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**LEGAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF ABORTION
WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON PUBLIC ATTITUDES
TOWARD FORCED TERMINATION OF PREGNANCY**

Abortion represents one of the most sensitive and controversial issues of modern society, which is at the intersection of a woman's right to self-determination, moral beliefs and religious norms. In this framework, the research aimed to examine the attitudes and opinions of citizens about abortion in relation to their socio-demographic characteristics, with special reference to the cultural and religious context of the region of Sandžak and the north of Montenegro. The sample included respondents who inherit a specific cultural-historical and religious identity, within which traditional and conservative values significantly shape the perception of the moral and legal aspects of abortion. The research was conducted in the territory of Novi Pazar, Sjenica, Tutin and the cities of northern Montenegro, using a questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale. The obtained data were analyzed by descriptive statistics, t-test, analysis of variance (ANOVA) and linear regression analysis. The results show that the majority of respondents have predominantly conservative attitudes

towards abortion, whereby it is predominantly perceived as a morally and religiously unacceptable act, rather than as an individual right of a woman. Statistically significant differences in attitudes were found in relation to gender, age and education: women and younger respondents express a more liberal approach, while men, older and more religious respondents show a higher degree of moral reserve. The analysis of cultural and religious determinants confirmed the connection between religiosity, traditional family values and negative attitudes towards abortion. The findings are consistent with research conducted in the Turkish and Saudi contexts, where religious beliefs and social stigma remain key factors in the formation of public opinion on abortion.

Key words: abortion, religious context, cultural values, sociodemographic differences, moral attitudes, psychological aspects, legal framework

INTRODUCTION

The issue of abortion is a multifaceted social and legal problem that causes deep ethical, moral and psychological dilemmas. In modern societies, it is at the crossroads between a woman's right to self-determination, protection of the life of the unborn child, and respect for the moral and religious beliefs of the community. The legal aspect of abortion involves the efforts of legislators to establish a balance between personal freedoms and public interest, while the psychological aspects include complex emotional reactions, feelings of guilt, anxiety and social stigma, especially pronounced in conservative circles.

In many societies, especially those with a strong religious identity, abortion is viewed not only as a medical or legal issue, but as a moral act that reflects the community's value system. In this sense, understanding citizens' attitudes about abortion becomes crucial for understanding how law, religion, culture and psychology intertwine in shaping social norms and individual decisions.

This research points to the divided attitudes of young people about abortion in a culturally diverse and religiously sensitive society, especially in the area of Sandžak and northern Montenegro. The results reveal significant gaps in knowledge about reproductive rights, legal regulations and contraception, which indicates the need to improve population education and information among young people. The examined sample included mostly young people with different levels of education, most of whom come from traditional communities where religious and family norms strongly shape moral attitudes.

These findings suggest that reproductive health education programs, as well as public policy reforms, are necessary to enable young people to make informed decisions about reproductive and moral issues. Greater knowledge of the legal framework and the availability of psychological support could contribute to reducing the social and emotional consequences of abortion. Future efforts should link legal, psychological and educational aspects into an integrated approach to this complex social phenomenon.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE REGULATION OF ABORTION IN CONTEMPORARY LAW

Abortion has always been a significant legal, moral, religious, and political issue. Legal literature provides numerous definitions of abortion, such as a specific medical procedure that prevents the birth of an unwanted child after conception (Cvejić-Jančić, 1998: 323), or as a forced termination of pregnancy through the sacrifice of the fetus (Petrović, 2007: 208). The method of regulating abortion has changed with the development of society, but in every era, there have been two fundamentally opposing views: the **pro-life** position, which emphasizes the right to life as a fundamental human right and is based on the sanctity of human life, and the **pro-choice** stance, which promotes reproductive rights and freedoms, including the ability to freely decide whether, when, and how many children to have (Konstantinović Vilić, Milosavljević, Petrušić, 1999: 19).

Although abortion is legally regulated in various ways in modern law, it is legal in many countries today, in different forms. However, due to the sensitive nature of the issue and the lack of global consensus, none of the international or regional human rights instruments explicitly mention the right to abortion. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that “everyone” has the right to life, yet the ambiguity lies in what is meant by “everyone,” and whether this includes the unborn or newly conceived child.

Europe's most important human rights document—the European Convention on Human Rights—also avoids directly addressing abortion due to the lack of consensus. Article 2 of the Convention provides that “everyone's right to life shall be protected by law,” but fails to define the term “person” or when a human being acquires legal personality, as it does not declare that life begins at conception (Grbović, 2023: 582). The European Court of Human Rights has stated that the term “everyone” used in Article 2 does not apply before birth. Consequently, the unborn are not protected under Article 2, and if fetuses were absolutely protected, abortion would be illegal even in cases of life-threatening risks to the mother (Stojšić, 2010: 248).

Certain international instruments indirectly address this issue. Article 16(2) of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women grants equal rights to men and women in making free and responsible decisions about the number and spacing of their children, along with access to information, education, and means to realize these rights. The Convention introduces gender equality in family planning without explicitly permitting or banning abortion, but emphasizes the need to raise awareness about birth control. The 1959 Convention on the Rights of the Child allows each state to determine its own stance on the rights of the child before birth (Lubura, 2021: 161). Additionally, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted the WHO position that abortion should not be a method of family planning and should be avoided wherever possible. All available means, consistent with women's rights, should be used to reduce both unwanted pregnancies and abortions. The Council of Europe emphasized that the final decision on abortion should rest with the woman, in accordance with her right to bodily autonomy, and that she should have access to resources to exercise this right (Stone, 2010: 70).

Most countries began legalizing abortion in the 1960s under the influence of strong feminist movements. Today, the legal landscape has changed considerably, particularly in Europe and the Americas. Current legal frameworks fall into three groups:

1. **Restrictive systems**, with a total abortion ban and rare exceptions (to save the woman's life), mostly found in Muslim countries, Latin America, parts of Africa, and in Europe—Malta and Ireland.
2. **Semi-liberal systems**, where abortion is allowed under specific conditions (Germany, Spain, Switzerland, Argentina, Pakistan, Israel, Egypt, South Africa).
3. **Liberal systems**, where abortion is allowed upon the woman's request in early pregnancy (USA, Russia, China, France, Sweden, Italy, Turkey) (Antić, 2017: 490).

The Soviet Union was the first country to legalize abortion on request in 1920 (Ponjavić, 1997: 77). In Sweden, abortion was allowed in 1938 under specific conditions, such as rape or risk to the mother's or fetus's health (Ponjavić, 1997: 78).

Determining when human life begins is a matter of legal interpretation, often based on philosophy, medicine, and psychology. The beginning of legal protection does not necessarily coincide with the biological beginning of life. A fetus's right to life inevitably conflicts with the woman's right to autonomy and the couple's right to family planning. Currently, no international or regi-

onal legal instrument clearly defines these rights, and national laws tend to avoid detailed regulation. A modern legal framework must strike a balance between the rights of the woman and the rights of the unborn, particularly as the fetus develops the characteristics of human life.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF ABORTION

Aligning the law with individual needs and societal expectations plays a vital role in ensuring a just legal system. Abortion, as an intentional termination of pregnancy, is a significant issue tackled by medicine, psychology, sociology, and other disciplines aiming to protect women's health—especially mental health. Societies concerned with the mental well-being of their citizens provide psychosocial support, particularly preventive and counseling services, for those considering or having undergone an abortion. Since the late 1970s, the psychological and emotional consequences of abortion have been increasingly studied, revealing a wide range of psychological outcomes.

Psychological aspects of abortion are closely linked to moral, ethical, economic, cultural, and sociodemographic factors. Age, cultural background, religion, and socioeconomic status affect how individuals perceive abortion. Symptoms such as anxiety, guilt, anger, depression, sadness, low self-esteem, antisocial behavior, eating disorders, relationship problems, and suicidal thoughts have been documented (Rankin, 1989). According to Cameron (2010), women with pre-existing mental health conditions, who undergo abortion at a younger age and without support, are at greater risk of negative emotional responses. A person's general attitude toward abortion and the reasons for undergoing the procedure significantly influence their psychological experience.

A 2006 longitudinal study in New Zealand found that abortion negatively impacted the mental health of young women, leading to depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, and drug use (Cameron, 2010). In a Canadian study, 41.7% of women reported high stress three weeks post-abortion (Bonevski, 2001). A Swedish study found that 50–60% of women experienced emotional distress after abortion, with 30% reporting severe symptoms (Fergusson, 2006).

These effects led to the formulation of the concept of post-abortion stress. Biggs et al. (2016) found that two out of five women experienced one or more PTSD symptoms shortly after an abortion, while 16% scored high enough to be considered at risk for the disorder. PTSD symptoms may include dissociation, acute anxiety, and panic attacks (Rousset et al., 2011). Depression in the post-abortion period can be influenced by hormonal changes, awareness of fetal loss, guilt, shame, and loss of motivation (Rue, 2014). If untreated, post-abortion depression can severely impact quality of life.

Psychosocial support is essential both before and after abortion. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) has shown good results in addressing emotional distress and post-traumatic stress. CBT is structured, goal-oriented, short-term, and cost-effective, making it especially suitable for those needing emotional adaptation due to trauma or loss (Matthews & Marwit, 2004, in Séjourné et al., 2010).

POPULATION EDUCATION IN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Population education plays a key role in informing young people about reproductive health and the importance of safe sexual behavior. Empowering students with accurate information enhances personal safety and reduces the risk of unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections. The educational system offers a space to understand reproductive health principles and encourages responsible approaches to sexuality and decision-making.

Integrating these topics into school curricula helps youth develop critical thinking skills necessary for healthy choices and societal well-being. Education about safe sex must be comprehensive and evidence-based, enabling youth to handle challenges and avoid negative consequences. As Rašević (2008: 201) states, “Population education promotes a new value system and lifestyle by spreading awareness about population factors, responsible family life, gender roles, reproductive health, and intergenerational solidarity.”

While reproductive health education exists in Serbia’s education system, it remains underdeveloped and inconsistently implemented. Marija Petrović (2021) reports that students feel schools and teachers provide minimal information—mostly limited to biology classes. Some believe that informed girls are labeled as “immoral” or “abnormal.” Although health education includes topics on STIs, contraception, and safe sex, content depth varies by school, teacher, and local policy. Emotional and psychological aspects of sexual behavior are often omitted. Sexual education is not adequately legislated or fully integrated into the curriculum (Petrović, 2010: 245). Additionally, societal resistance to open discussions about sexuality limits the effectiveness of these programs. For improvements, curricula must be modernized, teachers trained, and schools transformed into safe spaces where young people can ask questions and receive scientifically accurate answers.

METHODOLOGY

The research problem that the authors deal with in this work is aimed at understanding and defining the attitudes and opinions of citizens about aborti-

on as a complex social, legal and moral phenomenon. Special emphasis in the research was placed on examining the perception of citizens from the territory of Sandžak - specifically from Novi Pazar, Sjenica and Tutin - as well as the cities of northern Montenegro. This regional framework was chosen due to the specificity of the cultural-historical and religious identity of the population, within which traditional and conservative values significantly influence the formation of attitudes about the family, reproductive rights and the morality of abortion.

By analyzing the obtained results, we tried to determine to what extent the respondents are familiar with the legal and psychological aspects of abortion, what is their attitude towards its legality, safety and moral justification, and to what extent they perceive the decision on abortion as an individual right of the woman or as a joint decision of the family and the spouse. This approach allows the phenomenon of abortion to be seen not only as a universal social issue, but also as an issue rooted in the local cultural and religious context. The research thus contributes to the understanding of the factors that shape citizens' attitudes about forced termination of pregnancy in environments where traditional understandings and religious norms have a pronounced influence on the value orientations of individuals and communities. Based on the above, the formulated research problem reads:

The research problem refers to the examination of the views of citizens from the territory of Sandžak and the north of Montenegro on abortion as a complex phenomenon that causes divided opinions in society. The goal is to understand the existing factors that influence the formation of these attitudes and their connection with decision-making about abortion in a specific cultural and religious context.

OBJECTIVES OF THE EXAMINATION

The main goal of the research was to examine citizens' attitudes and opinions about abortion in relation to their sociodemographic characteristics, with a special focus on the cultural and religious context of the Sandžak region and the north of Montenegro. Bearing in mind that the research sample is territorially limited and includes a population that inherits a specific cultural-historical and religious identity, the goal was a deeper understanding of how traditional understandings of family life, moral norms and reproductive rights influence the formation of attitudes about forced termination of pregnancy.

The specific objectives of the research were:

- Examine respondents' attitudes and opinions about abortion as a whole, with an insight into their awareness of legal and psychological aspects.
- Determine the existence of differences in the attitudes about abortion in relation to the sociodemographic variables of the respondents (gender, age, marital status, education, material condition).
- To analyze the influence of the cultural-religious context and traditional values on the formation of attitudes about abortion among respondents from the territory of Sandžak and the north of Montenegro.
- To examine the connection between the moral, legal and psychological dimensions of the perception of abortion among respondents.

HYPOTHESES

H_0 : It is assumed that the attitudes and opinions of citizens about abortion are not homogeneous, but vary depending on the socio-demographic characteristics and cultural-religious context of the environments from which the respondents come. It is expected that traditional and conservative beliefs, characteristic of the region of Sandžak and the north of Montenegro, contribute to the formation of more restrictive attitudes towards abortion, while more liberal attitudes are more pronounced among younger, highly educated and urban respondents.

H_1 : It is assumed that respondents generally have predominantly conservative views on abortion, with the majority of respondents seeing abortion as a morally and religiously unacceptable act, rather than a woman's individual reproductive right.

H_2 : There are statistically significant differences in attitudes about abortion in relation to the sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents (gender, age, marital status, education and financial situation).

H_3 : The cultural-religious context and traditional values characteristic of the population of Sandžak and the north of Montenegro significantly influence the formation of attitudes about abortion.

H_4 : There is a statistically significant relationship between the moral, legal and psychological dimensions of attitudes about abortion.

All hypotheses were tested using appropriate statistical procedures in the SPSS 25 program: descriptive statistics, t-test of independent samples, one-factor analysis of variance (ANOVA), factor analysis (Varimax rotation) and linear regression analysis. The level of statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$.

SAMPLE

The sample in this research consisted of randomly selected respondents to express their attitude and opinion about abortion. The sample was determined by the random sampling method. The sample includes 153 respondents of both sexes, aged 18 to 35, with different socio-demographic characteristics.

Research methods and procedures

The research was conducted via the Google Forms platform in the period from 12/22/2024. until 25.01.2025. in the territory of the municipality of Novi Pazar, Novi Pazar, Sjenica, Tutin and North of Montenegro 153 respondents participated in the research, out of the total sample, 133 respondents were female and 19 male respondents.

For the purposes of the research, a questionnaire was constructed that contained five questions related to sociodemographic variables, fifteen questions related to attitudes and information about abortion and opinion about the safety and consequences of an abortion. The questionnaire is anonymous, due to the sensitivity of the research problem, the identity and personal data of the respondents are strictly protected.

Used statistical techniques for research purposes

Frequencies and percentages, arithmetic mean (M) were used to describe parameters of importance depending on their nature. Standard deviation (SD) was used as a measure of deviation from the average. The minimum and maximum sample value of numerical variables are also shown. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and t-test were used to test differences between parameters. Predictive properties of independent variables were examined using multivariate linear regression.

Reliability was measured through the Crombach Alpha coefficient, which measures internal consistency. Factor analysis with Varimax rotation was used to determine the dimensionality of the Abortion Attitudes Questionnaire, as well as to assess its discriminant validity.

Statistical processing and analysis was done in the statistical package SPSS ver. 25.0 (Statistical

Framework for the Social Sciences) for Windows. The probability level was established at $p \leq 0.05$.

A NOTE ON CODING AND INTERPRETATION OF VARIABLES

Attitudinal statements in the questionnaire were measured on a five-point Likert scale (1 - completely agree to 5 - completely disagree). The values are coded so that a higher score indicates a stronger disagreement with the

given statement. Therefore, in the regression analyses, some coefficients (β) had a negative sign in relation to the expected direction of interpretation. This negative sign does not mean an opposite relationship, but rather reflects the way the variable is coded (ie, that a lower score indicates a higher degree of agreement).

For example, in the regression model for Factor 1 (positive attitude towards abortion), a negative β value for the variable "Abortion should be legalized" actually means that respondents who agree with the legalization of abortion (thus have a lower score) have a more positive attitude towards abortion overall. In this way, consistency was maintained between the interpretation of the regression results and the descriptive findings.

RESULTS

We analyzed quantitative responses primarily using descriptive statistics (frequencies, means, standard deviations) and inferential tests tailored to the nature of the variables (e.g., t-tests, ANOVA, multiple regression). In addition, we conducted exploratory factor analysis to examine the underlying structure of attitudes toward abortion. The reliability of the attitude scale was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, which indicated satisfactory internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.759$).

TYPES OF INFORMATION AND AWARENESS: SURVEY RESULTS

On average, respondents demonstrated moderate awareness of abortion-related legal and psychological issues. As shown in Table 2, the majority of participants (60.8%) reported being only partially informed about the legal regulation of abortion in Serbia, while 20.9% stated they were fully informed, and 18.3% admitted having no legal knowledge.

In terms of reproductive education and contraception, 41.8% of respondents considered themselves moderately informed about safe methods of contraception, while 12.4% were insufficiently informed, and 7.8% were completely uninformed. When asked whether they received sufficient education about reproductive health during formal schooling, only 15.7% fully agreed, whereas 35.9% disagreed.

Most respondents (93.4%) believed that youth should receive better education on contraception and pregnancy prevention.

MOST VALUABLE INFORMATION FOR RESPONDENTS

When asked about the most valuable type of information related to abortion, respondents frequently emphasized the importance of understanding both the legal framework and the psychological consequences of abortion. For example, some respondents noted that understanding the emotional impact (e.g., depression, guilt, anxiety) was critical for forming a personal stance, while others considered legal clarity and women's rights as decisive in shaping their position.

ACCESS TO RELEVANT INFORMATION

Although most respondents believed that educational and legal information was important for forming opinions about abortion, many reported insufficient access during formal education. Only 15.7% felt they had received adequate education in school, while 39.9% believed they received only partial information, and 35.9% felt unprepared in this area.

This gap suggests that while respondents recognize the importance of informed decision-making, the current educational system does not meet their needs in terms of comprehensive reproductive health education.

CONFLICTING VIEWS ON INFORMATION EXPOSURE

Similar to findings in other domains (e.g., forensic interviewing), our respondents showed differences in their preferences for how much information is appropriate. While a majority emphasized the need for more detailed education and legal information to shape their views responsibly, a minority voiced concern that overexposure to one-sided narratives (whether pro-life or pro-choice) could bias public opinion or increase moral polarization.

Table 1. General data about respondents

	N = 153
Gender	
Male	19 (12,5%)
Feminine	133 (87,5%)
Years of age	
18-22	51 (34%)
23-29	44 (29,3%)
30-35	55 (36,7%)
Place of residence	
City	145 (95,4%)
Village	7 (4,6%)
Material condition	
Very good	40 (26,1%)
Good	111 (72,5%)
Bad	2 (1,3%)
Very bad	0 (0%)
Marital status	
Married/Married	81 (52,9%)
Single/Unmarried	66 (43,1%)
Divorced	6 (3,9%)
Widow/Widower	0 (0%)
School preparation	
High School	33 (21,6%)
College	10 (6,5%)
Faculty/Master studies	100 (65,4%)
Ph.D,	10 (6,5%)

Basic demographic characteristics of the participants in the study, totaling 153 individuals, are presented in the first table. The majority are female (87.5%), while males make up 12.5%. The most represented age groups are between 18 and 35 years, with the highest number of participants in the 30 to 35 age group (36.7%). Most participants live in urban areas (95.4%), while a small percentage come from rural areas (4.6%). Regarding financial status, most rate their condition as good (72.5%), while 26.1% consider it very good. In terms of marital status, slightly more than half are married (52.9%), while 43.1% are unmarried, and 3.9% are divorced. Concerning education, the majority have a university or master's degree (65.4%), while secondary school and higher school are represented by 21.6% and 6.5% respectively, and 6.5% hold doctoral degrees.

Table 2. Respondents' awareness of the legal and psychological aspects of abortion

		N = 153
Are you familiar with the legal regulation of abortion?		
I am fully aware		32 (20,9%)
I am partially familiar		93 (60,8%)
I am not familiar		28 (18,3%)
Should abortion be legalized?		
I totally agree		25 (16,3%)
I partially agree		35 (22,9%)
I don't agree		82 (53,6%)
I have no opinion		11 (7,2%)
Does banning abortion violate basic human rights?		
I agree		58 (37,9%)
I partially agree		37 (24,2%)
I don't agree		47 (30,7%)
I have no opinion		11 (7,2%)
Does the legalization of abortion violate the right to life of the unborn child (fetus)?		
I agree		99 (64,7%)
I partially agree		26 (17%)
I don't agree		17 (11,1%)
I have no opinion		11 (7,2%)
How do you feel about the morality of abortion?		
I totally agree		21 (13,7%)
I partially accept		29 (19%)
I don't accept		80 (52,3%)
I have no opinion		23 (15%)
Do you think young people should have better education about contraceptive methods and pregnancy prevention?		
Yes		141 (93,4%)
No		3 (2%)
I'm not sure		7 (4,6%)
How would you rate your awareness of safe contraceptive methods?		
Very informed		58 (37,9%)
Partially informed		64 (41,8%)

I am not informed enough	19 (12,4%)
I am not informed at all	12 (7,8%)
During your previous formal education, have you received enough information about pregnancy prevention and contraceptive methods?	
I totally agree	24 (15,7%)
I partially agree	61 (39,9%)
I don't agree	55 (35,9%)
I have no opinion	13 (8,5%)

Table number 2 shows data on awareness of the legal and psychological aspects of abortion. 53.6% of respondents disagree with the legalization of abortion, while 16.3% of respondents strongly support the legalization of abortion. When it comes to being informed about safe methods of contraception, 41.8% of respondents are sufficiently informed, while 12.4% are insufficiently informed and 7.8% of respondents are not informed at all about safe methods of contraception. legal regulation of abortion, while 20.9% believe that they are fully aware, while 18.3% are not aware of the legislation related to abortion. Finally, when it comes to formal education on pregnancy prevention and contraception, 39.9% of respondents believe that they partially received the necessary information, while 35.9% believe that they did not receive enough information, 15.7% completely agree that they received enough information, and 8.5% of respondents do not have an opinion.

Table 3. Results of factor analysis, Varimax rotation

	Initial Eigenvalues		Factor Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Factor 1	Factor 2
p4	4,543	26,726	26,726	0,776	
p7	1,857	10,926	37,653	0,676	
p9	1,525	8,969	46,622	0,668	
p11	1,174	6,909	53,531	0,662	
p10	1,062	6,25	59,78	0,648	
p12	0,95	5,587	65,367	0,606	
p2	0,866	5,095	70,463	0,545	
p17	0,828	4,872	75,335	0,441	0,332
p6	0,731	4,3	79,634	0,405	
p3	0,708	4,164	83,798	0,303	
p8	0,59	3,468	87,267		
p16	0,443	2,608	89,874		0,678
p15	0,428	2,519	92,393		0,630

p5	0,397	2,335	94,728	-0,306	0,609
p1	0,332	1,953	96,681	-0,316	0,548
p13	0,295	1,735	98,416	-0,338	0,489
p14	0,269	1,584	100		

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy=0,765, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity = 664,59 ($p<0,001$).

Table number 3 shows the factor structure of the Questionnaire on the attitudes of young people regarding abortion. The reliability of the factor analysis was checked by the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test of sample adequacy. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test value was 0.765 (limit value is 0.5). This confirmed that factor analysis of the model could be conducted. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity checked the correlation between questions. The value of this test was $\chi^2=664.59$ ($p<0.001$), which confirmed that factor analysis can examine the structure of the questionnaire. A total of five Eigens are greater than 1, but the ScreePlot shows a smaller slope of the curve after the second point. Additionally, the arrangement of items is much "cleaner" in two factors. The first factor is mainly related to attitudes about women's rights, the legality of abortion and the specific circumstances in which abortion is acceptable. Variables such as "Abortion is the right of every woman" (p4), "The decision on abortion is solely the woman's decision" (p7), "Abortion is acceptable if the woman and the family do not have enough financial resources to raise a child" (p9), as well as "Abortion is acceptable in case of rape" (p12) have high factor loadings on this factor, which indicates attitudes that support the legalization of abortion and the right of a woman to make a decision about her body. Another factor relates to negative attitudes towards abortion. The highest saturations of this factor have the variables: "Abortion affects the occurrence of depression in women after the intervention" (p16), "Young people are not sufficiently informed about the means that provide protection against unwanted pregnancy" (p15), "The law should prohibit abortion in all stages of pregnancy" (p5). The items "Education in schools provides enough information on the preservation of reproductive health" (p14) and "Consent of both partners is necessary to perform an abortion" (p8) were not included in any of the two isolated factors.

Graph 1. Scree Plot

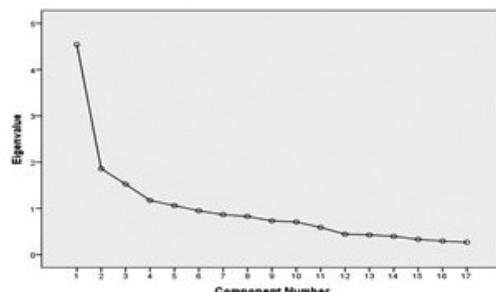


Table 4. Participants' attitudes toward abortion

	N	Min	Max	M	SD	Me	α
Abortion is murder and should not be allowed under any circumstances.	150	1,00	5,00	3,58	1,47	4,00	0,787
Abortion is acceptable in the first trimester of pregnancy, regardless of the reason for performing it.	151	1,00	5,00	2,37	1,53	2,00	0,825
Abortion after the first trimester is acceptable only when the doctor judges that it is necessary to terminate the pregnancy	150	1,00	5,00	3,36	1,59	3,00	0,739
Abortion is every woman's right.	149	1,00	5,00	2,70	1,68	3,00	0,866
The law should prohibit abortion at all stages of pregnancy.	148	1,00	5,00	3,01	1,68	3,00	0,884
The law should allow abortion at all stages of pregnancy.	148	1,00	5,00	2,00	1,36	1,00	0,817
The decision to have an abortion is solely the woman's decision.	149	1,00	5,00	2,74	1,67	3,00	0,786
The consent of both partners is necessary to have an abortion.	148	1,00	5,00	3,14	1,62	3,00	0,789

Abortion is acceptable if the woman and the family do not have enough financial resources to raise the child.	149	1,00	5,00	1,62	1,05	1,00	0,911
Abortion is acceptable if the parents feel they already have the desired number of children.	148	1,00	5,00	1,53	1,11	1,00	0,895
Abortion is acceptable if it is a minor pregnant woman.	149	1,00	5,00	2,36	1,59	2,00	0,898
Abortion is acceptable in case of rape.	147	1,00	5,00	3,75	1,56	5,00	0,719
Abortion is not acceptable under any circumstances.	148	1,00	5,00	2,69	1,57	3,00	0,788
Education in schools provides enough information about preserving reproductive health.	149	1,00	5,00	1,90	1,14	1,00	0,847
Young people are not sufficiently informed about means that provide protection against unwanted pregnancy.	149	1,00	5,00	3,67	1,37	4,00	0,722
Abortion affects the occurrence of depression in women after the intervention.	150	1,00	5,00	3,69	1,19	4,00	0,837
Every woman should receive adequate psychosocial support after an abortion.	150	1,00	5,00	4,45	0,97	5,00	0,916
Factor 1_Positive attitude about abortion	142	1,00	4,70	2,69	0,83	2,60	0,775
Factor 2_Negative attitude about abortion	145	1,00	5,00	3,34	0,98	3,40	0,740

The table number 4 presents participants' attitudes toward abortion, expressed through a series of statements rated on a scale from 1 to 5, where lower scores indicate agreement with more negative views and higher scores reflect more permissive or positive attitudes toward abortion. A notable portion of respondents consider abortion to be equivalent to murder and believe it should not be allowed under any circumstances (mean score 3.58), while attitudes toward abortion being acceptable in the first trimester are relatively moderate (mean score 2.37). High agreement is seen for statements supporting abortion in cases of rape (3.75) and for the necessity of adequate psychosocial support for women after abortion (4.45). Conversely, there is less support for the law allowing abortion at all stages of pregnancy (2.00) and for abortion justified by financial difficulties (1.62). The responses also reflect concern about psychological consequences, as most agree that abortion can lead to depression (3.69). The overall factor scores illustrate a division between positive and negative attitudes toward abortion, with mean values of 2.69 for positive attitudes and 3.34 for negative attitudes, indicating a stronger tendency toward negative views among the participants. All items demonstrated good reliability, with Cronbach's α ranging from $\alpha = 0.719$ to $\alpha = 0.916$, while the two factors showed good reliability of $\alpha = 0.775$ and $\alpha = 0.740$, respectively. The total Cronbach alpha coefficient of $\alpha = 0.759$ shows that the internal consistency of the scale is satisfactory.

Table 5. Attitudes about abortion in relation to general data on respondents

	Factor 1		Factor	
	Positive attitude about abortion	p	2_Negative attitude about abortion	p
	M	SD	M	SD
Gender			0,027^a	0,454 ^a
Male	2,29	0,74	3,19	1,34
Feminine	2,75	0,84	3,37	0,92
Years of age			0,016^b	0,048^b
18-22	2,98	0,74	3,12	0,97
23-29	2,53	0,99	3,61	1,02
30-35	2,58	0,73	3,28	0,91
Place of residence			0,658 ^a	0,539 ^a
City	2,68	0,84	3,34	0,98
Village	2,83	0,84	3,57	1,21
Material condition			0,469 ^b	0,430 ^b

Very good	2,65	0,92	3,46	1,02
Good	2,69	0,81	3,32	0,97
Bad	3,40	0,57	2,60	1,13
Marital status			0,001^b	0,319 ^b
Married/Married	2,44	0,82	3,45	0,99
Single/Unmarried	2,95	0,80	3,21	0,97
Divorced	2,96	0,73	3,53	0,98
School preparation			0,324 ^b	0,125 ^b
Medium	2,68	0,73	2,96	1,00
High school	2,24	0,40	3,64	0,65
Faculty/Master studies	2,75	0,88	3,42	0,99
Doctoral studies	2,51	0,93	3,42	1,03

M = arithmetic mean, SD = standard deviation, aT test, bANOVA.

We tested differences between various groups of respondents regarding their attitudes toward abortion using t-tests and ANOVA, with results presented in Table 5. A statistically significant difference was found in positive attitudes toward abortion based on gender ($p = 0.027$). Women showed higher average scores ($M = 2.75$, $SD = 0.84$), indicating more positive attitudes compared to men, who exhibited lower positive attitudes ($M = 2.29$, $SD = 0.74$). Significant differences were also observed in relation to age groups for both positive ($p = 0.016$) and negative attitudes toward abortion ($p = 0.048$). The most positive attitudes were found among respondents aged 18 to 22 ($M = 2.98$, $SD = 0.74$), while the most negative attitudes were observed in the 23–29 age group ($M = 3.61$, $SD = 1.02$). Additionally, marital status showed a statistically significant difference in positive attitudes toward abortion ($p = 0.001$). Respondents who were married or in a relationship had less positive attitudes ($M = 2.44$, $SD = 0.82$) compared to unmarried individuals ($M = 2.95$, $SD = 0.80$) and divorced respondents ($M = 2.96$, $SD = 0.73$). In other words, those not in a marital relationship tended to hold more positive attitudes toward abortion than those who were married.

	Standardized Co-efficients	Beta	T	P	Adjusted R Square					
					F	95,0% Confidence Interval for B				
DEPENDENT: FACTOR										
1_Positive attitude about abortion										
General data					3,983	0,001 0,113				
Pol	0,227	2,796	0,006	0,162	0,945					
Years of age	-0,156	-1,505	0,135	-0,358	0,049					
Place of residence	-0,031	-0,383	0,703	-0,741	0,500					
Material condition	0,121	1,446	0,150	-0,080	0,517					
Marital status	0,238	2,470	0,115	0,070	0,632					
School preparation	0,088	1,053	0,294	-0,073	0,239					
Legal and psychological awareness of abortion					5,668	0,000 0,209				
Are you familiar with the legal regulation of abortion?	-0,086	-1,119	0,265	-0,318	0,088					
Should abortion be legalized?	-0,239	-2,354	0,020	-0,440	-0,038					
Does banning abortion violate basic human rights?	0,013	0,162	0,872	-0,129	0,152					
Does the legalization of abortion violate the right to life of the unborn child (fetus)?	0,263	3,203	0,202	0,092	0,390					
How do you feel about the morality of abortion?	-0,152	-1,675	0,096	-0,316	0,026					
Do you think young people should have better education about contraceptive methods and pregnancy prevention?	-0,022	-0,282	0,779	-0,342	0,257					
How would you rate your awareness of safe contraceptive methods?	0,103	1,163	0,247	-0,068	0,264					
During your previous formal education, have you received enough information about pregnancy prevention and contraceptive methods?	-0,013	-0,149	0,882	-0,190	0,163					
	0,038	0,443	0,658	-0,378	0,596	7,039 0,001 0,002				
	-0,009	-0,085	0,933	-0,263	0,242					

DEPENDENT: FACTOR 2_Negative attitude about abortion	0,087	1,002	0,318	-0,381	1,163			
General data	-0,082	-0,927	0,356	-0,540	0,196			
Pol	-0,121	-1,190	0,236	-0,555	0,138			
Years of age	0,119	1,358	0,177	-0,061	0,329			
Place of residence						6,199	0,000	0,225
Material condition	-0,006	-0,074	0,941	-0,240	0,222			
Marital status	0,271	2,735	0,007	0,087	0,540			
School preparation	0,064	0,781	0,436	-0,098	0,225			
Legal and psychological awareness of abortion	-0,188	-2,311	0,222	-0,370	-0,029			
Are you familiar with the legal regulation of abortion?	0,133	1,517	0,132	-0,045	0,345			
Should abortion be legalized?	-0,212	-2,820	0,006	-0,836	-0,147			
Does banning abortion vio- late basic human rights?	-0,058	-0,662	0,509	-0,250	0,125			
Does the legalization of abortion violate the right to life of the unborn child (fetus)?	0,013	0,155	0,877	-0,183	0,214			

Table 6 presents the linear regression analysis examining the predictive properties of independent variables. In the model predicting a positive attitude toward abortion (Factor 1), gender (Beta = 0.227, p = 0.006) and the belief that abortion should be legalized (Beta = -0.239, p = 0.020) emerged as statistically significant predictors. Women exhibit significantly more positive attitudes toward abortion compared to men. Participants who believe abortion should be legalized show a significantly more positive attitude compared to those opposing legalization. Thus, women and supporters of abortion legalization tend to have a more positive attitude toward abortion.

Predictors of negative attitudes toward abortion were also examined. The set of general demographic variables did not significantly explain the negative attitude, as no statistically significant predictors emerged from this variable set. Participants who agree with abortion legalization exhibit a significantly more negative attitude toward abortion (Beta = 0.271, p = 0.007). Those who believe that legalization threatens the fetus's right to life have a significantly more negative attitude (Beta = -0.188, p = 0.022). Additionally, participants who think young people should receive better education on contraception and pregnancy prevention show a significantly more negative attitude toward abortion (Beta = -0.212, p = 0.006). In summary, the analysis indicates that attitudes toward abortion legalization and the fetus's right to life have the strongest influence

on negative attitudes toward abortion. Furthermore, education of youth about contraception is associated with increased negativity toward abortion.

DISCUSSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that respondents' attitudes towards abortion show a significant divide, which is related, among other things, to their legal and psychological views, education, social status, and level of awareness. Although there is a clear tendency to provide psychosocial support to women after abortion and concern about possible emotional consequences, attitudes towards the legalization of abortion and its moral acceptability vary, indicating deep social polarization on this issue.

Regarding legal awareness of abortion, the research results showed that 60.8% of respondents are partially familiar with the legal regulation of abortion, while only 20.9% consider themselves fully informed. This points to a significant proportion of respondents who are not fully aware of the legal aspects related to abortion. In the study conducted by Marija Radoman (2015), respondents' attitudes toward abortion legalization were divided, with a larger number opposing legalization (53.6%), which may indicate a connection with insufficient knowledge as well as cultural or political views influencing the perception of this topic.

When the results are viewed in the light of the cultural-historical and religious identity of the respondents, it can be seen that the dominant understandings about abortion in the region of Sandžak and northern Montenegro have deep roots in traditional value patterns, based on religious norms and patriarchal structures of family life. In these environments, the moral condemnation of abortion is often linked to religious teachings about the sanctity of life and the role of women in the family, which can contribute to a greater degree of social stigmatization of abortion and a more limited acceptance of a woman's right to choose. At the same time, this cultural framework also shapes the perception of legal regulation, because moral and legal aspects are often perceived as interdependent. When the results are viewed in the light of the cultural-historical and religious identity of the respondents, it can be seen that the dominant understandings about abortion in the region of Sandžak and northern Montenegro have deep roots in traditional value patterns, based on religious norms and patriarchal structures of family life. Similar patterns have been observed in research conducted in other Muslim and traditional societies, where religious beliefs strongly shape the moral framework within which abortion is interpreted as an ethical problem rather than an individual right of women.

Studies conducted in Saudi Arabia (Alharbi et al., 2022; Gaboon et al., 2017) indicate that abortion is largely unaccepted except in cases where the mother's life is threatened or severe fetal anomalies are present, while women are on average more tolerant of such exceptions compared to men. Such findings confirm that gender differences in the perception of abortion arise from different moral and emotional roles that society attributes to women and men.

Ekmekçi (2017) points out that Islamic ethics, especially within the Hanafi school of law, does not take an absolutely restrictive attitude towards abortion, but allows termination of pregnancy in certain circumstances, especially before the moment of "ensoulment" (spiritual revival of the fetus), as well as in situations when the mother's life is seriously threatened. Similar interpretations are presented by Al-Matary & Ali (2014), who emphasize that in Islamic bioethics, the decision on abortion is made based on the principle of preserving life and assessing the least moral harm (darura and maslaha).

In the Turkish context, research by Karaşin (2024) and Hatun and Yilmaz (2020) confirms that religiosity is one of the strongest predictors of negative attitudes towards abortion, while it was also observed that social stigma has a significant impact on the expression of public opinion on the subject (Yücel et.al., 2024). On the other hand, Wiebe et. al., (2011) and ISPU (2022) show that among Muslim minorities in secular countries, such as Canada and the USA, there is a greater degree of pluralism in attitudes - women are more likely to express pragmatic, contextual decisions based on life circumstances, economic factors and health risks.

These comparative findings indicate that even in different Muslim societies there is a wide range of interpretations, ranging from complete moral rejection to conditional acceptance of abortion. Nevertheless, the common feature remains the existence of strong moral stigmatization and the perception of abortion as a socially undesirable phenomenon, especially in environments with pronounced traditional and religious norms (Shapiro et al., 2014).

In this context, the results of this research confirm that the population of Sandžak and northern Montenegro share patterns characteristic of other conservative Muslim societies - where abortion is morally condemned, and legal and religious issues are viewed as interdependent. This combination of religious norms and social attitudes indicates that the issue of abortion in these areas cannot be understood exclusively through a legal framework, but requires interpretation in the light of cultural-religious identity, family relations and the collective moral code of the community.

The fact that there is no clear legal regulation of abortion at the universal and regional level leaves room for abuse and violation of basic human rights related to forced termination of pregnancy. The trend toward harmoni-

zation and unification of regulations in this area is not apparent; on the contrary, deeper divisions emerge with opposing views on abortion. On one side, the importance of the right to life and efforts to regulate the legal status of the fetus, which should be protected by all legal means, are emphasized. Lubura (2021) notes in her work that Ireland protected the fetus's right to life in its Constitution until the referendum held in May 2018.

On the other hand, there is a tendency to protect women's human rights, advocating for reproductive rights, family planning rights, and free decision-making, thus empowering women to freely manage their own bodies. "All available means, consistent with women's rights, must be used primarily to reduce the number of unwanted pregnancies and then abortions. The Council of Europe's position is that the final decision on abortion should be made by the woman, in accordance with each person's right to physical integrity, and that appropriate means should be provided to ensure that this right is truly enjoyed" (Lubura, 2021:161).

National legislations regulate the right to terminate pregnancy differently; some strictly prohibit it, others are very liberal, and a third group allows abortion under specific conditions, usually when the mother's life is at risk. Our study results show that 53.6% of respondents are against abortion legalization, which can be linked to broader social and moral attitudes towards abortion.

Contrary to our findings, Radoman (2015) notes that a significant number of respondents oppose abortion bans, emphasizing the discourse on individual choice and women's right to decide about their bodies. The study by Fergusson, Horwood, and Ridder (2006) also points out that negative aspects of abortion are very individual and manifest in various psychological difficulties in women who choose abortion, such as anxiety, depression, fear, worry, and suicidal behavior. According to Demichel et al., the most critical period related to experiences is before the abortion itself, due to lack of adequate support, insufficient information about abortion, and uncertainty about what follows after the procedure, which further increases anxiety levels (Demicheleli, 2007).

The results of our research indicate that the psychological consequences of abortion are complex and that attitudes towards abortion are not only reflections of moral beliefs but also deeply connected with social, educational, and religious factors. Research on the psychological consequences of abortion by Jelka Vukelić and colleagues (2010) shows that women's emotional reactions can have profound and long-lasting effects on their mental health. Both approaches suggest the need for a comprehensive approach that considers psychological and social factors when addressing abortion-related topics.

Women and respondents who support abortion legalization showed a stronger positive attitude towards abortion, while those opposed to legalization or who believe abortion threatens the fetus's right to life generally developed a negative attitude toward the procedure. Additionally, differences in attitudes towards abortion are clearly related to age group, marital status, and information about contraception, with younger people and unmarried individuals more inclined to accept abortion legalization.

Differences in attitudes regarding sociodemographic variables are found in numerous studies related to women's reproductive health. One such study compared knowledge and models of birth control among adolescent girls in Novi Sad (Kapor-Stanulović, Kapamadžija, 2000) and a study examining knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors relevant to birth control in Belgrade (Sedlecki, Marković, Rajin, 2001). Both studies highlight long-standing factors in the abortion issue: easy access to intentional pregnancy termination, insufficient knowledge about available contraception, lack of sexual education in primary and secondary school curricula, and underdeveloped networks of counseling centers for youth reproductive health.

One of the key findings of this research is the great need to improve young people's education about contraception and reproductive health. Most respondents agree that young people should have access to higher quality education on this topic, which underlines the recognized importance of prevention in reducing unwanted pregnancies and the need for legal and safe abortion. Schools should be the key institution in society providing comprehensive sexual education based on scientifically confirmed information and human rights principles. The role of educational institutions is not only to convey basic biological facts but also to promote responsible behavior, respect for diversity, and health protection.

“Although there is generally a lack of systematically conducted and methodologically sound research on the effectiveness of sexual education programs, the general conclusion is that quality, thematically comprehensive, and longer-lasting programs have positive outcomes in generating higher knowledge levels among young people and promoting more responsible behavior” (Mladenović, 2020:42).

Through structured programs, schools can enable students to develop critical thinking, gain adequate knowledge of reproductive health, and understand the emotional, social, and ethical aspects of sexuality. This contributes not only to preventive measures against sexual diseases and unwanted pregnancies but also creates an environment that strengthens interpersonal relationships and gender equality.

Moreover, our research confirms that attitudes toward abortion are not

merely individual beliefs but also shaped by social and cultural factors influencing how individuals understand this issue. Factors such as education, awareness of legal regulations, and moral values have a significant impact on attitudes, indicating the importance of a comprehensive approach that includes education, legislative changes, and social support.

Finally, the research reveals the necessity to work within society to strengthen awareness of reproductive rights and protect women's mental health, as only then will it be possible to make responsible, fair, and humane decisions regarding abortion. Further research is needed to better understand the factors influencing individuals' attitudes on this topic, aiming to improve policies that enable greater protection of reproductive rights while respecting diverse beliefs and opinions.

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

Although the research results contributed to a better understanding of citizens' attitudes about abortion, certain methodological limitations should be taken into account when interpreting the findings. First, the sample of respondents was not representative of the entire population of Serbia and Montenegro, but was limited to citizens from the area of Sandžak and the north of Montenegro. In addition, the sample showed a marked gender imbalance (predominance of female respondents), as well as a high percentage of highly educated and urban respondents, which may affect the homogeneity of responses.

Second, the research did not include specific variables that would directly measure religiosity, cultural patterns or belonging to a certain region, which makes it difficult to empirically prove the influence of cultural-religious identity on the formation of attitudes about abortion. Although the theoretical framework clearly recognized the importance of traditional values and religious beliefs for shaping attitudes in socially conservative environments, this aspect remained conceptual and not statistically operationalized.

Thirdly, the data was collected through an online survey, which carries the risk of self-selection of respondents, as the participants are mainly people who are active on social networks and have access to the Internet. Such an approach limits the generalization of the findings, although it does not diminish their descriptive and indicative significance. The mentioned limitations point to the need for conducting future research with a larger and more evenly structured sample, including variables that measure religiosity, regional affiliation and cultural patterns, as well as combining quantitative and qualitative methods for a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of abortion in specific social contexts.

CONCLUSION

A survey of citizens' attitudes about abortion conducted among respondents from the territory of Sandžak and the north of Montenegro showed that it is a complex phenomenon that includes legal, psychological, moral and cultural aspects at the same time. The obtained findings indicate the existence of extremely conservative views when it comes to the legality and moral acceptability of abortion, while at the same time there is an awareness of the need to educate young people about contraception and the importance of psychosocial support for women who have experienced termination of pregnancy. Analyses have shown that there are significant differences in attitudes in relation to the sex, age and marital status of the respondents, while legal and psychological awareness of abortion have been identified as relevant predictors of attitudes. These findings confirm the achievement of the basic objectives of the research, which were related to identifying attitudes and determining differences according to the sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents, as well as understanding the connection between moral, legal and psychological dimensions in the perception of abortion.

Although the research was conceived within the framework of a theoretical model that emphasizes the cultural-religious identity of the population of Sandžak and northern Montenegro, this aspect could not be empirically confirmed due to the lack of explicit indicators of religiosity and regional affiliation in the research instrument. Therefore, the findings regarding the influence of the cultural and religious context are viewed as indicative, not final, and represent the basis for further research.

Overall, the research contributes to a better understanding of the complexity of social attitudes about abortion in environments characterized by traditional values, pronounced religiosity, and emphasized family patterns. This approach makes it possible to see abortion not only as a legal and medical issue, but also as an issue of identity, moral system and cultural awareness of the community.

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conducted research and obtained results, the following recommendations for scientific, social and institutional practice can be singled out:

- It is necessary to continuously develop educational programs and public campaigns aimed at informing young people about reproductive health, contraceptive methods and the consequences of abortion, in order to reduce the number of unwanted pregnancies and the risk of irresponsible decisions.
- Health and educational institutions should provide adequate psychosocial support to women who have gone through the experience of abortion, including counseling, group and individual psychological help, as well as programs to empower women in crisis situations.
- It is necessary to improve intersectoral cooperation between health workers, pedagogues, psychologists, social workers and religious communities in order to develop a balanced approach that respects both the legal and moral aspects of the abortion phenomenon.
- It is recommended that future research include a wider and more representative sample of the population, evenly distributed by gender, level of education and place of residence, in order to enable greater reliability and generalization of the results.
- It is important to include a variable that measures the religiosity, cultural patterns and regional affiliation of the respondents, with the aim of empirically confirming the influence of cultural-religious identity on the formation of attitudes about abortion, especially in areas such as Sandžak and the north of Montenegro, where traditional values have a pronounced influence.
- It is recommended to combine quantitative and qualitative research methods, such as semi-structured interviews and focus groups, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the motives, value patterns and emotional aspects that shape attitudes about abortion.
- In the framework of curricula and programs in educational institutions (especially in secondary schools and at faculties of social and humanistic orientation), it is necessary to process topics related to reproductive health, ethical dilemmas and civil rights, which would contribute to the development of critical thinking and tolerance towards different attitudes.
- State and local authorities should encourage public dialogue on abortion issues, in a way that respects different value perspectives and that contributes to reducing the stigmatization of women and families facing this decision.
- In the academic context, it is necessary to additionally develop an interdisciplinary approach to the topic of abortion, which connects legal, psychological, pedagogical and theological aspects, in order to create a more complete insight into the complexity of this phenomenon in modern society.

- Further research should be focused on comparative analyzes between different regions and religious communities in Serbia and Montenegro, which would gain insight into the differences in the perception of abortion depending on the cultural-historical heritage and social norms.

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**PRAVNI I PSIHOLOŠKI ASPEKTI ABORTUSA SA
POSEBNIM OSVRTOM NA STAVOVE JAVNOSTI O
NASILNOM PREKIDU TRUDNOĆE**

Abortus predstavlja jedno od najsloženijih i najosetljivijih pitanja savremenog društva, koje se nalazi na raskršću prava žene na samoodređenje, moralnih uverenja i verskih normi. U tom okviru, istraživanje je imalo za cilj da ispita stavove i mišljenja građana o abortusu u odnosu na njihove sociodemografske karakteristike, sa posebnim osvrtom na kulturni i verski kontekst regiona Sandžaka i severa Crne Gore. Uzorak je obuhvatio ispitanike koji nasleđuju specifičan kulturno-istorijski i verski identitet, unutar kojeg tradicionalne i konzervativne vrednosti značajno oblikuju percepciju moralnih i pravnih aspekata abortusa. Istraživanje je sprovedeno na teritoriji Novog Pazaara, Sjenice, Tutina i gradova severne Crne Gore, korišćenjem upitnika zasnovanog na petostepenoj Likertovoj skali. Dobijeni podaci analizirani su deskriptivnom statistikom, t-testom, analizom varijanse (ANOVA) i linearnom regresionom analizom. Rezultati pokazuju da većina ispitanika ima pretežno konzervativne stavove prema abortusu, pri čemu ga većina doživljava kao moralno i verski neprihvatljiv čin, a ne kao individualno pravo žene. Statistički značajne razlike u stavovima utvrđene su u odnosu na pol, starost i obrazovanje: žene i mlađi ispitanici izražavaju liberalniji pristup, dok muškarci, stariji i religiozniji ispitanici pokazuju viši stepen moralne rezerve. Analiza kulturnih i verskih determinanti potvrdila je povezanost religioznosti, tradicionalnih porodičnih vrednosti i negativnih stavova prema abortusu. Nalazi su u skladu sa istraživanjima sprovedenim u turskom i saudijskom kontekstu, gde verska uverenja i društvena stigma ostaju ključni faktori u formiraju javnog mnenja o abortusu.

Ključne reči: *abortus, verski kontekst, kulturne vrednosti, sociodemografske razlike, moralni stavovi, psihološki aspekti, pravni okvir*