with this, regardless what they are like, it always leads to discrimination." (Andrej, 21)

The purpose of this study was not to form a transparent classification of all possible forms of discrimination. We only classified those discriminatory incidents that were mentioned in interviews and focus groups. Despite the fact that we tried to be as clear as possible and to draw attention to individual aspects of discrimination, the categories we implemented unavoidably overlap. Mainly, we considered two approaches to the classification of discrimination: its form and the location where it occurred. Other incidents of discrimination were arranged according to the visibility or non-visibility of traits which were the cause of discrimination, and according to the stigma attached to individual personal circumstances.

When reading through the stories that we transcribed we came to the conclusion that our interventions regarding the interpretation of these stories should be minimal and pushed into the background. We recorded so many

16 "When will you run out of glue?" (Kdaj ti bo zmanjkalo lepila?) was the tag line of a poster campaign concerning intersectional discrimination (the poster is printed on the cover of this book). This study on (intersectional) discrimination was conducted in the framework of that project.

17 All names next to quotes from interviews and focus groups are fictitious. The number next to the name represents the respondent's age. If EX appears next to the name instead of a number, this means that the respondent was an expert from one of the participating non-governmental organisations.

discriminatory incidents that are so comprehensive that they needed more space. Below, we minimise our interpretations and focus on experiences, stories and reflections of our respondents.

But first, a note about the selection of identities. The selection of the prevailing identity, the identity that respondents found the most important, did not represent a major problem for the majority. They almost always exposed one of their two or three identities as the dominant one. It even seemed, as stated above, that one of the dominant identities often covered up the rest, which are then thematised to a lesser extent. At the same time, the dominance of certain identities changed with time. The identity that is at a certain moment the most endangered, stigmatised or excluded, generally becomes the individual's most significant identity, except if one of the strategies of stigma management is the elimination or mimicry of the stigmatised identity. One can say that this is a personal or social determination of identities; the importance of a certain identity depends on the individual's perception of identity, as well as on the social placement of this identity.

"I do not think about my identity as a woman, in my everyday life. [...] As a human I am empowered enough, so that my identity as a woman does not contribute to any sort of discrimination. Except, maybe, on an institutional level. [...] But I have often given a lot of thought to my ethnicity, [...] especially at the end of the 1980s when the issue of Slovenia's independence arose. Back then, I gave it a lot of thought. [...] Back then, I received a very strong message: you are not one of us, you are not equal. If anything is going to go wrong you will be the first to suffer. Back then, the nationalist messages were very strong. [...] Afterwards, thoughts about my identity subsided. Now that the conflict with Croatia is at the fore again, I am once again reflecting on my identity. (Tina, 36)

The difference in perceiving identities is also established on the level of the potential interchangeability of identities. Identities which are not interchangeable have the primary position precisely because of their permanence.

This is especially evident from the case of people with disabilities, which is explained by Mate (Muslim) and Marija (Bosnian).

"Disability is more important, because this is me. You inherit religion, you can nurture it or reject it, in the case of disability, one has to struggle with themselves to survive." (Mate, 55)

"I would not say that disability is the most important identity, but it marked me at birth. I did not choose this for myself, but since this 'situation' was given to me at birth, it is also the one I identify with the most. From birth onwards, a lot of things were inaccessible to me, such as not being able to go to kindergarten, not being able to attend regular school due to the legislation and architectural barriers, back then, the only possibility for education was a special institution." (Marija, 59)



Attribution as a basis for discrimination

7

Although every discrimination is essentially based on prejudices and stereotypes, discrimination based on attribution is the most explicit form of discrimination where individuals are unequally treated because certain characteristics and capabilities are attributed to their identity. These are of course not necessarily true, since attribution is usually not based on experience. A great deal of such discrimination in the context of the workplace is experienced by people with disabilities, people with a developmental disorder and people with mental health problems, since they are a priori labelled as incapable of performing a certain task. But other personal circumstances can also be the basis for attributing reduced capabilities. Sanja's and Milan's examples – both are members of a minority ethnic community – clearly show how the logic of "us-them" is reproduced through the process of attribution, where "us" is positioned higher, and "they" are used only to enable such positioning of "us".

"When [in primary school] I went to the school social worker, she said that I have to understand that we as a nation [immigrants] were invited to Slovenia to work, not to receive education. Because of this, she suggested that I enrol in a vocational secondary school." (Sanja, 27)

"In primary school I sat next to a boy from the countryside. I knew they were building a house [...] but they did not shower and the boy stank. [...] My schoolteacher told me to invite my parents to a meeting with her. [...] She asked them how they take care of my hygiene, since she can always smell me whenever she walks by my desk. [She wanted to know] if I bathe regularly, if I change my underwear and so on. This is one such example that I will never forget." (Milan, 34)

Widespread discrimination based on attribution is also related to gender stereotypes which have its basis in a patriarchally-marked culture. Exclusion occurs at the point of gender-marked suitability or the capacity to perform certain tasks. In other words: this is discrimination based on sexism.

"I experience discrimination against women in every day of my life. For example, in traffic when guys vent their anger on women, that are supposedly bad drivers, even though this is not true. Sales staff think women are easier to "fool" if they are buying any kind of technical devices. As if women are not able to understand such things. Or they think that whatever they are selling is good enough for us. [...] Or insults one can hear over the radio. I just heard today on the radio that you can get "a crate of beer in exchange for a broad", and you also get a muzzle." (Tanja, 32)

Sexist culture translates to a gender-marked unequal treatment of men and women, which leads to discrimination.

"The attitude of clients towards waitresses is different than towards waiters. They "flirt" with women and think they can say anything to them because they are behind the bar. They are probably more reserved towards men; they have a little more respect for them." (Elvira, 31)

Another form of discrimination related to sexism is attributing certain characteristics to persons according to their social status and the resulting exclusion, which is based on the attributed and expected characteristics. At the intersection of the social status and gender, women are thus especially exposed to discrimination.

"I was looking to rent an apartment through an agency and she asked me: "How many will be moving to the apartment?" It was a three-room apartment. I said: "Three." And she said: "Do you have one child?" I said: "No, two." And that was it. She started asking me what my income was, how I would be able to afford it. And this was an apartment that I could easily

afford. [...] She said: "No, you cannot. A single mother cannot move to the apartment." (Mateja, EX)

A very disconcerting form of discrimination that experts engaging in mental health issues, have been drawing attention to is the rejection of healthcare to persons with such problems. When professional workers call from one of their non-governmental organisations and ask for help, medical professionals know right away what kind of a problem it is. We could say that they attribute a "diagnosis", which is based on their personal circumstance, to a person in advance.

"A doctor would not come when I called and told her that we have a woman lying here, who was unresponsive and was, in my opinion, dying. [...] And the doctor said: "If she does not die today, she will die tomorrow. It is addiction. She has been gradually killing herself for years. Even if she does not die today, she will die tomorrow." The woman was an alcoholic. She was having treatment but started to drink again ... It was a direct violation because she was in danger. And she did die." (Nina, EX)

Attribution based on visible traits

7.1

Attribution as a basis for discrimination is based on visible traits, such as gender or also on more or less non-visible traits that can be known or presumed, based on other, partial or even completely false information.

A trait as a visible symbol at first has an effect at the level of seeing or non-verbal communication. Stares, gazes, grimaces and similar can be forms of non-verbal discrimination or exclusion. Marija, who has a physical disability, recalls that such stares were very painful for her.

"In my youth, I was very affected by the piercing stares of people. Very early on, I became aware that I was different. Occasionally, I wished that the earth would open and swallow me. What are they staring at me for?" (Marija, 59)

A trait that generally discloses a certain identity of an individual can be so strong that it covers up all other (visible and non-visible) traits and thus, of course, also identities. In interviews, some respondents mentioned that they did not experience discrimination as the result of intersection of various personal circumstances, but they did notice that one of the identities (or one of the traits) could conceal the other. This is especially obvious in individuals that had been excluded for a longer period of time because of a trait, and by adopting a new trait (e. g. entering a new religious community) it had become so strong that it covered up the one that was once the basis for discrimination. For example, Ajša, who adopted the Muslim religion, mentioned that before adopting this religion she was more frequently discriminated against or excluded because of her gender; after adopting the visible traits of the Muslim religion (Ajša wears a headscarf), she started noticing that discrimination based on gender had subsided, but simultaneously she experienced exclusion due to her religion and the related recognisable traits. One could also say there is some sort of a hierarchy according to a certain identities' visibility. It seems that greater visibility or recognisability of a certain identity generates a greater potential for exclusion and discrimination.

"I was walking down the street and talking on the phone. A car with some kids drove by and they started yelling at me and spitting [because of the headscarf]. My friend [who also wears a headscarf] was actually spat on." (Ajša, 29)

Skin colour as a recognisable trait which can be the basis for exclusion has a similarly exclusive effect. Namely, Slovenian society is substantially defined by white skin colour, any deviation from this can be interpreted as *exotic* (which is a patronising mode of exclusion through fascination) or as *foreign* (a classic racist modes of exclusion). Sani, who is of Arabian origin, and Miha, who is half African, said that they often experienced direct exclusion because of their appearance.

"Yes, it is always the same: 'You Arab, you are a foreigner, you have no right to be here. Go back to where you came from.'" (Sani, 45)

"It can happen that somebody at the post office or at the bank talks to you, not in a foreign language, but they try to explain things in very basic Slovene, despite the fact that you are explaining to them what you need in perfect Slovene. Sometimes you get the feeling that they want to be done with you faster than usual. It is sometimes hard to be persistent because with some people you can very quickly trigger a reflex, such as, 'you have no right to lecture me, you 'nigger, črnec, zamorec', etc. (all are derogatory expressions for black people).' [...] You almost get the feeling that you should be grateful to be there, that they do not send you back." (Miha, 28)

Through visible traits, stereotypical notions are generated, which are attributed to these traits. Stereotypes actually function based on a trait (as a partial information) from which "the rest of the story" of a person is then created. This story is of course typical and therefore a perfect fertile ground for discriminatory treatment.

"You experience mistrust. You can often hear comments, like 'Yes, he is an Arab, he is dishonest' and such. Sometimes this is said in a joke, but sometimes you do not rightly know what they are actually thinking. [...] I also have to say that this occurred a couple of times in public offices ... mixed feelings. They were nice, but were also giving me sceptical looks." (Sani, 45)

Exclusion or violence, which individuals with visible traits of their stigmatised identity experience on the street, is in the context of official services, such as public offices, transferred into discriminatory treatment or even denial of service.

"My friend gave birth to a baby last year in the Ljubljana maternity hospital, where the midwife would not deliver the baby because 'Bosnians stink'. The girl was born in Ljubljana, went to school in Slovenia and is herself a medical professional. Can you imagine what a shock it must have been for her? To this day, she describes giving birth as a rape." (Sanja, 27)

"In an inn, they would not serve us [because of my Roma affiliation]. [...] We sat down. All the others were served, except us. After a long time the

waitress came and was very rude... so we left. [...] I once had a granuloma, it was all swollen and I was in pain ... but none of the dentists would take a look at me here in Novo mesto. Not one. [...] But that really was a long time ago." (Fani, 58)

The same way that explicitly expressed religious affiliation can be a partial trait from which the stereotypical part of "the rest of the story" can be derived from, the implicit traits of religious affiliation, which can be completely wrong, are also the building blocks in the image of a certain person. Studies at the Faculty of Theology, and the case that Andrej discussed at the focus group, are such an example. He was applying for a student job to supply coffee vending machines. Because he was a student at the Faculty of Theology the examiners at the interview were interested in everything else but his capabilities of performing the work.

"At the student employment brokerage service there was a tender for work: delivery and supply of coffee vending machines. I got there [to the interview] and introduced myself. A lady and a gentleman started asking me: 'Do you feel strong enough to lift this? Do you feel you are good with technical devices and you know how to change a fuse?' When I told them that I was studying theology they started asking me about my moral views. [...] What is my view on abortion, artificial insemination ... [...] At the end, she asked me if I had a girlfriend, which I found absurd. When I told them that I had a boyfriend the interview was over. That evening I received a message that [...] they did not need me." (Andrej, 21)

Different forms of discrimination occurring at the institutional level and in wider social contexts are also transferred to interpersonal relations, among others, also in the context of the family. Respondents talked about different forms of discrimination or exclusion by family members; in the case of same-sex oriented respondents this was evident by establishing a family secret and "non-discussion" policy regarding sexual orientation, in the context of gender, the respondents mentioned gender-marked roles that were attributed to fe-

male family members, and intolerance towards certain minorities, for example, ethnic minorities can have an important influence on partnership relations.

"I was discriminated against by the mother of my boyfriend. She did not like it that I was in a relationship with her son because I was not Slovenian. [...] She never said anything to me. I had to drag it out of my boyfriend because he was so uncomfortable. He often explained what she was like, and I also noticed myself that she made very nationalistic remarks. Well, then he gave in and confessed that his mother gave him an ultimatum: either he leaves or ... that she simply did not want to see me anymore. I would have to be Slovenian." (Tina, 36)

Language as a visible trait

7.1.1

"Slovenian kids in kindergarten already know who Prešeren is, but they [children of immigrants] do not. They do know who Vuk Karadžić is, even though Slovenian kids do not. And then they are discriminated against because of ignorance." (Tanja, 32)

As the above-mentioned cases of skin colour, religious affiliation and similar discriminations, language also has an effect as a trait and defines an individual's identity. Spoken and written language becomes a visible trait and a potential basis for discrimination.

In this section we discuss language, because the respondents most often mentioned it in conversation as the basis for their unequal treatment. Language as a basis for discrimination in Slovenia is generally related to members of minority ethnic groups or, more precisely, members of nationalities from former Yugoslavian republics. Language as a visible trait in these communities has an effect that Miran Komac (2003) calls the danger of "Roma syndrome". This means that their communities are recognised through language (also through names) as a social problem and not as a cultural phenomenon. Language is a sign of the "problem" from which certain characteristics and

capabilities are stereotypically derived. A respondent, who engaged in activities to help Roma children in the transition into a new, unknown language and prepared workbooks for them in Roma language, mentioned the opposition she had to face from teachers for doing this. They labelled her a “Gypsy teacher” and “pushed her to the edge of the teacher’s staff room”.

“I believe that every child in school has the right [...] to hear the words, ball, apple, tree, sunshine in their own language. [...] It is a form of discrimination, if the teachers say: ‘What? Now we will have to learn Gypsy? Why should we teachers, have to learn the Gypsy language?’ But if a teacher would at least know the words ‘loli’, which means red, ‘kham’, sun, or ‘kher’, house; if we only knew some basic words, then it really could mean something. I always felt sorry for these kids; why should they pay attention to me if they do not understand me. No wonder they were restless, if they did not understand us.” (Anam, EX)

In schools, language as a trait is, judging by stories told by respondents of non-Slovenian ethnicity, an especially pressing problem. Not only are they excluded by their classmates but also by the teachers, mostly through different treatment which is evident in the a priori assumption that members of other ethnic minorities have a poor grasp of the Slovenian language.

“In school, I felt that my ethnicity always caused me nothing but problems, in my relationship with teachers, as well as classmates. They did not like us because we were ‘Bosnians’, they often called me names. [...] All of us who were ‘Bosnians’ had to exhibit more knowledge than others, especially in Slovene lessons. Those of us, whose names ended on -ić, were also under psychical pressure from the teachers.” (Zdenka, 25)

“I had no problems related to my national affiliation. Except in Slovene lessons. From the first to the fourth year of school, my essays were always graded with an F. [...] At the leaving examination I received a B for my essay. [...] Someone else was grading the essay, not my professor, and suddenly I

received a positive grade. This confused me. But at least I knew that I had mastered the Slovene language to a certain extent." (Milan, 34)

Several respondents mentioned that teachers requested more proof that they really understood a certain subject or content, which was derived from a common a priori assumption that the children of immigrants were less successful in school (cf. Razpotnik, 2004).

"Several times in high school, I faced a situation where I had to know more than the others to get the same grade. Teachers believed that immigrants simply were not as smart as the others. Of course, no one said anything like that, but back then I felt that they were watching me more intently during examinations in case I was cribbing, because I had good grades. When they ascertained that I did not crib, and that I was maybe also intelligent, I was the exception that proved the rule." (Nina, 36)

"A teacher told my mum that she would never be able to give me an A as my final grade in Slovene studies, despite my good grades, because I was not Slovenian by birth." (Sanja, 27)

Discriminatory, a priori expectations are not merely related to the issue of language but related to this can also transform into other forms of so called cultural racism (cf. Kuzmanić, 2002). An individual is not excluded because of their capabilities or incapacities, but due to the attributed culture for which it is assumed that it is less developed and less worthy than "our" culture. Cultural racism is thus another lever through which the so called *Other* is established or through which the binary opposition "us-them" is reproduced.

"My Slovene teacher in high school – I always had an A in Slovene – commented on my perfectly normal behaviour, chatting, joking during the lesson, and said I should not act in class like we do 'down there' (in the Balkan countries). [...] I found it terrible. [...] You are hurt when someone judges you based on your name or based on where your parents come from." (Elvira, 31)

Similar to surnames that end on “-ić”, the traces of languages of the former Yugoslavian republics in the individual’s spoken or written language, also trigger some kind of anger in a part of the majority population – which is also a form of cultural racism, – because “failed” or “unfinished” assimilation can be evident from such language, or as Srečo Dragoš (2004: p. 11) calls it in the case of Isamophobia, “failure of compulsive assimilation”. The language usage of members of other, non-Yugoslavian nationalities, who live in Slovenia, is otherwise considered non-problematic, which makes it extremely indicative in such cases.

“My father never learned to speak Slovene well and he was always embarrassed when talking on the phone. Because over the phone, people in public offices ... now it is no longer so common, but in the 1990s it often happened that they were very unkind if you did not speak proper Slovene. [...] So my sister and I started making calls. And I always found it unpleasant because I always had to introduce myself with my name and surname. I am aware enough to know when somebody has a certain thought and when not, so I still find it unpleasant to call because of this. To certain public offices or institutions.” (Tina, 36)

It is interesting to note that some respondents experienced “positive discrimination” due to a better grasp of Slovene than what was expected of them, but not in a traditional sense of “positive” but actually in a more negative way. Because they were assimilated, they were rewarded and excluded from the stigmatised group. They were thus put in a position where they could enjoy the “reward”, provided that they distanced themselves from their stigmatised group and hid their identity so that it did not pose a threat for the majority group. Actually, at the relation “us” - “them” a new distinction was established: “good immigrants” and “bad čefurs” (a derogatory term for immigrants from former Yugoslavian republics).

“A friend told me that he does not like ‘čefurs’. And I replied: ‘Then what am I?’ And he said that I am not a ‘čefur’ because I speak Slovene and that I do not look like a one and that I’m assimilated.” (Tanja, 32)

Such cases of exclusion can also function as some form of patronisation.

"I worked with clients over the phone. [...] I was talking to a woman and we were chatting, I explained to her everything, she was very kind and at the end she asked me to tell her my name. I told her [a Roma/non-Slovenian name, author's note], and she said: 'Oh, have you lived here long? Your Slovene is very good.' I told her I was born here ...this was in 2005! To have someone tell me, 'Oh, you speak very good Slovene', because of my name" (Elvira, 31)

The relation of language as a visible trait to other traits is confirmed by the discriminatory incident experienced by the respondent of Croatian ethnicity. The fact that she spoke to a friend in Croatian on the street, was, similar to the case of the headscarf, a "disturbing trait" that needed to be removed.

"My friend and I, who is also from Croatia, were talking in Croatian. At that moment a guy walked by and approached us and asked us why were we speaking in Croatian and wheather we knew that we were in Slovenia." (Maja, 20)

Name as a trait which becomes visible

7.1.2

"At the unemployment office, they told me to change my name so I would be able to find a job." (Milka, 41)

Respondents who participated in our study because of their non-Slovenian ethnicity, often mentioned that, alongside language, their name was also a trait that triggered discriminatory treatment, exclusion and the attribution of stereotypes and the consequent treatment in accordance with such factors or as a reaction to these factors (cf. Kuzmanić, 1999). As some kind of "perverted" version of *nomen est omen*, the name is, when spoken and becomes a visible trait, a good indication of potential discrimination. The subjectivity of an individual is reduced to their name.

"I called the human resources department of a company and asked why they did not call me in for an interview because I knew that I met all the requirements specified in the employment tender. They asked me once again to tell them my full name and I told them. And the woman said: 'Well, that is why.' [...] A similar situation occurred when I took an oral exam at the Faculty of Law. They called my name, but made a mistake – they properly pronounced my name, but mispronounced my surname. I went in and asked out of caution if they meant me, so that I would not accidentally take the exam instead of someone else. He looked at my written exam and said: 'Yes, I meant you, but you know how it is ... we are not used to these surnames. And our faculty would also prefer that it stays that way.' After that I could not even answer the questions because I was in shock. [You do not expect] a Doctor of Law to make such a statement." (Sanja, 27)

"We [the Roma, author's note] had to change our names. If your name was Brajdič, you were not certain if you are going to get the job or not. Would someone buy a car from you because it says Brajdič in the certificate of registration? Can you buy a car after you tell them that your name is Brajdič? [...] Many Roma had to renounce their culture for Slovenians to accept us as we are." (Bobo, EX)

A non-Slovenian name can also function as something exotic or as a curiosity, which is not a traditional form of discrimination, but exposing this name can have excluding consequences for the individual.

"The situation with my name was very painful. People comment on my name. When I introduced myself, I always had to explain ... or they sing that song [a known Croatian song that mentions the name of our respondent, author's note]. This always makes me think, 'oh, my god!'. Some find this positive, but I am always reminded that I am different." (Tina, 36)

"It would be easier if I was called Katarina Novak. My name and surname immediately give away the fact that I am not a real Slovenian. [...] If I was called Katarina Novak it would probably be easier at the post office, when

enrolling at a high school, in college, anywhere ... Maybe they would not look at me as if I am ... And then there are responses, such as: 'Oh, you have a beautiful name. Where are you from?' Most say that it is a beautiful name, interesting, unusual, because they do not hear it everyday. But that is something different. Nobody would make a comment about Katarina Novak." (Elvira, 31)

Attribution based on non-visible, imagined or unknown traits

7.2

Discrimination does not originate only from visible or obvious traits, but also from non-visible or merely imagined traits, at the same time discrimination can be triggered by traits which we do not recognise and actually do not know what they communicate. Ajša's case is a perfect example of this. In Slovenia, her new identity (the trait of "foreign religion") resulted in a different treatment on different levels that do not originate directly from religious affiliation. As a Slovenian that adopted the Muslim religion she is often a priori treated as a foreigner (similar examples of intersection of skin colour and (Slovenian) ethnicity were mentioned in the previous chapter). In Ajša's case it seems that the headscarf plays a key role.

"Sometimes I notice that when people talk to me, they want to explain more loudly and clearly, so I can understand better. Or they ask: 'Do you speak English?' Sometimes people are confused when they hear me speaking in perfect Slovene. They do not allow the possibility of a Slovenian being a Muslim." (Ajša, 29)

"Visual attributes" do not have to be factual (as, for example, a headscarf is), but can also be imagined. Especially in cases of sexual orientation, the supposed recognisable signs, based on which persons that discriminate or are hostile recognise someone as a homosexual, can be grounds for discriminatory treatment, even though these traits can be completely false.

"At the train station a skinhead [because of my appearance] started yelling at me, that I am weird. And I asked him to come closer and confront me, if he has any problems, we can clear them up right away." (Maja, 20)

"When I went to get cigarettes in the middle of the night and I was 'a little tipsy', four guys dressed in militant clothing approached me. They told me to stop and I said I did not have time. 'Are you a faggot?' they asked. I told them, that sometimes I am. And he asked me: 'Do you want me to fuck you?' And I said: 'No, I told you, I do not have time for this.' Then he slammed into me sideways and pressed me against the wall and held me with both hands. Luckily, I managed to escape from him. I ran away, and they ran after me, but they soon gave up." (Tine, 25)

Misreading visible traits leads to the attribution of certain (stereotypical) characteristics which the person with such a trait had no intent to communicate.

"Because the stores had steps, my mother often left me waiting in front of the store (in a wheelchair) and people walking by were offering me money. It was so terrible I could cry. Then people got used to people in wheelchairs and they stopped doing that." (Marija, 59)

"The wife of our director has the same last name as one of the currently popular Roma. When the nurse came to their home because they had a baby, she asked, before even looking at the baby: 'Are you Gypsies?' Can you imagine that? [...] Is it really important whether she is a Gypsy or not? [...] She obviously did not want to touch a Gypsy baby ..." (Sanja, 27)

Traits which stand out and are recognised as foreign or traits for which we know what they communicate can become a basis for a demand for an explanation. The "questioner" automatically takes the position of their own culture as the norm (consequently also as something better) from which everything else deviates (as potentially problematic or dangerous). In such cases, this is

not necessarily intentional discrimination, but such positioning does lead to exclusion at the level of discourse.

"This often happens with people that are not knowledgeable. Just a couple of days ago a lady asked me [because of the headscarf, author's note]: 'What sect do you belong to? What are you?' They ask such stupid questions that you do not know how to react." (Ajša, 29)

Just as religious identity without traits is generally not visible and is imperceptible, sexual orientation as a basis for potential discrimination only becomes a visible trait, for example, through same-sex partnerships. Discrimination in the form of non-verbal expressions or insulting comments and questions in the example of a lesbian relationship, as described by Lepa, can also be established through intersection of homophobia and sexism.

"They see me with women that I bring to my apartment and so on. [...] Children do not notice this; those from 20 to 30 years of age are more perceptive. Then they evaluate and their imagination starts to work. I am talking about men. If you are in a lift, you can see them looking at you and your partner. You can see a whole movie going on in his head. [...] A neighbour once asked me: 'Is she your cousin?', I told him that she is my girlfriend. I do not remember exactly what he said, and I replied: 'Look, when you bring a woman as hot as this to your apartment, then we can talk.' And he did not bother me after that. It was no longer an issue." (Lepa, 25)

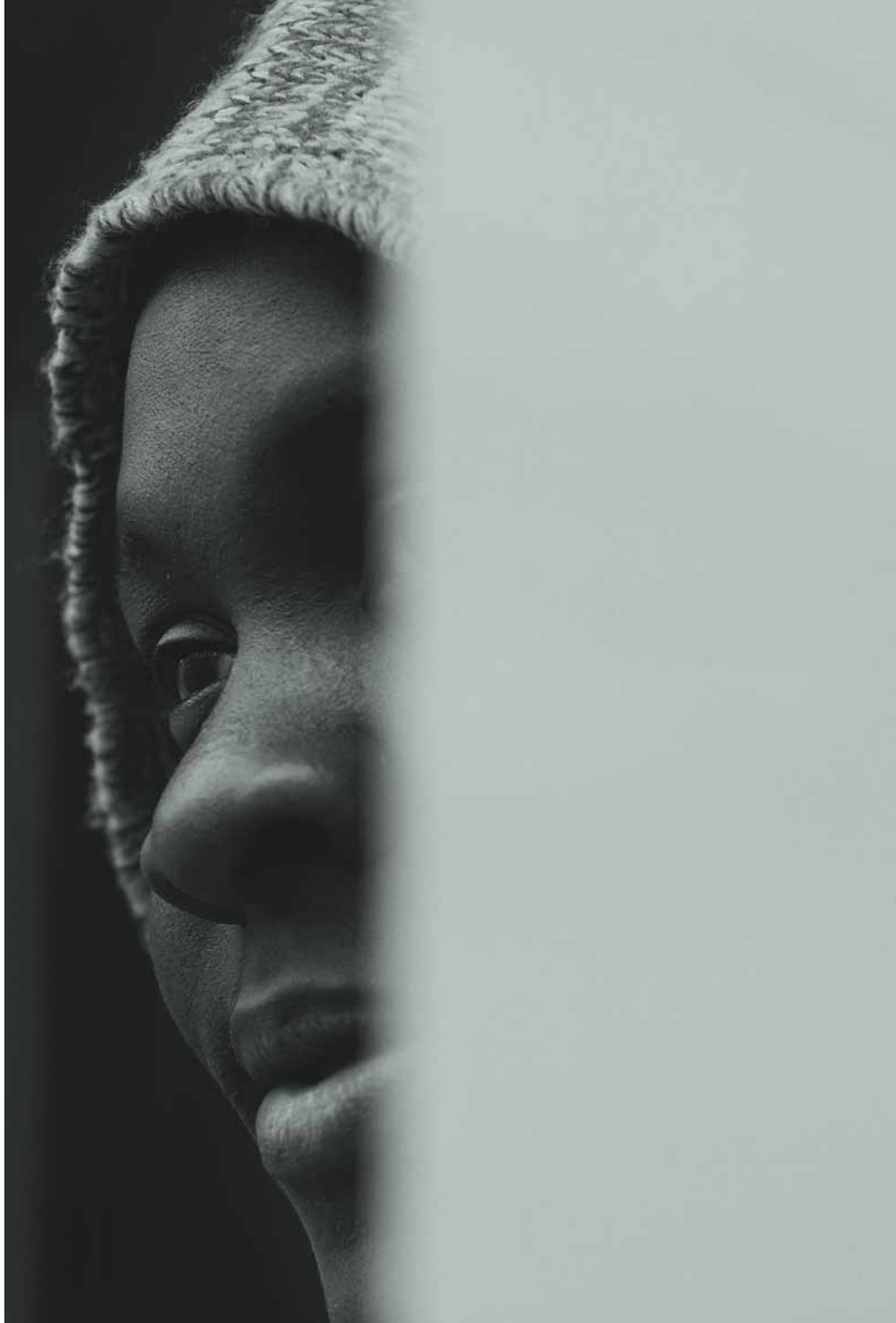
Most respondents said they had not experienced any physical violence on account of their identity, with the exception of one group: homosexuals. Mostly gay men (but not exclusively) reported on physical violence that they experience in everyday life due to their sexual orientation and the stigmatisation of this sexual orientation. According to research (Švab and Kuhar, 2005, Velikonja and Greif, 2001, Kuhar, Maljavac, Koletnik and Magić, 2008), they are often victims of physical violence perpetrated by unknown persons in public areas (e. g. by adolescent groups) that see "beating up faggots" as a form of

entertainment and proving their masculinity. According to Švab and Kuhar (2005), almost 24 % of gays and lesbians surveyed claim that they were victims of physical violence. In more than 60 % of cases the perpetrators of this violence were strangers, and the violence occurred in public areas (streets, bars, etc.).

"We went partying to a straight dance club which was not gay friendly. On the dance floor we relaxed a bit [...] and someone told us: 'Come outside and I will beat you to a pulp, you faggots.' When we went out for a smoke he started yelling: 'Goddamn you, faggots! Is this your wife?' [...] Then he hit my friend on the head. The security guards did not react. They stood at the entrance and smirked. Then we called a taxi and went to the police. There, they told us to go to the ER if we were hurt and that they will take it from there." (Andrej, 21)

"I and my boyfriend were walking from Metelkova. Outside, in front of the bus station, a group of boys stopped us and told us they were gay and that they were looking for a gay club. [...] We told them where it was. They asked 'And you, are you two gay?' And we said yes. And then they wanted us to crouch or something like that ... but I would not do it and I ran. I was punched in the stomach lightly, but I managed. But they held my friend and were beating him up and I lost it. [...] I yelled for somebody to call the police, but then they vanished and left him alone. [...] [In such situations] it is very wise to leave without showing fear. That is how you do not get beaten up." (Matjaž, 30)

"I was a victim of physical violence in my family because I am a lesbian. I had to find help myself. I was looking for psychosocial support in several counselling services. Luckily, this violence later stopped as I was already considering reporting it to the police. I was also searching for a safe house, in case I needed a place to retreat to." (Uli, 31)



Stigmatised identity

8

In his now quintessential study on stigma, Erving Goffman (2008 [1963]) states that stigma, or a characteristic that is “severely discriminatory” for an individual, is always relational; the same circumstance can in certain contexts be non-stigmatising, but in others it brings about stigma and as a result also exclusion and discrimination.¹⁸ In other words, it depends on how a certain trait that represents an individual’s identity is recognised and evaluated. Stigma is actually the result of continuously recognising certain traits as dangerous, which simultaneously means that these traits are also a basis for discrimination. In a vicious circle, a trait becomes a stigma that triggers new discriminations. Unequal treatment is based on reactions to stigma, as well as on attempts to prevent potential discrimination (concealing a stigma).

Discrimination as a reaction to stigmatised identity

8.1

Discrimination is not always a conscious act of exclusion or unequal treatment of certain individuals. It can also occur indirectly through reactions to stigma that can be insulting or humiliating for a person. These usually come in various forms of verbal discrimination which are the result of a binary opposition to the discourse about a norm. The discourse about the body, for example, through medical, media and other discourses establishes the healthy body and its care as a norm (cf. Foucault, 1993) that at the same time generates its opposition – the unhealthy body. Therefore, in present times, new groups are created that are discriminated against based precisely on this circumstance

18 Goffman makes the distinction between three forms of stigma, which are derived from (1) physical deformities (e.g. physical disability), (2) character traits (e.g. unwanted personal traits) and (3) group affiliations based on various personal circumstances such as race, religion, ethnicity etc. Our study primarily discusses the third form of stigma.

– for example, the obese. The norm of a healthy body as the source of verbal discrimination is of course most directly evident in people with disabilities.

"[In my home environment] the difference between a person with disabilities and a healthy person was very noticeable; because people that are not familiar with disabilities perceive a person with a disabilities in a completely different way than they do a normal healthy person. This gives rise to belittlement, disdain; they look at you in a completely different way." (Mate, 55)

A stigmatised identity can be the cause of discriminatory or excluding treatment due to the "discomfort" felt by people around individuals with stigma or with visible traits of a certain identity.

"When [my friends, author's note] find themselves in a situation where I introduce them to a boyfriend they all feel uncomfortable. If they really accepted me they would not be uncomfortable, they would not go pale, they would not give me strange looks ..." (Tomaž, 23)

A classic example of discrimination as a reaction to a stigmatised identity is the hopeless search for premises for drug addicts, which is often reported in the media. This is the so called NIMBY phenomenon (*not in my back yard*) which means that an individual generally recognises the stigmatisation of certain groups or their exclusion from society, but shifts the responsibility for the issue onto others (as if they themselves were not part of the same society). They agree with the solution for a problem, but will not allow it in their own back yard, since this will supposedly lower their living standards.

"[At the non-governmental organisation Ozara, where we wanted to establish a group for people with mental illness] we already had premises at Kidričeva Street, where mostly wealthier people lived. [...] And they had a petition going, because they would not allow 'loonies' there, what if someone goes mental and jumps through the window and falls on their child who would at the exact same moment be using the swing. Back then, I told them that even one of their lonely, elderly neighbours living alone could jump and fall

on their child. [...] But they succeeded in their attempts; we could not move into the building for a whole year and were searching for another location. This was in 1997. [...] [We did not use any legal means] because I found it stupid to do so. Even though we could have moved into that apartment by legal means, the neighbours would at first discriminate against them and these people would not feel good." (Nina, EX)

(Un)covering the stigma

8.1.1

Concealing a stigma is simultaneously a form of managing it and also a form of discrimination if the pressure to hide the stigma comes from outside. Because implicit hostilities, which can always erupt into explicit hostilities, are constantly present, the stigmatised groups establish a kind of self-control. This means that they control/cover up the stigma or control the way they present themselves on the outside. Where possible, one can cover up the signs of their stigma, because by doing so they can avoid discrimination. Goffman believes that "due to numerous benefits originating from the fact that you are seen as [...] normal almost all people that have the possibility of concealing their stigma will do so sometimes." (Goffman, 2008 [1963]: p. 69).

Implicit hostility that can turn into one of the elements of a certain culture or society becomes explicit (verbalised) if it comes in contact with stigma. It is expressed, for example, through entirely everyday comments, like this one, overheard by a respondent with a non-Slovenian ethnicity:

"I recall that my neighbour and I went to make sure what class I would be attending at high school. A girl there said: 'Oh, thank god, our class is pure'. [...] I got a feeling that I would have to be better to be on the same level. For example, when in company with other people, it was always important for me to be a 'kidder'. Probably not just for the sake of being one but also because of the above." (Tina, 36)

8.1.2 Stigma as a contagion

Respondents often mentioned several cases of being pressured to conform to the “norm”. The pressure generally came from the immediate family, since stigma functions as some kind of contagion – not only is the individual with a certain identity stigmatised, but so are people around them, especially if a certain identity seems shameful. The pressure to hide the stigma is related to the fear of discrimination through association (one does not experience discrimination because of their own identity but because of the identity of someone you are associated with). During her school years, Ajša and her sister, for example, experienced forms of exclusion due to the disability of their brother.

“When our mum came to get us at school, she carried him [the brother, author’s note] on her shoulder, or she pushed his wheelchair. And the children said that our mother came with a monkey to get us. [...] They also looked at me sometimes as if I was not quite alright.” (Ajša, 29)

The above example of discrimination through association is a case of social pressure towards a non-disabled body. Discrimination through association is established because the disability was socially constructed as some kind of a form of contagion for which the victims of exclusion had to prove that they were not infected.

A slightly different example is given by Švab and Kuhar (2005) in the study on everyday life of gays and lesbians, where they mention that the family often pressurizes the individual to hide their sexual orientation that they do not even want to discuss in the family circle. In this manner, a kind of “family secret” is established.

“I told my mother [that I was gay] two years ago and it was very uncomfortable. She did not take it well and will not discuss it even today. I told her: ‘Look, I have my own life; I will not burden you with this if you do not want to know about it.’ [...] She is worried that the family will be ruined, that she will have no one because of the way everyone will look at her. She is more

worried about what others might say. [...] And my aunt told me that I am no longer welcome at their place. She said that she thinks it is not normal, it is unacceptable and a shame for the family." (Tomaž, 23)

The silence regarding homosexuality in the context of family can also be replaced by insults or emotional extortion related to the individual's sexual orientation. This is also a case of expressing the unacceptability of an individual's identity.

"At home, I am out, but my mother doesn't take it well. And she sometimes calls me a 'faggot'. [...] When we argue for example. But it does not get to me much." (Marko, 18)

Establishing a "family secret" is not limited only to sexual orientation, similar forms of exclusion can also manifest themselves in cases of other personal circumstances. Marija, for example, recalls how disability was stigmatised when she was growing up.

"I know of a case where the parents were ashamed of their children with disabilities and kept them hidden at home so they never saw the outside of the house. These were all things that, from my birth on, distinguished me from the other, healthy children." (Marija, 59)

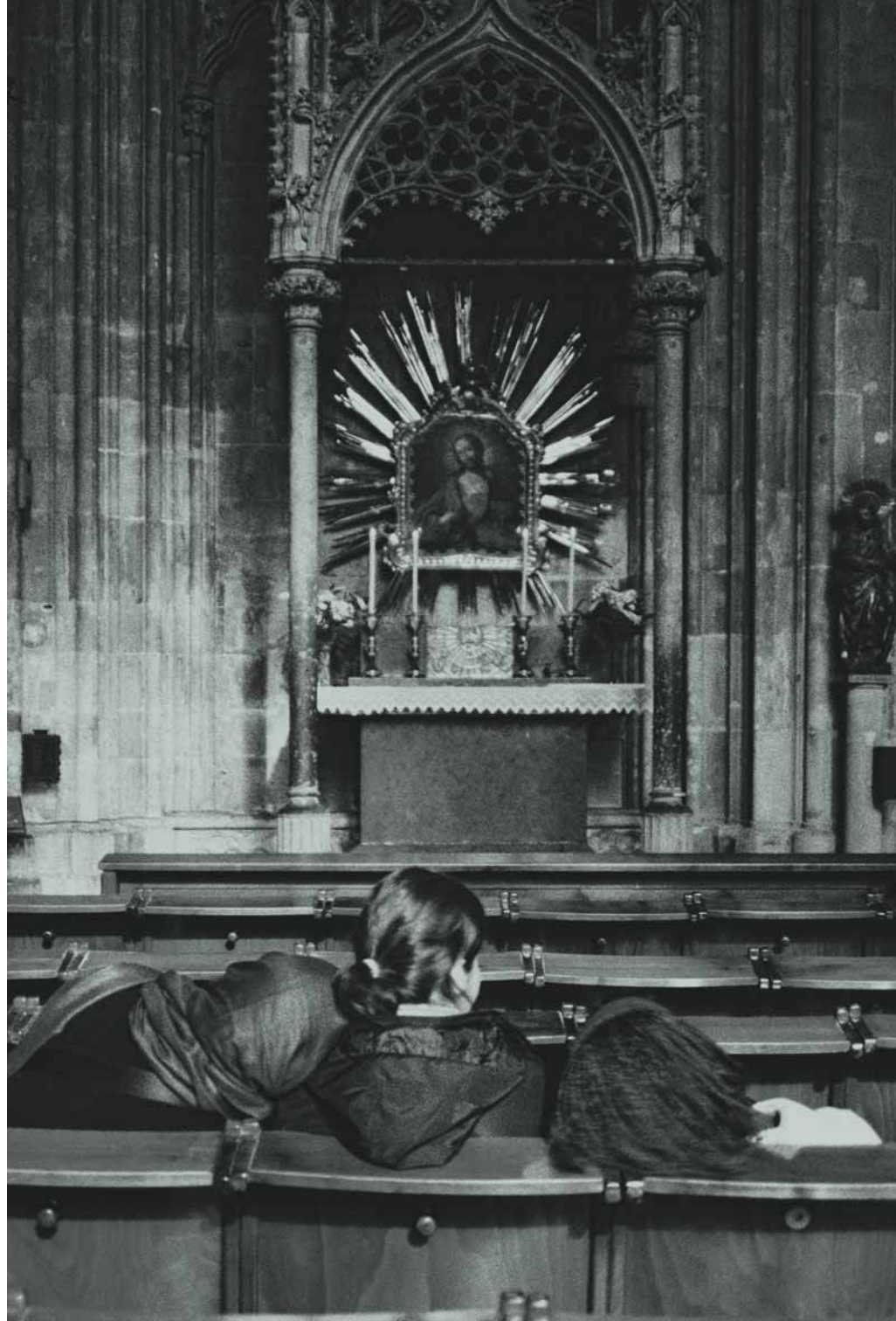
Mate mentioned a similar case of hiding the disability, even though it was obvious. The parents of a child with disabilities did not agree to adapt the entrance to their house because this seemed to them as a final admittance of the disability and a visible external sign that could call attention to the stigmatised identity.

"I know of a boy that lives with his parents in the countryside. There is a big step in front of their house which is not accessible by a wheelchair. They somehow load the boy onto a wheelchair and he always needs help to do that. I and my friends once agreed to build him a ramp but his parents would not allow it." (Mate, 55)

Similar situations also occur in families of people with mental health problems; experts dealing with this issue explained the effects of stigma as a contagion. Because they work with people with mental health problems they themselves are often stigmatised or discriminated against.

"When someone in the family becomes mentally ill, the stigma is applied to the whole family. All of a sudden, less friends come to visit. [...] The worst is, if family members become ashamed of this family member, start avoiding him, do not understand him. When I tell people that I work at Šent, the Slovenian association for people with mental health problems, people take a step back, as if to say, there are nothing but crazy people there and people that work there also go crazy sooner or later. I believe that they underestimate us, we are stigmatised." (Vesna, EX)

"I acquired a title: the Boss of the Loonies. But I am not hurt by it because I enjoy my work and because this is an area where a lot more needs to be done." (Nena, EX)



The mode and place of discrimination

9

So far, we have discussed two basic approaches to discrimination: the first form is based on visible traits, the other on non-visible, unknown or imagined traits. In both cases, traits which in the vicious circle of discrimination become a stigma, are the basis for unequal treatment. Discrimination is concretely manifested through various forms, which has already been discussed in the introduction. Below, we discuss discrimination from two aspects: the first is related to the mode of discrimination or exclusion, and the other to the place where discrimination occurs. Despite the fact that our conclusions cannot be generalised, it is characteristic of our sample that the most common discrimination is verbal in the form of negatively connoted expressions, while respondents most often mentioned discrimination in relation to the workplace. But every individual's experience is different, which makes the analytical division used here potentially misleading. Both forms of discrimination were in fact already mentioned in the frame of the above mentioned approaches to discrimination, therefore it might be better to say that each aspect of everyday life is full of potential discriminations and that discrimination has an incredible capability of mutating. It appears in numerous forms. But for the sake of the collected empirical data from interviews and focus groups, we should nevertheless examine the two forms of discrimination most often mentioned by our respondents.

Discrimination through use of negatively connoted expressions

9.1

As a form of discursive discrimination, Boréus (2006) mentions the use of labels that are negatively connoted, but adds that this is an intentional selection of such vocabulary with which one can exclude a certain group of people.

Such incidents of discursive discrimination are probably one of the most common forms of discrimination that individuals experience in their everyday life, as is shown in the examples below.

"You hear remarks made behind your back, such as 'vodoinštalater' (a derogatory term for a male homosexual). The worst is 'ritopik'. And this coming from people you would least expect. So now I trust practically nobody. I have three people here that I absolutely trust, the rest I would like to, even though I am not a violent person, send away with a punch." (Tomaž, 23)

"That stupid Bosnian. That is what I kept hearing and those words still ring in my ears." (Sandra, 50)

"People come to you and call you 'nigger'. [...] They actually call you 'nigger' or 'črnc' (both are derogatory terms for a black person), or ... they do not know what to call you. They do not know what the politically correct term is. They do not know if they should say that someone is black, or is it correct to say that someone is 'dark skinned'." (Miha, 28)

Negatively connoted expressions that are a form of verbal exclusion of certain groups can be merely a starting point from which physical forms of exclusion arise.

"In primary school, I was always labelled as someone from down there, čefur (a derogatory term for immigrants from former Yugoslavian republics and their descendants) ... I was also beaten up in front of the school because of that." (Milan, 34)

The study showed that the use of negatively connoted expressions is not necessarily intended for the direct exclusion of certain persons who are present in a certain situation, but that such words can also exclude persons that were not meant to be the target of exclusion. Such situations usually arise in cases where the stigmatised identity is not visible, that is why it is important for the potentially stigmatised person to set a limit of admissibility. Sexual

orientation, for example, is a frequent ground for such exclusion, since the use of words, such as “faggot” goes beyond merely excluding individuals with certain sexual orientation, but also becomes an insult, an “unacceptable identity” that individuals apply to others to insult and humiliate them. By doing so, they can simultaneously insult and humiliate persons with such sexual orientation that are present in the communication, but whose identity is not visible or known. A similar situation can arise when using the word “čefur” and similar.

“We were sitting at a table and a girl said ‘you čefur’. It was not meant for me, because I was talking to another girl. But I heard the word and said: ‘What, us ‘čefurs’? [...] She did not know that I am a čefur because I do not look like one ... Even my name does not give it away, I do not wear typical clothes ... and she said: ‘What, you are a ‘čefur’? I told her that I am not, that I am Muslim, but that according to her criteria I belong among ‘čefurs’. Because čefurs all come from down there ... She said that she did not mean it like that, and I told her that it does not matter what she meant. I asked her, how she would feel if someone were to say: ‘Hey dyke.’ [...] I was angry. Why are you compartmentalising me, if we are not all the same? Why? I do not know. I did not seem okay ...” (Lepa, 25)

“‘Peder’ (a derogatory term for male homosexuals) is a kind of a swearword. Whenever something goes wrong my co-workers ... immediately use the word ‘peder’. And I ask them: ‘What is wrong? What are we? What is wrong with us?’ ‘Oh, no, no, sorry, sorry’ they say [because they know that I am gay]. People do not even realise that they use this expression because they are certain that there are no ‘peders’ around.” (Franci, 38)

“I immediately come out when I come to a new workplace. I do not hide that I am a lesbian. I have not experienced any discrimination at work, except when people are telling jokes. But I never stayed quiet in such cases and we quickly cleared it up that some jokes are just not funny for everybody.” (Lojzka, 32)

9.2 Discrimination at work

"They do hire you. A good director employs you as a phone operator or something similar. But prejudices regarding people with disabilities are really strong. People do not know what disability is. They think disability is related to stupidity." (Tomaž, 23)

One of the first areas of preventing discrimination in Slovenian legislation (besides provisions in the Constitution and the Penal Code) was related to employment on the labour market. In 2002, a new Employment Relationships Act was adopted which, based on the European Council Directive 2000/78/EC on the general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation, prohibits discrimination based on various personal circumstances. At the European level, other anti-discriminatory directives are being prepared that will also encompass other areas of life, but it seems that employment and the related discrimination was the area in urgent need of legal regulation.

Data obtained from interviews and focus groups indicate that discrimination related to acquiring employment, as well as performing the work itself, is very common. In this context, respondents from the interviews and focus groups highlighted the problematic issue of discrimination related to disabilities, but other forms of discrimination related to, for example, gender and religious affiliation and other personal circumstances are not to be ignored.

9.2.1 Disability and the workplace

Even though this study, as mentioned previously, is not representative in the sense of the "quantitative" definition of discriminations, as experienced by individual groups, the interviews with people with disabilities nonetheless show that the direct, rough discrimination that the disabled encounter is a common experience. Because of this, their access to the labour market is substantially limited despite legal provisions (e. g. *Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Disabled Persons Act*), which, for example, have introduced the obligation for reasonable adaptation and correct the situation somewhat.

Obligation for reasonable adaptation namely means that the employers are obligated to adapt the workplace to make it accessible for people with disabilities, except if the requirement for the adaption is unreasonable (e. g. requires excessively high investments).

"I called a court that was seeking translators, because I speak German and also English. [...] They told me that they would invite me for an interview, that they would prepare a test of knowledge. Then I told them that there was only one problem: that it was hard for me to walk. [...] But this would not be a problem for me, since I would be sitting at a desk or at home when translating. Then the woman on the other side said that she did not know that people with disabilities also knew foreign languages. I said: 'Well, I do not know, Madam, you should judge by yourself, since you do not even know what disability I have.' [...] I told her that what she said was not very nice, and she asked, how could I be so rude. Then I told her, that I saw that I would not achieve anything and then I hung up." (Tomaž, 23)

Focus groups with experts dealing with people with mental health problems and developmental disorders – some of them also have disability status – have shown that, in the case of disabilities, there exists a sort of a hierarchy of disabilities. Marinka, who works at the Humana association (Združenje svojcev pri skrbi za mentalno zdravje – Association of family members for mental healthcare), for example, said that mental illness is still not *"equal to other illnesses, such as cancer or any other physical illness"*. It seems that people with mental health problems have difficulties in getting employed, not only because of their capabilities for work, but mainly due to a priori stigmatisation that is attributed to "the psychiatric diagnosis". When companies are looking for a person with disabilities for employment because of legal or other reasons, they prefer a physical handicap rather than mental.

"They called us [the non-governmental organisation Šent Prima, author's note] from a company and said that they need a certain number of people with a disability status. I suggested people with mental health problems

and they said: 'We would rather have someone without two legs and arms than someone that is not right in the head.' (Nina, EX)

"It happened last week. An ad was published in a newspaper in which a company was looking for a person with disabilities to employ. My friend [from the non-governmental organisation Šent Prima, author's note] called the company and told them that we had a suitable person with such and such an education and a disability status because he had mental health problems. After a day, an ad was published that said that they were looking for a person with disabilities, but without mental health problems. I think this was 100% discrimination. I cannot believe this happened a week ago," (Zarja, EX)

The influence of the social construct of the *Other* is very clearly evident in cases of people with mental health problems; the *Other* is something "outside", some sick body onto which everything that is the opposite of the definitions of health, the desired or acceptable is projected. Just as, at the end of the 19th century, psychiatry classified the human's sexuality either as healthy or as unhealthy – and homosexuality was categorized as an illness (consequences of this can be seen even today in the discrimination of gays and lesbians), so too were people with mental health problems, historically speaking, established as "crazies", and onto them were projected various characteristics, related to danger, fright and similar. It seems as though in this case the stigma is maintained by the "invisibility of the reason" for their mental state. The physical disability is more acceptable than the disability "hidden in the head", because it is visible and it looks as though it can be understood/controlled. Employers are afraid of unpredictability.

"Someone without an arm can successfully perform their work because they have learned how to perform it without an arm. But some people with mental health problems can break down despite regular therapy. Then the sick leave does not last merely a week as it does when you come down with the flu. It can last for six months or a whole year. This is a great risk for

the employer. [...] And employers are probably afraid of this the most, the unpredictability." (Nina, EX)

Discrimination in relation to mental health and the workplace is often also projected; an individual becomes "incapable" or "inappropriate" for certain work only after rumours that a certain person is "mentally disturbed" reach the employer. It then seems that the individual's actual operational efficiency is no longer important – it is covered up by the stigma of mental disorder and all that is projected upon this stigma.

"They hired a lot of people in a shopping centre and he was one of them. He was employed for a trial period. I do not know if the employer at that time was aware of the problems the boy had, but they were most certainly present: he was maybe a little clumsy, slow. But he did not have any special position there – his job was to put away trolleys. I do not think you need a university education for something like that; you just have to clean up and be relatively effective. After the trial period, his employment was not extended and when he told me this I had a feeling that an injustice had been done to him. 'Yes, they did not extend the employment.' I asked him, why he thought this had happened. And he said: 'Well, they said they did not need me and hired others.' After something like that, one wonders, if they are really so inefficient at work, or whether the employer had received some negative information." (Zarja, EX)

Despite all this, according to the experts, the majority of discrimination experienced by people with mental health problems is due to ignorance about the issue.

"Even the media create the phobia. What one can read in the Slovenske novice newspaper or see on the Kanal A TV channel is for example: 'He was released from the psychiatric hospital and then he shot down his family.' [...] This also relates to some kind of a label: Those who have been psychiatrically diagnosed or have been treated for mental illnesses are dangerous." (Nena, EX)

People with mental health problems are given a chance to work on the labour market only if the employer is sensitive enough to this kind of disability and prepared to work with such a person.

"Sometimes a certain personal circumstance, which the employer is familiar with because they have had a similar situation at home, can be the cause that they are more sensitive to this subject matter. This is not necessarily a mental health problem. [...] Awareness which we try to raise at our every step – not only of employers but also in the broader society – can lead to some employers at least being prepared to listen. [...] One of the forms that we are implementing in employment rehabilitation is supported employment. This means that the employer has access to a reference person that they can turn to. The employer needs to be educated, informed about what can happen so that they can be mindful of the changes and monitor this person." (Zarja, EX)

9.2.2 Religious affiliation and the workplace

According to Veronika Bajt (2008: pp. 227-229) one of the grounds for discrimination of religious minorities or, more precisely, the Muslims in Slovenia, is the fact that their national holidays do not match catholic holidays. Thus, Muslims have to organise the celebration of their religious holidays by themselves. She explains that a Muslims' absence from work on the day of their holiday is related to the question of what kind of relationship they have with their superiors (the same holds true for daily prayers). This is mostly the issue of the employer's flexibility and their sensibility to the issue of an individual's religious belief. Bajt also mentions an additional problem which originates from the intersection of ethnicity and religious belief. Namely, her study showed that Muslims often do not even dare to ask their employer about the possibility of praying because they do not speak Slovene or do not speak it well enough. Bajt writes that in some social contexts Muslims simply remain silent and thus a kind of consent to marginalisation is established, which in this case is the result of religion and ethnicity.

Legally, discrimination based on religious affiliation at work is prohibited in Slovenia (and other EU member states), but in fact the Slovenian Employment Relationships Act does not consider prayer as one of the possible necessities of an employed person (except in the case of the army and the police).

"I told my employer that I had converted to Islam and asked him if, in the afternoons, when certain offices are empty, it would be possible to use one of them for a five minute prayer. He said that would not be good because if people saw me entering empty offices they could start suspecting something bad was going on. There could be mobbing. He said the kitchen is a common room where you cannot lock yourself in and you never know when someone will enter. He told me I should be careful because the others could harass me and yet at the same time he himself was harassing me in a way, since he was not open enough to allow me to access that small space for those five minutes." (Ajša, 29)

The answer to the dilemma lies in the institution of reasonable accommodation developed in the area of discrimination of people with disabilities and could also be used for other personal circumstances, such as religion. When in Slovenia, a Muslim complained to the Advocate of the Principle of Equality because a company did not facilitate a diet during working hours that would be in accordance with his religion, the employer was found to be in violation of the prohibition of discrimination. The Advocate called upon the employer to respect the obligation of reasonable adaptation and to comply with the worker's request for a financial compensation for the diet.¹⁹

To avoid stigmatisation and potential loss of employment (or on the contrary, to avoid a situation where a Muslim is not even employed because of their religion) some are justifying the assimilation by perceiving the requirement to renounce certain elements of their religion as acceptable requirements for performing their work. Some go even further. As is evident from the answer

19 Opinion of the Advocate of the Principle of Equality, No. VEM-0921-10/2008-3 of 28. 8. 2008.

by Sebira, who replied to the question regarding the headscarf by saying that she would never wear something like that because no one would employ her, this can also be a case of establishing internal control and schism, which Renner (2008) calls “perfidious fragmentation”. Sebira states that covering her head with a headscarf in Slovenia was actually disruptive for her because it did not belong to this environment. This interpretation shows how “perfidious fragmentation” functions, how it lures away the weaker individuals of a marginalised group and how they adopt the discourse of those who are actually excluding them. Evident from Sebira’s answer are traces of argumentation that is for example often used by those opposing the construction of a mosque in Ljubljana.

“I would never cover my head. Just tell me, who would employ me? They would all be looking at it. [...] I will honestly tell you that it bothers me sometimes. [...] On the one hand it is nice, but on the other it is not. If you cover your head, cover it where such a thing is proper. Where you are not connected to your job. If you are on a farm you can be covered, if you are in the countryside you can be covered, if those around you are covered you can also be covered. Here, among so many people, I cannot allow myself to be an exception. They should cover themselves, pray, take care of such things, where this is proper. (Sebira, 43)

Sebira also believes that praying at work would not be fair to other co-workers who work for the same pay and work during the time when she would be praying.

Similar difficulties arising from the fact that an individual’s religion, which is not a majority religion, is not taken into consideration, also arise in the case of Orthodox believers. Namely, they do not celebrate Christmas and New Year on the same day as Catholics. While the latter can celebrate their holiday on a work-free day the members of the Orthodox religion cannot.

“I went to my department manager and told her that I am Orthodox and that we are celebrating Christmas today. And she said to me that this is not the

official holiday and that I will have to work. The same happened for New Year's. They have no respect for my religion." (Zdenka, 25)

Ethnicity and the workplace

9.2.3

Discrimination at work is not necessarily expressed in tangible unequal measures (respondents mentioned that cases of systemic or institutionalised discrimination are the least common, even though this does not mean that it does not exist), but it can also be seen in the relations between superiors and employees and of course in the relationships among employees. It seems that one of the most common forms of such ethnicity-related discrimination is the use of negatively connoted expressions. Their purpose is to marginalize a certain worker, humiliate them and thus establish a clear distinction between people who perform various forms of work.

"At work I hear various insults, for example: 'There are no Slovenians in the house, nothing but those whose names end on "ič", all "southerners"'. All of us 'southerners' had to work more, arrange goods; we had more tasks to perform than Slovenians. [...] Whenever [my superior] said my name she always stressed the "ič" ending of my last name. She had a different tone of voice when she spoke to us "southerners" than when she spoke to Slovenians." (Zdenka, 25)

Ethnicity, expressed through a person's name, often conceals the individual's capabilities, knowledge, qualifications ... and it seems that in certain situations, as for example, finding employment, the mere physical body remains in the foreground and is determined by a non-Slovenian name or a name that is typical for the Roma. Members of minority ethnic groups, including the Roma, are sometimes forced into changing their name to be at least invited to a job interview.

"I wrote sixty applications [for a job, author's note] and nobody replied. There was no reply. Neither yes nor no. [...] I believe that the reason for this

was my last name. [...] But if I go to them in person and they see that I speak Slovene perfectly and when they also see that I am knowledgeable, then there are no more problems." (Tanja, 32)

9.2.4 Gender and the workplace

A special form of unequal treatment at work is related to gender and gender-specific expectations. The feminist theory, for example, discusses the so called "emotional work" (Šadl, 2002) that demands of women the "transmutation of feelings" (Hochschild, 1985). This means that it is demanded from an individual performing a certain work to trigger or deny certain feelings to establish a pleasant and suitable mental state of people she is working with. The one to draw attention to this form of unequal employee expectations related to gender was Tanja.

"I have often wondered, if a man was in my position of employment, would he have to make coffee, kindly receive guests and listen to this 'shit' over the phone. Could I, if I was a man, just hit the table and say, enough is enough. If a woman did that, someone would probably object." (Tanja, 32)

In this short overview of discrimination forms that arise in the context of the workplace, we have highlighted the stories that we have obtained from our respondents. This of course does not mean that gender, as well as sexual orientation, which we did not mention separately here, and other personal circumstances, cannot be the basis for other forms of discriminatory treatment at work. Actually, at work, as well as in other contexts, various forms of discrimination are present. Same-sex orientation is, for example, a good example of discrimination arising due to the pressure to hide a stigmatised identity. The study on everyday life of gays and lesbians (Švab and Kuhar, 2005) has, for example, shown that more than half of the respondents hide their homosexuality at work because they are afraid of exclusion, mocking and similar; some believe that they would lose the chance to advance at work, if they revealed their homosexuality.



Intersectional discrimination in everyday life

10

"The white gay community wants me to out myself.
They want me to disclose that I am gay and proud.
The Asian community wants me to stay in my shell.
They are trying to change me.
Both communities are competing with each other.
People like me are the ones paying for this.
We pay to be in the middle."
[From the BBC documentary "Gay Muslim"]

"When my sister's son came home from school, where they were discussing ethnicity, he asked:
'Mum, what am I?'
And she answered: 'Well, you are everything! You are Slovenian; you are Croatian, and also Bosnian.'
And the kid was proud of it. She really knew how to handle such things."
[Tina, 36, on intersection of ethnic identities]

When introducing the question of intersectionality and intersectional discrimination in the interviews and focus groups (the theoretical background of this form of discrimination was discussed in the first part of this study) the first response was silence and embarrassment. The one-dimensional perception of discrimination is so prevalent and the practice of the dominant identity covering up the other is so pervasive that understanding intersectional discrimination is generally difficult. To the question of how he would react if a Roma, who is also a lesbian, turned to him for help, the representative of a gay and lesbian organisation replied:

"At Lingsium we could only accept her and discuss her sexual orientation. We would, in a way, ignore the fact that she is Roma. Except if she said that she has difficulties because she is Roma. Then we would have to turn to someone that has experience with this, because we do not. [...] We would direct her there. Otherwise we would accept her as an equal." (Matjaž, EX)

In general, the respondents never considered discrimination as a result of a joint effect or intersection of several personal circumstances. Even the non-governmental organisations generally function one-dimensionally. At the same time, the experts drew attention to the fact that some (stigmatised) identities are so powerful that they simply cover up the rest which thus become unimportant.

"I believe that even if this person [with mental health problems] would have AIDS and would simultaneously be lesbian or gay, the mental disorder would still be the element that would dominate so strongly that the rest would not be important." (Nina, EX)

In some cases, the respondents believed that addressing intersections could cause chaos. Mate, who is Muslim and has a disability, believed that taking an individual's religion into account is not reasonable, even though he mentioned difficulties in accessing religious objects.

"Societies and organisations that unite persons with disabilities would have to engage in activities for assuring a quality of life for a person with disabilities, religion plays no role here. If we involved religion, chaos would ensue." (Mate, 55)

The explanation of intersectional discrimination made some respondents, who participated in the study precisely because of the intersection of their personal circumstances (they were all potential "victims" of intersectional discrimination) perceive discrimination as a "multi-dimensional" issue. This perception made them recall some incidents that could be categorised as examples of intersectional discrimination. They are summed up below and

serve to present the multi dimensional view of intersection as the basis for new contents of discrimination that cannot be compared to merely one or the other personal circumstance in intersection.

Intersection of gender and ethnicity

10.1

"As a woman, I have always had to prove myself at work more than men. [...] As a member of an ethnic minority, I felt different, unwanted at work as well as in school." (Zdenka, 25)

A typical example of intersectional discrimination, that otherwise applies to women with Slovene and also non-Slovene ethnicity, is Milka's who, when seeking employment, was put in an unfavourable position, not only because she is a woman, but also because of her ethnicity that affects her identity as a woman.

"The employers told me that, because I am a woman, I will one day have children, but because I am also Bosnian, I will probably have several. They would not hire me because of that. [...] I was hurt and I told them that I would sign a paper stating that I would only have two children." (Milka, 41)

Respondents with a non-Slovenian ethnicity often mentioned cultural differences in the attitude to both genders within their own group or family community. They indicated a conflict that arises due to the different attitudes towards gender in the broader social environment or in their ethnic community. They generally identified the Slovenian society as more "democratic", while compared to the broader society they themselves experienced unequal treatment within their own community. This treatment of course originates from the patriarchal social order, of which we believe is still present in Slovenian society.

"In the family environment, my identity as a woman stands out even more. Men have more advantages and privileges, and women have to clean up and

serve. In our community, women are more oppressed. With us "southerners" the women are in some way automatically less worthy; we have fewer rights than men. [...] My brother never had to clean up, cook, do the washing. [...] Even my mother spoke in favour of this attitude, because she was raised that way." (Zdenka, 25)

"As a woman, I am better off in Slovenia. Croats are much more traditional regarding these things. It is normal for them that women are subordinate." (Tanja, 32)

Such conceptions in stereotypical notions also have an influence in the broader society and result in a gendered attitude towards members of various minority ethnic groups. Sanja, for example, mentioned that intersection of male gender and minority ethnicity in certain aspects produces a greater discriminatory treatment of male members of ethnic minorities through cultural conceptions.

"I believe that in general the stigma about men from Montenegro is greater. Either they are criminals or are such and such. I believe that they actually face greater difficulties. I know how many difficulties my father had because of this. He was an honest man, a good worker in Litostroj ... After we bought a bigger apartment because my parents had both worked hard, [...] my father had to go to the police because someone informed on us and claimed that my father was engaged in shady business. I know what a big shock that was for us back then. It was such a shock that my mother wanted to move to Montenegro, even though she had been living in Slovenia longer than previously in Montenegro." (Sanja, 27)

The section on interaction between gender and ethnicity can be concluded with another example of intersection which shows that intersectional discrimination is not the sum of individual types of discrimination, but instead establishes a new content and requires a special discussion. A respondent working in a shelter for women, who are victims of violence, mentioned that a Roma woman took refuge in their shelter once, who alongside domestic

violence, also experienced discrimination in the shelter (discrimination within the group of women who were victims of violence). For the staff, this meant that the woman required specific treatment and additional attention had to be devoted to her. It is clear from this case that the method of work, which is probably adjusted for women who are victims of violence, middle-class Slovenians, did not function in the case of the Roma woman even though she shared the same or similar experiences of violence with these women.

"We really paid her special attention for a couple of hours a day because we knew what a risk it would be if she went back. [...] [Other women from the shelter asked us:] 'Why does she have to be here with us? Turn her away, she is not like us! Why does she not go to, I do not know, to a psychiatric hospital? Why do we have to put up with her? Why do you not tell her to wear something different?' This is a sample of the society that these women bring with them. And they believe they are less worthy if they spend their time with someone that is not up to their standards. Imagined standards of course. Those created by society during their lives." (Mateja, EX)

Intersection of gender and religious affiliation

10.2

Exclusion of Muslim women²⁰ can be a potential intersection of discriminations, since gender determines certain external traits for which Muslim women are known. In her interview, Ajša mentioned that as a woman and a Muslim she stands out more often than male Muslims do. It seems that gender in the previously mentioned forms of discrimination is not a constituent part of discrimination, but it merely indirectly affects the conspicuousness of Muslim women, which can be the source of discrimination.

"Women stand out more and are more noticeable. Men in Islam stand out in a different way, but are still not as noticeable as women are. This makes it that much harder for us women." (Ajša, 29)

²⁰ In this case, we put the religious affiliation in the foreground, even though the Muslim identity in Slovenia also represents ethnicity.

It seems that gender in intersection with the Muslim religion is after all not important merely because of the visible traits that are different for each gender, but also due to conceptions on the situation of women in Islam. In the foreground here is the third type of discursive discrimination according to Boréus (attribution of typical characteristics and behaviours) in the frame of which inequality of women in Islam is stereotypically attributed to Muslim women. The consequences of such conceptions can result in the form of pressure to leave Islam.

"People frequently mention that women do not enjoy equal rights in Islam. At the very beginning, my mother told me she was sad because I chose to live according to principles that are three hundred years behind our time and that I will always have to walk behind my husband and similar nonsense. Discrimination thus comes from ignorance." (Ajša, 29)

It is interesting to note that intersection of gender and religion, on the other hand, also lead to elimination of certain forms of discrimination that were present before that. This indicates the previously mentioned covering up of identities or focusing on a certain person's most visible identity. Before wearing the headscarf, Ajša was primarily perceived as a woman, later her religious identity covered the sexual identity. Even though the intersection of the two identities led to new forms of discrimination, it simultaneously eliminated the previous gendered forms of exclusion.

"Before, men were feeling me up on buses, in the public; they whistled ... [...]. They defined me according to certain body parts. For example, 'Is that the one with big breasts?' ... [...] I noticed that since my head is covered these things do not happen. No one is trying to feel me up. My headscarf is a kind of a shield. [...] As a woman I was more discriminated against than now as a Muslim." (Ajša, 29)

Intersection of gender and disability

10.3

"In the past, there was an approximately equal attitude towards people with disabilities [of both genders], as if we were some kind of middle gender." (Marija, 59)

Respondents mostly agreed on the fact that disability is such a strong identity marker that it generally covers up other identities, which become less important because of. Considering the conducted interviews, one could say that the intersection of a disability with other personal circumstances primarily functions at the level of the (stereotypical) social perception of men and women, which is then translated into the context of a disability. Similar observations were mentioned by experts engaging in mental health disorder issues. They agreed that gender as such does not have a meaning, except in the social perception of these persons: women are perceived as less dangerous, and men as "the stronger gender", perceived as more dangerous.

"People are less afraid of women because they are not as physically strong as men. They do not feel as endangered among them even if they totally lose it. [...] People are convinced that women are more likely to hang themselves, take some pills, if they go crazy, or throw themselves under a train. Their suicidal tendency. With men, it is automatically assumed that they will be physically aggressive." (Nina, EX)

In partnership relations and families, which were highlighted as one of the pressing issues in cases of heterosexual as well as homosexual persons with disabilities, gender in intersection with disability is thought to function contrary to this. Other studies draw attention to this as well. According to Boškić, Žakelj and Humer (2008: 262-263), for example, disability (and lack of encouragement from the environment), discrepancy of the image of a person with disabilities, compared with the image of a mother as a caring figure, and the nonexistence of public services that would help the person with disabilities to perform their role as parents, are the main reasons why persons with disabilities often do not start their own family. At the same time

they call attention to the fact that women with disabilities are more likely to live alone, while men with disabilities have more possibilities to live with a person that cares for them (partner or a mother). Our respondent came to a similar conclusion.

"I would not say that men with disabilities are in a better position than women, except maybe when considering that in some cases women are more prepared to enter a marriage with a man with disabilities because they are already used to cooking, working and so on. In this sense, if men are agile enough, likable and pleasant ... I know of a lot of such marriages. [...] Cases where one of the partners has an accident, becomes disabled, men are more likely to leave the marriage than women. (Marija, 59)

In the context of a discussion on violence towards women, the issue and the "new content" established by the intersection of identities was clearly evident in one of the focus groups. When the leader of the focus group asked a person working in the area of violence against women, how they would treat a woman with disabilities, she replied:

"Oh, we cannot accept women with disabilities. In this case, if she is in a wheelchair ... It is a big problem in the area of violence". (Mateja, EX)

10.4 Intersection of gender and sexual orientation

Respondents mentioned that there are different reactions to male and female homosexuals. According to our respondents' opinions, certain conservative environments that are determined by macho and patriarchal culture act against male homosexuality more severely. This does not mean that we can speak in the context of such environments of some kind of "positive discrimination" of lesbians, but the reaction to male or female homosexuality is different.

"There are a lot of clubs in Jesenice where more provincial music is played, where such people gather ... In a way I am lucky to be a woman and a homosexual. Because if I was a man and they noticed me coming to such a club with a boyfriend, they would probably beat me up. Considering that I am a woman, I had no problems bringing a girlfriend to this club. People found it interesting. [...] If I was a man they would probably beat me up." (Lepa, 25)

Intersection of sexual orientation and ethnicity

10.5

Similar to the relation between gender and ethnicity, the respondents with an intersection of sexual orientation and ethnicity mentioned the differences in the perception of sexual orientation within their minority ethnic group compared to the broader society.

"A Slovenian can be gay, however, a 'čefur' (a derogatory term for immigrants) can only be straight. I think that this option is not only twice but a hundred times preferred." (Tine, 25)

"The problem was in my immediate family. It was a big shock because my nationality is Serbian, and gay on top of that. This was a giant tragedy." (Milan, 34)

Although the respondents generally did not mention discriminatory incidents that they could have experienced due to their ethnicity within the gay and lesbian community, they nonetheless believed that the attention to their specific situation, which occurred at the intersection of ethnicity and sexual orientation, would be welcome. As stressed by some, this would of course not solve the issue of discrimination that they faced in their everyday life.

"The only organisation that could [cover both of my identities], would be an organisation of 'čefurs' and homosexuals. We would be less discriminated against than we are in merely 'čefur' or merely lesbian or gay organisations. But we would nonetheless still be discriminated against." (Tine, 25)

"People from the former Yugoslavian republics who grew up in very traditional families have a lot of problems with this [their same-sex orientation, author's note]. I believe a campaign should be organised on their behalf. [...] I do not know, discussions, how to come out, how to save themselves because there are a lot of such cases." (Milan, 34)

10.6 Intersection of sexual orientation and religion

Intersection of religion and same-sex orientation is unique due to the fact that generally one identity excludes the other; our study included members of the Muslim, Orthodox and Catholic religions that all condemn homosexuality and perceive it as sinful. Individuals who are simultaneously religious and homosexual use different strategies for balancing both identities, most commonly this is a form of adapting the religious belief to the same-sex desire, as evident in the example of Lepa, who is lesbian and Muslim.

"I have set myself a set of criteria on what to believe and what not. Now, I do not find it controversial." (Lepa, 25)

Lepa first believed that the homosexual identity is so unacceptable that she voluntarily agreed to be treated for homosexuality in some kind of exorcism.

"I was not treated in Slovenia, but in a Balkan country. After I arrived they [the Muslim priests, author's note] welcomed me. I told them about my problem and they said it was okay, that it could happen to anybody. There was no discrimination; nobody said they did not want to treat me. They tried but failed. [...] It was a kind of hypnosis ... with prayer. They hypnotised you and started a kind of an exorcism. Only, it was done in Arabic. They failed to hypnotise me. If there was something in you, they could not succeed. I just laughed in their faces. [...] Then I felt good because I had resolved some things. [...] After all that, it became clear to me that it was what it was and that I had to accept it. Or, I do not know, lie to myself my whole life ..."

(Lepa, 25)

Intersection of sexual orientation and disability

10.7

In the context of intersection, a respondent with the two identities (disability, gay) spoke about the issue of partnership relations or the likelihood of establishing a partnership relation, which is, as mentioned above, alongside the issue of employment, one of the most pressing issues regarding potential discrimination in the context of a disability. A respondent with both personal circumstances emphasised that even in the gay and lesbian community his disability covered up his entire image as a person. His subjectivity was in fact suppressed and he was seen merely as a disabled body.

"In my situation, others only see these legs and are repulsed." (Tomaž, 23)

Intersection of ethnicity and disability

10.8

In focus groups, experts from the field of mental health problems spoke about the fact that immigrants are often in an unfavourable situation regarding healthcare. Due to their unregulated situation – employers employ them illegally – they do not even have the possibility to see a psychiatrist.

"Due to unregulated health conventions, immigrants were – at least in the past, I do not know the present situation – treated substantially worse than Slovenian citizens. [...] I handled a case of two workers from southern republics that were also unlucky considering they were not registered. They were employed illegally. They could not even visit a psychiatrist. Then we found a psychiatrist who was Serbian and they could get an appointment only because the two were also Serbian. But of course he received them illegally." (Nina, EX)

Despite the fact that our exploratory study showed a substantially higher number of one-dimensional discrimination (or the discrimination was perceived in such manner – it is namely possible that several circumstances had joint effects on discrimination, which the respondent was not aware of), the

above examples nonetheless indicate that it is necessary to thematise intersectional discrimination. Thematisation is mainly important in the sense of sensibilisation, which means that those who work with people who are discriminated against have to be aware that discrimination can be caused by the joint effects of several circumstances. Such sensibilisation is also important for anti-discrimination policies that by considering only one dimension, still do not prevent intersectional discrimination.



Methods of stigma management

11

Goffman's study on stigma introduces a series of various methods for managing a stigmatised identity that can be divided into four typical reactions of stigmatised persons to stigma: (1) correction, (2) compensation (indirect correction), (3) break with reality and (4) isolation. In the first case, the individual tries to correct what they think is the objective reason for their stigma (this of course only applies to those for whom it is assumed that can do so – for example, removing specific features from a body by plastic surgery). Compensation (Goffman does not use this term) is a form of indirectly correcting one's own stigma. The individual devotes much effort to mastering areas that as a rule they should not be capable of performing because of their stigma (e. g. a blind person learns how to ski). The break with reality essentially means reinterpretation of one's stigma; an individual employs an unconventional interpretation (contrary to stigmatising interpretation) that attributes a different value to the reason for stigma (examples of re-interpretation are gay and lesbian pride parades). Isolation as a form of stigma management means an escape from the reality of everyday life, where the individual does not have to face their stigma (Goffman, 2008 [1963]: pp. 17-25).

Methods of stigma management mentioned by respondents in interviews and focus groups can be classified according to Goffman's categories of stigma reactions. But we will additionally analyse and categorise them into seven categories. Most correlate to Goffman's third and fourth category, while the first two types of responses to stigma, according to Goffman, were almost not mentioned in our interviews.

Respondents perceived various forms of exclusion, verbal and physical attacks against them as a pressure to conform to norms that apply in a certain culture. At the same time, they are established as stereotypical representatives

of a certain group due to recognisable traits, such as religious, ethnic and similar, and are continuously put in situations where they have to defend and advocate their position. This is after all one of the characteristics of stigma, since alongside its *relativity* (different meanings of stigma in various social contexts), Stafford and Scott (1986) also mention collectivity as characteristic of stigma. We believe that this does not merely mean that devaluation comes from the group or society as such, but also that negative valuation of a single individual most probably also means devaluating the whole group of which they are a member.

11.1 Destigmatisation of stigma

One of the common strategies used by our respondents in their everyday life as a form of stigma management is destigmatisation of stigma. This is an establishment of a self-confident position in identity that is stigmatised by the environment, which correlates to Goffman's category of "breaking with reality". The self-confident position functions as a shield protecting them from stigma; it is a position in which individuals are proud of their stigma and with which they do not allow the environment to undermine their identity.

The Muslim Ajša stated that people often ask questions about her religion, where questions are usually asked in a way that tries to undermine the legitimacy of her religion. According to Ajša, the strategy of managing the stigma that she faces as a Muslim, who adopted the religion (she grew up in a Slovenian catholic family), primarily includes "a strong will" and a self-confident attitude.

"You have to have a strong will to endure, to not be influenced by your environment. [...] I have become confident. I do not want to show fear because I have noticed that if you show fear once, people charge at you and want to push you even lower." (Ajša, 29)

Destigmatisation of stigma functions in the sense of pressuring the broader environment to accept the individual and their identity. Lepa, who is a lesbian Muslim, stated that only by accepting her own sexual orientation did she force the others to accept it too.

"At the beginning I was panicking about what others would say and how they would accept it. Then I just decided to live like that, no matter what. I believe that after that others also accepted that they had no choice." (Lepa, 25)

The process of accepting a stigmatised identity can also function the other way round. In self-help groups, for example, the goal is to help the participants to accept their identity.

"In the area of mental health, I have noticed that a person applies the stigma themselves, only than it is applied by the environment. We are working towards helping the person accept themselves as they are. Only after that does the stigma, the label, become unimportant because they are content with themselves." (Vesna, EX)

A similar form of destigmatisation of stigma is non-recognition of stigma, which is reflected in the non-sensibility for exclusion. The individuals simply do not allow themselves to be treated as a victim and also do not perceive themselves this way.

"I do have one letter in my first and last name that is not from the Slovenian alphabet, but I never had a feeling that anyone would judge me based on that. Maybe I do not pay enough attention to what goes on around me because I 'don't give a shit'. [...] If you do not want to sit here with me then go away. I am not forcing anybody to be in my company. Maybe that is why I do not notice such problems." (Maja, 20)

11.2 Rationalisation and “justifying” the stigma

The other form of stigma management is stigma rationalisation. This is a conclusion that stigma is unavoidable and in a way also understandable. Rationalisation functions in the sense of accepting “things as they are”. This is not a case of resigned acceptance of one’s own situation, but explaining the stigma also leads to its acceptance. Sebira, a Muslim from Bosnia, for example, finds that the different treatment of Bosnians in Slovenia compared to Slovenians is “normal”.

“We are aware that we cannot be original Slovenes even if we have Slovenian citizenship. [...] We took the citizenship because of the rights and all that, but we are also aware that we cannot be as Slovenians are. We socialise with them, work with them, but of course we cannot be Slovenians. Just as Slovenians cannot be Muslims.” (Sebira, 43)

11.3 Relativisation of stigma

Stigma relativisation is a strategy similar to stigma rationalisation. Here, the individual perceives their stigma as one of numerous circumstances due to which an individual is excluded, but it is supposed to be a kind of general trend of exclusion that is normal for example in a group of adolescents.

“I did not feel excluded. Children like to tease each other and they always find something to tease about. It can be a long nose, maybe a big head, and they can tease you about that.” (Tanja, 32)

11.4 Concealing the stigma

Hiding or concealing a stigma is a common strategy of stigma management. An individual avoids a situation, in which they would potentially be

discriminated against, by hiding their stigma. Concealing the stigma can at the same time be a form of discrimination, if the pressure or the demand comes from people around the individual with the stigma, who demand that the stigma be concealed so that they can protect themselves against the stigma or shame that it brings (this is discussed above). Tomaž, for example, can hide his disability partially because he is still able to walk to a certain extent. Only after eliminating the visible disability trait can he make a contact in a gay club.

"If I go out, if I go to the Štirka or to Inbox club, I go there without the chair, without crutches, even if I get tired, even if I cannot manage it, I prefer to walk. Otherwise I would not get an opportunity to meet somebody." (Tomaž, 23)

Similarly, Marko also eliminated a "visible trait" (a certain type of clothes) to conceal the association of clothes with his sexual orientation.

"I attend a high school where the majority of pupils are boys. Homosexuality is not well accepted here. [...] If I was to out myself it would lead to a very bad situation. Even in class, if the professor hears that someone calls a classmate a faggot, he does not react at all. I have even heard a professor say that faggots were a class of their own. [...] I changed my style of clothing because of the school. I usually dress more ...gay, how should I put it ... tight t-shirts, tight trousers and similar. They started teasing me because of that. [...] School actually forced me to change. At first, I felt bad, I felt ashamed. But now I have got used to it." (Marko, 18)

The basic function of concealing one's own stigmatised identity is of course to protect oneself against violence or social exclusion.

"You somehow put up these fences and you set them however you like because you just have to protect yourself somehow. I know the social situation and society enough to know where I am in danger [because of sexual orientation, author's note] and I stay away from that because I do not see any point in doing that." (Nika, 31)

" [People with mental health problems] do not want to talk about it because they know that they will be excluded. I recall that one of our users had a boyfriend from a different environment, who did not know her from before. She did not want to tell him for a long time. And after being with him for more than half a year she told him she had been diagnosed and that she was undergoing treatment – she somehow felt more secure and told him – but this was the reason for their breakup." (Nena, EX)

Concealing one's identity can, in an individual's interpretation, be defined not as protecting oneself but protecting others against an embarrassing situation that they would have to face if they knew the individual's particular identity. Regardless of such reinterpretation of concealing a stigma, it nonetheless functions as a defence mechanism.

"In certain places, I do not mention it [that I am homosexual] but not because I was ashamed or anything like that, mostly because of others. They would be embarrassed if I told them." (Magda, 35)

Concealing a stigma can also occur on the level of declaration, which in the example below is related to the intersection of various ethnic identities. This can once again pose a problem in the binary scheme of clear ethnic identities.

"They believe I am non-Slovenian. Those who know me know that my father is Roma, but this is different than being a Roma woman. I never say that I am Roma. I distance myself from it. I just say that my father is Roma probably because I am uncomfortable. [...] My father is Roma, my mother Slovenian, what am I? I am an inhabitant of Ljubljana with Roma roots or what?" (Elvira, 31)

11.5 Mirroring the stigma

Similar to the form of destigmatisation of stigma, rejecting a stigma as a problem that an individual would have to face is also a form of dealing with a stigma (once again similar to Goffman's "break with reality"). Mirroring the

stigma occurs when the “ownership of the problem” is transferred to those who are attaching the stigma. In other words: the person with a stigma is not the one with the problem, but the society that is stigmatising them. In the individual’s reinterpretation, the problem is thus attributed to society and not to their identity. In this way, the stigma is reflected on those that attribute the stigma to the individual.

“After a certain time I eliminated all these complexes and realised that this was no longer my problem. It was their problem. [...] After that, completely different doors opened for me, developments, and everything else turned onto a completely different path. Stagnation stopped as did the constant expectations of something undefined. [...] Simply, I suffered a lot less, I was less hurt, I practically threw away the hurt. Now such things happen very rarely, only if a person is really close to me and I cannot appraise the situation objectively. Mainly though, if someone hurts me intentionally or unintentionally I just take it as their problem not mine.” (Marija, 59)

Maria eliminated the stigma by not “admitting to” and accepting the exclusion based on stigma and turned stigma management into a positive experience.

“Since I have opened myself to society, I have experienced an incredible acceptance from people. Here, where I work and where I go to shop every day, the staff, whenever I am without assistance, always come to help and are so kind that it is hard to believe. This here is like a somewhat bigger village, where a lot of people say hello to me. The same happened a few years ago around Christmas when a stranger came up to me, hugged me and said: ‘Thank you for always smiling.’” (Marija, 59)

Stigma as an advantage

11.6

The strategy of establishing stigma as an advantage is also similar to the destigmatisation of a stigma, with the exception that the stigma in this case is

"eliminated" through the realisation that experiences of stigma lead to positive attainments for the individual. Firstly, the experience of stigma brings about a greater sensibility to diversity, to relationships between people and similar, at the same time, this is a realisation that the stigma led to experiences which are in fact advantageous for the individual. Tanja, for example, believes that her experience of Croatian ethnicity and living in Slovenia, which was and still is a reason for exclusion, is to her advantage, because instead of one, she is familiar with two cultures.

"When I was younger I thought that I am in an unfavourable position. Not anymore. I believe that I am in a beneficial situation because I am familiar with both cultures. When I was little, it was worse, because they teased me, and then it took a while for them to get used to you. And then later you also become proud of the fact that you know both cultures." (Tanja, 32)

"Precisely due to that [experience of ethnic minority, author's note] I first developed a compassion for all kinds of diversities because you can see that you did nothing wrong, but they still treat you differently. First, there was compassion, now I believe that I am a more open-minded person because of that. I believe that it actually enriched me. I find people, who perceive gender or nationality or similar as something other, completely narrow-minded. Because of that I have a superiority complex that has developed from a inferiority complex." (Tina, 36)

"My mum has a very kind-hearted co-worker who is Slovenian by nationality. His daughter finished the Faculty of Medicine, concluded the specialisation and was a very good doctor. So they offered her employment in Austria. This successful, 35-year-old woman returned after 21 days, crying as a five-year-old because she was perceived as an "Ausländer" (a foreigner). Back then, she told her father that she would never think about immigrants in Slovenia in this way, because now she knows how much it hurts." (Sanja, 27)

Resignation

11.7

An individual's resignation is maybe not a strategy of active stigma management, but is a position that is adopted by some individuals continuously exposed to stigma and discrimination. At focus groups, resignation was often mentioned in relation to people with mental disorders.

"You see that a lot of them accepted [this situation]. They are lonely, here they only keep company with others like them, they know that society does not accept them and have given in to it. [...] This is a disorder that has been with them for decades, this is their way of life. They often express their wishes: 'Oh, you know how much I miss company, I miss my partner, I would like to have children, have a family, I would like to get a job ...'. But somehow this is not within their reach and they accept it." (Nena, EX)



Consequences of stigmatisation and discrimination

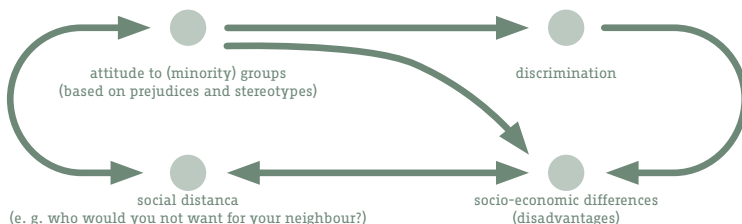
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The consequences of discrimination are various; basically, their denominator is the “*process of othering*”. Establishing the *Other* (in the binary power game between “us” and “them”) means that those who are not “us” are recognised as categorically different. This difference always potentially hides the possibility of establishing a hierarchy (“we are superior to them”) and the stereotypical perception of the “different” groups. The process of *othering* as a consequence of discrimination, therefore, first means to compare with other groups/individuals and immediately afterwards turns into keeping a distance from the group/individuals. This is a process of maintaining one’s own identity as the more valuable and positive one and is simultaneously the stigmatisation or discrimination of other identities.

Consequences of “othering” or discrimination vary – from economic, social, and political to entirely psychological, such as anxiety and depression. Makkonen (2002a) states that discrimination often leads to “a chain reaction of disadvantages” which means that discrimination at this level can also lead to the deterioration of an individual’s situation at a different level of their life. Thus one enters a vicious circle of discrimination.

The vicious circle of discrimination (adopted after Makkonen, 2002a)

Picture 4



The functioning of the vicious circle of discrimination and its consequences is explained below: the attitude towards certain individuals or groups in society is the starting point. If this approach is based on prejudice and stereotypes, then on one hand, this influences the socio-economic differences established in society, primarily by keeping a social distance from these groups. In sociological studies, the latter is evaluated on the basis of the question, who would you not want to be your neighbour, which is a good "prediction" method (of course not without faults) on who in society is potentially discriminated against. The social distance also influences the socio-economic differences and disadvantages that groups are exposed to due to marginalisation in society. According to Makkonen (2002a), people usually do not recognise this connection and take these differences as proof that certain groups in society are inferior to them. Such an attitude is of course also basis for discrimination, which in its consequences again influences the socio-economic differences. The attitude thus maintains stereotypes and prejudice, they in turn maintain social distance and discrimination, which influences socio-economic difference and thus the vicious circle continues into infinity.

In this study, the respondents were asked about concrete consequences of discrimination that, according to their opinion, they suffered due to unequal treatment. We noted five different types of consequences that are primarily related to psychological and health consequences.

12.1 Social exclusion

Consequences of systemic discrimination can result in complete exclusion of an individual. For example, Mate, who is a person with disabilities, had to agree to an early retirement and to social exclusion because the entrance to his school was not adapted for the people with disabilities. This is a typical case of "chain reaction of disadvantages" (Makkonen, 2002a).

"I enrolled into a secondary school of economics which I unfortunately had to leave after three months because it was not accessible by a wheelchair.

There are 5 steps in front of the entrance, 25 steps to get in the classroom, the toilets were inaccessible by wheelchair, and I had to go there every day. Even nowadays, most schools are still not adapted to persons with disabilities. So I had to leave the school after three months and go into early retirement because there was no other choice. And I have been in retirement ever since, waiting for a better tomorrow." (Mate, 55)

Exclusion of an individual is not merely a consequence of a (systemic) discrimination, but also the isolation itself is a form of discrimination.

"At school, they agreed that every child should bring something for the other classmates on their birthday. When a non-Roma child had a birthday, he gave candy to everybody except to my daughter. The girl that helped the boy share the candy asked him: 'What about Megi?' 'No,' he answered, 'she is a Gypsy'. [...] I was mad and I went to the teacher. She told me she did not know, and that she only found out what happened from the children. [...] My daughter had her birthday two months later. I told her: 'You decide, will you give your candy to everybody, or will you give it to everybody except that boy.' And she said: 'No, dad, I will give it to everybody.'" (Bobo, EX)

Discrimination can cause isolation, which on the one hand is a consequence of social exclusion and, on the other hand, a consequence of the individual's stigma management. Namely, the individual avoids situations where they could potentially be discriminated.

"If I was not Roma ... maybe I would have more friends. Not maybe, definitely." (Fani, 58)

"I was hurt several times. I felt lonely because I just pulled myself away from people. [...] But isolation is, no matter how you look at it, a kind of discrimination." (Nika, 31)

"The feeling of discrimination always makes me depressed. [...] I do not want any conflicts, that is why I withdraw myself and I think that I feel like there

is no way out. [...] I would prefer to be isolated, be just with myself and my partner." (Matjaž, 30)

12.2 Self-stigmatisation

The explicitly or implicitly excluding character of the environment, where an individual with a certain (stigmatised) identity lives for a longer period of time, can function as a self-fulfilling prophecy. Continued stigmatisation leads to adopting a stigma, to the belief that the stigma is justifiable and that the exclusion is well founded and that the reasons for it are real. This leads to some kind of self-stigmatisation. Several respondents mentioned that they gradually started believing what people were saying about them. Such exclusion definitely causes personal traumas and difficulties.

"It was simply often said: well what did you expect, be satisfied with what you have because you do not deserve anything more. When you are exposed to this kind of thinking for a long time, then you almost start to believe that it is the truth." (Marija, 59)

"When I was growing up, people told me that I stank, that I was a Gypsy, that I was this or that, because I was not Slovenian. You have to know, that this definitely left a mark on me, because when you keep saying to a child that they are nothing, then they also grow up with this kind of thinking." (Sanja, 27)

Similar self-fulfilling prophecy can function as fear of accusation, which would be based on stigma and stereotypical conceptions related to a certain stigma or a personal circumstance.

"I was always afraid that someone would blame me for stealing something. [I was afraid] that they would blame me if anything went missing, because I am not Slovenian. This was everywhere. In dressing rooms in school and

also at competitions ... often something went missing. And I was very afraid that they would blame me." (Nina, 36)

Self-stigmatisation can also be the result of internal hatred towards oneself which is based on socially attributed stigma. A typical example of this is internalized homophobia with which almost every gay man or lesbian are confronted. Continued exposure to a homophobic and heterosexist environment leads to internalized conceptions of the unacceptability of homosexuality. Internalised homophobia is expressed in several ways – from hiding homosexuality as a trait of potential discrimination to self-hatred.

"I do not feel easy enough to hold my boyfriend by the hand and walk through the city. Even though everyone knows that I am gay. Despite this, there is some kind of fear inside me, deeply rooted, that I am doing something wrong. [...] It is a deeply-rooted discrimination that I am subjecting myself to." (Franci, 38)

"Years ago, my girl and I were holding hands. We walked down the road past the Ledina high school. They must have been having a break because there were people leaning out the windows, yelling at us. Then objects started flying through the window and of course we let go of our hands, quickened our pace and walked on. [...] You can never forget this kind of thing; it stays in your head and not being able to put it out of your head gets on your nerves. Self-censorship is the result of fear." (Lojzka, 32)

Deteriorating health condition

12.3

Discrimination is directly related to an outburst of disease or deterioration of the individual's condition of health. Zarja, for example, mentioned a case of a young man with mental health problems whose health condition deteriorated soon after he was not able to get employment in a company, where they at first wanted to hire him, but later evidently found out about his condition.

"I recall a boy that was undergoing rehabilitation and was in training in a computer company and he was already in negotiations for getting a job. He loved working with computers. And then, that extended weekend of the 25th of June came. Immediately after that weekend, his mother came to see me instead of him and told me: 'It looks like the weekend was too long', the employer must have asked around and did not hire him. As a consequence, we had to take him to hospital in two weeks. Of course a person can fall to pieces when they find out that they are this close to something ... but of course it was not explicitly said why [he was not hired]." (Zarja, EX)

Just as a mental health problem can be the reason for discrimination, discrimination can also be one of the reasons for the emergence of a mental disorder. Thus, mental disorder can first be the consequence of exclusion and discrimination, and then another reason for a new discrimination.

"Some mention the reasons why the disorder emerged. For example, the fact that they stood out from their environment. There was, for example, a man from one of the former-Yugoslavian republics, he spoke Serbo-Croatian and he brought his culture with him. Discrimination began, and they excluded him. He got all the labels, čefur and similar. Then he started withdrawing and the disorder emerged." (Nena, EX)

"I know of a case of a lesbian having a mental disorder, which emerged because her sexual identity was suppressed. Not accepting this fact. Then depression followed ... Then there was a moment when you realise why it came to that. But sometimes, after 15 years, it can be too late to realise that a mental illness was the consequence of something like that." (Zarja, EX)

The experience of discrimination can instil the fear of reoccurrence of such an experience in the individual. This certainly leads to concealing one's "stigma" and to various forms of self-control. Gays and lesbians, for example, mentioned that they did not hold hands with their partners in public to avoid violence and discrimination. Fear is present in cases of mental disorders in a somewhat different form. This is mainly the fear of reoccurrence of

the disorder, since the disorder also results in potential discrimination and exclusion among other things.

"I find fear more daunting than the reoccurrence of the illness due to discrimination. Because you can manage the illness with medicine, you can think clearly, but fear after being rejected by your friends, your partner ... And mainly the fear, what if my child will also fall ill, what if they fall ill because of me? Fear is a strong factor of discrimination." (Nena, EX)

Additional discrimination

12.4

Discrimination triggers new discrimination. This does not necessarily occur at the primary level, but it is transferred through a kind of "discriminatory spiral" to other levels and relationships between groups and individuals. In this case, one can call it discrimination among discriminated groups (or even within a discriminated group) which functions on the principle of a scape-goat. The reaction that an individual experiences in their environment is a projection of negative characteristics onto other minority groups, for which it seems that are even more marginalised in society and are somehow "worse" than the minority group that the individual belongs to. Such discrimination can function as a symbolic purification of one's own position or as an expression of aggressive ethics which is the result of one's own social marginalisation. Tomaž, for example, drew attention to the discrimination practiced by people with disabilities.

"I do not understand why people with disabilities who are discriminated against, discriminate others. They are different themselves. Why do the different discriminate against others who are also different?" (Tomaž, 23)

Within her minority religious group, Ajša experienced the reflection form of discrimination, which she experienced in the broader society as a Slovenian who adopted the Muslim religion. Considering her ethnicity, it was hard for the outside society to accept the "wrong religion", but the members of the

religious community found it even harder to accept “the wrong ethnicity”. In this case, these are two sides of the same discrimination that is essentially an intersectional discrimination, since it appears at the intersection of religion and ethnicity. Within her religious group, Ajša felt the pressure to become exactly like Bosnians who are mostly Muslims. This was expressed mostly at the language level.

“Bosnians or Turks ask me if I speak Bosnian or Turkish yet. When I ask them why, they tell me that as a Muslim I should speak those languages. [...] I told them: ‘Wait a minute; the religion is for the whole world, not just for one nation.’ [...] I told them that I am still Slovenian and will be for the rest of my life. First, I am Muslim, and then I am Slovenian. It is interesting to hear something like that from Muslims. [...] In my religious community, discrimination based on nationality is frequent.” (Ajša, 29)

Discrimination within one’s own group is not necessarily based on intersections with other personal circumstances, but the same personal circumstances, that are manifested differently, can result in discriminatory treatment of a certain part of a minority. A typical example is the resistance of a certain part of a community of gays against the “effeminate” representatives of this community. The effeminateness as a trait is established as a negative, unwanted and disturbing element that supposedly casts a “bad light” on the whole community.

“That behaviour, waving hands, I am strictly against. People can be equal and I will not discriminate against anybody, but the situation is worse precisely because of those who behave like that; there is more discrimination. Some behave in a way that shames others and because of that, people are even more judgemental. You have to adapt to society to a certain extent because you are still a part of it.” (Tomaž, 23)

“I know someone [a gay] who does not want to socialise with effeminate gays because he is ashamed of what society might say. And he is not even

aware that basically they are both equal, the only thing different is their appearance." (Marko, 18)

In the examples described above, we can speak of a form of "perfidious fragmentation" (Rener, 2008) that has already been mentioned. It seems that the adoption of a stigma, on the one hand (an individual becomes that which is attributed to them through the stigma), and on the other hand, the withdrawal from one's own group, and as a result the reverse exclusion of the group (on account of social inclusion, the individual joins those who previously excluded the individual and instead of them, assumes the role as the corrector of their own group), are two of the worst consequences of stigmatisation and discrimination that clearly show how discrimination is related to power relations. These are actually two opposing parts of the same continuum.



Instead of the conclusion: discrimination and compassion

The numerous and sometimes almost unbelievable stories about discrimination that we as the researchers heard – a part of those are included in this study, even though it was necessary to limit them, since the stories have a different ring if you hear and see the person that was discriminated against – at first stir the feelings of compassion. Even though such feelings might be honest, they cannot do much in our efforts against discrimination. Evoking compassion can be very counterproductive, since the discriminated become “poor victims” in the compassionate perspective; they become passive subjects of social exclusion. It seems that instead of that an active position must be taken; discrimination is namely always relational, that is why victims of discrimination are not only those, who are directly discriminated against, but discrimination can also be destructive for the society where it occurs. A society which excludes most definitely has no future. The phrase, although banal, that diversity makes us richer, not poorer, seems important precisely because of that. With each discrimination which we do not act against, we are making ourselves poorer.

In this discussion, we have highlighted the intersectional discrimination, because studies show that by considering one-dimensional discrimination, we can overlook dimensions that have a joint effect and that establish some kind of “new content” of discrimination that has to be addressed through different dimensions. One-dimensional approach to intersectional discrimination is namely always limited. But we do not wish to claim that intersectional discrimination is worse, more dangerous, that it has more devastating consequences as the traditional “one-dimensional” discrimination, attention to which was drawn to in a joke made by one of our respondents. In a discussion on intersectional discrimination, she said: “If you are a woman,

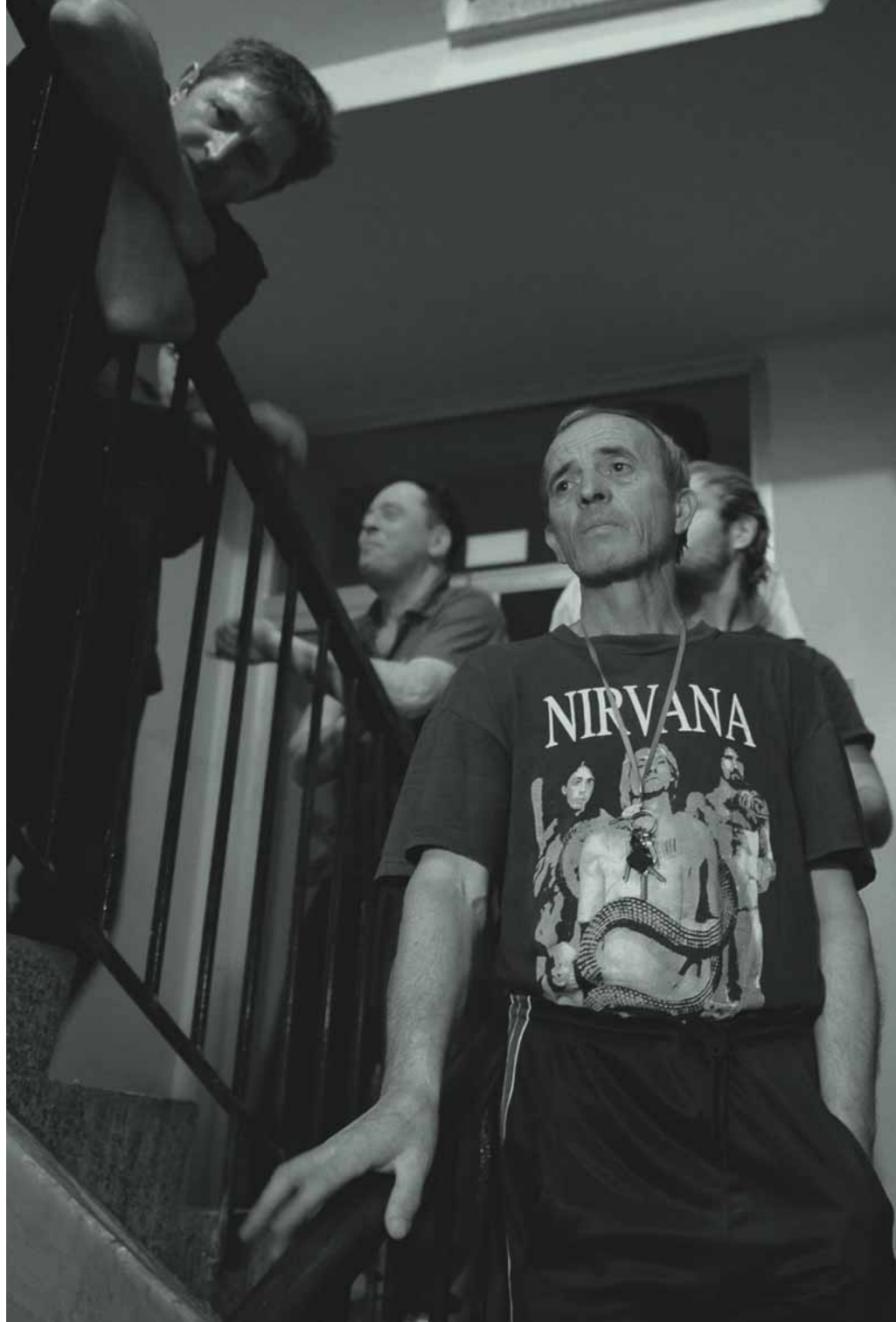
lesbian and in a wheelchair on top of that, then you can almost shoot a bullet to your head."

In no way did we want to make a hierarchy of various forms of discrimination, even though there definitely is a difference between verbal violence and genocide, which was drawn attention to by Allport (1954) in his classification of showing prejudices. This of course does not mean that verbal violence is not worthy of being discussed with all seriousness.

Reading through the stories about discrimination, obtained from the participants in this study, gives us an almost hopeless feeling that discrimination continues to occur despite efforts to eradicate it. One of the respondents compared discrimination with the Lernaean Hydra from Greek mythology. Hercules had difficulties killing the snake with nine heads, because for every chopped head, two new would grow:

"Discrimination is like the Hydra. You cut off her head and two new ones appear. It is everywhere, wherever you turn, I think it is very contagious. People that today look reasonable are not immune to such things. I see it everywhere I look." (Dalibor, EX)

The spiral of discrimination is definitely endless, but legal regulations and anti-discrimination legislation, examples of good practice and greater sensitivity to discrimination are nonetheless proof that the fight against discrimination is not fruitless after all. Maybe we will never succeed in doing what Hercules did, but this does not absolve us from the obligation to actively prevent discrimination, educate about discrimination, to draw attention to discrimination, to recognise it and to strive for an inclusive society.



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