



INCLUSIVE SOCIETY
INSTITUTE

SURVEY ON THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF THE LGBT+ COMMUNITY IN SOUTH AFRICA

Assessing the democratic consciousness, social cohesion and integration, and the life experiences of the LGBT+ community



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The Inclusive Society Institute is committed to promoting the values enshrined in the South African Constitution. As its name suggests, the institute is working towards the establishment of an inclusive society, that works for all that live in and call South Africa home. The LGBT+ community are an integral part of South African society. The moral and ethical objective of guaranteeing all citizens the right to freely live and express their gender, sexual and sexual orientation preferences, aimed at correcting past injustices is enshrined in the Constitution and post-1994 legislation. This survey, which was undertaken over the period 10 – 22 June 2020, assesses the lived experiences against the stated public policy objectives. And given that the survey was executed at the time that the COVID-19 lockdown was put in place to curb the pandemic, it included an appraisal of the impact that the regulations have had on the LGBT+ community.





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DISCLAIMER

Views expressed in this report do not necessarily represent the views of the
Inclusive Society Institute or those of their respective Board or Council members.

All records and findings included in this report, stem from the survey on the lived experience
of the LGBT+ community in South Africa, which took place over the period 10 – 22 June 2020.

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SETTING THE SCENE

1. Setting the scene and objectives of the survey

The Bill of Rights in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (RSA, 1996), guarantees that no one may be discriminated against by the state or any other person on the grounds of, amongst others, gender, sex, and sexual orientation. It further states that national legislation must be enacted to prevent or prohibit unfair discrimination on these grounds.

In a study commissioned by the African National Congress (ANC), it is suggested that the Post-Apartheid dispensation in South Africa paved the way for a “progressive global precedent for the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Trans Intersex and Queer equality” (Brown & Buntse, 2020). South Africa, they say, was the first country to recognise LGBT+ rights in its constitution and the country has subsequently developed a suite of policies and laws to give practical effect to these rights. This, Brown & Buntse argue, has made South Africa “a global benchmark for the rights of sexual minorities”.

Despite these advances, it is suggested that the LGBT+ community remains subjected to many adverse predispositions (Brown & Buntse, 2020). They argue that several of which are deep-rooted in colonial systems and institutional cultures that are antagonistic towards the LGBT+ community (Brown & Buntse, 2020). This, they say, has again been aptly exposed during the COVID-19 pandemic, where several human rights violations have illustrated that marginalised groups, including women, children, the LGBT+ community and people living with disabilities, have remained at the receiving end (Brown & Buntse, 2020).

Brown & Buntse (2020), in their study proposal to the ANC, identified seven pillars that articulate the peculiar policy nuances that often disenfranchise the LGBT+ community as it relates to the provision and access to public services. These pillars are education and youth development; access to healthcare and healthcare services; safety, security and psychosocial services; experiences when accessing essential services; homelessness and access to housing; job creation, employment and access to the economy; and queer migrants and asylum seeking.

The study proposed by Brown & Buntse (2020) aims to assess how South Africa's policy frameworks relating to the LGBT+ community are ensuring their equitable benefit from government services. It will investigate the lived experiences of the LGBT+ community, as it relates to their economic and social inclusion. In addition, given the timing of the study, it was also deemed fit to assess the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the local LGBT+ community.

The survey covered in this report serves to gather empirical data to support the aforementioned study. It will examine the level of consciousness of the LGBT+ community with regard to their constitutional and democratic rights, the level of social acceptance, integration and cohesion, and the attitudinal changes towards the LGBT+ community since the advent of democracy in 1994. Furthermore, it will delve into their lived experiences as it relates to the family, cultural, religious and personal health environment.

The survey period ran from Wednesday, 10 June 2020 and closed at the end of business on Monday, 22 June 2020. It should therefore be viewed as a snapshot of the LGBT+ community's sentiment during said period.

The Inclusive Society Institute offers this survey report as a contribution towards the important study envisaged by the ANC. It will also promote the outcome of the study to public policymakers as a further contribution towards consolidating national reflexion on this key human rights issue. The institute supports measures that will advance equality, inclusiveness and solidarity.



METHODOLOGY

2. Methodology

In reviewing the LGBT+ population size in South Africa, this survey relied on a UK Home Office report published in 2017, wherein it is estimated that around 500,000 South Africans identify themselves as gay, lesbian, bisexual or gender non-conforming. Furthermore, up to three million present themselves in a gender non-conforming way (UK Home Office, 2017).

To test its validity, a second report, published by The Other Foundation in association with the Human Sciences Research Council (The Other Foundation / HSRC, 2016) was consulted. It revealed a similar number of 530,000 adult men and women, of all population groups, both rural and urban, and across age groups, self-identify as either homosexual, bisexual, or gender non-conforming in some way – the same ratio as observed in other countries around the world. According to the study, more than six times as many people (approximately 430,000 men and almost 2.8 million women) present themselves in public (i.e. they dress and act) in a gender non-conforming way.

Sampling, data collection and data subjects

The survey questions were disseminated by electronic means via a number of databases associated with LGBT+ organisations. Recipients of the survey were members of the LGBT+ associations, thereby ensuring the quality of the sample, given that “the more completely the sampling frame covers the target population”, the higher the quality of the sample (European Social Survey, 2016). Standard data cleansing and validation procedures were carried out. In total, 288 valid responses, drawn from across all nine provinces, were received.

Whilst the largest proportion represented cisgender (male) in terms of gender identity, there was a good spread across all classifications. In terms of sexual orientation, the greater majority of responses came from individuals that consider themselves to be homosexual.

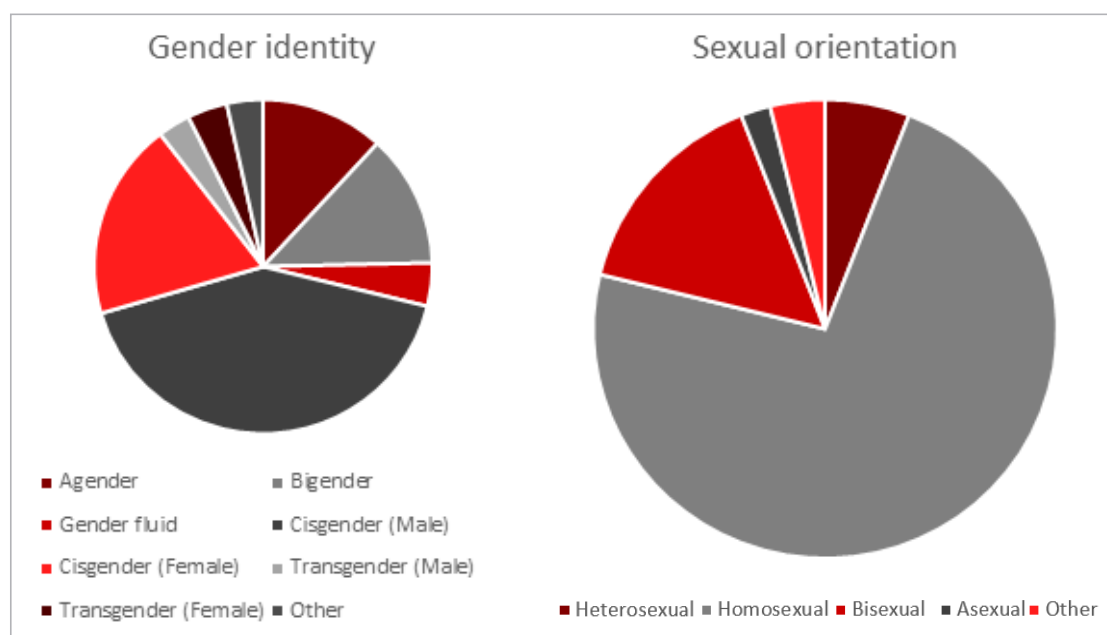


Figure 2.1: Breakdown of respondents by gender identity and sexual orientation

Confidence level and margin of error

In determining sample size, the institute normally relies on the 95 per cent level of confidence and five per cent margin of error, which is common for social sciences studies (Royse, 2008:209). In this particular survey, the level of confidence remains at 95 per cent, although the margin of error, at around six per cent, is slightly lower.

Sample size

To achieve a confidence level of 95 per cent and a margin of error of approximately 5 per cent, the institute is guided by the table published in Israel (1992) and Cochran's (1963) formula for calculating a sample for proportions. The former suggests a sample size of 400 obtained responses and the latter, 385. In terms of the aforementioned table, 204 responses for a population size exceeding 100,000 would result in a margin of error of 7 per cent. The 288 responses received in this survey would thus suggest a margin of error midway, that is around 6 per cent.

To further confirm the expected margin of error, the institute used the sample size calculator of Creative Research System (N.d.). By entering the estimated LGBT+ population sizes as suggested in the first paragraphs of this section, into the calculation, a 5 per cent margin of error for this size of population would require 384 respondents, a 6 per cent margin of error, 267 responses, and a 7 per cent margin of error, 196 responses. These calculations correspond closely with that of Israel, as outlined in the preceding paragraph.

Limitation

This survey was done by means of electronic dissemination. This therefore restricts the interpretation to be representative of those members of the LGBT+ community that have access to electronic means of communication. Furthermore, whilst pro-active steps have been taken to ensure data integrity, and all indications are that data is beyond reproach, the possibility of external manipulation of data input cannot be completely excluded.

Question set

The survey contained a total of 32 questions, which could be grouped into seven parts.

• Part 1 – questions of a demographic nature

1	What is your age?
2	What is your biological gender / sex assigned at birth?
3	What is your gender identity?
4	What is your sexual orientation?
5	In which province do you reside?
6	What is your marital status?
7	What is your occupational status?
8	What is your level of education?



• **Part 2 – questions relating to constitutional and democratic rights**

9	Are you aware of your constitutional rights as it relates to gender identity and sexual orientation?
10	Do you believe these constitutional rights are adequate policy?
11	Do you believe government is doing enough to guarantee your rights as it relates to gender identity and/or sexual orientation?
12	What is your lived reality in everyday South African society?

• **Part 3 – questions relating to social cohesion and integration**

13	Have you experienced discrimination as a part of the LGBT+ community in terms of social integration?
14	If yes to question 13 above, please indicate if you experienced discrimination in the following fields: Education and youth development; safety, security and psycho-social services; access to essential services; homelessness and access to housing; job creation, employment and asylum seeking; other.
15	If yes in question 13, where is the discrimination coming from: Government departments, private and NPO/NGO sector; individuals; other?
16	Do you experience any form of rejection and/or discrimination when wanting to express and participate in your own ethnic cultural practices?
17	Do you experience any form of rejection and/or discrimination when wanting to express your personal religious beliefs and/or activities?

• **Part 4 – questions relating to attitudinal changes in South Africa**

18	Do you believe that tolerance in terms of gender identity and sexual orientation has improved within South African society since the advent of democracy in 1994?
19	In your opinion, to what degree has the tolerance improved within South African society since the advent of democracy in 1994?
20	Do you believe that government departments give you fair treatment when accessing services?
21	Do you believe that the private and NPO/NGO sectors give you fair treatment when accessing services, goods or products?

• **Part 5 – questions relating to the family environment**

22	Are you accepted within your family for your gender identity and/or sexual orientation?
23	Are you in a happy relationship with your family and friends?
24	Are you abused in any way within your domestic environment?
25	If you are abused within your domestic environment, how is it manifested: Physical, psychological, other?

• **Part 6 – questions relating to health**

26	Do you have any adverse non-mental medical conditions such as diabetes, HIV/AIDS or TB?
27	Do you have any mental conditions, such as depression?

.....



• **Part 7 – questions relating to the impact of COVID-19**

28	Has your livelihood and earnings been impacted negatively by the measures taken to combat the COVID-19 pandemic?
29	Have you experienced any difficulties in accessing basic services and food?
30	If yes in question 29 above, please specify what: Health services, security services, social services (excluding food), food, other.
31	Are you in support of the measures taken by the government to combat the COVID-19 pandemic?
32	Has your domestic environment under COVID-19 related lockdown improved, remained stable, become strained, experienced domestic intolerance or become violent?

Testing male versus female (as assigned at birth) differentiation

Of the 288 individuals' responses received, 68 per cent were received from male biological gender as assigned at birth, and 42 per cent from those that identify as cisgender (male). The results are therefore heavily weighted in their favour. Furthermore, without a deeper analysis it will not be possible to determine whether there is a material differentiation to be made in terms of the results for female as assigned at birth versus male assigned at birth. The data, for selected questions, was accordingly also subjected to a deeper analysis by comparing the results obtained between male and female (as assigned at birth). The questions chosen for this deeper examination were:

- What is your lived reality in everyday South Africa?
- Have you experienced discrimination as part of the LGBT+ community in terms of social cohesion?
- In what field have you experienced discrimination as part of the LGBT+ community?
- Do you experience any form of rejection or discrimination when wanting to express or participate in your own ethnic cultural practices?
- Do you believe that government departments give you fair treatment when accessing services?
- Are you accepted within your family for your gender identity and/or sexual orientation?
- Are you in a happy relationship with your family and friends?
- Are you abused in any way within your domestic environment?
- Do you have any adverse non-mental medical conditions such as diabetes, HIV/Aids, TB?
- Do you have any mental health conditions such as depression?
- Has your income/livelihood been impacted negatively by the measures taken to combat the COVID-19 pandemic?

Testing of national validity

Given that just half of the responses were received from the Gauteng province, with the balance more widely spread across the remaining provinces, it was important to do sampling within the Gauteng province itself, in order to ascertain whether the national average was reflected in the provincial results as well. If this was so, it could comfortably be concluded that the national average stood. On the contrary, were it to be found that the provincial results differed considerably from the national average with regard to the views on the questions posed, an argument could be made as to the validity of the national conclusions.

To this end, a sample question was selected from each of the questions set parts, except part one, which relates to questions of a demographic nature. The questions selected were:

Part 2: Do you believe that government is doing enough to guarantee your rights as it relates to gender identity and/or sexual orientation?

.....

- Part 3: Have you experienced discrimination as part of the LGBT+ community in terms of social integration?
- Part 4: Do you believe that tolerance in terms of gender identity and sexual orientation have improved within South African society since the advent of democracy in 1994?
- Part 5: Are you abused in any way within your domestic environment?
- Part 6: Do you have any mental conditions, such as depression?
- Part 7: Are you in support of the measures taken by government to combat the COVID-19 pandemic?

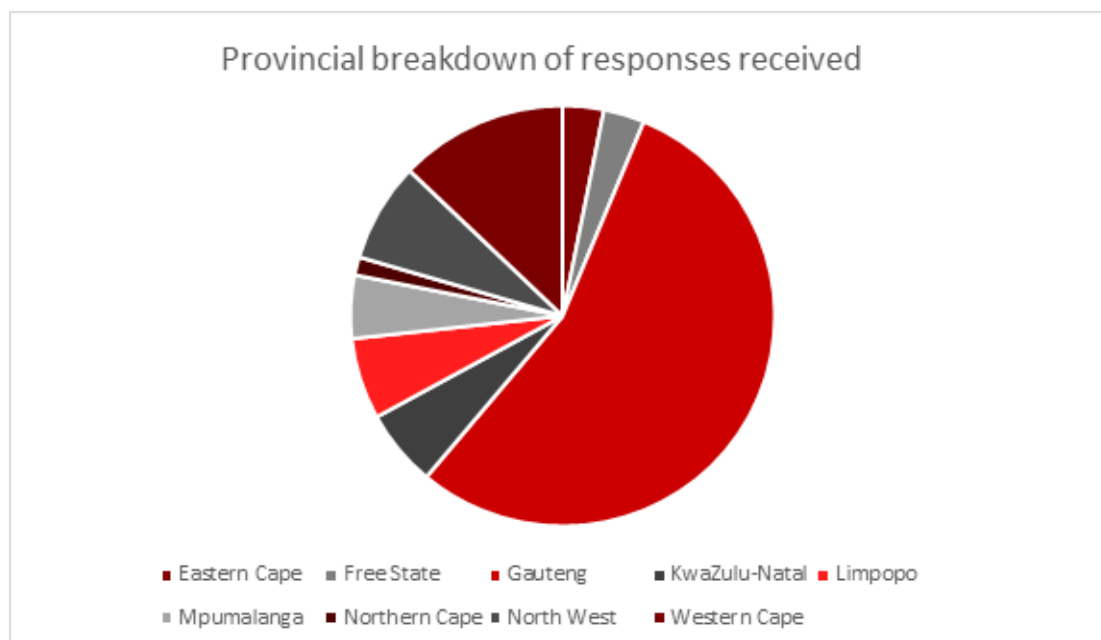


Figure 2.2: Breakdown of respondents by province

KEY FINDINGS

3. Key findings

The report covers the data captured for 288 individuals from across all provinces, and all LGBT+ gender identity and sexual orientation categories.

It is heavily weighted in favour of male assignment at birth and cisgender (male), requiring the need for the findings to be examined more deeply in terms of assessing the level of differentiation between their lived experienced compared to that of the female at birth, cisgender (female) respondents. This report restricts itself to a comparison between male and female categorisation as assigned at birth.

Furthermore, since more than half of the responses emanated from individuals residing in the Gauteng province, the data needed to be analysed in relation to the national validity of the results.

The members of the LGBT+ community surveyed represent a population size of between 500,000 and 530,000 South Africans who identify themselves as gay, lesbian, bisexual or gender non-conforming. Furthermore, it represents up to three million individuals who present themselves in a gender non-conforming way.

These findings restrict themselves to six main themes:

- (i) Constitutional and democratic rights
- (ii) Social cohesion and integration
- (iii) Attitudinal changes in South Africa with regard to the LGBT+ community
- (iv) The LGBT+ community and their family environment
- (v) The state of health of the LGBT+ community
- (vi) The impact of the measures taken to combat COVID-19 on the LGBT+ community

3.1 Findings in relation to constitutional and democratic rights

The overwhelming majority of respondents indicated that they were aware of the constitutional rights as it relates to gender identity and sexual orientation. Eighty-six per cent indicated that they were aware of their rights, whilst only 14 per cent were not. However, this does not correlate with their belief that these constitutional rights are in themselves adequate. Only 59 per cent believe it to be, whilst 41 per cent believe it not to be adequate. This would suggest that public policymakers need to further survey the community in order to assess where the policy gaps, real or perceived, remain.

Moreover, whilst the majority of respondents are both aware of their constitutional rights and of the belief that sufficient policy is in place to protect those rights, the vast majority of respondents are of the opinion that government is not doing enough to guarantee their rights. Conversely put, it appears the LGBT+ community require from government additional policy work, policy implementation and enforcement.

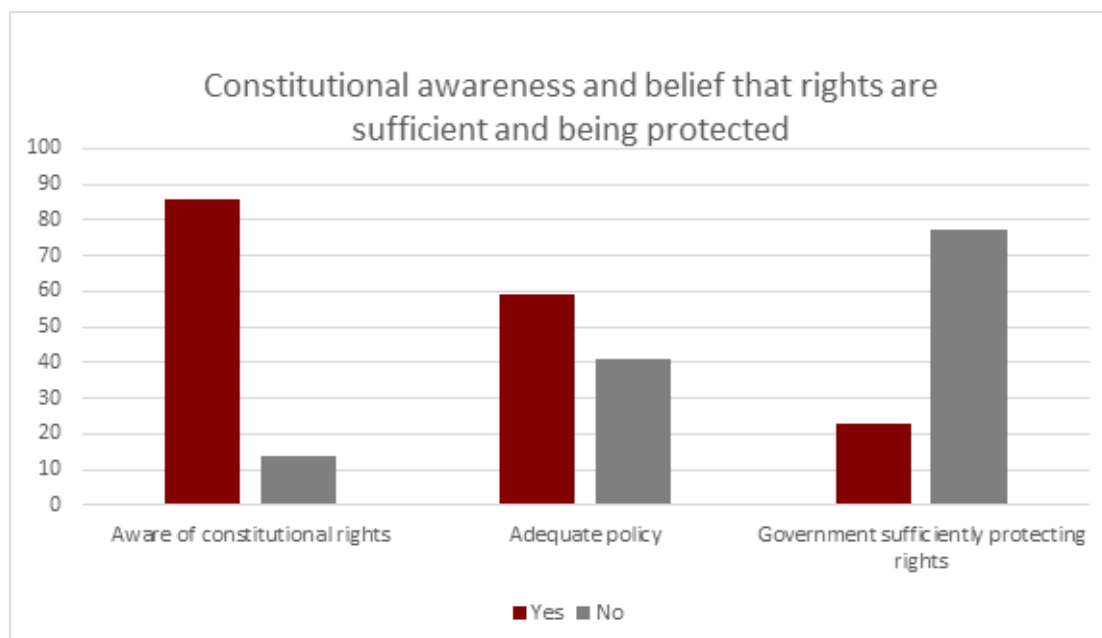


Figure 3.1: Analysis of LGBT+ community's awareness with regard to their constitutional rights and opinion regarding whether the rights are adequate

The aforementioned data indicates that whilst the LGBT+ community are aware of their rights, and in the main believe policy to be sufficient, it seems to fail the implementation test. This is confirmed when assessing the lived reality of the LGBT+ community in South Africa. Only 34 per cent feel free (14 per cent) or mostly free (20 per cent) to express their gender identity and/or sexual orientation as they please. The balance (two-thirds) are of the opinion that bias and discrimination takes place to various degrees. Twenty-four per cent feel subtle bias and/or discrimination, 25 per cent some bias and discrimination and 18 per cent feel mistreated or discriminated against because of their gender identity and/or sexual orientation.

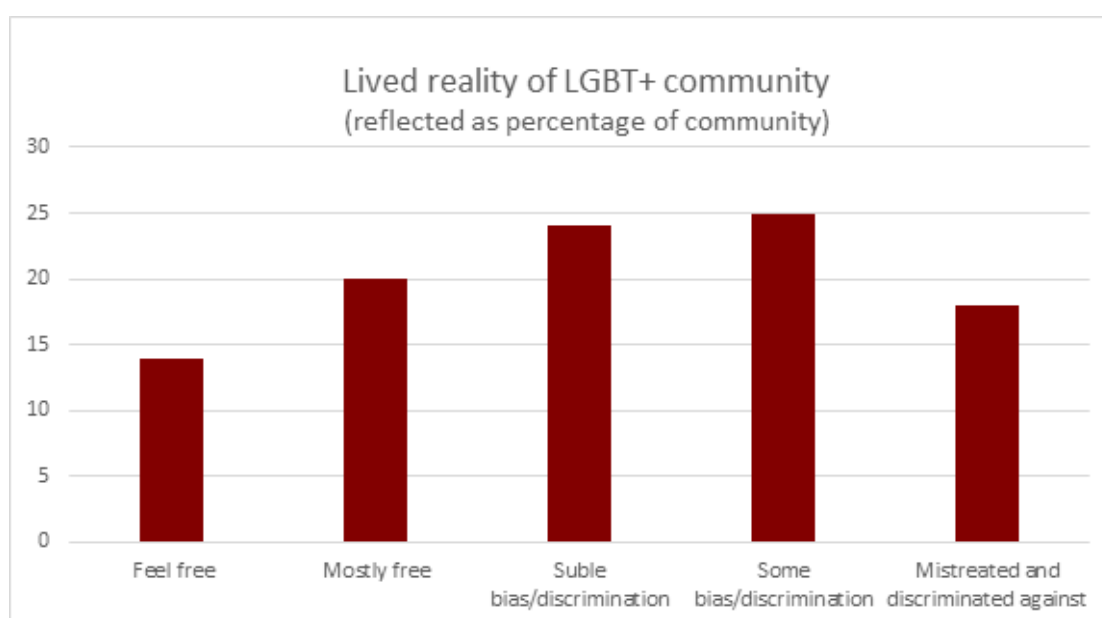


Figure 3.2: Analysis of LGBT+ perception of being discriminated against due to their gender identity/sexual orientation

3.2 Findings in relation to social cohesion and the integration of the LGBT+ community into South African society

In terms of feeling fully part of the South African society, the large majority of the LGBT+ community believe it not to be the case. Seventy-two per cent of respondents indicated that they had experienced discrimination in terms of social integration. The discrimination, it appears, is to be found across a broad range of areas, with more than half of the respondents indicating that they had experienced discrimination, citing education and youth development (69 per cent), safety, security and psycho-social services (65 per cent) and homelessness and access to housing (56 per cent) as issues needing attention. Just under half of said respondents (48 per cent) experienced discrimination in terms of access to healthcare and healthcare services, whilst 31 per cent cited access to essential services, and 22 per cent job creation, employment and asylum seeking as areas of discrimination. Eleven per cent made mention of a series of other areas of concern.

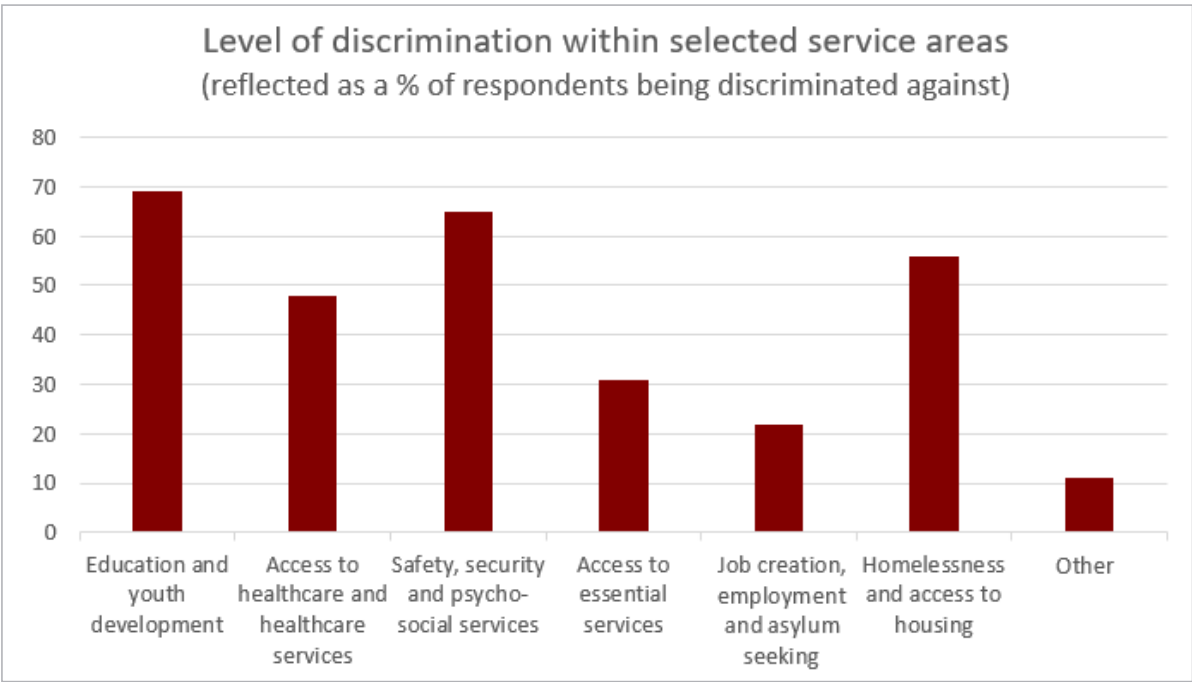


Figure 3.3: Analyses of service areas where the LGBT+ community are experiencing discrimination

The majority of the LGBT+ community did not consider either government departments or the private and NPO/NGO sector as the main perpetrators of discrimination, but an overwhelming majority cited individuals as the main purveyors thereof. Nevertheless, the levels of discrimination experienced across both the public and private sectors remain as an issue deserving attention. With regard to the public sector, 50 per cent did not experience discrimination from within the ranks of the public sector, in the private sector 55 per cent did not, whilst 78 per cent experienced discrimination against them by individuals.



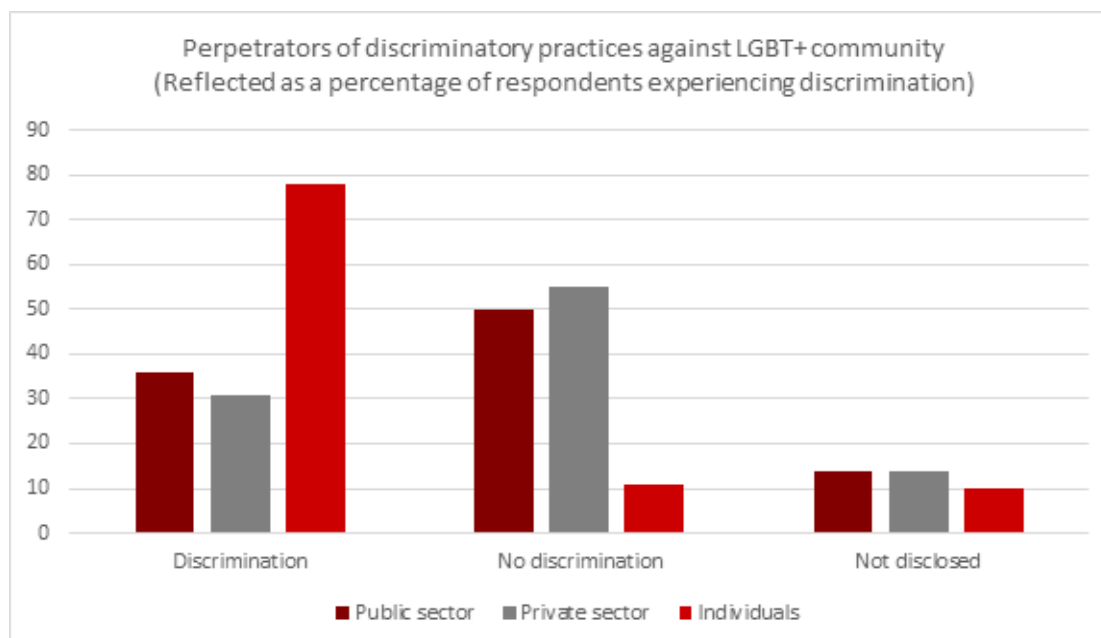


Figure 34: Analysis from whence discrimination is experienced by the LGBT+ community

The ability for the LGBT+ community to exercise their cultural practices and/or religious beliefs, remains a major stumbling block in terms of social cohesion. Fifty-nine per cent of respondents experienced some form of rejection and/or discrimination when wanting to exercise their cultural rights, and the percentage grew to 67 per cent when wanting to express their personal religious beliefs.

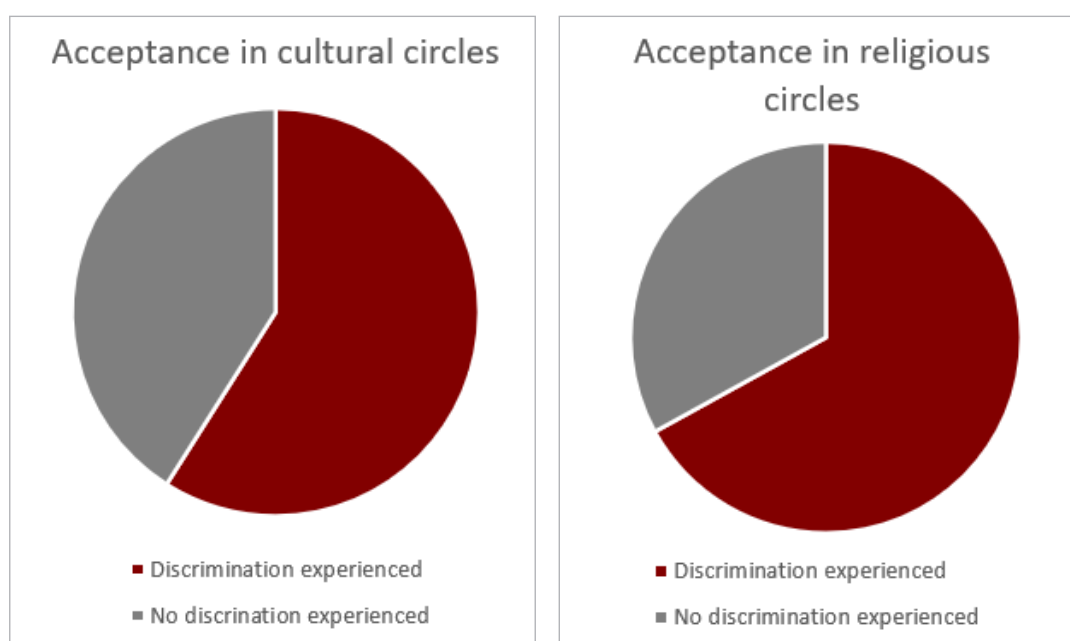


Figure 3.5: Analysis of levels of discrimination against the LGBT+ community within the cultural and religious environments

3.3 Findings related to attitudinal changes toward the LGBT+ community within South African society

There has been a material shift in society's acceptance of the LGBT+ community since the advent of democracy in 1994. Seventy-eight per cent of respondents were of the opinion that there was a greater level of societal tolerance in terms of individuals expressing their preferred gender identity and/or sexual orientation. Ninety-two per cent of respondents believed attitudes were improving, whilst only 8 per cent believed there were no real changes or improvements.

The opinion as to the extent of the improvements differed considerably, with only 5 per cent of the opinion that there was complete tolerance of the LGBT+ community. Fifteen per cent believed there were some major changes and/or improvements, whilst 30 per cent believed that the changes/improvements were adequate. Forty-two per cent of respondents were of the opinion that only some significant changes and/or improvements had occurred.

The results would suggest that whilst South Africa is certainly advancing in terms of the promotion of LGBT+ rights and inclusion, there is still some way to go before the LGBT+ community will feel completely included as fully fledged members of society.

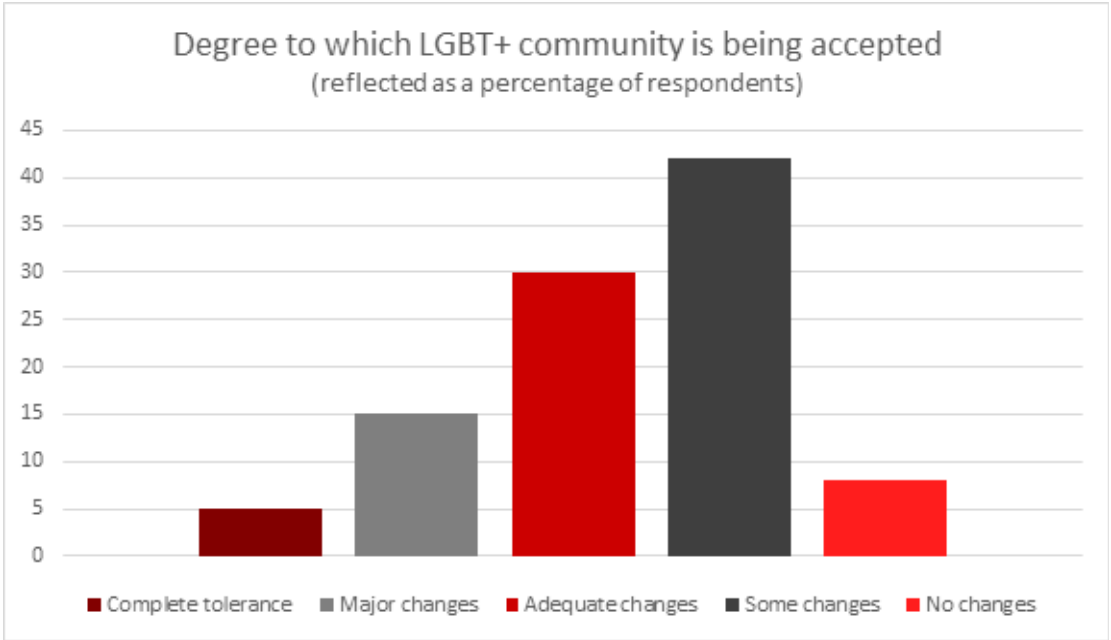


Figure 3.6: Analysis of attitudinal changes in society towards the LGBT+ community

In terms of the LGBT+ community being treated fairly, the majority of respondents felt that both the public and private sectors were handling them as such, albeit to a far greater degree in the private sector. Fifty-four per cent of respondents were of the opinion that government departments treated them fairly when accessing services, whilst 70 per cent were of the opinion that the private sector treated them fairly when accessing services or when procuring products or goods.

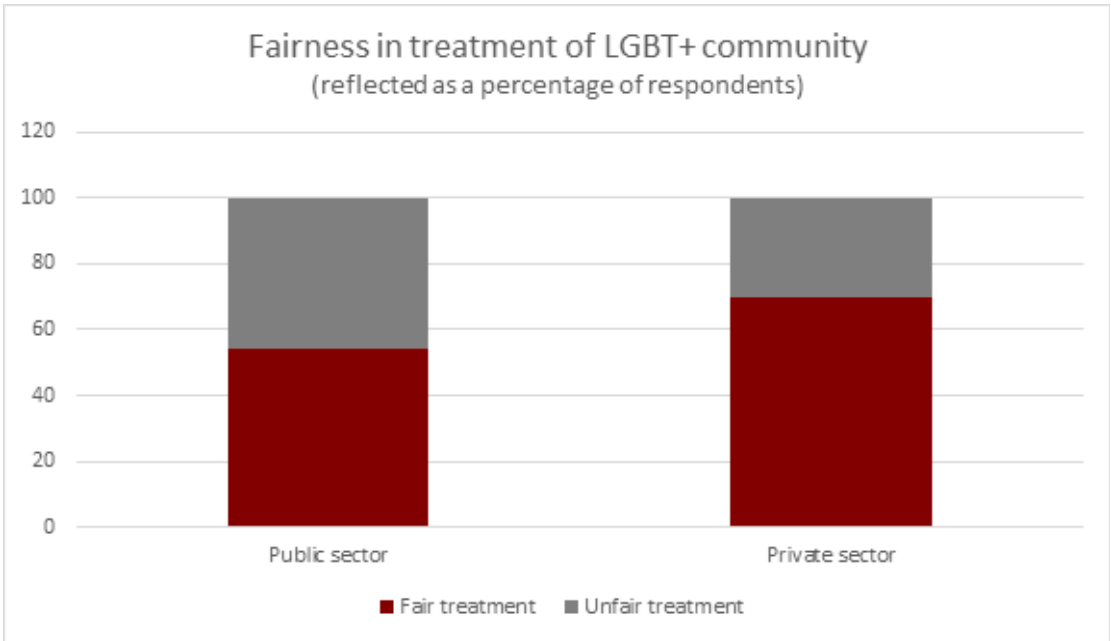


Figure 3.7: Analysis with regard to the level of treatment – public versus private sector

34 Findings in relation to the family environment of the LGBT+ community

Generally speaking, the LGBT+ community function within a healthy family environment. Sixty-five percent of respondents indicated that their family accepted them for whom they are, and 86 per cent indicated that they were in a happy relationship with family and friends. Only 18 per cent indicated that they were abused in any way within the domestic environment.

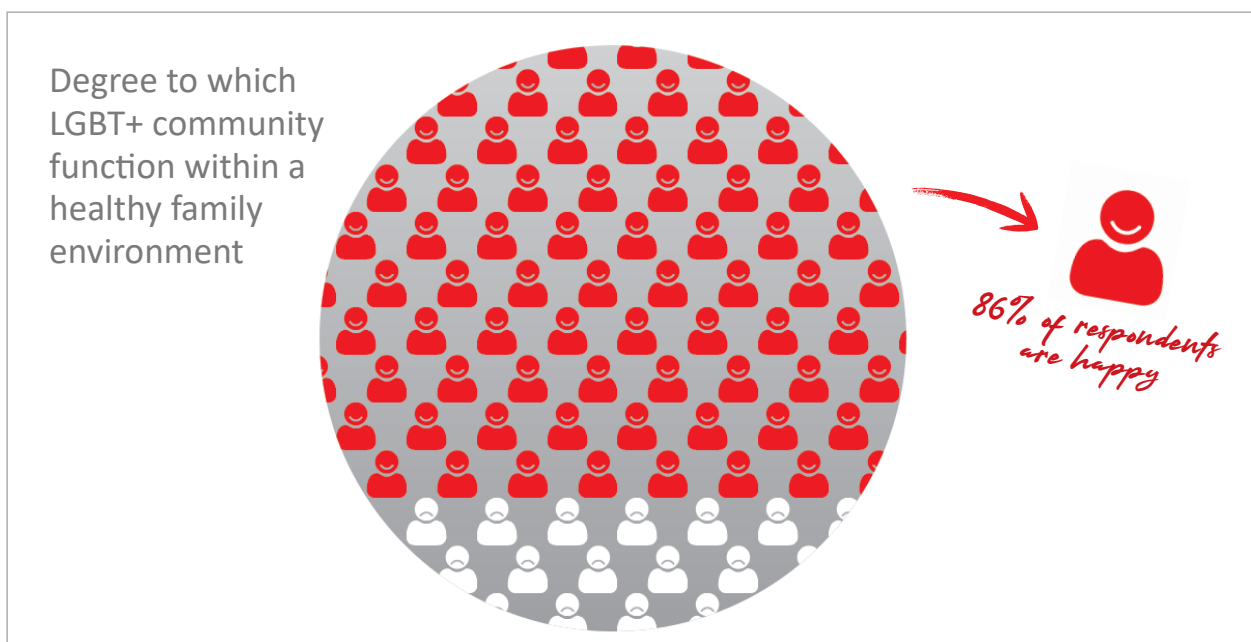


Figure 3.8: Analysis-degree to which the LGBT+ community function within a healthy family environment

In terms of the 18 per cent of respondents that indicated that they were subjected to abuse, the type of abuse varied, and individual respondents were often subjected to more than only one type of abuse. Thirty-nine per cent indicated that the abuse was physical, 92 per cent indicated that it was psychological, whilst 24 per cent pointed to some other type of abuse, for example the withholding of finances, or verbal insults.

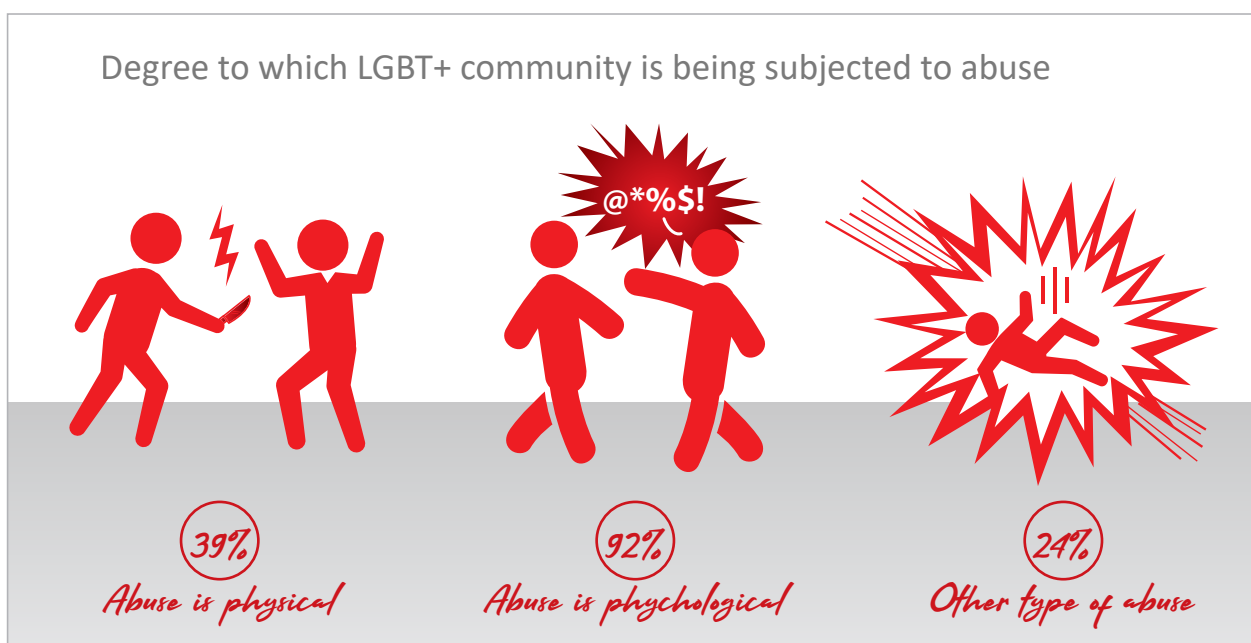


Figure 3.9: Analysis-degree to which LGBT+ community is being subjected to abuse

3.5 Findings in relation to the health of the LGBT+ community

The majority of respondents indicated that they were healthy. In terms of their non-mental health, 73 per cent indicated that they had no adverse medical conditions, whilst 59 per cent of respondents indicated that they had no mental health conditions.

Nevertheless, the level of respondents indicating some form of adverse health condition raises the alarm. To this end a deeper analysis was undertaken in terms of age segmentation. In the age group 25 and under, it was found that 20 per cent had non-mental adverse health conditions and 53 per cent had some form of adverse mental health condition. In the age group 36 to 55, the results were 28 per cent adverse non-mental health conditions and 36 per cent some form of adverse mental health condition. The result for the age group 55 and above was 13 per cent adverse non-mental and 33 per cent some form of adverse mental health condition.

The aforementioned results point to a significant finding. In terms of non-mental health conditions, the different age segments indicated similar patterns with marginal differences. However, in terms of adverse mental health conditions such as depression, even though the level across the LGBT+ community indicates a worrying pattern, it is especially high amongst the youth, that is persons under the age of 26. This would indicate a potential mental health crisis in the making.

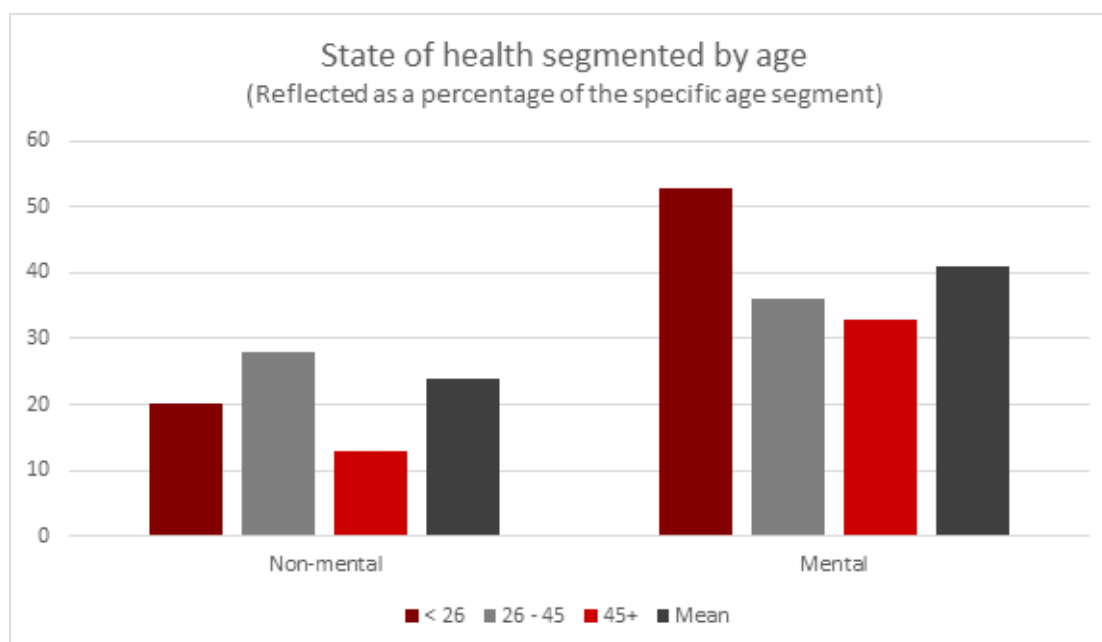


Figure 3.10: Analysis of the state of the LGBT+ community's mental and non-mental health segmented by age

3.6 Findings in relation to the impact of the measures taken to combat the COVID-19 pandemic on the LGBT+ community

Under this section, three topics are addressed: What is the level of support amongst members of the LGBT+ community for the measures taken by the authorities to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, how have these measures impacted their livelihoods and to what extent has it effected their domestic relationships.

There is a significant majority supporting the measures taken by the authorities to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. Sixty-nine percent of respondents are in favour of the measures. Nevertheless, around a third (31 per cent) of respondents indicated that they are not in favour of the measures, which is higher than previous findings of surveys conducted by the institute amongst a broader segment of society. In a June 2020 survey amongst supporters and members of the ANC, it was found that only 4 per cent of respondents were not in favour of the measures (ISI, 2020).

The aforementioned support in spite of the material impact that the measures have had on the income/livelihood of the LGBT+ community. Seventy-two per cent of respondents indicated that the measures taken by government negatively impacted their income/livelihood.

And whilst the majority of respondents (70 per cent) indicated that they did not have difficulties in accessing basic services, a significant 30 per cent did. For those respondents indicating access difficulties, serious constraints appear to be spread across a number of service delivery areas. Sixty-six per cent had difficulties in accessing health services, 52 per cent had difficulties in accessing security services, 77 per cent had problems in accessing social services (excluding food) and 79 per cent had trouble in accessing food.

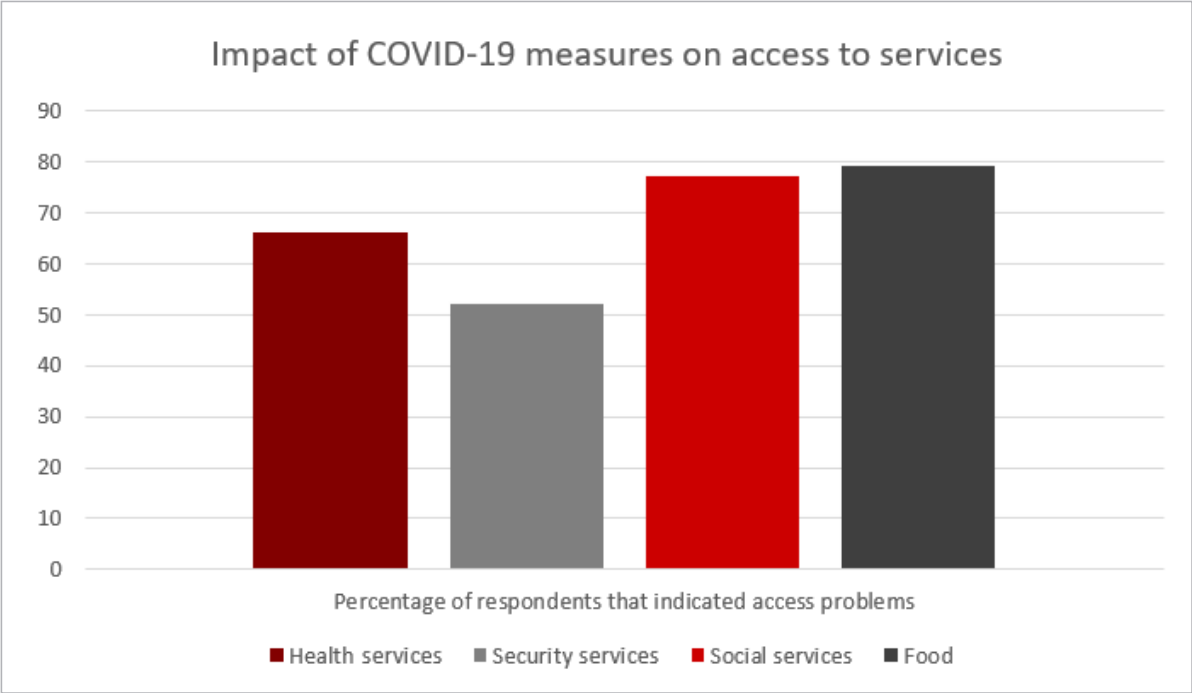


Figure 3.11: Analysis of difficulties in accessing services (for the 30 per cent of respondents with problems in this regard)

And finally, whilst domestic relationships seem to be holding in the main, there appears to be a disturbing negative change in the home environment. Sixty-one per cent of respondents indicated that their relationships had improved (13 per cent) or remained stable (48 per cent). Still, 39 per cent of respondents reported a turn for the worse. Thirty-three per cent indicated that their domestic relationships had become strained, 3 per cent indicated domestic intolerance, with a further 3 per cent indicating that the relationship had become violent (either physically or psychologically).

Read together with the high levels of adverse mental health conditions registered in section 3.5 of this report, it would be prudent for the authorities to design a social intervention to tackle the dual impact of the COVID-19 measures and the normal lived reality of the LGBT+ community.

3.7 Testing of the national validity of the results

As is elaborated on in the methodology section of this report, given that just half of the responses were received from the Gauteng province, it was necessary to compare the Gauteng provincial responses to the national responses. This was to conclude whether the Gauteng outcomes distort the national outcome in any way. To this end, the data of six questions was analysed and compared to the national outcome, so as to enable a consideration as to whether the variations impact the validity of the national results.



With regard to the question as to whether the respondents believed that government is doing enough to guarantee constitutional rights attached to gender identity and/or sexual orientation, 21 per cent of Gauteng respondents were of the opinion that enough was being done, whilst 79 per cent were of the opinion that this was not the case. The national response to this same question was a close correlation, with 23 per cent in the affirmative and 77 per cent in the negative.

With regard to the question as to whether the respondents experienced any discrimination from being part of the LGBT+ community, 69 per cent indicated that they were subjected to discrimination in some form, whilst 31 per cent did not. Once again, this is a close correlation with the national results, which reflected 72 per cent of respondents experiencing discrimination, and 28 not.

With regard to the question as to whether tolerance for the LGBT+ community had increased since the advent of democracy in 1994, 78 per cent were of the opinion that it had, whilst 22 per cent were of the opinion that it had not. Here the provincial response was an exact match with the national response.

With regard to the question as to whether the respondents experienced any domestic abuse, in the provincial response, 18 per cent indicated that they had, whilst 82 per cent said they had not. Here too the provincial response is an exact match to the national response.

With regard to the question as to whether the respondents had any mental health conditions such as depression, the provincial response matched the national response.

And finally, with regard to whether the respondents supported the measures taken by government to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, the provincial versus national response variation was marginal. At the provincial level 70 per cent of responses supported the measures, whilst at the national level it is reflected as 69 per cent.

From the aforementioned comparative analysis, it is evident that the lived reality of the LGBT+ community in the Gauteng province mirrors that of the national LGBT+ community. The institute is thus of the opinion that in light of the clear trend in similarities across all data sets, the validity of the national trends have been confirmed. The national results conveyed in this report can, in the opinion of the institute, be relied upon.

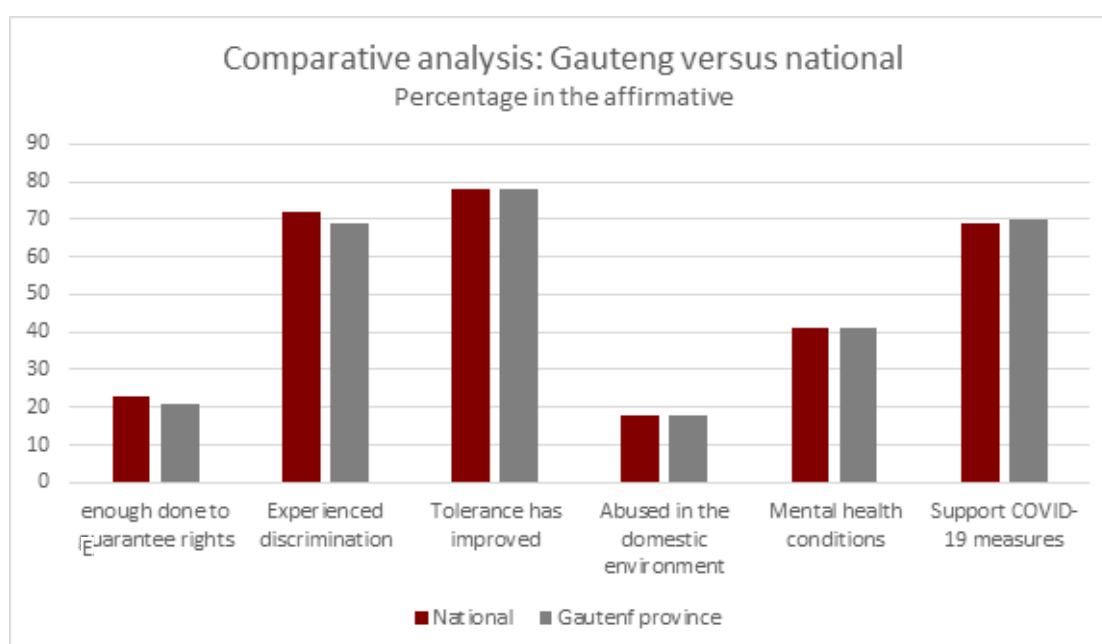


Figure 3.12: Gauteng province versus national comparative analysis of selected questions to test validity of national results

3.8 Testing male versus female (as assigned at birth) differentiation

A deeper analysis was done to determine whether there is a material differentiation to be made in terms of the responses from female (as assigned at birth) participants versus male (as assigned at birth) participants.

The lived reality in everyday South Africa

In terms of their lived reality, for both groups the response was substantially similar across the spectrum, with male respondents slightly more empowered than females. Whereas 14 per cent of males felt free to express their gender identity and/or sexual orientation, only 10 per cent of females felt the same.

As for the rest of the lived reality questions, the percentages allocated to each of the groups were neck and neck. Whereas 20 per cent of males felt mostly free to express their gender identity and/or sexual orientation, 21 per cent of females felt so. The response of both groups to the feeling of subtle bias was the same – 24 per cent. Whilst 24 per cent of males felt some bias and/or discrimination, 25 per cent of females felt so. And where 18 per cent of males felt mistreated, 20 per cent of females felt so.

Experienced discrimination as part of the LGBT+ community and the fields of discrimination

A far greater percentage of males experienced discrimination in terms of social cohesion as opposed to females. For males it was 74 per cent, and for females it was 66 per cent. That being said, females experienced discrimination over a wider range of areas than did males. The differentiation is illustrated below:

	Female	Male
• Education and youth development	65	52
• Access to healthcare and healthcare services	51	35
• Safety, security and psycho-social services	72	45
• Access to essential services	39	33
• Homelessness and access to housing	25	15
• Job creation, employment and asylum seeking	68	41
• Other	14	7

Rejection or discrimination when wanting to express or participate in own ethnic culture

Female respondents indicated a slightly higher margin of discrimination (62 per cent) than did male respondents (58 per cent). But in terms of both groups, the percentages were high and worthy of policy interventions to address the problem, which is clearly against the spirit of the rights embodied in the Constitution.

Fair treatment by government when accessing services

The trends regarding treatment by the authorities when accessing services were similar, although males did find them to be fairer than females. Whereas 56 percent of males found the authorities to be fair, this dropped to 51 per cent amongst female respondents. Regardless of the slight differentiation, there is a high percentage of dissatisfaction to which the authorities need to pay attention, as it goes against the Batho Pele (people first) ethos of the public service.



The family environment

There was a large differentiation between male and female respondents as to acceptance within the family environment with regard to their gender identity and/or sexual orientation. Here too, males were better off than females. Sixty-eight per cent of males found acceptance for their preferences within the family environment, whilst this dropped to 56 per cent amongst female respondents.

However, with regard to happiness within the family environment, both groups reflected a high level of contentment. For males it was 86 per cent, and for females it was 85 per cent.

Notwithstanding the high level of contentment, a material presence of abuse within the domestic environment was registered for both. In this instance, females were once again in a more precarious position than males, and substantially so. Twenty-one per cent of females indicated that they were subjected to abuse within the domestic environment, as opposed to 15 per cent of males.

Health

Whilst females were healthier than males in terms of non-mental health conditions, in terms of mental health, males were less affected. In terms of non-mental health, 27 per cent of males were affected as opposed to only 14 per cent of females. And in terms of mental health, 38 per cent of males were affected as opposed to 45 per cent of females.

The impact of COVID-19

The income and livelihoods of both male and female respondents were hard hit by the measures introduced by the authorities to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, with males experiencing slightly more hardship than females. Seventy-four per cent of males indicated that their income and/or livelihoods were negatively affected, as opposed to 67 per cent of females.

And similarly, male and female respondents both registered high levels of difficulties with regard to accessing basic services during the lockdown. In this instance the roles were, however, reversed, with 27 per cent of males indicating that they had experienced difficulties during the COVID-19 lockdown in accessing basic services, with it rising to 33 per cent for females.

Conclusion

Across a number of areas, both male and female members of the LGBT+ community face challenges, for which the authorities need to consider significant policy interventions. Being a female member of the LGBT+ community means that those challenges become more pronounced.

In all areas explored in this section of the report, females have been placed in a less favourable position than their male counterparts. But for the loss of income during the COVID-19 lockdown period and their physical health, females were in a worse position than males.

In terms of their lived reality, rejection or discrimination when wanting to express or participate in their own cultural practices, and treatment by government when accessing services, the differentiation, being within a five per cent range, was not so pronounced. In terms of societal discrimination and the impact of the COVID-19 measures, more so. But in terms of conditions within the family, which includes being subjected to abuse, and their mental health, the differentiation was quite stark.

This deeper analysis of the data suggests that whilst public policy could be improved to address the concerns and challenges within the LGBT+ community in general terms, certain female-focused policy interventions are required to tackle a number of areas of acute need.

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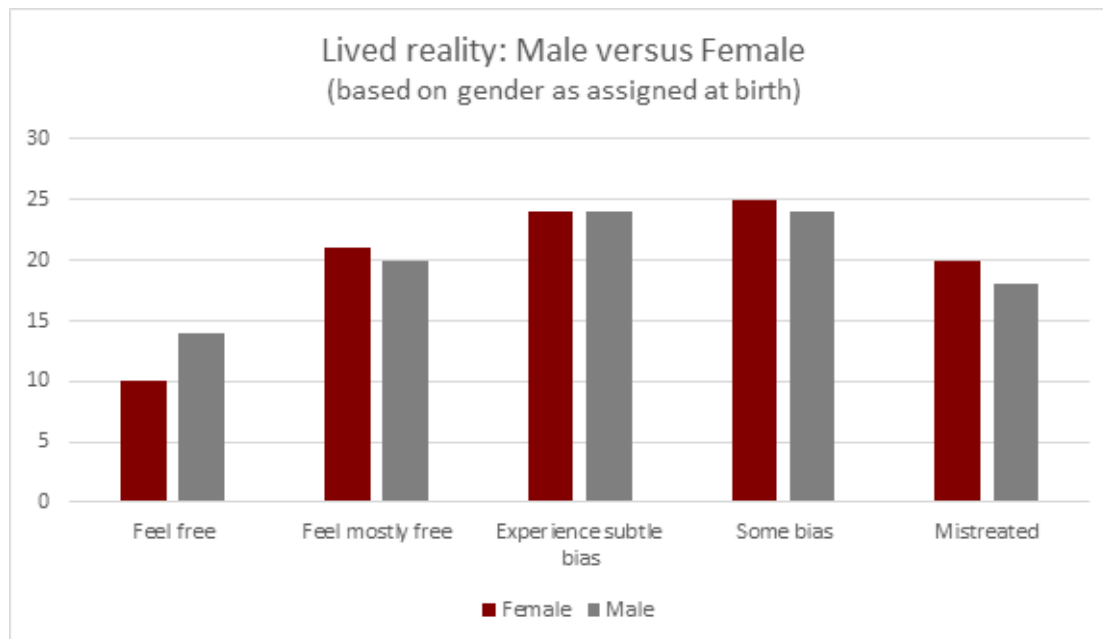


Figure 3.13: Analysis of the lived reality of the LGBT+ community – Female versus Male using gender assigned at birth

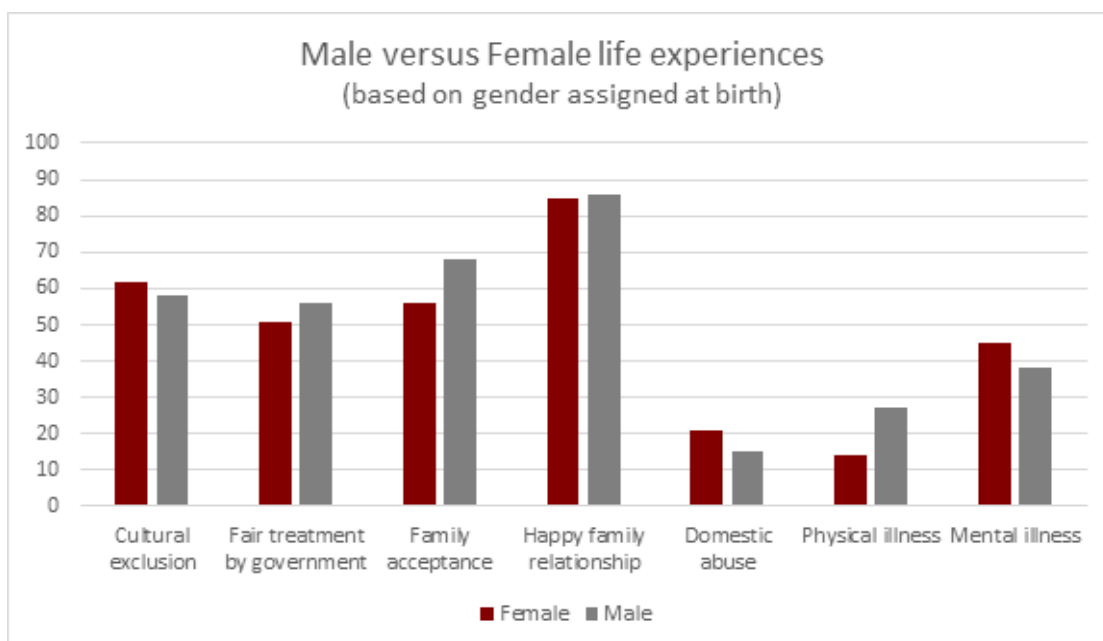


Figure 3.14: Analysis of various differentiated life experiences – Female versus Male using gender assigned at birth

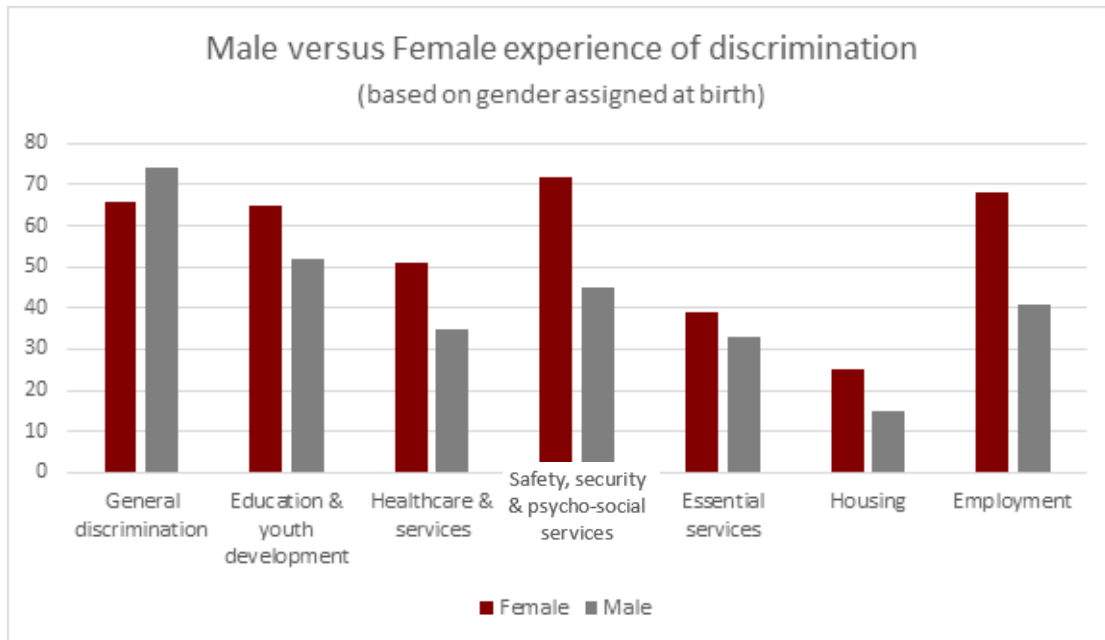


Figure 3.15: Analysis of discrimination against LGBT+ – Female versus Male using gender assigned at birth

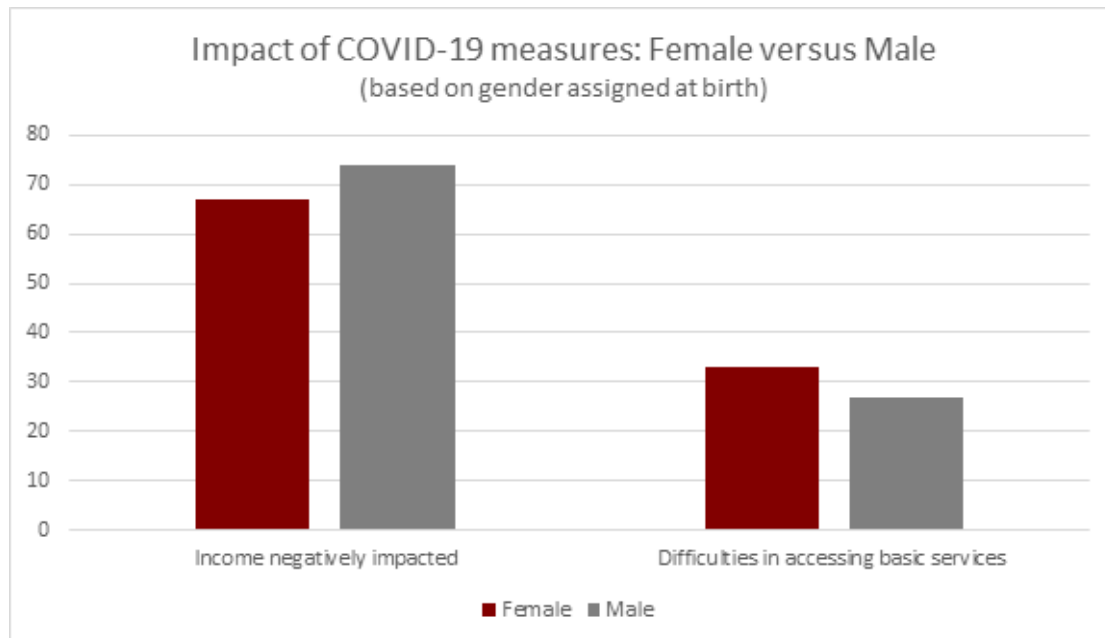


Figure 3.16: Analysis of COVID-19 measures on LGBT+ community – Female versus Male using gender assigned at birth

RECOMMENDATIONS

4. Recommendations

From the data processed in this survey it can be surmised that the constitutional and democratic rights of the LGBT+ community in South Africa are in nature progressive and compare favourably within the global context. As a generalisation it can similarly be deduced that the lived experience of the community is in the main positive. Nevertheless, full inclusion, tolerance and acceptance is still some way off. To achieve the complete realisation of LGBT+ rights still requires a great measure of work with regard to public policy development, the promotion of tolerance, constitutional and democratic adherence and full societal understanding and acceptance. To this end, the Inclusive Society Institute ventures three recommendations in pursuit of the full recognition and embodiment of the noble ideals embraced by the South African Constitution and legislation affecting this particular community.

Recommendation 1

The findings of this survey suggests that there remains a material disparity between the constitutional and legislative framework in relation to the advancement of LGBT+ rights and the practical implementation and execution of those rights within both the public and private sphere of society. To this end, it is proposed that the authorities embark on a systematic programme to sensitise both the civil service and the broader public on their obligations towards the LGBT+ community, and more so, the manifestation of humanitarian ethos, inclusivity and solidarity.

It is recommended that the Department of Public Administration design and implement an **awareness programme** aimed at sensitising the public service as to the rights of the LGBT+ community to receive equal and quality service from all civil servants. Likewise, the department should develop a **reporting and monitoring mechanism** aimed at ensuring adherence to the constitutional and legislative obligations of public officials. More generally, all government departments and provinces need to ensure the mainstreaming of issues of the LGBT+ community in all their policies.

It is further recommended that the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities prioritise engagements aimed at eliminating vestiges of discrimination with the religious and cultural fraternities. Other Chapter 9 Institutions such as the SA Human Rights Commission and the Commission for Gender Equality also have a role in creating awareness and monitoring discrimination.

Given the high levels of discrimination from individuals, general awareness and social behavior change campaigns will be critical, to promote and advance rights of LGBT+ persons.

Recommendation 2

The levels of discrimination across all areas surveyed are quiet worrying. Although at face value the data suggests that the LGBT+ community are generally content with public policies and their lived experience, and although, in most cases, the majority have responded positively to the areas investigated in the survey, unacceptable levels of dissatisfaction, albeit to varying degrees, were detected across the spectrum of areas surveyed.



To this end, the institute proposes that a series of focus groups be commissioned to deeper interrogate the findings of the survey. As it stands, policymakers are, through this survey, being made aware of the areas and extent of dissatisfaction, but a more pronounced understanding as to the substance of the displeasure is required in order to enhance and/or develop policy interventions that could effectively address the concerns. To this end, focus groups should, in line with the seven pillars identified by Brown & Buntse (2020), interrogate public policy as it relates to the LGBT+ communities, in the areas of:

- Education and youth development;
- Access to healthcare and healthcare services;
- Safety, security and psycho-social services;
- Accessing of essential services;
- Homelessness and access to housing;
- Job creation, employment and access to the economy; and
- LGBT+ migration and asylum seeking.

In addition to the aforementioned focus groups, it is proposed that a further focus group be established to examine the prevalence of gender based and intimate partner violence, domestic abuse and hate crimes.

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Recommendation 3
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In the course of analysing the data, extreme findings in relation to the presence of adverse mental health conditions amongst the LGBT+ community in general, but especially amongst the under 26 age group, were detected. Fifty-three per cent of respondents in the under 26 age group indicated that they were experiencing mental health conditions such as depression. This, in the opinion of the institute, points to a health crisis in the making. It is therefore proposed that a study be commissioned by the Department of Health, amongst others, to gain a fuller understanding of the causes and potential remedial policies and interventions that could be designed to mitigate against these acute disorders.

SUMMARY

5. Summary of detailed data

5.1 Summary of data for all respondents

	No.	%
Demographic questions		
Number of respondents	288	100
Age		
• Younger than 18	2	<1
• 18 – 25	90	31
• 26 – 35	121	42
• 36 -45	44	15
• 46 – 55	25	9
• 56 – 65	5	2
• Older than 65	1	<1
Biological gender / sex assigned at birth		
• Male	197	68
• Female	87	30
• Other	4	>1
Current gender identity		
• Agender	34	12
• Bigender	37	13
• Gender fluid	12	4
• Cisgender (Male)	120	42
• Cisgender (Female)	55	19
• Transgender (Male)	9	3
• Transgender (Female)	11	4
• Other	10	3
Sexual orientation		
• Heterosexual	17	6
• Homosexual	210	73
• Bisexual	44	15
• Asexual	6	2
• Other	11	4



Provincial breakdown		
• Eastern Cape	9	3
• Free State	9	3
• Gauteng	158	55
• KwaZulu-Natal	17	6
• Limpopo	18	6
• Mpumalanga	14	5
• Northern Cape	4	1
• North West	22	8
• Western Cape	37	13
Marital Status		
• Single	228	79
• Married (including civil partnerships)	32	11
• Divorced	11	4
• Other	17	6
Occupational status		
• Employed	156	54
• Unemployed	104	36
• Other	28	10
Level of education		
• Less than matric	15	5
• Matric	80	28
• NQF5 – NQF 6	41	14
• University degree or diploma (NQF7)	91	32
• Postgraduate qualification	61	21
Questions relating to constitutional and democratic rights		
Are you aware of your constitutional rights as it relates to gender identity and sexual orientation?		
• Yes	248	86
• No	41	14
Do you believe these constitutional rights to be adequate?		
• Yes	169	59
• No	119	41
Do you believe that government is doing enough to guarantee your rights as it relates to gender identity and/or sexual orientation?		
• Yes	66	23
• No	222	77
What is your lived reality in everyday South Africa?		
• I feel free to express my gender identity and/or sexual orientation as I please	39	14
• I feel that I am mostly free to express my gender identity and/or sexual orientation	57	20
• I feel I experience subtle bias and discrimination for my gender identity and/or sexual orientation	68	24
• I feel that I experience some bias for my gender identity and/or sexual orientation	72	25
• I feel I am mistreated and discriminated against for my gender identity and/or sexual orientation	52	18

Questions relating to social cohesion and integration		
Have you experienced discrimination as part of the LGBT+ community in terms of social integration?		
• Yes	207	72
• No	81	28
In what field have you experienced discrimination as a member of the LGBT+ community? (Percentage of those that experience discrimination)		
• Education and youth development	143	69
• Access to healthcare and healthcare services	100	48
• Safety, security and psycho-social services	134	65
• Access to essential services	90	31
• Homelessness and access to housing	46	22
• Job creation, employment and asylum seeking	116	56
• Other	22	11
From where the discrimination emanates		
<u>Government departments</u>		
• Yes	104	36
• No	144	50
• Undisclosed	40	14
<u>Private and NPO/NGO sectors</u>		
• Yes	90	31
• No	159	55
• Undisclosed	39	14
<u>Individuals</u>		
• Yes	226	78
• No	33	11
• Undisclosed	29	10
Do you experience any form of rejection and/or discrimination when wanting to express and participate in your own ethnic cultural practices?		
• Yes	170	59
• No	118	41
Do you experience any form of rejection and/or discrimination when wanting to express your personal religious beliefs?		
• Yes	194	67
• No	94	33
Questions relating to attitudinal changes in South Africa		
Do you believe that tolerance in terms of gender identity and sexual orientation have improved within South African society since the advent of democracy in 1994?		
• Yes	225	78
• No	64	22



In your opinion, to what degree has the tolerance towards gender identity and/or sexual orientation improved within South African society since the advent of democracy in 1994?		
• Complete tolerance	13	5
• Major changes/improvements	44	15
• Adequate/somewhat	87	30
• Some significant changes/improvements	121	42
• No real changes or improvements	23	8
Do you believe that government departments give you fair treatment when accessing services?		
• Yes	156	54
• No	132	46
Do you believe that the private and NPO/NGO sectors give you fair treatment when accessing services, goods or products?		
• Yes	202	70
• No	86	30
Questions relating to the family environment		
Are you accepted within your family for your gender identity and/or sexual orientation?		
• Yes	186	65
• No	102	35
Are you in a happy relationship with your family and friends?		
• Yes	248	86
• No	40	14
Are you abused in any way within your domestic environment?		
• Yes	51	18
• No	237	82
If you are abused within your domestic environment, how is it manifested? (As a percentage of those that experienced abuse)		
• Physical	20	39
• Psychological	47	92
• Other	12	24
Questions relating to health		
Do you have adverse non-mental medical conditions such as diabetes, HIV/Aids or TB?		
• Yes	69	24
• No	219	73
Adverse non-mental conditions segmented by age		
< 26 (92 respondents)	18	20
26-45 (165 respondents)	47	28
45+ (31 respondents)	4	13
Do you have any mental health conditions such as depression?		
• Yes	118	41
• No	170	59

Adverse mental health conditions segmented by age		
<26 (92 respondents)	49	53
26-45 (165 respondents)	59	36
45+ (31 respondents)	10	33
Questions relating to the impact of COVID-19		
Has your income/livelihood been impacted negatively by the measures taken to combat the COVID-19 pandemic?		
• Yes	207	72
• No	81	28
Have you experienced any difficulties in accessing basic services (during the COVID-19 lockdown)?		
• Yes	86	30
• No	202	70
If you have had difficulty in accessing basic services, of what nature were they? (As a percentage of those that experienced difficulties in accessing basic services)		
• Health services	57	66
• Security services	45	52
• Social services (excluding food)	66	77
• Food	68	79
• Other	4	5
Are you in support of the measures taken by government to combat the COVID-19 pandemic?		
• Yes	200	69
• No	88	31
Changes in the domestic environment		
• Improved	36	13
• Remained stable	139	48
• Become strained	96	33
• Experienced domestic intolerance	8	3
• Become violent (either physical or psychological)	9	3

5.2 Summary of data for Gauteng respondents

	No.	%
Number of respondents from the Gauteng province	158	100
Do you believe that government is doing enough to guarantee your rights as it relates to gender identity and/or sexual orientation?		
• Yes	33	21
• No	125	79
Have you experienced discrimination as part of the LGBT+ community in terms of social integration?		
• Yes	123	78
• No	35	22
Do you believe that tolerance in terms of gender identity and sexual orientation have improved within South African society since the advent of democracy in 1994?		
• Yes		
• No		



Are you abused in any way within your domestic environment?		
• Yes	29	18
• No	129	82
Do you have any mental health conditions such as depression?		
• Yes	65	41
• No	93	59
Are you in support of the measures taken by government to combat the COVID-19 pandemic?		
• Yes	110	70
• No	48	30

5.3 Summary of data for Female versus Male comparative analysis using gender assigned at birth

	Female		Male	
	No.	%	No.	%
	87	100	197	100
What is your lived reality in everyday South Africa?				
• I feel free to express my gender identity and/or sexual orientation as I please	9	10	28	14
• I feel that I am mostly free to express my gender identity and/or sexual orientation	18	21	39	20
• I feel I experience subtle bias and discrimination for my gender identity and/or sexual orientation	21	24	47	24
• I feel that I experience some bias for my gender identity and/or sexual orientation	22	25	48	24
• I feel I am mistreated and discriminated against for my gender identity and/or sexual orientation	17	20	35	18
Have you experienced discrimination as part of the LGBT+ community in terms of social cohesion?				
• Yes	57	66	146	74
• No	30	34	51	26
In what field have you experienced discrimination as a member of the LGBT+ community? (Percentage of those that experienced discrimination)	57	100	146	100
• Education and youth development	37	65	103	52
• Access to healthcare and healthcare services	28	51	68	35
• Safety, security and psycho-social services	41	72	89	45
• Access to essential services	22	39	65	33
• Homelessness and access to housing	14	25	29	15
• Job creation, employment and asylum seeking	39	68	81	41
• Other	8	14	13	7
Do you experience any form of rejection or discrimination when wanting to express or participate in your own ethnic culture?				
• Yes	54	62	114	58
• No	33	38	83	42

Do you believe that government departments give you fair treatment when accessing services?				
• Yes	44	51	111	56
• No	43	49	86	44
Are you accepted within your family for your gender identity and/or sexual orientation?				
• Yes	49	56	133	68
• No	38	44	64	32
Are you in a happy relationship with your family and friends?				
• Yes	74	85	170	86
• No	13	15	27	14
Are you abused in any way within your domestic environment?				
• Yes	18	21	30	15
• No	69	79	167	85
Do you have any adverse non-mental health conditions such as diabetes, HIV/Aids, TB?				
• Yes	12	14	54	27
• No	75	86	143	73s
Do you have any adverse mental health conditions such as depression?				
• Yes	39	45	75	38
• No	48	55	122	62
Has your income/livelihood been impacted negatively by the measures taken to combat the COVID-19 pandemic?				
• Yes	58	67	145	74
• No	29	33	52	26
Have you experienced any difficulties in accessing basic services (during the COVID-19 lockdown)?				
• Yes	29	33	54	27
• No	58	67	143	73



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INCLUSIVE SOCIETY INSTITUTE



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The Inclusive Society Institute (ISI) is an autonomous and independent institution that functions independently from any other entity. It is founded for the purpose of supporting and further deepening multi-party democracy.

The ISI's work is motivated by its desire to achieve non-racialism, non-sexism, social justice and cohesion, economic development and equality in South Africa,

through a value system that embodies the social and national democratic principles associated with a developmental state. It recognises that a well-functioning democracy requires well-functioning political formations that are suitably equipped and capacitated. It further acknowledges that South Africa is inextricably linked to the ever-transforming and interdependent global world, which necessi-

tates international and multilateral cooperation. As such, the ISI also seeks to achieve its ideals at a global level through cooperation with like-minded parties and organs of civil society who share its basic values.

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