

A lesson learned:

Why homophobia blocks effective HIV-prevention

“Homophobia limits MSM access to HIV prevention, information, commodities, treatment and care.

And faced with these legal and social sanctions MSM are excluded, or exclude themselves, from sexual health and welfare.”

(UNAIDS, 2006)

Homophobia

„Homophobia encompasses a range of negative attitudes and feelings toward homosexuality or people who are identified or perceived as being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT).

It can be expressed as antipathy, contempt, prejudice, aversion, or hatred, may be based on irrational fear, and is sometimes related to religious beliefs.“

(Wikipedia)

Heteronormativity



Homophobia is no phobia, but problems that occur by acting and thinking in norms of heterosexuality



Heteronormativity:

- Lifestyle norms
 - Heterosexuality as only sexual orientation or only norm („normal“, natural“)
 - Only a relation between man and woman is normal
 - Moral: „good“ heterosexual sex and „bad“ other forms of sexuality
- Oppression, stigmatization and marginalization of deviant forms of sexuality other than heterosexuality

External factors of heteronegativity



Instutionalized homophobia

- Experienced discrimination, stigmatization and violence
- Expected discrimination, stigmatization and violence
- By religion, government, family, school, everyday life, job, friends ...
- Limited access to health care services, fear, exclusion, etc.

External factors of heteronegativity



Family rejection of homosexuality

- 8.4 times higher likelihood of attempting suicide
- 5.9 times higher likelihood of depression
- 3.4 times higher likelihood of drug use
- 3.4 times higher likelihood of unprotected sex

(Ryan C, Huebner D, Diaz RM, et al. Family rejection is a predictor of negative health outcomes in white and Latino lesbian, gay, and bisexual young adults. Pediatrics 2009;123:346–52)

Internalized homonegativity



Internalisation of negative attitudes and assumptions of society about homosexuals

- Feelings of guilt, inferiority, lack of self-worth
- „Minority stress“: prejudice, stigma and discrimination create a feeling of a hostile and stressful social environment
- Causes pressure and stress on the person, the community and their ambient (bars, meeting points, saunas, discos, projects)
- This may cause mental health problems, less access to health services, less healthy living and less preventive behavior

Internalized homonegativity

Consequences in terms of prevention:






- Avoidance of HIV-testing
- Identification problems (hiding in the closet)
- Problems discussing HIV-status, sexual fantasies and limits, and prevention topics
- Less condom use

➤ Less control over Safer Sex

„How these variables amalgamate into lack of control over safe sex may involve fear, lack of access to condoms, surreptitious or no safety negotiations, lack of good preventive information or the need for rapid or anonymous sex, among other factors. „

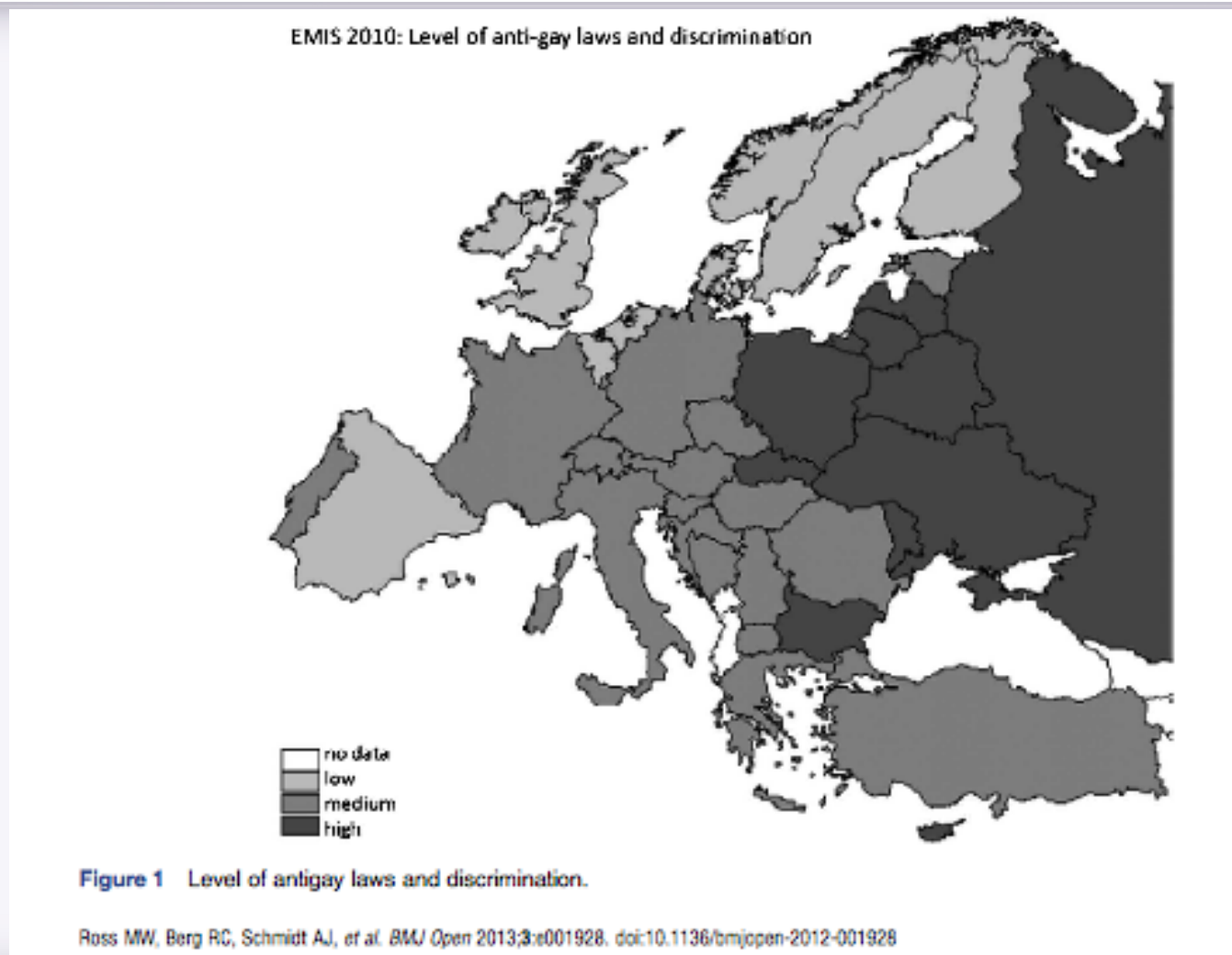
(Ross, Berg: 2013)

Heteronormativity / Homophobia

-  Ambient homophobia is a major determinant of internalised heteronormativity
-  Legal and governmental heteronegativity boost this effect
-  Discrimination is bad law, bad policy, bad psychology, bad medicine
-  Prevention for gays and other MSM needs a discrimination-free environment to be effective
-  Reducing homophobia is cost-effective and has a positive influence on the health of gays and other MSM

(Ross, Berg: 2013)

Antigay laws and discrimination



Structural Prevention

- Not only focused on individual behaviour **(behavioural prevention)**
- But to exert force on political, social and cultural factors influencing behaviour **(environmental prevention)**
- No action without **participation**: inclusion of target groups!
- No prevention without emancipation: empowerment and support of self-help efforts **(community strengthening)**

Basic principles in prevention among MSM

To the German Aids support services, prevention is not limited to applicatorily preventing HIV-infection, and therefore exceeds far beyond safer-sex-campaigns.

Prevention includes:

- **strengthening of self-acceptance and self-confidence**
- **promotion of societies acceptance of diverse lifestyles**
- **empowerment for self-responsibility**
- **protection, promotion and creation of sexual habitats/ sanctuaries (e.g. safe places)**
- **mediation of “individual social skills”**

Position paper “Gay men and AIDS”, passed at the DAH-general meeting 1989

I KNOW WHAT I' M DOING



Nationwide campaign



Claim supports self-confidence and strenght, supports community



Community strengthening

 Rolemodels (authentic, self-confident, diversity of community)



„I love my gay life“



„I like it dirty“



„There is no dress rehearsal in life“



„Freedom only with rubber“

Campaign against homophobia

Enough is enough!

My dignity is inviolable!

Vulnerability  Strength



Thank you for your attention!

