



Acceptance with reservations:

LGBT people in Slovenia

(Research report)

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Slovenia at a glance

- Slovenia decriminalized homosexuality in 1977.
- Discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is explicitly prohibited since 1994.
- Discrimination on the basis of gender identity and gender expression is explicitly prohibited since 2016.
- Civil partnership legislation was first introduced in 2005 and significantly improved in 2016.
- In Call It Hate survey over 80% of Slovenian respondents agree that LGBT people should be free to live their life as they wish. However, there is a slight reservation when it comes to transgender people.
- On average, the respondents reported higher levels of empathy towards heterosexual people compared to LGBT people. The least empathy is expressed towards LGBT people who were physically assaulted when drunk.
- Readiness to intervene when people are attacked by strangers on the street is high, particularly if the victim is a person with a disability.
- More than 60% of respondents believe that all types of crime should carry a higher sentence; respondents do not necessarily differentiate between hate crimes and other crimes.

Acceptance with reservations: LGBT people in Slovenia

1. Introduction

Slovenia saw the beginnings of an organized gay and lesbian movement in the early eighties, a decade before such movements emerged in the rest of the Eastern European countries. It came into being as part of the new social movements (e.g. the peace, ecological, and feminist movements), which represented a democratic opposition to the communist regime at the time and eventually contributed to the change of the political system in the early nineties.

The first attempts by the new social movements to adopt anti-discrimination laws on the basis of sexual orientation were made in 1986, and the first initiative for marriage equality came in 1989, two years before the disintegration of Yugoslavia in 1991. While neither of these initiatives were implemented at the time, they paved the way for changes that emerged later in the nineties (Kuhar and Mencin 2016).

Slovenia is a unique case also in the context of marriage equality debates. In 2005 it was the first country in the world where national legislation dealing with same-sex partners was adopted by the conservative right-wing government, rather than progressive liberal government as elsewhere in Europe. However, the Civil Partnership Registration Act (Parliament 2005) gave very limited rights to cohabiting same-sex couples (Kuhar 2011). In the subsequent years the Slovenian parliament proposed marriage equality legislation twice, both times rejected in subsequent referenda, initiated by the Roman Catholic Church and its satellite organizations. These actors started to promote the idea that the so called “gender theory” was destroying “proper family”, masculinity, femininity, our children and the future of our nation (Kuhar and Paternotte 2017).

Although both referenda represented a legal defeat for the LGBT community in Slovenia, the public debate around it nevertheless contributed to the shortening of the social distance towards gays and lesbians: while in the nineties around 60% of Slovenian citizens would not want a homosexual to be their neighbor, this dropped to 28% in 2016 (Toš 2018). Eventually it also led to the adoption of a new law in 2016 – the Civil Union Act (Parliament 2016a) – which puts homosexual and heterosexual couple on nearly equal legal footing: registered or cohabiting same-sex couples have the same rights as married or cohabiting opposite-sex couples, except from the right to joint adoption (second parent adoption is allowed) and artificial insemination. However, the symbolic distinction remains: marriage is an institution reserved only for heterosexuals, while civil partnership is open only for same-sex couples.

1.1. Legal and policy framework on anti-LGBT hate crime

“Unnatural fornication” among men in Slovenia was decriminalized in 1977, several years before the gay and lesbian movement emerged (Takács, Kuhar & Tóth 2017). Most of the anti-

discrimination legislation was adopted in the mid-nineties. The first piece of Slovenian legislation that explicitly refers to the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is the Penal Code (Parliament 2008) from 1994. However none of these anti-discrimination laws from the nineties and early 2000s explicitly mention “gender identity” or “gender expression”. In 2016 the Protection Against Discrimination Act (Parliament 2016b) was adopted, which is the first Slovenian anti-discrimination law that explicitly refers to gender identity and gender expression along with sexual orientation as the grounds on the basis of which discrimination is prohibited. Also, Article 27 of the International Protection Act (Parliament 2016c) from 2016 recognizes both gender identity and sexual orientation as the grounds on which people can be persecuted and therefore seek asylum in Slovenia.

There is no law in Slovenia that would specifically refer to the terms “hate crime” or “hate speech”. Instead the Slovenian legislation refers to the concept of “incitement to hatred”. The Criminal Code, for example, prohibits public incitement to hatred (article 297), which has been rarely used by courts, except in the Café Open case (see below).

According to the Rainbow Europe Index (ILGA Europe, 2018a) Slovenia ranks 17th among 49 European countries with 48% of respect for human rights of LGBTI people. It lags behind primarily in the fields of hate crime and hate speech, legal gender recognition and bodily integrity, and asylum with 13%, 22% and 33% of legislation in place respectively (ILGA Europe 2018b: 119).

1. 2. Scale of anti-LGBT hate crime

1.2.1. Victimization surveys

There are no official statistics gathered by police in relation to anti-LGBT hate crime. The police only record crimes initiated by hate, but it does not differentiate between different grounds on which the hatred is based.

On the other hand, there is a longitudinal research on everyday life of gay and lesbian people in Slovenia (conducted in 2004 on a sample of 443 self-identified gay and lesbian people (Švab and Kuhar 2005) and subsequently in 2014 on a sample of 1145 self-identified gay and lesbian people (Kuhar and Švab 2014)), which provides some information on experiences of homophobic violence. Consistently with other community based small-scale research (Velikonja and Greif 2001, Maljevac and Magić 2016) these two studies show that every second respondent (53% in 2004 and 50% in 2014) reported at least one experience with homophobic violence due to their sexual orientation in their lifetime. In most cases (around 90%) they experienced verbal violence, such as insults, 25% reported physical violence and 6% sexual violence. The perpetrators of these acts are mostly strangers (in a bar, on the street etc.), but an alarming increase in violence was recorded in schools: in 2004 about 20% of those, who have experienced homophobic violence, reported that they were victimized in school by their school-mates. The percentage doubled in 2014 when 40% reported having experiences of homophobic violence in schools.

A study by *Transakcija* on the experiences of discrimination of transgender people in Slovenia (Transakcija 2016) on a sample of 65 transgender respondents showed that 69% of them

declared experiencing discrimination due to their gender identity or gender expression, mostly in public institutions, in schools or at home.

The latest community-based study on a sample of 751 self-identified young LGBTIQ+ people by the Pride Parade organization (2017) confirms rather high levels of homophobic and transphobic experiences among young people: 40% of these respondents reported having experienced violence, with 29% of them experiencing violence or discrimination in education (Perger 2018).

1.2.2. Reported cases

According to the available studies (Kuhar and Švab 2014; Perger 2018) most cases of homophobic and/or transphobic violence are not reported. 91% of gay and lesbian people surveyed in 2014 did not report the violence to the police – most of them minimized it, claiming there was no point in reporting it as the violence was not “so harsh”, and almost 26% claimed that they would not achieve anything by reporting this type of violence to the police (Kuhar and Švab 2019).

However, there were some notable cases of homophobic violence, including several reports about violence occurring after the Pride parades in the 2000s, a homophobic attack on a British citizen who was visiting Slovenia in 2011 (Ma. 2011), and the attack by neo-Nazi group on LGBT Café Open in a week leading up to the ninth Pride Parade in Ljubljana in 2009. The group threw a lit torch and stones into the bar and seriously injured gay activist Mitja Blažič. This homophobic attack became the leading story in the Slovenian media and was seen as an effect of the increasing use of hate speech in the Parliament and elsewhere in Slovenian society. Three men – aged 18–22 – were arrested soon after, charged with hate crime, and sentenced to between 5- and 8-month imprisonments in 2011. However due to the procedural error (police kept the DNA of the accused, on the basis of which the attackers were found, beyond the legally allowed time period) the court decision was later annulled and the three men were set free (TK, STA 2014).

1.3. Previous research on the topic

The Slovenian public opinion poll (Toš 2018), conducted by one of the research centers of the University of Ljubljana, records social distance towards different social groups, including "homosexuals", since the early nineties. The most recent data, available for 2016, shows that the share of those who would not like a homosexual to be their neighbor is now 28%, which is half less than it was in the 1990s. In other words: the social distance towards gay men and lesbians in Slovenia has significantly shortened in the new millennium.

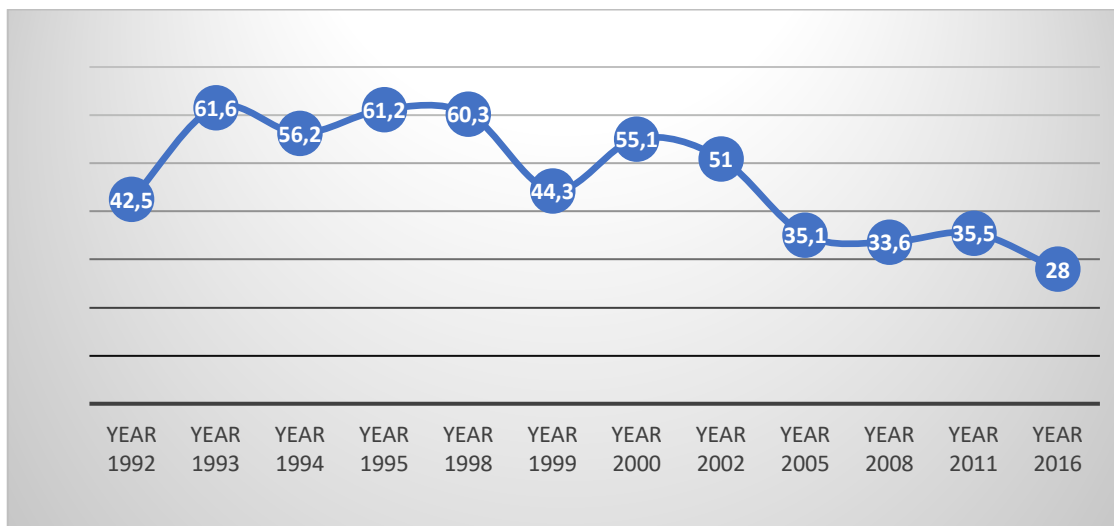
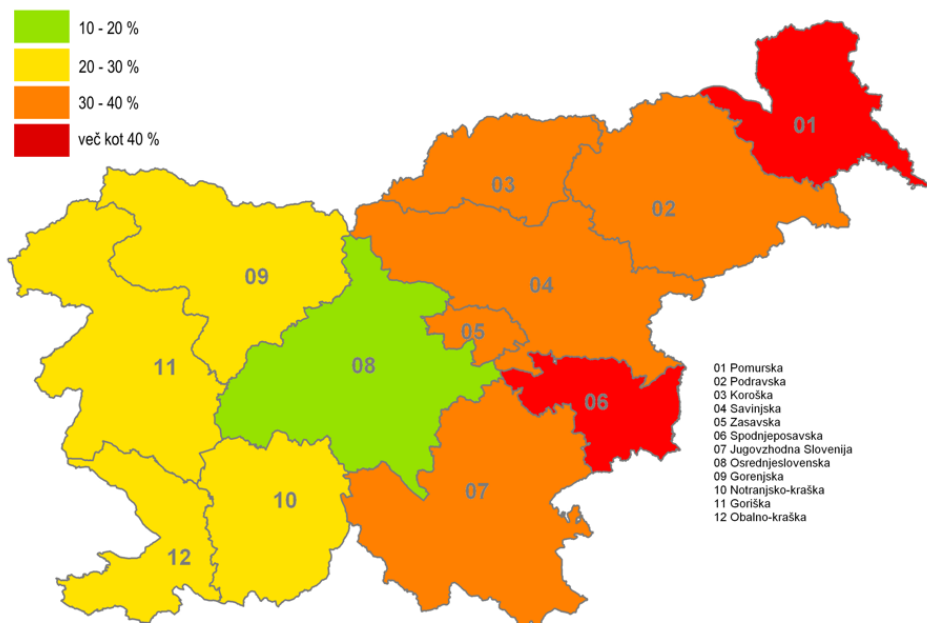


Figure 1 – Slovenian Public Opinion Poll: I don't want a homosexual to be my neighbor ... (Toš et al., 1992 – 2016).

By regions, the biggest social distance exists in the Posavska region (58%) and the smallest in the Osrednjeslovenska region (15.5%). These differences correspond with the urban/rural division and particularly economic development of the Slovenian regions: the more economically developed the region is, the shorter the distance towards homosexual people.



Picture 2: I would not wish to have a homosexual as a neighbor. Source: Slovenian Public Opinion Survey, 2016.

The European Social Survey also shows a steady increase in acceptance of LGBT people, with over 66% of Slovenians agreeing or strongly agreeing in 2016 (compared to 51% in 2002) with the statement that gays and lesbians should be free to live their lives as they wish.

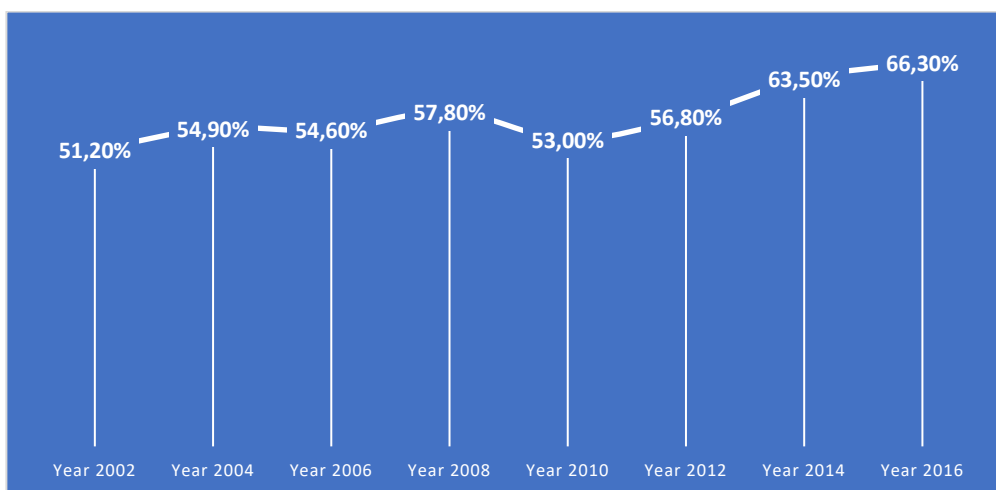


Figure 3 – European Social Survey (2002 – 2016), strongly agree + agree with “gays and lesbians should be free to live their lives as they wish”.

As part of the DARE project (Kuhar 2017) a public opinion poll on LGBT issues was conducted in 2017 on a representative sample of 607 respondents. The social distance was measured with a question about renting an apartment to different groups of people. A little more than a quarter of respondents asserted that they would rent their apartment to all the groups listed. Among the least desirable tenants are Roma (52.9%), followed by migrants from the

Middle East (47.1%), homosexuals (16.7%), families with five or more children (15.9%), immigrants from the former Yugoslav republics (15%) and single mothers (12.6%). The “most desirable” tenants among the “undesirable groups”, listed in the questionnaire, are disabled persons (7.8%).

The next set of questions dealt with expressions of intimacy in public. The majority of respondents (90.6%) do not mind if men and women hold hands in public. Similarly, although in a smaller proportion, this also applies to kissing: 76% of respondents are not bothered if a man and a woman kiss in public. Acceptance of expressing intimacy in public is significantly lower when it comes to same-sex couples: just over 63% of respondents do not mind if same-sex couples hold hands, and 47% of respondents do not mind kissing between two men or two women in public.

In the context of education, almost 30% of the respondents would mind if their child's teacher was gay and would not hide that fact in a school. A similar proportion (27%) of the respondents would also have been disturbed if their child's kindergarten teacher were an openly lesbian woman.

The respondents were also asked whether they consider it appropriate for Slovenia to have a president who would be publicly out as a gay person. 44% of the respondents considered that appropriate, 33% considered this to be inappropriate and 23% did not know. A gay identified person as the president is significantly more acceptable to women, younger and schooling groups, those who never attend religious rituals and those who voted for left-wing parties at the last elections (Kuhar 2017).

Finally, according to the latest available results on discrimination from Eurobarometer research (2015) around 55% of Slovenian fully agree that gay, lesbian and bisexual people should have the same right as heterosexuals, that there is nothing wrong with sexual relationship between two persons of the same sex and that same-sex marriage should be allowed throughout Europe. The 55% agreement with these statements is beyond EU average (Eurobarometer, 2015).

3. Attitudes and social distance towards LGBT people

Over 80% of Slovenian respondents agree that LGBT people should be free to live their life as they wish. However, there is a slight reservation when it comes to transgender people. Similarly, 40% of respondents would feel comfortable if they had an LGBT person as their neighbor. Again, with transgender people the level of comfort is slightly lower. Female respondents, younger and more educated people express higher levels of agreement and comfortableness.

In August 2018 a public survey on a sample of 602 citizens of Slovenia was conducted as part of the Call It Hate (CIH) project. In the remaining of this chapter the results for the survey are presented and analyzed. The first part of the study explored attitudes towards LGBT people. The second part tackled issues related to social distance, which – according to previous research in Slovenia – has significantly shortened in the past few years.

3. 1. Attitudes

The respondents were asked to explain to what extent (on a Linkert scale from 1 to 5) they agree or disagree that lesbians and gay men (jointly), bisexual people and transgender people should be free to live their own life as they wish. Furthermore, they were also asked about how they would feel having an LGBT person as their neighbor.

A bit more than 80% of respondents agree or strongly agree that gay men, lesbians and bisexual people should be free to live their own life as they wish. However, the level of agreement regarding transgender people is slightly lower than 80%, resulting in more people disagreeing with their right to live their life as they wish.

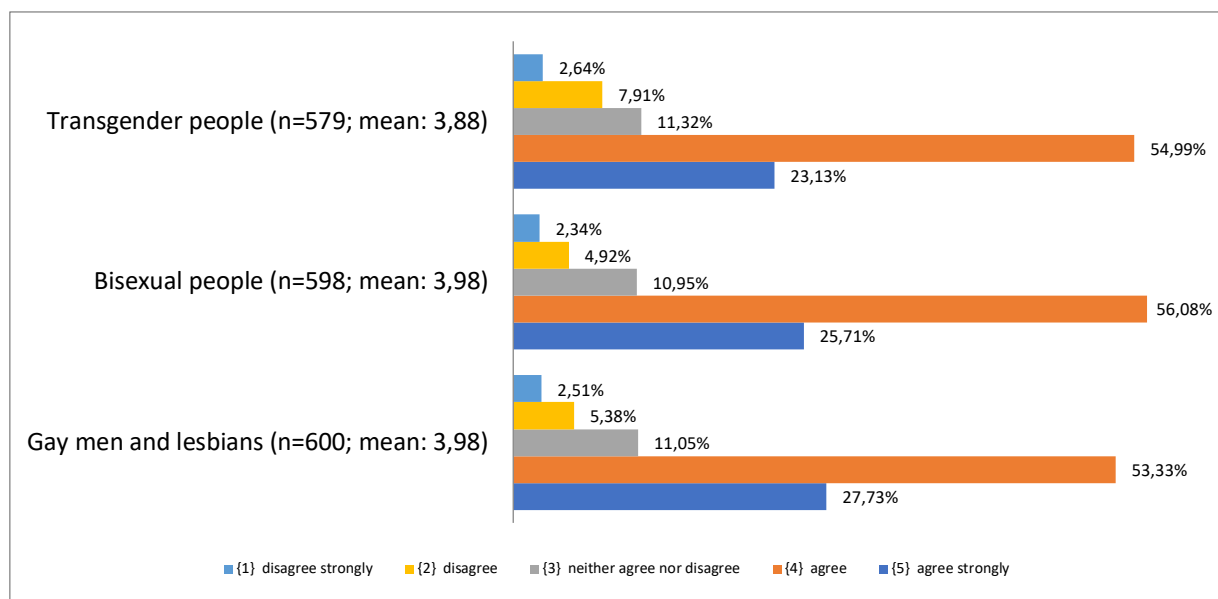


Figure 4: LGBT people should be free to live their own life as they wish

In terms of gender, female respondents expressed higher levels of agreement with this statement: around 85% of women agree or strongly agree with it compared to around 75% of men who also fully agree with it. Interestingly enough, men seem to have most reservations about transgender people: 72% of them believe that transgender people should be free to live their own life as they wish.

The results from our study show that, generally, the level of acceptance with the statement that LGBT people should be free to live their own life as they wish decreases with age. Similarly the agreement with the statement changes with the level of education: the higher the education level of the respondents, the higher level of agreement with the statement. Around 90% of respondents who have obtained higher education agree or fully agree with the statement that LGBT people should be free to live their own life as they wish. On the other hand, the lowest levels of agreement with this statement were recorded among people without education or with just an elementary education.

According to human values (security, benevolence and universalism), there are two important connections which are valid for all LGBT people. First, the respondents who attribute security a high level of importance expressed a low level of agreement with the statement that LGBT

people should be free to live their own life as they wish. Secondly, the respondents who attribute universalism a high level of importance also expressed a high level of agreement with this statement.

3. 2. Social distance

The second section of this survey dealt with social distance and was dedicated to the question of how would the respondents feel about having an LGBT person as their neighbor on a scale from 0 (totally uncomfortable) to 10 (totally comfortable).

As is evident from the figure 5 below, the results show that slightly more than 40% of all respondents would feel comfortable or totally comfortable if they had an LGBT person as their neighbor. Again, with transgender people the level of comfort is slightly lower: a bit less than 40% of all respondents would feel comfortable with a transgender person as their neighbor. Additionally, the data on the so-called detractors (answers from 0 to 6 on the scale) show that transgender people got the highest percentage of the first six levels of discomfort. In other words: there is still a high stigmatization and public invisibility of transgender people in Slovenia. The invisibility creates the discomfort in the first place: it is the fear of the unknown. The highest percentage of discomfort regarding transgender people is also noticeable if only the results of the bottom two boxes are taken into consideration: nearly 9% for a transgender person, 6% for a gay and bisexual man, and 5% for lesbians.

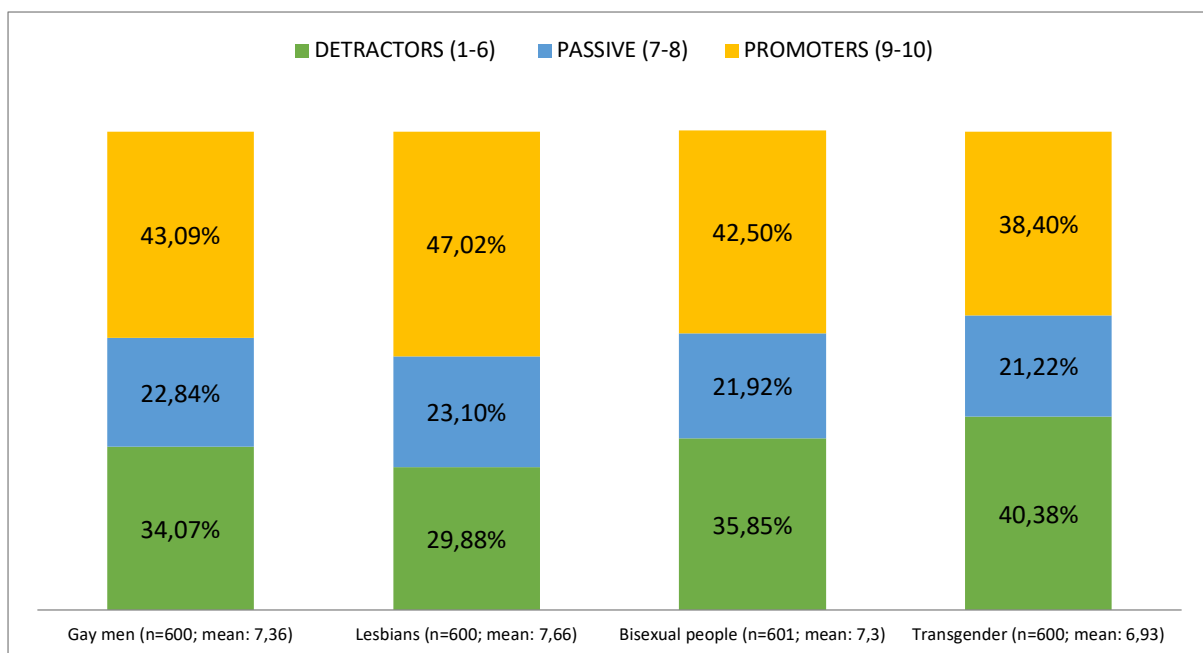


Figure 5: Respondents' opinion on how would they feel about having someone from LGBT group as their neighbour

Similarly, as with the previous statement, female respondents were more comfortable with having an LGBT person as their neighbor than male respondents. The results show noticeable statistical differences: a bit less than 55 % of female respondents compared to 32 % of male respondents would feel comfortable or totally comfortable if they had a LGBT person as their neighbor (statistically significant differences at the level 95%).

Age and education turned out to be equally significant as with the previous statement. The level of comfort decreased with age (see Figure 6) and increases with the level of education: around 55% of people with higher education would feel comfortable or totally comfortable with an LGB person as their neighbor. Again, the social distance towards transgender people is higher: 47% of people with highest education would feel comfortable around them.

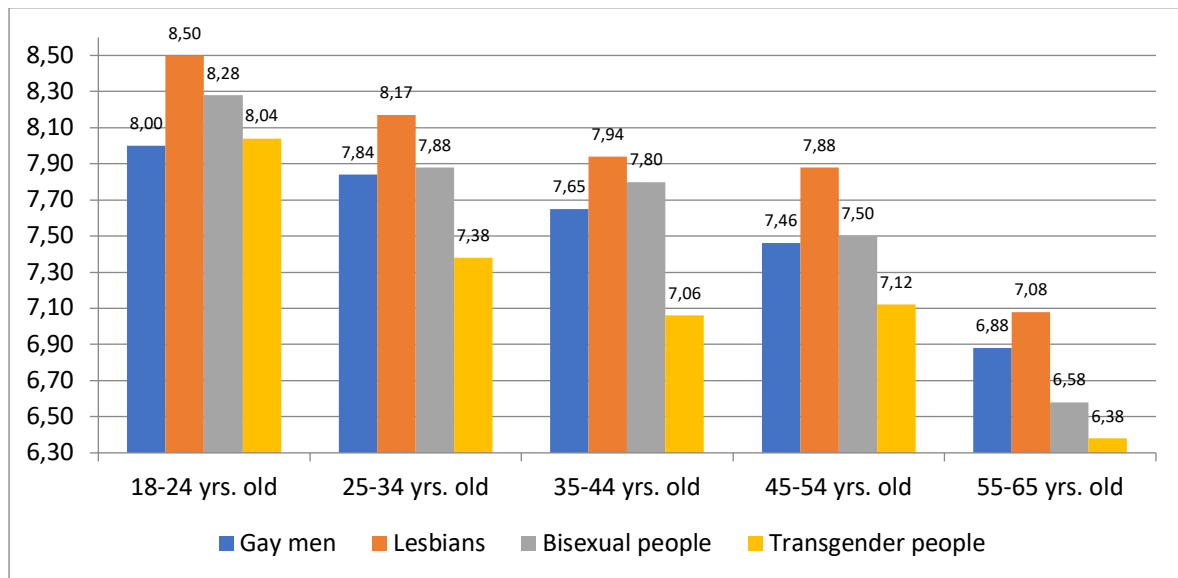


Figure 6: Having an LGBT person as my neighbor (by age groups)

According to human values (security, benevolence and universalism) as variables, the results showed the same two noteworthy connections that have already been noticed in the first part of this section for all considered groups. The respondents who attribute security a high level of importance expressed a low level of comfort should they have an LGBT person as their neighbor. On the other hand, respondents who attribute universalism a high level of importance also expressed a high level of comfort with having an LGBT person as their neighbor.

4. Levels of empathy

On average, the respondents reported higher levels of empathy towards heterosexual people compared to LGBT people. When comparing all the hypothetical situations used in the survey, lesbians or lesbian couples score the highest levels of empathy compared to all other non-heterosexual or non-cis groups. The least empathy is expressed towards LGBT people who were physically assaulted when drunk.

The next part of the study dealt with the intensity of empathy our respondents would feel if LGBT people or couples were victims of physical violence in the eight hypothetical situations. A scale was used (0 meaning no empathy; 10 meaning full empathy) and the respondents drew one of three routes: gay, lesbian or transgender. They were asked to evaluate to what extent they would feel compassion for people who have experienced violence in the below-mentioned situations.

	Total	Gay	Lesbian	Transgender
A heterosexual couple, who are physically assaulted on the street	9.09	8.98	9.21	/
A gay man\lesbian\ transgender\bisexual person who is physically assaulted by a group of people who are members of a far-right extremist organization	8.79	8.76	8.87	8.75
A gay man\lesbian\ transgender\bisexual person who is physically assaulted by a complete stranger	8.67	8.68	8.88	8.45
A gay\lesbian couple\ transgender\bisexual person who are physically assaulted while shopping	8.65	8.65	8.74	8.55
A gay man\lesbian\ transgender\bisexual person who is physically assaulted in your neighborhood by a member of their family	8.59	8.40	8.76	8.62
A gay\lesbian couple\ transgender person, who are physically assaulted on the street	8.34	8.10	8.68	8.26
A transgender sex worker who is physically assaulted by a client	8.23	0	0	8.23
A gay man\lesbian\ transgender\bisexual person participating in (national name of pride event) who is physically assaulted by counter-demonstrators	8.17	8.15	8.22	8.13
A drunk gay\lesbian couple\transgender\bisexual person who are physically assaulted near a bar	7.35	7.11	7.44	7.51

Figure 7 - Intensity of empathy in the eight hypothetical situations

On average the respondents scored level 9 (out of 10) of empathy when it comes to a heterosexual couple, and a bit more than level 8 for LGBT couple, with a transgender person scoring a bit higher level (8,3) than a gay couple (8,1). The difference in intensity of empathy between heterosexual and gay couples is statistically significant at the level of 95%. However, the difference between heterosexual couples and lesbian couples is not statistically significant: the respondents felt just a slightly higher level of empathy towards a heterosexual couple than towards lesbian couple.

When comparing all the hypothetical situations used in the survey, lesbians or lesbian couples score the highest levels of empathy compared to all other non-heterosexual or non-cis groups. Over 70% of our respondents feel empathy or complete empathy in most situations, except in a situation where a lesbian woman is physically assaulted by counter-demonstrators (66%), in a situation where a transgender sex worker is physically assaulted by a client (63%) and in a situation where a drunk lesbian couple is physically assaulted near a bar (49%).

Furthermore, in the situation where an LGBT person is physically assaulted by a group of people who are members of a far-right extremist organization, the highest percentage of empathy is recorded towards gay men (72%) and transgender persons (75%). In no other of the eight hypothetical situations in this section the empathy was as high as in this particular situation for these two groups.

5. Reactions to and opinions on hate crimes

Readiness to intervene when people are attacked by strangers on the street is high, but most likely for persons with disability. More than 60% of respondents believe that all types of crime should carry a higher sentence and do not necessarily differentiate between hate crimes and other crimes. The youngest respondents, however, believe that crimes motivated by someone's personality traits should carry a higher sentence, while respondents from the oldest age group show the lowest level of empathy for hate crimes. They believe that financial crimes are far more serious than crimes motivated by someone's personality traits, except crimes motivated by one's disability.

This section followed similar situations as in the previous one, except that this time the willingness to intervene (either directly or indirectly, such as by calling the police) was measured on a scale from 0 (highly unlikely to intervene) to 10 (highly likely to intervene). Among all the groups persons with disability are most likely to see intervention from people when attacked on the street by strangers (average 8.17/10). All other groups are less likely to experience intervention, but nonetheless the average is a bit less than 8 out of 10 (see Figure 8).

	Total	Gay route	Lesbian route	Transgender route
A person with disability is pushed and slapped on a street by stranger	8.17	8.30	8.20	8.02
A person coming from national or ethnic minority is pushed and slapped on a street by stranger	7.90	8.02	7.71	7.97
A gay man\lesbian\ transgender person is pushed and slapped on a street by stranger	7.87	7.89	7.97	7.74
Someone is pushed and slapped on a street by stranger	7.64	7.82	7.55	7.54

Figure 8 – Likelihood to intervene when violence happens on a street

The final section of our research looked into the opinions of our respondents on hate crimes. We used a Linkert type scale to record to what extent our respondents agree or disagree with the following three statements: (1) Lesbians, gay men and bisexual people avoid holding hands in public with a same-sex partner for fear of being assaulted, threatened or harassed; (2) Transgender people avoid expressing gender through physical appearance and clothes for fear of being assaulted; (3) Psychological consequences of bias motivated violence are more serious than consequences of violence without bias motivation.

The second part of this section dealt with the question of how severely hate crimes should be punished in order to measure the level of empathy towards LGBT people. Respondents were asked to estimate whether some crimes should be punished more severely than other crimes because they were motivated by hate of certain minority groups in the society.

According to our survey more than two thirds of the respondents (68%) agree or strongly agree that in general, transgender people avoid expressing their gender identity through their physical appearance and clothes for fear of being assaulted, threatened or harassed. Similarly, two thirds of respondents (66%) agree or strongly agree that in general, lesbians, gay men and bisexual people avoid holding hands in public with their same-sex partners for the same reasons. A slightly lower, but still high level of agreement was also recorded for the third statement: 59% of respondents agree or strongly agree, that when people are victimized because of something about them that they cannot change, like their sexual orientation or gender identity, the effects on them are worse than if they had been victimized for another reason.

Finally, we have asked our respondents to what extent they agree or disagree that some types of violence should or should not attract higher penalties, depending on what motivated the violent act. More than 60% of respondents believe that all types of crime should carry a higher sentence, including non-hate motivated baseline crimes. This shows general support for tougher sentencing, rather than specific support for harsher sentences for hate crime. Nevertheless, data shows that around 80% of respondents agreed that crimes motivated by prejudice against person's disability should be punished more severely than other types of crimes. Data also shows that respondents expressed the lowest level of empathy or sensibility for transgender people, and that they believe that crimes with a financial motive are more serious than crimes motivated by someone's transgender status, national or ethnic origin, religion and sexual orientation (see Figure 9).

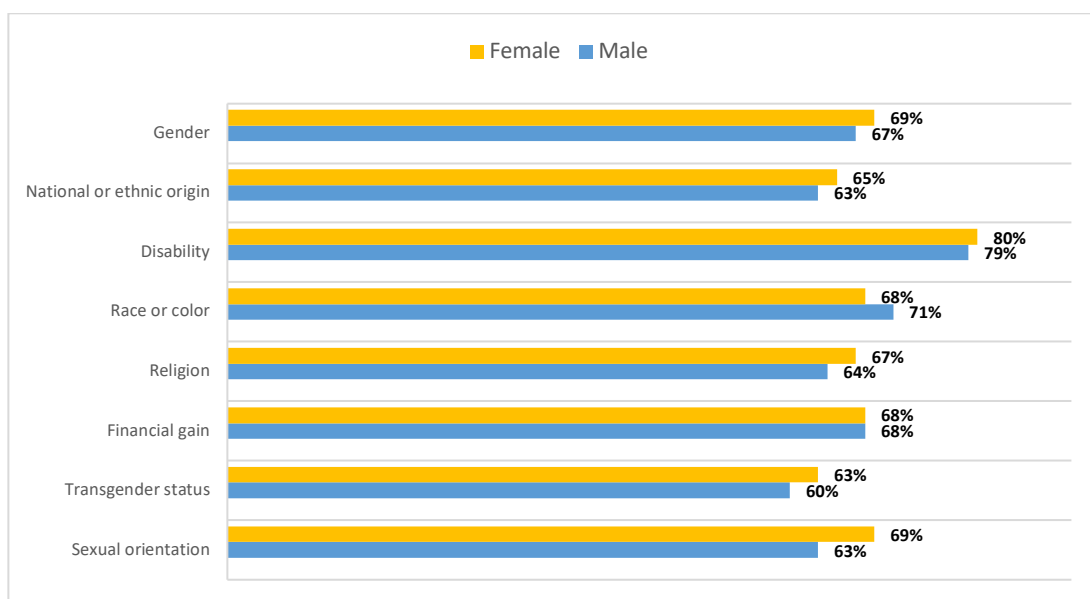


Figure 9 - Types of crimes which should attract higher penalties, according to respondents opinion

In terms of age the highest levels of empathy for hate crimes motivated by someone's personality traits was found among the first (18-24 years) and second youngest group of respondents (25-35 years). These are the only two groups of respondents who think that crimes motivated by bias against someone's personality traits should carry a higher sentence in comparison with crimes motivated by financial gains. In all other age groups respondents

believe that financial crimes are equally or even more problematic than the other crimes mentioned above. Respondents from the oldest age group (55-65) shows the lowest level of empathy for hate crimes. They believe that financial crimes are far more serious than crimes motivated by someone’s personality traits, with the only exception of disability. Data also shows that 79% respondents from this age group agree or strongly agree that crimes motivated by financial gain should carry a higher sentence in comparison with hate crimes. The most sensitive group about discrimination on the basis of gender is the group of youngest respondents, aged 18-24. 86% of them agree or strongly agree that crimes motivated by prejudice against a person's gender, should carry a higher sentence in comparison with other crimes. This group also scored highest level of empathy in connection to hate crimes, committed on the basis of other personal traits, except from disability, where older respondents more strongly believed that such crimes should be punished more severely (see Figure 10).

	18-24 yrs. old	25-34 yrs. old	35-44 yrs. old	45-54 yrs. old	55-65 yrs. old
Sexual orientation	75%	68%	62%	60%	67%
Transgender status	68%	62%	66%	53%	62%
Financial gain	58%	56%	65%	62%	79%
Religion	71%	70%	62%	61%	66%
Race or color	80%	68%	64%	68%	70%
Disability	78%	80%	78%	80%	80%
National or ethnic origin	70%	69%	64%	53%	66%
Gender	86%	67%	66%	64%	66%

Figure 10: Types of crimes which should attract higher penalties, according to respondents’ opinion and age groups

In terms of educational level, people with higher education tend to express lower levels of agreement with harsher punishments for hate motivated crimes. The only exception are sentences for crimes motivated by prejudice against person's disability, where they show significantly more empathy in comparison with other hate crimes. The most emphatic group for hate crimes because of person’s sexual orientation, transgender status and gender, seems to be the groups of respondents with secondary education. The share of respondents, who agree or strongly agree that these types of hate crimes should carry a higher sentence, is the highest among them.

Conclusion

The social distance towards LGBT people in Slovenia has been visibly shortening in the last decade and majority of Slovenian respondents in this survey recognize the unacceptability of discrimination, hate crimes and exclusion of LGBT people. However, there seems to be a slighter reservation when it comes to transgender people – in all items surveyed transgender people scored lower levels of support, empathy and understanding compared to LGB people. It is clear from this survey that the next “battle ground” in Slovenia in terms of securing human rights and social acceptance are transgender people, while the activities to shorten the social distance towards LGB people should continue.

When compared to heterosexual people and particularly the expressions of heterosexuality in public spaces, the acceptance of non-heterosexual visibility is lower. What also stands out is the distinction between older and younger generations: the former express higher levels of empathy and are better in recognizing the devastating consequences of hate crimes. The only exception are disabled people, who seem to enjoy rather high level of empathy and support among older groups of our respondents. In all other aspects the results are not surprising and are in line with other studies: women and people with higher education tend to be more inclusive than other categories of people.

Readiness to intervene when people are attacked by strangers on the street is high, but most likely for persons with disability. Disability is also the only “personal circumstance” which is recognized as being unjust ground for discrimination and violence, while all other forms of violence – hate motivated and non-hate motivated – seem to be the same for majority of our respondents. Quite interestingly, the survey also showed that lesbians or lesbian couples score the highest levels of empathy compared to all other non-heterosexual or non-cis groups, when faced with physical assault or similar situations in public space.

The youngest respondents, however, believe that crimes motivated by bias against someone’s personality traits should carry a higher sentence, while respondents from the oldest age group show the lowest level of empathy for such crimes. Older respondents believe that financial crimes are far more serious than crimes motivated by someone’s personality traits, except crimes motivated by one’s disability. It seems that there is still some kind of hierarchization among personal traits, with disability being at the top of this list.

On the basis of our research, we suggest the future studies to look particularly at the situation of transgender people in Slovenia and to analyse how and why disability generally attracts more empathy and understanding than any other personal circumstance.

Full report: <http://www.lgbthatecrime.eu/researchbook/2019%20Awareness%20of%20Anti-LGBT%20Hate%20Crime%20in%20the%20European%20Union.pdf>

Recommendations

- **Introduce measures to promote tolerance and non-discrimination for all personal circumstances in schools.**

Intervention into education is crucial for a more inclusive society: introduction of LGBT topics (and other issues that contribute to social exclusions) in education on primary and secondary levels is of crucial importance. It is important to address and de-construct hierarchies of personal traits: none of these should be more important than the others. It seems that some of these issues are already sufficiently addressed and others are not. The need to particularly address transgender issues seems to be specifically alarming as the study shows the least understandings for transgender issues.

- **Develop and adopt suitable legislative and administrative measures to combat hate crime and hate speech.**

Adoption of legislation with explicit focus on hate crime and hate speech is needed, as the current legislation insufficiently differentiates between different types of crimes and its motives; also policies that address subtle, often hard-to-trace elements of homophobia and transphobia should be introduced; hate crime legislation should ensure that all victims are equally and adequately protected.

- **Conduct such specific awareness-raising campaigns which can help to sensitize the general public regarding hate crimes and hate speech.**

More public debates and campaigns on the topic of different forms of hate crime and hate speech towards LGBT+ people and on their consequences are needed. Public is not yet fully aware of the differences between crimes and hate crimes or freedom of speech and hate speech.

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