WS1. Transnational and Comparative Research

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Charleroi

Girona

Nottingham

Sabadell

Thessaloniki

Wroclaw

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1. Introduction

Many studies of urban sexualities have focussed on large metropolitan cities (Evans and Cook 2014; Doan 2015) seen as the destination of LGBT populations where they can express their sexual and gender identities with greater anonymity and benefit from the array of associational and cultural activities. In particular a number of studies have focussed on the development of the gay village and its role in the gentrification of city centres by the gay population, planners and politicians (Brown 2014; Nash and Murray-Gorman 2014) or viewed large cities as centres of activism. Less attention had been paid to lesbian spaces which are often less visible. More recently there has been a call not to ignore ordinary spaces of sexualities outside major metropolitan in smaller cities as well as rural areas (Brown G. 2008; 2012).

The cities selected for Divercity range from small ones such as Girona (Spain) to medium sized ones such as Charleroi (Belgium) and Sabadell (Spain) to larger medium sized cities such as Nottingham (UK), Thessaloniki (Greece) and Wroclaw (Poland). Some of the cities (Charleroi, Sabadell) have experienced considerable deindustrialisation and high unemployment in recent decades. They, as well as Nottingham, which has also seen its manufacturing capacity decline in the past few decades, have attracted migrants. Others (Girona, Thessaloniki, Wroclaw) are today ethnically relatively homogeneous, though with a multicultural past which has increasingly been deployed to present the city as an open place.

Some of these cities are felt to be LGBT friendly (Girona, Nottingham, Sabadell, Thessaloniki) by LGBT groups as well as the general population; others are neither friendly nor hostile (Charleroi). As will become evident in the discussion of public spaces, cities encompass diverse neighbourhoods in terms of class and social diversity. None of the cities had a gay village. Generally there was little desire for a specific space, reflecting concerns about ghettoization, although there was at the same time a desire for specific services.

The cities also differ considerably in the existence of an LGBT infrastructure of social and support organisations and the extent to which these are funded by the local authority. For example Nottingham has a dense network of associations covering gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender cultural and social needs with, in some instances, a history going back to the 1970s. Nottingham Council financially supports the LGBT+ Network and promotes strong equality policies in the workplace. Thessaloniki's associations are more recent having been given some impetus through the election of an LGBT supportive mayor and the development of a Pride Festival bringing together diverse groups. Elsewhere there are few LGBT associations although other citizen organisations may be open, as in Sabadell, where there is a strong network of social movements which are sensitive to sexual and gender diversity, and the local authority is committed to implement LGBT policies and has joined the Divercity project as a partner. So too is Girona a partner in the project. Both these Catalan cities belong to a LGBTI network of Local Councils of Catalonia set up in June 2016. In Charleroi too the regional level has been instrumental in the

setting up a Rainbow House in October 2016, but otherwise there are few associations. In Wroclaw, nothing is provided by the municipality and in general the acceptance of non-heteronormative persons has worsened with the growing acceptance of hate speech and hate crimes in Poland which ranks near the bottom among EU countries in the ILGA Rainbow Europe Index measuring LGBT favourable policies in different countries (18% and 36th in Poland in 2016 compared to 82% for Belgium and 81% for the UK, 2nd and 3rd respectively).

Another important factor contributing to the existence of LGBT associations is the proximity of a large and LGBT friendly city, as is the case for Girona and Sabadell which are close to Barcelona. Similarly, Charleroi is within easy reach of Brussels which has a much wider range of facilities for LGBT populations, and especially for transgender populations. Nottingham, Thessaloniki and Wroclaw are not only much larger but are further away from other metropolitan centres.

While prejudices and discrimination against LGBT persons are persistent in the European Union (FRA 2013), despite the implementation of a European legal framework against homophobia, the situation for LGBT population was generally seen as having improved except for transgender people, especially Charleroi and Wroclaw. Nottingham has now become a centre for transgender activities with a number of specific associations and one of the few gender reassignment clinics in England. Table 1 outlines some of the key economic, demographic and political differences between the cities.

Table 1 Population, Politics and LGBT associations

	Charleroi	Girona	Nottingham	Sabadell	Thessaloniki	Wroclaw
Population	202,730	97,000	318,900 city 729,977 UA	208,310	325,182 city; 788,952 UA	637,100
Politics/LG	Alliance with socialists largest	Centre-right	Labour	Coalition of 4 left-wing parties	Independent with left support	Centre
Economic	High unemployment 19.2%	Growing, tourism	Loss of industry, service growth	De-industrialisation	Shrinking but growing service sector	Growing for business
Foreigners*	11.6%	Low	20.1%; 65.4% ethnic	10.3%;	Low	3.9%

			minority			
Visibility of LGBT population	Little	Little apart from major events	High (no gay village)	Little to medium	Medium	Little
LGBT Organisations	None until Rainbow House 2016	A few	Many in each category	None but strong social movements	A few	A few

- Foreign refers to foreign-born. For Nottingham, the figure refers to the ethnic minority population which includes those born in the UK and outside.

2. Objectives

In this report, we compare the six selected cities in relation to four broad guiding themes that encompass diverse aspects of public policies and the experiences of LGBT populations living in small and medium sized cities and which structured our research and its analysis. These themes include:

Theme 1: Combating hate crimes based on LGBTphobia: the role of policies, legal measures and claim/complaints' mechanisms.

Key issues cover actions that are undertaken, including at the legal level, to prevent and combat LGBTphobia at local level, the role of and relationship between different actors, such as law enforcement authorities, prosecutors, lawyers, public services and NGOs in identifying, reporting and defending victims of LGBTphobia; channels for formal complaint and the extent to which specific services address and implement measures to prevent and combat LGBTphobia as well as improve the welfare of LGBT people.

Theme 2: Experiences in public spheres: representations, virtuality, physical spaces and hate speech.

Public sphere is understood through three dimensions (physical, ideological and virtual). These lead to questions of how do physical spaces organize the relations in public space, especially with regard to LGBT people and how do LGTB people become visible in the different publics spaces? How do hate speech and hate crimes occur in public space and how do LGTB people create safe places in the city? How do local media portray different kinds of sexuality and gender expression and impact on public discussions of these issues at local levels? What is the impact of virtual space

in fostering hate speech and how important is virtual space as a place for LGTB people?

Theme 3: Social interactions and internalised experiences of LGBTphobia

This guiding theme focuses on social interactions and the personal experiences of LGBT people which addresses several interrelated dimensions of everyday life. These include family and intimate relationships and the impact of kinship interactions on the everyday life of LGBT people and their personal identity and self-esteem. It also explores interactions with others in significant sites such as educational institutions and work and professional life and community networks that support them and ensure their well-being.

Theme 4: Inclusion, exclusion, and intersectionality

LGBT populations are heterogeneous and differentiated by a number of variables, such as gender, class or socio-economic status, educational level, race and ethnicity, age, religion, age, disability and legal status. Intersectional discrimination has been identified as a key concern for LGBT people from faith or refugee communities or those who identify as ethnic minorities. The question is then to what extent do different socio-economic and demographic characteristics of LGBT populations make a difference to their use of the city and access to and experiences of discrimination in relation to different public services?

3. Research Methodologies

In order to explore these themes across the six cities, the teams conducted qualitative and quantitative research with a diverse range of LGBT individuals, and stakeholders - local policymakers and providers of services such as education and health and cultural activities. Interviews were often complemented by participant observation. Surveys were undertaken with the population to gain understanding of their views on a number of issues concerning the rights of LGBT individuals, the extent to which they interact with LGBT people, and whether they thought their city is LGBT friendly city.

3.1. Statistical Data on Hate Crime and Speech

We have examined the extent to which statistical data is available for LGBT hate crime and whether it is broken down by L, G, B and T. We have also looked at whether data is available at the local, regional and national levels in each city. No city was able to provide reliable information for the local level and at the regional level information is also patchy. The organisations that are responsible for providing the statistics are the police, equality organisations, government bodies and NGOs. In Nottingham the statistics are provided by the police. In Spain, the Ministry of the

Interior collects the data together from the national law enforcement authorities. In Charleroi the Belgium Equality Body (UNIA) registers LGBT hate crime. In Thessaloniki the Racist Violence Recording Network provides the statistics. In Wroclaw, the Ministry of the Interior record hate crime.

3.2. Fieldwork

The following provides a summary of how the research was and a summary of the participants. For a fuller discussion of the research and a list of the participants see the attached city reports.

3.2.i Interviews

In each city, 25 interviews with LGBT individuals and stakeholders were undertaken. 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.

We tried as far as possible to capture the range of categories of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender but in Charleroi and Nottingham were unable to obtain a person categorising themselves as bisexual. The lack of organisations made it difficult to find participants in Charleroi and Wroclaw where it was done through their own networks. In Wroclaw it was particularly difficult to find transgender people.

Some of the striking features of the sample were the high level of education. Only in Spain did individuals with primary education participate. Is it therefore that those with higher education have found it easier come out or is that they are more prepared to be interviewed? Whatever the reason it does indicate the middle class participation in the research. In several cities, many also professed no religious affiliation, in part due to the rejection of their sexual orientation and gender identity by organised religious institutions and families with conservative beliefs.

Below table 2 sets out the composition of the interviews in each city.

Table 2 Interviews with LGBT individuals

	L	G	B	T
Charleroi	3	8	-	3
Girona	5	5	3	3
Nottingham	4	6	-	4
Sabadell	6	8	1	2
Thessaloniki	5	6	2	2

City	Ed -High	Ed Sec	Ed Prim	Age (years)	Religion None
Wroclaw	4	8	3	1	
Total	27	41	9	15	

City	Ed -High	Ed Sec	Ed Prim	Age (years)	Religion None
Charleroi	10	4	-	22-58	10
Girona	7	6	3	23-58	13
Nottingham	11	3	-	19-70	11
Sabadell	11	4	2	18-68	14
Thessaloniki	9	6	-	24-58	2
Wroclaw	9	7		20-72	6

In relation to the interviews with stakeholders, we covered a range of roles and professions. They have been classified primarily in terms of the sector or type of organisation, although specialists in equality, diversity and human rights working for the local Council have been classified under equality, diversity and human Rights rather than under the category of Council which refers to those with more general remits. The distribution of stakeholder interviews differs by city, for example both Sabadell and Wroclaw have a large number of interviews related to equality, diversity and human rights while Thessaloniki has a large number with advocacy and general advice across different areas.

Table 3 Stakeholder Interviews

Sector/institution	Charleroi	Girona	Nottingham	Sabadell	Thess	Wroclaw
Council	-	2	3	3		
Legal	1	1		1		
Police	1	2	1	2		1
Equality, diversity, human rights	2		2	1		8
LGBT associations, services	3	2	2	1	1	0
Education		1	1	1	1	
Health	2	3	1	2	2	1
Advocacy, advice				1	4	
Cultural activities					2	
Media		1				

Total	9	12	10	12	10	10

3.2.ii Focus Groups

These were divided between one for LGBT individuals and one for stakeholders. In both instances most had been previously interviewed individually but in Girona they were different persons. Numbers ranged from 4 to 13 in the different focus groups. In some cases, discussions revolved around a narrow theme, for example education in Sabadell, due largely to the common background in this sector of many of participants in the LGBT focus group or in Thessaloniki where the stakeholder focus group, drawn from public social services, shared their experiences of dealing with LGBT groups.

In some cases it was difficult finding participants willing to participate. In Nottingham, it took several efforts to hold a focus group which was mixed between individuals and stakeholders. The distance of the researchers from the city made it complicated to find mutually agreeable times.

3.2.iii Survey

The survey was designed to elicit the view of the general public on whether LGBT should enjoy the same rights as heterosexuals, whether they interacted with LGBT individuals, whether they feel comfortable seeing same sex couples displaying affection, and whether they thought the city was gay friendly. The number of responses was 97 in Charleroi, 142 Girona, 71 Nottingham, 107 Sabadell, 100 Thessaloniki and 105 in Wroclaw. The means of accessing individuals were varied and included associations and their mailing lists, council websites and direct contacts in public spaces. Mailing lists and websites have a tendency to produce a more highly educated respondent. Sabadell has a better spread than Girona because the researchers went into an old people's home and a Roma centre. The Nottingham survey was conducted exclusively through contacts with individuals in the city centre and ad the lowest average level of education.

The results were analysed with Survey Monkey. The surveys were largely answered by heterosexuals (lowest in Nottingham, highest in Charleroi), large numbers had no religion except in Thessaloniki and Wroclaw), high levels of education, especially in Girona and Thessaloniki, mainly under 45 years of age, a majority female especially in Thessaloniki (see figures 2 and 3). Many had acquaintances, work colleagues or friends who were LGBT with the lowest score being in Wroclaw and highest in Thessaloniki. Nottingham obtained the highest score for being considered gay friendly and respondents feeling LGBT people should have leisure spaces, with Thessaloniki the lowest. Wroclaw often displayed the lowest scores for those who believed LGBT should have the same rights, that they feel comfortable in interacting with LGBT persons within family, among friends or colleagues and that

discrimination is a major social problem. Thessaloniki, on the other hand, had the highest scores on those who LGBT should have the same rights. Liberal values are probably correlated with knowing people who are LGBT.

See Appendix for the three comparative charts of socio-demographic characteristics of respondents and their views in each city.

4. Experience and Reporting of LGBT Hate Crime and Speech

Cities do not have hate crime statistics available for all levels, some have regional information but across the board it seems to be very limited and unreliable or no information is available at the local level. For example in Thessaloniki there are some hate crimes recorded but it is not known how many LGBT people are involved. In Wroclaw and Girona there are some organisations where local hate crimes can be reported but no statistics are available. The special prosecutor on hate crimes and discrimination of the Area of Sabadell is currently leading the inquiry of one case of homophobia.

In general statistics are not broken down systematically between hate crime perpetrated towards individuals because of their sexual orientation or their gender identity at the levels in which they are available across the cities. Sometimes hate crime is broken down between sexual orientation and transgender status as in Greece and the UK. However we do not have hate crime statistics broken down in any city so we can see numbers of hate crimes reported by lesbians, gay men or bisexual people. Even if this information is kept by the police, for example in the UK, it is not fed into the governmental reports. In Greece at the national level statistics are broken down by transgender and queer and also by gender and age. In Spain numbers of sexual orientation and gender identity hate crimes are not distinguished from each other. Charleroi also has no data which breaks down the numbers of hate crimes by sexual orientation or gender identity.

Significantly, there is also police denial of LGBT hate crime in Poland which must contribute to the low levels of reporting. For example in 2015 the police claimed that there were no LGBT hate crimes in Poland, while NGOs registered 53 such cases. Low reporting is a big problem in Poland, partly due to these attitudes which must also contribute to the lack of effective mechanisms of collecting data on LGBT hate crime and speech which further fuels the problem. In 2014, according to the Campaign against Homophobia, the major LGBT organisation in Poland, 120 cases were reported to their legal team. 90% of them targeted people on the grounds of their sexual orientation. In 2013 groups within the Ministry of the Interior set up to investigate human rights and discrimination, which have now been disbanded by the government, recorded 7 homophobic hate crimes but no transphobic hate crimes. It is clear that only a very few transgender people are coming forward to report in Poland.

The uneven level of information available at local, regional and national levels and the lack of a very detailed, systematic break down of the statistics by each group across all the countries make for a confusing overall picture.

Making of Formal Complaints

The situation in relation to making formal complaints is varied. In all cities there are the normal procedures for reporting crimes, including hate crime to the police. However, this is not always easy for a victim to make use of, and many city reports point out the reluctance to report and make formal complaints of LGBTphobia.

In terms of reporting mechanisms it appears that an online procedure is only available in Nottingham. The police in Nottingham have undertaken a hate crime reporting campaign and have discussed the possibility of creating third party reporting centres with the City Council. Research done in Nottingham city in 2015 suggests that 75% of respondents were likely to use such a service for confidential reporting of hate crime. The Nottingham police also have a hate crime poster campaign to try and raise awareness of hate crime and to improve reporting rates. In Girona and Sabadell, the main problem of the channels for formal complaints against LGBTphobia is not the absence of services, since the police and judicial services have spaces to report situations.

In Spain, a special prosecutor for hate crimes and discrimination has been designated in all provinces and municipal areas, such as Girona and Sabadell. In that city, the Ombudsman Office works in conjunction with the Commission of Coexistence, an organisation that monitors and deals with hate crimes and discrimination. This Commission is an efficient mechanism to deal with hate crimes and discrimination because it provides comprehensive assistance. When a hate crime case arrives to the Commission, the 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 of his/her rights. However the four problems mentioned above still mean a lack of reporting. In the Girona report, the regional police say that there are very few cases reported to them but the Catalan police have a protocol to assist victims of LGBTphobia and other discrimination acts. In Charleroi, there are no channels for formal complaints to NGOs, because there is a lack of LGBT NGOs. There is a national contact point at the Belgian Equality Body UNIA. Things are beginning to change in relation to organisations for LGBT people and 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. In Wroclaw, the employees of the Province Police Headquarters inform residents about the procedures of reporting crimes related to LGBTphobia and encourage people to report such cases to the police. The Polish Society of Anti-discrimination Law, which coordinates a nationwide network of pro bono lawyers, offers legal assistance to residents of Wroclaw. In Thessaloniki there is an Ombudsman in discrimination issues against civil servants, a body promoting the principle of equal treatment irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, age, disability or sexual orientation, also signals that more action needs to be taken in relation to reporting, especially in law enforcement authorities.

There are, however, four problems in relation to **reporting and making formal complaints**: 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. Secondly, LGBT people have difficulties in identifying and becoming aware of some of their experiences as crimes. Therefore, since they cannot identify them, they do not report them. Third, there is distrust in complaint systems, which are slow and complex and complainants don't think it will make any difference. Added to this is a fear of reprisals, of secondary victimisation and of an outcome that the complainant does not want. Finally, the lack of LGBT organisations makes it difficult to report.

All the city reports thus show that there is a need for improvement of reporting mechanisms, for more organisations where people can report homo and transphobia, confidentially and even anonymously, if they so wish, and a better cooperation between all organisations, including law enforcement agencies.

Crucially under-reporting emerged as a finding from the 2013 EU LGBT Survey by the EU Fundamental Rights Agency, cited in the UK 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%.

There are a number of similar reasons for low reporting across all the five EU cities with some differences for example in the level of fear about reporting. There were concerns, across all cities that nothing will be done and that procedure is slow. For example according to Galop's survey, of 600 people in the UK, 24% of LGBT felt that reporting would not produce a result but only 5% feared a negative reaction from the authorities in the UK (Galop, 2016, p.8). The latter is in contrast to the situation in Poland where there has been some denial of LGBT hate crime by the police despite NGOs registering incidents. Clearly such a situation is going to increase the level of fear about coming forward. Of the very few cases that have been brought so far before the Polish courts, the sentencing has been lenient on those who commit LGBTphobic crimes. In Thessaloniki the fear of the authorities was also noted in the research and a lack of faith in the system.

Thus across the countries LGBT people do not trust the authorities to varying levels and there is a fear of LGBT phobic reactions from the police. There is anxiety at being identified or being forced to come out and there is the difficulty of reporting what may be private issues through formal channels. Significantly there is the issue that LGBTphobia is associated with explicit manifestations of violence whilst symbolic violence, such as isolation, shaming and secrecy, is not always conceptualized as part of LGBTphobia. Consequently this symbolic violence is not reported by people nor addressed by the authorities. In Girona it is noted that there is the fear of being deported on the part of those without the correct papers. This is undoubtedly the case across the other cities too. In Charleroi, there are clear weaknesses in the registration of complaints for example the police do not always register the homophobic aspect of the crime in the initial reports or administrative staff forget to enter the specific code in the IT system. It is also important to note that many LGBT

people may suffer feelings of humiliation or shame as a result of being victimised and this may affect their confidence about coming forward.

5. Research Results

This section presents the results of the research under the four selected guiding themes.

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

The presence of local government policies aimed at preventing and combating LGBT phobic hate crime varies between the cities involved in this project, with some city councils doing a lot of work in this area, while others are doing less. However, all city councils have not only become more aware of the needs of LGBT people they have also become much more active in recent years in relation to providing policies for LGBT people and policies to prevent and combat LGBTphobia. There are also more initiatives against discrimination and hate speech, including on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity in all six cities.

LGBT people do not always ask for any specific treatment regarding public services (Charleroi, Thessaloniki) while in some cities some LGBT people would like to have more services, but others feel that their sexuality is a private affair and that services specifically for LGBT people are not needed (Wroclaw). In Wroclaw, the general stance of city stakeholders is that the deficiencies on the part of the municipality as regards meeting LGBT residents' needs are caused by passivity of the LGBT themselves. LGBT people also use general services provided by city councils which cater for a number of different problems (Thessaloniki). In Sabadell, LGBT issues have been added to gender policies and the result was the creation of the Area of Gender, Feminisms, and LGBTI in 2016, which belongs to the Department of Civil Rights and Citizenship. Girona has a municipal LGBT Council. Nottingham City Council has set up a Commission on Hate Crime and LGBT people are involved in this. It has also set up a hate crime incidence performance panel and has designated officers for hate crime to support people who have experienced hate crime. Nottingham city council also provides funding for the Nottingham LGBT Network. Wroclaw has an equality body in the city: the Field Plenipotentiary of the Commissioner for Human Rights in Wroclaw, which is strictly bound to the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights in Warsaw. There is also the Society for Family Development, Provincial Branch in Wroclaw, the oldest NGO in Poland working for sexual and reproductive health and rights of all people. The society also offers a support group for transgender persons and a psycho-educational group for parents of transgender children.

Except for Wroclaw, the other five city councils are very active in raising awareness of the issues LGBT people have to deal with and of LGBTphobia; they also cooperate with other services and organisations in the town. For example, both the city councils of Girona and Sabadell belong to the Network of LGBTI Local Councils of

Catalonia. This network was created in June 2016 and currently brings together more than 20 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 community. In Sabadell, the awareness raising activities are carried out by the Panel of Gender, Feminisms, and LGBT, a tool created with the aim to stimulate the participation of civil society agents in policies concerning gender equality and LGBT rights.

One of the issues that is clear in all cities is that the position of transgender people is often more difficult than that of lesbian and gay people and services for transgender people are developing more slowly than services for lesbian and gay people. This seems to be because in most cities people are more familiar with seeing lesbian and gay people and they are less familiar with transgender people and homophobia is recognised more easily than transphobia. However, in all cities more awareness is also slowly developing of the problems transgender people may face, the services they require and the need to prevent and combat transphobia as well as homophobia.

Availability of Training Programmes
In some cities, training programmes have been set up by the city council for other organisations (Girona, Nottingham, Sabadell). For example, in Nottingham, the city council works with the two universities in the city to provide training for other organisations. The Catalan Government, the Provincial Council of Barcelona and the City Council of Sabadell offer specific training for professionals of the public sector (city council staff, teachers, law enforcement authorities, health staff, etc.). Nonetheless it is clear that there is a need for training at all levels of the public sector. In Nottingham, both the city council and the police provide staff training for all their employees on LGBT issues, including trans awareness. In Charleroi, 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. City council staff of six cities need training, but training is also very important for other professionals in health, in education, in law enforcement and in many other areas, because people do not know how to deal with LGBT issues.

Police
In relation to the police, most city reports show that the police are also becoming more open to anti-discrimination and hate crime initiatives. In some cities, people are becoming more willing to report hate crimes, including LGBTphobia. In Wroclaw, local NGOs (such as Nomada: Association for Multicultural Society Integration, which acts for the protection of human rights of socially excluded groups, immigrants, foreigners, ethnic and religious minorities and which cooperates with and supports LGBT people) stress that the police has become more open to anti-discrimination training and people are more eager to report hate crimes, including crimes

motivated by LGBTphobia. Wroclaw police is also praised for their effective protection against manifestations of discrimination. In Wroclaw, police officers are trained about hate speech and hate crimes in order to counteract LGBTphobia effectively in local communities and groups where this phenomenon occurs. From 2013 the manual "People First: Anti-discrimination Measures in Police Units" applies. But, according to the Wroclaw report, no reliable information was found about whether and how these policies are actually put into practice. The police in Nottingham have many 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 which addresses hate crime, misogyny, trans-awareness, LGBT hate crime and unconscious bias training. The police in Nottingham work together with other organisations including the city council. The Police Chief Constable is very proactive in supporting events for LGBT people.

In Charleroi, 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 the response to complaints from individuals. The same system is supposed to be implemented within the judiciary but, while the contact person for the police in Charleroi was appointed several years ago, it is not clear who is in charge of the fight against discrimination in the judiciary. 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. So far, such training has not been implemented in Charleroi. In Girona and Sabadell, 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 Spain, in 2015 special prosecutors on hate crimes and discrimination were designated at provincial and local level.

Education
In many cities, there is insufficient provision for, or a lack of specific, anti-bullying and anti LGBTphobia training in schools. This became clear from interviews with young LGBT people. The Sabadell report stated that in Spain there is a lot of LGBT phobia expressed in education so there is an urgent need for more policies and strategies in the educational field. Sabadell is currently carrying out several trainings on LGBT bullying and the promotion of diversity for students of secondary education although more work has to be done at the education centres. There is also lack of training of teachers and other professionals in these issues in schools according to many city reports. The Girona report clearly spelled out that schools need to work on gender equality and sexual orientation. In Charleroi, the interviews also showed that the lack of specific information, especially for young adolescents, is one of the main issues for the LGBT population. There was no information within or outside the school environment. LGBT people are also still particularly confronted by homo and transphobic attitudes at school. But there are two organisations which try to deal

with the lack of information for young people in Charleroi, the Student NGO 'Les CHEFF' and GRiS Wallonia. Together they have developed a workshop for schools, however, not many schools have requested to have a workshop.

In Thessaloniki, the city council is participating in and disseminating two initiatives by the Council of Europe within schools and cultural activities for children: The "No To Hate 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; and, the "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. In Belgium, UNIA, the Belgian equality body, has launched a national campaign, mainly targeted at young people, against LGBTphobia in April 2016 and, as part of this campaign, information has been disseminated in Charleroi by the Diversity and Equal Opportunities official at City Hall.

So, again, there is some progress in the area of training in LGBT matters, but much more could be done. Many of the stakeholders interviewed in the different cities recognise that there is still a lack of professional training on LGBT issues and some suggested to make training compulsory rather than voluntary as it is in some places at the moment. This is especially important for teacher training courses, which should have a compulsory equality and diversity element.

Health
In Charleroi, there is an organisation which is very active in working with LGBT people in relation to the prevention of HIV. In Girona, there are no specific health programmes to assist lesbian and gay people, but transgender people report that they are well assisted by their health professionals, although this is partly because they resort to the transgender health project TRANSIT, in Barcelona. However there are a Youth Health Centres in Girona and Sabadell which are attentive to LGBT issues. Criticisms were raised by lesbian interviewees in Girona and Sabadell about the fact 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 and there is a general ignorance regarding the sexuality between women. This could explain the reticence of some lesbians to go to the gynaecologist because of a lack of a comfortable atmosphere.

In Wroclaw, the National Health Fund does not apply any strategies to prevent or combat LGBTphobia, but emphasizes that all patients are equal and have equal access to healthcare. However, the only medical/psychological consultation and diagnostic desks where LGBT people can be counselled are provided by the Society for Family Development. In Thessaloniki, there is the Addiction Prevention and Health Promotion Centre PYXIDA, which is a psychosocial support service that develops programmes and prevention measures as well as health education in the

local community. There is also ARSIS, an Association for the Social Support of Youth, specializing in the social support of young people 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' area of support is wider and not specifically just for LGBT young people. In Nottingham, the city council the police and the National Health Service (NHS) for Nottingham work together. The City Council has a scrutiny meeting with the NHS, the police and the refugee forum whose task is to scrutinize the Council. It also works with representatives of the health sector.

In this area, again, training is mentioned as an important issue and lack of training is a problem pointed out by interviewees in many of the cities. Health professionals who have had training on issues relating to LGBT discrimination and to LGBT people are much better in dealing with LGBT people. However, there is an even greater lack of training on the needs of transgender and intersex people.

Conclusion

All city reports show some activities in relation to preventing and combating LGBTphobia and they also show that the situation is improving especially for lesbian and gay people, but also for transgender people, although for the latter, the developments are happening more slowly. All cities except for Wroclaw report that the city council is getting more involved in policies to prevent and combat LGBTphobia and that there are some organisations in the city to which LGBT people can turn for help. All also mention that Pride events and similar events are taking place. In some reports, the activities of the national Equality body in this area are also mentioned.

It is also clear from the city reports that much more can and should be done. The issues that specifically need improving are, first of all, training at all levels, not only at schools, but also training of teachers, city council staff, police officers, other law enforcement officials, health professionals, politicians etc. This training should include raising awareness of the difficulties LGBT people encounter in their daily life, but it should go beyond that and train people in working with and assisting LGBT people. Services for young people are particularly important. A second point is the need for synergies between all actors involved at the city level with LGBT people. All organisations should work together to develop their services in a coordinated way. Third, there is a specific need for LGBT-sensitive health services, with health professionals being aware of the needs of LGBT, including transgender people. Fourth, problems with reporting LGBTphobia to law enforcement bodies are mentioned in all city reports as well as a lack of other organisations to report to in many cities.

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

The concept of public space is complex and perceived differently, reflecting interaction between gender, gender normativity, sexual orientation, ethnic group, origin and age. Not everyone uses their city in the same way and how communities access and use their public space might differ greatly within the same city. Moreover whole communities might elect to use their spaces in a particular way, to organise, to meet partners, or to relax and socialise. Use of space is also highly individualistic and contingent upon external variables. Visibility, for many, is linked to pubs, clubs, bars, cafes, etc, however, it was clear from the survey that other forms of socialising are widely undertaken by the LGBT community.

Small and medium cities are unlikely to have an LGBT population of significant size or spending power to warrant a 'gay village' or group of venues. Thus venues might only have an 'LGBT night' on one evening a week, or only once a month. LGBT people may congregate or colonise a café over time only to find such venues change ownership and they need to move on to find a new place to meet. The LGBT community are perhaps conscious that meeting places are largely temporary and often, have to be constantly renegotiated. This however is not just for the LGBT community as a whole but it can also be the case for sections of the community or individuals within the community, leading to a sense of constant adaptation.

Regardless of how, when and where LGBT people socialise or participate in city-wide activities or events, visibility remains a critical aspect to many, generating a sense of community, evidencing and validating existence, and acting as a visible representation of diversity.

Charleroi
The general consensus of Charleroi is that it is neither safe nor unsafe. Often safety was specific to location, time, etc. Many felt that they are not specifically seeking out specific LGBT spaces but are perhaps more interested in ensuring various structures and organisations are in place to advise and inform the younger population. Some people suggested they did not like the idea of living in specific LGBT areas, with some contesting the association of LGBT areas with stylized consumption (Remiggi 1998; Blidon 2004). It was noted that are no spaces for the transgender community and this renders them totally invisible.

Media representation of the LGBT community in the city is poor. The media rarely represents the LGBT communities and if it does then coverage is often negative. Nationally however coverage by the media has improved in past 15 years. New social media sites and online or virtual spaces are largely used younger people and those aged under 40 years. Usage and engagement here is often to access information which is usually absent from mainstream media. LGBT women are in general less present across the city.

Girona

Many of those interviewed have experienced both public and private discrimination throughout their life in terms of health access and provision, education and in the workplace. This did not amount to experiences of physical violence but respondents were careful to only show affection in adopted or recognised safe spaces. There is said to be considerable social pressures exerted upon those who born in Girona to conform to accepted family and social life. For many in the LGBT community their only way to address this is to move to Barcelona or to go there to socialise.

Most LGBT people do not participate as LGBT in public spaces in the city which has largely kept the community invisible. This is however thought to be changing and visibility has improved. Moroccans were seen as problematic in their negative acceptance of different sexual identities (see Nottingham and Sabadell). The transgender community still experience exclusion and often experience problems at work e.g. changing rooms in public sport facilities.

Local media mostly ignore the issues of LGBT communities and do not address such issues. Virtual networks and social media have created a new social space and this is used considerably now by gay men who seek out sex compared to tend to use them to find information and other kinds of affinities.

Nottingham

Nottingham is said to be a diverse and friendly city with the LGBT community often quite visible in the city centre, but less so in the suburbs and periphery. Most interviewees viewed it as a safe and tolerant location for LGBT people, though transgender people often felt less safe in general.

The city council's supportive attitude towards the LGBT community, alongside the presence of two large universities, was cited by many as central to how the city was viewed as tolerant and accepting of the community. All three organisations, alongside the police and county Council are vocal, visible supporters of the community. Caution is however advised in certain areas of the city centre at the weekend when the night-time economy is fully underway with occasional groups of young people many of whom are drunk. Newly arrived migrant communities were often viewed as less tolerant towards the LGBT community.

Most thought the commercial 'gay scene' has shrunk considerably over the last ten years and this led to some people no longer going out. Some expressed concern that if the LGBT scene shrunk much more then visibility would decline steeply leading to increased intolerance. Others felt the quality of the bars had also declined. The absence of a shared LGBT community space was however much commented upon.

When displaying affection in public, LGBT people are sometimes more cautious and say it depends upon the location, time of day/night, and the company. Younger people felt more open to displays of affection. Trans people felt noticeably less safe, even in LGBT spaces and for some this restricted where and when they socialised.

The public often made negative comments about them and this occurred also in LGBT venues where not all were made welcome.

Media representation of the communities in the city was thought to be good and there were several high profile visibility events throughout the year, some of which were cited as Good Practice.

Sabadell

The city centre of Sabadell is depicted as friendly and safe towards the LGBT community, however as with other cities the suburbs were viewed as hostile. This is often attributed to poverty (lower income) and also to the cultural traits of those who were less accepting or not accepting non-heteronormative sexual identities e.g. Muslims, Roma. However, it is recognised that diversity is also accepted in the city periphery and negative attitudes are not restricted to these groups.

At present there are no specific leisure spaces for the LGBT community mainly due to the proximity to, and the social dependence of, Barcelona. Some of the interviewees regret the lack of these areas, whilst others consider that specific LGBT spaces contribute to the ghettoisation of LGBT people. Social networks are important channels for organising amongst the community and especially for those coming out, but they are also often criticised for superficiality. Some media outlets have recently made LGBT lives more visible across the city.

Thessaloniki

Discrimination against LGBT people does not occur in public spaces in the city, however it is recognised as occurring in schools and workplaces. For the transgender community however the experience is different and discrimination is more widespread and occurs everywhere. The LGB community report feeling safe in the city with the exception of the Trans community. Most people however felt unable to display intimacy or affection in public places except perhaps in gay bars.

LGBT Pride, which is supported by the Mayor and where everyone participates has become very important as a way of increasing visibility. Local media has usually has open conversations about LGB issues with the exception of transgender issues which are usually portrayed negatively. Virtual spaces are apparently not widely used except by a few who participate online mainly to find a partner.

Participants mentioned some groups and organisations which are very active, aiming at the sensitisation and the awareness of the general public on LGBT issues and rights, thus raising the visibility of LGBT people in Thessaloniki.

Wroclaw

Wroclaw has a reputation as a city with strong Neo-Nazi circles hooligan groups. Local LGBT-oriented NGOs believe the situation has improved slightly as recently the hooligans have targeted refugees, but older people with activist leanings think it has worsened in general. Younger people and older people with no activist leanings

believe Wroclaw is a safe city due to multicultural history of the city, diversity at the local university and numerous tourists.

Attitudes towards the LGBT community are often said to be dependent upon the socio-economic and gender characteristics of the person, for example a middle-class male who drives to work compared to city centre worker using public transport or walking home at night. Most interviewees thought women were less likely to be physically attacked. The statement that neo-nazis do not attack women was made ironically with reference to the traditional respect for women in their traditional roles advocated by right-wing conservative circles.

The only city institution which is openly involved in increasing LGBT visibility is the Contemporary Museum. This institution hosts various LGBT political and cultural events (workshops, discussions, lectures, film screenings etc.).

Presently there is only one gay disco (Heaven and Hell) in the city. Respondents claimed not to be interested in such clubs. Some gay friendly coffee bars also exist across the city.

The local version of the major national newspaper reports on LGBT issues. For respondents virtual media was thought to foster a form of living life in a bubble. Despite this social media websites are developing and there are some useful websites and Facebook pages which are used to connect people socially.

Conclusion

The visibility of LGBT communities, their presence within public space and their adoption of public space is variable, both within each city and also across all six cities. It is also variant across all the constituent communities of L,G,B,T. In many ways it is determinant upon general levels of tolerance and acceptability of LGBT people within the city in general. A further variable is the type or dimension of public space under consideration: physical space; ideological space and virtual space.

For many interviewees this is constructed and articulated more simply as public space, (the public sphere and public domain); social space, (often the commercial 'gay scene' where LGBT communities often choose to socialize); the media (TV , Radio and broadcast worlds, both local and national) and then social media (online spaces). In larger cities, respondents often grouped or articulated their responses around these concepts of space, noting that they might be comfortable or 'out' and visible in one space – but not in another but this is not possible in smaller cities such as Girona. Alternatively they may be comfortable or 'out' and therefore visible to other non-LGBT people in all spaces, or not in any. Interviewees may have commented upon their role within these spaces taking a highly subjective viewpoint, or they may have responded by taking their specific community into consideration, i.e. stating that on the whole gay men were visible for example.

It was clear that even in 2017 many LGBT people were mindful as to how visible they chose to be and in which spaces. This was often guided by personal experience and

a personal reading of their city and how it works. Many adopted a risk awareness method or a risk aversion method whereby they were cognisant not only of spatial issues within the city, but temporal issues, crowds and the types of other participants in public spaces. Some respondents mentioned a particular caution or even a reluctance to be visible in public spaces which were in suburban or city – periphery areas. For others this safety/caution mode was linked to weekend drinking practices and the night time economy of their city. For others too this was linked to specific groups of people, sometimes including ethnic minorities or groups of immigrants who they believed or perceived held negative or unfavourable attitudes towards the LGBT community.

For many, visibility was linked to the population of the LGBT community within the city, the number and presence of cultural institutions which were considered LGBT friendly or nurturing and also the level of support provided and made demonstrable by local authorities, including the police. For others the presence, or otherwise of a commercial 'gay scene' were central not just to visibility and staking a claim to part of the city but to socializing. Where such venues did not exist or were in decline it was noticeable that those cities were considered by respondents to be less LGBT friendly with reduced LGBT visibility. The absence or decline of a commercial 'gay scene' might also disproportionally affect gay men as seen in Nottingham. The presence of an LGBT community facility or Rainbow House, was also seen to help raise visibility and to be politically important.

Often lesbians and gay women were reported as occupying and adopting virtual spaces and online spaces differently to gay men. Across all cities there had been a significant expansion of LGBT online spaces and social media platforms used for community socializing and organizing. Newer online or virtual spaces may also favour the younger generation and may exclude older LGBT people. Class divisions might also act to exclude here.

Visibility and adoption of public spaces was in all cites markedly different for those from the transgender community. Visibility and presentation often depended upon stage of transition as well as issues cited by all communities in terms of negotiating safety and crowds. Transgender respondents reported feeling less safe and less visible, more risk averse and often easier to spot and thus harass, than an average LGB person. They also reported not necessarily accessing or feeling safe in LGBT venues and they often undertook similar risk assessments or risk modification practices as LGB people talked about when moving in generalised public space. Those in the transgender community may be further excluded from accessing or using localised public services, e.g. public swimming pools.

Support from local authorities was recognised by all as key and important to raising visibility, supporting the communities and acting to help the community come together, e.g. Pride events. Where this was not the general practice of authorities, as in Poland, it is clear the community feel less well supported, less visible and less confident.

5.3. Social interactions and internalised experiences of LGBTphobia

Family acceptance was crucial in the experience of coming out and the well being of LGBT individuals. Siblings are often particularly helpful and understanding. The more liberal and educated the families the more likely they are to be understanding forthcoming. The socio-historical context in which a person developed sexual and gender identity can be important as in the case of Spain under Franco when LGBTphobia was institutionalised. Many research participants who lived during this time learned to suppress any public exhibition of affection, and this self-repression still impacts on their acts and expressions at present. Similarly, it was difficult to come out for transgender people in Charleroi during the earlier period of massive de-industrialisation and high unemployment.

Today, individuals may still wait for the right moment to come out to their families, for example when they have achieved financial independence. Conservative religious families are often very hostile, leading the child to break with them. School years could be difficult due to attitudes of other students and staff while work places varied since employers could make a big difference in promoting equality and anti discrimination policies and practices. Transgender people encountered the most persistent problems in access to health services and work place equality. Transphobia also remains common within predominantly lesbian and gay men. Bisexual people too experienced double discrimination within the LGBT community as well as outside of it and can be rejected because they do not conform to either sexual orientation.

Charleroi

For most of the Charleroi interviewees the discovery of their sexual orientation was a lonely and isolating experience. They report feeling afraid to reveal their sexual orientation to their families in their teenage years and later on. This is connected with dominant violent discourse concerning LGBT people in the city. An interviewee posited that this discourse emerged out of a period of unemployment in the city 20 years ago when there were widespread closures of companies.

Despite their fears some interviewees received acceptance when they came out to their families. Others were not accepted at all and were shocked by the reactions of their parents. However almost all the interviewees have remained in touch with their families. As in the case of Girona, siblings and friends were very accepting of their sexuality. All the interviewees had both LGBT and heterosexual friends. In the survey 85% said they had friends, fellow workers who were LGBT.

Access to basic services seems unproblematic for lesbian and gay people people in Charleroi. A social worker reported how much the situation has improved for lesbian, gay and bisexual people in the last 20 years. They feel they are well treated by staff. Interviewees report being well treated well by the council and the local police, with the exception of transgender people, who report experiencing difficult relations in almost all services, in Charleroi and elsewhere in Belgium.

School years were difficult due to the problematic attitudes of students, teachers and other school staff. They encountered a homophobic culture and some experienced direct and indirect harassment. It was very difficult to seek help because staff often held homophobic views. As a response to this culture, LGBT associations and other NGOs have tried to push for sexual diversity to be discussed as a topic in schools.

Lesbian, gay and bisexual interviewees have not experienced much prejudice in the labour market in Charleroi. They do not feel that their sexuality has stood in the way of them finding employment. However most did not feel the need to express their sexual orientation at work although some who had been working in the same place for a long time did eventually come out there. However this situation is again more difficult for transgender people whom many residents still hold prejudicial attitudes towards. Whilst the people of Charleroi are generally accepting of the presence of LGBT people and are in favour of the recognition of their rights they do not feel at ease with transgender people. This is partly due to the lack of visibility but the lack of visibility emerges from the discomfort and fear transgender people feel.

Girona

There was a lot of diversity in family reactions to coming out. Some families experience the coming out of a child as disruptive to the family project and acceptance may only come gradually. There are a minority of participants who decide not to discuss their sexuality with their family at all. Crucially experiences of coming out are often better when siblings are involved. Siblings are often accepting of sexual diversity and help deal with any conflicts.

Also important is the fact that interviewees tend to inform families once they have economic means to support themselves so that they are free to make their own choices and do not have to reply on financial support from their families. Generally it is noted that that there is a good acceptance from friends. Importantly there is a gay friendly bar, which provides a hub for the LGBT community. It is a safe and comfortable space. Some services for example the Youth Health Centre have supportive attitudes. However there were some accounts of prejudice from service providers, for example GPs.

There is a clear need for an office or a centre to provide support for LGBTI people, including concerning prejudicial attitudes amongst those providing health and social care otherwise people are forced to seek help in Barcelona. Significantly there is a great difficulty in transgender people accessing jobs apart from sex work due to transphobia in the labour market. As in other cities, there is clearly evidence of transphobia with the LGB community. It is variable among LGBT participants as to whether socializing with other LGBT people is important or if they are happy with having mainly straight friends.

Nottingham

The extent to which coming out was difficult also seems to depend on age, religion, life-stage, and whether one is transgender 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. 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. Several others lamented not coming out sooner but they were fearful of reactions in the 1980s and 1990s.

School experiences were not discussed a great deal amongst the Nottingham interviewees except by a 19 year old gay man who did not experience any problems at all and by a young transgender interviewee who had a very negative experience of coming out at school. He was bullied at school and nothing was done about it; the 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. Several interviewees including one with a teaching background pointed out that he feels the situation for LGBT students is now much better in schools but this young trans interviewee, who is now in his twenties and has fairly recently left school, did not have this experience. It may be better for L and G pupils but not for trans students. However the situation in the two Nottingham universities seems to be very good for LGB and T students.

Numerous interviewees with gay men illustrate that sexual health services, such as Nottingham's health shop, are available. Unlike gay men, transgender people report difficulty and delay in accessing health services. Nottingham has one of only eight 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 medically transition.

Gay men are more likely to need sexual health services than lesbian women and lesbians have not noted a gap in this respect but where they are problems for lesbian couples, it arises from the assumption that people are heterosexual in to gain IVF treatment. Importantly several interviewees including one from a Nottinghamshire NHS trust pointed out the gap in care home provision for all older LGBT people.

Importantly the city council and other Nottingham workers note that the discourse against any homophobia means that they generally feel comfortable being out at work who have ensured employees are mad aware of equality issues. So the measures that the council has put in place such as supporting Pride, the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia and flying the rainbow flag from their building have created a level of visibility around LGBT issues in Nottingham which has been crucial.

Transgender people note the lack of groups and organisations which can lead to isolation for them although it is a bit better for young transgender people as they are

more likely to go online and they have a group called Trans for Me which a young trans council employee jointly runs.

Older gay men are often isolated, some of them feeling this is due to the demise of gay friendly pubs and clubs where they would previously have met and socialized with other gay men. The scene has moved more to online spaces which younger gay men are accessing. 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.

Even when family are supportive the strength of the community itself is vital, and especially if they are not. However the LGBT community seems to organize separately and a number thought the community in Nottingham lacks cohesion and there is much segregation between the L, the G, the B and the T.

Sabadell

On the one hand, some LGBT people suppress their public exhibitions of homo-affectivity in order to feel safe or not become the subject of ridicule. On the other hand, some interviewees illustrate how they may have internalised low level insults and mockery and normalised or accepted certain forms of discrimination as lower intensity and not problematic when in reality these forms also curtail their freedoms and contribute to an overall culture which serves to suppress the free expression of LGBT people. Whilst interviewees in Sabadell do not always recognise internalized homophobia or transphobia they report lots of incidents of more overt discrimination in for example the workplace and their community. For example a man tried to remove the custody of his wife's son when he discovered she was a lesbian. However the Sabadell interviewees and survey respondents do not generally consider it to be a hostile place for LGBT people.

Parental support is crucial to one's sexual and gender development and whilst some did offer support this is sometimes merely tolerance rather than full acceptance. Interviewees who have children from previous relationships note that their children have accepted their parents' homosexuality. Interviewees comment that self-acceptance is important before revealing their sexual orientation to others in their intimate environment but what also emerges from the narratives is that self-denial is also common amongst interviewees who worry about rejection. The interviews also illustrate that positive LGBT referents, for example in the media, also determine an individual's experience of recognizing and exploring their sexuality.

There are no LGBT associations in Sabadell. For some interviewees, this is due to the social dependence of Barcelona, whilst for others it is due to the decline of the associative activity thanks to legislative advances. And there are also those who consider that there is no need for specific LGBT associations because of active social and cultural movements with open-minded people. However it has been pointed out that there are many informal networks. Furthermore, gay and lesbian parents have a need for peer socialisation and they meet under the auspices of the Catalan Association of Gay and Lesbian Families.

Thessaloniki

Coming out experiences have generally been positive, experiences vary from 'rather positive to very positive' with lots of support coming from siblings. It is also noted that generally mothers are more tolerant than fathers towards LGBT children. Greek society is still quite traditional concerning gender roles and some Greek men are less open concerning issues of sexuality as they hold more traditional principles and values. A few transgender interviewees have had the most traumatic experiences of coming out, sometimes being forced out of their homes and having to cut contact with their family. Families found it very difficult to understand bisexuality. Generally people have come out to their families but there is one interviewee in a 15 year relationship and who has not come out.

Cities tend to have friendlier and more tolerant areas where the LGBT community feel more welcome. In the east of Thessaloniki where there is greater economic growth than in the west of the city, which is more conservative, people are more open to different sexual orientations. Most of the respondents in the interviews and the focus group stated that the health services are not tailored to their needs as LGBT people. It was mentioned by many participants that due to their sexual orientation, they need special examinations and treatment and they are made to feel uncomfortable for making these requests. For transgender people quite often health care staff chose to ignore the preferred gender and name of the transgender person and call them by their assigned gender. There is also a problem with access to gender-neutral toilets.

Discrimination at school was widely experienced in those schools, which didn't understand issues of sexuality and gender, leading to absences. They felt unsafe due to these incidences of homophobia and racism and the fact that often staff held problematic views themselves meant it was difficult to get support.

Most of the interviewees have experienced workplace problems due to their sexuality such as bullying, jokes, work isolation, prevention of career progression. However individual colleagues have treated them well. Importantly lots of the interviewees are unemployed but this cannot be attributed to sexual orientation as there is very high unemployment in Greece. In 2016 it was 30% of the population, 69% long-term unemployed and 61,8% among young people. It seems that in the workplace lesbians and trans gender men face discrimination less often than gay men and transgender women who experience a lot of prejudice.

Wroclaw

Experiences of coming out to family range from very traumatic to through to tolerable to very supportive. Living in a big city and having a higher level of education attained by parents seems to increase levels of acceptance of gender and sexual diversity. Apart from one interviewee with a blue-collar job who has experienced homophobic comments, others had not experienced problems in the working environment despite the fact that in state companies its best not to reveal

one's sexual orientation. However, in a non-state company, Credit Suisse, a small LGBT network has been established to fight for LGBT rights it also encouraged Credit Suisse to co-sponsor the March for Equality in 2016.

All of the interviewees comment that they do not feel equality in public with heterosexuals and whilst some do express affection to their partners in public many feel afraid to do so.

It is particularly striking that gender and sexuality are usually not the most significant characteristics that the interviewees evoke to define themselves both as "private" and "public" beings. The most important distinction in this respect emerges between people who construct their subjectivities in political terms (including gender/sexuality) and those who do not take gender/sexuality as public/political, but private/individual category. Furthermore, even though gender/sexuality is recognized by some respondents as political, its actual meanings and importance for their subjectivities is defined differently. In fact, not all of them support the identity politics of LGBT activism. So, their narratives form a continuum with "homonormativity" and "queerness" as its opposite ends. At least a couple of persons advocate stable identity categories (such as a "gay man", a "lesbian", a "bisexual", a "drag queen" or a "trans person"). But only former or present actual activists of the mainstream LGBT movement take them literally.

LGBT social circles seem to be important mostly to people who have had traumatic experiences of coming out or are still in the process of identity building or have to live dual lives. These circles are important to transgender people for example one interviewee functions as a man in their professional world and as a woman in their transgender social circle,. Others who generally also support gay civil rights campaigning stress that gay men and lesbians do not think that they form a cultural minority or a social group. They use terms such as 'gay man' or 'lesbian' for political purposes but argue that the gender of the person one has sex with should not be an important component to one's identity.

Anarchists are critical of LGBT policies and organizing because of its 'homo-normativity' and cooperation with the neoliberal capitalist system. They also do not believe these identities or normative categories of 'gay' or 'straight' are stable. Furthermore these activists who can be said to be part of a queer movement focus not on civil partnership or on fighting for the same rights as heterosexuals but on combating racist, sexist and homophobic and other kinds of violence. There are also some younger interviewees who are rather critical of or simply uninterested in LGBT issues, because they do not want to belong to this type of "community" for which LGBT activists speak. For them sexual orientation or gender identity is private and their own business.

As residents of the city, most of the interviewees say they do not, as an LGB person, encounter problems when using the healthcare, social or cultural services. However some transgender interviewees report prejudice when accessing healthcare. It is commonly stressed by interviewees that LGBT needs are similar to those of other

residents. It is economic resources and age which are pointed out as more significant barriers in accessing various services in the city.

The municipality does not recognize the existence of LGBT needs and so most of the services specifically aimed at LGBT people are provided by the NGOs. It seems that the council is able to ignore LGBT needs because there is not an actual LGBT community. Interviewees seem divided in their response to this for example the queer activists argue that many citizens are not being catered for apart from the richest groups. Others without activist leanings do not want to be recognized by the council for their sexuality as they view it as a private matter. All of this makes it very difficult to talk of an LGBT community. Furthermore, some who are trying to forge their sexual orientation or gender identities want safe spaces for LGBT people, whereas others think that special places aimed at LGBT people contribute to the ghettoization process.

5.4. Inclusion, exclusion, and intersectionality

LGBT people need to be conceptualised as a heterogeneous group where axes of identification and inequality coexist, overlap and intersect (Brown 2012). This includes sexual orientation, gender identity, socio-economic status, education level, religion, ethnicity, legal status, age and disability. This gives rise to the interaction between social identities and related systems of oppression and discrimination and a multitude of individual and collective experiences and narratives which must be taken into account. In a city with long-standing LGBT network such as Nottingham, there is increasing realisation of the need to bring about a more inclusive LGBT community both within it and in relation to other forms of social division and identity, such as age, disability and faith groups, and that differences should be addressed by the Council and the police. In Nottingham there is an acknowledgment by institutions such as the Council and the Police of the need to address intersectionality and to give more support to ethnic minorities and those with disabilities.

Class too is significant in stratifying the experience of LGBT life. These intersecting axes may have implications for accessing services and infrastructures, such as health.

Tensions between gay and lesbians within the LGBT community
Several city reports have addressed tensions existing within the LGBT community itself. 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 in Nottingham. Some gay interviewees feel there are more social spaces and events for lesbians while lesbians on the other hand present an opposite picture of the situation and criticised the fact that the established LGBT advocacy organisation is gay dominant. The Charleroi city report highlight an invisibility of lesbian spaces in the city compared to gay bars and socialising spaces which is reflected in less specific services including health services and less advocacy although it may be because women tend to socialise more in private and semi-private spaces. It was also commented in Charleroi, Nottingham and Sabadell that lesbians may find it difficult

to identify whether they are being discriminated on the basis of sexual orientation or as women.

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

The Wroclaw report highlights the discrimination experienced by those transgressing gender normativity in public.

Older LGBT
The Nottingham report points to intergenerational discrimination when it comes to gay men and report forms of mutual exclusions between younger and older gay male mainly due to their physical appearance. In Wroclaw there was a general lack of services for lesbian, gay and bisexual people and a higher degree of homophobia encountered in public. A disabled lesbian woman in Wroclaw was fearful of the problems of growing older and obtaining the care she would need. There is increasing awareness of the care needs of older LGBT populations (Browne 2012).

Among interviewees in Nottingham 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 older gay men's 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 phones. A similar problem emerges from the Wroclaw report which points to a lack of social space for gay men in the city who report isolation and homophobic attacks by homophobes.

Social class and socio-economic status
The Wroclaw report points at how personal experiences of LGBT people in the city can be different according to social-class. For wealthy LGBT people the city might feel more LGBT friendly compared to poorer LGBT people living in the outskirts of the city and having to face a bus journey back home during the night when their perception of safety is significantly different. Economic wealth also allows LGBT people to travel and attend specific LGBT event events in different cities as was the case for transgender people in Charleroi and in Wroclaw and in general for those in Girona and Sabadell to Barcelona. The centrality of socio-economic status, cultural and economic capital in being able to confront violence and discrimination and enable social acceptance is also evident in the Sabadell and Thessaloniki.

In general, as noted, our interviewees were relatively highly educated, though not always able to get employment in cities such as Thessaloniki where the economic crisis had hit.   As the Wroclaw analysis pointed out even though their economic capitals and lifestyles vary, they possess similar social and cultural resources. This in turn creates more or less homogeneous view of "LGBT experience".

Ethnicity-related issues
In several cities (Charleroi, Girona, Nottingham and Sabadell), it was felt that certain faith and migrant groups are less accepting of non-heterosexual sexualities. It may lead, as in Charleroi that LGBT asylum seekers face isolation in their community and fear discrimination in at detention centres. They are likely not to use their sexual orientation as a ground to claim asylum for fear of facing discrimination. At the same time, several interviewees, including white British, commented on the very white nature of LGBT associations:

In Girona, the approach to migrant people is ethnocentric and not approached in an intersectional way. Sexuality and migration are totally separate in public services. In Sabadell, a Roma lesbian couple is a paradigmatic example of the intersection of sexual orientation and ethnicity as they are of Roma origins but had to break with part of their community despite the fact they still feel Roma. Moreover, they have also suffered stigmatisation, prejudice and marginalisation that severely affect Roma people in Spain.

Religion
LGBT interviewees have experienced problems with being accepted especially when they have religious parents or are in an environment with other religious people and this has led to distancing from parents. Intersectional aspects of sexuality and religion have been pointed out also as a form institutional discrimination as one Christian interviewee stated she cannot get married as Church of England does not allow it. This is an issue currently provoking considerable dissent within the Church.

The dissonance between religion and LGBT identities emerges strongly in the Polish case. The idea that 'gayness' and Catholicism are incompatible was expressed by some interviewees in Wroclaw because a confession requires determination to atone, in their opinion there is deep inconsistency between the two. The Faith and Rainbow, a Polish LGBTQ Christian group has been established in Warsaw with a branch in Wroclaw.

In Spain many LGBT people are agnostic although there are some LGBT Christian organisations which are, however, in a minority.

Other intersectional issues
Participants across all cities raised additional intersectional issues ranging from barriers to access to fertility services to body-shaming, HIV-AIDS discrimination, socio-historical contexts of LGBT discrimination and differential access to media and to LGBT communities from rural as opposed to urban areas. In Charleroi research participants have reported that the LGBT community is intolerant with non-conforming bodies and overweight people feel discriminated from within the LGBT community. People could be selectively included of people's identities when it comes to media representation. For instance, Christianity is represented negatively in the media so are women who also under-represented politically and in a sexualised way. One person can feel represented for one or more axes of their identity such as for instance being a white and middle-class person, however other

aspects of the same person's identity might be misrepresented or under-represented. For example, educated lesbians without children are better represented than black working class lesbians.

6. Best practices and recommendations

Our research across the four themes in the six cities revealed a number of good practices at local and regional scales by local councils, police and service providers that have contributed to improving the situation for LGBT groups. These concerned encouraging and enabling the reporting of hate crime and speech and effectively following it up. It also involved promoting the visibility of LGBT lives in public spaces through material and symbolic actions, such as the celebration of annual PRIDE festivals and IDAHOT Day and the setting up of consultation bodies. Action has also been taken to make employees aware of equality and anti-discrimination practices and render workplaces LGBT friendly.   Media too has begun to portray LGBT individuals in a more favourable light.

However in moving forward, there remains much to be done in services such as education and health to adopt inclusive approaches. In particular transgender people continue to face considerable bullying, harassment and discrimination. We should also be aware of the interaction of LGBT with other social divisions such as age, disability, faith and legal status and incorporate these insights into policy interventions. Data collection of LGBTphobic incidents (hate crime and hate speech) need to be improved, including between different services, such as police and justice, and reporting facilitated by multiplying the places where people can report LGBTphobia.

These best practices and recommendations are elaborated in greater detail in *WS2 Exchange of Best Practices, Strategies and Tools.*

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8. APPENDIX.
Survey.

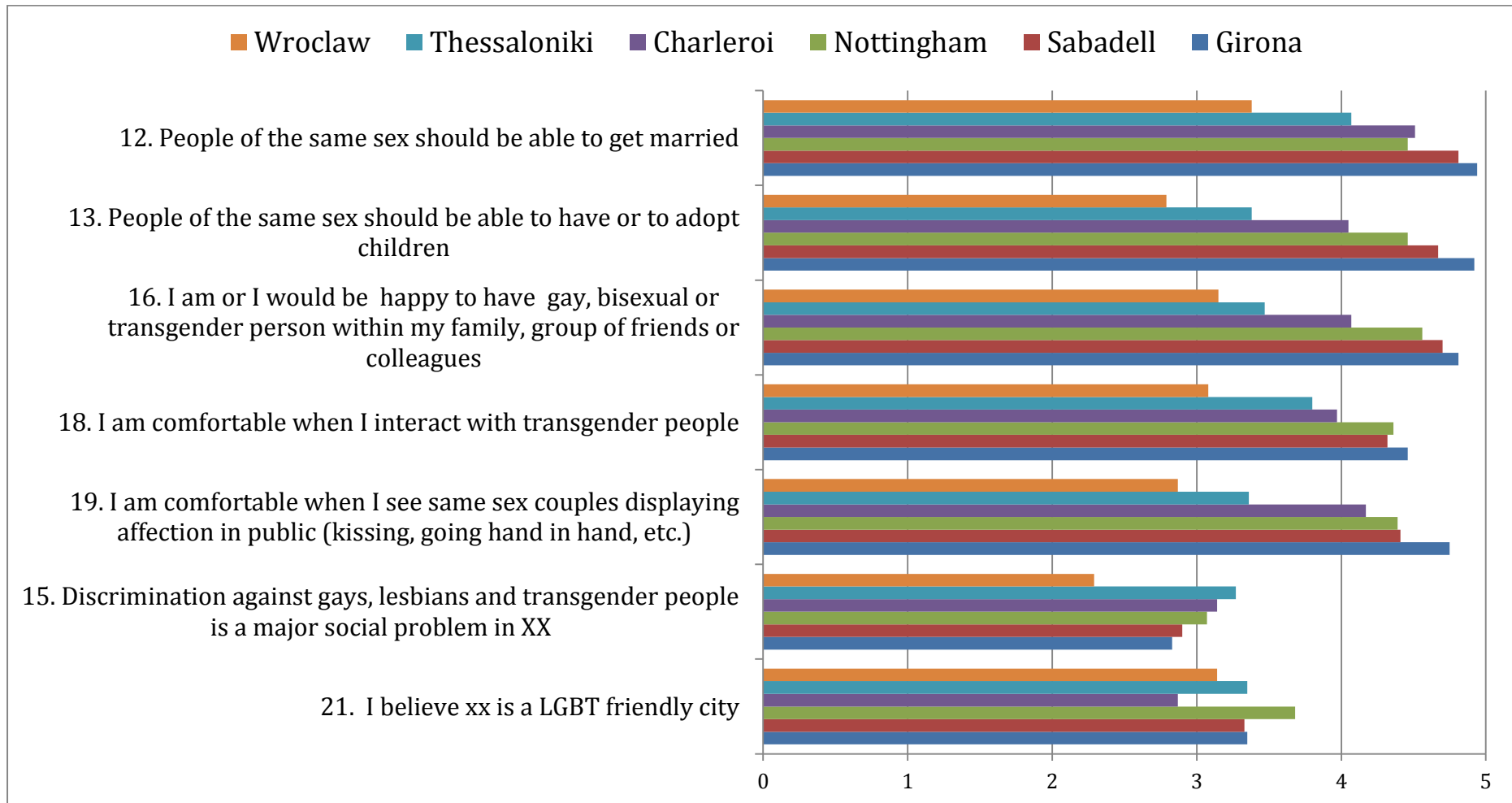**Figure 1 Responses to selected Statements, Average Rating**

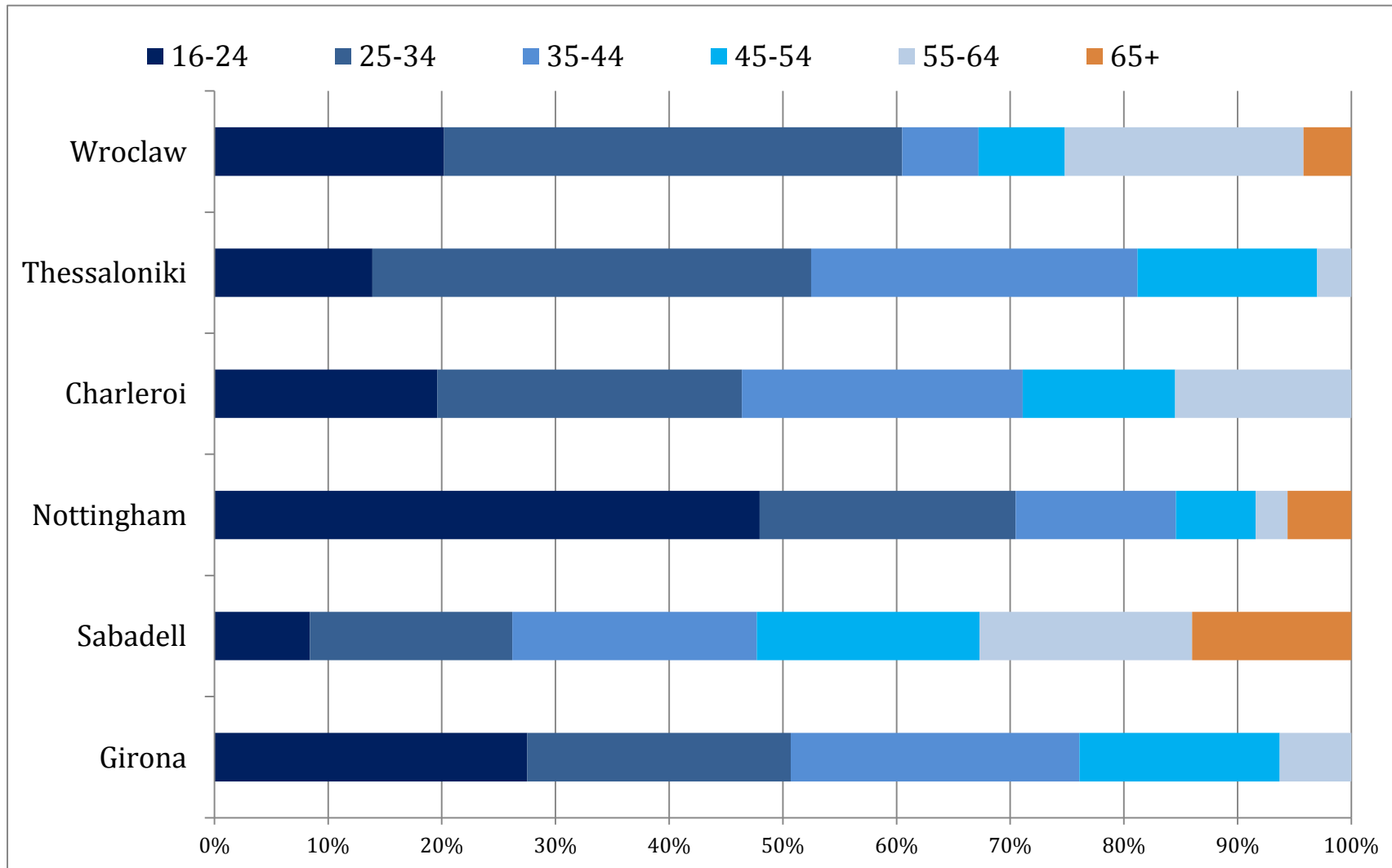**Figure 2 City comparisons of Age groups, in percent**

Figure 3: City comparison of Selected Background Characteristics in percent

Legend: Wroclaw, Thessaloniki, Charleroi, Nottingham, Sabadell, Girona

Categories: undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications (incl PhD); no religion; Heterosexual; Female; Have family members who are gay, lesbian, bi- or transgender; Have acquaintances, work colleagues and/or friends who are gay, lesbian, bi- or transgender