MSTourHer

master in **s**ustainable
toursim development:
cultural **her**itage,
environment, society

The above Programme is run by:

School of Environmental Studies, Geography and Applied Economics
School of Digital Technology

Department of School of Management Science

Department of School of Management Science

IREST (Institut de Recherche et d'Etudes Supérieures du Tourisme)

Université Paris I Panthéon – Sorbonne

The diversity of the LGBTQI+ travelers: Identifying what makes a destination LGBTQI+ friendly

Master Thesis

Gkava Anna

Athens, 2021

MSTourHer
master in sustainable
tourism development:
cultural heritage,
environment, society

Examining Committee

[Dimitris, Stergiou] (Supervisor)

Assistant Professor of Social Sciences, Department of Social Sciences, Hellenic Open University (EAP)

[Paris, Tsartas] (Examiner)

Professor of Tourism Development, Department of Home Economics and Ecology, Harokopio University of Athens

[Antonopoulou, Aikaterini] (Examiner)

Assistant Professor of Communication in the educational process, Department of Home Economics and Ecology, Harokopio University of Athens

Ethics and Copyright Statement

I, Anna,Gkava hereby declare that:

1) I am the owner of the intellectual rights of this original work and to the best of my knowledge, my work does not insult persons, nor does it offend the intellectual rights of third parties.

2) I accept that Library and Information Centre of Harokopio University may, without changing the content of my work, make it available in electronic form through its Digital Library, copy it in any medium and / or any format and hold more than one copy for maintenance and safety purposes.

Quote page

"Homophobia still exists today—the tourism and hospitality industries can combat it."

Guaracino & Salvato (2017, p.37)

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my family and my partner Martin for always being on my side to encourage me and support me in the creation of this thesis.

I would like to express my deep gratitude towards professor D. Stergiou, my supervisor for this thesis, who was always there to immediately advice and support me.

I would like to thank with all my heart my dear friends that were on my side supporting me. Michael, Katianna, Maria and Koni thank you so much.

Finally, I would like to thank all my classmates. Our mutual support and encouragement were crucial.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract in Greek

Η παρούσα μεταπτυχιακή εργασία ερευνά τον ορισμό της ΛΟΑΤΚΙ+ φιλικότητας στον τουριστικό κλάδο και εξετάζει την ετερογένεια των ΛΟΑΤΚΙ+ ταξιδιωτών. Πιο συγκεκριμένα, διερευνά την ποικιλομορφία που υπάρχει μεταξύ των αναγκών των διαφορετικών υποομάδων της ΛΟΑΤΚΙ+ κοινότητας με σκοπό τον προσδιορισμό των στοιχείων που καθιστούν έναν τουριστικό προορισμό φιλικό προς τα ΛΟΑΤΚΙ+ άτομα. Καθώς η μέχρι τώρα υπάρχουσα έρευνα έχει επικεντρωθεί κυρίως σε άνδρες συμμετέχοντες, συχνά γενικεύοντας τις ανάγκες τους στις ανάγκες ολόκληρης της κοινότητας, αυτή η μεταπτυχιακή εργασία ερευνά την ποικιλομορφία των απόψεων των ΛΟΑΤΚΙ+ ταξιδιωτών κυρίως σε σχέση με το φύλο τους. Η ποσοτική μέθοδος υιοθετήθηκε για να προσδιοριστούν οι αντιλήψεις της κοινότητας ΛΟΑΤΚΙ+ σχετικά με το τι κάνει έναν προορισμό φιλικό προς τα ΛΟΑΤΚΙ+ άτομα και να βρεθούν πιθανές διαφορές αντιλήψεων μεταξύ των υποομάδων της ΛΟΑΤΚΙ+ κοινότητας. Σύμφωνα με τα ευρήματα της έρευνας, παρατηρήθηκαν σημαντικές διαφορές μεταξύ των αντιλήψεων των συμμετεχόντων, ιδιαίτερα σε σύγκριση με το φύλο. Η έρευνα έδειξε ότι οι μη σις-τζέντερ [1]συμμετέχοντες έχουν μεγαλύτερη ανάγκη για ασφάλεια κατά την διάρκεια των διακοπών τους και αναζητούν σε μεγαλύτερο βαθμό υποδομές που απευθύνονται στον ΛΟΑΤΚΙ+ ταξιδιώτη συγκεκριμένα. Οι συμμετέχοντες που ζούσαν σε πιο αραιοκατοικημένες περιοχές είχαν παρόμοια αποτελέσματα, δείχνοντας μεγαλύτερο ενδιαφέρον για εγκαταστάσεις ΛΟΑΤΚΙ+, εκδηλώσεις και νομοθεσίες κατά των διακρίσεων. Τελικώς ωστόσο, το μεγαλύτερο μέρος των συμμετεχόντων συμφώνησαν ότι ένας προορισμός ή μια επιχείρηση που θέλει να προσεγγίσει τον ΛΟΑΤΚΙ+ ταξιδιώτη θα πρέπει πρωτίστως να επικεντρωθεί στη δημιουργία ενός ασφαλούς περιβάλλοντος, στηρίζοντας την τοπική ΛΟΑΤΚΙ+ κοινότητα και αναγνωρίζοντας την ποικιλομορφία της. Με βάση τα αποτελέσματα της έρευνας, η παρούσα εργασία παρέχει προτάσεις προς τουριστικούς προορισμούς που ενδιαφέρονται να προσεγγίσουν αυτήν την εξειδικευμένη αγορά.

Λέξεις-κλειδιά: *ΛΟΑΤΚΙ+ τουρισμός, ΛΟΑΤΚΙ+ φιλικότητα, ΛΟΑΤΚΙ+ φιλικές πολιτικές, ποικιλομορφία*

---

[1] A person whose sex assigned at birth does not aligns with their identified sex (Ficarra, Valcarce, & Williams, 2020).

Abstract in English

The present master thesis researches the definition of LGBTQI+ friendliness in tourism and looks into the heterogeneity of LGBTQI+ travelers. More specifically, it explores the diversity that exists among the needs of the sub-groups of the LGBTQI+ travelers with a view to identifying those elements that are especially important for a tourism destination to be considered as LGBTQI+ friendly. As former research focused mainly on male LGBTQI+ people, often generalizing their needs to the needs of the whole community, this thesis researches the diversity of the perspectives of LGBTQI+ travelers primarily in relation to their gender. Quantitative method approach was adopted in order to identify the perceptions of the LGBTQI+ community as to what makes a destinations LGBTQI+ friendly and find potential differences of perceptions among the sub-groups of the LGBTQI+ community. According to the findings of the study, significant differentiations between the perceptions of the participants were noted especially when compared by gender. Gender expansive participants showed a higher need for safety and a greater degree of interest for infrastructure specifically addressed to LGBTQI + travelers. Participants living in more sparsely populated areas had similar results, displaying a higher interest in LGBTQI+ facilities, events and anti-discriminatory legislations. To conclude however, most participants agreed that a destination or business wanting to approach the LGBTQI+ traveler should primarily focus on creating a safe environment, supporting the local LGBTQI+ community and acknowledging the diversity of the community. Based on the results of the research, this study provides recommendations towards destinations interested to approach this niche-market.

Keywords: *LGBTQI+ tourism, LGBTQI+ friendliness, LGBTQI+ friendly policies, diversity*

List of figures

List of tables

List of illustrations

Abbreviations

IGLTA	International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association
LGBTQI+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and other sexual and gender minority groups
UNWTO	The World Tourism Organization

Abbreviations

Glossary

1. **Gender wording**

Gender: Gender in a societal context expresses the range of ideas about masculinity and femininity. In the context of individual self, it expresses the identification of oneself as a man, a woman, or other identities who do not correspond to the traditional male/female binary. In contrast to sex it does not refer to biological characteristic rather than social and cultural (Mardell, 2016).

Cisgender: As cisgender, a person is identified whose sex assigned at birth aligns with their identified sex (Ficarra, Valcarce, & Williams, 2020).

Transgender: According to Ficarra, Valcarce and Williams (2020), the adjective transgender describes people whose gender identity and/or expression is different to the biological sex they were assigned at birth. The authors state, that transgender people may or may not undergo medical interventions as hormone treatment or sex reassignment surgery. The term transgender is an umbrella term under which many different identities fall (Ficarra, Valcarce, & Williams, 2020). It is often shortened to "trans" (Ficarra, Valcarce, & Williams, 2020).

Transmasculine: According to Mardell (2016, p.96) the term transmasculine describes "someone who has assigned female at birth, and who has a predominately masculine gender and/or expresses themselves in a way they describe as masculine". In other words, Iantaffi and Bockting (2011, p. 359) describe as transmasculine "transgender people who were assigned female at birth and now identify as male or masculine".

Transfeminine: As transfeminine are defined **"**transgender people who were assigned masculine at birth and now identify as female or feminine." (Iantaffi & Bockting, 2011, para.6).

Non binary: Non binary people do not identify neither as strictly female nor as strictly male. Existing or identifying outside the sex/gender binary, being neither a man nor woman, or being only partially or a combination of these things (Mardell, 2016).

Gender non-conforming: Gender non-conforming people do not identify and express themselves according to society's binary norms (Mardell, 2016).

Agender: Agender people do identify as having a gender, reject the concept of gender for themselves or are gender neutral (Mardell, 2016).

Intersex: As intersex, people are defined who were born with a variety of sex characteristics, whose anatomy does not fit into the typical male/ female definition of society (Mardell, 2016).

2. **Sexuality wording**

Heterosexuality: Heterosexual is a person that is attracted to the other gender (Mardell, 2016).

Homosexuality: Homosexual people are attracted to people of their own gender (Mardell, 2016).

Bisexuality: Bisexual people are attracted to the same and the other gender (Ficarra, Valcarce, & Williams, 2020).

Pansexuality: Pansexual people can develop attractions towards people of all genders (Mardell, 2016).

Asexuality: Asexual people experience a lack of sexual attraction (Mardell, 2016).

Chapter 1: Introduction

In modern times, tourism has expanded from being a luxury product for the upper class to becoming more and more accessible for people coming from different backgrounds all around the world. Factors that lead to the tourism industry being changed as a whole were the increase in incomes and mobility of the middle class as well as technological and transport advances (Waitt and Markwell, 2014). The fact that more people travel, can be viewed as an opportunity for visitors and hosts to expand their minds, educate themselves and become more tolerant by learning to appreciate the diversity of culture and people. According to UNWTO's global code of Ethics for tourism, "tourism… if practiced with a sufficiently open mind, is an irreplaceable factor of self-education, mutual tolerance and for learning about the legitimate differences between people, cultures and their diversity" (General Assembly 56/212, 2001). Following this statement, in this paper it will be argued that embracing the diversity of visitors can help the host communities develop themselves.

Diversity refers to the inclusion of different types of people in a group and often discusses differences regarding race, culture, gender and sexuality. Specifically, this paper will study the relationship of tourism with sexuality and gender. In order to research this topic, concepts and theories will be presented from the academic fields of tourism and gender studies. The field of gender studies is relatively new, as it started to become recognized in the academic world after 1990 (Gottschall, 2002). Today, it consists of queer studies (the study of sexuality and gender), women studies (concerning the position of women in politics and including feminism) and men's studies (Whitman College, 2021). Gender studies is an interdisciplinary field as it researches the concepts and dynamics of gender and sexuality in relation to other fields, as economics, human development, political sciences, sociology, biology, language, visual arts, media studies, literature, history, anthropology, medicine, law and religion (The University of Chicago, 2021). During the examination of gender and sexuality, gender studies also research the influence of other elements related to class, race, nationality, disability, location and ethnicity (Healey, Stepnick, & O'Brien, 2018).

The LGBTQI+ community is made out of people whose sexual or gender identity, orientation or practices are different than the ones of the majority of the world (University of Derby, 2021). This paper adopts the term LGBTQI+ to refer to non-heterosexual and non-cisgender people. It

specifically refers to individuals who are lesbians, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex etc. At the same time, a variety of other terms are being used in this study (ex. gay, homosexuals, queer) due to the diversity of terms found in literature. When referring to old studies, the terms utilized in those will be adopted. As one can observe, while reading through this study, the term "gay" comes up way more often than the terms "lesbians" or "transgender people". This is due to the fact that old research has been focusing way more on gay men than other sub-groups of the LGBTQI+ community.

1.1. Background information

While the field of gender studies did not become prominent until the 1990s, issues of gender and sexuality are being heavily discussed during the last decades. As stated by two of the first researchers of LGBTQI+ tourism, Waitt and Markwell (2014), LGBTQI+ tourism developed itself parallel to the socio political advancements. Meaning that by the appearance of many movements advocating LGBTQI+ rights, many freedoms were acquired for LGBTQ+ people, who progressively became more and more recognized. Recent research assesses that LGBTQI+ people make up to 5-10% of the total population (LGBT Capital, 2020). Today, thanks to the gain in recognition of the minority group, the LGBTQI+ issues are being researched and touristic destinations develop strategies to attract LGBTQI+ visitors (World Travel Organization, 2012).

However, after a history of marginalization, that still continues today in many parts of the world, many stereotypes continue to exist as well as misconceptions regarding LGBTQI+ people and subsequently LGBTQI+ travelers. While the term LGBTQI+ community is being used in this study to refer to non-heterosexual and non-cisgender people, one could argue that it groups together people with many different characteristics and needs. Stereotypes and misconceptions regarding LGBTQI+ people are subsequently still found in our society as well as in the research conducted about LGBTQI+ tourism and the practices tourist destinations adopt to attract LGBTQI+ travelers (World Travel Organization, 2012). In the following chapters of this study a brief history of LGBTQI+ tourism and research will be presented, highlighting the need for further exploration of the subject. Specifically, the necessity will be shown for a more inclusive examination of the subject portraying the diversity of the LGBTQI+ tourists. The goal of the above is to help destinations wishing to approach LGBTQI+ travelers to have a better understanding of the diversity and needs of the community. Research shows that applying LGBTQI+ friendly

policies has proven to be challenging and confusing for many businesses in the past (Berezan, Raab, Krishen and Love, 2015). A good understanding of LGBTQI+ travelers can help host communities and visitors to interact with mutual respect and learn from each other.

1.2. Aim, objectives and the significance of the study

Vorobjovas and Hardy (2015) critically reviewed the evolution of the gay travel research until that time. In the conclusions of their study, the authors emphasized the need for future research on the different needs/ wants of the sub-groups of LGBTQI+ travelers. Most of the extant literature has focused on the travel behavior and motivation of wealthier gay white men, which are part of the middle class, have no children and live in an urban environment. The authors claim that the lack of research regarding other sub-groups of the community, such as lesbians, transgender people and gay families has led to generalized projections and the creation of stereotypes regarding the LGBTQI+ travelers. Moreover, as claimed by Branchik (2002) and Hughes (2003) the needs and wants of the LGBTQI+ community are not solely defined by their sexuality but also by other factors, such as age, gender, occupation, income, social class, family, race, interests and place of living (Branchik, 2002; Hughes, 2003). According to the United Nations World Travel Organisation Global Report on LGBT Tourism, a common mistake in customer research is to make basic assumptions about LGBTQI+ travelers ignoring the diversity of the group (World Travel Organization, 2012). The report underlines the importance of businesses challenging these assumptions by studying this diversity in order to build strong customers relationships. Following the above, this research aims to create a more diverse picture regarding the elements that make a destination LGBTQI+ friendly.

This debate goes back to Binnie (2001) who talked about the "queer unwanted" including homosexual people of color, women and people included in the homosexual subculture. Waitt and Markwell (2014) criticized that while the tourism industry promises the "gay utopia" to the visitors, it is a "gay utopia" directed to the privileged and "good gays". Visser (2003) presents this argument on a case study regarding Cape Town. The city famous for being LGBTQI+ friendly, seems according to the author to direct itself clearly towards the white, wealthy, gay, male travelers.

As it will be demonstrated in the chapter examining the development of the history of LGBTQI+ tourism, the market grows with and influences the LGBTQI+ identity and the stereotypes of the LGBTQI+ people. As the LGBTQI+ tourism market is also interested in the profit or else "pink dollar" popular LGBTQI+ destinations and events have been criticized for promoting stereotypes by focusing almost exclusively on the interests of the wealthier and more powerful ignoring the nuances of the LGBTQI+ community. Waitt (2003) corroborates the above by providing the example of Sydney 2002 Gay Games. According to the author some homosexual residents of the city refused to take part in the event as they were appalled by the "macho" presentation of the gay community in the marketing campaign.

Waitt and Markwell (2014) explain the issue that big "gay Mecas" focus exclusively on some LGBTQI+ stereotypes and forget to take into account different elements that differentiate the individuals of the LGBTQI+ community, such as gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class and nationality. From the above one can conclude that it is necessary for destinations to pay attention to the diversity of the LGBTQI+ community if they want to be perceived as authentic and support its needs.

Following the above, the aim of this study is to explore the diversity that potentially exists amongst the needs of the sub-niches of the LGBTQI+ travelers with a view to identifying those elements that are especially important for a tourism destination to be considered as LGBTQI+ friendly. Specifically, the study will focus primarily on the nuances of the LGBTQI+ community by gender as previous research has focused mainly on male travelers neglecting the perspective of female and gender expansive[2] tourists (World Travel Organization, 2012).

In order to achieve this aim, the **objectives** of the study are as follows:

1. To critically review existing academic literature regarding LGBTQI+ tourism and the needs/ wants of LGBTQI+ travelers.
2. To conduct quantitative research regarding perceptions of the LGBTQ+ community as to what makes a destination LGBTQI+ friendly.
3. To identify potential differences of perceptions amongst different sub-groups of the LGBTQI+ community with primary focus the gender of the participants.

---

[2] Including: transgender, non-binary, gender non-conforming, agender and intersex people.

4. To provide recommendations towards destinations interested to approach this niche-market.

1.3. Structure of the thesis

In chapter 1 of this thesis an introduction of the topic was provided giving the reader an overview on the background, the aim, the objectives and the significance of this study. To continue, in chapters 2, 3 and 4 the literature review of the study is provided where secondary data are presented and analyzed. Specifically, in chapter 2 the development of LGBTQI+ tourism is given as well as a brief exploration of its economic power and its social impact. In chapter 3, the motivations of the LGBTQI+ tourists are examined. Chapter 4 focuses on what makes a destination LGBTQI+ friendly, examining factors as LGBTQI+ friendly policies, gay space, events and legislation. Following the literature review of the thesis, chapter 5 presents the methodology of the study's research discussing sampling, research tools, the procedure, the study's limitations and data analysis. Followingly, the results of the study are categorized and presented to the reader. Finally, the conclusions of the study are presented and recommendations are given towards destinations on businesses wanting to approach the LGBTQI+ traveler. This chapter also includes recommendations for future research deriving from the limitations of this study.

Chapter 2: LGBTQI+ tourism

According to the International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association [IGLTA] (Word Tourism Organization, 2017, p.14) "LGBT tourism refers to the development and marketing of tourism services and products for gay, lesbian, transgender and bisexual visitors". The organization claims that in many cases the primary goal of the destination or the touristic business (e.g. hotels, airlines) is to reassure the travelers that they will be safe and respected during their travel. In other cases, described by IGLTA, services and products are designed for the LGBTQI+ traveler specifically. Such examples include same-sex wedding ceremonies, honeymoons, accommodations and LGBT themed tours (Word Tourism Organization, 2017, p.14).

In this chapter a brief history of the development of LGBTQI+ tourism is presented as well as its current economic and social power. The goal of this examination is to better understand how LGBTQI+ tourism was developed, the way destinations and businesses approach it as well as its significance for the LGBTQI+ travelers themselves. The information provided in this chapter promotes understanding the historical, economic and social background before digging deeper into key concepts of this research.

2.1. The development of LGBTQI+ tourism

In this section, a brief examination of the development of LGBTQI+ tourism is presented in order to better understand the way and the circumstances under which it was constructed, the impact of the socio-political background, as well as the stereotypes that still exist regarding the LGBTQI+ tourists. By examining the history of the LGBTQI+ tourism, the necessity is reflected for research to challenge these stereotypical assumptions by studying the diversity of the LGBTQI+ travelers in order to develop suggestions for better constructing a LGBTQI+ friendly destination in the future.

According to the Global Report on LGBT of the United Nations World Travel Organization (World Travel Organization, 2012) the development of LGBTQI+ tourism needs to be examined in relation to its socio-political context. The report indicates a reciprocal relationship between LGBTQI+ tourism and socio-political advancements. As claimed by Waitt and Markwell (2014)

LGBTQI+ tourism was certainly affected by the social, economic and cultural characteristics which have changed the tourism industry as a whole, such as technological and transport advances, increased discretionary incomes[3] and mobility of the middle class. However, what is important to point out is the influence of other special factors as cultural attitudes towards LGBTQI+ people, the influence of gay authors and musicians, the niche marketing of pink dollar[4], the appearance of visible gay communities in North America and North Europe, the responses to HIV and AIDS and the transformation of the LGBTQI+ identity around the world (Waitt & Markwell, 2014).

Literature exploring the early development of LGBTQI+ tourism goes back to the eighteenth century (Clift and Wilkins, 1995). The early studies focus mainly on wealthier, well- educated, Northern European gay men, who traveled to the Mediterranean countries and the colonized Orient searching for relaxation, a warmer weather and the companionship of younger men (Waitt & Markwell, 2014).

When considering the socio-political background of the time, one can assume that the lack of literature linked to other sub-groups of the LGBTQI+ community is related to the absence of sociopolitical female power, the Eurocentrism of the researches and the lack of acknowledgment of the nuances of the LGBTQI+ community. Waitt and Markwell (2014) explain, that during the eighteenth and nineteenth century, homosexuality in Northern Europe and Britain was considered as a serious crime which was punished by life in prison or even death. The authors claim, that for this reason, homosexual men who possessed the necessary monetary means traveled to Italy, Greece and the colonized Orient in order to freely express, for a short period of time, their homosexual identity. While traveling to the Mediterranean was inspired by the myth of ancient homosexual cultures, gay tourism in the colonized Orient was stirred by stereotypes regarding the primitive nature of the inhabitants. In order to justify the colonization, the western societies portrayed it as a mission to civilize the inferior and "perverted" (Waitt & Markwell, 2014). The western countries portrayed themselves as civilized and therefore heteronormative, reinforcing the stereotypes about the Orient, homosexuality and gay travelers.

According to the writings of Waitt and Markwell (2014) it was not before the end of the World War I when certain cities in Europe like Paris, Berlin and Amsterdam started to develop the

---

[3] The part of someone's income that is available to spend on things other than necessary things such as food, clothing and fuel. (Cambridge Dictionary, 2021)

[4] "The disposable income of the gaymarket" (Berezan, Raab, Krishen and Love. (2015, p.1)

reputation of having an emerging gay subculture. In the Anglo-Saxon world social changes after the World War II lead to the creation of gay neighborhoods and the first LGBTQI+ safe spaces mainly in the big cities of America and Britain (Apostolopoulou, 2008).

It is important to underline that while these cities started attracting male homosexual visitors, gay traveling remained an underground activity. According to Vorobjovas and Hardy (2015) the conservative attitudes towards homosexuality kept the gay travel market for centuries alienated from the heteronormative normality. It wasn't before the mid-twentieth century when homosexuality began to be more accepted by the western society and the gay tourism industry started to become recognized (Vorobjovas & Hardy, 2015).

 Waitt and Markwell (2014) underline this fact by referring to the example of Amsterdam, a city nowadays known to be a LGBTQI+ tourism capital. According to the authors, the city did not start slowly accepting the gay traveling market before the 1960. This change came with the decriminalization of homosexuality in 1971 (Hekma, 1999) and the further development of the gay travel industry. However, as stereotypes about homosexuality remained, the city still struggled to embrace LGBTQI+ travelers even in the end of the nineties. (Waitt & Markwell 2014)

This turning point for LGBTQI+ rights and subsequently also for the LGBTQI+ traveling market is explained by Vorobjovas and Hardy (2015) by a series of events related to the gay liberation social movement, starting with the Stonewall Riots in 1969. These riots, which initially took place in New York City's Greenwich Village neighborhood, were the first uprisings of homosexuals against police violence and harassment (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019). Following these events, Werum and Winders (2001) refer to the establishment of active NGOs supporting the rights of homosexuals. Furthermore, according to Loftus (2001) this period was followed by a liberalization in citizens' attitudes toward homosexuality.

Image 1. LSE Library. (2012). Gay rights demonstration (possibly in Trafalgar Square?) including members of the Gay Liberation Front (GLF). The GLF held its first meeting in a basement classroom at the London School of Economics on 13th October 1970. It was inspired by the US GLF movements, which aimed to gain equal rights for the LGBT communities on an unapologetic basis. The organisation was very informal, having no designated structure, and organised marches, "gay days", street theatre performances, sit-ins and produced a journal entitled 'Come Together'. These activities led to the first Gay Pride March in 1972.

LSE Library @ Flickr Commons. Source:
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Demonstration,_with_Gay_Liberation_Front_Banner,_c1972_(7374381322).jpg

Waitt and Markwell (2014) corroborate the above, claiming that the period starting from 1969 until today was decisive for the emergence of gay tourism. According to the authors, in this period many gay-identified destinations emerged, as well as gay events, gay festivals, tour companies, accommodations, retailers, guidebooks and magazines. These initiatives were directed at the LGBTQI+ traveler specifically and were organized by LGBTQI+ individuals (Waitt & Markwell, 2014).

"Since the early 1970s, Western gay culture has become increasingly American-metropolitan centered, visible, politically astute, and increasingly commercialized. Gay tourism has been both an expression of these changes and a vehicle to sustain the emerging 'global gay identity'." (Waitt & Markwell, 2014, p.120).

Another important milestone for the development of LGBTQI+ tourism was the founding of The International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association (IGLTA) in 1983 (UNWTO 2012). According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2012) the association plays a major role in the organization of LGBTQI+ tourism all around the world and was the first LGBTQI+ organization to receive Affiliated Member status in the UNWTO in 2010. UNWTO claims that the mission of the organization is to expand LGBTQI+ tourism by demonstrating its importance and its economic and social power.

Waitt and Markwell (2014) claim that by the early 1990s, non-gay-owned businesses such as big airline companies, hotel chains and major tour companies, started to approach the gay tourism market. This lead to the partial mainstreaming of gay tourism (Waitt & Markwell, 2014). One important example, examined by Ciszek (2016) are the American Airlines which were the first big traveling company which directly targeted the LGBTQI+ community and developed anti-discriminatory measures. According to the author, the Airline did not always have a harmonic relationship with the LGBTQI+ community. Namely, in the early 1990s their relationship experienced two major crises, which damaged the organization's reputation and led to the reexamination of the airline's policies and procedures (Ciszek, 2016). However, those were exactly the factors which led American Airlines to reevaluate its policies and to become a pioneer regarding the treatment of LGBT employees and customers (Ciszek, 2016). Specifically, according to Ciszek, the airline took a number of action in order to prevent discrimination towards LGBTQI+ people, as: the implementation of sexual orientation and gender identity nondiscrimination policies in the workplace in 1993 and 2001 respectively, the offering of same-sex domestic partner benefits

in 2000, the endorsement of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act in 2008 and the development of a LGBT marketing team.

Another important milestone for the development of LGBTQI+ tourism as we see it today were the publications of the first traveling guidebooks and magazines for gay men in the mid-to-late 1960s (Waitt & Markwell, 2014). According to The World Tourism Organization (2017), the creation of these publications was the first recognition of LGBTQI+ tourism as a niche market with specific interests and needs. The organization refers to The Damron Address Book, which was published in 1964, as the first gay guidebook. Waitt and Markwell (2014) corroborate the above adding to that the guidebook was US focused in contrasted to the later published, Spartacus International Gay Guide which was Europe oriented. The first Spartacus International Gay Guide was published in 1970 in Germany (World Tourism Organization, 2017). Another fact that highlights the rapid evolvement of the LGBTQI+ tourism industry is the current affluence in LGBTQI+ tourism guides, on- and off-line produced by travel bloggers, media, destinations, travel agents, tour operators and DMOs (World Tourism Organization, 2017).

Following the Stonewall Riots, the social movements of LGBTQI+ communities, LGBTQI+ people started to become more widely accepted leading in 2001 to the legalization of same-sex marriage in the Netherlands (World Tourism Organization, 2017). This decision was a breakthrough against the marginalization of LGBTQI+ people and an important milestone for the development and establishment of LGBTQI+ rights. The World Tourism Organization highlights how the establishment of freedom of expression for the LGBTQI+ people helped the LGBTQI+ tourism market to flourish. Today the tourism sector benefits from LGBTQI+ ceremonies, honeymoons, special tours and resorts and the creation of numerous products and organizations specifically targeting the LGBTQI+ community.

Image 2. Jeffpw. (2001). *Photo of Jeffpw (on right) wedding ceremony in the Netherlands.*
Original text: Photo of my wedding ceremony in the Netherlands. My and my partner's gift to Wikipedia.
Merry   Christmas.   Creative   Commons   3.0.   Source:
https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=3256709

2.2. The economic power of LGBTQI+ tourism and the reaction of the market

The tourism market is growing as traveling becomes more affordable and accessible, leading to an increase in the range of tourism destinations and products available. Destinations, wanting to differentiate themselves in the touristic market and become competitive, seek to attract new tourism segments. Special interest touristic products begin to become important as for example ecotourism, which caters to the wants of tourists wishing to discover the natural environment without causing it any damage (Tsartas & Sarantakou, 2015). Touristic destinations research possible target markets, preferably, the ones that exhibit higher numbers of spending than others. According to the Word Tourism Organization (2017) LGBTQI+ travelers have been recognized to travel more frequently and demonstrate higher-than-average patterns of spending.

Image 3. Airlines for America. (2018). *The golden age of travel is now*. Source: https://www.airlines.org/media/air-travel-then-and-now/
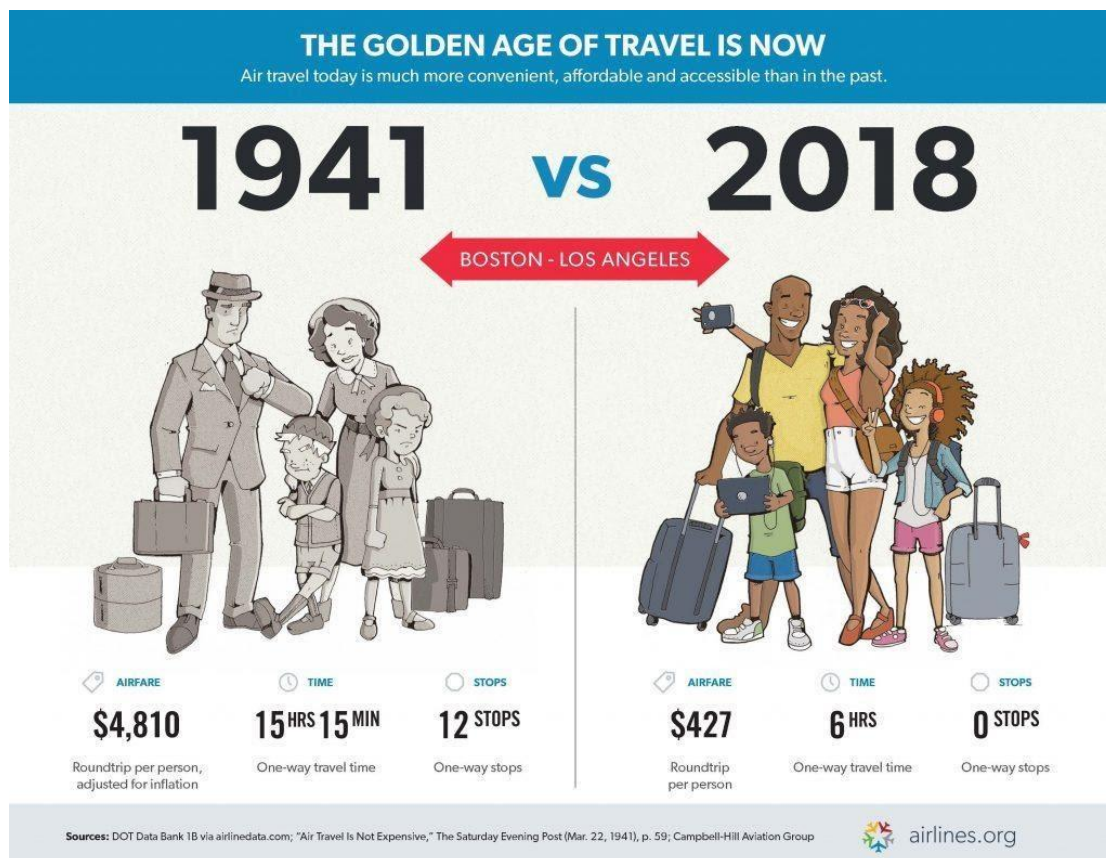
Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that counties with progressive policies towards the LGBTQI+ community have profited from important economic benefits deriving from the tourism sector as well as increased social benefits regarding the destination brand image of inclusiveness, diversity and tolerance (Liberato, Liberato, Abreu, Alén, & Rocha, 2018). The Worlds Tourism Organization (2017), highlights the example of Spain and Argentina who by promoting LGBTQI+ friendly and non-discrimination policies created a brand of tolerance and respect leading to the augmentation of visitors' numbers including but not limited to LGBTQI+ travelers. For this reason, more and more regions and countries try to adopt friendly marketing strategies to attract what is often referred in the literature as "pink dollar" or "pink pound" (Apostolopoulou & Tsartas, 2015). Berezan, Raab, Krishen and Love (2015, p.1) defined pink dollar as "the disposable income of the gaymarket". Cities like Amsterdam and Berlin have developed themselves into an art of "Meccas" for LGBT people due to their strong marketing towards LGBT communities and their progressive policies which provide an art of shelter from homophobia to the travelers (Apostolopoulou & Tsartas, 2015). The term Mecca in this context is used to describe a "must-go" destination for the LGBTQI+ travelers. These destinations have actively developed facilities

and policies to attract LGBTQI+ travelers. For these reasons they are frequently visited by LGBTQI+ people and function also as a place where LGBTQI+ can find each other and freely express themselves.

To better understand the appeal of the LGBTQI+ market, some information will be presented regarding its economic value and size. At this point it is important to mention that the existing data regarding the LGBQTI+ travelers is limited and is mainly gathered by independent marketing firms in a few regions (World Tourism Organization, 2012). Therefore, while this information gives us a glimpse on the economic power of LGBTQI+ people in tourism it is not to be overly generalized.

In December 2018 the firm Community Marketing Inc. which has been collecting data regarding the LGBTQI+ consumer for 27 years, released its 23d annual LGBTQ Tourism and Hospitality Report (CMI & IGLTA, 2018). The data presented in the report was collected in the United States through a 10-minute questionnaire. The participants were 5,709 self-identified members of the LGBTQ community. The report investigated the traveling behavior of LGBTQI+ people the preceding year. Notably, they found that LGBTQI+ people took in average the preceding year, 3.1 vacation or leisure trips, 2.2 trips to visit their friends or family and 1.5 business trips. The largest segment of responders, namely 33% described themselves as "Moderate price traveler, with a little luxury", following 30% of travelers who defined themselves as "Budget traveler with an occasional splurge" and 20% who answered that they are "Moderate price travelers". The answers showed great variety between the age of the participants and their gender with gay and bi men setting the price point higher as well as participants of an older age. Furthermore, 54% of the participants answered that they were members of at least a hotel loyalty rewards program and 78% of the participants that took at least one flight during the past year belonged to at least one Airline Frequent Flyer or Airlines Rewards Program. According to CMI President Thomas Roth ``There is no way to accurately enumerate LGBT economic impact. Our methodology is to take 5 percent of the whole U.S. tourism industry. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce the travel and tourism industry generated more than $1.3 trillion in economic output in 2010. Based on this data and CMI sample demographics, we estimate that the annual economic impact of LGBT travelers is over $65 billion per year in the U.S. alone" (World Tourism Organization, 2012).

Followingly, some data will be presented which were retrieved by publication of research conducted by *LGBT Capital*. The business specializes itself in corporate advisory and asset

management focusing on the LGBTGQI+ consumer sector. Seeking to gain and provide insights on the LGBTQI+ market, the company tried to estimate its numbers, including the percentage of LGBTQI+ people, the LGBTQI+ global population, the spending power (LGBT-GDP) and the LGBT-Wealth. In order to gain insights regarding the numbers of LGBTQI+ tourism, the organization deploys macro-economic data and modelling. The data published by the organization is presented in order to better explore the dynamics of the LGBTQI+ community in the global economy and in the traveling market.

According to LGBT Capital (2020) it is assessed that LGBTQI+ people make up to 5-10% of the total population. Specifically, recent data published by the organization estimates that the LGBTQI+ community is made up of almost 500 million individuals (LGBT Capital, 2018). The organization underlines the increasing power of the LGBTQI+ community in the market and its connection to recent social changes. Factors, such as the legalization of homosexual marriages and the change of the general opinion regarding LGBTQI+ people render the community more and more visible and active in the market. For example, when the state of New York legalized same sex marriage in 2011, the state's Senate Independent Democratic Conference estimated that this would attract LGBTQI+ tourism leading to the earning of nearly US$400 million by 2014 (Szabo, 2011). According to LGBT Capital (2020) LGBTQI+ people tend to have a higher disposable income, growth-friendly consumption patterns and travel more frequently and for longer periods of time. Specifically, data published by LGBT Capital (2018) estimate that the LGBT-GDP is around US$3.6 trillion per year. Furthermore, LGBT Capital (2020) has examined data retrieved from the Credit Suisse Research Institute's publications and conducted further research in order to estimate the LGBTQI+ population's share of Global Household Wealth. According to the last publications LGBT-Wealth is estimated to be around US$18 trillion (LGBT Capital, 2020). The high profitability estimated from the LGBTQI+ market has resulted in many businesses developing policies to target this "pink dollar" market.

Following the above information, it is to be understood that the LGBTQI+ tourism market has become a very promising new domain for touristic businesses to invest in. *Out Now Global*, a company specializing in helping touristic businesses develop themselves in the LGBTQI+ market published a survey in which it examined the reaction of tourism companies towards the LGBQI+ market (Ian Johnson, 2016). The data presented in the report of the company were collected by an online survey conducted between May and November 2015, and comprised answers provided by 661 respondents. In relation to the touristic companies taking part in the survey, 50% of them were

based in the USA/ Canada, 23% in the UK and 15% in Europe. In the question regarding the specific domain the companies best fit in, the three biggest segments of respondents answered that they were travel agent businesses (49%), following tour operators (14%) and accommodation businesses (9%). Highlighting the previously discussed attractiveness of the LGBTQI+ tourism market, the majority of the companies taking part in the survey not only replied that they were interested in the LGBTQI+ tourism market but also that they had previously invested in it. Specifically, the study showed that 66% of the respondents replied that their organization had considered targeting the LGBTQI+ travel as a target market. Furthermore, 57% of the companies taking part in the survey mentioned previously allocating some resources to directly target the LGBTQI+ market. However as underlined by *Out Now Global* in the report this percentage is not corresponding to the very promising LGBTQI+ market. Namely, according to the company, the LGBTQI+ consumers spent more than $202 billion on travel products globally during 2015. Examining the height of the investments in the LGBTQI+ it seems to be rather low in comparison to what it promises. More specifically 42% of the companies that replied positively, invested under $5,000, 17% of them invested between $5,000 and $9,999 and 9% invested between $10,000 - $24,999. *Out Now Global* expects the investments to continue to rise due to increasing recognition of the economic promises of the LGBTQI+ market and due to societal changes such as the recognition of equal marriage across the whole US in 2015.

2.3. Ethical debates and the social impact of LGBTQI+ tourism

The economic power of the LGBTQI+ travelers described in the previous section, has motivated many touristic businesses who wished to become more competitive in the tourism market to develop marketing strategies in order to attract LGTQI+ travelers. A contradiction that was observed in some businesses and destinations adopting such practices was that the image they promoted of LGBTQI+ friendliness did not go along with the reality of their environment. This false marketing has been termed in literature as "pink washing". Berezan et al (2015, p.1036) describe "pink washing" as "the promotion of a gay-friendly environment without having identified its internal issues (such as violence and inequality) that could hinder this niche market". Furthermore, there have been critics claiming that the image of the LGBTQI+ traveler as this wealthy ideal consumer is not representative of the reality of many LGBTQI+ people. In this section the debate around "pink washing" will be discussed through the case study of Israel.

Furthermore, the stereotype of the LGBTQI+ traveler will be presented as well as its effects on the LGBTQI+ community. Finally, it will be argued that when developed with genuine interest for the LGBTQI+ community, LGBTQI+ tourism can have a significant social impact on the local community and the travelers.

The purpose of presenting the case study of Israel is not to draw definite conclusions regarding the motives of its branding policies, as this would require an in depth analysis of the political intentions and its impacts. Rather than that the example and the debates focused around it are going to be briefly presented in order to better understand the arguments surrounding the concept of "pink washing". According to Avraham (2009) Israel's ambivalent image has made it challenging for the country to develop a strong brand and amongst others has impeded the touristic industry from growing. In order to counteract the negative correlations connected to the country's image, which were generated mainly due to its history of conflict with Palestine, Israel developed a number of re-branding strategies (Avraham, 2009). Amongst those attempts, the country branded itself as a gay friendly destination (Avraham, 2009). Some researchers and political activists such as Schulman, a professor in the City University of New York, and Jasbir Puar have accused Israel for exploiting the LGBTQI+ community in order to present itself as a modern and democratic land in contrast to Palestine and the Middle East (Ritchie, 2014). According to Ellison (2013, p.8-9) three prominent Arab queer/LGBTQI+ organizations, "Palestinian Queers for BDS, Al-Qaws, and Pinkwatching Israel" define Brand Israel rhetoric as "the cynical use of gay rights and queer voices to obscure Israeli human rights violations." They claim that "Brand Israel portrays Israel as a haven for gays in the Middle East, while demonizing surrounding countries and societies". Shafie (2015) corroborates the above, claiming that the motives behind the promotion of LGBTQI+ rights in Israel are dishonest and superficial aiming to conceal its actions against Palestine. Other researchers as Blackmer (2019) disagree with those statements claiming that accusing Israel of "pink washing" lies on a false interpretation of the term, are unfunded and hinder productive dialog. Furthermore, in research conducted by Ram, Kama, Mizrachi, and Hall (2019) the positive impact of LGBTQI+ tourism in the country is highlighted.

Image 4. TMagen. (2013). *During the 2013 Tel Aviv Pride Parade, the anarcho-queer collective "Mashpritzot" held a die-in to protest Israeli pinkwashing, and the homonormative priorities of the city-sposored   LGBT   center.*   Creative   Commons   3.0.   Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:%D7%9E%D7%A9%D7%A4%D7%A8%D7%99%D7%A6% D7%95%D7%AA_%D7%A4%D7%A2%D7%95%D7%9C%D7%94_%D7%95%D7%A8%D7%95%D7 %93%D7%94_2.jpg

Such debates have led researchers and specialists to bring into question this image of LGBTQI+ tourism as an opportunity for easy economical profit. It is criticized that tourism businesses have given their focus solely to LGBTQI+ travelers sharing specific characteristics, as high income, celibately lifestyle and privileged position in society. The assumption used to be that since LGBTQI+ people tended to build less often their own family, due to societal constrains, they were more economically flexible and could afford to travel and spend more. This concept is found in literature by the acronym DINK - dual income, no kids – (World Tourism Organization, 2017). According to the World Tourism Organization (2017) gay same-sex couples were portrayed as the ideal consumer. The organization criticized, that due to this stereotype, businesses and researchers concentrated their interest on gay wealthier men neglecting lesbians and as one can hypothesize also other sub-groups of the LGBTQI+ community. The legitimacy of this image of LGBTQI+ travelers can be challenged considering the progressive legalization of same-sex marriage and adoption in many countries around the word. Furthermore, not all research corroborates the assumption that LGBTQI+ people show higher than average degrees of spending. A recent study

conducted by Ram, Kama, Mizrachi, and Hall (2019) regarding the LGBTQI+ tourism in Tel Aviv showed that LGBTQI+ travelers did not spend more money than non-LGBTQI+ tourists. Furthermore, Badgett (1997) and Carpenter (2004) criticized the assumption of homosexual men having higher disposable income, arguing that on the contrary, they often suffered from salary discrimination.

Furthermore, as the LGBTQI+ community has faced a lot of stigma and still is in many countries around the word, generalizations regarding the community can lead to further stereotypes and discrimination. While this paper discusses the positive impact of societal changes as the legislation of same-sex marriage in some countries, it is important to remember that LGBTQI+ people are still being persecuted in many places around the world. The following map constructed by The international lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex association [IGLA], shows the protection or criminalization of same-sex acts between adults. Countries colored with the orange or red color criminalize same-sex activity with imprisonment or even death.

Image 5. IGLA. (December 2020). *World map on sexual orientation laws.* Source : https://ilga.org/maps-sexual-orientation-laws
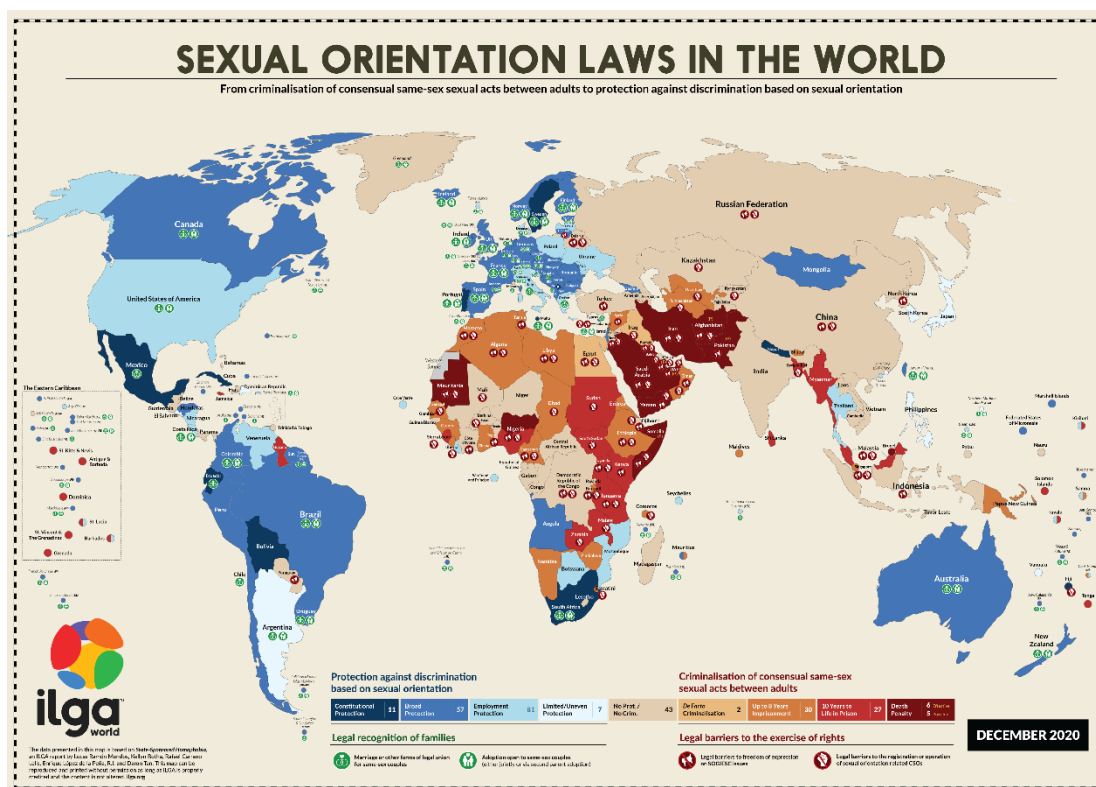
In order for the LGBTQI+ people to overcome this stigma, the need is addressed for the diversity of the LGBTQI+ community to be recognized. According to the World Tourism Organization

(2012) a common mistake in customer research is to make basic assumptions about LGBTQI+ travelers ignoring the diversity of the group. Waitt (2003) corroborates the above by providing the example of Sydney 2002 Gay Games. According to the author some homosexual residents of the city refused to take part in the event as they were appalled by the "macho" presentation of the gay community in the marketing campaign. The World Tourism Organization underlines the importance of businesses challenging stereotypical assumptions about the LGBTQI+ community by studying its diversity in order to build strong customers relationships. This debate goes back to Binnie (2001) who talked about the "queer unwanted" including homosexual people of color, women and people included in the homosexual subculture. Waitt and Markwell (2014) criticized that while the tourism industry promises the "gay utopia" to the visitors, it is a "gay utopia" directed to the privileged and "good gays". Visser (2003) presents this argument on a case study regarding Cape Town. The city famous for being LGBTQI+ friendly, seems according to the author to direct itself clearly towards the white, wealthy, gay travelers. Waitt and Markwell (2014) explain the issue that big "gay Meccas" focus exclusively on some LGBTQI+ stereotypes and forget to take into account different elements that differentiate the individuals of the LGBTQI+ community, such as sexuality, gender, ethnicity, class and nationality.

The World Tourism Organization (2017) brings to the attention of tourism businesses and destinations wanting to approach the LGBTQI+ market, the importance of authenticity. According to the organization, if a region advertises itself as the ideal LGBTQI+ friendly destination strictly in order to profit from the touristic industry, while the local LGBTQI+ community faces discrimination, this inconsistency between the brand and the local reality will be quickly revealed. The LGBTQI+ community has shown to have a strong sense of identity and remain highly connected through different online platforms and communication channels (Liberato, Liberato, Abreu, Alén, & Rocha, 2018). Studies have demonstrated that LGBTQI+ travelers are less likely to visit a destination if the local LGBTQI+ community is treated badly. In a research conducted by CMI (2018) 80% of the participants agreed that they would not travel to a destination which treats its local LGBTQI+ community poorly. According to the World Tourism Organization (2017), if a destination or a business is interested in approaching the LGBTQI+ market they should firstly focus on developing anti-discriminatory policies and creating and LGBTQI+ friendly environment for all stakeholders.

In this way, as the organization underlines, the development of LGBTQI+ tourism has far more to offer than its economic benefits. According to the World Tourism Organization (2017) it can

change the image of the destination into one of tolerance and respect. Hughes (1997) advocates that the city becomes positively associated with tolerance and freedom of expression even for tourists who do not wish to participate in LGBT touristic products. By supporting LGBTQI+ rights, the destination becomes a significant global advocate of universal human rights (World Tourism Organization, 2017). This image has a significant effect on how the city is perceived internationally but also on how it is experienced by its own citizens. By developing LGBTQI+ friendly touristic products, tolerance is promoted for the local LGBTQI+ community.

Indeed, as the article 2.1 of UNWTO Global Code of Ethics for tourism states (General Assembly 56/212, 2001):

"Tourism… should be planned and practiced as a privileged means of individual and collective fulfillment; when practiced with a sufficiently open mind, it is an irreplaceable factor of self-education, mutual tolerance and for learning about the legitimate differences between people, cultures and their diversity."

2.4. Motivations of LGBTQI+ Tourists

The recognition of the LGBTQI+ new niche market and of economic benefits that can derive from it have led to numerous studies regarding the motivations of LGBTQI+ tourists. Most of the studies that exist on this topic have developed after 1990, when LGBTQI+ issues began to be more widely discussed and accepted. Initially, researchers focused mostly on the needs and wants of western gay men. In this chapter the motivations of LGBTQI+ tourists will be highlighted. Furthermore, the study will try to investigate the reasons behind those motivations.

In 2006, Hughes (2006) studied the motivations and traveling habits of the gay travelers and developed the theory that one can differentiate between two categories of gay vacations and LGBTQI travelers. The first category consists of travelers that, while being part of the LGBTQI+ community, do not differ in their vacation habits from the mainstream traveler. The second one consists of LGBTQI+ travelers whose vacations have a distinct gay character. However, these two categories do not refer to homogenous patterns. As the LGBTQI+ community consists of people with many different characteristics and needs, those are also reflected in the way they decide to spend their holiday. Hughes (2006), in an attempt to explain this diversity, attributed it to the different degrees of engagement of LGBTQI+ travelers to products and services specifically developed for LGBTQI+ people. Some examples of LGBTQI+ products and services include

LGBTQI+ festivals, events, hotels, bars, marriage ceremonies and honeymoons (World Tourism Organization, 2017).

Further studies argue that the motivations of LGBTQI+ tourists should not be examined solely in relation to their sexual or gender expression. LGBTQI+ travelers show many common traveling patterns as non-LGBTQI+ tourists. For example, common tourism motivations such as traveling for sun, leisure and gastronomy are found in researches discussing the motivations of LGBTQI+ people and non-LGBTQI+ people alike (Clift & Forrest, 1999). Furthermore, other factors, as the profession of the travelers and their social and familial status, have been recognized to influence traveler's motivations essentially (Branchik, 2020; Hughes, 2003).

A differentiation one could assume between the cisgender- heterosexual traveler and an LGBTQI+ travel could be lying on the need of LGBTQI+ tourists to find a non-homophobic destination where they will be free to express themselves without danger. A recent study conducted by Community Marketing Inc. (2014) revealed that LGBTQI+ travelers avoid countries which are not considered safe for LGBTQI+ people. Specifically, when asked if a country or destination reputation as being safe influences their travel choices, 94% answered positively. Furthermore, when asked if they would visit a country which enforces homophobic legislations, only 11% of the participants expressed positive inclination. This increased need for safety can be easily understood considering the history of marginalization and persecution of LGBTQI+ people that still continues in many parts of the world.

Corroborating the above and adding some extra elements, research conducted by Vorobjovas-PInta and Hardy (2015) investigates the relationship between the marginalization of LGBTQI+ people and their need for safety but also very importantly, their need for a place where they can express themselves freely. According to the authors, the predominantly heteronormative [5]everyday life has led often to the marginalization, stigmatization and oppression of LGBTQI+ people. Such experiences create the need for many LGBTQI+ people to find themselves in a space where they will feel free to express and develop their LGBTQI+ identity. Such spaces can be nonheterosexual-dominant events, bars, festivals, hotels etc. (Vorobjovas-Pinta & Hardy, 2015). They are often referred in the literature as "gay spaces" or "queered spaces" (Vorobjovas-Pinta & Hardy, 2015).

---

[5] "Suggesting or believing that only heterosexual relationships are normal or right and that men and women have naturally different roles" (Cambridge Dictionary, 2021)

According to Vorobjovas-Pinta and Hardy (2015) a queered space "is a space where heterosexuals are effectively outnumbered by homosexuals and which is adapted to primarily cater to gay consumer needs" (p.4). In other words, gay space represents a "physical manifestation of gay community" (Hindle, 1994, p.11). Further studies conducted by Apostolopoulou and Tsartas (2015), reflect on the role of tourism in the construction and validation of gay and lesbian identity. The authors argue that in some cases, tourism offers the only opportunity to lesbians and gays to practice their sexual identity and validate it by coming in contact with other LGBT people in an accepting environment.

In the second chapter of this study the concept of the "good gays" was introduced, discussing how specific sub- groups of the LGBTQI+ community are being recognized more and viewed in a positive light than others. An example that was mentioned were, white, wealthier, gay men with hyper masculine behavior and characteristics. People sharing those characteristic are generally recognized by the wide public more than other sub-groups of the LGBTQI+ community as black, feminine or transgender LGBTQI+ people. As the need for safety, freedom of expression and "gay space" has been linked to the experience of marginalization and stigmatization of LGBTQI+ people, this study makes the assumption that people deriving from more stigmatized sub-groups of the LGBTQI+ community could possibly express these needs more.

Chapter 3: LGBTQI+ friendly destinations

The past decades, the legislation and the public opinion regarding the LGBTQI+ community have become more and more accepting leading to a freer expression of homosexuality and gender and contributing to the development of the LGBTQI+ market. As explored in the first chapter of the study, the LGBTQI+ tourism market has proven to be very profitable economically but also an important contributor for societal change. For this reason, over the past years, more and more destinations and businesses have started to market themselves as LGBTQI+ friendly. Some of them have succeeded in becoming a kind of LGBTQI+ "Meccas". UNWTO (2017) describes NYC, Barcelona, Vienna and Argentina as mature LGBTQI+ destinations. Furthermore, studies have shown that the LGBTQI+ friendliness of the destination plays an important role for LGBTQI+ travelers when reaching important decisions regarding their vacation. It is a factor they consider when choosing the destination, they will travel to, the products they will use and the hotel in which they will stay. Specifically, in a research conducted by the Travel Industry Association (2006), nearly half of all gay men and lesbians taking part in the study, stated that the gay-friendliness of a destination is an important factor they consider when deciding where to travel. Furthermore, according to the survey of Community Marketing and Insights (CMI & IGLTA, 2018) 69% of the LGBTQI+ travelers tend to stay at hotel brands which they know are LGBTQ-welcoming.

While many businesses and traveling destinations attempt to brand themselves as LGBTQI+ friendly and many travelers search for destinations with this characteristic, the definition of the term remains loose. When looking to define LGBTQI+ friendliness no specific criteria seem to apply for all different products and businesses. The Travel Industry Dictionary (2013) defines gay-friendly as the "catering to or welcoming of gay and lesbian travelers.". Additionally, Guaracino (2007) argues that the indicators of LGBTQI+ friendliness will vary for different types of businesses and can be subjective as they are connected to the personal experience of the LGBTQI+ traveler. Referring specifically to the touristic destinations, the author tries to define LGBTQI+ friendliness by highlighting the importance of an existing local active LGBTQI+ community, the organization of gay events and the existence of gay spaces such as bars and restaurants. Of course, the tourism and traveling industry is made up of many different types of businesses with different needs and characteristics.

As presented in chapter 2.1. American Airlines was one of the first traveling companies which openly targeted the LGBTQI+ travelers and developed non- discrimination policies towards LGBTQI+ people. This shift of the attitude of the company was sparked by an uprising of the LGBTQI+ community due to some homophobic incidents in the earliest 1990s (Ciszek, 2016). At that time, becoming more LGBTQI+ friendly for the business meant that American Airlines developed sexual orientation and gender identity nondiscrimination policies in the workplace, offered same-sex domestic partner benefits, developed a marketing strategy specifically targeting LGBTQI+ customers and endorsed the Employement Non-Discrimination Act (Ciszek, 2016).

In order to better explore the meaning of the term "LGBTQI+ friendliness" in relation to a touristic destination the following five criteria will be examined in this chapter: (1) LGBTQI+ friendly policies, (2) Commercial facilities directed to LGBTQI+ people, (3) Events, (4) Legislation and (5) Marketing directed to LGBTQI+ travelers.

3.1. LGBTQI+ Friendly Policies

As the popularity of the LGBTQI+ market increases more and more businesses and destinations wish to develop LGBTQI+ friendly strategies in order to target this niche market. At the same time, no universal indicators have been developed to estimate how LGBTQI+ friendly a destination or a business is. In this section the term LGBTQI+ friendliness will be investigated by examining the policies a touristic destination or a business can adopt to be deemed LGBTQI+ friendly. In order to achieve this goal, the study will discuss LGBTQI+ certification companies (TAG-approved) and their criteria to estimate the LGBTQI+ friendliness of a business. Then, the guidelines provided by UNWTO and The International Gay and Lesbian Association (IGLTA) to destinations and touristic businesses wishing to become more LGBTQI+ friendly, will be examined.

According to Berezan, Raab, Krishen and Love (2015) the absence of specific indicators defining LGBTQI+ friendliness, has led travelers to often rely on the judgement of certification agencies when choosing their destination or their accommodation. Such certification agencies develop some specific criteria in order to define LGBTQI+ friendliness, such as the enforcement of non-discriminatory policies. According to the authors, this absence of official indicators makes businesses themselves rely on the criteria of those certification agencies when developing LGBTQI+ friendly policies. In other cases, touristic businesses plainly deem themselves as being LGBTQI+ friendly and decide to market themselves as such (Berezan, Raab, Krishen, & Love, 2015). Some important certification agencies which have tried to define LGBTQI+ friendly policies include *TAG-approved* and *Fabugo.com* (Berezan, Raab, Krishen, & Love, 2015). In order to better understand such classifications, the criteria adopted by *Tag-approved* will be discussed.

Tag-approved, is a company which evaluates hotels' policies and provided that they meet the criteria, certifies them as LGBTQI+ friendly (Tag Approved, 2020). According to the website of Tag Approved (2020 p.1), a property qualifies to be certified as LGBTQI+ friendly if the following criteria are satisfied: (1) "Enforce non-discriminatory policies including sexual orientation and gender identity." (2) "Treat heterosexual and same-sex couples equally in personnel policies." (3) "Provides LGBTQ diversity and sensitivity training for employees." (4) "Empower customers and employees to be "watchdogs" of its LGBTQ business practices." (5) "Gives back to their community." (6) "Employs staff who reflect the diversity of their community."

A more detailed description of the elements above can be found on the Second Global Report on LGBTQI+ tourism. The report was conducted in 2017 by *UNWTO* and the *International Gay and Lesbian Association* (*IGLA*) (UNWTO, 2017). IGLTA functions today as a professional body which represents LGBTQI+ travelers and collaborates, trains and certifies destinations and businesses from all around the world as LGBTQI+ friendly. The organization educates businesses and destinations by providing training, facilitating conventions and proposing networking opportunities (Waitt & Markwell, 2014). Those businesses include destinations, hotel chains, travel agents, tour operators, events, and other service providers (UNWTO, 2012).

In the Second Global Report on LGBT Tourism, the organization emphasizes, that in order for a destination to successfully reach the LGBTQI+ community, it must concentrate its efforts into reaching the following three objectives:

- Encouraging the integration and diversity of LGBTQI+ people in the destination and/or business (tourists and locals alike).
- Conduct research to understand the LGBTQI+ travelers.
- Develop collaborations with local businesses and the local LGBTQI+ community.

Through those initiatives an authentic communication with the LGBTQI+ visitors can be achieved which is believed to be an essential element for the success of the touristic destination. In other words, anti-discriminatory policies should be adopted regarding the local LGBTQI+ communities, the tourism workers and visitors alike.

Furthermore, according to the report, it is important that LGBTQI+ friendly behavior does not start and end in the interaction of the business with the LGBTQI+ traveler. That means that the businesses should adopt a LGBTQI+ friendly attitude firstly in the working environment, by hiring staff that belongs to the LGBTQI+ community and practicing anti-discriminatory policies in the workplace. Furthermore, the anti-discriminatory mentality should not only be directed to the LGBTQI+ individuals but extend further to the rest of their social circle. It should be a mentality following all interactions with employees, customers, investors, LGBTQI+ community and locals preferably integrated into corporate social responsibility. Creating a LGBTQI+ friendly environment in the touristic destination starts from the active support of the improvement of the life of the local LGBTQI+ community. Furthermore, businesses should conduct special training

programs for their staff. Educating the staff is very important in order to offer a sincere welcoming to the LGBTQI+ visitors. These training programs should include information regarding gender and sexuality and should be inclusive to all different LGBT sub-groups, as for example: transgender visitors, LGBTQI+ families, lesbian and gay couples, etc. These workshops are especially important to avoid inappropriate incidents guided by prejudice, as for example: ignorant comments regarding the gender of a transgender person or offering a room with separate beds to a gay couple.

3.2. Gay Space – Commercial facilities

While exploring the motivation of LGBTQI+ tourists in the third chapter of this study the need of safety, freedom of expression and validation of the sexual or gender identity were discussed. Some LGBTQI+ tourists seek to travel in order to come in contact with other LGBTQI+ people and express themselves freely in a safe and accepting environment. In their vacations, they can experience a freedom which they might not have in their everyday life (Fimiani, 2014). They seek therefore places adapted to their needs where they can meet other LGBTQI+ people. As discussed in the third chapter of this study, the definition "gay space" or "queered space" is used to describe an environment where the majority of the people are LGBTQI+ and which is adapted to cater to their specific needs. Gay space is sometimes viewed as a social and spatial manifestation of the LGBTQI+ community (Hunt & Zavcharias, 2008). However, Hunt and Zacharias (2008, p.29) support that the term goes beyond that as "space acquires meaning through the interplay of physical geography, activity, and representation". Meaning, that an idea is constructed of a place, through the interpretation and media portrayal it gets. A place gets therefore its identity by the image it creates.

Following the above definitions of "gay space" the term can refer to any space which is mainly visited by LGBTQI+ people, caters to their specific needs and/or has a distinct LGBTQI+ identity. In tourism "gay spaces" can be bars, café places, accommodations, cruise ships, neighborhoods or even digitals platforms. The term "gay village" exists to refer to neighborhoods with distinct LGBTQI+ identity. One such example being Montreal's gay village district (Hunt & Zavcharias, 2008). The district puts efforts to attract mainstream LGBTQI+ tourists by controlling its urban development, creating gay establishments branding itself as homonormative (Hunt & Zavcharias, 2008).

Image 6. Atilin. (2006). *Montreal's Gay Village, near the Beaudry metro station.* Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Villagegai.jpg

3.3. Events

Another element that seems to attract LGBTQI+ travelers are special events and festivals. According to the study of Waitt and Markwell (2014), gay tourism is driven in a greater extend by festivals and special events than mainstream tourism. The authors claim, that gay travelers are particularly interested in destinations where special events take place. According to the researchers Vorobjovas-Pinta and Hardy (2015) destinations wanting to attract LGBT tourists have recognized this pattern and therefore make efforts to heavily promote such events. Examples of events and festivals especially celebrated by LGBTQI+ travelers include the Pride parade, the Eurovision Song Contest, the Mardi Gras parades and festivals, the International Gay Games sporting festival, leather pride festivals and the gay rodeo circuit (Waitt & Markwell, 2014; Vorobjovas-Pinta & Hardy, 2015). These events can act as a safe environment for free expression of the LGBTQI+ travelers, following the same logic as the examples mentioned in the previous section. They can be therefore viewed as "gay" or "queered" spaces, where LGBTQI+ travelers are free to express their identity. Furthermore, events can also function as political statements (Waitt & Markwell,

45

2014). A very important example of an LGBTQI+ event with political function is the "pride parade".

The Pride parade is one of the most well-known LGBTQI+ events. According to Kates and Belk (2001) the Pride parade started out as a commemoration of the first riots of gays and lesbians against oppression and police harassment. Specifically, the Pride parade can be traced back to an outbreak of riots starting on the 28th June of 1969 in New York City's Greenwich Village neighborhood. To understand the background of the events, the authors point out that before the riots started, in 1969, it was common practice by the police to raid bars and harass homosexuals in known gay neighborhoods. When in June 28 police came to raid the Stonewall Inn bar in New York City's Greenwich Village neighborhood, for the first time the event caused a number of heated reactions leading to the first riots, the so called Stonewall riots (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019). To commemorate these events and fight for visibility, political rights and social inclusion, LGBTQI+ communities around the world continue today to parade each year in June (Kates & Belk, 2001). Nowadays, the Gay Pride usually involves a series of events leading to a colorful parade from the LGBTQI+ community and its supporters (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019). According to the editors of Encyclopedia Britannica (2019), the event takes place all around the world, sometimes encountering resistance and sometimes being greeted warmly by the city and its visitors. The source reveals that gay Prides today attract from several hundred thousand to more than a million visitors in cities heavily promoting them as Amsterdam, Paris, London, New York, Chicago, Mexico City, San Francisco and Sao Paulo. The Pride Parade has been the start for many festivals and events including Europride which is a Pride festival organized by a different European country each year. A bright example of an event attracting tourists to the host country was the organization of Europride by Madrid in 2007. The event attracted more than two million celebrants (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019).

Image 7. Travener, B. (2014). *São Paulo's 18th annual LGBT Pride Parade 2014 - Parada Gay - Gay Pride.* Source: https://www.flickr.com/photos/bentavener/14108541924/

Adding to the above, the World Tourism Organization (2017), emphasizes the importance of LGBTQI+ destinations or businesses creating partnerships with local LGBTQI+ organizations. Through this partnership the LGBTQI+ events, festivals and actions will be promoted attracting new visitors to the city, empowering the local LGBT community and providing a good experience to the LGBTQI+ visitors. It is important to underline that in the organization of such an event the support of the local authorities is also essential in order to provide the venue and protect the participants.

3.4. Destinations Safety - Legislation

In research conducted regarding the needs and wants of LGBTQI+ travelers an element that persisted was their need for safety (Hughes, 2002). While feeling safe in the touristic destination is an element important for all travelers independently of their sexual and gender identity, LGBTQI+ tourists seem to have more threats to consider. In many countries homosexuality is looked down upon, discriminated or even illegal. For these reasons LGBTQI+ travelers seem to value the policies of the countries towards the local LGBTQI+ community and the general opinion

of the citizens when choosing a destination to travel to. Those elements play an important role for them to be able to freely express themselves in the destinations without the fear of being the target of homophobic behaviors or policies.

For the above reasons LGBTQI+ platforms and associations have developed guides for the travelers to consult when choosing a destination. One such example is the following ranking published by Spartacus traveling guide (2020). In their Gay Traveling Index, the organization listed the countries, from the most LGBTQI+ friendly to the most dangerous for the LGBTQI+ people. For the listing the organization chose 8 positive criteria and 9 negative. The positive criteria were the following: Anti-Discrimination Legislation, Marriage / Civil Partnership, Adoption Allowed, Transgender Rights, Intersex / 3rd Option, Equal Age of Consent, "Conversion Therapy", LGBT Marketing. From the other side the negative criteria were: Religious Influence, HIV Travel Restrictions, Anti-Gay Laws, Homosexuality Illegal, Pride Banned, Locals Hostile, Prosecution, Murders, Death Sentences. In the Table below, one can find listed countries that had the best ranking in 2020.

Ranking 2020	Country	Total
1	Canada	12
1	Malta	12
1	Sweden	12
4	Austria	11
5	Argentina	9
5	Netherlands	9
5	Spain	9
5	United Kingdom	9
5	Uruguay	9
10	Denmark	8
10	Germany	8
10	Iceland	8
10	New Zealand	8
10	Portugal	8

Image 8. Spartacus. (2020). Top Destinations by Spartacus. Source :
https://spartacus.gayguide.travel/gaytravelindex.pdf

To help their visitors feel safe, the World Tourism Organization (2017) encourages touristic destinations and businesses to create partnerships with local LGBTQI+ organizations. Such a cooperation helps render the tourism businesses up-to-date and ready to inform the visitors

regarding: safe and dangerous areas, who to contact in case they experience discrimination and the LGBTQI+ activities that exist in the city (World Tourism Organization, 2017).

3.5. Marketing

Guaracino (2007, p.160) had differentiated between four stages of LGBTQI+ marketing in the history of LGBTQI+ tourism. Namely the first stage of "tolerance", then the second stage of "gay-friendliness", following the stage of "we are gay-welcoming" and finally the stage of "gay-aggressive" marketing.

The first country to openly speak to the LGBTQI+ traveler were the Netherlands in the early 1990s, sending the message to the LGBTQI+ traveler that he was "tolerated" in the country. According to the author while the message, of LGBTQI+ people being plainly tolerated, might seem backward-looking nowadays, back then it was an important milestone for the development of the LGBTQI+ tourism. The author continues explaining how tolerance became "gay-friendliness". Wanting to express their openness, many countries or business started in the end of the 1990s to add a rainbow symbol to their advertisement. In the start of the 20th century, as the general opinion started to shift and the legislation to change in many countries in favor of the LGBTQI+ community a new message started to be sent by the marketing companies, namely the "we are gay-welcoming". The author gives example of marketing practices in that epoch like the organization of gay and lesbian photoshoots, the creation of ads and promotion campaigns aimed at the LGBTQI+ travelers and the cooperation with the local LGBTQI+ community to develop correct practices. Moving even further and marketing the LGBTQI+ community travelers explicitly Guaracino (2007) refers to the final stage of LGBTQI+ marketing as the "gay-aggressive" marketing phase. Moving further from "tolerating" the LGBTQI+ community, touristic destinations and business claim to "love and embrace" it. Guaracino (2007, p.161) brings the example of Montreal who stated "We love that you're totally out here." in their ad campaign. New practices that played a major role in the development of LGBTQI+ marketing at the time were: the organization of LGBTQI+ tourism advisory boards, the launch of expensive campaigns specifically targeted to the LGBTQI+ visitors and the involvement in the political scene in order to protect the interests of LGBTQI+ tourists and residents.

In order to better understand what marketing strategies are adopted today by businesses targeting LGBTQI+ travelers, some further data collected by the previously mentioned research of Out Now

Global (Ian Johnson, 2016, p.18) will be presented. According to the company, in the question regarding which initiatives the businesses participating in the survey took in order to develop LGBTQI+ tourism, the replies were the following: Most of the participants (76%) read published media articles in order to learn about LGBTQI+ tourism. In contrast to that, only 50% of the participants read published research regarding this subject. 58% of the participants advertised in LGBTQI+ media and 56% created specific LGBTQI+ targeting advertisements. Followingly, 53% sponsored LGBTQI+ organizations and events and 41% included same-sex imagery into their mass mainstream-targeted communication. In relation to the platform the businesses more frequently used to target LGBTQI+ tourists, 50% of the participants replied that they used Facebook, following Twitter with 27% of votes and LinkedIn, Pinterest, Instagram and YouTube with approximately 9-13% each.

From the above one can draw the conclusion that touristic businesses wanting to approach the LGBTQI+ customer tend to get their information from the media rather than academic papers and focus the majority of the time in advertising to this specific audience. This means that the advertisement is created specifically for this audience and is promoted through LGBTQI+ media or in LGBTQI+ events. Less often the LGBTQI+ customer is addressed in the mainstream advertisement or through mainstream media.

According to the Word Tourism Organization (2017), authenticity is essential when developing a destinations brand. If a region advertises itself as the ideal LGBT-friendly destination strictly in order to profit from the touristic industry, while the local LGBT community faces discrimination, this inconsistency between the brand and the local reality will be quickly revealed. In order to develop an authentic LGBTQI+ friendly brand the organizations encourage destinations and businesses to paint a realistic image of the LGBT-friendly characteristics of the city. In other words, when creating the story of the destination they should not focus on stereotypes but on examples of real local LGBT individuals that have successfully integrated in the society.
Guaracino (2012) agrees, adding that marketing towards the LGBTQI+ community should be creative and true to the identity of the LGBT community. He refers to the ending of "pink washing", claiming that LGBTQI+ travelers nowadays have the means to research and share their experiences. According to the author LGBTQI+ travelers are aware of the HRC Equality Index and select qualified TAG Approved hotels and resorts. For these reasons, false marketing will be easily recognized and businesses or destinations will be ignored by the LGBTQI+ travelers.

Agreeing to the above, Community Marketing and Insights (CMI & IGLTA, 2016) empathize that LGBTQI+ people have a strong sense of identity and tend to connect even in the virtual world through online platforms. Research conducted by (Liberato, Liberato, Abreu, Alén, & Rocha, 2018) corroborates the above, with its findings suggesting that LGBTQI+ travelers are highly connected and use the internet before, during and after their trip on order to search for information, share their experiences and evaluate the destinations. Undoubtedly, as the LGBTQI+ traveling market became more and more recognized, tourism businesses and destinations started to develop more online platforms specifically targeted at this type of visitors (Liberato et al. 2018). Such platforms include websites, apps, social networks, forums and associations. However, the researchers underline the importance of developing further websites and online products specifically targeted to this segment in order to better market the destinations. The authors emphasize the need for DMOs to establish a partnership between relational and digital marketing. This includes the contribution of free internet and the creation of platforms to establish the communication between locals, public administration and tourists (Liberato et al. 2018).

Discussing further the need for authenticity in LGBTQI+ marketing, Guaracino (2007) criticized that the diverse LGBTQI+ market is often represented in the advertisements by a single-image, namely the stereotype of the white young gay man. According to the author while destinations adopt this image to attract the LGBTQI+ visitors it often has the opposite effect acting as a push factor. Surprisingly, this one-dimensional, non-representative imagery seems to be non-attractive even for travelers of this specific group (Guaracino, 2007). The author advises marketing companies, destinations and businesses that want to target this group to include LGBTQI+ people with different characteristics and enjoying different activities. Guaracino (2007, p.162) created a term to discuss this issue: "gayversity" meaning the "acknowledgement of diversity within the LGBT market".

According to the World Tourism Organization (2017), good destination marketing [6]is essential for the success of the touristic destination. In order for DMOs, destinations and touristic business to successfully market to the LGBTQI+ customer, the organization has highlighted some important

---

[6] Morrison (2019, p.9) defines destination marketing as: "a continuous, sequential process through which a destination management organization (DMO) plans, researches, implements, controls and evaluates programmes aimed at satisfying traveller's needs and wants as well as the destination's and DMO's visions, goals and objectives. To be most effective, the DMO's marketing programmes depend upon the efforts of many other organizations and individuals within and outside the destination."

points. Firstly, it encourages acquiring knowledge and creating synergies. By being more informed about the subject, business and destinations interested in marketing to the LGBTQI+ traveler can remain authentic and relevant. In order to acquire knowledge, they can attend relevant exhibitions concerning LGBTQI+ tourism, as Fitur Madrid, ITB Berlin, IGLTA Annual Global Convention. Furthermore, they can participate in seminars given by LGBTQI+ market experts. Additionally, they can create partnerships with the local Universities. Such partnerships would have the aim to encourage research regarding: the needs of the LGBTQI+ tourists, their motivations and their experiences in the destination and write suggestions for better marketing practices. To increase visibility to consumers, the World Tourism Organization encourages the hosting or supporting of important LGBTQI+ events. To get a destination or an individual business on the LGBTQI+ community map, the destination or the business can host or donate to a popular LGBTQI+ event.

Chapter 4: Research Methodology

The aim of this study is to explore the diversity that potentially exists amongst the needs of the sub-niches of the LGBTQI+ travelers with a view to identifying those elements that are especially important for a tourism destination to be considered as LGBTQI+ friendly. This study specifically focuses on the gender sub-groups of the LGBTQI+ community. In order to achieve the above, after the literature review has been created where secondary data was presented and analyzed, the research continues with the collection and analysis of primary data through the application of quantitative methodology.

During the review of the existing academic literature regarding LGBTQI+ tourism and the needs/ wants of LGBTQI+ travelers, several issues were identified needing further investigation. To address these issues, the research model applies the quantitative analysis approach, involving the development of questionnaires aimed at LGBTQI+ travelers. The questionnaires requested participants from different sub-groups of the LGBTQI+ community to share their opinions on what makes a destination LGBTQI+ friendly.

Quantitative research was deemed more appropriate for the investigation of this topic for one main reason. To accurately represent the diversity of the LGBTQI+ community, it was necessary that a large sample was included in the research, containing people with different genders, sexualities, nationalities, living environments, age-groups etc. Quantitative research allows the investigation of a larger sample in many different locations (Denscombe, 2014). It therefore facilitated the inclusion and the portraying of the perceptions of many different sub-groups of the LGBTQI+ community.

Quantitative research stems from the scientific philosophy of positivism. The last, has a realistic orientation and postulates that there is one objective truth which exists independently from human perception and can be measured (Slevitch, 2011). Smith (1983) refers to this approach as *dualist* or *objectivist* as it separates the researcher from the research in its pursuit for the objective truth. Quantitative research utilizes scientific methods like probability and mathematics in order to analyze its data (Denscombe, 2014). For this reason, quantitative research claims to be based on objective laws and be separated from the researcher's values (Smith, 1983). Assuming a large

sample is provided and data is analyzed in a methodical way, quantitative methodology allows the generalization of the results (Slevitch, 2011).

4.1. Sampling

As demonstrated in the previous chapters, the needs and wants of LGBTQI+ people have been frequently generalized, overlooking the nuances of the community and neglecting to engage in the research of different sub-groups of the LGBTQI+ community. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) in order to be able to generalize the results of a study it is important for the researchers to carefully select their sample and that it is of sufficient size. For this reason, the goal of this paper was the sample to be as wide as possible. In order to research the perspectives and needs of the LGBTQI+ community, the participants needed to be people identifying as LGBTQI+. That means that their selection followed the principles of *purposive sampling*. According to Denscombe (2014) when "purposively sampling" participants are invited by the researcher according to some specific criteria that fit the research's needs. In other words, the sample was not random but participants identifying themselves as LGBTQI+ were purposively selected. Furthermore, to achieve a diverse representation of the LGBTQI+ community, the participants in this study differ in the way they identify themselves in matters of gender and sexuality, in their age, nationality, the size of the communities they live in and their lifestyle.

The link to the online questionnaire was shared with members of various LGBTQI+ associations and students of Gender Studies. Specifically, members of the following organizations and institutions were contacted: *Color Youth* (Greece), *Lebrija Diversidad* (Spain), *Rainbow School* (Greece), *Transgender Support Association* (Greece), *Gender Studies in Utrecht University* (Netherlands) and *Centre LGBTQ Paris* (France). Those organizations were chosen as they were representing or studying the rights of the LGBTQI+ community, focused on gender diversity and were based in multiple countries allowing for a more diverse sample. Members of the associations *Color Youth, Lebrija Diversidad* and *Gender Studies in Utrecht University* replied forwarding the online questionnaire to the rest of the members. Furthermore, the questionnaire was given to LGBTQI+ individuals who shared it with their social circle.

4.2. Research tool: Questionnaire

As for the purposes of this research a large number of responders was necessary, coming from different areas and countries, the creation of a digital questionnaire was deemed best suited. A 5-7-minute-long questionnaire was created through the *Google questionnaire* platform which contained 13 main questions with various sub-questions. The *Google questionnaire* platform was chosen as it was easily accessible and had a good layout allowing a user-friendly experience to the participants. All questions posed were closed allowing the creation of quantitative data. Closed questions are questions in which the responder is instructed to reply by choosing one or multiple answers already supplied by the creator of the questionnaire (Denscombe, 2014).

The first seven questions of the survey, asked participants to provide some demographic information. Participants were questioned about their gender, their sexuality, their age, their nationality, the population of the place they live and whether or not they were traveling with their children. This allowed for the detection of different sub-groups of the LGBTQI+ community that are often neglected in research as transgender people or LGBTQI+ people living in rural areas.

In the questions 8 to 13, the participants were asked to share their opinions, feelings, habits, preferences and beliefs on different elements related to the LGBTQI+ friendliness of a tourist destination. According to Denscombe (2014, p. 152), it is essential for researchers to detect the key issues they want to investigate beforehand in order to ask the right questions and keep the questionnaire "crisp and concise". For this reason, questions 8 to 13 represent each a different thematic or element deemed essential for the LGBTQI+ friendliness of a tourist destination. The thematics that are being investigated are the following:

- Question 8: Importance of LGBTQI+ friendliness
- Question 9: Legislation and safety (CMI & IGLTA, 2018, p.25; CMI, 2014b, p.27)
- Question 10: LGBTQI+ friendly accommodations (CMI & IGLTA, 2018, p.20)
- Question 11: Gay space (CMI & IGLTA, 2016, p.32)
- Question 12: Marketing and advertisement (CMI, 2019, p. 27)
- Question 13: Suggestions towards destinations (CMI, 2014a, p.17)

The main aim of the survey was to set questions and see the perceptions of LGBTQI+ travelers regarding different LGBTQI+ friendly practices destinations and businesses adopt. This was achieved by asking the participants to evaluate the importance of different practices regarding the legislation of a destination, hotel policies, touristic marketing and advertisement strategies, the importance of gay space and general advices towards destinations seeking to become more LGBTQI+ friendly.

In order to construct the questionnaire, four different surveys conducted by CMI and IGLTA between the years 2014 and 2019 were perused. This research adopts different questions of the four surveys, adjusting them to the needs of this specific study. The questionnaire used in this study is presented in Appendix A.

As LGBTQI+ people have been and still are discriminated in many parts of the world, this has led many of them to conceal their LGBTQI+ identity (European Commission & Bell, 2017). For this reason, it was particularly important in this research to ensure the anonymity of the participants (European Commission & Bell, 2017). Participants were reassured in the introduction of the questionnaire that anonymity was maintained in the analysis and reporting of the data collected. During the conduction of this study all data remained anonymous, and no person identifiable data was collected.

4.3. The procedure

In order to research the definition of LGBTQI+ friendliness in relation to a touristic destination and/ or business, a 7- 10-minute online survey was conducted. The survey was shared online with different LGBTQI+ communities and organizations in Europe (ex. *Color Youth* in Greece and *Lebrija Diversidad* in Spain) during the period 07/08/2020 to 24/11/2020. In total 144 people took part in the survey. While this number is not large enough to reach final conclusions about the perceptions of LGBTQI+ people on what makes a destination LGBTQI+ friendly, it can give some insights regarding the importance of different LGBTQI+ friendly policies.

4.4. Study's limitations

The survey experienced some limitations regarding the number of participants of the different LGBTQI+ sub-groups. While there were high numbers of some LGBTQI+ sub-groups, there were fewer participants in others. For example, regarding the gender of the participants, more than the half of them were women, following an important number of men and finally way less *gender expansive participants*, as *transmasculine, transfeminine, non-binary/ gender non-conforming/ agender, intersex*. The same limitation was noted regarding the other categories of sub-groups as: sexuality, age, nationality, population of place of living and familiar situation. As the LGBTQI+ community is already a minority group, becoming access to smaller subgroups is difficult given the limitations of time to conclude this research. For this reason, in order for the outcome of the research to be representative, some initiatives had to be taken described in the following chapter.

4.5. Data analysis

Quantitative data analysis process requires the collection and statistical analysis of the data followed by the production of appropriate graphs and tables to represent the results (Denscombe, 2014). Following the collection of the questionnaires, the data was automatically recorded by *Google forms* into an excel sheet. Then, this data was analyzed and graphs were created with the help of the functionalities of *Excel* software. Basing on the questions of the survey, the part of analysis has been divided into six categories, where the responses of the participants are presented and compared.

In order to compare the responses of the participants, demographic questions were posed as a means to detect different sub-groups of the LGBTQI+ community. As previously referred in the limitations of the study, some sub-groups were represented more in this survey than others. Meaning that for some sub-groups the number of the participants was so limited that it did not allow generalizations. In order to better understand the above, some details will be given regarding the sub-groups that are going to be represented in the survey's results.

Firstly, the responses will be presented by gender as following: *Female, Male, Gender expansive*. Due to the limited number of *transmasculine* (7), *transfeminine* (0)*, non-binary/ gender non-conforming/ agender* (17)*, intersex* (0)*,* participants, their responses will be presented together in a category adopting the term *gender expansive*. The term *gender expansive,* has been previously

utilized in research conducted by CMI and IGLTA (2018) as the responses of the above mentioned participants tend to follow very similar patterns. This was also the case in this study.

Regarding sexuality, the study collected an important number of data regarding *homosexual* and *bisexual/ pansexual* people. Sub-groups of participants identifying themselves differently (ex. *queer*) made up less than 1% of the total sample each. For this reason, their responses were counted in the overall results but will not be represented separately.

The data was also analyzed in relationship to the population of the place the participants live. Specifically, two groups were created. The first one refers to participants living in places with more than 100,000 residents and will be characterized as *"urban"* during this study. The second one refers to participants living in places with less than 100,00 residents and will be referred to as *"rural"*.

The data will not be represented by nationality as other than Greek participants the other sub-groups had less than 20 participants each. The same goes for LGBTQI+ people traveling with children as only 3 participants taking part in the survey belong in this category.

Furthermore, to avoid a false representation of the LGBTQI+ travelers, participants that have answered that they are cisgender- heterosexuals are not included in the overall results. The same goes for participants that answered "prefer not to say" to both of these questions.

Chapter 5: Survey Results

5.1. Demographic information

In this section, some further information will be provided regarding the profile of the survey's participants. Some demographic information will be presented regarding their gender, their sexuality, their age, their nationality and the population of the city they live in. As previously discussed the goal of this study was to enable different sub-groups of the LGBTQI+ community to express their opinion on what constitutes an LGBTQI+ friendly environment. This data was then analyzed with specific focus on the different gender sub-groups. For this reason, the study aimed to evolve participants identifying themselves differently in regards to their gender and their sexuality. Furthermore, as LGBTQI+ people are complex and influenced not solely by their sexuality and gender identity some other characteristics were identified in order to estimate their influence on the participants' perceptions, as their age, their nationality and the population of the city they lived in.

As displayed in the Figure below, approximately half of the participants identified with the *female* gender. Specifically, 73 participants making 50,7% of the total participants. Followingly, 44 participants identified as *male* making 30,6%. With much lower but significant participation, 7 people identified as *transmasculine*, and 17 people as *Non binary/ Gender non-conforming/ Agender* making in that order, the 4,9% and 11,8% percent of the study's sample.
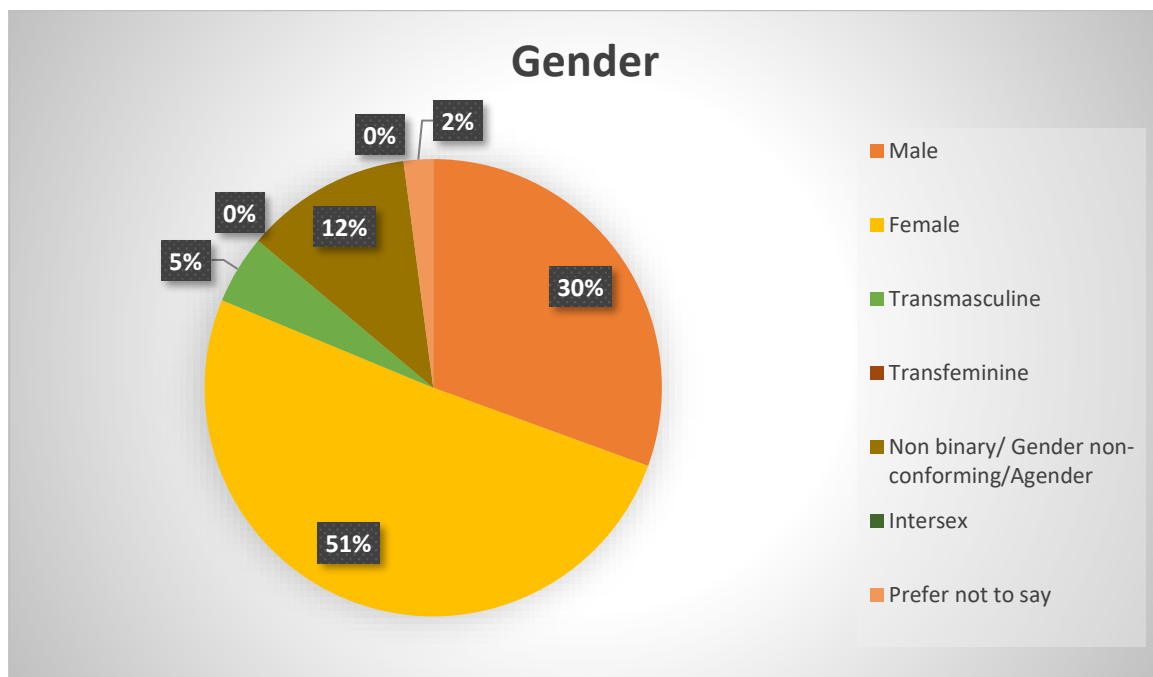
Figure 1. Percentage of participants by gender

Regarding the sexuality of the participants, both *homosexual* as well as *bisexual/ pansexual* participants made up the 40,3% of the study's sample with 58 representatives each. Following these groups, 20 participants identified as heterosexual making up for the 13,9%.
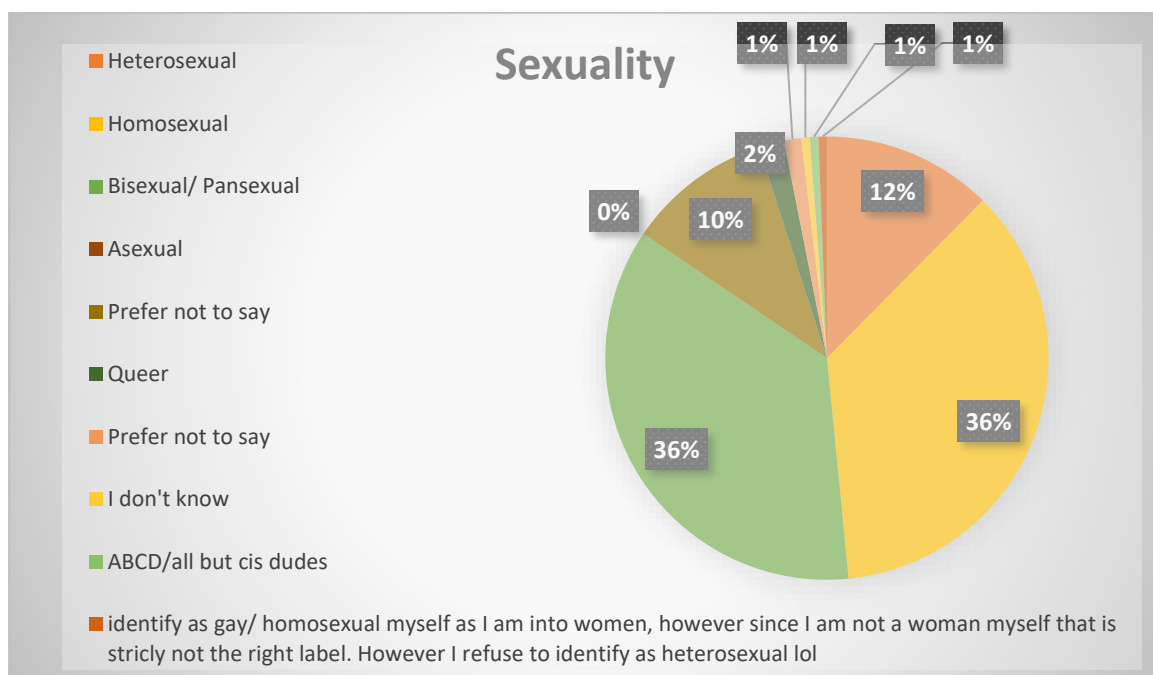
Figure 2. Percentage of participants by sexuality

As displayed in the Figure below, more than half of the participants were 25-34 years old. Specifically, 76 participants making 52,8% of the total participants. Followingly, 55 participants were 18-34 making 38,2%. Only 8 participants were 35-44 years old making up the 5,6%.
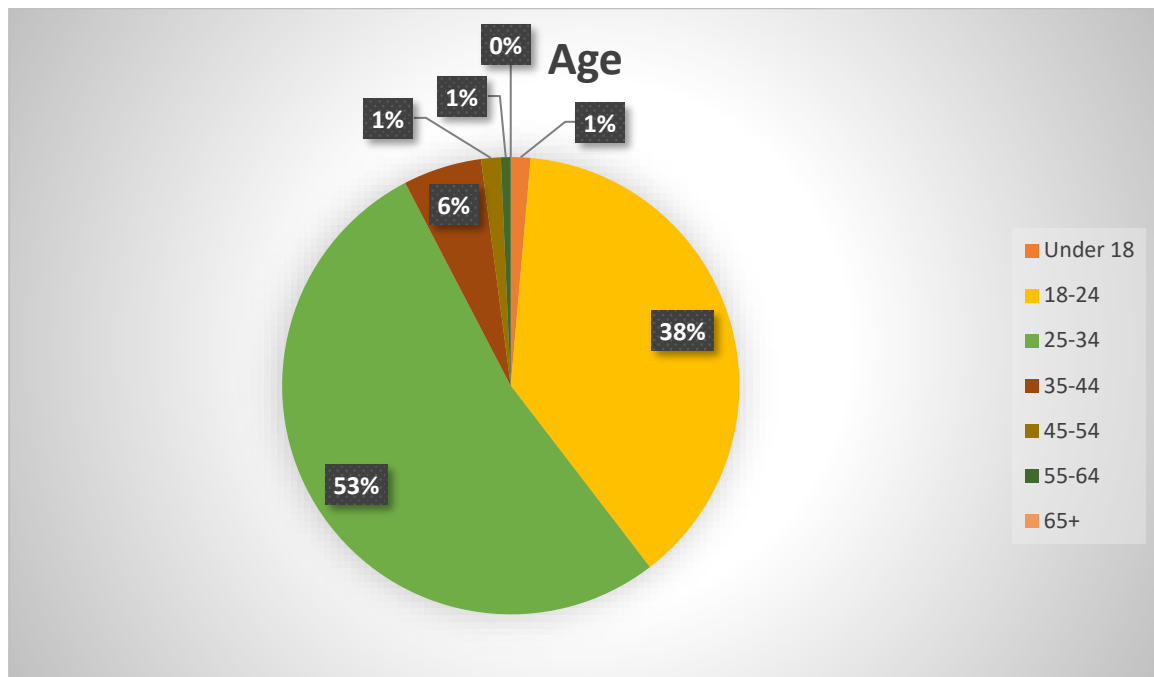
Figure 3. Percentages of participants by age

Regarding the nationality of the participants, 66% (95) of them were Greek, 10% (14) of them were Dutch and 5% (7) of them were French. The rest of the sample was made up of various other European, South American and Asian nationalities which will not be displayed as they made up less than 0% of the sample each.
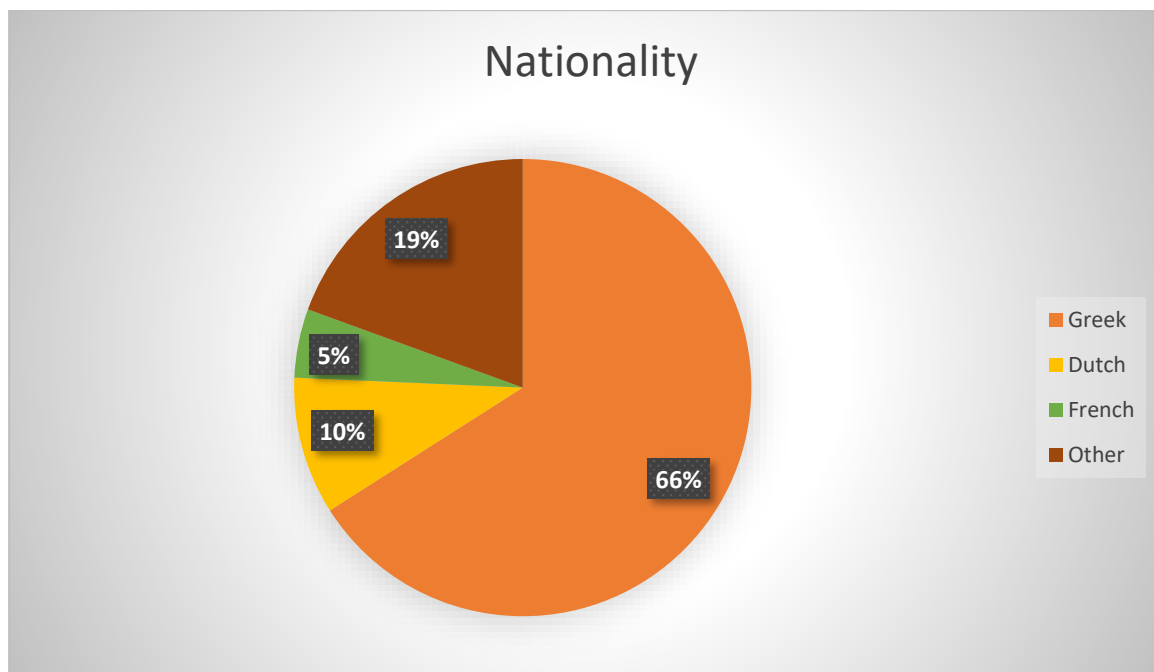
Figure 4. Percentages of participants by nationality

Bellow, the percentages of the participants are displayed according to the population of the place they live in. 102 participants making up 71% of the total sample live in areas with more than 100,000 residents. 20 participants live in areas with between 1,000 and 30,000 residents and 19 in areas with between 30,000 and 100,000 residents.
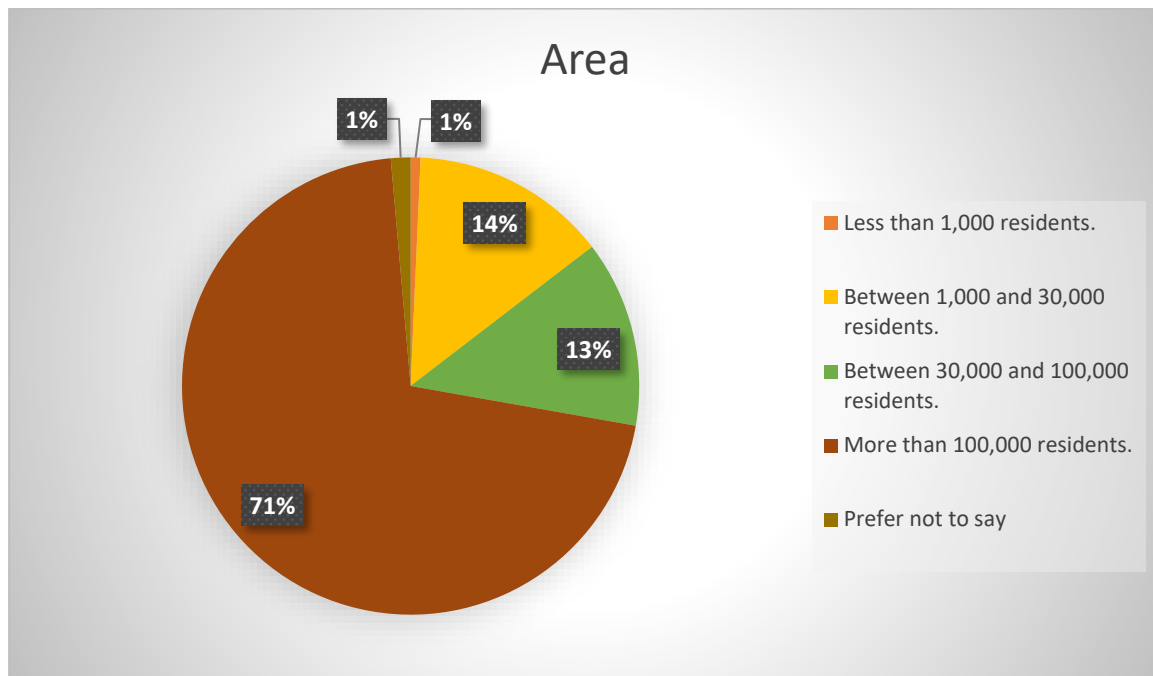
Figure 5. Percentages of participants by area

The study also researched to see how many participants had children and how many of them traveled with them. Unfortunately, the sample collected was not high enough to allow further analysis of the data of this sub-group of the LGBTQI+ community. Only three participants replied that they had children and that they went to vacations with them.
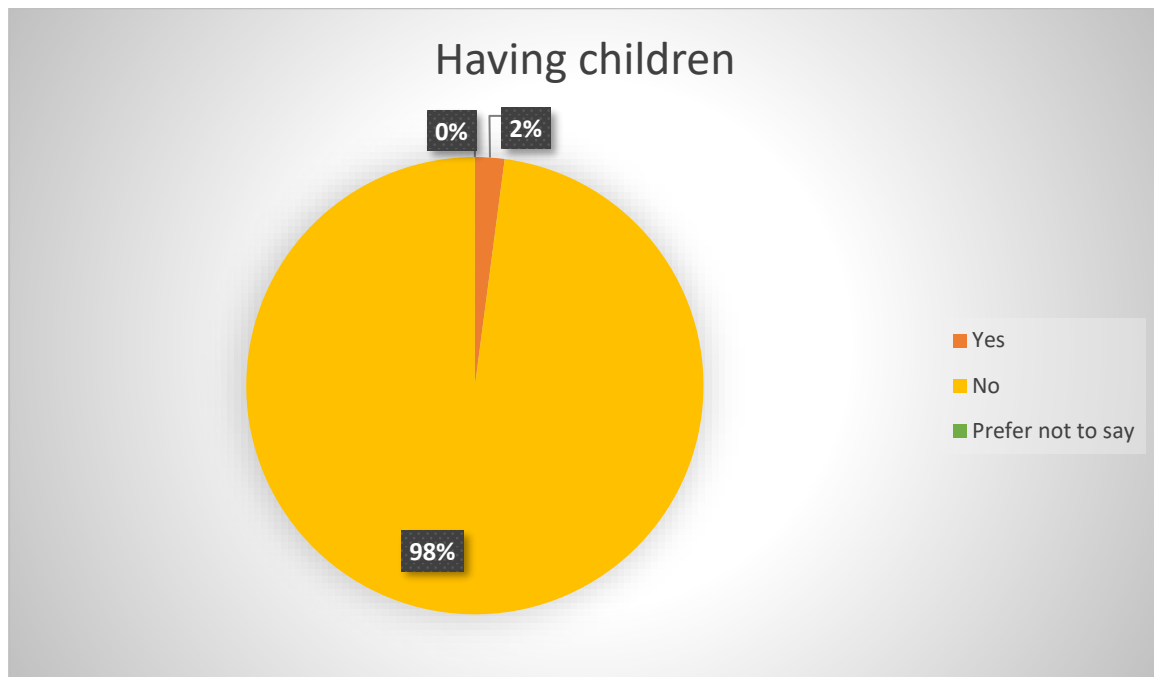
Figure 6. Percentages of participants having children
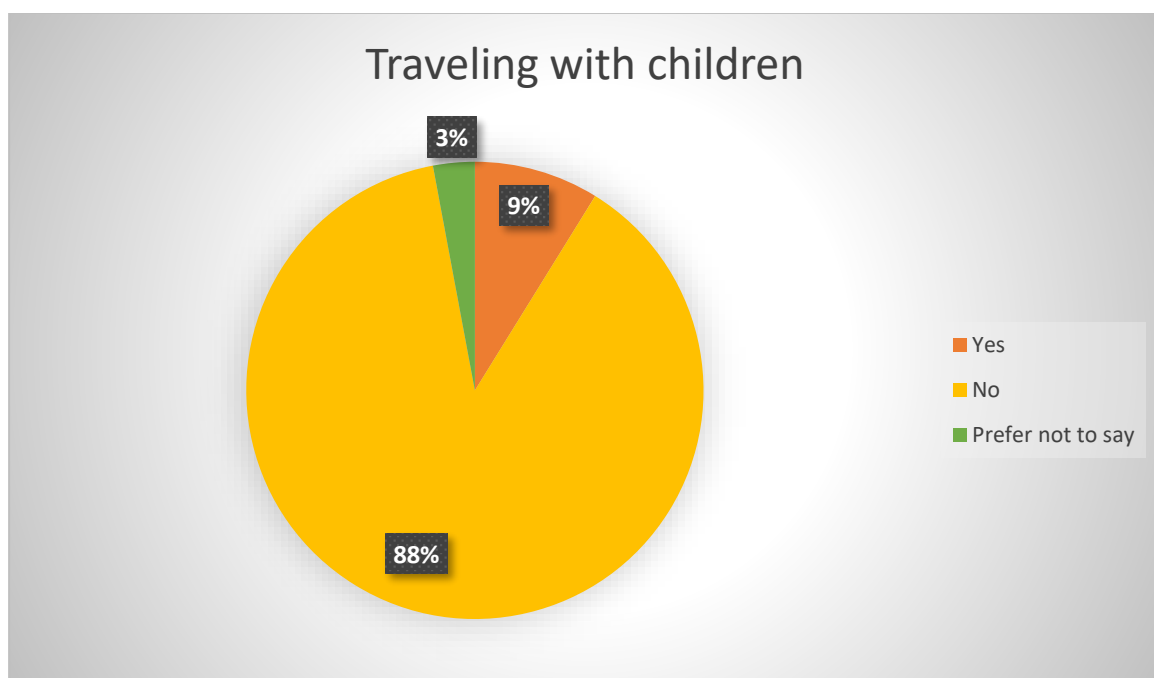
Figure 7. Percentages of participants traveling with children

The aim of this study is to investigate the different perceptions of the sub-groups of the LGBTQI+ community on the LGBTQI+ friendliness in tourism with special focus on gender diversity. The collected sample allowed for the comparison of the results according to:

- Gender: Female/ Male/ Gender expansive

- Sexuality: Homosexual/ Bisexual

- Age: 18-24/ 25-34

- Area: Urban (more than 100,000 residents / Rural (until 100,000 residents)

The data was also analyzed per nationality (Greek-Dutch) but no distinct differentiations were noted. For this reason, the study will not focus on differentiating the results by nationality.

5.2. Importance of LGBTQI+ friendliness

This section will be discussing the importance LGBTQI+ people give to the LGBTQI+ friendliness of the destinations they travel to. The participants were asked the following question: "*When selecting a destination for your vacation, how important is it that the destination is LGBTQI+ friendly?"*. They could answer picking a number between 1 to 5. 1 standing for "*Not at all important"* and 5 for "*Extremely important".* As seen in the following graph, the grand majority of the participants choose the numbers 3 (33%) and 4 (36%). Meaning that the LGBTQI+ friendliness of a destination is probably not the first criteria they look at when choosing a destination, however it still is something they consider before traveling. The option chosen more often after 3 and 4 was 5 (17%) meaning that for an important percentage of the LGBTQI+ people the LGBTQI+ friendliness of the place they visit is extremely important. Only 9% of the participants gave the answer to and 5% the answer 1. Making in total 14% of the participants rather uninterested in this factor. Those facts corroborate the need for such research in order to define specifically what those travelers mean and seek when referring to an LGBTQI+ friendly destination. The mean deriving from the above answers was 3.51.
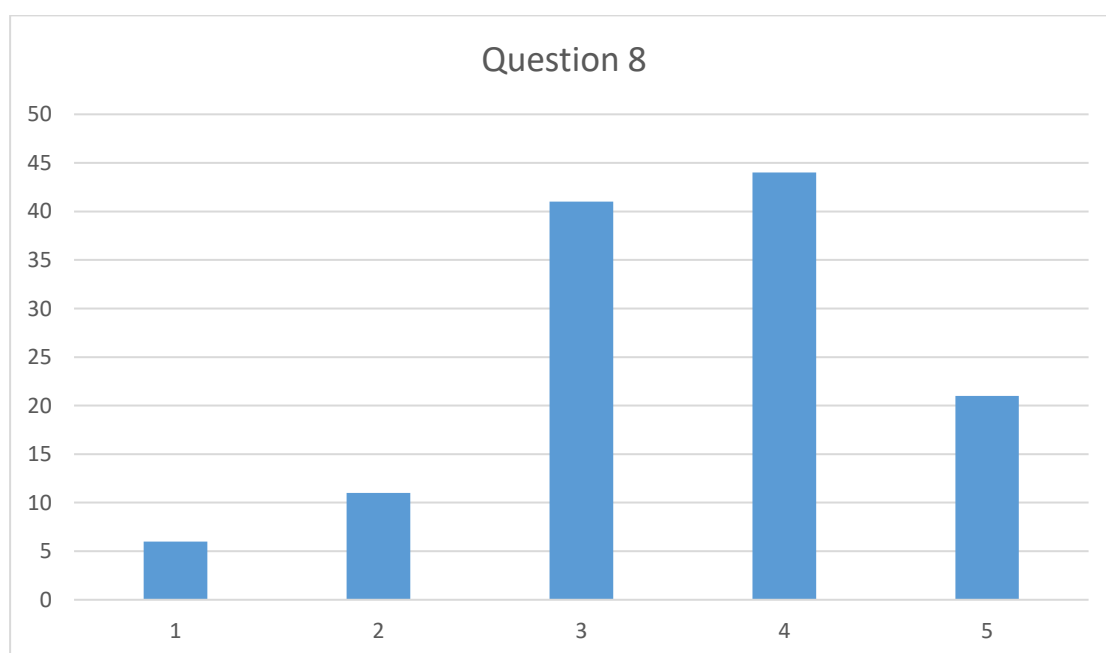
Figure 8. The importance of the LGBTQI+ friendliness of a destination

Looking a little bit deeper into this information the figure 9 represents the answers of the travelers according to their gender. The information that stands out from the figure is that gender expansive participants, including *transgender* participants and *Non binary/ Gender non-conforming/ Agender* participants seem to lay much higher importance to the LGBTQI+ friendliness of a destination. Specifically, 75% of the gender expansive participants have chosen the answers 4 (50%) and 5 (25%). Only 8% of the *gender expansive* participants answered on the negative side of the spectrum with 4% choosing 1 and another 4% choosing 2 as their answer. It is also noteworthy that only 17% of the *gender expansive* participants chose a neutral answer (3) to the question. As we can see in the rest of the results, 43% of women choose 3 as their answer and 28% of men. While the biggest group of women answered neutrally to the question, most of men (52%) answered in the positive side of the spectrum with 36% of them choosing 4 and 17% of them 5 as their answer.
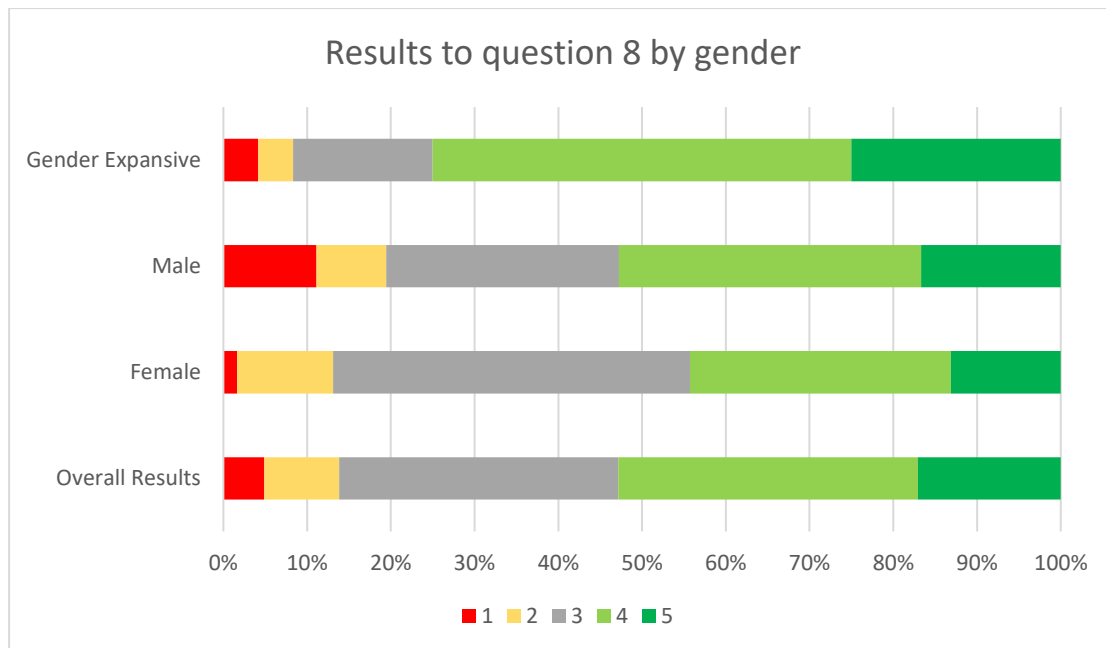
Figure 9. Results to question 8 by gender

	Mean
Gender Expansive	3.88
Male	3.39
Female	3.43
Overall Results	3.51

Table 1. Question 8- Mean by gender

The results are also presented for people living in "*urban*" and people living in rather "*rural*" environments. While no big difference can be viewed in the answers of the two groups, people living in rural environments seem to give slightly bigger importance to the LGBTQI+ friendliness of a destination than people living in big urban environments. Specifically, 56% of participants living in *rural* environments answered attributing 4 (40%) or 5 (18%) significance to this attribute. From the other side, only 50% of the participants living in *urban* environments answered with 4 (33%) and 5 (18%).
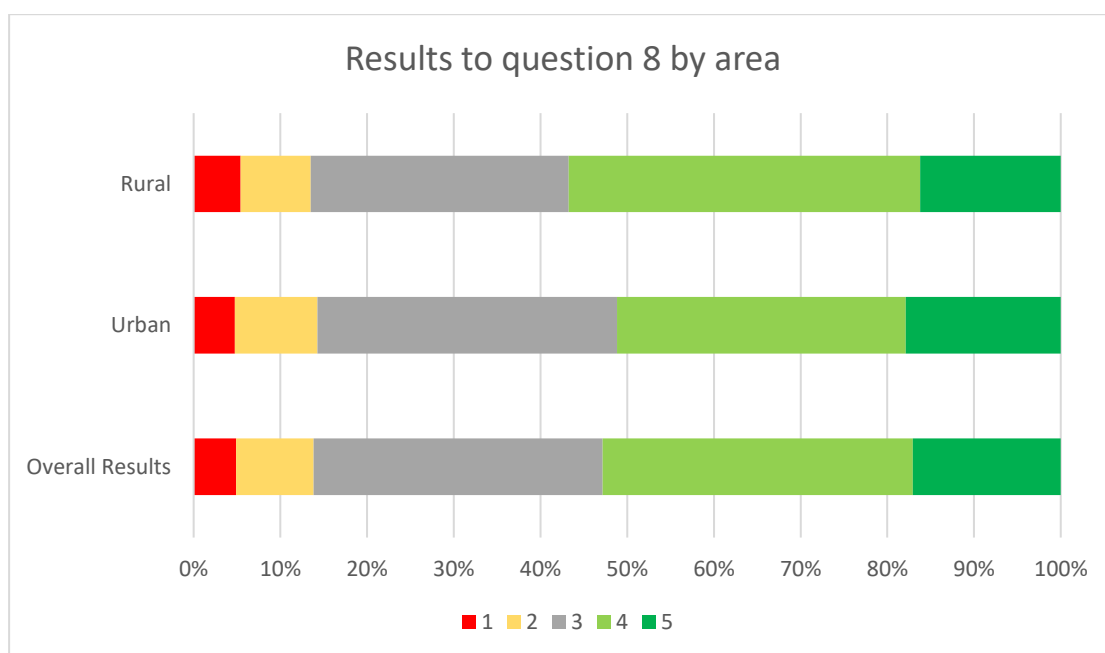
Figure 10. Results to question 8 by area

	Mean
Rural	3.54
Urban	3.5
Overall Results	3.51

Table 2. Question 8- Mean by area

The figure below represents the results of question 8 by sexuality. As we can see in the graph, homosexual participants seemed to attribute a slightly higher value to the LGBTQI+ friendliness of a destination than bisexual-pansexual participants. Specifically, 40% of the homosexual participants chose 4 as their answer and 16% chose 5. On the other side, from the bisexual-pansexual participants 32% choose the number 4 and 17% the number 5.
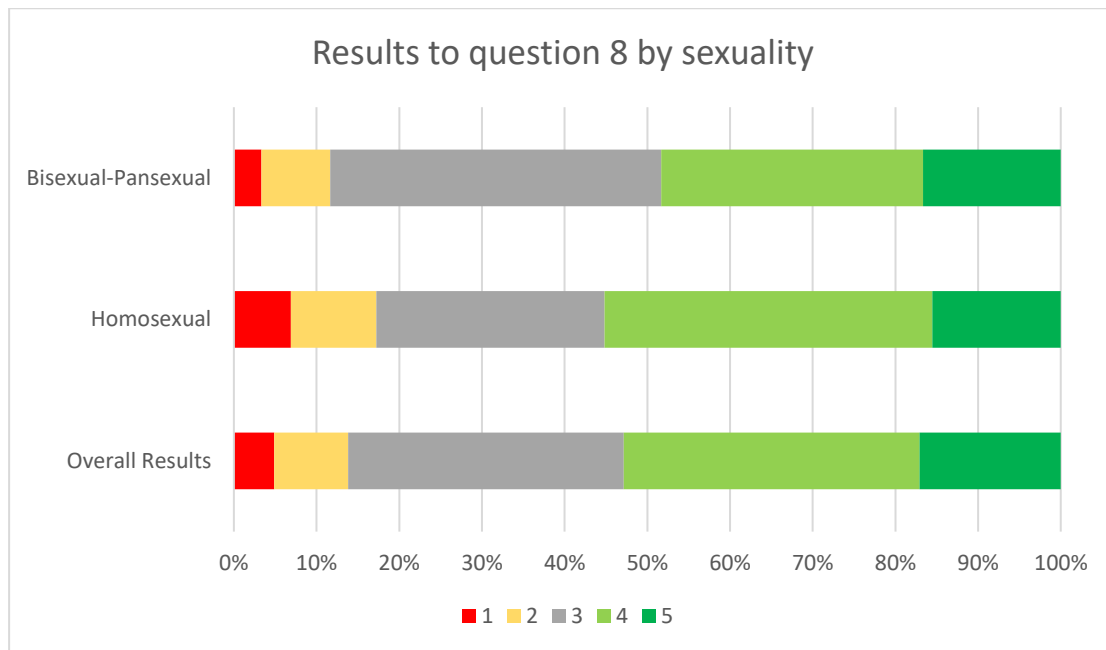
Figure 11. Results to question 8 by sexuality

To conclude, the above information makes it clear that the LGBTQI+ friendliness of a destination is something that LGBTQI+ travelers consider and value. Furthermore, LGBTQI+ people that are universally less recognized than other minority groups of the LGBTQI+ community, as *trans*gender people and *Non binary/ Gender non-conforming/ Agender,* seem to have a bigger need for the establishment of LGBTQI+ friendly policies and facilities. People living in *rural* environment seem to place also a slightly higher value to the LGBTQI+ friendliness of the destination than people living in *urban* environments. This could be attributed to a lack of LGBTQI+ facilities or a more conservative mentality in their everyday environment. Those elements will be further researched in the following sections. Homosexual participants expressed also a bigger degree of need for LGBTQI+ friendly touristic destination but the difference was not groundbreaking so no conclusions can be reached from solely this question.

5.3. Legislation and safety

In this section, the perceptions of the LGBTQI+ participants regarding the legislation of the country will be investigated as well as their need for safety and their empathy for the local LGBTQI+ community. The participants were given 8 statements and they were asked to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement. They could answer with one of the following options: "Strongly Disagree", "Disagree", "Neither agree nor disagree", "Agree" and "Strongly Agree". The goal of the question was to see how the policies and legislations of a country can affect the

willingness of an LGBTQI+ person to visit a destination. To investigate the above, the data will be presented according to gender as significant differences have been noted in the perception of female/ male and gender expansive participants.

9.1. *"I will not travel to a destination that treats their local LGBTQI+ community poorly."*

The above question was aiming to see how the perception of the quality of life for the LGBTQI+ locals could influence the decision of the LGBTQI+ travelers to visit a destination. According to the information provided by figure X, 58% of the LGBTQI+ participants answered that indeed, they would not travel to a destination that treats its local LGBTQI+ community poorly. The group with the highest percentage of overall agreement with the statement, were men (67%). From those 39% choose the option "Agree" and 28% the option "Strongly Agree". Interesting are also the answers of the "Gender Expansive" group, as 42% answered "strongly Agree" following 20% with "Agree". Female participants seem to have the lowest percentage of agreement amongst the three groups, as 36% choose "Agree" and 15% choose "Strongly Agree" making up for 51% of the participants. Very few participants disagreed with the statement, specifically 15% of women stated that they "disagreed", 3% of men stated that they "Strongly Disagree" and 8% that they disagree, 4% of the gender expansive participants ``strongly disagreed" and 13% "disagreed". Amongst all participants the disagreement percentage was only 13%. From all the groups of participants, women had the highest percentage of the "Neither agree nor disagree" option with 27% of them choosing this option.
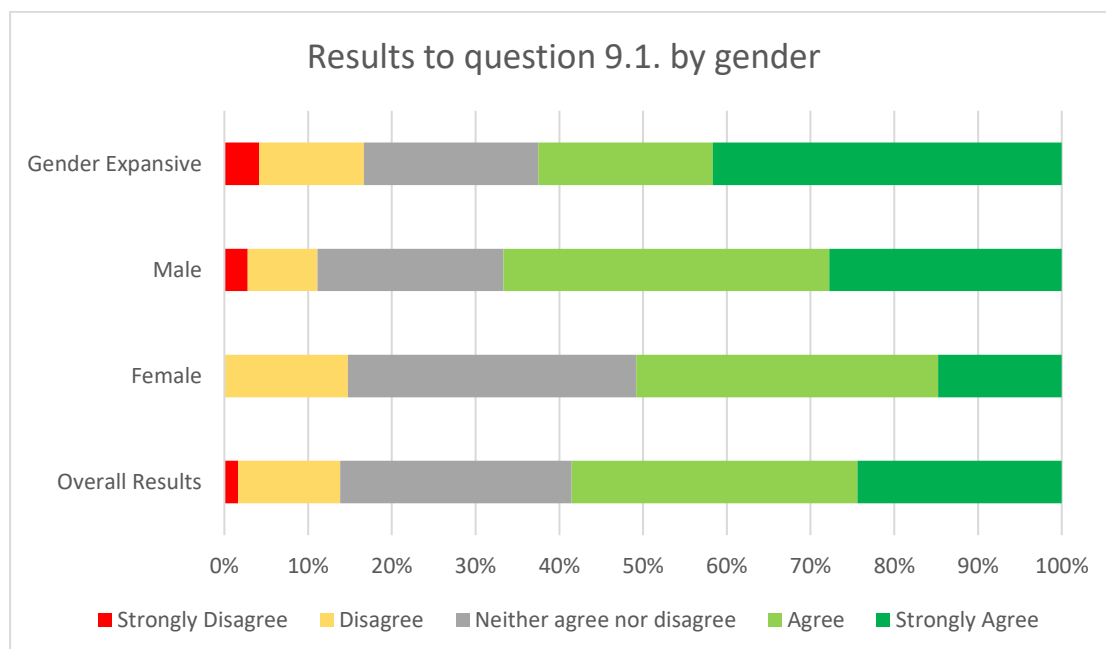
Figure 12. Results to question 9.1. by gender

9.2. *"I am more likely to travel to destinations with sexual orientation anti-discrimination laws."*

The above question researches the effects of the legislation, specifically of the existence of sexual anti-discrimination laws, to the willingness of LGBTQI+ travelers to visit a destination. According to the survey's results, 76% of the overall participants answered that they are more likely to travel to destinations with sexual anti-discrimination laws.

As it was the case in questions 8 and 9.1., *gender expansive* participants seem to value such initiatives highly, as 88% of them answered positively to this statement. Specifically, 46% of the *gender expansive* participants replied with "Strongly Agree" and 42% percent with "Agree". In relation to that, 43% of men declared that they "Strongly Agreed" and 33% that they "Agreed" making up in total the 76% of men participants. Lastly 73% of women answered positively to the statement. Of those, 33% women declared that they "Strongly agreed" and 40% that they "Agreed". The percentage of disagreement to the statement 9.2. is not very significant, namely 8% of the total participants replied negatively to the statement, 2% by "Strongly Disagreeing" and 6% by "Disagreeing".
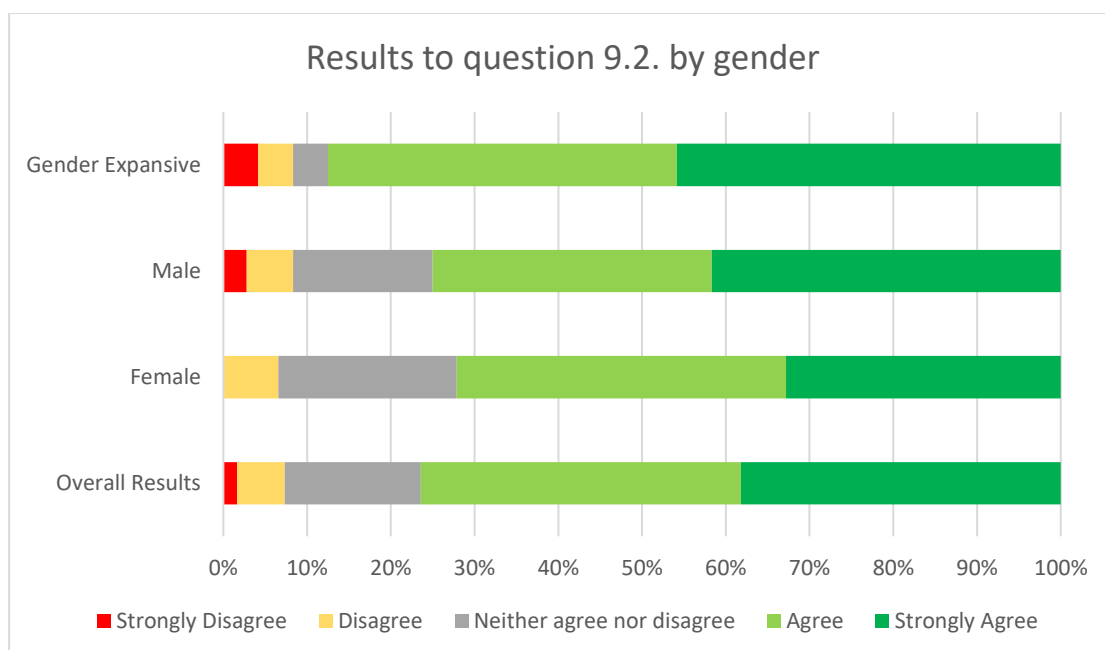
Figure 13. Results to question 9.2. by gender

Interesting are also the facts filtered by the characteristics of the area the LGBTQI+ participants live in. As we can see in the following figure, the survey's participants that were coming from a

rural area answered more positively than the participants coming from big urban centers. Specifically, 89% of people living in rural areas answered positively to the question, 40% selecting "Strongly Agree" and 49% "Agree". From the other side 72% of the participants living in big urban areas answered positively to the question. 37% of them choose "Strongly Agree" and 35% "Agree". The percentage of disagreement was also significantly lower for people living in rural areas, namely only 3% while the percentage of people from urban areas disagreeing was 9%.
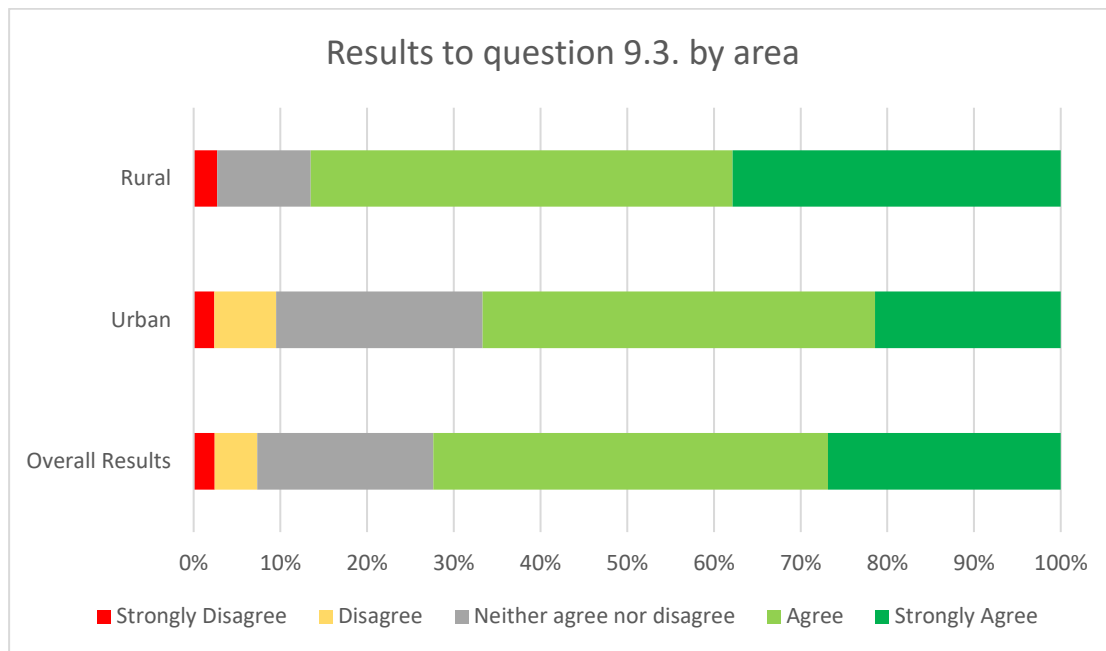
Figure 14. Results to question 9.3. by area

9.3. "I am more likely to travel to destinations with gender identity anti-discrimination laws."

As in question 9.2., this question refers again to the legislation of the countries this time focusing however on the *gender* anti-discrimination laws. 73% of the participants answered positively to the statement. 27% of them claiming that they "Strongly Agreed" and 46% that they "agreed" that they were more likely to travel to destinations with gender identity anti-discrimination laws. Only 7% of the total participants disagreed with the statement.

Looking at the results represented by gender, we see that gender expansive participants consistently give answers that show that they have a higher need for laws that protect them and make them feel safe in the destination they travel. Specifically, 80% of the *gender expansive* participants supported the above statement with 50% of them "Strongly Agreeing" and 33% "Agreeing". Following this sub-group 70% of women answered positively to the statement. 46% by "Agreeing and 25% by "Strongly Agreeing" to it. Following, 50 percent of men declared that they "Agreed" with the statement and 17% that they "Strongly Agreed".
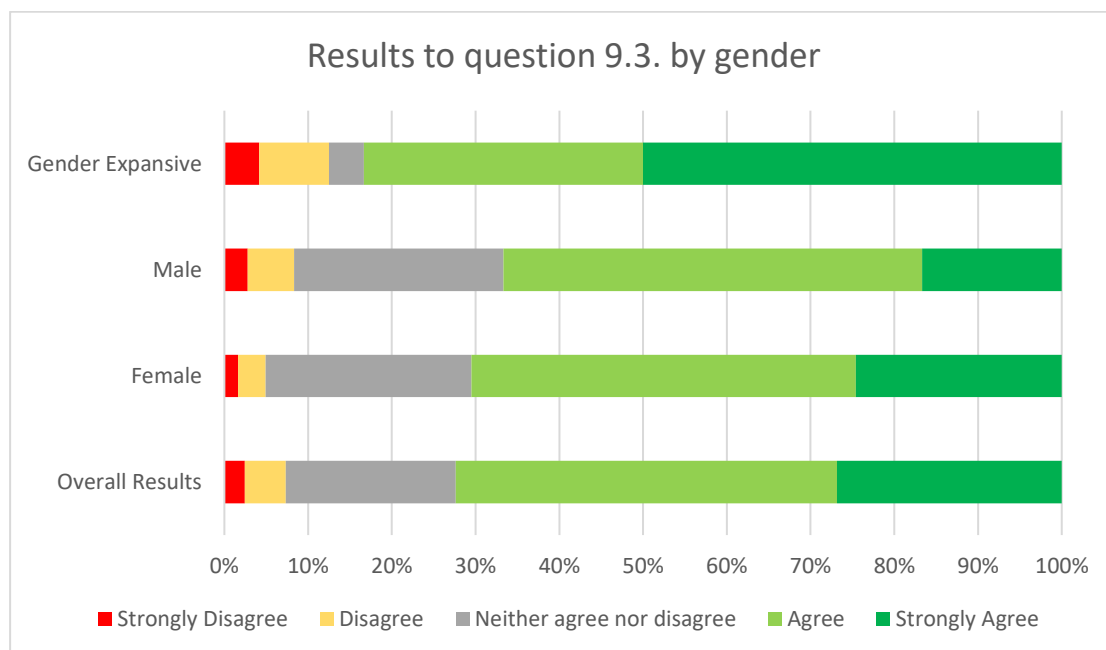
Figure 15. Results to question 9.3. by gender

As it was the case in question 9.2. participants coming from rural areas deemed the statement more important. 88% of the participants coming from rural areas agreed with the statement in contrast to only 66% of the participants coming from big urban environments.
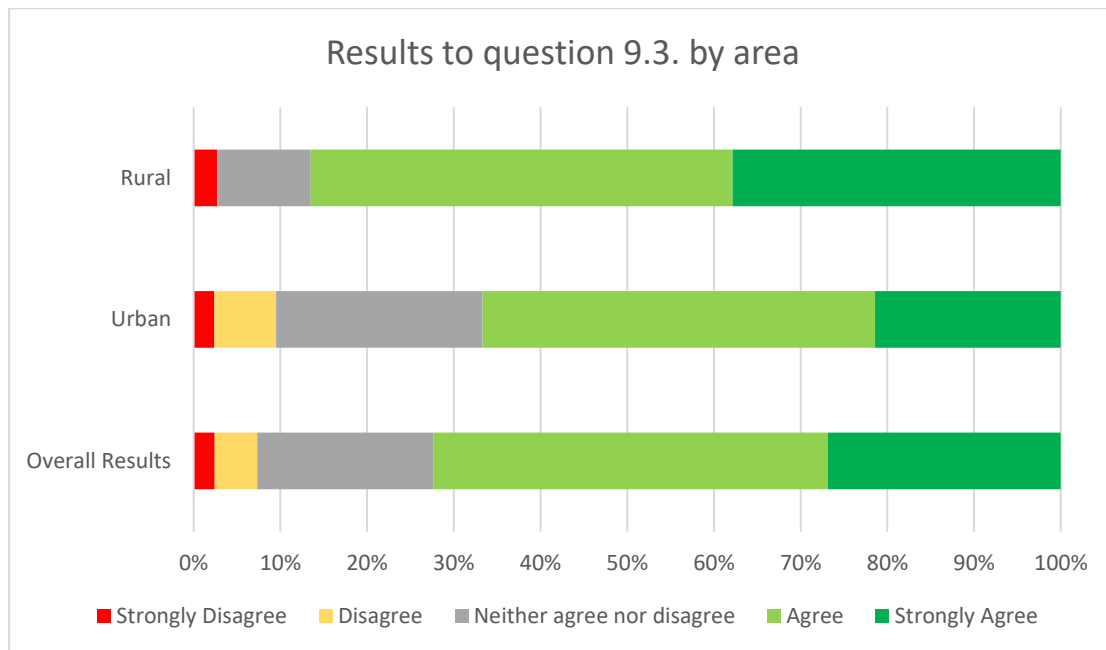
Figure 16. Results to question 9.3. by area

9.4. *"I will travel to a destination that is LGBTQI+ unfriendly, as long as I feel safe as a tourist."*

The goal of the above question was to see if the decision of certain LGBTQI+ tourist not to visit a country due to discriminating-policies was due to a personal need of safety, empathy or a political statement. In this question the answers of the participants did not show great variations. 45% of the participants claimed that they would indeed travel in an LGBTQI+ friendly destination as long as they feel safe. From the other side 30% of the participants answered negatively to the question. The reasons behind these answers will be explored in the following questions.

As mentioned above no great variations in the answers of the participants have been noted in this question. The only noteworthy element, could be the slightly smaller number of male participants claiming that they would not visit an LGBTQI+ unfriendly destination even if they felt save. Namely, only 19% of the male participants answered negatively to the statement.
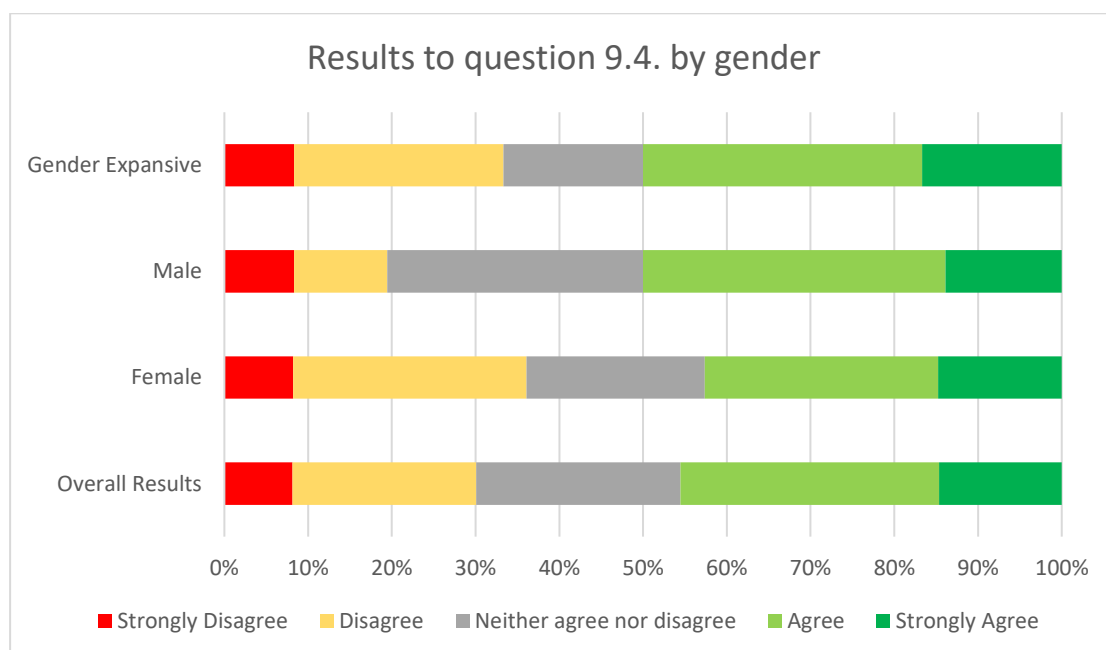
Figure 17. Results to question 9.4. by gender

9.5. "*I only travel to known LGBTQI+ welcoming destinations.*"

The above statement is a call for LGBTQI+ people to state if the LGBTQI+ friendliness of a destination is their first criteria and a condition for them to visit a tourist destination. In this question, the responses were overall negative. Specifically, 56% of the participants responded negatively to the statement hinting to the conclusion that while the LGBTQI+ friendliness of a destination is an important element they consider, for most of the LGBTQI+ travelers it is not the sole reason they choose to visit it. More precisely, 17% of the participants ``Strongly disagreed'' with the statement and 40% "disagreed". Only 11% of the participants agreed to the statement, 4% by choosing "Strongly Agree" and 7% "Agree". The highest percentage (30%) of agreement to the statement had again *gender expansive* participants. In contrast, only 9% *male* participants and 7% of *female* participants agreed to the statement.
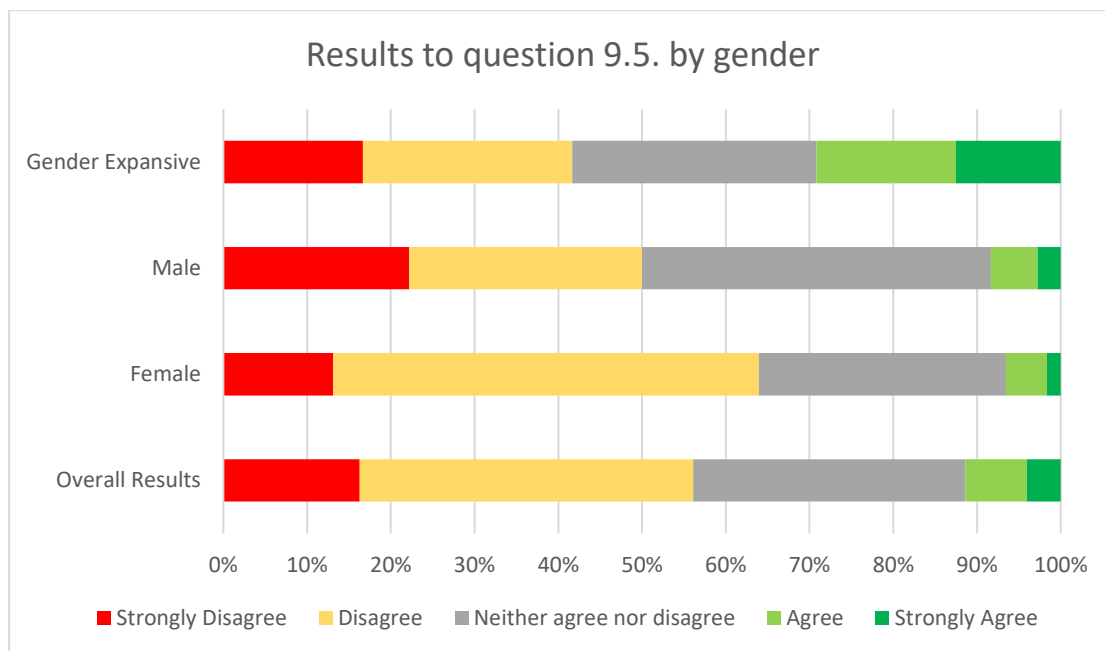
Figure 18. Results to question 9.5. by gender

9.6. "*Traveling as an out LGBTQI+ person to countries with anti-LGBTQI+ laws creates positive change.*"

The above statement researches the reasons LGBTQI+ people would travel to destinations unfriendly towards LGBTQI+ people. As previously discussed the notion exist that tourism can have an important impact to the destination by introducing different ideas and cultures. Therefore, the assumption is made by some LGBTQI+ travelers that by visiting a destination which discriminates its LGBTQI+ citizens they bring awareness on LGBTQI+ issues and help the local LGBTQI+ community. According to the answers of the participants, the minority of them actively expressed this believe. According to the overall results only 22% of the participants answered positively to the statement. From the other side 35% of the participants "disagreed" (21%) or "strongly disagreed" (14%) with the statement. An important percentage of the participants took a more neutral stance by choosing "Neither agree nor disagree" (42%). Specifically, 39% of *female,*47% of *male* (47%) and 28% of *gender expansive* participants choose 3 as their answer. It is interesting to remark the big difference between the negative answers of *gender expansive* people and the rest of the participants. Namely, 50% of the *gender expansive* participants answered negatively to the statement, in contrast to only 33% of *female* and 28% of *male* participants. Again hinting to the increased need of safety for *gender expansive* people.
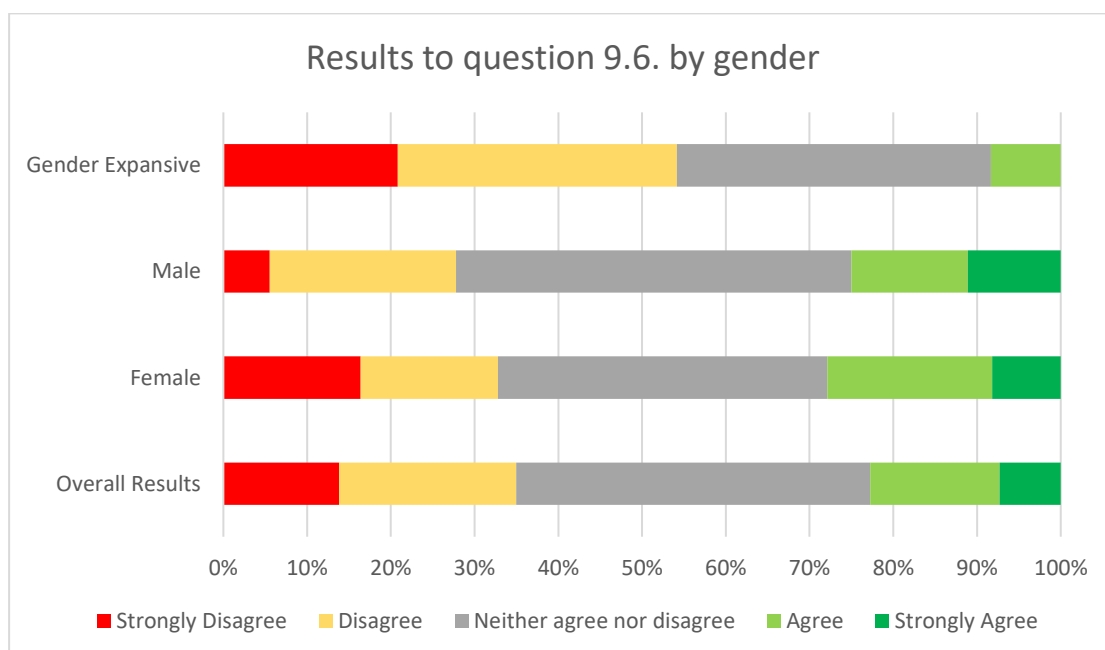
Figure 19. Results to question 9.6. by gender

Of interest are also the results showing the answers of the participation by living area. Namely while 45% of people living in *urban* areas answered that they neither "agree nor disagree", that was only the case for 38% percent of the participants living in *rural* areas. Furthermore, the percentages of disagreement (*urban* 23% - *rural* 40%) and agreement (*urban* 21% - *rural* 26%) to the statement were higher, linking to a bigger involvement and interest towards this issue.
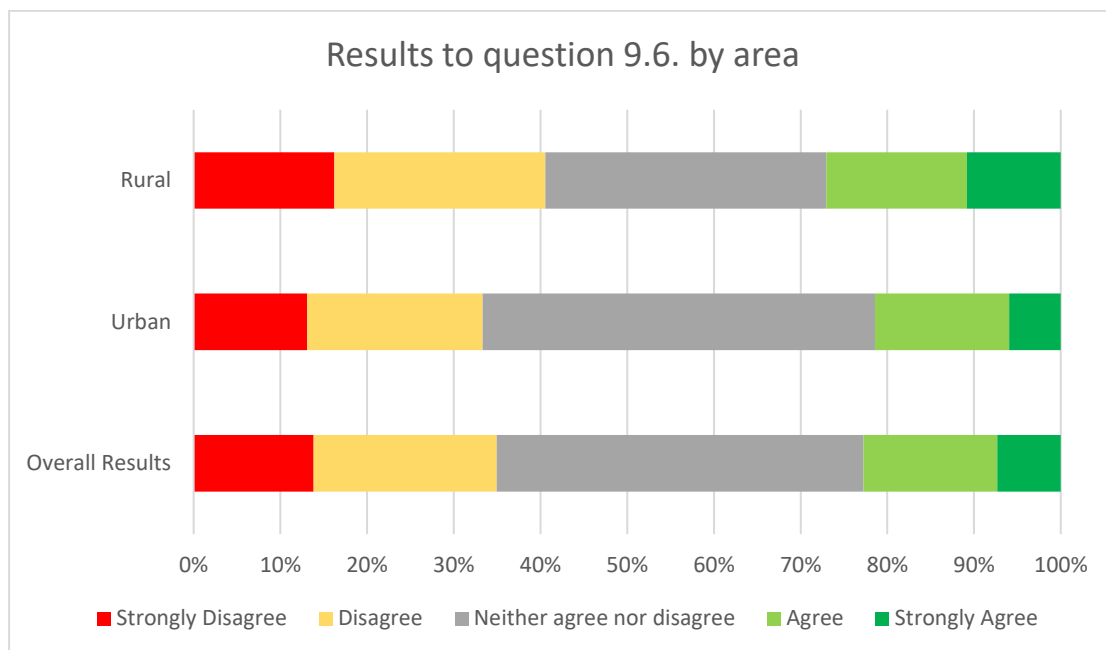
Figure 20. Results to question 9.6. by area

9.7. *"Boycotting a destination because it is LGBTQI+ unfriendly, does more harm than good."*

While the believe exists, that traveling to a destination unfriendly towards LGBTQI+ people can create change, the notion also exist of boycotting such destinations. Therefore, not empowering economically a destination that discriminates towards LGBTQI+ people. In the question regarding their opinion on the impacts of boycotting an LGBTQI+ unfriendly destination, 45% of the participants replied that they viewed boycotting rather positively while 36% of the participants "neither agreed nor disagreed" and 21% thought that boycotting could cause more harm than good. As discussed in question 9.6. participants coming from *rural areas* (30%) showed lower percentages of neutrality towards this issue, than participants living in *urban areas* (39%). Again underlining a higher possible interest in such matters.
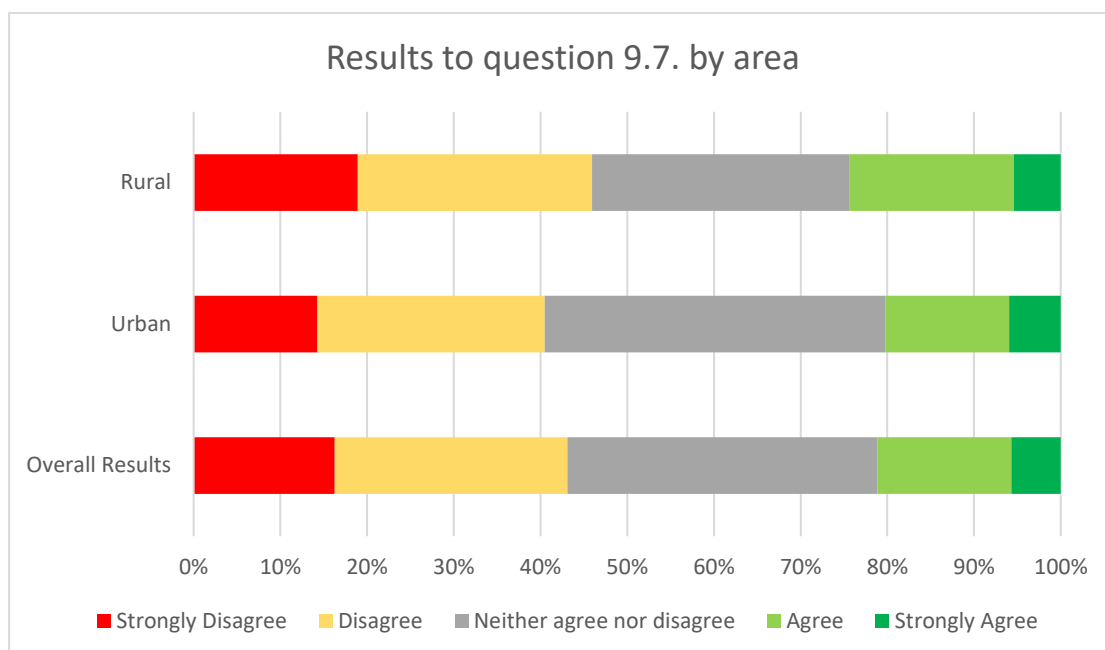
Figure 21. Results to question 9.7. by area

9.8. *"I am more likely to travel to destinations with a reputation of being safe for LGBTQI+ travelers."*

As it is clear by the answers of the participants, as 79% of them answered positively to the above statement, that the reputation of a destination as safe for LGBTQI+ people can significantly influence the decision of the travelers to go there. The highest degree of agreement had *gender expansive* participants as 96% of them "agreed" (42%) or "strongly agreed" (54%) with the statement. Furthermore, no *gender expansive* participant answered negatively to the statement. Underlining once more the increased need of *gender expansive* people for safety in the touristic destination.
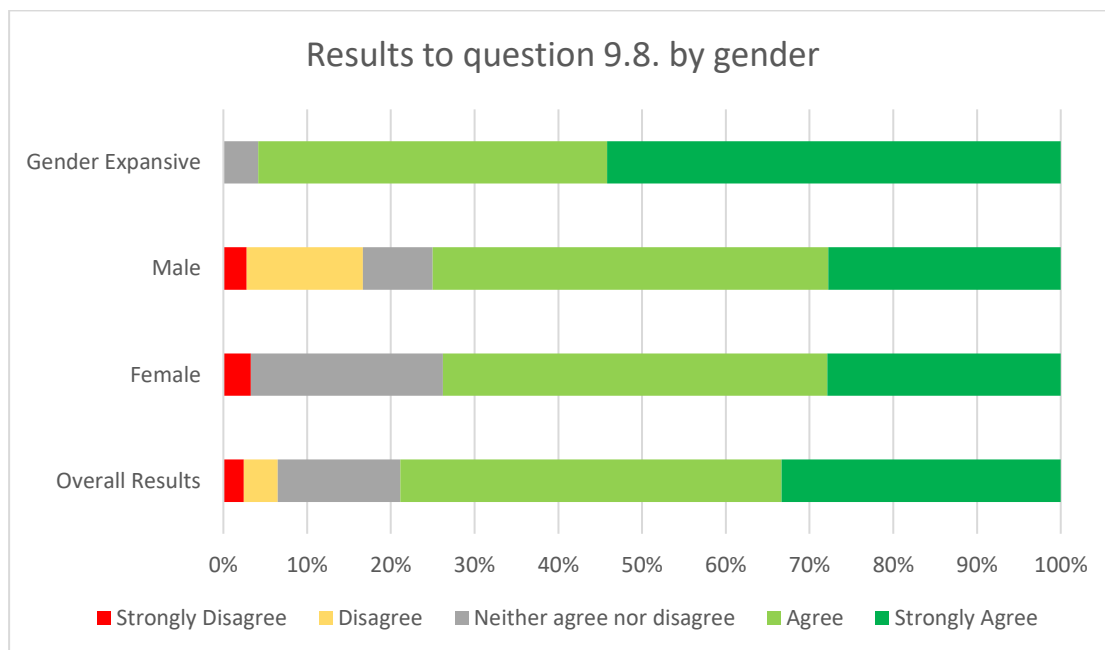
Figure 22. Results to question 9.8 by gender

Similarly, participants coming from rural areas showed 0% of disagreement with the statement.
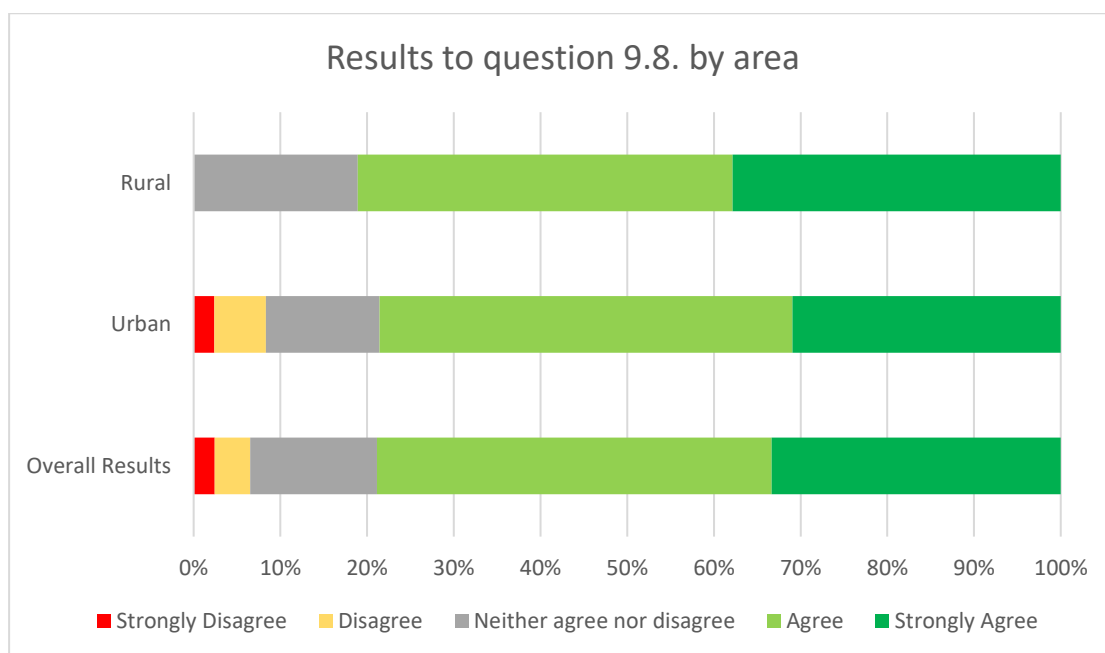
Figure 23. Results to question 9.8 by area

5.4. LGBTQI+ friendly accommodations

This section discusses the LGBTQI+ friendliness of accommodations. The example of a hotel is used and the questions refer to different LGBTQI+ friendly policies that may be adopted. The policies range from staff training, to non-discrimination policies, marketing and advertisement. The goal of this series of questions is to point out the LGBTQI+ policies a business can adopt to be deemed LGBTQI+ friendly. The question posed to the participants was the following: *"Which of these programs and outreach methods are important to you, when considering booking a hotel, or joining a hotel loyalty program?".* Following the question different statements were given to the participants who were asked to indicate the degree of importance each statement had for them. They could choose between the following options: *"Extremely unimportant", "Unimportant", "Neither important nor unimportant", "Important"* and *"Extremely important".*

10.1. "Hotel or brand has sexual orientation non-discrimination policies."

The first statement included in question 10 was referring to the establishment of sexual orientation non-discrimination policies in touristic accommodations. According to the data presented in the following figure, the big majority of the participants agreed with the statement that hotels or brands

need to have sexual orientation non-discrimination policies. Specifically, 68% of the participants agreed with the statement in contrast to only 20% of participants who expressed disagreement. In this question the tendencies present in all the sub-questions of this subject are already observed. Namely, *gender expansive participants* tended once again to attribute higher importance to all LGBTQI+ friendly policies. *Men* on the other side seemed to be more indifferent towards the subject of LGBTQI+ friendly accommodation and the *female* answers found themselves somewhere in the middle. In this specific example, one can see that *gender expansive* participants had the highest percentage of agreement with the statement (78%) and the lowest percentage of disagreement (8%). Following, *female* participants replied in agreement with the statement by 63% and only 11% disagreed. Finally, 58% of the *male* participants agreed with the statement and 20% of them disagreed with it.

As the same tendencies will be present in the following statements of this section, only the most noteworthy examples will be represented and analyzed in depth in the following sub-questions.
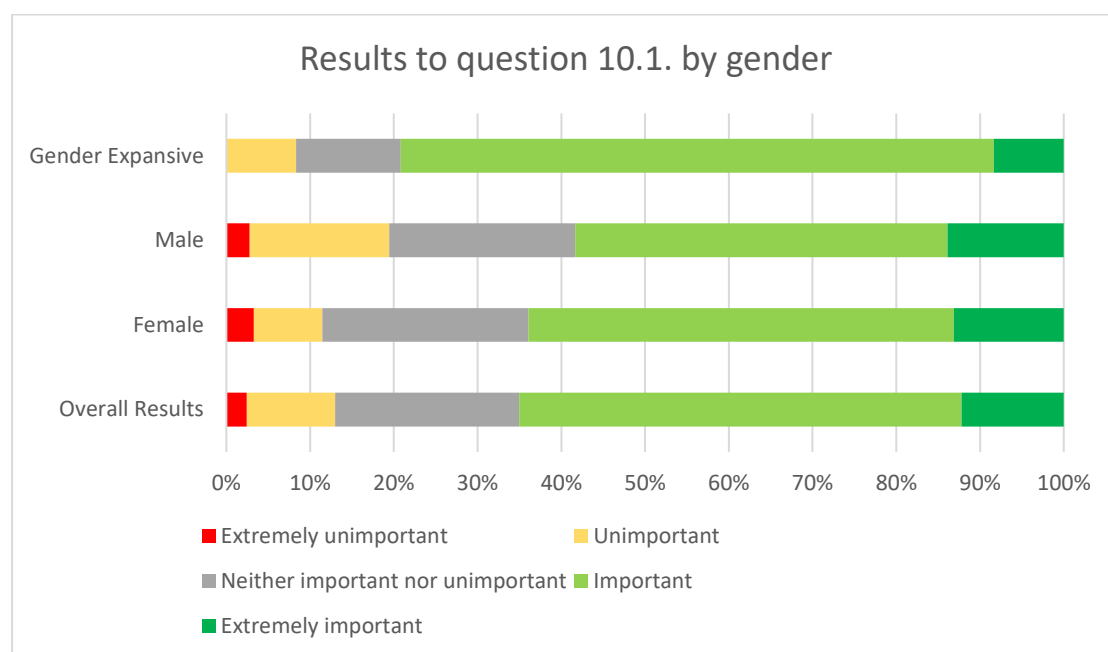
Figure 24. Results to question 10.1. by gender

10.2 *"Hotel or brand provides LGBTQI+ diversity training to staff."*

The above statement researched the opinions of the LGBTQI+ people in touristic businesses developing LGBTQ+ diversity training for their staff. According to the overall results, 49% of the

participants answered positively to the statement, 14% disagreed with it and 36% of the participants remained rather neutral. As represented in the following graph, *gender expansive* participants showed the highest degree of agreement with the *female* participants second and the *male* participants last.
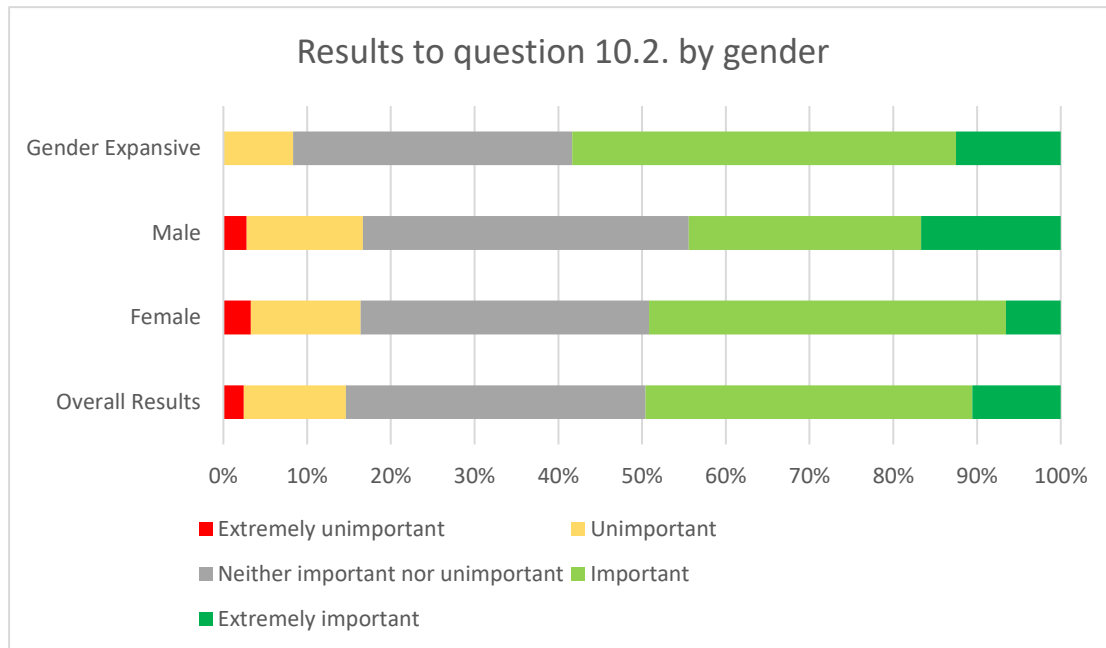
Figure 25. Results to question 10.2. by gender

10.3. *"Hotel or brand has gender identity non-discrimination policies."*

The majority of the participants, namely the 60% deemed the above statement "Important" (44%) or "Extremely important" (16%), only 13% of them answered on the negative scale and 28% of them remained rather neutral. Between the answers of the different genders the same pattern is being noted as in statements 10.2. and 10.1.
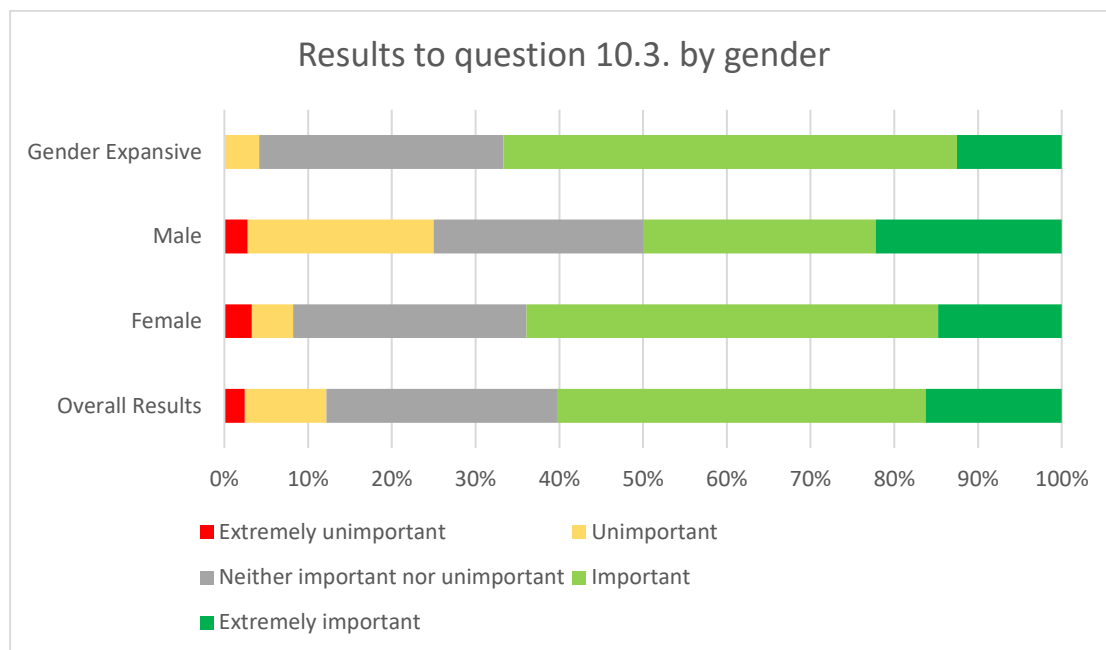
Figure 26. Results to question 10.3. by gender

10.4." *Hotel or brand advertises itself as LGBTQI+ friendly."*

According to the overall results, 53% of the participants answered that they considered the hotel advertising itself "important" (40%) or "Extremely important" (13%). Only 16% of the overall participants deemed this initiative "Unimportant" (13%) or "Extremely unimportant" (3). All participants deeming the initiative "Extremely unimportant" were *male*.
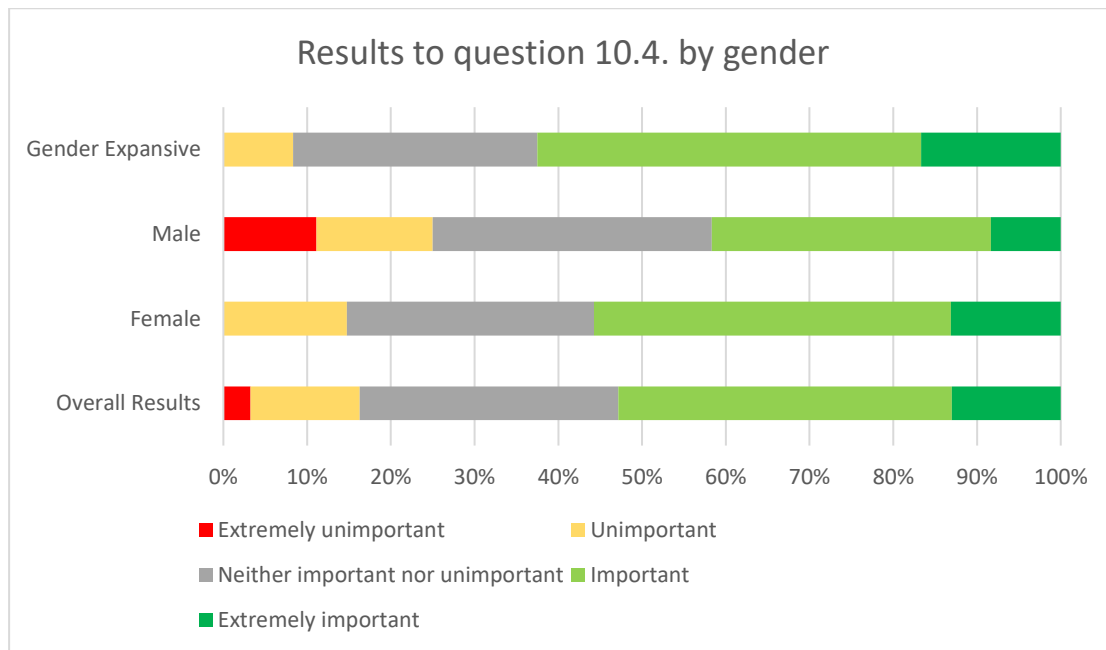
Figure 27. Results to question 10.4. by gender

10.5. *"Hotel or brand has LGBTQI+ imagery on their website."*

The overall results revealed that 42% of the participants considered the above action "Important" (32%) or "Extremely important" (10%), 41% of the participants deemed this measure "Neither important nor unimportant" and 18% answered that they found it "Unimportant" (10%) or "Extremely unimportant" (8%). In contrast to the previous statements, male participants replied more positively than *female* participants. The statement however still held the highest importance for *gender expansive* participants.
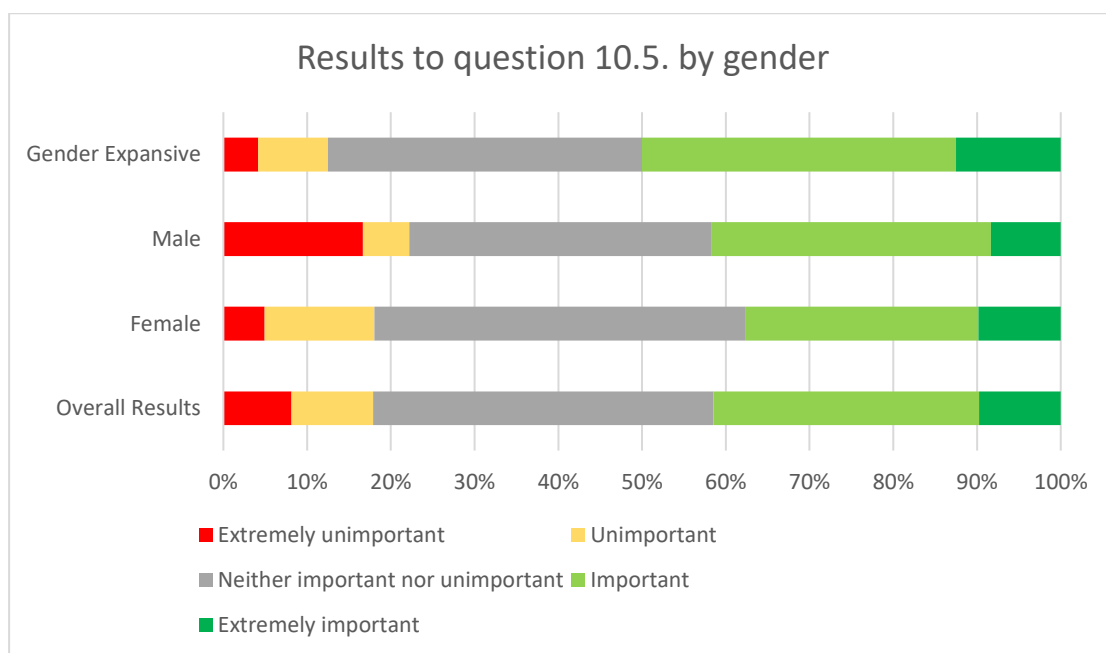
Figure 28. Results to question 10.5. by gender

10.6. *"Hotel or brand employs LGBTQI+ staff."*

According to the overall results, 60% of the participants deemed the policy "Important" (35%) or "Extremely important" (26%). 28% of the participants replied that they found the measure "Neither important nor unimportant" and 11% found it "Unimportant" (9%) or "Extremely unimportant" (2%). *Female* participants seemed to give slightly more importance to this measure than *gender expansive* and *male* participants.
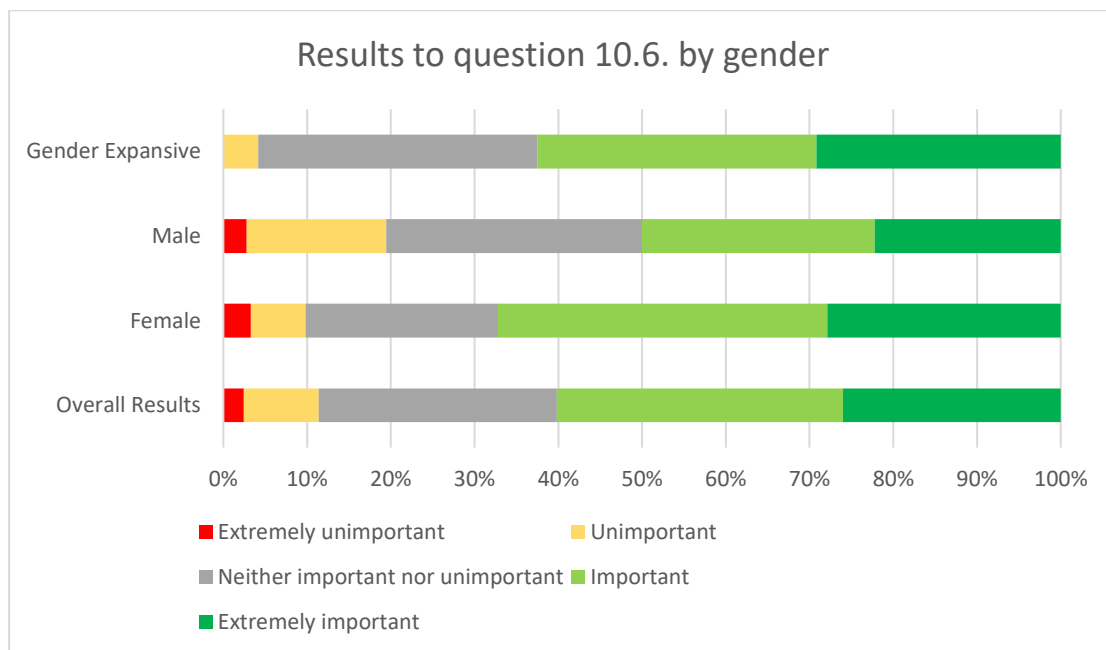
Figure 29. Results to question 10.6. by gender

10.7. "Hotel or brand, supports the LGBTQI+ community (e.g. by sponsoring LGBTQI+ events)."

According to the overall results, 61% of the participants considered supporting the LGBTQI+ community "Important" (37%) or "Extremely important" (24%). Only 14% of the participants found the measure rather unimportant and 25% of the participants did not express a clear opinion. *Female* participants gave the measure the highest importance (66%) in relation to *gender expansive* (62%) and *male* participants (49%).
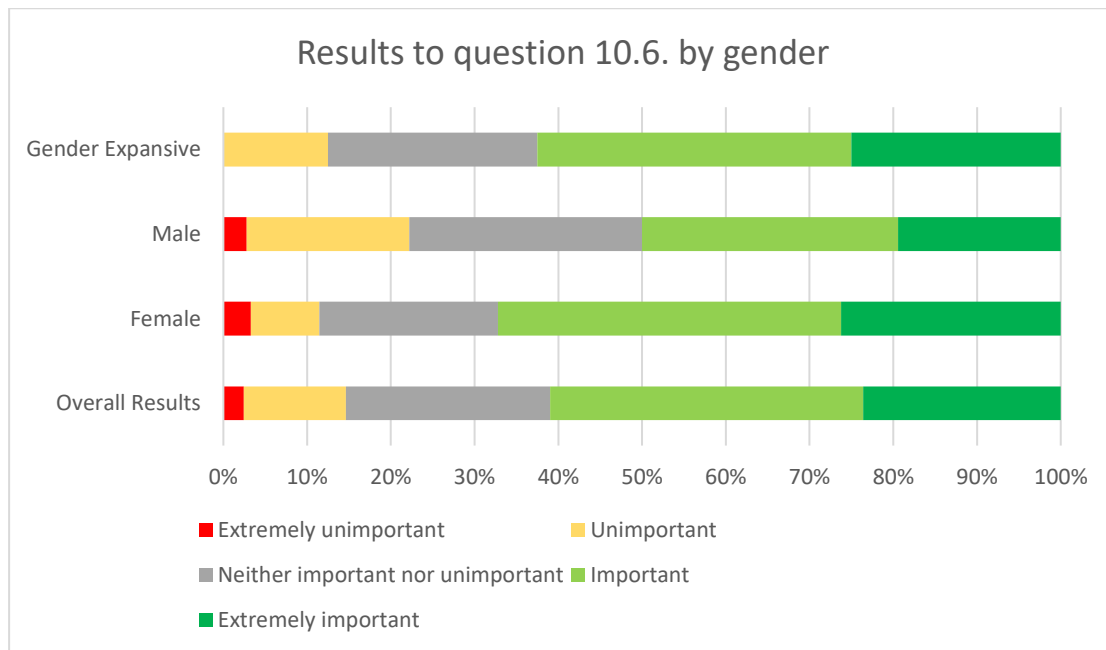
Figure 30. Results to question 10.6. by gender

5.5. Gay space

In this section, the need of the travelers for "gay space" will be researched. All questions included investigating the relationship of LGBTQI+ travelers with LGBTQI+ facilities in the touristic destination. Those include, accommodation facilities (ex. hotels) and socialization spaces like bars and cafes but also online dating/socializing platforms. Furthermore, the role of events is researched and the relationship between gay travelers and other more politicized spaces like LGBTQI+ conferences or community centers. The question posed was the following: "*In the past 12 months, have you participated in any of these LGBTQI+ specific activities while on vacation in a different city than the one you live in? When on vacation in a different city, I have...* ". Following the question some statements were given to the participants who had the option to choose between the answers: "*Yes"*, "*No*" and "*Prefer not to say*".

11.1. "Attended a gay/lesbian bar."

This first statement investigates the relationship of the LGBTQI+ travelers with nightlife spaces specifically catering to the needs of LGBTQI+ people. Most of the participants, namely 57% replied that indeed they had visited a gay/lesbian bar during their travels.

According to the figure bellow, *female* participants showed more interest than *male* or *gender expansive* participants for attending this type of "gay space".
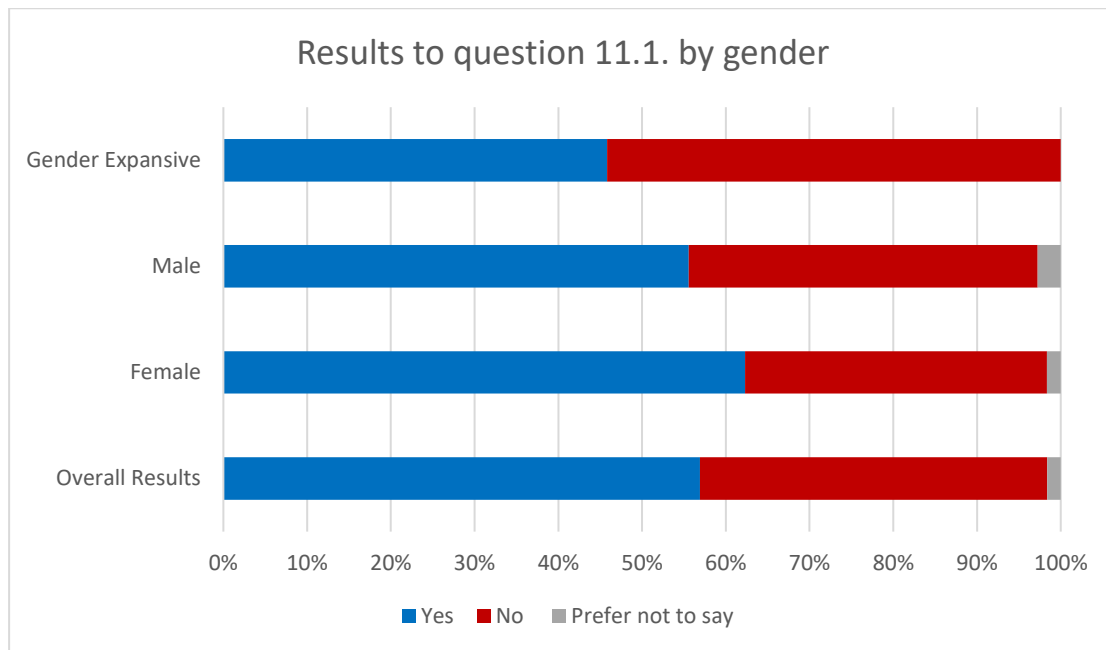
Figure 31. Results to question 11.1. by gender

Furthermore, when comparing the age-groups of people from 18-24 and people from 25-34, the last showed a bigger tendency in visiting gay/ lesbian bars at touristic destinations.
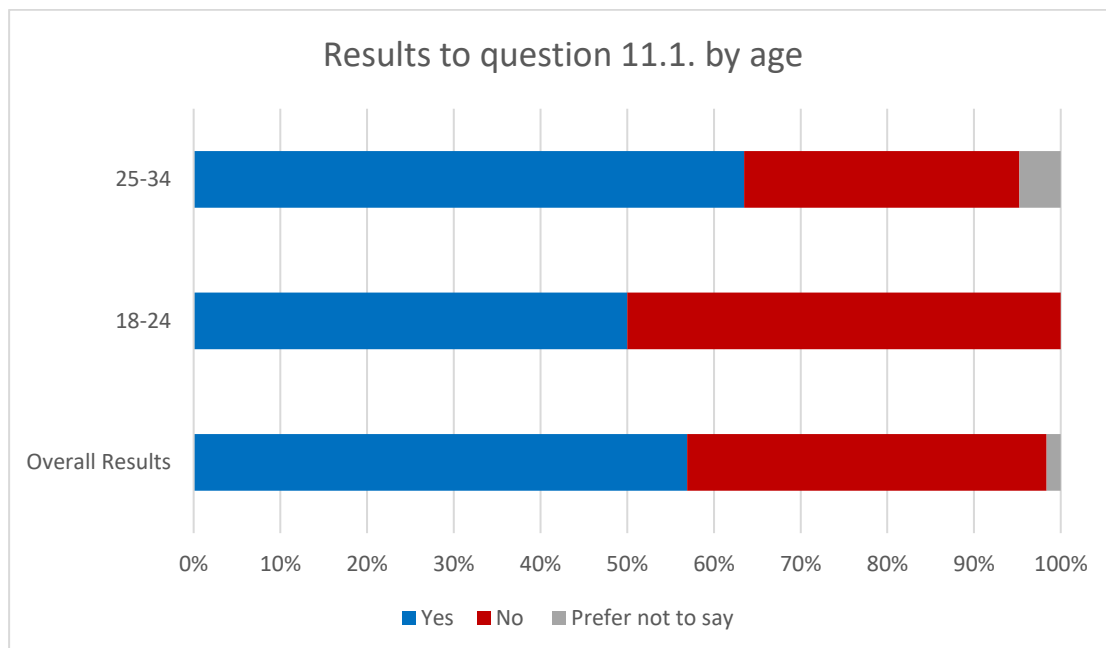
Figure 32. Results to question 11.1. by age

11.2. "Visited an LGBTQI+ neighborhood."

Exploring this subject further, participants were asked if they had visited an LGBTQI+ neighborhood while traveling. The overall results were approximately 50/50. 50% of the participants answered negatively to the statement and 49% positively. As in question 11.1. *female* participants answered slightly more positively to the question than *gender expansive* and *male* participants. Again *male* participants showed the least interest for this type of gay spaces.
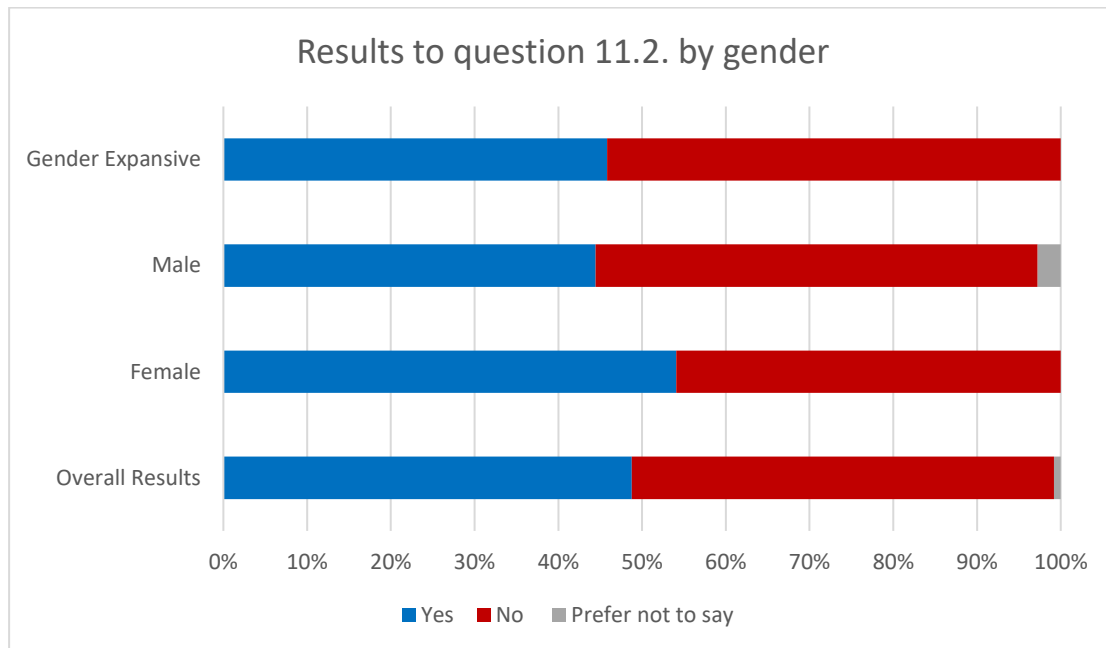
Figure 33. Results to question 11.2. by gender

In the results there was also noted a slightly bigger interest of LGBTQI+ travelers living in *rural* destinations to visit LGBTQI+ neighborhoods than LGBTQI+ travelers living in *urban* destinations.
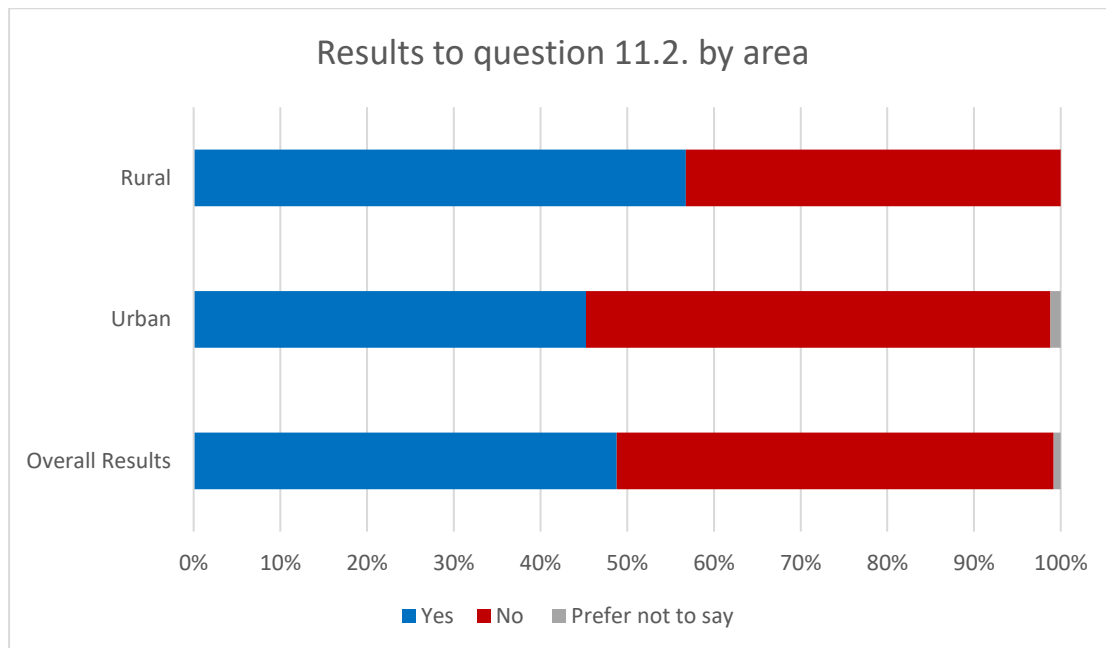
Figure 34. Results to question 11.2. by area

Furthermore, homosexual travelers, showed a slightly bigger interest in visiting LGBTQI+ neighborhoods in their travelers than bisexual- pansexual travelers.
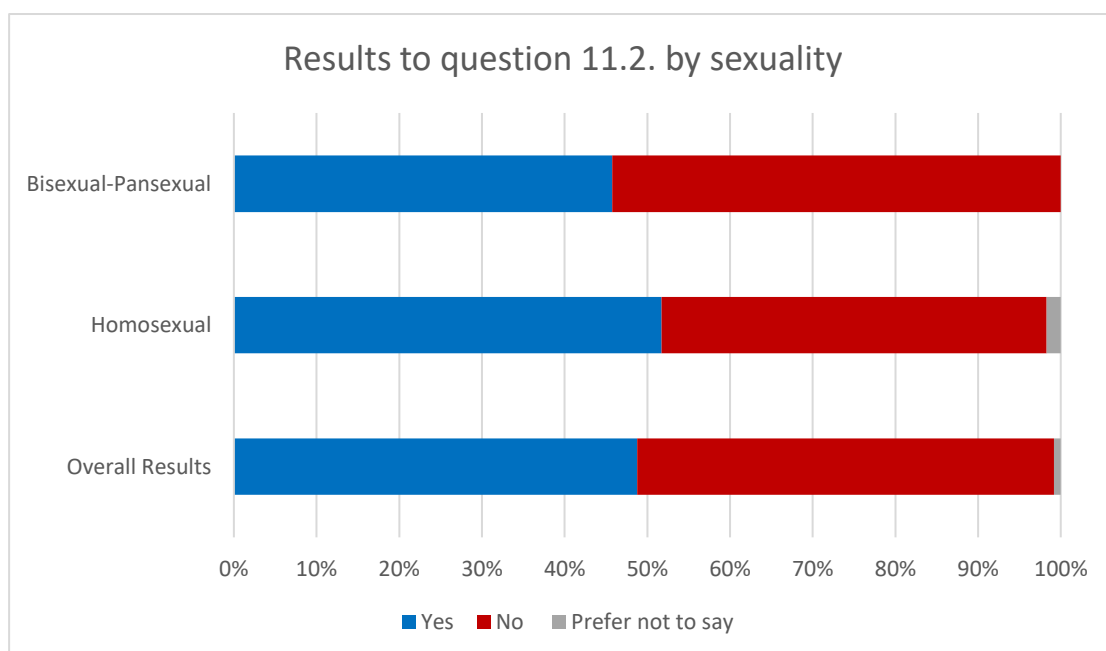
Figure 35. Results to question 11.2. by sexuality

11.3. "*Attended a restaurant in the LGBTQI+ neighborhood.*"

In the question of whether they had visited a restaurant in the LGBTQI+ neighborhood they visited participants answered rather negatively (64%). According to the overall results only 33% of the participants agreed with the statement. *Gender expansive* travelers showed the highest percentage of interest in performing such actions.
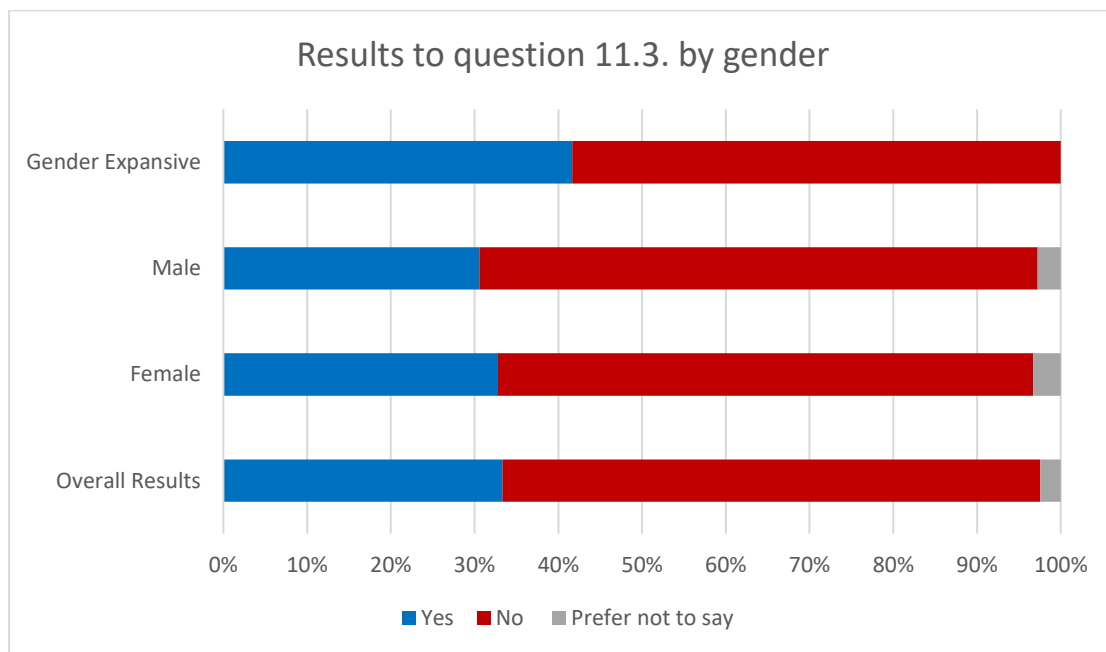
Figure 36. Results to question 11.3. by gender

Also, again in this example, participants living in *rural* environments answered more positively than participants living in *urban* environments.
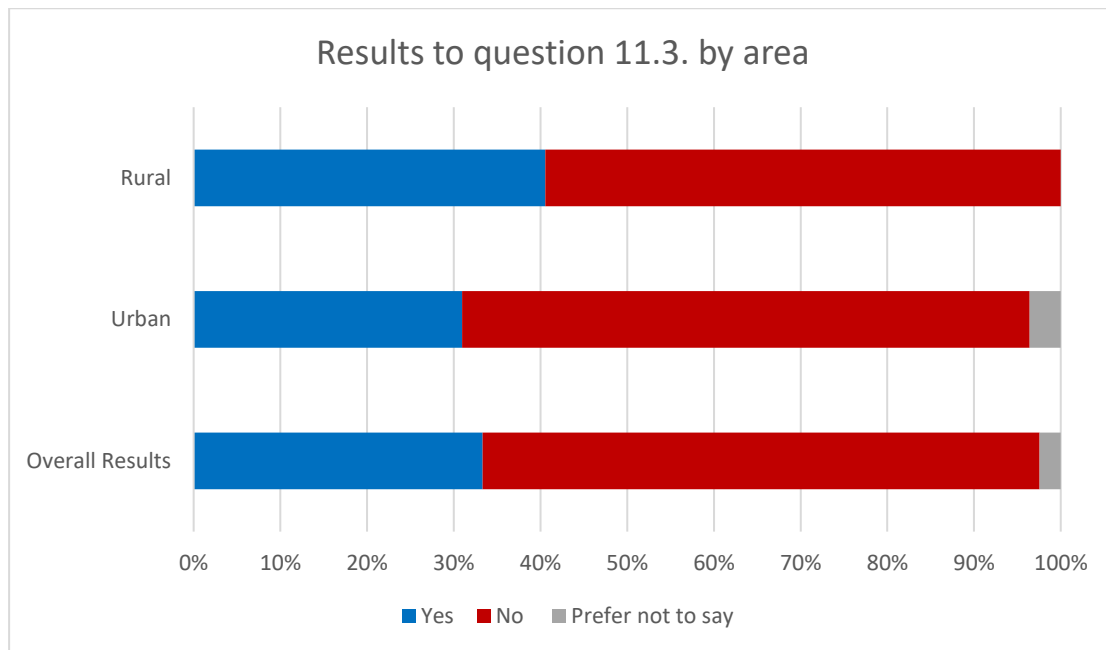
Figure 37. Results to question 11.3. by area

11.4. "*Attended a gay/lesbian nightclub.*"

According to the results of the data analysis, 53% of the participants replied positively to the statement of whether or not they had attended a gay or lesbian nightclub in their touristic destination. *Gender expansive* and *female* participants displayed a higher percentage of positive responses in relation to the *male* participants.
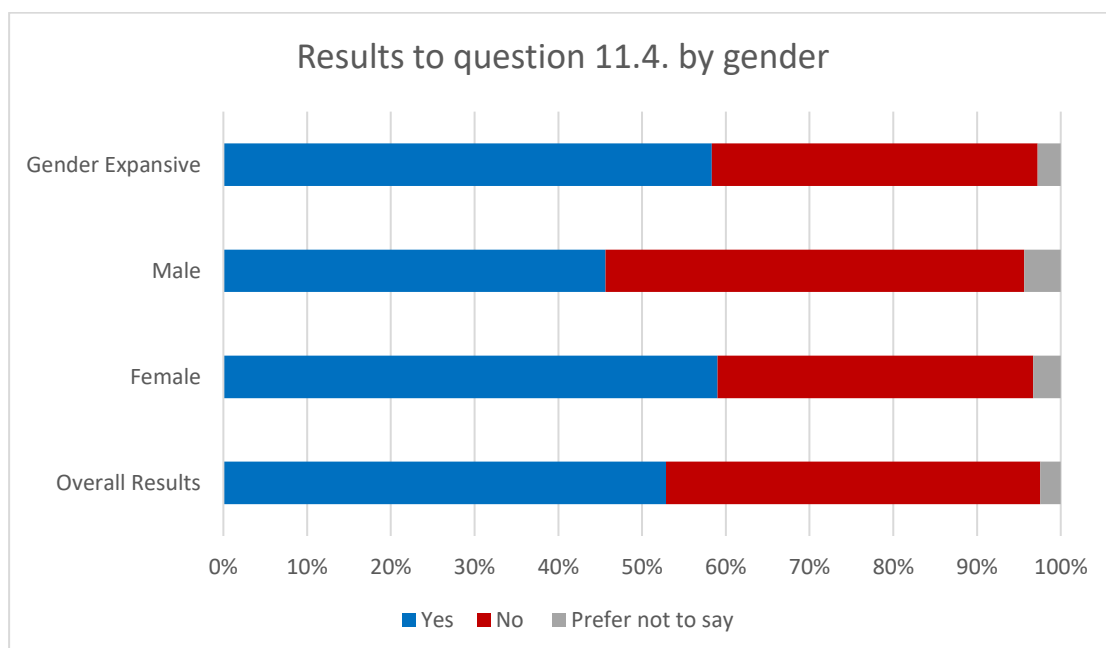
Figure 38. Results to question 11.4. by gender

11.5.

"*Purchased clothes or other retail items in the LGBTQI+ neighborhood.*"

In question 11.5 no significant differences were noted between the answers of different groups of the participants. Most of the participants of the survey (87) answered negatively to the question making up for the 70%. Positively answered only 33 participants making up the 27%. Meaning that only a small percentage of LGBTQI+ people consider shopping in an LGBTQI+ neighborhood as an activity they wish to do on their vacations.
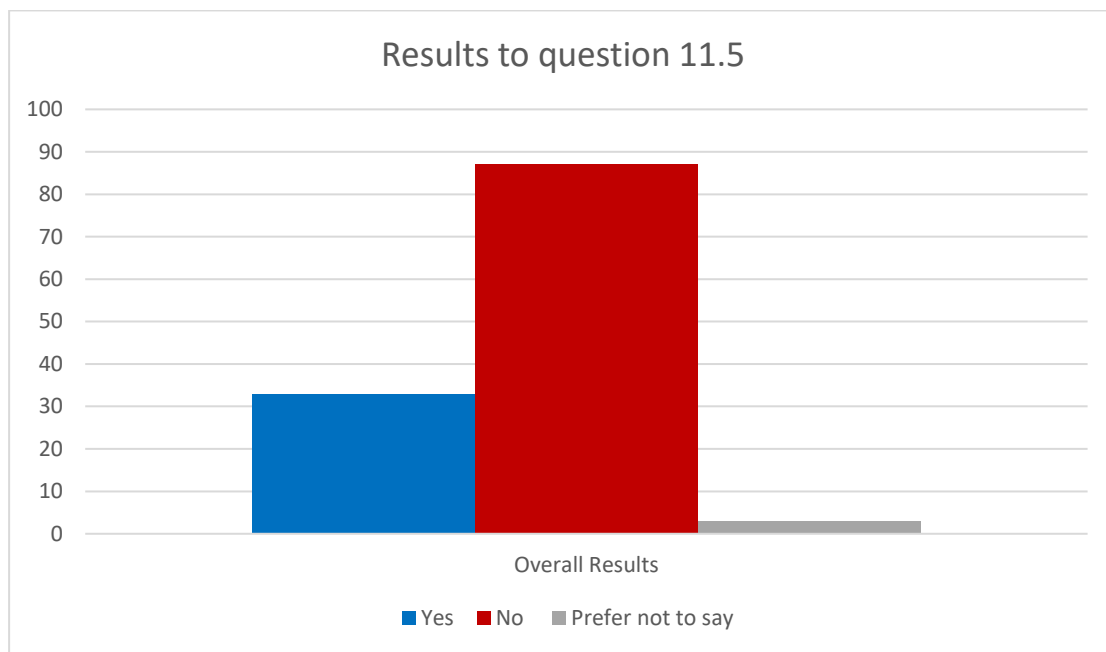
Figure 39. Results to question 11.5.

11.6. "*Used a LGBTQI+ dating website or a dating mobile app.*"

In the question on whether they had used a dating app while visiting a tourist destination, 47% of the participants answered negatively and 49% of them positively.

In contrast to the previous questions where *male* participants displayed the least interest of the facilities aimed to provide "gay space" to the visitors, *male* participants showed the highest percentage of interest for virtual gay space facilities, specifically dating apps.
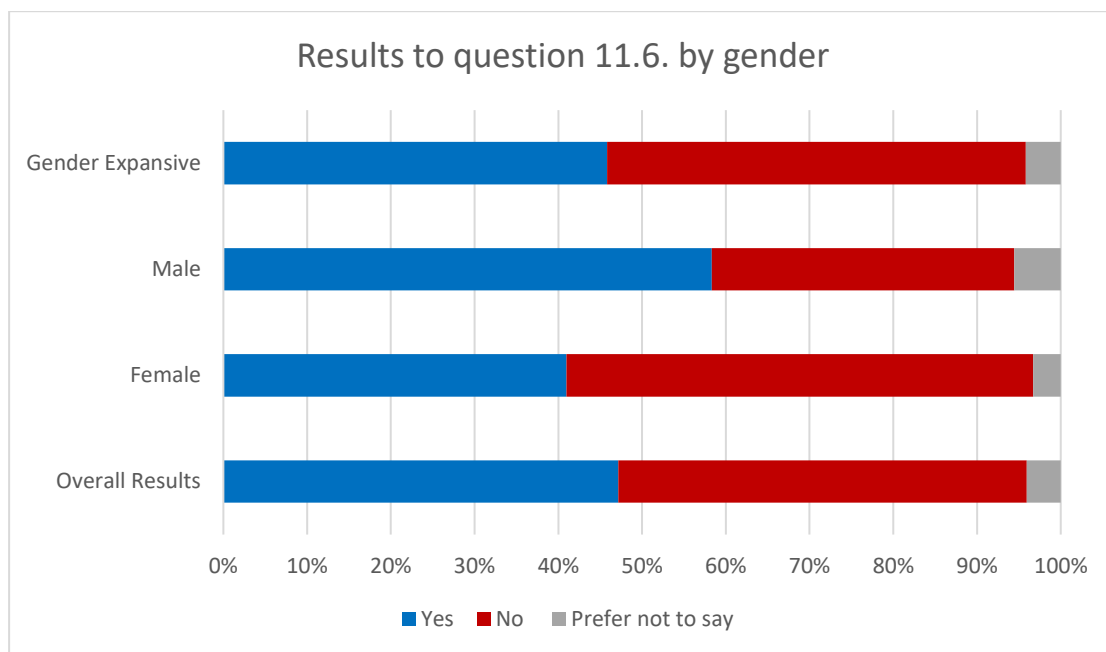
Figure 40. Results to question 11.6. by gender

As displayed in the figure below, homosexual participants replied also more positively to the question than Bisexual-Pansexual participants.
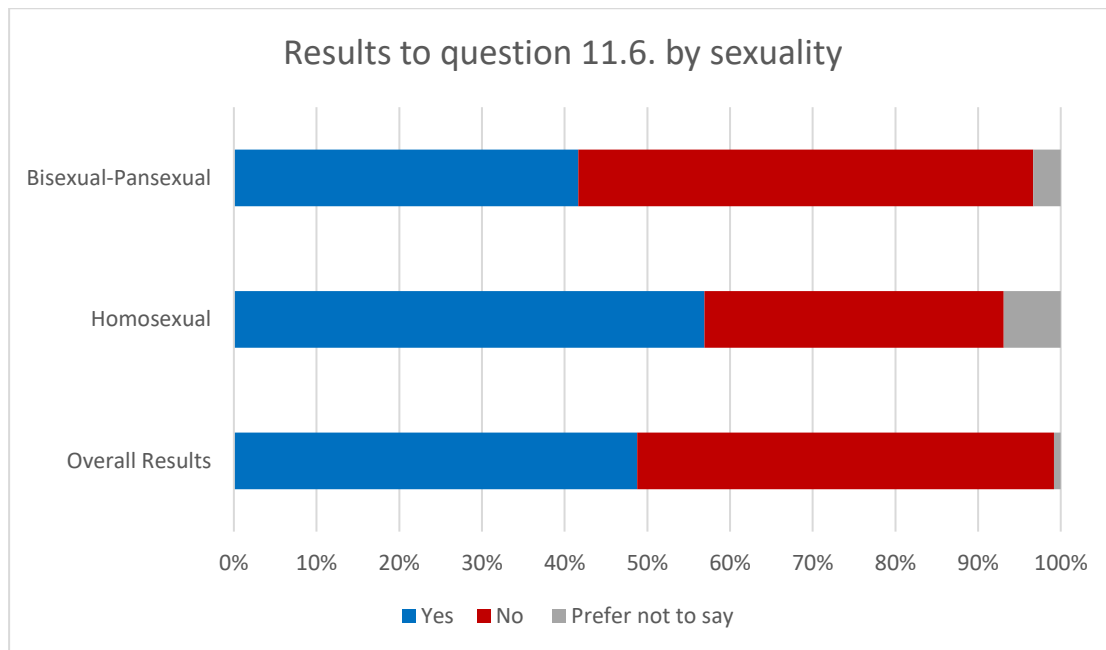
Figure 41. Results to question 11.6. by sexuality

11.7. "*Attended an LGBTQI+ Pride event.*"

This statement is the first one of the questions researching the relationship of LGBQTI+ travelers with events. As displayed in the figure below, 40% percent of the participants replied affirmative to the statement. The highest percentage of agreement showed gender expansive and female participants. Male participants on the other side seemed to be less interested in joining the LGBTQI+ pride event while on vacation.
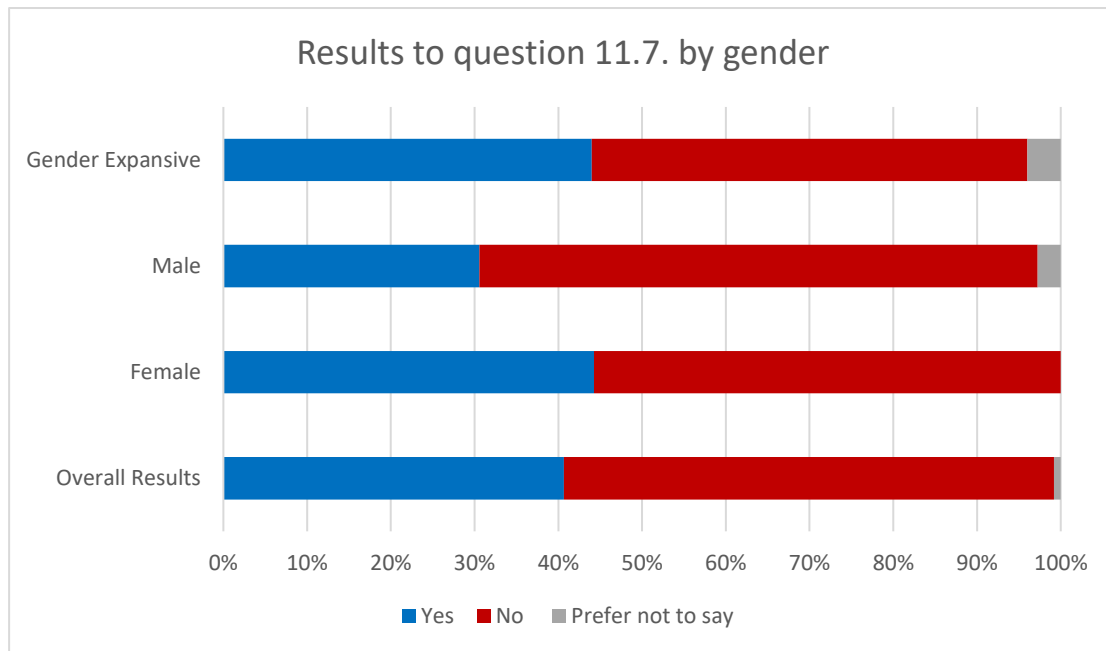
Figure 42. Results to question 11.7. by gender

Furthermore, participants coming from rural environments showed higher degrees of interest in taking part in a Pride event in another city than people living in *urban* environments.
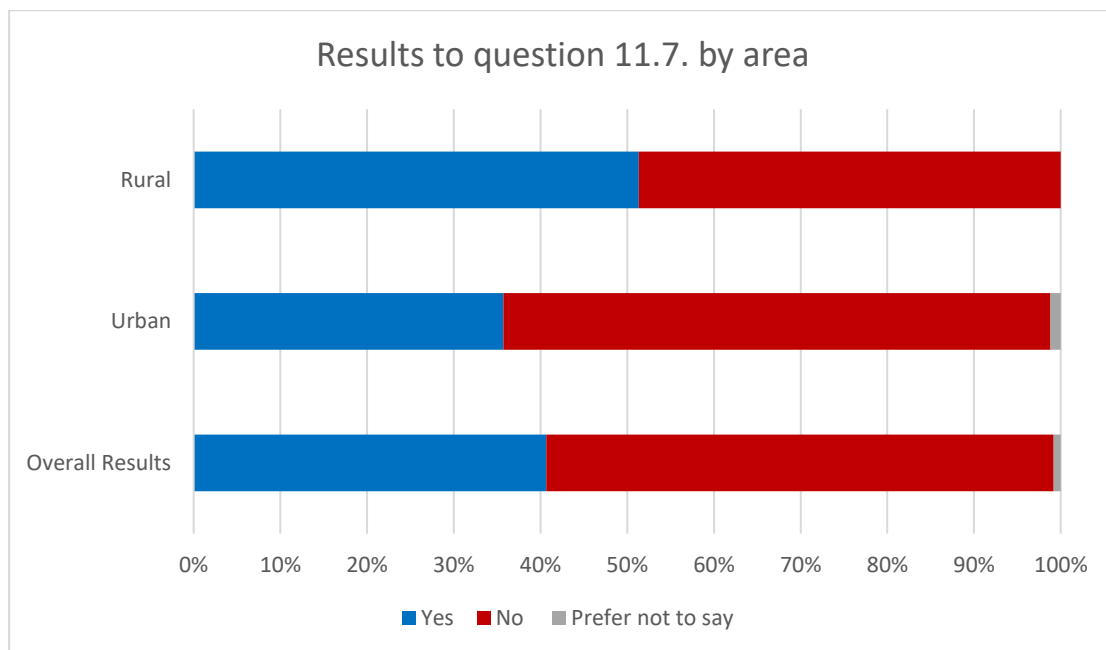
Figure 43. Results to question 11.7. by area

11.8. "*Attended an LGBTQI+ party event other than Pride.*"

Continuing the discussion around LGBTQI+ events, this statement invited participants to share if they have participated in some event different from Pride. According to the replies, 48% of the participants had indeed participated and 51% not. According to the graph bellow, there was no great variation noted between the answers of the participants by gender. The *female* participants showed a slightly higher percentage of agreement with the statement than the rest of the sub-groups but the difference was not outstanding.
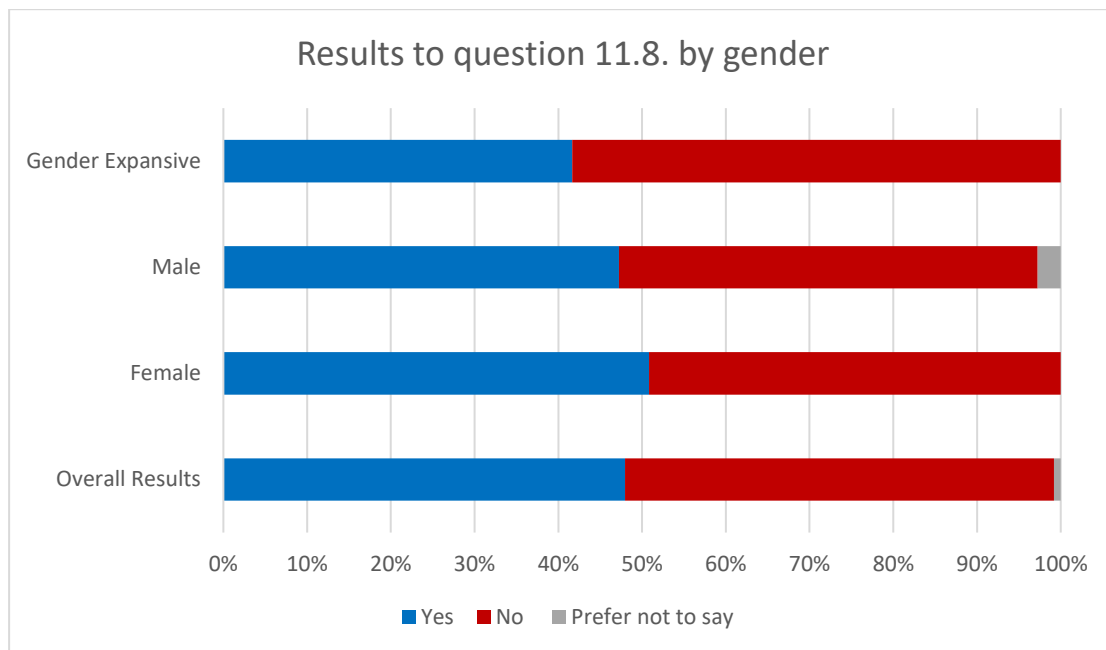
Figure 44. Results to question 11.8. by gender

On the other hand, this example shows again how people coming from *rural* areas might have a heightened interest in *gay space* facilities and events.
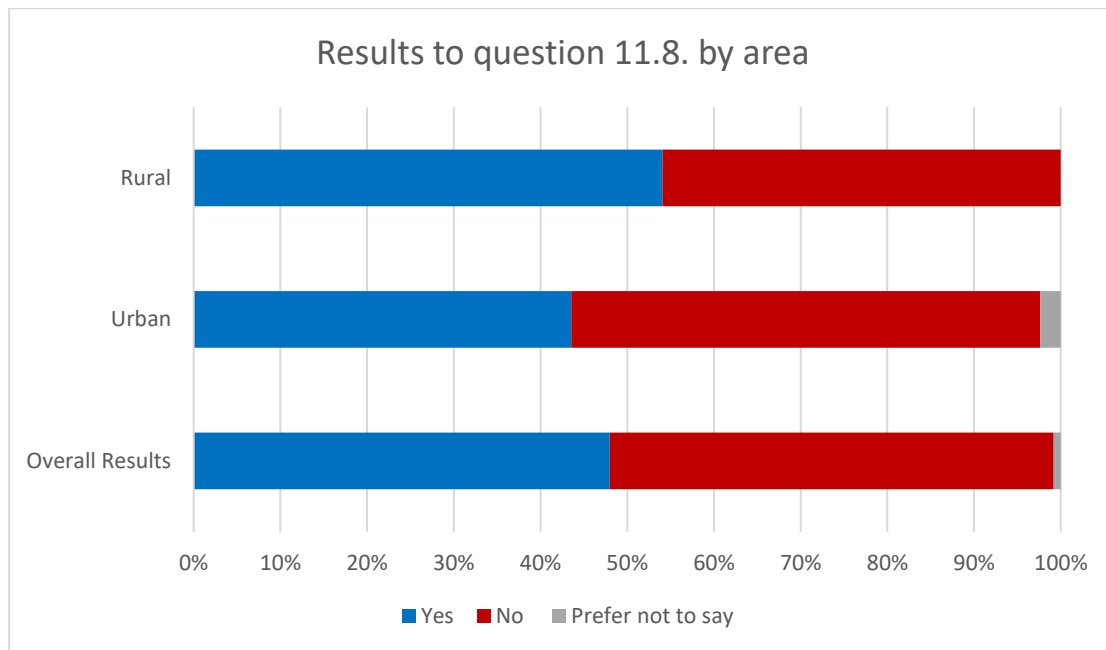
Figure 45. Results to question 11.8. by area

11.9. "*Spent a night in an LGBTQI+ dedicated hotel or guesthouse.*"

While in the previous statements regarding the usage of touristic "gay space" approximately 50% replied positively, in the question of whether the participants had spent a night in a LGBTQI+ dedicated hotel or guesthouse the vast majority replied negatively (94%).

When looking at the data by gender there was some interest shown by *gender expansive* participants and very little by *female* participants. No interest was showcased by *male* participants.
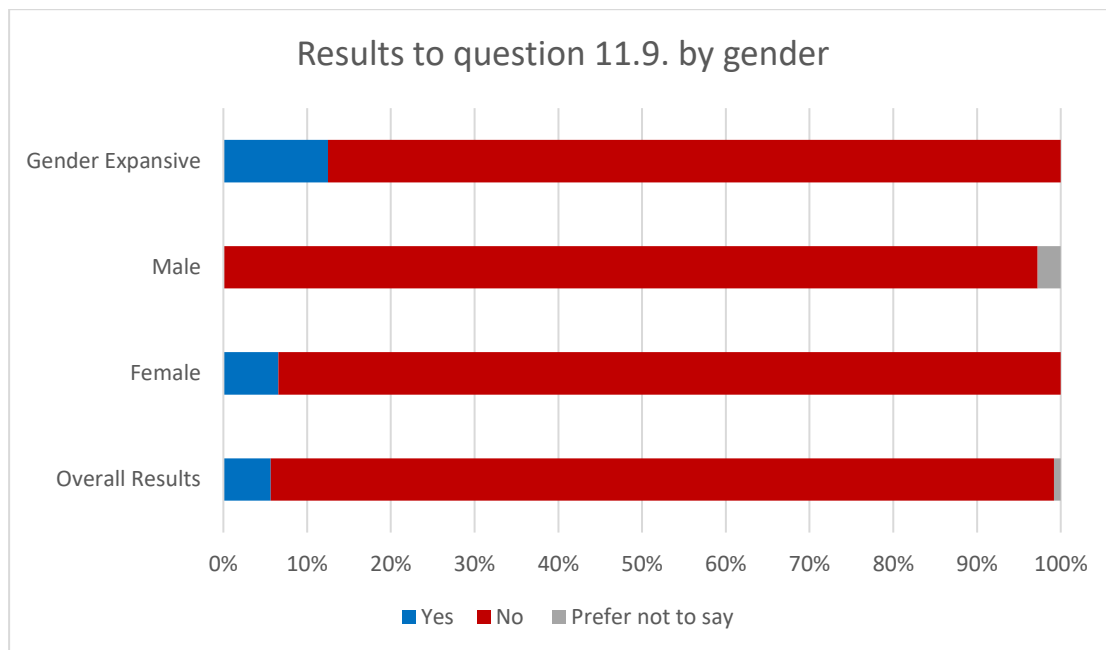
Figure 46. Results to question 11.9. by gender

11.10. "*Visited the local LGBTQI+ community center.*"

This question discussed the relationship of LGBTQI+ travelers with "gay spaces" having a more politicized character. While according to the overall results, only 19% of the participants answered positively in visiting the local LGBTQI+ community center while traveling, 40% of the *gender expansive* participants answered positively.
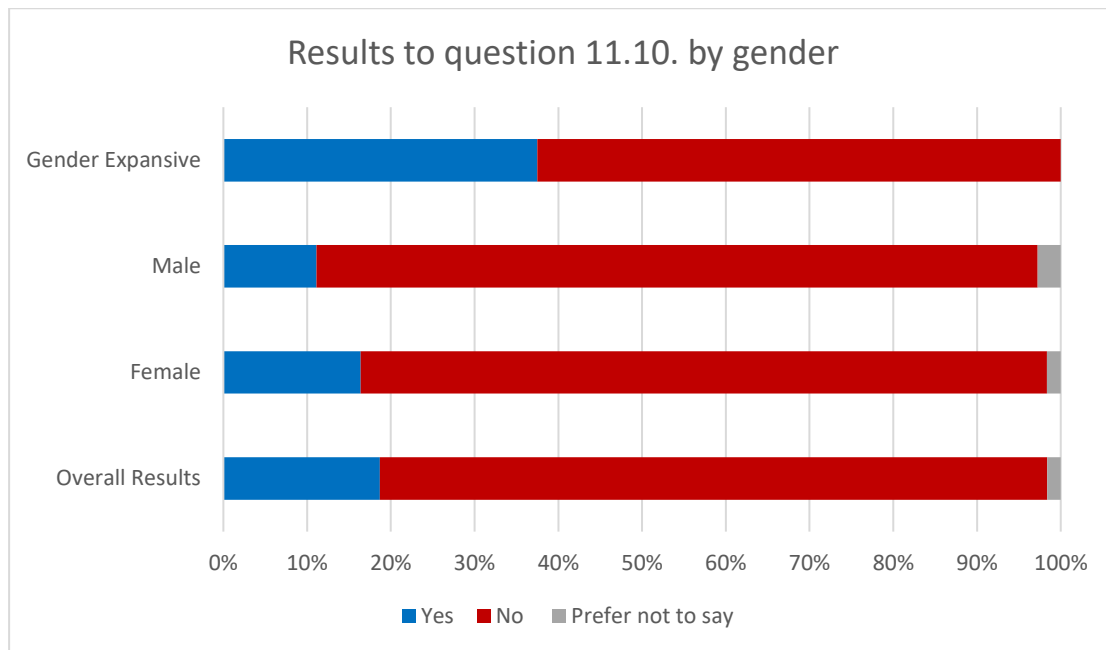
Figure 47. Results to question 11.10. by gender

Similarly, participants coming from *rural areas* had a higher percentage of positive responses than participants coming from *urban* environments.
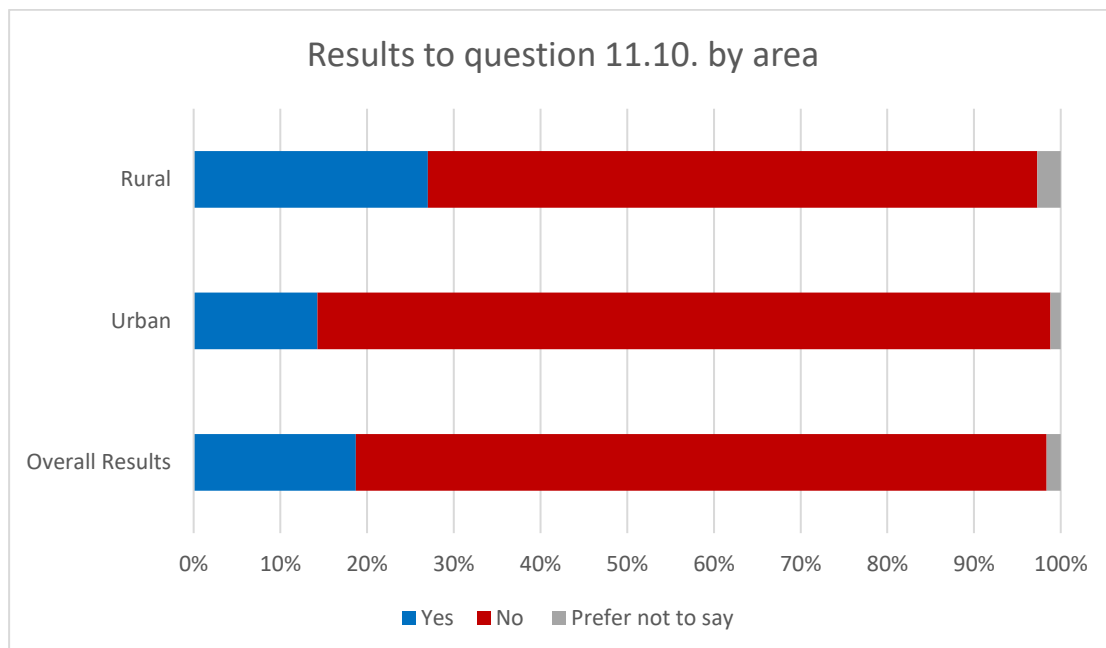

Figure 48. Results to question 11.10. by area

11.11. "*Attended an LGBTQI+ conference.*"

An LGBTQI+ conference is another example of a more politicized gay space facility. According to the responses of the participants the highest percentage of them did not attend an LGBTQI+ conference while traveling. *Female* and *gender expansive* participants had shown a higher percentage of involvement than *male* participants.
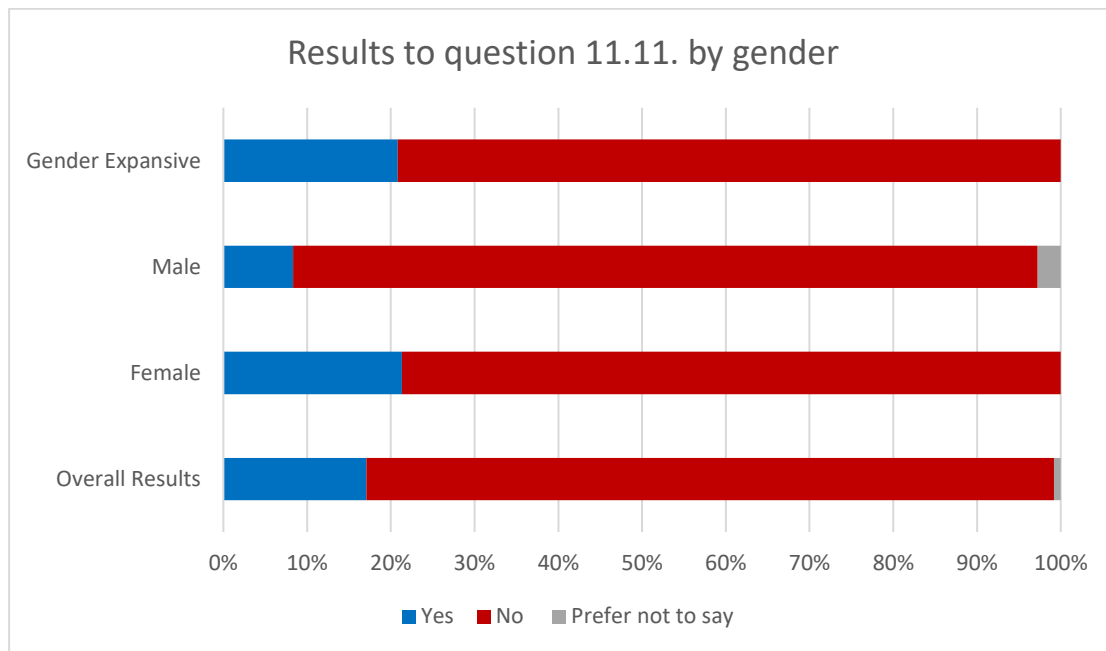
Figure 49. Results to question 11.11. by gender

11.12. "*Used an online platform to come in contact with local LGBTQI+ people.*"

The final statement of question 11 is another example of investigating virtual gay space. The participants were asked more generally if they used an online application to come in contact and socialize with other local LGBTQI+ people. The aim of the socialization in this statement was not specifically dating as in statement 11.6. but could also refer to friendly bonds or interest in understanding the conditions of living of local LGBTQI+ people.

Approximately, 46% of the participants replied positively to the statement. As in question 11.6. *male* participants answered slightly more positive than *female* or *gender expansive* participants.
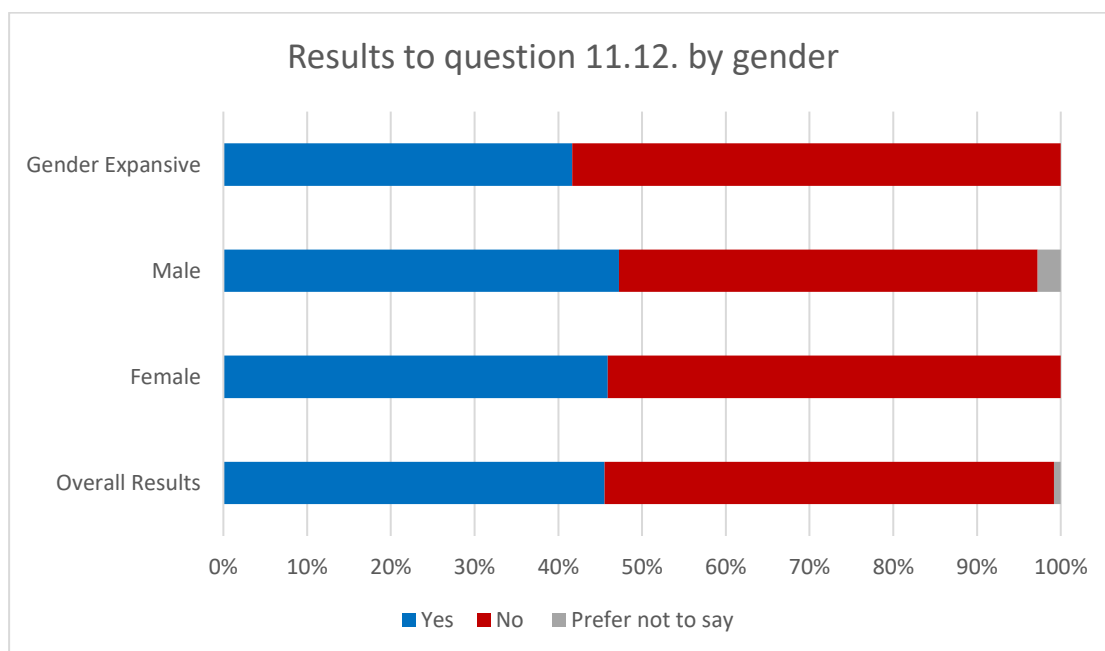
Figure 50. Results to question 11.12. by gender

5.6. Marketing and Advertisement

In this section the different marketing and advertisement policies adopted by touristic destinations/ businesses to attract LGBTQI+ travelers will be researched. The following question was posed to the survey participants: *"12. How do you feel about a travel company (airline, hotel, tour operator, etc.) when you see the following types of LGBTQI+ outreach strategies?"* Followingly, the participants were given a series of statements regarding different strategies to approach the LGBTQI+ customer. They could choose to evaluate the statements with one of the following options: *"Very negative", "Negative", "Neutral", "Positive", "Very positive".*

Related to marketing and advertisement no strong differences were detected between the answers of the different age- and sexuality sub-groups. For this reason the data will not be presented by age or sexuality in this section.

12.1. **"Standing up for LGBTQI+ rights and equality."**

As one can see in the following figure, 96% of the overall participants considered the above marketing strategy "Positive" (17%) or "Very positive" (75%). Only 2 participants deemed the strategy negatively (2%). 8 participants replied that they felt "Neutral" about the initiative making up the 7% of the participants.

Results to question 12.1.
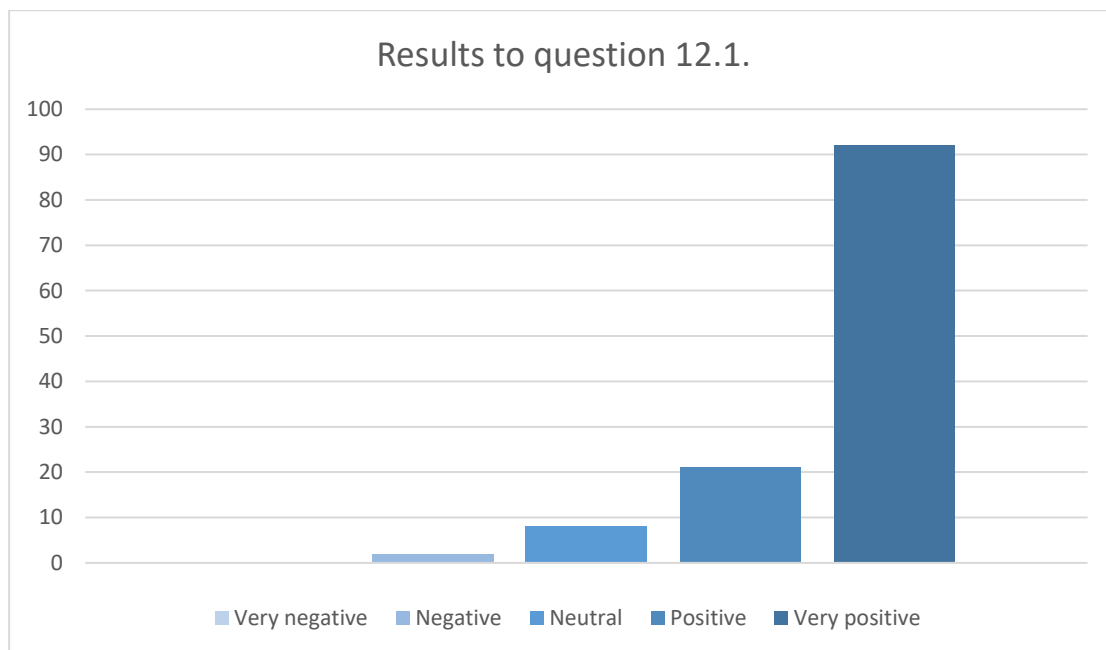
Figure 51. Results to question 12.1.

12.2. "Sponsor a local or national LGBTQI+ non-profit."

In the figure below the overall results of the survey are presented. According to them, 90% of the participants felt positively about the above statement. Only 3 participants replied that they felt "Negatively" about the statement, making up 2% of the overall survey participants. 9 participants (7%) replied that they felt "Neutral" about the statement.
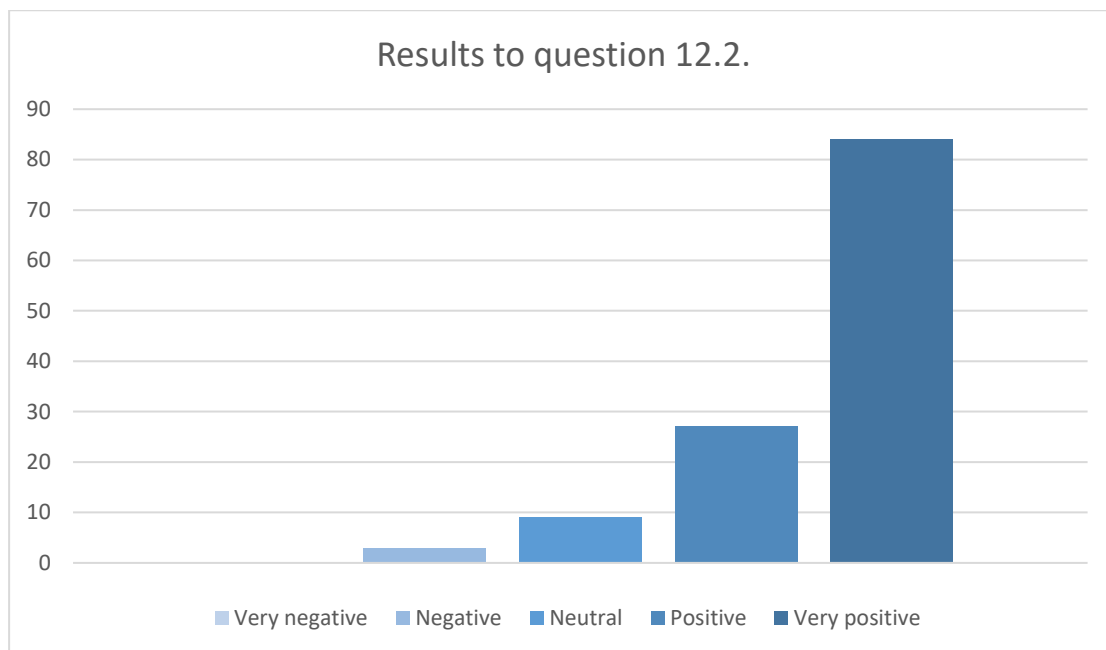
Results to question 12.2.

Legend: Very negative, Negative, Neutral, Positive, Very positive

Figure 52. Results to question 12.2.

12.3. "**Sponsor or participate in a local Pride event.**"

The responses on the above statement are presented below by area. As noted in the section discussing "gay space" participants living in *rural* spaces expressed more interest in the sponsorship of participation in a local Pride event than people living in *urban* areas. According to the overall results 75% of the participants replied that they felt "Positively" (33%) or "Very positively" (42%) about the above statement. 86% of the participants living in *rural* environments replied positively in contrast to only 72% of the participants living in urban areas.
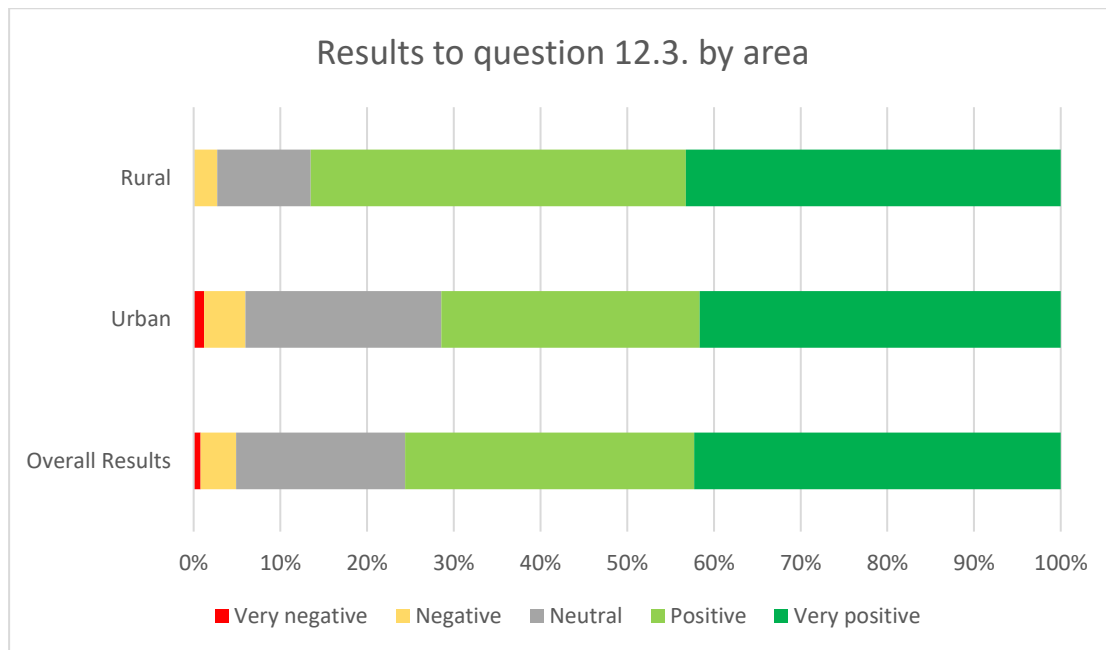
Figure 53. Results to question 12.3. by area

12.4. "Use a rainbow flag in their advertising imagery."

According to the overall responses of the participants the majority of the 56 % responded that they viewed this strategy positively. As represented in the figure below, *gender expansive* participants showed slightly less interest to this marketing policy than *male* or *female* participants.
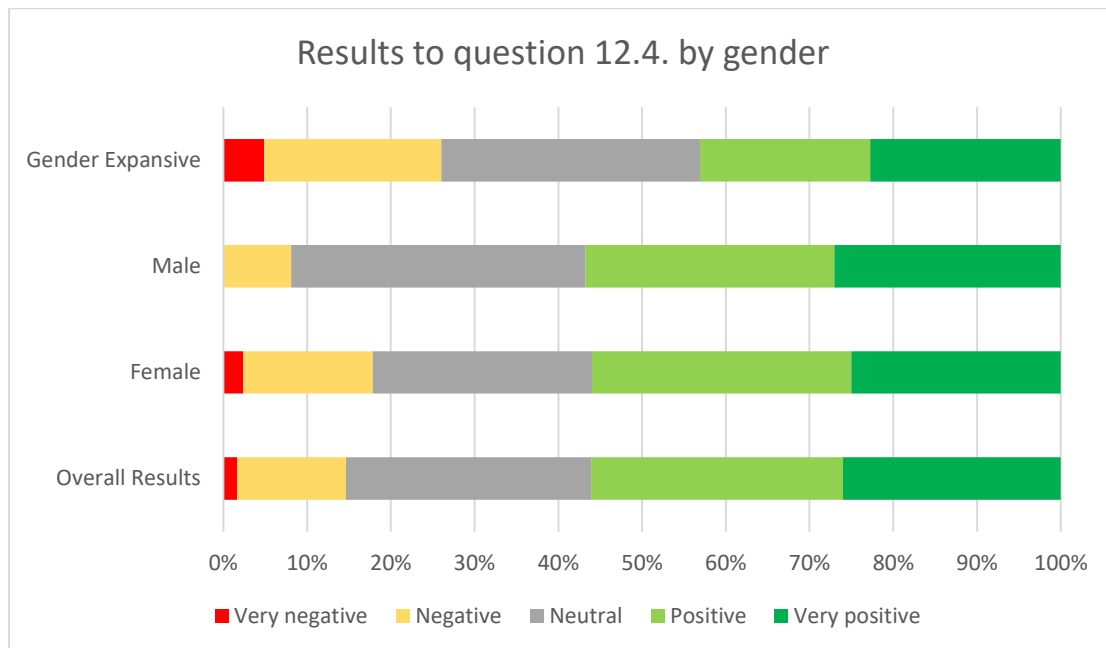
Figure 54. Results to question 12.4. by gender

12.5. "Redesign their logo into rainbow colors."

43% of the participants replied that they felt positively about this marketing strategy, 26% replied that they felt "Negatively" and 31% that they felt neutral. As represented below in the graph, *male* participants showed the highest percentage of agreement with the above statement.
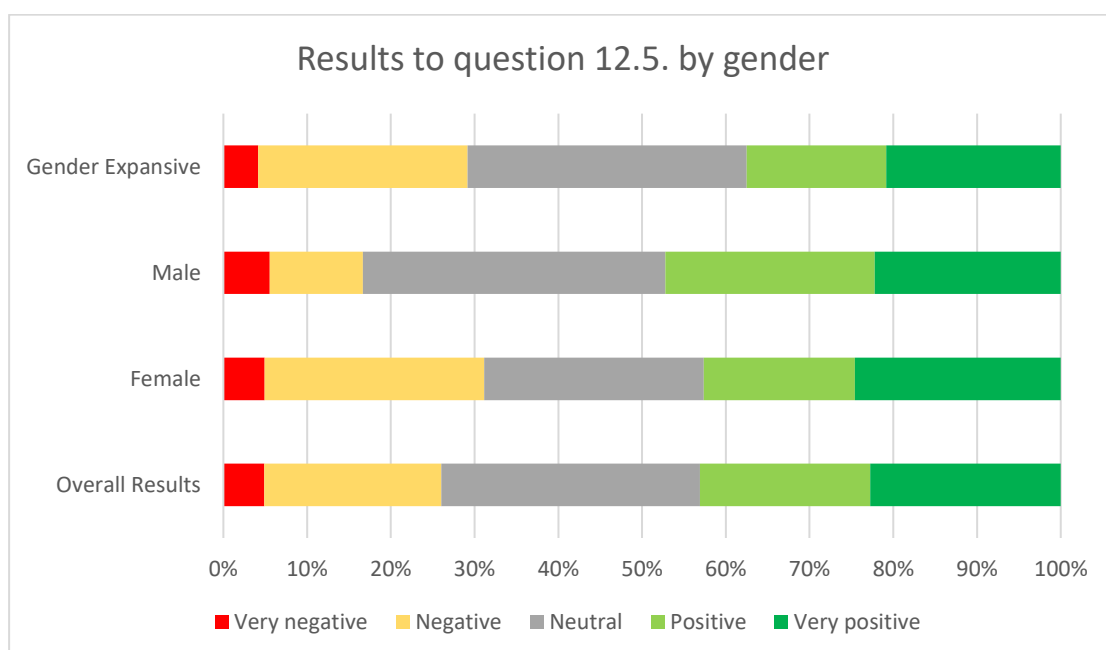

Figure 55. Results to question 12.5. by gender

12.6. "**Reflect the diversity of the LGBTQI+ travelers in the imagery of the advertisement.**"

Overall, 81% of the participants replied that they felt positively about the statement. *Gender expansive* participants and *female* participants showed the highest percentage of agreement.
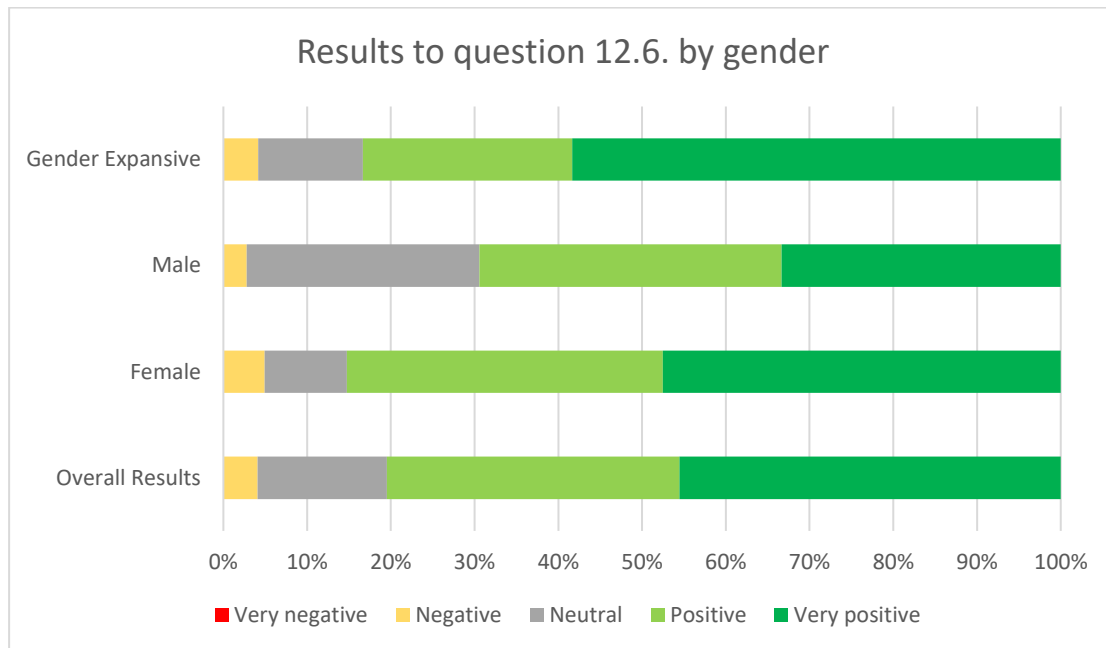

Figure 56. Results to question 12.6. by gender

12.7. "**Brand imagery shows LGBTQI+ travelers with different characteristics.**"

Overall, 87% of the participants agreed that they felt positively with the above statement. *Female* and *gender expansive* participants showed significantly higher percentages of agreement with this statement than *male* participants.
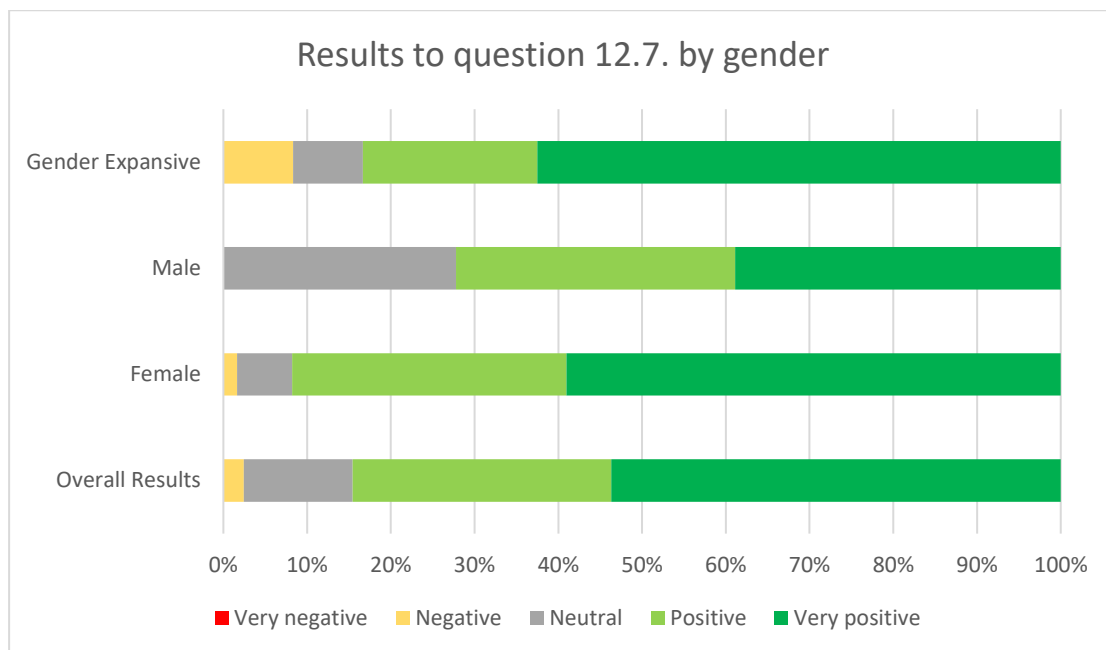
Figure 57. Results to question 12.7. by gender

12.8. "Advertising itself in the LGBTQI+ media."

The majority of the overall participants agreed with the above statement (63%). As represented in the figure below, *female* participants showed higher percentages of agreement than *male* or *gender expansive* participants.
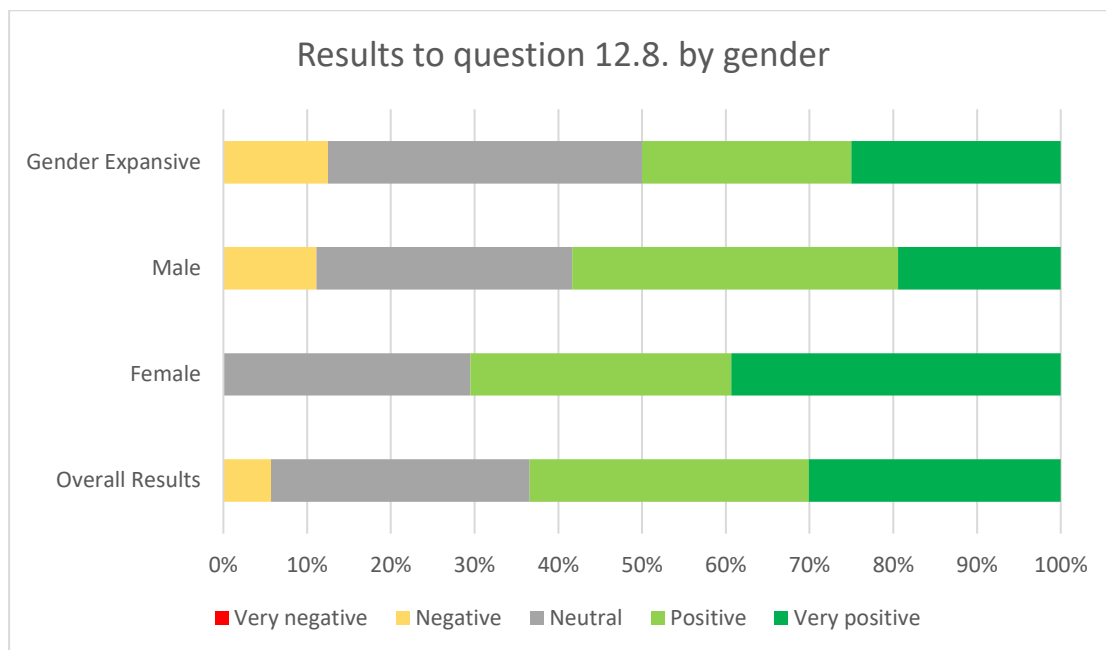
Figure 58. Results to question 12.8. by gender

12.9. "Advertising itself as LGBTQI+ friendly in the mainstream media."

According to the overall results, 75% of the participants felt positively about the statement. As represented in the graph below, *female* participants replied more positively than *gender expansive* and *male* participants.
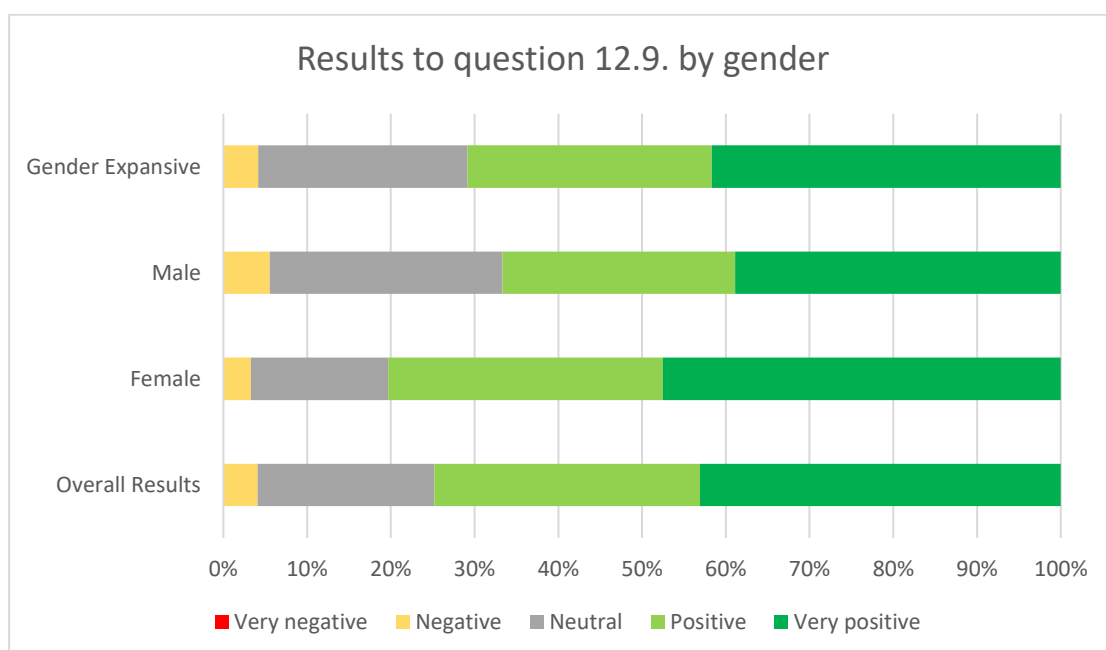

Figure 59. Results to question 12.9. by gender

5.7. Suggestions towards destinations

In this section some suggestions towards destinations wishing to become more LGBTQI+ friendly will be introduced and data will be collected regarding the perceptions of LGBTQI+ travelers. To achieve the above, the participants were asked the following question: *"13. In your opinion, how important are the following initiatives for destinations seeking to attract LGBTQI+ visitors?"*. Then 11 different statements were introduced to them and they had the options to choose between the following answers: "Extremely unimportant", "Unimportant", "Neither important nor unimportant", "Important", "Extremely important"

13.1. "Implement non-discrimination and LGBTQI+ friendly policies for tourism businesses."

According to the overall results, 94% of the participants deemed the above policy as important. No participant replied negatively to its implementation. 100% of the *gender expansive* participants replied that they considered the implementation of non-discrimination and LGBTQI+ friendly policies for tourism businesses important.
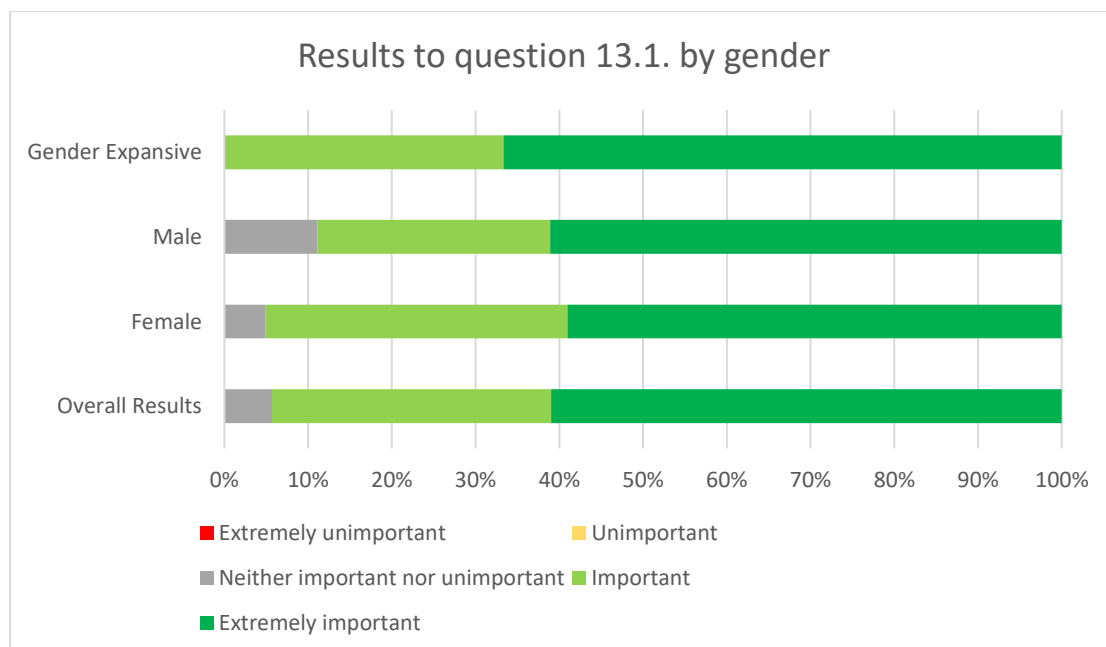

Figure 60. Results to question 13.1. by gender

13.2. "Implement non-discrimination and LGBTQI+ friendly laws."

As in question 13.1., no participants replied that the deemed the implementation of non-discrimination and LGBTQI+ friendly laws unimportant. 93% of the participants replied that they considered it important and a very small part remained neutral.
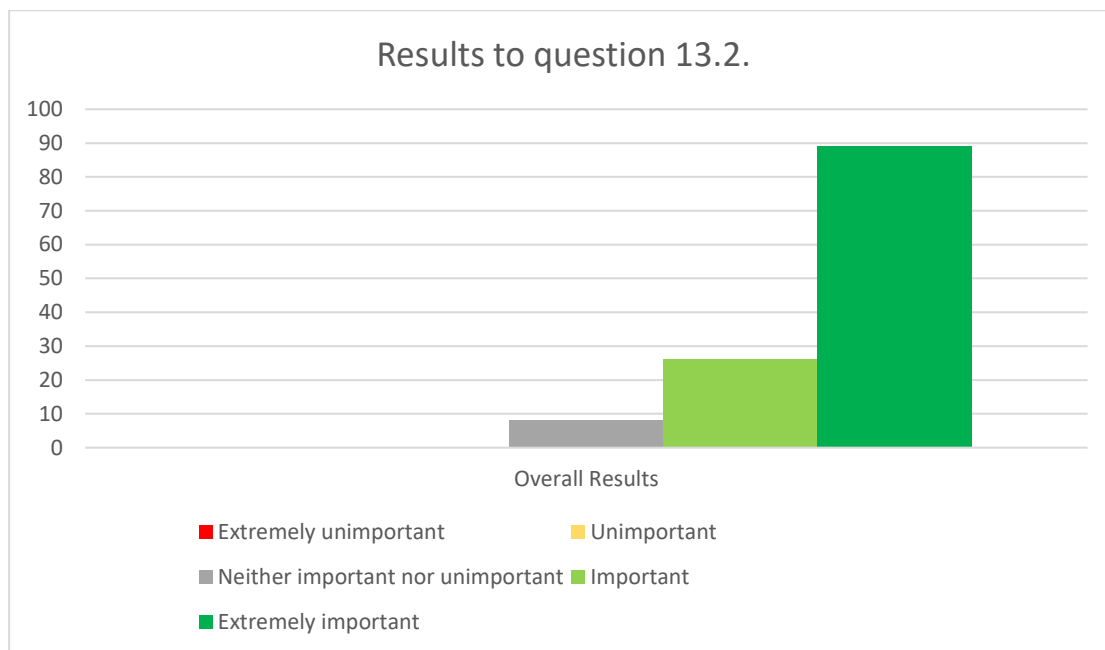

Figure 61. Results to question 13.2.

13.3. "Use LGBTQI+ friendly advertising."

According to the overall results, 72% of the participants deemed the above measure important. As displayed in the following graph, *gender expansive* participants attributed more importance than *female* or *male* participants.
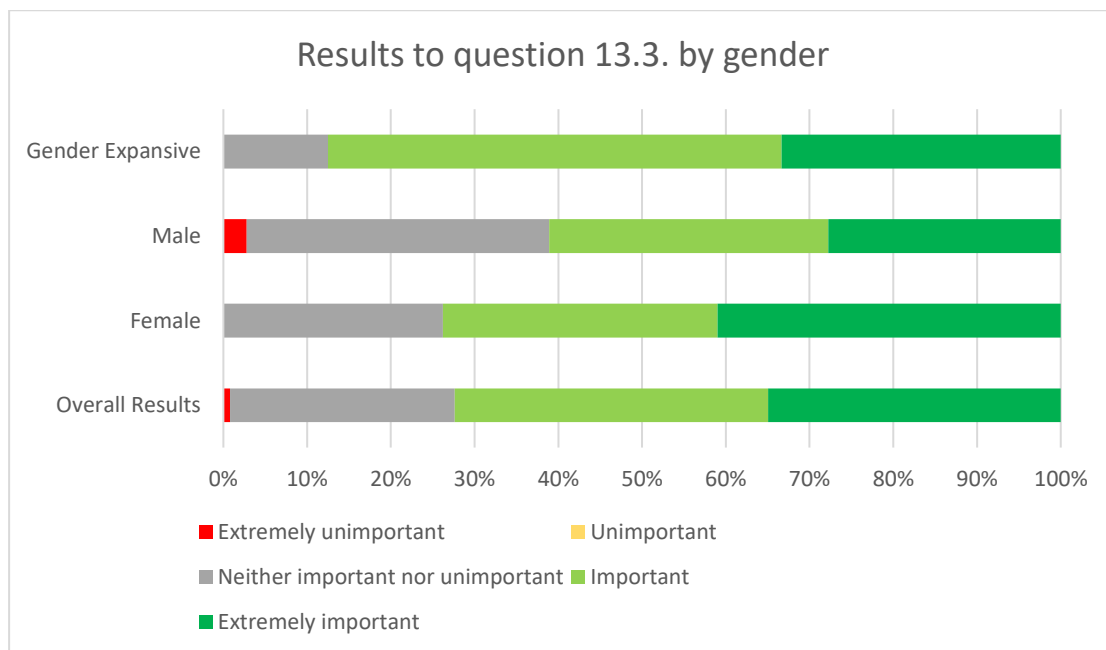
Figure 62. Results to question 13.3. by gender

Participants living in *rural* environments replied slightly more positively than participants coming from *urban* environments.
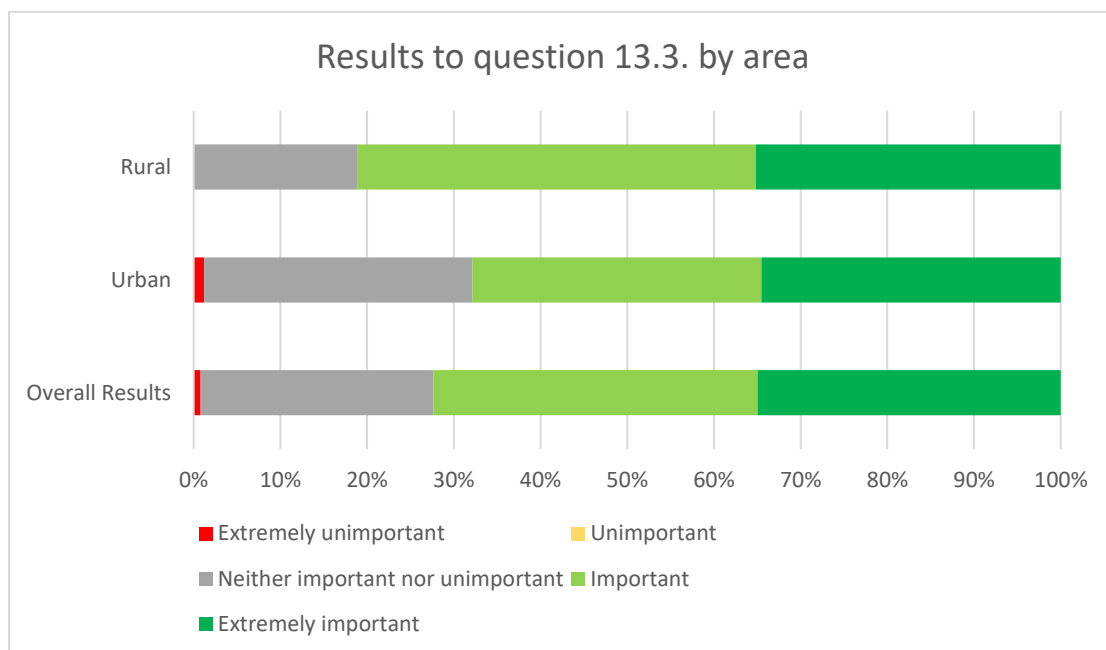

Figure 63. Results to question 13.3. by area

13.4. "Provide gender-neutral/single-stall bathrooms and other facilities (like change rooms)."

81% of the participants deemed this initiative important. *Gender expansive participants* had the highest percentage of agreement with *female* participants following closely after them and *male* participants showing significantly less interest for the subject.
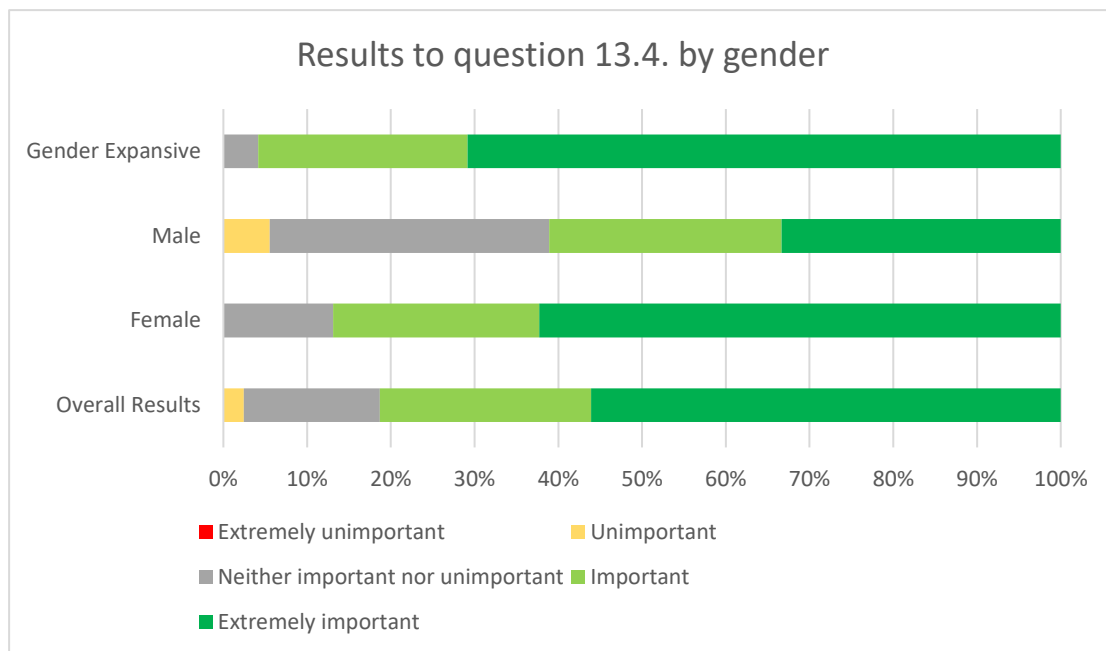

Figure 64. Results to question 13.4. by gender

Furthermore, participants coming from *rural* environments had significantly higher percentages of agreement with the statement than participants living in *urban* environments.
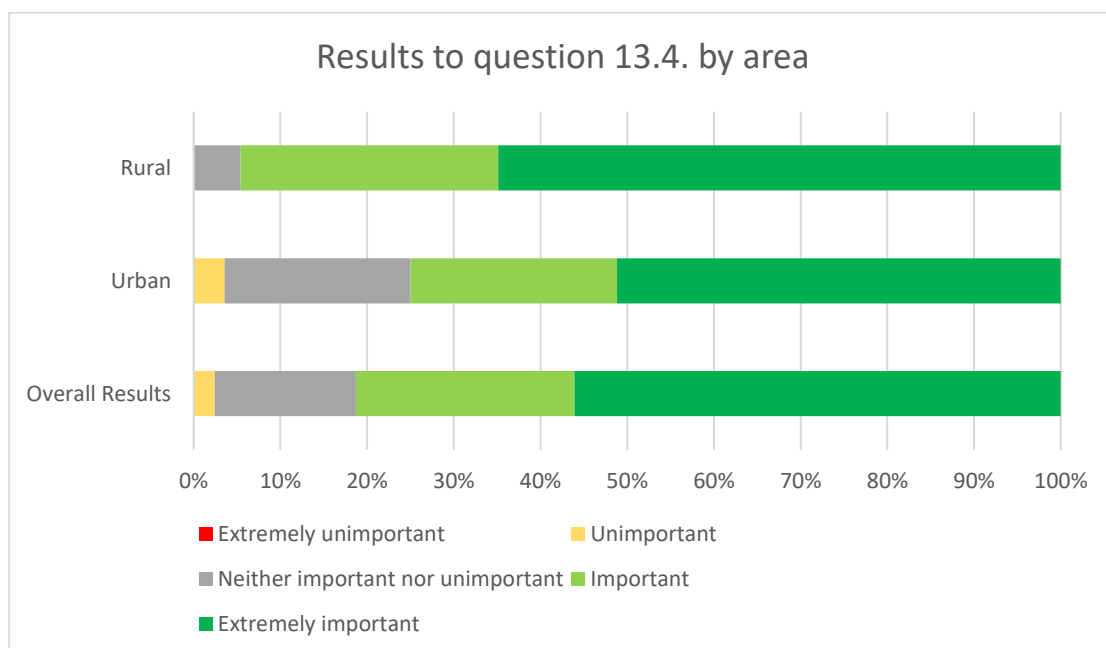

Figure 65. Results to question 13.4. by area

13.5. "Provide sensitivity/LGBTQI+ training to administrative staff, like the police force and cab drivers."

88% of the participants considered the above statement with an important majority deeming it "Extremely important" (64%). *Homosexual* participants answered slightly more positive than *bisexual-pansexual* participants.

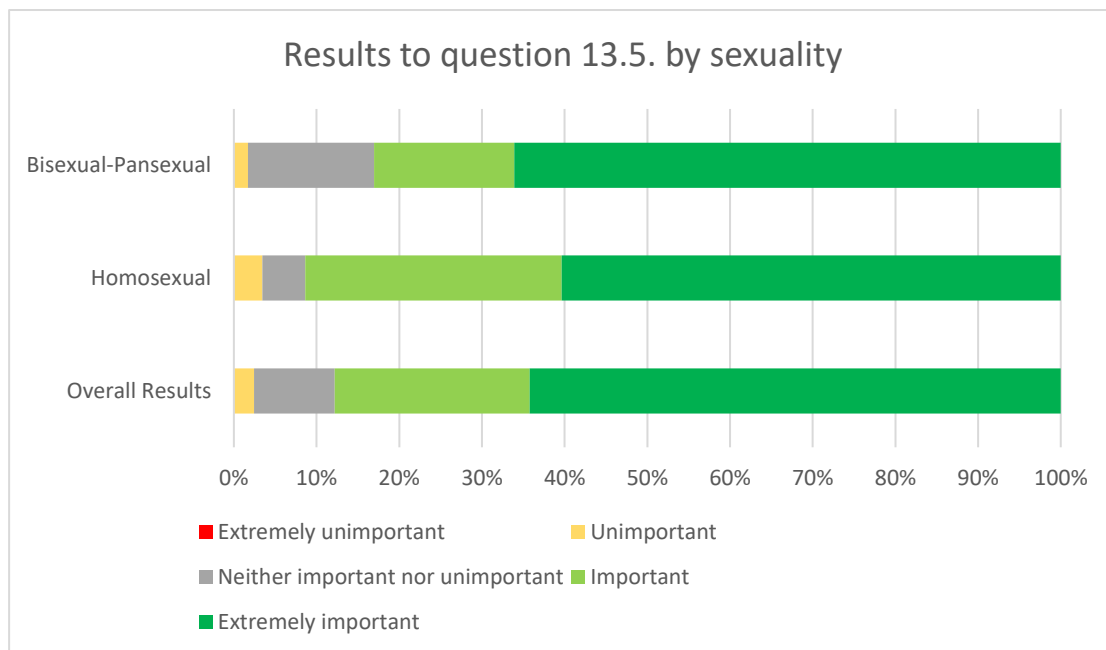
Figure 66. Results to question 13.5. by sexuality

13.6. "Have the city provide sensitivity/LGBTQI+ training to people employed in the tourism sector."

According to the overall results, 87% of the participants deemed the above statement important. As represented below, *gender expansive* participants attributed slightly more importance to this measure than *female or male* participants.
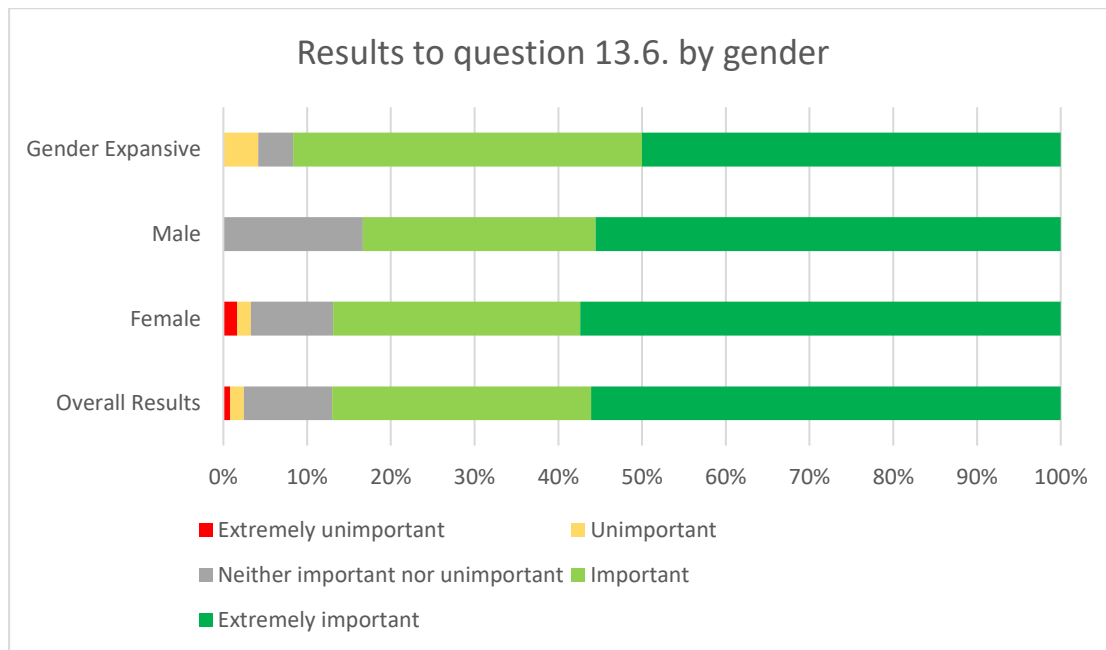
Figure 67. Results to question 13.6. by gender

Furthermore, *homosexual* participants expressed slightly more interest towards this measure than *bisexual-pansexual* participants.
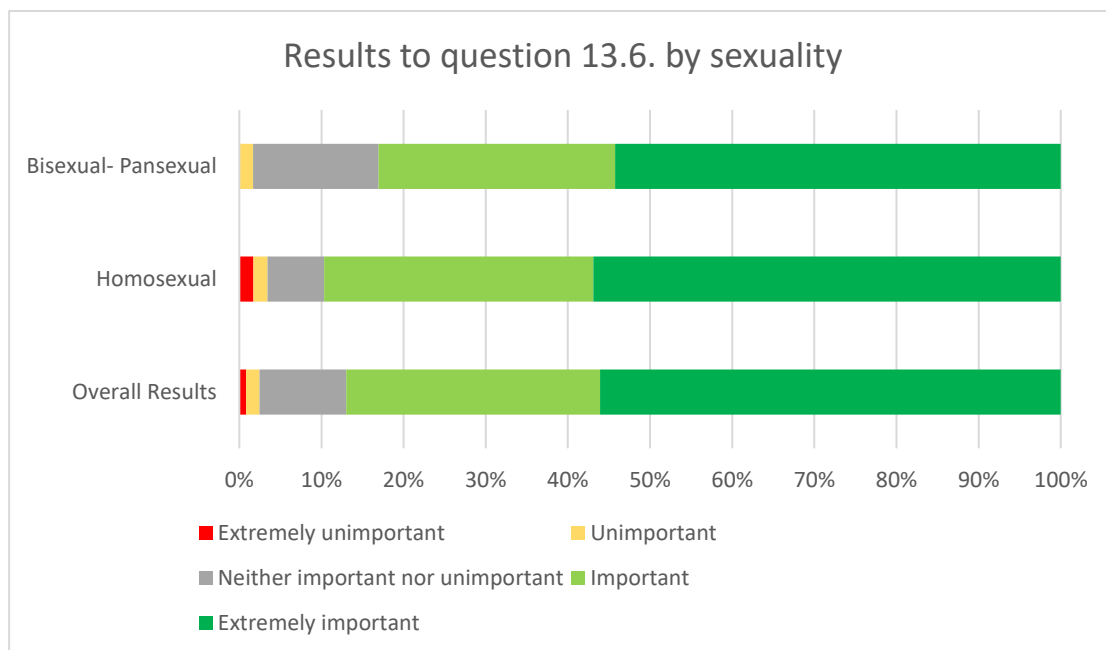
Figure 68. Results to question 13.6. by sexuality

A slight difference between the responses of participants living in *rural* and participants living *urban* environments was detected.

Figure 69. Results to question 13.6. by area

13.7. "Develop LGBTQI+ friendly areas and attractions."

According to the overall results, 80% of the participants replied that they considered tourist destinations developing LGBTQI+ friendly areas and attractions important. *Gender expansive* and *female* participants replied more positively than *male* participants.
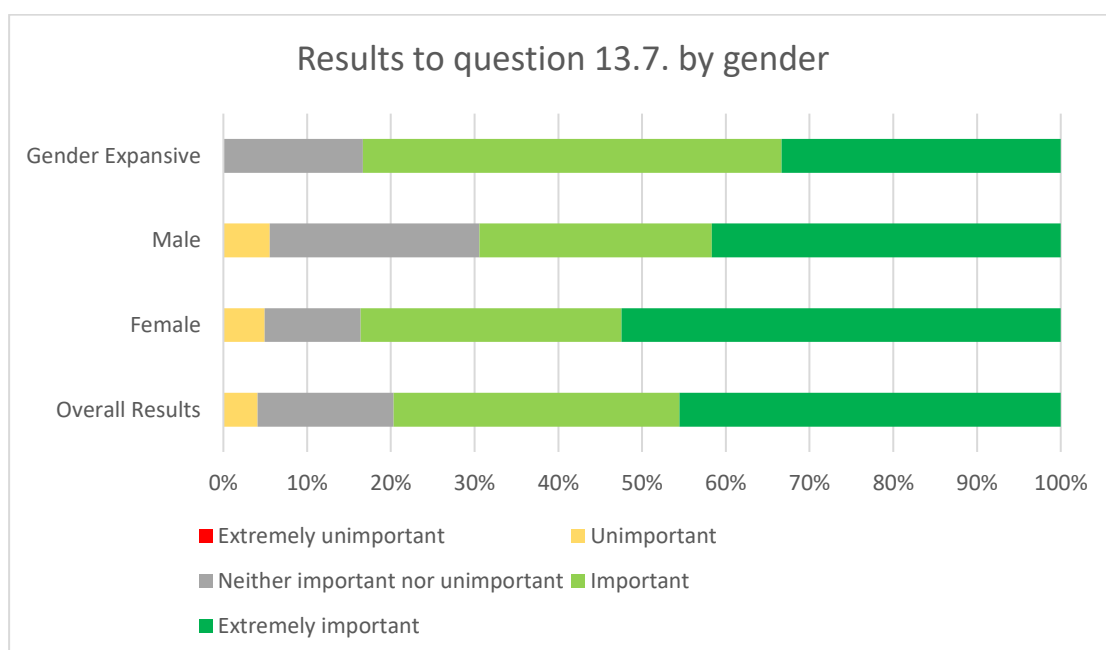
Figure 70. Results to question 13.7. by gender

13.8. "Host LGBTQI+ community events."

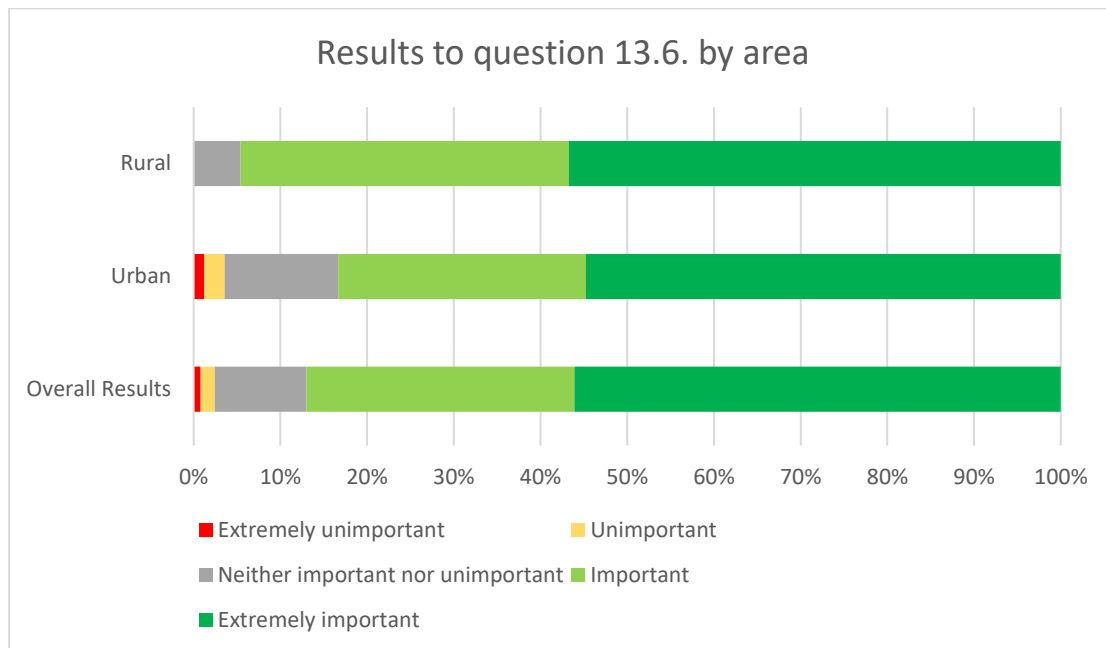According to the overall results, 78% of the participants replied that they considered the touristic destination hosting LGBTQ+ community events important. *Female* participants expressed the highest amount of interest.
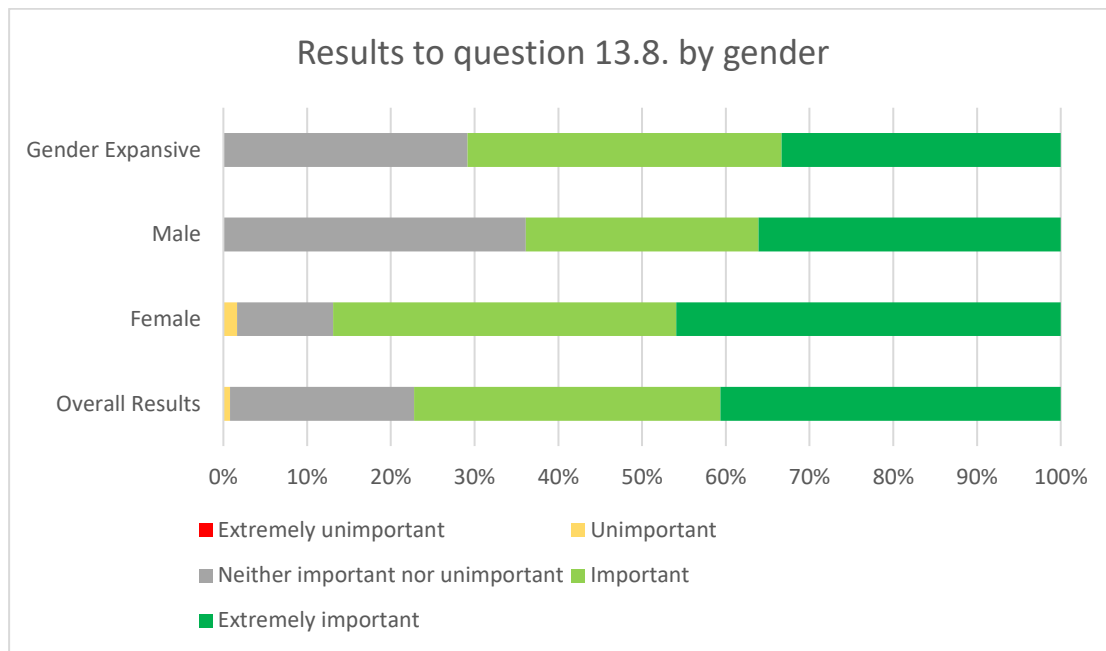
Figure 71. Results to question 13.8. by gender

13.9. "Engage LGBTQI+ local residents into tourism policy-making."

The grand majority of the participants, namely the 81% replied that they considered touristic destinations engage LGBTQI+ local residents into tourism policy-making important. *Gender expansive* participants expressed the highest amount of interest.
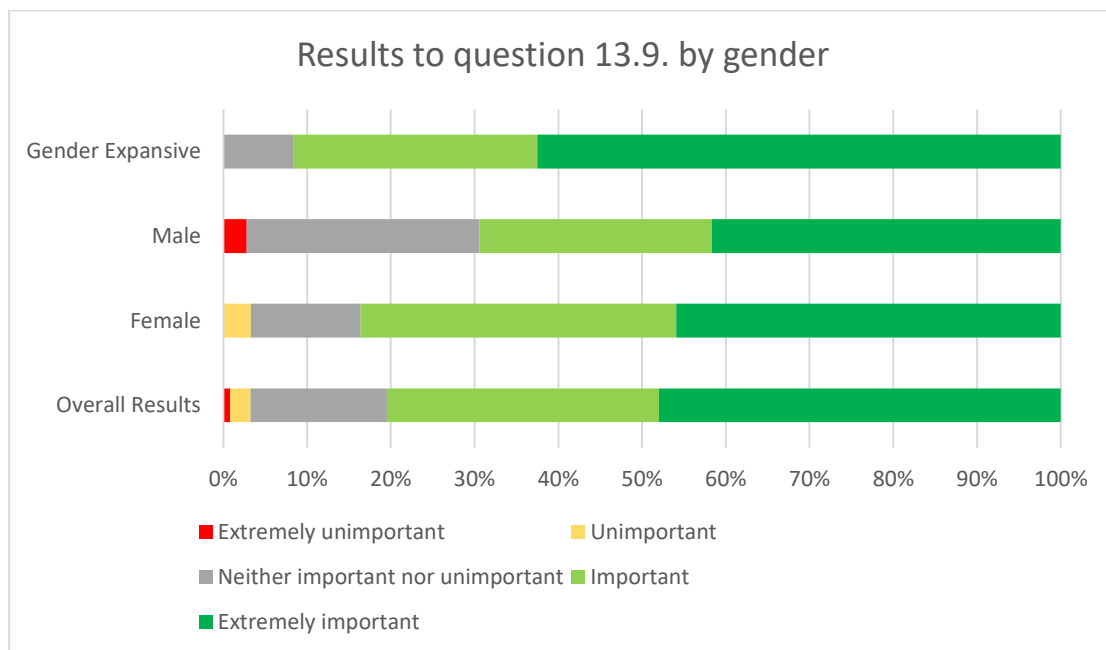
Figure 72. Results to question 13.9. by gender

13.10. "Use ads featuring real LGBTQI+ people rather than stereotypical gay imaginary."

According to the data represented bellow, 88% of the participants replied that they considered touristic businesses using ads featuring real LGBTQI+ people rather than stereotypical gay imaginary, important. 100% of the *gender expansive* participants agreed with the statement. Male participants displayed the smallest degree of interest towards this policy.
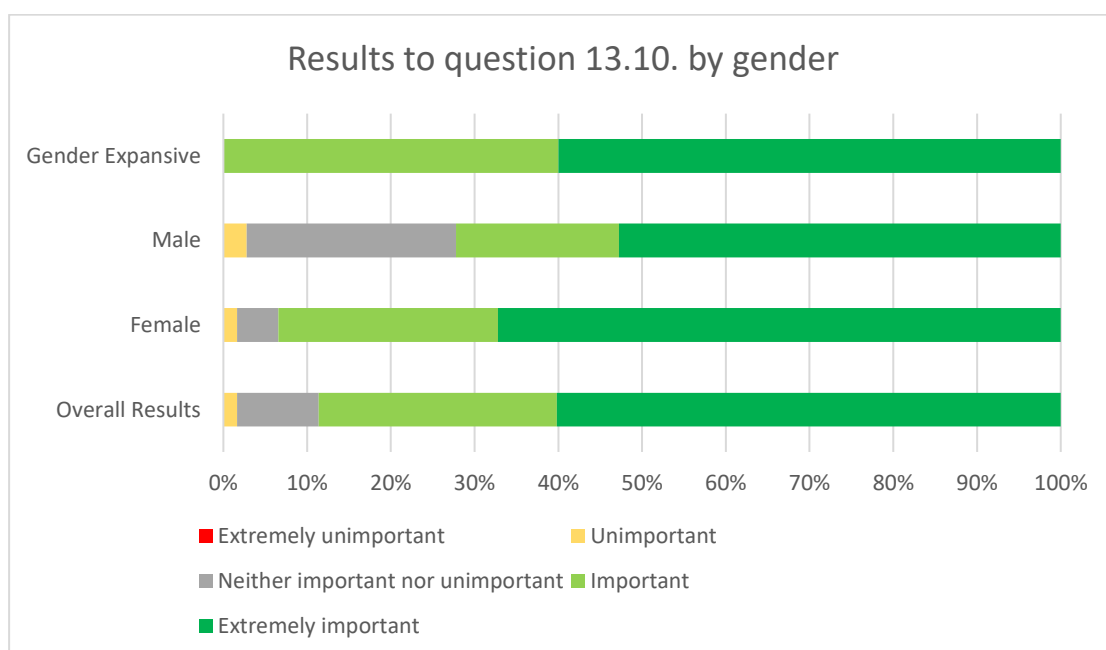
Figure 73. Results to question 13.10. by gender

13.11. "Provide workshops to tourism businesses to help create an LGBTQI+ friendly environment."

According to the data analysis, 90% of the participants replied that they considered as important the above statement. *Female participants* showed the highest percentage of agreement and *male* participants the lowest.

Figure 74. Results to question 13.11. by gender

Chapter 6: Conclusion and recommendations

6.1. Main conclusions

According to the findings of this study, the LGBTQI+ friendliness of a destination is something that LGBTQI+ travelers consider and value. While it may not necessarily be the main element that motivates them to traveling to a destination, it definitely is a factor they examine and that influences their final decision.
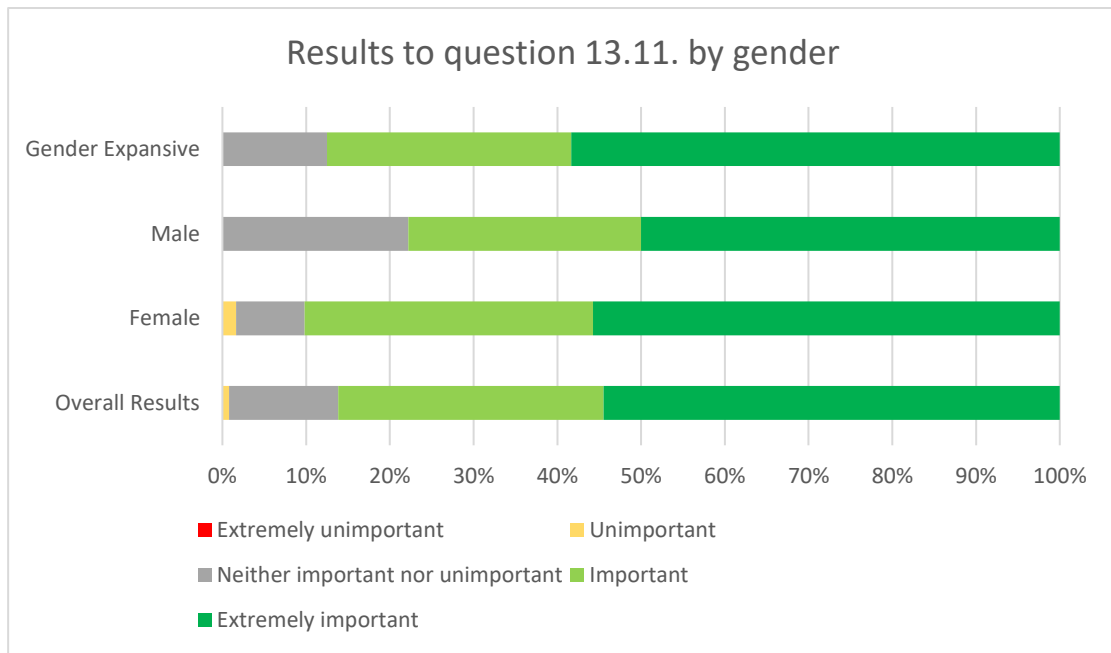
In the literature review of the study, it was discussed how *safety* is an important aspect LGBTQI+ travelers consider before visiting a destination. This was corroborated by the research's results. According to the responses of the participants, sexuality and gender anti-discrimination laws/ policies play an important role in the decision-making process of the travelers to visit a destination. The above is also confirmed by the responses of the participants regarding which hotel programs and outreach methods they consider important. According to the results of the research, the most essential initiative a hotel can adopt to attract LGBTQI+ visitors is to establish policies against gender and sexuality discrimination.

Furthermore, in the literature review of the study, the theory was discussed that LGBTQI+ people tend to have a *strong sense of community* and create bonds in the physical as well as in the virtual world. That was corroborated by the research, as the big majority of the participants claimed that they would not travel to a destination that treats their local LGBTQI+ community poorly. Furthermore, the most of the participants claimed that they would be more likely to book a room in a hotel hiring LGBTQI+ staff and supporting its local LGBTQI+ community. Even when discussing the best outreach strategies, the participants considered as first priority actions for businesses to stand up for LGBTQI+ rights in the local community and sponsor local/ national LGBTQI+ non-profits or events.

Another concept discussed was that of *gay spaces* or in other words, the creation of touristic facilities specifically targeting the LGBTQI+ traveler. Approximately half of the participants claimed to have visited *gay spaces* during holidays. The most popular of them were bars and nightclubs followed by LGBTQI+ neighborhoods and special events (ex. Pride). Only a very small minority of the participants stated that they stayed in a hotel exclusively for LGBTQI+ people. That could be due to a lack of interest of the participants or due to absence of such facilities.

Similarly, very few participants replied that they went for shopping in an LGBTQI+ neighborhood, visited a local LGBTQI+ community center or conference. Meeting and dating online platforms played a significant role especially for male travelers.

The hypothesis of this study was that the elements perceived as important for a destination to be considered LGBTQI+ friendly will show differentiations between the sub-groups of the LGBTQI+ community. This was corroborated by the findings of the research which showed important variations between the responses of the participants. The most noteworthy differentiation was between the responses of the participants by gender. Specifically, *gender expansive* participants showed overall bigger interest in LGBTQI+ policies aiming to legally protect the travelers and empower the local LGBTQI+ communities than *male* or *female* participants. This could be explained by the fact that *transgender, non binary, gender non-conforming* and *agender* people are less recognized and therefore feel the need for more protection and acknowledgment. *Gender expansive* participants seemed also more motivated in getting in touch with local LGBTQI+ associations and participating in the local discussion on LGBTQI+ issues. Regarding marketing and advertisement, both *gender expansive* as well as *female* participants expressed their need for an approach that reflects the diversity of the LGBTQI+ travelers. *Male* participants were more inclined towards more traditional approaches as putting a rainbow flag in the imagery of the advertisement or redesigning the logo into rainbow colors. Furthermore, *male* participants valued legislations protecting LGBTQI+ travelers but in general seemed less inclined towards hotel and business policies and outreach methods targeting the LGBTQI+ traveler. *Male* participants were also less prone than *female* and *gender expansive* to visit a gay spaces and preferred the usage of online applications to come in contact with local LGBTQI+ people.

A similar pattern was noticed when examining the data by the area of living of the participants. People living in *rural* environments showed more interest in LGBTQI+ facilities, events and laws protecting LGBTQI+ rights than people living in *urban* environments. This could be attributed to the existence of a more conservative environment in *rural* areas and a lack of LGBTQI+ facilities. The last makes sense, considering the fact that LGBTQI+ events and facilities are usually found in big metropolitan centers.

When examining the results by sexuality, *homosexual* participants showed slightly higher interest in LGBTQI+ friendly policies and activities than *bisexual/ pansexual* participants. In the survey results few points were noted that showed some differentiation between the perceptions of the two

sub-groups. The research overall suggested that there were no big differentiations in the perspectives of these two sub-groups. While the differences between *homosexual* and *bisexual/ pansexual* participants were not as evident as the differences in perceptions of the participants examined by gender it is still of interest to refer to them with caution. Those were mostly noted regarding the application of sensitization training towards local administration staff and tourist employees. *Homosexual* participants seemed more motivated towards such initiatives than *bisexual/ pansexual* participants. Furthermore, *homosexual* participants were more prone to the usage of LGBTQI+ dating and socialization apps.

6.2. Policy recommendations

The intention of the study was to reach conclusions regarding the LGBTQI+ friendliness of touristic destinations/ businesses and use them to develop policy recommendations. As discussed above, the assumption has been confirmed that the LGBTQI+ friendliness is a characteristic of the destination that influences the decision of the LGBTQI+ travelers. This chapter will discuss what exactly destinations/ businesses can do in order to become LGBTQI+ friendly and satisfy the needs of this niche market.

Regarding accommodation services, for example hotels, the following initiatives have been deemed important. Firstly, the businesses, should establish policies against gender and sexuality discrimination. According to the results of the survey, this practice has been viewed as the most important step for an accommodation to become LGBTQI+ friendly. One can relate this element to the need of LGBTQI+ visitors to feel safe in their vacations. Other important steps to become LGBTQI+ friendly include the hiring of LGBTQI+ staff and the supporting of the local LGBTQI+ community. An example of supporting the local LGBTQI+ community could be the sponsoring of local LGBTQI+ events. As discussed above, LGBTQI+ people empathize a lot with each other and have a strong feeling of community. Accommodation service should also feel encouraged to provide LGBTQI+ diversity training to the staff educating them on how to treat LGBTQI+ travelers with understanding and respect. When fulfilling the above criteria and taking care of the safety of the visitors, accommodation services wishing to attract this niche market, can proceed to advertise themselves as LGBTQI+ friendly and add LGBTQI+ imaginary to their website. The best outreach methods will be further elaborated.

Furthermore, some suggestions will be provided directed to destinations wanting to develop LGBTQI+ tourism and considering the facilities they should grow. According to the findings of the research the most popular LGBTQI+ facilities are gay bars and nightclubs. Destinations wanting to approach this niche market should consider developing such facilities or making them more accessible for tourists. LGBTQI+ tourists also claimed to enjoy visiting neighborhoods with an LGBTQI+ character or history. The promotion and protection of such spaces could eventually mean the attraction of LGBTQI+ tourists. Moreover, the organization of LGBTQI+ events such as Pride could be beneficial for the image of the destination as LGBTQI+ friendly. Virtual spaces where travelers can meet or date are also very popular in our time. The destination could develop online platforms for tourists to come in contact with locals from the LGBTQI+ community. From the other side, accommodation services dedicated only to LGBTQI+ visitors did not seem to interest the LGBTQI+ travelers taking part in this research.

The highest priority for touristic destinations or businesses wanting to reach out to the LGBTQI+ traveler should be standing up for LGBTQI+ rights in the local community and sponsoring local LGBTQI+ NGOs or events. By promoting the rights of the local LGBTQI+ community an authentic ¨welcome¨ will be communicated to all the LGBTQI+ travelers and locals. Furthermore, as events have been known for having an important significance for the LGBTQI+ people, sponsoring for example the Pride event can have a positive effect on how LGBTQI+ people feel about the destination or business. Regarding advertising, it is preferable for businesses wanting to attract LGBTQI+ travelers to advertise themselves as LGBTQI+ friendly in mainstream media not only in LGBTQI+ media and to include imaginary of different LGBTQI+ sub-groups.

Destinations wanting to become more LGBTQI+ friendly and attract this type of tourism should primarily focus on becoming safe place for the visitors as well as the locals. This can be mainly achieved by implementing non-discrimination and LGBTQI+ friendly legislations. Furthermore, they can provide sensitivity training to administrative staff (for example the police force, cab drivers and people working in the local touristic sector). Moreover, they can educate local touristic businesses by providing them relevant workshops and create LGBTQI+ facilities (like gender neutral bathrooms). Finally, the engagement of the local LGBTQI+ community is very important in order to create good living conditions for the locals and authentic and enriching experiences for the visitors.

6.3. Recommendations for further research

As discussed in the limitations of the study, researches trying to understand the differences between different subgroups of a minority group, face the challenge of finding a significant sample. That was the case also in this study as while 144 responses to the questionnaire were collected, many subgroups of the LGBTQI+ community were not adequately represented. That did not allow for insights regarding the views of specific subgroups as well as their comparison. For this reason, a research with a larger and more diverse sample could allow the collection of data from more sub-groups of the LGBTQI+ community and therefore of their specific needs and preferences. That would allow the further understanding of the diversity of LGBTQI+ people and would help the touristic domain improve their approach towards them. Furthermore, now that specific differences between the perceptions of the subgroups of the LGBTQI+ community have been located further qualitative research could allow a more in depth understanding of the situation.

References

Apostolopoulou, Elia & Tsartas, Paris. (2015). Gay and Lesbian Tourism: The Construction of Gay Identity. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/322539009_Gay_and_Lesbian_Tourism_The_Construction_of_Gay_Identity

Apostolopoulou, N. (2008). Διερεύνηση επιλογών γκέι τουριστών στην Αθήνα [Exploring gay tourist options in Athens] (Unpublished thesis). ΕΚΔΔΑ. Retrieved from https://www.ekdd.gr/ekdda/files/ergasies_esdd/19/025/1254.pdf

Avraham, E. (2009). Marketing and managing nation branding during prolonged crisis: The case of Israel. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy, 5*(3), 202-212. doi:10.1057/pb.2009.15

Badgett, L. (1997). Beyond biased samples: Challenging the myths on the economic status of lesbians and gay men (A. R. Gluckman & B. Reed, Eds.). *Homo Economics: Capitalism, Community and Lesbian and Gay Life,* 65-72. New York: Routledge.

Berezan, O., Raab, C., Krishen, A. S., & Love, C. (2015). Loyalty Runs Deeper than Thread Count: An Exploratory Study of Gay Guest Preferences and Hotelier Perceptions. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, 32*(8), 1034-1050. doi:10.1080/10548408.2014.958209

Blackmer, C. E. (2019). Pinkwashing. *Israel Studies, 24*(2), 171-181. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.2979/israelstudies.24.2.14

Branchik, BJ. (2002). Out in the market: a history of the gay market segment in the United States. *Journal of Macromarketing*, *22*(1), 86-97.

Cambridge University. (2021). HETERONORMATIVE: Signification, définition dans le dictionnaire Anglais de Cambridge. Retrieved January 08, 2021, from https://dictionary.cambridge.org/fr/dictionnaire/anglais/heteronormative

Carpenter, C. (2004). New evidence on gay and lesbian household incomes. *Contemporary Economic Policy,* 22(1), 78–94.

Ciszek, E. (2016). A corporate coming out: Crisis communication and engagement with LGBT publics. *Case Studies in Strategic Communication, 5*, 72-98. Retrieved July 8, 2020, from http://cssc.uscannenberg.org/wpcontent/uploads/2016/08/v5art5.pdf

CMI. (August, 2014a). *Welcoming the Transgender Traveler. A study for the Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention & Visitors Bureau* (Rep.). San Francisco: Community Marketing Inc. Retrieved February 2, 2021, from https://www.communitymarketinginc.com/documents/temp/CMI_GFLCVB_TransgenderTraveler2014.pdf

CMI. (December, 2014b). *CMI's 19th LGBT Tourism & Hospitality Survey* (Rep.). San Francisco: Community Marketing Inc. Retrieved February 2, 2021, from https://scholarworks.umass.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1880&context=ttra

CMI, & IGLTA. (December, 2016*). 21st Annual Survey on LGBT Tourism and Hospitality - U.S. Overview Report. CMI's 20th Annual LGBT Tourism and Hospitality Survey, USA Overview Report* (Rep.). San Francisco: Community Marketing Inc. Retrieved July 9, 2020, from https://www.communitymarketinginc.com/documents/temp/CMI_21st-LGBT-Travel-Study-Report2016.pdf

CMI, & IGLTA. (December, 2018). *23rd Annual LGBTQ Tourism & Hospitality Survey. USA Overview Report* (Rep.). San Francisco: Community Marketing Inc. Retrieved July 9, 2020, from https://communitymarketinginc.com/documents/temp/CMI_23rd-LGBTQ-Travel-Study-Report2018.pdf

CMI. (December, 2019). *24th Annual LGBTQ Tourism & Hospitality Survey USA Overview Report* (Rep.). San Francisco: Community Marketing Inc. Retrieved July 9, 2020, from http://www.cmi.info/documents/temp/CMI_24th-LGBTQ-Travel-Study-Report2019.pdf

Clift, S., & Wilkins, J. (1995). Travel, sexual behaviour and gay men. In P. Aggleton, P. Davies, & G. Hart (Eds.), *AIDS: Safety, sexuality and risk* (Social Aspects of AIDS, pp. 35-54). London: Taylor & Francis.

Denscombe, M. (2014). *The good research guide: for small-scale research projects*. Philadelphia: Open University Press.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION, & Bell, M. (2017). *Data collection in relation to LGBTI People*. Publications Office of the European Union. https://doi.org/10.2838/522787

Ficarra, M., Valcarce, O., & Williams, S. (2020). WRITING ABOUT GENDER AND SEXUALITY. Retrieved August 04, 2020, from https://www.hamilton.edu/academics/centers/writing/writing-resources/language-of-difference-writing-about-gender-and-sexuality?fbclid=IwAR0gjxosGtYMCZVwF1KP7NktARB7Nes2_TkryBwVQwyQRvZBjax9L C39E38

Fimiani, R. (2014). The Role of Gay Spaces for a Gay Destination. doi:10.13140/2.1.5029.5682. General Assembly Resolution 56/212 [United Nations & UNWTO]. (21 December, 2001). *Global Code of Ethics for Tourism*, A/RES/56/212. Retrieved June 25, 2020 from https://webunwto.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/imported_images/37802/gcetbrochureglobalcodeen.pdf

Gottschall, M. (2002). The ethical implications of the deconstruction of gender. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion, 70*(2), 279-299. doi:10.1093/jaar/70.2.279

Guaracino, J. (2007). *Gay and lesbian tourism: The essential guide for marketing*. Amsterdam: Elsevier/Butterworth-Heinemann. doi:10.4324/9780080554587

Guaracino, J., & Salvato, E. (2017). *Handbook of LGBT Tourism and Hospitality*. Amsterdam University Press. https://doi.org/10.17312/har-ring-parkpress/2017.03.hlgbtth.001

Healey, J. F., Stepnick, A., & O'Brien, E. (2018). *Race, ethnicity, gender, and class: The sociology of group conflict and change*. Los Angeles: SAGE.

Hekma, G. (1994). Amsterdam. In D. Higgs (Ed.), *Queer sites: Gay urban histories since 1600* (pp. 61-88). New York: Routledge.

Hindle, P. (1994). Gay communities and gay space in the city. In The Margins of the City: Gay Men's Urban Lives (S. Whittle, Eds.), 7-25. Hants: Ashgate Publishing Limited.

Hughes, H. (1997). Holidays and homosexual identity. *Tourism Management, 18*(1), 3–7. doi:10.1016/s0261-5177(96)00093-3

Hughes, H. (2002). Marketing gay tourism in Manchester: New market for urban tourism or destruction of 'gay space'? *Journal of Vacation Marketing, 9*(2), 152-163.

Hughes, H. L. (2006). *Pink tourism: Holidays of gay men and lesbians*. Wallingford: CABI.

Hunt, M. & Zacharias, J. (2008). Marketing the Imaginary of Montreal's (Gay) Village. *Canadian journal of urban research. 17*, 28-57.

Ian Johnson, I., CEO. (2016). *Out Now Global LGBT Travel Industry Survey, 2016* (2nd ed.). Utrecht, Netherlands, 3512XK: Out Now.

Iantaffi, A., & Bockting, W. O. (2011). Views from both sides of the bridge? Gender, sexual legitimacy and transgender people's experiences of relationships. *Culture, Health & Sexuality, 13*(3), 355-370. doi:10.1080/13691058.2010.537770

Kates, S. M., & Belk, R. W. (2001). The Meanings of Lesbian and Gay Pride Day: Resistance through Consumption and Resistance to Consumption. Retrieved from https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/089124101030004003?casa_token=Exo vUw9BlGsAAAAA:XPgLhu9qyMAjvyY-5ESlB_sht9UwDJ7E5POx0UdDUo2Zhzy_2CGW7UYw2u0hgn6ayopnVNz0ls01w

LGBT Capital. (2018). *Estimated LGBT Purchasing Power: LGBT-GDP - 2018 -*. Retrieved July 01, 2020, from http://www.lgbt-capital.com/docs/Estimated_LGBT-GDP_(table)_-_2018.pdf

LGBT Capital. (2020). *LGBT MARKET STATISTICS*. Retrieved July 01, 2020, from http://www.lgbt-capital.com/index.php?menu_id=2

Liberato, P., Liberato, D., Abreu, A., Alén, E., & Rocha, Á. (2018). LGBT Tourism: The Competitiveness of the Tourism Destinations Based on Digital Technology. *Advances in Intelligent Systems and Computing Trends and Advances in Information Systems and Technologies,* 264-276. doi:10.1007/978-3-319-77703-0_27

Loftus, J. (2001). America's Liberalization in Attitudes toward Homosexuality, 1973 to 1998. *American Sociological Review, 66*(5), 762-782. doi:10.2307/3088957

Mardell, A. (2016). *The ABC's of LGBT+*. Coral Gables, FL: Mango Media.

Morrison, A. M. (2019). Marketing and managing tourism destinations. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Pritchard A., Morgan N.J., & Sedgley D. (1998). Reaching out to the gay tourist: Opportunities and threats in an emerging market segment, Tourism Management, 19 (3), 273-282.

Ram, Y., Kama, A., Mizrachi, I., & Hall, C. M. (2019). The benefits of an LGBT-inclusive tourist destination. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management, 14*, 100374. doi:10.1016/j.jdmm.2019.100374

Ritchie, J. (2014). Pinkwashing, Homonationalism, and Israel-Palestine: The Conceits of Queer Theory and the Politics of the Ordinary. *Antipode, 47*(3), 616-634. doi:10.1111/anti.12100

Saunders, M. N. K., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2009). Understanding research philosophy and approaches to theory development. *Research Methods for Business Students*, *4*, 106–135. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/309102603_Understanding_research_philosophies_and_approaches

Shafie, G. (2015). Pinkwashing: Israel's International Strategy and Internal Agenda. *Kohl: A Journal for Body and Gender Research 1, 1*(1), 82-86. doi:10.36583/kohl/1-1-7

Slevitch, L. (2011) Qualitative and Quantitative Methodologies Compared: Ontological and Epistemological Perspectives, Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality and Tourism, *12* (1), 73-81. doi: 10.1080/1528008X.2011.541810

Smith, J. K. (1983). Quantitative versus qualitative research: An attempt to clarify the issue. *Educational Researcher*, *12*, 6–13.

Spartacus' World. (2020). Gay Travel Index. Retrieved June 1, 2020, from http://www.spartacusworld.com/gaytravelindex.pdf

Szabo, L. (2011). Gay marriage set to boost NewYork tourism. *USA today.*

Tag Approved. (2020). LGBTQ Welcoming Hotels Worldwide. Retrieved July 10, 2020, from https://www.tagapproved.com/

The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. (2019, June 21). Gay Pride. Retrieved from https://www.britannica.com/topic/Gay-Pride

The University of Chicago. (2021). The Center for the Study of Gender and Sexuality. Retrieved January 04, 2021, from http://gendersexuality.uchicago.edu/about/

Travel Industry Association. (2006). Comprehensive Travel and Tourism Study of Gays and Lesbians Highlights Leisure Travel Insights. Retrieved July 07, 2020, from https://www.htrends.com/trends-detail-sid-25463.html

Tsartas, P., & Sarantakou, E. (2015, January). New Trends for Tourism Products: The Issue of Tourism Resources.

University of Derby. (2021). Gender and Sexual Minority Students (LGBTIQA). Retrieved January 06, 2021, from https://www.derby.ac.uk/study/student-support/health-and-wellbeing/gender-and-sexual-minority-students-lgbtiqa/

Vorobjovas-Pinta, O. & Hardy, A. (2015). The Evolution of Gay Travel Research. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, *18*(4), 409-416.

Waitt, G. & Markwell, K. (2014). *Gay tourism: culture and context*. New York: Routledge

Werum, R., & Winders, B. (2001). Who's "In" and Who's "Out": State Fragmentation and the Struggle over Gay Rights, 1974–1999. *Social Problems, 48*(3), 386-410. doi:10.1525/sp.2001.48.3.386

World Tourism Organization [UNWTO]. (2012). Affiliate Members Global Report, Volume 3 - Global Report on LGBT Tourism. Madrid: UNWTO. doi: 10.18111/9789284414581

World Tourism Organization [UNWTO]. (2017). Affiliate Members Global Reports, Volume 15 – Second Global Report on LGBT Tourism. Madrid: UNWTO. doi:10.18111/9789284418619

Images:

Image 1. LSE Library. (2012). *Gay rights demonstration (possibly in Trafalgar Square?) including members of the Gay Liberation Front (GLF). The GLF held its first meeting in a basement classroom at the London School of Economics on 13th October 1970. It was inspired by the US GLF movements, which aimed to gain equal rights for the LGBT communities on an unapologetic basis. The organisation was very informal, having no designated structure, and organised marches, "gay days", street theatre performances, sit-ins and produced a journal entitled 'Come Together'. These activities led to the first Gay Pride March in 1972*. LSE Library @ Flickr Commons. Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Demonstration,_with_Gay_Liberation_Front_Banner,_c1972_(7374381322).jpg

Image 2. Jeffpw. (2001). *Photo of Jeffpw (on right) wedding ceremony in the Netherlands. Original text: Photo of my wedding ceremony in the Netherlands. My and my partner's gift to Wikipedia. Merry Christmas. Creative Commons 3.0*. Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=3256709

Image 3. Airlines for America. (2018). *The golden age of travel is now.* Source: https://www.airlines.org/media/air-travel-then-and-now/

Image 4. TMagen. (2013). *During the 2013 Tel Aviv Pride Parade, the anarcho-queer collective "Mashpritzot" held a die-in to protest Israeli pinkwashing, and the homonormative priorities of the city-sposored LGBT center.* Creative Commons 3.0. Source:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:%D7%9E%D7%A9%D7%A4%D7%A8%D7%99%D7%A6%D7%95%D7%AA_%D7%A4%D7%A2%D7%95%D7%9C%D7%94_%D7%95%D7%A8%D7%95%D7%93%D7%94_2.jpg

Image 5. IGLA. (December 2020). *World map on sexual orientation laws.* Source : https://ilga.org/maps-sexual-orientation-laws

Image 6. Atilin. (2006). *Montreal's Gay Village, near the Beaudry metro station.* Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Villagegai.jpg

Image 7. Travener, B. (2014). *São Paulo's 18th annual LGBT Pride Parade 2014 - Parada Gay - Gay Pride.* Source: https://www.flickr.com/photos/bentavener/14108541924/

Image 8. Spartacus. (2020). *Top Destinations by Spartacus. Source : https://spartacus.gayguide.travel/gaytravelindex.pdf*

Appendix A: Questionnaire

The purpose of this study is to explore the needs of the LGBTQI+ travelers with a view to identifying those elements that are especially important for a tourism destination to be LGBTQI+ friendly. Thank you very much for taking the time to fill in this questionnaire. Your responses will help develop recommendations towards destinations interested to become more LGBTQI+ friendly.

This questionnaire will take approximately 5-7 minutes to complete. Anonymity will be maintained in analysis and reporting. All data will remain anonymous, and no person identifiable data will be collected.

1. **Gender**

Male
Female
Transmasculine
Transfeminine
Non binary/ Gender non-conforming/ Agender
Intersex
Prefer not to say
Other, namely:

2. **Sexuality**

Heterosexual
Homosexual
Bisexual/ Pansexual
Asexual
Prefer not to say
Other, namely:

3. **Age**

Under 18

18-24

25-34

35-44

45-54

55-64

65+

4. **Nationality [Short answer]**

5. **What is the population of the place you live in?**

Less than 1,000 residents.

Between 1,000 and 30,000 residents.

Between 30,000 and 100,000 residents.

More than 100,000 residents.

6. **Do you have children? [Yes, No, Prefer not to say]**

If 'Yes', please answer question 7. If 'No' or 'Prefer not to say' please move on to Question 8

7. **If so, are you an LGBTQI+ person/couple traveling for vacations with your children? [Yes, No, Prefer not to say]**

8. **When selecting a destination for your vacation, how important is it that the destination is LGBTQI+ friendly? [scale] [Not at all important 1,2,3,4,5 Extremely important]**

9. **Please indicate your degree of agreement or disagreement with the following statements [likert scale] [Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither agree nor disagree, Agree, Strongly agree]**

I will not travel to a destination that treats their local LGBTQI+ community poorly.

I am more likely to travel to destinations with sexual orientation anti-discrimination laws.

I am more likely to travel to destinations with gender identity anti-discrimination laws.

I will travel to a destination that is LGBTQI+ unfriendly, as long as I feel safe as a tourist.

I only travel to known LGBTQI+ welcoming destinations.

Traveling as an out LGBTQI+ person to countries with anti-LGBTQI+ laws creates positive change.

Boycotting a destination because it is LGBTQI+ unfriendly, does more harm than good.

I am more likely to travel to destinations with a reputation of being safe for LGBTQI+ travelers.

10. **Which of these programs and outreach methods are important to you, when considering booking a hotel, or joining a hotel loyalty program? [likert scale] [Extremely important, Important, Neither important nor unimportant, Unimportant, Extremely unimportant]**

Hotel or brand has sexual orientation non-discrimination policies.

Hotel or brand provides LGBTQI+ diversity training to staff.

Hotel or brand has gender identity non-discrimination policies.

Hotel or brand advertises itself as LGBTQI+ friendly.

Hotel or brand has LGBTQI+ imagery on their website.

Hotel or brand employs LGBTQI+ staff.

Hotel or brand, supports the LGBTQI+ community (e.g. by sponsoring LGBTQI+ events).

11. **In the past 12 months, have you participated in any of these LGBTQI+ specific activities while on vacation in a different city than the one you live in? When on vacation in a different city, I have... [Yes, No, Prefer not to say]**

Attended a gay/lesbian bar.

Visited an LGBTQI+ neighborhood.

Attended a restaurant in the LGBTQI+ neighborhood.

Attended a gay/lesbian nightclub.

Purchased clothes or other retail items in the LGBTQI+ neighborhood.

Used a LGBTQI+ dating website or a dating mobile app.

Attended an LGBTQI+ Pride event.

Attended an LGBTQI+ party event other than Pride.

Spent a night in an LGBTQI+ dedicated hotel or guesthouse.

Visited the local LGBTQI+ community center.

Attended an LGBTQI+ conference.

Used an online platform to come in contact with local LGBTQI+ people.

12. How do you feel about a travel company (airline, hotel, tour operator, etc.) when you see the following types of LGBTQI+ outreach strategies? [Very positive, Somewhat positive, Neutral, Somewhat Negative, Very negative]

Standing up for LGBTQI+ rights and equality.

Sponsor a local or national LGBTQI+ non-profit.

Sponsor or participate in a local Pride event.

Use a rainbow flag in their advertising imagery.

Redesign their logo into rainbow colors.

Reflect the diversity of the LGBTQI+ travelers in the imagery of the advertisement.

Brand imagery shows LGBTQI+ travelers with different characteristics.

Advertising itself in the LGBTQI+ media.

Advertising itself as LGBTQI+ friendly in the mainstream media.

13. In your opinion, how important are the following initiatives for destinations seeking to attract LGBTQI+ visitors? [Extremely important, Important, Neither important nor unimportant, Unimportant, Extremely unimportant]

Implement non-discrimination and LGBTQI+ friendly policies for tourism businesses.

Implement non-discrimination and LGBTQI+ friendly laws.

Use LGBTQI+ friendly advertising.

Provide gender-neutral/single-stall bathrooms and other facilities (like change rooms).

Provide sensitivity/LGBTQI+ training to administrative staff, like the police force and cab drivers.

Have the city provide sensitivity/LGBTQI+ training to people employed in the tourism sector.

Develop LGBTQI+ friendly areas and attractions.

Host LGBTQI+ community events.

Engage LGBTQI+ local residents into tourism policy-making.

Use ads featuring real LGBTQI+ people rather than stereotypical gay imaginary.

Provide workshops to tourism businesses to help create an LGBTQI+ friendly environment.