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(Sabadell, Thessaloniki, Wroclaw, Charleroi, Girona and Nottingham)

WS1. Transnational and comparative research on homo- and transphobia in small and medium cities

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CITY REPORTS: SABADELL

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Introduction

This report presents the main findings of the ethnographical and statistical research carried out in Sabadell (Spain), by the University of Barcelona team, on multiple dimensions of LGBTphobia, as well as the existing legal, political and social measures to combat this social problem. This document complements the legal and the best practices reports previously elaborated for the action-research project “Diversity: Preventing and combating homo- and transphobia in small and medium cities across Europe” (co-funded by the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme of the European Union).

In the first chapter of this report, all the physical and socio-economic features of the city will be presented. Secondly, we will discuss the main methodological issues and also the particularities of the fieldwork undertaken. Followed by research results which are presented according to the following guiding themes: Combating hate crimes based on LGBTphobia: the role of policies, legal measures and claim/complaints’ mechanisms; Experiences in public spheres: representations, virtuality, physical spaces and hate speech; Social interactions and internalised experiences of LGBTphobia; Inclusion, exclusion, and intersectionality. Finally, and apart from the conclusions, some recommendations are made to suggest ways to improve the welfare of LGBT people at each level of government (local, regional, and national).

The findings of each city report, as well the comparative report, will enable us to implement the planned activities for the second part of the Diversity project, such as the best practices guides for local governments and LGBT people, the ethical codes for local services and governments, the training seminars for law enforcement authorities, prosecutors and lawyers, and the awareness-raising campaign.

1. The city

1.1. Physical and human geography

Sabadell belongs to the Autonomous Community of Catalonia, in the northeast of Spain, and is located 20 km from the capital, Barcelona. Both cities are very well connected by motorway and railway. Sabadell has a territory of 37.8 km² and is divided in seven districts; each district has two or three sectors, which are formed by one or more neighbourhoods (see Annex 3).

Sabadell has 208.321 inhabitants (making it the fifth most populous city in Catalonia), with a population density of 5.500 inhabitants/km². Slightly more than half of the population are women (51.3%), almost a third (28.4%) are between 0-14 years of age, more than half of the population (56,6%) fall between 15-65 years, and the remainder (15%) fall within the elder (65 years or older) age gap (Ajuntament de Sabadell, 2016a).

At the beginning of the 21st century, Sabadell experienced a very high increase of the immigration rate. Currently, 10.3% of Sabadell residents have a foreign nationality, whilst this rate hardly exceeded the 1% threshold in 2000¹. 37.4% of the foreigners are from the Americas, 32.3% from Africa, 19% from Europe, and 11.1% from Asia. The most represented countries of origin are Morocco, Bolivia, Romania, and China. There exists a noticeable difference in the distribution of immigrants living in the city centre (6.5%) compared to those living in the suburbs, with some neighbourhood populations exceeding 16% (e.g. Can Puiggener) (Ajuntament de Sabadell, 2016a).

Sabadell has one of the largest Roma populations in Spain. In spite of the lack of official data, the Fundación Secretariado Gitano de Sabadell (one of the most important Spanish Roma associations) estimates that there are about 8.500 of Roma living in the city (4% of the population). And similar to distribution patterns of immigrants living in Sabadell, the great majority of the Roma people lives in suburban neighbourhoods such as Can Puiggener, Torre-romeu, Can Feu, Can Deu and Campoamor.

According to the City Council, the main religion of the city is Catholicism. Due to the presence of Roma and Latin-American communities, the second largest practised religion is Evangelism, and to a lesser extent, Islam as a result of the arrival of Muslim immigrants at the beginning of the 21st century. Other religious groups such as Jehovah's Witness, Mormons, Buddhists and Hindus, although a minority, are also present in the city².

1.2. Historical and economic context

From the 2nd half of 19th century to late 20th century, Sabadell became a major centre in the textile industry and wool fabric production (for which it was nicknamed the "Catalan Manchester"). The opportunities offered by the industrial expansion motivated the massive

¹ In January 2016, Catalonia had an immigration rate of 14%.

² <http://mapes.audir.org/sabadell/>

arrival of people from other parts of Catalonia and the rest of Spain. The most important immigration flow occurred between the 1950s and 1970s, when the population tripled from 59.494 inhabitants in 1950s to 179.716 by 1972.

Due to the 1970 economic crisis many textile businesses were forced to close, which resulted in a significant increase in unemployment. As a result the crisis compelled the city to diversify its economic activities in new commercial and leisure areas (e.g. the Eix Macià) which appeared next to the traditional industries, leading to another important economic development for the city. From the 1980s until the first decade of the 21st century, Sabadell developed a Welfare State politics (improvement of public and social services, creation of infrastructure, new urban spaces and public facilities) and a knowledge-based economy (the city attracted technology companies and created a training and research centre in the field of medicine).

However, during the early 21st century the global recession and austerity programs established by European and international authorities stopped the consolidation of welfare and development politics, and even created serious difficulties in the provision of basic services (Council of Europe, 2015). The Spanish labour market was especially hit by the recession, and Sabadell wasn't an exception: in 2007, the pre-crisis unemployment rate was 8.56%, by 2012 post-crisis unemployment more than doubled to 20.93% (Expansión, 2016).

In June 2016, the registered unemployment rate of Sabadell had decreased to 14.82%, although slightly lower than the Spanish national rate (17.7%), it is still one point higher than the Catalan average (13.1%) and five points higher than the Eurozone rate (9.8%) (Ajuntament de Sabadell, 2016b). The gross disposable household income per capita in Sabadell and Catalonia is almost the same: 16.3 and 16.2 thousands of euros, respectively (IEC, 2015). With regards to the economic sectors, the city has clearly tertiarised its productive structure: the main sectors are services (46.2%) and trade (31.4%). The industrial sector, which was crucial for the development of the city, currently represents only the 8.1% of the local economy.

As many cities, Sabadell has marked socio-economic differences between its city centre and suburbs: the centre is dominated by middle class traditional Catalan bourgeoisie and has higher housing prices; in the suburbs there are also differences depending on the sector. Whilst some expensive single-family homes prevail in some neighbourhoods, others (La Plana del Pintor, Campoamor, Ca n'Oriac, Can Puiggener) are predominately diverse culturally and of working class status, where the majority of people at risk of social exclusion are concentrated.

1.3. The local government

Since the end of the Franco's dictatorship (1975), all local elections in Sabadell have favoured left-wing or centre-left mayors. The first, and longest, mayor was Antoni Farrés (1979-1999), who belonged to the Iniciativa per Catalunya-Els Verds (Initiative for Catalonia-

Greens), the ancient Unified Socialist and Communist Party of Catalonia, which is formed by a coalition of green, social-democratic and communist parties. From 1999 to 2015 Sabadell was governed by two mayors, Manuel Bustos and Joan Carles Sánchez, both from the Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya (Socialists' Party of Catalonia). Juli Fernández, from the Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (Republican Left of Catalonia), a social-democratic and pro-independence party, is the current mayor. The government is formed by a coalition of four left-wing parties: Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya, Crida per Sabadell (Call for Sabadell), Units pel Canvi a Sabadell (United for Change in Sabadell) and Guanyem Sabadell (Let's Win Sabadell).

In 2011 the municipal government underwent a restructuring process to create the Department of Civil Rights and Citizenship. This new addition allowed the gathering and coordination of some areas that once were managed separately with the aim to reinforce the promotion of equality, diversity, cooperation, and solidarity (Council of Europe, 2015). In January 2016, the Department underwent its own restructuring process in order to integrate LGBT issues in the 'Area of Gender and Feminisms'. At present, the Department of Civil Rights and Citizenship is divided into five areas: 1) Diversity and Interculturality; 2) New Citizenship and Reception; 3) Cooperation and International Relationships; 4) Gender, Feminisms, and LGBTI; 5) Youth. This Department is in charge of promoting sexual and gender diversity by means of awareness-raising campaigns, educational activities, professional training, and seminars and conferences, amongst other activities.

The recent changes to the City Council government and the various reorganisations affecting the Department of Civil Rights and Citizenship have meant that many measures and policies are still in the first phase of planning or implementation. As a result, researchers have had to sometimes carry out an analysis of some measures and politics under very tight timescales.

1.4. The civil society and the LGBT movement

Sabadell is an actively civic city with a large number of civil organisations of all kinds. These include neighbourhood associations, professional and commercial organisations, religious and immigrant associations, cultural and sportive clubs, civil rights associations, etc., all of which maintain a constant dialogue with the local government.

One of the most relevant bodies of cooperation between the local government and civil society is the Commission of Coexistence. Such Commission, created in 2004 to deal with violence from far-right members, is a citizens' tool to monitor and deal with hate crimes and discrimination and to address any social conflict. It is composed of all the political parties present in the local parliament, trade unions, civic organisations, members of the Lawyers Association of Sabadell, representatives of social minorities and law enforcement authorities.

Currently there are no LGBT associations officially registered in Sabadell, although the fieldwork revealed that an association of young people, called the 'Panteres Roses' (Pink

Panthers), is now being formed. Historically, there have been three LGTB organisations in Sabadell, principally managed by gay men. The first LGBT organisation in Spain, post Franco's dictatorship, the Front d'Alliberament Gai de Catalunya (Gay Liberation Front of Catalonia), had a delegation in Sabadell until the end of the 1980s. The Front had a revolutionary and ground breaking ideology and it questioned gay leisure areas as capitalist products which tended to ghettoise the gay population. After that, 'Deu de cent' (Ten per cent) and 'Som com som' (We are as we are) appeared. They abandoned this revolutionary rhetoric and centred their work on demanding the normalisation and acquisition of rights. The Gay Liberation Front of Catalonia was the largest group of the three (with around 20 members); 'Deu de cent' and 'Som com som' did not even exceed 12 members.

In spite of the non-existence of LGBT associations, there are some organisations in the city that promote the values of diversity, equality and solidarity, and consequently constitute comfortable spaces of socialisation for LGBT people. Such associations include, but are not limited to, 'La Colla Castellera' (group of human tower building), 'Justa Revolta' (feminist association) and 'Les Bruixes' (street fireworks association). Moreover, the Maria Mercè Marçal Foundation maintains and disseminates the work of this Catalan poet who was also a lesbian and feminist activist.

2. The fieldwork

2.1. Approach to the object of the study

Qualitative and quantitative techniques were used to conduct research on the multiple dimensions of LGBT phobia and the measures implemented by the City Council of Sabadell and the local organisations to prevent and combat this social problem. The fieldwork was mainly ethnographic, including in-depth interviews and focus groups with LGBT people and local stakeholders. Participant- observation was also conducted at events organised by (or addressed to) LGBT people. In addition, a survey was conducted in order to comprehend the attitudes and opinions of Sabadell residents regarding the rights of the LGBT community. The fieldwork was carried out during a period of ten months (February 2016-November 2016).

Firstly, in order to present the project and establish channels of collaboration, a meeting was organised with three workers of the Department of Civil Rights and Citizenship of the City Council of Sabadell. This Department's staff have been the main informants throughout the fieldwork, and their support has been crucial to achieve the planned activities. Through several meetings and informal contacts they showed us the socio-political reality of the city, provided technical support to develop key activities (e.g. focus groups), and contact some LGBT people to participate in the in-depth interviews. Moreover, three workers of the Department were formally interviewed as stakeholders. Due to the close collaboration between the Department of Civil Rights and Citizenship and the University of Barcelona, the City Council of Sabadell has become an associated partner of the Divercity project.

In general, both LGBT people and local stakeholders were very interested in participating in the Divercity project. The needs and problems of the LGBT community in small and medium cities is a ground-breaking subject, thus many people wanted to share their experiences and opinions with us. That predisposition meant that we had enough people willing to participate in the in-depth interviews and focus groups, although the need to have an exhaustive sample forced us to proceed the sampling process to find other potential participants with certain socio-demographic characteristics.

2.2. In-depth interviews

Amongst the sample, 17 persons who defined themselves as gay, lesbian, bisexual and/or transgender people, and 12 local stakeholders (see Annex 1, Tables 1 and 2) were interviewed. At the methodological level, we created a specific interview guide for each group. Whilst the questions about life and personal experiences prevailed in the LGBT guide, the stakeholder guide principally addressed professional issues. However, the distinction between LGBT people and stakeholders was difficult to maintain during the fieldwork. We must bear in mind that LGBT people often have a professional role which is crucial to ensure the welfare of the LGBT community, so they could be interviewed both as a LGBT person and

stakeholder. In those cases, we decided to combine the questions of the two guides with the aim to collect the vital experiences as well as professional opinions.

Regarding the LGBT interviews, we carried out mainly single interviews, although we also organised three interviews with homosexual couples (two of which are married with children) which allowed the exchange of experiences and opinions between the interviewees. This was also an opportunity to understand the problems and needs of same-sex marriages and parenting.

The average duration of the LGBT interviews was one hour and fifteen minutes. The place of the interview was chosen by the interviewees, always bearing in mind that a comfortable place was crucial to create an adequate atmosphere. Consequently, many interviewees chose their home, whereas others preferred known bars. All interviews were conducted in Sabadell, except for one which was carried out in Barcelona.

The LGBT interviews provided us with quite an exhaustive sample size in terms of self-definition (gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people); gender (cisgender men and women³, but also a transgender woman who criticised the gender dichotomy); age range (the youngest was 18 years old whilst the oldest was 68); socio-economic background (from successful business owners to the unemployed living in the poor suburbs); and marital status (single, married, divorced from heterosexual marriages, and a widower). Considering that about 4% of the population are Roma people, we contacted the main association in the city (Fundación Secretariado Gitano) and we managed to interview a Roma lesbian couple.

Regarding the local stakeholders, we interviewed professionals from the fields of local government, health, justice, education, public security, and civil society. The vast majority of the interviews were conducted in the stakeholder's workplace, and on average lasted one hour and ten minutes. Except for the three Department of Civil Rights and Citizenship employees, the rest of the stakeholders were interviewed separately.

The first interview was conducted with the Department of Civil Rights and Citizenship employees. Two of them perform management tasks, whilst the third respondent is the City Councillor of Civil Rights and Citizenship. This joint interview was crucial not only to know the policies and strategies implemented by the current local government, but also to identify the main differences between this government and the previous ones (one of the respondents has worked at the City Council for almost 20 years).

Apart from the staff at the Department, we interviewed the Ombudsman of Sabadell (Síndic de Greuges), who is also a recognised gay that works to strengthen the visibility of the LGBT people in Sabadell. In Spain, the Ombudsperson has a long tradition and is responsible for defending the fundamental rights and civil liberties of citizens by monitoring the activity of

³ Cisgender is a term for people who have a gender identity that matches the assigned gender at birth, and it is the opposite of the term 'transgender'.

the Administration and public authorities. The Ombudspersons can carry out any investigations they consider necessary, informing parliament of the results. Nevertheless, they do not decide on possible sanctions in cases they investigate, but just can make suggestions in this regard (FRA, 2015a).

The special Prosecutor on Hate Crimes and Discrimination of the Area of Sabadell was also interviewed. This prosecutor is under the coordination of the Service of Hate Crimes and Discrimination within the Provincial Prosecutor's Office of Barcelona (to which Sabadell belongs to). At present, the special Prosecutor is leading the inquiry of eight cases of hate crimes and discrimination, amongst which one case involving homophobia took place in Sabadell.

In relation to the law enforcement authorities, we talked to a policeman and a policewoman who work at the Local Police Department of Sabadell. The first one coordinates the Office for Citizens and the Victims' Attention Service; and the second one is also the president of the only association of LGBT police in Spain (GAYLESPOL). This association carries out an important task because it deals with the cases of LGBT phobia which appears along the Spanish law enforcement agencies.

In the field of education, a head teacher of a primary education state centre was interviewed. This school receives many students from Can Puiggener, a neighbourhood with an important presence of Roma people and newcomers, and for which reason her professional experience was important to understand how the education centres deal with all kinds of diversity.

Within the health field, we spoke to a gynaecologist in the Reproductive and Sexual Health Service (RSHS) at a Primary Care Centre. She works in partnership with Actua Vallès (Act Vallès)⁴, an NGO specialised in STD prevention and sexual education. Furthermore, she works with a service called 'Tarda Jove' (Young Afternoon) in Sabadell. Once a week this service offers sexual advice (especially contraceptive methods) and care (analyses and cultures) to people under 25.

Respecting the civil society organisations and actors, we interviewed the coordinator of the Fundació Secretariado Gitano in Sabadell, one of the most important Roma associations in Spain which works to combat the Romaphobia and to promote the social inclusion of this community. Specifically, the Sabadell's Office focuses its attention on the inclusion of Roma people into the labour market and schooling for the youth. The interviewee received around 10 enquiries from LGBT Roma persons who asking for how to manage their coming out socially.

Furthermore, we interviewed a professional of Actua Vallès who coordinated the Quick Test Service of STDs and the Sexual-Affective Education Workshops for adolescents (which are

⁴ 'Vallès' is the Catalan region to which Sabadell belongs (specifically, the Western Vallès).

offered to several cities within the province of Barcelona). The respondent also collaborated in the Sexual-Affective Campaign that the Sabadell City Council organises every year, with which different activities are implemented for students of secondary education.

Finally, we talked to one of the main activists of Spanish LGBT rights, who lives in Barcelona but has worked for the City Council in Sabadell for many years. He has organised many events and actions to promote sexual and gender diversity in Sabadell since the transition to democracy. This interview has been indispensable to gather a historical perspective of LGBT issues in the city.

2.3. Focus groups

We have organised two focus groups: one for LGBT people and another for local stakeholders (see Annex 1, Tables 3 and 4). Similar to the approach taken for the in-depth interviews, two different guides were elaborated. The LGBT guide prioritised the needs, troubles and demands of the interviewees, whilst the stakeholder guide tackled the existing and further measures to prevent and combat LGBTphobia, and to promote the sexual and gender diversity. These guides did not include specific and closed questions, but only general topics to be discussed.

The LGBT focus group had six participants, lasted two hours and twenty minutes, and took place in a meeting room provided by the City Council of Sabadell. This group was led by a moderator and a researcher who observed the interactions between the participants and took field notes. The participants were three cisgender men who self-defined as gays, one cisgender woman who self-defined as lesbian, and two both transgender and lesbian women. The average age of the participants was 26 years (the youngest was 18 and the oldest 38), and three of them were students at that time. This factor, along with the fact that two of the participants were primary education teachers, influenced the main discussed topic to be about the education field.

The stakeholder focus group had five participants (the sixth cancelled the appointment at the last minute), lasted one hour and forty minutes, and took place in an office in the Department of Civil Rights and Citizenship. Unlike the LGBT focus groups, this group was only managed by one researcher who played both the role of the moderator and the observer. Two of the participants had been already interviewed: the Special Prosecutor on Hate Crimes and Discrimination, and the professional of Actua Vallès. The rest were contacted because their skills and experiences fit the objectives of the activity: the coordinator of the Area of Gender, Feminisms, and LGBTI of the Department of Civil Rights and Citizenship, a trainer who takes part in the Sexual-Affective Campaign organised by the City Council, and a specialist in LGBT and local policies. Whereas in the LGBT group the main topic was the promotion of the diversity in the education system, the stakeholders focused on the need to continue the development of the awareness-raising activities addressed to citizens, in spite of the budgetary difficulties.

2.4. Participant observation

The University of Barcelona conducted participant-observation of some events that tackled the LGBT issues, most of which addressed this topic from the perspective of local policies. Participant-observation brought us important inputs, particularly to present the project and further obtain a feedback, establish contacts and alliances, study the context of the activities, and observe the debates and interactions between the participants. As an illustration, in April 2016 we presented the project in the session of the Panel of Gender, Feminisms, and LGBTI. This is organised by the Department of Civil Rights and Citizenship once or twice a month, and meets representatives from the LGBT population, women's associations and equality organisations, with representatives from all the local political parties, in order to plan, organise, and assess the activities and events carried out in the city (e.g. 15 May, 28 June, 25 November, etc.).

In addition to participant-observation, the University of Barcelona carried out several dissemination activities in order to present the project and the preliminary findings. The research conducted in Sabadell was presented at the Third International Conference on Sexual Diversity Studies in Ibero-America, which was held in Granada (Spain) in November 2016. The goal of this conference was to analyse and debate the changes in sexuality and gender in different areas of social life.

2.5. Survey

In order to complement the ethnographical research, an online survey was conducted on Sabadell residents (using SurveyMoney software). The aim of the survey was to analyse the opinions of the citizens towards different issues regarding LGBT people. The majority of the questions addressed LGBT rights (such as marriage and adoption) while some others tackled social interactions of LGBT people (e.g. displaying affection in public and the leisure LGBT areas). The rest of the questions dealt with LGBT phobia and the attitudes to combat it.

In order to ensure the maximum dissemination of the survey, we requested the support of the Department of Civil Rights and Citizenship. After holding a meeting with two of their professionals, we decided that the Department would send the survey out using their different mailing lists of civil society groups in Sabadell, trying to make the sample as exhaustive as possible in terms of gender, age, socio-economic level, origin, etc. Collaborating with the professionals of the Department also avoided the potential problems with data protection.

We received 83 responses within the first two weeks of expedition. The respondent sample was not representative in terms of age (only one person over 65 years old) and ethnicity (e.g. we did not have any Roma person). In order to obtain the representation of Roma people, we decided to request the Secretariado Gitano to survey 5-7 users of the association. With the aim to correct the digital divide affecting older people, the City Council was asked to approve the face-to-face surveys in residential centres. Finally, two centres in

the city were chosen, where 15 surveys were carried out. In total, 107 responses were obtained (See Annex 2 for the survey results).

The following sections of this report include the findings of the ethnographical (in-depth interviews, focus groups, and participant observation) and statistical research carried out in Sabadell. These results will be presented according to four guiding themes: 1) Combating hate crimes based on LGBTphobia: the role of policies, legal measures and claim/complaints' mechanisms; 2) Experiences in public spheres: representations, virtuality, physical spaces and hate speech; 3) Social interactions and internalised experiences of LGBTphobia; 4) Inclusion, exclusion, and intersectionality. Such guiding themes constitute dimensions of concern that structured the data-gathering and data-analysis processes throughout the research.

3. Combating hate crimes based on LGBTphobia: the role of policies, legal measures and claim/complaints' mechanisms

3.1. Local policies and the promotion of sexual and gender diversity

In Sabadell, most policies and measures to combat LGBTphobia and promote the sexual and gender diversity are implemented by the Area of Gender, Feminisms, and LGBTI in the Department of Civil Rights and Citizenship, which often cooperates with other local departments and civil society organisations to carry out joint policies. Until now, the City Council of Sabadell has tended to prioritise the organisation of awareness-raising activities, instead of creating specific services for LGBT people. Consequently, whilst the City Council has interiorised and promoted a convincing discourse in favour of the LGBT diversity, at present there are no public services that exclusively target LGBT people in the city. Bearing in mind that the prioritisation of the symbolic and discursive measures (e.g. rainbow flag-raising or political statements) is a common feature of Spanish small and medium cities, which often do not have the same resources as the big cities, such as Madrid or Barcelona, to implement targeted services for each vulnerable social group.

The vast majority of the awareness-raising activities are organised from The Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia (17 May) to LGBT Pride (28 June). During this period, the City Council of Sabadell implements several activities, such as rainbow flag-raising campaigns, conferences, book launches, film screenings, theatre plays, etc. In 2016, the Department of Civil Rights also launched an awareness-raising campaign on the effects of homophobia. To this aim, 180 billboards throughout the city were used to promote the slogan: "We must ventilate the closets"⁵. The planning, organisation and assessment of these activities are carried out through the Panel of Gender, Feminisms, and LGBTI, a tool created with the aim to stimulate the participation of the civil society agents in the policies concerning the gender equality and the LGBT rights.

In addition to the awareness-raising campaigns, in 2016 the Department of Civil Rights and Citizenship offered two courses on the promotion of sexual diversity to all council workers. In spite of the Catalan Government, the Provincial Council of Barcelona and the City Council of Sabadell offered specific training for professionals of the public sector (teachers, law enforcement authorities, health staff, etc.), many of the stakeholders interviewed recognise that there is still a lack of professional training on LGBT issues at all levels of the local government, and consider that these courses should be compulsory for the local services staff, and not voluntary as happens now.

⁵ The Department takes advantage of these activities to publish some monographic guides: Monograph for the LGTBI Day (2012); Monograph for the Day against Homophobia (2012); Monograph on Homophobia in sport (2014); Monograph on approaches to sexual diversity (2015). <http://www.sabadell.cat/ca/gui-som-2/documents>

The City Council of Sabadell also belongs to the Network of LGBTI Local Councils of Catalonia. This network, created in June 2016, currently gathers 14 Catalan local councils in order to facilitate the exchange of tools, resources and best practices, as well as plan coordinated measures to ensure the rights of this community⁶. For instance, in January 2017 Sabadell will host a seminar on local policies and LGBT issues to staff of all councils participating in the Network.

During the previous term, a service was created by the Department of Civil Rights and Citizenship with the aim to assist persons who have suffered discrimination on the grounds of their sexual orientation, gender, age, religion or disability: the Civil Rights Office (CRO). The CRO was conceived as an information and attention service that, if required, derived the citizen to the existing local services and tools (e.g. social work, health or psychological care, etc.). However, according to the professionals who have created it, the CRO has not been effective because it has not had enough human and economic resources and it has been socially unknown. The CRO is now being restructured.

In general, the LGBT respondents consider that the current local government is more committed to combat LGBT phobia and to attend the needs of this community than the previous one. Particularly, the creation of a LGBT area in the Department of Civil Rights and Citizenship and the proliferation of awareness-raising activities are perceived as the main signs of this commitment. Nonetheless, some of the interviewees warn that it is crucial that the awareness-raising activities are complemented by comprehensive policies at all levels of the local government, such as a LGBT Strategic Plan. Otherwise, the government will stay at a superficial level with the only aim of making a good impression in the eyes of the citizens, which would suppose a political strategy of “pinkwashing⁷”:

“There’s a lot of showing off just because it looks good (...) there are a lot of ways of raising the awareness of the population beyond events empty of any content, such as when the councillor turning up to show the face, and that’s it” (SAB-IV-GP-14).

Regarding the lack of services targeted exclusively to LGBT people, some interviewees consider that these services would not contribute to the normalisation nor social integration of the collective, rejecting the idea that LGBT people are a vulnerable group with special needs: “It’s also as if you label the person, which is kind of absurd. And if we want to normalise, we have to normalise everything” (SAB-FG-EX-9).

Some others, especially those who have more intensely suffered discrimination and isolation, consider that it is crucial to create a LGBT office that offers information, advice and attention, and also provides spaces for peer socialisation and support. In addition, two

⁶ In November 2016, this Network was formed by 14 local councils: Girona, Terrassa, Sabadell, Rubí, Cerdanyola del Vallès, Sant Quirze del Vallès, Badia del Vallès, Ripollet, Santa Coloma de Gramanet, Granollers, Gavà, Sitges, Mataró and Berga. Some other local councils have manifested its willingness to adhere the Network.

⁷ This term is used to describe a variety of political strategies aimed at promoting a government through an appeal to LGBT-friendliness.

transgender women explain that local government should also offer work promotion for transgender people, given that these people are one of the most vulnerable groups regarding access to the labour market.

3.2. Basic services: Education and Health

These main axes of welfare societies play an essential role for the prevention and combat of LGBTphobia and the guarantee of the fundamental rights of these collective. Health and education services must create safety and tolerant places where people feel free to develop their identities and express their needs. If we want to analyse education and health services in Spain, we have to take into account that local governments have limited powers in these areas, which are under the responsibility of the State and regional governments. As a local government, Sabadell can implement specific measures (e.g. a training course in an education centre), but it cannot undertake structural reforms (e.g. educational curricula reform).

In this sense, every year the City Council of Sabadell organises the Sexual-Affective Campaign, with which different educational activities (such as an anti-bullying course and a gymkhana on healthy sexual relationships) are offered for students of secondary education (more than 4.000 young people have been engaged in 2015)⁸. For both LGBT people and stakeholders, this is a very ambitious campaign that shows the educational commitment of the City Council. However, whilst the anti-bullying training puts LGBTphobia at the core of the activity (a case of LGBT-bullying is used as an example when implementing it), during the gymkhana too much emphasis is put on the uses of the prophylaxis (especially the heterosexual one) whilst the promotion of sexual and gender diversity is overlooked.

For the vast majority of the LGBT people interviewed, the education centres constitute one of the social spheres where LGBTphobia is highly expressed. In consequence, they think that different levels of government have to develop plans and strategies to promote the sexual and gender diversity between all actors of the education system: teachers, students and families⁹. The experience of LGBT-bullying that a young lesbian, who participated in the LGBT focus group, suffered at the secondary school constitutes a paradigmatic case of this

⁸ This campaign is offered to all state secondary schools (13 in total) and those semi-private schools that request it. In Spain, semi-private schools are subsidised by the government and offer low school fees.

⁹ In Spain, there are several studies that deal with LGBTphobia in the education centres and propose measures to prevent it. Cf. Pichardo Galán, J.I. (Coord.) (2015). *Abrazando la diversidad: propuestas para una educación libre de acoso homofóbico y transfóbico*. Instituto de la Mujer y para la Igualdad de Oportunidades; Benítez Deán, E. (Coord.) (2015). *LGTB-fobia en las aulas. ¿Educamos en la diversidad sexual?* COGAM; Generelo, J. (Coord.) (2012). *Acoso escolar homofóbico y riesgo de suicidio en personas LGB*. Área de Educación de FELGTB/Comisión de Educación de COGAM; Santoro, P.; Gabriel, C.; Conde, F. (2010). *El respeto a la diversidad sexual entre jóvenes y adolescentes. Una aproximación cualitativa*. Observatorio de la Juventud en España; Agustín Ruíz, S. (Coord.) (2009). *Diversidad sexual en las aulas. Evitar el bullying o acoso homofóbico*. Fundación Triángulo Extremadura/Plural, Servicio Extremeño de Atención a Homosexuales y Transexuales; Pichardo Galán, J.I.; Molinuevo Puras, B.; Rodríguez Medina, P.O. (Coord.) (2007). *Actitudes ante la diversidad sexual de la población adolescente de Coslada (Madrid) y San Bartolomé de Tirajana (Gran Canaria)*. Ayuntamiento de Coslada/Ayuntamiento de San Bartolomé de Tirajana/FELGT.

necessity: She was harassed by a classmate, whilst their teacher impassively watched the situation. Moreover, when the young lesbian's mother showed her dissatisfaction to the harasser's mother, the latter replied: "If your daughter wasn't queer, my son wouldn't harass her" (SAB-FG-GP-6).

We interviewed four persons who have experienced LGBT-bullying, and all of them consider that they did not receive support from their teachers. In general, LGBT interviewees (two of them are teachers) believe that education professionals lack resources to promote sexual and gender diversity, and often reproduce the values of the sexism and the heteronormativity. For this reason, one of the teachers (SAB-IV-GP-2) emphasises that there is a need for alternative models of gender amongst the teachers in order for the pupils to access other guiding models.

For its part, the head teacher of a primary education centre interviewed (SAB-IV-EX-12) explains that, in general, the education centres invest their efforts correctly to promote LGBT diversity. Furthermore, she highlights that this task of preventing and awareness-raising is quite complex due to the fact that heteropatriarchy is heavily anchored in our symbolic universe. Her school does not have any specific action planned in the curriculum, although some teachers have explained the diversity of family models spontaneously. Besides, she explains that one of the teachers who is gay has given a speech to the students on his sexual option.

Whilst in Spain there is unanimity that bullying (even the LGBT-bullying) has to be severely persecuted, the promotion of sexual and gender diversity is still not seen as a fundamental value, but rather an ideological measure (linked to left-wing policies) that breaks the supposed neutrality of the education system. As a result, the promotion of LGBT diversity often depends on the will of each centre, or even the will of each teacher. Many centres do not consider the explicit defence of this kind of diversity as an education priority, and often forget that those who have to get used to the diversity are not LGBT people, but cisgender and heterosexual people:

"We have insisted on several occasions that our children's school offer some kind of training for the students on sexual and family diversity, but the management has rejected our proposal with the excuse that they had not detected this need, because there are no gays in the classroom" (SAB-IV-GP-16).

Regarding the health system, the respondents (excepting the transgender women) assert they have not felt discriminated by health services. However, some of them (especially the lesbians) denounce that heteronormative logic is dominant amongst the health professionals, such as gynaecologists or midwives, considering that all the questions posed to the users refer to the heterosexual intercourse: "When I say I'm lesbian there's no problem, but at the beginning the questions are about the penetration, totally heterosexual"(SAB-IV-GP-9). For another woman (SAB-IV-GP-4), if this situation does not

constitute a case of discrimination, it could explain the reticence of some lesbians to go to the gynaecologist because of a lack of a comfortable atmosphere.

Similarly, the professional who works in Actua Vallès (STD prevention NGO) states that there is a general ignorance regarding the sexuality between women (amongst the population, but also amongst health professionals and policy-makers). Some professionals do not know about the risks for lesbians of contracting STDs, whilst lesbians are often overlooked by sexual education and STD prevention campaigns. In relation to gay men, this professional emphasises a critical recommendation, that is, to incorporate measures against homophobia in the STD prevention programmes because homophobia is one of the main drivers of sanitary risk:

“A lot of men are not allowed to live out their sexuality in an open way and hence they end up turning to clandestine sexual circuits, like cruising or male prostitution. A guy who goes to a cruising area (...) probably his main worry in that moment is not whether to put on a condom or not, but whether he'll be seen or not. On the other hand, we've got the interiorised homophobia (...) if you feel that you've failed a lot of the expectations that people put on you, maybe you won't take particular care of yourself and you might rather punish yourself” (SAB-IV-EX-6).

Those who felt directly discriminated by health services were two transgender women interviewed. In general, the Primary Health Care Centres are unaware of the needs of transgender people and of the existing health resources for this community. The case of one of the interviewees shows this lack of awareness. This person explains that she had to wait six months since she contacted for the first time the general practitioner until that doctor referred her to the Gender Identity Unit (GIU) of the Clinic Hospital in Barcelona, the centre of reference by the Catalan Health System which provides hormonal and surgical treatment publicly funded¹⁰. During this time three different specialists visited her: a general practitioner, a midwife, and a psychologist.

Like the Spanish transgender movement, these women specially criticise the existing care model of the GIU, in which the access to the standardised health resources (hormones and surgeries) depends on the judgment (through diagnosis) of a psychiatric professional: “I don't understand why I have to speak to a psychiatrist when it's not an illness” (SAB-IV-GP-3). The “real life experience”¹¹, with which the GIU imposes a stereotyped vision of the gender, and the fact that the professionals prioritise the medical attention to those people

¹⁰ At present, nine of the seventeen Spanish regions provide transgender medical assistance, although not all of them sponsor the sexual surgeries.

¹¹ With this proof it is expected that the person adopts the gender role socially linked to his/her experienced gender (by changing the clothing and the hairstyle, the use of cosmetics, etc.). The person's will to begin the change of role and his/her capacity to act in accordance with their new role, is assumed by the professionals of the GIDU as the confirmation of the diagnosis.

who are close to the classical ideal of transsexuality¹² are also other criticised aspects. Furthermore, the interviewees denounce that the Spanish law establishes the obligation of obtaining a diagnosis of ‘gender dysphoria’, and undergoing two years of hormonal therapy in order to request the modification of sex and name in all the official documents and registers¹³. In their opinion, these requirements violate the principle of corporal self-determination.

Finally, the Catalan Government has satisfied the demands of the transgender movement, because in October 2016 it has approved a new care model with which the depathologisation of the health assistance is recognised. From this point forward, the centre of reference by the public health system will be Trànsit (which literally means “crossing” in Catalan), a world pioneer health service located in Barcelona. At Trànsit, a model of informed consent is applied in which it is the transgender person who, after having received the necessary information and counselling, takes all the decisions with regards to the process of corporal transformation. Similarly, no psychiatric diagnosis is brought about, and a psychological support is only carried out if the person asks for it.

3.3. The formal complaints on LGBTphobia

Sabadell residents have several bodies and formal channels to report LGBTphobia and receive professional assistance. Both regional and local police departments have a Victims’ Attention Service, which was created with the aim of attending victims of gender violence, but currently also attends other vulnerable collectives. In addition, in November 2015 the Prosecutor’s Office of Sabadell designated a special prosecutor on hate crimes and discrimination, who is dealing with one case of homophobia. There is also the Sabadell’s Ombudsman Office, which has received some cases based on LGBTphobia, most of which have been resolved with the mediation of the Ombudsman (that is, without a formal claim)¹⁴.

Moreover, these organisms jointly work with political parties, law enforcement authorities, jurists, and civic organisations through the Commission of Coexistence, an organism that monitors and deals with hate crimes and discrimination. Although this Commission was created to combat (and principally deals with) racism and extreme-right violence, it is an efficient mechanism to deal with LGBTphobia because the main actors of the local society provide a comprehensive assistance. When a hate crime case arrives to the Commission, the

¹² The ideal of “true transsexual” was created in the 1960s: a person who rejects his or her body since childhood, who wants to adopt a stereotyped gender role, who deeply wants an operation and who is heterosexual. In the GIDU, the people who come close to this ideal usually obtain the diagnosis quickly, while those who do not comply with the orthodoxy often experience that the process is prolonged for months or that they even end up without a diagnosis

¹³ Ley 3/2007, de 15 de marzo, reguladora de la rectificación registral de la mención relativa al sexo de las personas.

¹⁴ For instance, the Ombudsman has mediated in a case of workplace harassment against two transgender woman, and another where a lesbian’s couple were harassed by their neighbours. He has also mediated between the main actors (neighbours and users) of a cruising zone (Castellarnau).

protocol establishes that the law enforcement authorities investigate the incident, whilst members of the Lawyers Association of Sabadell provide legal support to the victim, who is also informed on his/her rights. Moreover, the City Council offers psychological assistance, and decides whether to act as private prosecutor. Most interviewees consider that the activity of the Commission has been crucial to combat the extreme-right violence in the city.

In spite of the existence of these organisations and measures, both LGBT people and local stakeholders emphasise that frequently it is not easy to report this violence. This point of view agrees with the results of the FRA's LGBT survey, according to which 43% of victims in Europe did not report the most serious incidents of hate-motivated violence they experienced (FRA, 2015b). The main factors that cause this situation have been pointed out during the fieldwork: the fear of possible reprisals, the mistrust in the effects of the court proceedings, which are often complex and slow, the anxiety that the complaint process may incur a non-desired coming out, the effects of the secondary victimisation (especially in the case of those people who have suffered violence during a practice socially stigmatised, such as cruising), etc. The Ombudsman adds that people are getting accustomed to report the more manifest violence, such as a physical attack, while they generally find it harder to report subtler discriminations, such as mockery or insults. Similarly, a LGBT interviewee who gets continuously insulted by the young people of her neighbourhood recognises the difficulty in identifying the harassers, as they are not always the same:

“You don't know who is shouting at you in the street because it could be so many different people... What do you do then? Do you report the whole population of Sabadell?” (SAB-IV-GP-6).

4. Experiences in public spheres: representations, virtuality, physical spaces and hate speech

Public space cannot be conceived as a simple aggregation of physical places (streets, squares, parks, buildings, etc.) that organises the distribution of the cities. It is rather an ideological space, intersected by meanings and representations, practices and social relationships (also the sexual and gender ones) according to the hegemonic socio-symbolic order; although this order is often challenged through resistance, subversion and struggle. Moreover, the spaces of socialisation and production of meanings are not reducible to the urban. Lately, digital and communication technologies force us to take other social spaces and information distribution channels that have become crucial for social life into account.

4.1. Urban spaces

As we have pointed out, in Sabadell there are socio-economic differences between the city centre and some of the neighbourhoods located in the suburbs, such as La Plana del Pintor, Ca n'Oriach, Can Puiggener, Campoamor or Torre-romeu. Whilst the city centre is dominated by the Catalan middle class, these neighbourhoods, where the different migrants have traditionally settled, are ethnically diverse, but they also concentrate the highest poverty rates and the majority of people at risk of social exclusion. A segregation which is not only spatial and economic, but also symbolic: "People from Torre-romeu don't say 'I'm going to the city centre', but 'I'm going to Sabadell'" (SAB-IV-EX-12).

According to some of the LGBT interviewees, there are also cultural differences between the city centre and these suburban neighbourhoods, differences which shape divergent perceptions and attitudes towards gender and sexual diversity. Following this point of view, the city centre is perceived as a friendly and safe area for LGBT people, whilst these suburbs are seen as hostile, and even violent spaces. These differences are attributed to the cultural traits of some of the residents, especially Muslims and Roma: "The place where I live is a low-income neighbourhood, most of the people are Roma and Muslim, and they do not accept these relationships (homosexual couples). Whereas, in the city centre people are kissing and go hand in hand" (SAB-IV-GP-4). This way, LGBTphobia is culturalised, principally conceived as a characteristic problem of a cultural 'other' who has not interiorised the Western values of respect and tolerance.

However, some LGBT people and local stakeholders reject this thesis of spatial and cultural concentration of LGBTphobia. A lesbian couple conceive LGBTphobia as a transversal problem which cannot be reduced to a specific population, adding that they know LGTB people who live in peripheral neighbourhoods and have never experienced any problems. In this sense, a local policewoman insists upon distinguishing between the social perception of risk and reality:

"Often people go to the centre believing that they have a series of rights that they don't have in the more peripheral neighbourhoods (...) But often we are surprised to

find out that people in these neighbourhoods accept diversity much more because they themselves are often constituted by elements and components of diversity, so they accept and live with it” (SAB-IV-EX-11).

In another vein, at present there are no specific leisure areas (bars, restaurants, discos, shops) for LGBT people in Sabadell. For the great majority of the interviewees, this lack of places is the consequence of the physical proximity to, and social dependency of Barcelona, a big city with a strong associative network and various LGBT areas¹⁵. Whereas Sabadell “is like a town where everyone is known and controlled” (SAB-IV-GP-1), Barcelona is idealised as a place that promotes freedom, diversity and anonymity: “In Barcelona you can go out in the street as you want to, no one will say anything” (SAB-IV-GP-3). Some years ago there was a gay bar in Sabadell, but it did not meet the requirements that the respondents attribute to this type of spaces: “A bar in Sabadell does not allow you to meet new people, nor to be anonymous” (SAB-IV-EX-1).

However, not everybody regrets this lack of LGBT leisure areas. As with the debate on the targeted public services, some LGBT people consider that these areas not only project a frivolous vision of homosexuality, but also hinder the social acceptance of sexual diversity, contributing to the ghettoisation of the community:

“I’m against ghettos (...) I don’t feel any need to go to a place where everybody is of your condition (...) ¡Gosh! We don’t want there to be any discrimination and we ourselves are closing gates” (SAB-IV-GP-8).

On the contrary, others express that there is a need for socialisation and affinity spaces which has to be satisfied:

“I understand that a group of people who coincide in sexual-affective terms look for spaces where they can meet and have fun (...) Might this be necessary in a 100 years? I don’t know, because the affinity has a sense of its own. It’s not about self-marginalisation but more about obtaining what a relative minority needs to develop (...) There are resources that we don’t have to question. I think we’d rather have to problematise whether we all have the same rights” (SAB-IV-EX-8).

Despite the fact that there are no leisure areas in the city, Sabadell have two cruising zones for gay men, that is, public spaces where people look for anonymous, casual, and furtive sex. The most important area is the forest of Castellarnau, located in the suburbs¹⁶. Active since the late 1970s, this cruising area has occasioned some conflicts which have had to be dealt with by the Ombudsman and the Coexistence Commission¹⁷. On the one hand, the

¹⁵ The main area is the “Gaixample”, located in the city centre. This is a portmanteau term composed of the words “gay” and “Eixample”, the neighbourhood to which this area belongs to.

¹⁶ The other area is the men’s toilets of the Parc Catalunya.

¹⁷ The conflicts in this area have been motivated by the effects of the Spanish real estate bubble from the mid-1990s, which have triggered an intensive urbanisation in a forest area that was previously almost inhabited.

neighbours complained about the filth originated (above all condoms), problems regarding mobility (illegally parked cars) and a certain indiscretion by the users (sexual relations were visible to the walkers). On the other hand, the users denounced the robberies and the police harassment, undermining their anonymity by using the loudspeakers of the patrol cars to warn the owners (by their names or their number plates) of the badly parked cars¹⁸. However, according to a stakeholder who has mediated between the social actors, the local police have stopped the harassment and the conflicts between users and neighbours have calmed down:

“It was basically a question of putting some order between the users, so that they would be aware that they could use the space but in an ordered fashion and respectful with the people who live there; and, on the other hand, making the neighbours aware that the area could be used for what it was being used” (SAB-IV-EX-9).

4.2. Media and virtual spaces

In general, the interviewees do not consider the treatment of LGBT issues in the media of Sabadell as particularly harmful, although they have sometimes been a source of discrimination. This is the case of one of the most important newspapers in the city (Diari de Sabadell), which in 2009 published an article with the title: “Sexual Deviation”. In this article, the author held a pathological vision of homosexuality and regretted the high number of homosexual weddings in Catalonia. Obviously, the article generated a great controversy, and several LGBT persons wrote to the newspaper expressing their disagreement.

When it comes to the LGBT representations in the TV, some interviewees consider that certain TV channels (especially the Catalan public TV) and American TV series (such as *Transparent*, *Glee* or *Queer as Folk*) have contributed to making LGBT lives more visible. However, others warn that the media quite often project a stereotypical vision of the LGBT people. In this sense, transgender women are often linked to show-business and prostitution, whilst the prototype of gay man is effeminate and histrionic.

On the other hand, there is a great consensus in the conception of digital social networks as important channels for the construction of the subjectivities and social relationships of LGBT people, especially for those who are still developing their sexual orientation or gender expression. In this sense, LGBT networks are perceived as a tool to find emotional support, combat isolation, promote socialisation, and share information: “When you come out you're lost. You don't know anybody; you don't know where to go. Through the chat you get to know people, you discover that they meet up. You open up” (SAB-IV-GP-4). These networks are also appreciated because they disseminate positive models with whom to identify:

¹⁸ Often the authorities carry out these strategies in the cruising zones (such as lightening the area or clearing the vegetation) for dissuasive purposes. Cf. Langarita, J.A. (2015). *En tu árbol o en el mío. Una aproximación etnográfica a la práctica del sexo anónimo entre hombres*. Barcelona: Bellaterra.

“For instance, the Youtube videos in which famous people come out (...) If I had had something like that in my adolescence I might have found out that I was gay sooner (...) now it’s a lot easier to get onto the Internet and have more tools to find role models (...) So I have found videos from people of my age who explain their experience (...) Well, when seeing these videos, I get tears in my eyes because I identify a lot with them” (SAB-IV-GP-13).

In relation to the contact Apps (e.g. Grindr), the majority of gays interviewed tend to criticise them due to their superficiality, despite the fact that most of them have actually used them: “It might be in the process of turning into a meat market” (SAB-IV-GP-8). Besides, the fact that these applications show the people who are ‘available’ close to you means that in places such as Sabadell there are not many possibilities to ‘hook up’ with new people: “If you activate this APP in Sabadell you know everybody who is connected” (SAB-IV-GP-13).

5. Social interactions and internalised experiences of LGBTphobia

5.1. Personal experiences of LGBTphobia

LGBT interviewees have suffered different types of LGBTphobia in several areas of their lives, but some of them consider that they have not experienced any discrimination or violence. In this last case, LGBTphobia tends to be associated with the exercise of violence or discrimination by people or institutions (such as physical or verbal aggressions, discrimination in the access to basic services), whilst the consequences that the violence and discrimination produces in the person subjected to it (e.g. fear to come out, shame, self-incrimination) are not problematised. Hence, LGBTphobia is internalised and normalised. This is the case of a gay man interviewed, who after stating “I haven’t had any problem regarding homophobia”, indicates that he was hiding his relationship with his current husband for 6 years due to fear of family rejection (SAB-IV-GP-9).

LGBTphobia has both a corporal and cognitive effects on the person who suffers it (Eribon, 2012). Firstly, LGBTphobia is embodied, domesticating expressions, gestures and acts to fit the parameters of heteronormativity. The suppression of public exhibitions of homo-affectivity constitutes an example of this bodily (self)control:

“When we started our relationship 20 years ago things weren’t like that, and consequently you get used to a certain inhibition, or rather no exhibition (...) There’s a state of semi concealment that you normalise” (SAB-IV-GP-5).

“If children see us kissing in public... A man and a woman is alright, but two women (...) No, it’s not alright. Their mother should teach them at home and explain what lesbian and gay couples are, but I shouldn’t traumatise a child” (SAB-IV-GP-14).

On the other hand, it seems that mockeries or isolated insults have been internalised as a normal part of the everyday life by some LGBT people. These people have become accustomed to this LGBTphobia of ‘lower intensity’, so they do not consider this violence as a major problem, especially if compared with the continuous physical and psychological violence that they still experience in social life: “People go hand in hand everywhere. Someone might look at them strangely, or say ‘sissy’, but they are not worried and that’s all there is to it” (SAB-IV-EX-4).

Whilst the respondents have not always identified internalised LGBTphobia, this is not true for the other types of violence and discrimination, which have been explained in detail during the interviews. A gay man reported his company for workplace harassment (and won the court case) due to the homophobic insults by his head. A transgender woman reported that in secondary school a teacher advised her to dress “like a boy” if she wanted to find a job; whilst the other trans woman interviewed explained that her basketball teammates compel her to get changed in another changing room because they felt uncomfortable in her

presence. A lesbian explained that her ex-husband tried to take away the custody of her son when he found out that she was lesbian. In the same lines, a Roma lesbian couple complained about the rejection by part of the Roma community of their birth district, etc.

Other respondents report discrimination produced within the LGBT community. Transphobia is also present amongst some gays and lesbians, whilst the reproduction of the stereotypes of virility shapes a “homonormativity” (Duggan, 2002; Stryker, 2008) that excludes those gays whose image does not adjust to the project of social normalisation, such as the passive, effeminate, and eccentric gay. In addition, a bisexual woman explained her difficulties in expressing her bisexuality publicly because “it is an option which is often linked to immaturity and emotional instability” (SAB-IV-GP-9). This is the double discrimination that bisexual persons often suffer: internal (some parts of the LGTB collective do not consider them equal due to the fact that they also have heterosexual relations); and external (because they break with the socially established heteronormativity).

Another important aspect to take into account is that anybody who does not adjust to the sexual and gender parameters can experience LGBTphobia, independently of their sexual orientation and/or gender expression. For instance, at the secondary school, an interviewee suffered discrimination despite the fact that he still was not clear about his sexuality nor had come out as gay. He was rejected by the other boys because he did not like games and sports typically associated with virility.

In another vein, whilst the experiences of LGBTphobia have marked the lives of most interviewees (with the exceptions as noted), the persons affected do not consider Sabadell as a particularly hostile city towards LGBT expressions. Similarly, the survey respondents do not think that discrimination against LGBT people is a major social problem in Sabadell. Almost 30% of respondents disagree with this statement (4% “completely disagree” and 25.4% “disagree”), while only 18% agree (13% “agree” and 5% “completely agree”).

5.2. Personal experiences of coming out

For the great majority of the LGBT interviewees, the support of their parents has been crucial to their sexual or gender development, although not all of them received this support when they came out. Two of the interviewees broke bonds with their parents due to their repudiation. A lesbian moved to the South of Spain in order to escape from the pressure of her mother and express her sexuality freely. Five respondents experienced an initial rejection but later tolerance (not full acceptance) from their parents. In this regard, one of the interviewees describes a double standard in the social discourse on homosexuality:

“My father does not have any problem with homosexuals, but that's outside our home. Outside he doesn't have any problem, but that his daughter tells him that she's lesbian, that's a problem for him” (SAB-IV-GP-9).

In terms of children, a gay and a lesbian who have had children from heterosexual marriages, and two homosexual couples with children (a gay couple has two adopted sons, whilst the lesbian couple has twins as a result of sperm donation) express that their children have accepted their homosexuality. Regarding the reaction of their friends, the interviewees consider that the 'coming out' process has shown them who their 'true friends' are.

According to some interviewees, before revealing their sexual orientation and/or gender expression to their intimate environment, self-acceptance is necessary. However, self-denial is still a common fact amongst some homosexual and transgender people, who predict the rejection of a heteronormative and cisgendered society: "I let the time go by, thinking it might all just be an illusion" (SAB-IV-GP-3).

The existence of positive LGBT referents (in schools, TV, cinema, literature) is also a determining factor supporting sexual or gender development, and which decreases the feelings of estrangement, isolation and shame that those who do not fit into the social norms might feel. Nowadays, with Internet and social media, for young LGBT people it is easy to find role models and guiding information, but only a few years ago it was much more complicated to find these referents. That was the case of a lesbian interviewee, who expressed that once she was clear about her attraction to women in the 1980s, "I felt completely alone until I came to a library and found some information about homosexuality" (SAB-IV-GP-5).

5.3. Social and associative life

As explained earlier, there are no LGBT associations in Sabadell. The last association was 'Som com som' (2008-2015), which had approximately 10 members (almost exclusively middle-aged men) and was organised around two axes: political actions and leisure activities. According to its founder, the association did not work because most people only participated in the leisure time activities, such as parties, excursions, dinners, etc.: "Those people were comfortable and they didn't feel the need to lobby the governments in order to change the policies and normalise homosexuality" (SAB-IV-GP-1). It seems that there was also a lesbian association not long ago, but nobody could tell us much about it because its members did not publicise their activities. To this regard, an interviewee explains that it was more like a socialisation group than a political association.

For some interviewees, this lack of LGBT associations in Sabadell, and the decline of the associative activity in Spain, is due to the accomplishment of LGBT rights thanks to the legislative advances (such as same-sex marriages and adoptions, the Catalan LGBT Law, etc.)¹⁹:

"If we observe the legal context we can see that we are protected by the laws. For this reason, many gay people want to live their sexuality normally and not engage in

¹⁹ In 2015 there were 108 marriages in Sabadell, 5 of which were same-sex marriages.

political or social activities” (SAB-IV-GP-1).

From this point of view, at present LGBT people should focus on making themselves more visible publicly and normalise LGBT expressions: “Nowadays we need to normalise and show ourselves just the way we are. Which rights do we need to claim?” (SAB-IV-GP-7).

Nonetheless, other respondents do not believe in the depoliticisation of the LGBT community, and consider that in Sabadell there is not a need for specific LGBT associations because there are very active social and cultural movements, which are very sensitive to the sexual and gender diversity. In this regard, ‘Justa Revolta’, ‘Les Bruixes’ and ‘La Colla Castellera’ have been identified as “comfortable spaces where there are a lot of open-minded people with a social commitment” (SAB-IV-GP-9).

Despite the fact that there are no specific associations in the city, some interviewees have pointed out that there are informal networks of relations between gay people. Part of the former members of ‘Som com som’ get together once a week to have dinner, whilst the young people from Sabadell maintain the bonds established in a small (physical and virtual) space such as Sabadell: “Either we have met on the Internet or we have slept together, or they are friends of friends, or a cousin” (SAB-IV-GP-13).

In general, when the interviewees were consolidating their sexuality or gender expression they felt the need to socialise in LGBT environments, such as leisure areas, associations, online chats and Apps. Nonetheless, once these sexuality or gender expressions have been established, the respondents tend to distance themselves from the LGBT context. Once again we find that will to normalisation and also the critique of LGBT spaces: “It was a very stereotyped world (...) I don’t like the labels. There is no need to group in sectors and that each one defends their own interests” (SAB-IV-GP-2).

However, it seems that for gay and lesbian parents there is more of a need for peer socialisation. In those cases, the associations of same-sex parenting (such as the Catalan Association of Gay and Lesbian Families) do not only provide advice and legal support in issues such as adoption or assisted reproduction techniques, but also constitute friendly spaces where family members can have fun and be educated in diversity values:

“At some point we have indeed had meetings with associations, above all for the children’s sake (...) you give them elements about other family types so that they understand that families can be constituted in many different ways” (SAB-IV-GP-15).

6. Inclusion, exclusion, and intersectionality

Although LGBT people often have life experiences and feelings in common because of their non-hegemonic sexual orientation and/or gender expression in a heteronormative and cisgendered society, they have to be conceptualised as a heterogeneous group. Human lives are shaped by several axes of identification and inequality that coexist, overlap and intersect: sexual orientation and gender identity, but also gender, socio-economic status, educational level, ethnicity, origin, legal status, age and disability. The interaction between social identities and related systems of oppression and discrimination gives rise to a multitude of individual and collective experiences and narratives that must be taken into account²⁰.

The experiences of a Roma lesbian couple constitute a paradigmatic example of the superposition of axis of identification and inequality. As lesbian and independent women, they have not followed the imperatives of the traditional Roma culture, and part of their community has rejected them because homosexuality is conceived as a non-Roma phenomenon: “We’re Roma, but are we more non-Roma because we’re lesbian? Ok then. Then I’ll live as a non-Roma but I’m Roma. And perhaps I’m better off than you” (SAB-IV-GP-11).

Despite the fact that they admit that their life courses break with a lot of the Roma norms, both of them emphasise their link to the Roma identity by means of defending some of its distinctive characteristics. This is illustrated by the celebration of a big party for their wedding: “It’ll be a big party. We’re Roma and it has to be visible in something” (SAB-IV-GP-12); and the desire to have many children because they provide ties of solidarity and affectivity between the family members: “We want a big family. I don’t care what they are, boys or girls, as long as they’re a lot. That you come home and see the table and think ‘look at those kids’” (SAB-IV-GP-11).

Moreover, they have also suffered the stigmatisation, prejudices and marginalisation that severely affect Roma people in Spain. For instance, when one of the interviewees’ parents left Can Puiggener (a neighbourhood with an important percentage of Roma people) to live in Creu Alta (a middle-class neighbourhood) 25 years ago, some people of the latter neighbourhood organised a demonstration protesting against their arrival due to the problems perceived to be socially linked to Roma people: noise, filth, violence, etc. In addition, the same interviewee experienced multiple discrimination “sexuality/ethnicity” when she was rejected for work in a restaurant because the owner (who had an extreme-right ideology) openly hated Roma and homosexuals.

The personal history of a lesbian who was interviewed provides us with another example of the importance of intersectional analysis. When she worked in a hospital she could express

²⁰ Cf. Platero, R.L. (Ed.) (2012). *Intersecciones: cuerpos y sexualidades en la encrucijada*. Barcelona: Bellaterra.

her sexuality openly because, in her own words, the work environment was friendly towards LGTB people. However, and due to a disability, she had to leave that job, and instead started selling raffle tickets in a street shop. From that moment, she thought that she has had to hide her sexual orientation because the great majority of the clients are senior citizens, and she often has to listen to homophobic comments. In addition, she complains about the historical lack of lesbian associations in Sabadell. She went to some activities organised by 'Som com som' but she did not feel at ease because she was the only woman amongst men. According to a stakeholder from the City Council: "In our society, as a woman you have fewer rights; as a lesbian, you are sometimes overlooked by gays" (SAB-IV-EX-8).

Whilst ethnicity, disability and gender have marked the lives of these women, the socio-historic context in which each person develops their sexuality and gender identity is also an important factor that shapes the experiences of LGTB people. Franco's Dictatorship and the first few years of transition towards democracy was a period characterised by an institutionalised LGBTphobia in which any kind of public expression of homosexuality was severely condemned or persecuted both by the government and society.

Most interviewees who lived this period learned to suppress any public exhibition of affection, and this self-repression still determines their acts and expressions at present. Another gay man explained an episode of discrimination, which today would be difficult to reproduce: During the worst times of the AIDS epidemic, one of his co-workers went to the bathroom in another department to avoid using the same toilet as he did.

The 1960s, 1970s and the 1980s were also hard times for transgender people. Public administrations did not attend the health needs of this community (sex reassignment surgeries were considered a castration in the penal code until 1983), and so the only way to reconstruct their bodies was to turn to practices of corporal self-management. In the case of transgender women, the most widespread practices were to take hormones without any medical control, and the clandestine injections of liquid silicone (or industrial oils) into hips, buttocks, breasts or cheeks, with the aim of rounding the body and thus approach the aesthetic ideal of women. As a result of these dangerous practices, many women had serious health problems and even died.

On the contrary, many interviewees consider that nowadays young LGBT people live their sexuality and gender expressions in a more easy-going and healthier way due to the progressive social acceptance of the sexual and gender diversity, and the implementation of policies and services addressed to this community. Nonetheless, there is a debate on the lack of political conscience due to the supposed acquirement of LGBT rights. In any case, the following testimony shows the importance of generational differences in the LGBT experiences:

"There are very young people who have been very openly gay or lesbian at their secondary school (...) and although I'm only five years older, I notice that I have

somehow lived it differently (...) and then, for instance, a friend of mine who is fifty-something, and who is gay, of course, he explained how he had experienced the AIDS epidemic, all his friends have died. We compared our experiences and well, it's very different" (SAB-IV-GP-13).

Finally, personal experiences of LGBT people as well as their resources to confront violence and discrimination are determined, to a large extent, by their socio-economic status. Being a LGBT person from a disadvantaged background is an added social exclusion factor in hostile environments where the struggle for scarce resources and survival prevails. On the contrary, a high social, cultural, and economic capital contributes to social acceptance and provides the necessary resources and skills to avoid episodes of LGBTphobia, or at least to be able to deal with them. Such is the case of a middle-aged gay man interviewed, who considers that he has not experienced any type of discrimination due to his elevated economic and cultural capital (he belongs to the Catalan bourgeoisie and is the owner of a company). If we add that he is married to his lifelong boyfriend, we have a paradigmatic case of the socially acceptable homosexual model. In his own words: "We're (he and his husband) a reference in the city" (SAB-IV-GP-8).

7. Conclusions/Best practices identified/ Recommendations

In this chapter the main conclusions of the research will be presented on the basis of the empirical findings. Moreover, the best practices to prevent and combat LGBTphobia in Sabadell will be identified to make possible the subsequent exchanges between the cities of the project (Sabadell, Girona, Wroclaw, Nottingham, Charleroi, and Thessaloniki). Finally, some recommendations will be made to suggest ways to improve the welfare of LGBT people at each level of government (local, regional, and national).

Conclusions

1. The role of policies and public services

- ❑ The City Council of Sabadell has tended to prioritise the organisation of awareness-raising activities and courses on the promotion of sexual diversity, instead of creating specific services for LGBT people.
- ❑ There is a lack of professional training on LGBT issues at all levels of the local government (council staff, local police, education, health, etc.).
- ❑ In general, respondents consider that the current local government is committed to combat LGBT phobia and to attend the needs of this community.
- ❑ The education centres constitute one of the social spheres where LGBTphobia is highly expressed. Consequently, those people who consider that LGBTphobia is a major social problem tend to be linked to the education system (teachers, students, parents).
- ❑ In general, education professionals lack resources to promote sexual and gender diversity.
- ❑ The promotion of sexual and gender diversity in education centres is not seen as a fundamental value, but rather an ideological measure that breaks the supposed neutrality of the education system. In consequence, the promotion of LGBT diversity often depends on the will of each centre, or even each teacher.
- ❑ Homosexuality is usually introduced into the education centres in the context of HIV/AIDS prevention and information, whilst education activities rarely deal with transgenderism and gender diversity.
- ❑ The Primary Health Care Centres are generally unaware of the needs of transgender people, and the care model of Gender Identity Unit pathologises and standardises this community.
- ❑ Heteronormative and androcentric logic is dominant amongst health policies and services. As a result, lesbians are often overlooked by the sexual education and STDS prevention campaigns, which often forget that LGBTphobia is also a major health risk factor.
- ❑ Sabadell residents have several bodies and formal channels to report LGBTphobia and receive professional assistance. However, frequently it is not easy to report LGBTphobia due to the fear of possible reprisals, the mistrust in the effects of the court proceedings, the anxiety of a non-desired coming-out, and the effects of secondary victimisation.

2. Public spaces

- ❑ In general, interviewees consider that Sabadell is a friendly city towards LGBT people.
- ❑ Nonetheless, some interviewees highlight the differences between the city centre (safe) and the suburbs (unsafe), and tend to culturalise the LGBTphobia (a phenomenon linked to specific communities, such as Muslims and Roma).
- ❑ At present, there are no leisure areas (bars, discos, shops, etc.) for LGBT people in the city, due to the proximity to, and the social dependence of, Barcelona.
- ❑ Some of the interviewees regret the lack of these areas, whilst other respondents consider that specific LGBT spaces contribute to the ghettoisation of the LGBT people.
- ❑ Social media is a very important channel for the construction of subjectivity and social relationships for LGBT people. In this sense, online LGBT networks are a tool to combat isolation, promote socialisation and share information.

3. Personal experiences and social interactions of LGBT people

- ❑ LGBT respondents have suffered LGBTphobia in different areas of their lives (family sphere, workplace, public spaces, school, health services, etc.).
- ❑ LGBTphobia is often associated to the exercise of violence or discrimination by people or institutions, whilst internalised LGBTphobia is not always conceptualised as a result of social and symbolic violence.
- ❑ LGBTphobia has both corporal and cognitive effects on the person who suffers it. The suppression of public exhibitions of homo-affectivity and the acceptance of spontaneous insults and mockeries are some of the main consequences.
- ❑ There is also LGBTphobia within the LGBT community. Transgender and bisexual people are marginalised by some gays and lesbians, lesbians are sometimes ignored by gays, while part of the gay collective reject the effeminate gay.
- ❑ Anybody who does not adjust to the sexual and gender parameters can experience LGBTphobia, independently of their sexual orientation and/or gender expression.
- ❑ There is a contradiction between the discourses and social practices regarding the respect of sexual and gender diversity. Many people publicly reproduce a discourse of tolerance (which has become a politically correct discourse), but on the other hand their everyday practices strengthen the LGBT-phobic system.
- ❑ To have the support of the intimate environment has been crucial to sexual or gender development of the respondents, although not all of them received this support when they came out.

- ② The existence of positive LGBT referents is also a determining factor supporting sexual or gender development, and which decreases the feelings of estrangement, isolation and shame.
- ② At present, there are no LGBT associations in Sabadell. For some interviewees, this is due to the accomplishment of LGBT rights, whilst others consider there are very active social movements which already satisfy the needs of the LGBT community. When LGBT people were consolidating their sexuality or gender expression they felt the need to socialise in LGBT environments, but once these sexuality and gender expressions had been established, they tended to distance themselves from these environments.

4. An intersectional analysis of socio-demographic characteristics and experiences of discrimination in the city

- ② LGBT people have to be conceptualised as a heterogeneous group. They share a non-hegemonic sexual orientation or gender expression, but their experiences are shaped (and differentiated) by several social identities and systems of discrimination.

Best practices identified

1. Commission of Coexistence. At local level, this is a suitable body to combat LGBTphobia and offer a comprehensive assistance to victims. It has been able to involve the main civil society organisations, the City Council and all the political parties of the city, a fact which has allowed it to maintain itself despite the different changes in the government.

2. Panel of Gender, Feminisms, and LGBTI. This is an effective tool to stimulate the participation of the civil society agents in the planning, implementation and assessment of the activities and events regarding the promotion of gender equality as well as sexual and gender diversity.

3. Network of LGBTI Local Councils of Catalonia. Bearing in mind that LGBT policies are still a new area of government in Spain, these networks facilitate the exchange of tools, resources and best practices, as well as the planning of coordinated measures between the local governments.

4. Service of Hate Crimes and Discrimination of the Provincial Prosecutor's Office of Barcelona.

This service have been able to create a network of special prosecutors on hate crimes and discrimination from local prosecutor's offices (such as Sabadell), which allows the combat of violence against LGBT people at local level, and the coordination of strategies at provincial level.

Recommendations

1. Recommendations at local level (City Council of Sabadell)

- ☐ Awareness-raising campaigns and training courses are specific measures which should be supported by strategic planning. In this sense, a LGBT Strategical Plan could be created, and reviewed every five years. Thereby the City Council could define its mid-term strategy (specific objectives and necessary resources to achieve them) and subsequently assess it accordingly.
- Considering that many LGBT people experience isolation, confusion and rejection during the first phases of their sexual or gender development, as well as violence and discrimination in different areas of their lives, to create a LGBT Office that offers information, advice and attention, and also provides spaces for peer socialisation would be important. This office could have at least one professional for the reception and information, who would also derive the user to the other local services, if appropriate. However, if the City Council doesn't have the required resources to create this Office, the Civil Rights Office (which deals with all kinds of diversity and related discriminations) should be restructured (more resources and better publicised).
- ☐ Bearing in mind that there is a lack of professional training on LGBT issues at all levels of the local government, training activities should be multiplied. Moreover, these activities should be compulsory for the staff directly dealing with users.
- ☐ The Sexual-Affective Campaign is an ambitious strategy that shows the commitment of the City Council in the education field. However, promotion of sexual and gender diversity could have a more relevant role, and STD prevention should go beyond the heterosexual relationships advice.
- ☐ Local services (through its records and ID documents) should recognise the experienced gender of transgender people, even though they have not changed their registered gender.

2. Recommendations at regional level (Government of Catalonia)

- ☐ As we pointed out in the Sabadell Legal Report, the Law 11/2014 for guaranteeing the rights of LGBTI people and eradicating homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in Catalonia is a pioneering norm in Spain. In this regard, the Catalan government should allocate the necessary resources for the law deployment.
- ☐ Bearing in mind that, in general, health professionals presuppose the heterosexuality of the users (and thus all questions posed to them refers to heterosexual sexuality), the Ethical Code of the Catalan Institute of Health should introduce the recognition of the sexual and gender diversity. In addition, training courses on these issues should be reinforced between health professionals.
- The depathologisation of the Catalan health model for transgender people is a step beyond in the recognition of transgender rights. However, the informed consent model (which is only applied in Trànsit) should be decentralised, that is, deployed between the Catalan Primary Care Professionals, who are now unaware of the needs of this community. In

addition, would be necessary to increase the budget for the sex reassignment surgeries because currently transgender people have to wait several years to undergo these surgeries in the public health.

- ☐ STD prevention programmes should pay more attention to sex between women, as well as introduce measures against LGBTphobia, which is one of the main drivers of sanitary risk.
- If we consider that the education field is one of the social spheres where LGBTphobia is highly expressed, it is crucial to promote the sexual and gender diversity between all actors of the education system: teachers, students and families. In this sense, LGBT diversity should be explicitly introduced in secondary education curricula (e.g. in the program of the subject called “Culture and Ethical Values”)²¹. In addition, education centres should recognise the diversity of the family models (e.g. at present, school documents often request the signatures of the father and the mother).

3. Recommendations at national level (Spanish government)

- ☐ As some regional governments have done, the Spanish government could elaborate a LGBT law to ensure the rights of LGBT people and combat violence and discrimination towards this community at a national level.
- ☐ The Law of the Statute of the Victim (2015) establishes special measures that can be applied to protect the victims of felonies committed on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. In this sense, the Spanish government should allocate the necessary resources for the deployment of this law.
- ☐ The court proceedings linked to LGBT crimes should be simplified and accelerated without the victims experiencing a loss in rights.
- It is crucial to reform the “Law 3/2007 regulating the rectification of the register, concerning peoples’ sex”. According to several international organisations which defend the depathologisation of transgender people and the corporal self-determination²², the article 4.1.a. (which establishes the necessity to obtain a ‘gender dysphoria’ diagnosis) and the article 4.1.b. (which requires two years of hormonal treatment) should be removed from the Spanish law.

²¹ At present, the contents of this subject hardly address the sexual and gender diversity.

²² Cf. Yogyakarta Principles (2007). *Yogyakarta Principles on the Application of International Human Rights Law in relation to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity*; Council of Europe (2011). *Discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity in Europe*; European Parliament (2011). *Resolution of 28 September 2011 on human rights, sexual orientation and gender identity at the United Nations*.

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9. Annexes

ANNEX 1. Tables of interviews and focus groups

Table 1. LGBT interviewees

No	Category	Gender	Age	Educational level	Occupational level (According ISCO)	Origin	Ethnicity/ Religion	Marital Status	Dependence (Children/ elderly)	Years in the city
1	Gay	Masculine	64	Higher Education	Primary education teacher	Citizen	Atheist	Divorced (heterosexual marriage)	A daughter	Since 1982 (Eixample)
2	Gay	Masculine	38	Higher Education	Primary education teacher	Citizen	Agnostic	Single	--	All his life (City Centre)
3	Trans / Lesbian	Feminine	30	Secondary Education	Assembler	Citizen	Atheist	Single	--	All her life (Creu Alta)
4	Lesbian	Feminine	41	Higher Education	Other sales worker	Citizen	Atheist	Divorced (heterosexual marriage)	A son	All her life (except for three years) (Torre-romeu)
5	Lesbian	Feminine	47	Higher Education	Administratio n professional	Citizen	Atheist	Married	--	All her life (Creu Alta)
6	Trans / Lesbian	Feminine	18	Secondary Education	Student	Citizen	Agnostic	Single	--	All her life (Planada del Pintor)
7	Gay	Masculine	66	Higher Education	Creative and performing artist	Citizen	Atheist	Widower	--	All his life (except for some years) (Concòrdia)
8	Gay	Masculine	50	Higher Education	Chief executive	Citizen	Atheist	Married	--	All his life (City Centre)
9	Bisexual	Feminine	32	Higher	Shop	Citizen	Atheist	Single	--	All her life (except for

				Education	salesperson					one year) (Creu de Barberà)
10	Gay	Masculine	68	Primary Education	Retired	Citizen	Non practising Catholic	Single	--	All his life
11	Lesbian	Feminine	32	Primary Education	Street and market salesperson	Citizen	Evangelist (Roma)	Single	--	All her life (Creu Alta)
12	Lesbian	Feminine	26	Secondary Education	Office cleaner	Citizen	Evangelist (Roma)	Single	--	8 years ago (Creu Alta)
13	Gay	Masculine	24	Higher Education	Administrative and logistic professional	Citizen	Atheist	Single	--	All his life (Mercat Central)
14	Lesbian	Feminine	40	Higher Education	Social worker	Citizen	Agnostic	Married	A son and a daughter	15 years old (Gràcia)
15	Lesbian	Feminine	38	Secondary Education	Other services manager	Citizen	Agnostic	Married	A son and a daughter	30 years old (Gràcia)
16	Gay	Masculine	52	Higher Education	Security guard	Citizen	Agnostic	Married	Two sons	Since 1987 (Gràcia)
17	Gay	Masculine	54	Higher Education	Engineering professional	Citizen	Agnostic	Married	Two sons	All his life (Gràcia)

Table 2. Stakeholders interviewees

No	Role	Service
1	Counsellor of Civil Rights and Citizenship	City Council of Sabadell
2	Head of services	Department of Civil Rights and Citizenship. City Council of Sabadell
3	Head of programs	Diversity and Interculturality Program and Gender, Feminisms and LGTB Program. Department of Civil Rights and Citizenship. City Council of Sabadell
4	Ombudsman	Ombudsman's Office of Sabadell
5	Special Prosecutor on Hate Crimes and Discrimination	Prosecutor's Office of the Area of Sabadell
6	Coordinator of the 'Quick Test Service of STD' and the 'Sexual and Affective Education Workshops'	Actua Vallès (STD prevention and sexual education NGO)
7	Coordination of the 'Office for Citizens' and the 'Victim's Attention Service'	Local Police of Sabadell
8	Officer	Department of Civil Rights and Citizenship. City Council of Sabadell
9	Gynaecologist Member of the Editorial Committee of the 'Young Sex' (information and advice website)	Reproductive and Sexual Health Service. Sant Fèlix Primary Care Centre Government of Catalonia
10	Coordinator	Fundación Secretariado Gitano de Sabadell (Roma association)
11	Police officer President	Local Police of Sabadell GAYLESPOL (Spanish association of LGBT police officers)
12	Head teacher	Escola Samuntada (primary education centre)

Table 3. LGBT focus group

No	Category	Gender	Age	Educational level	Occupational level	Origin
1	Gay	Masculine	38	Higher Education	Primary education teacher	Citizen
2	Gay	Masculine	26	Higher Education	Primary education teacher	Citizen
3	Gay	Masculine	24	Higher Education	Administrative and logistic professional	Citizen
4	Trans/lesbian	Feminine	30	Secondary Education	Assembler	Citizen
5	Trans/lesbian	Feminine	18	Secondary Education	Student	Citizen
6	Lesbian	Feminine	20	Secondary Education	Student	Citizen

Table 4. Stakeholder focus group

No	Role	Service
1	Coordinator of the 'Quick Test Service of STD' and the 'Sexual and Affective Education Workshops'	Actua Vallès (STD prevention and sexual education NGO)
2	Special Prosecutor on Hate Crimes and Discrimination	Prosecutor's Office of the Area of Sabadell
3	Coordinator	Area of Gender, Feminisms, and LGTBI. Department of Civil Rights and Citizenship. City Council of Sabadell
4	Specialist in LGBT and local policies. Member of the Panel of Gender, Feminisms, and LGBTI	Department of Civil Rights and Citizenship. City Council of Sabadell
5	Trainer/educator in the Sexual-Affective Campaign	Department of Civil Rights and Citizenship and Department of Health. City Council of Sabadell

ANNEX 2. Survey results

Q1 Do you live, work or study in Sabadell?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	92.52%	99
No	2.80%	3
Other (please, specify)	4.67%	5
Total	107	

Q2 How long have you been living and/or working/studying in Sabadell?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Less than 6 months	5.71%	6
Between 6 months and 1 year	1.90%	2
1 year – 5 years	9.52%	10
Longer than 5 years	82.86%	87
Total	105	

Q3 Which neighbourhood do you live in?

Neighbourhood	Total Responses
Centre	21
Gràcia	9
La Creu Alta	7
Can Rull	7
Sol i Padrís	7
Ca n'Oriac	4
La Concòrdia	4
Covadonga	3
La Creu de Barberà	3
Can Feu	3
L'Eixample	2
Torre-romeu	2
Other	13
TOTAL ANSWERS	85

Q4 Do you have acquaintances, work colleagues and/or friends who are gay, lesbian, bi- or transgender?

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	92.52% 99
No	2.80% 3
I don't know	4.67% 5
Other (please, specify)	0.00% 0

Total	107
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Q5 What is your gender?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Female	61.68%	66
Male	38.32%	41
Other (please, specify)	0.00%	0
Total	107	

Q6 What is your sexual orientation

Answer Choices	Responses
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Heterosexual	81.13%	86
Gay/Lesbian	11.32%	12
Bisexual	7.55%	8
Other (please, specify)	0.00%	0
Total	106	

Q7 How old are you?

Answer Choices	Responses
16-24	8.41% 9
25-34	17.76% 19
35-44	21.50% 23
45-54	19.63% 21
55-64	18.69% 20
65+	14.02% 15
Total	107

Q8 Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people should have the same rights as other people

Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Completely agree	Total	Weighted Average
2.94%	0.98%	0.00%	2.94%	93.14%		
3	1	0	3	95	102	4.82

Q9 Legal protection that apply to gay and lesbian people should also apply to transgender and intersex people

Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Completely agree	Total	Weighted Average
1.96%	0.00%	2.94%	4.90%	90.20%		
2	0	3	5	92	102	4.81

Q10 People should be free to express their gender and sexuality no matter what they are

Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Completely agree	Total	Weighted Average
2.94%	0.00%	0.00%	4.90%	92.16%		
3	0	0	5	94	102	4.83

Q11 People of the same sex should be able to get married

Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Completely agree	Total	Weighted Average
1.01%	0.00%	3.03%	9.09%	86.87%		
1	0	3	9	86	99	4.81

Q12 People of the same sex should be able to have or to adopt children

Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Completely agree	Total	Weighted Average
2.94%	0.98%	4.90%	8.82%	82.35%		
3	1	5	9	84	102	4.67

Q13 Hate crime against lesbian, gay, bi- and transgender people should be persecuted more severely

Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Completely agree	Total	Weighted Average
0.99%	1.98%	4.95%	15.84%	76.24%		
1	2	5	16	77	101	4.64

Q14 Discrimination against gays, lesbians and transgender people is a major social problem in Sabadell

Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Completely agree	Total	Weighted Average
4.04%	25.25%	52.53%	13.13%	5.05%		
4	25	52	13	5	99	2.90

Q15 I am or I would be happy to have gay, bisexual or transgender person within my family, group of friends or colleagues

Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Completely agree	Total	Weighted Average
1.96%	0.00%	5.88%	10.78%	81.37%		
2	0	6	11	83	102	4.70

Q16 I am comfortable when I interact with lesbian, gay and bisexual people

Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Completely agree	Total	Weighted Average
---------------------	----------	----------------------------	-------	------------------	-------	------------------

1.96%	0.98%	3.92%	12.75%	80.39%		
2	1	4	13	82	102	4.69

Q17 I am comfortable when I interact with transgender people

Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Completely agree	Total	Weighted Average
2.97%	0.99%	15.84%	21.78%	58.42%		
3	1	16	22	59	101	4.32

Q18 I am comfortable when I see same sex couples displaying affection in public (kissing, going hand in hand, etc.)

Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Completely agree	Total	Weighted Average
2.00%	2.00%	13.00%	19.00%	64.00%		
2	2	13	19	64	100	4.41

Q19 Sabadell should have leisure spaces for LGBT people (bars, clubs, etc.)

Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Completely agree	Total	Weighted Average
12.87%	14.85%	38.61%	16.83%	16.83%		
13	15	39	17	17	101	3.10

Q20 I believe Sabadell is a LGBT friendly city

Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Completely agree	Total	Weighted Average
---------------------	----------	----------------------------	-------	------------------	-------	------------------

0.00%	3.03%	64.65%	28.28%	4.04%		
0	3	64	28	4	99	3.33

Q21 What is your religion?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Catholic	29.59%	29
Other Christians (Protestant, Orthodox, Evangelist, etc.)	1.02%	1
Muslim	0.00%	0
Jewish	0.00%	0
No religion (atheistic, agnostic, etc.)	60.20%	59
Other(please, specify)	9.18%	9
Total	98	

Q22 What is your highest educational qualification?

Answer Choices	Responses	
No formal qualification	2.04%	2
Primary education	4.08%	4
Secondary education	1.02%	1
Vocational training	12.24%	12
A level	12.24%	12
Undergraduate degree	35.71%	35
Postgraduate	30.61%	30

Other(please, specify)	2.04%	2
Total	98	

Q23 What is your region of origin?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Catalonia	86.73%	85
Rest of Spain	7.14%	7
Europe	4.08%	4
Latin America	1.02%	1
North of Africa (Morocco, Algeria, etc.)	0.00%	0
Sub-Saharan Africa	0.00%	0
South of Asia (Pakistan, India, Bangladesh)	0.00%	0
East Asia (China, Japan, etc.)	0.00%	0
Other(please, specify)	1.02%	1
Total	98	

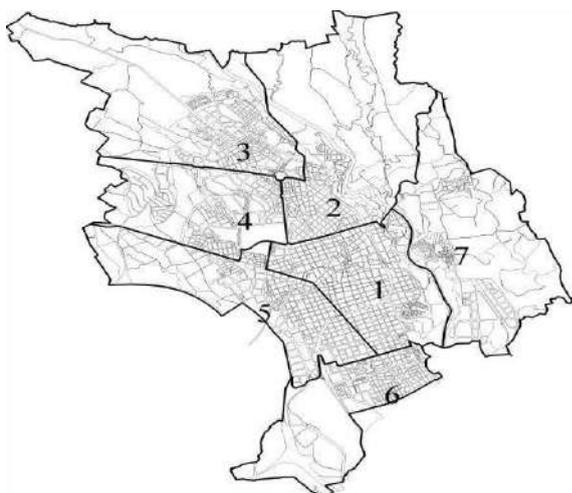
ANNEX 3. Maps

a) Sabadell²³



²³ Source: Google Maps.

b) Sabadell districts/sectors/neighbourhoods²⁴



📍 **District 1**

- Sector Centre: Centre · Hostafrancs · La Cobertera
- Sector Sant Oleguer: Laietana · Sol i Padrís · Avinguda-Eixample

📍 **District 2**

- Sector La Creu Alta: La Creu Alta
- Sector Can Puiggener: Can Puiggener
- Sector Togores: Togores

📍 **District 3**

- Sector Ca n'Oriac: Ca n'Oriac · Torreguitart · Torrent del Capellà
- Sector Nord: La Plana del Pintor · Can Deu · La Roureda
- Sant Julià d'Altura: Sant Julià d'Altura

📍 **District 4**

- Sector La Concòrdia: La Concòrdia · Can Borgonyó
- Sector Can Rull: Can Rull · Cifuentes · Via Alexandra
- Sector Berard: Can Llong

📍 **District 5**

- Sector Gràcia: Gràcia
- Sector Can Feu: Can Feu · Els Merinals · Can Gambús
- Sector Oest

📍 **District 6**

- Sector La Creu de Barberà: La Creu de Barberà · Les Termes
- Sector Sud: Espronceda · Campoamor

²⁴Source: Wikipedia.

- Sector Sant Pau

📍 **District 7**

- Sector La Serra: El Poblenou · Torre-romeu
- Sector Est



CITY REPORT: Thessaloniki

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Eleni Sakellariou, Family and Childcare Centre (KMOP)

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1. Introduction and description of Thessaloniki and neighbourhoods

1.1. Introduction

The present document is the report on homophobia and transphobia in the city of Thessaloniki and was prepared as part of the Workstream 1, titled “Transnational and comparative research on homo-and transphobia in small and medium cities across Europe” of the “DIVERCITY: Preventing and combating homo-and transphobia in small and medium cities” project. The report tries to depict the situation regarding homophobia and transphobia in the city of Thessaloniki, by presenting and analyzing the role of policies and public services, the life of the LGBT people in public spaces (physical and virtual), the social interactions and personal experiences of LGBT expressions and an intersectional analysis of socio-demographic characteristics and experiences of discrimination in the city of Thessaloniki. This report is the result of the fieldwork undertaken in Thessaloniki by the Greek partners of the DIVERCITY project, i.e. the Family and Childcare Centre (KMOP) and the Municipality of Neapoli - Sykies (M.N-S).

1.2. Geographic, demographic and historical, economic and social characteristics

Thessaloniki is the second-largest city in Greece and the capital of the Region of Central Macedonia. The city was founded in 315 B.C. and was annexed to modern Greece on the 8th of November 1912 from the Ottoman Empire. Thessaloniki is often referred to as the ‘co-capital’ of the country to emphasize its status compared to other major cities in Greece. Thessaloniki is located at northern Greece, close to Balkan borders. The city has played a historically predominant part at international and national level, since it has been a ‘nerve’ centre at a focal point that connected north, east and west. It has been a hub for transportation that connects the Greek mainland with the Balkans and Eastern countries and was developed as a metropolitan centre of the Northern Greece and an important development pole in the Balkan Peninsula.

Throughout the centuries, it was considered a multicultural city (Important Jewish and Armenian community along with Bulgarian and Turkish population). Its main networking infrastructure are the via Egnatia highway (A2), the Aegean Highway (PATHE-A1). It has an important port for northern Greece, an airport and railway network. The port of Thessaloniki is the 2nd biggest in Greece. It connects Europe with Minor and Middle East, the Aegean with the Black Sea.

The city –as a metropolitan area - has a population of 1,104,460 inhabitants according to the last census of 2011. Thessaloniki is the second major economic and political centre while its port serves as a critical transportation hub for Greece and South-eastern Europe in general. The city is also a famous cultural centre due to the annual International Film Festival while the

city's Paleochristian and Byzantine monuments comprise on UNESCO's World Heritage Sites. In 2014 Thessaloniki was the European Youth Capital.

The population of the main **Municipality of Thessaloniki** is 324,766 people –census 2011. The average age of the population was 40,67 years (2011 census). 54,3% were women and 45,7% were men. Within the metropolitan area of Thessaloniki – and according to 2011 census- 6.3% of the population are foreigners, of whom 84% are from third countries and/or unspecified citizenship.

The main religion is the Orthodox Christian. However, within the city there have been a historical minority of Jewish and Armenians. In recent years and due to immigration flows there are Muslim populations in the city but still the number is uncertain. Most of the Muslim population is located in Athens.

The economic and social crisis has been more evident in northern Greece and the Region of Central Macedonia. The city of Thessaloniki and its economy has shrunk significantly. Thessaloniki is the most important one in the Region of Central Macedonia, which has both a dynamic impact on the city but also means that the city is accepting all the repercussions at socio-economic level from the surrounding region and especially in unemployment: In 2016 30% were unemployed, of whom 69% long-term unemployed, and 61,8% young people. During the years of crisis there has been a shift from the productive economy towards the services sector, while the manufacturing sector is shrinking and the agricultural sector is stable. (54% of GDP in services, 28% of GDP in secondary sector of production and 18% of GDP in the agricultural sector). Greek GDP in current process in 2015 was 175.7 billion € (-1.3).

Main economic activity is the service sector. Services activities have been shrinking since 2010 steadily. Especially, the micro-enterprises that are the majority of entrepreneurial activity in the city –and mainly retail sector- are closing one after the other. The manufacture sector has been severely hit by the crisis, with many industries of the sector moving towards other Balkan countries (mainly Bulgaria) where there is a more 'friendly' tax system for enterprises. The agricultural sector in the broader area of the city is quite strong (18%) however also with limited activity over the last seven years of the crisis.

A good sign in the city's economy is the R&D activity that is developing around the city's research facilities and which has become main investment priority. In the city of Thessaloniki there are four major Universities - Aristotle University which is the largest in the Balkan area and the University of Macedonia and the "Alexandrio" Technical Institution. Also, in Thessaloniki is based the International University of Greece. All these are hosting over 105,000 students. According to the Strategy for Smart Specialisation (RIS3) the region of Central Macedonia, of which Thessaloniki is the central and largest city, is among the regions of developed capacities in Research and Technology along with Attica, Crete, and Western Greece. The Research and Innovation structures – apart from the universities mentioned- include high standards institutions such as the **Centre for Research and Technology-Hellas (CERTH)** which is listed among the TOP-25 E.U. institutions with the highest participation in

competitive research grants, with important scientific and technological achievements areas such as Energy, Environment, Industry, Information & Communication, Transportation & Sustainable Mobility, Health, Agro-biotechnology, Smart farming, Safety & Security, as well as several cross-disciplinary scientific areas. Also, the institution for agricultural research is based in Thessaloniki - ELGO – DIMITRA.

Also, the tourism sector around the city is growing. The city is in proximity to the popular summer tourism destination of Halkidiki area. Also, the proximity of the city to Mount Athos (Agio Oros) which is located in Halkidiki's peninsulas and it a historic landmark of Orthodox religion, with the historic monasteries and treasures from the byzantine era is attracting global tourism all year long. The city of Thessaloniki is the necessary stop to access Halkidiki – airport, port, road – and emphasizes on the city-break tourism of Halkidiki travelers. The city of Thessaloniki and its surroundings is attracting Religious tourism especially from Balkan orthodox religion populations, since the city is a historic byzantine city with old churches and monasteries. Convention tourism is also growing and in relation to the city's investment in R&D. The historic multiculturalism of the city has become over the years a city-branding strategy, with many cultural activities referring to the past of the city as a central Greek, Jewish, Armenian and Ottoman centre in Europe.

The social structures in the city (of the Municipalities) are broad and cover the basic services towards the citizens: child protection and creative occupation centres, elderly protection and open centres, social structures against poverty (homeless care, social groceries and pharmacies), PwD social structures and children with disabilities creative occupation centres, refugees shelters and programmes, shelter for abused women and children, Programmes for housing and social rehabilitation, labour reinsertion programmes and counselling, primary health care – social health centres, social benefit enterprises for creative activities and children day occupation centres, blood banks, etc.

Municipality of Neapoli-Sykies is located at the north-western part of the metropolitan area of the city of Thessaloniki. The Municipality is composed of 4 former municipal entities (Sykies, Neapoli, Ag. Pavlos and Pefka). Its location is quite unique in the city, bordering with the old byzantine walls of the city and the peri-urban forest of the Seih-Sou. The Municipality's population –according to the 2011 census- is 84,741. The average age tendency is of a growing population. Since 2001 there is a raise in the ages of 40-49 years old and of 50-59 years old, while the raise in the ages of 70+ is 47.36%. The indicator of ageing in the area is 104.99%. The education level of the citizens in the Municipality is of higher education at 18% approximately, 30% approximately of high-school education and/or professional training, 12.5% of basic education, 23% approximately of primary school education and the illiterate percentage is of 0.90. Due to the economic and social crisis in Greece, the Municipality of Neapoli-Sykies is faced with high unemployment rates, especially among the younger population and this unemployment is long-term.



Thessaloniki: City Overview

Source: Wikipedia

1.3. Local Government and Political Context

The city of Thessaloniki –its metropolitan area - is comprised of 6 municipalities: Thessaloniki, Kalamaria, Neapoli-Sykies, Pavlos Melas, Ampelokipoi-Menemeni, Kordelio-Evosmos. Along with the outskirts' Municipalities (Delta, Halkidona, Oraiokastros, Lagkada, Pylaia-Hortiatis, Volvi, Thermi and Thermaikos) they form the Regional Unit of Thessaloniki which is part of the Region of Central Macedonia, and as a regional unit is the largest in the Region.

The **City Council of the Municipality of Thessaloniki** is comprised of the Mayor, Mr. Boutaris, 8 Deputy Mayors in the sectors of: 1. Technical Works, Environment and cleanliness, 2. Social Policy & Solidarity, 3. Culture, Education & Sports, 4. Tourism & International relations, 5. Finance, 6. Development, 7. Administrative Reform & Civil Society, 8. Urban Resilience & Development Programmes, the President of the City Council, the vice-president and the secretary. The city council is comprised by a total of 49 city councillors. The majority (liberal - autonomous from central party- with the support of the Social-Democrats (PASOK-DIMOKRATIKI ARITERA) has 29 city councillors, the major opposition 10 city councillors (right-wing supported by the "NEA DIMOKRATIA" Party). The 3rd political group in the council "Thessaloniki-Open City" has 3 elected councillors and it is supported by the central- left – Government Party of SYRIZA. The 4th political group has 2 elected councillors and it is supported by the Communist Party of Greece. The 5th political party has also 2 elected

councillors and it supported by the far-right-fascist party of “Golden Dawn”. The 6th group independent from the right-wing has one elected councillor –the leader- and the same is for the last two groups (both independent: one from centre-liberal group and the last the independent ecologist-greens group).

The Municipality of Neapoli-Sykies has a similar –smaller composition: The Municipal Council is comprised by the Mayor, Mr. Daniilidis who has been the elected Mayor of Sykies since 1994. The Municipality has 6 Deputy Mayors in the departments of: 1. Social Policy, 2. Technical Works, 3. Administration & Finance, 4. Civil Protection & Green 5. Minor technical works – Town Planning, 6. Town Cleanliness. The Council is comprised of 41 councillors. The majority political group with 25 elected councillors, is from Social-Democrats, Left and Liberal origins widely supported by political Parties. The major opposition is also from Social-Democrats and Liberal origins and has 9 elected councillors. The 3rd political group in the Council is supported by the central- left – Government Party of SYRIZA and has 3 elected councillors in the council. The 4th political group with 2 elected members is independent – liberal, supported by the right-wing party of NEA DIMOKRATIA. The last political group with also 2 members in the council is from the Communist Party of Greece.

After 2010 in the city of Thessaloniki, a change in political context occurred: The city’s administration up to 2010, was formed by the conservative, right-wing party for over 20 years. This had an effect on the city’s reluctance for openness to the world and towards more liberated activities. The new majority in the municipality, under Mayor Giannis Boutaris, opened the city and its rhetoric towards LGBT community. The Mayor himself repeatedly has made his views on the matter public, underlying the importance of LGBT community for the social cohesion of the city, its economy and international tourism. However, these developments occur only at a rhetoric level and for visibility purposes. No specific and tailored policy and service has been developed for the LGBT community at a municipal level.

Municipality of Neapoli-Sykies also has not any specific policies or practices directed to the LGBT community. However, the scope of its social policies is open towards all citizens facing any kind of discrimination or exclusion. The Municipality’s Social Policy Department and in particular the Counselling centres operating, are the main tools that the Municipality possesses in order to assist citizens in need. In particular, the counselling centres provide general social and psychological support, labour market counselling, legal support and counselling, child protection services, housing and rehabilitation, etc. Its staff is interdisciplinary, composed of social workers, psychologists, legal experts, etc., who – depending on the specific problem that the citizen faces – direct them towards a course of action, working together with other Municipal or public or private entities in order to provide the best possible support. The DIVERCITY project is the first attempt of the Municipality to approach practices from other European cities regarding LGBT local policies.

1.4. LGBT Organisations and Resources

1.4.1. Background

In 1976, 2 years after the fall of the dictatorship of the colonels, the legislative framework and institutional structures inherited in the post-junta period were anachronistic and conservative. Greece at that time of late 70s and early 80s presents high numbers of immigration abroad and urbanisation (movement toward cities, especially towards Athens and Thessaloniki). In this context the newly elected government of Konstantinos Karamanlis- of the right-wing party Nea Dimokratia -aimed for the integration of the country in the European Economic Community. In this direction the government could not remain indifferent to the liberal demands of Western Europe, especially concerning the recognition of the human rights.

Within this framework, Athens has been the city where the first LGBT movements were born. (First one was AKOE – Greek Homosexuals Liberation Movement). Within this atmosphere, Thessaloniki, the 2nd largest city of Greece, took no time to enter the movement for promoting LGBT issues. In 1979 the ‘Autonomous Homosexual Front of Thessaloniki’ was founded. During the same period, a feminist movement of Thessaloniki, the autonomous Women’s Group of Thessaloniki, publishes the “Katina” magazine that contains a lot of articles on lesbian women topics. In 1988 the ‘Thessaloniki Homosexuals Initiative’ followed. Later in 1995 the “Partnership Against Homosexuality’ appeared and since then they have organized the annual “Panorama of Homosexual Films’.

1.4.2. Current Situation

The City of Thessaloniki, as previously mentioned, at official Municipal level, since 2010 actively supports LGBT issues and promotes visibility of different groups. The city council of Thessaloniki **provides its spaces at the city Hall** for the organization of events by different LGBT groups. For example, on International Transgender Day the city council of Thessaloniki provided its premises at the city Hall for the organization of events hosted by the different LGBT groups active in Thessaloniki and beyond. Most importantly, the new administration of the city of Thessaloniki, is officially supporting the Thessaloniki Pride, which is organized under its auspices and also hosts at the city Hall discussions and Forums during the event of Thessaloniki Pride.

The city of Thessaloniki attracts LGBT people from other areas: According to the Travel Information Channel ‘destsetters” that focuses on Gay travelers and to the world-famous site “Gay Star News”, Greece is attracting an average of 15% of LGBT travelers and Thessaloniki is one of the most famous destinations especially in relation to the Thessaloniki Pride Festival and to the famous summer destination of Halkidiki area which is in close proximity to Thessaloniki city. Also, since the city is the 2nd largest Greek city it attracts LGBT people from other neighbouring smaller cities – which usually are more conservative and “close-minded” and lack places where LGBT people can socialise and express themselves.

Currently, in Thessaloniki there are the following LGBT resources and active associations and groups:

- **Good As You(th) – LGBTIQ Thessaloniki Youth community¹**

Good As You(th) is a group of young LGBTIQ people that promotes the interaction among them, socialising, the sharing stories, discussion of issues of concern and finding a common ground of action for the visibility of their issues within city. They are also working closely with the Aristotle University for the creation of a structure for protecting LGBTIQ students of the University and they have achieved that the sexual orientation and the gender identity are specifically mentioned within the Internal Regulation of the University.

- **Thessaloniki Rainbow Youth (LGBTIQ youth)²**

It is a group of young people that inspired by the Thessaloniki Pride participate actively in organizing awareness campaigns against homophobia, transphobia, school and domestic violence, marginalisation, inequality of rights, stigmatisation of LGBT people.

- **Thessaloniki Lesbian Community³**

- **Thessaloniki Pride - HOMOPhonia⁴**

HOMOPhonia - Thessaloniki Pride is a collective that aims to give voice to people forced to hide because of their sexual orientation and gender identity. As “HOMOPhonia” they organised the first Thessaloniki Pride Festival –after years of silence- in 2012. They are an open group to whomever wishes to fight against repression of each individual because of their sexual orientation and gender identity. To this end they collaborate with other collective actions that are pursuing same/similar goals. They are supported by other groups: OLKE, Lesbian Group of Thessaloniki, Good As You(th), Positive Voice-Greek Union of HIV positive people, Synergy for the Social Gender, Antiracist Movement of Thessaloniki. Besides the Pride event, they organize other initiatives, as well. For example in December 2015 on the World AIDS Day they co-organised with the Hellenic Centre for Disease Control & Prevention, the dept. of Prevention & Health Promotion of the Region of Central Macedonia, the City of Thessaloniki and the “Positive Voice-the Greek Union of HIV Positive people, an informational campaign at the most central square of the city – Aristotelous.

Thessaloniki Pride Festival: The first attempt to hold a Pride event in Greece was made by AKOE (Greek Homosexuals Liberation Movement) on 28 June 1980 in Athens, characterising the event as a cultural one, and was repeated 2 years later at the Zappeion

¹ <https://www.facebook.com/GoodAsYouth/>
<http://goodasyouth.com/>

² <http://www.thessrainbowyouth.blogspot.gr/>
<https://www.facebook.com/ThessRainbowYouth/>

³ <https://www.facebook.com/%CE%9B%CE%B5%CF%83%CE%B2%CE%B9%CE%B1%CE%BA%CE%AE-%CE%9F%CE%BC%CE%AC%CE%B4%CE%B1-%CE%98%CE%B5%CF%83%CF%83%CE%B1%CE%BB%CE%BF%CE%BD%CE%AF%CE%BA%CE%B7%CF%82-%CE%9B%CE%9F%CE%98-706491632793741/>

⁴ <http://www.thessalonikipride.com.gr/index.html>
<https://www.facebook.com/SalonikaPride/>
<http://homophoniathesspride.blogspot.com/>

building. It was 10 years before similar events were held again, mostly following private initiatives of Athens (Strefi Hill 1992, 1994, 1995, Field of Mars 1993, 1996 and at indoor venues 1998 and 1999). At the same time, similar events were held on the waterfront of Thessaloniki by OPOTh (Homosexuals' Initiative of Thessaloniki) and the magazine 'O Pothos'.

Thessaloniki Pride is a civil society organisation with the goal of promoting the visibility of sexual orientation minorities (gay, lesbian and bi people) and gender minorities (transsexual persons), as well as supporting equality and human rights in the greater area of Thessaloniki. For this purpose, Thessaloniki Pride organizes the festival that holds the organization's name every June, an event which stands as the realisation of the right of gay, lesbian, bi and transsexual people to be present in the public sphere and contribute to public speech as such. This yearly festival, reaches out to the whole city as an occasion to celebrate diversity and fight stigmatization. This event, which started dynamically in 2012, has grown to become the most attended human rights-related event of Thessaloniki. Apart from the yearly festival, Thessaloniki Pride also organizes educational as well as interventional events throughout the year. The organisation also works towards setting up a Southeastern Europe network of similar civil society organisations. Thessaloniki pride also holds Weekly radio emission at the voluntary radio "Proud 'n' Loud"

- **SYMPRAXI – Partnership for the Social Gender**⁵

Its main activity is the implementation of the annual competitive **Thessaloniki International LGBT-Q Film Festival** since 1999.

Thessaloniki International LGBT-Q Film Festival

It is organised annually in co-operation with "SYMPRAXI" - Partnership for the Social Gender & the Film Festival of Thessaloniki.

Other initiatives that operate in the city of Thessaloniki – but are not exclusively local – are:

- **OLKE (Gay Lesbian Community of Greece)**⁶ with basic aims to combat discrimination and protect human rights of LGBT people in Greece.
- **Rainbow School**⁷ It is a volunteer Non-profit Collective Group of scientists of educational, mental health and social sciences backgrounds. The group is active within schools to promote the issue of discriminations on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and characteristics.
- **Rainbow Families**⁸ is a national-wide initiative that promotes rights of LGBT families.

⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/155007480913/>
<http://lgbtq-iff.gr/en/home/>
<https://www.facebook.com/thess.lgbtq.film.festival/>

⁶ <https://www.olke.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/OLKEorg/>

⁷ <http://rainbowschool.gr/%cf%80%ce%bf%ce%b9%ce%bf%ce%b9%ce%b5%ce%af%ce%bc%ce%b1%cf%83%cf%84%ce%b5/>

<https://www.facebook.com/RainbowSchoolGR/about/>

⁸ <http://ouraniotoksofamilies.blogspot.gr>

<https://www.facebook.com/ouraniotoksofamilies/?fref=ts>

- **LGBT-PwD**⁹ was created in 2015 as to include LGBT people with any kind of disabilities. Within limited time this group is consisted of 35 members from Athens, Thessaloniki and Patra and keeps expanding geographically.
- **SYD: Transgender Support Union**¹⁰ is a recognized NGO for the protection of the rights of the trans community, which acts throughout Greece.

The different LGBT groups active in Thessaloniki mainly target their activities towards promoting their interests, through visibility and awareness raising events and through other collective actions – démarches, interventions, protests to the responsible authorities that promote – or hinder – their issues. Thessaloniki groups are actively participating in the Anti-racist Festival that takes place every year and it brings together -and it is co-organised by- a variety of collective movements promoting anti-racism.

⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/loatamea/about/>

¹⁰ <http://www.transgender-association.gr/>

<https://www.facebook.com/%CE%A3%CF%89%CE%BC%CE%B1%CF%84%CE%B5%CE%AF%CE%BF-%CE%A5%CF%80%CE%BF%CF%83%CF%84%CE%AE%CF%81%CE%B9%CE%BE%CE%B7%CF%82-%CE%94%CE%B9%CE%B5%CE%BC%CF%86%CF%85%CE%BB%CE%B9%CE%BA%CF%8E%CE%BD-971845076160039/>

2. Fieldwork undertaken

In order to explore the views and the experiences on discrimination, needs and service provision of the LGBT people in Thessaloniki, fieldwork was undertaken as follows:

2.1. Individual interviews with 15 LGBTs

The interviews were carried out by KMOP, in its office, in the city of Thessaloniki from 16 of May 2016 until 17 of June 2016. Special attention was given on the selection of the participants, so as to ensure an as equal as possible representation of all involved categories. In total, KMOP interviewed 6 gays, 5 lesbians, 2 bisexuals and 2 transgender. Even though it was easy to find gay and lesbian interviewees, it was not very easy to identify and find people who are bisexual. It was not also very easy to convince the transgender people to participate in the research. Special care was also given to include participants from various age groups, education levels and occupation. KMOP contacted partner organisations, such as, as well as the Homophonia Thessaloniki Pride, which helped very much in finding the interviewees. All of the participants were informed about the scope of the research and of the DIVERCITY project; also they were assured that their participation would remain anonymous and their data would be used only for the purposes of the research of the DIVERCITY project. They were asked to confirm their consent by signing the relevant participation agreement forms. No problems were encountered during the interviews; the only difficulties met were that in some cases the interviewees were taciturn and of course no pressure was put on them at all. Please refer to the table of the Annex I “Individual Interviews with LGBTs” for the composition and the demographics of the interviewees.

2.2. Individual interviews with 10 stakeholders

The interviews were carried out by KMOP, in its office, in the city of Thessaloniki, from 16 of May 2016 until 17 of June 2016. Also in this group of interviews, a big effort was made so as to ensure a good sample of participants coming from both public and private sectors and to cover as many aspects of the topic as possible. It was not difficult to find representatives from various categories of stakeholders, as KMOP contacted partner organisations in the city, with whom it has collaborated in the past. Besides, the local partner in the DIVERCITY project, the Municipality of Neapoli – Sykies not only participated in the interview as a stakeholder, but also helped KMOP in identifying the most appropriate stakeholders. Again, participants were informed about the scope of the research and of the DIVERCITY project; also they were assured that their participation would remain anonymous and their data would be used only for the purposes of the research of the DIVERCITY project. They were asked to confirm their consent by signing the relevant participation agreement forms. No problems were encountered during the interviews; Please refer to the table of the Annex II “Individual

Interviews with Stakeholders” for the role and the services that are provided by the stakeholders who participated in the interviews.

2.3. One focus group with 13 stakeholders

The focus group took place on 23th of September 2016, in the Municipality of Neapoli - Sykies, with 13 participants, representatives of various professions and organizations. Mostly they were persons working in public social services. Their statements are important since they are getting in contact with many persons and also because they are supporting persons belonging to vulnerable groups. All the participants were very willing to participate in the focus group and share their experience in dealing with LGBT issues as well as their personal attitude regarding issues of discrimination and exclusion. Surprisingly this was also the fact for the city counselor who dedicated two hours of his precious working time (he is a lawyer) to participate to the focus group. Please see Annex III (A) “Focus Group with Stakeholders” for the role and the services provided by the stakeholders who participated in the focus group.

2.4. One focus group with 8 LGBTs

The focus group with the LGBTs was carried out in KMOP offices in Thessaloniki, on the 30th of September 2016. The participants of focus group consisted of a diverse group coming from the LGBT community, having differences in sexual identity and self-defined gender. Some differences arose also regarding the social-educational level and occupation. The age range was also broad with big differences among the participants (19 to 34 years old). In total, 3 gays, 2 lesbians, 1 bisexual and 2 transgender participated in the focus group. Again, the Homophonia Thessaloniki Pride, helped very much in finding and convincing the LGBT members to participate in the focus group. All of the participants were informed about the scope of the research and of the DIVERCITY project; also they were insured that their participation would remain anonymous and their data would be used only for the purposes of the research of the DIVERCITY project. They were asked to confirm their consent by signing the relevant participation agreement forms. Before the discussion on topic started, the participants had the chance to introduce themselves and to get to know each other, so as to feel more comfortable. The discussions proceeded smoothly and without any serious problems. The only difficulty that came out many times during the focus group was about the necessity of refocusing the discussion on the themes and subjects we were interested in, while the participants’ discourse was often derailing to subjects about the actions of their LGBT teams, to legal or juridical issues regarding LGBT rights in Greece, and medical issues on human rights and inclusion, and also to personal experiences statements not always relevant to our discussion. Please see Annex III (B) “Focus Group with individual LGBTs” for the composition and the demographics of the participants to the focus group.

2.5. An online survey responded by 100 individuals

The online survey was carried the period from August 2016 to October 2016. The questionnaire was developed using the SurveyMonkey tool. In order to include a broad range of respondents, coming from both the LGBT community and the general public of the city of Thessaloniki, the online survey was disseminated to many stakeholders and organisations, accompanied by a brief letter which explained the scope of the online survey and also included a brief description of the DIVERCITY project. As it was not very easy to reach the goal of the 100 respondents, we contacted many partner organisations in Thessaloniki, which forwarded the survey to their mailing lists, thus helping in the dissemination of the project. Please see Annex IV “Online Survey” where the tables for each question are presented.

3. Combating hate crimes based on LGBTphobia: the role of policies, legal measures and claim/complaints' mechanisms

3.1. Legal and political context

The Greek Constitution provides protection through certain articles against hate speech and hate crimes. In its second article the Constitution obliges the State to respect and protect human dignity. Article 5 provides for the free development of human personality and the right of every citizen to enjoy the "protection of life, honour and freedom." Furthermore, Article 7 prohibits torture, any physical injury, impairment of health or psychological violence, as well as any other offense against human dignity "punishable under the law". Finally, according to Article 25 the State guarantees the implementation of human rights and the unimpeded and effective exercise, as defined by international agreements signed and ratified by Greece. Laws concerning LGBT people have evolved significantly over the last years and have established Greece as one of the most liberal countries in Southeast Europe. Discrimination is not as common anymore, however, LGBT persons in Greece still face legal and social challenges. According to a 2016 report carried out by ILGA-Europe, which assesses LGBT rights in European countries, Greece ranks 15th (out of 49 countries) in Europe. Both male and female same-sex sexual activity are legal in Greece since 1951.

Anti-discrimination laws in employment exist since 2005 and anti-gay discrimination in the workplace is prohibited: there are very specific legislations towards preventing and combating discrimination and harassment in public services, and more particular in the fields of employability, access to health and social services, the education system and the civil protection system. Specifically, law 3304/2005 protects sexual non-discrimination and aims to adopt a general regulative framework for the combating of discrimination because of sexual orientation and of discriminations in employment and workplace.

Greek law protects gender identity. According to law 3896 of 2010, discrimination on the basis of gender identity is considered equal to discrimination on the basis of sex and thus all laws regarding the latter also cover discrimination on the basis of gender identity. Furthermore, transgender individuals have the right to change the sex on their birth certificate with an application to a court of first instance that is always accepted by default.

Regarding **marital status**, the law 4356/2015 for civil partnerships, rights, penal provisions and other provisions ensures the right of people of the same sex to enter into civil partnerships with –almost- the same rights as people of the opposite sex.

In December 2016, the Greek Parliament passed a bill expanding the rights of same-sex couples and ensuring equal protection in workplaces regardless of gender, religion or sexual orientation. Nevertheless, joint adoption, IVF access for lesbians, and same-sex marriage is still prohibited.

Hate speech and hate crime legislation is one of the most rigid and comprehensive in Europe. In September 2014 the law against racism was amended (Law 4285 (FEK A'191/2014). The

changes stipulated that hate speech and violence against LGBT individuals or groups would be punished with imprisonment for 3 months to 3 years and a fine of €5.000 to €20.000. If the actions have led to a crime, the penalty is increased by 6 months more of imprisonment and a fine of €15.000 to €30.000 extra. If the final imprisonment exceeds 1 year, then the convict loses his/her political rights for 1 to 5 years. If the offender is a public worker, then the imprisonment and the fines are raised even more. If the offender was committing the above representing an organisation or company, they are also fined. Entities in the public domain are, however, excluded from this last rule. This has led to criticism since the churches are also legal entities of the public domain, thereby excluding them from any consequences after the conviction of a priest. Furthermore, public prosecutors are given the freedom to move against the offenders even without a lawsuit from the victims, and if the victims file a lawsuit, they are allowed to do it free of charge, in contrast to the common practice. Since 24 December 2015, Greece prohibits discrimination and hate crimes based on sex characteristics. On 2 December 2016 further anti-discrimination protections on the basis of sexual orientation, gender and religion in the workplace were passed by the Hellenic Parliament in a 201-21 vote with 5 abstaining and 73 absent. This Law has been described as one of the most rigid prohibitions of hate speech and hate crime in Europe (Sinclair, 2016).

Participant M.N-S N4 in his experience as a lawyer mentioned that the cases he had with transgender people – over 30 years old - who wanted to proceed with gender change meet no obstacles and there are no discriminations within the juridical system in the country. In his opinion there is an open attitude towards the gender issues and his transgender clients haven't mentioned any complaints for discrimination against them –at least in the legal process of gender change:

“The technical legal procedure is relatively easy in gender changing. There are several cases in the city of Thessaloniki and this is in my opinion very important and shows that society is accepting these people. Thus, concerning the juridical and legal system there is no obstacle for transgender people”.

“Within the city of Thessaloniki where I work and also I am engaged in societal work in legal counselling for the last 6 years, I have never had an incident for complaints for discrimination”.

However, as stated by the LGBT focus group, this may have been happening because they are afraid of doing so, or they do not think that such a report would improve things and would decrease such offences, while a few of the participants expressed the opinion that they do not know to whom they could report such an offence.

3.2. Local public services and policies

The above legal and political situation has been reflected in the policies and public services. However, no specific and targeted LGBT service or policy has been implemented at local government level. The LGBT support system in Thessaloniki is provided mainly by the NGO

and private organisations/associations. Local public services, following the principle of proximity to citizens and their needs, have developed social services networks that operate as "open door" to people who belong to vulnerable social groups. A particularly remarkable example is the function of prevention centres and social services of the municipalities aiming particularly towards the identification of the needs of the population and the implementation of prevention and psychosocial care programs by psychologists and social workers. Among these identified needs and demands, the prevention of violence or harassment because of sexual orientation is very common, and as a result specific prevention programs are designed and applied.

The Municipality of Neapoli-Sykies – and many of the other local authorities in Thessaloniki – has a structure of social services that interconnect and complement each other. Each citizen with a problem (financial, job-related, marginalised, excluded from a service, health issue, domestic violence, school issues, etc.) can file their problem within one of the four counselling centres of the Municipality. There, interdisciplinary personnel consisted of psychologists, social workers, sociologist, can guide them as to what action is to be pursued step-by-step and according to the specific need. Most of the time, the past years of the financial and social crisis, the main issue of concern for citizens coming to the Municipality's counselling centres is job finding and counselling on matters of CVs and interviews.

However, there have been interactions with LGBT people as stated by the focus group of stakeholders. Participant M.N-S N1 mentioned that as social public service they do not treat LGBT people differently:

“We had no cases that the beneficiary declared that they are LGBT and there is no reason for us to ask them. It is not of use to us to ask them. I have only one case of gay couple -40-45 years old- that comes to our centre but there are other issues more basic issues for the services we are providing to them– they are HIV positive. One of them comes from a small town and has difficulty on how to visit his parents. They have come to Thessaloniki to find shelter”.

The same participant M.N-S N1 however, raised an issue “I am wondering if there is an issue when we are counselling on jobs and labour market assistance”. That said on the basis of how they could recommend a job, for example to a transgender person, e.g. for looking after an old couple. “I don't believe we are ready to so”.

Participant M.N-S N3 also had experience with LGBT people:

“In the 10 years I work in the Municipality I came up with 5 incidents. One was gay teenager, two were gay adults and one lesbian and one transgender. From all, only the young teenager came with an issue relevant with his sexual orientation and had indeed been a victim of bullying in school. From the other four adults their sexual orientation and identity did come up among their other problems. But their reasons for accessing the municipal social services were not specifically on their

sexual orientation and identity. Only one case of a gay man who had lost his job because he came out openly in his work space which was in the field of the church”.

Participant M.N-S N11 later mentioned:

“Their basic needs from what I have heard from them are related with their working environment, meaning that they cannot express themselves openly because they are afraid of losing their jobs”.

The municipality’ social services staff considers that even though it is a public service and thus could be considered by LGBT people a deterrent for asking for services, it is the contrary, since they feel comfortable. But, most of the times they don’t open up: “I don’t believe that as a society we are very open and liberal and that’s why they hold back to come and to openly express their specific requests for psychosocial counselling” mentioned participant M.N-SN2

Other services in the city involve support to immigrants and refugees and housing and rehabilitation services. Also, major attention is given by the municipalities in Thessaloniki in issues of supporting citizens against poverty and exclusion: Social groceries and pharmacies are operating, projects on housing and social rehabilitation are also implemented. During the last 3 years the Municipality of Thessaloniki and of Neapoli-Sykies are implementing programmes for the refugees’ temporary housing and creation of shelters. All the above services are open to the beneficiaries, with no discrimination and with no recorded cases of LGBT beneficiaries.

The Municipality of Neapoli-Sykies is participating and disseminating within schools and cultural activities for children two initiatives by the Council of Europe: 1. “No The Speech” Campaign of Young People for Human Rights to address and combat hate speech by mobilising young people to speak up for human rights and democracy online, and to reduce the acceptance of hate speech by reporting and denouncing it. 2. “One in Five” Campaign to stop sexual violence against children: to equip children, their families/carers and societies at large with the knowledge and tools to prevent and report sexual violence against children, thereby raising awareness of its extent. Both these initiatives have an impact and could be connected with gender identity and sexual orientation educational campaigns within local school communities. Also, within the city of Thessaloniki runs the dept. of Social Policy and Gender Equality. As a department and its services is obliged to follow the Laws on gender identity and sexual orientation.

3.2.1. NGOs and local public services

A network of services operates along all municipalities in the city of Thessaloniki. Some of them are separated, belonging in different Municipalities and some are interconnected, especially through the active NGOs in the city. Within the Municipality of Neapoli-Sykies – and beyond in the city- operates the Addiction Prevention and Health Promotion Centre PXXIDA (COMPASS). It is a psychosocial support service that develops programmes and

prevention measures and health education in the local community. It falls to the National Prevention Centres Network, which includes entities created by local initiative and the scientific and financial support of the National Organization against Drugs -O.KA.NA. Staff from this organisation participated in the stakeholders' focus group. Participant M.N-S N7 mentioned that:

“We had cases of children in their teens that searched their gender identity and had sexual experiences with same sex people. These children felt comfortable (in our centre). We also helped their parents to stand by them and see how they could support their child”.

“Also, within our work with the schools' communities we have cases of teachers that have different sexual orientation and this had no different effect on the services that we provide. They do not come to us on this matter but to have access to our other services as teachers or as people that need a support without being restricted”.

Regarding cases of young students who have 'other' sexual orientation or gender identity the same participant M.N-S N7 said:

“They are a minority in school communities and they are faced with bullying, hate speech, discriminations. We had cases when visiting schools and things were very bad for them and we had to do work with the community (school) as well. First with the teachers that they would also pose their prejudices on the children and then with the students' community”

PYXIDA centre mentioned that they wish to become involved within a programme that concerns children-with sexual orientation and gender identity issues- and the behaviours that that they come against to. “For us the main issue is the acceptance and reception and we try, for all of those that come to us, to feel that they can trust us and speak to us. Because we go to schools, it is a great deal to be gay/lesbian. It is an issue of how this is used as a tool to be hurt, to be bullied”.

There are four other similar centres that operate in cooperation with the local communities and Municipalities and the National Organization against Drugs -O.KA.NA. (Municipality of Thessaloniki, Municipality of Ampelokipoi-Menemeni, Municipality of Kalamaria). The main NGO in the city of Thessaloniki that is collaborating with local government is “ARSIS” - Association for the Social Support of Youth, specializing in the social support of youth that are in difficulty or danger and in the advocacy of their rights. The main target is the prevention of youth marginalisation, the elaboration of policies which defend youth rights and the active social support towards disadvantaged young people. ARSIS has also been actively involved within refugees' camps and has a network of shelter homes for endangered young people in the city. For its work it has been actively collaborating with the city's municipalities.

ARSIS mentioned within the stakeholders' focus group, that as an NGO they had cases of beneficiaries of their services that involved LGBT people. However, their area of support is

wider and the LGBT issue just came up within the wider counselling and support. They also said that within their spaces there is no feeling of restriction and discrimination in relation to accessing the services they provide. “We had a case of transgender person who felt very well finding a place where he/she could rely on and share and discuss their issue and felt really protected” (Participant M.N-S N8).

However, they are not a specialised organisation in LGBT issues and this means that sometimes they need to refer to other organisations:

“There was an incident in the homeless shelter of an underage boy who dressed as a woman and there was racist speech against him. As an organisation we had to call the (LGBT) community so they could frame the specific incident” (Participant M.N-S N9).

“We welcome (LGBT) people but our role is not to do counselling and support work with the specific people. If it is clear from the start that they need support on specific LGBT issues, then we address the cases elsewhere to other structures” mentioned participant M.N-S N12.

Participant M.N-S N8 continued saying that “ARSIS does not deal specifically this issue. Meaning, that it is something completely natural and there is no point of specifying it from the part of the structure’s point of view”.

All city stakeholders are involved widely in preventing and combating discrimination, hate speech derived by various reasons and this can include also homo- and transphobia. They are also organisations that are encouraging access to rights and services for citizens. However, because their scope of work is not specifically LGBT people and have no targeted policy/service they could only provide general points of view and fragmented incidents that involved LGBT people. However, they recommended that initiatives should be taken forward and that they would like to be involved in LGBT issues in the future.

The focus group also agreed that it is important to have education about LGBT issues, as well, within schools “It is about prevention of discrimination and hate. There is some sexual education taking place but LGBT issues are not part of it” (Participant M.N-S N6).

“More actions for children and young people. It very important. We (ARSIS) have for years now, the “mobile school” which goes on site and makes interventions within ROMA communities, where children usually don’t attend school. ...education on LGBT issues could be similar....” – Participant M.N-S N13.

And also they agreed and recommended that awareness raising campaigns within communities are important.

In this direction they agreed that synergy among institutions/organisation is very important for LGBT people to see and be aware of active collaborations as groups that work together. Also, they recommended that the social services of the municipalities should pursue and establish connection with the LGBT community, so as to find out what they are defining as

acceptance and access to services and jointly design actions that are also fitting their interests and needs.

3.3. Political discourse

Some of the parties have placed the issues of rhetoric and hate crimes, answering questions made by institutionalized groups of LGBT people before the euro-elections of June 7, 2009 and the national elections of 4 October 2009. Most parties supported the implementation of Article 2 and Article 7 of the Universal Declaration of the UN on the prohibition of discrimination in the invocation of the Declaration of rights and equal protection of the law. They also condemned the hate speech and supported the measures against it.

As shown from the previously described developments in passing Laws on legal protection of LGBT people and of access to rights (marital status, etc.), the political discourse the last few years has become more visible and pressing from all sides. This is partly due to the fact that the left-wing government party of SYRIZA, by its fundamental political orientation, has for years pressed towards the rights of LGBT community. So, being the government party accelerated the law-passing developments and further enhanced the legal framework. Apart from SYRIZA the other liberal parties also widely supported these measures taken: As mentioned, in 2016 the rights of same-sex couples and ensuring equal protection in workplaces regardless of gender, religion or sexual orientation were expanded and passed by the Parliament in a 201-21 vote with 5 abstaining and 73 absent. The percentage of support was similar concerning the Law 4356/2015 for civil partnerships, rights, penal provisions and other provisions for same sex couples.

These, developments shown the maturity of the political system – from right-wing to left-wing – to recognise LGBT community as –almost- equals to the other. However, as stated by the 2015 Annual report of the Racist Violence Recording Network, the rise of the LGBT attacks coincided with the period when the Hellenic Parliament was voting on the legal recognition of Civil Partnerships between same sex couples. The report mentions that this fact “reaffirms that the political discourse can trigger committing crimes because of prejudices and thus the politicians and other public opinion shapers should bear in mind that the political public discourse, especially as formed through and by the media can foment prejudices and can jeopardise the safety of the targeted persons”.

According to the Survey results the above climate is reflected in the answers:

- Approximately 90% of the respondents of the Survey monkey agreed that the LGBT people should have the same rights as the other.
- Almost 85% agreed that Transgender and intersex people should have the same legal protection as gay and lesbian people.
- However, in the issue of adopting children, which the law still does not recognise, is also –to a certain degree- reflected in the answers where 27.66% are disagreeing and

47.88 agreeing and there is a significant 24.47% of neither/nor which could indicate a confusion and a society that is not ready for something like that.

- Moreover, while there has been considerable legal progress, conservative social mores still hold influence and the Orthodox Church has often denounced homosexuality as a sin and "defect of human nature".

3.4. Reporting and defending victims of homo and transphobia and discrimination and harassment

Regarding procedures, roles and relationships between different actors, such as law enforcement authorities, equality body, prosecutors, lawyers, public services and NGOs in identifying, reporting and defending victims of homo and transphobia and discrimination and harassment there are still further actions to be taken, especially in law enforcement authorities and the synergy between actors. Greek authorities have made efforts to establish better cooperation between different actors regarding the identification, reporting and defending victims of homo- and transphobia. In order for these actions to succeed, a functioning relationship between public services, enforcement authorities, lawyers and NGOs is necessary and crucial.

For example, since 2013 -and under the provisions of P.D. 132/2012- and in accordance to the current legal framework, within the Police department are operating offices of Combating Racist Violence. These offices are collecting data and collaborate with the different social or legal services, social partners and NGOs on issues of racist crimes. When first established, members of the National Racist Violence Recording Network participated as trainers in the two-day training organized for the newly appointed officials, which though is not sufficient enough.

Moreover, within the National Racist Violence Recording Network 35 NGOs along with 2 bodies as observers (the Ombudsman and the Immigrants Integration Council of Athens) collaborate so as to provide assistance to victims of racist violence.

3.5. Reporting of LGBT Hate Crime and Speech and Data Collection

3.5.1. Reporting channels

At first stage, the Ombudsman has been the main body promoting the principle of equal treatment, in cases where it is violated by public services through Article 19. 1 of Law 3304/2005. Furthermore, Article 20.2 of the same law extends the remit of the Ombudsman in discrimination issues against civil servants, acting "as a body promoting the principle of equal treatment irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, age, disability or sexual orientation". In short, the hypothesis of a discrimination complaint procedure is as follows: discriminated person presents to the competent administrative authority or court the

facts. He / she who is accused that he/she has made a practice of discrimination must prove that he/she did not violate the law. Those responsible can be punished with imprisonment up to 3 years and a fine up to 5,000 euros (Article 16, n. 3304/2005 and Article 23, n. 3896/2010). Especially for cases brought before the Ombudsman, if it is proved that there has been discrimination or unequal treatment, the Authority mediates the protection of the victim and the removal of the adverse effects.

Besides, the offices of Combating Racist Violence of the Police department inform victims on their rights and provide them with medical care and psychological support if needed. They have to keep records on racist violence incidents and report to the responsible public prosecutor every case they undertake in preliminary investigation or ex-officio after official complaints. However, it should be noted that the initiative of the Ministry of Public Order and Citizen Protection and the provisions of P.D. 132/2012 fails to address issues of major importance for the effectiveness of these special Departments, namely the selection and recruitment procedure of their personnel, as well as their respective training.

Also, the P.D. 132/2012, introducing special Departments and Offices within the Hellenic Police aimed at tackling the phenomenon of racist violence, limits its scope only to victims of acts of hatred "on national, racial, or religious grounds". Consequently, does not include people who have been victimized due to sexual orientation and gender identity. However, according to the statistics of the Hellenic Police, sexual orientation and sexual identity are already taken into account in the management of hate crimes. Nonetheless, still there is no written inclusion in the responsibilities of the Departments and Offices of combating Racist Violence.

So far, besides the Ombudsman as an independent Authority for protecting human rights against discrimination, operates the National Racist Violence Recording Network which was created by an initiative of the National Committee for Human Rights and the UNHCR with the participation of NGOs. Today, 35 NGOs participate in the Network that provides legal, medical, social and other supporting services and come to the aid of victims of racist violence along with 2 bodies as observers (the Ombudsman and the Immigrants Integration Council of Athens). This Network was created exactly because there was an absence of an official and effective system of recording racist violence crimes and because there was a need to connect the different NGOs and other bodies that recorded such crimes and produce integrated data. It was initiated in 2011 and since then produces a Common Form of Recording Racist Incidents so as to produce clear and integrated data for the quantitative and qualitative analysis of racist violence tendencies in Greece. Members of the Network are NGOs that the Municipality of Neapoli-Sykies and other Thessaloniki's services and Municipalities are in close collaboration with: ARSIS and PRAKSIS. These NGOs can act as intermediators between local services and the Network.

In application of the existing laws, every citizen or institutionalized club has the right to make complaints about discrimination issues or homo- and transphobia behaviour while trying to access public services. According to institutionalized groups of LGBT people, care should be

taken to record the hate speech incidents and hate crimes by an independent body (e.g. ombudsman), which will ensure an annual report to publish its conclusions both in Greece and in international organizations and institutions. Clearly, there must be better cooperation between the police and the public services and NGOs in order to better coordinate their action. The privacy and anonymity of those who resort or make a complaint should be fully respected. The independent authority shall monitor and verify that the police and courts take all necessary actions to punish the perpetrators of crimes and hate speech and render justice. The cooperation of the judiciary and the police and the role they play must be explicitly mentioned in detail in the annual report of the independent body.

As previously mentioned, the relatively new-established departments and offices of the Hellenic Police have under their responsibility the investigating and filling of formal complaints against racist violence. Major issue as stated by the Ombudsman and the Racist Violence Recording Network Reports is the training of the officers that staff these offices.

3.5.2. Statistics

According to the Racist Violence Recording Network's report for 2015, during the period between January-December 2015, they recorded at national level, 273 cases of racist violence with over 300 victims. The 185 cases concerned LGBT people and 4 of these concerned immigrants LGBT that were attacked on both terms and in two cases the victim was also person with disabilities. Also, 10 of the cases involved attacks against LGBT activists. The recorded attacks in Thessaloniki city, according to the report, were in total 25 incidents – not clear from the report how many involved LGBT people.

Most of the recorded incidents come from the organisation Colour Youth – LGBTQ Youth Community of Athens. According to the report, the president of the organisation Colour Youth–LGBTQ Youth Community of Athens, explained that the racist violence victims because of sexual orientation and gender identity are more often of young age and dependent from their family environment which most of the times does not support them enough.

Also, the Network reported that due to respect for their privacy, the absence of legal protection of the gender identity and lack of trust towards the authorities (both police and legal system) a great number of victims did not proceed with official filling of the attacks. From 185 incidents the 82 victims were women and 44 out of them transgender. Most of the times the persons in touch with the Network were men. 40 cases involved underage people, in 141 cases the victims were 19-30 years old, 79 cases they were 31-45 years old and in at least 14 cases the victims were 45-65 years old. From these reported cases more than 98 men were targeted, 30 women. 54 transgender and 9 queer. 125 cases involved attacks due to sexual orientation, 54 cases because of gender identity but there also cases that involved both terms.

Among the reported cases the Network's report gives special attention to the fact that most of domestic violent attacks occur when the person 'comes out'. The 91 cases were about hate speech and insulting gestures (spitting, throwing of objects). Only 4 cases were filled in the

police and for 6 cases a criminal law procedure has been initiated. In 90 cases the victim does not wish to proceed with formal complaint either because they are afraid of the impact on their privacy or because they do not trust the authorities. Only in 17 cases the victim wishes to proceed with official complaint. In 10 cases the victim sought for psychosocial support. The Network in its Report strongly recommends that a special Circular with specific instructions should be handed to the police authorities for the treatment of the victims of attacks because of gender.

4. Experiences in public spheres: representations, virtuality, physical spaces and hate speech

4.1. Safe or dangerous spaces for LGBT people in the city

Most of the LGBTs who participated in the fieldwork agree that the hate speech and hate crimes incidents against LGBT people have been noticeably reduced during the last decade in Thessaloniki, so people feel now that this city has changed in a positive direction in terms of acceptance and inclusion. However, incidents of verbal violence against community people still exist, in both private and public spaces, even in the city centre, in some cases by members of racist groups. Many of the participants in the online survey (65%) believe that the hate crime against lesbian, gay, bi- and transgender people should be persecuted more severely.

It is worth mentioning that there are many differences as regards the discriminations LGBTs face in public spaces, in terms of their gender and orientation. For instance, lesbian women feel more accepted and better understood by the society, although they often face risqué behaviours, such as calls for participating in heterosexual activities with men (something that is against their sexual orientation and preferences) or more than two people that are perceived as offensive humiliating sexual discriminations. On the other hand, homosexual men still confront judgmental comments, discriminations and criticism, but at the same time physical violence incidents are constantly being reduced. However, physical and verbal violence against trans people still exists, with special reports of extreme legal violations, such as homicide, being very frequent in contrast with other big cities, without any perceptible reason. It's worth mentioning that violence seems to affect mainly trans women, compared to trans men and that can be explained with stereotypical and sociological factor related to trans women ("patriarchal society", "psychological complexes on masculinity", etc.)

The majority of the LGBTs who participated in both focus groups and interviews stated that they have never experienced any discrimination due to his/her sexual expression and orientation in public spaces; those participants who faced some experiences of discrimination, stated that these took place at school (in the form of school bullying) and/or at work. It is noticeable, though, that almost the 36% of the participants of the online questionnaire believes that discrimination against gays, lesbians and transgender people is a major social problem in Thessaloniki. The category of the research participants who stated that they have faced many and various types of discriminations and violence in all contexts (within family, at school, at work, at public services and in various open and close public spaces) are the transgender. Participant KMOP N5 underlined that she has been afraid to report these discriminations and she would never do that, because she feels that everybody looks at her in a suspicious way.

Moreover, special mention was made by the bisexual participants on the discrimination they experience by both straight and homosexual people, as they cannot understand this kind of sexual orientation (bisexuality) and they do not consider it as real; for example, participant KMOP N2 highlighted that she has been made to feel uncomfortable for being a bisexual

person by people who are straight. It is worth mentioning, though, that none of the research participants has ever made any report of discrimination and hate crime he/she has experienced, some of them because they are afraid of doing so, some others because they do not think that such a report would improve things and would decrease such offences, while a few of the participants expressed the opinion that they do not know to whom they could report such an offence.

In general, LGBTs feel safe living in Thessaloniki, while the transgender do not always feel safe. Moreover, the existence of special “gay friendly” private spots and places offer to LGBTs an extra sense of safety and the ability to express themselves and communicate with each other freely and unconditionally, although these spots are few and tend to be limited more and more the last years because of “inside community” disagreements. According to some participants, during the last years the owners of the local “gay friendly” spots made specific decisions to exclude lesbian woman from gay/men spots and vice-versa arguing that on this way they will protect their clients from being exposed to other than same-gender people. This strategy led to limitation of “gay friendly” spots and places for both men and women. It is worth mentioning, though, that more than half of the respondents of the online survey (57%) agree that Thessaloniki should have leisure spaces for LGBT people (bars, clubs, etc.).

4.2. Visibility of LGBT people in the different public spaces

Physical and public spaces influence LGBT people lives, in terms of their sexual expression. In general, the participants in the focus groups and the interviews responded that they consider Thessaloniki a friendly city for LGBT people, for instance participant KMOP N1 thinks that it is the most friendly Greek city for a LGBT person to live and its citizens are very open minded as regards LGBTs. However, most of them do not feel comfortable displaying intimacy and they are hesitant to express themselves spontaneously towards their partners in public spaces, open physical spaces or public buildings, such as universities or libraries; some of them feel that they are negatively commented, when they express their intimacy with their partners and they believe that the city is not ready to accept such expressions in public (for instance, participant KMOP N13). The only exception are specific gay friendly bars and restaurants and cultural places, which are very famous to the LGBT community are those places where they become “visible”, as there they feel very comfortable. Despite that, according to their answers, it seems that during the last years’ incidents of racist and discriminatory attitude against LGBT people have been reduced and that encourages free expression and partnership. It is also noticeable that lesbian women are more likely to enjoy a higher freedom of expression, in contrast with homosexual men and transgender people. Moreover, it is worth mentioning that there is a variety of opinions by the respondents in the online survey when they were asked if they are comfortable when they see same sex couples displaying affection in public; there were participants who are comfortable and others who are not.

As regards visibility issues, special emphasis was given by almost all respondents to the Thessaloniki Pride Festival that takes place every summer; this is the event which brings all LGBT groups and teams (gay friendly and supportive social groups: activists, NGOs, political parties) together. This is a common action where every team participates and it is accepted and recognized by every city actor or stakeholder. Through this event, the LGBT community gains the opportunity to express itself openly, to inform society, to utilize local media and turn public's attention to the issues it faces. During the last years, the cooperation and collaboration between LGBT community and local agents, stakeholders and media has been increasing, mostly due to the Thessaloniki Pride festival. Moreover, the research participants mentioned some groups and organisations which are very active, aiming at the sensitization and the awareness of the general public as regards LGBT issues and rights, contributing thus to the visibility of the LGBT people in Thessaloniki; these groups are: 10percent.gr, Positive Voice, Transgender Association, Lesbian Group of Thessaloniki, Good As You (th) – LGBTIQ Youth Community of Thessaloniki, HOMOPhonia - Thessaloniki Pride.

4.2.1. Participation of actors in public space

There is no active engagement of the local actors as regards LGBTs' public presence. The only exception mentioned was the Thessaloniki Pride festival, in which the majority of the local actors and stakeholders are actively involved.

4.3. The role of local media

During the last years, there is an obvious serious development of how local media accept the LGBT community in Greece and particularly in Thessaloniki. To name some of them, local public radio (Thessaloniki FM100) and local public TV channel (ERT3) were characterized as "supportive" and "accessible". The research participants made special mention on the provision of platforms which encourage public speaking and open conversations on important issues for LGBT people, as well as on sexuality and gender diversity and social inclusion. Mainly the local radio stations, small TV networks and especially web news portals and newspapers have increased their collaboration with community agents lately, and are also willing to be educated in terms of politically correct discourse and vocabulary, valid terminology based on rules of respect on human rights of LGBT community. Moreover, important community actions, such as Thessaloniki Pride Festival, are widely promoted and covered by all local media. As regards the LGBTs' representation in the local media, most of the respondents expressed the opinion that they are positively and adequately represented and this has to do with reasons of political correctness and with the fact the media is an area where gays predominate. Few of them shared an opposite opinion, for instance KMOP N9 participant thinks that the LGBT people are not even mentioned like they do not even exist and when they are mentioned, a negative impression is created for LGBTs. It's noteworthy though that the transgender research participants believe that transgender people are negatively represented

in media and in some cases they are humiliated, mainly through the media discourse that use words and phrase that can be harmful (“transsexual politics”, “the man who turned into a woman”).

4.4. The impact of virtual space

All participants emphasized that the LGBT community is better represented in web environment and internet media, especially to those media where LGBTs have immediate access and collaboration with editorial teams. The quality of written speech that is used by such media protects community people’s dignity and pride is deliberate, and most of the time make use of valid vocabulary and terminology. Community people clearly prefer to express their opinions, to raise concern and inform local society more via internet media, than radio or TV, while in the last ones broadcasted information is often less controlled and could be less safe for LGBT people. It is very interesting, though, that few of the respondents participate actively in LGBT online fora or networks, the number of which increases year by year, the participants supported. In addition, few of them use the social media for reasons related to their sexual orientation and gender identity, aiming to “educate” community to use the rights words when talking about LGBT community (transgender and not transsexual, normal and not disease, etc.). Almost all agreed that the online networks and social media are mainly used by LGBT people in order to find a partner, while few of them use these media to read articles and share opinions on LGBT issues. The few examples mentioned concerned specific LGBTQAI groups in Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, CouchSurfing.

5. Social interactions and internalised experiences of LGBTphobia

5.1. Family and intimate relationships

All research participants agreed that the family and intimate relationships are of great importance for them. The most important issue discussed during both the focus group and the individual interviews concerned the coming out of their sexual orientation and how their families and relatives supported them in their personal development as well as in their sexual expression. Most of the respondents would characterise their experiences of coming out as rather positive and even very positive. In many cases their family members and relatives were very supportive in terms of their sexual expression and the formation of their gender identity. However, some of them could not receive all the support they needed from their parents, as it was not easy for them to understand and fully accept their gender “diversity”. Many participants gave special emphasis to the support and the assistance they had from their sisters and brothers, who played an important role in their coming out and in their personal development as LGBT people.

Of course there were also negative experiences as regards the coming out, KMOP N3 interviewee’s experience of coming out as a gay to his family was rather a traumatic experience, as they never accepted it and thus resulted in cutting relations with them. Especially participants who belong to the transgender category faced very traumatic and painful experiences, as in some cases, parents have never accepted their children’s sexual orientation and identity and very often they even pretend that they are not aware of this; few of them reported that they were victims of huge psychological and physical abuses by their parents and they were forced to leave the house and cut relations with them.

The transgender participants stated that they were never supported by their parents and close family environment, when they decided to proceed to sex reassignment surgery. Moreover, bisexual participants mentioned that their families could not understand their dual sexual preference. There were even participants who reported that their families ignored their real sexual orientation, as they have never revealed it and they keep hiding it, for instance the interviewee KMOP N4, who is a 45 years old gay, even though he is in a 15 years’ relationship with his partner, he never revealed his sexual identity to his family.

In addition, some other important views as regards family and intimate relationships were expressed, most of which concerned family relations, acceptance and recognition, as well as the importance of such relationships for people’s social, occupational and finance functionality. The main ones can be summarized as follows:

- Family acceptance, especially parents’, is of high importance and it is usually constructed since childhood, or since the person acknowledges his/her specific nature. Automatic reactions such as refusal, concealment, and avoidance of any related conversation is unhelpful and could harm long-term psychological emotional and social person’s development.

- Family acceptance is connected to financial safety, especially for people who face difficulties to get a stable, long lasting job because of social prejudice, and racist attitude in the work environment. During the discussion, some people expressed their worries of being long term unemployed while they are not easily accepted by several employers so they are often rejected due to their behavior, resulting in severe living problems. Family contribution and support is crucial to that point, even for surviving reasons.
- Mothers often seem to be more tolerant than fathers and to exhibiting better understanding of LGBT children's preferences. Although this specific issue seems to be subjective to some extent, it also represents a big part of Greek and local mentality for fathers being more unapproachable and focused on stable principles and prototypes, compared to mothers.
- Differences arose also in terms of social orientation, tolerance, and social criticism expressed by families living in different areas of the city. So, families living in east areas are more open to different life and sexual orientation, criticize less often and more subtly, as well as they accept more easily LGBT people's expressions, while west areas of the city seem to be more conservative, less educated and less open to diversity. These differences have roots in history of the city and the way it had been populated and developed the last decades. In general, east areas of Thessaloniki are characterized by more economic and cultural growth than the west ones. That affects LGBT inclusiveness too.

5.2. Basic services

As regards their accessibility to the city's public services, in general the respondents mentioned that these are easy accessible; some of them highlighted that this is related to the kind staff of these services, "they are very trustful and capable people", according to KMOP N12 participant. However, they believe that there are many steps to be taken in order that these services to better serve the LGBT citizens and to become tailored to their specific needs. Only the transgender participants agreed that they face some issues as regards access to these services as well as the way they are treated by the staff of the services. Again there is a variety of opinions on this issue, according to the gender and sexual orientation of the respondents, while homosexual and bisexual men and women face much less problems in accessing these services than transgenders or seropositive people do. There are also many differences on the basis of the kind of the provided services. In particular:

- Health: Most of the respondents in the interviews and in the focus group believe that the health services are not tailored to the needs they have as LGBT people, for a number of reasons. It was mentioned by many participants that the fact that in some cases, due to their sexual orientation, they need special exams and treatment, makes them feel uncomfortable. Access to health care services seems to be still problematic for transgender people. The biggest issues transgender people face are related to

gender identity and to how medical personnel treats them and this subject. Quite often health care staff choose to ignore the preferred gender and name of a trans person, so they call them with their ID name and gender. There is also an intense confusion in regards with hospitalization and long-term health care services, since issues of accommodation and use of public spaces (such as toilets) come out often. Despite that, no incidents of lack of nursing and care provision were mentioned by the research participants because of gender discrimination and racist behavior. Also, for the homosexual seropositive men there is an additional objective difficulty for them to accept the special medical and psychosocial care they need, so an issue of building special and independent health care unities emerges often.

- Education: This issue was discussed, divided into two categories: child education and adult education. Most of the participants mentioned at least one specific incident of social discrimination and racist attitude against him / her in school, elementary, middle or high school. Although experiences of each participant are different and personal coming from several occasions, lack of safety in schools and teachers' biases came into light. That kind of situation leads many LGBT students to unexcused absence of school, to learning gaps and consequent emotional and social problems. Still, they believe that the education services are not aware of sexual and gender diversity issues to a great degree and in many cases they lack the knowledge on how to treat members of the LGBT community, as they are not engaged in issues related to LGBTs. Fewer incidences were referred to regarding adult education environments and most of them are limited to arguments and quarrels during special occasions or events that LGBT community organised in Universities, such as parties, informative events, activism, etc. These isolated incidences are related to non-academic organisations that oppose the community's actions.
- Legal services: As regards access to legal services, no particular difficulties and problems were mentioned by the majority of the participants. Special mention was made only by the transgender people of the focus group in receiving executive loyal support and protection about subjects on gender choice legal recognition, handling racist behaviors, and assertion of personal and group rights.

5.3. Work and professional life

As regards their work and professional life, most of the LGBT participants stated that they face a series of discrimination actions and harassments, due to their sexual orientation; these include bullying at work, jokes about LGBTs, work isolation, discriminations as regards career progression towards the higher tiers of employment in terms of hierarchy and remuneration, etc. However, many of the respondents mentioned that their colleagues and employers absolutely respect their sexual orientation and never experienced any negative attitude or have been made to feel uncomfortable for being LGBTs. Of course, there are exceptions, especially for transgender people, for instance KMOP N8 participant mentioned that he

experienced a kind of hate speech by employers, when they looked at his ID documents. Few of them mentioned that their sexual orientation is not known to their colleagues, either because they believe that this is a very personal issue, or because they think that this would cause problems to their professional life and career progression. All participants agreed that the kind of profession, the working environment and company's culture, as well as employer's personal attitude are highly important as regards the extend of discriminations and workplace harassment. In addition, it is worth mentioning that a big percentage of the LGBTs who participated in the field research are unemployed; however, it would be irrational to connect this fact with their sexual orientation, given the huge percentages of people who are affected by unemployment in Greece, due to the economic crisis.

Another interesting point that was highlighted by the research participants was that there are differences in the discriminations that LGBTs face in their work and professional life, based on their gender identity and sexual orientation. In particular, lesbian women and transgender men seem to face discriminations in working environments less often than homosexual men and transgender women do, with the latter usually becoming victims of intense prejudices and exclusion. Besides, homosexual men who do not fit the usual standards of masculinity are usually treated with hesitation by several working environments, so they are excluded from interviews, often due to their appearance or behavior. Such situations often lead specific LGBT groups to occupational, professional and social exclusion.

5.4. Community networks

Most of the participants agreed that the city of Thessaloniki is an important factor as regards their social life and their social interactions. However, almost all agreed that their sexual orientation has not been determined by the city and its citizens. They believe that their everyday interactions with actors such as neighbours, associations and other social activities (e.g. leisure, hobbies, etc.) are normal and not affected in any way by their sexual preferences. This opinion is also confirmed by the respondents of the online survey, as the majority of them stated that they are comfortable when they interact with lesbian, gay and bisexual (72%) and transgender people (63%).

As regards the social interactions with peer groups, it is worth mentioning that the LGBT community of the city consists of several different "teams" (this word was used by the participants to show the differences among various groups) and persons who often have different perspectives, orientation and goals. This means that being a member of the LGBT community does not affect their social life and LGBT peoples do not have a central role on this either. Even though there are some specific LGBT groups in the city, most of them do not cooperate with each other; the only exception that brings all LGBT groups and teams together is the Thessaloniki pride festival. All participants agreed that the Thessaloniki Pride event is a common action where every team participates and it is accepted and recognized by every city actor or stakeholder. Through this event, the LGBT community gains the opportunity to

express itself openly, to inform society, to utilize local media and turn public's attention to the issues it faces. During the last years, the corporation and collaboration between LGBT community and local agents, stakeholders and media has been increasing, mostly due to the Thessaloniki Pride festival. Thessaloniki's major supports warmly Pride festival and often participates, turning it into a big and widely discussed event, promoted also by the local media (FM100 radio, ERT3 TV channel), local big companies and institutions (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, University of Macedonia).

5.5. Construction of personal identity and self-esteem

The complexity of this particular issue appears very often during conversations and discourses by LGBT people, pointing out core issues that are associated to personal identity, social gender, acceptance and attempts for inclusion. Although sexual identity and orientation seems to be pretty clear to each participant, social identity and social gender (in terms of social norms, stereotypes, society gender expectations) are more fluent, so they do not fit common social standards. That causes often a disassociation between the self-identity LGBT people claim for themselves and the identity society waits from them. This disassociation is perceived and experienced by LGBT people, so they often feel the need to explain and describe their preferences to other non-community, society people, in order for them to avoid stereotypes and racist behaviour. Especially for the transgender people the resulting personal and social consequences coming from identity issues are big and frequent.

6. Inclusion, exclusion, and intersectionality

It seems that for the LGBT persons who have a working specialty or a higher education it is easier to be socially integrated, to gain a job and earn money for a dignified living, without being forced to lower level or sexual work. In addition, LGBT people who are of higher education level and are fully integrated in the labour market seem not to face any particular problem as regards access and use of the services; at the same time, this category of the LGBTs is better socially integrated and does not experience any discrimination or hate crime offences and, even in such cases, know exactly how to cope with such issues. They also feel more comfortable as regards their sexual expression in public spaces and in any context, i.e. at work, at their social activities and at everyday interactions. Their social interactions are not limited to LGBT people.

On the other hand, LGBT people who are unemployed and of lower education level face more problems which are related to their sexual orientation and have an impact on their everyday life in the city as well as at their personal and family life. This means that the socioeconomic status as well as the educational level play an important role in terms of LGBTs' acceptance and social integration.

Special mention should be made of the bisexual research participants, who seem to face some problems in the use of services, due to their bisexuality, which is not fully understood, as they tend to be treated as straight.

Transgender persons stated that they have more limited access to health care services and also they face bigger difficulties in regards to bureaucratic issues. In general, their life in Thessaloniki is not very easy and they often face much discrimination and hate speech. They seem to have compromised on the fact that the citizens of Thessaloniki are not ready to accept transgender people.

Finally, in terms of biological gender, men GBTs seem to be less discriminated than women LBTs, which is related to the social and economic inequalities between men and women that exist in Greece, while age differences do not play any particular role as regards the discriminations LGBTs face.

7. Conclusions – Best Practices – Recommendations

7.1. Conclusions

As conclusions from the field research carried out with LGBTs and stakeholders in Thessaloniki, the following important points can be stated:

- In terms of actions and policies that are undertaken to prevent and combating homo and transphobia at national and local level, there are very specific legislations towards preventing and combating discrimination and harassment in public services, and more particular in the fields of employability, access to health and social services, the education system and the civil protection system.
- Local public services in Thessaloniki, following the principle of proximity to citizens and their needs, have developed social services networks that operate as "open door" to people who belong to vulnerable social groups, including LGBTs.
- Law enforcement authorities, equality body, prosecutors, lawyers, public services and NGOs have to establish a functioning relationship so as to succeed in the combatting of homo- and transphobia.
- Hate speech and hate crimes incidents against LGBT people have been noticeably reduced during the last decade in Thessaloniki, so people feel now that this city has changed towards a positive direction in terms of acceptance and inclusion.
- Physical and public spaces influence LGBT people lives, in terms of their sexual expression. The research participants highlighted that even though they consider Thessaloniki a friendly city for LGBT people and its citizens very open minded as regards LGBTs, they do not feel comfortable displaying intimacy and they are hesitant to express themselves spontaneously towards their partners in public spaces, open physical spaces or public buildings, such as universities or libraries.
- LGBTs in Thessaloniki prefer specific gay friendly bars and restaurants and cultural places, which are very famous to the LGBT community. In addition, the annual Thessaloniki Pride Festival is the most important event in terms of visibility, as LGBTs have the chance to express themselves openly, to inform society, to utilize local media and turn public's attention to the issues they face.
- As regards how local media encourage public discussions around LGBT issues at local levels, during the last year, there is an obvious serious development on how they accept LGBT community in Greece and particularly in Thessaloniki. Not only are there media which encourage public speaking and open conversations on important issues for LGBT people and promote LGBT actions, but also local media have expressed interest in being educated in terms of politically correct discourse and vocabulary, valid terminology based on rules of respect on human rights of LGBT community.
- Besides, the research participants consider web environment and internet media as very important for LGBTs' representation, as they have the chance to express their opinions, to rise concern and inform local society. They also emphasized that the

quality of written speech that is used by such media protects community people's dignity and pride is deliberate, and of the time make use of valid vocabulary and terminology. However, few of them use the social media for reasons related to their sexual orientation and gender identity. The few examples mentioned concerned specific LGBTQAI groups in Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, CouchSurfing.

- On the topic of family and intimate relationships, a variety of opinions and experiences were expressed. Most of them had very positive experiences as regards their coming out of their sexual orientation and were supported by their family members and their relatives. Of course, there were also participants, especially the transgender, who faced very negative and traumatic experiences as regards their sexual orientation, which could never be accepted by their parents.
- As regards their accessibility to the city's public basic services, most of the LGBTs agreed that the access to the basic services is very easy and in general they are treated very kindly by the relevant staff. They think, however, that there are many improvements to be made in order these services to better serve the LGBT citizens and to become tailored to their specific needs.
- Also in their work and professional life, there are some LGBTs who face various discriminations and harassments due to their sexual orientation, while others reported that their sexual and personal life has never been a reason for feeling uncomfortable or for experiencing discriminations at the workplace, especially those participants belonging to higher social class.
- As regards their everyday interactions, most of the participants agreed that the city of Thessaloniki plays an important role in their social life and interactions. However, almost all agreed that their sexual orientation has not been determined by the city and its citizens. They believe that their everyday interactions with actors such as neighbours, associations and other social activities (e.g. leisure, hobbies, etc.) are normal and not affected in any way by their sexual preferences. Moreover, the majority of them mentioned that LGBT peoples do not have a central role in their social life.

7.2. Best Practices

Despite the fact that the city and its local social structures don't have specific services tailored towards LGBT people and their needs, good practices have been detected within the city of Thessaloniki.

The city of Thessaloniki actively supports the Pride Festival which is organised under the City's auspices. Also, the "Thessaloniki International Film Festival", which is an organisation under the supervision of the Ministry of Culture and with participation of the City Council within its Board of Administration, co-organises the Thessaloniki International LGBT-Q Film Festival. These activities, are the most visible and are known beyond the city and the country, with the participation of organisations, people, etc. from abroad. Also, the City Hall spaces are provided

when asked, to various groups to organise their events – e.g. to the SYD (Transgender Support Union) on the Transgender Day of Remembrance in order to host their visibility and awareness-raising event. However, all the support mentioned is at the visibility and symbolic sphere. No actual, tailored service or supported is being delivered.

This gap has been covered by formal or less formal groups of LGBT NGOs that are dealing with everyday issues of discrimination, social exclusion, networking, psychosocial and legal support, creative events and educational and awareness-raising campaigns, etc. These groups – and especially the more formal ones NGO's, such ARSISI, call upon when they deal with an extreme situation of discrimination against a LGBT person. However, the city (Municipality of Thessaloniki and the Municipality of Neapoli-Sykies) are participating in different anti-discrimination and hate-speech campaign and also in educational activities along with NGOs.

At law enforcement level (which is under the State responsibility and not of local government), a specific department for racist crimes was created in 2013. However, as the specialised NGO Racist Violence Recording Network has reported, no significant training of the police officers has occurred. Also, as has been reported, in many cases, LGBT people are not aware of the services provided or their rights and thus their lack of trust towards the authorities is growing. It worth mentioning that Greece in general has enhanced the legal support system for LGBT people and further promoted their rights and access to services after the voting of the last Laws in Parliament which passed with wide majority.

At private- leisure sector LGBT presence is becoming more evident. Starting from the promotion of gay/lesbian bars, to hotels that advertise their 'gay-friendliness' the LGB(T) has started to become a visible issue which promotes their presence inside the city.

7.3. Recommendations

LGBT people still are not feeling safe. Especially, transgender people are faced with discriminations and prejudices and the hate crimes against them are still a major concern. The wish of LGBT people to being able to go to places where everyone else goes and being able to be themselves is something that needs to be pursued mainly through awareness raising campaigns. Also, their job related concerns and health access are their major concerns which need to be pursued along with the local social services.

It is important though that the city's social services are not exclusive towards LGBT people. As they have mentioned they provide services where it is not necessary to state their sexual orientations or gender identity. However, when they need the service because of that reason, the Municipal services need to deal with the LGBT needs. This is why they need training and further familiarisation with LGBT issues. As stated by the stakeholders the need is for more and better synergies among different organisations (local and NGOs working together) which even though in some cases is happening it does not reach LGBT organisations and people. They need to be aware that this is happening and that the services are open to them. Also, as mentioned the local public services need to reach out to LGBT organisations and learn about

what they need and proceed with jointly designing of tailored services. They recommended that initiatives should be taken forward and that they would like to be involved in LGBT issues in the future. For example, “PYXIDA” (COMPASS) mentioned that they wish to become involved with a programme that concerns children-with sexual orientation and gender identity issues- and the discriminating behaviours that that they come up against. The focus group also agreed that it is important to have education about LGBT issues, as well, within schools.

“More actions for children and young people. It very important. We (ARSIS) have for years now, the “mobile school” which goes on site and makes interventions within ROMA communities, where children usually don’t attend school. ...education on LGBT issues could be similar....”

And also they agreed and recommended that awareness raising campaigns within communities are important.

To sum up, the following recommendations could be made:

- ☒ Law enforcement authorities, equality body, prosecutors, lawyers, public services and NGOs have to establish a functioning relationship so as to succeed in the combatting of homo- and transphobia.
- ☒ More chances should be given to LGBTs to express themselves openly and to inform local society, besides the annual Thessaloniki Pride Festival.
- ☒ Local media and internet media should encourage public speaking and open conversations on important issues for LGBT people and promote LGBT actions.
- Many improvements should be made in city’s public basic services (health, education, legal services) so as to better serve the LGBT citizens’ specific needs.
- ☒ Medical staff, public servants, law enforcement agents, teachers and journalists should be trained on LGBT issues.
- ☒ Pupils, students, and young people should be educated and sensitized on gender diversity and equality issues.

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Annex I “Individual Interviews with LGBTs”

No	Category	Gender	Age	Education	Occupation	Origin	Ethnicity/ Religion	Marital status	Dependence (Children/elderly)	Years in the city
1	G	Male	44	Higher	Professional (Teacher)	Greek	Greek/ Christian	-	-	
2	B	Female	37	Secondary	Unemployed	Greek	Greek/ Christian	Married	-	37
3	B	Male	37	Higher	Professional (Freelancer)	Greek	Greek/ Agnostic	Single	-	2
4	G	Male	45	Secondary	Professional (Private Employee)	Greek	Greek/ Christian	-	-	45
5	T	Female	44	Secondary	Professional (Freelancer)	Greek	Greek/ Christian	-	-	20
6	L	Female	58	Higher	Unemployed	Greek	Greek/ Christian	In partnership	-	58
7	G	Male	43	Secondary	Professional (Private Employee)	Greek	Greek/ Christian	-	-	-
8	T	Male	25	Secondary	Unemployed	Greek	Greek/ Christian	Single	-	25
9	L	Female	24	Higher	Associate Professional	Greek	Greek/ Agnostic	Single	-	-
10	L	Female	33	Higher	Professional (Preschool Educator)	Greek	Greek	Single	-	16
11	G	Male	34	Higher	Professional (Private Employee)	Greek	Greek/ Christian	Single	-	34

12	G	Male	46	Higher	Professional (Civil servant)	Greek	Greek/ Christian	Single	-	26
13	G	Male	34	Higher	Professional (Freelancer)	Greek	Greek/ Christian	Single	-	34
14	L	Female	38	Secondary	Professional (Private Employee)	Greek	Greek/ Christian	Single	-	38
15	L	Female	33	Higher	Professional (Doctor)	Greek	Greek/ Christian	In partnership	-	3

Annex II “Individual Interviews with Stakeholders”

No	Role	Service	Additional comments
1	Founding member	Homophonia Thessaloniki Pride: Support the LGBT community in Thessaloniki (psychological / educational / scientific / cultural support, etc.)	
2	Advocacy Responsible	PRAKSIS: Holistic approach to vulnerable social groups in terms of: health, public health, employment, psychological support, education, housing.	
3	Head of Department - Psychologist	Department of Social Service of the Neapoli - Sykies Municipality: Social support, legal counselling, employment counselling, psychological support	
4	Social worker	KENTRO ZOIS (CENTRE FOR LIFE): Free psychological, social and legal support / Day Centre: meeting place providing information, support and entertainment for HIV / AIDS patients / Info Centre: for computer training / Companionship programme at hospitals and at home / Support programme for prisoners and former prisoners with HIV / AIDS / Empowerment programme for women with HIV / AIDS disease / Fundraising events as well as Awareness events	
5	Psychologist	Social Service of Neapoli area of Neapoli - Sykies Municipality: Social support, legal counselling, employment counselling, psychological support	
6	Recruitment professional	PYXIDA Drug Abuse Prevention and Health Promotion Centre: Addictions Prevention / Support programmes for children and teenagers in school community / Educate the teachers in terms of children and teenagers socio-psychological health issues / Parent School / Programme for quitting smoking / Counselling for teachers, parents, children, teenagers	
7	President	AIESEC - University of Macedonia: Leadership Skills Development through participation in Programmes abroad	
8	Founder	ART HUB: Education through art; art carrier in the city	
9	General Secretariat	International Development of Ecology and Art: Cultural Events Management	
10	Doctor	KETHEA (Therapy Center for Dependent Individuals) PROMITHEAS project (Counselling Unit for Prisoners): Psychological and medical support to drug users, Entertainment, Provide for food and clothes	

Annex III (A) “Focus Group with Stakeholders”

No	Role	Service	Additional comments
1	Social worker	Community social services in Sykies	
2	Social worker	Community social services in Neapoli	
3	Manager	Social services in Neapoli	
4	City counsellor	Municipality Neapolis-Sykeon	
5	Director	Community Services of Neapolis-Sykeon	
6	Manager	PYXIDA, Centre for Drug abuse prevention and Health promotion	
7	Social anthropologist	PYXIDA, Centre for Drug abuse prevention and Health promotion	
8	Psychologist	Association for the Social Support of Youth is a Non –Governmental Organization	
9	Psychologist	Shelter for the temporary stay of minors – Arsis	
10	Legal counsellor of the Mayor	Municipality of Neapoli-Sykeon	
11	Counsellor	KMOP	
12	Social worker	Youth support service – Arsis	
13	Social worker	Service for the Support of Vulnerable Social Groups – Aris	

Annex III (B) “Focus Group with individual LGBTs”

No	Category	Gender	Age	Education	Occupation	Origin	Ethnicity/ Religion	Marital status	Dependence (Children/elderly)	Years in the city
1	G	Male	24	Higher	Unknown	Greek	Greek	In partnership	No	24
2	L	Female	24	Higher	Unemployed	Greek	Greek	In partnership	No	24
3	G	Male	29	Secondary	Unemployed	Greek	Greek	Single	No	29
4	L	Female	27	Higher	Professional (Mathematician)	Greek	Greek	In partnership	No	9
5	G	Male	33	Higher	NGO social servant	Greek	Greek	In partnership	No	33
6	T	Male	34	Unknown	Professional (Private Employee)	Greek	Greek	-	No	34
7	T	Female	Unknown	Unknown	NGO social servant	Greek	Greek	-	No	-
8	B	Male	19	Higher	Student	Greek	Greek	-	No	-

Annex IV “Online Survey”

DIVERCITY project, Thessaloniki

Tuesday, October 25, 2016

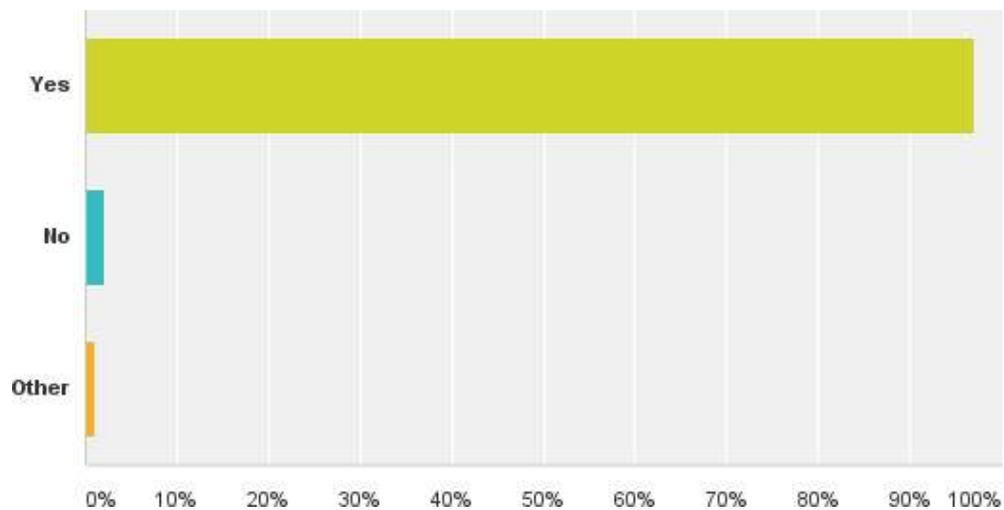
Total Responses: 100

Date Created: Tuesday, August 02, 2016

Complete Responses: 93

Q1: Do you live and/or work or study in Thessaloniki?

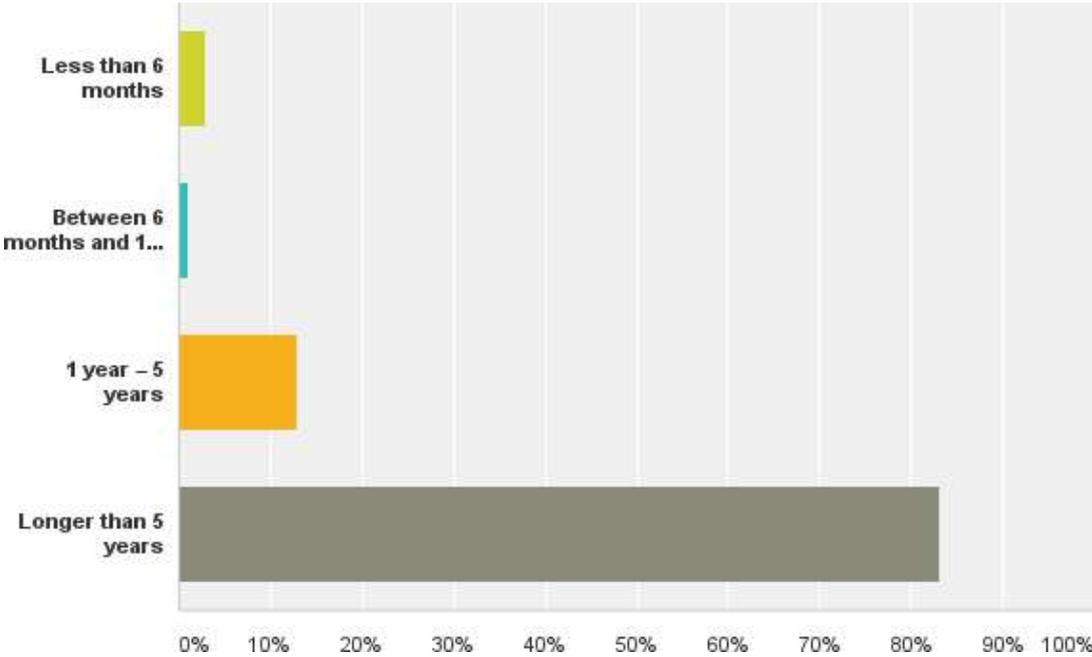
Answered: 100 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	97.00% 97
No	2.00% 2
Other	1.00% 1
Total	100

Q2: How long have you been living and/or working/studying in Thessaloniki?

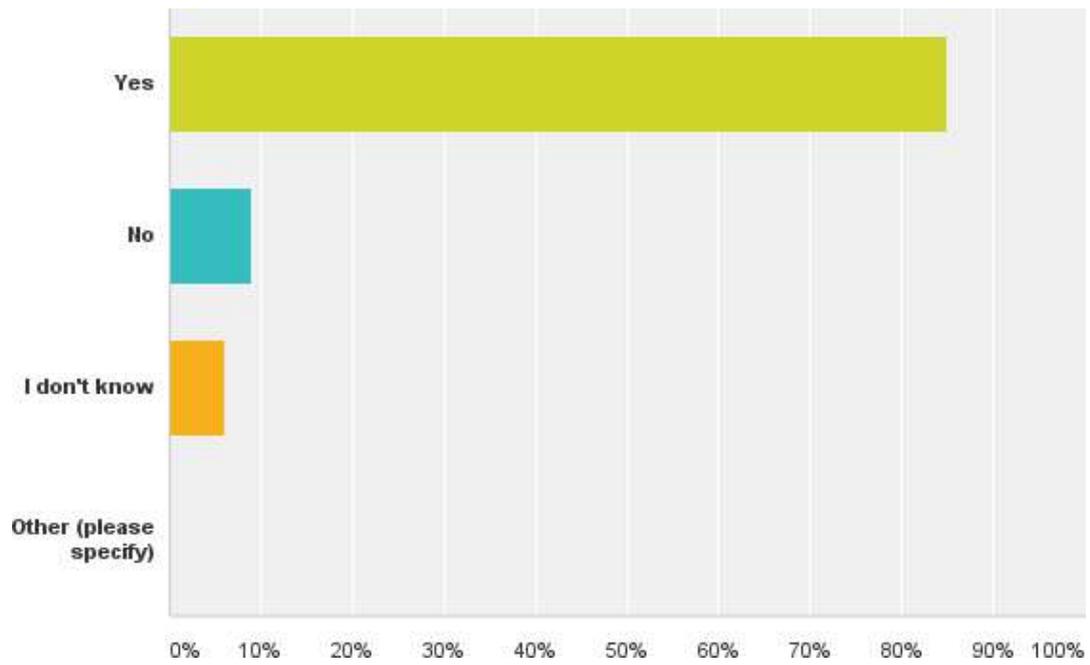
Answered: 100 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
Less than 6 months	3.00% 3
Between 6 months and 1 year	1.00% 1
1 year – 5 years	13.00% 13
Longer than 5 years	83.00% 83
Total	100

Q3: Do you have acquaintances, work colleagues and/or friends who are gay, lesbian, bi- or transgender?

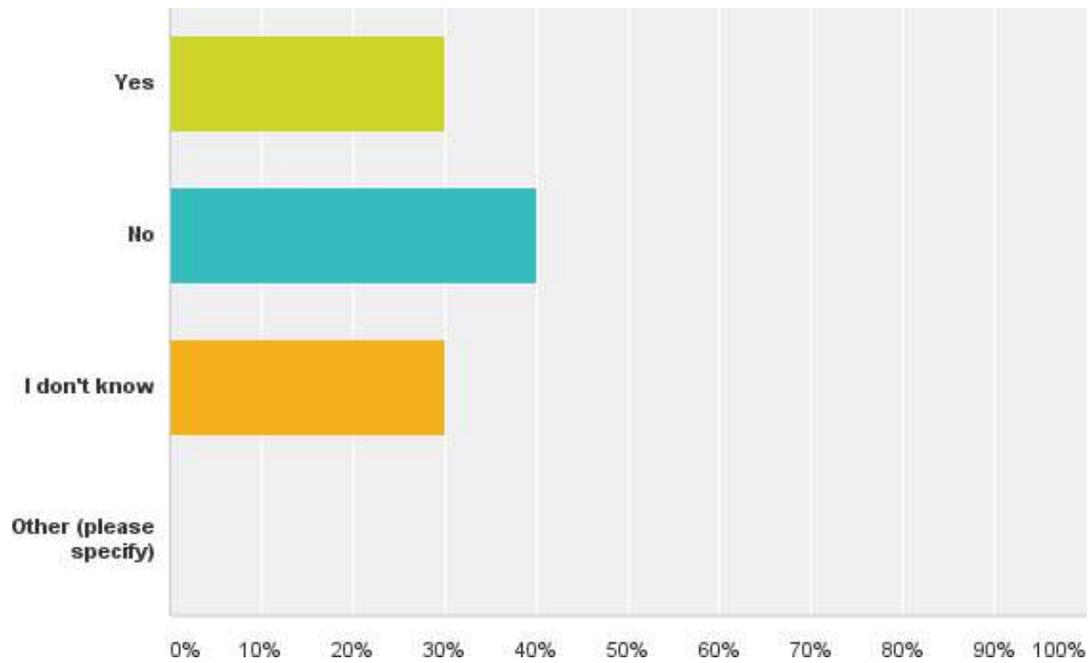
Answered: 100 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	85.00% 85
No	9.00% 9
I don't know	6.00% 6
Other (please specify)	0.00% 0
Total	100

Q4: Do you have family members who are gay, lesbian, bi-or transgender?

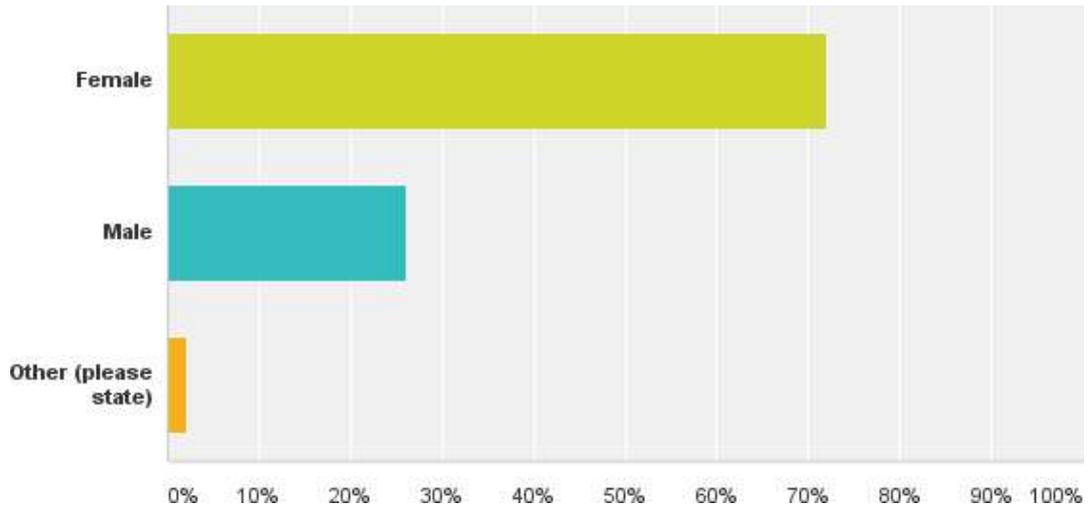
Answered: 100 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	30.00% 30
No	40.00% 40
I don't know	30.00% 30
Other (please specify)	0.00% 0
Total	100

Q5: What is your gender?

Answered: 100 Skipped: 0



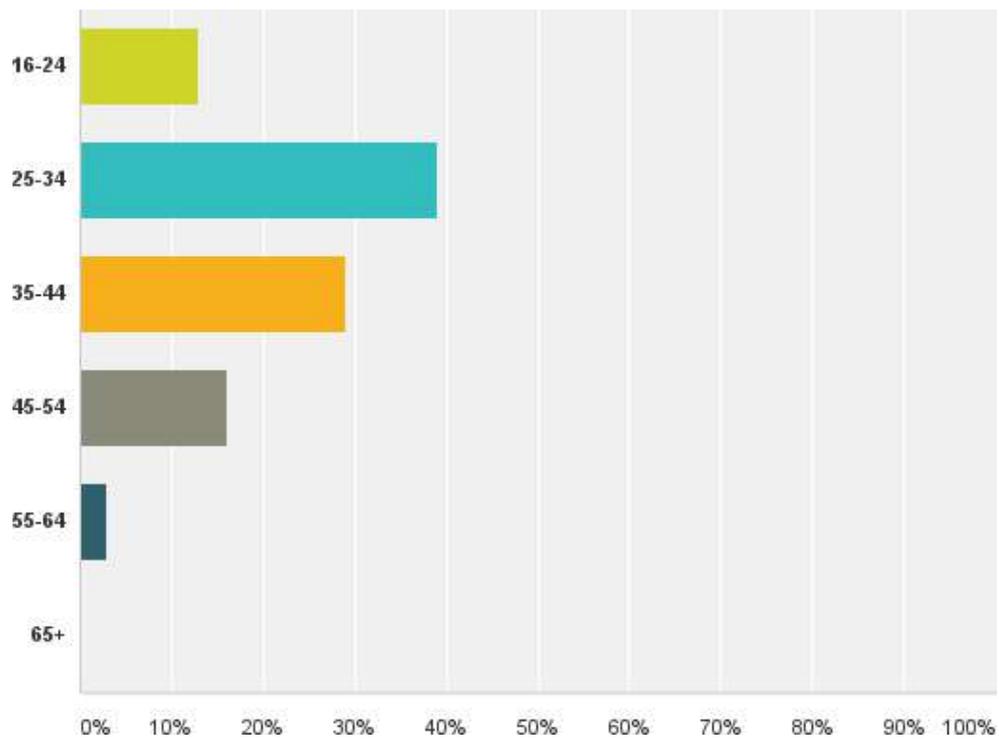
Q6: Sexual orientation

Answered: 100 Skipped: 0

Answer Choices	Responses
Heterosexual	84.00% 84
Gay/lesbian	7.00% 7
Bisexual	7.00% 7
Other (please state)	2.00% 2
Total	100

Q7: How old are you?

Answered: 100 Skipped: 0



Q8: Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people should have the same rights as other people

Answered: 94 Skipped: 6

	completely disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	completely agree	Total	Weighted Average
★	1.06% 1	1.06% 1	8.51% 8	26.60% 25	62.77% 59	94	4.49

Q9: Legal protection that apply to gay and lesbian people should also apply to transgender and intersex people

Answered: 94 Skipped: 6

	completely disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	completely agree	Total	Weighted Average
★	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	15.96% 15	23.40% 22	60.64% 57	94	4.45

Q10: I believe people should be free to express their gender and sexuality no matter what they are

Answered: 94 Skipped: 6

	completely disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	completely agree	Total	Weighted Average
★	1.06% 1	5.32% 5	8.51% 8	25.53% 24	59.57% 56	94	4.37

Q11: People of the same sex should be able to get married

Answered: 94 Skipped: 6

	completely disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	completely agree	Total	Weighted Average
★	3.19% 3	6.38% 6	20.21% 19	17.02% 16	53.19% 50	94	4.11

Q12: People of the same sex should be able to have or to adopt children

Answered: 94 Skipped: 6

	completely disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	completely agree	Total	Weighted Average
★	14.89% 14	12.77% 12	24.47% 23	12.77% 12	35.11% 33	94	3.40

Q13: Hate crime against lesbian, gay, bi- and transgender people should be persecuted more severely

Answered: 94 Skipped: 6

	completely disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	completely agree	Total	Weighted Average
★	10.64% 10	10.64% 10	13.83% 13	21.28% 20	43.62% 41	94	3.77

Q14: Discrimination against gays, lesbians and transgender people is a major social problem in Thessaloniki

Answered: 94 Skipped: 6

	completely disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	completely agree	Total	Weighted Average
★	0.00% 0	15.96% 15	47.87% 45	26.60% 25	9.57% 9	94	3.30

Q15: I am or I would be happy to have gay, bisexual or transgender person within my family, group of friends or colleagues

Answered: 94 Skipped: 6

	completely disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	completely agree	Total	Weighted Average
★	4.26% 4	11.70% 11	39.36% 37	19.15% 18	25.53% 24	94	3.50

Q16: I am comfortable when I interact with lesbian, gay and bisexual people

Answered: 94 Skipped: 6

	completely disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	completely agree	Total	Weighted Average
★	2.13% 2	3.19% 3	22.34% 21	27.66% 26	44.68% 42	94	4.10

Q17: I am comfortable when I interact with transgender people

Answered: 94 Skipped: 6

	completely disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	completely agree	Total	Weighted Average
★	3.19% 3	5.32% 5	28.72% 27	30.85% 29	31.91% 30	94	3.83

Q18: I am comfortable when I see same sex couples displaying affection in public (kissing, going hand in hand, etc.)

Answered: 94 Skipped: 6

	completely disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	completely agree	Total	Weighted Average
★	9.57% 9	15.96% 15	27.66% 26	20.21% 19	26.60% 25	94	3.38

Q19: Thessaloniki should have leisure spaces for LGBT people (bars, clubs, etc.)

Answered: 94 Skipped: 6

	completely disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	completely agree	Total	Weighted Average
★	5.32% 5	5.32% 5	31.91% 30	38.30% 36	19.15% 18	94	3.61

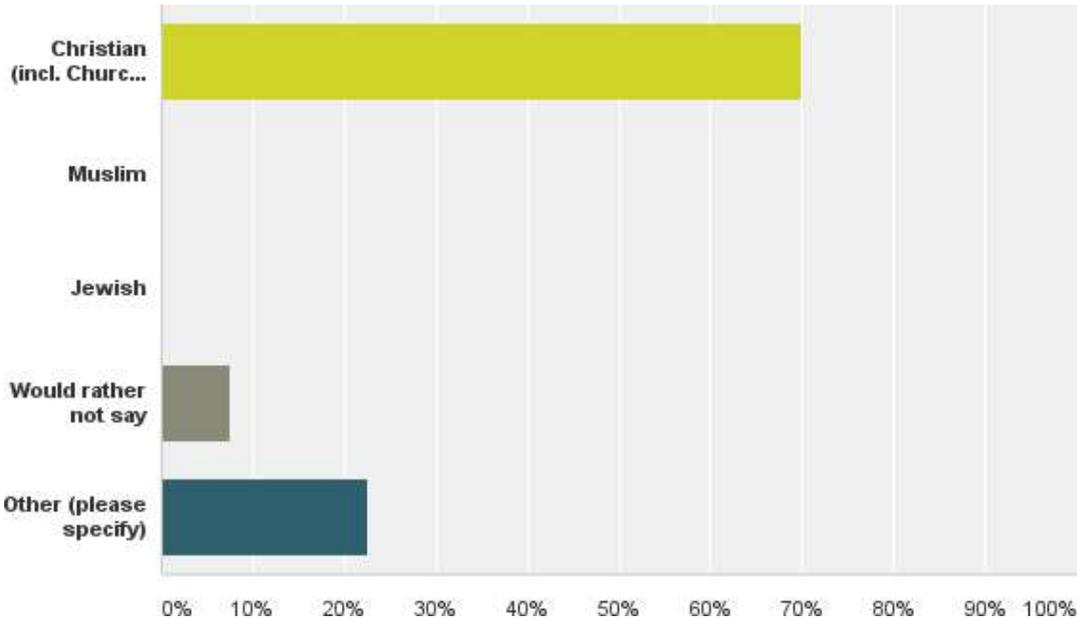
Q20: I believe Thessaloniki is a LGBT friendly city

Answered: 94 Skipped: 6

	completely disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	completely agree	Total	Weighted Average
★	0.00% 0	12.77% 12	42.55% 40	39.36% 37	5.32% 5	94	3.37

Q21: What is your religion?

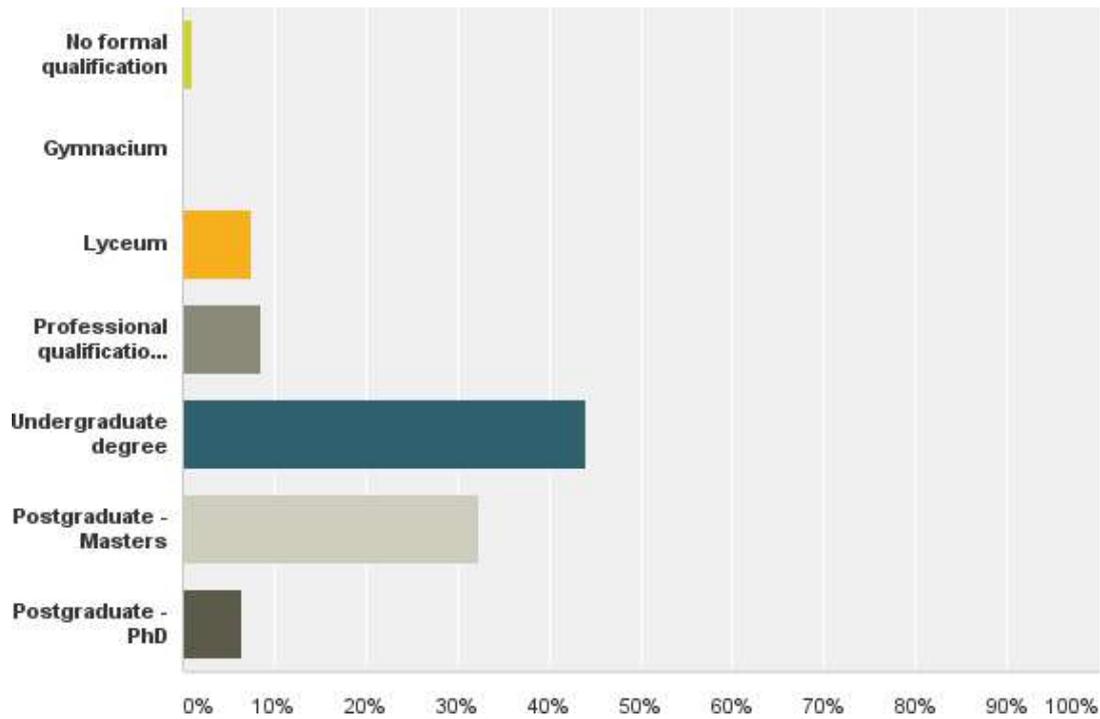
Answered: 93 Skipped: 7



Answer Choices	Responses
Christian (incl. Church of England, Protestant and other)	69.89% 65
Muslim	0.00% 0
Jewish	0.00% 0
Would rather not say	7.53% 7
Other (please specify)	22.58% 21
Total	93

Q22: What is your highest educational qualification?

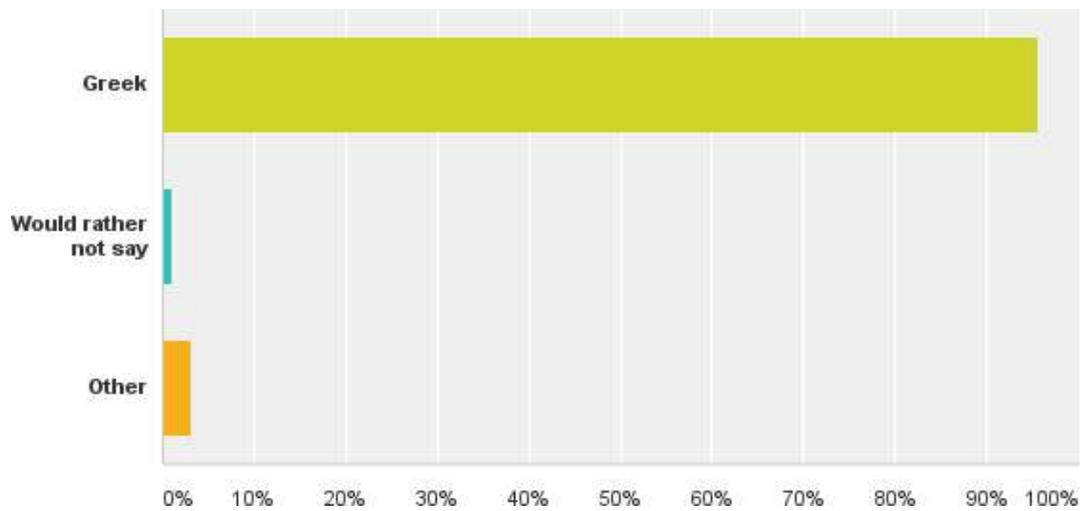
Answered: 93 Skipped: 7



Answer Choices	Responses
No formal qualification	1.08% 1
Gymnasium	0.00% 0
Lyceum	7.53% 7
Professional qualifications (please specify)	8.60% 8
Undergraduate degree	44.09% 41
Postgraduate - Masters	32.26% 30
Postgraduate - PhD	6.45% 6
Total	93

Q23: Which of the following groups most adequately describes your ethnic origin?

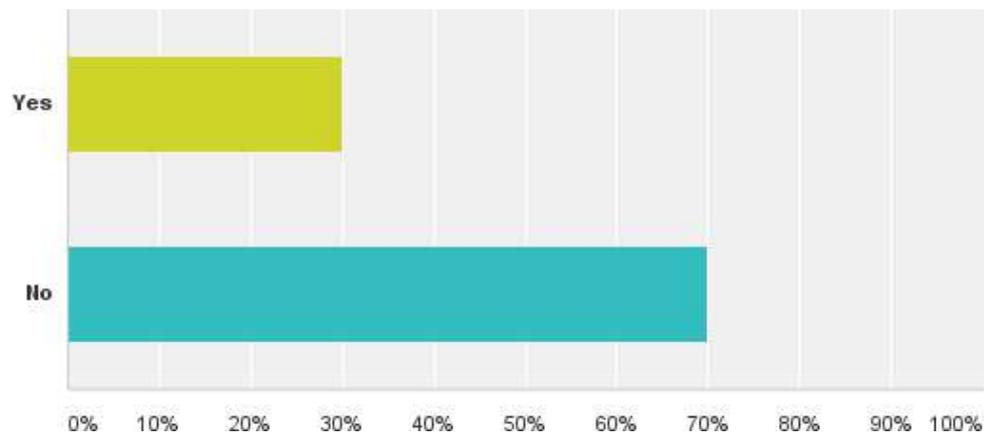
Answered: 93 Skipped: 7



Answer Choices	Responses
Greek	95.70% 89
Would rather not say	1.08% 1
Other	3.23% 3
Total	93

Q24: Would you be interested in receiving updates about the DIVERCITY project?

Answered: 93 Skipped: 7



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	30.11%	28
No	69.89%	65
Total		93

- The efficient system of monitoring hate crime and speech motivated by LGBT-phobia should be provided.
- Training for law enforcement officers and justice department workers, including police officers and judges, on LGBT hate crime and speech should be more extensive.

Local level:

- Reporting to the police: the victims should report LGBT-phobic crimes exactly in these terms so as the police would need to include them into their statistics; because statistics are based on a specific behavior of a perpetrator, not on victim's identity, victims should provide the police with their identities to make up a separate category.
- Cases of LGBT-phobic discrimination and crimes as well as court judgements ruling against them should be publicized to expose legal gaps and make the authorities to carry out legislative changes.
- Topics aimed at preventing and combating LGBT-phobia should be introduced into curricula on every level of educational system in the city.
- Awareness-raising campaigns should be organized in Wrocław.
- The municipality should take LGBT-phobia in the city more seriously.



divercity

preventing and combating **homo** and **transphobia**
in small and medium cities across Europe

DIVERCITY: CITY REPORTS

Charleroi

October 2016

By Isabelle Carles

Université Libre de Bruxelles



Co-funded by the Rights, Equality and Citizenship (REC) Programme of the European Union

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1. Introduction

In Europe, large cities are seen as the best places to live for LGBT people. Homosexuals find them attractive because they guarantee both anonymity and visibility, while increasing the possibilities of meeting their fellows. Large cities allow LGBT people to identify with specific territories, notably to develop a collective identity, mainly through the expansion of social networks based on the presence of gay shops and associations (Leroy, 2009). The number of same-sex marriages celebrated in large cities can also be an indicator of this preference. Same-sex marriages in Belgium have been celebrated primarily in Brussels and Antwerp, which are the main cities in Belgium, following the adoption of the law legalising same-sex marriage in 2003.¹

Specific areas for the LGBT population have developed in Belgian cities, as in other large cities in Europe. Brussels has recently seen the emergence of a Gay Village in an area of the inner city known as the Saint-Jacques district where there is a visible concentration of homosexual presence such as bars and associations and a wider spatial distribution of more heterogeneous and less visible types of homosexual territory in the urban area (Deligne & *al.*, 2006).

Surveys of the Belgian population's attitudes towards the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) population have been conducted recently, covering Belgium as a whole.² While these have sought to develop deeper understanding of the attitudes and opinions of the general population regarding LGBT people, none has considered the impact of living in a small or medium-sized city³, despite the fact that many anti-discrimination policies are implemented at the local level, whether concerning the police or judiciary, education, local public services or equal opportunities.

The purpose of this study is to enhance understanding of the specific mechanisms of homophobia and transphobia in small and medium-sized cities. We have chosen for this purpose to analyse the situation of the LGBT population in Charleroi. Located some 50

¹ According to federal statistics, in 2014, 398 same-sex marriages were celebrated in Antwerp and 320 in Brussels.

² The study "Beyond the Box" was conducted in 2003 among 1,000 Belgian people aged over 16 years. The main objective was to measure the attitude of the Belgian population regarding sexism, homophobia and transphobia. Another survey was conducted in 2016 among 1,000 Belgians aged between 18 and 75 years at the request of UNIA. It focused on the social perception of homo/bisexuality and attitudes towards LGBT people.

³ The main difference examined is that between broad groups such as people living in cities and people living in rural areas.

kilometres from Brussels, Charleroi has a population of 202,730⁴, the fifth largest in Belgium, after Brussels, Antwerp, Liège and Ghent.

Founded in the 17th century, Charleroi was originally a military garrison that evolved into an industrial centre and remained a leading industrial city throughout the 19th century. Factory closures during the crisis of the 1970s have left vast wastelands and urban middle classes have moved to the suburbs, abandoning the city centre neighbourhoods.

Due to the widespread loss in industrial power in the area since the 1970s, the city registered some of the highest unemployment and poverty rates in Europe for most of the 1980s and 1990s.⁵

However, from the early 2000s, the overall economy of the area has diversified to include health care, transport and telecommunications. Charleroi is experiencing an economic transition with the emergence of a new fabric of innovative enterprises.

In the meantime, the city is at the heart of dramatic architectural transformations. The city centre is on the verge of being fundamentally reorganised in order to bring back all the essential functions of a metropolitan centre, reintroduce quality housing and create public spaces for residents. This will also entail a radical change in the approach to mobility, an ambitious overhaul of the urban fabric and the redevelopment of green areas. The new urban plan aims to redefine the areas devoted to economic activity by revitalizing brownfield sites, reintroducing workplaces in the heart of the urban fabric and improving the city's integration of its major transport infrastructure (airport, train station, motorways, railways, ports, etc.).

Unemployment and poverty rates in Charleroi are nevertheless still significant and the recent closure of a large company will further increase the unemployment rate.⁶

Charleroi is also characterised by a large migrant population. The city's 30,000 migrants make up 11.6% of the total population⁷, the majority from Italy (135,000), Morocco (2,794), France (2,475), and Turkey (2,416). As in other parts of Belgium, these waves of immigration resulted, at least until the 1960s, from government immigration policy based primarily on demand for labour. This policy was implemented by means of bilateral agreements with 'labour exporting' countries.⁸ In Charleroi, successive generations of migrants from Italy, Turkey and Morocco came to work in the industrial sectors, mainly in coal and steel. The last

⁴ See <http://statbel.fgov.be/fr/statistiques/chiffres/population/structure/residence/plus/>

⁵ The employment rate is 51% (compared to 61.1% for Belgium) and the unemployment rate is 19.2%.

⁶ Caterpillar has announced the shutdown of its only industrial site in Belgium, in Charleroi. The closure will impact around 6,000 jobs including sub-contractors working for the company in and around Charleroi (see *Caterpillar ferme son usine: les cinq choses à savoir*, Le Soir, 3 septembre 2016, www.lesoir.be).

⁷ In Belgium, foreigners represent 11% of the total population (See Centre pour l'Egalité des Chances, Migration, Annual report 2012, p. 28 s.).

⁸ These agreements contain provisions on residence conditions, employment restrictions, wage and welfare conditions, as well as conditions relating to family reunification and housing.

legal wave of immigrants took up residence in Belgium in the 1960s and immigration policy for labour flows officially ceased at the beginning of the 1970s.

Charleroi is part of the Walloon Region, which is well organised with respect to the LGBT population. Created in 2007, the Walloon Rainbow Federation brings together many LGBT organisations in Wallonia. In the wake of the adoption in Wallonia of the Decree of 11 April 2014, several Rainbow houses have been created recently.⁹ Adoption of this Decree reflects the Walloon Region's commitment to support the LGBT sector actively. By financing LGBT NGOs such as the Rainbow Federation and Rainbow houses, and similar NGOs, the Walloon Region aims to help them support victims of discrimination, among other objectives.

For a long time, there was no sustainable LGBT structure in Charleroi. There have been several attempts to create such structures in the city but these did not work very well and ended up being closed. The absence of LGBT NGOs in Charleroi is specific, as many structures exist in other Walloon cities, such as the Rainbow Houses in Liège, Namur and Mons. Several LGBT sport organisations also exist in Liège and Namur. It is also worth noting that LGBT student organisations exist in Liège, Namur and Mons but not in Charleroi. According to the Walloon Rainbow Federation, LGBTI associations are gradually expanding in the Walloon region to meet an urgent need of the population. Some provinces such as Hainaut and Luxembourg remain underserved and the Walloon Federation of rainbow houses has invited local public authorities to help local associations develop and sustain their activities.¹⁰

Despite the fact that Charleroi is the city with the largest population in the Walloon Region, the creation of a specific LGBT structure is quite recent. A Rainbow House was created in October 2016, bringing together several LGBT NGOs. This initiative has certainly to be linked to the adoption of the Walloon Decree of 2014 on the one hand, and City Hall's will to be more proactive on the topic, on the other.

As a result, the LGBT population is not very visible in Charleroi. This is also due to the scarcity of LGBT bars or discos in the city. Several LGBT pubs have been closed in the last ten years. This is certainly linked to the general economic situation and the recent urban transformations of the city leading to the demolition of several areas in the city centre, including a few LGBT bars.

In addition, the city is not highly visible in annual events specifically linked to the LGBT population, such as the Belgian Pride in Brussels and the International Day against

⁹ See Décret insérant, dans le Code wallon de l'Action sociale et de la Santé, un Livre VII relatif à l'aide aux personnes lesbiennes, gays, bisexuels, bisexuelles et transgenres, 11 avril 2014, M.B. du 12/05/2014, <https://wallex.wallonie.be/index.php?mod=voirdoc&script=wallex2&PAGEDYN=indexBelgiqueLex.html&MBID=2014202982>

¹⁰ See Fédération Wallonne Arc-En-Ciel, Rapport d'activité 2015, p. 8.

Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia, held each year on May 17. To invite cities in the Walloon Region to become more involved in this event, the Walloon Rainbow Federation sent a letter to all the cities, asking them to raise the Rainbow flag on their City Hall, together with a draft good practice guide. So far, Charleroi has raised the flag only once, in 2009, when it was decided to organise a specific event around its LGBT population for the so-called Rainbow days.¹¹

For all these reasons, the city is not considered as particularly gay-friendly either by people who live in the city or those from outside it, even though it is not considered to be particularly dangerous or hostile to the LGBT population. In Charleroi, the most visible issues are poverty and social problems linked to the city's economic deterioration. People living in Charleroi and social actors do not see their city as particularly problematic with regards to the LGBT population.

¹¹ The event was mainly organised conjointly by the NGO Tels Quels and SIDA-IST Charleroi Mons, both of which are very active on LGBT issues in the city.

2. Fieldwork undertaken

Choice of interviewees

The objective of the interviews of stakeholders and LGBTs, and of the survey of the population of Charleroi was to supplement or amend the secondary data contained in the Belgian background report analysing existing legislation, policies and practices on homo- and transphobia in this country. The second objective was to provide additional information by giving a better picture of policies and good practices at the local level. The survey and interviews achieve all these objectives by trying to analyse any internal principles that lead to failures in the relationships between stakeholders and LGBTs and to highlight enabling and constraining factors related to empowerment of this specific population.

The experts and stakeholders interviewed were selected according to their field of competence, with the aim of obtaining a comprehensive representation of organisations in contact with the LGBT population at the local level. Accordingly, the sectors of employment (Interview with FOREM representative), health (SIDA-IST Charleroi Mons), social services (Service Prévention-Assuétudes CPAS de Charleroi), education (GRiS Wallonie and CHEFF) and the local police were covered. It proved impossible to identify the prosecutor in charge of the fight against discrimination, although it is mandatory for such a prosecutor to be appointed at the local level.¹² The person in charge of equality and diversity issues in the City Council was also interviewed. This panel was completed by representatives of LGBT NGOs (Tels Quels and Genres Pluriels) and a legal expert on LGBT issues in the Federal Equality Centre (UNIA), as that body's local expert was not yet in office in Charleroi.¹³ Links between these different actors have sometimes been in place for a long time and some belong to the same platforms for action.

It was more difficult to establish contacts with potential LGBT interviewees, mainly due to the lack of local LGBT NGOs and specific areas dedicated to this population in Charleroi. As a result, people were found through various means such as NGOs based in Brussels and Charleroi¹⁴, regional LGBT social networks and a call from a local radio.

Fourteen LGBT people were interviewed (10 men and 4 women). This included eight gays, three lesbians and three transgender people. Different age groups were represented in

¹² Circular COL 13/2013 provides for the appointment of a contact person in the police force responsible for racism and homo/transphobic issues and in the judiciary (contact prosecutor in the corresponding prosecution department). See Circular COL 13/2013 of the Minister of Justice and Home Affairs Minister of 17 June 2013.

¹³ This is now the case and the local representative of UNIA, Belgium's Equality Body, was present at the focus group held in September in Charleroi.

¹⁴ The NGOs Tels Quels, Genres Pluriels, GRiS and CHEFF were contacted and provided contacts.

balanced fashion, with five interviewees aged between 20 and 30, two between 31 and 35, three between 40 and 45, two between 45 and 55 and 1 aged 58. Four have completed secondary education and ten have completed higher education. In terms of occupations, there is a majority of professionals (seven). One is a manager and three are technicians and associate professionals.

All the interviewees are Belgian and describe themselves as having no religious beliefs. Concerning their marital status, six respondents are single, five in partnership and three are married. Only one respondent has children. Three of the potential interviewees did not participate in the interview at the last minute, despite showing a real interest in the research. Lesbians were particularly difficult to reach.

Almost all the interviews took place in Charleroi and in the suburbs. They were face-to-face and people were interviewed on an individual basis except for SIDA-IST Charleroi Mons, for which two representatives were interviewed together.

Composition of the focus groups

Two focus groups were held in September. The first was on September 12th, and was composed of members of the LGBT community. These included three gays and one transgender.

The second focus group took place on September 14th and involved seven social actors. Representatives of various sectors such as health (SIDA-IST Charleroi Mons), education (GRiS Wallonia and CHEFF), LGBT community (Tels Quels) and police were present. There were also two representatives of City Hall, including the diversity and equal opportunities official and the local UNIA representative.

For both groups, those present were interviewed on an individual basis in the first phase of the research, with the exception of one LGBT person. Each focus group lasted around two hours.

Composition of the survey respondents

A total of 97 individuals responded to the survey, which was initiated in September. The survey was disseminated widely in Charleroi using different NGO networks.¹⁵ The survey

¹⁵ Such as the Maison des Associations, the Centre Laïc de Charleroi, MONS and ULB universities in Charleroi and local unions.

was completed twice by direct contact with people in Charleroi in different parts of the city.¹⁶

Among those who responded to the survey, 83.3% have been living in Charleroi for a long time (more than five years); 63.6% are women¹⁷ and 87.2% heterosexual (compared with 11.7% lesbian or gay and 1.1% bisexual). More than 50% are aged between 25 and 44 (compared with 19.6% aged 16-24, 13.4% aged 45-54 and 15.5% aged 55-64). The majority have no religion (65.9%); 21.1% are Catholic, 8.5% are Protestant and 4.2% are Muslim. In terms of education, 38.6% have a bachelor's degree and 23.8% have a master's or higher. Another 23.8% of participants have secondary school qualifications.

¹⁶ For example, outside a tube station, at the FOREM, Haute Ecole provinciale du Hainaut, Campus de Charleroi-Solvay, Les Casernes de Charleroi.

¹⁷ A certain degree of caution is required in interpreting the results of the survey as women are over-represented, even though women form the majority of the population of Charleroi (51.38% women and 48.62% men). Many men refused to participate in the survey when it was implemented via direct contacts. However, given that there does not appear to be significant differences in responses according to gender, we do not consider that this over-representation of women in the sample affects the conclusions.

3. Combating hate crimes based on LGBT-phobia: the role of policies, legal measures and claim/complaint mechanisms

The only very active public organisation on LGBT issues has been found in the health sector, mainly in charge of AIDS prevention. It is one of the few organisations directly in contact with the LGBT population of Charleroi. Its team visits LGBT bars to build awareness about the importance of prevention. These visits offer an opportunity to talk to people and develop relations with them. They also go to music festivals where they can reach young people, including the LGTB population. They also frequently organise screening operations in the train station. These provide the opportunity to be in touch with a large variety of people, including the homeless.

This organisation is advocating for the creation of a specific LGBT structure in Charleroi. It notes that, while specific LGBT health services are essential, they are nevertheless insufficient to respond to the needs of the LGBT population, which are as varied as the image of the LGBT population itself. For most LGBT people, health issues are linked to AIDS, which tends to present a negative image of this population. There is a pronounced need for a general structure offering information and support. This would help bring about a global approach to LGBT issues, instead of specific ones based on health or education.

Scarcity of local public policies and measures to prevent and combat homo and transphobic attitudes and practices

Charleroi has been slow to implement actions to prevent and combat discrimination, harassment and homo and transphobia at the local level.

This can be seen in the field of education, for example. The results of the study show that LGBT people have been or are still particularly confronted with homo and transphobic attitudes at schools. The lack of specific information for young people is one of the main issues for the LGBT population in Charleroi, as confirmed by the LGBT interviewees. Most said that adolescence was particularly difficult for them as they could not find any support in the city within or outside the school environment once they had discovered their sexual orientation.

To respond to this phenomenon, the student NGO Les CHEFF has developed a course dedicated to schools, in collaboration with GRiS Wallonia, a volunteer group of gays and bisexuals offering to meet young people at schools and other community groups to answer

questions about their sexual orientation. The goal is to open a debate on homophobia and to make young people more aware of LGBT issues through the testimony of two young LGBTs (a woman and a man). The workshops also aim to improve the self-esteem of young people going through their coming-out process, as well as those questioning their sexual orientation. They also encourage a positive and more open attitude among those in their inner circle. However, the workshops are organised at the request of schools and few schools in Charleroi and its suburbs have requested a workshop (ULB-S-7).

In contrast, the national campaign against homo and transphobia launched by the Belgian equality body, UNIA, in April 2016, has been widely disseminated in Charleroi. The main target group is young people. A website with video clips presents young lesbian, gay and transgender people in their daily life. The site also includes information on LGBT networks in Belgium. The videos clips have also broadcast on radio and TV. The main objective of this campaign is to provide information and support to young people who live in Wallonia.

In Charleroi, information has been disseminated as part of the campaign by the Diversity and Equal Opportunities official at City Hall. Leaflets and brochures have been distributed throughout the city, such as through the local police, in sport clubs, libraries, health centres, etc. As this campaign was launched only recently, however, it is still too early to evaluate its impact.

Regarding the attitudes of the local public services, according to the interviewees, they do not pay special attention to the needs and demands of LGBT people. But at the same time, the LGBT population does not ask for any specific treatment regarding public services. As stated by the interviewees, there have been tremendous advances in local public services relating to LGBT issues over the last 20 years. It used to be difficult to speak about homosexuality in a context of employment or social aid, but that is not the case any more and homosexuality is no longer taboo. (ULB-I-10)

In contrast, transgender interviewees describe difficult relationships with services in general, including health, education (ULB-I-9) and public services, in large, medium-sized and small cities alike (ULB-S-10). It is noteworthy that, except for a few, the stakeholders interviewed did not even mention them. The survey results show that while the population of Charleroi is frequently in contact with L or G people, the majority have never or very rarely been in contact with transgender people. They seem totally invisible in the city, except in the health sector where social workers have been in touch with transgender prostitutes.

Concerning specific measures implemented by public services, the local police has been identified as a very active actor in preventing and combating homo and transphobic attitudes and practices. Thus, the police officer in charge of the fight against discrimination requires police personnel to react and to report incidents of discrimination in order to increase its visibility and prevent under-reporting. He is also seeking a change of internal rules to place emphasis on the prohibition of discrimination within the police. In addition, to

train young policemen to react to discrimination, he teaches recruits in police academies to write police records appropriately. The objective is to train them to better detect discrimination in order to prevent it when they write police records.

Concerning public services, the Rainbow Walloon Federation organises training sessions for front-line local public services, especially city councils. However, it is not clear whether the staff of Charleroi's City Council have received this training. According to the Diversity and Equal Opportunity Official, people working in the front line have been trained to serve the LGBT population adequately, especially since the adoption of the law legalising same-sex marriage

Impact of political discourse on measures addressed to LGBT people

In Charleroi, political discourse on LGBTs has been absent for a long time. There was no public interest in LGBT issues until recently. The single visible event during the last ten years was the organisation of the Rainbow Days in May 2009. The aim of these days was to promote a positive image of the city's gay population with information on various aspects of homosexuality. This year, the Rainbow flag was flown outside City Hall.

Apart from that, it is well known that the city has not been involved in LGBT issues and that City Hall has done nothing, whereas several other cities such as Mons, Liège and Namur have been developing specific actions and have granted subsidies to local LGBT NGOs (ULB-S-4).

However, there have been a couple of attempts to develop a LGBT NGO with volunteers. For instance, a social service was set up at the beginning of 2000. But the service had to close because it was not used:

“People of Charleroi did not attend the social service and went to Brussels to avoid being identified in Charleroi... When people from Charleroi needed to speak about their sexual orientation, I met them in Brussels. Today, it would be different because it is probably easier to be homosexual in Charleroi than 20 years ago.” (ULB-S-1)

The commitment to support the implementation of a Rainbow House is certainly linked to the adoption of the Walloon Decree of 2014, which offers subsidies for the establishment of Rainbow houses. However, today the city wants to show its involvement on LGBT issues. One of the main measures adopted is the support given to the creation of the Rainbow house in Charleroi.

For the City Council's Diversity and Equal Opportunities official, it was important to give a positive signal to the LGBT community in Charleroi:

“A Rainbow House will be created soon in Charleroi. It is important that they have a clearly identified place in the city. The LGBT representatives are pleased to be in Charleroi, Wallonia's largest city. As a diversity and equal opportunities representative, I should give the opportunity to each group to be visible.” (ULB-S-3)

A weak channel to support victims of homo and transphobia, discrimination and harassment

For the majority of the respondents, homo and transphobia are not a predominant ground of discrimination in Charleroi. According to the police and UNIA, which are the two main channels for formal complaints, racism and disability are the two main grounds of discrimination (ULB-S-2 and 6). In the sector of employment, age discrimination, particularly for older workers, is the main issue (ULB-S-5). In addition, discrimination against LGBT people is not seen as a major social problem in Charleroi. They were only 26.5% of the respondents who agreed or fully agreed with this position. The majority of respondents (56,38%) had no opinion. This would suggest that homophobia and transphobia are not particularly visible.

Several policies have been adopted at the federal level to improve the fight against discrimination, including at the regional and local levels. They are being implemented very slowly, however, and Charleroi is no exception to this phenomenon.

Channels for formal complaints against homo and transphobia do not really exist in Charleroi. This is due to the lack of NGOs focused on LGBT issues as well as the lengthy absence of a local contact point of the federal Belgian equality body, UNIA. As mentioned in the first report on policies in Belgium, a network of 11 regional points has been created to give victims the possibility to lodge a complaint at local level. However, the implementation of these local contact points in the Walloon Region is taking time and in Charleroi, for instance, it was just set up last May. According to many of the social actors interviewed, this will significantly help victims, who will be able to lodge complaints or get information on discrimination. The regions and the Interfederal Equality Body (UNIA) have signed a specific protocol that gives UNIA competence to handle the complaint. Under the protocol, complaints are registered at the local level and treated and analysed at the federal level.

At the level of the police, Circular COL 13/2013 provides for the appointment of a contact person within the police force in charge of racism and homo/transphobic issues. The contact person handles LGBT issues and is responsible for improving law enforcement's response to complaints from individuals.

The same system is supposed to be implemented within the judiciary, with a contact prosecutor in the corresponding prosecution department. The contact prosecutor in each

court district should be specialised in discrimination, including LGBT issues in the prosecution service.

While the contact person for the police was appointed several years ago, it is not clear who is in charge of the fight against discrimination in the judiciary. According to several interviewees, the contact person retired last year and nobody has been named as the new contact person so far. For social actors, this reveals that the fight against discrimination is not seen as a priority in the judiciary.

In contrast, the contact person for the police is very involved and has tried to build networks between local police departments on the topic, but there have been no significant results yet. While the appointment of a contact person is mandatory according to Circular COL/13 2013, appointees are still very rare in Wallonia three years after the adoption of the circular.

As a result, it is difficult to develop efficient channels between the police and prosecutors at the local level as well as to develop regional networks between police and the judiciary. This impedes the commitment of the Belgian equality body UNIA to develop specific training sessions and exchanges of experience between the police and the judiciary on discrimination issues. In the framework of Circular COL13/2013, UNIA organises a two-day common training session on discrimination issues for the police and the judiciary. The first goal is to discuss practical aspects of the handling of a complaint, such as the qualification of facts in order to better identify and properly register the ground and the type of crime. The police are also trained to better detect the ground of discrimination. For UNIA, the common training session is also an opportunity for the police and the judiciary to engage in discussion and become more familiar with each other's work, the aim being to combat discrimination together. So far, such trainings have not been implemented in Charleroi.

The recent creation of a rainbow house as well as the implementation of the UNIA local contact point is expected to improve the handling of complaints. It is also necessary to appoint without delay the contact person for prosecutors so that an efficient network of all the principal actors can be put in place. According to the results of the survey, Charleroi's population is still waiting for an effective treatment of complaints, as they were 89.2% to say that hate crime against LGBT people should be persecuted more severely (72,04% totally agreed and 17,2% agreed).

4. Experiences in public spheres: representations, virtuality, physical spaces and hate speech

Charleroi: a safe or dangerous place for LGBT people?

The image of Charleroi is not generally associated with safety. According to the interviewees, Charleroi is considered as a dangerous city whatever groups you belong to. However, despite this general image of lack of safety, Charleroi is not considered as especially dangerous for LGBTs. Transgender people, however, do not feel secure at all in Charleroi, wherever they may be.¹⁸ (ULB-I-3,8,9). For the respondents to the survey, it is interesting to note that they are not able to say clearly if Charleroi can be seen as a LGBT friendly city or not. 58% of them neither agree nor disagree with the question on the LGBT friendly aspect of Charleroi.

Lesbian and gay people feel almost at ease everywhere in Charleroi, depending also on the time, but some of them are more careful in certain areas:

“If I have to walk through the city, there are some areas where I would choose to be discreet or even walk a meter away from my partner because I'd be afraid to run into thugs who seek to attack gays”. (ULB-I-7)

According to the police, while it is well known that there is a phenomenon of under-reporting, due partly to the lack of efficient networks, hate crimes and hate speech motivated by homophobia or transphobia are rare in the city (ULB-S-6):

“I have only seen a few cases. There is surely a grey area, but if it were really dangerous, we would be called for offenses, to intervene in cases of injury, etc. And that is not the case.”

The only case of hate crime reported was perpetrated against a gay and occurred in a public space. Several interviewees also related homophobic attitudes or speeches occurring mainly at work (ULB-I-1, 10, 11) and generally not directly directed against them, with one exception (ULB-I-11).

The police nevertheless note several cases of runaway minors due to the family's non-acceptance of their sexual orientation (Stakeholders focus group).

For some respondents, living in cities with specific areas dedicated to LGBTs is not automatically associated with safety. On the contrary, going to such areas could be dangerous for a member of the LGBT population as they can be easily identified, increasing

¹⁸ It is certainly significant that the three transgender people who were interviewed no longer live in this city and were interviewed in another city. The only transgender potential interviewee living in Charleroi cancelled the appointment at the last minute.

the probability of being exposed to homo or transphobia. Trans people in particular do not feel secure in such areas:

“For some transgender women, coming to the Rainbow House in Brussels at night is sometimes dangerous. They are the leading victims of violence. I do not think that the fact of concentrating the LGBT population guarantees safety.” (LGBT focus group)

For some authors, these specific areas can be seen as identity territories for communities still in search of social and political recognition (Castells, 1983; Godfrey, 1988). LGBTs in Charleroi are not asking for such territories. However, while most of the interviewees do not ask for specific LGBT leisure areas in Charleroi, they would like to see a specific LGBT structure in the city, especially to advise and inform the younger population on LGBT issues. This certainly means that they still need social and political recognition of LGBT members.

Visibility of LGBT people in the city

In Brussels, a recent study on the homosexual territories in the city highlights a concentration of homosexual presence in the inner city and a wider spatial distribution of more heterogeneous and less visible types of homosexual territory in the urban area (Deligne & *al.*, 2006). In Charleroi, there are no specific territories for the LGBT population at all. The LGB population seems to be spread across different parts of the city. This might be owing to different factors.

Firstly, the city is characterised by the absence of areas organised around communities. This is the case for migrants, who are not concentrated in specific areas (ULB-S-3). According to City Hall's Diversity and Equal Opportunity representative, the city is characterised by a mix of populations, including an ethnic mix. Just as there is no specific concentration of Turks or Moroccans, there is no specific area for LGBT people:

“One of the achievements of this city is that its foreign communities are dispersed throughout its territory. There is a succession of neighbourhoods. There is no fracture or break, everything fits. It shows the permeability of Charleroi's society.” (ULB-S-3)

The city is therefore very mixed and people, including LGBTs, do not feel the need for a specific area where they can come together. The few existing LGB bars are not concentrated in the same place.

Secondly, LGBT respondents themselves do not ask for more visibility in public spaces. They want to be present in all public spaces not especially as a member of the LGBT community but more as “ordinary citizens.” They seek fluidity between LGBT people and the rest of the population:

“I would not like to belong to a specific LGBT community because I do not like the idea of living only with gay people. I prefer to be mixed in, to see everybody and not just gay people. In Charleroi this is possible because when you go to places which are not specifically LGBT and you are a gay, there is no problem.” (ULB-I-4)

LGBTs are more in favour of being present everywhere within the city in order to get people used to living nearby. They want to be free to live wherever they decide to live. They do not like the idea of living in specific LGBT areas. They want to be free to be in and out, to have friends in the LGBT community and outside it. Some of them contest the assimilation of LGBT areas with new centres of stylized consumption, as highlighted by some authors (Remiggi 1998; Blidon, 2004):

“In Brussels, in the street where the Rainbow House is located, there are rainbow flags everywhere, in front of all the stores...there is even a rainbow flag in front of a laundry!” (LGBT focus group).

Appropriation of public, private and semi-public spaces

In Charleroi, the dominant feeling is that the city is open-minded about the presence of the LGBT population in public spaces. This feeling comes from social actors, LGBT respondents, once again with the notable exception of transgender people who do not feel at ease at all in the city. For the survey's respondents, the situation is more ambiguous. 22,5% fully agree and 26,8% agree with the idea that Charleroi should have leisure spaces for LGBT people. However, 39,7 % neither agree nor disagree.

For the LGB population, there is no need to create specific areas for the LGB population as they feel at ease everywhere in the city:

“I do not feel that in Charleroi there is a LGBT community, defined as people who are united around a common identity and looking to be together. People are quite open and LGB people do not feel the need to join and be apart.” (ULB-I-4)

While there is no specific area in the city dedicated to the LGBT population, some groups of LG people are well organised through informal networks of friends and share leisure activities in and out of the city, such as going to restaurants, cafes or discos together. They are very mobile, like the other inhabitants of Charleroi, who respondents say are accustomed to taking part in leisure and cultural activities both in the city and outside it, going to the theatre in Brussels or Lille (a French city nearby), for example, or having a drink in Mons or Namur, two other cities in Wallonia. This cannot be said to be a specific habit of the LGBT population, since a large part of the population of Charleroi has also adopted this kind of behaviour.

For leisure activities, LGBT people enjoy going to various places. All of them have both hetero and L, G, B or T friends and enjoy living in a diverse environment:

“In Brussels, everything is concentrated in the same area. That is not the case in Charleroi: there is no gay-friendly area. There is a pub in the lower part of the city and one in upper end of the city. This is all right because it allows people to mix.” (LGBT focus group).

However, some older respondents consider that, when they were younger, it was easier to express their sexual orientation in a big city like Brussels in LGBT bars and discos. Twenty years ago, they feared being stigmatised in Charleroi and sought out anonymity in larger cities:

“When I was younger, in Brussels, we were 400-500 LGBT people in discos, while in Charleroi we were 80. There's a big difference between 80 and 400 people! And I loved to go from one gay place to another, from a small café to a larger one, then to a disco. We had this diversity that did not exist at all in Charleroi (ULB-I-7).

Women are nevertheless less visible than men in the city. Things are changing slowly, as it is possible to find new mixed pubs or for women only. For trans people, there is no specific place for them at all and they are totally invisible.

The local media: what role concerning the LGBT population?

LGBT issues are rarely presented in the local media. When they are, according to the interviewees, they are mainly focused on subjects linked to medical prevention and AIDS or spectacular homo or transphobic aggressions. This presentation contributes to a very negative image of the LGBT population. In addition, many LGBT interviewees complain about the representation of the LGBT population portrayed in media coverage of the Gay Pride. They claim the media are intent on showing the most extravagant LGBT people during the Gay Pride held yearly in Brussels in May (ULB-I-2,4,7):

“They only show the spectacular and extravagant LGBT people participating in the pride. The media never show the other participants, mainly people belonging to NGOs with specific political messages.”

At the national level, nevertheless, the LG respondents consider that the overall image of LGBTs has improved over the last 15 years. Gays and lesbians are no longer systematically caricaturised and the discourse on LG people is more positive. It is now commonplace to see LG couples living an “ordinary” life in TV series, for instance.

According to transgender people, their overall image is still negative and stereotyped: the transgender population is very often linked to prostitution and they are described as pathological by the medias. The vocabulary used to describe transgender issues is in almost all cases inappropriate and often insulting.

The role of virtual spaces in combating or enhancing hate speech

The impact of virtual spaces in combating or enhancing homo and transphobia, according to respondents including LGBTs, is difficult to evaluate, as people are totally free to choose information in virtual space. As a result, those who are likely to be homo or transphobic would search for and find homophobic information or hate speech on the LGBT population.

Respondents nevertheless acknowledge that virtual space could be a very good channel to help build a positive image of the LGBT population. This is the case for example of the campaign “Et toi t’es casé(e)?”, aiming to build young people's awareness of homophobic and transphobic stereotypes.¹⁹ This campaign endeavours to educate young people aged between 12 and 25 and the professionals that work with them in education, youth groups and sport, in order to combat stereotypes and discrimination. It also aims to encourage young people to find help and answers to their questions, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity. The campaign is based on short videos with young L, G, B or T people speaking about their own experience of their sexual orientation in life. The idea is to show this population in day-to-day life, far from the stereotyped representations of extravagant LGBTs.

LGBT people use virtual spaces in different ways and for various reasons. Some use social networks to get information on their community. Most find it difficult to get information on LGBT issues because they are almost absent in “classical” media. For most, it is important to have better knowledge of the evolution of the rights of LGBT people across Europe and worldwide, on various issues such as equal rights, same-sex marriage or adoption of children: “It is very difficult to find complete LGBT-oriented articles or information on conferences on LGBT issues, etc. Unfortunately, the topic does not interest most people” (ULB-I-14).

For young people, virtual spaces are a real source of support and information, particularly for those living in small cities with no effective support available and no access to information. This is particularly the case for transgender people who are usually very lonely and isolated. Finding proper information on transgender issues is difficult as the traditional information sources for young people are usually not properly informed about all of these issues:

“I don't know how I managed to define myself as a transgender but I succeeded in finding the word, which was very difficult because this word did not even exist when I was a teenager. There were many depictions of transsexuals defined as having a psychiatric illness. The predominant image was linked to mental health” (ULB-I-9).

¹⁹ <http://www.ettoitescase-e.be/index.php>

The LGBT people living in Charleroi also use social networks to exchange views and/or to meet other LGBT people. The use of social networks is particularly popular among the younger generation and less so among people around 40. They usually use Gaypax. Some of them are followers of specific pages, such as stophomophobie.com, Tetu and Yagg. As seems to be the case for LGBT leisure centres, women are less present on LGBT social networks than men, except on specific lesbian ones (ULB-S-7).

5. Social interactions and internalised experiences of LGBTphobia

The impact of kinship interactions on the everyday life of LGBT people

For almost all the LGBT respondents, the discovery of their sexual orientation was a lonely experience. They spent their teen-age years without talking about their sexual orientation to their families. They described this period as the most difficult part of their life due to isolation and loneliness, without the possibility to get support or to communicate with someone about their intimacy.

Most of the LGBT people interviewed were afraid to reveal their sexual orientation to their family. According to ULB-I-1, this is certainly linked to the dominant violent discourse on LGBT people in the city:

“If I put myself in the working-class culture, what I heard about homosexuality was very violent. But there is a gap between the vocabulary used and what people really feel about it. The word homosexuality is not used very often in Charleroi. One talks about 'poof'. So you wonder whether, when you talk about it one day, you will be accepted...”

One of the respondents linked this violent discourse to the general atmosphere of the city 20 years ago, when large numbers of people were suddenly unemployed after the closure of many companies:

“When I was a child, I saw all the misery, loneliness, all this difficulty of being. There was a background of aggressiveness.”

It was only when they were around 20 or 25 years old that most of the LGBT respondents informed their family about their sexual orientation. Some chose the timing of their coming out, while others had no choice because their parents discovered it.

The experience of coming out was very intense for all of them as they had no idea how their family would react but feared being rejected. They were nevertheless surprised about their family's reactions. Some respondents were positively surprised about their acceptance. Others, on the contrary, were shocked by the negative reaction of their parents, who feared being stigmatised by the rest of the family or/and their social environment. Some parents advised their children to hide their sexual orientation and to pretend that they were heterosexual. Other parents were also very disappointed. For them, having a LGBT son or daughter meant missing out on the chance to have grandchildren. It is noteworthy that in most of the cases, sisters and brothers have accepted their sexual orientation without any hesitation, as did their friends as well.

For one of the transgender interviewees, it was very difficult for his father to admit that a woman can become a man. For him there was a question of “natural authority” and physical features that cannot be changed. The father was also afraid that it would cause his child to lead a difficult life. (ULB-I-9).

For one of the respondents, coming out was a process with several steps:

“First, I hid my sexual orientation. Then I admitted it, but I was afraid. Now I say it clearly and the people who are not at ease with it can avoid me.” (ULB-I-4)

Even if the acceptance process was sometimes long, almost all the respondents have maintained contacts with their families. The interviewees included four couples, three gay couples and one lesbian couple. All of them said that they are accepted by their families and do not encounter specific problems in their relationships and social life. Coming out with people of their generation including relatives, friends and even fellow workers was a more fluid process than with people of the older generation.

As said above, the LGBTs interviewed in the study's fieldwork have LGBT friends but also heterosexual friends. They are very keen on developing various relationships with a wide range of different people.

This is not surprising in the light of the survey results, since 85.6% of the respondents state that they have friends or fellow workers who are LGB or T. The proximity with at least lesbians and gays is therefore a reality in Charleroi and 89.2% of the respondents said that they are comfortable when they interact with lesbian, gay and bisexual people. The same cannot be said for relations with transgender people, as only 40,2% said they are comfortable interacting with transgender people.

Good treatment by staff of services but real difficulties with schools

The access to basic services does not seem problematic for LGB people living in Charleroi and they consider that they are well treated by staff of various services.

“Here, in the field of services and employment, there is a respectful and open-minded attitude towards LGBT people. I have been a social worker in Charleroi for 20 years and I never heard anything about discrimination against LGBT people. That was not the case 20 years ago. When I was looking for a flat with my partner, we just said that we work together. Today it is really less problematic. Times have changed.” (ULB-I-7)

For most of the LGBT interviewees, however, especially those who express their sexual orientation more visibly, the school years were very difficult. The relations with other students, teachers and school staff in general were problematic. Some report experiences of direct or indirect harassment and describe a general homophobic atmosphere at school:

"I remember the stress of the gym, the lack of privacy around the other boys, the remarks on gays ... It was impossible to be yourself, to exist". (ULB-I-8)

Homophobic attitudes were shared by some teachers and staff. For all the respondents, it was almost impossible to seek support from the school when they faced harassment. Some members of staff were even hostile:

"At school, it was a disaster. The director and several teachers did not want to help me when I had to face problems of harassment or violence. Two teachers tried to defend me but they were unsuccessful. My lesbianism was even discussed in the class council. According to the teachers, I was a very bad example and I incited the other girls to adopt the same attitudes" (ULB-I-14).

It was also difficult to find outside support, as there was no specific LGBT NGO network and youth structures were not really aware or well informed about LGBT issues, especially transgender.

For many respondents, this seems to be less the case today. First, young people can find a lot of information on internet. Second, information is more readily available at school on LGBT issues, in classes such as morals or as part of the Education Programme on Affective and Sexual Life at school (EVRAS).²⁰ Under pressure from LGBT organisations, the theme of sexual diversity has been included and a leaflet produced that includes the subjects of LGBT, homophobia and transphobia in training for EVRAS trainers.

Apart from schools, LG respondents do not refer to additional difficulties in their access to services. Some have been in contact with the city council and/or the local police and consider that they were treated well. The notable exception is once again transgender people, who experience difficult relationships in almost all services, in Charleroi and elsewhere.

A working life without major problems

Being LGB does not seem to be problematic in working life in Charleroi. Those interviewed have easily found jobs and do not think that their sexual orientation could be a problem in this respect. Most did not feel the need to express their sexual orientation at work. Some who have been working for a long time in the same place have finally come out at work without problems.

²⁰ In June 2012, the French Community's Decree on the mission of teaching in primary and secondary education was amended in order to include education in emotional, social and sexual life (EVRAS) as a mandatory subject.

This opinion is shared by the regional Walloon organisation for employment and vocational training (FOREM) in Charleroi. In the framework of its actions, the FOREM organises training and awareness raising on anti-discrimination for employees directly in contact with the public looking for a job or training. An Equality and Diversity department was set up in 2008 to raise diversity awareness among different categories of employees such as front-line staff, trainers, businesses and advisors.

During training sessions, the staff has the opportunity to present cases of discrimination they have encountered. According to ULB-S-5, employees are mainly confronted with discrimination based on age, origin or gender in the framework of employment. Homophobia and transphobia are not frequently discussed during training and awareness-raising sessions and people usually have no questions about LGBT issues.

Lastly, concerning the FOREM's internal situation, an assessment was carried out within the organisation in 2008. The results have shown that LGBT employees are well accepted within this body (ULB-S-5).

Most of the LG interviewees were not exposed to discrimination or harassment at work and feel at ease at work:

“I have worked in several schools in Charleroi. I never felt that my sexual orientation was a problem for my colleagues. I had a couple of free discussions with them about my homosexuality... I am more at ease in Charleroi than in Brussels in a work context” (ULB-I-4).

“At work, 20 years ago, when a colleague was gay or lesbian, it was a real subject of conversation. Nowadays, one does not even speak about it.” (ULB-I-7)

Respondents did not report any harassment experiences at work with the notable exception of a gay who works in Brussels and had a very bad relationship with his manager. He was insulted several times without any reaction or support from the company even though he had tried to get some reaction (ULB-I-11). However, he did not complain, thinking that it would not be useful and feared being sacked.

For some respondents, however, homophobia and transphobia can be present in certain working environments. Some have encountered homophobic attitudes or speech among fellow workers but usually not directed against them in particular.

“I have heard of people who are rejected at the workplace, among their fellow workers, for example, which is seen as a very male environment. If they say they are gay, it's a catastrophe, they are mistreated.” (ULB-I-4).

“My workers made fun of two young men going hand in hand. I reacted and they didn't say anything afterwards.” (ULB-I-10).

For few respondents, working-class people are more prone to homophobic speech or attitudes ((ULB-I-7 and 10). But they do not take this to mean that working-class people are

more homophobic than other categories. It means that they are violent in their expression. At the same time, they are tolerant with people with whom they are in contact. Once again, the results of the survey show clearly that the majority of the population of Charleroi is happy to be in contact with LGB people. Indeed, 62.7% declared that they are or would be happy to have gay, bisexual or transgender persons in their family, group of friends or fellow workers ²¹ and 72% are totally at ease when they are in contact with LGB people.

An active social life

Being LGBT does not constitute an obstacle to belonging to different networks. On the contrary, most of the LGBT respondents are very active socially. They are or have been involved in political parties or NGOs linked or not to LGBT issues. Two have political responsibilities at the local level. None has any problem in terms of acceptance of their sexual orientation in this context.

Many of the respondents frequently use social networks and groups, mainly to get information on LGBT issues. The youngest respondents use them to have frequent exchanges of ideas with LGBT people. For trans people, the NGO network and social networks dedicated to trans issues are both fundamental as they have a real need for a place where they can get information, express themselves and discuss with other trans people.

Some of them have participated or participate in the gay pride in Brussels or other events linked to LGBT people in Brussels or other cities in Wallonia, such as les *fiertés namuroises* in Namur, which is a city next to Charleroi.

These results are in line with the survey results showing that the presence of LGBTs is accepted and that there is clear recognition of their rights by the population of Charleroi. Respondents were massively in favour of equality of rights between LGBT people and the rest of the population (89.4% completely agree and 5.3% agree) and the majority said people should be free to express their gender and sexuality (87.2% totally agree and 7.4% agree).

The vast majority is also in favour of same-sex marriage (77.7 % totally agree and 5.3% agree). Respondents are more divided over same-sex couples having or adopting children (51.1% totally agree and 17.4% agree).

The population of Charleroi is also accustomed to being in touch with LGB people, with 85.6% of the respondents saying that they have LGBT friends or fellow workers. Fewer state that they have LGBT family members (39.6%).

²¹ 48,9% of the respondents totally agree with this idea, while 13,8% agree.

When it comes to their feelings in their relations with LGBT people, 72% declare that they are totally comfortable when they interact with LGBs. Asked whether they feel comfortable when they see same-sex couples displaying affection in public, 55.9% say that are totally comfortable in such a situation. However, only 48.9% are totally happy to have LGBT persons in their families, group of friends or fellow workers.

This is even worse when they interact with transgender people, since only 40.2% feel comfortable when interacting with them. This result is similar to those obtained in the “Beyond the box” study that measured the attitude of the Belgian population regarding sexism, homophobia and transphobia. Respondents were relatively tolerant concerning lesbians and to a lesser extent with transgender people.²²

It seems that the people of Charleroi accept the presence of LGBTs and are in favour of the recognition of their rights but do not feel completely at ease in their interactions with them, especially with trans people.

From this point of view, the survey results are quite similar to the results obtained in a general survey conducted recently in Belgium on the acceptance of homosexuals and bisexuals in daily life.²³ According to this survey, homo and bisexuals are accepted by the Belgian population, which has a positive image of this population. However, there is a phenomenon of tolerance but not of complete acceptance. The same can be said concerning the population of Charleroi.

In addition, it seems that LGBT people are tolerated in the public space as long as they are not too visible. It should be noted that most of the gays who were interviewed consider that they have a supposedly male appearance. In their view, this may be one of the reasons they were not subject to harassment in the city. In contrast, all the trans people interviewed said they do not feel secure in Charleroi and live in large cities where they feel they can express their sexual orientation freely without having the feeling that they are exposed to danger and aggression.

Construction of personal identity and self-esteem: a long process

For almost all the LGBT respondents, the construction of their personal identity and self-esteem was a long and solitary process. Adolescence was particularly difficult, due to

²² See “Beyond the Box”. The study was conducted at the request of the State Secretary for Equal Opportunity of the Brussels-Capital Region, the Centre for Equal Opportunities and the Fight against Racism and the Institute for Gender Equality (http://igvm-iefh.belgium.be/fr/publications/beyond_the_box).

²³ The survey was conducted among 1,000 Belgians aged between 18 and 75 years at the request of UNIA. It focused on the social perception of homo/bisexuality and attitudes towards LGB people. (<http://unia.be/fr/publications-et-statistiques/publications/lhomophobie-en-belgique-anno-2016-rapport-de-recherche>).

isolation and the impossibility to develop a self-identity. For most, it was impossible to talk with their parents about their feelings:

“During this period, I was unable to talk about my sexual orientation, even with my father. I thought that I would spend my life hiding my orientation. I even thought of getting married to a Catholic woman!” (ULB-I-4)

According to a specialist in transgender issues, it is more problematic to rebuild the self-confidence of people living in small cities than in large ones. In large cities, people have access to information and can find tools to help them build a positive image of themselves, which is more difficult in small or medium-sized cities where people sometimes cannot easily access internet or information centres because of mobility issues. (ULB-S-10).

Trans people are particularly isolated and have a very negative self-image. Due to difficulties accessing information on trans issues, they often lack proper information and have a very negative image of trans people. As a result, they think that they have psychological problems and they perpetuate psychiatric beliefs and psychiatric discourse on trans people.

As one of the interviewees said:

“There was nothing, nothing at all. We were completely alone. I was terribly afraid of myself... I had a very negative sexuality, and I drank a lot... I was very aggressive with women because I deeply wanted to be one of them and it was prohibited.” (ULB-I-8)

“When I was a teenager, I did not exist. Trans-identities did not exist. It was not possible to conceive that a man could be a woman at his birth. When I was in Charleroi in my teen-age years, I was in a phase of conscious masculinization but could not fully accept it. I then went through re-feminization phases because it was more comfortable. I then went out with a boy because I found it so much easier at home, in the street, everywhere.” (ULB-I-6)

For most of the respondents, the post-adolescence period was much easier. This period usually corresponds to a change of environment as most went to another city - bigger than Charleroi - to continue their education. They suddenly discovered that it was possible to express their sexual orientation without fear of being rejected or stigmatised. This was experienced as a kind of deliverance and after this step, they were able to come back to Charleroi and come out to their families.

For most, contacts with other LGBT people as well as the possibility to talk about their sexual orientation with friends or relations freely were essential to building a positive image of themselves. For transgender people, being in contact with specialised NGOs is vital due to the scarcity of information and the general negative representation of trans people in the media and in society as a whole.

6. Inclusion, exclusion, and intersectionality

As already mentioned, Charleroi is characterized by a high rate of poverty and unemployment and an important migrant population. Among all these categories, one finds LGBT people who often experience multiple discrimination based on their sexual orientation and other grounds.

Poverty and sexual orientation: being homeless and LGBT

According to social workers, there are many homeless people in Charleroi who are concentrated in specific areas. A LGB population has been identified among them. According to ULB-S-9, who works with those in a very precarious situation, this population is often homeless and has an accumulation of problems, including financial and sometimes mental health disorders. Among this population, LG people do not hide their sexual orientation, but do not talk about it. Nor do they complain about specific difficulties linked to their sexual orientation, possibly because they adopt a strategy of invisibility to avoid problems, or possibly because they are not exposed to homophobia.

However, like the rest of the homeless, they have difficulties accessing health services, especially hospitals. The main access to health for the homeless is street medicine. They can also be in touch with the NGO SIDA-IST Charleroi Mons, which among other responsibilities, is in charge of AIDS prevention and screening.

LGBT migrant and asylum seekers: an urgent need for specific support

According to ULB-S-8, in the migrant population of Charleroi, especially people from sub-Saharan and North Africa, homosexuality is usually a taboo. As a result, LGBT members of this population feel terribly isolated and often need to talk about their sexual orientation, especially women.

Among these, LGBT asylum seekers are a particularly vulnerable category. They often fear discrimination by reception centre staff and other asylum seekers. As a result, they do not easily express their sexual orientation even if they need specific aid, especially concerning their asylum request, precisely based on their sexual orientation. Several LGBT organisations in Belgium are specialised in LGBT asylum issues. They offer support and legal aid to asylum

seekers. However, it is not easy for asylum seekers living in Charleroi to be in contact with these organisations which are in large towns like Brussels or Antwerp. Therefore, information on the existence of these organisations should be disseminated more widely among the migrant population and social actors in contact with them.

Trans people applying for asylum encounter specific problems. According to ULB-I-10, some reception centres for asylum seekers are in remote areas in Belgium. They are not prepared to receive transgender people adequately as they are usually very ignorant about trans issues:

“They imagined that they would accommodate two drag queens. It was far from the reality! They thought they should take care of all the processing operations, etc. It was not the case at all.” (ULB-I-10)

Again, people working in reception centres for asylum seekers need training to become more familiar with LGBT issues.

Being LGBT and a woman: doubly invisible in the city

Among the LGBT population, lesbians are not particularly visible in Charleroi. When people talk about bars, they often refer to gay bars. When it comes to public services, especially health, it is symptomatic that lesbians are not very present. At the national level, according to ULB-S-2, they are less likely to complain about sexual orientation than gays (124 men compared with 23 women in 2015):

“This population is more difficult to reach because they are much less visible, with much less formal networks, and are also less visible politically. We hear very little about lesbians, and this also holds among migrant women”. (ULB-S-9)

“I think women are so used to being discriminated against for various reasons that they cannot identify it when it is on the basis of sexual orientation or gender. Or they do not see the point of complaining”. (ULB-S-2)

Several interviewees believe that women are less in touch with health services than men because they think that men are more exposed. As a result, they do not protect themselves appropriately and are not well informed on health issues.

The need to respect diversity within the LGBT population

Some respondents point out that discrimination can also exist within the LGBT community itself. This is the case for overweight gays who feel rejected by the rest of the gay population. This is why one of the respondent has created a specific club for them. The idea was to create a place where people can meet and discuss without being ostracised by other LGBT people:

“I never wanted to participate in gay pride because I knew that, if there was a group of 15 large men participating, everyone would have been made fun of, including LGBT people themselves who do not like the overweight and have the cult of the thin and muscular body... When I was in Berlin or in the United States, they did not let me into LGBT discos because, according to them, I was too big » (ULB-I-5).

The NGO Genres Pluriels is very much aware of intolerant attitudes within the LGBT population itself. It therefore asks its members to adopt respectful attitudes regarding other minorities such as migrants and to accept all forms of diversity. For them, the NGO should be a place to learn how to be open-minded about all sorts of attitudes and behaviours of different minorities.

It therefore seems necessary to develop information on LGBT issues, which includes all the sub-groups within the LGBT population. The issue of intersectionality should also be carefully addressed by the Rainbow House in Charleroi. It is vital that the LGBT population in all its diversity can find support and adequate information.

7. Conclusions

While Charleroi appears at first sight to be not very gay-friendly, the results of the study show that the LGBT population is well accepted in the city. The citizens of Charleroi are often in contact with LGBT people and the idea of having specific LGBT areas within the city is rejected both by the LGBT people and by the rest of the population. The citizens of Charleroi are also very tolerant concerning the recognition of equal rights to LGBT people and same-sex marriage, 13 years after the adoption of the law.

According to the LGB population itself, living in Charleroi is not problematic. They do not feel the need to have their own territories and they feel secure in most parts of the city. They are not particularly exposed to discrimination or harassment either in the employment field, or in access to and use of social and local public services. This population is also very active in the local political and social fields. This description, however, concerns mainly lesbians and gays, as transgender people have a very negative experience in the city where they do not feel secure at all and where they experience discrimination at schools and harassment.

However, while there is tolerance of LGB people, it seems that there is not complete acceptance by the population of Charleroi. LGBs seem to be tolerated in public spaces as long as they are not too visible. The population agrees with the recognition of LGBT rights but is not totally at ease in developing interpersonal relationships with LGB people. The situation is worse with transgender people.

There is therefore a clear need for information on LGBT issues to be disseminated among the population as a whole and for support for LGBT people. The creation of the local Rainbow House at the heart of the city is a step in the right direction as it symbolises local authorities' support for LGBT people living or working in the city. The expectations are high because the LGBT population as well as social actors have long been waiting for the creation of a structure able to respond to various needs.

The purpose of the following best practices and recommendations is to suggest responses to these expectations. They emerged from the study and were identified through the interviews and the focus groups. Since Charleroi is in a phase of building a LGBT network, there are more recommendations than good practice.

Examples of best practice include several actions led by the local police of Charleroi, such as including anti-discrimination in the police force internal rules, and requiring policemen to signal incidents of discrimination systematically in police reports when they occur.

In the field of education, the workshops organised conjointly by the NGOs GriS Wallonia and CHEFF for schools also constitute a good practice. They aim to prevent prejudice and stereotypes based on sexual orientation. The NGO organises workshops based on the personal experiences of gay, lesbian and bisexual volunteers. They are specially trained to answer all questions asked by students. Volunteers work in pairs, most often a male and female team. This approach allows young people to put a face on a reality that sometimes scares or intimidates them and this could possibly help them clear up any misconceptions they have had about homosexuality and bisexuality.

In the sector of health, the work done by the NGO SIDA-IST in Charleroi is worth mentioning. Through their prevention and screening actions for Sexually Transmitted Infections including AIDS, this organisation is in contact with a wide range of the population of Charleroi, from young people to LGBTs, migrants and the homeless. The NGO develops a transversal approach to respond adequately to the various needs of the LGBT population in its diversity, including asylum seekers, migrants and the homeless.

In terms of recommendations, firstly, it is strongly recommended to increase the visibility of LGBT people in the city, without neglecting any of its components, whether L, G, B or T, and with emphasis on lesbians and transgender people who are usually the least visible among the invisibles.

To increase the visibility of LGBTs, it is recommended to invite the new Rainbow House of Charleroi to participate in the main events organised yearly in the city, the so-called Big Five: carnival, flea market, summer activities, French Community feast and Christmas market.

A specific event should also be organised in Charleroi for the International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia, such as an event in a public space (in the Park Reine Astrid for instance) with music and shows.

It could also be interesting to organise events together with other cities in the Walloon Region such as Mons, Namur and Liège, to exchange good practice and information on LGBT issues.

With regards to the police, it is strongly recommended to propose training for policemen in order to improve their awareness of how to serve LGBTs appropriately in the police station when they are victims of homophobia or transphobia. This could be planned in accordance with the federal equality body UNIA and the judiciary.

It is also necessary to better organise and coordinate the relationships between the different local police forces working in different cities in Wallonia in order to exchange information and best practices.

As regards the media, it could be interesting to develop the visibility of LGBT people in their day-to-day life, showing them at home, in their neighbourhoods or at work, for example, through videos broadcast on TV channels, radio and websites.

Local media should also turn to the Rainbow House as a source of information on LGBT issues in order to use suitable vocabulary and concepts, especially concerning transgender people.

It has also been suggested that a specific ethical charter be drawn up and signed by journalists. The aim of the charter would be to invite journalists to use a proper and respectful vocabulary when speaking about LGBT people and to avoid reproducing stereotypes and prejudice, especially concerning trans people, by using inappropriate vocabulary.

Finally, it is suggested to propose specific training on LGBT issues for local media, including the use of proper vocabulary. The ethical charter could be signed by journalists at the end of the training session.

Regarding education, it is necessary to better inform teachers, staff and psycho-social centres for young people on LGBT issues with proper and adequate information, especially on transgender issues, which are still dominated by prejudice and stereotypes. The Rainbow House should be identified by social actors in the field of youth, education and health as the key place for information.

It is also suggested to create a student NGO dedicated to LGBT people, like those that exist in several cities in Wallonia such as Mons, Liège, Namur and Louvain La Neuve. The objectives of the CHEFF are, among others, to develop student groups related to the diversity of sexual orientation and gender identities within the Wallonia-Brussels Federation and to unite student groups.

In addition, sexism in the media and school textbooks should be eradicated as sexism is a strong vector of homo and transphobia based on the reproduction of prejudice and stereotypes on women and men.

Lastly, vocational training on homo and transphobia should be implemented widely in different training centres for social workers, policemen and health workers. The training on LGBT issues developed by the LGBT NGO Tels Quels is a very good example. This organisation is used to train future social workers. Their goal is to initiate future social workers to LGBT issues and to inform them about the various LGBT networks in Belgium.

Concerning NGOs, it is essential to ensure significant financial support to the Rainbow House of Charleroi. The house should be the reference centre for information on LGBT issues for individuals as well as organisations. It should be able to steer people to the

appropriate service when needed, such as specialists for asylum seekers, for instance. It is also necessary to strengthen the networking of all social actors involved in LGBT issues to address intersectional LGBT issues appropriately.

The Rainbow House has a key role to play in this respect as a coordinator of all the different actors. It should be the place to coordinate all the available information needed by LGBT people in different sectors such as health, employment, leisure activities and social services. The Rainbow House should also be the place to find information on how to complain when people are victims of homo or transphobia. Close collaboration should be developed with the local UNIA representative, the police and the judiciary. To sum up, through the Rainbow House, people should be able to get information on LGBT and related issues.

In regard to health services, the key point is information, because people are still under-informed on prevention. It is therefore recommended to create a specific space where people living in remote areas without easy access to information can find information and support. Information should also be more focused on lesbians, as they seem under-informed on health issues. Lesbians are exposed to sexually transmitted diseases but do not adopt preventive attitudes because they have integrated the common discourse on sex without risks for lesbians. At the same time, specific projects on Lesbian health are rare because public authorities argue that they need specific data on lesbians which currently do not exist.

It is also suggested to implement at the local level a specific **ethics code for health services and hospitals**, similar to the code created by the NGO Genres Pluriels for a hospital in Brussels which encourages staff to use appropriate language and attitudes towards LGBT people. The Code has been developed together with doctors to improve understanding of the needs of the transgender patients. The aim is to ensure respectful and appropriate behaviour by staff in their relations with LGBT people.

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Annex I: Individual interviewees

No	Category	Gender	Age	Education	Occ	Origin	Ethn/Rel	Marital	Dependence	Years
ULB-I-1	G	M	42	Higher	2	Belgian	None	Single	None	42
ULB-I-2	G	M	40	Higher	2	Belgian	None	Single	None	40
ULB-I-3	T	M	28	Higher	2	Belgian	None	Single	None	18
ULB-I-4	G	M	34	Higher	2	Belgian	None	Single	None	30
ULB-I-5	G	M	53	Higher	1	Belgian	None	Married	None	53
ULB-I-6	G	M	23	Second	3	French	None	With partner	None	3
ULB-I-7	G	M	43	Higher	2	Belgian	None	With partner	None	43
ULB-I-8	T	F	48	Higher	2	Belgian	Italian	Married	Children	24
ULB-I-9	T	M	27	Higher	2	Belgian	None	Single	None	20
ULB-I-10	G	M	58	Second	3	Belgian	none	Married	None	58
ULB-I-11	G	M	35	second	3	Belgian	None	With partner	None	
ULB-I-12	L	F	22	Second		French		Single	None	22
ULB-I-13	L	F	25	Higher		Belgian		With partner	None	25
ULB-I-14	L	F	25	Higher		Belgian		With partner	None	25

Annex II: Stakeholder interviewees

No	Role	Service	Comments
ULB S 1	Social worker and psychotherapist	Tels Quels http://telsquels.be	In charge of the implementation of the new Rainbow House in Charleroi
ULB S 2	Legal expert in LGBT issues	UNIA - Federal Equal Opportunities Centre http://unia.be/en	In charge of the fight against discrimination
ULB S 3	Diversity and equal opportunities Official at the City Council	Charleroi City Council http://www.charleroi.be/node/2923#sthash.1TGJW5MU.dpuf	Scope: Family, disability, Health, social integration, equal opportunities
ULB S 4	Communication	Rainbow House Federation for Wallonia Region http://arcenciel-wallonie.be/web/acw/federation.html	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex umbrella at the regional level. Political, social, cultural activities
ULB S 5	In charge of diversity and equal opportunities issues	FOREM www.leforem.be	Wallonia public service in charge of employment and occupational training
ULB S 6	Police inspector & Contact person	Police of Charleroi, http://www.policelocale.be/5330/home.html	
ULB S 7	Permanent educational	CHEFF, http://www.lescheff.be GRiS, http://www.griswallonie.be	LGBT Student NGO LGBT educational structure working with schools
ULB S 8	Two social workers	SIDA-IST Charleroi Mons, http://www.sida-charleroi Mons.be	Health Prevention Centre
ULB S 9	Director	Service Prévention Assuétudes du CPAS de Charleroi http://www.cpascharleroi.be/sante-mentale/prevention-assuetudes.html	Preventing addiction Centre specialised on drugs
ULB S 10	Psychologist Counselling and GPs' training programmes	Genres Pluriels, www.genrespluriels.be	Transgender issues

Annex III: Focus groups

List participants of the Focus groups of Stakeholders

N°	Role	Organisation
1	Legal expert from UNIA at the local level	Local point of Charleroi UNIA – Equality body Federal Centre
2	General inspector and contact person against discrimination	Police of Charleroi
3	Responsible for the implementation of the Rainbow House in Charleroi	Tels Quels NGO
4	Educational Responsible	Gris (Education on LGBT issues at school) CHEFF (LGBT student NGO)
5 & 6	Diversity and equal opportunities Official at the Charleroi City Council	Charleroi City Council
7	Social worker	SIDA-IST Charleroi Mons (prevention of HIV and STM)

List participant of the focus groups of LGBT people

No	Category	Gender	Age	Education	Occupation	Origin
1	G	M	34	Higher	2	Belgian
2	G	M	40	Second	3	Belgian
3	G	M	43	Higher	2	Belgian
4	T	M	27	Higher	2	Belgian

Annex IV: Survey

Do you live and/or work or study in Charleroi?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	91,4%	85
No	6,5%	6
Other	2,2%	2
		4
<i>answered question</i>		93
<i>skipped question</i>		4

How long have you been living and/or working/studying in Charleroi ?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Less than six months	3,1%	3
Between six months and a year	3,1%	3
Between 1 and 5 year(s)	10,4%	10
More than 5 years	83,3%	80
<i>answered question</i>		96
<i>skipped question</i>		1

Do you have acquaintances, work colleagues and/or friends who are gay, lesbian, bi-or transgender?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	85,6%	83
No	12,4%	12
I do not know	2,1%	2
Other (please specify)		0
<i>answered question</i>		97
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Do you have family members who are gay, lesbian, bi-or transgender?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	39,6%	38
No	55,2%	53
I do not know	5,2%	5
Other (please specify)		0
<i>answered question</i>		96
<i>skipped question</i>		1

What is your gender?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Woman	63,4%	59
Man	36,6%	34
Other (please specify)		2
<i>answered question</i>		93
<i>skipped question</i>		4

Sexual orientation		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Heterosexual	87,2%	82
Gay/lesbian	11,7%	11
Bi-sexual	1,1%	1
Other (please specify)		3
<i>answered question</i>		94
<i>skipped question</i>		3

How old are you?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
16-24	19,6%	19
25-34	26,8%	26
35-44	24,7%	24
45-54	13,4%	13
55-64	15,5%	15
More than 65	0,0%	0
<i>answered question</i>		97
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender(LGBT) should have the same rights as other people		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
1	1,1%	1
2	1,1%	1
3	3,2%	3
4	5,3%	5
5	89,4%	84
<i>answered question</i>		94
<i>skipped question</i>		3

Legal protection that apply to gay and lesbian people should also apply to transgender and intersex people

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
1	1,1%	1
2	1,1%	1
3	7,4%	7
4	5,3%	5
5	85,1%	80
<i>answered question</i>		94
<i>skipped question</i>		3

I believe people should be free to express their gender and sexuality no matter what they are

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
1	1,1%	1
2	0,0%	0
3	4,3%	4
4	7,4%	7
5	87,2%	82
<i>answered question</i>		94
<i>skipped question</i>		3

People of the same sex should be able to get married

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
1	3,2%	3
2	3,2%	3
3	10,6%	10
4	5,3%	5
5	77,7%	73
<i>answered question</i>		94
<i>skipped question</i>		3

People of the same sex should be able to have or to adopt children

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
1	5,4%	5
2	3,3%	3
3	22,8%	21
4	17,4%	16
5	51,1%	47
<i>answered question</i>		92

skipped question

5

Hate crime against lesbian, gay, bi- or transgender people should be persecuted more severely

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
1	1,1%	1
2	0,0%	0
3	9,7%	9
4	17,2%	16
5	72,0%	67
<i>answered question</i>		93
<i>skipped question</i>		4

Discriminations against gays, lesbians and transgender people is a major social problem in Charleroi

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
1	6,4%	6
2	10,6%	10
3	56,4%	53
4	16,0%	15
5	10,6%	10
<i>answered question</i>		94
<i>skipped question</i>		3

I am or would be happy to have gay, bisexual or transgender person within my family, group or friends or colleagues

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
1	2,1%	2
2	0,0%	0
3	35,1%	33
4	13,8%	13
5	48,9%	46
<i>answered question</i>		94
<i>skipped question</i>		3

I am comfortable when I interact with lesbian, gay and bisexual people

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
1	2,2%	2
2	0,0%	0

3	8,6%	8
4	17,2%	16
5	72,0%	67
<i>answered question</i>		93
<i>skipped question</i>		4
I am comfortable when I interact with transgender people		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
1	2,2%	2
2	1,1%	1
3	34,8%	32
4	21,7%	20
5	40,2%	37
<i>answered question</i>		92
<i>skipped question</i>		5

I am comfortable when I see same sex couples displaying affection in public (kissing, going hand in hand, etc.)		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
1	3,2%	3
2	7,5%	7
3	14,0%	13
4	19,4%	18
5	55,9%	52
<i>answered question</i>		93
<i>skipped question</i>		4

Charleroi should have leisure spaces for LGBT people (bars, clubs, etc.)		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
1	7,5%	7
2	3,2%	3
3	39,8%	37
4	26,9%	25
5	22,6%	21
<i>answered question</i>		93
<i>skipped question</i>		4

I believe Charleroi is a LGBT friendly city

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
1	8,6%	8
2	16,1%	15
3	58,1%	54
4	14,0%	13
5	3,2%	3
<i>answered question</i>		93
<i>skipped question</i>		4

What is your religion?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Catholic	21,3%	20
Christian	8,5%	8
Muslim	4,3%	4
Jewish	0,0%	0
No religion	66,0%	62
Other (Please specify)		1
<i>answered question</i>		94
<i>skipped question</i>		3

What is your highest educational qualification?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
No formal qualification	0,0%	0
Primary school	0,0%	0
Secondary school	23,9%	21
Vocational education	13,6%	12
Undergraduate degree	38,6%	34
Postgraduate (masters/PhD)	23,9%	21
Other (please specify)		6
<i>answered question</i>		88
<i>skipped question</i>		9

Which of the following groups most adequately describes your ethnic origin?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Belgian	81,5%	75
Italian	8,7%	8
French	2,2%	2
Moroccan	2,2%	2
Turkish	0,0%	0
Nord-African (except Morocco)	0,0%	0
Sub-Saharan African	5,4%	5
Would rather no say	0,0%	0
Other (please specify)		2
<i>answered question</i>		92
<i>skipped question</i>		5

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City Report on homo- and transphobia (Girona)

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1. Introduction and description of the particular city and neighbourhoods

Girona is a city located in the Northeast of Catalonia, at the confluence of the rivers Ter, Onyar, Galligants and Güell. It has a population of 97.000 people. It is the capital of the province (named Province of Girona as well), and therefore it houses numerous provincial services, such as a reference hospital, a public university -the only one in the province-, and other institutional delegations. The main economic activities are linked to services, tourism and other commercial exchanges. The income per capita in Girona is 34.400€, that exceeds by more than 6.500€ the average of Catalunya (27.832€)¹

Girona is made up of 9 different neighbourhoods, most of which consist on several sectors: Centre (Barri Vell, Mercadal, and Carme), Eixample (Sant Narcís, Eixample Nord, and Eixample Sud), East (Sant Daniel, Torre Gironella, Pedreres, Font de la Pólvora, Vila-roja, and Gavarres), Mas Xirgu, Montjuïc, Nord (Pedret, Pont Major, Muntanya de Campdorà, and Pla de Campdorà), West (La Devesa-Güell, Sant Ponç, Fontajau, Taialà, Germans Sàbat, Domeny Nord, and Domeny Sud), Santa Eugènia (Hortes, Santa Eugènia de Ter, and Can Gibert del Pla), and South (Palau, l'Avellaneda, Montilivi i la Creueta).



Image 1: Picture of the view of Onyar River in the city center

¹ 2014, Official Statistics website of Catalonia <http://www.idescat.cat/pub/?id=aec&n=356&lang=es>
(Revised December 23, 2016)

The city of Girona has great architectural heritage, and it is home of many medieval buildings and streets, which are still in use. Several historical sites, like the medieval cathedral, the stonemade streets or the houses hanging over river Onyar have made Girona a touristic point. For this reason, the city receives hundreds of thousands of tourists -both national and international- every year.

In relation to sexual liberation activities, Girona has got very few LGBT organizations. In 2012 the city council created the Local LGTB Council as a consulting organ about LGTB issues. Girona has different associations and NGOs working against homo- and transphobia, but not many participants in each one of them. In addition, the city has a business openly friendly towards LGBT people, but they are very incipient. Girona is also a member of the LGTBI Network of Towns.

However, as will be further explored in the analysis, Girona offers a rather conservative framework where LGBT people can feel a pressure for not showing a non-hegemonic way of living and loving. Many participants -though not all of them- report a difficulty in coming out to their parents, and several homophobic attacks and discriminative attitudes are referred. Although the local council is undergoing some political actions towards equality, most of the interviewed LGBT people feel that it is not enough, and most of them report that they cannot walk in the streets holding hands with their partners as comfortably as they would in a bigger or more anonymous city. LGBT people have no visibility in the city and non-heterosexuality is usually hidden. The discourses and representations of diversity in the city are reduced to special days such as Pride Day (June 28th), Anti-homophobic day (May 17th), or December 1st (AIDS day). Nevertheless, sexual and gender identity diversity are not present in the city's daily life.



Image 2: Pedestrian crossing in Girona painted with the colors of the rainbow, painted on June 28th, 2015.

The fact that Girona is only 100 km away from Barcelona contributes to a mutual influence regarding lives of LGBT people. Many Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, and Trans* move to Barcelona to openly experience their sexual option or gender identity. This phenomenon is known as sexile, that is, migration mainly because of sexual or gender issues to the big city (Guzman, 1997). Also, some of the LGBT people from Girona spend the weekend in Barcelona or go there to hang out in LGBT nightlife. The LGBT diaspora influences significantly in city life and contributes to making new significates of sexuality in the small city. LGBT people also have particular dynamics arbitrated by different factors such as the mutual social control, the difficult of anonymity, class, gender, origin and people's the expectations and priorities, among others. However, although this may look like Girona is presented as a hostile place for LGBT people, there are many other factors inherent to the small size of the city which also constitute a care and support system for most of its inhabitants, regardless of their sexual orientation. That is to say, even though Girona arises as a place where non heterosexuality is not usually very visible, its LGBT citizens can still feel accepted and accompanied by peers as members of the community of Girona.

2. Fieldwork undertaken

The sample selection for this research has had several processes, which have been quite different for the survey and for the interviews and the focus group. Finding participants has not been an easy job, and in the process of sample selection we have encountered some resistances which account for some of the processes that we have later realized. For instance, some of the interviewees feared exposing themselves if they participated, and some others had doubts about the impact of the research. Furthermore, we also realized that the gender of the interviewer highly influenced the motivation of some of some participants. Finally, there was a concern among some trans*² people about feeling examined and fearing having their words twisted.

First of all, as it is aforementioned, Girona lacks a strong, present LGBT association network. There are currently four LGBT associations, but even though it was a good starting point, it didn't really offer a proper arena in which to focus our search for participants neither LGBT people nor stakeholders. Also, one of this organizations, self-defined as autonomous, refused to participate in the research because they stay away of institutions as a policy.

Hence, we started by interviewing the president of the aforementioned association, which, besides being a great start, proved very useful in terms of learning what stakeholders were important in Girona at the moment. Some of the people who we met through this first contact led us to other participants and stakeholders, configuring this way a snowball effect.

However, we didn't find enough people through this snowball effect. At this moment, we also started looking around for LGBTI people who might have known, at the same time that we contacted local authorities and a police officer so they could participate as stakeholders too.

² The term "trans*" is going to be used in this document to refer to the myriad of identities who don't fall into the category of cis gendered (who identifies with the assigned gender) (Tompkins, 2014).

It turned out that some of our acquaintances, or acquaintances of people we knew, were LGBTI people living in Girona, so we could count on some more participants. This, however, wasn't enough.

At this point, we had already conducted some interviews, and we had already learnt some of the specificities, spaces and ways of the city of Girona. We talked to the owner of the local gay friendly bar, who introduced us to some other people who he thought might be interested in participating in our research, and some of them did.

Here, we had already interviewed a good percentage of the participants, and we were still looking for more. We then realized that while we had many gay and lesbian participants, we only had one bisexual woman, two trans* people, and no bisexual men. We started looking for more bisexual and trans* people to interview, but we couldn't find any more. In this sense, finding bisexual men in Girona turned out to be the most difficult part. Finally, we could interview the 25 target number of participants. Although we are sure that the bisexual men exist in Girona, we presume that the lack of visibilization of bisexuality in general and men bisexuality in particular made up for an added difficulty in finding participants.

Curiously, although it was pretty difficult to find all the LGBT participants that we needed, meeting with stakeholders was easier. Most of them were eager to collaborate and easily found a spot for us, and when preparing the focus groups, it was much easier to make up a group of stakeholders than a group of LGBT people.

When conducting interviews and focus groups, we have encountered some problems, that though not big, still relevant. On the one hand, we found the proposed identity categories (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans*) to be too tight for some of the participants. Even though some of them did identify with one of these labels, others opted out of the classification and gave alternative ones, or agreed to a category even though they don't fully identify with them. Hence, we agree that we should reconsider identity categories as such.

Another problem that we have encountered in conducting the interviews is the different cultural and educational level of the participants and the positions they wanted to portray. For instance, the interviews conducted with the politicians took a form similar of a political discourse, and it was difficult to deepen into the participant's opinions beyond her institutional position.

Nevertheless, there were was an element that made some of the conversations carried during interviews much deeper that they would have if this element hadn't been present. The interviewers' team was made up of three people, one of them an openly gay man. This help greatly when conducting the interviews with LGBT people because this quickly made the interviewee feel in a safe place, relate to the interviewer, and answer more elaborately.

Regarding the survey, we could count with the help of the City Council, who posted the survey in their website and circulated it so many people could answer it.

Concludingly, the most difficult part of the search for participants has been looking for less visible identities. However, once we started conducting interviews, it became more and more easier to find participants. Finally, although we succeeded in interviewing 15 LGBT

people, it was easier to get stakeholders to participate (11 Stakeholders). Regarding Focus groups, we had some more participants in the stakeholders group (8) than in the LGBT people group (5). Finally the survey was answered by 142 citizens.

3. Combating hate crimes based on LGBTphobia: the role of policies, legal measures and claim/complaints' mechanisms.

In general, most of the interviewees are happy about the legal measures which favour affirmative actions on LGBT rights -which are, as well, measures against homophobia- as well as specific measures to combat homophobia and hate crimes. Likewise, the survey carried during this piece of research reveals that 99.2% of surveyed people agree with equal rights for LGBT people and heterosexual people. However, some of the stakeholders point out that the Catalan law against LGBTphobia -which was approved just two years ago- is not completely deployed and, hence, that it cannot be used in its whole. Nevertheless, although there is a legal framework which supports the cases of homo and transphobic discrimination, only one of the participants has reported a hate and discrimination crime. From the regional police, they also report that there are very few reports and that the cases reported are not very consistent.

Discrimination actions can also be produced in the institutional field. In this sense, it is significant that P8, for instance, married her partner to be able to access marriage legal benefits, and nevertheless she and her wife suffered heavy institutional homophobia when they wanted to exercise her rights. In places with a strong presence of trained associations which are in constant dialogue with the institutions, these associations can act as mediators. However, in areas where there is not an articulation of the associations, it gets more difficult to find support tools.

Homophobic actions in the institutional framework can question the legitimacy of the whole of the institution, even if this is because often of the actions of a single public worker. This is why it is fundamental to be able to count on professionals who are trained and sensibilized on sexual diversity and gender identity.

Another important fact that the research let to is that many LGBT people in Girona are highly depoliticized. In this sense, some of the discourses present in the interviews show certain opposition to queer leisure and recognition spaces. Such discourse appears aligned with an elitist position which places intellectual aspects before sociocultural ones. In Girona there aren't specific services aimed at LGBT people. Recently, the City Council has ceded premises for the LGBT associations which will be managed by them. However, the services that will be provided in this premises are yet to be discussed.

The demands and needs of LGBT people are very diverse and vary according to different variables, such as age and gender, and specially the training and associative involvement of the interviewees. Those with more training and / or participating in LGBT associations are much more demanding and critical of the public services and of the way in which their needs are incorporated than people without it. In the health services there does not exist any specific program to assist LGBT people. In fact, some of the interviewees report that some health professionals change the tone and the service when they realize that their patients are gay or lesbian. However, trans* people report that they are well assisted by

their health professionals, although this is partly because they resort to the trans health project TRANSIT, in Barcelona. In this line, the case of the gynecological services with lesbians is paradigmatic, because most of the lesbian participants report that health staff don't take into account the particularity of the sexual option, and sometimes they have been made uncomfortable questions and they have been denied gynecological tests, on the basis that penetration is the action that determines the sexual relationship, although not all sexual relations are based on penetration, and that there are other sex games that also bring genitals and body flows in contact.

“The gynecologist told me that I did not need a cytology because I hadn't had sex. But I did have had sex, with another woman” (P14A).

Another participant also denounces the discriminatory and moralistic treatment of a midwife who attended during a gynecological visit, asking intimate questions to the point of disturbing the participant:

“Then [the midwife] began to ask questions, I mean, I don't know if they were pertinent. It's like... I got nervous. So I don't know if it was me, who felt weird, and... because she told me, “we are conducting a survey, I want to ask you some questions”. And then... I mean, she mixed it all. Then she went like: “but, do you use sexual toys?”. And I was like, what do you care? Well, I didn't quite understand how it was like. I didn't get it if it was because I had told her that I hook up with girls, you know?” (P2, pg 2).

On the other hand, it is necessary to emphasize that the schedules, dedication and forms of attention of the medical system make it difficult for professionals to detect specific needs. Only those with special sensitivity immediately detect particular needs. When professionals are also LGBT people or have a special awareness and training on issues of gender or sexuality, their focus on sexual diversity and their attention to the particularities of LGBT people is greatly improved.

"I think that, in general, to my knowledge, everything is pointing at these peculiarities, the different family models. The problem is that, at the end of the day, it depends mainly on each professional. You have a theory, or it needs to be in a certain way because theoretically or because of a law, and nobody argues it because the treatment needs to be egalitarian, normalized, but then it all changes according to each person's beliefs” (S2).

It must be highlighted that sometimes discrimination within institutions is attributed to structural or organizational reasons. This is the case of computer forms, especially in the case of pediatric primary health services:

"In our software, as we noted, [in the form] appears ‘mom and dad’, and there isn't the option of ‘mother-mother’ or ‘father-father’” (S2).

From one of the services which commonly works with LGBT people -as well as with non LGBT people- we can observe a sensitivity to work with LGTB people with an inclusive language that makes the relationship between users and service more comfortable. Even so, some of the statements by certain stakeholders appeared discriminatory against other specificities

"The use of condoms is difficult. And then in some cases, like, I do not know, it's funny, I've discussed it with some girls, if in jail, for example, a gypsy says, "if my husband has it, me too", and they don't use condoms because they have never used them. There are groups, right?, which are more like that..."(S4, pg 22)

Through the interviews we have detected the need of more training as well as the need to establish protocols which are effective, known and applicable to all professionals and which allow both to act correctly in the face of needs of LGBT people and also to detect discrimination in the health services field.

One of the local health services, the Youth Health Centre, has a very interesting role in the issue of sexuality that offers free counseling service for young people between 12 and 25 years and have a perspective and support also to lgbfriendly families. However, the case of trans* and intersex people highlights a widespread ignorance in most health care services. Nevertheless, it must be pointed out that the care and sexual health promotion programs which often discuss sexual diversity and their specific health are being censored in some schools. This causes an injury to the children in private schools or direct-grant schools that prohibit external intervention:

"We were in a school that was religious, and then they also have these programs, they have programs or referents which... Well, where children can go if they have any problems or ask to speak with someone, and then they are always very reluctant to let external staff from the health center to the school with the health program. In fact, this year I've stopped going. And the Health and School program is not being done in several charter schools because of a lack of collaboration with the board of directors". (S2)

In this sense, we found the local government poorly involved, and several interviewees report having to resort to self-management because the administration wouldn't provide the necessary services, which is especially negligent with transgender people:

"When I have needed something, I have had to manage by myself by going to Barcelona, for example. In the end you have to get by on your own, and everyone lives it with ignorance. No one is going to come and tell you: hey, it's alright, you can come to the light and show yourself as you are. No one is going to tell you that." (P12).

Hence, most of the services, especially those which trans* people need, are not found in Girona, and trans* people have to resort to more centralized areas, such as Barcelona, to be well assisted. Furthermore, trans* people who decide to undergo surgery usually have to assume the high cost, for which class and purchasing power. It is especially relevant for young people who find difficulties in going to Barcelona since many of them have not autonomy for travelling to Barcelona. In this sense, it is not surprising that many people live with the idea of wanting to leave Girona and going to Barcelona to live, especially those who don't have family bonds in Girona.

Although there are formal protocols for the attention and fight against discrimination on the grounds of sexual choice in schools, these are not applied and the form of intervention is left to the teacher's discretion.

“Like so many other things, it’s up to the teacher, because many situations may occur in the classroom. Then, you leave it up to the teacher so they treat the topic when it emerges in class, if it does. But there is not a part of the syllabus which says “you must discuss this topic”. But it is clear that we are government workers and, hence, in the classroom there has to be this respect towards diversity of any kind, it’s in the constitution, right? It is not optional” (S6).

Education professionals detect bullying situations late and do not know how to deal with discrimination exercises. There are several reports of experiences of bullying in the school environment by people interviewed. Although the education system is one of the areas which generates more worries among stakeholders and LGBT participants, we have not found any intervention practices in the education centers which provide a positive perspective on diversity. Furthermore, the degree in Teaching, the Master degree in Diversity and Inclusive Education and the Master degree for High School Professor at the University of Girona haven’t got subjects that include sexual diversity. The absence of education and practice towards sexual diversity in the educational system is one of the most alarming issues in the city.

The presence of other sexual and gender references that surpass the male/female binomial and build positive discourses towards sexual and gender diversity are fundamental to the building of a more inclusive educational space. The presence of sexual diversity and gender among teachers could be key to educating in visibility. However, LGBT faculty acknowledge that they lack tools to become visible in schools.

It is necessary to emphasize that making homosexuality visible can also generate problems to the professors who decide to do it, since parents can request a change of teacher. This is due to the fact that there is still the belief that homosexual people are pedophilic and therefore they will abuse their students.

However, it is necessary to emphasize that the generational change among teachers is also bringing new perspectives to the education system and some teachers contribute to a transformation on LGBT issues from a personal bet (Platero and Langarita, 2016).

One of the participants, precisely, is a young teacher from a school in Girona who does not hide his sexuality, and although he has had some problems with parents, in general nobody from the staff has shown attitudes of rejection towards him. Even so, from his position, he narrates that he often hears teachers making homophobic comments about students who they think that may be homosexual, always from a logic of normality:

“For example, there is a student who nobody talks normally about. They use the word ‘normal’ a lot, right? ‘He doesn’t do normal things...’ Well, we’d have a whole debate in here” (P1).

The working environment can also be a hostile environment for many LGBT people, since forms of socialization are usually organized from heterosexual logics:

“I used to work in a company where you could not say anything. It was closed, you could not express yourself as you are. You had to have everything hidden, there were jokes... You had to have it all hidden, all [...] Of course, you just got used to it”. (P9)

In Girona, at the local level, the institutional discourse pro sexual diversity and against homophobia has recently been opened. However, it is still a very embryonic discourse that needs maturity to achieve greater impact on citizenship and also to lay the foundations of an institutional position that goes beyond the aesthetic aspects or conciliatory measures. Moreover, some participants also claim that the discourse of the City Council is simply a whitewash, and that they have not feel supported by it when carrying out actions of struggle, actions that the interviewed City Council member reports to have supported.

Some of the participants also point out that there is a strong need to address gender equality and sexual diversity from school, as well as to work with the general population on trans* issues, especially on trans* children.

The LGBT Local Council has become the space of coordination between the different actors. However, there still isn't a proper and effective space in which to define and delimit the fields of action and priority lines at the city level.

On the other hand, there is a network of institutional relations established to be able to carry out the complaints and their follow-up, led by the autonomous police and the prosecution. They follow up the cases and, in some cases, the police also accompanies people who report. Even so, with very few reported cases and the lack of official LGTB training, this network is rarely put into practice.

Another space where different actors relate, in this case in an informal way, is the local "gay bar". Actually, it was never meant to be a gay bar, but the fact that the owners are gay and that LGBT people feel safe in this business ended up giving the space the same use and role in the community -at least at night- as a meant-to-be gay bar would have. This bar serves as a space for socializing and flirting, but especially for connecting LGBT people of Girona, since there is no other leisure space which functions as a safe place. The owners / waiters have a clear welcoming role with people who've just come out or who are new in Girona.

The main problem of the channels for formal complaints against homo and transphobia is not the absence of services, since the police and judicial services have spaces to report situations of homophobia (See City Report on existing legislation, policies and practices Girona and Sabadell, Spain). However, there are four major problems regarding this. First of all, police or judicial bodies that collect the complaints have difficulties in identifying what constitutes a homophobic crime, which must be treated differently both in legal and police terms. This also translates into the difficulty of collecting the complaint correctly so that it can be treated as a hate crime. Secondly, we identified important difficulties by LGBT people to identify and become aware of some of their experiences as crimes, which they can report. Many LGBT people have normalized discrimination situations and have assumed them as natural, and only the most sensibilized ones are able to identify these situations, and some also reported them. Therefore, since they cannot identify them, they do not report them. That is why it is essential that police and judicial bodies are able to identify the situations and hence actually protect the victim. Third, there is also distrust in complaint systems, usually because they don't think it will make any difference. Finally, since there are not many LGBT organizations in Girona it gets tricky to report discriminations, and it gets especially difficult for trans* people, who don't have a specific organization in Girona.

4. Experiences in public spheres: representations, virtuality, physical spaces and hate speech

Situations of homophobia occur both in the public space and in private spaces. Moreover, as Didier Eribon (1999) notes, the difference between public and private in terms of sexuality is very confusing for LGBT people, since both public and private spaces are spaces of control and supervision for the sexual behaviors and gender identities of all subjects.

It is important to highlight that most of the participants have experienced different forms of discrimination based on gender identity or sexual option throughout life. In turn, this discrimination has occurred mainly in spaces of proximity such as school, family, health center or work space.

In the interviews carried out there are no reported actions of physical violence in the public space. However, many of the participants report having received some contemptuous comments when showing their affection in the public space. In fact, a good part of the interviewees avoid showing their affection in public or only do it after verifying that they are alone, in the dark or in a safe place:

“Well, if we ever go to the old town, to the ramparts, and there’s no one there, well, then we can kiss a little. Or maybe we are at the gay bar, where we can be holding hands, no problem”. (P3)

So, there is a selective process in which LGBT people show their affection or desire when they are in safe places. In this sense, the local gay friendly bar is one of the safest public spaces for many LGBT people. In the case of lesbians, however, showing affection may involve an extra risk for aggression. Some of the interviewees, as well as some participants of the focus group, report that they have had experiences of street sexual harassment by men when they have shown affection to their female partners. This is a specificity only found when interviewing lesbian and bisexual women, which shows that some straight men locate lesbian relationships as a space of fantasy.

It is significant the difference and the options between people who were born and raised in Girona and people who weren’t in relation to discrimination and safe spaces. For those who were born in Girona, social pressure is greater than for those who come to live as adults, especially taken that some of them are already fleeing from a smaller or more conservative space.

“Since I’m a foreigner, I haven’t encountered any problems. I don’t feel discriminated, but it is true that for people who is from here, Girona is still very village-like with this and sometimes it has the disadvantages of small villages” (S2).

Concerning the construction of safe spaces in the city districts, the messages are contradictory and often respond more to social patterns and prejudices than to experiences lived by the participants.

"You can feel comfortable in the old town, because there are many tourists, one thinks that they have a more open mind than nationals... you feel more comfortable (P3)

³
"Salt at night scares me a little. Because of Moroccan people more than anything else, they are the ones who cause the most problems." (P4)

Although public space may be hostile to demonstrations of affection, there are also places of escape that allow one to experiment with desire.

A response mechanism of many LGBT people in the city to deal with homophobia and the situations of discrimination that can be derived from sexual option has been to move to Barcelona, which is a nearby city that allows greater anonymity than Girona. The link with Barcelona is common for many LGBT people, either because they go out partying there, because they have friendly relations with people from Barcelona or because they feel freer when they go there, and they see Barcelona as much more open than Girona:

“I have some friends who hold hands when they go to Barcelona, they kiss and all of that... in the train, they hold hands... and when they get back to Girona, they walk apart”. (P9)

At the level of identification of safe and hostile spaces in the city of Girona, in the different interviews we observed an intersection between several aspects, mainly between the position of the majority of participants as national and of white skin, with the need to open spaces to express non-normative sexualities. In this sense, several participants place spaces with greater concentration of migrated people as unsafe spaces, although none of them have ever suffered an aggression in these places. This intersection is alarming because in most cases they are discourses that reifies racism -already present in the city of Girona-carried out by subjects who share positions of subalternity and periphery:

"I do not know. Now I will look like a racist and this is not the case, but I think that, for instance, Salt, Font de la Pólvora, Santa Eugènia... I know they are neighbourhoods where you can, I don't know... I have an acquaintance who lives in... well you don't really have problems... Well, now I'm talking without knowing, but I figure that right in the middle of the street in Salt if you make out with a guy I'm sure that you'll hear some "fag!". Well, maybe you won't, eh?" (P1).

Most of the people who have participated in this research do not actively participate as LGBT people in the public space, and only some of them do so on the Pride celebration or other events and dates such as the December 1st, the World AIDS Day.

LGBTI visibility in Girona has improved in the last few years, but it is always problematic. A sign of this is that some straight people from Girona don't want to go to the local gay friendly bar because it is identified as gay. In this sense, the interviews show an ambivalence regarding this bar because, although it is a safe space where people can feel not judged, it is also seen as a labelled space, and particular for LGBT people.

“Here in Girona people are very scared, because there are many prejudices. When you walk down the street I don't worry about the looks they give me, I don't care, but it makes me think that, well, a stare is already offensive, of poor taste” (P10A).

It is significant that gender conformant participants report a higher tranquility than trans* participants. One of them, for instance, has had problems at work. For instance, the lockers

³ Salt is a village close to Girona with the population with a higher rate of immigration of the whole Catalonia, with 40% of its population being immigrant.

where people put on their uniforms are mixed, with only one toilet where to get changed if you don't want to be seen. She has requested toilets for women and for men, and in the meantime, since she does not want to be seen by men, she gets to work with her uniform on.

The main feature of the media is the absence of news related to sexual diversity from a local perspective. Invisibility in the media is constant in the city, beyond the news generated at a regional, national or international level.

On the other hand, the way in which news are narrated, rather than contributing to visibility and generating transformations, they sometimes generate more fear among the LGBT population:

“Because unfortunately you see lots of news in the TV, of new homophobic aggression, etc., to show off” (P3).

At the level of television fiction, some of the participants report that, although series are starting to portray gay and lesbian visibility, characters' portrayals are often homogenous and do not account for gay and lesbian realities. At the trans* level, there are currently no television references in fiction, although they have issued documentaries on trans* from a medical and normalizing perspective, and one of the trans* interviewees reports that she liked them.

The interviewed stakeholder who works in media -in a radio station- reports that they do not have guidelines to speak about LGBT people on air, and that it depends on the journalist who writes each piece of news. This goes in the same line as the aforementioned ways of health professional, who aren't given specific guidelines either and who also have to decide according to their own criteria.

Although there currently are online messages against LGBT people, these are not produced in Girona or contextualized in the city. Rather, they are more general messages circulating at a regional, national or international level. The main function of the network has been to become a socializing space for LGBT people, a space where to share doubts, make friends and get sexual partners. For a lot of LGBT people Internet networks play or have played a key role in their relationships. The main apps that are used are those aimed at the creation of friendly, partner or sexual networks, especially geolocation apps like *Grindr*. In any case, we detected that the use of networks is highly biased, being more used by gay men, and it plays a much more prominent role among younger people.

In this sense the network allows for generating a parallel community of access to sex to people who remain closeted and for whom being discovered as LGBT could generate serious problems in their closest social context:

“The world of married men in Girona who look for sex, well, it is huge” (S6)

In the case of lesbian or bisexual women there is no report of a very large use of these virtual networks. For this reason, when looking at the role of virtual networks it is necessary to take into account a strong intersection between gender positions articulated with sexuality, which looks like it highly informs the way that participants relate.

Furthermore, within the trans community Internet plays a very important role because it works as an articulatory tool for trans* people who don't have a service or political

association close to their homes. It creates virtual bonds between trans* people who otherwise wouldn't be able to relate, give each other tips and support, and share experiences:

“Interviewer: Internet, is it important to you?”

P5: Yes. Facebook is very important, I've created a profile, and any question, doubt, there's always an answer.

Interviewer: So, people give advice?

P5: Yes, for instance, there's this girl, I have her WhatsApp and we also talk on the phone.”

Public space in Girona unfolds as a complex and diverse scenario where perceptions and experiences differ according to an intersection of gender, gender normativity, sexual option, ethnic group, origin and age. Although there are places described as safe spaces, these are not the same for everybody. We noted that for people who've been born and raised in Girona, the city is a place of control, where familial bonds diminish greater possibilities for visibility in most cases. However, there are people who actually chose to live in Girona as a kind of sexilium, either because they come from smaller and presumably more conservative villages or because it's a new space where they don't fear running into a family member or an old school mate. Furthermore, gender conformance also affects the safety feelings in public spaces. Hence, trans* participants report a smaller sense of security while walking around Girona or using certain public spaces than cisgendered people. Public spaces, though, aren't all perceived equally safe. However, even though some of the elements that make LGBT people feel safer have to do with quiet, unfrequented spaces, some other arise from prejudice -since they are not based into the participants' experiences-, especially those regarding spaces with high rates of immigration.

5. Social interactions and internalised experiences of LGBTphobia

Family acceptance of diversity is fundamental to the well-being of LGBTI people. However, family relationships of people who have participated in this study have been very diverse, with people whose families have naturally accepted the diversity to other who have lived the sexual or gender diversity of their children as a drama.

"Well, my mother said, "What are you going to tell me, son, that I don't know already?"[...]. And my father told me, well, then that's it. This is it, so let's keep going, right? And well, they supported me with everything and I didn't have any problems. In fact, I've never had any problems in this regard with my family. With my grandfather, for example, it also went super well, no problems." (P1)

It is also necessary to emphasize that when in the family there are friends, acquaintances or other relatives who are also LGBT, the relationship with diversity is usually different and with more acceptance and support towards the LGBT family members:

“I didn't have any problem at all. With my family it was all very natural. I've got some friends who are gay too and at work as well, well, I've never had any problem in

telling it. From the beginning. [...] What's more, in my family, my ex aunt who used to be with my uncle is homosexual and she's still part of the family. She was my uncle's girlfriend and now she's with a girl. My mother has got gay colleagues at work and she's always treated this topic naturally". (P3)

To promote the well-being of LGBT people, it is necessary to break with the idea that LGBT children represent a failure of the family project. For some participants, as Sedgwick (1990) argues, the narrative of the coming out did indeed follow a logics of disruption:

"At first, shocking, because they didn't expect it. What do many parents expect? That you can gift them with grandchildren, that you can have a "normal" family... traditional... right? This. But... Slowly but surely they ended up accepting it. But I didn't have any problems, like having to kick me out of the house, no, none of this" (P3)

Family relationships do not necessarily have to be broken by a child coming out. What's more, this event does not have to ruin the family project, but rather it can contribute to a change of the course that allows a family to be more open to the acceptance of diversity.

Experiences of coming out in the family environment are mediated by the environment. In an environment with great social hostility different strategies are established, strategies which in face of an unexpected situation become a test until a more or less successful result is achieved, which sometimes involves flight:

"I'm from a very small village, and when it all came to light, the first reaction of my family and neighbors was calling me to talk and to offer me a psychologist. Then I didn't know what was going on with me, I knew I liked guys but I didn't know what was going on. So, instead of helping me understand, they worsened the situation. It was harsh, but for me it is cool today that I've been through this because I learnt so many things. My mother supported me a lot, and she helped me leave home when I was 15 so I didn't suffer. I'm talking about '88, in a village in inland Brazil. Then you were obviously a target for everything, bullying, that's how they call it nowadays". (P6).

In families, each member has a different role and the role of siblings tends to make things easier for LGBT people in the family. Siblings often participate in favor of the acceptance of diversity, they're usually allies that accompany LGBT people in the family environment:

"Luckily, I had the help of my older brother" (P3).

It is necessary to emphasize that family plays a fundamental role in the process of socialization of all people, which is why it is fundamental to be able to influence family discourses and practices to present sexual and gender diversity as a positive event.

It should be noted that, as it occurs in other contexts, many LGBT people decide to inform their families of their sexual and/or gender choice once they have economic or relational alternatives that allow them to live outside the family and without the need for their support (Langarita and Salguero, 2017).

Sometimes the coming out process is not the product of a reflexive exercise, but is the result of a fortuitous event that was not foreseen. This makes it difficult to take control of how, when and with whom to come out:

“Unfortunately, my parents learnt because of someone else” (P3).

At the moment of coming out, LGBT people not only take into account the effects of identifying themselves as LGTB, but also the consequences on family relationships in context:

“Those who suffered the most were my sisters, not me, because they obviously called me “fagot”, but it didn’t affect me. My sisters, who are almost my age, would wipe and feel threatened” (P6)

Sometimes, stories of coming out in a family environment are rewritten to make it more acceptable and to minimize emotional effects. For instance, a participant from Honduras reports that he never suffered discrimination, neither in Girona nor back in Honduras, and yet it is hardly credible that in the Honduras of the 1980s sexual diversity could be accepted without any type of problem by the community as a whole.

“When I was 16 years old I talked to my parents. And while in Honduras it gets really difficult, my father told me: “I can’t fight against nature”. Neither my parents, nor my brothers, nor my cousins, nor any person within my family, absolutely, nothing”. (P4).

Rewriting coming out, dramatizing it or interpreting it as it is done in public representations of coming out are mechanisms that allow us to construct a new life story. However, coming out stories are not always dramatic, and some of the participants report stories of total soothe and non-disruption of the family life.

As for friend relationships, most of the interviewees emphasize the good acceptance from friends and support from them have been really important to continue with the process of acceptance. It is true that on some occasions there have been some friends, who have rejected the maintenance of the friendship, but this has been a minority of the cases, and in any case it has served to test out true friendship:

“There was a friend who couldn’t see me, who stopped talking to me. [...]. Believe it or not, we used to try things as kids...” (P3)

“There were friends who didn’t support me because they made fun of me. They leave you aside. You can’t leave them aside because you are in a group of friends, but it doesn’t really help. Nowadays, if you come out to people, it’s ok, great, right? Well, in the 90s, we weren’t accepted in friend groups. Well, they did accept you but they made fun of you or joked with you”. (P9).

It is usually thought that the family should be aware of the sexual choice of its members, however it is not always the case. There are people who, despite openly recognizing each other, decide not to talk about their sexuality in the family environment:

“My family does not know. My father, who died 3 years ago, didn’t know and my mother doesn’t know, neither does my brother... And they haven’t said anything. If they know it, they haven’t said anything. I never thought about telling them because they are old... I didn’t have any problem because home nobody ever spoke about sex, never”. (P9).

It is important to highlight the role of socialization spaces, in the case of Girona, the existence of a gay friendly bar which allows to build community for many LGBT people, and to have a space in which to feel comfortable and safe.

In addition, the staff of some services often have support attitudes to the LGTB people who attend, as well as to their families, as is the case of the Youth Health Center. These spaces are very important because when teenagers think they cannot tell that they are not heterosexual or gender conformant they don't know where to go, and a space where the door is opened and where they are given an accompaniment helps to support the self-esteem and the well-being of the users.

However, in the interviews and focus groups there were some accounts of prejudiced situations towards LGBT service users. For instance, a participant reports that, in a doctor's visit, he was told to "watch out more". Furthermore, some of the participants report that, when visiting the doctor, she was treated as if she and her partner were heterosexual, ignoring and justifying that they do not have enough information to attend to them. In this sense, some doctors and gynecologists have a heterosexist scheme which leads to a negligent assistant of LGBT people:

"If you talk about a homosexual issue, they tell you that they are not informed enough to take care of it. That is my experience, what I have found. And it's not just that, but the whole role. When you talk to a doctor and they ask you, assuming you're straight. " (P12)

This bad assistance gets even worse in the specific case of trans* people. One of the trans* participants reports that once a pulmonologist refused to visit her when they learnt that she was a transgender person. However, some of the health professionals are well sensibilized and play a supportive role in transitions.

For all the aforementioned reasons, there is a need to create an office to assist vulnerable LGBTI people in cases like this. Otherwise, LGBTI people are forced to seek help and proper assistance in Barcelona, or else to stay unhelped in Girona.

Work or the study center is one of the places where LGBT people spend more time. This is why it is fundamental that people can express themselves as they are without being subject to sanction or discrimination by colleagues and superiors. However, the experiences in the labour world are different since the sexual option or gender expression can generate problems at different levels.

First, with classmates, at a study center, openly homophobic statements, jokes, laughter and scornful comments to people with sexual diversity or with different expressions of gender are common. In addition to discursive actions, corrective situations can also occur in which sexual harassment attempts to correct sexual choice. Secondly, clients or users of services sometimes make homophobic comments that await the approval of the counterpart. For instance, an interviewed teacher reports that some parents at the school where he works didn't want him to teach their child:

"Well, at work what I told you before. Yes, once, some parents said... Well, because they ran into me... Well, I was with my partner, and they must've seen me, or something, I don't know. But they can't have seen me doing anything, because I don't... But perhaps they saw me kissing, I do not know. But a kiss like "hello, bye

bye". A peck. And... well, and one day, I found out that they had gone to the school to say, well, that "my kid's teacher dates men! Well, I don't want my child to have a teacher *like that*". But well, this was solved in its due time" (P2).

Another participant, a hairdresser, reports that she hides that she is a lesbian at work because she fears that the customers might reject her.

Finally, with bosses, which hold a position of power that can take perverse forms. For instance, one of the participants, a lesbian woman, reports that in a former job, she once ran into his boss while holding hands with her female partner, so her boss realized that she dated women. From that moment on, her boss started sexually harassing her, and she ended up reporting it to the police.

Regarding work possibilities, one of the trans* women interviewed reports that most of the trans* people she knows can't access a job which is not prostitution.

"I work; I have been fortunate that I work in a place where they haven't had any problem with me transitioning. But most of my colleagues can't, even if they are very professional and academically prepared, because they [employers] do not want that, and it is very difficult for a transgender person to find a job. If I lost my job now..." (P10A).

Relationships with the community are described as cordial relations in which conflicts are hardly produced due to sexual and gender diversity. About the associative movement, it is necessary to emphasize that its representativity is very low, since in both the number of associations and the participation rates is not representative and is biased by a generational barrier.

The way in which social relations with other LGBT people are established varies considerably from one person to another. Whereas some participants the sexual choice of their friends is insignificant, for other socializing with other people or LGBT couples is an important fact which they value.

"For me [having lesbian friends] saves many therapy hours! Damn! It's like, I'm normal, nothing is wrong..."(P2)

Homophobia and transphobia can also be given among LGBT population, as the following quote by a gay man shows:

"P4: I don't really get along with trans. For instance, if a cross-dresser friend shows up, I wave them and that's it. I don't like being... Why? I don't know... I don't like it. I respect it. But I helped a friend to get out of this, and now he's a very famous hairdresser in Mexico.

Interviewer: You helped him to stop dressing up like a woman, to be "normal"? P4: Yes. If someone feels good doing it, it's alright, but I personally don't like it".

Some people find that the biggest difficulty is in accepting that you may like the boys and then change the girls.

Girona arises as a complex city where to establish LGBTI relationships. On the one hand, many participants narrate some difficult coming out stories, and most of them waited to

come out to their parents when they had some economic alternatives. On the other hand, Girona is also a place where strong bonds are created with both family and friends which have to do with the size of the people and partly to endogamy, and it becomes a strong support system for many people. However, this does not usually extend to jobs and public services. Although some of the participants report having no problems at work or being well assisted by the public health system, others retell experiences of discrimination to the point of denying medical assistance for being trans* or being harassed by a boss for being a lesbian. These and other experiences make up a city with a myriad of experiences in social interactions, a significant amount of which would call for an important social transformation.

6. Inclusion, exclusion, and intersectionality

Although this research has been focusing on LGBT people, many other issues have arisen during it. For instance, it is interesting to see how homophobic behaviors are usually attributed to people from other socio-cultural contexts, and although there were many stories of families having a hard. Spaces of socialization are not only governed by questions of sexual choice, but also by other variables such as origin which conditions the way subjects socialize. For instance, one of the participants, who is from Honduras, narrates how his social life relies only with other Latin American spaces when he was asked about his social life:

"Latin festivities more than anything. In 2005 I was public relations for Tropicana, in AP7. Then in Escandal, in Rosas street, also on the highway, near MercaGirona" (P4)

Experiences of homophobia can have a maximized effect in situations of special vulnerability, as is the case of minors or migrants, since the lack of resources and spaces of representation makes it difficult to construct security spaces. One of the cases narrated by the stakeholders of the regional police report a case of a minor who lives with his mother and his mother's boyfriend, and receives aggressions and homophobic vexations from the mother's boyfriend on a daily basis. In this case, the minor could not report it until there was an adult who could accompany him, because a minor cannot legally file a complaint without certain conditions:

"Well, it's a boy who lives with his mother's boyfriend, and the boyfriend can't bear him being gay. He is very young, I think he's about 14 or 15 years old. And his mom's boyfriend insults him, vexes him... [...] We find a person that because of this kid's sexual condition, very young, he's really ashamed of it, doesn't want him to get on his car, he insults him. And the kid's even reported that the man takes off his trousers, touches his own genitalia, and tells the victim: 'fucking faggot, this is what you like'" (S1A)

Repeatedly, there appear speeches that reaffirm the idea that in schools, neighborhoods or territories with a greater volume of immigration it is also more difficult to activate measures against homophobia. These types of statements are profoundly significant, since they reproduce widespread discourses on migration to justify institutional inactivity.

These discourses of aligning racist positions with positions of non-normative sexualities are very perverse, since we find them in a space where there is a legal framework that is not deployed, a local government that has only whitewashing policies, and some testimonies of

traumatic coming out experiences. This way, certain homonationalist logics of sexual exceptionalism (Puar, 2007) emerge from participants from a city that, as aforementioned, is far from being a space lived by everyone as LGBT friendly, where part of the participants chooses to live their affective-sexual dimension more or less hidden. This is a perverse move which locates based on a nationalist fantasy that “unlike *theirs*, our country [...] is compassionate, tolerant and accommodating of women and sexual minorities” (Denike, 2010, pg 87), which has proven not to be in the city of Girona.

7. Conclusions

Through the research we have been able to delve into various aspects of being LGBT in Girona, and several conclusions emerge from them. Girona, a city of about 97000, conceals a diverse field of realities for its many inhabitants, LGBT or not. Described as provincial and conservative by many but lived as a familiar and thus rather safe place for others, it is a place where some work is still to be done.

Although the stories of homophobia are a constant for LGTB people, there are also stories of success, stories of pleasure, joy, love, confidence, security, that deserve to be recognized. Barcelona keeps being a referent, but maybe we do not need it to stop being it to be able to keep walking. The important thing is to be able to build bridges that make life more livable.

Even though Girona is not narrated as a safe space by many of the participants, it is true that the vast majority of them, especially those who were born there, like it as a place to live and would not move out because it offers them diversity and calm, even though it is not really an LGBT friendly city. Many participants stand up for the good quality of life Girona can offer, and although some of them have a complicated relationship with their families regarding their sexuality, some still prefer it before a much bigger city like Barcelona, where they don't feel pressured but where they don't have bounds either. However, exile to Barcelona is also constant, and even one of the trans* participants we interviewed would move to Barcelona if she could afford it because she would be closer to the services she needs.

On the other hand, it is remarkable that there are certain homonationalist positions of concern among the participants and that they should be specifically addressed in the interventions to facilitate coexistence for everybody.

Institutions have a discourse of proximity and openness to everything LGBT, but when it comes to working they often do not put the necessary resources to support the demands and struggles.

There is a sector of the LGBT population of Girona which is politicized, but it is a very small sector, and this means that there aren't many safe spaces from the same LGBT collective, which is a claim of some participants. These organizations are also not representative of an important part of the LGBT people, who for this reason don't engage into the associations' activities.

After talking to all the stakeholders, we've been able to identify several best practices. However, there appears to be a political correctness, but it is not always followed by a wish of change.

7.1. Best practices Identified

7.1.1. Local level

- Local LGBTI Council

- The Local LGBTI Council is a consultation body at the Girona City Council created in 2012 with the aim of promoting equality for LGBT people in the city of Girona.

- LGBT Network of Towns

- The LGBT Network of Towns is a network made up of several towns and villages across Catalonia which work together for the development of policies to defend LGBTI people and to avoid sexual orientation diversity to become a reason for discrimination.

- United Commission for June 28th

- The United Commission for June 28th of Girona is an activist body made up of different LGBT associations of Girona, which work together to organize the series of events for celebrating June 28th, the Day for the Liberation of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people.

- Campaign of visibility.

- The City Council has carried out some campaigns for LGBT visibility, for instance, rainbow coloring a zebra crossing to commemorate June 28th.

- Youth Health Center

- Service which offers accompaniment to young people (12-25 years old) and their families about sexuality issues.

7.1.2. Regional level

- Service of Hate Crimes and Discrimination
- Service for the Protection and Assistance of the Victims
- Interdepartmental Plan for non-discrimination towards homosexuals and transgender people.
- Section on equal treatment and non-discrimination towards LGBT people
- National Council of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersexual People Law 11/2014, of 10 October, for guaranteeing the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people and eradicating homophobia, biphobia and transphobia. The objective of the act “consists of developing and guaranteeing the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans* and intersex (LGBTI) people and preventing discrimination and violence against them, so as to ensure complete freedom in relation to sexual and affective diversity in Catalonia”.

7.1.3. National level

- **Prosecutor specialized in hate crime**
 - The Hate Crime Prosecutor is a figure present in every province of the Spanish State.

7.2. Detected Needs and Recommendations

First of all, there is a need to work for **critical training in sexuality material and gender expression so that people can identify situations of homophobia and discrimination**. One of the main problems detected is that some LGBT people are not able to recognize discrimination situations, and accept them as natural. In the same line, there is a need **to train the police and judicial bodies so that they are able to identify the stories of discrimination and collect them in the complaints**, in order to be able to deal with them with their particularities. Training professionals, however, can't be only about sensibilization: it has to involve organization, legislation and social framework.

Secondly, it is necessary to **contribute to the visibility of sexual and gender diversity through positive and effective messages** that overcome specific and aesthetic interventions. The current visibilization campaigns are indeed important, and for this reason they should intensify and deepen and they should not be limited to mere the celebration of certain days. It is necessary to work in order to generate **referrals in key services and representative bodies** that allow the construction of other representations that overcome ideas of failure, isolation and rejection. You can be gay, lesbian, trans or bi and be happy. In this sense, **having leisure spaces and LGBT socialization is fundamental**. The network has fulfilled this function in some media. Nevertheless, it is interesting to have other spaces such as bars, associations, etc. which can continue with the task. There has to be a **promotion of LGBT associationism** to contribute to generate critical awareness among society, an association that is renewed, incorporates other generations and adapts to changing needs. The associationism that was valid in the 90s today does not challenge the younger ones. On the other hand, the needs to be work done alongside mass media as well as with local media, where gender and LGBT models and issues need to have a continuous presence. Although there are already some referents on TV, these are reported to be too far from reality or too generic. We suggest that a more thorough work is done between public institutions and media to generate the aforementioned representation.

Furthermore, we have detected that the educational system is a priority area where to prevent and combat homo and transphobia in larger society. Many of the LGBT participants suffered discrimination at school, and we have also identified a lack of training on sexual diversity in the university education of primary school and high school teachers. At the same time, we have also noticed that the possible trainings carried out through external workshops are pretty important, though not enough. We have identified a lack of implication of the faculty in these trainings, where external agents may carry out workshops for the students while the teachers stay as merely observers and don't take part in trainings themselves. In the fight against LGBTphobia there is a need for an active implication of

schools' faculty, who must be a model for the students and generate an environment of trust and acceptance. For all these reasons, we recommend: 1) including LGBT issues training in educational plans for teachers, 2) promoting training of current teachers, and 3) promoting inclusive educational materials, visibility of diversity and the celebration of the Day Against LGBTphobia.

Finally, there is a need for an **intervention plan which really implies all the agents, in addition to the classic agents**, who incorporate gender and LGBT perspectives in their global gaze. Health services staff have a very important role in this aspect, and they can be extremely relevant for trans* people who want to undergo any kind of medical process - from hormones to surgery- and who need an accompaniment through the intricate network of public health. However, not all of them are embracing an inclusive approach on patients, neither on gay, lesbian and bisexual ones, causing some bad experiences. More specifically, all of the lesbian participants report having had difficulties and bad experiences while visiting their gynecologists, and some of the gay participants report stigma on HIV by their doctors. For this reason, there is also a need to construct inclusive discourses among the medical community which allow for a better treatment and wellbeing of the patients.

There is indeed a need for improving good practices in Girona in relation to LGBT. Although Girona is reported to be a fair place where to live, with a pretty good quality of life, there are still many topics which concern LGBT people and stakeholders. Through the analyzed and reported best practices, as well as with the recommendations given throughout this report, we claim for an improvement of the intervention on LGBT issues which, at the end of the day, serve to improve the quality of life of all inhabitants of Girona and, more specifically, those who have non conformant sexual options and/or gender identities.

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Annex I: Individual interviewees (15)

No	Category	Gender	Age	Educ	Occ	Origin	Ethn/Rel	Marital	Depen- dence (Child en/eld erly)	Years in Girona
P1	G	Men	25	Higher education	Professional	Catalonia	Atheistic	Single	0	25
P2	L	Women	31	Higher education	Professional	Catalonia	Atheistic	Single	0	31
P3	G	Men	32	Secondary	Technician	Catalonia	Atheistic	In partnership	0	3
P4	T	Men	52	Primary	Technician	Honduras	Catholic	Single	0	13
P5	T	Women	41	Primary	Technician	Catalonia	Different religions	Single	0	3
P6	G	Men	41	Secondary	Technician	Brazil	Mestizo / Atheistic	Married	0	6
P7	L	Women	58	Primary	Personal service worker	Catalonia	Atheistic	Married	0	23
P8	L	Women	35	Higher education	Professional	Spain	Atheistic	Married	1	2
P9	G	Men	48	Higher education	Unemploye d	Catalonia	Atheistic	Single	0	48
P10A	T (partner P10B)	Women	51	Secondary	Technician	Spain	Catholic	Married	2	28
P10B	H (partner P10A)	Women	--	Unknow	Unknow	Catalonia	Atheistic	Married	2	Unkno w
P11	L	Women	26	Higher education	Professional	Catalonia	Atheistic	Single	0	3
P12	B	Women	23	Secondary	Professional	Catalonia	Personal Spirits	In partnership	0	2
P13	B	Women	55	Higher education	Professional	Spain	Agnostic	Married	0	6
P14A	L(partner P14B)	Women	24	Secondary	Elementary occupation	Catalonia	Atheistic	In partnership	0	5
P14B	B(Partner P14A)	Women	30	Secondary	Elementary occupation	Catalonia	Atheistic	In partnership	0	5
P15	G	Men	40	Higher education	Manager	Catalonia	Atheistic	Single	0	40

Annex II: Stakeholders interviewees (10)

No	Role	Service	Additional comments
S1A S1B	Police	Mossos d'esquadra	Target people: General Public Funding: Public Number of workers: 16000
S2	Doctor	Health Centre	Target people: General Public Funding: Public Number of workers: 50
S3	Psychologist	Youth Health Service	Target people: 12-25 years olds Funding: Public Number of workers: 6
S4	Service coordinator & Psychologist	HIV detection and guidance	Target people: People with HIV relatives of people with HIV, people with others STDs. Funding: Private & public Number of workers: 2
S5	President of Local Section	Gay NGO	Target people: LGBT people & General Public Funding: Private & Public Number of workers: 5
S6	School director	Primary School	Target people: Children and families Funding: Public Number of workers: 30
S7	Owner	LGBT Business	Target people: General Public Funding: Private Number of workers: 3
S8	Decision Maker	City Council	Target people: General Public Funding: Public Number of workers: 950
S9	Social Worker	City Council	Target people: General Public Funding: Public Number of workers: 950
S10	Journalist	Local Media	Target people: General Public Funding: Private Number of workers: 20

S11	Prosecutor	Just Services	Target people: General Public Funding: Public Number of workers: Unknown
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Annex III: Focus groups (5)

LGBT Focus group

No	Category	Gender	Age	Educ	Occ	Origin	Ethn/Rel	Marital	Depen dence (Childr en/eld erly)	Years in Girona
P16	L	Women	40	Secondary School	Technician	Catalonia	Agnostic	Single	1	20
P17	G	Men	30	Primary School	Services worker	Catalonia	Agnostic	Single	0	30
P18	G	Men		High education	Professional	Catalonia	Agnostic	In partners hip	0	6
P19	L	Women	22	High education	Unemployed	Catalonia	Agnostic	Single	0	5
P20	Queer	Queer	19	Secondary School	Student	Catalonia	Agnostic	Single	0	2

Stakeholders Focus group

No	Role	Service	Additional comments
S12	Women Section coordiantor	CCOO (Union)	
S13	Regional coordinator of LGBT issues	Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family	
S14	Police (Victims attention coordinator)	Ajuntament de Girona (City Council)	
S15	Victim attention coordinator	Ministry of Justice.	
S16	Psychologist	Institut Català de les Dones	
S17	Psychologist	Heath network	
S18	Social Services coordinator	Ajuntament de Girona (City Council)	
S19	Coordinator	Health Promotion service (City Council)	

Annex IV: Survey

1. Do you live and/or work or study in Girona?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	93,0%	132
No	2,1%	3
Other:	4,9%	7
Answered question		142
Skipped question		0

2. How long have you been living and/or working/studying in Girona?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 6 months	10,9%	15
Between 6 months and 1 year	2,9%	4
Between 1 year and 5 years	15,2%	21
Longer than 5 years	71,0%	98
Answered question		138
Skipped question		4

3. Which neighborhood do you live in?	
Answer Options	Response Count
Centre	32
Example	11
Est	2
Mas Xirgu	0
Nord	1
Oest:	11
Santa Eugènia	12

Sud	9
Salt	6
Other (working/studying in Girona)	17
Answered question	101
Skipped question	41

4. Do you have acquaintances, work colleagues and/or friends who are gay, lesbian, bi or transgender?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	97,1%	137
No	0,7%	1
I don't Know	2,1%	3
Other (please specify)	0%	0
Answered question		141
Skipped question		1

5. What is your gender?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Female	72,3%	102
Male	24,8%	35
Other (plase state): <i>Responses: Queer / I'm look like women, but I'm lesbian / Difference genders</i>	2,8%	4
Answered question		141
Skipped question		1

6. What is your Sexual orientation?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Heterosexual	76,6%	108

Gay/Lesbian	13,5%	19
Bisexual	8,5%	12
Other (please state):	1,4%	2
<i>Responses: Without classification</i>		
Answered question		141
Skipped question		1

7. How old are you?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
16-24	27,5%	3
25-34	23,2%	9
35-44	25,4%	3
45-54	17,6%	3
55-64	6,3%	6
65+	0,0%	2
Answered question		142
Skipped question		0

Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Completely agree	Rating Average	Response Count
0	0	1	2	138	4,97	141
Answered question						141
Skipped question						1

9. Legal protection that apply to gay and lesbian people should also apply to transgender and intersex people						
Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Completely agree	Rating Average	Response Count

0	1	1	9	129	4,90	140
Answered question						140
Skipped question						2

10. I believe people should be free to express their gender and sexuality no matter what they are

Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Completely agree	Rating Average	Response Count
0	0	0	5	135	4,96	140
Answered question						140
Skipped question						2

11. People of the same sex should be able to get married

Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Completely agree	Rating Average	Response Count
1	0	0	4	132	4,94	137
Answered question						137
Skipped question						5

12. People of the same sex should be able to have or to adopt children

Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Completely agree	Rating Average	Response Count
0	0	3	5	130	4,92	138
Answered question						138
Skipped question						4

13. Hate crime against lesbian, gays, bi- and transgender people should be persecuted more severely

Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Completely agree	Rating Average	Response Count
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2	2	5	19	108	4,68	136
Answered question						136
Skipped question						6

14. Discrimination against gays, lesbians and transgender people is a major social problem in Girona

Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Completely agree	Rating Average	Response Count
7	40	69	16	7	2,83	139
Answered question						139
Skipped question						3

15. I am or I would be happy to have gay, bisexual or transgender person within my family, group of friends or colleagues

Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Completely agree	Rating Average	Response Count
1	0	6	11	122	4,81	140
Answered question						140
Skipped question						2

16. I am comfortable when I interact with lesbian, gay and bisexual people

Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Completely agree	Rating Average	Response Count
0	0	5	12	118	4,84	135
Answered question						135
Skipped question						7

17. I am comfortable when I interact with transgender people

Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Completely agree	Rating Average	Response Count
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1	20	32	85	4,46	138
Answered question					138
Skipped question					4

18. I am comfortable when I see same sex couples displaying affection in public (kissing, going hand in hand, etc.)

Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Completely agree	Rating Average	Response Count
0	1	8	16	116	4,75	141
Answered question						141
Skipped question						1

19. Girona should have leisure spaces for LGBT people (bars, clubs, etc.)

Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Completely agree	Rating Average	Response Count
7	15	63	20	31	3,39	136
Answered question						136
Skipped question						6

20. I believe Girona is a LGBT friendly city.

Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Completely agree	Rating Average	Response Count
0	12	73	39	10	3,35	134
Answered question						134
Skipped question						8

21. What is your religion

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Catholic	17,0%	24

Other Christian religions	0,7%	1
Muslim	0,7%	1
Jewish	0,0%	0
No religion	79,4%	112
Other (please specify)	2,1%	3
<i>Responses: Buddhist, personal religion</i>		
Answered question		141
Skipped question		1

22. What is your highest educational qualification

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
No formal qualification	0,0%	0
Primary Studies	1,4%	2
Professional qualifications	4,3%	6
Secondary studies	14,2%	20
Undergraduate degree	51,1%	72
Postgraduate (Master/PhD	29,1%	41
Other (please specify)	0,0%	0
Answered question		141
Skipped question		1

23. Which of the following groups most adequately describes your ethnic origin?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Catalonia	91,5%	129

Rest of Spain	5,7%	8
Europe	1,4%	2
Latin America	0,7%	1
Nord of Africa	0,0%	0
Sub-Saharan Africa	0,0%	0
South Asia	0,0%	0
Eastern Asia	0,0%	0
Other (please specify)	0,7%	1
Answered question		141
Skipped question		1



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in small and medium cities across Europe

City Report

Nottingham

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1. Introduction and description of Nottingham

Nottingham is 178 km from London and is the administrative capital for the East Midlands Region. Nottingham City Council became an independent unitary authority in 1998 but from 1974 to 1998 had been part of Nottinghamshire County Council. The city is surrounded by a number of adjoining areas (Arnold, Carlton, West Bridgford, Beeston and Stapleford), each socio-economically different. These constitute different local authorities and some key services are administered by Nottinghamshire Country Council.

In 2013 Nottingham and its surrounding areas formed an urban area or conurbation of 729,977 people. Nottingham itself had an estimated population of 318,900 (2015). Between the two censuses (2001 and 2011), the urban area increased by 10% mainly due to growth within the city itself.

Nottingham is a tourist destination; some of it due to its association with the legend of Robin Hood, of which the earliest mention of England's greatest outlaw hero is found in the B text of William Langland's *Piers Plowman*, dated to about 1377. Visitors spent over £1.5 billion in 2011 - the sixth highest amount in England. In 2013 it was estimated the city received 247,000 overseas visitors. It was also designated a UNESCO city of literature in 2015 thanks to the association with the city of leading writers such as Lord Byron, D.H. Lawrence and Alan Sillitoe.

The city itself had a GDP of £17,373 per capita and in 2015, was ranked as being in the top 10 UK cities for job growth (2004–13) in the public and private sectors. More new companies were started in Nottingham in 2014/15 than in any other UK city, with a 68% year-on-year increase. However research (Nottingham Post 2014)¹ also showed that Nottingham City has one of the highest numbers of employed residents working in low skilled occupations out of the UK's ten Core Cities (i.e. largest cities outside of London), and the lowest number working in managerial and professional jobs. However, the wider urban area of Greater Nottingham has a far more highly skilled and highly paid profile.

Traditional industries in the city were based on lace making, bicycle production and tobacco. Lace making ended after WWII and the area in which it was produced, the Lace Market in the city centre, has been gentrified. Cycle manufacturing (Raleigh Cycles), which began in 1885, was closely associated with Nottingham but ceased producing in the UK in the post-war years and the factory site was demolished in 2003. Nonetheless, Nottingham is home to the headquarters of number of large companies such Boots (chemists), and has a number of other large companies such

¹Nottingham Post and Nottingham Business School, Nottingham Trent University (2014) The Great Nottingham Debate

as the credit rating agency, Experian, the energy company E.ON.UK and the tobacco company, Imperial Tobacco. The recent economic development strategy developed by Nottingham City Council has sought to target sectors such as carbon technologies, digital media, life sciences, financial and business services, retail and leisure.

Nottingham is a multi-cultural city with people from 93 different countries and 101 spoken languages. Migrants from the Caribbean settled in Nottingham in the 1950s but it was a troubled time and there were race riots in 1958 in St Anne's, a working class area near the city centre. There have been high levels of migration into Nottingham with 15.1% of the population having arrived in the UK between 1991 and 2011. From 2001 to 2011, 8,900 non-UK born individuals moved to Nottingham. Within Greater Nottingham, migrants have largely settled within the city (80%). In 2014-15, new migrants increased by 1400 with the largest contribution coming from Romanians and Italians. The Polish, whose numbers had peaked in 2007, still form the single largest group of post Accession EU migrants (53.7%) followed by Romanians with 24.9% (East Midlands Councils 2015)². In terms of the labour market, though slightly less than about a decade ago, their position is quite polarized between those doing less skilled manufacturing and services work, on the one hand, and highly skilled jobs, as in education and health, on the other. There are also a large number of international students at the universities, particularly from East Asia, and who only stay for a few years.

According to the 2011 census, the majority of people who live in Nottingham are White British (65.4%) with 0.9% Irish, 0.1 Gypsy/Irish Traveller and 5.1% Other White. Mixed populations constituted 6.7%; Asian categories comprised 13.1%; Black (African, Caribbean, Other) 7.3%, Arab 0.8% and other ethnic 0.7%. The Black and Minority Ethnic population is significantly younger than the rest of the population. 44.2% declared themselves to be Christian, 0.7% Buddhist, 1.5% Hindu, 0.4% Jewish, 8.8% Muslim, 1.4% Sikh, 0.5% Other, 35% None and 7.6% not stated.

Nottingham has a very high proportion of young residents. In 2013, 20% of the population of Nottingham Urban Area were aged between 18 and 24 years –more than double the national average (9%). A large proportion of the 18-24 year old population within the UA are likely to be students at the University of Nottingham and Nottingham Trent University. In the 2012-2013 academic year, there was a total of 35,540 students studying at the University of Nottingham and 26,870 students studying at NTU i.e. over 60,000 in all. Both universities have active LGBT associations.

Politically, Nottingham City Council is controlled by Labour which has 52 out of 55 seats with Conservatives having 3 seats. Nottinghamshire Country Council, which

² Statistics on recent immigration were obtained from East Midlands Councils (2015) *The Impact of International Migration on the East Midlands*, East Midlands Council and Nottingham Business School, Nottingham Trent University.

was narrowly won by Labour at the 2013 elections with 34 out of 67 councillors, passed into no overall control in 2014. There is considerable support from the City Council for LGBT organisations, including a contribution to the funding of the Lesbian and Gay Switchboard and events such as the local Pride held at the end of July. As employers, the Council and the Country Council are both Stonewall Diversity Champions. The Council has an active LGBT staff network of about 100 members which meets bi-monthly.



Raising of the LGBT flag above Nottingham Castle to celebrate IDAHO

LGBT Organisations

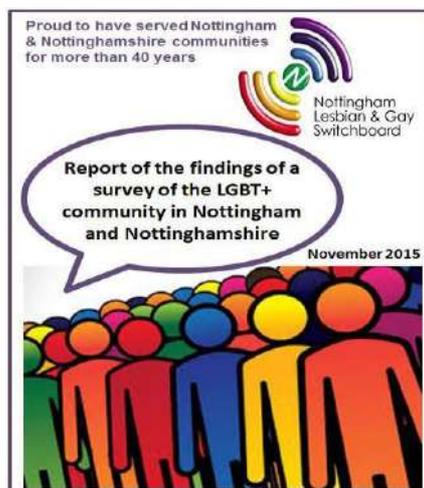
There are a large number of associations and support organisations covering a wide range of LGBT groups and activities but they tend to cater for a particular category. Part of the reason that Nottingham is a LGBT friendly city is connected with both its feminist history and contemporary feminist presence and left wing roots, which still manifest in a Labour controlled council. Nottingham is a hub of feminist activity, and is one of the reasons why there are many lesbian groups, and much of it is based around the Women's Centre. Indeed it has been a place where feminists have organized since the 1970s. The Women's Centre was founded in 1971 and in 2013 the Centre obtained a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to preserve the archives of women's involvement in the Nottingham Liberation Movement struggles and the Nottingham Women's Centre in the 70s to late 80s.

The Nottingham Lesbian and Gay Switchboard, which celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2015, and has now been renamed the Notts LGBT+ Network, has also been a key organisation. It emerged out of the Nottingham Campaign for Homosexual Equality,

started in 1971³ and in 1975 acquired a phone line and set up a website in 2004 (www.nottslgs.org.uk). In 2006 it took over the Nottingham LGB section of the DMOZ search engine. Notts LGBT+Network is a charity affiliated to Nottingham Community Voluntary Services as well as several other CVS in adjacent areas. It aims to “provide support and objective information on all matters relevant to lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and trans* people, a safer sex input into enquiries of a more general nature, training for its volunteers and for other organisations, both within the lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans community and the local community as a whole”.

It has links with many organisations and representatives on a number of consultation groups, such as The City Police LGBT Forum, The City Council LGBT Consultation Group, the Notts Hate Crime Steering Group, the Notts Stonewall Task and Finish Group, the Notts Healthcare NHS Trust Communities of interest group. Since 2005 it has published QB (Queer Bulletin) printing 1000 hard copies and reaching about 1100 others through email lists.

It conducted a survey of the needs of the LGBT population in 2015. 286 individuals in all answered the survey in which 39% of respondents described themselves as gay, 34% lesbian, 13% bisexual, 5% heterosexual and 4% pansexual.



2. Fieldwork undertaken

Fieldwork consisted of interviews with a range of individuals and stakeholders and a focus group which largely comprised individuals who had previously been interviewed. However in bringing together both individual and stakeholder

³ Homosexuality was only decriminalized in 1967 through The Sexual Offences Act 1967 which decriminalized homosexual acts in private between two men, both of whom had to have attained the age of 21. The Act applied only to England and Wales and did not cover the Merchant Navy or the Armed Forces. Being a lesbian was not illegal. The age of consent was equalized for all at 16 years in 2001 regardless of sexual orientation in England, Scotland and Wales.

interviewees it enabled us to deepen our understanding of what had been achieved, what remained to do and issues of intersectionality between categories of LGBT and age, disability, ethnicity and faith, .

One of the problems encountered in undertaking the fieldwork was that due to time and budgetary constraints, researchers have not been able to travel to Nottingham as many times as they would have wished and thus engage in more ethnographic and participatory methods. We addressed the difficulty of travel and not being able to go to Nottingham so many times, in part, by conducting some interviews by Skype and phone. 19 of the interviews were conducted in person and 4 were conducted on Skype. Two other people were interviewed by phone.

2.i Selection of Interviewees

We selected our interviewees on the basis of gender, sexuality, age, religion, ethnicity and workplace. Class is also a factor we have considered in the analysis, as most of our interviewees are middle-class and well educated despite the fact that Nottingham has many poor parts and lower socio-economic groups. Many interviewees are also middle-class because it is a university town and have come to Nottingham to study and remained to work in the city after graduating. Perhaps it is also more likely that middle-class people, in comparison to some working-class gay men, feel more comfortable being interviewed about their sexuality and are more likely to be part of LGBT networks at work and elsewhere.

Significantly, it was difficult to find BME interviewees so we only have one black stakeholder interviewee. He is the hate crime project officer for the council. This gap in the sample of BME interviews is in part due to the greater difficulty in coming out and of being openly gay in the British Asian and Black communities. However it is also important to note that the majority of our interviewees came from white-dominated groups and organisations. The publicity was not cascaded amongst faith groups where it may have reached more LGBT BME people. There are no BME LGBT groups in Nottingham, except a few which seem to only have an online presence, although there are obviously LGBT BME people within faith communities but they generally have to keep their sexuality hidden, especially among the more conservative groups (MUI8).

One interviewee commented that there is a problem in Nottingham with a lack of connection between different LGBT groups and LGBT people with disabilities and BME people and that more work should be done by the council to create links with BME and disabled LGBT people. *'Equality work should be under a bigger umbrella to include BME groups and disabled groups and they should do more work together'* (MUS25). It was confirmed in the focus group. As noted above it is a challenge to reach the voices of BME LGBT who are not out. For example the LGBT+ Network (helpline) conducted a survey of LGBT attitudes in Nottingham and it only had 2% black and 2% Asian respondents, 87% were White British, a composition which is very different to Nottingham's ethnic and religious composition in the 2011 census (see above).

However we were heavily reliant on the council for support with finding interviewees so this lack of linkage work by the council, despite the difficulties, is also reflected in our sample. We do not have any disabled LGBT people, so this is also a clear gap. The council's Equality and Diversity officer assisted us and put out publicity via the council's LGBT online network and accepted those who came forward. Whilst we instructed her in terms of our required demographic it was difficult for us to manage the selection very closely from a distance so for example our sample also has more gay men than lesbians. (It is difficult to turn people away who are keen to be involved unless a rigorous process with recruitment monitoring forms is applied where it is clear in the publicity that a person may not be chosen). However this gender inequality in the sample may also point to the issue that has been raised by several interviewees that groups like the LGBT+ Network, where we derived some of our sample because it is a key and very active helpline and information providing organization in Nottingham, is male dominated.

2.ii Composition of Interviews

25 people, including 11 stakeholders who work with LGBT people and 14 individuals who are part of the LGBT community in Nottingham, were interviewed. One interview was conducted jointly with a trans couple. We did not manage to interview any bisexual persons although associations representing this group have become more common (see Appendix 2). Some interviewees obviously fall into both categories of individual and stakeholder. We do not know the sexuality or gender identity of some of our stakeholders, as we have not asked this question of them.

23 of our interviewees are white, one white other but who sometimes describes himself as non-white, and one is Black. 7 of our interviewees are women and 12 are men. We have interviewed 4 transgender people, 3 of whom are young trans people in their twenties and the fourth is 44. One interviewee is a non-binary transgender person and 1 is female to male transgender, 2 others are male to female transgender. Age is important in this category as young trans people have more groups and online networks than older trans people in Nottingham.

The age range of our interviewees is between 21 and 70 years old, and although we have interviewees in all adult age groups, we only have 2 interviewees from the older adult age group (although one of the interviews actually was conducted with 2 older gay men). The largest age group are those in their forties. The small number of older adults is partly because our sample is largely derived from those who are of working age, although some of the gay men are retired LGBT+ Network volunteers (helpline). 8 of our 25 interviewees are council workers. We also interviewed 2 students as well as one member of the police and a member of an NHS Health Trust.

2.iii Focus group

We conducted one focus group. We advertised the focus group amongst our interviewees and stakeholder contacts in various numerous civic, statutory and

charitable organisations in Nottingham including the council, the police, the LGBT + Network, the Women's Centre and various trans groups such as Transhub. Similar issues presented themselves due to the distance of the researchers from Nottingham, in that we tried to ensure that we had commitment from people but on the day 4 did not attend. We had hoped it would be a larger group with a representative from the Women's Centre but a handful of people did not turn up on the day. We had four attendees and a facilitator. Were we based in Nottingham we could have held several other groups and risked people not attending.

The focus group consisted of two trans people, one of whom is non-binary and the other is female to male trans. A lesbian and council worker also attended. It was attended by a black stakeholder from the council, whom we also interviewed individually.

2.iv Survey

The survey was undertaken directly with 71 respondents in the city centre of Nottingham (see Annex 2 for results). It aims at assessing whether Nottingham is a LGBT friendly city and therefore it was crucial that the questions were answered by laypersons and not by people who are part of the LGBT community and whose views are already favourable to LGBT issues. Two researchers approached respondents on the streets of Nottingham making sure that different ethnicities and age groups were represented. In general, younger people were more open to be approached and answer the survey questions. A group of mostly non-white taxi drivers were approached and accepted to respond to the survey, some other participants were Eastern Europeans and several from young and middle-age BME group. Some older middle-class white women accepted to fill out the survey, although in general people were busy with their everyday life, and only those taking breaks or in an already sociable situations, showed openness and availability in filling out the survey.

3. Hate Crime

In the UK, as across the EU, LGBT hate crime is still widely under-reported despite some improvements by the police and other agencies in encouraging people to come forward. According to the Home Office's statistical bulletin, in 2015/16, at the national level there were 8,052 offences recorded by the police based on LGBT-phobia in England and Wales. Among them, 7,194 (89%) were sexual orientation hate crimes and the remaining 11% (or 858) were transgender hate crimes. (Home Office, 2016, p.1) It is also widely recognized, despite problems with how incidents are recorded, that intersecting identities can mean a person is subjected to a hate crime on the basis of several or multiple characteristics such as race, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, mental health and disability. Significantly, Stonewall's Gay British Crime Survey in 2008 showed 8% of all BME lesbian and gay people have experienced a homophobic hate incident compared to 4% of all lesbian and gay people, (Dick, 2008 cited in Perry, 2009).

In 2015/16, the police referred 1,339 LGBT hate crime cases to the Crown Protection Service for a decision on whether to prosecute or not. The conviction rate for LGBT hate crimes increased to 83% compared to 81.2% for the previous year. The proportion of guilty pleas increased to 73.9% for the same period. (CPS, 2016, p.24-26)

In terms of court cases, in 2015/16 almost 60% of hate crimes are related to offences against the person; almost 30% to public order offences; and less than 4% to criminal damage. (CPS, 2016, p.32) The percentage for the other principal offence categories can be found in the report.

Regional and Local

In 2015/16 court cases at the regional level in the East Midlands showed that the conviction rate decreased to 83.2% (89) compared to 87.9% (94) for the previous year. Accordingly, the percentage of unsuccessful cases rose from 12.1% (13) to 16.8% (18). There were 107 cases brought to the CPS for each year. (CPS, 2016, p.44, 50).

At the local level the number of incidents reported has gone up, especially at the County level which covers the area surrounding the city of Nottingham.

Table 1 Hate Crimes and Incidents on Grounds of Sexual Orientation

	April 15-Jan16	April 16-Jan17	change	% change
Nottingham City	71	94	23	32.4
Nottinghamshire	62	114	52	83.9

Source: Nottingham City Council

This might be because people feel more comfortable reporting but there is also some indication that hate crimes went up as a result of the Brexit referendum on whether to remain or leave the EU held on 23 June 2016. Hate crime incidents were not only directed towards migrants and minority ethnic groups but appeared to spill over to other categories.

Existing mechanisms for reporting LGBT hate crimes and discrimination

At the national level, if a person is in an immediate danger, it is advised that they call the police. Once a crime is reported, the person will hear from Victim Support. The next step is to attend the local Witness Service and wait for the outcome of proceedings.

There is a platform called True Vision where one can report a hate crime online if one does not want to go directly to the police. (http://www.report-it.org.uk/your_police_force) There is also the organization 'Stop Hate UK' who offer independent and confidential information, advice and support to anybody affected

by LGBT hate crime (<http://www.stophateuk.org/report-lgb-and-t-hate-crime/>). Galop gives advice and support to people who are victims of LGBT hate crime. They provide specialist advocacy and support, advice on the law, assistance in applying for financial compensation for victims of crime and filling police complaints (<http://www.galop.org.uk/how-we-can-help/>).

At a local level in Nottingham, with the person's consent, the Nottinghamshire police will put the person in touch with agencies that can provide a relevant service. Nottinghamshire Police is committed to record all hate crime offences including hate crimes against women (i.e. misogyny) and against alternative cultures, like 'goths' (<http://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/community/community-protection/hate-crime/>).

In case the person feels uncomfortable going straight to the police, Nottingham City Council provides preliminary support and advice (<http://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/community/community-protection/hate-crime/>).

NOTTS LGBT+ Network (volunteer run) also provides local information about reporting a hate crime. Nottinghamshire Hate Crime Steering Group has, with the support of Paddy Tipping, the Police & Crime Commissioner, sponsored training sessions on supporting victims of LGBT hate crime (<http://www.nottsigs.org.uk>).

The low levels of LGBT hate crime reporting are clearly illustrated by the research, for example the Galop study, which includes an online survey of 467 LGBT people and analysis of individual interviews, showed that only 25% of participants had reported the most recent hate crime they had experienced. Under-reporting also emerged as a finding from the 2012 EU LGBT Survey by the EU Fundamental Rights Agency, cited in Galop's report, which showed that of the 600 UK participants only 25% had reported the most recent hate crime they had endured. The reporting average amongst other EU country participants was 17%.

Reasons given for not reporting:

According to Galop's research, a number of reasons were given by LGBT people for not reporting. These included:

- LGBT people feel that reporting would not produce a result (24%);
- LGBT people are unsure whether their threat amounts to a hate crime (22%);
- LGBT people feel that they are not treated seriously by the local authorities (12%);
- LGBT people fear that reporting will make the situation worse (7%);
- There is a constant fear of a negative reaction from police to their identity (5%), (Galop, 2016, p.8)

However according to the EU LGBT Survey 2012, only 2% of participants stated that they did not report a hate crime because they were unsure how or where to do it. So

it does not seem to be the case amongst those surveyed in 2012 that people do not know how or where to report but that they are reluctant due to the reasons stated above.

In Galop's survey, 40% of those who reported the most recent crime they had experienced indicated that they did not find the process easy. Some issues that LGBT people stated are that there is a perception that justice professionals had not received training on LGBT issues (68%); the repetitive procedures (47%); a lengthy process (44%); and some participants were apprehensive about the prospect of disclosing their sexual orientation and/or gender identity (27%), (Galop, 2016, p.9)

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) stated that action taken by police forces to improve their compliance with the National Crime Recording Standards (NCRS) has led to improved recording of crime over the last year. Together with a greater awareness of LGBT hate crime, and improved willingness of victims to come forward, this is likely be a factor in the increase in hate crimes recorded by the police in 2015/16 compared to the previous year. In 2015/16, the number of reported sexual orientation hate crimes increased by 29% and transgender by 41%, (Home Office, 2015/16, p.4-5).

Almost all of our interviewees had experienced some form of abuse but often this was not recent and did not include physical violence. When asked whether they would report a hate crime, most of the interviewees responded that it would depend on the severity of the incident; if physical violence or vandalism were involved they would be more likely to report. However they would be more likely to ignore petty or more casual incidents and abusive comments. Some, such as the transgender interviewees said this is because they are used to it and others because they felt the police would not be interested or that they had told the police about name-calling in the past and received a negative response.

Research Findings

4. Combating hate crimes based on LGBTphobia: the role of policies, legal measures and claim/complaints' mechanisms.

There is a lot of support for policies to prevent homo- and transphobia in Nottingham, by both the City Council and the police. The City Council does surveys, collects city-wide statistics and does research into what is happening across the city and this includes comparable work across the different groups vulnerable to hate crime. Their research was conducted by Nottingham Citizens, an alliance of 40 organisations with an LGBT member (from Nottingham University) on the Committee. It helped to identify groups that are subject to hate crime. It was found, for example, that taxi drivers are often the target of (racial) hate crime in

Nottingham. They also found that hate crime on public transport was a problem and this is directed towards people with learning difficulties, mental health difficulties and Muslims. Some of the work of the Council focuses on repeat-victimization. There is a Commission on Hate Crime set up by the City Council and LGBT people are involved in this. The approach used in the work in relation to hate crime prevention in Nottingham is a multi-agency approach. The City Council runs the Nottingham Insight website which 'is a shared evidence base, providing access to data about Nottingham and its surrounding areas.' The website includes info about LGBT Nottingham residents. However, an interviewee criticized the Council for not doing '*intrinsic analysis*' and not going down to the '*nitty-gritty*'. '*Continually consulting as part of a survey etc but they often include 20 people*' (MUS23). Another said that the Council '*collects city wide statistics –though this is perhaps not the best*' (MUS1).

The City Council itself provides strong equality and diversity training for all its employees and this training includes trans-awareness and a session where a trans person who has transitioned comes along. They use the university hate crime training to assist them in this staff training. They have an additional support mechanism for LGBT staff and there is a zero tolerance policy towards discrimination among council employees. The City Council has an equalities team, consisting of 5 members of staff and including an equality lead and an equality consultant. The City Council also has a hate crime officer. They do work to prevent and combat homo- and transphobia in the context of local policies in areas such as employment, health and social services, police and the education system. The Council does hate crime training sessions for other organizations, does talks about LGBT networks and signposts this training at the Nottingham LGBT+ Network.

From the survey done in 2015 by the Switchboard it is clear that three quarters of respondents felt Nottingham and Nottinghamshire is a good place for LGBT people to live. The survey also showed that more than a quarter of LGBT respondents to the survey (77 out of 286 respondents) were willing to participate in focus groups to help advise public and voluntary sector organizations about how their services can best meet the needs of LGBT people. The City Council runs such focus groups.

The City Council also provides funding for the Network but Nottingham County Council does not. According to one interviewee '*fairly recently there was a County Council leader who cut all of Switchboard's funding. The government had orchestrated cuts but told councils to only cut a certain percentage but this councillor cut the whole of Switchboard's funding; he is still a councillor*' (MUS22). A council interviewee emphasised that a multi-agency approach is necessary (in order to best meet the needs of the LGBT community. (MUS4) One interviewee said that, at the City Council, '*two years ago there was much more of a hate crime focus, but now mostly consulted on the publicity campaign*'. *Now consultation is not 'a constant focus of work*' (MUS1). The City Council has undertaken a media campaign about the changing attitudes of people in the city. The Council collaborates with the police and with the two universities in Nottingham in relation to preventing and combating hate crime.

The police in Nottingham have several contacts with the LGBT community and support events and recruitment fairs and are promoting inclusion. They also have an independent advisory group consisting of agencies across the city. This group addresses hate crime, misogyny, trans-awareness, LGBT hate crime and unconscious bias training. The police are also involved with Transplus and Nottingham transhub groups. They have a very active support group for LGBT staff. Nottinghamshire Police Headquarters is a Stonewall Diversity Champion. The Chief Constable is very keen on prevention and awareness raising around equality and insists on zero-tolerance towards bullying and harassment. The police had a stall at the fresher's fair (an event for new students) at the University.

The City Council has a hate crime incidence performance panel, which looks at cases reported to the police, especially open cases. It examines how these open cases can be progressed. The Council looks at and evaluates specialist projects around hate crime and what can be learned from them. It identifies potential areas which need change (e.g. public transport) and it also identifies support groups for victims of hate crime. The council has designated officers for hate crime to support people who have experienced hate crime. However, hate crime is under-reported (MUS4, MUS 20).

The City Council works closely together with the police and the Nottingham LGBT Network and there is a feeling of shared ownership of LGBT issues between police and council. This cooperation covers both preventing and combating homo- and transphobia and goes beyond the City Council and the police to include other agencies and organizations.

The police in Nottingham have a clear zero tolerance policy towards hate crime, bullying and harassment on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. The police also run a LGBT forum and the City Council is a part of this: officers of the council regularly attend the forum. The independent LGBT advisory group also works towards combating hate crime, including homo- and transphobia. This group works with crime stoppers, the health care trust, mental health teams and BME LGBT groups.

The police have undertaken a hate crime reporting campaign and have discussed with the City Council the possibility of creating third-party reporting centres, such as True Vision, with the City Council. The survey by the Lesbian and Gay Switchboard mentioned above showed that 75% of respondents were likely to use a service for confidential reporting of hate crime. They also have a hate crime poster campaign to try and raise awareness of hate crime and to improve reporting rates.

Overall, the City Council and the police in Nottingham both do a lot of work towards preventing and combating homo- and transphobia and they work closely together, with each other and with other organizations in the city, on these issues. Both are very inclusive of the needs and demands of LGBT people in the city although one interviewee, who had lived in London before, did not think the services in Nottingham were as inclusive as in London (MUI10). In relation to working with other organizations and agencies: the City Council has a scrutiny meeting with the

NHS, the police and the refugee forum: their task is to scrutinize the Council. It also works with representatives of the health sector, voluntary organizations, police service, court and local schools (for example, joint training session looking at LGBT issues and homophobia in schools). There is a shared portal where organizations come together. The Council and City Homes work with Communities Inc., (a new BME led national social enterprise) developing a citywide positive action programme called Future Leaders of Nottingham Programme. The programme identifies diverse future leaders and organizations from across the city.

Another example of cooperation of the City Council with other groups and campaigns is the support of the council for the Nottinghamshire Strategic Tobacco Alliance Group (STAG) which is working to raise awareness amongst certain groups including LGBT people about the dangers of smoking. They note that the prevalence of smoking is higher amongst LGBT people than amongst the general adult population. One of the interviewees questioned this and said that the City Council might not have drawn the right conclusion from the survey. The survey showed that LGBT households are more likely to have a smoker living there, but this could be a heterosexual member of this household (MUS23).

The City Council has a Pride Committee and the council flies the rainbow flag quite regularly. They also support the local PRIDE activities, promote IDAHO day and disseminate info on IDAHO. The website of the City Council has info for LGBT people. The City Council also does a lot of work with young trans people ('trans for me@group) and are looking at doing more work with the public around health and well-being.

Both the City Council and the police in Nottingham are a Stonewall approved employers who ranked among the top 100 in 2016. Many interviewees have noted the vital work done by the Council and the police and comment on the fact that Nottingham is a LGBT friendly city and that a lot has changed in the last 10 years (MUI 14, MUI15, MUI16, MUI7, MUI18), although others say that services are '*not great*' and could be improved and that more community support is needed (MUI19). Some interviewees mentioned that more could be done for trans people, that there is a separation between LGB and T (MUI 6, MUI 9, MUS24, MUI12, MU17)). Others stressed that a more intersectional approach was needed (MUS20, MUI10, MUI15). Some said that information was not always easy to access. Quite a few interviewees mentioned that there is still much discrimination amongst LGBT people themselves.

Some of the interviewees felt that the City Council promotes a lot of initiatives in relation to LGBT people, but only those that do not entail a financial outlay. Some felt they made symbolic gestures but they do not go further or reach out beyond this. According to one stakeholder interviewee, '*they are very good at engaging with its own staff but I wonder about their efforts with the community as a whole*' (MUS23). They are, engaging in big profile things but are less willing to deal with the issues that the LGBT community is dealing with (MUS23). But another interviewee points out that '*there are limited funds to address discrimination and hate crime. Publicity costs money*' (MUS 21). As an example, of doing only things that do not cost

money, the flying of the rainbow flag by the Council was mentioned. But, even if this does not cost the Council any money, it still has an important symbolic value: it shows that the Council is open to and supports LGBT people.

5. Experiences in public spheres: representations, virtuality, physical spaces and hate speech

Nottingham, unlike Brighton, which is widely regarded as the unofficial 'gay capital' of the UK together with other large communities in London, Manchester, Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, Liverpool and Newcastle upon Tyne, does not have a gay village. It does have an annual Pride Festival and other annual public events such as LGBT History month (February). In 2011 and 2012, Nottinghamshire had 240 places of Pride of Place, more than any other place per head of population. IDAHOT Day on 17 May is also celebrated, the rainbow flag flown on the Castle and cultural activities held at the Broadway Cinema and Five Leaves bookshop, an independent bookshop with lesbian and gay literature as one of its specialisms. However it does not have a centre for LGBT people as Leicester, another large city in the same region (East Midlands) which on the other hand has less of a reputation for being an LGBT friendly city.

i. Nottingham: a safe or dangerous place for LGBT people?

Nottingham City has over the years suffered from a reputation of crime and high levels of violence. This is mostly located in the city centre and much of it can be linked to the night-time economy which thrives in the centre (NCDP 2015). Nottingham is a diverse city but it is also near to traditional mining communities which are considered by many to be more traditional, less open and less tolerant of LGBT people.

Interestingly hate crime or addressing it did not feature in Nottingham Crime and Drugs Partnership, Partnership Plan 2015-2020. Thus there were no targets linked to this appearing in the plan. Anti-social behaviour is however a strategic target and it is noted that this occurs mainly in five wards in the city and also in the city centre.

The Nottingham Plan to 2020, (2010, One Nottingham) set out the strategic vision for the city. Although LGBT is not mentioned in the plan, there are some broad aspirations regarding safety as evident in statement made in the document "By 2020, Nottingham will be a significantly safer city with lower crime, fear of crime and perceptions of lower anti-social behaviour".

Similarly the Council Plan for 2015-2019 (NCC 2015) talks of five key objectives including, 'cutting the number of victims of crime by a fifth and continue to reduce anti-social behaviour'. It further says it will 'promote an Equal Nottingham and Lead the City in tackling discrimination and promoting equality'.

ii. LGBT friendly?

The majority of respondents think of Nottingham as a diverse and gay friendly city. However experiences do vary and many respondents balance this view by saying this is true for the city centre, but not necessarily for suburbs or other areas.

'Nottingham is quite friendly to LGBT people but Nottingham is a deprived city and with that comes people who are not that accepting of LGBT people, though this may be a stereotype. I am not going to get verbally assaulted by men in suits but assaulted by men in sportswear. Nottingham is not affluent, has a high rate of crime' (MUI5)

The city council's supportive attitude towards the LGBT community was cited by several people as central to how the city was viewed as tolerant and accepting of the community. Others cited the two Universities as central to making Nottingham friendly and safe for LGBT people – both engage in visible support to the communities.

Some suggest caution in certain areas of the city centre at the weekend when the night-time economy is fully underway – i.e. there are many groups of young people around and also some are drunk.

However there was recognition that acceptance of LGBT people might not be the same in all communities across Nottingham and often communities of new arrivals, immigrants or faith groups could pose challenges.

'(Nottingham's) growing and diverse communities can have different sentiments towards LGBT communities so we have to work with this. People from Africa etc., and they have different cultural experiences as to how they treat LGBT people in their community. Often in a negative way. We do see this and are dealing with it. So this is a piece of work for us to do looking at diverse LGBT communities and wider communities. We need a greater handle on this'. (Focus group)

'Nottingham is a walk-able city, many positive things although there is still homophobia'. (MUI 8)

The focus group respondents mentioned that some BME LGBT people choose not to access the LGBT spaces in the city due to racism they perceive within the LGBT community:

'The reasons why some groups don't access the LGBT community are because the gay community can be racist in its thinking'. (Focus group)

Also disabled people may have trouble physically accessing spaces.

The Survey undertaken by Nottingham Lesbian and Gay Switchboard (NLGS) yielded the following results about the existence of an LGBT community in Nottingham:

- 53% of the respondents felt there was an LGBT+ community where they live and 44% felt part of the LGBT+ community where they live. From the responses given Nottingham has the largest amount of people who felt part of the LGBT+ community where they live.
- Over half of the respondents (57%) felt they were part of the wider community where they live.
- Three quarters (75%) of the respondents felt Nottingham and Nottinghamshire is a good place for LGBT+ people to live.
- The vast majority of respondents (92%) thought there is still a need for an LGBT+ community.
- Friendship and support, a diverse collection of like-minded people and places where LGBT+ people meet with freedom are broadly of equal importance in defining what respondents felt that an LGBT+ community meant to them.
- Inclusiveness and cohesion in the LGBT+ community and LGBT+ spaces are the two main means by which respondents thought the LGBT+ community could be strengthened.

Source: Notts Lesbian and Gay Switchboard (2015)

iii. Use of public, private and semi-public spaces

Whilst respondents were in agreement that Nottingham was a gay friendly city there was recognition that the city did not have a shared gay space in terms of an LGBT centre. Leicester was often cited as a nearby city with an LGBT centre for all communities to share and come together:

‘We need a LGBT community centre but nowhere to go. So people form their own groups but actually we need a centre where we can bring all those services under one place’. (Focus group)

Several respondents, including all gay men interviewed, commented upon the absence of gay spaces for men and older gay men in particular (see next section on visibility). It is clear from the older gay men we interviewed how isolated some of them feel due to the demise of gay friendly pubs and clubs where they would previously have met and socialized with other gay men. The lack of a gay scene may be affecting older gay men to a greater extent than lesbians and be more of a contributory factor to their level of isolation and loneliness as they appear to have less friendship networks than lesbians, who have an email link list Link Notts ‘Lesbians in Notts Connected’. Although there is a dining club ‘Dinner Ladies’, there is no women’s bar but they do have rotating spaces, go to each other’s houses or meet in cafés (MUI 8). However one Trans person felt that the lesbian scene in the

city was really run by radical lesbian feminists who were often trans-exclusionary which she found difficult and unpleasant.

Lesbians appear to occupy social media spaces more effectively and thoroughly than gay men and they actively use this to organise and plan events and groups, for example the Link Notts Forum which is for lesbians in Nottingham. Over 500 women are part of the forum. The women are 30 years and above and the group does a lot of activities together.

iv. Visibility of LGBT people in the city

Most LGBT people hang out in the Creative Quarter and Lace Market area of the city where there are some gay friendly commercial venues. Nottinghamshire Pride also ends up in this location. There is a lesbian pub called the New Foresters which is very trans-friendly – but Trans people often don't feel safe in gay bars.

Some venues are seen as supportive of the LGBT community e.g. the 200 Degrees Coffee shop also hosts LGBT events during the year. The Five Leaves independent bookshop is also used a lot by the LGBT community and it hosts local events. There is a women disco run every two months called Juice.

For some respondents, mainly lesbian women, socialising is undertaken in clubs, groups, societies and interest or hobby groups outside of any commercial activity. Lesbians in particular often reported a mixed social group, wide and diverse group of friends, good social life, not just gay friends. For example the Hiking Dykes walking group, Sapphist Writers group for lesbian and bisexual women, and women's dining club, Dinner Ladies, were all mentioned. It was widely agreed by respondents that lesbians are better organised socially than the men. The Women's Centre is for Women only and hosts a reading group, a single parent group and BME support services.

Some respondents linked the issue of visibility to the size and extent of the commercial 'gay scene'. It was widely acknowledged by all respondents that the commercial 'gay scene' has shrunk or downsized significantly. This was a widely held view and it became very dominant very quickly amongst all respondents from all communities.

'I think the gay scene is shrinking because society is more accepting. It's not so necessary for LGBT people to interact in person anymore. Businesses for LGBT people in Nottingham are shrinking but services are growing'. (MUI 8)

Some expressed concern that if the LGBT scene shrunk much more then visibility would decline steeply leading to increased intolerance.

'There used to be 3-4 gay pubs. However Grinder and Gaydar and austerity may have contributed to their closure. There is one pub left and one nightclub called Propaganda. There used to be a theatre bar

that was pleasant place, although it was not just for gays but that has closed now. 'Gay men haven't really got anywhere social to go now'. (MUI 8)

'The gay nightclub NG1 became almost homophobic before it reverted to being a straight club. There is still a need for a commercial gay scene. Birmingham has more clubs and Manchester. Nottingham has done a disservice to older gay men in closing their pubs. Older gay men suffer from the lack of gay friendly pubs/social spaces, young gay men use Grinder'. (MUI 8)

However there has been a dramatic decline within community in terms of places to go. There are two bars at one end of the city and nothing in-between.

'With the decline of gay scene in Nottingham, the Switchboard has more people contacting them. - more lonely older men are getting in touch with them'.

In addition to the loss of bars and clubs it was noted that other services have been reduced in the city. This has affected some groups more than others.

'Due to the decline there are less bars and clubs and other gay friendly places to go. This is partly due to internet. There used to be a group called 'Break Out'. There were also 5 full time NHS LGBT support employees, now there are none. The county council have starved the Switchboard of funds at different times so this leads to consequences. Switchboard has survived, recently had its 40th anniversary. Something needs to be done to address the noticeable decline in commercial scene in Nottingham. However one aspect is that people are more relaxed or more integrated. If the scene was in decline in mid 1990s people would have felt more anxious whereas now the sense of urgency isn't there' (MUI 8)

Some voiced concern over the long-term future of the commercial LGBT scene in the city:

'Generally speaking, presence of a gay scene is so important. It's also important that the citizens of the city are aware that there is a gay scene. The gay scene is partly shrinking because of online dating. It can be difficult to find someone to befriend and sleep with. In a couple of years there may not be a gay scene in Nottingham. People demand high quality services. Gay men may be more comfortable going elsewhere if this happens'. (MUI5)

Some gay men acknowledged that the reduction of the number of gay venues was linked to the downturn in the economy. Others linked this to the switch to online spaces for meeting friends and partners. Again online spaces were felt by many to be

suitable more for younger LGBT people and were thought by many not to be particularly favourable to older gay men, or welcomed by them.

Some felt that the need for specific LGBT venues was vanishing as life became more tolerant or accepting:

'It is good people don't feel the need to go specifically LGBT venues but on the other hand it decreases visibility', (MUS24)

Some respondents felt the quality of bars and clubs available now was also not suitable, with an absence of wine bars and more 'up-market' locations in which to meet friends.

In terms of displaying affection in public, respondents are sometimes more cautious and qualify this by saying it depends upon the location, the time of day or night, if they were with a crowd of friends, who was there, etc. One respondent felt the LGBT community had become more influential so public displays of affection are more acceptable now with fewer people pointing and making comments to each other. Some respondents noted the high visibility and presence of the police in the city centre and that this was welcomed.

In some areas of the outer city, respondents would definitely think twice, or would not display affection. Older gay men in particular are reluctant or very wary to show public affection whilst younger LGBT people are less concerned about this. Some women also expressed a reluctance to display affection but some also said it depended upon when and where. Two respondents, one male, one female noted they would feel less comfortable displaying affection in any Asian or Muslim area of the city. Many said they would feel confident in reporting any issues that arose.

One lesbian respondent noted that in the centre of town in certain galleries or bars she would feel comfortable expressing affection but in the local MacDonald's she wouldn't feel comfortable and would expect some hostility and negative comments. Another (MUI 8) mentioned that 12 years ago she had experienced incidents of someone calling out 'lesbian' when she was walking down the street holding hands with her partner.

One mature gay BME male argued that visibility was supported by the council but actually quite qualified in what it meant, i.e. that the council were supportive of high profile 'showy' events but that this did not lead to any deep changes within the wider city population.

'There is a discrepancy about visibility: all kind of LGBT academic and artistic events are organised by people working on queer theory, globalisation and sexuality, queer diaspora. There is a frequent collaboration involving art galleries, connections and exchanges between academia and art are very rich and this is amazing but it's not translated in the everyday life of the city. Lived urban experience of

LGBT people is not there in terms of cosmopolitanism and diversity'
(MUI 10).

Recent successes regarding LGBT visibility:

- ☐ Flying the Rainbow flag from the castle during IDAHO week
- ☐ Partnership support for LGBT History Month in February with displays in libraries, civic centres, register offices, bookshops and key offices
- ☐ LGBT History month LED bus signs
- ☐ IDAHO Events and the council promotes Idaho day by publicising it around the city
- ☐ Visible police support for key LGBT events, police website and police recruitment of LGBT staff
- ☐ BiCon conference for bisexuals
- ☐ Trans Day of Remembrance
- ☐ Nottinghamshire Pride event
- ☐ Out in Education teaching school pupils about LGBT issues
- ☐ Council Day centres and Care centres post LGBT posters in common reception areas
- ☐ Support Orlando Community vigil
- ☐ Public consultation regarding key policies
- ☐ Third party reporting sites for hate crime
- ☐ Mainstream media coverage of civil partnerships at the City Hall

v. Visibility of transgender people

The experience for the Trans community was again different. There were recognised spaces or 'Trans hangouts' at the Broadway Cinema. Comments from Trans respondents included:

'generally though we would pick and choose where we go out and we would go out as a group'. (Focus group)

'We are still at the stage where Trans people get stared at, shouted at, bullied, harassed, discriminated against at work. They ask crazy questions about our genital – which is crazy. Some feel they need a right to know if you are Trans'. (Focus group)

Two trans young people felt that they were often stared at made fun of when out in public:

'People can tell I'm trans. Nottingham is a very closed minded area, a very small percentage of people are brought up in the city. The majority are from poorer places in Nottinghamshire and they come into town and see different people and feel threatened by it'. (MUI 17)

'We [trans people] have rubbish visibility', 'Trans people are seen as monsters'. 'Shemale this and tranny that'. There is a lot of sexually objectifying of trans people and transgender porn'. (MU 12)

Some Trans respondents commented about their exclusion from lesbian and gay venues in the city and they stated were not always made to feel welcome. One Trans youth felt that the local gay pub is really for older gay men who have little knowledge about trans people. One also noted that there are some spaces/ groups for trans feminine people and maybe transvestites but said there was nothing for trans males.

Some Trans respondents noted the differences within the Trans community for those who were more easily identifiable by the wider community as Trans:

'I am privileged by female passing and can glide by cos people don't notice your Trans-ness so I can avoid transphobic people and fit it'. (Focus group)

'Trans women have a very different experience that don't pass for CIS. People can see they are a Trans person and they can receive a lot of verbal harassment, and even more violence' (Focus group)

vi. The Transgender experience

The Trans community asked the Broadway Cinema if the cinema owners could turn one of the toilets there into a gender-neutral toilet and they agreed. Similarly, rough Trade, (a music store and café bar), have set up gender-neutral toilets. This is welcomed by the trans community. A similar attempt to re-sign public toilets at Nottingham Trent University was met with confusion with new gender-neutral signs being placed then removed.

Clearly for the Trans community certain spaces are routinely thought to be off-limits, for example swimming pools and gyms. As one Trans person noted:-

'Most Trans people don't swim because of the issues around changing rooms and stuff like that. But we have a swimming group so we all go together to XXX swimming pool. So we feel safer. They have gender natural changing rooms. We don't publicise this so don't publish this widely please. We only go as a group at 9am when there are no kids. If there are kids then we would be bullied. Once a kid asked if 'Are you a tranny?' That can put people off coming'. The staff are fine. We often wear unusual clothing rather than swim suits. We had to clear it with management etc'. (Focus group)

There was also recognition that the few spaces available can themselves quickly become segregated or used only by one sector of a community, for example:

'So a group would say it's for all the community but often it is just older Trans women for example. We are trying very hard with Trans space not to make it like that and make as broad as possible'. (Focus group).

vii. Media

The majority of respondents noted that the coverage in national press and local press has improved significantly. Examples were given of how negative many journalist and newspaper stories were in the 190s and 1990s. Some local family newspapers used to refuse to carry adverts for LGBT people or businesses. This has now changed significantly and local media, newspapers, TV and radio are all active in promoting LGBT businesses and openly cover LGBT issues.

'The council's Pride committee and RC were asked to talk on BBC Radio 4 about how the cuts have affected, and contributed to the decline of, the LGBT community in Nottingham and about older LGBT people in the city. They discussed the lack of places to go, not everyone wants to meet in bars. Social media plays a part in the decline of the community, not what it used to be'. (MUS2)

In addition QB newsletter (an LGBT newsletter) is readily available at many outlets.

Many LGBT people now obtain community news and information online – key to this was the Internet and also social media.

One lesbian said media representation depended on who was being represented:

'It depends who I am, people who are part of LGBT community are also women, men, white middle and working class, Asian. They may be represented possibly for some of those things and not for others'. (MUI 15)

viii. Outside of Nottingham

It was recognised that the experience of those living in Nottingham might not be reflected in the towns and villages outside in the County of Nottinghamshire. There are recognised LGBT communities in Worksop and Mansfield and Worksop has an annual gay pride with over 1200 attending.

The situation outside Nottingham was thought to be not as safe or welcoming for LGBT community members, many of whom sought actively to move to Nottingham:

'This is the positive thing about Nottingham that I know of people in the north of the county who are experiencing extreme harassment in their communities and they are desperate to move to the city. And it isn't always easy to move to the city, to get housed, to get support. So Nottingham city is definitely seen as a haven – as opposed to the north of the county which is perhaps deprived ex-mining communities and

they are not perhaps the best places to be out and about as a trans person'.

'I would expect to see homophobia in the working men's clubs' (MUS11)

In wider Nottinghamshire, e.g. Worksop, Mansfield, and Shirebrook, there are spates of homophobic attacks and *'if you ask the police they have no record of them'*. One older gay male respondent knew of at least two incidents where the victims were arrested not the perpetrators and found that there was no record of this with the police. He added:

'it's very frightening in that area. The city is ok but the county is not ok and the police are not doing much, if anything' (MUS 11)

6. Social interactions and internalised experiences of LGBTphobia

This section looks at the experiences of coming out in families and relationships and social interaction with others in the community, at work and in professional life as well as access to basic services, such as health.

i. Family and intimate relationships and coming out

Relationships with family are largely dependent on how individuals have felt coming out, or expressing their sexuality, to their parents and family. The extent to which coming out was difficult for interviewees also seems to depend on age, religion, life-stage, and whether one is trans or not.

For some interviewees under 40 years of age, excluding those whose parents have strong religious beliefs, interviewees experienced a reasonable level of support from family and friends. One lesbian in her thirties commented *'I'd been put in a heterosexual box but family and friends soon adjusted.'* (MU1 9) Another interviewee found his liberal parents supportive when he came out at 16 years old, as were friends and colleagues but the *'people I associate with tend to be more liberal'*. (MUI 15) This highlights how the milieu one is part of, which is partly chosen and partly enforced at work, is vital. Importantly the city council and other Nottingham workers, such as those who work for City Homes note that the discourse against any homophobia means that they generally feel comfortable being out at work. For example, the same employee noted that colleagues would not even hint if his sexuality were an issue with them (MUI5). She is happy in the city because there are strong laws protecting her (MUI15). However without the presence of the LGBT group in the council another interviewee thinks that its employees would not be nearly as equality aware as they are now. So the measures that the council has put in place such as supporting Pride, IDAHO Day and flying the rainbow flag from their

building have created a level of visibility around LGBT issues in Nottingham which has been crucial.

Some of the older interviewees had far less favourable experiences coming out. Some moved to Nottingham to escape towns which were homophobic or places where LGBT people were completely invisible with nowhere to socialize. For example a male interviewee recounted that coming out as gay in Lincolnshire was horrendous. There was nowhere to go to be open, except a once a month gay night in a very rough Boston pub, so he made the long journey to Nottingham every weekend for years. He wanted to be somewhere he could 'live and be'. (MUS22) Several others lamented not coming out sooner but they were fearful of reactions in the 1980s and 1990s.

Five respondents stated they had selected Nottingham as the city they wished to move to and many of them cited the opportunities afforded by the city for LGBT people. This included work opportunities or cultural life which were seen as an opportunity to live their life as an LGBT person, or simply to find 'a safe space'. Others thought their original town or village too small and with no visible LGBT community;

'I moved to Nottingham due to my sexuality, this was a considerable reason. I needed to live in the city, x was too small, the number of gay men was limited, no gay scene. There are more services in Nottingham, it also had a gay scene and decent population of gay men'. (MUI5)

Some expressed this as it being easier to interact with your environment and your communities by moving to a big city. Some found local businesses are geared towards LGBT people and that living in a city does facilitate this significantly. This level of activity makes people more social and engaged with the environment.

For example one person moved from a small village in x which was a reasonable environment but there was nothing available for LGBT people there which made for a lonely experience. Even if they cannot be said to have been part of a sexual migration to Nottingham, many interviewees having come to the area for work, family or study have noted how important a gay friendly place is in the decision to remain in a place.

When an individual has religious parents or is in an environment with other religious people, interviewees have experienced problems with being accepted. A Christian lesbian interviewee did not feel able to tell fellow Christians about her sexuality.

'I felt as a woman I'd been discriminated against enough and didn't want a further area of discrimination, or to be pigeon holed, I didn't want to lose my reputation, I didn't want to draw attention to it'. (MUI8).

Another interviewee's mother who is a strict Jehovah Witness was unable to accept her daughter's sexuality and the mother's reaction was extreme at the moment of telling. Her daughter has subsequently had to distance herself from her mother.

Similarly a young trans person's mother started crying and wanting her to see 'a religious man' when she was told. (MUI3) Her parents have made her 'life miserable' and she rarely visits them.

Significantly, other young trans interviewees have had negative experiences of coming out. One experienced bullying at school and nothing was done about it; teachers turned a blind eye. He came out as gay first, which he had already been bullied for, and later as trans which also made him a target. The 'Out in Education' initiative campaigns against homophobia in primary and secondary schools. Several interviewees including one with a teaching background pointed out that he feels the situation for LGBT students is much better in schools but this young trans interviewee, who is in his twenties and has fairly recently left school, did not have this experience. It may be better for L and G pupils but this does not mean that is the case for trans students. However the situation in the two Nottingham universities seems to be very good for LGB and T students. We interviewed a gay student and union officer at Nottingham Trent University and he, along with the full-time trans students we talked to, noted the high level of awareness and cultural competency in the union and among the staff.

The younger trans people interviewed also do not feel that the police take their experiences of transphobia seriously, one interviewee even going so far as to say '*We are not humans, they don't understand being trans*'. (MUI17) The feeling is that the authorities don't want to take it into their hands. Another young trans person, a male to female trans person, who has suffered verbal abuse and assault, was beaten up on her way home when first transitioning. However she notes that physical abuse doesn't happen so much now but name-calling on the street is still common. She tried reporting when younger but the police did nothing. She doesn't feel police support has increased, '*unless you are injured they won't do anything*'. (MUI12)

However a trans person who is a student at the university has had a much more positive experience of being trans in general as the university, as noted above, is very inclusive and has numerous gender and sexuality officers which support LGBT students. Trans students have access to gender neutral toilets and can easily enact a process whereby they can change the pronoun they are addressed by.

Trans interviewees pointed to the transphobia and biphobia within the LG community. There is an attitude of '*why can't you just be gay?*' It has also been pointed out that it is '*very different being trans and being gay*' and that '*my life would be much easier if I were gay*.' (MUI13) Clearly the intersection of gender and sexual identity is a complicated relationship inside and outside of the LGBT community.

There is often limited provision for Bisexual community members in Nottingham and bisexuals often make use of L and G spaces. However, in 2015 the UK's biggest gathering of bisexuals and their friends, BiCon, was held at the University of Nottingham's University Park campus. Often referred to as the "Highlight of the Bisexual Year", it attracts people from all over the UK with a supportive interest in bisexuality.

ii. Work and professional life: Interactions with employers, management and co-workers and workplace harassment.

As noted above many of the council workers point out that they feel comfortable and supported in their workplaces due to the efforts made by the council. Although some felt more could be done and one interviewee argued that some of the initiatives are merely symbolic:

'They need to be more open about engaging, make more of an effort, they do symbolic things but they don't bother doing anything further and reaching out beyond that'. He goes on that initiatives that require money are neglected: 'the council does quite a lot but it takes the cheap options due to resources'. (MUS23)

There was one example of a council worker who experienced verbal abuse within the last three years. This was a lesbian interviewee who was subject to verbal abuse from straight males colleagues at the city council. They were using homophobic terms, she challenged them verbally and received apologies by email. A lesbian interviewee described being uncomfortable as a result of both sexuality and gender. She worked in a police station which was very male dominated where she found 'everything difficult', for example she didn't feel comfortable with some of their conversations. In the end she came out at the police station: *'I don't care anymore, I just want to be happy'* (MUI7).

iii. Community networks

Trans people note the lack of groups and organizations which can lead to isolation for them although it is a bit better for young trans people as they are more likely to go online and they have a group called Trans4Me which a young trans council employee jointly runs.

Even when family are supportive the strength of the community itself is vital, and especially if the family is not. One gay male interviewee reports: 'his bigger family are the gay community' because they provide confidence and recognition. (MUI 14) However the LGBT community seems to organize separately and one non-binary interviewee argues that the community in Nottingham lacks cohesion and there is much segregation between the L, the G, the B and the T. For example the LGBT+ Network, formally the Gay and Lesbian Switchboard is an important helpline and information resource in Nottingham. In 2015 it celebrated its 40th anniversary. However lesbian interviewees have noted that they have not felt able to get involved with the helpline because it is dominated by gay men. Trans people have also pointed out they were excluded in name and in practice. In 2015 under pressure from trans groups the Network added the T to their name. One trans interviewee who provides training for them has noted that the process to make the organization more inclusive has been a very challenging one. Several lesbian feminists

commented that the Network seemed like it *'was mostly old white men'* and that *'it is slightly old fashioned and it may be that they haven't kept up [with the times].'* (MUI18)

iv. Access to Basic Services

Numerous interviewees with gay men illustrate that sexual health services, such as Nottingham's health shop, are available. However a foreign-born gay interviewee felt that after living in London for 9 years Nottingham was not as inclusive. For him it was a satisfactory experience and there was access, but different from London in that the attitude and the behaviours of health professionals were not as open. He had some strange feelings and uncomfortable encounters. *'I wasn't offended by it but I felt it- they are not quite as open'* (MUI10).

Unlike gay men, trans people report difficulty and delay in accessing health services. Nottingham has one of only 8 gender identity clinics in England. The waiting lists are long and trans interviewees feel there should be much quicker treatment available for those wanting to transition.

One young trans going through transition would like the health services to be better but they were better than she was expecting. She felt her GP was ambivalent about treating her and her request to go to the gender clinic. (MUI13) It was reported by several interviewees that access to the clinic is frustrating and once on their list appointments are only once every three months. There are delays with being offered hormones. This is connected with making people wait so they can be sure so that they don't change their minds but one interviewee finds this unfair arguing that it's rare for people who have transitioned to change their minds.

Gay men are more likely to need sexual health services than lesbians and lesbians have not noted a gap in this respect but a lesbian interviewee pointed out where the problems lie for lesbian couples *'the health services would be better if they did not so often assume people are heterosexual'*. (MUI19) She described her feeling of exclusion in her attempts to gain IVF treatment with her partner on the NHS in the Nottingham. She encountered doctors who were unaware of NHS policy for lesbian couples wanting to pursue IVF. *'The doctor didn't know anything about fertility services for lesbians'*. (MUI19) He later said that lesbians have to be treated the same as heterosexual couples even though there are medical differences. A couple have to have been trying for a child for a certain amount of time before they are eligible for fertility treatment on the NHS. However the only option for lesbian couples to do this is to pay for treatment. She told the doctor that in having to treat them the same as heterosexual couples they were being discriminated against. She was concerned about this discrimination but also about the lack of awareness and cultural competence among doctors. She feels there needs to be more information about fertility issues available locally for LGBT people. There should be a place, either actual or online, where lesbians can go for information about having a family.

Other research participants argue lesbians should be given specific fertility and IVF information given the fact that they have to pay for fertility treatment due to the heterosexual bias in the NHS (MUI 19).

Importantly several interviewees, including one from a Nottinghamshire NHS Trust pointed out the gap in care home provision for all older LGBT people. (MUI16/MUS3) The NHS worker was concerned about older LGBT people who have experienced a lot of stigma in the past also experiencing that in the context of care home provision.

'It is difficult to work out what services are needed but certainly respite care for older LGBT people and diverse care homes, we need to make sure there are diverse care homes where transparency is possible is vital i.e. a person can have their partner there and it to be clear that they are their partner, husband or wife'. (MUS3)

7. Inclusion, exclusion, and intersectionality

In this section we examine the social divisions and intersections which need to be addressed by different institutions and LGBT groups and individuals. As Michael Brown (2012; 541) noted "geographies of sexualitiescannot focus exclusively on sexuality per se, but must also consider its connections with other dimensions of identity".

'We don't have a cohesive LGBT community' (MUI 9).

The view of the LGBT community as being divided into silos was repeated by a large number of the respondents from all sides of the community. There was a need both for institutions such as the Council and police to address intersectionality and to give more support to ethnic minorities and those with disabilities. (MUS20)

Older gay men

Among our interviewees there seem to be widespread agreement on the role of social media and apps in the shrinking of spaces of face-to-face encounters in the LGBT community. This fact has implications for their ability to socialise. Older gay people suffer most from closure of their spaces of encounter such as for instance pubs, while young LGBT people thrive more in social media and are quite happy to meet through smart phone apps (MUI 14; MUI 16).

The use of certain slang words highlights the kind of mutual exclusions based on age existing within the gay community itself. Our interviewee recounts that older gay men are called 'bears' and younger gay men are called 'twinks'. The former term depict the masculinity of older men as 'hairy, heavy-set (sometimes muscular) gay or bisexual, thus projecting an image of rugged masculinity. One interviewee reported that 'twinks' don't want to have 'bears' around and complain if older gay men go to

the same places, in other words older more mature 'bears' are not welcome in places where young gay men might want to hang out. One older gay man addressing issues of exclusion within the community mentioned the fact that ageism is not tackled or addressed by the various organisations behind the community:

'There is a shared feeling that ageism in the LGBT community is not being addressed despite initiatives such as Pride and IDAHO' (MUS 23).

One older gay male noted, *'the scenes are quite divisive, a lot of friends won't go out in Notts'*

'Older gay men feel like outsiders in their own community. Some older gay men socialise with lesbians' (MUS23).

Transphobia

During the interviews and the focus group, research participants extensively discussed the lack of inclusivity and segregation between L,G,B and T and also in relation to other social divisions and identities.

One trans interviewee notes that:

'There is a lot of internal transphobia in LGBT community. For example gay men saying "you're not a real man, you haven't got a penis" and gay men saying being gay is enough.' (MU17)

The same interviewee mentions the Trans Exclusionary Radical Feminists (TERF)⁴ and that *'they hate trans people' and there are lots of TERF websites (MU17).*

The interview participants suggest that gay males are reluctant to engage with issues faced by transgender people. One young male to female person (21 years) feels that support is better for the super young transgender people in Nottingham (around 15 years old) and not necessarily for transgender people of her age (MU13)).

Black Minority Ethnic

One mature gay male who was BME noted that he felt an outsider in the LGBT community which he felt was mono-cultural:

⁴ One transgender interviewee mentioned that Nottingham is a centre for the Trans-exclusionary Radical Feminists (TERFs) and that they have suffered online abuse from TERFs. TERF is a term used by feminists and others to name radical feminists who do not accept trans women as women and argue that one cannot be a woman unless one is born as such. They also argue that trans women should not be able to access women-only spaces.

I am non-white LGBT, both in the university and in public space. The cultural difference does not fit in the seemingly LGBT friendly Nottingham... It is seriously very white... it is not intersectional, we cannot speak about race and ethnicity. Being LGBT and foreign is an occupational hazard... There is no attention to equality and diversity (MUI 10).

At the same time, a common feeling expressed by several research participants (MUUI5) was that non-white groups are less accepting of non-heterosexual sexualities. One of the stakeholders suggested that LGBT awareness is much needed in Eastern European and Somali community (MUS1) and that specific programmes such as Future Leader are necessary in order to enhance the leadership of LGBT and BME people (MUI 16). Some research participants also spoke of the importance of class, of not being demonstrative in working class areas. One participant has offered her opinion on the organisation previously called Switchboard as being old fashioned and mainly older white male, thus identifying an age and ethnic bias (MUI 18; MUS 25).

Religion

As we have noted there are problems when an individual has religious parents or is in an environment with other religious people. Interviewees have experienced problems with being accepted (MUI3). Intersectional aspects of sexuality and religion have also been pointed out (MUI 18) as a form of institutional discrimination, as the Church of England does not allow marriage in the Church.

Dimensions of Class

One stakeholder we interviewed pointed to the need for more mental health support for LGBT people and explained that there is a lack of positive role models in the LGBT community, offering the example of Caitlin Jenner, whose example was picked up by another interviewee too. Jenner represents a hyper-female transgender person and although she contributes to glamourizing transgender people she lives an unreal life. In this she allows for Cis normality to be projected onto the transgender community. So the intersection of class and sexuality is important here: celebrity's representation of transgender people is problematic as average transgender people don't get to have a voice (MUS 11).

With regards to participation in the media, one interviewee offered a very interesting discussion about some aspects of her identity being represented in the media instead of other aspects. Christianity is represented negatively in the media and women are represented negatively by the media and under-represented politically and in a sexualised way. As a white and middle-class person she feels represented by these other aspects of her identity when others are not. She does not feel lesbians are under-represented as such, but women are compared to men. On the other hand, educated lesbians without children are better represented than black working class lesbians (MUI 18).

8. Conclusion

While Nottingham does not have visible gay spaces as in some other British cities, such as Manchester or Leeds, it has a large and growing number of social and support associations. The Lesbian and Gay Switchboard, renamed the Notts LGBT+ Network in 2015, reaches out to large numbers and publishes QB. Nottingham has been a hub of feminist activity since the 1970s, which has contributed to the development of many lesbian groups. There are also a growing number of associations representing transgender people and their needs. An impressively large number of employers have obtained the Stonewall Workplace Index award. A number of individuals have sought to move to Nottingham from surrounding areas which are hostile or do not provide a good social environment. There is notable visibility of LGBT presence through public events and support for key LGBT events, such as Pride, LGBT History month, LD bus signs, and the Flying of the Rainbow Flag during IDAHO week. As evidenced by the Stonewall Workplace Equality Awards, a number of large local employers have developed a good working environment for LGBT individuals. Based on individual interviews and respondents to the survey, Nottingham is seen as a LGBT friendly city, though transgender people still encounter many problems in public spaces and institutionally.

However many have commented on segregation between different groups of LGBT people and the lack of inclusivity. The roots of this segregation probably go back to the 1970s after the decriminalisation of homosexuality which did not affect lesbians who have successfully developed a wide range of social and support organisations. The Switchboard, which began in the 1970s, has been dominated by gay men and been slow to respond to changes. The social life of older gay men often revolved around bars which have increasingly closed as the internet has become the site of communication for younger LGBT populations and have left some of them feeling isolated. More recently there have been attempts to bring about greater inclusivity through, for example, the broadening of the remit of the Lesbian and Gay Switchboard to include bisexuals and transgender people. A number of organisations have been formed for these groups. There is also an increasing awareness of the lack of inclusion of ethnic minorities, faith groups and the disabled within the LGBT community and a desire for the Council and the police to take into account these intersectional aspects in their policies.

There is considerable cooperation between Nottingham City Council and the police and with other agencies to prevent and combat homo and transphobia and the development of third party reporting sites for hate crimes. However transgender people do not feel that they are always understood by the police and continue to face bullying and harassment.

Best practices and moving forward

1. Good partnerships between organisations such as the Council, Notts LGBT+ Network, the police and the NHS Health Trust.
2. Good employment practices as evidenced by the large number of organizations who have obtained the Stonewall Workplace Equality Award and by comments from interviewees. Among the organisations are Nottinghamshire Health Care (NHS Foundation Trust), which is a major provider of mental health, intellectual disability and community healthcare, and which was the leading employer in 2015 and which is now deemed a Star Performer for its leadership on trans equality. Other employers who have been placed among the top 100 employers in the UK in the past few years are Nottinghamshire Police, Nottinghamshire County Council, Vision West Nottinghamshire College, Nottingham City Homes, Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service and Nottingham City Council. Regular meetings are held among those who have received Stonewall Awards.
3. The Notts LGBT+ Network monitors who uses its information and support services.
4. The Nottinghamshire Police has been at the forefront of engaging with hate crime and developing innovative measures, such as a new hate crime perpetrator programme with local authority partners, the National Holocaust Centre and Nottingham Trent University. It is aimed at challenging the thinking and behaviour of people who have committed, or are at risk of committing, a hate crime or hate incident. Initially it is being aimed at young people, but eventually will be available for all hate crime perpetrators.
5. Out in Education has developed services for trans children.
6. Existence of one of the few gender identity clinics and more facilities catering for trans needs.
7. Good practice in relation to leisure facilities. The local Trans group negotiated use of facilities with management to obtain gender neutral changing facilities and access at set times.

Recommendations for Preventing and Combating LGBT Hate Crimes

At the national level:

- ☐ Develop national standards on training of police officers and police staff on LGBT hate crimes;
- ☐ Media organisations and technology providers must have a zero tolerance policy on LGBT hate crime posted on social media platforms and news websites and make sure users know about it;
- ☐ Train moderators on how to identify and remove LGBT hate crime and make it as easy as possible for users to report online incidents of LGBT hate crimes.

Improving the legal framework by:

- Ensuring the hate motive of an individuals' conviction is recorded on their criminal record;

- ☐ Extending the possibilities of remedying the deficiencies in LGBT and disability hate crime laws as well as including intersex people in hate crime laws;
- ☐ Providing legal backing to the rights within the Victims Code and Victims Charter.

Improving the data collection:

- ☐ By commissioning and publishing further research to evaluate what measures are effective in encouraging victims to report LGBT hate crimes and incidents to the police;
- ☐ By using the data more effectively and taking action according to the findings.

Recommendations at the local level:

- ☐ Improving access to referral arrangements to hate crime support services;
- ☐ Increasing awareness of support services;
- ☐ Police officers and other local officials should visit schools and youth groups to bring awareness to hate crime incidents and challenge the use of casual LGBT-phobia;
- ☐ Local authorities should collaborate in order to build preventative educational programmes for perpetrators of hate crime and combat online hate crime;
- ☐ Stakeholders and local authorities should support the creation of a regular survey of LGBT perceptions to contextualise changes in recorded hate crime;
- ☐ Local authorities should be more inclusive and work in partnership with a diverse range of LGBT people (minority, ethnic, migrant, religious, disabled, older) in order to determine what their needs are and how to inform strategic priorities. (Galop, 2016, p.29); (Stonewall, 2013, p.26-27); (National LGBT Hate Crime Partnership).

Moving On

- ☐ More attention to be paid to the needs of the older LGBT population, including social spaces and care homes for diverse populations;
- ☐ Despite improvements, more support and services for trans populations;
- ☐ Promotion and improvement of inclusivity across the different categories of LGBT so as to reduce segregation and overcome discrimination between LGBT groups, especially towards bi and transgender people;
- ☐ The Council and the Police to address and take into account intersectional linkages, such as with BAME and disability;
- ☐ More work to be done with diverse communities, for example, tackling homophobia in black churches and, more generally, undertake work with faith and BME organisations.

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ANNEX 1

Table 1 Individual interviewee Table

N o .	Categ ory	Gend er	Ag e	Educ	Occ	Origin	Ethn/R el	Marit al	Depen d (Childr en/eld erly)	Years in city
1	G	Male	27	Degree	2 (council worker ?)	White , Irish	None	Single with partn er		2
2	G	Male	43	Degree	2? Leaseh old officer	White /Britis h	Christia n	Single		33
3	L	Femal e	32	Degree	2? County Safety Officer	White , British	None	Single with partn er		12
4	G (3 men focus group)	Male	66/ 43/ 70	Post- grad/NVQ /teaching certificate	?	White , British	Of the three one is unitaria n	Divorc ed, marri ed, single		27, 26, 29
5	T	Non- binary		Post-grad	2 Counsel lor	White , British	None	Marri ed		44
6	G	Male	36	Post-grad	2 Acade mic	Turkis h	Muslim	Single with partn er		4
7	T	Femal e	19	College	Student	White , British	None	Single , lives with paren		19

								ts		
8	T	Female	21	Degree	Student	White , British	Christi an	Single , lives with paren ts		4
9	G	Male	67	HHD	4 Self- employ ed	White British	None	With partn er		25
1 0	L	Female	40	Post-grad	2 Teache r	White , Europ ean	None	Single with partn er		15
1 1	G	Male	48	Post-grad	1 Manag er in educati on	White , British	None	Single with partn er		12
1 2	T	Male	20	School	???	White , British	None	Single with partn er		20
1 3	L	Female	41	Post-grad	2 Acade mic	White , British	Christi an	Single with partn er		10
1 4	L	Female	35	Post-grad	2 Acade mic	White , British	None	Single		?

Table 2 Stakeholder interviews

No	Role	Service	Additional comments
1	Special Projects Manager-Cohesion	City Council	
2	Community Cohesion Officer	City Council	
3	Project Manager Transformational Change	NHS	
4	Hate Crime Project Officer	City Council	
5	Equality and Diversity Student Union Officer	Nottingham Trent University	
6	Equality and Diversity Advisor	Police	
7	LGBT + Network volunteer/retired	LGBT + Network (Helpline and information service)	
8	John Lewis employee, LGBT + Network	John Lewis	
9	Analysis and Insights team	City Council	
10	City Council Protection Team	City Council	
11	Director of the Women's Centre	Women's Centre	

Table 3 Focus Group

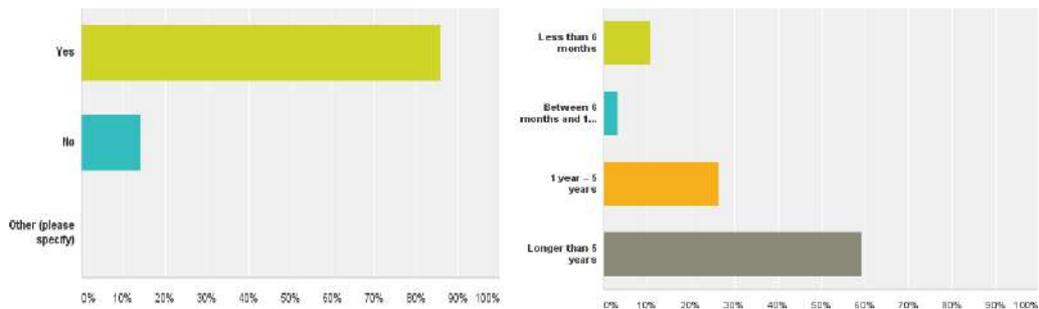
No	Role/Category
1	Transgender person
2	Transgender person
3	Community Cohesion Officer, Council
4	Hate Crime Officer Council

ANNEX 2 Survey Results

The survey, conducted from October to December 2016, included 71 individuals. The following results illustrate the responses.

Q1: Do you live and/or work or study in Nottingham? **Q2: How long have you been living and/or**

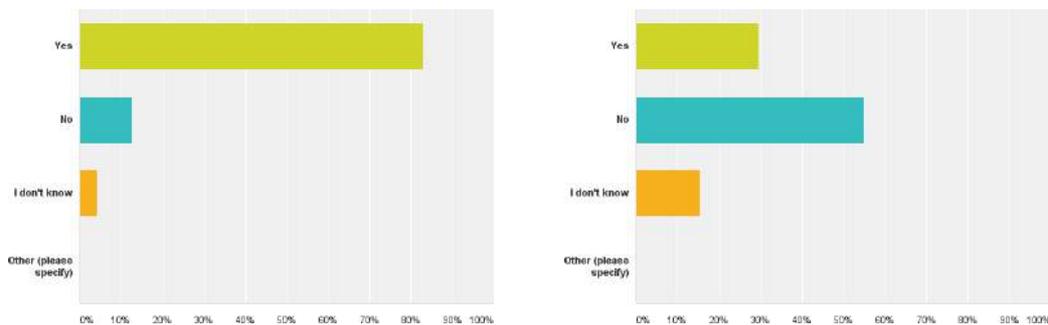
working/studying in Nottingham?



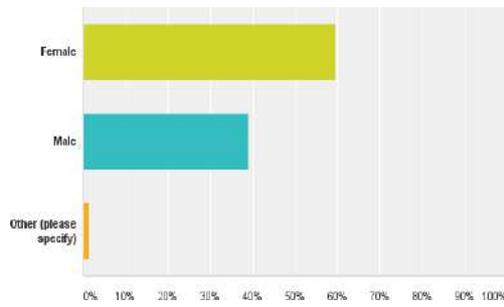
Q4: Do you have acquaintances, work colleagues and/or friends who are gay, lesbian, bi- or transgender?

Q5: Do you have family members who are gay, lesbian,

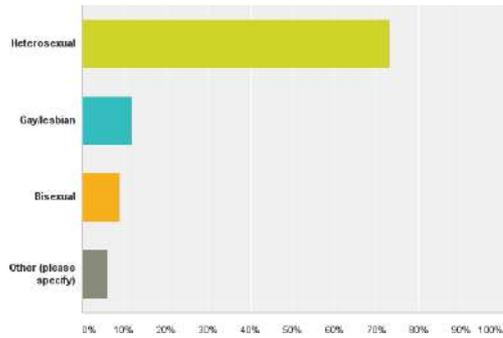
bi-or transgender?



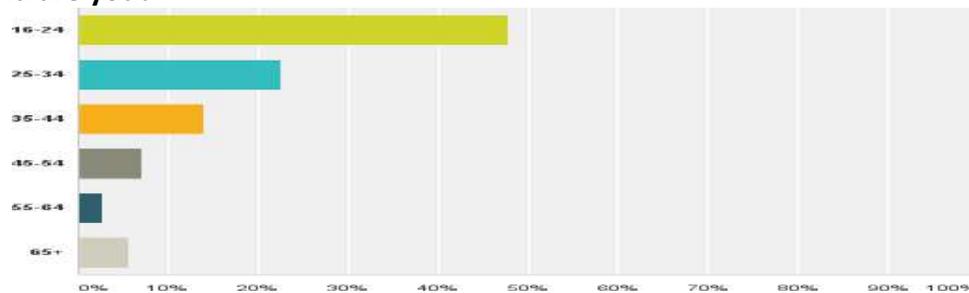
Q6: What is your gender?



Q7: Sexual orientation



Q8: How old are you?



Q9: Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people should have the same rights as other people

	Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Completely agree	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	4.29% 3	2.86% 2	5.71% 4	11.43% 8	75.71% 53	70	4.51

Q10: Legal protection that apply to gay and lesbian people should also apply to transgender and intersex people

	Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Completely agree	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	4.29% 3	2.86% 2	2.86% 2	24.29% 17	65.71% 46	70	4.44

Q11: I believe people should be free to express their gender and sexual orientation no matter what they are

	Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Completely agree	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	4.41% 3	2.94% 2	0.00% 0	20.59% 14	72.06% 49	68	4.53

Q12: People of the same sex should be able to get married

	Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Completely agree	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	2.86% 2	7.14% 5	2.86% 2	15.71% 11	71.43% 50	70	4.46

Q13: People of the same sex should be able to have or to adopt children

	Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Completely agree	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	2.86% 2	5.71% 4	4.29% 3	17.14% 12	70.00% 49	70	4.46

Q14: Hate crime against lesbian, gay, bi- and transgender people should be severely prosecuted

	Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Completely agree	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	1.47% 1	5.88% 4	11.76% 8	39.71% 27	41.18% 28	68	4.13

Q15: Discrimination against gays, lesbians and transgender people is a major social problem in Nottingham

	Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Completely agree	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	1.47% 1	27.94% 19	41.18% 28	20.59% 14	8.82% 6	68	3.07

Q16: I am or I would be happy to have gay, bisexual or transgender person within my family, group of friends or colleagues

	Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Completely agree	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0	2.94% 2	10.29% 7	14.71% 10	72.06% 49	68	4.56

Q17: I am comfortable when I interact with lesbian, gay and bisexual people

	Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Completely agree	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	1.52% 1	0.00% 0	4.55% 3	19.70% 13	74.24% 49	66	4.65

Q18: I am comfortable when I interact with transgender people

	Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Completely agree	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0	6.25% 4	6.25% 4	32.81% 21	54.69% 35	64	4.36

Q19: I am comfortable when I see same sex couples displaying affection in public (kissing, going hand in hand, etc.)

	Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Completely agree	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	1.52% 1	9.09% 6	6.06% 4	15.15% 10	68.18% 45	66	4.39

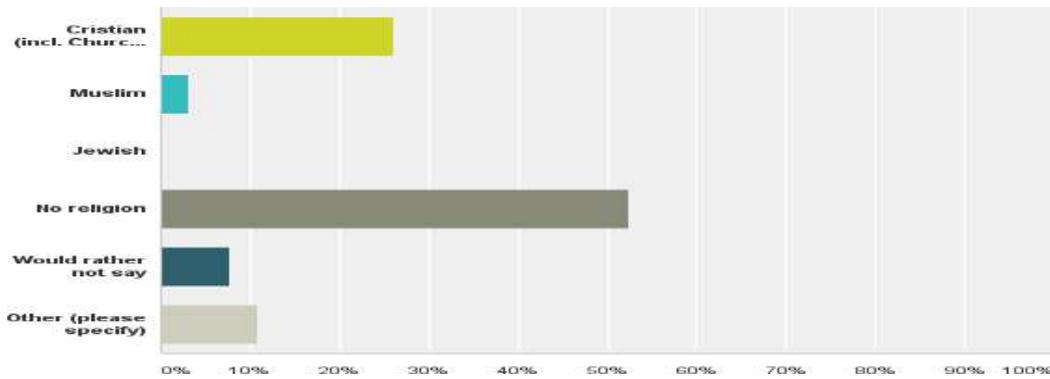
Q20: Nottingham should have leisure spaces for LGBT people (bars, clubs, etc.)

	Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Completely agree	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	1.61% 1	4.84% 3	14.52% 9	35.48% 22	43.55% 27	62	4.15

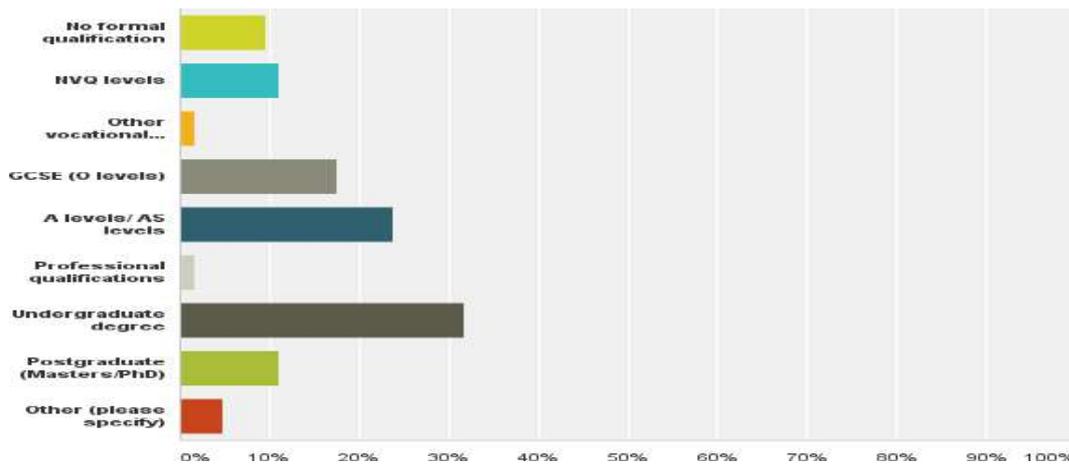
Q21: I believe Nottingham is a LGBT friendly city

	Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Completely agree	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	1.59% 1	4.76% 3	31.75% 20	47.62% 30	14.29% 9	63	3.68

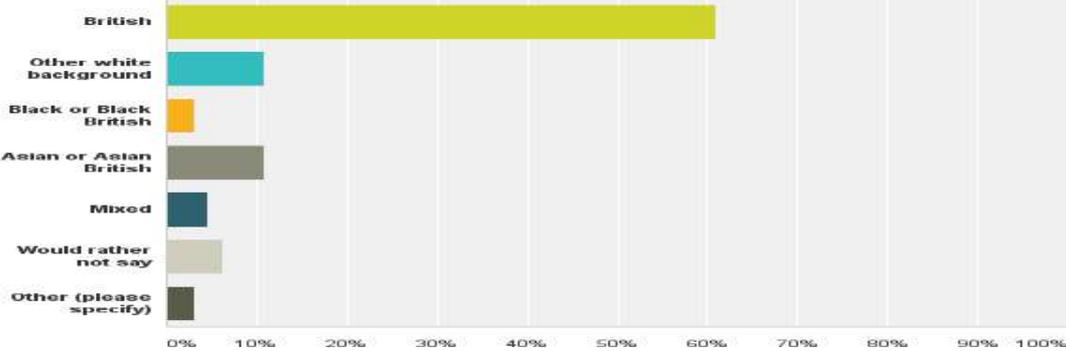
Q22: What is your religion?



Q23: What is your highest educational qualification?



Q24: Which of the following groups most adequately describes your ethnic origin?



Q25: Would you be interested in receiving updates about the Divercity project?

