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"**LGBTQIA+ refugees/migrants in Greece: addressing the legal and social context**".

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Declaration of originality

I responsibly declare that the submitted dissertation for the award of the diploma of the Postgraduate Program "Media and Refugee / Migration Flows", Specialization "Communication Management of Refugee / Migration Flows" of the Department of Communication and Media Studies/National and Kapodistrian University of Athens has been written by me personally and no one else has written the whole or part of it. In addition, I responsibly declare that this dissertation has not been submitted or approved for the award of any other postgraduate or undergraduate degree, in Greece or abroad. This dissertation represents my personal views on the subject. The sources I have used are mentioned in their entirety, giving full references to the authors, including internet sources.

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Abstract

In a dynamic era where diversity and inclusion of all social groups uniformly is of paramount importance, this thesis, entitled "LGBTQIA+ refugees/migrants in Greece: addressing the legal and social context", explores the challenges faced by LGBTQIA+ individuals in the context of migration, with a particular focus on Greece.

The primary objective is a twofold examination: first, to explore the legal framework governing the rights of LGBTQIA+ refugees and migrants in Greece and its implications during their integration process; second, to explore the social dynamics and cultural factors that shape the experiences of LGBTQIA+ people in the context of migration in Greece. However, it is important to examine and report on whether the barriers stemming from the legal and social context respectively correlate with each other.

Methodologically, the thesis uses an integrated approach, combining an overview of existing legal and social frameworks, analysis of social identities and prejudices, qualitative interviews with LGBTQIA+ refugees/migrants and an examination of the social and cultural factors that influence their integration into Greek society. While additionally shedding light on the experiences and motivations of LGBTQIA+ refugees/migrants in Greece, this study acknowledges the limitations they face in their efforts to integrate smoothly into Greek society. Their influences relate both to their personal experiences before and during their settlement in Greece, as well as the difficulties caused by the shortcomings of Greek legislation and social factors.

Acknowledgements

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Introduction

In a rapidly evolving socio-political landscape where diversity and inclusion are at the heart of everything, the exploration of marginalized communities is of paramount importance. This thesis, entitled "LGBTQIA+ refugees/migrants in Greece: addressing the legal and social context", seeks to contribute to the understanding of the challenges faced by LGBTQIA+ people in the context of migration, with a particular focus on Greece.

As Sigmund Freud once said, "As we go through life, we learn the limits of our abilities." This phrase could refer to the obstacles that LGBTQIA+ refugees and migrants encounter, not only during their migration, but also in trying to understand the legal and social context in which it is necessary to safeguard their rights and dignity. In fact, it would refer to the fact that by overcoming their difficulties, their capacities increase.

The thesis delves into the experiences of LGBTQ+ refugee and migrant individuals within the Greek context. Recent developments in LGBTQIA+ rights globally contrast sometimes with the challenges faced by those seeking asylum or a new life in Greece. Nevertheless, what are the unique legal and social challenges faced by LGBTQIA+ refugees and migrants in Greece? This question is the focus of our investigation and serves as the guiding force of this thesis.

The objective of this thesis is therefore to firstly examine the legal frameworks governing LGBTQIA+ rights in Greece and their impact on refugees/migrants, as well as to explore the social dynamics and cultural factors that influence the experiences of LGBTQIA+ people in the context of migration in Greece.

To achieve these objectives, the methodology combines a comprehensive overview of existing legal and social frameworks as well as analysis of social identities and prejudices, qualitative interviews with LGBTQIA+ refugees/migrants and analysis of social and cultural factors influencing their integration into Greek society.

Although this study provides an important contribution to the understanding of the experiences of LGBTQIA+ refugees/migrants in Greece and the reasons that led them to make this move, it is important to acknowledge the limitations they experienced in their efforts to integrate into Greek society. One of these constraints is religion, which shapes Greek society, while at the same time Greek bureaucracy seems to be an important factor with a strong influence on both legal and social levels.

Therefore, by exploring the legal and social context of LGBTQIA+ refugees/migrants in Greece, this thesis seeks not only to answer pressing questions but also to inspire further research and debate in the fields of human rights, immigration studies and LGBTQIA+ advocacy.

More specifically, the first chapter of the theory will examine the concept of identity in the social sciences, which is a multifaceted concept rooted in language and in the understanding of ourselves and others. It encompasses individual and collective identification, which is influenced by social structures and group membership. While individual identity emphasizes uniqueness, self-categorization theory explores how individuals identify with social groups, shaping perceptions of personal and social identity. Within groups, individuals navigate roles, behaviors, and social expectations, contributing to cohesion and defining social roles. Group dynamics include assessment, commitment and role transition, with roles often reflecting status and influence. These discussions highlight the complex relationships between identity formation, individual and group dynamics, and the interplay between personal and social identities in social science contexts.

This is followed by an analysis of the distinction between xenophobia and racism, which is of paramount importance for understanding the complexity of discrimination. While racism involves systematic prejudice and discrimination against people based on their nationality or race, xenophobia is rooted in fear and hatred of foreigners. Although both often coexist, xenophobia is not based solely on fear, but can also stem from envy or a sense of inequality. In addition, racism can extend beyond skin color to include cultural differences, marginalizing certain groups based on race or culture. However, attempts to conflate racism and xenophobia into a monistic conception oversimplify their distinctive characteristics and fail to recognize their specificities. Instead, the intersection of sexism

and homophobia reveals a deeper intertwining of prejudices. Furthermore, it is argued that homophobia and sexism are interrelated phenomena, with the oppression of LGBTQ+ people being directly linked to the oppression of women, and further clarifies how gender bias contributes to misogyny, homophobia, and the marginalization of LGBTQ+ communities.

In addition, exploring heteronormativity as the fundamental step in understanding the LGBTQ+ community reveals pervasive social biases and norms that contribute to marginalization and discrimination. Rooted in assumptions about gender and sexuality, heteronormativity perpetuates the belief that heterosexual relationships are natural and ideal, while alternative expressions of sexuality are considered deviant or abnormal. The LGBTQIA+ community, which includes diverse gender and sexual identities, faces entrenched prejudice and discrimination shaped by heteronormative beliefs. Despite increasing visibility and acceptance, LGBTQIA+ people still face marginalization and violence, often fueled by social taboos and stigma, in addition to experiencing heightened levels of prejudice and exclusion. Prejudice and discrimination against LGBTQIA+ people manifest itself in a few areas, including religion, culture, and social norms.

The Geneva Convention delineates refugees as individuals fearing persecution due to factors like race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or social group membership. Migrants, on the other hand, move for diverse reasons, including economic opportunities. Despite legal distinctions, both refugees and migrants encounter discrimination and xenophobia. SOGIESC asylum seekers, encompassing Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics, face unique hurdles during the asylum process, such as proving the authenticity of their identities and navigating cultural barriers. Discrimination against refugees and migrants underscores the importance of addressing xenophobia and upholding their rights to foster more inclusive societies.

Finally, it analyses European immigration policy, which includes different views among Member States, with some of them supporting liberal immigration policies and others adopting anti-immigration positions. EU migration policy, structured around four pillars, covers regular migration, asylum, trafficking in human beings and social impacts. Challenges persist for SOGIESC asylum seekers in Europe due to gaps in legislation and systemic discrimination. In Greece, a main entry point for refugees, LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers face

hiding to survive, discrimination and violence, exacerbated by national and power dynamics. Residence permits for third country nationals in Greece, governed by evolving legislation, include various categories, such as work, humanitarian reasons, study, and family reunification, while EU citizens enjoy certain rights under the 2004/38/EC Directives.

Part A – Literature Review

CHAPTER 1: WHAT "IDENTITY" MEANS?

The first part of the thesis focuses on the concept of identity. It is shown that identity theory and social identity theory are key frameworks that delve into the intricacies of individual and collective identities, and especially into the contexts of social movements. The theory demonstrates that individual identity is formed during socialization, while self-categorization theory introduces the notion that the individual is not permanently linked to personality. It is also demonstrated below that discrimination and prejudice are pervasive, interrelated, and complex concepts and the dynamics of both are quite subtle.

At the same time, it is discussed how groups exert considerable influence on the individuals who form them, thereby shaping roles and identities. While cohesion within a group is created through emotional bonds and empathy.

More specifically, the 4 sub-chapters that are all discussed are:

1. How important are "identities" in Social Science?
2. How is individual identity and self- categorization related to Social Identity?
3. People in groups
4. Discrimination and Prejudice

1.1 How important are "identities" in Social Science?

What is the definition of 'identity'? As a basic starting point, identity is defined as the human capacity - rooted in language - to know 'who is who' (and therefore 'what is what') (Jenkins 2008). This includes knowing who we are, knowing who others are, knowing who we are, knowing who we are, knowing who they think we are as identity is a human multidimensional classification of the human world and the place all people have in it, with criteria for evaluation and/or ranking (Jenkins 2008). The criteria of this hierarchy may be

based on collective identification, putting them in conflict with hierarchies of individual identification, which can create an interactive meaning (Jenkins 2008). More generally, however, there are no defined standards for this hierarchy, thus not being able to define the corresponding, predetermined behaviors. But according to Brubaker and Cooper, *"The identity is too ambiguous too torn between "hard" and "soft" meanings, essentialist connotations and constructive qualifiers, to be of any further use to sociology."* (Brubaker & Cooper 2000, p. 2).

Identity theory (IT) and social identity theory (SIT) are prominent research fields from the disciplines of sociology and psychology respectively, while collective identity is considered as a point of convergence between these two fields (Davis et al 2019). More specifically, collective identity, which will be examined in detail below, is a sub-theory of social identity theory that concerns the identification of humans and corresponds closely and often with group/social identity in identity theory, which refers to socially situated identity categories. Keeping in mind that social identity theory includes multiple sub-theories, it is important to note that collective identity belongs to these sub-theories and focuses on identity as it relates to social movements (Brewer 2001).

In general, identities are quite multifaceted and are divided into individual interpersonal and social processes that can be embedded in social structures. To begin with, social identity theory explains how individuals organize identity meanings, put them into practice in social situations, and respond to corresponding feedback about it (Burke & Stets 2009; Strylke & Burke 2000). Social identity theory is concerned with the processes of identification between different identities within the group to which they belong (Abrams et al 2004). More specifically, social identity is *"that part of an individual's self-concept that arises from a knowledge of membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value or emotional significance attached to that membership"* (Tajfel 1982, p. 255).

Therefore, from the perspective of identity theory, identities are internalized meanings associated with the self as an individual having a specific role or being a member of a group (Burke & Stets 2009). The person, the role and the group/society constitute 3 bases of identity. Group and social identity represent two parts of the same base, perceived as categorized status. While group identity refers to membership in a community of specific individuals (e.g., family, school, political organization), social identity refers to categories

that denote one's position within the larger social structure (e.g., race, gender, age) (Davis et al. 2019). The three bases of identity, however, mutually inform and interact so that individuals activate role identities and verify notions of identity through this interaction between identities (Davis et al. 2019). Therefore, unifying the links between Identity Theory (IT) and Social Identity Theory (SIT) is generally the key step in constructing a general view of the self, which refers to the process of collective identity (Stets & Burke 2000).

However key research from both sociology and psychology points to collective identity as a possible link between identity theory and social identity theory, although it mainly functions as a broader umbrella for SIT (Burke and Stets 2009). Collective identity essentially focuses on group cohesion, emotional attachment, and solidarity as critical to the formation and maintenance of activist identity (Polletta & Jasper 2001).

It is important to note, however, that social identity theory consists of two parts (Scheepers & Ellemers 2019). The first part, which is also psychological, describes the cognitive processes underlying the definition of social identity and the assumption of the motivation for people to pursue a positive social identity (Scheepers & Ellemers 2019). On the other hand, the second social-structural part describes the way people cope with a negative social identity (Scheepers & Ellemers 2019). However, as far as negative criticism is concerned, a general tradition is that few groups are neutral in their internal assessments. Natural groups, usually have evaluative connotations. That is, some groups are generally respected and enjoy a high social status whereas other groups have low status, sometimes even to the extent that they can be regarded "stigmatized groups" (e.g., the unemployed) (Scheepers & Ellemers 2019).

1.2 How is individual identity and self- categorization related to Social Identity?

Individual identification emphasizes unique differentiation, as during socialization in everyday life, individuals define themselves and are defined by others in terms that make them differentiated (Jenkins 2008). This self-identification is essentially a way of understanding similarity as even individual identification necessarily implies a similarity (Jenkins 2008). More specifically according to Erik H. Erikson, *«The term "identity" expresses*

such a mutual relation in that it connotes both a persistent sameness within and a persistent sharing of some kind of essential character with others" (Erikson 1980, p. 109).

But there is an alternative abstention found in self- categorization theory, which argues that the self should not be identified with the permanent structure of personality, because the self is not always experienced in terms of personality or individual differences (Turner et al 1994). In self- categorization analysis, however, personal identity is said to reflect interpersonal differentiation while rejecting the view that a particular stock of long-term knowledge can be directly identified with self-concept (Turner et al 1994). In short, the self-concept or one's current self- category, is conceived as a context- dependent cognitive, representation (Oronato & Turner 2004).

Furthermore, the idea that social identities or identification based on group membership is because the many expressions of personal identity are of central interest in self-categorization theory (Oronato & Tuner 2004). According to this view, much research has shown that social identities emerge in people's spontaneous descriptions of the self (Oronato & Turner 2004). In parallel, however, Oronato & Turner believe that *"self-categorization theory predicts that the projection of personal identity is made salient and vice versa"* (Oronato & Turner 2004, p. 260). Also, self- categorization theory argues that *"social identity may on occasion function nearly to the exclusion of personal identity"* (Turner 1982, p. 19).

1.3 People in groups

Groups have a huge impact on people's lives, not only groups in a professional-work context but also the wider groups to which we belong because of our gender, ethnicity, nationality, citizenship, socio-economic status, personal and social choices (Hogg & Vaugham 2010). From this process emerges the definition of an entity, i.e., the property of a group that makes it appear as a coherent, distinct, and unified entity (Hogg & Vaugham 2010). Essentially, however, these choices largely determine our people's role in society and their identity. Yet even groups to which people 'do not belong' can also have a profound impact on their lives through the decisions they make and the actions they take within society (Hogg & Vaugham 2010). As "groups are actually categories, through of people

rather than things" (Hogg & Vaugham 2010 p. 154). Therefore, through the categories, they create the characteristics that determine who is in the group and who is not (Hogg & Vaugham 2010). Social psychologists believe that human groups are actually characterized by these fuzzy sets of related and overlapping characteristics that, taken as a whole, distinguish people who are in the group from those outside the group (Deaux et al. 1995).

Within the context of a group, the concept of cohesion prevails, which initially connects people as members of the group emotionally to each other and then to the group, thus giving a sense of solidarity and unity (Hogg& Vaugham 2010). In essence, cohesion is the most basic property of the group that makes it 'stick' as a tightly knit, self-contained entity, characterized by behavioral similarity, mutual support between members, solidarity, team spirit, and ethics (Hogg& Vaugham 2010). Indeed, according to research from a psychological perspective, cohesion within a group has been attributed mainly to the development of bonds of mutual empathy between people, which creates a cohesive group, since as empathy increases so does cohesion (Festinger et al. 1950). However, in this process there is a significant problem, mutual liking is an unreliable indicator in large groups where people do not all know each other (e.g., nation, company) (Hogg & Vaugham 2010). To solve this problem, Hogg (1993) distinguished between personal attraction and social attraction (Abrams & Hogg 1993). As, personal attraction as he states, "is the liking aspect of groups of all shapes and sizes and comes from identification with a group" (Hogg & Vaugham 2010 p. 163).

In addition, a key characteristic of both small and large groups is that they develop over time and acquire a particular model of community building that focuses more on individuals than on groups (Levine et al 1994). According to Levine et al (1994), the passage of individuals through groups is accomplished by means of three basic and continuous processes, assessment, commitment, and role transition (Levine et al 1994). The individual essentially through these processes compares the group in terms of the reward they receive and enters a process of comparison with other rewards from other potential groups or relationships (Levine et al 1994). However, at the same time individuals are evaluated by the group itself based on their contribution to the group, which if positive leads to the individual's approval (Hogg & Vaugham 2010).

In the context of groups, however, the dominant position is occupied by roles that constitute the patterns of behavior that distinguish between different activities within the

group and that interrelate to one another for the greater good of the group (Hogg & Vaugham 2010). However, roles are not equal, as some have a higher status than others, which makes them more valued, thus exerting more influence. In most groups the most prestigious role is that of leader. It can therefore be seen that the role within a group is directly linked to prestige. This is proven by the definition of situational expectation states theory which according to which "theory of the emergence of roles as a consequence of people's status-based expectations about others' performance" (Hogg & Vaugham 2010 p. 167).

However, the threat to social identity and groups in general can take many different forms and cause rather different behavioral reactions (Branscombe et al. 1999). A number of investigators suggested that intragroup factors also influence group behavior (Branscombe et al. 2002). Analytically, the week's own relationships are divided into two main categories in the quantitative and qualitative. The latter refers to the nature of the relationships (attitudes and feelings), while the former refers to the number of intra-group relationships and the forms that these relationships take between different factional groups (Kephart 1950).

However, it is important to note that within the intragroup context, the required respect resulting from a favorable intragroup evaluation is an important predictor of group commitment and adherence to group rules (Tyler et al 1996). Furthermore, it is argued that potential positive treatment within the intragroup predicts behavior that may serve the goals of the group (Tyler et al 1996). However, it has been observed that positive intragroup cognition primarily from peers rather than from authorities uniformly leads to actions that serve the group (Branscombe et al 2002). At the same time, J. J. Seta, and Seta (1996) argue that positive intragroup comparisons encourage disengagement rather than group-serving behavior in low prestige groups (Seta & Seta 1996). However, they old argue that positive intragroup performance comparisons signal to recipients that they will be accepted in the best performing external group, which makes it possible for them to consider defecting to the highest prestige group (Seta & Seta 1996). It is therefore understood that just because someone is liked and accepted in the internal group does not mean that they will be valued accordingly by an external group (Branscombe et al 2002).

1.4 Discrimination and Prejudice

In the majority of cases, for members of stigmatized groups, the threat of being the target of prejudice or discrimination is a defining feature of everyday life, often limiting their access to resources, their integration into other social groups and generally creating barriers in many areas of their social life. Prejudice, as mentioned above, is the tendency to underestimate others and to prefer one's own group (Zemojtel-Piotrwska et al 2020). According to Hogg & Vaugham, prejudice and discrimination have different meanings; "prejudice is a type of attitude dominated by cognitive biases and the liberal use of stereotypes, discrimination is a type of behavior based on unfair treatment of certain groups of people" (Hogg & Vaugham 2010, p. 194). It is therefore clear that the link between the concept of prejudice and the concept of discrimination is not so straightforward, as prejudice is mainly created around strong and highly accessible negative attitudes, while discrimination is largely detrimental to members of minority groups (Hogg & Vaugham 2010).

According to Heidrun Friese, *"the concept of prejudice links judgement to something that precedes judgement, not only to representations, worldviews, opinions received by others, but also to power, authority and to intertied traditions in which humans as social beings endowed with language are always already embedded"* (Friese 2001, p. 63). More specifically, prejudice is linked to much of the world's suffering and human misery, from limited employment opportunities for migrants to physical violence against people belonging to minority groups to genocide. Hogg & Vaugham identify a paradoxical fact "prejudice is socially undesirable, yet it pervades social life" (p. 195). More tellingly, in societies where prejudice was institutionalized, elaborate excuses were used to deny that prejudice was actually practiced (e.g. apartheid in South Africa) (Hogg & Vaugham 2010). However, this is gradually changing, as today, across Europe, prejudice and racism are now recognized and disseminated through the media, in politics and in everyday life. Therefore, Hogg and Vaugham observed this in some countries, but there has been a change in the last decade. Prejudice is therefore shown to be based on negative stereotypes of groups and often translates into aggression towards an outgroup (Allport 1954). But at this point the question is warranted, if prejudice is an attitude and a way of life, is discrimination an inevitable outcome?

Otherwise, according to Hogg & Vaugham *"it is likely that in your community prejudice is expressed in subtle and often hidden way that crude discrimination is now less common. There are three kinds of behavior that way conceal underlying prejudices: reluctance to help, tokenism and reverse discrimination"* (Hogg & Vaugham 2010, p. 198). Reluctance to help is essentially an unwillingness to help other groups to improve themselves for the good of the common society. On the other hand, tokenism is the small and insignificant positive action towards members of a minority group (Rosenfield 1982). Whereas reverse discrimination essentially in the words of Hogg & Vaughan concerns people with residual prejudice, they may sometimes do everything possible to favor members of a group against which they are prejudiced more than members of other groups (Hogg & Vaugham 2010, p.197).

Prejudice knows no cultural or historical boundaries; however certain groups are the enduring victims of prejudice. Most of times, they are based on social categories that are vivid, omnipresent and have a social purpose. These groups mainly include people who are judged for their race or ethnicity, sexual preferences, and gender identity (Herek 2000), people for their physical or mental disabilities (Fishbein 2002), and older people (Kite et al 2005).

One manifestation of prejudice that needs attention is towards refugees, as we will see in more detail below, which prompts scholars, especially sociologists, to consider the theory of the integrated threat of prejudice. The negative attitudes of this theory come from four (4) sources: 1) the perception of the group as symbolic, 2) the perception of the group as a realistic threat, 3) negative stereotypes, and 4) intergroup anxiety (Stephan & Stephan 1996). All the above negative behaviors have different manifestations and several times different responses, such as with inattention, rudeness and disrespect, and often aim to reinforce individual or mass violence- aggression and systematic elimination (Haslam 2006).

CHAPTER 2: INTERSECTIONS OF PREJUDICE: EXPLORING THE COMPLEXITIES OF XENOPHOBIA, RACISM, SEXISM, AND HOMOPHOBIA

Firstly, this part of the thesis explores the distinctions between racism and xenophobia. The former is defined as systematic incidents of prejudice and discrimination based on ethnicity or race. While xenophobia is often considered on the spectrum of racist behavior, targeting foreigners based on fear rather than a belief in racial superiority. While cultural racism seems to introduce a dimension that focuses on cultural differences.

Second, it explores how stereotypes of gender conflict are culturally maintained, influencing social expectations of men and women. At the same time, it is shown that homophobia sexism and p heterosexism are interrelated, thereby contributing to the oppression of LGBTQ+ people.

More specifically, the 2 sub-chapters that are all discussed are:

1. Xenophobia – Racism: Is this the same thing?
2. Sexism and Homophobia: Are they connected?

2.1 How the concept of categorization leads to dehumanization

As mentioned above, discrimination based on race or ethnicity has historically been responsible for some of the most horrific acts of against humanity. Essentially racism, as stated by Hogg & Vaugham, *"is the systematic incidents of prejudice and discrimination against people based on their ethnicity or race"* (Hogg & Vaugham 2010, p. 198).

At the same time, Tafira (2011) in her research entitled "Is xenophobia racism?", argues that what has been called xenophobia in many circles, including the media and universities, actually belongs to the spectrum of racist behavior. However, it is important to bear in mind that racism is based not only in terms of skin color but on differences that are guaranteed

in areas such as culture, ethnicity, language, dress etc. (Tafira 2011). However, perhaps now an important question is raised: What is the difference between xenophobia and racism?

It is important not to confuse xenophobia with racism. Racism is essentially the belief that one race is superior to another, while xenophobia is the fear of foreigners based primarily on fear (Kim & Sundstrom 2014). Fear is not the only or necessarily the primary emotion affect involved in what is picked out by "xenophobia" (Kim & Sundstrom 2014). For example, envy, resentment, or feelings of incongruity perhaps experienced first these may or may not precipitate fear (Kim & Sundstrom, 2014). While many times xenophobia and racism go hand in hand it has been observed that it is possible for individuals of the same race to be xenophobic towards each other. The key difference is that in xenophobia, prejudice is based on the belief that certain individuals are outsides and foreign to the community or nation (Kim & Sundstrom 2014). However, according to Suman Fernando (1993) it is not reasonable to think of racism in terms of xenophobia, as there is the potential to reduce the problem to the notion of fear of foreigners (Fernando 1993). Another disadvantage of the connection racism with xenophobia, is that it portrays racism as a simple prejudice, and a misconception that can be countered by a simple appeal to reason or education (Fernando 1993). While racism can be out of personal prejudice and fear, but it has always gained its power through economic and social forces (Fernando 1993).

In general, conflating racism and xenophobia for the sake of forming a monistic understanding of racism tends to ignore their specificity (Kim & Sundstrom 2014). While additionally as Kim and Sundstrom state *"Monist narratives of racism end up revealing more about the debates within academic disciplines in which they are embedded than about racist or anti-racist practices"* (Kim & Sundstrom 204, p. 33).

However, from the perspective of nation states, racism has taken on a national character and is expressed through nationalist policies against those perceived as foreigners (Kim & Sundstrom 2014). Whereas, on the contrary, the resulting xenophobia is no longer generalized but rather nationalized (Kim & Sundstrom 2014). An example that may help in understanding these two concepts is the events that took place in South Africa. More specifically, on 1 May 2008, violence against black migrants first erupted in the town of Alexandra in Johannesburg and then spread to other areas of Gauteng. This violence resulted in the deaths of 62 people, the injury and maiming of hundreds and the displacement of thousands. The events that took place at the time have been labelled

xenophobia in many quarters, for example by academia and the media. However, in reality what happened was actually a product of racism and more specifically cultural racism (Tafira 2011).

   For Taguieff (2001), when taking of cultural racism, racism can be certiculated in terms of either race or culture, while at the same time marginalizing certain groups (Taguieff 2001). Essentially at its core, cultural racism reflects the way in which people experience a conflict between the deep emotional dislike they may feel for some racial groups and the values that emphasize their equality and commonalities with other groups (Hilton & von Hippel 1996). In essence, this process involves the denial of prejudice and racial disadvantage and opposes affirmative action or other actions that address racial or cultural disadvantage (Hogg & Vaugham 2010). Therefore, distinguishing racism from xenophobia or even from sexism and homophobia, as we will see later, may miss racism transmogrifications.

2.2 Sexism and Homophobia: Are they connected?

   As mentioned above, prejudice knows no cultural or historical boundaries and extreme forms of discrimination based on race or ethnicity have led to inhumanity and atrocities. Within these are events of prejudice and discrimination against people based on their gender, i.e., events of sexism (Hogg & Vaugham 2010). For example, multiple studies on gender stereotypes have revealed that both men and women hold traditional stereotypical beliefs: men are capable and independent, and women are warm and expressive (Hogg & Vaugham 2010). Traditional stereotypical beliefs, however, have significant cross-cultural generality and have become entrenched as social stereotypes, often without personal conviction.

   More generally, it is tempting to argue that competence, independence, worth and expressiveness are all highly desirable and valued as human attractiveness in both biological sexes. However, this is not valued equally by both biological sexes and several times they are presented differently due to some traditional stereotypical perceptions. Traditionally men and women have held different roles in society due to allocation of social roles (e.g. men hold full-time jobs outside the home, while women value the role of 'housewife') (Hogg & Vaugham 2010).

However, evidence of women and minority groups (e.g, LGBTQIA+ community) having low social well-being due to inequality. This is supported by research that demonstrates that conditions related to prejudice are more pronounced in sexual minority groups (Meyer et al. 2011). More specifically, Suzanne Pharr in her text Homophobia: A Weapon of Sexism (1998), observed that homophobia, heterosexism, and sexism are interrelated phenomena, and the oppression of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgender people is directly linked to the oppression of women (Pharr 1998). Pharr explained that *"without the existence of sexism, homophobia would not exist"* (Pharr 1998, p. 26) and continued that "*homophobia has worked very effectively to keep men and women afraid to step out of gender roles that imprison and support male power and control"* (Pharr 1998, p. 119).

Third-wave African- American feminist Barbara Smith (1998) argued that the source of all these beliefs and thoughts is schools, describing them *as "virtual cauldrons of homophobic sentiment"* (Smith 1998 p. 114). She further elaborated on her thoughts about homophobia in schools by saying that *"everything from the graffiti in the bathrooms and the putdowns yelled on the playground to the heterosexists bias of most texts land other learning materials and the firing of teachers on no other basis than that they are not heterosexual"* (Smith 1998, p. 114).

In addition, Kate Bornstein, artist, and activist in her book Gender Outlaw: Men, Women, and the Rest of Us (1994), argued that there is a bipolar gender system in society suggesting a *"gender cult"* that results in misogyny and sexism. More specifically, she pointed out that *"The most obviously violent structure within the cult of gender is sexism, misogyny. Misogyny is necessary to maintain the cult of gender"* (Bornstein 1994, p. 105). In fact, misogyny has taken multiple forms, such as male privilege, patriarchy, gender discrimination, sexual harassment, belittling of women, violence against women and sexual objectification (Srivastana 2017). But at the same time Bornstein observed that the gender bias, sexism, and homophobia that prevail are directly extended to the minority group of LGBTQIA+ people, as for a portion of people in society they *"violate the gender norms in this culture"* (Bornstein 1994 p. 105).

This hostility against the 'normality' of gender reinforces and reproduces homophobia, sexism and heterosexism and contributes greatly to the oppression of LGBTQIA+ people (Duke & McCarthy 2009). This fact is confirmed by other critiques and queer theorists and third wave feminists have argued that the subjugation of oppressed people (e.g., women,

people of color, indigenous peoples, LGBTQ people, people with disabilities, the poor) is so pervasive that the oppressed are often unaware of their own degradation (Duke & McCarthy 2009).

But instead, there is a section of people who benefit more based on their gender (e.g., gender privilege, skin color privilege, heterosexual privilege, class privilege) who often fail to recognize this oppression experienced by a significant proportion of people (Duke & McCarthy 2009) this is because *"the phenomenon of privilege cannot be recognized within the American ideology of meritocracy"* (Mclntosh 1997 p. 224). For example, the Brazilian theorist and activist Paolo Feire (1970, 1974) described the failure to recognize one's own oppression and the oppression of others as *"false consciousness"* (Feire 1970, 1974). When the oppressed become aware of the oppression (i.e. the "critical consciousness") and struggle for liberation, the struggle for liberation begins (Trask 1999). On the contrary, however, the oppressor has no reason to stop what he is doing. Oppressors have power and try to maintain it by reproducing stereotypical beliefs about gender.

CHAPTER 3: UNDERSTANDING LGBTQIA+ IDENTITY

This part of the thesis explores the role of heteronormativity in the LGBTQ+ community. It essentially delves into the concept of heteronormativity, which is defined as the pervasive assumption that heteronormativity is the default and expected orientation of people. At the same time, it highlights its impact on people's identities, relationships and social norms.

In addition, the discussion is developed by exploring the ever-evolving acronym LGBTQIA+, including the prejudice, violence and discrimination suffered by LGBTQIA+ people. While the ever-evolving LGBTQIA+ acronym is further analysed. The prejudice, violence and discrimination suffered by people who self-identify as members of the LGBTQIA+ community are explored in relation to race, ethnicity, and gender. More specifically, the 2 sub-chapters that are all discussed are:

1. Heteronormativity: Understanding the LGBTQ+ community, and beliefs in the context of social justice and gender equality
2. The impact of Heteronormativity: marginalization and stigmatization of members of LGBTQIA+ community

3.1 Heteronormativity: Understanding the LGBTQ+ community, and beliefs in the context of social justice and gender equality

The principles of democracy are designed to represent and uphold the political and social rights of all citizens, ensuring social justice and equal representation. Yet despite advances in the political, social, and cultural spheres and despite advances in research, training, and organizational policies to reduce stigma, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and other people who may self-identify and belong to the LGBTQIA+ community, continue to face heterosexist verbalizations acts in their everyday life (McCabe et al. 2013). First, the word LGBTQIA+ denotes an acronym where evolving. More specifically, these acronyms stand for L (Lesbian), G (Gay), T (Transgender), Q (Queer/ Questioning), I (Intersex), A (Asexual). Many other terms (such as non-binary and pansexual) that people use to describe their experiences of gender and sexuality are marked with the plus (+) symbol. Often, however, the letters often appear in a different order. While at the same time, some scholars such as Meyer (2010), choose to put the letters in alphabetical order as well (e.g., BGLQT), in order not to privilege one identity more than the other (Meyer 2010). In the last decade this acronym is starting to become universally understood, accepted, and most importantly politically correct in its use. However, many people still experience regular marginalization and discrimination across the sectors by using this acronym (Prock et al. 2019).

In general, understanding and perhaps later disclosing one's sexual orientation or gender identity is a deeply personal act for members of the LGBTQIA+ community (Prock et al. 2019). But before this stage, the understanding of heteronormativity comes first. As defined by Kitzinger (2005), "heteronormativity refers to assumptions related to sex and gender, which include beliefs in normality or naturalness of people of opposite sexes to be attracted to one another, to be publicly recognized and celebrated through a variety of social discourses and institutions" (Kitzinger 2005, p. 478). He says that *"in this belief system, 'same- sex couples' are (if not 'deviant') a 'variation on' or an 'alternative to' the*

heterosexual couple" (Kitzinger 2005, p. 478). And he concluded his definition by saying that *"heteronormativity refers, in sum, to the myriad ways in which heterosexuality is produced as a natural, unproblematic taken- for- grated, ordinary phenomenon"* (Kitzinger 2005, p. 478). For most people, however, heteronormativity has been observed to gradually become an endogenous, social norm, rather than an active act of prejudice (Kitzinger 2005).

Gayle Rubin in her book, "Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality" argues that the force of sexual normality cuts across multiple systems of privilege and oppression, used to regulate all people and frequently sits at the heart of national and global struggles over people's rights (Rubin 2012). But in contrast to Kitzinger, Rubin believes- warns that norms for healthy, nature and ethical sexuality are reconstituted even within feminist, socialist, gay, and lesbian movement, where new- but nonetheless singular and repressive- sexual standards can and do take hold (Rubin 2012). Especially, in neoliberal times, discernment of heteronormativity must include attention to its companion, homonormativity, or the pursuit of lesbian and gay rights traditionality granted to white, middle- class heterosexuals, such as privacy, domesticity, and consumption (Duggan 2003).

Each study strongly demonstrates that heterosexual and homosexual norms are constituted not only by perceptions of gender and 'object choice', but through a complex web of ideas about age, racial and political bodies, love, social class aspirations, political and social values, and cross-cultural desires (Ward & Schneider 2009). It is thus shown that heteronormativity shapes the production of identities, relationships, cultural expressions, and institutional practices and reveals that it is a force with consequences, not just discrimination against lesbian and gay men (Ward & Schneider 2009).

Marriage, as the most central organizational institution of society, is the main vehicle in maintaining patriarchal gender relations, is of crucial importance (Coontz 2005). Marriage is essentially a 'hegemonic form of heterosexuality' (Van Every 1996), presenting an idealized and socially acceptable package regarding sexual relations (Van Every 1996). In essence, then, marriage is a heteronormative process, thereby infusing a particular configuration of sexual and gendered practices and ideas with *"an implicit sense of correctness and normality"* (Berlant & Warner 1997 p. 554). Ingraham calls this form of marriage *"heterosexual fantasy"* (Ingraham 1994, p. 203-204) as it creates the illusion of prosperity and romantic love that permeates culture (Ingraham 1999). According to Michelle Wolkomir in her article, *"Romantic love frames the ideal intimate relationship as*

unique (e.g., "my one and only mate"), exclusive (e.g., committed monogamy), as well as inexplicable and naturally emergent- a sexual chemistry and emotional bonding that just happens when a man and a woman are "right" for one another" (Wolkomir 2009, p. 495). In reality, heterosexual relationships, as defined by romantic love and reflected in the idealized form of marriage, rely heavily on and recreate the traditional gender system (Wolkomir 2009).

Catherine MacKinnon (1982) argues that *"sexuality is the axis of gender inequality"* (MacKinnon 1982 p. 533). And she argues this by stating that *"Sexuality is a form of power. Sex, as socially constructed, embodies it, not the other way around. Women and men are separated by sex, become the sexes as we know them, by the social demands of heterosexuality, which institutionalizes male sexual domination and female sexual subordination"* (MacKinnon 1982 p. 533). A fact that is also supported by Sheila Jeffreys (1996) saying that *"Gender is not simply the mold in which men and women learn different sexualities but is a product of sexuality itself. The sexuality of male supremacy, heterosexual desire, requires the constant recreation of masculinity and femininity"* (Jeffreys 1996, p. 77). These thoughts therefore argue that conceptualizations of heterosexuality help to reinforce a compulsory, institutionalized system that supports gender inequality (Rich 1980). However, according to Ingraham (1994), despite the importance of understanding and theorizing heterosexuality, it has not become central to feminist sociology (Ingraham 1994). Instead, queer theory has strongly contributed to the understanding of heterosexuality and the maintenance of inequality between men and women (Schilt & Westbrook 2009).

In gender inequality, therefore, are hidden cultural patterns about the naturalness of a binary gender system, in which only the two biological sexes exist (West & Zimmerman 1887). These schemas are primarily constituted by our current gender order and patterns of power relations between men and women as well as the expression of femininity and masculinity. However, masculinity and femininity are not fixed qualities, so their respective reactions or needs differ. This is evidenced by the fact that transgender individuals challenge the gender categorization of gender chosen based on their sexual organs (Schilt & Westbrook 2009). Therefore, transgender individuals - people living with a social gender identity that differs from birth - can successfully express their femininity or masculinity without having the genitalia assumed to result from their outward appearance (Schilt & Westbrook 2009).

3.2 The impact of Heteronormativity: marginalization and stigmatization of members of LGBTQIA+ community

As mentioned above, LGBTQIA+ is an evolving acronym, referring to people's experiences, desires and needs regarding their gender and sexuality. However, this category of people who identify, or perhaps more importantly, consider themselves to belong to the LGBTQ+ spectrum is largely not an accepted group of people by most of society (Turner 2015). It is therefore clear that the accumulation of prejudice and taboos against gay people has existed since the arrival of the modern era. More specifically, a person who identifies as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or generally belongs to the LGBTQIA+ spectrum not only faces ridicule, shame, deprivation of the right, and possible criminal charges but in a large percentage of the world can face violence and even death (Dworkin & Yi 2003). In short, people belonging to the LGBTQIA+ community are overwhelmingly marginalized, experiencing a strong sense of prejudice. This behavior, however, is largely fueled by the gender belief system, which is defined by Deux and Kite (1987) as *"a set of beliefs and opinions about men and females and about the purported qualities of masculinity and femininity"* (Deux & Kite 1987, p. 97). This is a powerful and often unrecognized belief system that perpetuates sexist and heterosexist prejudice, as it is a key part of theory in many cultures, leading to the stereotype that lesbians are masculinity and gay men are femininity directly affecting bisexual and transgender people (Deux & Kite 1987).

More generally, the way in which discrimination based on race, gender, disability, or religion is experienced varies considerably. However, the common feature that unites all the above is the affront to dignity that individuals suffer because of belonging to any group (Dworkin & Yi 2003). In the case of LGBTQIA+ people, however, it turns out that the trauma does not come from the poverty or powerlessness they may have, but from invisibility (Dworkin & Yi 2003). Invisibility is also associated with less victimization (Dworkin & Yi 2003). However, this does not mean that they are free from the prejudice experienced by their community (Dworkin & Yi 2003). Invisibility in most cases is the devaluation of desire, it is the attribution of perversion and shame to spontaneous physical affection and the denial of freedom of expression and self-determination of the body (Dworkin & Yi 2003). That is, they are essentially trying to be invisible to avoid discrimination but at the same time are traumatized by this process of invisibility.

Many previous studies have shown that prejudice (i.e., negative emotional reactions towards out-group members who are perceived as different) and discrimination (i.e., unfair treatment by out-group members experienced because of a person's membership of a minority group) and discrimination against LGBTQIA+ people are commonplace (Morrison et al 2018). Research from the UK also suggests that transgender people experience unique and more intense forms of discrimination and exclusion, such as transphobia directly related to gender non-conformity (Bayrakdar & King 2021). Homophobia certainly plays a key role in addressing biases about identity, race, gender, and class as well as many forms of anti-queer violence (Meyer 2015). Additionally, for many LGBTQIA+ people of color, racism is just as important as homophobia in shaping their violent experiences (Meyer 2015). However, although considerable evidence suggests that transgender people experience higher rates of violence than lesbians and gay men, much more attention has been paid to the homophobic violence experienced by transgender people (Meyer 2015). According to research, the most marginalized LGBTQ+ people, many of whom experience violence at higher levels and are excluded, are migrants, refugees, transgender people, homeless people, and low-income gay men of color (Meyer 2015). Conversely, the experiences of some LGBTQIA+ individuals, particularly those who are white and middle class, have been highlighted as more privileged within the LGBTQIA+ community (Meyer 2015). At the same time, research from the UK suggests that transgender people experience unique and intensifying forms of discrimination and exclusion such as transphobia that is directly related to gender non-conformity (Bayrakdar & King 2021).

Most countries use religion, culture as the main reasons for the oppression of LGBTQIA+ people, as homosexuality and transsexualism are cited as parts of religious and urban decadence (Dworkin & Yi 2003). LGBTQIA+ people are therefore believed to undermine the beliefs and values of the wider society in which they live and threaten the established social order (Dworkin & Yi 2003). This belief can lead to classist and sexist attitudes but also to extreme racist and violent attacks towards LGBTQIA+ people. Sexual Orientation Violence (SOV), a term coined by D'Augelli (1998), begins early as he states that by the end of primary school, young people know heterosexuality as good and homosexuality as good thereby preventing them from expressing any behaviour for fear of being judged as immodest (D'Augelli 1998). Emotions of fear and anxiety of being rejected by society and family are provoked and cultivated (D'Auggeli 1998).

Different patterns of discrimination, harassment and violence can also be found at the intersections of sexual orientation and ethnicity, as we will see in more detail below (Bayrakdar & King 2021). Recent evidence suggests that there is an even greater risk of discrimination and marginalization. Furthermore, recent literature shows that lesbian women are more likely to experience workplace bullying compared to gay men, suggesting that discrimination based on sexual orientation may even differ by gender (Hoel et al 2014). However, even age is a criterion for harassment. Research with older gay men suggests that they may be more easily discriminated against or harassed when they do not conform to heteronormative representations of masculinity (Ozturk et al 2023). It is therefore evident, that there is also a complex relationship between gender norms and how discrimination, harassment and violence is experienced according to sexual orientation (Bayrakdar & King 2021).

CHAPTER 4: HOW DO THE CONCEPTS OF REFUGEE-MIGRANTS AND LGBTQIA+ COME TOGETHER?

This part of the thesis explores the discrimination suffered by migrants and refugees. Initially, emphasis is placed on the controversies surrounding the definitions of refugees and migrants as terms such as refugee, asylum seeker and forced migrant are often used interchangeably, causing confusion.

Additionally, this chapter focuses on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC) asylum seekers. It highlights the historical marginalization and deportation of LGBTQIA+ individuals while they are subjected to violence, exploitation, economic problems, cultural barriers, and multi-layered discrimination during their movement or resettlement.

More specifically, the 2 sub-chapters that are all discussed are:

1. Migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers: what is the difference between them and what are the prejudices that they experience?
2. Facing Discrimination: Challenges Encountered by LGBTQIA+ Asylum Seekers

4.1 Migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers: what is the difference between them and what are the prejudices that they experience?

Almost 70 years after the Geneva Convention on Refugees, the issue of refugees is still highly controversial. What does it mean to be persecuted on the grounds of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership of a particular social group? The definition of refugee developed in the Geneva Convention states that a refugee is a person who:

[has a] well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion (Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugee of 28 July 1951, Article 1), is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it (UNHCR 1951[1]).

The key point of this definition is that the refugee's reason for fleeing is the "fear" of joining certain social, religious, and political groups in his/her country, or not "conforming" to certain beliefs. Even though the UNHCR developed the definition of a refugee in 1951, the use of the term is still muddled both in policy and academia today, especially for what constitutes a refugee. The terms, refugee, asylum seeker, and forced migrant, are often used interchanged, despite many differences within these terms (Panzika 2020, 19).

As Max Cherem states *"this definition yields a tripartite distinction between refugees who, after status recognition have entitlements to non- refoulement and new membership, versus both immigrants and refugee- like outsiders who while poorly off, do not"* (Cherem 2016, p.

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[1] This information was taken from: UNHCR – The 1951 Refugee Convention.
https://www.unhcr.org/about-unhcr/who-we-are/1951-refugee-convention

187). So, it was with this in mind that Cherem agreed in part, as did many scientists, for several years with the definition put forward by Andrew Shacknove (1985) in his book "Who Is Refugee?" who stated that *"a refugee is, in essence, a person whose government fails to protect his basic needs, who has no remaining recourse than to seek international restitution of these needs, and who is so situated that international assistance is possible. Thus, it is not a matter of entitlements that distinguishes refugees from all other person whose basic needs are unmet by their home government but a matter of dissimilar objective conditions"* (Shacknove 1985, p. 282). In parallel, however, Kukathas warns that the Geneva Convention *"adopts a very narrow definition of a refugee... people fleeing war, natural disaster or famine are not, according to this definition, refugees"* (Kukathas 2005, p. 217). Miller agrees by stating that: *"There is clearly a good case for broadening the definition to include people who are deprived of subsistence rights basic health care, etc."* (Miller 2007, p. 225).

Regardless of the definitions of refugees that have been given over the years, discrimination and prejudice have been prevalent around them. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), xenophobic attitudes or discrimination on the grounds of "alienage" are among the greatest challenges for refugees worldwide. Sometimes these discriminations are violent, directly threatening the lives of refugees (Achiume 2014). This in most cases occurs irrespective of whether they have legal documents that allow them to access and stay in the country. Refugees are regular targets of verbal and physical harassment by both private, and public authorities and experience direct threats to both their lives and livelihoods (Achiume 2014).

However, reports of prejudice based on xenophobic attitudes and discrimination need not necessarily be only violent. Globally, refugees and asylum seekers experience a wide range of harm on account for non- violent explicit prejudice based xenophobic discrimination (Achiume 2014). For example, explicit bias seriously compromises refugees' efforts to access a range of social services to which they are entitled under the law, human rights, such as health care, basic education, etc. (Achiume 2014).

Confusion is also caused by the term 'migrant' (Anderson & Blinder 2017). More specifically, the meaning of the term migrant also varies between groups as it diverges from the public, professional to policy makers and experts (Douglas et al 2019). It is therefore

shown that while the definition of refugee is precisely defined in the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, migrants are a heterogeneous group with no precise international consensus on their definition. One definition that could initially be provided is that of Anderson & Blinder (2017) where they state that *"Migrants might be defined by foreign birth, by foreign citizenship or by their movement into a new country to stay temporarily (sometimes for as little as a year) or settle for the long- term"* (Anderson & Blinder 2017, p. 3). At the same time, however, it is argued that the term migrant is more neutral, as neither the direction nor necessarily the purpose of movement within the country, nor the movement outside the border is considered. Migrants can be defined in legal, exploratory, and static terms and their motivations towards this process can be economic, security or family reunification (De Beer et al 2010). Therefore, in general the term migrant is a term used to describe people who move within or outside countries mainly to improve their economic and social living conditions (Douglas et al 2019).

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) tries through its definitions to alleviate the confusion caused by the definition of migrant and to provide clarity in this regard, stating that a migrant is defined as any person who moves or has moved to an international border or within a state but away from his or her place of habitual residence, regardless of the legal status of the person and regardless of whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary. However, the reasons for this movement and the duration of this stay are irrelevant[2].

However, the same discontent that exists around the refugee seems to prevail for the migrant. Members of the hosting countries are often not welcoming towards migrants, which is in many cases due to existing beliefs about migration, ethnocentric beliefs about national identity, and concerns about values and religious beliefs (Deslander & Anderson 2019). Essentially, there is a very fine line between the differences that exist between cultures, cultural values, and the influences that respectively regulate moral values within a society (McDonald 2010). It is therefore not surprising that these moral values both differ and are strongly supported, resulting in intense problems (McDonald 2010). These problems can be related to both the management of refugee and migrant flows and

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[2] This information was taken from: IOM, World Migration Report 2018.
https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/wmr_2018_en.pdf

problems within society in trying to live together (McDonald 2010). These perceptions are also linked to the fear that migrants pose a threat to the host country, as they highlight the moral and not only differences that exist between these groups (Tajfel 1982). These differences cause negative attitudes towards migrant and refugee groups resulting in the dissemination of misconceptions within society about these groups (Tajfel 1982).

More specifically, the transmission of false beliefs present the migrant group (external group) as a 'others to the citizens of the host country (internal group), thus contributing to the interpretation of migrants as 'threat', which also helps to exacerbate attitudes and discrimination towards them (Esses et al 2013). The politics of the "other" represented by foreigners happens because of the fear of the unknown and the different, so that the presence of refugees and migrants is demonized in the eyes of the citizens (Ignatieff 2017). Therefore, migrants and refugees represent the danger of threat and danger. However, it is important to note that the fear of threat also comes from the refugee or migrant born in the country who embraces the values, culture, and civilization of his or her homeland (Ignatieff 2017). To protect their own citizen, the citizens of the country face the 'danger' of the other by means of exclusion, exile, or violence (Ignatieff 2017). Additional characteristics such as gender, education, political orientation, religious belief, and ethnic identification are some of the characteristics that contribute to attitudes towards migrants along with general attitudes towards diversity (Ward & Masgoret 2006).

4.2 Facing Discrimination: Challenges Encountered by LGBTQIA+ Asylum Seekers

It has been noted many times throughout history and around the world that people belonging to the spectrum of the LGBTQIA+ community have been marginalized or even expelled from their homelands or driven out because of their membership in this community and have encountered serious problems in their discriminatory granting of immunity. As mentioned above, the LGBTQIA+ acronym represents lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer people. The plus (+) symbol represents people with different gender identity sexual orientations, gender expressions and gender characteristics or LGBTQIA+. Therefore, as this acronym is ever evolving, in most forums SOGIESC asylum seekers are referred to as

SOGIESC (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics) asylum seekers to ensure their inclusion in this group.

During their movement, LGBTQIA+ are exposed to various forms of violence and exploitation, and in most cases are at an uncomfortable economic disadvantage due to discrimination in the labour market and lack of family or community support due to their LGBTQIA+ (Bennett & Thomas 2013). Yet their oppression continues, however. SOGIESC asylum seekers are particularly vulnerable within asylum systems as they are pressured to 'behave' as gay to be able to support their asylum claim (Jansen & Spijkerboer 2011). Therefore, during the asylum process, their right to privacy and dignity is not always respected as they must prove the credibility of their sexual orientation, gender identity, persecution or the underlying reason for their persecution or fear (Jansen & Spijkerboer 2011). As anthropologist David Murray states, *"essentially the LGBTQIA+ refugee must prove that their sexual orientation or gender identity is 'authentic' and that they have been affected by their non-acceptance"* (Murray 2014 p. 471). Often, however, asylum seekers are unable to provide such evidence or may be reluctant to speak or describe their gender or sexuality due to fear or internalized shame or cultural differences (Borges 2019).

At the same time, however, LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers in detention centers often face discrimination and hostile attitudes from both staff members and other asylum seekers (Nematy et al 2022). It therefore becomes impactful that even after resettlement, along with their sexual minority status, they also struggle with strong cultural barriers, as do all refugees (Kahn et al 2017). Therefore, as Nematy, Namer and Razum (2022) state in their recent research *"LGBTQIA+ forced migrants face multi- layered discrimination in various settings in host countries (e.g., employment, housing, healthcare system) due to the intersection of race ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion and nationality"* (Nematy et al 2023, p. 637).

CHAPTER 5: THE SITUATION IN EUROPE AND IN GREECE

This part of the thesis explores the European migration policies, focusing on the European Union's (EU) diverse views on migration. It outlines the pillars of EU migration policy and

the challenges faced by SOGIESC (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics) asylum seekers. In addition, the legal status of SOGIESC asylum seekers in Europe is explored.

The narrative shifts to Greece, a pivotal entry point for refugees and migrants, examining the complexities of asylum procedures and the under-researched aspects of LGBTQIA+ asylum jurisprudence. Reports of illegal refoulement, threats, and violence against SOGIESC asylum seekers within temporary detention centers underscore the dire situation. The broader context of violence, discrimination, and systemic challenges faced by LGBTQIA+ individuals in Greek refugee camps are thoroughly examined.

The text also touches upon residence permits for third-country nationals in Greece, tracing the evolution of migration legislation from the early 20th century to the present. It outlines categories such as work and professional purposes, humanitarian and exceptional reasons, family reunification, and long-term residency, shedding light on the conditions for obtaining these permits.

More specifically, the 4 sub-chapters that are all discussed are:

1. European Migration Policy
2. What is the legal status of SOGIESC asylum seekers in Europe?
3. What prevails in Greece?
4. Categories of Residence Permits for Third Country Nationals in Greece

5.1 European Migration Policy

Migration policy and regulations in the European Union (EU) Member States are governed by different views. In particular, some states adopt a more liberal stance, believing that migration inflows are beneficial and have a positive impact. On the contrary, other EU Member States adopt an anti-migration stance as they believe that they are slowed down by migration (Speciale 2010).

Guzi, Kahanec and Ulceluse (2021) argue that migration has always been an integral part of the EU, while legislation on it has served as an instrument of influence in shaping

the socio-political and economic conditions of its member states. At the same time, they argue that EU migration policy is based on 4 pillars which more specifically are regular migration and mobility, international protection and asylum, trafficking and maximizing the impact of migration and mobility on the development of European societies (Guzi et al 2021). All the above are integral to the rule and purpose of protecting the human rights of migrants.

Through its migration policies, the EU sets the conditions and frameworks for the legal residence or entry of migrants in the Member States, with the aim of managing and addressing both illegal migration and the exchange of populations in general. The first stage of migration policy was the creation of the Schengen Treaty on 19 June 1990, with the aim of establishing a common policy and direction for migration. However, despite its creation in 1990, it came into force in 1995 and could not entirely solve the problems of the member states (Speciale 2010). Essentially, the Schengen Treaty defines the functioning of the common external borders of the member states and states that EU citizens have the right to stay as visitors in an EU member state for three months and the right to work with equal treatment as citizens of the member state (Speciale 2010). However, each Member State has the right to determine the volume of admission of migrants from third countries seeking employment, while the EU has the right through its policies to conclude agreements with third countries.

A key achievement of the European migration policy, established by the Lisbon Treaty in 2007 but in force since 2009, is the fact that the EU has joint responsibility with Member States for determining the number of migrants aiming to find work in accordance with Article 79(5) of the Lisbon Treaty. While, in contrast, the European Court of Justice has the right for policies relating to the migration and asylum process (European Parliament 2021).

5.2 What is the legal status of SOGIESC asylum seekers in Europe?

In Europe, current asylum legislation does not include in all form's persecution on the grounds of gender expression and gender characteristics, which means that there are recommendations to ensure an enhanced protection and reception as regards persons

persecuted on the grounds of SOGIESC asylum seekers[3]. However, the most important law in the EU is the Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Gender Characteristics Act by the Maltese Parliament enacted on 1 April 2015. In the asylum application procedure, the ILGA-Europe recommends ensuring that self-determination is respected for trans asylum seekers at all stages of the procedure and access to legal gender recognition is guaranteed to trans refugees, as it is important to be respected and considered. This fact causes a problem in terms of the psychological trauma of refugees. However, many states continue to follow another procedure as the legal regime is specific enough to ensure access of migrants and refugees to public, private services, and the labor market (ILGA EUROPE). EU law sets out detailed mandatory requirements relating to providing status and documentation to certain categories of migrants, such as asylum seekers (Article 6 of the Reception Conditions Directive (2013/33/EU)), recognized refugees (Articles 13 and 18 of the Qualification Directive (2011/95/EU)) or long-term residents.

 As we mentioned above, migration is a global phenomenon as more than 250 million people have been forced to leave their country. However, the migration policy followed by the EU is basically not respected by the institutional frameworks of the respective countries. The rise of Islamophobia in general after the refugee crisis of 2015 has significantly affected asylum procedures in European countries. A recent German poll of 10 refugee- receiving countries in Europe revealed that most of respondents in all but two countries agreed that further migrants from predominantly Muslim countries should stop (with the greater number of respondents to be from Poland (71%) and from Austria (65%)). Media reports suggest that financial problems and growing frustration with the EU's handling of the migration crisis have contributed substantially to this phenomenon. In short, the current social climate has the potential to create a series of difficulties for migrants who seek asylum in European countries, especially Muslim migrants. This difficulty also affects SOGIESC asylum seekers where their gender identity is not accepted in countries due to their religious ideologies (Greenflied et al. 2020).

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[3] This information was taken from the official site of the ILGA- EUROPE - POLICY BRIEFING ON LGBTI REFUGEES AND EU ASYLUM LEGISLATION. (HTTPS://WWW.ILGA-EUROPE.ORG/POLICY-PAPER/POLICY-BRIEFING-ON-LGBTI-REFUGEES-AND-EU-ASYLUM-LEGISLATION/)

To respond to the need for a legislative framework for LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers, the EU created the "Rainbow Welcome Project». In particular, POUR LA SOLIDARITÉ-PLS (Belgium), Le Refuge Bruxelles/Het Opvanghuis Brussel (Belgium), ACATHI (Spain), Le Refuge (France) and Croce Rossa Italiana (Italy) created the Rainbow Welcome project. Rainbow Welcome aims to offer a set of recommendations for improving the reception of LGBTQ asylum seekers in Europe based on what has been researched during the two years of the study by the four partner countries. The evaluation of the final conference of the project was organized with the support of the LGBTIQ+ Intergroup, in the European Parliament on 12 October 2022.

5.3 What prevails in Greece?

As is well known, since 2015 Greece has been one of the main entry points for refugees and migrants to Europe, but it is also the last gate of the Schengen area. Due to its land and sea accessibility, Greece received almost 100,000 asylum applications in 2020, which describes the difficult situation experienced by people and the necessity of respecting the EU Convention (AIDA 2021). In Greece, both formal and informal organizations are actively responding to the high influx of asylum seekers and their needs. Despite this, most of times Greek asylum jurisprudence remains under researched, and there is no publication of first/ second instance decisions except in very crucial cases. For this reason, according to a recent survey by Avgeri (2023), Greek society is indifferent to discussions on issues related to sexual orientation, identity, gender expression and gender characteristics (Avgeri 2023).

Mariza Avgeri (2023) in her research confirms what was mentioned above by saying that hiding or being discreet about their personal details during the asylum process is something that is most often required of SOGIESC asylum seekers (Avgeri 2023). At the same time, however, certain inaccuracies in both European and domestic legislation regarding asylum applications submitted by SOGIESC asylum seekers necessitate the existence of a special procedure exclusively for them (Fisher 2019).

In the context of the asylum process, there have been several reports of illegal refoulement of newly arrived persons, but the Greek state proceeds with the deportation of persons with asylum status and vulnerable groups (AIDA 2021). Vulnerable people such

as SOGIESC asylum seekers, in addition to the painful asylum process, also face direct threats, mental and physical harm in the camps they are placed in as racism and prejudice are common in Greece (Wallis 2019). At the same time, rape and sexual harassment are a frequent and daily occurrence in the lives of SOGIESC asylum seekers in temporary detention centers, as the infrastructure is not able to support their specific needs (Wallis 2019). In addition, there is a fear of being attacked by their peers who do not accept them because of cultural, religious, or other issues (Wallis 2019). It is therefore understood that sexual harassment, psychological and physical violence, and intimidation are the greatest risks that SOGIESC asylum seekers may again suffer during their stay in Greek temporary detention centers, and this process also raises many issues such as health issues, infections, genital trauma as well as great trauma and stigma (Belanteri et al 2020).

The situation of intimidation therefore regarding life experiences during the asylum admission process also reflects the situation in the various Greek refugee camps, where poor accommodation, lack of space and lack of necessities create a suffocating situation for SOGIESC asylum seekers who must be daily vigilant for fear of harassment or assault (Wang & Papoulias 2022). Mixed- housing, mixed- bathroom areas and zero monitoring by security is a practice that leaves vulnerable and LGBTQIA+ persons in great risk within the camp environment (Thomas- Davis 2017). In addition, LGBTQIA+ people avoid walking alone in the camp areas for reasons of physical integrity, especially at night, and may often be accompanied by another refugee, volunteer, or NGO worker (Idzikowska 2021). However, it seems that power relations are even subordinated within LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers for reasons of ethnicity, and it seems that African SOGIESC people are at greater risk (Idzikowska 2021). In conclusion as Idzikowska (2021) states many LGBTQIA+ refugees experience intrinsic discrimination resulting in them being left homeless or feeling directly threatened in communal accommodation spaces (Idzikowska 2021).

Violent incidents and clashes, police fascism and chauvinism in political discourse in Greece target more LGBTQIA+ people with refugee backgrounds, reflecting the dangerous fate of being both LGBTQIA+ and an asylum seeker (Bericat et al 2018). Incidents of violence and crimes by the authorities are numerous, not only in refugee and migration contexts but also in domestic cases (Bericat et al 2018). Most importantly, LGBTQIA+ people are victims of harassment, discrimination, hate speech and hate crimes, while excessive police and state violence resulting from the abuse of power are behaviors, they experience on a daily

basis in Greece cases (Bericat et al 2018). Therefore, it can be understood that prejudice and incidents of violence are largely the results of discrimination, while it is often the systemic construction of social living that institutionalizes individuals into discriminatory practices cases (Bericat et al 2018).

5.4 Categories of Residence Permits for Third Country Nationals in Greece

Before the 1990s, the Greek state had not emphasized its migration policy and the legalization of illegal migrants in Greece. In an institutional context therefore the migration legislation regulating from the old Law 4310/1929[4] "On the settlement and movement of foreigners in Greece, police control, passports, deportations and displacement etc.". According to the provisions of the higher law, foreigners could be granted a residence and work permit only if there was work between employer and employee. This permit was granted for a period of one year with a maximum period of five years. The renewal of the permit after five years could be renewed every two years and staying for a period of more than 15 years allowed the application for permanent residence in Greece.

Following other provisions, in 2014 Law 4251/14[5] "Immigration and Citizenship Integration Code and other provisions" was passed and implemented, which is still in force today. According to this Law they are entitled to a residence permit:

A. For work and professional purposes.

Such as Residence Permit for dependent work, Residence Permit for investment activity and others.

B. For Humanitarian, Exceptional and Other Reasons

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[4] This information was taken from: Hellenic Republic - Gazette of the Government. http://6dim-diap-elefth.thess.sch.gr/Greek/Diapolitismiki_Ekpaidefsi/NomothesiaDiapEkpshs/06_MetanasteytikhPolitikh/n4310-1929.pdf
[5] This information was taken from Greek Ministry of Immigration and Asylum.
https://migration.gov.gr/migration-policy/metanasteusi-stin-ellada/katigories-adeion-diamonis-politon-triton-choron-dikaiologitika%E2%80%8B/

Such as victims of trafficking in human beings who do not cooperate with law enforcement authorities, victims of domestic violence, third country nationals for at least seven (7) consecutive years, public interest, and others.

C. For Studies, Voluntary Work, Research and Vocational Training

Such as student mobility, researcher mobility, participation in special projects, military, and productive studies, etc.

D. For Victims of Human Trafficking and Illegal Migrant Smuggling
E. For Family Reunification

Such as Authorization of entry of a family member, residence card for a Greek spouse or partner etc.

F. Long- term

Such as Long-term Residents Residence Permit and Second- Generation Residence Permit

At the same time, it is important to note that citizens of European Union (EU) countries, unlike citizens from third countries, have the right to enter Greece if their identity card or passport is valid, without any other document or other equivalent wording being required. After entering Greece, they have the right to stay in Greece for three (3) months without any other document required, in accordance with Directives 2004/38/EC[6].

However, for EU citizens wishing to stay in Greece for a longer period than three (3) months and to have access to social and other benefits, the conditions of Directives 2004/38/EC, which have been incorporated into Greek law, must be met. More specifically, whether citizens are employed or not employed, they do not need to meet any other conditions. Students and other unpaid workers, as well as retired persons, must have sufficient resources for themselves and their family so as not to be a burden on the social welfare system. In addition, they must be registered by the competent authorities if they have been living in Greece for more than 3 months and are entitled to equal treatment with nationals of the host country. However, the host authorities are not obliged to grant

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[6] This information was taken from: EUR- LEX Access to European Union Law. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/summary/eu-freedom-of-movement-and-residence.html

benefits to EU citizens who do not work for pay during the first three (3) months of their stay.

CHAPTER 6 – METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The aim of chapter six is to focus on the rationale and objective of this research by presenting in as detailed a manner as possible the research methodology used/adopted to answer the research questions posed.

The research methodology essentially consists of a set of actions and steps, with the sole aim of answering the questions posed in the research. Within the methodological section, the research areas are presented, and the tools and steps used and applied for the implementation of the research are explained in detail.

More specifically, the 6 sub-chapters that are all discussed are:

1. Research Methodology
2. Research Tool
3. Research Analysis
4. Participants and Selection Process
5. Information of Participants
6. Limitations

6.1 Research Methodology

The research methodology chosen in this thesis research for data collection and analysis is the qualitative research approach. Qualitative research aims to investigate a phenomenon in depth and emphasizes understanding and interpreting peoples' perceptions. Therefore, the researcher is trying to answer questions like "why" and "how". Hence, holistic understanding is the goal of qualitative inquiry. Furthermore, with

qualitative research, the researcher can understand human behaviors, lived experiences, intentions and motivations based on observation and interpretation, while discover what people think and feel.

At the same time, Silverman (2013) states that data analysis in qualitative research is based on either the generative method or the inductive method. Researchers using qualitative research essentially aim to investigate, understand, and interpret social phenomena within a physical context. The philosophy essentially underlying qualitative research is rooted in interpretation, whose emphasis seeks to delve into the subjective nature of reality. Its philosophy therefore emphasizes the documentation and complexity of human experience and the understanding of the social and cultural context that helps to shape the respective phenomena-experiences.

Moreover, as far as this research is concerned, the inductive method was used, where the data is analyzed within a theoretical framework facilitating understanding and information interpretation. The inductive method essentially involves the collection and analysis of data based on people's experiences and experiences. It is an analytical, difficult, and time-consuming approach, which is extremely useful when researchers' knowledge of the research topic is limited or non-existent. With this method, researchers start with more specific observations and data and try to work with the analysis of more general theories and conclusions. That is, in this case the empirical data collected from the participants guided me towards the analysis of a more general hypothesis.

6.2 Research Tool

The interview is the main data collection tool in qualitative research and in the case of this thesis, it facilitates the collection of information and data that help in answering the research questions posed. Essentially, the interview is the main research tool used to collect information, and interpret the questions posed in the research and through it the researcher undertakes to provide relevant answers.

As Katerina Kedraka (2008) states *"interviewing is a process that allows the researcher to obtain information and data through discourse analysis of selected case characteristics"* (Kedraka 2008, p. 1). Through the interview process, the researcher can gain access to the way people think, based solely on their behavior and their views on it. In general, the interview process should be based on free and open communication so that the researcher can find out what the interviewee is thinking and feeling. As a research tool, it has many advantages, as it provides opportunities to clarify certain questions, thus enabling a deeper insight into data that may have been previously unclear. This process is greatly assisted by the guarantee that exists between the researcher and the respondent. (Kedraka 2008).

The steps that are usually followed when conducting an interview are listed below (Kedraka 2008):

1. <u>Selection of respondents</u>: When using the interview as a data collection instrument. Respondents should therefore be both typical and non-typical cases to represent all categories.

2. <u>Preparation and planning of the interview</u>: The interview should be designed around a few thematic axes, which should be interwoven with both the objective and the themes that emerge from the analysis.

3. <u>Initial approach of the respondent</u>: An important part of the success of an interview is due to the communication with the interviewee, which helps to cultivate an atmosphere of trust.

4. <u>Conducting the interview</u>: During the interview, the interviewer must establish a relationship of trust, so that it is easier for the interviewee to answer honestly.

5. <u>Dealing with difficulties</u>: The interviewer must constantly ensure the smooth continuation of the interview, using communication techniques and alternative ways to help the interviewee.

Through the interview, a social and psychological relationship is created between the interviewer and the interviewee. The interviewer should prepare himself/ herself thoroughly for the interview as in a short period of time he/ she will acquire a lot of important information. There are three main types of interviews, unstructured, semi-structured and structured. As far as the present research is concerned, it has taken the form of structured interviews, where the respondent is asked to answer a series of questions

specified by the interview form. The structured interview is similar to a questionnaire which is closer to quantitative research. However, a semi-structured interview was used where the interview guide was available, but the interviewee has the freedom to discuss other topics.

6.3 Research Analysis

The aim of this qualitative study, as already mentioned, is to explore the obstacles that people belonging to the group of migrants and refugees and the LGBTQIA+ community encounter in a legal and social context, in their attempt to integrate into Greek society. At the same time, however, through the analysis of these problems, I try to find similarities and differences that these people encountered in their attempt to be able to survive and better acclimatize with their gender identity or sexual identity in Greek society.

The research questions justify why qualitative research the most appropriate research method for this thesis is, as already mentioned above, as the very nature of the research questions is qualitative and exploratory. This means that the research questions are mainly in the words "how?" and "why?". These words suggest that the researcher wants and needs to thoroughly explore this phenomenon through experiential experiences by trying to understand it through the inductive method. Essentially, qualitative research constitutes an introspection into human emotions and thoughts and appreciates that there is no single reality to be revealed, which is why it was preferred in this research. In addition, qualitative research is a method of approaching and delving into social phenomena, which proves to be an appropriate choice of analysis in this thesis research as it primarily examines the social phenomenon of the integration of LGBTQIA+ refugees and migrants in Greek society.

At the same time, there are various approaches used in the inductive method, with thematic analysis being the most common and the one we will use in this research. Thematic analysis is used to analyze the data entered in the form of written text by the researchers and, more specifically, to analyze the data that emerges from the most common methods of data collection in qualitative research such as the interviews that took place in this research. Furthermore, the analysis of qualitative data must be understood as

a continuous, cyclical process that takes place during different stages of the research and not a linear process. One of the main advantages of this type of analysis is that it is characterized by 'flexibility', opening the way for the generation of unexpected knowledge.

The purpose of the thematic analysis is to create an analytical and systematic record of the codes and themes emerging from the participant interviews. This is where the first and perhaps the main problem for researchers using thematic analysis to analyze data in qualitative research arises. Essentially, the question arises as to whether an individual's view or behavior regarding a particular issue can be merged with the view or behavior of other individuals. However, in thematic analysis it is assumed that this can happen, but researchers must always be vigilant so that error is avoided, and valid conclusions are drawn.

6.4 Participants and Selection process

The research for the implementation of the interviews of this thesis research consists of six people who participated in this process entirely anonymously. More specifically, it consists of five migrants and one refugee, belonging to the LGBTQIA+ community spectrum. The sampling method chosen is known as 'purposive sampling'. It is essentially a non-random sampling method that is predominantly used in qualitative research. In purposive sampling, the researcher deliberately selects participants as they possess certain characteristics or have experienced certain behaviors or phenomena that are directly related to the research questions (Bryman 2012). The researcher's aim is therefore to select and engage individuals who can provide rich, interesting, and meaningful knowledge, opinions, information, and experiences about the topic under investigation. In the present research, the researcher chose purposive research as the most appropriate way to come into direct contact with refugees and migrants who belong to the LGBTQIA+ community, live in Greece and may have a small but significant view on existing laws and have experienced which difficulties in a legal and social context in their attempt to integrate into Greek society.

The researcher approached the participants through personal contact and the mediation of some common acquaintances. Initially the first contact was made through texting and phone calls to participate in the research and to ascertain how positive they were about taking part in this research. In the second stage the researcher sent detailed information about the topic, the interview questions, and some important information that each participant should know before the interview process started. Then the when and how each follow-up would be conducted were discussed with the sole focus on the participants' convenience. Most of the participants preferred to be interviewed by phone or even through the online video call as most of them do not have Athens as their permanent residence, where the researcher resides. Therefore, two (2) of the six (6) interviews were conducted via online video call, three (3) of the six (6) were conducted via telephone and one (1) interview was conducted face-to-face. The interviews lasted from 30 minutes to 1 hour and 10 minutes. However, of main importance is the fact that the effort and willingness of all those who participated in the interviews was extremely important and worth mentioning, as their help was invaluable in conducting this thesis research.

6.5 Information of Participants

Before presenting the results, it is necessary and essential to provide some information about the respondents in terms of their age, origin, educational background, and occupation. Age is an important demographic factor in the experience of LGBTQIA+ and refugee identity, therefore, diversity in this category was expected to produce important different results. Subsequently, their backgrounds also vary, which equally offers the research the opportunity to learn about different lived experiences, opinions, events, customs, traditions, and prejudices that they have experienced both in their status as refugees or migrants and in their LGBTQ+ identity. More specifically, participants come from Armenia, Italy, Albania, Albania, Serbia, Ukraine- Russia, and Bulgaria- Iran. Their research backgrounds range in different stages, from high school seniors to postgraduate level.

Table 1 below details the nickname of each respondent that they gave permission to be listed, the age, origin, educational level, and occupation of each participant.

TABLE 1

Information of Participants

Participant	Nickname	Age	Country	Educational Background	Working
Participant 1 (P1)	Felix	26	Armenia	College	Barista
Participant 2 (P2)	Gloria	54	Italy	University (Bachelor)	Drag Queen / Psychologist
Participant 3 (P3)	Sogol	46	Albania	High School	No data
Participant 4 (P4)	Giovanna	21	Serbia	High School	Customer Service
Participant 5 (P5)	Min	24	Bulgaria-Iran	College	No data
Participant 6 (P6)	Andy	33	Ukraine-Russia	University (Master)	Ukrainian-Russian Language Translator/ Guide

6.6 Limitations

In this section, some of the limitations related to the research conducted as part of this graduate program will be presented. Firstly, the main obstacle that the researcher encountered during conducting this thesis research is the difficulty of finding LGBTQIA+ refugees and migrants. Finding such people was valuable with difficulty in contacting

various organizations and agencies to help in this area, namely finding LGBTQIA+ migrants and refugees. Most times and organizations have a policy of not promoting research from which there is no direct involvement or even supervision from a member of their scientific team. Which is perfectly acceptable and understandable as it is about protecting the human data of the participants.

The second and equally important obstacle to this research was the languages spoken. Several of the participants who contributed to the conduct of this research did not use both Greek and English spoken by the researcher very well and as a result some of the questions asked during the interviews were not understood in part or in full. Furthermore, the barrier of the common spoken language had a decisive deterrent role in enabling the participants to express themselves in the way they would like to and to analyze more easily their thoughts, concerns, and experiences. This therefore resulted in some questions not being answered or not being answered in the way they would have liked.

In addition, another key limitation of this research is perhaps a small but significant degree of bias. In the main, all qualitative research is subjective in nature as the researcher holds a crucial role in this research process. The degree of bias in a thesis should be referred to as the extent to which the research may be influenced by personal beliefs or external factors that could alter or even affect the research findings. However, as the researcher develops a close relationship and contact with the research participants there is a significant possibility that the researcher may be led to bias and unilateralism because of this. It is therefore very important for researchers to strive for objectivity and try to combat - reduce bias to ensure to the greatest extent possible the reliability and validity of the research. In addition, however, the very development of these topics is not impartial as the researcher himself may unintentionally influence the findings of the research.

And the last but equally important factor to be mentioned as it is a major limitation of this research is the lack of representativeness. The sample size used in this thesis research is small and the participation is quite limited and incomplete and therefore, the results cannot be considered representative despite which similarities. The lack of representativeness in a thesis refers to the degree and size used in the research and may not accurately reflect the wider population or even the phenomenon studied in this thesis. This important limitation in thesis research can affect the generalizability of any findings discovered.

Part B- Analysis

CHAPTER 1: ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS

This part of the thesis presents the analysis of the data. This data has been organized into major themes that provide a clear framework by which the questions can be formulated. More specifically, this analysis is based on four (4) major thematic categories into which the research field and the interviews from which the research questions emerged had been divided respectively. Therefore, the structure of this part is based on the research questions and accordingly divided into four (4) themes with sub-themes where the results are analyzed.

More specifically, the three subchapters are divided into:

Theme 1: Leaving the intragroup

1.1 External factors (e.g., war, poverty, other)

Theme 2: Integration in Greece

2.1 Reasons for staying in Greece

2.1.1   Fear of return

2.1.2   Better living conditions

Theme 3: Integration and gender identity

3.1 Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

3.2 Positive attitudes towards intersex people

3.2.1   Age as a determinant of attitude towards LGBTQIA+

3.2.2   Educational level as a determinant of attitude towards LGBTQIA+

Theme 4: Inclusion and ethnic identity

4.1 National identity and attitudes of the host society

4.1.1   Factors shaping positive attitudes

4.1.2 Factors leading to social exclusion

Theme 1: Leaving the intragroup

In search of better conditions, LGBTQIA+ refugees and migrants have been forced to leave their home countries. Their motivation for this decision was the search for a better standard of living, moving away from any condition that might have urged otherwise. It is important to note that for the participants in the present research, the main reason for leaving the country was not their sexual orientation and gender identity. More specifically, their two main reasons for leaving were external factors (e.g., poverty, war, and others) and identity factors-deviance from the ingroup and identity.

1.1 Factors for leaving the country of origin

This part of the thesis analyses and presents the answers to the first research question, which concerns the reasons for leaving their country of origin, mainly due to external factors (such as war, better economic conditions and others). In the interview process, when participants were asked about their reasons for leaving their countries of origin, most of them answered based on personal reasons. In more detail some of them stated:

Felix: *"My mother stayed in Greece for several months, so when she and my father were getting married, she wanted to leave Armenia and she liked it better here. And my grandmother had already come to stay here. So, it was easier for her to come and live here. They had, let's say, a ready-made house, Greece was a little bit ahead of the Soviet countries actually".*

Sogol: *"For something better".*

Giovanna: *"My mum married a Greek and we came to live here. I really wanted to leave Serbia; I was very happy about it. However, we moved very strangely, but I really wanted to come here for a better life".*

Min: *"I grew up in Bulgaria until I was 4 years old and basically my parents for a period of about 2 years circled around Europe looking for a better country to move to. And in the end, they ended up in Greece because it was both closer to Bulgaria and because my grandmother had some jobs here. So it was easier to settle down".*

In contrast to the extracts of the literature analysis observed above, it is observed here that there is no possible persecution on grounds of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political beliefs, as the participants of this thesis left their countries motivated by economic, security and family reunification.

In the context of LGBTQIA+ migrants and refugees in Greece, the factor of deviation from their intragroup, or place of origin, and their identity becomes a central issue, as for some individuals it is the main factor that led them to migrate. As these individuals leave their homelands, this subcategory explores the impact of this departure on the new place of residence. This factor sheds light on the complex interplay between migration and identity construction for these individuals. This is shown to have occurred in the case of Andy, where she decided to move away from Russia both for reasons of war and for reasons of not accepting her sexual and gender identity.

More specifically, she said:

"I always wanted to live somewhere in Greece, because even then it was difficult for me in Russia to be an LGBTQ+ person. After 2014 I realized that the problem is not only my sexual orientation, but also my ethnicity, because now the war started 1.5 years ago, but the problems started much earlier. When Russia took Crimea, I understood that it was time for me to leave because every year things were getting worse and worse. In Russia I did not have my human rights. That's why I left. To be freer and not to be afraid."

As discussed in Chapter 1 of the Literature Review, some researchers have suggested that intragroup factors also influence group behavior (Branscombe et al. 2002). In the context of the intragroup relationship, the required respect resulting from a favorable intragroup evaluation is an important predictor of group commitment and adherence to group rules (Tuler, Degoyey et Smith 1996). However, older scholars argue that positive intragroup performance comparisons signal to recipients that they will be accepted in the best performing external group, which allows them to consider defecting to the most prestigious group (Seta & Seta 1996). Therefore, it is understood that just because someone is liked and accepted in the internal group does not mean that they will be valued accordingly by an external group (Branscombe et al 2002).

Theme 2: Integration in Greece

As mentioned earlier, Greece has been one of the main entry points for refugees and migrants in Europe, especially since 2015 and even before. In this part of the diplomatic research, an attempt will be made to explore the conditions and reasons for integration in Greece.

2.1 Reasons for staying in Greece

In Chapter 1 of the Literature Review, and more specifically in subchapter 1.4, I argue that cohesion and group membership is mainly attributed to the development of bonds of mutual empathy between people, which creates a cohesive group, since as empathy increases, so does cohesion (Festiger et al 1950). However, beyond the process of cohesion, it is shown through the interview process that fear and striving for better living conditions are the main reasons for moving and staying in Greece.

2.1.1 Fear of return

The main impetus that forces LGBTQIA refugees and migrants to flee to Greece as a refuge lies in the palpable fear of returning to their countries because of persecution and discrimination due to sexual orientation and gender identity, they expect a better future. This sub-theme delves into the overwhelming narratives of resilience as these refugees navigate the treacherous terrain of seeking safety while facing the haunting prospect of returning to a place where their very existence is met with 'hostility'. Greece is not simply becoming a geographical refuge but seeks to become a place of safety for them, offering them the opportunity to forge a future free from the shackles of fear and persecution.

During the interview, Giovanna shared with me the most difficult experience she had in Greece. Her personal difficult experience concerned a sexual harassment she received and at the end of her narrative she mentioned her fear of returning to her country of origin, Serbia.

In more detail, she said:

"The most difficult experience I had was when I was working in a restaurant in Milies in Pelion and my boss's best man hit my buttocks. I didn't do anything because at that time I was still in the state of exploring my sexuality and had slowly started to realize that I was asexual. When I was little I kind of understood and I know I don't like sex, but I didn't know there was a definition of asexual. This incident happened to me when I was 19 years old. Because I was sex everyone, I think I can't say "no" and I can't react when someone sexually harasses me because I don't react just because I don't want anything sex related. I mean I think that was a thought of mine was wrong and I have corrected it, but I remember very clearly that at the time I thought it didn't matter to say "no" and it didn't matter to react when someone sexually harasses me because I don't want anything to do with sex anyway. It was also difficult because I am an immigrant and at the time, I didn't know my rights as a worker, and I didn't know what I could call the union and report it. I don't know what I can call my lawyer and sue. I didn't know any of that and I was only focused on my goal what I can't lose my job and I can't renew my residency and I didn't want to go, must go back to Serbia with nothing. And that's why in the speeches I had left it and never said anything to anyone. I was afraid."

But in addition, Andy was also a refugee during the interviews and when asked if discrimination discouraged her from participating and her desire to integrate into Greek society, Andy responded:

"I have no choice but to try to overcome all these obstacles. I'll do everything I can not to go back to Russia, I can't. And now I can't even go to Ukraine because I have Russian citizenship and that's a problem now for Ukraine. I used to think I had three countries, meaning Ukraine is my motherland, Russia is the country I grew up in and I had a whole life and now I have my life in Greece. And when I started the war, I lost all the countries. Because in Russia there is fascism, in Ukraine they don't want me because I have Russian citizenship and in Greece, they don't care what happens between these countries. Greece has its own problems which are understandable but still it is difficult for me. I'm scared and sad that I have nowhere to go. And in Greece things are getting harder with the war".

The reasons for the persecution or removal of people from their countries of origin have been mentioned above. Many of them feel fear and horror at the sound of returning to their homelands, as demonstrated below. As mentioned in the Literature Review, the envy, resentment or even feelings of mismatch that they had experienced in their homelands in the context of racism can precipitate and trigger the feeling of fear (Kim & Sundstrom 2014). At the same time, this fear may have come earlier in the context of rejection by their society and/or family (D'Augelli 1998) and they fear the possibility of returning similar events. Also, research has shown that experiences of exclusion from society, harassment and violence can create anxiety and stress and even disruption to the lives of LGBTQIA+ individuals, directly shaping their pathways (Fredriksen- Goldstein et al 2017).

2.1.2 Better living conditions

Above mentioned above are the factors that drive migrant- refugee participants away from their countries of origin. Most of them reported that they left their countries to find better living conditions and a better future. During their efforts to integrate in Greece most of

them faced obstacles and discrimination as will be mentioned in more detail below. However, most participants as they themselves state that they try to overcome any obstacles and remain in Greece as they believe that the living conditions are better than their home countries.

 They state in more detail:

Admin: *"As I mentioned along the way I took my first steps as an LGBTQ+ person in the two years I was back at my parents' house in Bulgaria, in a small town. I don't know now what it's exactly like in the Greek countryside but the difference I experienced Thessaloniki where I live with the provincial town in Bulgaria was huge. Obviously, there are people who look at you and heckle you because of what you wear and how you look and so on. Everywhere there will be, but I feel like if there were 90% of people there it's 30% here. So, the conditions here are so much better".*

  According to Admin, the attitude of the local community in Bulgaria is more negative towards LGBTQIA+ compared to Thessaloniki, Greece. Of course, as he mentions, the comparison is between a rural and an urban area. This factor should be taken into consideration, since in urban contexts, LGBTQIA+ are usually more free to express themselves and are less targeted by the population.

Giovanna: *"Serbian society will always be related to Greek society. I don't think I will ever get away with it that in Serbia it is not acceptable for my preferences. I will always say "aaa is better than Serbia? So, it is very good". I feel accepted not completely of course in Greek society but I think if I lived in Serbian society trying to be myself, I wouldn't be able to. I wouldn't even come out there".*

Andy: *"When I arrived in Greece I went to Greek lessons, and it was like going back to kindergarten. So, the Greek education system is not as harsh as the Russian one. In Russia things are very, very hard. Here they encouraged me very much in the lessons and I feel so different from Russia I felt euphoria especially when I wanted to leave Russia. Here things are better. Especially after the war".*

The first two quotes indicate that the attitude of the Greek society towards LGBTQIA+ people is more positive than in other countries, therefore making the life of LGBTQIA+ easier. Greece is seen as a more relaxed place compared to other contexts in terms of expectation and pressure. However, they consider it more relaxed not only in terms of acceptance of their sex and gender identity but also in social and political terms compared to their country of origin, which in this case is Russia and Serbia.

Theme 3: Integration and gender identity

As mentioned in chapter one of the Literature Review, in most cases for members of stigmatised groups the threat of being targeted by prejudice or discrimination is a defining feature of their daily lives, often limiting their access to resources, their integration into other social groups and generally creating barriers in many areas of their social life. In this part of the research, however, and regardless of whether they experienced any of the above both during their stay in Greece and in their countries of origin, the focus will be on the positive attitudes experienced by the participants during their integration efforts in Greece.

3.1 Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Often there can be in circles a pervasive prejudice surrounding sexual orientation and gender identity perpetuating discrimination and preventing the search for self-expression. This deep-rooted prejudice manifests itself in a variety of social domains, from employment opportunities to personal relationships, creating an environment where individuals are unfairly judged based on who they love or how they identify. This subcategory delves into the attitudes participants have experienced more generally because of their sexual orientation and gender identities in Greece. The personal experiences and narratives of participants will be analyzed below.

Min, when asked about the most difficult experience he had in Greece, mentioned a permanent daily difficulty due to his sexual and gender identity. As he stated:

In more detail he stated:

"Regarding the LGBTQIA+ part, the truth is that my personal acceptance as an LGBTQIA+ person was experienced elsewhere, it happened to be the two years I went back to live in Bulgaria as an adult. I don't know what it would have been like if I experienced it here but for sure and now that I live in Greece the hardest part is that I fear for my physical integrity many times. Because I study at private college and fashion and I am generally the most eccentric one, sometimes I may go out in a skirt, sometimes I may wear make-up, sometimes I may wear something that doesn't fit the stereotype of a man in Greece, and in the Balkans in general. Many times, there have been times when I have been cursed at, I have had water thrown at me, I have even had stones thrown at me. In the beginning the first time I wore a more rock style skirt I tried to justify my masculinity with the way I wore it. I put it on with a more masculine walking style and a more masculine style to make it somewhat more acceptable. But the first time I put on a short green skirt I felt cuter until I got on the bus and the 30 minutes until I got to the center of Thessaloniki, I felt like everyone was going to swallow me with their eyes. It bothers me when I feel like I can't be myself and I'm afraid of that. They laugh behind my back and point a finger at me...".

Min, as can be seen from his response, often feels threatened and discriminated against and harassed in the process of expressing his true self. As already mentioned, discrimination is a type of behaviour based on unfair treatment of certain groups of people and is largely official for members of minority groups (Hogg & Vaugham 2010). Additionally, however, research confirms Min's claims, stating that transgender people experience more intense forms of discrimination, exclusion, and harassment due to non-compliance with society's norms (Ozturk et al 2023)

Then, during the interview and in response to a question, Andy shared a personal event that happened to her that she feared for any consequences and perhaps ridicule against her.

More specifically she said:

"This year I started using feminine pronouns and I feel that if I use them in public and arbitrarily on people, I don't know I will have an issue. So, I use the male ones. And it bothers me because while I've opened a whole new world for myself that I want to study, I can't easily do it".

In these words, Andy is essentially saying that she finds it difficult to express her true self, perhaps out of fear of prejudice. While her desire is to be able to express herself the way she wants to, which may have taken her time and effort to accept, and she always has a hard time expressing them outwardly and that is something that upsets and limits her. More specifically, prejudice is associated with much of the human suffering for the people who suffer it, and usually those who suffer it also have more limited opportunities for expression and social acceptance (Friese 2001).

In contrast to the above participants, other participants have not experienced strong marginalization and discrimination in their everyday life, which some of them attribute to their personal self-confidence.

More specifically, they state:

Giovanna: *"I haven't thought about it too much, but I think I'm spoken to differently from men because I'm a woman. And actually, I'm not a woman either I'm gender fluid. I don't say I am, they see me as a woman and maybe they see me as gender fluid. I know they talk to me differently I just haven't looked into it, and I haven't thought about whether I've missed something or learned something that I should have learned and because I'm a woman and because I'm a migrant".*

With these words Giovanna wants to express that when her sexual and gender identity is not visible, the reactions are mitigated and there is no strong deviation from what is accepted by the society. Invisibility is associated with less victimization and is often associated with the devaluation of desire and freedom of body expression and self-determination (Dworkin & Yi 2003).

Felix: *"And for my background and for my sexual preferences I think everyone is very, very polite, pleasant, never made me feel bad. And I think that's something that I don't feel bad about either, so it's not the 'Oh I've got the Achilles heel' and someone might come up to me and I might panic or get picked on, I think it's also how much a person supports who they are. I mean I've never tried to hide it to be accepted or to make the other person feel more superficially that I belong. I am who I am."*

Sogol: *"Personally, there is nothing stopping me. I do everything the way I want but it's about respecting the environment. I've never personally felt a barrier to doing something because I don't declare it at all. But there are obstacles in general to others. I know who I am and have never been interested in others".*

Gloria: *"I've never had a problem. Never. I don't care about people, it's just the way I am".*

As mentioned above, it is clear that the accumulation of prejudice and taboos is commonly experienced for multiple reasons by a person who self-identifies as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or generally belongs to the LGBTQIA+ community. These individuals not only face ridicule, shame, deprivation of the right, and possible criminal prosecution, but in a large percentage of the world they may face violence or even death (Dworkin & Yi 2003). It is therefore understandable that individuals belonging to the LGBTQIA+ community are to a large extent marginalized, easily experiencing feelings of prejudice.

3.2 Positive attitudes towards intersex people

Through the process of the integration of people into groups, an entity definition emerges, i.e., the property of a group that makes it appear as a coherent, distinct, and unified entity (Hogg & Vaugham 2010). However, even groups to which people 'do not belong' can also have a dominant role (Hogg & Vaugham 2010). Therefore, within a group context the concept of cohesion prevails, which connects people as members of the group emotionally first to each other and then to the group, thus giving a sense of solidarity and unity.

Therefore, the following will analyze which individuals and specifically which individuals with which characteristics help to better and smoother integration of people in Greek society.

During the interviews, when the participants were asked about which individuals and with which characteristics have helped them to eliminate discrimination or to integrate more smoothly into Greek society, it appeared that age and education play a decisive role in this process.

3.2.1 Age as a determinant of attitude towards LGBTQIA+

According to the analysis of the interviews, age seems to be an important determinant in attitude and behavior towards LGBTQIA+ people. Young people were considered as more open and positive towards them.

For example, Felix said:

"I think young people help to eliminate discrimination. I also think that a little bit older people are more closed-minded and have a lot of fears because I think they haven't explored a lot of things. Even they themselves when I see something different in front of them, they either pass it by, or they don't care, or they don't want to know and are afraid of it".

According to Felix, young people carry the possibility and hope for elimination of discrimination. They are the ones who are positive and accepting towards LGBTQI+, a view that is shared by Gloria as well. Older people seem to avoid LGBTQI+ people due to lack of knowledge and consequent fear.

Andy: *"I experienced very warm feelings when I went to the university in Thessaloniki for the first day and I was very scared, but the guys came to help me immediately. They started asking me questions and I felt very good. In general, the university was a very warm place for me in the first time. And now the new guys at Thessaloniki Pride, who I volunteer with,*

who ask me about the age pronouns I use are always very keen on it, it's very cool. Generally, it's young guys that have been helping me out".

The same is supported by Andy, who found students in Thessaloniki to be very welcoming and helping him/her to become part of the student community.

Giovanna: *"Those who have helped me a lot are my anarchist friends who are the same age as me and are from my group. Most of them are also LGBTQIA+".*

Giovanna considers political ideology as a factor influencing attitude towards LGBTQIA+. But a similar thought is also discussed in the book " Queering Anarchism Addressing and Undressing Power and Desire", where Daring and his team state that anarchist comrades should be familiar with queer comrades, and vice versa queer comrades should be familiar with anarchism, as the union of these two concepts, which are not entirely separate, is particularly fruitful.

In addition, Min also believes that he has been helped a lot by women, especially those over 20. He claims that they have helped him a lot in expressing his gender identity and being able to externalize his preferences more comfortably in terms of his physical appearance such as makeup and clothing.

3.2.2 Educational level as a determinant of attitude towards LGBTQIA+

Another factor that seems to influence attitudes towards intersex people is education. As education often acts as a catalyst for social awareness and understanding, the research explores how different educational backgrounds influence attitudes towards the intersex community. The study suggests that higher levels of education may be associated with increased empathy, acceptance and informed perspectives regarding LGBTQIA+ people. This is something that was also stated by interviewees during the interviews in reference to what characteristics of people help them in terms of reducing discrimination. In particular, they emphasized people's educational level, putting it as one of the key factors in both

understanding sexual and gender identity and eliminating any form of discrimination in this regard.

Some of the participants stated:

Felix: *"I certainly think that in areas where the level of education is lower, there will be discrimination. But young people who are usually more educated help to reduce discrimination. I mean if you talk to some Greeks who have lived abroad for some years you can see a completely different view on all these issues we are discussing. I think that as much as Greece has progressed, it still has some old attitudes that directly affect the society we live in"*.

In addition, as mentioned in the Literature Review, recent research shows that there is an even greater risk of discrimination and marginalization for LGBTQIA+ people from minority ethnic groups and closeted groups (Cyrus 2017).

Theme 4: Inclusion and ethnic identity

As mentioned in the Literature Review, current asylum legislation does not explicitly include persecution based on gender expression and gender characteristics, which means that LGBTQIA+ people are not included in the international protection process because of this. However, the most important law in the European Union is the Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Friendly Expressions Act of the Maltese Parliament. Certain inaccuracies in both European and domestic Greek legislation regarding asylum claims made by LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers make it even more necessary to have a special procedure exclusively for LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers (Fisher 2019). It is important to note that the refugee-migrant participants of this research have not applied for asylum based on their sexual or gender identity.

4.1 National identity and attitudes of the host society

The complex interaction between national identity and the attitudes of the host society is a crucial aspect of the thesis. As LGBTI migrants and refugees orient themselves to a new cultural landscape, the reception they encounter often reflects host society's perceptions of identity and belonging. This subsection examines how pre-existing ethnic identity structures influence the acceptance or resistance these individuals face. Whether characterized by openness and inclusivity or entrenched prejudices, the attitudes of the host society become the lens through which this research seeks to understand the complex dynamics that shape LGBTQIA+ migrants experiences that shape their sense of belonging in an alien context. However, below, and according to what the participants said, both positive and negative attitudes during their arrival in Greece and their efforts to integrate into Greek society will be analyzed.

4.1.1 Factors shaping positive attitudes

During the interviews some of the participants and when asked about whether they experienced or continue to experience discrimination in their efforts to stay in Greece, they mentioned that a factor in not being discriminated against both based on their origin and based on their sexual or gender identity. More specifically, some respondents stated that if their country of origin has a good relationship with Greece or is twinned with Greece then it is a key criterion for not being racist or homophobic or discriminatory.

In more detail some of the participants stated:

Felix coming from Armenia said: *"Generally I was treated very well when I came to Greece. And because I think Greece also has a good relationship with my country so there was no problem, I just think that maybe if I was from Albania or somewhere else, I might have had some problems. I saw this in relation to other classmates of mine. As an LGBTQIA+ person it doesn't affect me again because again it measures the country you are from because let's*

say even now and at my age, I think that when someone knows somebody is kind of excited where I am from Armenia, they don't resent it, they don't have anything negative in their mind or even the opposite".

Gloria: *"I have never experienced anything negative. Maybe the fact that I'm from Italy plays a role".*

Giovanna: *"I also get angry for an extra reason because I'm from Serbia and everyone says I'm Orthodox, which I'm not. But my country is Orthodox, and they can say a lot of negative things to an Albanian or an Egyptian or a Syrian, who came from their country and have more problems than me, while in my country they will welcome me. To them I will tell them that they must go back to their country while to me, who is from an Orthodox country, they will say "oh you are our sister, the Serbs are our brothers" and that makes me very angry. For me, once they know that Serbia, they will be happy and accept me very positively and because I am white in skin. I feel that I have a different attitude because I am from a state twinned with Greece, because they believe that I am Orthodox and because I am white, if these things were not true, there would be more problems".*

According to her, Giovanna believes that religious identity influences attitudes and behaviors among people in a more positive way. The common characteristics between peoples and groups unite people and classify them as members of a common group. One of these common characteristics is religion.

Min: *"I have the privilege of being a European citizen, so I am more comfortable with the process and everything. As far as I know, it is more difficult for people who are, for example, war refugees and do not come from a European Union country".*

This is something that is also proven by the words of Sogol, who is of Albanian origin. More specifically he stated:

"Yes, in general I faced and still face obstacles every day. If they hear an Albanian name, you are likely to have a problem".

According to the above, the country of origin plays an important role in the majority of taxes both in terms of avoiding discrimination and prejudice and in terms of integrating migrants and refugees into Greek society. According to research from a psychological point of view, cohesion within a group is mainly attributed to the development of mutual empathy bonds between people, which creates a cohesive group as the more empathy increases, the more cohesion increases (Festinger et al 1950).

4.1.2 Factors leading to social exclusion

By delving into the complex dynamics of social inclusion and social exclusion, the thesis examines the multifaceted factors that contribute to the marginalization of LGBTQIA+ migrants and refugees. Within this subsection, the focus is limited to the specific elements that enhance social exclusion. Essentially, the thesis aims to shed light on the root causes of social exclusion, setting the stage for informed debate and promoting strategies to remove the barriers that prevent LGBTQIA+ migrants and refugees from fully integrating into their new host societies.

In more detail some of the participants stated:

Giovanna: *"I think the worst perception of LGBTQ+ people believed by church people is that they should die. And also, immigrant we shouldn't be here, and we should go to our country and that makes me very angry".*

Felix: *"I think certainly the older age groups are definitely more discriminatory because I think that both because of habit and because they've grown up in a different environment*

closer to religion, they think quite differently. I think all of that makes them more closed-minded and have a lot of phobias".

Andy: *"Many Greeks have a good image of Russia in their minds because of its religion and culture. But for me this is bad because I don't believe in God, and it is strange for some Greeks and because of my sexual identity. And this was the reason to break my relationship with the neighbors and with some other people".*

At the same time, during the interviews, almost all the participants expressed and recounted their personal experiences and obstacles they had experienced that led them to social exclusion. More specifically, they recounted the discrimination that mainly related to bureaucratic procedures of the Greek state that posed basic obstacles in their daily lives.

In more detail some of the participants stated:

Giovanna: *"Actually my biggest obstacle is an event that has happened to me. Basically, I was absent in a court and now I have a blacklisted criminal record because that court was in 2019 and I sued a person in 2017 when I'm on vacation in Samothrace. This person was then acquitted and then he sued me for false accusation, and I was just absent from court because I didn't know about it. And because he was acquitted in 2017, I now have a black record for allegedly filing a false complaint since he was acquitted in the first trial, and I was absent in the second court. And in 2019 I went to the district in Volos, and they told us that there is a court in my name without my knowledge and I am from another country. Whenever I was absent because I didn't know it, no paper came to me, and I didn't know it and now I have a blacklisted criminal record. Now I have applied for an appeal. This is a big hurdle for me with my rights I feel I didn't know the process, where I can find these things and now, I'm in trouble. This clearly means the system is not well set up. Now with this issue I don't know if I can renew my residency next year and now that I want to change jobs, I won't find it easy because who will accept me with a blacklisted criminal record".*

In this excerpt, Giovanna recounts the events that occurred during a court matter that resulted in the blackening of her criminal record. This event causes her to reflect on the

legislative process that should have been put in place but also causes her anxiety about the future and her search for a new job.

Min: *"I have a big issue with my name. I had for personal reasons a change of adjective in Bulgaria with a court and change my father's last name to my mother's last name. However, in Greece when I had to go to a public office to change my name so that I could use online services to avoid having to hassle in person I was told that I cannot change such non-changeable details as first name and surname. Which perhaps I understand because it is not for example an address that can be changed easily but I have changed it normally with a court. And when I asked them what the procedure was, and I showed them that I have the documents from the Bulgarian court that shows that you changed your surname, but they didn't accept it. And they told me that this case must be validated by the Greek court and that I must have a trial in Greece again with all my costs from the beginning for them to accept that I have indeed changed my surname. This makes my daily life more difficult because I can't easily make identification and everywhere I must go in person with the court documents. And I also had an issue with social assistance which while I am entitled to it, I could not receive it because of my issue with my other suffix error".*

Min mentioned during the interview his important personal issue which is the process of reading his new suffix in Greece. The Greek bureaucracy does not recognize his suffix change which has been legally carried out in Bulgaria and as a result the daily procedures take longer to identify him. At the same time some others are not carried out at all such as the provision of assistance where he is entitled but cannot receive it because of this issue.

Sogol: *"Then at the beginning of 1999 when I came there was more difficulty. They were taking a long time for the papers, but it was okay. There is a period to be just like that without papers".*

Felix: *"There were periods when because the passport needs to be renewed and you have to have a residence permit which needed a certain amount of time to be issued, for example, for example, I remember that at some point when I was taking an exam and I needed the passport because I was waiting for my identity card to be issued, the passport was stuck in*

a stagnant state because it could not be renewed again. So, for a period of time, I didn't have the papers so I didn't even know if I could take the exam I didn't know when the ID card would come out. So, my ID card came out during an exam period and directly the army paper came to me at a time when I didn't expect it. I had trouble reorganizing my schedule and my life and daily routine. I just think that in another country the system would be more focused on getting the paperwork out on time quickly without any hassle or extra money. To me it would also be more process and the government would have to do more and not so much you to deal with. Because you should be too involved".

Andy: *"The process of getting a residence permit in Greece is one of my biggest obstacles, I think. Every time I go to the periphery or somewhere to do something about my paperwork, I always feel like I'm not human. I always feel that I am very small very weak that I am fighting something big, huge and for which my life has no meaning. So, I'm like a card I'm not a person to them. Let's say my previous residence permit I waited six months and when I got it in my hands it was only valid for another month and a half".*

   Sogol, Felix, and Andy during their interview tried hard to convey the obstacles and difficulties they went through with their registration renewal process. All three participants experienced and strongly experienced this process as an obstacle which made them want to talk about it without any specific such question being asked. All three participants reported that there were periods when their official documents regarding their stay in Greece had not been renewed. While Andy strongly conveys her deep sadness, anxiety, and difficulty every time she goes through this process with the phrase *"I always feel like I am not human"*.

Also, in another point, Andy again mentions, when asked about the current legislation in Greece, the problems she encounters in the bureaucratic procedures she must go through to get her residence permit in Greece.

"I can't say that I know much about the legal framework in Greece. And I guess that's a big issue too that there's no place you can go and find out what you're entitled to where you can go to get help to get information. Let's say in the region where I go for my residence

permit there is an office, but they give you irrelevant information to the information you need. So, let's say I give you a list of paperwork you need to gather and then you go, and I tell you that the paperwork you went to is wrong. They're basically giving you the wrong information, So I personally found some people from Ukraine, Russia, and Belarus and generally people who are Russian-speaking and who had been through this trial a little bit before me. And from them I got the information to be sure about the papers that they need".

According to research most countries use religion, culture as the main reasons to oppress LGBTQIA+ people as homosexuality and transgenderism are cited as parts of religious and urban decadence (Dworkin & Yi 2003). LGBTQIA+ people are therefore believed to undermine the beliefs and values of the wider society in which they live and threaten the established social order (Dworkin & Yi 2003). The same is supported by some participants, stating that age is one of the main factors that lead them to suffer discrimination.

CHAPTER 2: DISCUSSIONS OF THE RESULTS

The aim of this study is to focus on and explore any legal and social obstacles that refugees and migrants encounter in their efforts to integrate into Greek society. This chapter of the thesis aims to combine primary and secondary research findings. The chapter is organized in subchapters based on the research questions.

More specifically, the 2 sub-chapters that are all discussed are:

1. The role of the concept of "identity" in the context of Greek society
2. Legal and social obstacles of LGBTQIA+ migrants and refugees in their efforts to integrate into Greek society

2.1 The role of the concept of "identity" in the context of Greek society

Firstly, it is important to note that the participants came to Greece without their sexual or gender identity being a primary factor. Instead, most participants came at a relatively young age with or without their families seeking a better future both economically and socially. It is therefore understandable that their sexual or gender identity is not mentioned anywhere in their official documents in relation to their stay in Greece. However, this might be in their favor as according to a recent survey, sexual orientation, Gender Identity and Gender Identity and Gender Identity and Gender Characteristics (SOGIESC) remain unimportant in the public debate in Greece regarding the protection of migrants and refugees (Avgeri 2023).

However, it is important to note that although their main reason for leaving their home country was neither their sexual identity nor their gender identity, some of the participants believe that Greece helped them to better understand or discover some aspects of their sexual or gender identity, believing that perhaps in their country of origin they would not have had this opportunity. As the theory proves, within a group, the concept of cohesion can and should prevail, which connects people in the group both emotionally and in terms of solidarity and unity. In essence, cohesion is the most basic attribute of the group which is also the link between members (Hogg & Vaugham 2010). Identity individuals through this process are evaluated by the group members themselves and as a result any differences that exist are therefore highlighted (Hogg & Vaugham 2010).

In addition, through the process of primary research it was proven that mainly young people helped significantly in terms of eliminating discrimination around LGBTQIA+ refugees and migrants, while helping in a more meaningful and smoother integration into Greek society. However, as has been shown in theory, in the context of intergroup relations, the required respect that arises in the context of intergroup assessment is an important predictor of group cohesion (Tyler et al 1996) which in Greek society is shown to be true for individuals who may not be part of the same group. Furthermore, it is argued that the possible positive behaviour that may exist within a group is possibly due to the goals of that group (Tyler et al 1996). While at the same time it has been observed that positive intragroup treatment, especially by peers, uniformly leads to actions that serve the group (Branscombe et al 2002).

2.2 Legal and social obstacles of LGBTQIA+ migrants and refugees in their efforts to integrate into Greek society

The main objectives of this thesis were to explore the legal and social obstacles that LGBTQIA+ refugees and migrants encounter when trying to integrate into Greek society. More specifically, the search for legal barriers as it was proven in the primary research through the interview process also primarily causes social barriers resulting in social exclusion.

During the interview process it was shown that the vast majority of the participants believe that the Greek bureaucratic system needs significant improvement and basic structural changes. This result lies as the participants themselves, although they were not asked anything like the Greek bureaucracy, mentioned its problems and the strong obstacles caused to them by its inefficiency, without this being due to their gender identity or sexual identity. As they themselves stated, the deficiencies in the Greek legislation also caused obstacles in the social field and more specifically in the process of their integration into Greek society, causing social exclusion. Consequently, as it is understood, LGBTQ+ refugees and migrants are undermined by the beliefs of the wider society in which they live and as a result they are often threatened with exclusion from the social class (Dworkin & Yi 2003).

However, apart from the social exclusion suffered by the participants due to the inefficiency of the Greek bureaucracy, as was understood during the interviews, another barrier that makes them socially excluded is that of religious beliefs. Religion is one of the main criteria of acceptance or not in Greek society. More specifically, some of the participants believe that they experienced because of their country of origin with which Greece happens to have a similar religion or may be considered as twin states. On the contrary, even they themselves believe that their sexual orientation or gender identity stands as a barrier when the discussion turns to the area of religion in Greek society. Religion has the potential to cause strong and poignant discrimination through it and is the means of insulting the dignity of people belonging to another group (Dworkun & Yi 2003). In addition, most countries use religion, culture as the main reasons for oppressing LGBTQIA+ people, as homosexuality and transgenderism are cited as parts of religious and

urban decadence (Dworkin & Yi 2003). LGBTQIA+ people are therefore believed to undermine the beliefs and values of the wider society in which they live and threaten the social order (Dworkin & Yi 2003).

Certainly, the issue of bureaucracy is a major challenge for LGBTQIA+ refugees and migrants trying to integrate into Greek society. The bureaucratic obstacles they face can exacerbate their social exclusion and prevent them from accessing basic services and legal protection. Delays in processing asylum applications, difficulties in obtaining the necessary documentation and inconsistencies in administrative procedures can create additional obstacles for LGBTQIA+ people navigating the complex Greek bureaucracy. Moreover, the intersection of bureaucratic inefficiency with other forms of discrimination, such as homophobia and transphobia, further exacerbates the challenges faced by LGBTQIA+ refugees and migrants. Addressing these bureaucratic obstacles requires comprehensive reforms to eliminate them, with the aim of streamlining administrative procedures, enhancing transparency and accountability, and ensuring that LGBTQIA+ persons are treated equally under the law. However, in a first stage, further research could therefore involve a variety of methodologies, including qualitative interviews, surveys, and participatory action research, to capture the complexity of individuals' experiences and perspectives. New research efforts could aim to explore the lived experiences of LGBTQIA+ refugees and migrants in the Greek context, shedding light on the multifaceted challenges they face and identifying effective strategies for promoting LGBTQIA+ refugees and migrants' rights and rights in the Greek context. Moreover, comparative studies between European countries can provide valuable information on differences in legal frameworks, social attitudes, and support services, highlighting best practices and areas for improvement.

Conclusion

In the pursuit of understanding the challenges faced by LGBTQIA+ refugees and migrants in integrating into Greek society, this thesis has delved into the legal and social landscapes shaping their experiences. The exploration, encapsulated in the title "LGBTQIA+ refugees/migrants in Greece: addressing the legal and social context," aimed to contribute to the broader discourse on diversity, inclusion, and human rights.

The introduction laid the groundwork, highlighting the paramount importance of exploring marginalized communities in a world evolving towards greater diversity and inclusion. Drawing inspiration from the greater insight that now exists into the diverse identities of both sexual and gender identities, the thesis focused on LGBTQIA+ individuals who, during their migration to Greece, faced challenges not solely defined by their sexual or gender identity. Rather, their arrival often marked their search for a better future, both economically and socially. The concept of 'identity' emerged as a dynamic force in the context of group cohesion, shedding light on the role of younger people in promoting inclusion and eliminating discrimination.

The complexities of identity in the Greek context and the legal and social obstacles faced by LGBTQ+ migrants and refugees were examined in detail. The findings revealed a complex interplay between legal frameworks and social attitudes, highlighting the need for holistic changes. The shortcomings of the Greek bureaucratic system were identified as significant obstacles, both in legal processes and in their impact on social dynamics. Moreover, religious beliefs stood out as a criterion for acceptance, revealing the complex intersections of culture, religion, and discrimination.

The research highlights the interconnected nature of the legal and social challenges faced by LGBTQIA+ refugees and migrants in Greece. The unique experiences of this community, shaped by the evolving social landscape of Greece, require differentiated solutions. As this thesis contributes to a deeper understanding of their struggles, it also highlights the urgent need for comprehensive changes in legal frameworks, bureaucratic systems and social attitudes. The call to action is clear - a more inclusive, just and understanding society

requires concerted efforts to reshape policies, promote social acceptance and remove discriminatory barriers. This study not only answers pressing questions, but also launches a dialogue for further research and advocacy in the areas of human rights, migration studies and LGBTQIA+ advocacy.

In conclusion, across the different narratives explored during this study, the shocking statement of one participant encapsulates the essence of our quest: ***"I care that I am not just seen with an identity or a document or mixed nationality or as an ethnicity because it doesn't add anything of that, something different to my soul. Those are just some parts of who I am, but the most important part of my identity is my mind, my soul, and my character. Everything else is stereotypes".*** This assertion resonates as a powerful reminder that individual depth transcends external labels. As we conclude this exploration of the lives of LGBTQ+ refugees and migrants in Greece, it becomes apparent that true understanding requires moving away from simplistic categorizations. The call is for a society that recognizes the richness within everyone, overcoming stereotypes and embracing the complexity of human identity.

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