WS 1: Analysing homophobic attitudes and stereotypes

D1.2: National Report on homophobic attitudes and stereotypes among young people
The Netherlands
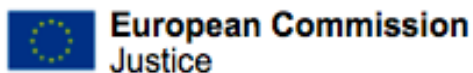
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1   Introduction

This report analyses the results of two researches carried out in the Netherlands. The research was done in the context of the NISO Project "Fighting homophobia through active citizenship and media education", a two years initiative co-funded by EU (DG Justice) through its Human Rights and Citizenship Programme. The aim of the NISO project is to engage students in a participative process aimed to discuss and possibly overcome social exclusion and stereotypes of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgenders (LGBT).

The first phase of the project consisted of analysing homophobic behaviours, attitudes and stereotypes among the population and more in particular among young people and LGBT people in the four participating countries: Belgium, Estonia, Italy and The Netherlands.

First a background analysis has been done on the political and social context. This was done by through desktop research in each country and a meta/analysis across the four participating countries. This report showed that LGBT people are still regular victims of social exclusion and discrimination, and in most countries, schools are found to be unsafe environments for LGBT students.

In order to obtain a more detailed picture of the most common stereotypes and of the experiences of discrimination suffered by LGBT persons, the second step of the research consisted of carrying out two surveys in each participating country: one among the LGBT community and one among secondary school students. The surveys were based on two comparable questionnaires. The same questionnaires, translated, were used in all participating countries. The two questionnaires aimed in particular at gathering information on the main stereotypes against LGBT people, their inclusion in the society and their experience at school.

A transnational analysis of the results obtained in the four countries will be also carried out.

The results gathered through the two surveys carried out in the Netherlands are presented in this report. First the methodology adopted for the research and the two samples are presented. The second chapter focuses on the main stereotypes attached to gender identity and sexual orientation diffused in the society and among the students, and their effects on the two target groups. The social inclusion and acceptance of LGBT persons according to them and to the students is analysed in the third chapter, together with the causes of the lack of social inclusion and the opinion of students on some LGBT rights. Finally, the fourth chapter regards more in particular the situation at school.

2 Methodology and samples

In order to be able to gain a clear picture of the most common homophobic attitudes and stereotypes towards LGBT people, it has been decided to make two surveys in parallel: one within the LGBT community, and one in the schools. The two surveys aim at obtaining information on the point of view of these two different actors and to confront the experience of LGBT people and the attitudes and vision of the youth in the Netherlands.

This chapter describes first the sample. The second and third paragraphs describe more in detail how the two questionnaires have been diffused among the two target groups, and the main characteristics of the two samples of the surveys. A fourth paragraph goes into some of the difficulties that emerged during the development of the survey and the dissemination. In the final paragraph we summarize the conclusions.

2.1 The LGBT people sample

GALE, the participating partner in the Netherlands worked close with the EduDivers Foundation to distribute the questionnaires. EduDivers is the Dutch counterpart of GALE and shares an office and staff. The surveys were put online through Google Docs. The survey for LGBT people was put online on 15 August 2011 and the data collection was closed on 15 November 2011.

The respondents were recruited through personal contacts and PR in LGBT focused digital media and education media. Six banners were developed and 147 organizations and websites were asked to place the logo (which linked to the survey) on their website for 6 weeks.

10 minuten voor een veilige school
"10 minutes for a safe school"

Geef de leerlingen een stem!
"Give the students a voice!"

Help mee aan het verkiezingsspel!
"Help us with the election game!"

Mijn idee voor een homovriendelijke school
"My idea for a gay friendly school"

Mijn idee voor een lesbovriendelijke school
"My idea for a lesbian friendly school"

Mijn idee voor een transvriendelijke school
"My idea for a trans friendly school"

Five websites (Gaykrant.nl, Edudivers.nl, Gayandschool.nl, FemFusion.nl, Transgendernetwerk.nl) agreed to publish the banners or publish a news article including a reference to the online survey. In addition we did a direct (e-)mailing to over 900 LGBT individuals and organizations of the EduDivers network. EduDivers is the Dutch counterpart of GALE, with whom we share an office and resources.

Because it could not be documented properly through which source the respondents found the questionnaire (and this was also not asked in the questionnaire), it is not possible to determine through which sources respondents were attracted. We expect the direct mailing to have been most effective in recruiting respondents. This is also shown in the responses, because there is an over-representation of respondents from the education sector. This is also reflected in the high education level of the respondents. This sample should not be seen as representative for the whole LGBT population. It is a convenience sample mainly drawn from the LGBT movement in the Netherlands with a bias towards the education sector and LGBT people active in peer-education.

All 325 LGBT persons responded to the questionnaire, of which 45% were born male, 53% female and 0,3% (1) intersexual. Seven respondents (2%) answered they did not want to categorize themselves.

Figure 1 shows the repartition by age of the respondents: almost half of them are aged between 30 and 50. There is also a rather large sample of 20% over 50. The prevalence of older people may be explained by the distribution which was partly done through personal snowballing recruitment in professional, semi-professional and activist networks, which in the Netherlands are predominantly people who were socialized in the sixties and seventies.
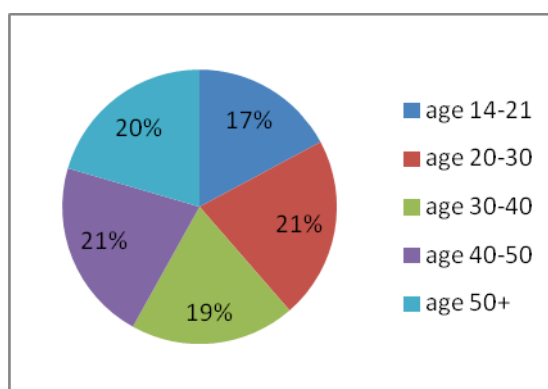
Figure 1: Age of the respondents to the LGBT questionnaire

We asked whether respondents were only or mostly attracted to men or women. In the international project team we decided not to ask for self-labelling as "gay", "lesbian", "bi" or "transgender" because we felt this might be too categorizing and restrictive, especially for young people and secondary school students of 12-16 years old.

Of the whole sample, 40% was attracted only to men, 25% only to women, 10% to both sexes and 15% felt more or less attracted to one of the sexes. Since this does not say much about whether people could be defined as gay, lesbian, or bisexual, we combined these answers with the sex of the respondents. The categorization of

course depends on whether we consider respondents who say they are "mostly attracted to" the same sex to be gay/lesbian or bisexual. In the figure below we give both options.
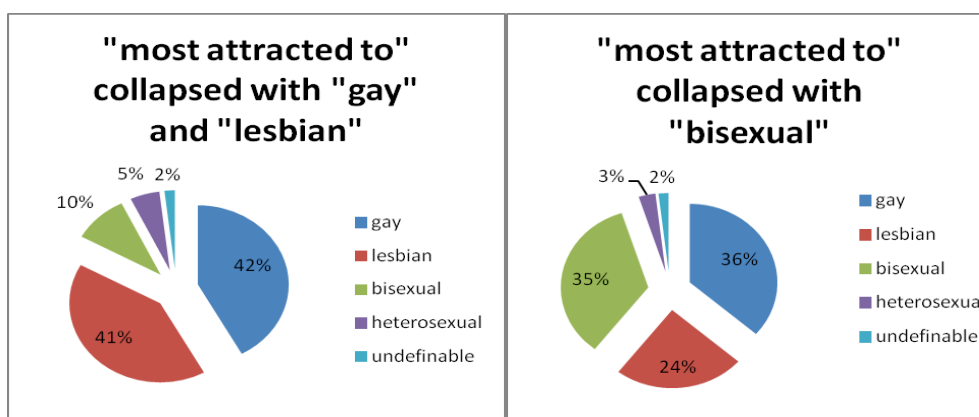
Figure 2: Sexual orientation of the respondents of the LGBT questionnaire

Figure 2 shows that when we consider "most attracted to" to be gay or lesbian, 41% of the sample is lesbian and 42% of the sample is gay. Alternatively, when we consider "most attracted to" to be bisexual, only 24% of the sample is lesbian and 36% of the sample is gay. By looking in this way the percentage of bisexuals goes up from 10% tot 35%.It also becomes clear that almost half of the women (41%) is not exclusively attracted to women, while only about 14% f the men is not exclusively attracted to men.

Being born as male, female or intersexual does not automatically determine the way people feel about their gender identity. Because the researchers are conscious of this, we asked how the respondents identify on a gender continuum.
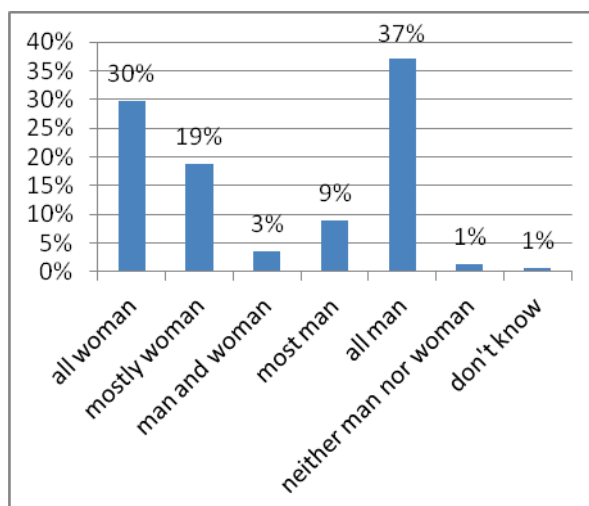
Figure 3: Gender identity of the respondents of the LGBT questionnaire

Figure 3 shows that quite large numbers of respondents consider themselves psychologically not to be exclusively 'women' or 'man'.

One of the hypotheses of the analysis was that the socio-cultural background of the respondents will have an influence on their experience and attitude towards LGBT issues. Therefore, different questions of the first part of the questionnaire regarded

their job, their level of education, the language(s) they speak at home (in order to identify their origin) and the religious community to which they belong.

Figure 4 presents the job categories of the respondents.
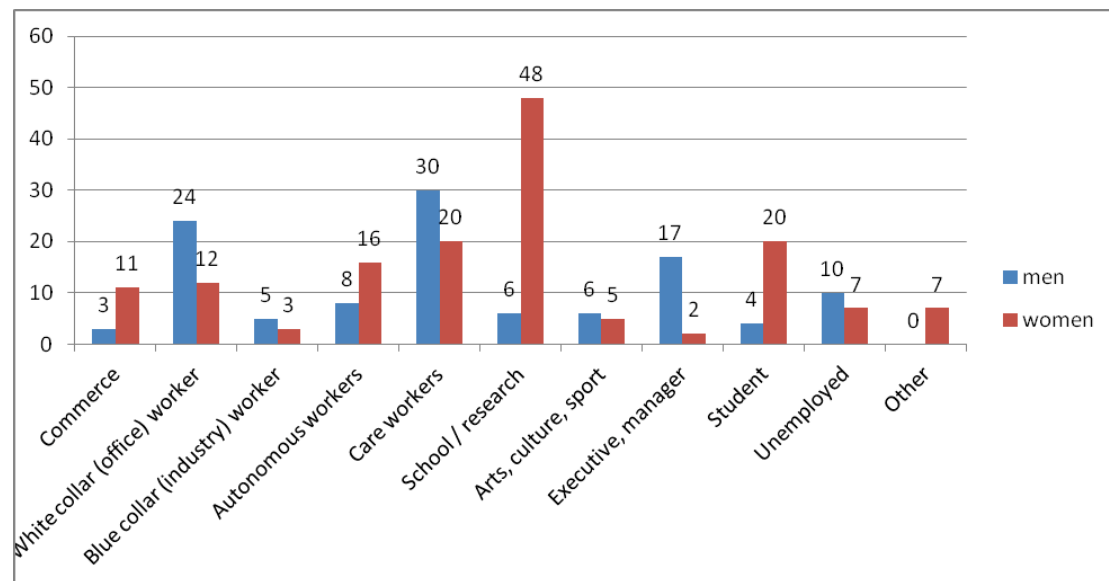
Figure 4: Typologies of jobs of the respondents to the LGBT questionnaire

There is an overrepresentation of female teachers and students in the sample.
The high number of respondents from school and research reflects the snowballing recruitment through networks of GALE and EduDivers, which work exclusively in the education area.

The education level of the respondents is quite high. This figure must be compared with the general Dutch situation: in the Netherlands, About 33% of the Dutch population aged between 25 and 64 has a bachelor or MA degree[1]. In our sample, this is 85%, showing a strong bias towards higher educated respondents.
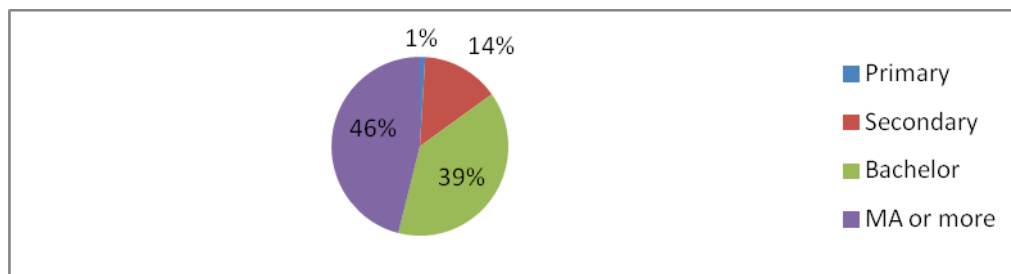
Figure 5: Education level of the respondents to the LGBT questionnaire

The data obtained regarding the language (and therefore the origin) of the respondents were not sufficient to be significant. In fact, all of the respondents (100%) speak Dutch at home and only 0,4% (also) speak another language.

A majority of the respondents were non-religious (75%). Almost equal numbers were Catholic or Protestant, with few other religions.

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[1] Ministerie van OC&W, Monitor Trends in beeld, opleidingniveau van de Nederlandse bevolking (http://www.trendsinbeeld.minocw.nl/grafieken/3_1_2_31.php)
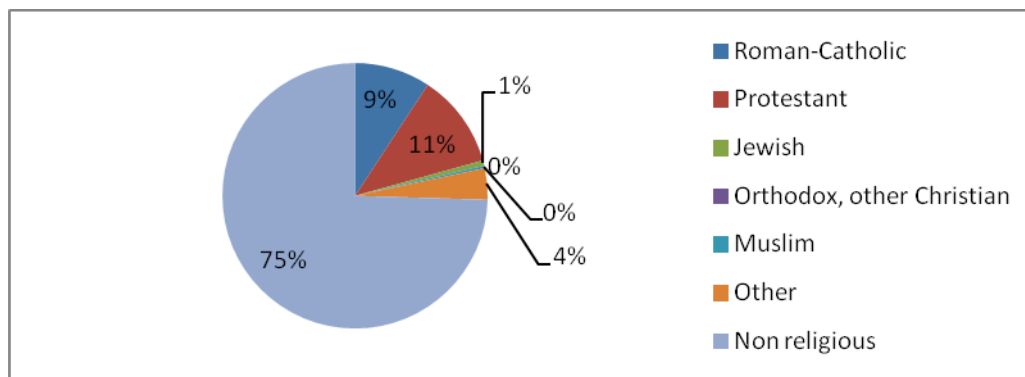
Figure 6: Religion of the respondents to the LGBT questionnaire

2.2   The students sample

The survey among secondary school students was carried out in schools. GALE approached 19 schools with the request to have one or several classes fill in the questionnaires during a lesson. This was partly done through internet and partly on paper. The paper results were uploaded in the same online Google Doc file. Four schools decided to participate in the research: two in Amsterdam, a school in Utrecht and a school in The Hague. The Amsterdam schools were lower vocational institutions with largely Turkish/Moroccan/Surinam 2nd generation immigrant student populations. The Utrecht and The Hague schools are predominantly Caucasian students. The school in The Hague is one of the top-level performing schools (Gymnasium) in the Netherlands.

The questionnaire, obviously anonymous, was distributed to classes by the teacher, who afterward collected the papers and sent them to the researchers.

In total, 339 students responded to the questionnaire, 47% boys and 52% girls. Four students (1%) classified themselves as "other".

The age distribution of the respondents showed a range between 11 and 19, with the majority being 13 and 14. In total, 70% of the sample is minors (Figure). The distribution reflects the average distribution of students over classes in a school.

Figure 7: Age of the students interviewed

Figure 8 presents the typologies of schools of the respondents. "Vmbo" signifies vocational school, "bl" being the most practical and basic level and "tl" the "theoretical learning route"" which prepares students to proceed to higher professional school types. "Havo" prepares for higher professional training and "Vw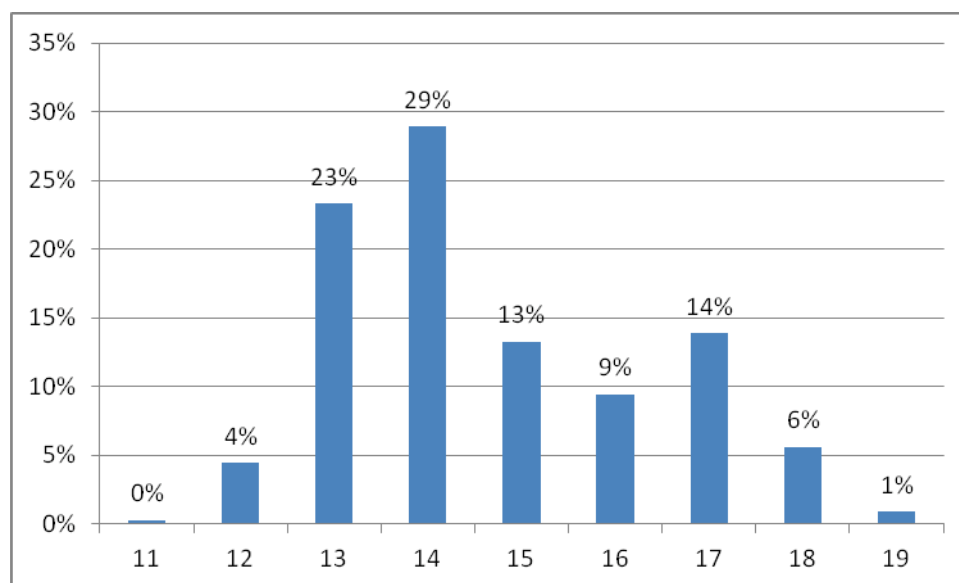o" prepares for university. To simplify the overview, we added a graph in which all Vmbo is collapsed in one "handicraft-administrative level education"

The Vwo respondents are from the The Hague school, the Havo students from the Utrecht school and the Vmbo students from the two Amsterdam schools. Taken as a total, the statistics do not offer comparability with the Dutch average distribution of students across school types, with Vmbo-tl being underrepresented by 40% and Vwo 13% being overrepresented. In addition, the The Hague Vwo school is one of the best schools in the Netherlands while one of the Amsterdam Vmbo schools almost went bankrupt a few years ago because of its low quality. This school is now working hard to improve their school climate and results.
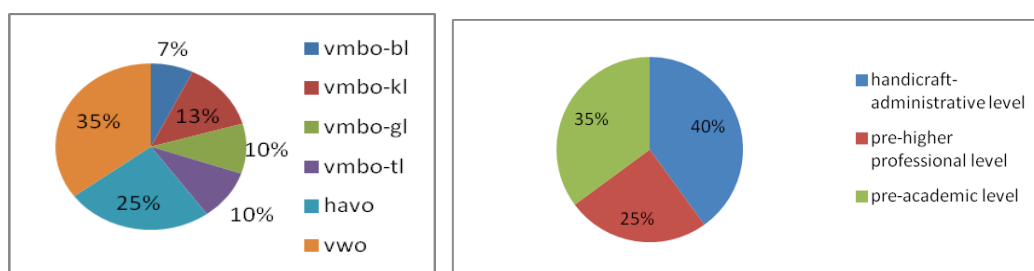
Figure 8: School typologies of the respondents to the students' questionnaire

In order to analyse the socio-cultural family background of the respondents, the students were asked to indicate the language they speak at home, the school title of their parents and the religious community to which they belong.

Many students speak several languages at home. In the vocational schools, 11 languages from immigration countries were spoken next to Dutch.

Regarding the school title of the parents, figure 9 reports the highest school title of the mother and the father. The differences are not significant and the figures show a similar level of education as the national average.
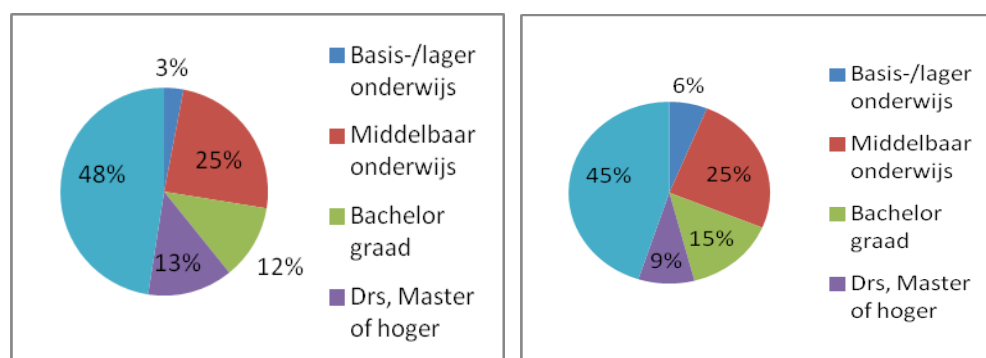
Figure 9: Highest education levels attained by the father and the mother of the student

Explanation:
Basis-/lager onderwijs: primary education
Middelbaar onderwijs: secondary education
Bachelor graad: bachelor, higher professional or first phase university education

Drs., Master of hoger: second phase university education or higher

Regarding the religious community to which the students belong, 14% declared to be Christian, 25% Muslim and 50% said to have no religion. The high percentage of Muslims is due to the participation of the 2 vocational schools in Amsterdam, of which one is mixed and the other is of an almost 100% student population of immigrant (mostly Moroccan and Turkish) descent.
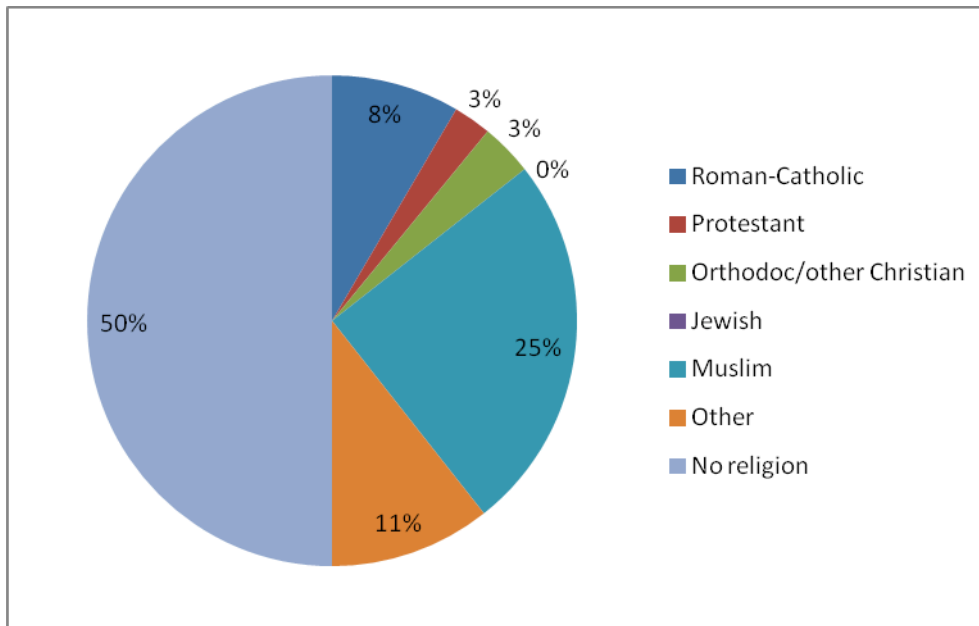
Figure 10: Religious affiliation of the student's sample

In total, 15 (5%) of the girls said to be attracted mostly or only to girls and 7 (3%) of the boys who said to be attracted only or mostly to boys and 8 of the female respondents. Seven girls but no boys had bisexual feelings. Thirteen girls and 7 boys are not sure (6%).

In contrast, 132 boys and 130 girls said to feel only attracted heterosexually. In this sample, the number of self identified gay and lesbian respondents is slightly higher than in other Dutch research on sexual attraction in teenagers.
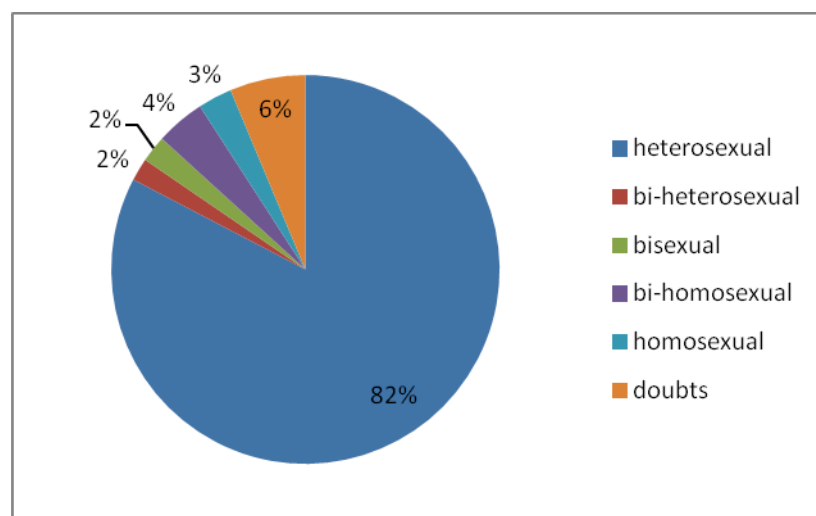
Figure 11: Sexual attraction of students

Because we expected that self-labelling is more difficult on a lower vocational school

than on a pre-academic school, we checked the distribution of same-sex attraction across the represented schools. In this check we left out the students who felt "mostly attracted to".

	Gymnasium	Higher Vocational School	Lower Vocational Schools
gay boys	2	0	0
lesbian girls	5	0	2
bisexuals	4	3	0
doubts	1	8	11
total number of students	108	76	123

Figure 12: Sexual attraction per school

This closer look does give the impression that it is easier to acknowledge same-sex attraction at higher level education schools: the gymnasium counts 11 self-identified gay boys, lesbian girls and bisexuals and only one doubter, while the 2 lower vocational schools have 11 doubters and only 2 self-identifying lesbian girls.

Considering that one of the hypothesis of the analysis is that the social closeness of the students to LGBT people has an influence on their attitude, they were asked if and how many open LGBT persons they know (Figure 13), the age of these persons (Figure 14), and their relationship with them (Figure 15).
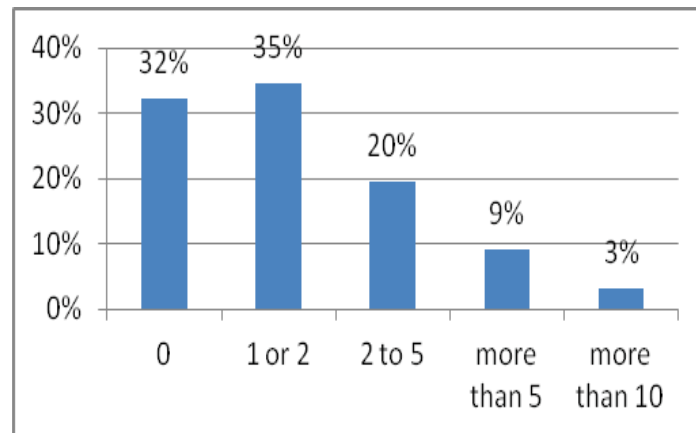
Figure 13: Number of LGBT persons known by the students

This figure shows more than half of students know a few LGBT persons, but 32% does not know even one.
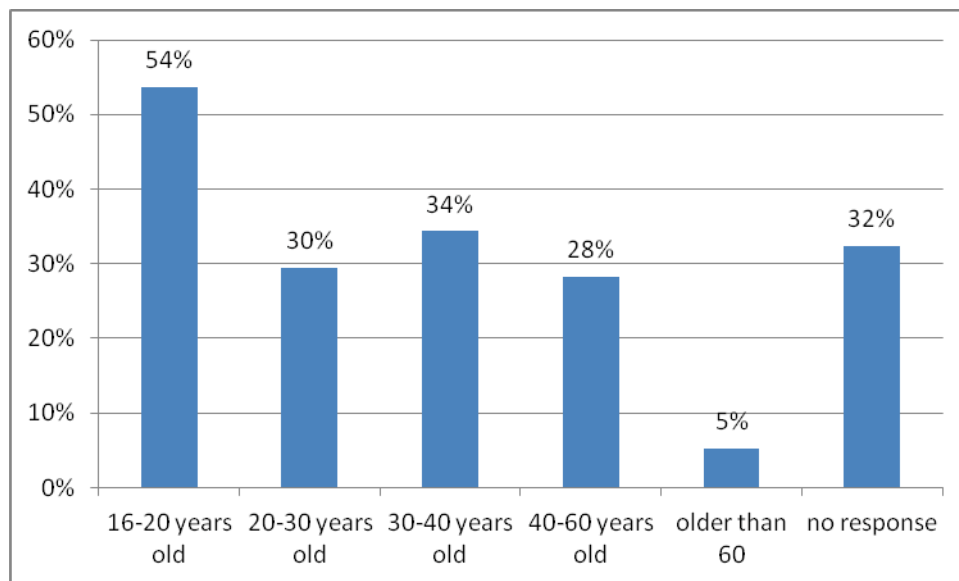
Figure 14: Age of the open LGBT persons known by the students

This figure shows that more than half of the students know LGBT people between 16 and 20 years. Since a large part of the students know these people from school (37%), or they are good friends (21%) or acquaintances (38%), it is likely the students know LGBT people in their direct environment.
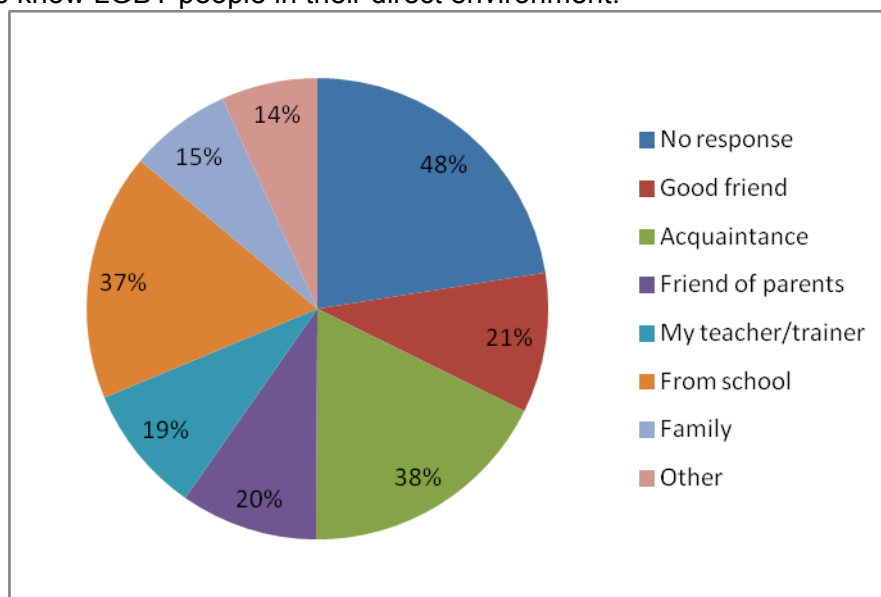
Figure 15: Relationship of the students to the LGBT persons they know

Finally, in order to analyse the perception of the students on the LGBT young people in their school, they were asked to indicate how many persons in their school they think are lesbian, gay or bisexual, and how many are open about it.
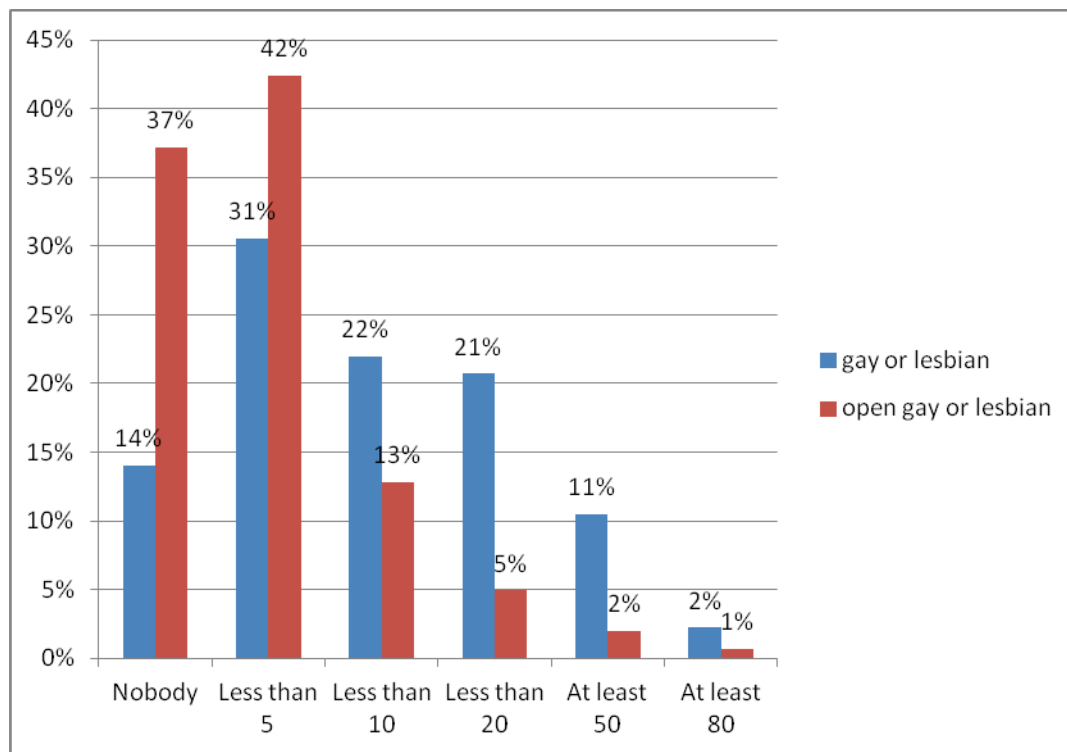
Figure 16: Number of lesbian and gay persons that students think is open

Of the 314 and 304 students who answered these questions, 37% believes no-one is openly gay or lesbian in school and 15% thinks they are no gays and lesbians at all.
Of the rest, 42% thinks there is a maximum of 5 open gays and lesbians in school, while 31% thinks the total number is probably less than five.

The fact that most students think that there are less than 5 students open about their homo- or bisexual feelings shows that students are aware of the fact that a high number of gay, lesbian and bisexual students chose not to be open about their sexual orientation at school.

Based on research about actual numbers of lesbian and gay students in high schools, at these schools with between 700 and 1000 students, between 9-13 students should already come out at school, while between 70 and 100 are probably in the closet. Only 5% of the students guess correctly there should be between 10-20 open gay and lesbian students in their school and only 2% guesses correctly that there should be at least a total of 80 gay, lesbian and bisexual students.

We wondered whether there would be a difference per type of school in this assessment by students, especially because the Gymnasium had a reasonably high number of "open" gay, lesbian, and bisexual students in comparison to the other schools.

Assessment of number of LGB students in specific schools	Gymna-sium	Higher Vocational Schools	Lower Vocational Schools
Nobody	6%	1%	6%
Less than 5	15%	7%	9%
Less than 10	15%	4%	4%
Less than 20	17%	3%	1%
At least 50	8%	1%	2%
At least 80	2%	0%	0%

Figure 17: Percentage of students that think there are LGB persons in their school (percentages calculated per category)

This figure shows indeed that estimates of students in the Gymnasium are higher than in the vocational schools, although even there only 2% guesses a correct number.

Assessment of number of OPEN LGB students in specific schools	Gymna-sium	Higher Vocational School	Lower Vocational School
Nobody	23%	1%	11%
Less than 5	25%	9%	7%
Less than 10	8%	2%	2%
Less than 20	4%	1%	0%
At least 50	1%	1%	0%
At least 80	0%	0%	0%

*Figure 18: Percentage of students that think there are **open** LGB persons in their school (percentages calculated per category)*

In the survey, 11 respondents of the Gymnasium stated they feel clearly gay, lesbian or bisexual. Although these 11 are part of the selection of 203 respondents from this school, which has more than 900 students, the number of 11 "out" students seems to be realistic as a Dutch average for a school of this size according to previous research. Still, only 4% of the students of the Gymnasium make a correct estimate.

Both the real numbers of vocational students who say they feel clearly gay, lesbian or bisexual and the estimates of all students about total numbers of LGB or open LGBT students are extremely low, so it is impossible to draw conclusions about this, except that the social environment of these schools does not seem to be supportive for LGB students.

2.3   Limitations of the methodology

During the analysis it became clear the development of the questionnaires could have benefitted from a qualified advice by methodologists. Some questions were

unclear, which led to missing answers from about 30 respondents per question (almost 10% of the sample). It remains unclear to what extend other respondents understood all questions properly. This problem may have also partly have arisen from difficulties in translating proposed questions from English to Dutch. However, enough respondents were left to do an analysis.

For a range of questions, answers were originally not coded properly or were asked as open questions, where after the researchers had to code textual answers. This was done by checking the textual answers, constructing a list of most mentioned terms and then coding textual answers as belonging to the constructed categories. This process may have created a researcher bias because texts had to be interpreted as belonging to a category, for example a respondent mentioning as a prejudice: "pink handbag, broken wrist" and the researcher categorizing this as "effeminacy".

2.4   Conclusion

This report is based on the surveys in two convenience samples of 325 LGBT people (14-66 years old) and 339 high school students (11-19 years old, most 13-14-15). Most of the LGBT respondents had a high education level and a majority of 29% came from the education sector. 75% was non-religious. In the student's sample, 50% was non-religious, 25% was Muslim and 15% was Christian.

The respondents are convenience samples because the recruitment of the respondents was done through regular channels of the GALE Foundation and the EduDivers Foundation, both of whom focus on sexual diversity in schools.
This means that among the LGBT sample there is considerable bias towards respondents being either a teacher or being active to some extent in the gay, lesbian or bisexual movement. We did not succeed in attracting transgender people. The high school sample was recruited from mainly 4 schools in Amsterdam, Utrecht and The Hague, who were also approached to take part in the Voice OUT school game. The Voice OUT game is partly prepared by this research.
The lower vocational schools in this sample had a high number of Muslim students, which is not representative for the Netherlands. The Gymnasium is one of the highest scoring pre-academic schools in the Netherlands and thus not representative.
So, while the samples in this research are quite diverse, they are not representative and actually may present some extremes in Dutch society: the LGBT sample more activist and education focused than average, and the high school student sample a mix of the lowest and the highest educational levels and a mix of religions in urban contexts. While this mix, on the whole, does not automatically allow for representative conclusions, it does give some grounds to explore significant differences in opinion in Dutch society.

3 Perceived stereotypes

Before analysing the discriminative and sometimes violent behaviours towards LGBT people, it is interesting to first have a look at the main stereotypes diffused among the population, which often can give an explanation to these attitudes. In this chapter, both points of view are taken into consideration: the opinion of the students and the main stereotypes perceived by the LGBT people and how these affected them.

We asked the LGBT respondents to list stereotypes they have been confronted with. The following word cloud gives an overview of the words used for gay men.

Figure 19a: Word Cloud
representing most mentioned stereotypes of gay men as reported by LGBT people

Figure 19b: Word Cloud
representing most mentioned stereotypes of lesbian women as reported by LGBT people

It immediately becomes clear that the terms "vrouwelijk" (feminine), "verwijfd" (effeminate) and related gender stereotypes (effeminate behaviour, fashion, hairdressers, sensitive, clothing, outer appearance) are dominant. Also, many respondents list gay stereotypes on sexuality, like "seks" (sex) appears in sentences like "always after sex", "seksbelust" (lust for sex) and "promicue" (promiscuous).
Lesbian stereotypes are mainly seen as "mannelijk" (masculine), "stoer" (butch) and "kort haar" (short hair).

3.1 Stereotypes on gender identity

In order to gather information on the students' reactions to gender stereotypes, we selected about 20 provocative sentences that report some traditional ideas about the main characteristics of men and women, or boys and girls, and their role in society. For each sentence, the students were asked to indicate whether or not they agree with these statements. Some of these sentences have been used in the past in larger surveys carried out at international level on the same topic.

Most students do not agree a lot with overtly stereotypical statements like "Boys who go to ballet are stupid". Still, a quarter agrees with this statement, which we also see in comparable questions. Both girls and boys seem to have more freedom to choose jobs or leisure activities they like.
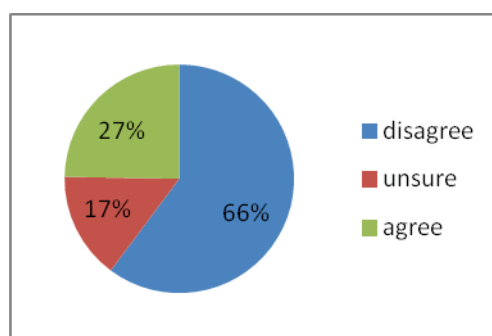
Figure 20 Students dis/agreeing with the statement "Boys who go to ballet are stupid"

At the same time, we see that gender stereotypes about social gendered behaviour and related attitudes are still very strong. For example, a majority think that it is normal that girls give more attention to their appearance.
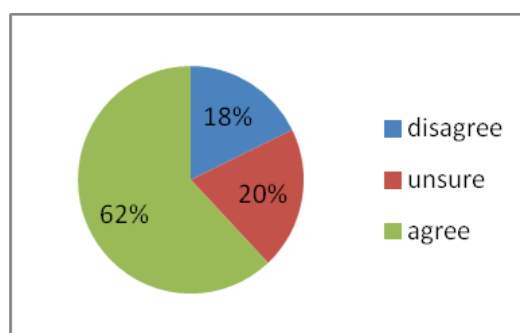
Figure 21 Students dis/agreeing with the statement "It is normal that girls give more attention to their appearance than boys"

Maintaining a strong external image on masculinity is still important for boys, but seems to be wrapped in insecurity. For example, the strong-worded statement "a real

man does not get bullied, he fights back when challenged, if necessary with the fist" yields very ambiguous results among the students.
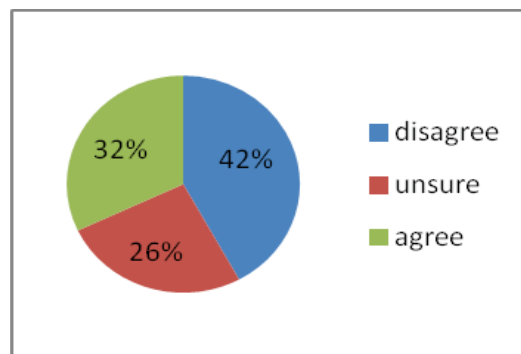
Figure 22 Students dis/agreeing with the statement "A real man does not get bullied; he fights back when challenged, if necessary with the fist"

Also a question about masculine autonomy yields ambiguous answers.
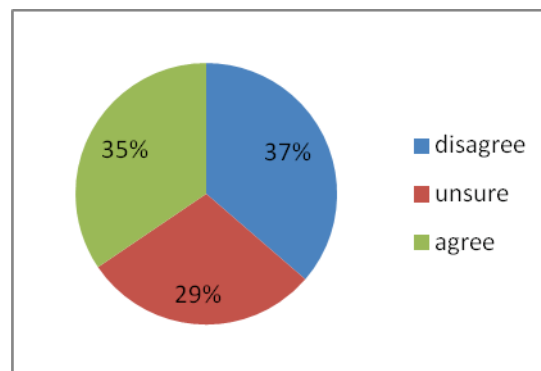
Figure 23 Students dis/agreeing with the statement "A man should take care never to be dependent of others to reach his goals"

3.2   Definition of homosexuality according to the students

After analysing the opinion of the students on some diffused gender stereotypes, this paragraph presents their vision of homosexuality and LGBT persons, comparing it with the perception that LGBT community members have of the stereotypes attached to them.

The students have been asked to indicate what, in their opinion, is homosexuality, choosing among 11 suggested answers (Figure 24). They could give more than one answer.
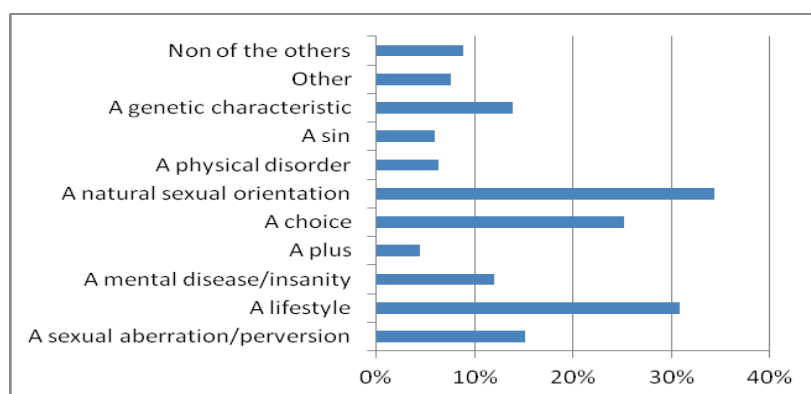
Figure 24: Definition of homosexuality

Most of the students think that they consider homosexuality to be a natural orientation. Quite a large number says it is a "choice", with some students adding "which should be respected".

In some cultures, labelling homosexuality a "choice" could be a negative statement, implying it could be "changed". A similar argument can be made towards labelling homosexuality as a "lifestyle". When we look at the distribution of answers across students, there does not seem to be a clear correlation between answers of students choosing for "disorder", "mental disease" and "perversion" in combination with "choice" or "lifestyle". This may signify that the majority of Dutch students do not relate to these traditional images. It may be they think "choice" means that LGBT people have a choice to express themselves like they want, and that some LGBT people may have a "lifestyle" (other forms of relationships, friends, and fashions) than heterosexuals. This hypothesis is supported by some of the comments students make in the survey, like:

> "He (gay men) behaves usually a bit more female, but I think this is everyone's own choice, nothing wrong with that". (Female student, 14, Gymnasium) *[Hij gedraagt zich meestal wel wat vrouwelijker, maar ik vind dat dat iedereen zijn eigen keuze is, dus niks mis mee.]*

None of the students makes comments that links "choice" and "lifestyle" to the traditional view of homosexuality as seduction or immoral lifestyle. At the same time, it is often ambiguous whether students make a realistic assessment of what they experienced, or whether they reproduce gendered (heteronormative) stereotypes.

In another question, the students were asked if they consider that lesbian women and gay men have particular characteristics. Figure 25 shows the percentage of students who think that gay men and lesbian women have particular characteristics.
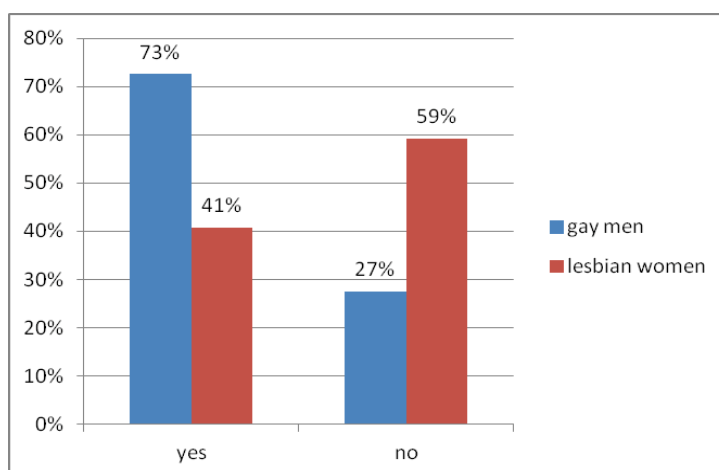
Figure 25: Percentage of students who think lesbian and gay persons have specific characteristics

The majority of the students think that gay people have specific characteristics. For lesbians, the picture is more mixed.

Figure 26 shows that the answers of the girls and the boys are not very different.

Boys   *girls*
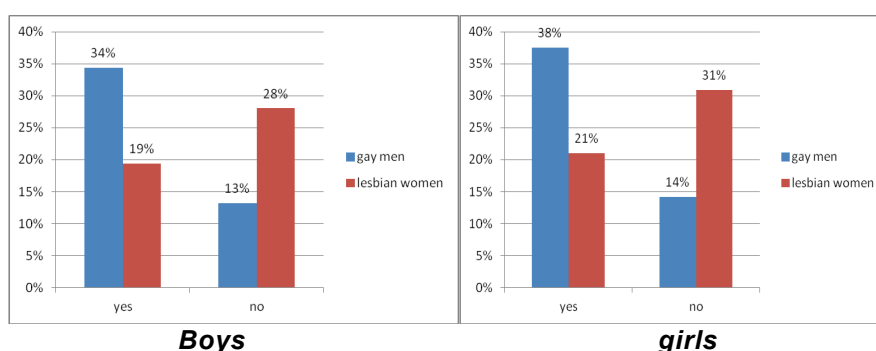
Figure 26: Percentage of girls and boys who think lesbian and gay persons have specific characteristics

3.3   Analyzing stereotypes

We asked the students to specify which characteristics they think lesbian women and gay men have. In parallel, the questionnaire to LGBT persons asked adults to indicate the 5 most common stereotypes they feel are ascribed to gay men and lesbian women. In the following analysis we compare the answers of the LGBT adults and the young people. Note that the questions were different, so what we actually compare are the impressions of LGBT adults about prevalent stereotypes in society, with the images that high students have of gays and lesbians.

The respondents were quite aware of the sensitivity of dealing with stereotypes. Some of the LGBT adults felt uncomfortable offering stereotypes, even when they were not asked to list this in general. With students there was a varied picture.
Many students did not answer the questions about "characteristics of gay men/lesbian women" (32% did not answer the question about gay men and 61% did not answer the question about lesbian women). This is also due to the fact that we first asked students "Do you think gay men have speficic characteristics?" And then: "If yes which ones?" Based on the answers about "characteristics", the researchers

coded the answers according to most mentioned terms, which often could be considered stereotypes. Still, of the students that did answer the question about "characteristics", 15% explicitly made an excuse about listing a stereotyped characteristic about gay men and 18% explicitly made an excuse about listing a stereotyped characteristic about lesbian women.

The first striking difference between our adult sample and the young sample is the number of respondents that answer these questions and the number of stereotypes listed by them. More LGBT adults are aware of stereotypes and they list a far broader spectrum than young people.

For example, 91% of the 325 LGBT respondents mention 943 examples of stereotypes about gay men and 89% mention 896 examples of stereotypes about lesbian women. In contrast, 68% of the 339 young people mention 365 examples of stereotypes about gay men and 39% mention 152 examples of stereotypes about lesbian women. This gives the impression that LGBT adults know more stereotypes than young people.

A second difference between the samples is the distribution of stereotypes both the type of stereotypes ascribed to gay men and to lesbian women, and the number of times specific types of stereotypes are mentioned by adults and young people.

The question about stereotypes in both questionnaires was an open question. We explored and analyzed the variety of stereotypes in a three step way.

First we fed the answers into Wordle, and formed Word Clouds to get a first impression of the most prevalent terms and concepts.

Secondly we constructed a list of the most mentioned concepts (12 for gays and 13 for lesbians). The answers were scored on this list. This allowed us to generate statistics on the mentioned stereotypes. However, we need to be careful interpreting these statistics. Regularly, it was difficult or ambiguous to interpret which kind of statements should be categorized in which category. For example, if a student said that lesbians are masculine, rough and have different behaviour, we could score this under "masculine", "rough" and "other", or just assume that "different behaviour" was just meant as an explanation of "masculine". Also, we noted that words like "rough" are often considered to be so gendered in their meaning that may be synonymous for "masculine" (for some respondents.)

Some students listed "fancies people of their own sex" as an answer to these questions. Because we did not know how to interpret this "characteristic", as it is more a definition than a characteristic, we disregarded these statements in the analysis.

Although the listed stereotypes of gay men and lesbian women were not comparable, we felt a need to compare the range of responses and assess how the types of stereotypes differed across gay and lesbian. To make this third step, we used a second division in four standard categories that was the same for gay men and lesbians. The four categories are:

1. Sexual preference and ideas about the origin of sexual orientation
2. Role behaviour and gender
3. Openness about sexual orientation or gender identity, discrimination and perceived provocation
4. Sexuality and relationships

These four categories, called the PROS model (Preference, Roles, Openness,

Sexuality) are part of a theoretical model developed by the Dutch organization EduDivers to analyze heteronormativity and to guide education about sexual orientation and gender identity.

3.4   Stereotypes about gay men

The Word Clouds of the responses of LGBT adults and young people when they list stereotypes about gay men reveal that gender plays an important role.

Figure 27a: Word Cloud
of stereotypes of gay men as perceived by LGBT people

Figure 27b: Word Cloud
of stereotypes of gay men as perceived by young people

Words like "vrouwelijk" (female) and "verwijfd" (effeminate/sissy) appear quite large. Also, the Word Clouds already show that stereotypes related to sexuality like "seks" (sex), "seksbelust" (out for sex) and "promiscue" (promiscuous) are quite prominent in the Word Cloud of LGBT people, but not in the Word Cloud of young people. The Word Cloud of young people contains more variations of "female", like "girls", "girlish", "girl-like" and more neutral words like "gedragen" (behaviour), "kenmerken"

(traits), "kleding" (clothing) and "vrienden" (friends).

In the second step we scored the responses in 12 categories. Because most answers contained more than one qualification, and some respondents did not respond this question at all, the number of responses per category is not related to the number of respondents. On a total of 325 respondents, 296 LGBT respondents (91%) gave 943 qualifications/examples of stereotypes of gay men. On a total of 339 respondents, 231 young people (68%) gave 365 qualifications/examples.
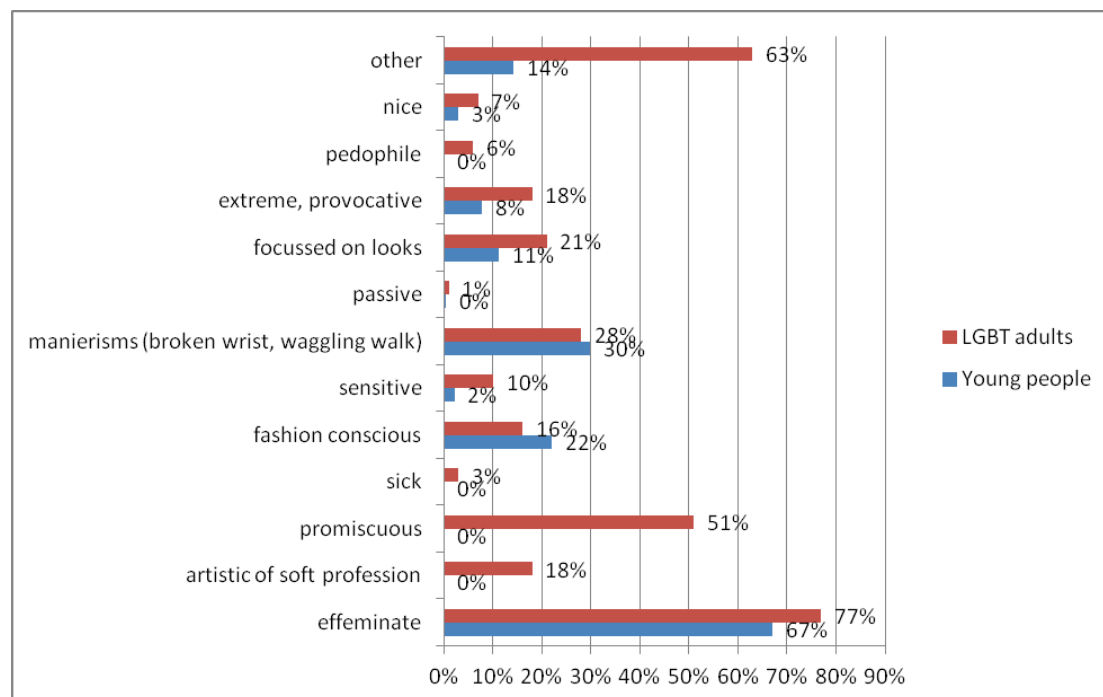
Figure 28: Comparison between young people and LGBT adults
of stereotypes about gay men

In Figure 28, we compare the percentages as given by LGBT adults and young people. Now
It becomes clearer there are some communalities but also big differences in perception.

The main communality is that both LGBT adults and young people see that gendered stereotypes make up the largest part of all stereotypes with respectively 77% and 67%. Also, mannerisms like a broken wrist ("slap handje"), a waggling walk ("nichterig lopen"), a high pitched voice ("hoge stem") are mentioned almost to the same extent by LGBT adults and young people with respectively 28% and 30%.

> "Strange walk, girly-like. ; actually just a girls in the shape of a boy" (male student, 13, Gymnasium*) [raar loopje, meisjesachtig. ; eigenlijk gewoon een meisje in jongens vorm]*

Apart from gender stereotypes, many young people are a bit vague and ambiguous about their gay fellow students:

> "He is being ambiguous with boys and men and talks with a sort of voice you just get scared of (female student, 15, Gymnasium) *[hij doet vaag bij jongens en mannen en praat met een bepaalde stem waar je gewoon bang van wordt]*

Both LGBT adults (16%) and young people (22%) think that fashion consciousness is a gay stereotype. Also, both LGBT adults (21%) and young people (11%) note that gay men may be more focussed on how they look, but it is notable that the young people find this much less so than LGBT adults.

At the same time, we see quite a few differences. The most pronounced difference is that none of the young people ascribe promiscuity to gay men, while 51% of the LGBT adults give examples of this stereotype. Also, it is quite pronounced that 18% of the LGBT adults ascribe specific professions to gay men while young people do not mention professions at all. The old fashioned stereotype that gay men are (also) paedophiles is still stated by 6% of the LGBT adults, while none of the students mentions this, not even students with a cultural-religious background where this belief is supposed to be common.

Among young people, there is a large number of "other" statements. One of the most prevalent statements in this section is that young people note that gay boys tend to have a lot of girl friends and associate less with other boys.

> "Well that one associates with girls and acts a bit strange, he does not really associate with boys" (female student, 14, audiovisual school) *[nou die gaat met meisjes om en doet en beetje raar, en gaat niet egt met jongens om]*

As a final step, we rescored all statements in the four categories EduDivers proposed to analyze heteronormativity. Figure 29 shows the comparison between LGBT adults and young people. Here is it now becomes perfectly clear that the bulk of experienced stereotypes by young people are related to gender and role behaviour, only slightly to coming-out or so-called provocative behaviour and not at all to prejudice about the origin of sexual orientation or to sexuality. These statistics differ from the impressions we get when asking directly to prejudices or attitudes, like we did in the earlier question about the "definition" of homosexuality. It may be that young people have not been exposed yet to traditional stereotypes like adults have. It may also be speculated that the teenage respondents do not have so much experience yet with sexuality, which may be a reason why specific stereotypes about *sexuality* escape them currently, while they do note that gay boys *socially* associate more with girls than with other boys.
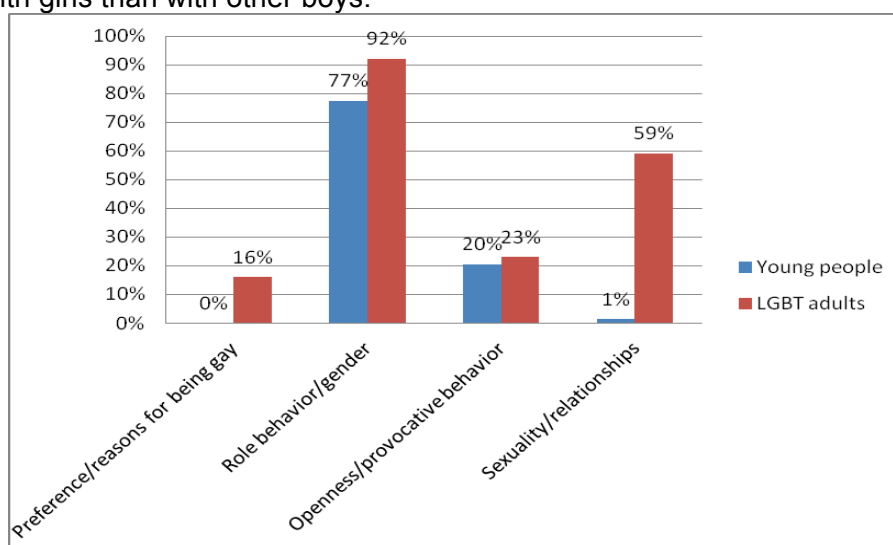
Figure 29: Comparison of clusters of stereotypes about gay men

3.5   Stereotypes about lesbian women

The Word Clouds of the responses of LGBT adults and young people when they list stereotypes about lesbian women also reveal that gender plays an important role.

Figure 30a: Word Cloud
of stereotypes of lesbian women as perceived by LGBT people

LGBT people list words like "mannelijk" (male), "mannen" (males), "kort" (short, as in "short hair") and "stoer" (sturdy). A common stereotype mentioned by LGBT adults is also "tuinbroek", which means "baggy garden trousers".

Figure 30b: Word Cloud
of stereotypes of lesbian women as perceived by young people

Again, the listed stereotypes by young people are less specific than those of LGBT adults. In relation to lesbians, the young people in this sample often use more neutral words like "vrouwen" (women), "mannelijk(er)" (male, more) and "als een jongen" (like a boy). But they often use words like "vaak" (often), "sommige" (some of them), "minder" (less), "meestal" (usually) and "een beetje" (a little) to slightly disqualify their statements.

On a total of 325 respondents, 288 LGBT respondents (89%) gave 896 qualifications/examples of stereotypes of lesbian women. On a total of 339 respondents, 131 young people (39%) gave 152 qualifications/examples.
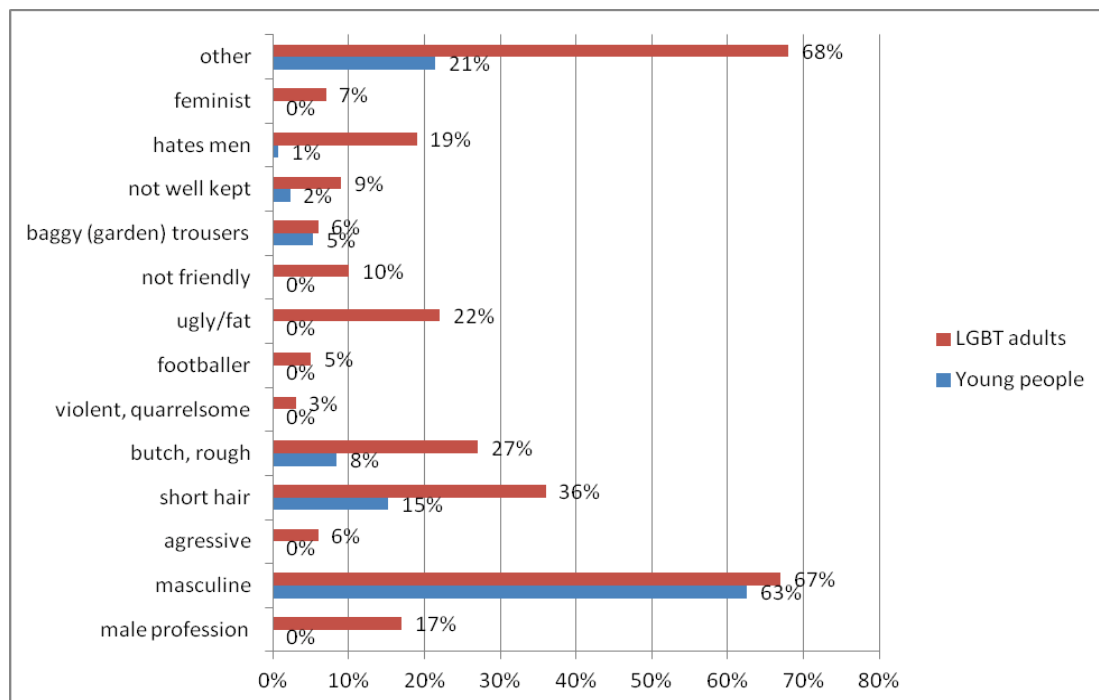
Figure 31: Comparison between young people and LGBT adults
of perceived stereotypes about lesbian women

The most mentioned stereotypes are again related to gender. LGBT adults and young people largely agree on the stereotype that "lesbians are more masculine" (67% and 63%). Also, the stereotypes that lesbian have short hair and are butch, rough or sturdy are mentioned, but it should be noted that young people mention them much less than LGBT adults: short hair 36% against 15% and butch, rough 27% against 8%.

> With some you think they are straight but with others you see them behaving more masculine and their clothing is more masculine. (Male student, 16, handicraft-administrative school*) [bij sommige denk je dat ze hetero zijn maar bij andere zie je ze meer mannelijk gedragen en hun kleding is wat mannelijker]*

There are also quite a few differences between LGBT adults and young people, which resemble the differences related to gay men. None of the young people mention that lesbians have male professions, while 17% of the LGBT adults do. None of the young people raise the idea that lesbians are aggressive, quarrelsome, footballers, ugly, unfriendly or feminist. Only a very few think that lesbians may be not well kept or hate men.

> The hairs are often very short because they want to look like a boy. and they are very nice. (Female student, 13, audiovisual school) *[De haren die zijn vaak heel kort want ze willen op een jongen lijken. en ze zijn heel aardig]*

The 7 students that state that lesbians sometimes wear baggy trousers do not use the word "garden trousers" like LGBT adults usually do. These results may be indicative of changing attitudes towards lesbian women, or to different lifestyles of young lesbians. The second reason seems more likely. While LGBT adults often refer to stereotypes about lesbian women the way they may have looked in the seventies and eighties, the young people often stress that lesbian girls may choose to be "slightly masculine" or "very feminine". While LGBT adults often stress (the

stereotype of) how lesbian may be closed, closeted, radical feminist and man-haters, the young people often point to the impression that lesbian girls may be strong-willed and make own choices.

> They stand stronger in their life. (Male student, 18, Gymnasium) *[Ze staan sterker in het leven.]*

> Sometimes dressed a bit masculine, but this is of course not always the case. I happen to know a few lesbian women and they are all Gothic and have short hair. (Male student, 17, Gymnasium) *[Soms wat mannelijk gekleed, maar dit is natuurlijk niet altijd zo. Ik ken toevallig een paar lesbische vrouwen en die zijn allemaal gothic en hebben kort haar.]*

> A bit like boy behaviour. What is customary for boys: Talk about girls, and how she behaves. (Male student, 13, audiovisual school) *[Een beetje een jongens gedrag. Wat standaard voor jongens is: Over meisjes praten, en hoe zij zich gedraagt.]*
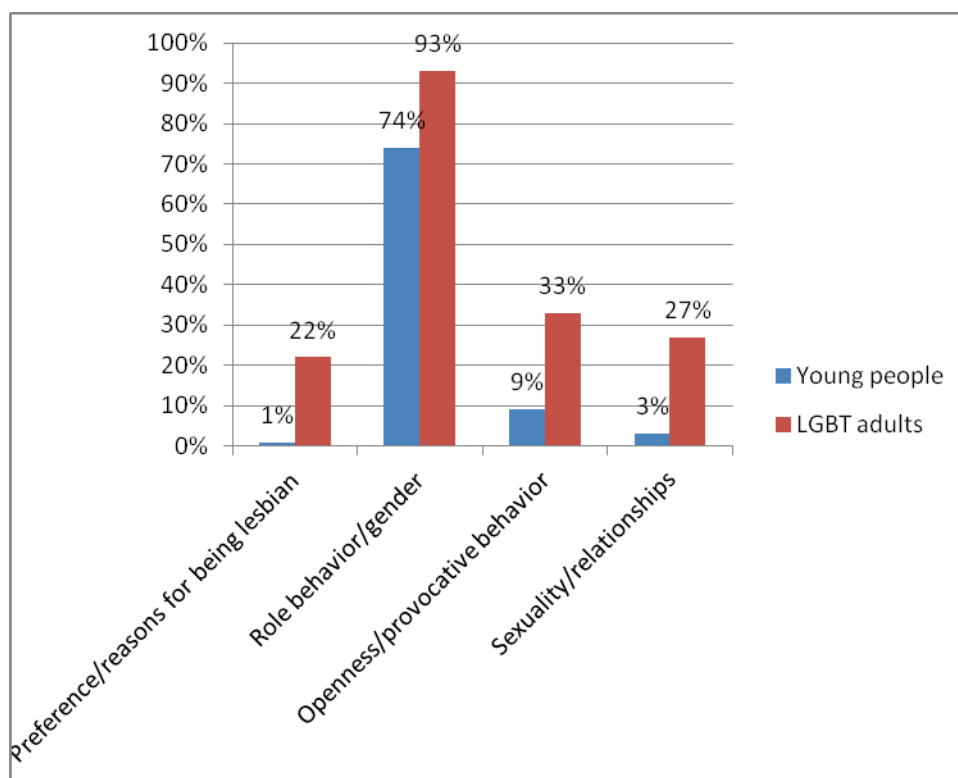
Figure 32: Comparison of clusters of stereotypes about lesbian women

Finally, we compared if LGBT adults and young people differed in their views of stereotypes on lesbians when we collapsed their statements in the four PROS categories. Here we find again comparable effects as we saw for stereotypes about gay men. The main communalities are in the area of gender. But even here, there is quite a gap between the 93% of LGBT adults who list examples of stereotypes fitting this category and the 74% listed by the young people. Young people hardly mention stereotypes related to reasons for being lesbian.

3.6 Conclusions about prejudice and stereotypes

The most important conclusion we can draw from these results is that gender stereotypes are the most prevalent and important stereotypes, both among young people and perceived by LGBT adults.

A second general conclusion we are tempted to draw from these results, is that it looks like LGBT adults perceive a broad set of stereotypes, but that this image does not correspond with the image of the young people in schools. When comparing the statements, it looks like many of the stereotypes perceived by adults are not raised by students on their on initiative, especially not stereotypes about the origin of homosexuality, about sexuality and about typical professions. This is not to deny that the perceptions of LGBT adults may be wrong; in fact, many of the LGBT respondents give concrete examples of how they were offended and discriminated based on specific stereotypes. It may well be that LGBT adults experience these stereotypes when confronted with other adults, and not with young people. It may also be that the LGBT adults refer to stereotypes they experienced over their whole lifetime, while high students necessarily have less years of experience, and their experience is mostly limited to the school environment (other students and some teachers). The discussion about stereotypes is also complicated, because some LGBT people will show behaviour that does not conform to the norm of heterosexuality. This only becomes a stereotype when people start to generalize it and treat all members of a group as if they have this behaviour. Plain statistics about stereotypes should therefore be considered with caution: answers can reflect both a reality and an unfounded generalization.

A third conclusion we are tempted to make is that high school students may be largely unconscious about a series of prejudices, and can be lead to form stereotyped images by offering them examples. In this questionnaire, the students did give some prejudiced answers to closed questions, for example about the "definition" of homosexuality. However, when they are asked to formulate their own statements, they do not come up with many stereotypes except gender stereotypes. It may be that researchers and by extension educators, who bring up stereotypes in surveys and in lessons, actually frame stereotypes by bringing them up, rather than combating existing stereotypes. This potential effect needs more research.

4 Behavior and attitudes of students

As explained in chapter 2, a large majority of the students still have gendered stereotypical images of gay men and lesbian women. In this chapter we explore to what extend these images translate in negative attitudes and behaviour.

4.1 Attitudes of students

An attitude can be defined as a positive or negative evaluation of people, objects, event, activities, ideas, or just about anything in your environment[2]. According to health promotion theory, attitudes are an important predictor of behavior. In the case of stigma, negative attitudes can have a direct effect and turn into discriminatory behavior, while positive attitudes can lead to inclusive or supportive behavior.

4.1.1 General attitudes towards gay and lesbian concerns

To explore the attitudes of students, we asked them a series of questions, ranging from general evaluations of homosexuality and rights of gays, lesbians, bisexual and transgenders. We asked:

General statements
A. Transgender persons should be free to live their own life as they wish
B. Bisexual persons should be free to live their own life as they wish
C. Gay men and lesbian women should be free to live their own life as they wish
Generally accepted human rights
D. Lesbian, Gay, bisexual activists should have the right to organize a peaceful event in the neighbourhood
E. Lesbian, Gay, bisexual activists should have the chance to express their opinions in TV programs
F. It is important that gays and lesbians stand up for their rights
Marriage and adoption rights
G. Lesbian couples should have the right to adopt babies
H. Gay couples should have the right to adopt babies
I. A gay couple (two men) can be good parents
J. A lesbian couple can be good parents
K. Two men or two women should have the possibility to get married

In Figure 33 we see an overview of the answers. The general trend is that only a minority of the students have over negative opinions about homosexuality generally and about accepted human rights for homosexuals.

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[2] Zimbardo et al, Psychology (3rd Edition), Reading, MA: Addison Wesley Publishing Co., 1999
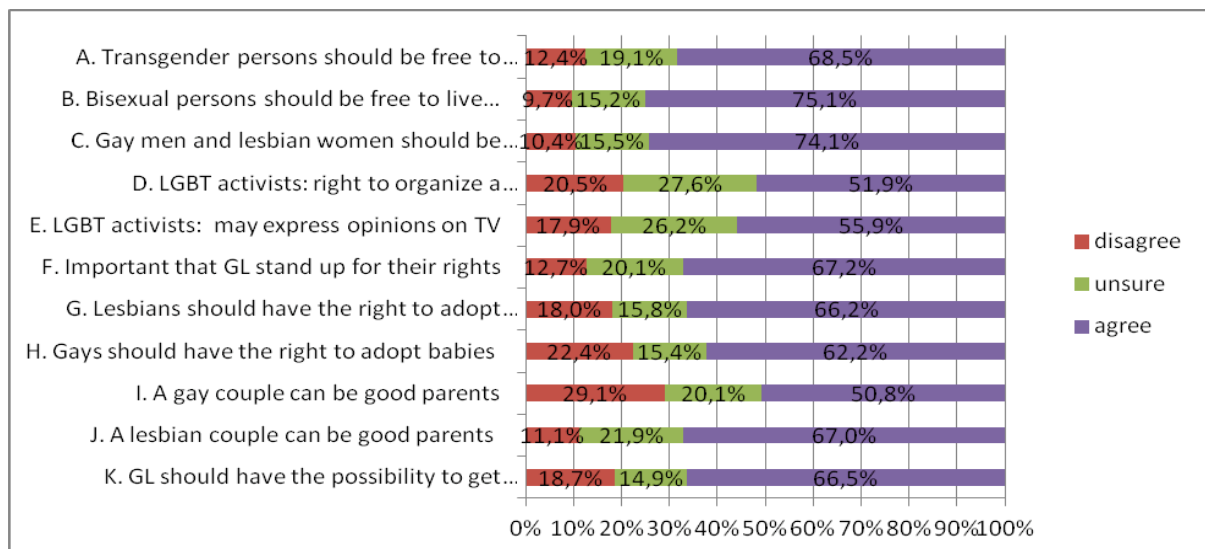
Figure 33: Opinions of students about LGBT concerns

But at the same time, when we add the negative students and the students who are uncertain, we tend to get much larger minorities of between 25% and 48%, which shows the ambiguity of students, even when they think about generally accepted human rights.

Three other notes should be made.

First, it seems that more visibility of LGBT meets a lot of resistance and uncertainty among students. Almost one third is uncertain about the right to assembly (statement D) in the neighbourhood and one-fifth is against this. Also, visibility on TV meets almost the same ambiguity and resistance.

Second, marriage and adoption rights meet most resistance among students. Further analysis shows this difference can be explained by differences between boys and girls but especially by the religious background of the students in this sample.
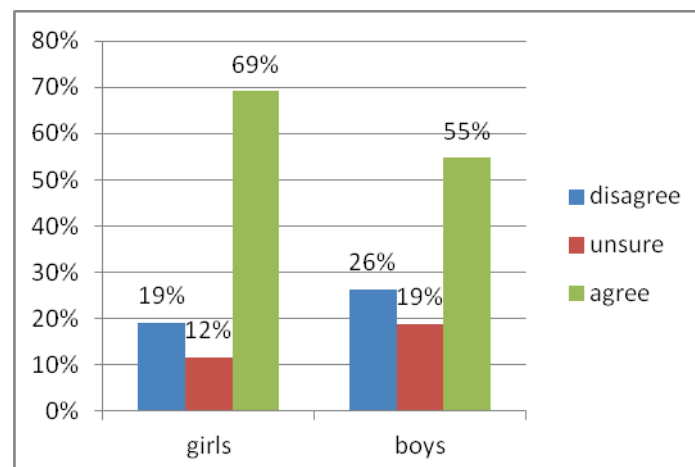

Figure 34: Differences between boys and girls on the statement
"Gay couples should have the right to adopt babies"

In Figure 34 we see a larger proportion of the boys does not agree with the statement that gay men should be able to adopt babies (26% against 19%).
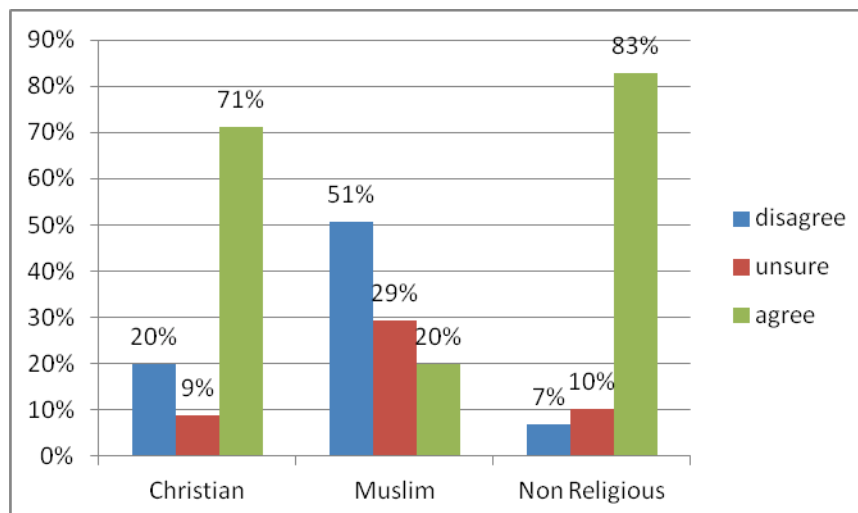
*Figure 35: Differences between religious affiliations of young people on the statement
"Gay couples should have the right to adopt babies"*

In Figure 35 we see how large proportion of Christian students (71%) and non-religious students ((83%) agree with this statement, comparing with only 20% of Muslim students who agree. Half of the Muslims plainly disagrees (51%).

4.1.2   *Perception of social norms about LGBT people*
Personal attitudes are often strongly influences by social norms. This means the perception of students of how LGBT people will be treated by others, are important to be explored. Therefore, we also asked them more specific questions about how welcome homosexuals are in certain environments.

Figure 36, 37 and 38 show how the surveyed students think about homosexuality, bisexuality and transgenders.
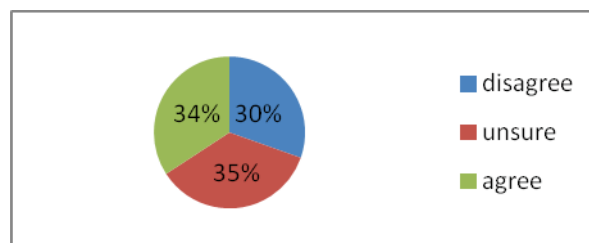

*Figure 36: Agreement of students with the statement
"Homosexuality is generally accepted"*

Regarding homosexuality, the agreement, disagreement and insecurity about the statement is almost perfectly divided in 3 parts. This is a strong indication of ambiguity about this theme.
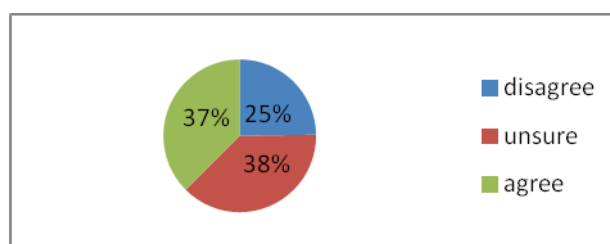

*Figure 37: Agreement of students with the statement
"Bisexuality is generally accepted"*

The disagreement with the statement that bisexuality is generally accepted is slightly higher than with homosexuality, but the graph still shows considerable ambiguity.
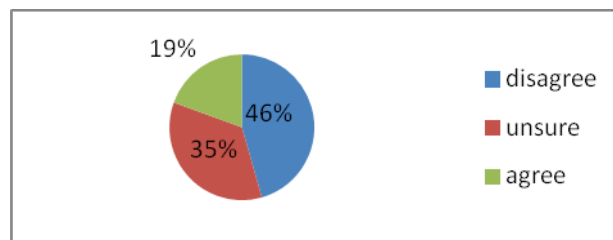
Figure 38: Agreement of students with the statement
"Transgenders are generally accepted"

A majority of 46% the students agree that transgenders are not generally accepted. Fewer students are uncertain about this.

4.1.3   Impressions of how welcome gays and lesbians are at school
Since young people spend a lot of time in school and our project focuses at empowering students in school, we asked specific questions about school. Figure 39 shows how students respond to the question how welcome gays and lesbians are at their own school.
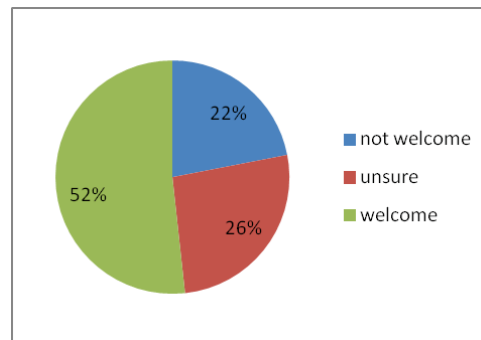
Figure 39: How welcome are gays or lesbians at your school?

About half of the students think gays and lesbians are welcome, while the other half is unsure (26%) and thinks they are not (22%). We wondered if there were differences among students explaining who are less welcoming, and further analysis showed (Figure 40) that religious background played the most important role.
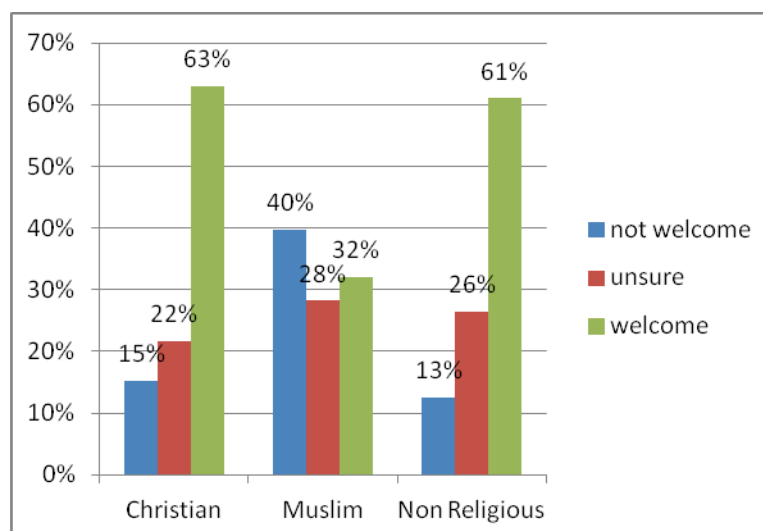
Figure 40: "How welcome are gays or lesbians at your school?"
Differences between religious affiliations of students

Almost three times as many Muslim students (40% against 15 and 13%) state that gays and lesbian are not welcome in their school compared with Christians and non-religious students. Among the non-religious students there is somewhat more ambiguity than among Christian students, but there are even more Muslim students unsure about this.

Often, negative attitudes towards sexual diversity are based on incorrect assumptions and exaggerated images which are generalized to all "homosexuals". We also wondered whether students acknowledge such prejudices exits. We asked them to what extent they agree with the statement that "most heterosexuals have prejudices about homosexuals".
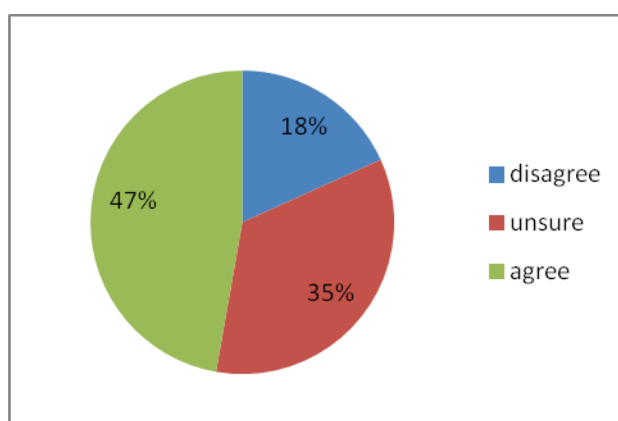

Figure 41: Agreement of students with the statement
"Most heterosexuals have prejudices about homosexuals"

The answers of this question show that almost half of the students agree with this and only 18% disagrees. This may provide a good basis for further dialogue and education.

4.1.4 Conclusions
The general impression from the analysis of students' attitudes and their view of social norms in the school is one of ambiguity. Between one-third and a half of the students feel negative towards gays, lesbian, bisexual and transgenders. Like in other research, boys tend to feel more uncomfortable than girls.
In contradiction with other research, the school level does not seem to make much of a difference in attitudes in this sample.
However, religious affiliation does make a difference, with Muslim students (in this sample mainly from lower vocational schools) being considerably more negative and insecure about homosexuality and gay and lesbian rights.

4.2 Behaviour of students
In order to see whether student attitudes actually may translate in concrete behaviour, we asked a range of questions about behaviour towards lesbian and gay classmates.

First we asked them if they think open homosexuals are bullied at school.

Figure 42: Agreement of students with the statement
"Open homosexuals are being ridiculed and bullied at our school"
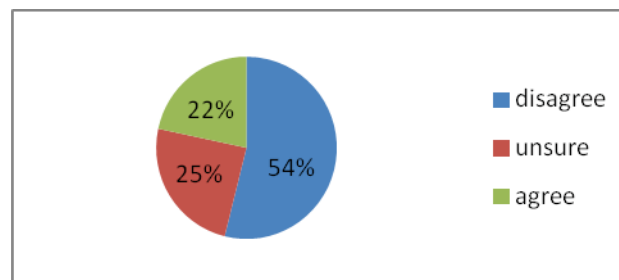
A small majority of 54%   disagrees with this, but the other half is unsure of agrees. We need to look deeper to analyze the actual (planned) behaviour of students.

To do this, we asked students to indicate what their reaction would be towards a gay (for boys) or lesbian (for girls) schoolmate in different situations. In particular, they had to indicate whether or not they agreed with the following statements:

1. I would make it clear he/she should keep his/her hand off me;
2. I would feel at ease becoming friends with him/her;
3. I would feel at ease making homework with him/her;
4. I would rather sit next to someone else during the break;
5. I would find it annoying to share a room with him/her on a school excursion/project week.

Taken together, these statements represent the social distance young people intend to take from classmates they perceive as gay or lesbian. Such social distance, or ostracization, is the main reason for stress and reasons not to come out among LGBT students.

4.2.1   The comfort zone of students

In the survey, we asked a series of questions about how conformtable students felt when there are together with LGBT students in different situations. In order to analyse the results, a global sum considering the answers of the students to each situation was calculated, and the students were divided in three groups between those who feel comfortable with lesbian and gay schoolmates and those who do not (Figure 43).
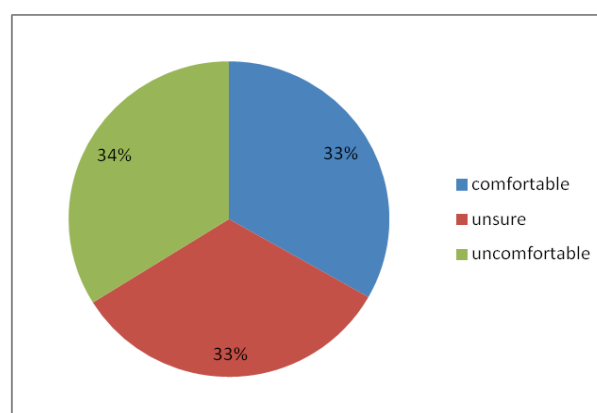

Figure 43: Generalized comfort in behaviour of students
towards lesbian or gay schoolmates

This graph shows clearly how the degree of comfort is almost exactly divided in three thirds.

In other research, the answers on these questions tend to show that the discomfort of young people increases when the social distance proposed in the question becomes smaller. For example, there is usually less resistance against making homework together than sharing a room on an excursion together.

This effect is also visible in this sample. In Figure 44 we see how twice as many students feel uncomfortable sharing a room during an excursion as making homework together.
Almost half (42%) would not want to be friends with an lesbian or gay student and another 39% would be unsure about it, leaving only 21% of the student population to feel comfortable with being friends.
Only harsh statements like "keep your hands of me" are less common, 54% disagrees with this type of behaviour. Still, 17% of the students would be this crude and again almost a third would be unsure.
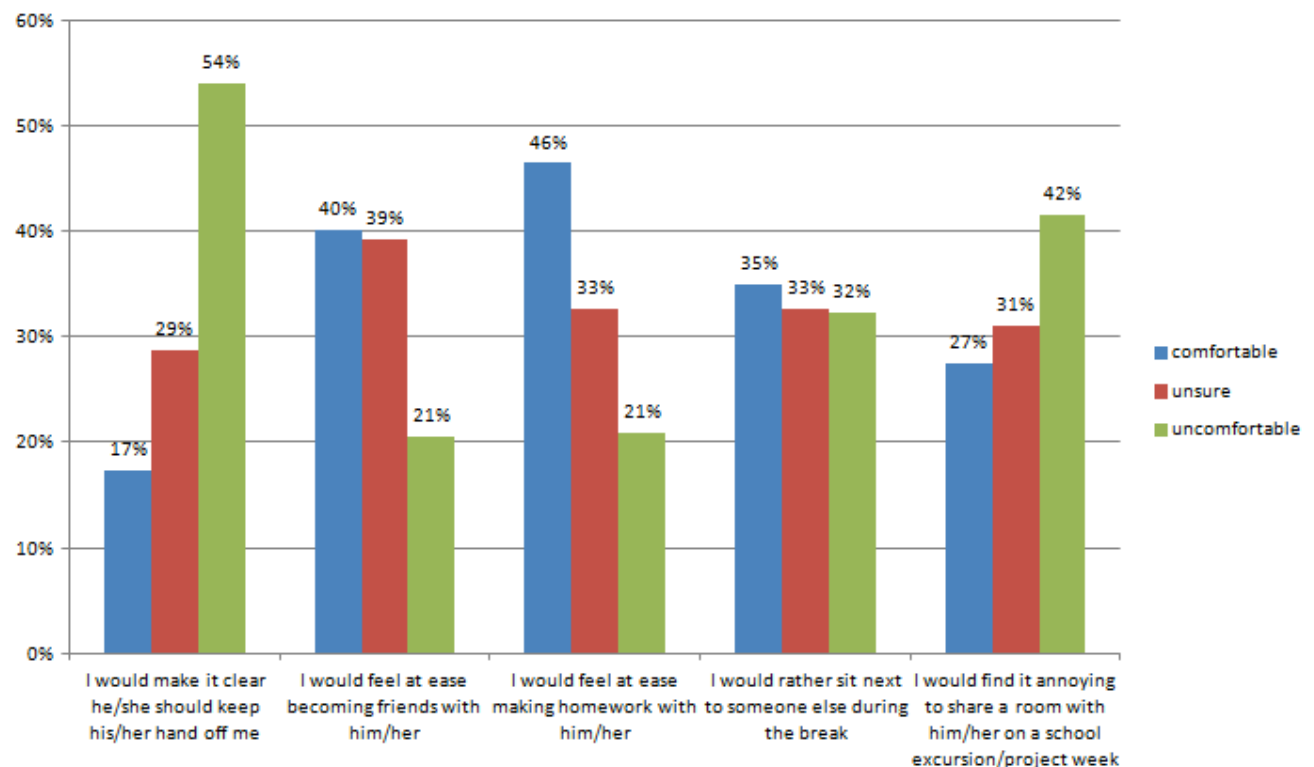
Figure 44: Social distance of students towards lesbian or gay schoolmates

4.2.2 Boys maintain more social distance

There are a number of differences between girls and boys: as is shown consistently in other research on gender and homosexuality, girls are usually more tolerant than boys.
For example, there is a clear difference between boys and girls when asked whether students would make clear that gay or lesbian students should keep their hands of them.

Figure 45: Boys and girls (dis)agreement with the statement
"I would make it clear he/she (gay or lesbian schoolmate) should keep his/her hands off me"

Figure 45 shows boys agree considerably more with this. Still it is good to realize that in total 83% of all students would either agree with this or be insure about it, with only a 10% difference of 78% and 88% between the girls and boys.
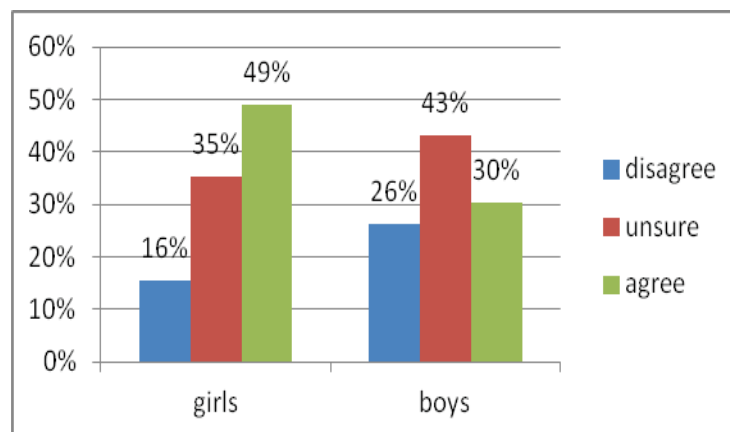
Figure 46: Boys and girls (dis)agreement with the statement
"I would feel at ease becoming friends with him/her"

Figure 46 shows boys disagree almost twice as much as girls when asked how they would feel about being friends with gays and lesbians, and also feel considerably unsure about this.
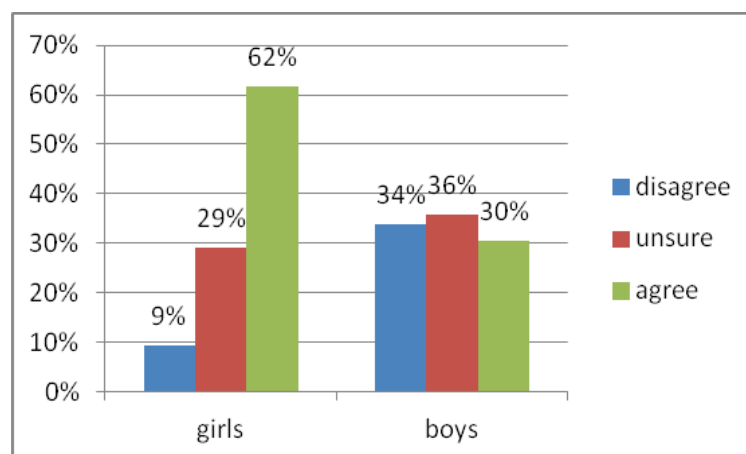
Figure 46: Boys and girls (dis)agreement with the statement
"I would feel at ease making homework with him/her"

Figure 46 shows how twice the number of girls would be comfortable making homework with lesbian classmates, while boys are very mixed in their opinion whether they would do that with gay boys in their class.
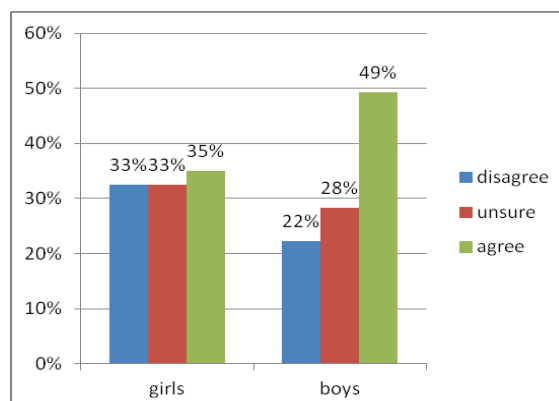
Figure 47: Boys and girls (dis)agreement with the statement
"I would find it annoying to share a room with him/her during an excursion/project week"

Finally, Figure 47 shows how girls are quite mixed in their opinion of whether they would share a room with a lesbian classmate, while half of the boys would not like to do that with a gay boy. Still, if we would rate discomfort by counting both agreement *and* insecurity, the difference would not be so great: then 67% of the girls and 78% of the boys would feel uncomfortable with sharing a room.

4.2.3 Small differences between vocational and higher level students
Dutch research has often shown significant differences in behaviour between students who study at vocational level and students who study at pre-higher professional or pre-academic level. For us this was a reason to check whether this was also true for this sample.
We noticed that this was only sometimes the case. For example, there is no clear difference between vocational students and higher level students when asked whether students would make clear that gay or lesbian students should keep their hands of them, or whether they would make friends. At most one could say vocational students are a bit more unsure about such statements.

4.2.4 Muslims considerably for distant in their behaviour
Another way of comparing the opinions in the sample is to check whether religious background plays a role. For this analysis, we joined all Christian respondents (Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox Protestant and Jewish) in one group and compared them with Muslims and non-religious students. In this analysis we ignored the "other religions" because their number was too small to yield sensible results.
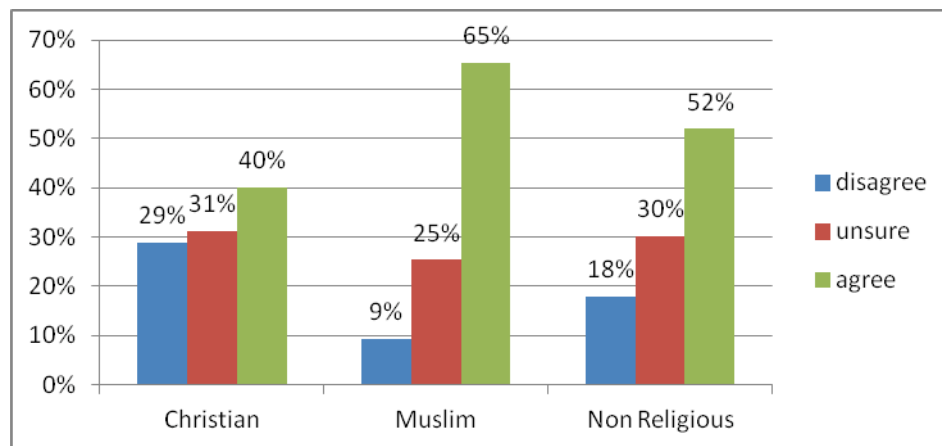
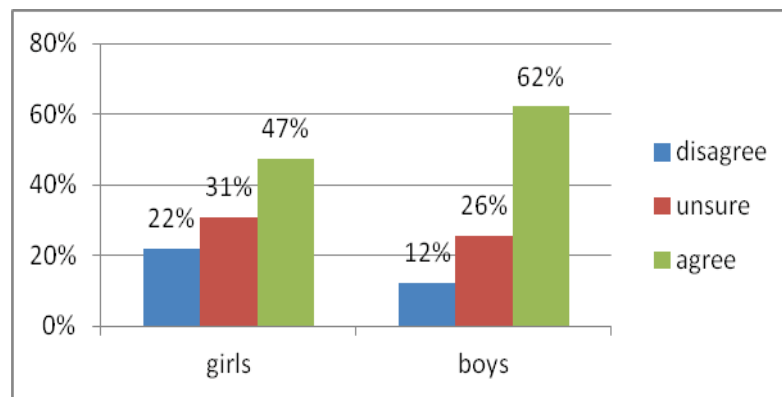*Figure 48: Religious-based (dis)agreement with the statement*
"I would make it clear he/she (gay or lesbian schoolmate) should keep his/her hands off me"
(percentages calculated per category)

Figure 48 shows that a large majority of the Muslims students would make it explicitly clear to gay and lesbian students that they should keep their hands of them. There is only a small minority who thinks this is rude and disagrees with this type of behaviour.

There is twice as much disagreement with such behaviour among non-religious students, but still a majority of 52% agrees with it. The Christian students are much divided on this issue.
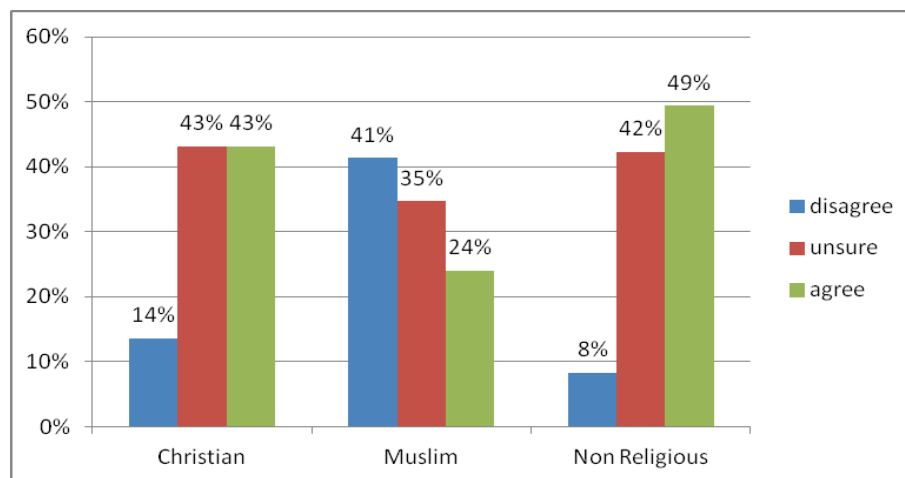
Figure 49: Religious-based (dis)agreement with the statement
"I would feel at ease becoming friends with him/her"
(percentages calculated per category)

There is also a big difference between Muslim students on one hand and Christian and non-religious students on the other hand when it comes to friendship. Of the Muslims, 41% would not feel at easing having a gay or lesbian friend, against 14% of the Christians and 8% of the non-religious students.

Again, within the group of non-religious students, there seems to be more variety in (planned) behaviour than among Christians. Still, it should be noted that 57% of the Christian students and 51% of the non-religious students would not like to be friends with gay and lesbian classmates, or feel insecure about his.
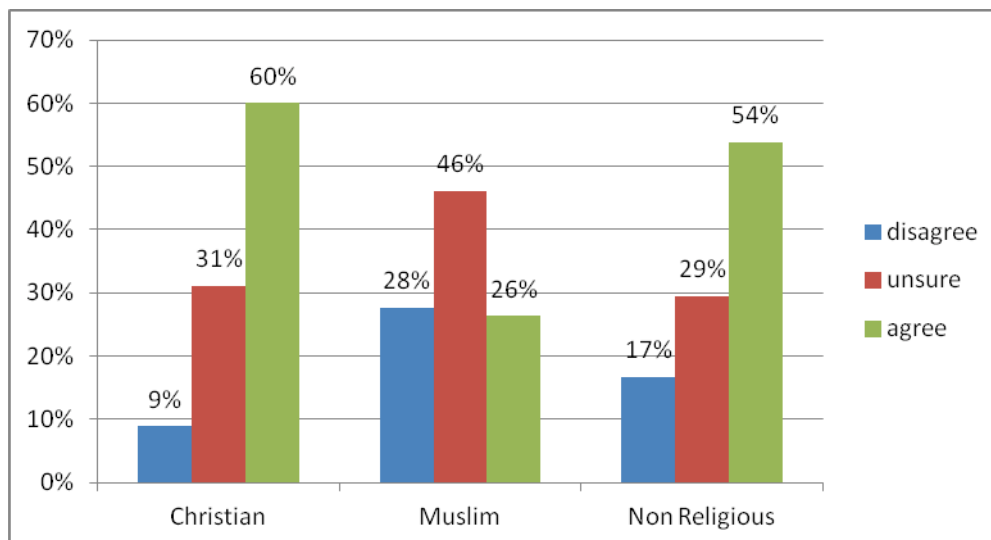
Figure 50: Religious-based (dis)agreement with the statement
"I would feel at ease making homework with him/her"
(percentages calculated per category)

Figure 50 about making homework together - an important aspect of learning together at school - shows how 40% of the Christians students, 74% of the Muslim students and 46% of the non-religious students would not do this or feel uncomfortable doing it. While the Muslim students' social distance in this is almost twice as high as that of the Christians, the general picture shows how big portions of students intend to ostracize gay and lesbian students in common school work. This poses quite a threat to the gay and lesbian students' academic performance.
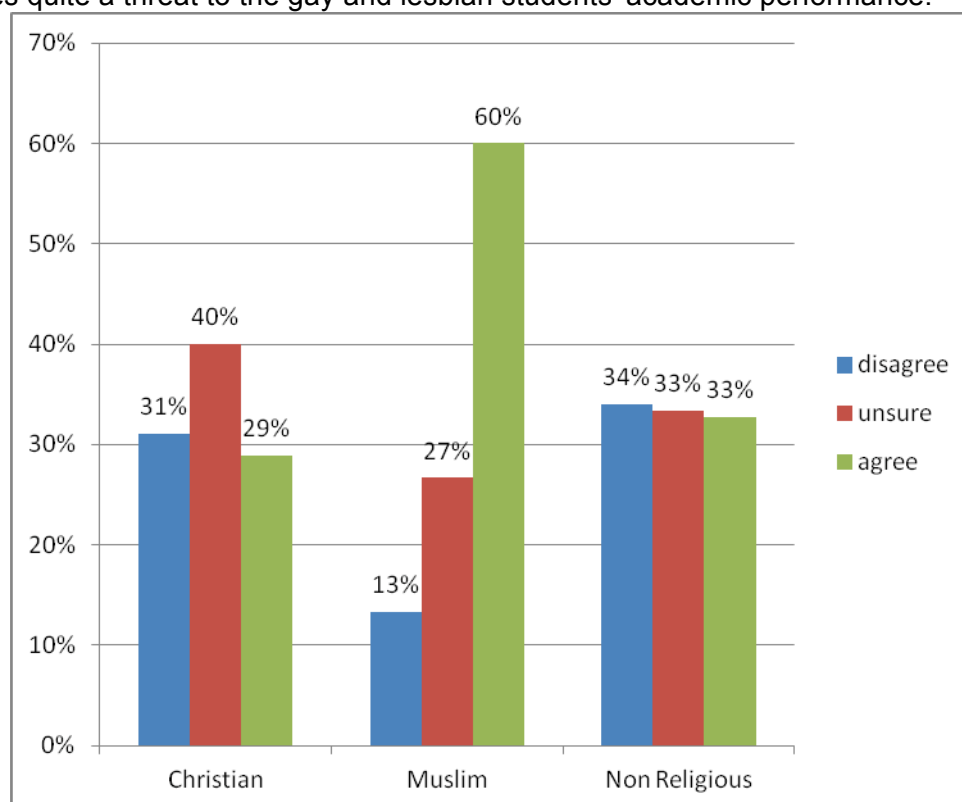
Figure 51: Religious-based (dis)agreement with the statement
"I would find it annoying to share a room with him/her during an excursion/project week"
(percentages calculated per category)

Finally, the question about sharing a room during an excursion shows again a large majority of Muslim students objecting to socializing with gay or lesbian students, while Christian and non-religious students are more ambiguous about this. Still, apart from the staggering 87% (60%+27%) of the Muslim students, large majorities of 69% of the Christian students and 66% of the non-religious students would either not agree or feel insecure about sharing a room during an excursion.

4.2.5   Conclusions

The five questions about social distance students intend to take from gay and lesbian students show a general trend of ostracization of gay and lesbian students. An overall average of 67% of the students answers they would distance themselves from gay and lesbian students or at least feel insecure about contact.

Further analysis shows that boys and Muslims distance themselves most of gay and lesbian classmates. In contrast with other Dutch research, education level seems to have less pronounced effects on a social behaviour.

However, further analysis also shows that when we add the students who feel unsure about ostracizing gay and lesbian students to the students who clearly announce to ostracize, the differences between boys and girls and between Muslims and other are not so clear any more. This insecurity about how to behave plays an important role among students. There is a consistent group of about one third of the students who feel insecure. In some subgroups, like Muslims, this number may rise to 46%, depending on the question. It is likely that the insecure students may be tempted to act in ways that are modelled by the more vocal ostracising students.

The social distancing of gay and lesbian students by other students in a variety of ways is bound to have a negative impact on LGBT students. Learning social skills, learning from each other and feel safe at school will become difficult in such an environment. It would seem a proper coping response of LGBT students not to come out to prevent ostracization. However, this does have other consequences. The continued hiding of one's feelings may create a risk for minority stress. The invisibility of LGBT students in school may lead to the only noting clear - because different from the norm - examples of LGBT students. These "clear" examples may be generalized as images for all LGBT people, thus creating stereotypical images. These may in turn lead to further insecurity and ostracization.

4.3   *Social inclusion of LGBT according to students*

Apart from the concrete behaviour in schools, we were interested in exploring how the social inclusion or exclusion of LGBT in school is related to social inclusion or exclusion of LGBT in other areas. We already discussed the answer of students on the question how "welcome gays and lesbians are in school". We also asked this question about a variety of environments in which they live. A first question was how welcome gays and lesbian are (Figure).
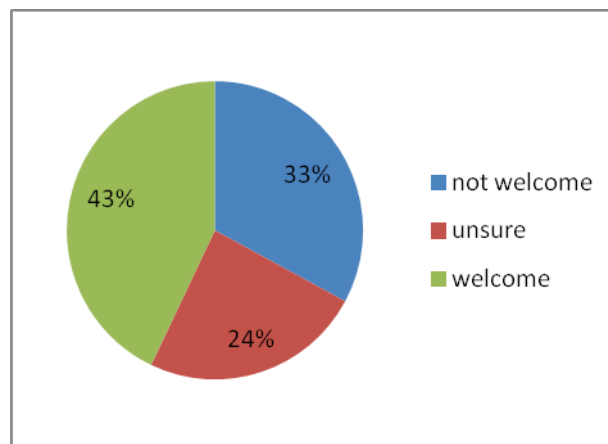
Figure 52: Agreement of students with the statement:
"How welcome are gays or lesbians among your friends?"

A bit less than welcomeness in schools (52%, figure 39), about 43% thinks gays and lesbians are welcome among friends, while 33% thinks not (against 22% not welcome in school).

Figure 53: Agreement of students with the statement:
"How welcome are gays or lesbians among your friends?"
Differences between religious affiliations, percentages caluclated per category

Because being welcome *in school* was strongly influenced by religious affiliation, we checked the influence of religious affiliation on *friendship*. On this theme, religious affiliation had an even stronger influence. A large majority of 60% of the Muslim students would not welcome a gay or lesbian friend against 26% of the Christian students and 16% of the non-religious students.
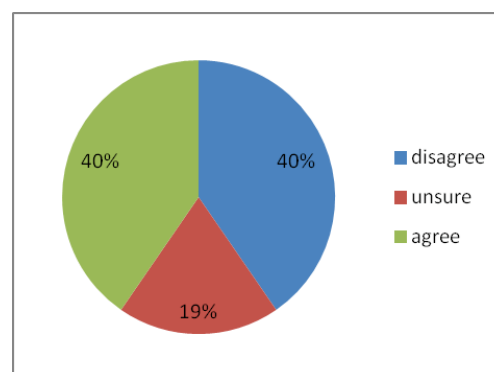
Figure 54: Agreement of students with the statement:
"How welcome are gays or lesbians at your home?"

An equal number of students (40%) think gays and lesbians would be welcome at home, with 19% unsure. When we look closer to religious affiliation, it becomes clear Muslim youth are more than twice as unwelcoming as other students. Christians welcome gays and lesbian less than non-religious students at home, but non-religious students are more insure about this.
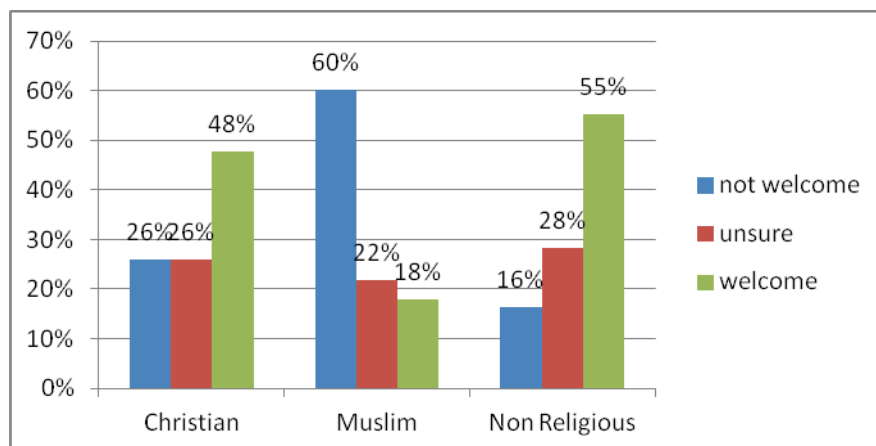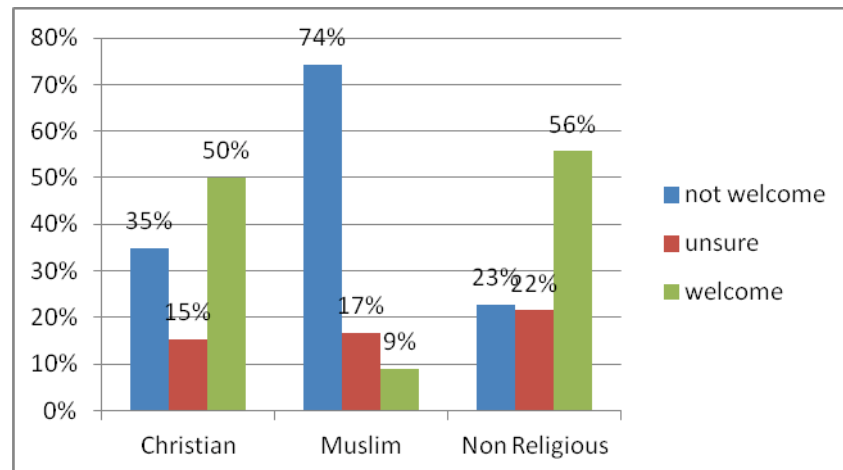

Figure 55: Agreement of students with the statement:
"How welcome are gays or lesbians at your home?"
Differences between religious affiliations, percentages caluclated per category

After these examples, we would like to present the whole range of questions and answers to the "welcoming" question.
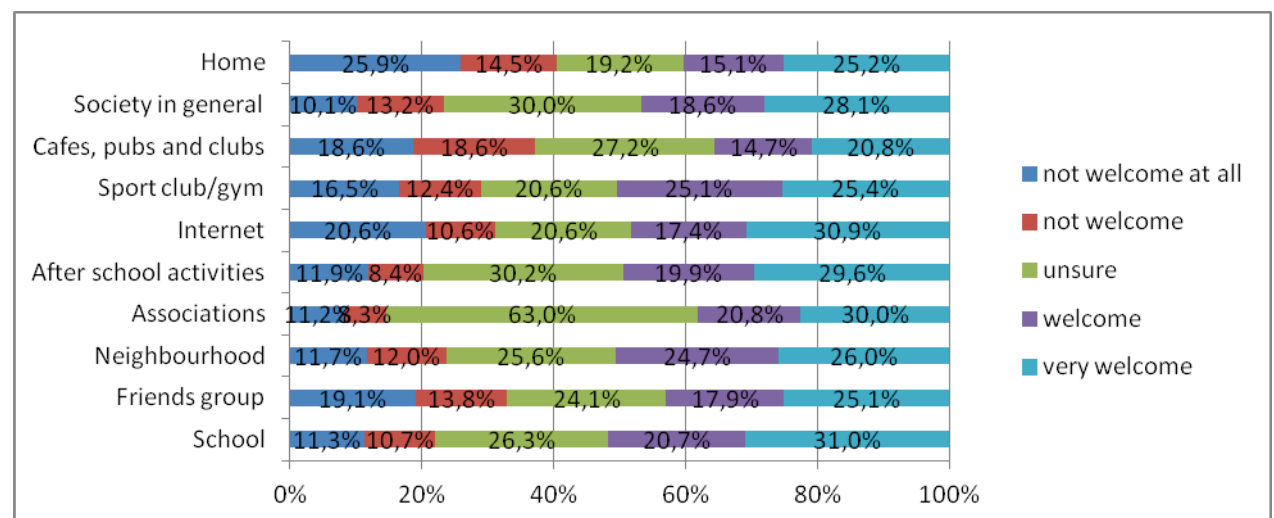
Figure 56: Evaluation of how much gay/lesbian friendly their everyday environments

This overview shows how for almost all the contexts, a majority of the students do not consider them as gay and lesbian friendly. In this figure we did not count the categories "not welcome at all" and "not welcome" in one category, as we did before. This figure shows more clearly the large variation of opinions. A score of "very welcome" never gets higher than 31% (internet), while " not welcome at all" ranges between 10-11% (society in general, associations, neighbourhood, school) and 25% (home).

When we do combine "not welcome at all" and "not welcome" in one category, the environments that the students consider as the least gay/lesbian friendly are:

1. At home (40%)
2. Cafes and bars they frequent (37%)
3. Among their friends (33%)
4. On internet (31%)

On the other hand, the environments that they consider as the most gay and lesbian friendly are:
1. Their school (52%)
2. In associations they are members of (51%)
3. In their neighbourhood (51%)
4. Sport club (50%)

These answers contrast with the answers the LGBT respondents show how the reality of LGBT experiences may differ from the straight experience, at least as experienced by high school students.
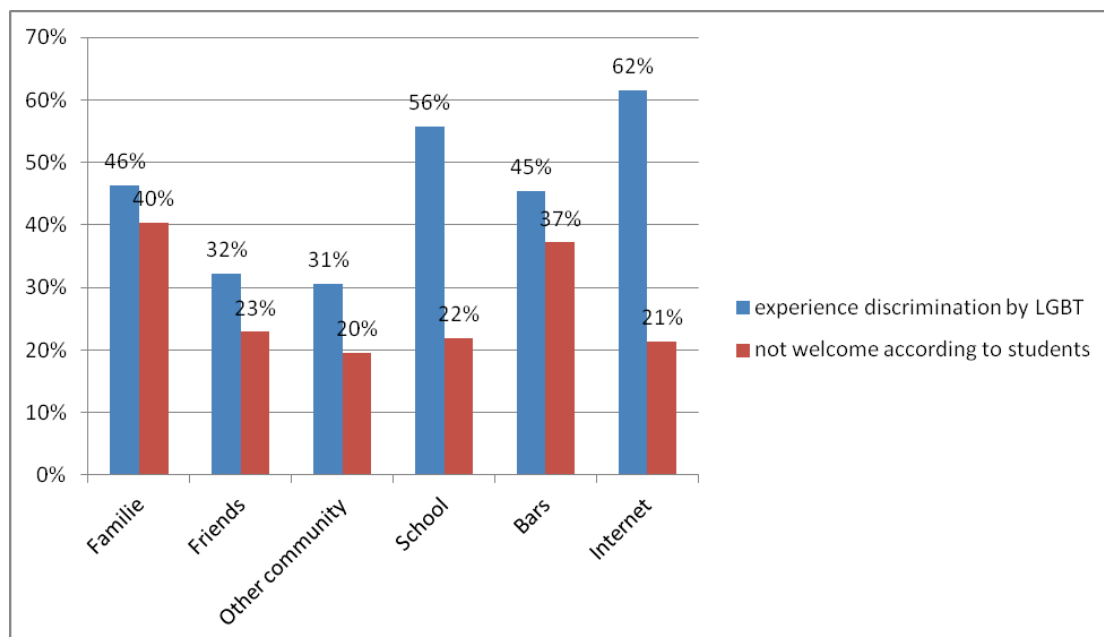
Figure 57: Comparison experience with discrimination by LGBT respondents with evaluation of not welcome by students

A much larger proportion of the LGBT respondents experienced discrimination in school and on internet, while there are also clear differences in experiences in bars, other communities and among friends. In all cases, the experiences of LGBT are worse than students predict.

5. LGBT experiences

In order to have a broad perspective of homophobia phenomenon in Dutch society, this chapter explores the experiences and perception of the LGBT respondents. We first discuss the effect of stereotypes on the life of LGBT. Then we explore concrete experienced discrimination of LGBT and go on to focus on this in the school context. Finally, we explore the reasons for homophobia, as perceived by our LGBT respondents and their suggestions for what to do against homophobia.

5.1 The effect of stereotypes on LGBT respondents

In the chapter on stereotypes, we analyzed the stereotypes about gay men and lesbian women and we concluded our LGBT respondents list a wide range of stereotypes, whole the students almost exclusively limit themselves to stereotypes that relate to gender. What are the consequences of this? Stereotypes in themselves do not hurt people, they are just exaggerated images. However, if people act negatively towards gays and lesbian based on such one-sided images, stereotypes can lead to ostracizing and discriminative behaviour.

We asked the LGBT respondents what they perceive to be the effects of stereotypes on their lives. This was an open question, respondents were asked to give one example of such an effect (if at all). A total of 196 respondents (of 325) stated 180 examples. This means that 60% of all respondents experienced effects of stereotypes.
We made a list of examples that were mentioned more than once and rescored them to be able to show them in a graph. Figure 58 presents the answers.
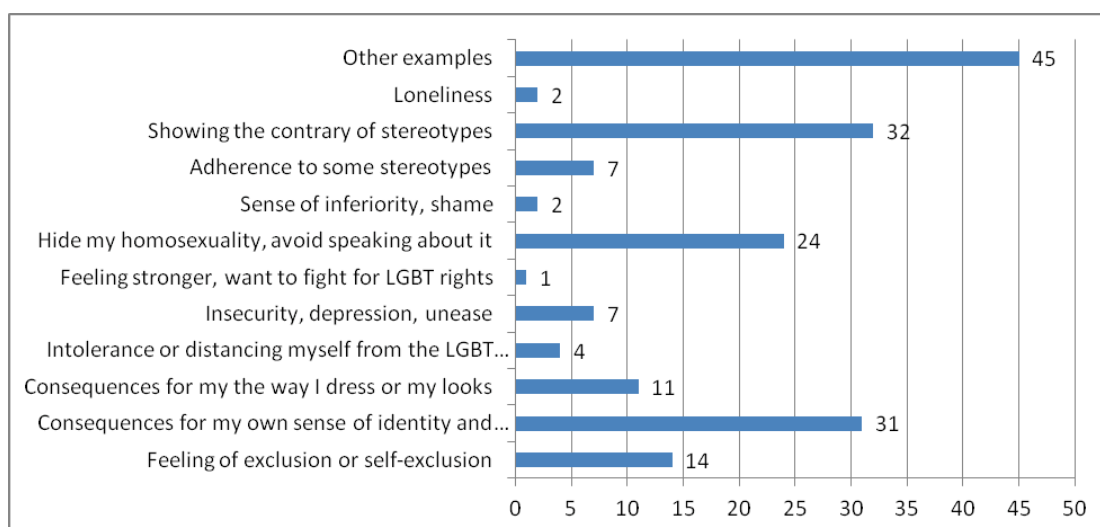
Figure 58: Effects of stereotypes attached sexual orientation on LGBT persons

Most mentioned were that LGBT respondents were showing the contrary of stereotypes (32 times, 18% of all the examples), consequences for their own identity (for example not coming-out; 31 times, 17% of the examples) and not speaking about their own homosexual feelings (24 examples, 13% of all examples).

The strategy to show the contrary of stereotypes is a very common one in the Netherlands and is not only a personal strategy. It is also used in anti-homophobia education. Especially in the more rural parts of the country, were visible cultural diversity is less common, anti-homophobia peer-education groups tend to stress that gays and lesbian are 'normal' rather than stress that it is necessary to learn to cope with diversity.

5.2 Experiences of discrimination by LGBT respondents

According to the LGBT respondents, almost 90% experienced prejudice or discrimination on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity at least once in their life (Figure 59).
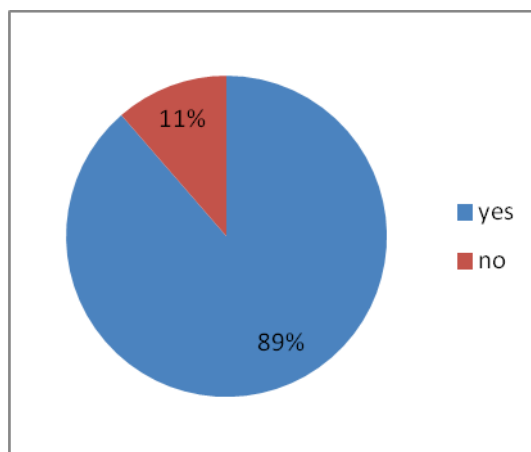
Figure 59: Number of LGBT respondents
having experienced discrimination or prejudice

The contexts in which such discriminations were suffered are various (Figure 60).
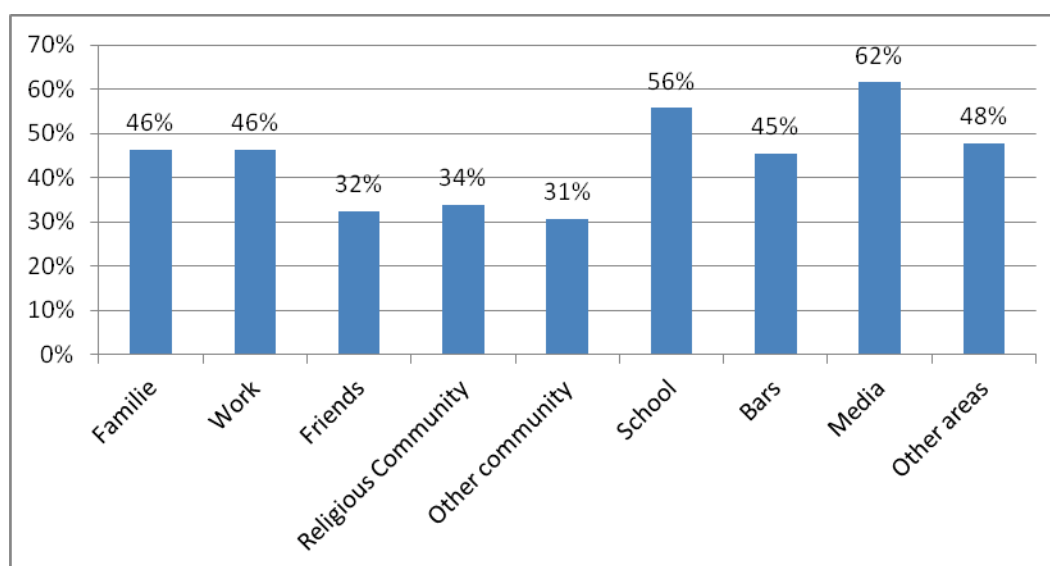
Figure 60: Contexts in which the LGBT respondents
have experienced discrimination or prejudice

We asked respondents to score on 8 areas if they felt discriminated. The answers ranged from 31% to 62%, implying that there are discriminating in all areas. The highest score is on prejudice in the media, including TV and internet. Discrimination in school is a good second with 56%. But also work, family and bars have high scores of almost 50%. These are all public areas we have to be in, and we cannot really choose to not engage in them.

Areas like friends, religious communities and other communities, which can often be chosen to be in, have slightly lower scores. This may be because LGBT (adult) people are at least partly able to choose in what communities they want to be and who they deal with there. But still in self-chosen environments, it seems unavoidable for at least 30% of the respondents to avoid discrimination or prejudice.

We were also interested in what kind of discrimination LGBT people then experienced. The respondents could choose five categories of discrimination, ranging from non-acceptance to physical violence. Figure 61 gives an overview.
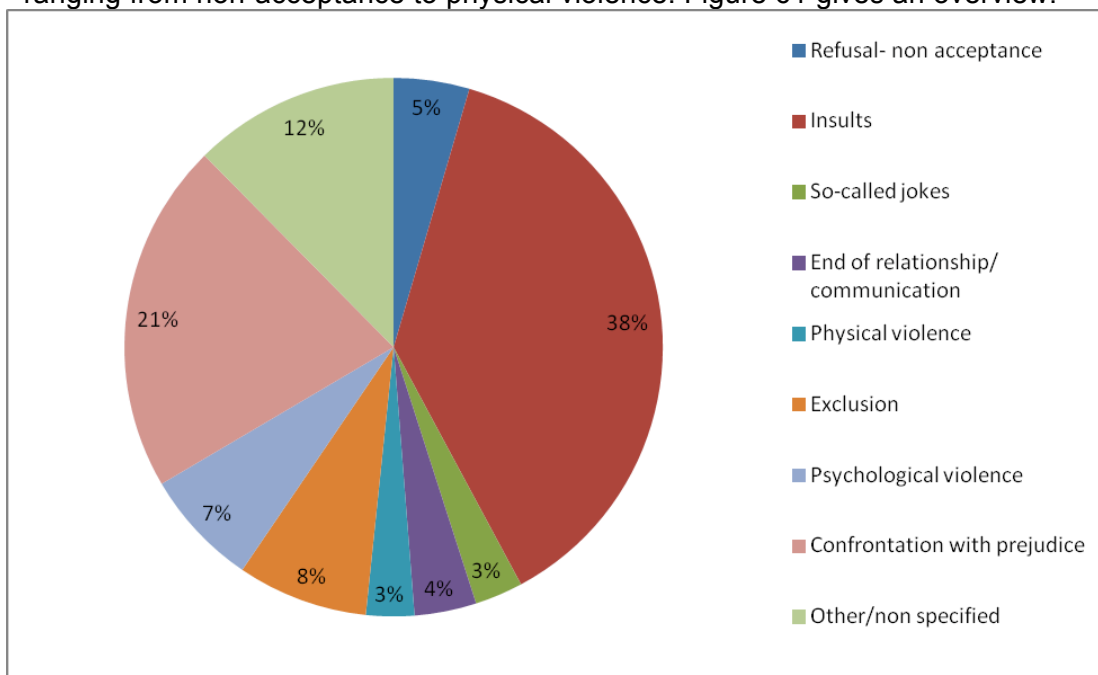
Figure 61: Type of discrimination experienced by LGBT respondents

These results show that insults and prejudice make up the majority (59%) of the experienced discrimination. So-called jokes are also mentioned quite some times. The other effects are each mentioned less than 9%.

Of course, we should see these results in perspective: this is the daily experience of LGBT adults. Many of these LGBT people have found a way to l.ife among friends and have chosen friendly and environments to be in. The high percentages of social distance of up to 50-80% that high school students plan to take from LGBT students are not experienced by these respondents (8% mention social exclusion as a form of experienced discrimination).

5.3   Discrimination at school

As stated in chapter 3 and in the previous paragraph, school is second worst environment in which the LGBT respondents suffered discrimination: 56% of them declare to have been discriminated at school. In this paragraph we first examine the experiences discrimination in schools by LGBT people, then we explore whether they came out at school and finally we explore the influence of the curriculum on their lives.

5.3.1   Experienced discrimination by LGBT adults

Gay men and bisexuals appear to be the ones who were the most subjected to episodes of discrimination at school: 41% of the gay men and 32% of the bisexuals (Figure 62). Lesbians report a lower, but still significant number of experiences of discrimination at school. We omitted transgenders from this analysis, because there was only one self-identified intersexual and no transgenders in this sample.
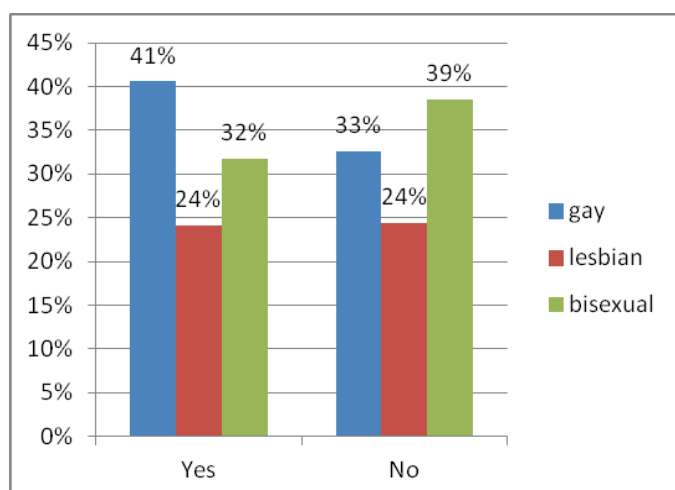
Figure 62: LGB respondents who experienced discrimination at school

5.3.2 Coming out at school

Figure 63 shows the percentage of LGBT persons who made their coming out at school.
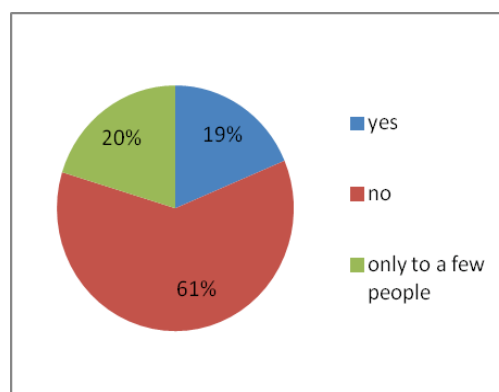
*Figure 63: Percentage of LGBT respondents
who made their coming out at school*

The majority of the LGBT respondents did not come out at school (61%).
This percentage does not differ very much from the 55% of young LGBT people who said in 2001 that they could not come out at school[3]. In a more recent report (2005)[4], 75% of the boys and 71% of the girls said most classmates knew about their sexual orientation. Both of the samples from 2001 and 2005 were convenience samples from reader of the gay/lesbian youth magazine Expreszo, presumably the most "out" section of gay/lesbian teenagers in the Netherlands. In a more representative subsample within this last research, 72% of the boys and 85% of girls told at least someone about their sexual orientation.
In yet another and more recent sample (2007)[5], 60% of the respondents said they were not out at school.

These statistics refer to opinions of LGBT on whether they come at school or not. Of we look at the reality of schools, it appears that numbers are much lower. In chapter

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[3] Dankmeijer, P. (2001). *Gerapporteerde onveiligheid door homojongeren vergeleken met heterojongeren.* Amsterdam: Empowerment Lifestyle Services.
[4] Graaf, H. de; Meijer, S.; Poelman, J.; Vanwesenbeeck, I. (2005) *Seks onder je 25e*, Rutgers Nisso Groep/Soa Aids Nederland, Utrecht, 8 september 2005
[5] Franssens, Dirk; Koning, Maaike; Hospers, Harm, (2007) *Outcomes. Deelrapport 1 Homojongenscohort.* Universiteit Maastricht, september 2007

3, we discussed the perceptions of straight students and saw the majority only knew maybe 10 open students in their school, which often had 1000 students. This implies a visibility of a maximum of 10% of all LGBT students.

These facts make clear it is quite difficult to get reliable information about the coming-out of LGBT people (in schools, and elsewhere). The impression is that LGBT people may exaggerate to how many people they come out, and that external visibility of coming-out is lagging far behind, suggesting that actual coming-out is most often restricted to limited "safe" circles.

The main reason given by the respondents for not making their coming out at school is that they were not conscious of their sexual orientation at that time (for 40% of the respondents).
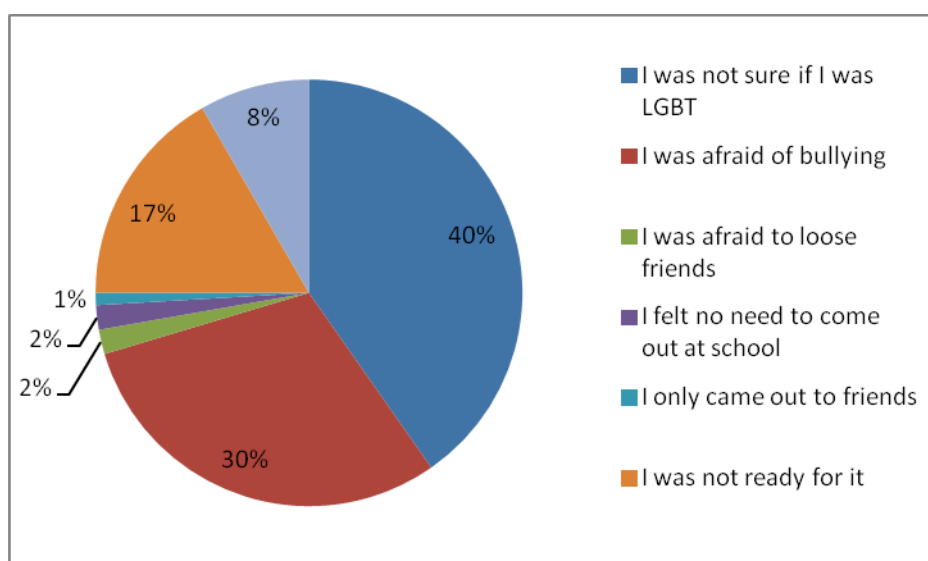
Figure 64: Reasons of LGBT not to come out

The second reason (30%) was that they were afraid of bullying and 17% said "not to be ready for it", in other words: they did not feel empowered enough. A small number of 4 people (8%) said they felt no need to come out.

The fact that almost one third of the respondents who decided not to make their coming out at school did it by fear shows the extent of a lack of school policy to protect LGBT people against bullying. The results also show how important a sense of self-determination and empowerment is for young people (57% or the reasons; not sure/being ready). This shows how, apart from more adequate anti-bullying policies, schools need to support young LGBT people to become more aware of their feelings and educate them to express their feelings and opinions. Self determination and freedom of expression are important human rights principles and should be part of the citizenship programme of every school.

5.3.3 Homosexuality in the school curriculum

In the Netherlands we have had a fierce debate during the last 2 years about whether the central curriculum guidelines for primary and secondary education should be changed and make education about sexual diversity compulsory. The LGBT movement advocated strongly for this, while the education sector advocated for more autonomy of teachers and schools, implying less central detailed guidelines. The debates lead to regular media headlines and several parliamentary debates. It was in this charged political atmosphere that our question about homosexuality in the

curriculum and the consequences of this information on LGBT people got an extra dimension.
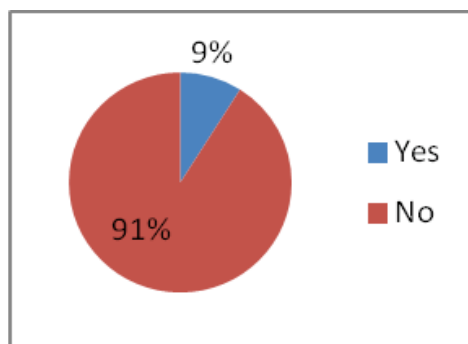
Figure 65: Did lessons help you to develop your sexual orientation or gender identity? Opinions of the LGBT respondents

A very large majority of the LGBT respondents indicated that the curriculum they got did not help them to develop their sexual orientation or gender identity.

To find out whether there was any school policy or intervention at all that supported the LGBT people, we asked them examples of this. Only 24 of the 325 respondents (7%) could offer an example of this. This was again an open question, of which we coded the answers to be able to present them in a graph (Figure 66).
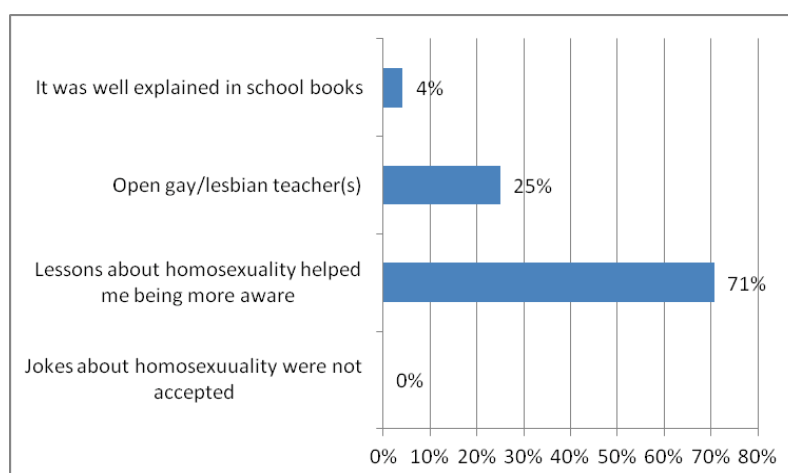
Figure 66: "If your school helped you in developing your identity, give an example of what helped", responses of LGBT respondents

Most of the examples (71%) were about aspecific lessons about homosexuality. However, even though we asked examples of what *helped* the respondents, a large part of the examples actually refer to amibuous or no-so-good experiences:

> We so only once a short film about two boys in Scotland, who were in love with each other which resulted in all misery. This was not discussed during the next part of the lesson, it clearly was a 'mandatory process' for the teacher. And in Biology it was mentioned in two in sentences, but nothing was done with it. (male, 23) *[We hebben één keer een korte film gezien over twee jongens in Schotland, die verliefd werden op elkaar waardoor er allemaal ellende op hun pad kwam. Daar werd verder niet op in gegaan tijdens de rest van de les, het was echt een 'verplicht nummertje' voor de docent. En bij*

> *biologie kwam het in twee zinnen naar voren, maar daar werd verder ook niets mee gedaan.]*

> In middle school there was basic attention. Class 1 in Social Care, in the context of sexuality. Class 2: also, in Biology. Class 4: better attention by teacher Civics. Also peer-education by COC volunteers then. Pity, was by two older women. I could not identify with them. (male, 24) *[in de onderbouw basale aandacht. Klas 1 bij verzorging over seksualiteit. Klas 2, idem bij biologie. Klas vier betere aandacht door docent maatschappijleer. Ook voorlichting door COC toen. Jammergenoeg door twee oudere vrouwen. Kon ik me niet mee identificeren.]*

Research shows that about 25-30% of Dutch secondary schools do give some attention to homosexuality[6]. About half of this is done by teachers themselves, often by showing a video. In the other half of the cases, local gay and lesbian peer-educators are invited to do a panel session of 50 or 90 minutes. The respondent just quoted already referred to such a session in a ambiguous way. Our respondents reer more often to such sessions, in most cases in a negative way.

> No, on the contrary: a lesbian women came to class, she was so butch, I found her scary and I did not want to have anything to do with being lesbian. This delayed my coming-out. (female, 36*) [Nee, in tegendeel: er kam een lesbische vrouw in de klas die was zo pot, dat ik ze eng vond en met lesbisch zijn niets mee te maken wilde hebben. dit heeft mijn coming out vertraagt.]*

> At preparatory school for higher professional education the Gay Group Wageningen was invited to talk, the negative remarks of male fellow students surprised me very much and in the end make me remain in the closet longer. However, the men of the Gay Group Wageningen remained very quiet and friendly and this gave me a good feeling. (female, 38*) [Op de HAVO was de Homogroep Wageningen uitgenodigd om op school langs te komen om te praten, de negatieve reacties en opmerkingen van de mannelijke medeleerlingen hebben mij zeer verbaasd en heeft uiteindelijk ervoor gezorgd dat ik langer in de kast ben gebleven. De mannen van de Homogroep bleven wel heel rustig en vriendelijk en dat gaf een goed gevoel.]*

A recent research about how gay and lesbian peer-education groups carry out their education[7] concludes that peer-educators can have a high impact on students, but that the didactic skills of the peer-educators, like maintaining discipline in class and facilitating a safe dialogue could very much be improved.

The examples mentioned by LGBT respondents that refer to real supportive experiences are few. They either refer to an adequate integrated attention to sexual diversity in the curriculum and by the teacher, or to teachers that were role models because they represented people who felt at ease with their sexual orientation.

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[6] Kersten, Anne; Sandfort, Theo (1994) *Lesbische en homoseksuele adolescenten in de schoolsituatie*, Utrecht, Interfacultaire Werkgroep Homostudies
  Inspectie van het Onderwijs (2009). *Weerbaar en divers. Een onderzoek naar seksuele diversiteit en seksuele weerbaarheid in het onderwijs.* Utrecht: Inspectie van het Onderwijs.

[7] Mooij, Ton; Fettelaar, Daan (2012), *Voorlichtingslessen seksuele diversiteit in het Voortgezet Onderwijs. Pilot onderzoek: observatie van LHBT-voorlichting* Nijmegen, ITS, februari 2012

> Elaborate sex education in which homosexuality, bisexuality got elaborate attention. (male, 43) *[uitgebreide seksuele voorlichting waarin homoseksualiteit, biseksualiteit uitgebreid onder de aandacht is geweest]*

> The only thing that helped was a female teacher who was openly bi and could talk about this in a very relaxed way. (female, 29) *[Wat alleen geholpen heeft was dat een docente van ons openlijk bi was en hier heel relaxt over praten.]*

Next to what helped, we also asked LGBT respondents if they found examples of prejudice in their school curriculum. Quite a large proportion of 34% thought so (Figure 67).
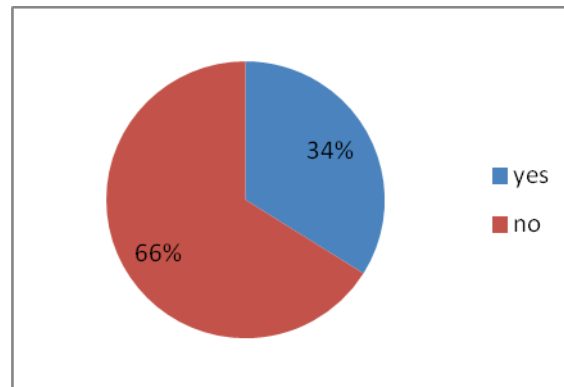
Figure 67: Percentage of LGBT respondents
who found something that expresses prejudice in the school curriculum

Again, we asked the question to give examples, which we coded to show them in a graph (Figure 68). 112 respondents (34% of all respondents) offered a total of 77 different examples of prejudice in their curricula.
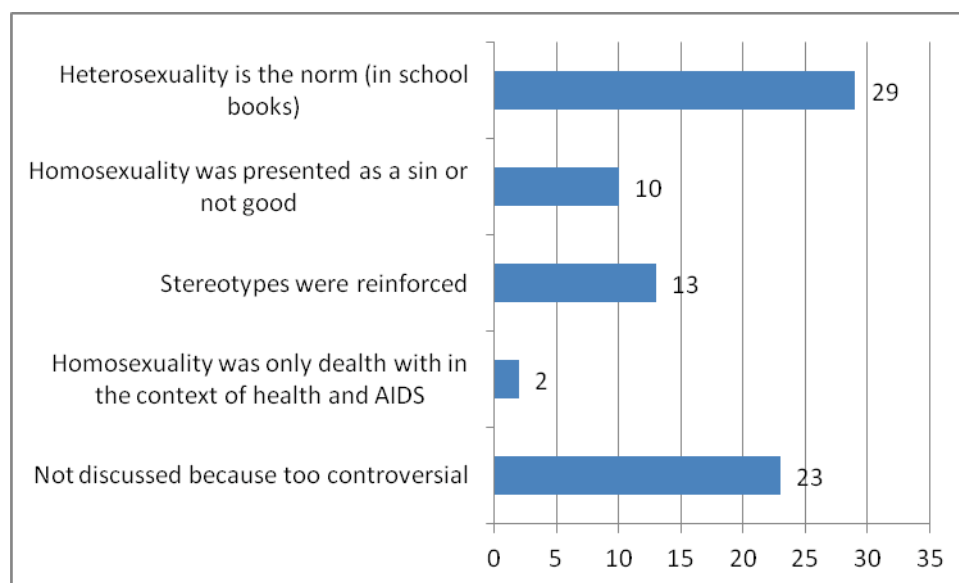
Figure 68: Prejudice experienced by LGBT respondents in the curriculum

The two most mentioned examples are heteronormative school book texts and the lack of discussion because the teacher thought sexual diversity was too controversial. Together, these categories make up 68% of the examples.

> Always hetero marriages or relationships as examples, in literature lessons NEVER a gay book; silence is ALSO discrimination (female, 64) *[altijd*

> *heterohuwelijken dan wel relaties als voorbeelden; in literatuur lessen NOOIT een homoboek; stilzwijgen is OOK discriminatie]*

In other comments, many respondents remark there was no or hardly a reference at all in the curriculum.

> One sentence in the Biology book, so sad... (female, 16*) [1 regel in bioboek echt zo triest]*

Some respondents observe that teachers made quite discriminatory remarks. Many of these remarks are quite recent.

> A teacher of Dutch advised against reading a book because "there was gay stuff in it" (female, 16) *[Een Nederlands docent die een boek afraadde omdat er 'van dat homo-gedoe' in zat.]*

> On my Christian school it was considered whether gays and lesbians should be allowed to have a relationship with each other. That this was even considered is discrimination to me. (Female, 20) *[Op mijn christelijke school werd overwogen of homo's en lesbi's een relatie met elkaar zouden mogen hebben. Dat dit uberhaupt overwogen moet worden is voor mij discriminatie.]*

> My English teacher said she did respect gay people but did not accept them. (Female, 24) *[Mijn lerares Engels zei dat ze homoseksuele mensen wel respecteerde maar niet accepteerde.]*

> During the Civics lesson, the question arose whether it should be possible that gay people adopt children. Before the class could answer, the teacher said that probably everyone would agree that the answer on this is "no". This was around 1985. (Male, 44) *[Tijdens de les maatschappijleer kwam de vraag aan de orde of het mogelijk moest worden dat homo's kinderen adopteren. Voordat de klas antwoord kon geven, zei de leraar al dat iedereen het er wel mee eens zou zijn dat hierop het antwoord "nee" is. Dit was rond 1985.]*

5.4 Homophobia and how to combat it

The survey on LGBT people aimed at analysing not only their personal experience of discrimination and prejudice, but also their opinion on how to fight against this phenomenon. In particular, the respondents were asked what they consider as the main causes of the social exclusion of LGBT people and the best ways to combat homophobia.

Regarding the most important causes of social exclusion of LGBT persons, the respondents were asked to choose a maximum of three factors from a suggested list (Figure 69).
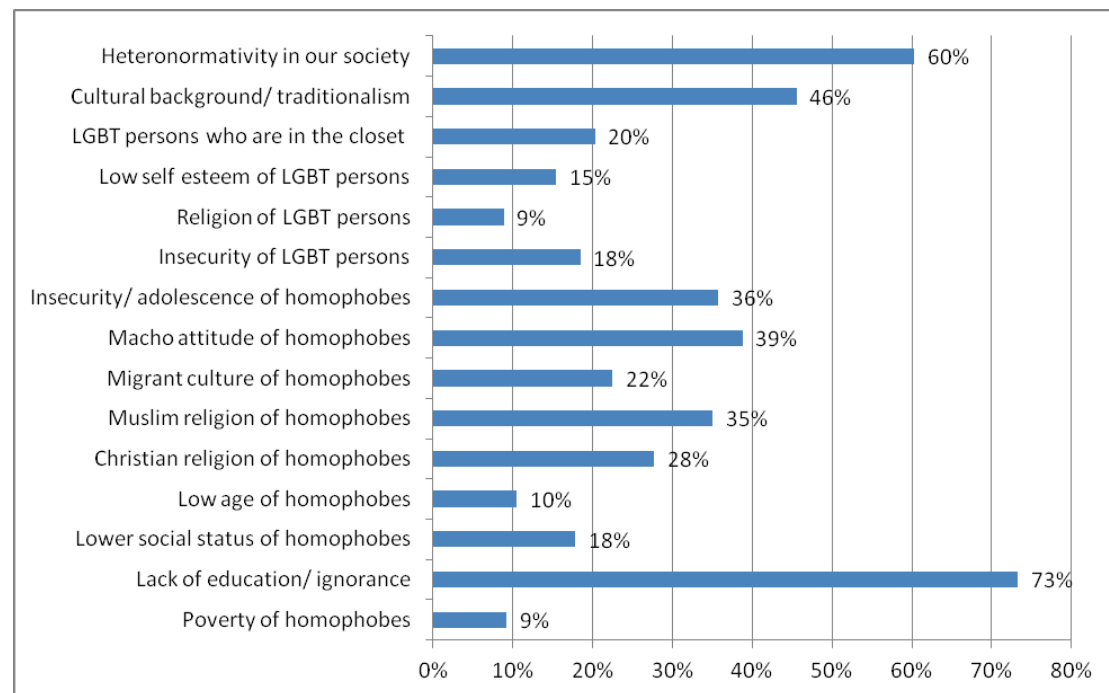
Figure 69 Most important causes of social exclusion according to LGBT respondents

73% of the respondents consider the lack of education and knowledge as the most important cause of social exclusion of LGBT persons. The second cause indicated by the respondents is the heteronormativity in society (60%), followed by the cultural background and traditionalism (46%). Macho attitudes, Muslim religious affiliation and the insecurity of adolescents also scored relatively high with 35-39%. Christian religion stays a bit behind Muslim religion as a perceived cause of homophobia.
About one-fifth of the respondents consider that the LGBT Community has some responsibility in the social exclusion: 20% indicated the fact that LGBT are in the closet and 15% that insecurity of LGBT persons may contribute to homophobia.

The actions suggested by the LGBT respondents to combat homophobia are not connected to what they consider its causes, except the clear preference to take action in schools and with young people (Figure 70).
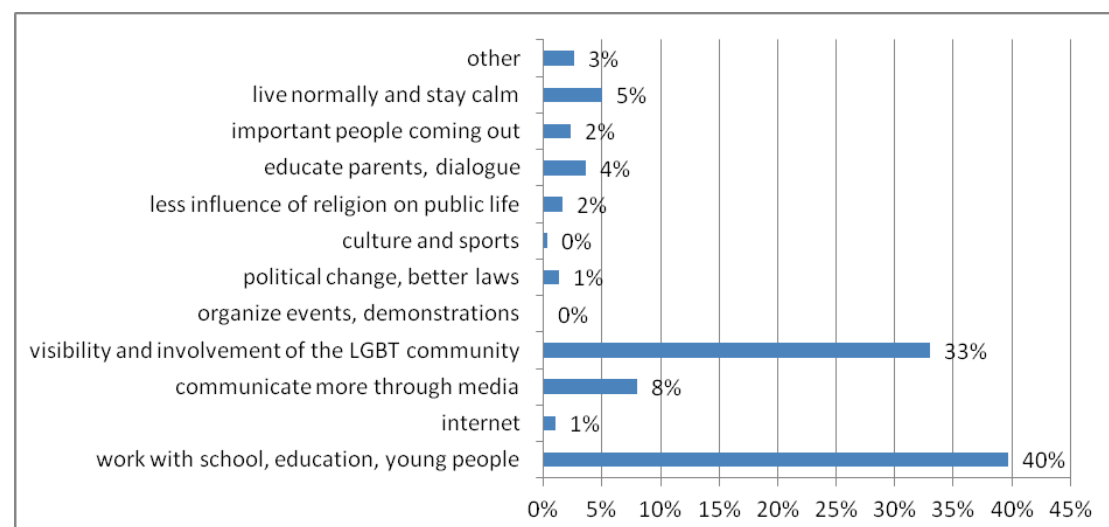
Figure 70: Effective ways to combat homophobia according to LGBT respondents

The preference to focus on young people connects well to the goal of the NISO

project and the Voice OUT game in schools.

A second important way suggested by LGBT respondents is "visibility" and involvement of the LGBT community. Apparently, this does not refer to Gay Prides and events (which scores 0 in this question). In Figure 71 we see that gay/straight alliances in school (including "Jong & Out" groups for 16- LGBT youth) score highest as examples of good practices. Gay/straight alliances are school clubs of LGBT and allied students, which are partly social and partly activist. The Dutch gay/lesbian advocacy organization COC Netherlands imported this concept 4 years ago from the USA. Since then, a lot of national publicity has been given to promote gay/straight alliances. The mention of gay/straight alliances as a good practice by LGBT respondents reflects this media attention.
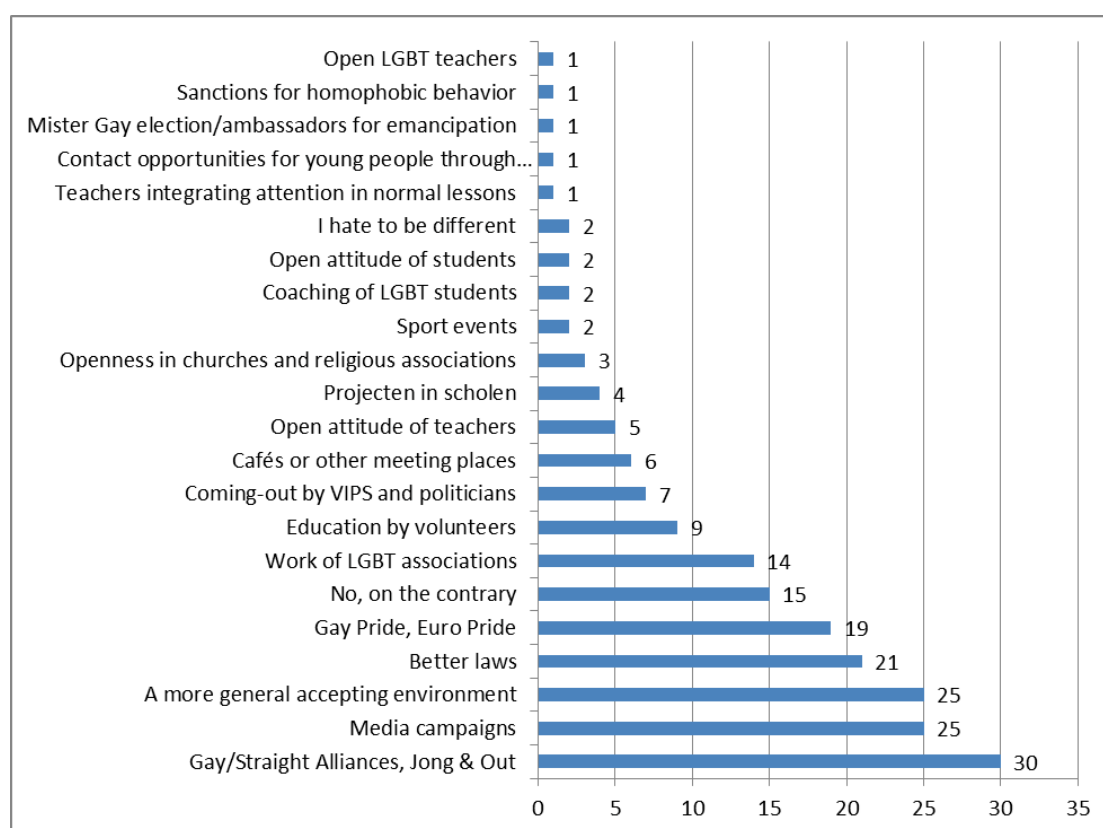
*Figure 71: Best practices mentioned by LGBT people (numbers refer to the total number of respondents that mentioned the example)*

Figure 71 also shows other examples of good practices. 183 (56%) of the LGBT respondents stated a total of 169 statements about good practices. While none of the respondents scored Gay Pride events *as an effective way to combat homophobia*, when asked for good practices, 19 respondents stated Gay Pride as a *good practice* (10% of all examples). This suggests that at least some of the respondents appreciate 'visibility' events as interesting (maybe for empowerment of LGBT people) but not necessarily effective on behaviour of homophobic people.

5.5   Conclusions

More than half of the LGBT respondents feel that prejudice has had effects on their lives. A high percentage copes with stereotyping by behaving "non-stereotypical" (read: 'normal', heteronormative).
Almost all LGBT respondents (90%) have experienced discrimination. The media and schools score high as areas of discrimination and stereotyping. Most discrimination takes the shape of insults, hurtful jokes and prejudiced reactions.

The school is the second worst environment to be: 56% of all LGBT people felt discriminated here. Gay men feel most discriminated (41%) but bisexuals (32%) and lesbians (24%) are not far behind.

61% of the LGBT respondents did not come out at school. This percentage corresponds to some other research about coming-out in schools in the Netherlands. However, it is noted that the 30% that says they do come out at schools, probably do or did not very visibly so, when we relate their opinion to the awareness of the straight high school students.

Reasons to not come out were mostly the fear of bullying and not being ready or sure to be LGBT.

Most LGBT (91%) did not see anything helpful for their sexual identity in the school curriculum. They complain about no mention at all, only short sentences and heteronormativity, and about teachers making offensive and ignoring remarks.

When the LGBT people are asked what they think are the causes of homophobia, they say a lack of knowledge and heteronormativity are the main causes. As strategies to combat homophobia, they mention work at schools and visibility and involvement of the LGBT community as most important. When asked for examples, support for LGBT young (16-) people is most mentioned.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Summary of the findings

This report is based on the surveys in two convenience samples of 325 LGBT people (14-66 years old) and 339 high school students (11-19 years old, most 13-14-15). Most of the LGBT respondents had a high education level and a majority of 29% came from the education sector. 75% was non-religious. In the student sample, 50% was non-religious, 25% was Muslim and 15% was Christian.

6.1.1 A convenience sample

The respondents are convenience samples because the recruitment of the respondents was done through regular channels of the GALE Foundation and the EduDivers Foundation, both of whom focus on sexual diversity in schools.

This means that among the LGBT sample there is considerable bias towards respondents being either a teacher or being active to some extent in the gay, lesbian or bisexual movement. We did not succeed in attracting transgender people. The high school sample was recruited from mainly 4 schools in Amsterdam, Utrecht and The Hague, who were also approached to take part in the Voice OUT school game. The Voice OUT game is partly prepared by this research.

The lower vocational schools in this sample had a high number of Muslim students, which is not representative for the Netherlands. The Gymnasium is one of the highest scoring pre-academic schools in the Netherlands and thus not representative.

So, while the samples in this research are quite diverse, they are not representative and actually may present some extremes in Dutch society: the LGBT sample more activist and education focused than average, and the high school student sample a mix of the lowest and the highest educational levels and a mix of religions in urban contexts. While this mix, on the whole, does not automatically allow for representative conclusions, it does give some grounds to explore significant differences in opinion in Dutch society.

6.1.2 Perceived stereotypes

When we explored how stereotypes are experienced by LGBT people and by high school students, the most important conclusion we can draw from these results is that gender stereotypes are the most prevalent and important stereotypes, both among young people and perceived by LGBT adults.

A second general conclusion we were tempted to draw from these results, is it seems LGBT adults perceive a broad set of stereotypes, but that this image does not correspond with the image of the young people in schools. When comparing the statements, it looks like many of the stereotypes perceived by adults are not raised by students on their on initiative, especially not stereotypes about the origin of homosexuality, about sexuality and about typical professions. This is not to deny that the perceptions of LGBT adults may be wrong; in fact, many of the LGBT respondents give concrete examples of how they were offended and discriminated based on specific stereotypes. It may well be that LGBT adults experience these stereotypes when confronted with other adults, and not with young people. It may also be that the LGBT adults refer to stereotypes they experienced over their whole lifetime, while high students necessarily have less years of experience, and their experience is mostly limited to the school environment (other students and some teachers). The discussion about stereotypes is also complicated, because some LGBT people will show behaviour that does not conform to the norm of heterosexuality. This only becomes a stereotype when people start to generalize it and treat all members of a group as if they have this behaviour. Plain statistics about

stereotypes should therefore be considered with caution: answers can reflects both a reality and an unfounded generalization.

A third conclusion we are tempted to make is that high school students may be largely unconscious about a series of prejudices, and can be lead to form stereotyped images by offering them examples. In this questionnaire, the students did give some prejudiced answers to closed questions, for example about the "definition" of homosexuality. However, when they are asked to formulate their own statements, they do not come up with many stereotypes except gender stereotypes. It may be that researchers and by extension educators, who bring up stereotypes in surveys and in lessons, actually frame stereotypes by bringing them up, rather than combating existing stereotypes. This potential effect needs more research.

6.1.3   Attitudes and behaviour of high school students

The general impression from the analysis of students' attitudes and their view of social norms in the school is one of ambiguity. Between one-third and a half of the students feel negative towards gays, lesbian, bisexual and transgenders. Like in other research, boys tend to feel more uncomfortable than girls.
In contradiction with other research, the school level does not seem to make much of a difference in attitudes in this sample.
However, religious affiliation does make a difference, with Muslim students (in this sample mainly from lower vocational schools) being considerably more negative and insecure about homosexuality and gay and lesbian rights.

We asked five questions about social distance students intend to take from gay and lesbian students show a general trend of ostracization of gay and lesbian students. An overall average of 67% of the students answers that they would distance themselves from gay and lesbian students or at least feel insecure about contact.

Further analysis shows that boys and Muslims distance themselves most of gay and lesbian classmates. In contrast with other Dutch research, education level seems to have less pronounced effects on a social behaviour.

However, further analysis also shows that when we add the students who feel unsure about ostracizing gay and lesbian students to the students who clearly announce to ostracize, the differences between boys and girls and between Muslims and other are not so clear any more. This insecurity about how to behave plays an important role among students. There is a consistent group of about one third of the students who feel insecure. In some subgroups, like Muslims, this number may rise to 46%, depending on the question. It is likely that the insecure students may be tempted to act in ways that are modelled by the more vocal ostracising students.

The social distancing of gay and lesbian students by other students in a variety of ways is bound to have a negative impact on LGBT students. Learning social skills, learning from each other and feel safe at school will become difficult in such an environment. It would seem a proper coping response of LGBT students not to come out to prevent ostracization. However, this does have other consequences. The continued hiding of one's feelings may create a risk for minority stress. The invisibility of LGBT students in school may lead to the only noting clear - because different from the norm - examples of LGBT students. These "clear" examples may be generalized as images for all LGBT people, thus creating stereotypical images. These may in turn lead to further insecurity and ostracization.

6.1.4   Experiences of LGBT people

More than half of the LGBT respondents feel that prejudice has had effects on their lives. A high percentage copes with stereotyping by behaving "non-stereotypical" (read: 'normal', heteronormative).

Almost all LGBT respondents (90%) have experienced discrimination. The media and schools score high as areas of discrimination and stereotyping. Most discrimination takes the shape of insults, hurtful jokes and prejudiced reactions.

The school is the second worst environment to be: 56% of all LGBT people felt discriminated here. Gay men feel most discriminated (41%) but bisexuals (32%) and lesbians (24%) are not far behind.

61% of the LGBT respondents did not come out at school. This percentage corresponds to some other research about coming-out in schools in the Netherlands. However, it is noted that the 30% that says they do come out at schools, probably do or did not very visibly so, when we relate their opinion to the awareness of the straight high school students.

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Most LGBT (91%) did not see anything helpful for their sexual identity in the school curriculum. They complain about no mention at all, only short sentences and heteronormativity, and about teachers making offensive and ignoring remarks.

When the LGBT people are asked what they think are the causes of homophobia, they say a lack of knowledge and heteronormativity are the main causes. As strategies to combat homophobia, they mention work at schools and visibility and involvement of the LGBT community as most important. When asked for examples, support for LGBT young (16-) people is most mentioned.

6.2   Discussion

As far as we know, this research is the first attempt in the Netherlands to map which and how stereotypes of LGBT people are perceived by both LGBT people and by straight young people. The results yield some quite surprising conclusions, which may well have relevance for school policy and for the content of education. In this discussion, we would like to raise some important and critical questions.

6.2.1   There is nothing wrong with being a sissy or a butch

From the analysis of the comments of the high school students, it is crystal clear they perceive that "not behaving as a proper boy or girl", or gender non-conformity is the main stereotype they have of gays and lesbians, and that gender non-conformity annoys them most and makes them most insecure. At the same time, we see how the LGBT adults name a much wider range of stereotypes.

In addition, we noted that LGBT people often try to show the contrary of stereotypes as a reaction to them. This is not only a personal strategy of individual LGBT people. For example, some anti-homophobia peer-education groups use a game "who of the three is gay?" which is modelled on a popular TV programme. Students have to guess who of three 'normal' looking gays or lesbians are really gay or lesbian. The objective of this game seems to be to make clear to students that gays or lesbian are 'just as normal' as heterosexuals. Some of the peer-education groups even state they would not accept effeminate gay educators or overtly butch lesbian educators in order to avoid stereotypes. Such group do not seem to realize how they are buying into a normalizing discourse about sexual diversity and how their 'gays and lesbian are normal' strategy may actually increase the ostracization of LGBT people who are not behaving strictly to gendered norms. In extreme cases they may even be blaming

effeminate gays, partying gay men on the Canal Parade, butch lesbians, polygamous bisexuals and gender non-conforming queers or transgenders of "threatening tolerance".

Based on these observations, we propose that Dutch emancipation policy and education professionals and peer-educators rethink their policies and interventions. How can we develop effective policies and interventions that incorporate that combating homophobia actually means to nuance heteronormativity? How do we prevent that well-intended anti-homophobia education or anti-bullying interventions actually discriminates LGBT that are not gender non-conforming?

The answers on these questions may be theoretically feasible, but may be complicated in practice. The strong 'normalizing' tendency within the gay and lesbian movement, including among gay and lesbian educators may be a major obstacle to widen the scope of anti-homophobia education to anti-heteronormative education. Both among the activists and among the students, the fear of being 'different' and not 'normal' could block more effective interventions. To be able to cope with this, we suggest that educators and teachers are better trained and empowered, so they are more aware of how gender and homophobia are linked in the larger context of heteronormativity. In addition, they should be supported in how to deal with the often fierce remarks from insecure high school students, who consider their gender to be immutable and rigid gender conformism as essential for their social and sexual identity. To say it in a crude way: there is nothing wrong with being a sissy or a butch.

6.2.2 Getting rid of the religion as the main cause of homophobia

In the discussion about LGBT emancipation in the Netherlands, the social and political discussion has always been dominated by a strong bias of blaming Christians and especially Christian schools of being homophobic. In the last ten years, the 'Muslim threat' has been added to this anti-religious zeal. Some have even proposed that "tolerance" has become a central tenet of the Dutch national identity, and that tolerance towards homosexuals is increasingly used as a litmus test to exclude immigrants from social acceptance. This effect is also seen in other "Western" countries and has been called "homonationalism". "Homonationalists" seek to combat homophobia by blaming (only) immigrants (especially Muslims) for homophobia and focus on disciplinary and socially excluding strategies.

The results of this research seem - at first glance - to join this choir, because throughout the report, in-depth analysis showed how Muslim students are considerably more intolerant than other groups.

However, we would like to make some nuanced remarks about this.
When we look properly to the opinions of students, we see high levels of ambiguity. Especially among the non-religious students, we sometimes see both very negative and very positive opinions. While Muslim students generally have a high level of negative opinions in this research, there are also high levels of insecurity. Christian students are often in the middle.

Both effects point to the fact that adolescents are often quiet insecure about their identity and opinions. Belonging to the peer group and adapting to its norms and values to be accepted is an overwhelming need for most adolescents. At this age, self determination is extremely difficult.
For Muslim students, who are often children of immigrants from poor and conservative rural backgrounds, the cultural gap between the home-culture (which is traditional rural Islamic) and the school- and street culture (which is focussed on

dating and social status among peers) complicates life. They constantly have to choose between competing demands and it is no wonder this dramatically increases their already high insecurity. This insecurity shows in the high level of "unsure" answers, but may also be part of the reason why Muslims (and other students) choose intolerant answers. By choosing to reject 'abnormal' people, they categorize themselves as 'normal'. In this light, discrimination in adolescents may be partly seen as a coping mechanism to survive in a strong-opinionated peer group.

Our research did not allow us to research this effect in-depth. It would be interesting if other researchers could explore this issue further. A better insight in how adolescent insecurity works may give us more tools on how to make schools and other youth centres more safe and empowering, taking into account the biological and developmental limitations that obviously play a role.

When this report is published, the Voice OUT pilots have already been done in schools, among others in 2 classes with almost 100% students. These pilots show how these students life in homes where sexual diversity is never discussed and how students (and actually teacher in this school as well) are extremely surprised that guest-teachers dare to bring up the subject of sexual diversity and homophobia. In a class with a majority of Muslim boys, at the beginning of the Voice OUT program, the general opinion of the students was that all people deserved respect, but that gays and lesbian were an exception "because they are not people". After the program, the students developed a small campaign with a video on this theme.
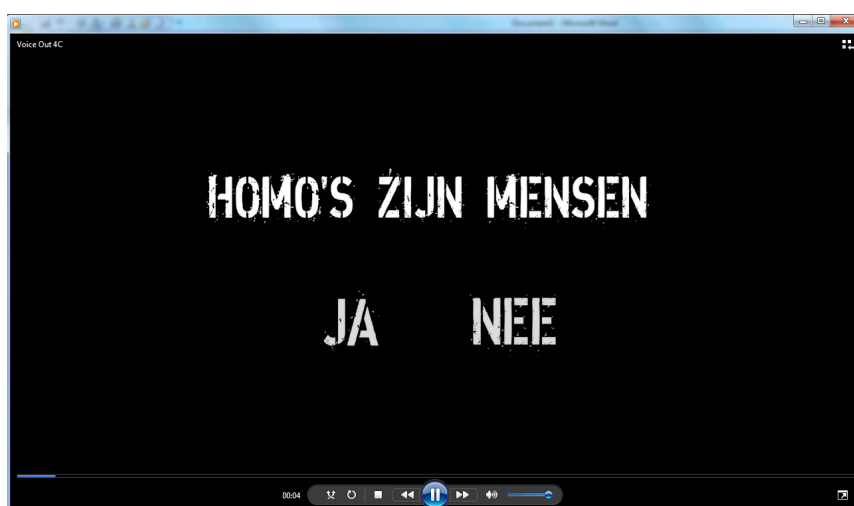

Figure 72: Starting image of the video campaign in a mostly Muslim class
("Gays are humans: YES (or) NO")

The video opens with a black screen and the text: "gays are human YES NO". After a small pause, the YES fades, showing the opinion that gays are not humans. The video then proceeds with a short drama in the school. A screen says "2012: homosexuality is forbidden" and shows scenes of two gays adults and a lesbian student hiding their feelings. Then, a screen announces: "all homosexuals are arrested" and we see a dramatic scene of how the homosexuals and the lesbian are dragged to a school room and locked up. The video ends with the prisoners being freed by a black student and cheering. The closing screen recaptures the start screen, but now the NO fades. The video reflects the change of opinion in this group during the Voice OUT game. Of the two video's that were made in this school, this video won the school election (it was shown in a series of classes and defended by the students who developed it and all students could vote for the best campaign). However, the parents of the students who acted in this video did not give permission

to show the video outside the school. This shows how a successful educational intervention has its limits.

To summarize, we would like to remark that simply condemning the negative statements of Muslim students, as harsh as they can be, is probably not going to work to emancipate this group of young people. There are opportunities, but they need to be tailored to their starting knowledge and level, to the school situation and the limitation of school interventions in relation to what students experience at home and in the streets needs to be recognized.

6.2.3 Obvious visibility instead of normalized activist visibility

A final remark we would like to make is about visibility strategies. A large number of the LGBT respondents suggest that visibility and LGBT community involvement would be the most effective way to combat homophobia. Yet, reject "demonstrations" and shows of diversity - especially gender diversity - as options. As mentioned before, a large number of the LGBT people prefer 'normalizing' strategies. As one respondent says:

> And by organizing an alternative ('normal') gay parade, which is not a kind of carnival with striking and exotic dressed up people (and thus being unrealistic). A real Pride, where the real, everyday, ordinary, civil, discreet gaylesbi's walk around in their normal, ordinary clothes. For real pride means that you just be yourself, rather than act differently then you normally do and perform a theatre play on a boat.] (Female, 36) *[En door een alternatieve ('normale') Gay Parade te organiseren, die niet een soort carnaval is met opvallend en exotisch uitgedoste mensen (en dus onrealistisch). Een echte Pride, waar de echte, alledaagse, doodgewone, burgerlijke, onopvallende holebi's rondlopen in hun normale, doorsnee kleren. Want echte trots betekent dat je gewoon jezelf kunt zijn, in plaats van je anders voor te doen en een theaterstuk op te voeren op een boot.]*

In sum, they believe that great visibility of 'normal' gay and lesbian people will increase tolerance. We could call this the (normalizing) "activist" strategy. A smaller proportion of the LGBT movement - which is hardly represented in our research - may promote a more radical "queer activist" strategy, which is also highly visible, but focuses on rocking the foundations of heterosexism *and* homonationalism.

This view competes with another perspective, which promotes making diversity obvious ("vanzelfsprekend", "het gewoon maken") as the preferred strategy for emancipation. Respondents who promote obviousness give examples of daily interventions, which show the diversity of homosexuality, genders, heterosexuality, and most important, treat this in a relaxed and matter of fact way. Obviousness does not stress visibility so much. The matter of fact way of doing this does not benefit from large scale visibility but from small scale relaxed communication. In policy terms, this more low profile way of integrating (sexual) diversity in routine policy, processes and communication could be labelled "mainstreaming".

Our experience in schools is that a mainstreaming or obviousness strategy works better. However, in practice this is difficult to promote by the LGBT movement, or by peer-educators. This is because an obviousness strategy can better be implemented in daily routines than in specific sessions or demonstrations. The obviousness strategy is better suited for people working in education or studying. The side-effect is that LGBT activists may feel at a loss, because especially when they are not part of the sector, they can only stimulate other to do this, rather than do things themselves. Our suggestion is that the LGBT movement should study its own role in

such mainstreaming processes. Activists need to overcome their own need to do things themselves and find ways to cooperate with heterosexuals to create a self-evident obviousness which makes it possible to discuss sexual diversity and gender regularly and in a relaxed way.