



The aim of this publication is to collect the abstract and some of the papers discussed during the International & Interdisciplinary Conference “LGBTQI Empowering Realities Challenging Homophobia and Transphobia”. The final conference has been the last step of the project co-funded by the European Union and titled “Empowering LGT young people against violence a P2P model” (JUST/2011-2012/DAP/AG/3059). The partner of the project were: The Department of Psychology of the University of Turin, The School of Social Justice Of The University College Of Dublin, The School of Health and Social Work of the University of Hertfordshire, The Political Science and Sociology Faculty of The Complutense University of Madrid, The Life Quality National Association OZARA Slovenia, the Department of Humanistic Studies of The University of Naples “Federico II”.



This project is co-funded by  
the European Union

"This publication has been produced with the financial support of the Daphne Programme of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of contractor/implementing and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Commission."

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Department of Psychology (2015)  
© 2015 Dipartimento di Psicologia Università di Torino  
ISBN 978-88-905-24967  
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***SUMMARY PAPER BOOK***

## LECTURE

### Born this way? The Science of sexual orientation and its implications

#### Lingiardi V.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Vittorio Lingiardi, (Department of Dynamic and Clinical Psychology, Sapienza University of Rome M.D.), is a psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, and Full Professor of Dynamic Psychology at the Faculty of Medicine and Psychology, Sapienza University of Rome, where he was Director of the Clinical Psychology Specialization Program (2006-2013). His scientific and research areas of interest are: a) assessment of personality disorders; b) psychotherapy/psychoanalysis research; c) defense mechanisms; d) therapeutic alliance; e) gender identity and sexual orientation. He is the author of many books and papers. With Nancy McWilliams and Robert Wallerstein he is in the Steering and Scientific Committee of the new edition of the Psychodynamic Diagnostic Manual (PDM-2, Guilford Press, expected for 2015). With the paper "Psychoanalytic attitudes towards homosexuality: An empirical research" (International Journal of Psycho-Analysis, 85, 2004, pp. 137-158) he won the 2004 Ralph Roughton APsaA Paper Award. For Raffaello Cortina Publisher he is Chief Editor of the series "Psychiatry, Neuroscience, Psychotherapy".

#### ABSTRACT

«I write poetry because my genes and chromosomes fall in love with young men, not young women». With a single line, the poet Allen Ginsberg upsets centuries of controversy about the role that nature and culture have in the government of our lives. But poets, you know, follow paths erratic and arcane. Ordinary people, sooner or later, ask you the question: "Born that way or become so?" Which means: "Being gay is the 'psychological' result of early relational experiences, education and social interactions, or is it a matter of genes and chemistry". Inevitable question, but wrong. Because it is determined by two prejudices. That we are all born as *tabulae rasae*, ready to be molded from the outside: education, environment, experiences. Or that we are programmed for specific tastes, desires and behaviors. The error is in the binary approach: nature vs culture, internal vs external, male vs female. It is not only a mistake but also a danger - and even more if we talk about sexuality. An explanatory model cannot be separated from the use we make of it. When Freud shifted our attention from the moral to the psychological, the effect was a breath of fresh air: you can finally talk about sexuality, and not of sin. But then, towards the end of the last century, when a group of biologists shifted our attention from psychology to genetics, many felt a similar liberating effect: "Mom, Dad: It is not your 'fault'!" After commenting on the more or less convincing aspects of the work of the neuroscientist Simon LeVay, author of "Gay, straight and the reason way", I will address the issue of sexual orientation as genetically determined trying to catch the psychological, historical, social and political implications of any etiological model of homosexuality. Or, better, homosexualities.

## LECTURE

### GENDER VARIANT PEOPLE BETWEEN PATHOLOGISATION, SOCIAL STIGMA AND RESILIENCE

Valerio P.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Paolo Valerio (MD) is Full Professor in Clinical Psychology at the University of Naples Federico II. He is the Delegate of the Rector for students with disabilities, Head of the SInAPSi Centre ([www.sinapsi.unina.it](http://www.sinapsi.unina.it)), Head of the Service of Clinical Psychology of the Naples University Hospital, President of the Foundation “Genere Identità Cultura” and President of the “Osservatorio Nazionale sull’Identità di Genere” (O.N.I.G.). He has participated in many European projects. Specifically, he was the scientific coordinator of “Hermes – Linking network to fight sexual and gender stigma” (Daphne III). Currently, he is Marie Curie Fellow and a member of the advisory group of the “Empowering LGT young people against violence: a P2P model” (Daphne III).

#### ABSTRACT

The recent publication of DSM-5 should be considered as a turning point in the redefinition of transgender identity condition, in particular of its new psychiatric diagnosis “Gender Dysphoria”. For the first time, the Gender Identity Disorder Workgroup involved transgender NGOs around the world before making important theoretical changes. The main doubt dealt with the usefulness and the sense of maintaining such a diagnosis. At the same time, the board of directors of WPATH encouraged the de-psychopathologisation of gender variance worldwide, looking at the phenomenon as culturally common and human. Although the external and political pressures, the psychiatric diagnosis still exists and such a pathologisation may cause social stigma and rejection. Unfortunately, gender variant people – beyond the “psychiatric stigma” – represent a highly stigmatized population, experiencing high levels of minority stress. In a chain, this particular stress may impact their mental health status, increasing the likelihood of developing anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress, and suicidal ideation. Gender variant people generally live within a transphobic environment that facilitates the internalization of social stigma, developing shame, self-hatred and alienation. They have to cope with these negative events and self-devaluating images much more than a not gender variant person.

This contribution will provide a general overview of the actual socio-political condition lived by gender variant people, in particular embracing the psychological effects of gender prejudice and anti-transgender violence on mental health and wellbeing and the resilience strategies they may use to cope with.

## Symposium A

# EMPOWERING LGT YOUNG PEOPLE AGAINST VIOLENCE: A PEER TO PEER MODEL

## 1. Empowering LGBTQ people against violence: a p2p model: the project

**Rollè L.<sup>1</sup>, Marino E., Gerino E., Brustia P.**

<sup>1</sup>Luca Rollè is psychologist, psychotherapist and assistant professor of Dynamic Psychology at the Department of Psychology – University of Torino. He is the Principal Investigator of the project “EMPOWERING LGT YOUNG PEOPLE AGAINST VIOLENCE: A PEER TO PEER MODEL” and he has been involved in other EU project with the role of researcher or supervisor. His researches are focalized on: homo-trans/phobia, sexual identity, domestic violence, postnatal depression in a perspective of Health and wellbeing. He has been trainer in the programmes of the project and he is Aggregate Professor of “Sexual Orientations and Gender Identities” at the Department of Psychology and he is member of the board “Psychology of sexual orientations and gender identities” of the Register of Piemonte Psychologist.

### ABSTRACT

The EU FR Agency reported that LGBT people and heterosexual youth not conforming to stereotypical gender expressions and behaviour experience harassment, bullying and discrimination, facing in some cases violent physical attacks (FRA 2009, 2012); the victims may experience a strong disempowerment that leads to social isolation, psychological stress, reduction of self-esteem and coping strategies (Herek, 2009). The present 24 month project aims to integrate the experiences and best practice of 3 projects realized within the European Union’s FRC and DAPHNE III programme.

The main goals of the project has been to increase the empowerment, using a P2P approach, of young LGBTQ people to protect themselves and their peers against violence and to create a safe space for these youths by working with various service providers increasing the awareness about homo/trans-phobic attitudes (Rollè, Brustia, Caldarera, 2014) and to highlight the issues of minority stress (Meyer, 1995), as recommended by the European Commission (2012/3). The intervention-research design of our project – funded by the European Commission under the Daphne III [JUST/2011-2012/DAP/AG/3059] aims at achieving progress in attaining the priority “Empowerment work at grass-roots level”, also through the involvement of local NGOs. Participants: young LGBTQ people (18yo-M 30yo), service providers and helping professionals of the nations of each partner. The used methodology has been P2P approach as a mean to achieve empowerment and knowledge through a three-steps programme: 1. Empowering young LGBTQ impacted, in some way, by homophobic or transphobic; 2. Training various types of helping professionals and service providers to increase knowledge of violence against young LGBTQ people, and skills necessary to work with them effectively; 3. Empowering some of LGBTQ people through training to become facilitators. The project involves 2 partners from IT, ES, SI, UK, IE, different countries with a different level of awareness on sexual identity, homo/trans-phobia, in order to enhance an improvement and harmonization of knowledge, technical skills and culture at a European level. All programmes have been evaluated with a quali-quantitative measures to highlight the process and the outcome of the programm

## 2. Positive Action Promoting Change

### Quilty A.

Aideen Quilty is director of the Women's Studies Outreach Programme at the School of Social Justice, University College Dublin. Her research is focused on developing geographies of space and place within higher education. Her most recent work seeks to combine feminist and spatial theories and practices with the aim of articulating place pedagogies for community-based higher education and disenfranchised groups included LGBTQI. She locates her undergraduate and post-graduate teaching as a form of critical civic practice and is committed to promoting educational access and participation for traditionally under-represented groups.

#### **ABSTRACT**

The Dublin contribution to this symposium reflects our involvement with a European DAPHNE project working with young (18-30 year) LGBTQ adults on an empowerment programme aimed at targeting homophobic and transphobic violence. As the team responsible for Programme One this presentation sets out the rationale behind this particular educational LGBTQ intervention. Seeking to explore the relationship between non-normative identities, homophobia/transphobia, activism and socio-political contexts and empowerment and resilience this programme drew on the rich history of new left social movements, including feminism, as we sought to chart a pathway to the current reality for LGBTQ lived lives. Acknowledging the real difficulties and multiple forms of discrimination faced by LGBTQ people this programme sought to harness the well documented levels of LGBTQ resilience and strength. Reflecting this aim the participants developed personal empowerment plans over the course of the programme. We hope to share something of these individually designed plans as we seek to articulate the dynamics of empowerment and resilience that gained articulation within this innovative, challenging programme.

### 3. Power to Promote. LGBTQI empowerment

**Amodeo A. L., Scandurra C., Picariello S.<sup>1</sup>, Rodriguez E., Monaco S., Valerio P.**

<sup>1</sup>Simona Picariello is a Clinical Psychologist, PhD candidate in Psychological and Pedagogical Sciences and trainee in Psychoanalytic psychotherapy for developmental age, adolescence and couple. She is been a short-term scholar at the “Center for Family Studies” of the University of Miami (October 2013-April 2014). She is a member of “Empowering LGT young people against violence: a P2P model” (Daphne III). She is a member staff of “Disguise Ritual Music – DRUM” (7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme Marie Curie Actions – People – IRSES). She participated in Erasmus Program (LLP) at Universidad de Sevilla (2009/2010).

#### ABSTRACT

**Aims:** The Programme 2 of the Project, entitled “Power To Promote. LGBTQI Empowerment”, was aimed at training different professionals and public service providers on theoretical references and direct practice of the work with LGBTQI people. Specifically, the main purpose of the training programme was to improve their (a) knowledge on gender and sexual violence against young LGT people, (b) awareness of the impact of the violence on young LGT people, (c) relational and communicational skills.

**Themes:** The major topics addressed in the programme, both through theoretical and practical sessions and activities were: identity and sexual orientation; phobia and stigma; sexism, heterosexism, and cissexism; minority stress; gender-queer theory; stigmatization in workplace; history of LGBT movement; empowerment and resilience; communication skills; project ideations and development.

**Materials:** According to the purpose of the Programme, participants were provided with theoretical materials and, above all, they were directly involved in active learning during the training sessions. The main materials used by all the partners of the project have been: exercises on empathy and communication skills; videos and short movies; products from previous projects on the same matters; focus groups.

**Manual:** The Manual of this Programme is intended to provide a theoretical and pedagogical framework for a work on LGBTQI issues in different contexts and with different addressees. It constitutes a useful booklet where all the themes addressed by the programme are explained, in a concise and clear form, which can be used by any training and educational figure.

## 4. Waves of Change: peer to peer. About Resistance and strategies at the hetero-patriarchal violence in youth

**Cabezas González A.<sup>1</sup>, Barón Vioque S.<sup>2</sup>, Martínez Valle C., Cairo Carou H., Lois M.**

<sup>1</sup>Almudena Cabezas González PhD, Politics. She is an associate professor in the School of Political Science and Sociology (UCM), Spain. Her research is focus on Geography of regionalism and Feminist Geopolitics, Transnationalism and Gender. As visitor professor she has been in universities of Europe, Latin America and United.

<sup>2</sup>Susana Barón Vioque. Psychologist (Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 1990-1995), Master in Educational Guidance at the Universidad de Alcalá (1999-2000), Counselor at the Psycho pedagogical guidance and evaluation team at Pozuelo (2001-2003) and at the Guidance Department at IES.E.Patarroyo since 2003, where she carries out a plan for the prevention of homophobia in the educational system.

Associated Professor at the Department of Basic Psychology since 1996, her researches focus on the creation of a theoretical model to explain basic psychological processes involved in the learning and maintenance of homophobic behaviors.

### **ABSTRACT**

The article presents the p2p model to empower LGTB young people as the final programme of the Empowering young lgtb realities in Europe project. We address first the methodology focus in the possibilities to empower young LGTB people using the p2p model. There is a reflection on power management in the p2p models, the relevance of empathy and trust in order to generate appropriate environment to manage assertiveness, confidence and so on.

There is a brief comparative exercise in the development of the programme for each country team in order to present continuities, difference and particularities by context. Last, there is general comments on potentialities and risk on the use of p2p model to fight the heteropatriarchal violence.

## 5. Evaluating the effectiveness of fostering empowerment and resilience strategies by young LGBT adults in a European action research

Ramon S.<sup>1</sup>, Warrener J.

<sup>1</sup>Shula Ramon is a social worker and a clinical psychologist by her training, who has researched and published extensively recovery from mental ill health and domestic violence, often involving people who use services as co-researchers and co-trainers. In doing so, she has learned that providing opportunities for stigmatised people to become more empowered and resilient is a key to their ability to move from internalising their stigma to becoming survivors and reclaiming their agency. She has acted as the senior researcher in the LGBT project in the UK, having the overall responsibility for the evaluation aspect of the project.

### ABSTRACT

The project Empowering young LGBT adults: a P2P model has attempted to provide opportunities of reclaiming identity via three educational programmes. Programme 1 aimed at fostering empowerment and resilience strategies for young adults to be applied in their everyday and professional lives. The evaluation aimed to discover if this educational route has successfully achieved its aim across the six participating sites, by focusing on both outcomes and processes, and on a comparison of where participants were at the pre-programme stage, immediately after the programme, and at the follow up stage.

The methodological framework of multiple embedded case studies was adopted. Several methods were applied to measure change, including individual self-reports, intersubjective focus group discussions, and responses to hypothetical case scenarios of complex situations. Data collected included expectations from the programmes and whether these were met, views about what was of significance in the programmes, and the impact they had on the participants' lives. The quantitative data was analysed with the use of SPSS, the qualitative data was thematically analysed with NVivo software. Ensuring the meaning was sufficiently similar across five cultures was also a demanding task.

The findings highlight an increased appreciation of the participants' own abilities to respond constructively to the social challenges they faced, and apply the newly acquired reflective understanding to themselves and to others in a more empowering way than before. The solidarity and openness which developed in the first programme were in evidence in the second programme for participants which focused on developing their co-facilitation skills of similar, future, groups indicating the beginning of the development of their resilience capacity. These are promising beginnings, which require further nurture in a future context that is often re-testing their newly acquired empowerment and resilience.

## 6. Dissemination of the P2P LGT project

### **Dobnik B.**

Bogdan Dobnik is a member of the Scientific Council for Social Welfare of the Ministry of Social Affairs and member of the Interministerial Commission for granting the status of humanitarian organizations in Slovenia. He is also Slovenian representative in the CARE Europe. Until recently he was a member of the Managing Committee of the National Forum of Slovenian humanitarian organizations. Lately, he is particularly actively involved in preventive activities to strengthen children's mental health, activities to raise public awareness on the issue of suicide and campaigns for destigmatisation of mental disorders.

### **ABSTRACT**

By definition dissemination means to broadcast a message to the public without direct feedback from the audience. In terms of project implementation the dissemination is one of the key activities of project partners to inform the public about the project, its progress and results and to create circumstances to support the sustainability of the project results. The dissemination plan was envisaged in a way to efficiently approach a wide public and to instigate a dialogue with the public. The dissemination activities of the project were very carefully reviewed and planned according to up-to-date principles and guidelines. The whole process of dissemination of the project and its results was set up as a process of classical brand building, presenting a sensitive, innovative, creative, subtle, socially oriented and vital brand. The entire campaign originated from the project graphic image, working towards a graphically coherent external communication which evolved into different forms of dissemination materials, such as e.g. promotional leaflets, web site, presence in the most popular social networks (e.g. facebook) etc. Using the most innovative trends in marketing to bring the Empowering LGT Young People Against Violence project closer to the target public should not be understood as superficial, content-diminishing or quality-decreasing gesture, but as an added value of the project to have the know-how to deliver its results to the key stakeholders and to bring it to their attention.

## Symposium B

### CREATING AWARENESS ABOUT HOMOPHOBIA AND TRANSPHOBIA: PATHS, PROJECTS, STUDIES AND EDUCATIONAL STRATEGIES

#### 1. Local policies for LGBTQI young people equality and safety: the city of Torino LGBT office experience

**Truppa G.<sup>1</sup>, Emprin R.**

<sup>1</sup>Gianluca Truppa. Graduated in Politics, attended a post-graduate specialisation course in Equality and Discrimination at the University of Milan. Works as project officer and trainer for the LGBT Office of the City of Torino since 2010. Represents the City of Torino in the International Rainbow Cities Network.

#### ABSTRACT

Since it was founded in 2001 the LGBT Office of the City of Torino works closely with Institutions, University, companies and NGOs at local and national level to develop joint actions aiming at improving quality of life for LGBT citizens in Torino and elsewhere. Training and networking are the main tasks assigned to the Office by the Administration. The presentation will focus on training and raising awareness activities carried out in education and safety in relation to LGBTQI young people.

Schools, Youth from Voluntary Service and local Police officers were the main targets of trainings hereby presented.

Providing teachers with tools for including LGBT issues in their lectures helps them to combat prejudice and discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity. Activities carried out in schools by teachers with their students and respective families on LGBT topics improve safety of LGBTQI students indoor and outside by strengthening inclusion in the peers group and rejection of homo/transphobic bullying.

Coherently with the City of Torino policy on equality in public service delivering, young people taking part in the Voluntary Services within the Administration are trained on LGBT topics. Training represents a mutual learning for the peers' group and an occasion for some of the beneficiaries coming from non-European continents (mainly Africa, Southern America, Asia) to confront with diversity and to inter-relate discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity with other grounds of discrimination (sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief etc.).

City of Torino Police is the local symbol of law enforcement institution for young citizens in streets, schools, university, various locations. From several years proximity policing programmes include meetings of police officers with students in schools to raise awareness on safety, discrimination, bullying, violence. Trainings to police officers on LGBT hate speech and hate crimes carried out by the LGBT Office with local NGOs were essential to support local Police officers and include homophobic and transphobic bullying among subjects discussed with students in classrooms and encourage the latters to report.

Training of teachers, school administration and Police officers on LGBT topics is crucial to develop a safer and inclusive environment for LGBTQI young people and their families in the city.

## 2. Tales and discrimination: an awareness path for children and their families

Gullotta A.<sup>1</sup>, Gerino E.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Alessandro Gullotta is doctor of psychological science, with a thesis about family cooperation in the care of Hikikomori adolescent psychopathology; his research interests deal with childhood and adolescence psychopathologies, parenting and caregiving, attachment and identity, sexual orientation and sexual identity issues in childhood and adolescence, parenting system and heteronormativity. He is trainee to the teaching post of prof. Luca Rollè and partner of the group of dynamic psychology at the department of Psychology of the University of Turin.

<sup>2</sup>Eva Gerino is psychologist, PhD in Psychological, Anthropological and Educational science, Psychoterapist trainee and partner of the group of dynamic psychology at the department Of Psychology of the University of Turin. She is now Contract Professor in family dynamics and her research interests deal with LGBTQI issues and dynamics in a perspective of Health and wellbeing, coming out and LGBTQI people path in family system, family and couple dynamics, LGBTQI themes in an aging contest.

### ABSTRACT

Discriminatory attitudes in relation to gender and sexual orientation are even more evident within family interactions and in the managing of *parenting* and *caregiving* dynamics. These processes contribute to the development of significant changes in the children and adolescents' identity structure, changes that, expose children to strong behavior and identity influences. The discriminatory attitudes, especially homophobic or transphobic behaviours, intensify in children's minds, combining with other typologies of discrimination, such as all that can differ from the "rule".

This project has the aim of sensitizing in an active way children and their families on these themes, in particular, encouraging the reduction of prejudicial, stereotyped playful modes addressed to younglings, promoting the free expression of individual differences in a motivating, serene environment, proposing a cooperative, community atmosphere among different people, supporting the sharing of these differences at the expense of a sort of ratification by the *in-group*. Moreover, the project focuses on the remodeling of *parenting* and *caregiving* approaches, together with family upbringing, which are often characterized by heteronormative, sexist models.

In order to reach the above-mentioned objects, we suggest the use of fairy tales so that children could be better involved and we could be really nearer to them. We thought about a set of recreational-educational, creative activities and role-playing, within the frame of the most popular animation movies, welcome to the youngest, aimed at the learning and awareness of discriminatory attitudes. Each activity contains an implicit message as to invite to a critical reflection and to produce a different point of view of the family and the child.

At the end of the activities, in fact, children and their families should gain a greater sensitivity to these issues, having been in contact, through these recreational but concrete experiences, with the possible consequences of the discriminatory process.

### 3. Dancing princes and rugby princesses Multi-membership in small communities

#### Montabone M.

Monica Montabone. Systemic psychologist psychotherapist began working in the late 90 in psychiatric rehabilitation and founded the Cooperativa Sinapsi and being among the first members of the Association Casa Bordino of Turin. Since then deals with families and the rights of people in difficulty, becomes therapist in 2000 and teacher of psychotherapy at Episteme and begins to deal with LGBT parenting, deepening the themes of prejudice and stereotypes. Manages groups of students psychotherapists in particular on the issues of disability and families. Meanwhile also deals with school dropout working with the Province of Turin with more than 200 children a year and families in need. She has a private practice of systemic therapy relational ago supervisions and collaborates with COREP for master's degrees in psychology of disability.

#### ABSTRACT

This work intends to show a networking project aimed at increasing awareness and activating inclusive practices related to homoaffection and homoparenting in Susa Valley Communities.

Cultural change is seen as the result of participation and co-management activities among all the involved actors.

The project, realized in a systemic perspective, involved many speakers (teachers, Municipalities, parents' associations). The shared participation among the actors created a program addressed to the whole community and, at a later stage, to teachers, non-teaching school personnel, educators, parents, primary and secondary school students. The project, that still continues, is structured in four stages: increasing awareness among the population and parents, above all; increasing awareness among teachers, educators, non-teaching school personnel; working in the field with students; evaluation.

Starting by calling into question prejudices and stereotypes about family and gender roles, we initiated the co-construction of a different way of thinking about affection, where diversity is a resource for creative thoughts and practices. The public debate was extremely participated and it was very appreciated by the entire community; many requests for new meetings arrived from the neighboring municipalities. Within the school, inclusion programs were built by means of specific trainings on homo-affection, family models and homophobic bullying led by trainers from the LGBT association and the psychologist.

Famiglie Arcolabaleno (Rainbow families) and adoptive parents presented their experiences. This practice resulted in theatre plays performed by the students. Together with the teachers, we drafted a chart of young people rights that illustrates the practices for fighting homophobic bullying. It was adopted by the whole school institute.

The project was the beginning of a consideration about the beauty of diversity and homoparenting families' rights in the perspective of preventing violence against LGBT young people and families.

## 4. A project of intervention against homophobic bullying to support the quality of relationships in the schools

**Taurino A.<sup>1</sup>, De Caro M., Greco R., Serino C.,**

<sup>1</sup>Taurino A. Assistant professor in Clinical Psychology at the University of Bari.

Main research interests: sexuality; gender identity; sexual orientation; homosexuality; same-sex and transsexual parenting; homophobia and trans-phobia; interventions to prevent and combat homophobia and trans-phobia in educational, academic and institutional contexts. He is the author of two books on psychology of gender differences and of many articles on national and international journals on the topic of same-sex parenting and theoretical models /epistemological constructs for the deconstruction of homophobic prejudice and violence.

### ABSTRACT

In a systemic perspective, the homophobic bullying can be considered as the outcome of prejudicial beliefs about sexual orientation linked to a dysfunctionality of inter-subjective systems that organize the relationships among students. Based on this approach, we structured a wide action-research program aimed at improving the quality of relationships in the school. The project is focused on the construction of a specific network (constituted by the University of Bari, The Regional Education Office of Apuglia, the Provincial Student Council of Secondary Schools of Bari's and BAT provinces).

The project was divided into two phases. In the first phase, 150 students from different Secondary Schools were recruited to participate to an intensive peer-education training course related to homophobic bullying, aiming at detecting and reducing peer victimization among adolescents. They took part in three focus group and training sessions about the quality of relationships in their contexts; they were involved also in a discussion aimed at the construction of a specific questionnaire to be administered in each school. Later (the second phase) they became the tutors of their classmates when these were required to fulfil the individual questionnaire by an online procedure set up in each school.

In the second phase we administered a questionnaire which detected the ways in which the bullying phenomenon occurs within the school, involving a sample of 9.000 students. The students answered a number of questions concerning their experience in the school, their role in possible bullying dynamics, and their opinions as to the reasons for bullying, to the more frequent victims' social categories and so on. Particular attention was paid to homophobic bullying and to the students' cultural models regarding homosexuality and sex and gender stereotypes.

Results were analysed by considering the effect of some critical variables (gender, kind of school, different social contexts, and so on) and the correlation among several forms of peer victimization. Starting from the results, a number of psychological activities was set up in different school communities involved in the present study. Empowering strategies of peer education and action research were then generated in the frame of our project, in order to prevent and reduce bullying behaviours, while developing more positive interpersonal/intergroup relationships, and more inclusive cultural models of sexuality to promote a culture of differences in the schools. In our contribution the project will be presented and the results will be discussed in more details.

## Symposium C

# GENDER STEREOTYPES, HETERONORMATIVITY AND HETEROSEXISM: GROUPS, INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES

## 1. Objectification and gender stereotypes: the key role of mass media

Rollero C.<sup>1</sup>, De Piccoli N.

<sup>1</sup>Chiara Rollero earned her PhD in Social Psychology at the University of Turin (Italy). Her research interests deals with gender issues, stereotypes, objectification processes, mass media and well-being from a gender perspective. She has more than thirty international research publications on these topics. Now she is Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Psychology of the University eCampus (Italy), where she teaches Social Psychology.

### ABSTRACT

#### **Introduction and Aim**

Objectification is a specific form of dehumanization by which individuals are conceived and treated as objects and instruments. Literature on objectification has largely shown the relationship between viewing objectified media models and women's body dissatisfaction and drive for thinness. The purpose of the present study was to extend past research by examining the effects of objectified media images – considering both male and female models - on the endorsement of sexist attitudes.

#### **Method**

Participants were 166 heterosexual undergraduates (51.8% male). Each participant was randomly assigned to view one of three advertisements sets (objectified male condition, objectified female condition, and control condition). Then their ambivalent sexism toward men and women was assessed.

#### **Results**

Findings showed that objectification of women affects men's endorsement of sexist attitudes, increasing hostility toward women and decreasing hostility toward men. Instead, women's sexist stereotypes were not influenced by objectification.

#### **Discussion**

For men, the objectification of women seems to increase the endorsement of an explicit adversarial view of women, i.e. hostile sexism, but it reduces the expression of resentment toward gender power inequalities, i.e. hostility toward men. Concerning women, in line with the Ambivalent Sexism Theory (Glick & Fiske, 1996), we can argue that objectified women emphasize their sexual allure, which can be seen as a way to control men, but to reinforce gender stereotypes. Taken together, present results provide additional evidence to suggest that objectified media models may contribute to origin sexist attitudes, although specific for each gender.

## 2. Legal reasoning and gender stereotypes in the case law from a comparative family law perspective

### Falletti E.

Elena Falletti. Full-tenured assistant professor of Comparative Private Law at the Faculty of Law of the University "Carlo Cattaneo" Castellanza (VA). She carried out her PhD in Comparative Law at the University "State" in Milan in 2006. When she was Phd candidate she was DAAD Stipendiatin and Marie Curie Fellow at the Westfälische Wilhelm-Universität Münster (Germany). After that, she gained a post - doctoral Fellowship at the Max Planck Institut für Geistiges Eigentum of Munich (Germany).

### ABSTRACT

#### **Introduction and aim**

The aim of this abstract is to analyze the text of legal decisions in comparative family law, focusing on English and Italian case law for verifying the presence of gender stereotypes. The main area of interest is the different approach to the evolution of family law, especially to the traditional gender roles: male-female, husband-wife, father-mother.

#### **Method**

Indeed, on the one hand the English legal system granted protection to traditional families and also to new family models such as "rainbow families" (formed by same-sex parents) and extended families (formed by new families of divorced parents). How do English judges face this kind of cultural changement in justifying their decisions? On the other hand the Italian Parliament does not grant legal recognition for all families in front of law equally. However, both first instance and appeal courts are try to recognize equal treatment for parents and children without discrimination from the parent's gender. How are Italian judges able to overcome the limits such legislative perspective?

#### **Result**

Analyzing the grounds of the judgments in an area with a strong influence of political, philosophical, religious and social issues as family law, we find that stereotypes, especially gender stereotypes, could hide themselves behind apparently neutral concepts. But what is a "stereotype"? Especially a "gender stereotype"? It concerns the sex of a person, especially his or her failure to conform with socially accepted sexual behaviour about what "real" men or women do or don't do.

#### **Discussion**

Finally, the paper should suppose which role have stereotypes in both legal systems.

### 3. Are perceptual distortions in political area consequences of gender stereotypes?

#### Urea R.

Roxana Urea is working at University of Bucharest, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences since 1996. She has a Ph.D. in Psychology since 2003 and two master degrees .She is an expert: in child's psychodiagnosis, in educational and professional guidance and work capacity assessment, in human resources, in psychological and political marketing, in family counselling of persons with disabilities, in psychology of maladjustment and behavioural deviance, in special education of people with mental disabilities. She is an active representative of Romanian psychology abroad on congresses and conferences in psychology and education field.

#### ABSTRACT

##### **Introduction and Aim**

In sense of W. Lippmann 1922, the stereotype affects judgment imposing itself to current reality. An essential aspect of gender stereotype is that man learns to associate various personal attributes, such as personality traits, roles and professions, with being male or female. Beyond those features by definition related genus (eg mother or father to be), there is a low probability to talk about a politician who is a woman and to associate automatically her features to a set of instrumental traits (aggressiveness, competitiveness, courage, strength, etc.) that inherent belong to a man. The presence of women in political structures exists in Romanian society, but there is still the belief that involvement in political structure is "bypassed" by female population. Social psychology offers an explanation for this, linking aspirational level success with perception of chances of success, perception which is "directed" by gender stereotypes and still "validated" by Romanian society.

##### **The aim**

In the present study I will seek to identify whether the policies are still being described / perceived by feminine representatives, in masculine terms.

##### **Method**

I used the Romanian Gender Scale Attributes (internal consistency index = .749, fidelity index= .794,) and Romanian Gender Roles Inventory (internal consistency index = .757, fidelity index= .826,)

##### **Lot of research**

The research was done on 167 female students: 96 coming from different departments of University of Bucharest (57, 48%) – and 71 coming from different departments of Polytechnic University (42,52%) ; 91 % are coming from urban environment and 9% from rural environment.

##### **Results**

We found a specific gender stereotypes typology related to perceptual distortions in political area

##### **Discussion**

There are differences between the perceptual distortions in political area at students coming from different departments of University of Bucharest comparing with those who are coming from Polytechnic University

## 4. On sexuation: how psychoanalysis can contribute to break with the idea of sexual norm

### **Bolgiani P.**

Paola Bolgiani is psychotherapist-psychoanalyst, member of the Scuola Lacaniana di Psicoanalisi and Word Association of Psychoanalysis, professor at the Istituto Psicoanalitico di Orientamento Lacaniano (Turin) and Istituto freudiano (Rome, Milan), institutes for the specialization of psychotherapists. She works since 2000 at the Centro Psicoanalitico di trattamento dei malesseri contemporanei (Turin). She's clinical Director of an therapeutic institution for children and young adults (near Vercelli).

She has published several articles in magazines of psychoanalysis. Some articles have been translated in French, Spanish and English.

### **ABSTRACT**

#### **Introduction and Aim**

Freud claimed that "anatomy is destiny". However, in his later works, inquiring about female sexuality, he introduces new ideas that will bring Jacques Lacan to open a new horizon around the question of sexuality. Lacan overthrew Freud's statement. He noticed also that the fact of leaving the issue of sexuality on a strictly anatomical level, led not only to difficulties in the clinic, but also left the subjects at the mercy of anxiety, sometimes dramatic, about their supposed "normality". The purpose of this report is to show how, through the introduction by Lacan categories of imaginary, symbolic and real, all three involved in the sexual position of each subject in terms of body image, inscription in the symbolic world, and enjoyment, we can be oriented in contemporary clinical, considering each subject as a singular exception.

#### **Method**

The research is carried through the study of clinical cases encountered in practice as a psychoanalyst, both private and at the Centro Psicoanalitico di trattamento dei malesseri contemporanei onlus

#### **Results**

We emphasize that each person must find their own way to deal with what sexuality exceeds the size of the image and the symbolic, and that concerns the specific way of enjoyment, through a "bricolage" of its own.

#### **Discussion**

The contribution of Lacan in the field of psychoanalysis allows to consider the specific way in which each subject is related to sex, breaking with any idea of normality or sexual norm, and instead putting in value the singular choices.

## 5. Painting by numbers: examining participants' quantitative responses at pre, post and follow-up programme data collection stages concerning the impact of the P2P project

### Lloyd M.

Michele Lloyd lecturer and researcher in the School of Education at the University of Hertfordshire, UK. She combines work on undergraduate and doctoral programmes with doctoral supervision and research. She has published research nationally and internationally on education policy, special educational needs, long-term health conditions, schizophrenia, domestic violence and media representations. Her research interests include educational inequality, neoliberal ideology, poverty, social justice, multimedia communication and human rights.

#### ABSTRACT

This paper examines quantitative data derived from participants across the six partner sites engaged in the P2P project. Data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.

Firstly, young people undertaking Programme 1 gave their responses to a 14-item resilience scale ('The Resilience Scale' is an international trademark of Gail M. Wagnild & Heather M. Young, 1993). Cross-national findings were analysed at the pre, post and follow-up stages to evaluate evidence of change. Increases in self-belief, determination and feeling proud of accomplishments indicate the programme had a positive effect on young people's sense of self-confidence and empowerment. The rise in the number of young people who agreed their life had meaning is further evidence of enhanced resilience amongst some participants.

Additionally young people responded to a 42-item scale asking about their experiences within the LGBT community and sense of their own identity. Following their engagement in the programme young people reported feeling less judged by others for their sexual orientation, and were less likely to feel isolated and separate from other LGBT people. So too were they less likely to feel uneasy around people being very open in public about their sexual orientation.

Quantitative data were also generated from professionals and service providers undertaking Programme 2. They were provided with a vignette scenario and asked to indicate their strength of feeling towards 20 listed reactions. Responses were amenable to quantification and were analysed cross-nationally. Again, pre- and post-programme findings were compared in order to measure change over the time span of the training programme. While data analysis demonstrates considerable congruity of opinion, interesting variations among a minority of participants are also revealed. Differences as well as commonalities among participant responses are discussed.

## Symposium D

### SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND SEXUAL IDENTITY: CLINICAL CONTRIBUTIONS AND STUDY CASES

#### 1. Lacanian Psychoanalytic clinical practice with queer transgenders

#### Nicotra M.

Maria Nicotra, psychoanalyst, psychoterapist.

She is cooperating teacher at Istituto Psicoanalitico di orientamento Lacaniano (IPOL), Turin.

Member of Scuola Lacaniana di Psiconalisi and Ass. Mondiale di Psiconalisi.

Psychotherapist at Spo.t, a project of Maurice LGBTQ (Turin) and at Rete Dafme, a project for offense victims. She is clinical director at La Cittadella (Saluggia), an institution for young people with neurodegenerative diseases and seniors. Among other publications she is author of essays on gender and transgender issues. She has directed documentaries on LGBTQI realities among which: TransAzioni on FTM trans- reality (2004) .

#### ABSTRACT

##### **Introduction and aim**

The theme of transsexuality and transgenderism mobilize on the cultural, social, health and legal fields. In the last decades there is a proliferation of researches and theories of transsexuality and transgenderism developed by cultural, gender and queer theorists which goes in the direction of the social inclusion and depathologization.

This paper aim to questions some points of the clinical practice with queer and transgender subjects who don't fit in 'mainstream' transsexuality.

##### **Method**

The research is made through clinical cases matured in the contest of Spo.t, a project of Maurice GLBTQ of Turin which give assistance and services (endocrinologist, psychotherapist, lawyers, social assistance) - a "spot" - also for social inclusion to queer, transgender and transsexual people.

##### **Results**

By exploring some fragments of clinical cases and referring to lacanian psychoanalytic theory of sexuation and topology (post-structural theory of Lacan) this paper aim to point out which elements are involved in the psychoanalytical treatments with subjects who express a desire to be beyond sex, to belong to neither sex, to transcend the limits of sexual difference.

##### **Discussion**

The discussion aims to stress a reflexion regarding the clinic of transsexuality and some crucial notes concerning the medical – legal procedure in Italy that subjects must attain in order to obtain the change of identity in the registry.

## 2. A psychoanalytical Lacanian clinical contribution against the stigma of pathologization

### Morrone S.

Silvia Morrone psychoanalyst, psychotherapist. Teacher at Ipol – Istituto Psicoanalitico di orientamento Lacaniano (Turin). Member of Scuola Lacaniana di Psicoanalisi and Associazione Mondiale di Psicoanalisi.

Psychotherapist at Spot, a project of Maurice LGBTQ (Turin). Psychotherapist at Centro Psicoanalitico di trattamento dei malesseri contemporanei (Turin). She is Clinical Director of Comunità Terapeutiche Il Montello (Serravalle Scrivia – Al), an institution for psychiatric patients offenders. In the age '90 she collaborated with the sexology team of Mauriziano Hospital (Turin)

### ABSTRACT

#### Introduction and Aim

According with the international campaign Stop Trans Pathologization, born in 2007, whose goal was the elimination of transsexualism from DSM, the contribution has the aim of highlighting how clinical Lacanian psychoanalysis, with the aim of not pathologize the subject's relationship with his own sexuality, produce subjective space for the construction of life solutions appropriate to the uniqueness of each subject.

#### Method

The research is made through clinical cases matured in the contest of Spot, a project of Maurice GLBTQ of Turin Which give assistance and services (endocrinologist, psychotherapist, lawyers, social assistance). The treatment of the case was driven by the Lacanian psychoanalytic theory. This is a clinica-sotto-transfert, in line with other current psychodynamic, it considers diagnostic evaluation as a tool to guide the direction of the treatment and not to categorize and label, as it tends to make the scientific discourse through the DSM.

#### Results

In Lacanian psychoanalytic practice, the results of a carefully take into account, through the transference relationship, the complexity subjective, with particular reference to the relationship of the subject with their own desire and the ability, through the same care, to offer him new possibilities for action and relational strategies allowing more flexible, such as out of isolation, stabilization subjective without recourse to medicalization.

#### Discussion

Where you free the subject from the stigma of psychiatric pathologisation, open to the possibility of subjects lifestyle choices "in their own way" We can say we have some theoretical references (and not ideological) that allow us to accommodate the singularities without introducing subjective prejudices, but those that we can accommodate any event, as recalled Dr. Lacan, "ignoring what you know"?

### 3. Multicausal discrimination: sexuality and social dynamics of European chub and chasers

**Florea M.M.<sup>1</sup>, Vasilescu V.C.**

<sup>1</sup>Mihnea-Mihail Florea is a young Romanian humans rights activist currently involved in developing the LGBT movement in Bucharest. His previous experience is within the disability sector, with an emphasis on social service delivery and employability issues. He is currently CEO and Funding member of Lindenfeld Association, Fundraiser for Accept Association and Project coordinator for Junior Achievement Romania.

#### **ABSTRACT**

While many LGBT subcultures experience specific social angst and discrimination within and outside the community due to social identity, one of the least documented is that of the Chub-Chaser community. The lack of visibility within the LGBT movement and the lack of public awareness regarding this minority isolates it from the mainstream LGBT community, with dire consequences. Thus, there is close to no Chub-Chaser representation within European community organizations and there is close to no knowledge base regarding anti-discrimination and empowerment mechanisms for Chub-Chaser youth, despite specific needs regarding self-identity. More often than not, the self-disclosure of their non-normative sexual orientation and identity is seen as a second-coming out for individuals, resembling the identity crisis found in transgender, transsexual, and intersex people.

Community wise, European development of the Chub-Chaser movement is still not well established in time. Regardless, development signs of this subculture in Europe can be seen with the emergence of specific internet groups and social clubs spawning across Europe, usually in the more international urban areas: Madrid, Berlin, London.

The current paper supports the academic effort to further understand the wide classifications within the Chub-Chaser community - from a self-image and sexual behavior point of view - and to reveal it's inner dynamics and how individuals and groups relate to the wider LGBT movement. Perceived discrimination, in various forms, are analyzed based on quantitative and qualitative research methods, with a focus on crossdiscrimination. The data will be based on over 100 survey responses from individuals identifying within the Chub-Chaser community coming from over 10 European countries, as well as 5 in-depth interviews with relevant representatives.

Conclusions will be drawn with respects to improving the approach towards self-identifying Chub-Chaser youth in the context of personal development and social inclusion within and out of the LGBT community.

## 4. Information behaviour of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual (lgbt)

Andrés T.<sup>1</sup>, González-Teruel A.

<sup>1</sup>Tabatha Andrés is a student of the Degree in Information and Documentation. She collaborates in the company *Unitat Web i Marketing* of the University of Valencia, where she carries out tasks as information, web content manager and documentalist. She is a volunteer in the group Lambda Valencia.

### ABSTRACT

#### Introduction and Aims

The studies on information behaviour seek to know why people need, and use information, both in their work environment and in their daily life. Studying these aspects in populations whose life situations may be classified as transitional, it is of a special relevance as far as the information systems planned may serve as a support for individuals in that situation. A clear example is the one that LGBT teenagers in the process of discovering their sexuality are living. The objective was to know the experiences which gave place to their information behaviour.

#### Method

A qualitative explorative study was designed and interviews to a group of people selected according to a non-probabilistic sampling of convenience were led. The population of interest was anyone between 18 to 30 years old included in the group. The information obtained was analysed through a quantitative analysis of content.

#### Results

The data obtained described three aspects: a) Personal circumstances and development which includes how they accepted their orientation and identity; b) Mechanisms used by informants to look up information; and c) Opinions on useful improvements for the LGBT youngsters.

#### Discussion and conclusion

The identification and acceptance process was produced at early ages. Informants turned to a person who could provide them with information and support, that is, a mentor. As for the type of information sought, among men the search for sexual partners predominates whereas in the case of transsexuals' information needs, these needs disappear after the surgery. The society is considered "out of the closet" but the information LGBT is not visualised properly, due to prejudices or ignorance. It is important to obtain qualitative data in order to understand the interaction of LGBT people with the information in the different situations of life.

## 5. Crucial moment

### Arzente G.F.

Gian Francesco Arzente psychotherapist and psychoanalyst. Member of the School of Lacanian psychoanalysis and the World Association of Psychoanalysis. Founding member of the Center spicoanalitico treatment of illnesses contemporary non-profit organization of Turin and psychotherapist at the therapeutic community Montello. Professor IPOL.

#### ABSTRACT

The work that I wish to expose is the result of my experience as a psychotherapist at the *Psychoanalytic Center of treatment of illnesses daily*. It provides, in its *Section Insecurity*, the possibility of conducting the talks free for a specified time. The therapeutic aim is to reach, in the shortest possible time, to obtain the rapid therapeutic effects. First of all, is to isolate what hurts the subject, that is generally the effect of trauma entered unconscious in the particularity of the subject. Since opening, 15 years ago, many of the subjects that you have turned, at least 100, we have crossed the threshold from a problem related to homosexuality. Each of these subjects showed a crucial moment, one in which the other has been reduced to a mere object mistreated, humiliated, devalued. Although the phenomenology of the episode varies, the structure remains the same: a representative of authority (father, semblances male) mistreats his son or daughter in the time of formation of the Oedipus and it produces an identification imaginary powerful to strict and violent "father". Happen that they recognize that it has inflicted on the partner the same fate of humiliation and abuse that had hit the subject at the time of their being humiliated lived in 'childhood. When the subject is unable to say what he did suffer the partners is related to the traumatic moment he himself lived in childhood emerges the possibility that the patient takes responsibility for the suffering of another. If therapist is in time with the patient's insight interpreting him his identification with his father, it produces a therapeutic gain considerable with the immediate effect being able to finally communicate their sexual selection. Follows a clinical vignette.

## Symposium E

### LGBTQI LIVES, IDENTITIES, EXPERIENCES AND SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS.

#### 1. Putting families of origin into the queer picture

#### Bertone C.

Chiara Bertone Ph.D., is Assistant Professor in Sociology of the Family at the University of Eastern Piedmont, Italy. Her main interests lie in sexuality, family change and family policies, explored from a gender perspective. She is author of the volumes *Whose needs? Women's organisations' claims on child care in Italy and Denmark* (2002) and *Le omosessualità* (2009), and co-editor of *Queerying families of origin* (2014).

#### ABSTRACT

The paper argues for the need to put intergenerational relations into the picture in order to understand the conditions for access to citizenship rights and recognition for non-heterosexual people. The case of Italy, where individual entitlements and responsibilities are largely structured around intergenerational dependence, underlines the importance of this dimension. Based on a study of the families of origin of self-identified young gay men and lesbians carried out in Italy, the paper explores how access to citizenship rights, and the construction of the identities who can claim for recognition, are mediated by processes of mutual disclosure and negotiation within the families. Beyond a shared notion of family ties as defined by unconditional love, a diversity of narratives are detected, linked to differences in gender, class and family cultures. It is especially when family narratives are informed by the middle class ideology of the democratic family as a space for the development of authentic selves that access to rights becomes conditional upon compliance with the obligations of a "good child", and the conditions for the reproduction of heteronormative citizenship are set. The paper poses a crucial question, asking how alliances along family ties can develop on the basis of shared stories of family diversity and marginalised identities, rather than of loving (and normative) support to LGBT people in need and an advocacy in their name from a position of heterosexual privilege.

## 2. About gay-parenting: a study to explore social representations

Rodriguez E., Cuccurullo A.<sup>1</sup>, De Simone G., Cesarano V.P.

<sup>1</sup>Alessia Cuccurullo is a Clinical-Community Psychologist. She collaborates with “Anti-Discrimination and Culture of Differences Service” of “SInAPSi Center” of University of Naples "Federico II" since 2012. This collaboration aims to prevent and fight many forms of discrimination and violence and to promote a culture of diversity. The main activities of this work are: to update website [www.bullismoomofobico.it](http://www.bullismoomofobico.it), to realize workshop, training and awareness interventions for university students and to implement projects to prevent homophobia and homophobic bullying in several primary and secondary schools. She is also a graduating student at the Specializing School in Systemic Psychotherapy

### ABSTRACT

#### **Introduction and Aim**

This article represents the product of a working group pertinent to the “Anti-discrimination and Culture of Differences” Service of the “SInAPSi” Athenaeum Center (University of Naples Federico II). The main purpose of this work is describing data collected from the conduction of a survey. The aim of this research has been to examine social representation of Italian population about same-sex parenting as a new form of family.

#### **Method**

A survey expressly built has been conducted on a sample of 199 subjects. It has been distributed on line on different channels, and at a later stage the answers has been putted through a thematic analysis with the T-LAB software (Lancia, 2005).

#### **Results**

From the survey’s analysis three Clusters came to light: 1) Factors influencing psycho-social development of children, 2) Acceptance and awareness in the Italian contest, 3) Characteristics of heterosexual family. It appears interesting that the most frequent word is “homosexuality”, while the “family” word is really rare.

#### **Discussion**

From main analysis results emerges the stereotype of a “good family” necessarily inserted in an hetero-normative culture, that is to say a family only constitutes from two opposite sex parents. It exist the idea that same-sex couples, who want to be parents, didn’t deal with their “condition”. Moreover, a “pathological” view of the homosexual orientation also persists. Same-sex male relationships are considered promiscuous, despite the scientific disconfirmation of this idea. Furthermore, a widespread worry is connected to an insane development of the son of gay-parents. Finally, also people declaring themselves favorable and opened to this kind of “new families” underlines the complexity connected to stereotypes and prejudices of socio-cultural contest. The reflection about the results of this study can be a starting point to promote an ample awareness and to build a culture of differences.

### 3. The impact of homophobic and transphobic bullying on education and employment opportunities

#### Rise E.<sup>1</sup>, Formby E.

<sup>1</sup>Eirik Rise has worked with IGLYO's educational work since spring 2012, as member of the work group on education. He was on the preparation team for the IGLYO "Stop hate - tackling homophobic and transphobic bullying" taking place in Oslo, June 2013. He has followed the development of the research and attended the official launch of the research at the European Parliament in February 2014. Since 2014 he has been a board member of the board of IGLYO and has amongst others initiated a pan-European teacher training workshop on sexual education under the Pestalozzi programme.

#### ABSTRACT

##### •Introduction & Aim

In 2012 IGLYO selected Eleanor Formby from the Centre for Education and Inclusion Research at Sheffield Hallam University (UK) to conduct research titled The Impact of Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying on Education and Employment: A European Survey.

This research report aims to highlight the destructive phenomenon of bullying and the longer term consequences for many individuals and explore the relationship between bullying and access to the labour market. In the current time of economic recession, much attention is paid to factors affecting employment, and it seemed apparent that bullying would impact individuals' job prospects. Yet very little research had focussed on this connection.

##### •Method

An online survey was used. The survey was hosted on a secure website for a period of approximately two months. The survey was designed and piloted in negotiation with IGLYO, and distributed via networks connected to IGLYO, targeted in particular at Croatia, Denmark, Ireland, Italy and Poland.

There were 187 responses to the survey in total. Due to this relatively small number, the results cannot be generalised or disaggregated by region, but as a whole they do point to issues to be considered in future service planning and/or further research.

##### •Results

The research has demonstrated the prevalence of issues about (loss of) confidence, isolation, attendance and/or participation, and motivation and/or concentration, resulting in potential academic attainment and/or achievement disadvantage. Though negative experiences of schooling were more widespread, there were differences of opinion about the potential for bullying or discrimination at further or higher education levels.

On the whole, it was clear that identifying as LGBTQ could impact upon a person's plans or aspirations for the future, regarding choice of studies and/or career, as well as migration concerns. Migration issues were apparent in people's desires to avoid certain areas for education and/or employment, and in people's desire to move to locations with more progressive legislative frameworks in which to live their lives.

##### •Discussion

The research extends existing literature that often focuses on impacts on mental health and emotional wellbeing. It is clear that a connection exists between bullying and employment, particularly in the current economic recession. It is also apparent that there is a need for more research in this area in order to better understand the impact of bullying. For us, this exploratory research is only a beginning, and IGLYO hopes to help facilitate more investigation into the topic at the European, national, and local levels.

## Symposium F

### CHALLENGING HOMOPHOBIA AND TRANSPHOBIA: FROM PROJECTS TO EMPOWERMENT

1. LeCoseCambiano@Rome (ThingsChange@Rome):A project to Prevent Homophobic Bullying, Gender Segregation, and Gender Violence in Schools

**Lingiardi V., Baiocco R.<sup>1</sup>, Nardelli N., Ioverno S., Tanzilli A., Nappa M.R., Orfano I.**

<sup>1</sup>Roberto Baiocco is an assistant professor of Developmental psychology at the Sapienza University of Rome. His primary research interests focus on family functioning and the implications for adolescent adjustment. The second area of research concern sexual minority youth and parent-child relationships in the transition from adolescence to young adulthood. From 2008 he is the Director of the Counseling Service named "BE as you ARE" (Sapienza University of Rome), that offers support and understanding, listening and responding to adolescents, young adults, couples and families who are facing problems related to sexual orientation and/or "gender identity".

#### ABSTRACT

The Department of Education, Childhood, Youth and Equal Opportunities of the Municipality of Rome Capital and Sapienza University of Rome developed a project to prevent homophobic bullying, gender segregation, and gender violence in schools. The project was titled "LeCoseCambiano@Roma" namely "Things Change@Rome". The project was developed to contribute to the description and understanding the homophobic bullying within the context of schools in Rome. Several studies demonstrated an association between victimization by homophobic bullying and school dropout. There are also important effects of homophobic bullying that can result in serious and long-term disorders, including post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation. A website was developed for the purpose of data collection. A total of 1,627 students within 24 different school classes completed a questionnaire largely based on that developed by Kosciw et al. (2012) for the 2011 National School Climate Survey. Participants answered using Likert based scale to several questions surrounded by four areas: 1) school climate and homophobic bullying; 2) satisfaction toward life, emotional well-being, and interpersonal relations quality; 3) contact and friendship with LGBT people; 4) school engagement in teaching about sexual orientation, gender identity, and related issues. About 47% of students reported that they heard homophobic remarks by schoolmates," and 25% reported that they heard the same remarks by their teachers. There were 8% of the students that claimed that they had experienced homophobic bullying at school "at least once." The difference in the rate of bullying is high among different sexual orientations: about 6% of the heterosexual students claimed to have suffered homophobic bullying versus 35% of non-heterosexual students. Those who have experienced homophobic bullying reported a lower level of perceived well-being and considered dropping out of school due to the discomfort felt in school contexts. These results have important implications in educational and social fields.

## 2. Psychologically Relevant Mechanism of Empowerment and Resilience in LGBT Individuals

### Podkrajšek R.

Rok Podkrajšek is a clinical psychologist. He works mainly in the field of clinical psychology, counseling, group and individual psychotherapy. The wider research interest includes qualitative methods in social sciences and psychotherapy, emotions in psychotherapy and in mental health, psychotherapy and psychological approaches for substance abuse problems, cognitive behavioral therapy. In regard to the questions of the LGBT population his interests include: the same sex identity formation with special focus on the internalized homophobia, same sex couples issues, problems with substance abuse in the GLBT population and affirmative psychotherapy. Otherwise he is engaged with the Slovenian Chamber of Clinical Psychologists.

### ABSTRACT

Empowerment is not a new concept, its understanding and dimensions have been studied for decades. One of the most promising and relevant aspects is its psychological dimension in which it is addressing the issue of psychological change. The process dimensions of the changes within the individual have yet to be researched. With the vision of achievable goals in empowering individuals and communities, many programmes are being developed and we have some idea about what in these designs is effective. Implications of the construct are also related to many personality traits and human characteristics. It is important to study empowerment, for it is the most promising concept for individuals and societies to cultivate basic human values. Empowerment is mostly a value orientation.

### 3. Queering Research. Critical research methodologies from Peer to peer perspective

**Berna D.<sup>1</sup>, Herrero Galiano E., Villaamil F., Jerez Novara A.**

<sup>1</sup>David Berna Social Anthropologist. Researcher in several themes, outstanding Queer minorities, Gypsies, Migrations and Sexual work. At the same time is Lecturer in M.A. and University specialization courses in Complutense University of Madrid, Elche University and in Reina Sofía Museum Studies center. In recent years he has participated in various forums and courses of political and theoretical thinking about power, race, sexuality and body in Spain and other european countries. He has several national and international publications in these themes in books and scientific journals. He's also member of several research groups in Spain and Europe

#### **ABSTRACT**

This communication tried to present the main reflections on the research methodologies used in our work on the closet and the coming out process in Madrid City with gay and lesbian young. In our research, heavily influenced by critical perspectives as feminist standpoint epistemologies and understandings of situated knowledge and aligns itself with the politics of post-colonial theory and Decolonizing methodologies. In this work we have tried to question traditional power relations which have characterized modern research.

To dialogue and not ask, to negotiate and not to impose have been actions present in our work. The results of our research have been different that we could have obtained if we had followed a traditional processes. These minutes will focus on exposing both the development process of these methodologies and analysis of results

## 4. Transgender identities in Italy: between structural stigma and European pressures

Amodeo A.L., Picariello S.<sup>1</sup>, Scandurra C., Monaco S., Valerio P.

<sup>2</sup>Simona Picariello is a Clinical Psychologist, PhD candidate in Psychological and Pedagogical Sciences and trainee in Psychoanalytic psychotherapy for developmental age, adolescence and couple. She is been a short-term scholar at the “Center for Family Studies” of the University of Miami (October 2013-April 2014). She is a member of “Empowering LGT young people against violence: a P2P model” (Daphne III). She is a member staff of “Disguise Ritual Music – DRUM” (7th Framework Programme Marie Curie Actions – People – IRSES). She participated in Erasmus Program (LLP) at Universidad de Sevilla (2009/2010).

### ABSTRACT

**Introduction.** Despite of European recommendations in the field of gender identity, Italy does not guarantee human rights of transgender people. The only Italian law regulating Gender Reassignment Surgery forces Italian transgender people to be sterilised and to dissolve pre-existing marriages, representing a case of structural and institutional stigma. This contribution provides an overview on the individual effects of the social and legal condition experienced by Italian transgender people, through the direct witnesses of a small group of them.

**Method.** Four focus groups were carried out by two conductors and two observers within the European project “Empowering LGT young people against violence: a P2P model” (Daphne 2013-15), in the Programme 1 and Programme 3. The training sessions were addressed to transgender people, with the purpose of improving their personal and social skills, and of empowering their resources, facilitating resilience strategies. Programme 3 had the aim of training participants to become facilitators.

The results presented refer to a small group of Italian transgender people, involving 15 participants on the whole, with age ranging from 20 to 37 years old.

**Results.** The following themes emerged: 1) Birth family as possible cradle of institutional stigma; 2) Negative effects of the familial violence; 3) Perceived stigma and internalized transphobia; 4) Integration of transgender identity: pride feelings. Social and psychological implications are discussed.

**Conclusions.** Structural stigma deeply affects everyday life and identity development of transgender people.

Understanding underpinning mechanisms could help planning and implementing actions of prevention and intervention at local and systemic levels.

## 5. LGBTQI rights: anti-discrimination policies at the University of Turin

Spanò M.<sup>1</sup>, Patti V.

<sup>1</sup>Maria Spanò Confidential Counsellor, University of Turin

### ABSTRACT

This contribution aims at describing the positive actions undertaken by the University of Turin through its Guarantee Committee and the Confidential Counsellor, in order to support students in gender transition.

Such positive actions rely both on University internal regulations (Art. 2, Code of Conduct for the defence of dignity) and rules at national and European level.

We will briefly overview the issues raised at European level by Art. 14 (ECHR), 21 of the Nice Treaty and the Directive 2004/83/CE, which - for the first time - mentions gender identity as an independent factor of discrimination, other than gender discrimination.

At national level, we will focus on Article 3 of the Constitution, the notion of discrimination under Art. 2 Legislative Decree 216/2003 and Art. 25 Legislative Decree 198/2006, applied by analogy. Finally, we will examine Law 164/1982 which rules the two stages in the judicial process of sex rectification: authorization for surgery and name and gender rectification in public registries.

The regulatory framework leaves some issues (such as the excessive length of the procedure, the need for age of majority to access sex reassignment surgery, the contentiousness of the procedure, as well as the issues about not previously authorized surgery) open.

We will finally describe the positive actions undertaken by the University of Turin through its Guarantee Committee and the Confidential Counsellor, in particular the ones devoted to education and counseling. We will also discuss the 2002 initiative to provide students in gender transition with a document with the chosen name: it is now replaced by the "electronic academic transcript alias" - available on the University web platform - which provides the students with a temporary identity and an anticipatory alias associated with the official one - kept confidential.

## Symposium G

### NOT ONLY SEXUALITY: MINORITIES, REALITIES AND RESOURCES OF LGBTQI

#### 1. Intersectionality: Persons with Disability who identify as LGBTQI

#### Azzopardi Lane C.L.

Claire Lucille Azzopardi Lane is a specialist in the field of disability and sexuality. Dr. Azzopardi Lane has worked in various sectors, including education and training, academic research and policy making. Currently, Dr. Azzopardi Lane lectures at the University of Malta, across various departments, she provides training to professionals in the area of sexuality and disability and is actively involved in the delivery of sex education and sexual health programmes for young people with intellectual disability. Dr. Azzopardi Lane's recent research work revolved around disability and sexual health, cancer and parenting and gender identity.

#### ABSTRACT

##### **Introduction and Aim**

Sexual identity and sexual expression are an integral part of the life of persons with disability. However people with disability still face prejudice, stigma and discrimination when expressing non-hetero normative sexual identity and expression. This paper explores the experiences of young people who identify as LGBTQI in a Maltese sociocultural context.

##### **Method**

A qualitative research method was employed to explore the lived experiences of participants using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA).

##### **Results**

The research identifies lack of awareness amongst stakeholders, service providers, parents and the local community about the intersectionality of disability and LGBTQI persons. Such lack of awareness leads to fear and ignorance that contribute to the barriers encountered by persons with disability and their sexual expression.

##### **Discussion**

Being a minority within a minority contributes to the vulnerability and isolation of persons with disability. Thus persons with disability require further support from organisations that promote the rights of the LGBTQI community. More awareness and education about intersectionality is required to uphold the rights of persons with disability who identify as LGBTQI.

**Caldarera A.<sup>1</sup>, Baietto C., Brustia P.**

<sup>1</sup>Angela Caldarera is a clinical psychologist and PhD candidate at the University of Torino. She is completing her PhD in the dept. of Psychology, with a thesis on gender identity development and psychological wellbeing (advisor: prof. Brustia), developed in cooperation with the Center of Expertise on Gender Dysphoria, Department of Medical Psychology, VU University Medical Center, Amsterdam, Netherlands (co-advisor: prof. Cohen-Kettenis).

Honorary psychologist at the Gender Identity Development Service, Tavistock & Portman Clinic, London.

ONIG Member.

Within the CI.DIGe.M. Gender Team she does research and works as a clinical psychologist with adolescents referred to the service.

### **ABSTRACT**

*Introduction & Aim.* Gender Dypshoria “refers to the distress that may accompany the incongruence between one’s experienced or expressed gender and one’s assigned gender”, as mentioned by APA in DSM-5, and may manifest itself in childhood and adolescence.

### 3. Internalized sexual stigma and psychological well-being: exploratory research on Italian and Belgian gay and lesbian people.

Lorenzi G.<sup>1</sup>, Miscioscia M., Simonelli A.

<sup>1</sup>Giorgia Lorenzi received her B.E. degree in “Psychology of Personality and Interpersonal Relationships”, in 2012, and an MA degree in “Community Psychology”, in 2014, both from the University of Padova. Since September 2014 she has been doing her internship at the service of neuropsychiatry for children and adolescents and she’s collaborating with Dr. Alessandra Simonelli and Dr. Marina Miscioscia, who have been working on LGBT issues since 2010.

#### ABSTRACT

Numerous researches have shown that in homosexual people the internalized homophobia is a risk factor for mental health, whereas the social support is a protective factor. Internalized homophobia affects the onset of mental disorders and it’s related to less social support (Mc Gregor et al. 2001; Szymanski et al., 2008). The aim of this research is to understand if the legislative context can influence the psychological well-being. For this reasons we have analyzed the levels of internalized homophobia, anxiety, depression and social support in two groups of gay and lesbian people coming from Italy and Belgium. These two European countries are very different in terms of civil rights of the LGBT population. The sample is composed of 194 adults (M=29 years, SD=9.08). From the analyzed questionnaires (MISS-LG, BDI, STAI, MSPSS) has emerged that the investigated constructions are well related to each other and that the levels of internalized homophobia are higher in the Belgian gay group, who enjoy the same civil rights of the heterosexual people, more than in the Italian one. This particular result could be related to a greater frequency of coming out of Belgians compared to Italians or to a sort of defence reaction of the Italian group to the tests, affected by the continuous negations of their civil rights. Future researches should focus both on the several aspects of the coming-out process and on the family support, which plays a huge role in mental health.

## 4. Sexual satisfaction individuals with gender dysphoria after sexual reassignment surgery: a case report.

**Quattrini F.<sup>1</sup>, Di Nardo M., Maiella R., Fulcheri M.**

<sup>1</sup>Fabrizio Quattrini PhD Student (XXVII Ciclo) in Clinical Psychology and Biomedical Science. School of Advanced Studies "G. D'Annunzio" University – Chieti  
Adjunct Professor (M-PSI/08) of Clinical of Paraphilia and Deviance (6 CFU) Graduate Studies in Psychology L'Aquila University  
Membership to European Society for Sexual Medicine (ESSM)  
Membership to Federazione Italiana Sessuologia Scientifica (FISS)  
President of Istituto Italiano di Sessuologia Scientifica di Roma  
President of LoveAbility Association

### **ABSTRACT**

#### **Introduction and Aim**

In order to obtain appropriate and consistent data, studies on the Gender Dysphoria (GD) have focused on an early diagnosis, on the association between GD and specific personality traits, including homoerotic sexual orientation. Moreover, interesting studies dealing with new GD medical and surgical techniques have also been described. To the best of our knowledge, only few studies have attempt to evaluate sexual and relational well-being after Surgical Sex Reassignment. Aim of the present study is to critically review the current and relevant literature involve the erotic and sexual representation after SSR, focusing on the orgasmic pleasure in individuals with gender dysphoria (with regard male to female transsexuals) living in real life test before and after SRS.

#### **Method**

Even if the studies do not all agree, from the review described we can deduce that subjects after SRS perceive their sexual experience and its frequency as improved.

#### **Results**

Positive prognostic factors, such as a request for SRS under the age of 30 years, absence of severe psychiatric disorders, homosexual orientation, a real life test experience for at least one year, full knowledge and acceptance of the SRS and psychotherapeutic support are not to be underestimated.

#### **Discussion**

Psycho-clinical approach in MtF individuals is the chance to enable them before SSR, to reach a greater self awareness of their body and sex, internalizing their orgasmic experience and avoiding the denial of pleasure originating from the same genitalia. Thus the psychodynamic and psycho-bodily psychotherapy, during the RLT, may be considered a better approach to an important reinforcement of the orgasmic pleasure consciousness.

## 5. Place Pedagogies of LGBTQI Empowerment

### Quilty A.

Dr Aideen Quilty is director of the Women's Studies Outreach Programme at the School of Social Justice, University College Dublin. Her research is focused on developing geographies of space and place within higher education. Her most recent work seeks to combine feminist and spatial theories and practices with the aim of articulating place pedagogies for community-based higher education and disenfranchised groups included LGBTQI. She locates her undergraduate and post-graduate teaching as a form of critical civic practice and is committed to promoting educational access and participation for traditionally under-represented groups.

#### ABSTRACT

In this paper I take up the particular question of how we might consider notions of LGBTQ empowerment through pedagogies of place. I draw on the particular experience of a peer to peer LGBTQ empowerment educational project, funded through the European Commission DAPHNE initiative 2013-2015. The importance of this particular transnational, multi-disciplinary educational intervention as a potential space of LGBTQ empowerment reflects the argument that the local and geopolitical conditions in which we, as LGBTQ educators, ask questions - disciplinary, pedagogical, intellectual, institutional - matter (Wiegman, 2002, p44). I argue that the relevance of this particular LGBTQ intervention in social justice terms might be understood as a form of locational politics. This recognises the importance of place within education 'not only as the focus of student inquiry or academic study, but as the spaces for performative action, intervention, and perhaps transformation...as students (and teachers) participate in remapping their material and curricular landscapes (Kitchens, 2009, p240). Developed relationally across the participating country partners, this programme highlights the need for particular forms of educational provision designed for queers, by queers and queerly interested individuals, about and because of queer desires and discrimination. I argue that these place pedagogies of empowerment confront the notion that 'heteronormativity is still a (spatial!) structure that conceals, denies and erases' (Brown: 2011, p125) and in so doing represent a direct challenge to educational, institutionalised, heteronormative practice.

## Symposium H

### FROM INSIDE TO OUTSIDE: THE COMPLEX WAY OF LGBTQI PEOPLE

#### 1. The Homophobic Discourse Remembering the Authoritarian Personality. A Case Study

**Barbetta P.<sup>1</sup>, Bella A., Barazzetti A.**

<sup>1</sup>Pietro Barbetta is a Psychotherapist and Professor in the Department of Human and Social Sciences at the University of Bergamo, where he teaches courses in psychodynamic theory. Prof. Barbetta has also been teaching at the Milanese Centre for Family Therapy since 1995.

He received his Ph.D. in Social Studies from Trento University. His international experience includes programs and consultancies in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, France, Portugal, United Kingdom, Spain, USA and Switzerland.

Author of several articles, chapters and books, his latest publications are "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Idiocy. Or, what "oligophrenia" tells us" with A. Bella and E. Valtellina, in Trauma and Memory and "Social construction and difference: A Deleuzian critique" in The Electronic journal of communication.

#### ABSTRACT

In the presentation we will discuss a clinical case of Homophobia. Starting from the first session with A.H., his phobia about being gay became immediately evident. A.H. was inquiring his parents and relatives asking them, with anxiety, if they were thinking he was gay. Of course everyone was trying to keep him quiet answering no, and reassuring him. Such an answer, instead of keeping him quiet about the argument, increased his idea of being "contaminated" by homosexuality. After several sessions of clinical work, the therapist proposed to A.H. a diagnostic assessment with TAT. In the following presentation we will show the themes involved in the sessions during which TAT has been used, and the conversational approach to the diagnosis starting from the interpretation of every picture of the TAT given to A.H.. In A.H. case TAT revealed that, beyond Homophobia, A.H. showed a more general process of Phobia, and some delusional features in connection with the encounter with other people who, for some reason connected to Otherness (from skin colour to particular kind of conduct in public) could either be perceived as showing aggressivity or, vice versa, could stimulate aggressivity in A.H..

During the presentation we will also propose some clinical interpretations starting with the TAT use in the classic research by Adorno et al. on Authoritarian Personality.

## 2. A Transsexual parent recount his transition.

Ricci M.E., Mamo F., Miano P.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Paola Miano Associate Professor in Dynamic Psychology – Dipartimento di Scienze Psicologiche, Pedagogiche e della Formazione - University of Palermo. My research interests are, in particular, gender identity from pre-adolescence to adulthood, intersexuality, diverse sex development and his effects on psychological wellbeing and interpersonal relationships, dysfunctional families and substitute caregiving, attachment, sexual abuse and juvenile sex offender.

### ABSTRACT

Changes in family systems have concerned norms, roles and relational styles. The presence of a trans-sexual father or mother represents a specific condition in the parenting function.

When a parent decides to come out about his or her transsexualism, the process of disclosure becomes a family issue and this coming-out may cause, in the transsexual's partner, sexual rejection, disillusion, anger, identity crisis, alteration in one's system of beliefs and concern for one's children.

The adjustment process to trans-sexual parenthood entails the acceptance of this new condition and a focusing on the care function, independently of the relationship of the couple. Moreover, difficulties at the level of the couple tend to influence other areas and especially the parenting function.

A trans-sexual FtM individual responded to a semi-structured interview on his coming out and his transition experiences. F is a trans-sexual who began his transition after the birth of his two children. His account of his experience regards the following themes: the couple's relationship, reactions to the coming-out from the family of origin, the incongruence between personal and social identity and the need to proceed with sex-reassignment surgery so that one may obtain modifications to registered personal data.

With regard to the process of the family's adjustment to a parent's transsexualism, it is possible to provide a few recommendations: it is advantageous for a trans-sexual parent (with a partner's support) to tell one's children as soon as possible about one's new condition; it is preferable for parents to agree on the facts of the revelation, adopt accessible language, be available to talk about transsexualism and to answer all questions. These precautions may enhance the stability of the parent-child relationship and avoid potential concerns about being abandoned, the onset of a sense of guilt or a hostile reaction.

### 3. Gender variance in childhood and adolescence, social inclusion and school drop out: strategies to support psychological wellbeing

**Caldarera A.<sup>1</sup>, Crespi C., Mineccia V., Finzi S., Molo M.T., Massara D.**

<sup>1</sup>Angela Caldarera is a clinical psychologist and PhD candidate at the University of Torino. She is completing her PhD in the dept. of Psychology, with a thesis on gender identity development and psychological wellbeing (advisor: prof. Brustia), developed in cooperation with the Center of Expertise on Gender Dysphoria, Department of Medical Psychology, VU University Medical Center, Amsterdam, Netherlands (co-advisor: prof. Cohen-Kettenis).

Honorary psychologist at the Gender Identity Development Service, Tavistock & Portman Clinic, London.

ONIG Member.

Within the CI.DIGe.M. Gender Team she does research and works as a clinical psychologist with adolescents referred to the service.

#### **ABSTRACT**

**Introduction & Aim.** In recent years many studies focused on psychological health in gender variant (GV) children. Cohen-Kettenis and Pfäfflin highlighted that gender atypicality may lead to psychological suffering, in relation both to an individual and to a social level: Stieglitz showed that discrimination, lack of support and of adequate coping strategies within the social and family context may result in low self-esteem, depression and substance abuse in adolescence. School plays an important role in the psychological wellbeing of GV children and adolescents. This work is aimed at: (1) identifying the situation of GV children and adolescents in the school environment, in relation to discrimination and social exclusion; (2) describing consequences of such situation on their wellbeing; (3) outlining an experience of a prevention work with schools.

**Method.** A systematic review of the scientific literature was performed, and the findings were organized and classified. In the light of these findings, the school situation of the GV youth referred to CIDIGeM (Centro Interdipartimentale Disturbi Identità di Genere Molinette, a specialized clinical service for gender identity issues in Turin) will be presented, and the actions currently carried out within schools will be presented.

**Results.** Discrimination perceived by GV youth often leads to early school leaving and social isolation, and frequently the school staff feels helpless. School meetings led by the CIDIGeM staff resulted in a more aware approach to the issue by the side of the school staff, and adolescents who were at risk of school drop-out managed to continue in attending school.

**Discussion.** Though GV youth still experience discrimination and social exclusion, with negative consequences on their life, it is possible to work in order to prevent this situation. Both a systematic training and specific network meetings at schools are very important tools to fight social stigma and school drop-out.

#### 4. ...and the daughter said: “Can I call daddy hir? (hir: him plus her)”

**Petiva P.<sup>1</sup>, Spirito M., Gheri S.<sup>2</sup>, Siragusa R.**

<sup>1</sup>Patrizia Petiva:Psicologa Psicoterapeuta;Didatta-Supervisore dell'Accademia di Psicoterapia della Famiglia di Roma; collabora con il C.I.D.I.Ge.M. ( Centro Interdipartimentale Disturbi Identità di Genere Molinette) per il trattamento delle famiglie di adolescenti con Disforia di Genere.

<sup>2</sup>Sabrina Gheri: collabora con Fondazioni ed associazioni che si occupano della disabilità; segue progetti di sensibilizzazione rispetto al tema dell'autismo.

#### **ABSTRACT**

The long road to the transition in an adult MtoF is more complex when it involves the wife and the children: it is an event of crisis and change that upsets family dynamics. The therapy of the family S., allows us to reflect on the father transition and the implications produced in the wife and in their 8 years old daughter lives. In the therapy we can focus on the new possible parenting, on the new roles and on the old and new dynamics. This therapy, through individual and family therapy sessions, highlights the complexity of the family transition and the effects of the coming out also through the children point of view.

## 5. Exploring the Language of Empowerment from Transphobia to Transpositivity

### McGarry P.

Paula McGarry Following a two year period of study at the School of Social Justice at UCD I was recently awarded the degree of MSc. in Equality Studies. While I have labelled myself as a mature student during my two years at the School of Social justice, it might be more accurate to describe myself as a “mature slow developer”. After all, it only took me fifty years to “develop” my identity as a male to female transsexual, and roughly the same length of time to “develop” my passion for people and my aptitude for critical thinking and writing on issues of empowerment and personal development for people who are marginalised.

#### ABSTRACT

This paper draws on research carried out as part of my studies for a MSc in Equality Studies. My Master thesis, *Improving the Social World for Young Transgender People*, explored the lived experience of coming out as transgender for five young people ranging in age from 24 to 27. Their coming out stories, collected by means of semi-structured qualitative interviews, provide a snapshot of a critical period of change in their lives. The interviews capture personal and interpersonal adjustments as they realised, disclosed and accepted their transgender identity. My interpretation of their coming out stories revealed transnegativity (more typically known as transphobia) and transpositivity as major themes. Drawing on the *respect and recognition* dimension of the equality framework, I associate transnegativity with negative societal attitudes that stigmatise difference. Transpositivity, describes the personal agency of the participants that empowered their defiance of stigma-induced depression; the acceptance of their transgender identity; and ultimately, the enjoyment of well-being in their lives. I conceptualise this transpositive-empowered movement from depression to well-being as a transformation in the way they think and talk about their trans identity. Interpreting the voices of the trans participants in this way provides evidence to support the hypothesis that an exploration of the language at the heart of the discourse on transgender identity has the potential to disempower negative attitudes to trans identity and enhance the well-being of young transgender people.

## Symposium I

### LGBTQI IN FAMILY, ORGANISATION, WORK PLACE, RELATIONS AND LEGAL WORLD.

1. Discrimination in the workplace: an empirical study of perceived diversity climate and coming out

Ramaci T.<sup>1</sup>, Aiello F.

<sup>1</sup>Tiziana Ramaci is Assistant Professor in Work and Organizational Psychology at the Department of Human and Social Sciences, Kore University, Enna. Her research interests include innovation processes within the public administration; organizational models and policies; training and human resources development; job recruiting; “flexibility” and “temporary employment”; Diversity Management; integration, assimilation and marginalization. She is also member of the Italian Psychology Association (AIP), the Italian Society for Guidance (SIO) and of IHRT - International Hope Research Team .

#### ABSTRACT

##### **Introduction and Aim**

Recently, the LGBT movement recorded significant achievements in the field of human rights recognition. The Italian social context still has the presence of numerous and serious prejudices against homosexuals. This is clearly demonstrated by the attitudes of politicians who often externalize hostile positions towards the homosexual universe, and is aggravated by the fact that Italy still has not yet codified homophobic behavior as a crime. This evidence requires to dedicate effort and attention to managing how the dynamic outcome of economic and social components influence each other. The purpose of this study was to explore how gay employees in Sicily perceive to be treated in the workplace. In particular, we went to investigate if they feel that are able to make “comingout” at work and social support by heterosexual colleagues.

##### **Method**

The participants were 256 Italian homosexual employees (160 males, 96 females) aged between 18 and 70 years ( $M=33.29$ ;  $SD=10.86$ ), working in public or private sectors. Test used for data detection was: Homosexual discriminations Questionnaires for employees, created ad hoc for the research (Sartori, 2009) with the assessment of 8 discrimination behaviors (self- and other-directed) and 3 support behaviors (rating scale from 0 = never to 4 = always). .

##### **Results and Discussion**

First results show low frequencies of perceived discrimination behaviors. In particular employees with secondary Italian schools, with full-time jobs declare more discriminations. And, for the social support, people with part time jobs declare more support.

## 2. Therapeutic project for integration: a proposal to help the supporting relationship

**Bechis D.<sup>1</sup>, Mancini S., Notari D., Spagna N., Larosa P., Baietto C.<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Daniela Bechis Born in Castellamonte (TO), 17/08/1983. Graduated Medicine and Surgery, 2008, 106/110. Child Psychiatry Resident at the Regina Margherita Hospital from 2010, thesis in progress about Gender Dysphoria and Autism Spectrum Disorders, discussion in May 2015. Co-author of the oral presentation “Dysphoria or Gender Variance?” at SINPIA Congress in Rome, September 2014. Member of the SINPIA Piemonte Section Secretariat since May 2011

<sup>2</sup>Chiara Baietto Born in Turin, 15/07/1957. Graduated in Medicine and Surgery, 1983, 110/110 cum laude, thesis recommended for publication. Specialization in Child Psychiatry, thesis “Modalità relazionali tra madri detenute e figli conviventi” (*relational patterns between incarcerated mothers and their children*), 1987, prisons in Voghera and in Turin. Sexual counselling 1° e 2° Level, SSSC Turin, 2000. Clinic Sexologist, SSSC Turin, 2011. University Master in Bioethics, Facoltà Teologica Italia Settentrionale, thesis “La Disforia di Genere nelle varie fasi della vita: problematiche bioetiche”: (Gender Dysphoria in the life-span: bioethics issues) discussion in March 2015. Assistant Medical Director NPI SCUD NPI OIRM. Coordinator of the Atypical Gender Identity Service from 2008. Child psychiatry professor on contract at the TNFP and Pediatric Nurse courses within the University of Turin.

### ABSTRACT

#### **Introduction and Aim**

We describe a model of intervention to encourage socialization with peers for children and adolescents with Atypical Gender Development, considering the integration with peers as an important confirmation of identity and a protection factor for development.

90% of children as well as almost all adolescents with gender dysphoria referred to the gender identity service of the pediatric hospital Regina Margherita in Turin shows serious difficulties in relationship with peers with a sense of exclusion and feelings of alienation.

These difficulties are also present in children and teenagers who do not report experiencing hostile attitudes by peers.

#### **Method**

The intervention model includes a mediated peer experience, which can improve coping strategies as well as relational skills in other contexts (like school, sportive activities etc.), fostering in this way self-esteem and resilience.

A personalized project is tailored for each child and, according to his/her characteristics, the clinician offers them the possibility of attending an educational group of children, who have different difficulties, but all connected with relational problems.

#### **Results**

For this therapeutic work we use complementary strategies: the small groups are led by a professional educator and, within the sessions, a time-slot with the child psychiatrist is reserved to create room for the working-through process.

#### **Discussion**

This therapeutic experience is being realized as a pilot project; and the preliminary data analysis will make it possible to evaluate the process and outcome of this work.

### 3. Diversity Media Awards – LGBT Representation in the Italian Media: from academic research to popularization

**Bionda M. L.<sup>1</sup>, Vecchioni F.M.A.<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Maria Luisa Bionda is more than 20 years experienced in qualitative research. Since 1995 she teaches at Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (Milan). Specialized in semiotics and cultural anthropology, she is continuously searching for new approach and methods to improve the comprehension of the consumers choices.

<sup>2</sup>Francesca Vecchioni is a journalist, communication expert, founder and president of Diversity , an association whose aim is to promote diversity as a resource. She has worked in publishing, marketing and communication, promoting arts, culture and entertainment. She is also editor in chief for asap online media.

#### **ABSTRACT**

Media are increasingly concerned with LGBT representation and topics: talk about gender, sexuality, and family constantly moves from traditional media to web 2.0 and back, in the process often acquiring a prejudicial nature. It is not easy to safeguard the quality of this information, but it is also essential in order to exert a positive influence on collective imagery and identity construction, also in order to dispel doubts and fear.

The project:

What is the state of LGBT representation in Italian media? We will gauge media products broadcasted during 2014. We will set a relevance benchmark which will allow us to select the most important products, and focus our analysis upon them. Our aim is to assess the effectiveness and reach of the message, as well as (and most importantly) its accuracy! In this analysis, we benefit from the cooperation with academic and private research institutions such as 2B Research, and scholars affiliated to ~20 universities spanning a broad range of research topics! A ten-scholar panel will vouch for the soundness and reliability of the qualitative assessment and will draw policy-relevant conclusions!

We will then proceed to rank the most accurate and effective media products, one for each category, both by topic (e.g. fiction, news, etc.) and media (e.g. TV, radio, etc.).

Results will be disseminated through social networks, encouraging feedback from users! Finally, we will engage the media themselves. Our final report will be presented at a dedicated event, the Italian Media Awards, which will be modeled upon GLAAD Awards. This event will serve both to disseminate even further the research itself and to raise awareness in media outlets of the importance of an effective and accurate portrayal of LGBT people.

## 4. Homophobia and transphobia in the Italian legal system

### Potè M.

Michele Potè Born in Turin in 1965, bachelor 's degree in Law at University of Turin, family and criminal lawyer, member of Avvocatura per i diritti LGBTI – Rete Lenford

#### ABSTRACT

In Italy there isn't a law which punish bias-motivated violence and bias-motivated speech.

In March of 2013, MP Ivan Scalfarotto (PD, social democratic) presented a bill (no. 245) making the instigation or the commission either of discrimination or of acts of violence, in reason of homophobia or transphobia, a criminal offense.

The bill was approved by Camera dei deputati, but whit an amendment creating an exception about the opinions expressed within organizations that carry out political, union, culture, health, education, religion or worship activities.

This amendment was criticized by LGBTI NGOs who said this emptied the bill of its power.

The bill must be approved on the senate floor.

This bill intends to extend to hate crimes and hate speeches in reason of homophobia or transphobia the Law Mancino-Reale approved in 1993 in order to achieve a better protection for LGBTI people.

A previous bill in 2009 maked a recidivism in case of bias-motivated violence and bias-motivated speech (art. 61 Codice penale), but this bill wasn't approved by Parliament.

## 5. LGB-silent-T phenomenon in the Irish LGBT Movement

### Finlay L.

Laura Finlay is an LGBTQI activist who for almost a decade has contributed to the expansion of the LGBT activist landscape in Ireland at policy and practice levels within a range of contexts including the University and the NGO sector. She was centrally involved in co-ordinating the Irish contribution to the 4th European Transgender Council, has been Parade Director of Dublin LGBT Pride and is currently a Board Member of TENI (Transgender Equality Network Ireland). Laura is a recent graduate from the Masters Programme in Equality Studies, University College Dublin.

### ABSTRACT

This paper draws from my recently completed master thesis which sought to investigate solidarity relations between the Irish LGB community and the trans\* community. This paper explores whether the 'LGB-silent-T phenomenon' exists in the Irish LGBT movement. For the purposes of this paper the 'LGB-silent-T phenomenon' is the term I am using to describe the marginalisation and erasure of trans\* people, both historically and in the current LGBT social justice movement, which has often led to the 'T' being a token gesture. While the research traces the early history of the LGBT movement in the U.S, it primarily focuses on the trans\* movement in Ireland. Drawing on a series of interviews conducted with stakeholders in the Irish trans\* community, I argue that trans\* people are still marginalised and erased, and that the 'LGB-silent-T phenomenon' exists in the Irish LGBT movement and I hypothesise two possible reasons for the continued marginalisation and erasure of trans\* people: the first being the roots of cissexism planted in the early days of the gay rights movement by trans\* exclusionary radical feminism; the second being that in the current push for marriage equality, trans\* people simply do not fit into the image of 'same-sex' couples being portrayed to the media and the general public to appeal to 'middle Ireland'.



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# Lacanian psychoanalytic clinical practice with queer transgenders

Mary Nicotra

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*The theme of transsexuality and transgenderism mobilize on the cultural, health and legal fields. In the last decades there is a proliferation of researches and theories of transsexuality and transgenderism developed by gender and queer theorists which goes in the direction of the social inclusion and depathologization. This paper aims to question some points of the clinical practice with queer and transgender subjects who don't fit in 'mainstream' transsexuality. The research is made in the context of Spo.t, a project of Maurice GLBTQ of Turin which give assistance and services - a "spot" - also for social inclusion. By referring to lacanian psychoanalytic theory of sexuation and topology, this paper aims to point out which elements are involved in the psychoanalytical treatments with subjects who express a desire to transcend the limits of sexual difference. The discussion aims to stress a reflexion regarding some crucial notes concerning the medical – legal procedure.*

*Keywords:* Lacanian psychoanalysis, transgender, transsexuality, queer, Lacan

## Introduction

Many researches around issues of gender have been carried out in the last fifty years .

Indeed nothing more than the issues related to identity and to its sexual connotation can put to work on a cultural, social and scientific level as a questioning effect of the axiom of the two sexes, male-female, and of the two gender, man-woman.

The DSM in its successive publications shows the unceasing work in progress to define the transgender and transsexual phenomenon.

Some associations were established worldwide and at a local level with the aim of keeping alive the debate. For example in Italy the National Observatory of Gender Identity (ONIG) is an association that brings together health professionals, institutions and associations.

Interesting reflections also come from the researchers at the Unit of Clinical Psychology and Applied Psychoanalysis of the Department of Neuroscience and Behavioral Sciences, of the University of Naples 'Federico II'. They well highlight in *L'enigma del transessualismo*<sup>i</sup> some key issues with respect to the practice as organized. They emphasize the clinical related institutional problems and question the assumptions that underlie the practice, whereby the request of psychological interviews systematically comes from a subject-other-than-the-patient, particularly by an institutional subject, as the medical corps. In their experience generally the doctor, within specialized units, requires the psychiatrist, psychologist or psychotherapist to 'assess the transsexual condition' before proceeding with surgery. The individual therefore have to undergo a compulsory path structured in a given time. Interviews and tests which have the function of determining whether exist the conditions to diagnose a 'gender dysphoria' are required depending on the protocol. The psychologist assumes a role that has to do with the verification of the transsexual condition.

With regards to the cultural studies, scholars have articulated and divergent readings Kate Bornstein<sup>ii</sup> argues that transgender individuals are not trapped in the wrong body, but they combine the concept of male and female in a new way. She believes that the medicalization and the sex (re)allocation process, which encourages the majority of transgender and transsexual people to transit with their body from one gender category to the other, is a source of pain and suffering, and move them away from their desire, creating significant distortions in their stories.<sup>iii</sup>

Jay Prosser, however, in his book *Second Skins*<sup>iv</sup>, stresses that transgenders and transsexuals are not constantly looking for subversion of gender categories, but they are rather looking for a house/body sufficiently strong and stable.

The question is therefore very complex and probably someone will agree with Kate Bornstein, whereas others with Jay Prosser.

In between there are the life stories of everyone. Each one with their own symptoms. One by one.

### **Lacanian psychoanalytic clinic: from the primacy of the symbolic to the clinic oriented by the real**

In his former teaching, from Seminar I to V, Lacan emphasizes and develops the centrality of the symbolic, mainly dealing with the language issues, and the theory of the signifier. In this period, not only he includes the specular pair 'a-a' (scheme L) in the imaginary, but also the entire field of significations. The signifier, which is in the field of symbolic, produces multiple significations, that become part of the imaginary field. The same signifier - for example 'woman'- can generate many imaginary meanings.

In *L'istance de la lettre dans l'inconscient ou la raison depuis Freud*, Lacan writes that the cabin offered to the Western man to satisfy his natural needs submits his public life to the law of urinary segregation. In this way, recalling the sign of the two toilets for men and women, he shows us how the subject is called to assume the signifier 'man' or 'woman' in order to cross one doorway or the other.

Lacan coined the neologism *parlêtre* to condense in a word the indissoluble relationship between human beings and language. We are born immersed in the language and the human being does not coincide with the biological organism. It is rather a spoken body, marked by the language from the very beginning, and then a body that suffers a loss, a division, because of the signifier. The body has to build up itself, we are not born with a body. The body is built, it is effect of the word and to nominate oneself man or woman it is an effect of the language.

To assume one's proper own sexual being requires a symbolization, but it will not be enough to assume one's proper own sex, because the difference between sexes is not written in the unconscious. There is a "real" at stake, an unspeakable referent, that affects the relationship of the subject with his own sex. "Real" is not reality.<sup>v</sup>

In the R.S.I. Seminar, 1974-75, Lacan returns on the triad consisting of the real (R), the symbolic (S) and the imaginary (I), leveling the three registers, RSI, and producing the redefinition of reality. The latter does not exist by itself but it is the result of how the three registers RSI are kept together. The Borromean knot will hold them together.

The Borromean knot is a topological figure composed of three rings ringed between them so that if we separate any of the three, the other two are released too. From the knots theory on, it has been produced a major change in the clinic: the starting point is no longer the Other and the lack-to-be in the desire, but rather the *jouissance*, which is always autistic itself.

The borromean knot is a clinic writing. The first clinical writing, the classical Freudian writing is the Oedipal one. It places the subject's position with respect to the coordinates of the Oedipus, and the family complexes. It considers the symptom the heir of the paternal function.

The borromean writing allows us to go beyond. This clinic allows us to talk about those structures that have not reached the Oedipal configuration and to identify the significant differences. In the case of the psychosis where it was not possible to integrate the castration, because of the missed registration of the paternal function in the symbolic, they will be the symptoms of compensation to allow a knotting. This indication makes to gather in the clinic as the knotting of imaginary, symbolic and real through a fourth element, the symptom, which is the necessary condition in order to keep a significant concatenation. The *syntome* is then a way to keep together the three registers, a solution the subject finds.

Lacan introduces the formulas of sexuation during the lesson of April 9th, 1974, in the seminar '*Les non-dupes errent*'. He declares that "l'être sexué ne s'autorise que de lui-même"<sup>vi</sup> which means that sexual being authorizes him-her/self by him-her/self. The fact that they are classified as male or female, does not prevent them from the choice.

In the complex sexualization formulas Lacan elaborates a logic to explain how the position related to the phallic signifier produces the choice of the sexual position for each '*parlêtre*'

The phallic signifier is undoubtedly a compass of the desire of the subject, but it is not a guarantee of the personal word act. Each subject is in relation with sexuality through his own word. The process of sexualization does not come from the biology or the cultural context but by the logic of the discourse. The subject is alone in front of the personal act of the word, utterance, that determines a personal sexual position.

Thus, what happens when the subject cannot fit himself/herself as a man or a woman?

What happens to those people who cannot find even a place in the mainstream of transsexualism, that are individuals who request the institutions to go from one gender to another through surgery?

What happens on a medical-legal level to those subjects who declare their uncertainty and who subjectively cannot or do not want to accept the medical offer?

It opens up a world that is contemporary. The transgender subjects exist. They seek their place in the world, demanding their rights to exist.

### **Effects of clinical experience with individuals who call themselves queer and transgender**

The Maurice GLBTQ have been developing in Turin, in the last four years a project called 'Spo.T', that offers paths dedicated to the social inclusion of transgenders and transsexuals, and the possibility to access psychotherapy and endocrinologic counseling.

With regards to psychotherapy, this is not an alternative to institutionalized paths and protocols that are provided within the hospital operational units. This is another way.

When the Spo.T team met the colleagues of CIDIGEM, the Turin Molinette Hospital specialized team in transsexualism, they realized that although the two paths can interact in certain moments, the people who turn to Spo.T, do not turn to CIDIGEM and vice versa.

Thus, why 'Spo.T'?

Spot translated in Italian means 'place'. I do not know if the project designers are aware of it. Actually, after four years of this experience, they can understand it from the effects. 'Maurice' makes a spot for the individuals, who find in it a spot to include themselves socially, through groups of peers and activities of the association.

For a psychoanalyst, due the assumptions that guide its practice, as I tried to say with reference to the teaching of Lacan, also it is a question of doing place, a spot to the subject, to the subject of unconscious. For a psychoanalyst it is not a question 'to ascertain the transsexual condition'.

A psychoanalyst chooses to be oriented by the particular speech of each individual, one by one, in order to field the conditions where the subject of the unconscious can arise.

In this case, by accepting the demand of the subject, he lets the speech of the subject teach him without applying to the theory put in the position of the truth. The truth comes always from the subject.

The subject - one by one - needs to bring his own word, his own speech and in the setting it is important that he can produce his own position of enunciation, beyond utterance, the statement coming in the speech.

There is something very interesting in my clinical practice with individuals who define themselves queer and transgender. What is gathered in each session with each individual is that if you drop any supposition to know and you let the uniqueness of each person to find its own way, without any universalization attempt, the subject finds unique solutions and singular inventions, that have nothing to do with the adaptation to a standard nor with a high or wrong behavior.

I think of someone for whom the sessions themselves serve as a place to deposit the anguish as he/she/\* tries to build a crutch to walk in the world, although limping. Or someone else who no longer wants to resort to surgery. Or even somebody who has found a way to give a place to his strong desire, who has decided to call himself a man rather than a woman. Others realize that what seemed

impossible to bear is not that much their own body, but the gender roles they turn against. Everybody with their own story, their own symptoms, each one in a new bond of transference.

What I learned is that it is necessary to accept those new signifiers -queer - transgender - that emerge in the speech of the subjects, so that each one can find a way to define himself/herself /\*in a singular possible way, beyond new labels

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<sup>i</sup> P.Valerio,R.Vitelli ,*L'enigma del transessualismo*, Ed.Franco Angeli, Milano 2004

<sup>ii</sup> K.Bornstein, *Gender Outlaw: On Men ,Women and the Rest of Us*, Routledge, New York and London 1994.

<sup>iii</sup> P.Califia, *Sex Changes. The Politics of Transgenderism*, : Cleis Press. San Francisco 2003.

<sup>iv</sup> J.Prosser, *Second Skins: TheBody Narratives of Transsexuality*, Columbia University Press, New York1998.

<sup>v</sup> The “real” is that inaccessible place for the subject, that resists to any signification or sense, together with the other two registers, the symbolic and the imaginary. The “real” has not to do with ideas or immutable and inaccessible essences opposed to the imaginary world that we perceive, in the Platonic sense of the term. The “real” is related to '*jouissance*', repetition, sex and death drive. It cannot be reduced to a sense. We can catch something about it only in relation to the other two registers: the symbolic and the imaginary.

<sup>vi</sup> J. Lacan, *Le Séminaire, livre XXI, Les non-dupes errent* (inédit), leçon 9 avril 1974.



# Discriminations in the workplaces: an empirical study of perceived diversity climate and coming out

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*Abstract: The Italian social context still has the presence of numerous and serious prejudices against homosexuality. This is clearly demonstrated by the attitudes of politicians who often externalize hostile positions towards the homosexual people, and it is aggravated by the fact that Italy still has not yet codified homophobic behavior as a crime. The aim of this study is to explore how gay employees in Sicily perceive to be treated in the workplace, and in particular, if to come out, to heterosexual colleagues, rather than to not declare, determine a different perception of the same behavioral area. Test used for data detection was an ad hoc Homosexual discrimination Questionnaires for employees, divided into different parts. Results obtained from 256 Italian homosexual employees confirm our hypotheses and show as variables, named education, job contract, time and, conditionally to the coming-out, generally rated with different levels of perceived discrimination behaviors and evaluations of social support by heterosexual colleagues.*

*Keywords: Work, discrimination, supportive, coming out.*

## Introduction

Recently the LGBTQI movement recorded significant achievements in the field of human rights recognition. Many states have continued to call for progress towards sexual equality through a number of international civil laws. For instance, Denmark (1989), Norway (1995), Germany (2001) and Switzerland (2002), have anti discrimination laws which that prohibit discrimination against LGBTQI workers in employment and extend partnership and parenting rights to all LGBTQI people. Besides that, Sweden and the Netherlands (1996), allow adoption by same gender couples. Furthermore, all these countries prohibit sexual orientation discrimination in employment<sup>[1]</sup>. However, it is important to address the gap in the sexual orientation standard within the HRM literature and the progress that have actually been achieved. A clear example of this reversal is the equality/diversity policy and practice within the organizational behaviour<sup>[2; 3]</sup>.

Few research have shown that the “closeted” homosexual workers will have a less positive work-related attitudes in the companies that prohibit the sexual discrimination<sup>[4]</sup>. It is clear from these results that anti-discrimination policies are strictly related to employee retention, high levels of work satisfaction, productivity and profitability<sup>[5; 6]</sup>, high level of performances<sup>[7]</sup> and well being<sup>[8; 9]</sup>. Moreover, previous studies have shown a correlation between job satisfaction and diversity climate acceptance<sup>[10]</sup>, while other research suggested that diversity orientation is a strong predictor of workers' engagement and successful outcomes<sup>[11]</sup>. Coming out or, vice versa, “stay in the closet” increases (or inhibits) the employee communication relationship, promotes inclusion processes and stimulates perceived organizational supportive<sup>[12; 13; 14]</sup>. Finally a strong sense of anti-discrimination prevents employees of holding their opinions about organizational circumstances<sup>[15;16]</sup> harassment<sup>[17]</sup> and turnover<sup>[18]</sup>. The impact of organizational equality/diversity policy and practice has been confirmed by a relevant number of researches.

## Methods

### Sample and procedure

The participants were members of cultural associations that offer some protection against LGBTQI discrimination and partnership and promote the parenting rights. The participants were 256 Italian homosexual employees, working in public or private sectors with different kind of contract, different ages and education. The study tools are included in a self-report questionnaire. The test used for data collection is an ad hoc questionnaire named “Homosexuality and discriminations in the work place”<sup>[19]</sup> gathered in 2013. The participants were informed of the nature and purpose of the study personally.

Data are analysed with the R - Project for Statistical Computing<sup>[20]</sup>.

## Measures

The survey contained commonly used close-ended items measuring perceptions of discrimination and supportive behaviour to a total of 11 items (even if for this preliminary study we will consider only six) with the assessment of eight homophobic behaviours (self- and other-directed) and three supportive behaviours (rating scale from 0= never to 5 = always). In addition, the questionnaire contains two sections: the first one includes the scales used to describe the improvement of their coming out status (yes or not, with who, I am considering homosexual, bisexual); the second one includes socio-demographic variables. In particular, participants are asked to indicate, on categorical scale with different points: gender, age, kind of contract and level of education. Table 1 summarizes important information about socio-demographic characteristics of the sample used as independent variables, crossed by the coming out.

**Table 1.** Summary of descriptive statistics of subjects' characteristics.

		Coming out						Tot.
		Yes	%	No	%	N.A.	%	
Gender	Male	99	61.9	26	16.3	35	21.9	160
	Female	53	55.2	11	11.5	32	33.3	96
Age (mean, sd)		35.6±10.7		30.8±7.7		29.5±11.3		33.3±10.8
Education	Primary	2	100	0	0	0	0	2
	Secondary	20	51.3	4	10.3	15	38.5	39
	Higher	68	56.7	22	18.3	30	25	120
	Graduate	46	59.7	9	11.7	22	28.6	77
	Over	13	86.7	2	13.3	0	0	15
Status	Single	65	57	18	15.8	31	27.2	114
	Etero-couple	7	46.7	2	13.3	6	40	15
	Homo-couple	80	63	17	13.4	30	23.6	127
Sons	Yes	51	58.6	19	21.8	17	19.5	87
	No	101	59.8	18	10.7	50	29.6	169
Sexuality	Homosexual	122	60.7	31	15.4	48	23.9	201
	Bisexual	15	46.9	4	12.5	13	40.6	32
	Transsexual	6	75	0	0	2	25	8
	Other	9	60	2	13.3	4	26.7	15
Work condition	Employed	139	84.8	22	13.4	3	1.8	164
	Student	5	12.5	8	20	27	67.5	40
	Unemployed (inactive)	2	13.3	1	6.7	12	80	15
	Unemployed (active)	6	16.2	6	16.2	25	67.6	37
Sector	Public	49	84.5	8	13.8	1	1.7	58
	Private	90	84.9	15	14.2	1	0.9	106
Job contract	Determinate	78	83.9	13	14	2	2.2	93
	Indeterminate	58	81.7	10	14.1	3	4.2	71
Time	Full	72	80.9	11	12.4	6	6.7	89
	Part	59	78.7	12	16	4	5.3	75
Tot.		152	59.4	37	14.5	67	26.2	256

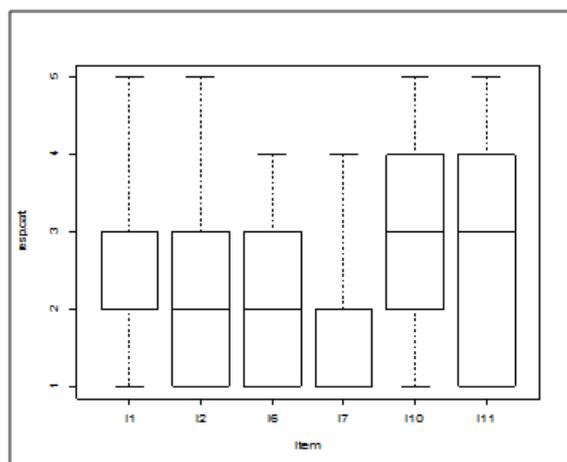
## Results

Before analyzing the relationships between the levels of perceived discrimination behavior and the evaluations of social support by heterosexual colleagues on the one hand, and coming out to the other, let take a quick look at what emerges from table 1. As shown in table, there are some associations between some subjects' characteristics and coming out; those (almost) statistically significant ( $p < 0.1$ ) are to have sons ( $p = 0.04$ ), work condition ( $p = 0.000$ ), sector ( $p = 0.08$ ), job contract ( $p = 0.1$ ), and finally time ( $p = 0.11$ ).

As previously mentioned, among all, we selected six items for the data analyses. The first four are

related to homophobic behaviors (self- and other-directed): *i1*, Express themselves negatively about homosexual people in general other than myself; *i2*, Express themselves negatively about myself as a lesbian/gay; *i6*, Complain about the presence of homosexual people in general in the workplace; *i7*, Complain about my presence as a lesbian/gay in the workplace. The last two items state the supportive behaviors (self-and other-directed): *i10*, Express solidarity with the cause of homosexual people in general (e.g. on account of being victims of violence and/or discrimination), and *i11*, Express solidarity in my regard as a lesbian/gay person (because vulnerable to violence and/or discrimination). Related to the ordinal nature of the responses, the analysis was performed using the nonparametric U test of Mann-Whitney, which compares the medians of groups of different subjects. Figure 1 shows the medians of items considered for the purpose of research. Table 2 reports the medians of the same items, conditionally to do or not coming out; we investigate whether the answers, given by declared individuals, rather than not, are similar (in median).

**Figure 1.** Medians of some items considered in order to the aim of the study.



**Table 2.** Medians of some items, conditionally to the coming out

Coming out	<i>i1</i>	<i>i2</i>	<i>i6</i>	<i>i7</i>	<i>i10</i>	<i>i11</i>
Yes	3	2	2	1	3	3
No	3	1	2	1	2	1

Data indicates three differences between the medians of the two groups of subjects, and in two cases, these differences are highly significant: *i2* ( $p = 0.09$ ), *i10* ( $p = 0.000$ ), and *i11* ( $p = 0.000$ ). Data also shows that the answers are conditioned by education and job contract for item *i2* ( $p = 0.02$ ,  $p = 0.047$ , respectively), and time for *i6* and *i11* ( $p = 0.017$ ,  $p = 0.046$ , respectively).

### Conclusion

This study reveals different perception of equality or discrimination in the workplace by heterosexual colleagues. The results shown that when the items are other-directed, the judgment to the harassment (*i1* and *i6*) between the two groups of subjects (declared/non-declared.) are similar; instead, this is not true for supportive item (*i10*). When items are self-directed, the two groups of subjects do not express different perception with regard to discrimination (*i7*), but they express a different one in terms of harassment (*i2*) and supportive behavior (*i11*). Furthermore, the results reveal that: employees with different levels of education and job contract declare different perceptions towards self-directed

discrimination (*i2*); employees with different working time declare different perception with respect to the other-directed discrimination (*i6*), and to the self-directed supportive behaviors (*iii*). According to this perspective, it is important that management of diversity take in considerations the LGBTQI discrimination, focusing on the workers, in addition to the social and economic values. To conclude, for many organizations it may be a most challenging and demanding task, though once achieved it can improve their quality and work life significantly.

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considered either a catastrophe or an opportunity of freedom for the subject to go beyond what has determined him so far.

However, if for a psychoanalyst, diagnostic evaluation as a label, as stigma, does not say anything of the singularity of a subject, at the same time he considers necessary to find out what are the subjective conditions on which has been built the relationship of the subject with the sexual that concerns him, conditions which differ in the different structures.

In chapter II of *Seminar XVIII On a discourse that might not be a semblance*<sup>i</sup>, Jacques Lacan talks about the difficulties encountered by Stoller (the first to introduce, in 1968, the distinction gender – sex) when he had to explain some particular cases in which the subjects said to “feel a woman in a man’s body”. According to Lacan, the interpretation of Stoller lacks, in some of those cases, of a fundamental concept, which the psychoanalytic clinic has: the concept of *foreclosure*.

In *Seminar XVIII*, Lacan deals with transsexualism starting with two clarifications: the first one is that sexuality (as the difference between man and woman), does not rely only on biology, namely on chromosome combinations, but also on language. The second one concerns the fact that we cannot deal with issues affecting sexual differences without the clinical tools to do a differential diagnosis.

Psychoanalytic theory claims that the neurotic can appeal to the signifier, to the language, to represent his sexual being. There are, instead, different subjective conditions for which this operation is not possible because something has been *excluded from the symbolization*. Lacan writes: “Freud admits a phenomenon of exclusion for which the term *Verwerfung* [*foreclosure*] appears valid and from which *Verneinung* [*denial*] is distinguished. It can happen that a subject refuses access to his symbolic dimension to something that he has nevertheless experienced, which in this case is nothing other than the threat of castration. The subject’s entire subsequent development shows that he does not want to know anything about it, Freud literally says, *in the sense of the repressed*”.<sup>ii</sup>

Therefore, Freud tells us that there is a difference: what falls in the field of *denial*, returns in the symptoms and in many other phenomena. What instead is produced following the *foreclosure* has a completely different destiny: the lack of access to the symbolic, means that what has been expelled cannot appeal, as in the case of the repressed, to the symbolic function and to its “channels”, signifiers of language. What is expelled, reappears in the real as a not symbolized enjoyment, with which the subject does not know how to do. In this regard, clinical experience shows that when a subject finds himself in these conditions, even the sexual organ appear like a *detached piece*, a piece of the body in relation to which only castration can represent a possible solution to the subject.

Nevertheless, is there something that comes in place of this symbolic “lack”? Lacan says that when for the subjects something lacks in respect of the symbolic function, he still has the *image*, although it is a particular image. “It’s an image that isn’t inscribed in any dialectic, but whose function as model, as specular alienation, nevertheless gives the subject a fastening point and enables him to apprehend himself on the imaginary plane”.<sup>iii</sup> For this reason it is about to seize, each time, the status of the changes in the real that a subject wants to bring to his own body.

This evaluation is needed to avoid the ratification of purely conformist identifications that, while can provide to the subject *the sense* of what it needs to be done to be a man/be a woman, on the other hand may involve passages to the act of which irreversibility can throw the subject himself in the most complete anguish.<sup>iv</sup>

In front of the delicacy of the issues at stake, it is not about, for a psychoanalyst, to stand back in his own practice. It is rather to evaluate each time, case by case, in respect of the subjective choices, how to become partner of the subject in the appropriate way.

Where possible, psychoanalysis aims to escort the subject to the rebuilding of a *substitution* [*suppléance*]. The substitution has not to do with the rebuilding of something that has broken, as requested by the social mandate, does not *re-habilitates* to a previous state of supposed integrity.

Freud already said it clearly: for some subjects, in front of what structurally can't be symbolized, there is no chance of appeal, in the field of the word, to something that edges that hole, that inscribes it in a dialectic. An *ad hoc construction* it is required. This is to point out that not all the constructions represent a substitution that allows the subject to reach a condition of stabilization. For example, in the case of *President Schreber*<sup>v</sup> where he cannot appeal to the symbolic dimension, he constructs an imaginary substitution – *to be the woman of God* – that, on one hand, localizes the enjoyment, and on the other hand, does not make it achievable. However, when the “fabric” of the substitution is imaginary, it represents a precarious solution, which can falter at any moment.

Unable to appeal to that ordering signifier that Lacan calls the *Name-of-the-Father*, the relationship with the *Other* is for the subject always very invasive: the *Other* enjoys and enjoys the subject. For this reason, one of the purposes of the treatment is to localize the enjoyment, making it difficult to reach.

The passage to the act itself may represent, for a subject, a form of substitution, as it allows a separation from the *Other*, as we can see in the case of *Aimée* or in that of *M.me Lefebvre*, studied by Marie Bonaparte, where the completion of the act brings, for the subject, a relief, a sort of healing from the “obsessions” that afflict him.

Thanks to the last teaching of Lacan, to do a differential diagnosis we have at our disposal, a clinic that Jacques-Alain Miller defines *continuist*. A clinic that distinguishes itself, not for the classes, but for the ways, that are *variations*. Therefore, it is necessary to give place to the *approximation*, since you are not only in the yes-or-not, but also in the more-or-less.

It is precisely starting from this orientation that the psychoanalysis practice is based: a clinic of the act in opposition to the correction of inappropriate behaviours. I hypothesize in fact that considering the subjective solution in their *variety*, let them “lay” on the language, may offer a less invasive way of dealing with one's *own* sexuality than the surgical one (when it's not explicitly required by the subject), a way less close to the passage to the act.

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<sup>i</sup> J. Lacan, *Le Séminaire Livre XVIII, D'un discours qui ne serait pas du semblant* (1970-1971), Paris, Le Seuil, 2007.

<sup>ii</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 16. It is worth noting that, in this way, Freud first of all makes us understand that for psychoanalysis it is always about having to deal with a subject that can never understand himself as such. The hypothesis of the unconscious – which underlies Freudian psychoanalytic theory -, in fact, presupposes a subject that does not belong entirely to himself. He keeps missing a part of himself, is divided by structure. What the subject knows, must not overshadow what he ignores of himself. For this reason Freud warns not to be deceived by what shows itself.

<sup>iii</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 241.

<sup>iv</sup> I hypothesize that the very absence of this kind of evaluations has, as effect, the large number of post-operative complaints, when you must face a real lack.

<sup>v</sup> S.Freud, “Gesammelte Werke”, S.Fisher Verlag GmbH-Frankfurt am Main, vol. 6.



that claimed succession rights under the Rent Act in respect of premises of which the deceased partner was a protected tenant. The claimant, who sued the case in front of all jurisdictional levels up to the House of Lords, was never recognized protection, even though his case satisfied the requirement of the Rent Act. Indeed, it was recognized that the claimant, involved in a homosexual relationship, was a member of the deceased's family. The House of Lords considered that the term *spouse* is to be defined as a person living with the original tenant as a wife or husband, and absolutely did not include a same sex partner. The expression used in paragraph 2 (2), could be applied only to legal spouses or heterosexual life partners, given the obvious literal meaning, but evidently it refers to a traditional cultural context. According to this decision, judges have “*to resist the temptation to change a bad law by giving it a new linguistic twist, because such changes could only be made by Parliament*”. The cultural issue of tradition is related to the case *Ghaidan v. Mendoza* ([2004] UKHL 30, [2001]), very similar to the *Fitzpatrick* case. The defendant argument is focused on parenthood: Same sex partnerships cannot be equated with family in the traditional sense. Same sex partners are unable to have children with each other, and there is a reduced likelihood of children being a part of such a household”. Justice Nicholls affirmed that “*The line drawn by Parliament is no longer drawn by reference to the status of marriage. Nor is parenthood, or the presence of children in the home, a precondition of security of tenure for the survivor of the original tenant. Nor is procreative potential a prerequisite*”. There is a connection between the security of the tenure for the survivor of the couple living in that home and it consists of an important and legitimate purpose of a social nature since the couple shares the home and life together in that place. This circumstance is real, applicable and common both to heterosexual and homosexual couples. Justice Nicholls overcame the classic conservative traditional argument and its connection with the protection of children born to a married heterosexual couple.

A recent and very well-known case, decided by the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom [*Bull & Anor v Hall & Anor* [2013] UKSC 73 (27 November 2013)] could be abridged by the question formulated by Lady Hale at the beginning of the judgment itself: “*Is it lawful for a Christian hotel keeper, who sincerely believes that sexual relations outside marriage are sinful, to refuse a double-bedded room to a same sex couple?*”. Baroness Hale's legal reasoning in this judgment flourished in the definition of 'direct' discrimination according to EU law opposed to 'indirect discrimination', and what the meaning of the 'duty of accommodate' is. However, the real interesting core of her reasoning useful to underline the presence of stereotypes, even if implicit, is this statement: “*Homosexuals can enjoy the same freedom and the same relationships as any others. But we should not underestimate the continuing legacy of those centuries of discrimination, persecution even, which is still going on in many parts of the world. It is no doubt for that reason that Strasbourg requires "very weighty reasons" to justify discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation. It is for that reason that we should be slow to accept that prohibiting hotel keepers from discriminating against homosexuals is a disproportionate limitation on their right to manifest their religion*”. Although the main issue of this lawsuit is that the enforcing of non-discrimination principle with the freedom of society as a whole and, and at the same time, of its individual members, the content of this argument is almost unsettling. Indeed, this assertion highlights a fact related to past and present discrimination against homosexual people even if it does not seem to be strictly relevant to the decided case. It shows a nuanced sense of guilt for what still has not yet changed in other cultures, states or traditions that are discriminating and persecuting LGBTIQ people.

Recently, the England and Wales Court of Appeal (*Bright & Anor v The Secretary of State for Justice* [2014] EWCA Civ 1628 (16 December 2014)) decided the claim of two homosexual serving prisoners about the separation from their same-sex partners. In a restricted living environment such as a prison the behaviour of inmates is a relevant safety issue. They complained an unlawful interference in their private lives according to Article 8.2. ECHR, that governs the proportionality and legality of the authoritative measures balancing them with the right to family life. The core of this decision was defining what 'insulting' or 'indecent' behaviour is when occurring in a prison, where “*it is not always possible to differentiate between consensual and coercive relationships in a custodial situation*”. According to the Court of Appeal judges, the words 'insulting' and 'indecent' are ordinary words whose meaning is clear and well understood. They are sufficiently clear to form the basis of criminal offences. It is unrealistic (and not required by the Strasbourg jurisprudence) to expect the public authorities (in this case the Secretary of State) to provide a list of examples of 'insulting' and 'indecent' or other

inappropriate behaviour. It is also unrealistic and unnecessary to expect him to spell out in detail the kind of physical contact between prisoners (including cuddling) that is regarded as indecent or otherwise unacceptable. For these reasons the claimants' challenges were rejected.

### **3. Parenthood, religion and same-sex issues**

It should be noted that in my mothertongue the word *pregiudizio* could be translated by both the terms “prejudice” and “prejudgment”. In this perspective, the main issue solved by the Italian Supreme Court of Cassation is related to the question: “What is the hierarchy of values according to which the child should to be educated and brought up?” In this case, the father's point of view apodictically referred to *“the child's fundamental right to be educated according to both parents' principles and religious education”*. This statement portrays the child as a passive object of her parents' desires, especially in consideration of the environment of origin of her Muslim father. Indeed, homosexuality and cohabitation of the mother with another woman means the formation of an unorthodox family situation according to religious teachings, related not only to the Muslim religion but also to other religions (such as Christian, Jewish, and so on). In this case, the lower courts have found that the child has received a negative impact related to her father's aggression, therefore the lower court gave the child exclusive custody to her mother. The Court of Cassation confirmed that the investigation about the influence of the mother's homosexuality on parenting does not matter. In fact, it is not sufficient in order to report generic unspecified *“negative impact on the educational level and the growth of the child - the family environment in which she lived with her mother - the specification precisely the lack of which had been stigmatized by the courts of appeal”*. The judges of legitimacy also emphasize that *“the basis of the applicant's complaint are not based on scientific certainty or data of experience, but only on the mere pre-judgment on homosexuality and it is detrimental to the balanced development of the child as living in a family centered on a homosexual couple. Between the alleged “pre-judgment” concerning the harmful effects of homosexuality and the demonstrated deleterious effects of paternal aggressive behavior, the Court has clearly specified its position, condemning also the possible alibi evidence of cultural and religious violence.*

In a different case, the Juvenile Court of Rome authorized a step-child adoption for the partner of the child's mother. It is a very open minded decision, but in the legal reasoning there is a sentence that sounds out of place: *“homosexual parenthood is a divergent parenthood, but equally “healthy” and “worthy” to be recognized as such”*. In this judgment, even if in a positive point of view, homosexual parenthood is related to the *“sanitarian”* concept of *“health”*, while, as it is well-known, homosexuality is a personal condition and not a disease.

The most recent Italian judicial decision on this issue is related to the recognition of the same-sex parenthood to a child, the son of a couple of lesbian mothers, one Italian and one Spanish, regularly married in Spain according to the Spanish Law. The couple applied for registration of their son at the registry office of Turin. The child was born through a process of in vitro fertilization with a sperm donor and the fertilized egg which had been donated by the Italian woman, while the Spanish one had given birth to the child. The municipality refused to register the child's birth certificate because of the Italian law does not recognize any kind of parent-child relationship based on same-sex parenthood. The provision was legally challenged. The Court of First Instance stated that the transcription was *“contrary to public order understood as a set of principles established by the Constitution or otherwise founding the entire organizational system, including the rules of filiation that make express reference to the concepts of father, mother, husband and wife, the traditional stereotyped concepts of family members”*. On the contrary, the Court of Appeal of Turin ordered the transcription of the child's birth certificate. In fact, it is not disputed that, from both the ethical and legal viewpoints, the identification of motherhood and fatherhood as a result of medically assisted heterologous procreation emphasizes the concept of voluntary behaviour necessary for filiation as a choice and the recruitment of responsibility for parenting. Indeed, the Italian Parliament, with the law 154/2013 reforming the status of filiation, identified the concept of parental responsibility. In fact, the parent-child relationship changed deeply allowing several different parental figures as the result of new reproductive techniques: the genetic mother (who donated the fertilized egg), the biological mother (who carried out gestation) the social mother (who expresses a willingness to take on the parental responsibility); the genetic father, the social father (who take care of the child) or other social figures who may, in fact, not coincide with each other.

Recently, the English courts have been confronted with a case (Re J and S (Children) [2014] EWFC) 4

related to the presence of a double stereotypical prejudice: on the one hand it is based on ethnic discrimination, provoking the escape of the family group from their home country, and on the other hand with the stereotype alleged by the family itself against homosexual foster parents who had been entrusted with two of the couple's children. This case is related to Slovakian Catholic citizens of Roma origins. They had to move from Slovakia to the UK because of the social deprivation and discrimination endured by the Roma community for many years. After they came to the UK, five of their ten children were taken in by foster families [[2013] EWHC 2308 (Fam)]. A homosexual couple took care of two of them. Their biological parents refused this solution and appealed against the foster care order. Their claim was based on these facts: they are a Slovak Roma family practising Catholic faith and a homosexual couple as potential adopters do not promote "the children's Roma heritage or their Catholic faith" because "they are a homosexual couple and as such their lifestyle goes against our Roma culture and lifestyle". Finally, they argued that their family has been subjected to a "conscious and deliberate effort" of "social engineering" to transform their "Slovak Roma children to English middle class children." The reaction of Justice Munby to the parents' claims concerns on the one hand the prevailing protection of the best interests of the child, in front of which even the pretense and inconsistent relevance of the children's ethnicity necessarily passes into the background, and on the other hand an obligation, not only moral, paid by the parents to adapt to the laws and customs of the country that welcomed them after their flight from a foreign land, in this case another country within the European Union. Justice Munby underlined that, even if the court must always be sensitive to social, cultural and religious circumstances of the particular child and his or her family, the case has to be judged *according to the law of England and by reference to the standards of reasonable men and women in contemporary English society. The parents' views, whether religious, cultural, secular or social, are entitled to respect but cannot be determinative. They have made their life in this country and cannot impose their own views either on the local authority or on the court.* In this specific case stereotyped prejudices were applied by the claimants, and Justice Munby had no shyness in censuring them from a legal viewpoint, recalling obedience to the laws of England for all those, citizens or foreigners, living on English soil. Furthermore, he made a moral comment, described the applicants themselves as "bigoted".

#### **4. Conclusions**

The empirical study of the Italian and English judgments showed different paths for identifying stereotypes. The Italian courts refer to abstract categories, because of the refusal of the Parliament to recognize equal treatment to LGBTIQ and heterosexual people. This forces the judges to face the legitimacy of traditional concepts, which are hidden in a narrative reconstruction disconnected from reality. In the English legal system, however, the recognition of equal rights has also allowed the judges' arguments to be more focused on the reality of the case and identifying stereotype, especially in the arguments of the parties related to specific discrimination cases. The conclusion that could be drawn is that the stereotype is still present in the common mentality, but the English legal system, that has already fulfilled the recognition of equality among citizens regardless of their sexual orientation or gender, is more effective in contrasting stereotypes as demonstrated by the last case discussed, where it is said that cultural, social or religious elements can not prevail over law.



# The Homophobic Discourse Remembering the Authoritarian Personality. A Case Study

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*Starting from the first session with A.H., his phobia about being gay became immediately evident. A.H. was inquiring his parents and relatives asking them, with anxiety, if they were thinking he was gay. Everyone was trying to keep him quiet answering no, and reassuring him. Such an answer, instead of tranquilizing him, increased his idea of being “contaminated” by homosexuality. After several sessions of clinical work, the therapist proposed a diagnostic assessment with TAT. TAT revealed that, beyond Homophobia, A.H. showed a more general process of Phobia, and some delusional features in connection with the encounter with other people who, for some reason connected to Otherness, could either be perceived as showing aggressiveness or, vice versa, could stimulate aggressiveness in A.H.. During the presentation we will also propose some clinical interpretations starting with the TAT use in the classic research by Adorno et al. on Authoritarian Personality.*

*Keywords:* TAT, Homophobia, Authoritarian Personality, Psychotherapy, Imagination

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Adolfo comes to the therapy and during the first session speaks about his terror to be homosexual; he would like the psychotherapist to tell him if this feature could be proven true or false. The psychotherapist explains that “homosexuality” is not a diagnostic category. It is a personal choice motivated by a sexual desire and attraction to members of one's own sex. On these bases homosexuality is not a mental illness. The psychotherapist also says that the only person who can acknowledge one's own homosexuality is the subject himself through his sexual and love choices and each discourse about it may be arguable.

Adolfo's response to this preliminary explanation has been to assert that he feels like he is suffering from something that concerns homosexuality, in respect to which he consults his parents. They have tried to reassure him in two ways: firstly, they did not see any homosexual manner in Adolfo, secondly informing him that if ever he were gay, he would be accepted into his family anyway, despite the problems that this could arise.

However, Adolfo's response about the possibility to be homosexual is a reaction of profound anguish and fear.

In the subsequent meetings three topics are produced by Adolfo: his physique, his body linked with his ugliness and his being unable to seduce young girls, who are often younger than him, but they appear to be more expert on the sexual level, as if they had daily sexual relations whereas he is still a virgin. The third point regards other men's body, his peers, that he describes as more muscled, tonics; he describes their pectorals and etched abdominals whereas A. describes himself as flabby. These descriptions seem to screen some pleasure which is however radically denied.

In the next stage another annoyance comes to light: Adolfo's reaction when he comes in contact with gay men. This tension is related with the irritation felt with Moroccan, Albanian and Gipsy, persons that, in the collective unconscious, may represent a threat to entirety of socio-cultural identity.

Adolfo attends medicine department and he thinks that his disorder goes beyond fear of homosexuality. He asks again, but in a new way, for diagnostic assessment. Psychotherapist supposes with Adolfo a Phobic Disorder with a strong homophobic component. The therapist suggests an evaluation through the medium of TAT.

## **TAT administration: epistemology and methodology**

The Thematic Apperception Test, developed by Henry Murray in 1935, is with Rorschach one of the most famous projective test and it has a long and rich bibliography in researches, studies and

applications in clinical environment and so on. An heterogeneous overview due to its own nature, which does not lend itself to standardization or quantitative validation processes. The issue of utility and meaning of a diagnosis has always been problematic and controversial in the psychotherapeutic and psychoanalytic environment. If a psychodynamic and ecological conception of the psychic universe were chosen, then it wouldn't be possible to use a medical idea of diagnosis which could stand detached or independent from a more complex existential situation of the patient.

Only an idiographic perspective, able to look at the psyche as a complex semiotic net that is not circumscribed to an individual's brain without history, could try to build a diagnostic discourse which does not impose itself as a nomothetic verdict.

We use TAT as a sharing tool of a potential diagnosis. As an element during which diagnosis and therapy are not separated. Therefore the discourse on diagnosis could join the therapeutic conversation, bringing it back into it because it's preeminent compared to technical evaluation. The TAT reveals to be a therapeutic tool itself.

The therapist and the patient, through its administration, become actors of a co-constructive process which is able to create worlds and imagines characterized by a strong metamorphous power. This could be useful to identify and understand, through the relationship, not only dysfunctions and symptoms or problematic knots but also several forms of resilience, in order to appraise all the patient's and therapeutic link's resources.

The TAT, through projection's mechanism interlaced with perception, is able to understand the individual mental operation along with his semantic system, understood as idiosyncratic form appearing from a cultural context. The testing's name, Thematic Apperception Test, transmits a perception's imagine as culturally impregnated: an event that, although biologically grounded, is essentially thematic. It brings meaningful subjects, which, for their nature, have a cultural matrix.

The TAT is a peculiar stirring which is fit to stimulate in the patient his imagination level, transitional area par excellence, rich of convertible and creative possibility. This is the reason why the TAT is composed of several ambiguous imagines, which do not make up an unique narrative sequence.

These two elements actually establish a possible access to imaginative reign for the therapeutic couple. Since the imagines which TAT is composed of, are not ordered in a narrative uniform sequence, makes it suitable for describing a complex dynamic and existential framework, open to a theatre of identifications and projections, which are not forced to converge on the Id and on an normative cohesion or a functional cohesiveness in the terms of most traditional Ego Psychology.

In this way, the TAT could become essentially a vehicle in according with Klein's theories: the tales which are arisen by it, could not be neatly organized to mark a biography nor paint a map of Id's integration, but they compel the couple to work on a unique mean's fragment; each chart is on its own without strict representatives to any psychoanalytic theory.

This view gives us prolific clouts to the thought of authors like Winnicott, Bion or Bollas. Effectively, the figural and fragmented nature allows a link with reality's fact extremely free, open, polyvalent, positioning the therapeutic couple in a transitional and intermediate area as Winnicott called it, opening to exploration of "known not thought" and to the evocative resonances into co-transfer relationship. Starting from these premises, the TAT could become an outright transitional subject between therapeutic's world and patient one; accepting a relationship-wise function.

Finally, the fact that the TAT displays the imagines evidently coming from a world which is far from our own, immediately ascribable to a past time, gives to these pictures an additional evocative value, forcing the narrator to compare himself with a material which contains a historic importance, accepting an opportunity of releasing himself from probable flattening on the present and opening, at individual and collective level, to the game of intergenerational cross and to the existence of social anthropological and historic cultural differences.

In accordance with these premises, we do not want to proceed with a rigid classification about the tales, in forms or contents, neither to work on an important numerical sample to establish congruencies on probably diagnostic features. Rather each administration is part of the therapy and the therapist who judges, in each case, the meaning and the possible utility of the test.

The administration of the tables is made in several rounds, it is recorded and then transcribed. An equipe, composed by at least three psychologists and the therapist, listens the administration's record, they discuss and analyze it, recording themselves too to allow an extra analysis.

After this work, the tables are administered to the patient again, according to the equipe's analysis, and he is requested to make additional comments. In this way, the flexibility/rigidity about the possibility of tales' change is judged, as well as the resulting margin of therapeutic intervention.

In Adolfo's case, his request for a diagnostic assessment has incited the therapist to use the TAT, inserting this need of definition and labeling in the therapeutic speech, allowing a different understanding and giving a direction for a possible change.

The therapist chose for Adolfo these 22 tables: 1, 2, 3BM, 4, 5, 6BM, 7BM, 8BM, 9BM, 10, 11, 12M, 12 BG, 13MF, 13B, 14, 15, 16, 17BM, 19, 20.

Generally, the administration consists of 20 tables, but according to the previous meetings and the emerged material, the therapist chose to insert a double version of the tables 12 and 13, showing to Adolfo the imagine for adult men and for adolescents. Both choices are made according to an Adolfo's infantilism, such as making him swing from adults to adolescents categories.

The administration was conducted initially in two sessions for the 22 tables, adding a third meeting to let him choose three tables that he liked the most and three that he hated the most. The sessions were all recorded, transcribed, and analyzed.

### **Theatre of a homophobia: imagines and fragments**

Table 6BM gives us the picture of the relationship between Adolfo and his mother. His mother is a business woman, who had entrusted little Adolfo to his father. Despite her choice, she was still the family's pillar, personifying a figure of economic and social success, deserving her son's respect and consideration. The necessity of loyalty to this figure is clear, also for a debt felt toward her, an obligation felt for an important person, toward a pilaster of one's own life and family, although his inevitable lack, in his felling, of an emotional acknowledgement.

A mother's figure had already appeared in table 5. This last passage suggests that the mother is seen as an independent figure of growth and maturation, versus his father's apprehension, with all the ambiguities that this represents in an evolving experience: to dismiss is like an abandonment, it allows a detachment and a separation that, even if legitimated, embodies a grief. In Adolfo's story, the mother, who was less and less present on an emotional and care level, has always been the one who incited to autonomy balancing the father's behavior, more protective and caring.

Finally with these tables we could recognize a mother in respect to whom the subject feels an ambivalent feeling: in one way there is the consideration for her ability, her bravery, her success. Her distance to the family's affects allows her to be free, in addition to a debt because she had supported the family's life. On the other side there is the necessity of dealing with all that it has taken away in emotional terms from the mother-children relationship.

The most important tables which enable to rough out some aspects of the relationship with the father are the 7BM and 8BM. Aron notices that the subjects with authoritarian high score describe the 7BM table as an humiliation by the old man to the young man, and the persons with authoritarian low score describe this as a respectful relationship from guy to the adult, whereas Adolfo sees a criminal conspiracy between two crooks. The meeting between the subjects takes place for the necessity to set right a common problem: to stamp out a lawman. This seems an inverse Oedipal scene: the two, starting from the idea to kill the mother-law, arrive to the solution to sully her name and so to rub her out. The name, the social success, the fame, the patrimony.

In the next table the tale continues, but now, the murder of the mother, which has sacrificed herself for her son, brings the killer guy to the insanity. There are two identifications: between A. and the mad avenger against the mother's killers, and between himself and the crook who together with the godfather had killed the lawman.

In the 12BM table, a woman is going to die. The caregiver was identified by Adolfo as the woman's father or a priest. The end of the tale is different for each subject. The priest is the spiritual father but in this picture his distance, which makes him familiar and at the same time able to leave without struggling, might save the young woman's life. Vice versa, the father's pain makes the scene so sullen to design the girl for death.

In the 13B table, a father plans to finish his work earlier than usual in order not to make his son unhappy for something that the child was waiting to arrive but that his father feared may not realize. It's a child's positive memory with something bitter inside. In a way there's a big emotional value, with care, safety and aid. In the other way, there's the reproach for the inability of separation, which could bring to a symbolic death.

In the 1, 2, 4, 9, 10, 13 MF, 17BM and 18BM tables we could observe some peculiar features of Adolfo's relationship with himself. It stands to reason that there is an inner split between duties linked to the possibility of success, in order to satisfy the narcissist desire of power, achievement and sexuality released from the emotions and the affections (1, 4), and the idealization of an amorous sentiment without the sexual part (10). It's moreover evident the division of the subjects (and of the world) in the superior and inferior social classes, or between the esteemed and respectable persons and the slackers (2, 9). In these tables, the homophobic traits appear clearly, along with the ambivalence towards the powerful male figures, which are craved and deeply despised (13 MF, 17BM, 18BM). Being homo-sexual would signify to symbolically surrender to the flatteries of these individuals, to be their defenseless prey. To Adolfo's eyes the most terrible scenario is to identify with the victim and the weak, without the courage to despise those boastful muscles and the empty narcissism that would prevent him from the possibility to have plain and good emotional relationships.

It's interesting to note that the tables with the higher therapeutic value, which could outline feasible harmonic poises for Adolfo's conflicts, are the ones that make more room for the imagination, with less ties. Now a shepherd appears and sacrifices himself to save his oxen (11); a boy finds an abandoned newborn and decides to take care of him (12); a guy looks at the moon and may have a fiancée (14); some long and deep thoughts about the inevitable coexistence of death and life appear (15, 16); finally a guy emerges, capable of bearing the uncertain waiting for a beloved girl whom he would be able to share an emotional life with (20). A beautiful and sweet memory of his grandparents emerges here. It is as if this ambivalence and expressive freedom had a curative power against his rigid dichotomies and the violence of a narcissistic desire produced by scissions and insecurities.

The research on authoritarian personality by Adorno et al. could be useful in this context, such as some psycho-socio-analytic attempts to read mafia mind or behaviors linked to fundamentalism.

It is the phobia of alterity and differences, produced by the identification and security needs. The narcissistic vulnerability prevents from the possibility of an ambivalent and strong enchantment, as the love and eros relationships. At the same time, it impedes the development of an open identity, which allows for uncertainties and ambivalences, captivations and pains. The narcissistic traits are even hated because they negate a more realistic possibility of self exploration.

The homosexuality is feared because it represents an unforgivable alter ego of the idealize narcissistic super-hero, his victim, his shape. Being homosexual could mean to sully his mother's name, surrendering to his father's love; a father that, despite his sweetness, risks to block any growth and autonomy of his son and any possibility of success and achievement. It could represent the other face of the serial killer into whom the college boy, whose mother sacrificed for, transformed.

At the same time, homosexuality exerts a strong attraction power since it represents the possibility to release the exhausting control, required by the interior superhero not allowing him to enjoy the love of his father, who he does not want to resemble, still loving him and having been loved back.

The stronger the attraction, the bigger his fear to surrender, and the resulting denial and scorn.

Despite the differences into the classical description by Aron on the problem of an authoritarianism caused by a controlling father, the investigation on the personal past conducted by TAT, enables to show an interior theatre, which allows to reconstruct the identification dynamics, counter-identifications and feelings that bring to the need to totally identify. This generates a social phobia, not in medical or diagnostic terms, but to be seen as a phobia about the others, the Other and the alterity that inevitably lives inside us.

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## A transsexual parent recounts his transition

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*Abstract: When a parent decides to come out about his or her transsexualism, the process of disclosure becomes a family issue. The adjustment process to transsexual parenthood entails the acceptance of this new condition and a focusing on the care function, independently of the relationship of the couple. Moreover, difficulties at the level of the couple tend to influence other areas and especially the parenting function. A transsexual FtM individual responded to a semi-structured interview on her coming out and her transition experiences. F is a transsexual who began her transition after the birth of her two children. Her account of her experience regards the following themes: the couple's relationship, reactions to the coming-out from the family of origin, the incongruence between personal and social identity and the need to proceed with sex-reassignment surgery in order to be able to obtain modifications to registered personal data.*

*Keywords:* parenthood, gender dysphoria, transsexualism, coming out, family relationships.

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The DSM-5 diagnostic criteria for gender dysphoria emphasize the presence of “a marked incongruence between one’s experienced/expressed gender and assigned gender (...) associated with clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational or other important areas of functioning” (APA, 2013, p. 452-453). In order to understand the different typology of transsexualism, Stoller, Herdt (1982) and Baldaro Verde (1991) suggest distinguishing between primary and secondary transsexualism; primary transsexualism is characterized by the conviction of really being of, and belonging to, the other sex; individuals with this condition usually state that they have always felt themselves to be of a different gender from the assigned one. Secondary transsexualism, on the other hand, is associated with feelings of fear and discomfort in the assigned gender role, late onset and a lack of identity coherence.

Coming out as a transsexual individual may be very tough, especially when the person coming out is a parent (Miano, Mamo, 2014); revealing his or her condition to the family of origin may be difficult, whilst sharing the transsexual condition with one’s own children will represent a matter for some concern regarding the children’s development, their relationships with the transsexual parent and the potential for discrimination by peers.

To explore the parental dimension in a transsexual individual we interviewed F., a 42-year-old FtM transsexual individual with two children. The interview was constructed in a semi-structured form. First of all we studied how F. had decided to join an Italian association focussing its work on homosexual and transsexual parenting, what kind of expectations F. had about this association and the support that he could receive from the organization and from other members. Then we investigated the personal history of F., and in particular, how F. came to identify herself as a transsexual person, how he decided to undergo a gender transition, which motivations led him to reassign to the male gender and which obstacles and protective factors he found during the transition process. In this regard, F. answered a series of questions on his coming-out process; when had he resolved to tell his parents and siblings that he would feel better in a male gender? why had he reached this decision? how had his relatives reacted to his coming-out and how had the quality of his previous relationships with his parents and sisters influenced their relationships after his disclosure? Focusing on what happened after the transition and coming-out, we asked F. to tell us something about the adjustment process; whether he had received support through psychological counselling and psychotherapy and what he had found in terms of support.

Another important issue concerned his relationship with husband and children; we investigated his

relationship-as-a-couple before and after the transition, his children's reaction to the coming-out and their adjustment to his transsexualism. In exploring why F. was worried about the consequences for his two children, we focused especially on his concerns with regard to specific risks of discrimination by peers. At the end of the interview we examined the incongruence between personal and social identity and his attitude with regard to the need to proceed with sex-reassignment surgery, in order to be able to obtain modifications to registered personal data.

The interview was subjected to content analysis, which revealed several crucial elements concerning the topics examined, both in terms of experiences described by the interviewee and as an occasion to reflect on the difficulties to be encountered in such situations.

### **Parenthood and transition process**

The decision to go through the transition process came during adulthood, when F. was a married woman with very young children. Changing his feminine characteristics and presenting himself as a man brought about the need to reorganize familial and social relationships in a context in which the representation of F. as woman, mother and wife had already been formed. This decision not only entailed the family acknowledging F. as a transsexual, but also having to face a mourning process. The person they had known until then, whose distinctive characteristics were massively based on feminine physical features and gender-related expectations, had somehow ceased to exist, and new bonds, based on the new identity, had to be established.

Furthermore, the physical change and the new masculine identity had been perceived by the husband and the family of origin as something that F. could have avoided. The family blamed him, especially because he had a responsibility towards his children. In a situation such as the one we are presenting, the psychological dynamics related to the sense of guilt can be particularly cruel (Lebovici, 1971). The sense of guilt, occasioned by all these processes, was actually very intense. F. says he went through an excruciatingly painful conflictual experience in which he felt he had to choose between affirming himself as a man and harming his children.

F. eventually decided for the change. He kept imagining the kind of parent he would have been if he had not decided in favor of the transition. He concluded that, had he renounced being his true self, the children, in the end, would not have become better people. Had he retained his biological gender, he would probably have become a depressed, frustrated, and unsatisfied woman, resenting his children for not allowing him to be happy, and as a consequence making them unhappy for having denied his own fulfilment as a human being. Despite experiencing deep discontent, afterthoughts and doubts, F eventually chose to commence the transition, the ongoing change being communicated to the children when they started asking questions about the changes they had noticed in their mother. F. recounts that after he had told the children the truth, things proceeded smoothly with them.

It is very important to tackle the instances of guilt and mourning, otherwise the person desiring gender transition might acquire a serious sense of guilt, subsequently renouncing the desired change, and feeling depressed, frustrated, dissatisfied, aggressive towards whomsoever is believed to have hindered his/her self-fulfillment. On the contrary, this person might try to realize his/her hopes by completely sidestepping feelings of guilt, with subsequent minimization and negation of the importance of the effects of the transition on significant individuals.

### **Parenthood and identity**

F. recounts how he had to deal with the problem of integrating his female identity (related to motherhood) into his new male identity. Having had children before transition and being a parent does not consent F. to identify himself univocally in the male gender, whenever he thinks about himself in relation to his children. Having given birth to, and having breastfed, his children and hence having carried out the relational and social function of a mother, F. experienced a sort of dual identity in which the man is also a mother. This dual identity is a psychological solution for F. so that he can actually retain certain aspects of reality: his will to be a male, his will to keep his parental function

intact, the awareness that his children experience him as a mother, the awareness that his children are dealing with the new male identity of their mother

In his children's everyday social dealings F. still behaves partially as their female mother, so as to guarantee continuity with the past and engender gradual change.

### **Transition process, family and social context**

The family's original reaction was one of dismay, which was followed by an attitude of denial and mourning. A few relatives refused to recognize his new identity and expressed closure, while others reacted with overt rage and/or denial with regard to the new condition. Others reacted with a sense of loss and painful resignation.

With his family of origin, F experienced primeval emotions related to his infancy, a need to be loved simply for what he was, simply for existing. However, transition to adulthood invalidates many expectations shaped and stabilized over the years, and the process of re-building ties and prospects is a tortuous one.

As for the general social context, F reported problems at work caused by his anguish regarding what was happening inside him. He lost some of his old friends whilst gaining new ones.

### **The former partner**

The relationship issue with the former partner has not been resolved yet. F. recounts how, at a certain point, he felt the need to tell his husband the truth about what he was experiencing internally. Separation eventually followed this revelation. The couple struggled through moments of tension and heated arguments, the husband reacting with bewilderment and shock, yet subsequently trying to assist F in the transition process; however once he had become aware of the nature of the changes his wife was going through, he was too upset and eventually gave up the fight.

At the time the interview was being conducted, F. and his former partner were attending counseling in order to deal with issues concerning their children, although F. tells us that his former husband still has a negative attitude towards the transition. Generally speaking, a former partner, as in this case, may well feel destabilized, damaged, desperate and hostile, consequently bringing about even stronger feelings of guilt and hurt in the transsexual person. Reaching an agreement with the former partner is obviously desirable and beneficial because of potential repercussions on the children. However, this goal is objectively difficult to achieve and demands considerable time and personal commitment.

### **Transition process and Surgical Sex Reassignment**

F's male identity found a satisfactory solution through mastectomy, the acquisition of masculine physical characteristics and the elimination of menses. These were elements that F. felt were indispensable, whereas hysterectomy and especially phalloplasty were prospects that he found deeply distressing, and therefore decided to postpone any decision. He believes that these ultimate changes might eventually be tackled by the transsexual many years after transition, and at present he is in no rush to address the issue. With regard to this issue, F. recounts how his being a mother holds him to a social identity that is still female in the children's contexts and, therefore, there is no pressing need to change his legal gender.

### **Parenthood, transition and social support**

Being a transsexual parent engenders feelings of loneliness that permeate this whole narrative. F. says he needs to talk to people with similar experiences. He has been very active in seeking out other transsexual and homosexual parents wishing to discuss care for their children and ways of dealing with emotions of guilt, doubt and fear.

The relationship with psychologists and psychiatrists is, in part, conflictual. Apart from a few positive experiences, F. basically considers psychotherapy to be a choice, rather than an obligation, in obtaining a diagnosis preliminary to transition. Nevertheless he claims that he would never have rushed into transition without deep, prior reflection.

## Discussion

Support interventions for any individual undergoing transition during adulthood need to deal with the process of mourning and the sense of guilt. The transsexual parent needs to feel secure within the parental function in order to adequately deal with his children's possible feelings of abandonment, guilt and hostility (Luciani, Inghilleri, Fasola, 2007).

Since the physical change is visible and cannot be concealed, it is highly recommended that the subjects communicate the transition to the children as soon as possible (Luciani, 2008). It is obvious that agreement with the former partner (and parent of the children) would be advantageous, so that all communications regarding offspring may be implemented with mutual support, and children do not get caught up in squabbles (White, Ettner, 2007).

Keeping up the maternal function in a FtM transition implies that one part of the individual and social gender identity continues to be connected with the female dimension, leading to possible ambivalence towards SSR and legal gender change.

In light of the above, associations supporting transsexual parenthood could play a highly beneficial role by keeping themselves informed of the particular psychological and relational implications of transsexual parenthood.

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# Tales and discrimination: an awareness path for children and their families

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*Abstract: Discriminatory attitudes in relation to gender and sexual orientation are even more evident within family interactions and in the managing of parenting and caregiving dynamics. These processes expose children to strong behavior and identity influences. The discriminatory attitudes, especially homophobic or transphobic behaviours, intensify in children's minds, combining with other typologies of discrimination. This project has the aim of sensitizing in an active way children and their families on these themes, in particular, encouraging the reduction of prejudicial, stereotyped playful modes addressed to younglings. Moreover, the project focuses on the remodeling of parenting and caregiving approaches, which are often characterized by heteronormative, sexist models. In order to reach the above-mentioned objects, we suggest the use of fairy tales so that children could be better involved and we could be really nearer to them; we assumed the structuring of specific pedagogical activities for the achievement of a shared, intergenerational awareness.*

*Keywords: childhood, fairytales, gender, stereotypes, heteronormativity.*

## **Introduction & Theoretical Assumptions**

Childhood can be considered as an essential moment in the construction of identity. Some famous authors have placed in this period the transformation of the biological organism, characterized by endogenous rhythms and impulses, into an individual able to participate in the dyadic relationships and to place himself in a direct contact with the world (Kaye & Wells, 1980). With the expression “psychological birth” (Mahler, 1975) we can't mean -today- a secondary phase after the biological birth in which the psychic mechanisms are activated, but a period of great symbolic flourishing for the child: a collection of complex moments that deserve to be appraised and promoted. The process of identity construction is expressed on the trade-off of attachment and symbiosis experiences and scouting practices (Boris, Zeanah, 2005), that must be mediated by parents, in order to maintain a balance between dyadic intimacy and environment connection. During the early childhood, the child explores the development of different forms of identity: runs through the various stages of cognitive enhancement from automatic reflexes to more complex and symbolic operations (Piaget, 1936), develops the components of his emotionality by degrees, organises the basis of his gender identity inspired by figures close to him and using examples of which can be accessed. Through the experience of first relations, the child makes generalized ideas of what is the world in his mind: he shape “internal working models” that will guide him in the adventure of life (Maccoby, 1992).

The construction of gender identity is a slow and gradual process and involves not only intrapsychic dynamics, but also the main relationships of the child: the examples that he retrieves in its environment. A sexist and heteronormative conception of the gender, combining with other stereotypical ways of understand the different elements of life, can play a vital role in the education of the child, which could tend to discriminatory attitudes in more advanced parts of life (Jackson, 1999).

The process of identity construction, generally understood and declined in the stages of separation-individuation (Mahler, 1973), can be stimulated through different channels: games, stories and creative activities can be good ways to promote a balanced growth of the various components of identity.

We think that the fable, and consequently the animation productions are a priority mean for the child's education and to raise awareness on important issues that require important environmental stimuli. The tale, as known, is one of the main means for the transmission of important meanings in childhood and adulthood (Bettelheim, 1975).

In the mental health system the fairy tale is often used to achieve different purposes, encourage health promotion and empowerment in several cases. The tale is the symbolic paradigm of life, its contents

convey important messages able to eliciting, playing on emotion and affective involvement, important changes and insight in the child (Bourke, 2008).

Recent studies have shown that fairy tales have an important role in the consolidation of gender identity. A Macedonian study of 2012 (Andonovska-Trajkovska 2012), reinterpreted the theories of Vladimir Propp about the Russian folk tales, who studied the influence of fairy tales in the development of personality. Long before, in the 1996, Alan Beveridge formulated a study on the representation of madness in Disney's animations and the influence of these images in the identity shaping of the child (Beveridge, 1996).

Several studies have demonstrated that highly stereotypic sex-role behavior characterizes programming for both children and adults (McGhee & Frueh, 1980). Television imagery has adopted the tendency to portray men and women in conventionally stereotypical ways as demonstrated by nearly two decades of television content analysis (Coltrane & Adams, 1997).

The tales that come to our children through books and cartoons, may prove of great influence on the shaping of gender identity, however in the history of fairy tales and especially in their Disney's transposition can be found stereotypical elements of sexism and heteronormativity.

### **Our Project**

Our idea originates from the reflection initiated during the second programme meeting of the European project "Empowering LGT young people against violence: a P2P model", with the aim of imagine plans and strategies oriented at creating awareness and empowerment and about discrimination. We thought the children as means of the human potential education (Montessori, 1970), and the fairy tale as channel for a direct and playful transmission of important meanings, images and representations.

Although in the past fairy tales and their film adaptations have not been vehicles of modern and balanced educational messages, today we can see a gradual but intense change. According with the most modern pedagogical principles and in response to the significant changes in the socio-psychological world, fairy tales now seem to have changed some of their historical characteristics. For example, in the recent animation "The Brave" (2012), the Irish protagonist Merida fights the antiquated traditions of his family that hopes an arranged marriage, at the end of the many adventures the princess decided not to marry and devote herself to the passion of the chase. In the main part of the feature Merida says: "There comes a day when I don't have to be a princess. No rules, no expectations. A day where anything can happen. A day where I can change my fate". The content of "The Brave" proves to be extraordinary not only because the protagonist is able to fight for their ideals dissonant from the family traditions, but also because it is able to subvert socio-cultural mechanisms rooted and now become mandatory.

In the famous "Frozen" (2013), free reinterpretation of Andersen's fairy tale "The Snow Queen", sisters Anna and Elsa pose before all else their brotherly love, understanding through their own experiences that not always the "prince" is good in all and that often a woman must find within herself the strength to break free from difficulties.

Studying the content of these recent contributions, we reflected that if rethought in a modern educational function, the content of fairy tales – especially the Disney productions - could be used for the creation of individualized and shared paths aimed at raising awareness for children and their families on important issues like heteronormativity, sexism and discrimination.

The principal aim of our project would be to raise awareness of children and their families with respect to issues of identity differences, stereotypes and prejudices concerning gender identity and gender roles. In particular, through the participation of families with young children to a thematic structured path, we hope that the experience could: 1) promote the reduction of stereotypical and prejudicial mechanisms by ensuring the free expression of individual differences in a harmonious context of freedom; 2) encourage, through reflection on the meaning of " education for freedom ", a

freer intra-familial communication and expression of personal identity characteristics; 3) propose a collaborative and cooperative climate between different people, encouraging reflection on the importance of the recognition of diversity, and promoting a deeper thinking over the tendency to a defensive assimilation by the in-group; and 4) foster group dynamics aimed at non-discrimination and reception of the new and the different.

With these aims, we collected some of the most beautiful fairy tales, tracking the most educational meanings and we have structured a path of psycho-educational activities. Using the contents of famous tales and animations as Cinderella, Finding Nemo, The Little Mermaid and Mulan, we have created educational activities aimed to overcome prejudice and stereotypes, restore the balance of family dynamics, the body perception, and improve the consciousness of gender identity. We insisted on activities that, through the use of the senses and skills, tend to an harmonious vision of self and others and a conscience of their identity characteristics. In this way the relationship between Cinderella and her sisters becomes an example of family triangulation, the Nemo's sick fin proposes reflection on physical disability, the change of the little mermaid in human stimulates to achieve their objectives and the need of Mulan becoming man proposes interesting implications about the fluidity of gender.

This project was born from the belief that working on raising awareness of children can be a good starting point for building a most welcoming future. At the same time we have considered the family interaction as a priority means for the transmission of important meanings . through working with families, and an experiential methodology is possible to provoke reflections in individuals that otherwise would not be exploited .

This project is looming as a first track for launching future reflections and the implementation of concrete and practical activities aimed at raising awareness on specific issues.

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evaluation and data dissemination.

The Association "Famiglie Arcobaleno" presented a project titled STOP OMOFOBIA to the school directorate of Sant'Ambrogio and Almese. A new version of the project initially created by Nichelino's Municipality, in partnership with school directorates and the Municipality of Turin. This project was included among the possible training for teaching and non-teaching school personnel of both school directorates and some modules addressed to students were provided in Sant'Ambrogio primary school.

A first meeting titled "*Many families, all of them special*" was organised in a social centre in the Municipality of Villar Dora, that patronised the initiative and invited the mayor and the council member in charge of education. Some pediatrician intervened talking about families changing. Doc. Amadio and Doc. Rivetti, both paediatricians, talked about recomposed families - that have at least three surnames on their doorbell -, their meetings with homoparenting families, warm family unit, welcoming for the children, independently from their composition.

The association Famiglie Arcobaleno brought the attention on denied rights of homoparenting families telling about the experience of a mother. The crucial theme was the need for a citizenship for these realities that grow and are part of the many way of being of a family.

*Genitori si diventa* focused on the adoption experience, the meaning of not being biological parents of a child who already has his/her story, often troubled.

In the first meeting, the assembly, composed by more than 200 people, focused on the therapist behavior, the usefulness of stereotypes that, since they are mental shortcut, allow to think without effort. Stereotypes are adaptable, reduce the stress caused by the unknown, help in memorization, categorizing everything. The idea of stereotypes as automatism authorizes people to recognize their own stereotypes and correct their thoughts. It was said that stereotypes are a belief or a set of beliefs on the basis of which a group of people gives specific characteristics to another group of people. This idea focused on what is happening at that moment: a meeting of experiences, affectivity, families.

As said by Allport, only from the meeting a new thought can grow, becoming a reality different from stereotypes and prejudices that normally are recalled when we know something that we think different from ourselves.

We pass from the paradigm of diversity to the one of differences. The first assume a contrast: someone different from someone else or who is inadequate compared to a preconstituted model, a standard. The paradigm of differences, on the other hand, help us in recognizing the polychromy of human beings, accepting the variety of experiences, society forms, families, passing to an idea of multiple identity, where all the experiences are special, even one's own.

In the meeting, many engaging themes were discussed such as love, the right of self-expression, parenting. A young transgender sitting in the audience shared her gratitude for the event because she felt included in a new world that was trying to call into question.

In this regard, already in 1997, Gianfranco Cecchin said: "the main way to feel alive as human being is to meditate on one's own prejudices in relation with others' prejudices and, before reforms, each one should realize how much he/she contributes to the present system as it is".

It follows an afternoon with readings, open to the public, in the Public Library of Villar Dora, titled *Lecture di libri per bambini liberi* (Readings of books for free children). Texts for children were presented and interpreted, calling into question gender stereotypes and their diffusion through readings since the childhood.

Both moments were participated and had a great echo in the community. It was asked to organize similar meetings in neighboring municipalities.

Starting from the discussion on prejudices and stereotypes in relation with family roles and gender, we continued in the co-construction of a different way of thinking affectivity, where variety should be a resource for thoughts and creative practices.

In school, inclusion processes were activated with special trainings on homoaffectivity, family models, homophobic bullying, led by a psychotherapist and trainers from the Training group of the Turin Pride coordination, an association where members from major LGBTQI groups from Turin are represented. For teachers and non-teaching personnel three meetings were organized focused on sexual identity, gender roles and sexual orientation. A shared language was built on these matters using role games, case studies and exercises. The discussion was about what to do with homophobic writings in the toilets, students' discriminatory behavior, how to manage the relation with non-traditional families. At the end of the meetings with the teachers, a chart of the rights of the children was drafted, stating the practices to fight against homophobic bullying.

Primary school teachers and students assisted to a show titled "Di che famiglia sei?" (To which family do you belong?), interpreted by the Company Onda Teatro. Different types of families were represented, divided by a wall. When the wall fell, families met themselves, finding out that they had a lot of things in common than what they thought. Children and teachers' feedback was positive: students' drawing told about the meeting and the similarity between homoparenting, recomposed and adoptive families. In a word among families.

The teacher, that created a new version of the project in Nichelino, organized a self-training meeting for teachers from the school directorate of Buttigliera Alta. The main theme was the reading of texts without stereotypes. Some books were presented to the participants to give a different sight on gender roles.

This happened between 2012 and 2013. In 2014 some meetings were still organized in neighboring municipalities. In particular, a bookshop in Avigliana, La Casa dei Libri (The books' house), organized several events addressed to curious parents. Readings for children, teenagers and adults were presented, focused on libertarian education and educational processes that teach happiness and welcome.

In this context, the systemic psychologist helped participants, mainly parents and teachers, in thinking over stereotypes and prejudices in the story of childhood literature. The focus was on gender and family stereotypes. In the present crisis period, stronger is the need for certainty, the mind looks for comforting answer and becomes stiff. If we want to be perfect, healthy and successful, we do not feel adequate in our peculiarity and the first prejudice that appears is the one related to ourselves. We feel as if something is missing and prevent us from adapting to a preconstituted model that since we were children was communicated to us through stories, films, advertising where a person should be something or someone. It is complicated to appreciate the variety of life, replacing the deficit model with the variety and curiosity one.

The first goal of the project was to increase curiosity and awareness on the range of affective and familiar choices. We still receive requests of organizing meetings, so we reached our goal. The protection of the right of citizenship of different realities was another objective and the feedback in the participation and in the discussion showed us that we are at the beginning of a process. Many people still struggle in calling into question preconstituted ideas. Some members of municipalities administration were sensitive to our proposal, some others were worried but they participated anyway. Very interesting was the atmosphere at the end of the public event with the community where the entire audience agreed that a family composed by two lesbians could be something healthy. The mother from the Rainbow family who was moderating the event, Annika Mazzucco, declared: "Well, now what do you think about starting to get use to a family with two dads? Two gays who have a child?"

The project was the beginning of a reflection on the beauty of plurality, the rights of homoparenting families in the perspective of preventing violence against LGBTQI young people and families.

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# Objectification and gender stereotypes: the key role of mass media

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**INTRODUCTION AND AIM.** Objectification is a specific form of dehumanization by which individuals are conceived and treated as objects and instruments. The purpose of the present study was to examine the effects of objectified media images – considering both male and female models - on the endorsement of sexist attitudes.

**METHOD.** Participants were 166 heterosexual undergraduates. Each participant was randomly assigned to view one of three advertisements sets (objectified male condition, objectified female condition, and control condition). Then their ambivalent sexism toward men and women was assessed.

**RESULTS.** Findings showed that objectification of women affects men's endorsement of sexist attitudes, increasing hostility toward women and decreasing hostility toward men. Instead, women's sexist stereotypes were not influenced by objectification.

**DISCUSSION.** Taken together, present results provide additional evidence to suggest that objectified media models may contribute to origin sexist attitudes, although specific for each gender.

**Keywords:** objectification; mass media; ambivalent sexism; gender stereotypes.

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The objectification theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) has provided a social constructionist account of the female body, arguing that in Western societies women are often regarded as objects, with the focus being placed on all or part of their bodies in a sexual context rather than on their abilities. This theoretical perspective has generated an increasing amount of research showing the damaging consequences of the objectification process, in terms of body shame, appearance anxiety, negative and depressive affect, and various forms of disordered eating and sexual dysfunction (for a review see Moradi & Huang, 2008 and Tiggemann, 2013). Although objectification theory is grounded in women's experiences, researchers have begun to investigate the applicability of this framework to explore men's experience as well (e.g., Johnson, McCreary, & Mills, 2007; Rollero, 2013), given the increasing tendency to objectify men's physiques in Western societies (Johnson et al., 2007).

From a sociocultural perspective, one of the most powerful conveyors of objectification is represented by mass media. Literature has provided convincing empirical evidence for the relationship between viewing objectified media models and state self-esteem, body dissatisfaction and drive for thinness (e.g. Grabe, Ward, & Hyde, 2008). However, research on the potential consequences of objectified media models need to be extended to include other outcomes (Grabe et al., 2008).

The aim of the present research was to extend past research on the effects of viewing objectified media images. Specifically, we tested as dependent variable the endorsement of ambivalent sexist attitudes. We explored the effects of viewing both objectified male and objectified female images (past research has tended to use visual stimuli of only men or women, not both, with few exceptions, i.e. Johnson et al., 2007; Morry & Staska, 2001; Rollero, 2013) and considered both male and female respondents (past research has tended to recruit only men or only women).

## Method

Participants were 166 heterosexual undergraduates (51.8% male, mean age= 24.5 years, SD =2.36, range 19-29). When recruited, they were told they were participating in a short study about television viewing.

Each participant was randomly assigned to view one of three advertisements sets (objectified male condition, objectified female condition, and control condition). Among the groups no significant differences were found with regard to age,  $F(2, 164) = 2.21, n.s.$ , and body mass index,  $F(2, 164) =$

2.72, n.s.

For each experimental condition a 3-minute video was created. The objectified male video included 6 advertisements which featured male models. The objectified female video contained 6 commercials which featured female models. In the control condition the video included 6 advertisements featuring products without people (bottles, food, animals).

After exposure to the experimental condition, participants were asked to fill in a short questionnaire assessing ambivalent sexism toward women (ASI) and ambivalent attitudes toward men (AMI) (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Glick & Fiske, 1999; Rollero, Glick, & Tartaglia, 2014). The ASI is a widely used 22-item self-report measure of sexist attitudes toward women composed of Benevolent Sexism (BS;  $\alpha=.85$  for this study) and Hostile Sexism (HS;  $\alpha=.90$ ) subscales. The AMI is a 20-item self-report measure of attitudes toward men composed of two subscales: Benevolence toward Men (BM;  $\alpha=.84$ ) and Hostility toward Men (HM;  $\alpha=.86$ ).

## Results

One 2 (Gender of participant) x 3 (Advertisement Type: objectified male, objectified female, control condition) between-participants multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was performed to assess the effects of both the respondents' gender and the experimental condition on the endorsement of ambivalent sexism. Results revealed a multivariate main effect of Gender  $F(4,162) = 5.54, p<.001$ , and of the interaction between Type of Advertisement and Gender of participant,  $F(8, 162) = 3.79, p<.01$ . At the univariate level, Gender of participant significantly affected BS,  $F(1, 162) = 10.01, p<.01$ , HS,  $F(1, 162) = 10.61, p<.01$ , and BM,  $F(1, 160) = 11.88, p<.01$ . Men scored higher than women on all these dimensions (BS: males  $M = 2.18, SD = .93$ ; females  $M = 1.73, SD = .83$ . HS: males  $M = 2.53, SD = 1.26$ ; females  $M = 1.86, SD = 1.09$ . BM: males  $M = 1.89, SD = 1.08$ ; females  $M = 1.43, SD = .47$ ). The interaction between Type of Advertisement and Gender was significant for HS,  $F(2, 162) = 3.09, p<.05$  (Figure 1), and HM,  $F(2, 162) = 4.11, p<.01$  (Figure 2). Men in the objectified female condition expressed higher levels of Hostile Sexism toward women,  $F(2, 85) = 3.77, p<.05$ , and lower levels of Hostility toward Men  $F(2, 85) = 6.04, p<.01$ , than men in the other conditions. Scores of women did not vary across conditions (HS:  $F(2, 77) = 1.09, n.s.$  HM  $F(2, 76) = 1.97, n.s.$ ).

## Discussion

For men, the objectification of women seems to increase the endorsement of an explicit adversarial view of women, i.e. hostile sexism, but it reduces the expression of resentment toward gender power inequalities, i.e. hostility toward men. In other words, objectifying women advertisements contribute to men's justification of the status quo. Thus, men exposed to objectified women decrease the females' value and increase the males' one. On the contrary, women's sexist attitudes are not sensitive to the different manipulation conditions. However, there seems to be a tendency to decrease hostility toward men when the male body is objectified. This might be connected to stereotypes concerning men, as objectification of men implies a kind of attractiveness based on strength and muscularity, leading not only to sexual seduction, but also to protection.

Given the limits of our sample (participants were all undergraduates), results should be generalized with caution. However, they establish not only that objectification processes act in different ways on genders and between genders, but also that physical beauty ideals are embodied in "gendered archetypes", which lead to increase men's value and decrease women's value. Future research should investigate how these archetypes affect the individuals' body identity, even considering the key role played by sexual orientation.

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Figure 1. Hostile sexism toward women: mean scores of male and female participants across the experimental conditions.

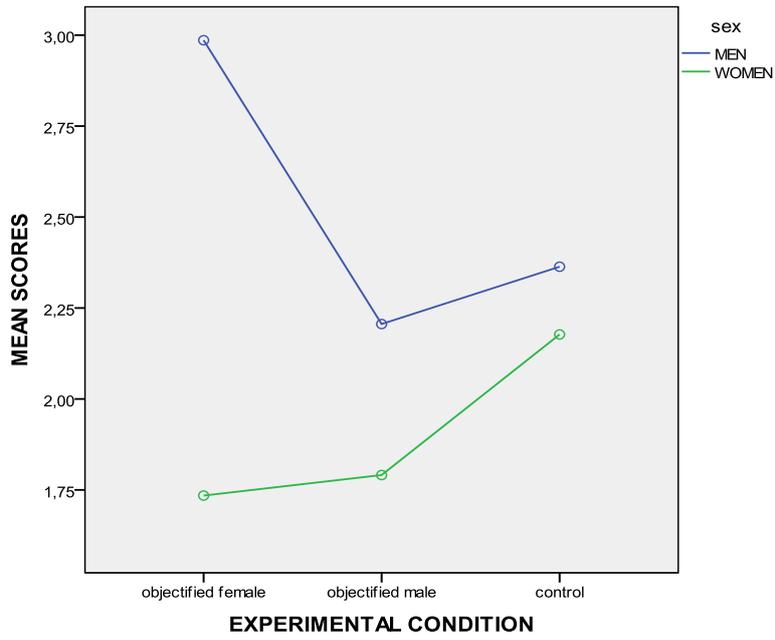
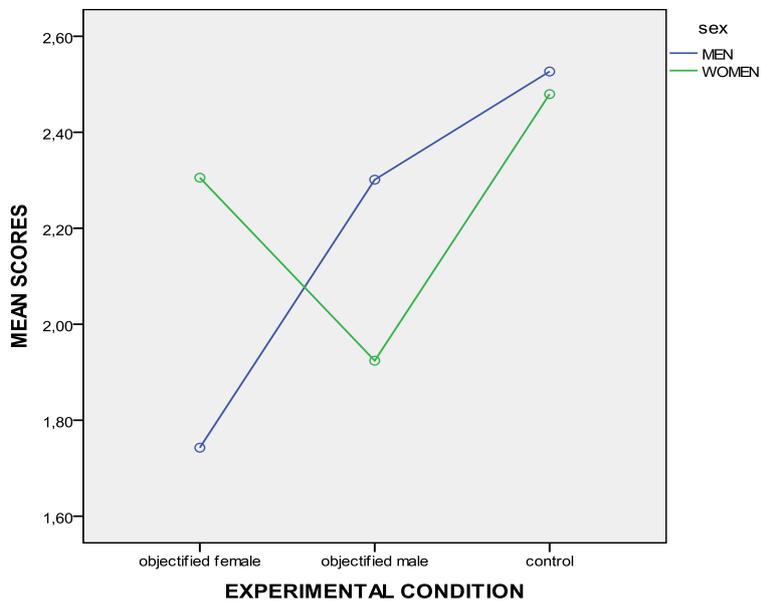


Figure 2. Hostility toward men: mean scores of male and female participants across the experimental conditions.





# Information behaviour of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transsexuals (LGBT)

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*Those teenagers in the process of recognition of their sexual identity within the LGBT collective (lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transsexuals) should be able to access the most accurate and quality information available in order to experience that transitional stage in the healthiest and safest manner. The objective of this research was to know the experiences which gave place to the information behaviour of the people included in this LGBT collective, seeking to satisfy their anxieties as they grew older and matured. A qualitative explorative study was designed and interviews were conducted to a group of people selected according to a non-probabilistic sampling of convenience. The population of interest was anyone between 18 to 30 years old included in the collective. The information obtained was analysed through a qualitative analysis of content. The data obtained make reference to two aspects: personal situation and development and the mechanisms used by informers for seeking information.*

*Keywords: Information behaviour, Information seeking, LGBT, teenagers, qualitative methods*

## **Introduction**

The studies on information behaviour aim to know why people need, seek and use information, both in their working environment and in their daily life (Fisher, Erdelez, & McKechnie, 2005). The study of these aspects in populations whose life situations may be classified as transitional is of a special relevance since the information systems planned may serve as support for individuals in that situation. An example of this kind of situations is the one experienced by teenagers in the process of recognition of their sexuality, and concretely, those people included within the LGBT collective (lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transsexuals). If the access to information is crucial for citizens in any democratic society, in the case of the LGBT collective, Keilty (2009) points out, in addition, that this access is essential even for their survival, since it can contribute to the prevention of suicides or HIV infections. Given that public information services should be designed for the entire population and should respond to the demands for information of any citizen, some researches have been geared towards knowing what is being done in meeting the growing demands for information by the LGBT population. This is the case of Curry's works (2005), in where the reference librarian's behaviour in the public library was valued in view to the demands for information by young gays and lesbians, or the study led by Schaller (2011), which gathered opinions of groups of LGBT university students about the gaps and barriers they encountered when accessing the information in the university environment.

In this context, this research was aimed at knowing the experiences that gave place to the information behaviour of those people included in the LGBT collective who sought to satisfy their anxieties as they grew up and matured, in the process of recognition of their sexual identity.

## **Methods**

In order to develop the objectives proposed, an exploratory study with a qualitative methodological approach was designed with the aim of gaining knowledge about the study under consideration.

The population of interest was anyone between 18 to 30 years old included in the LGBT collective. In addition, given that the research sought to understand the process of information seeking (rather than representative finding) a non-probability sampling of convenience, of a maximum variation was considered appropriate (Patton, 2002). The final sample was composed of a person from each one of the LGBT orientations (Table 1).

<b>Informant number</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Sexual definition</b>	<b>Studies</b>	<b>Context</b>
Informant number 1	23	Bisexual	Upper Secondary Education	Rural
Informant number 2	24	Lesbian	Master's Degree Studies	Urban
Informant number 3	22	Gay	Undergraduate Studies	Urban
Informant number 4	28	Lesbian	<i>Licenciatura</i> Studies (former Spanish undergraduate degree)	Rural
Informant number 5	25	Transsexual/Heterosexual	<i>Licenciatura</i> Studies (former Spanish undergraduate degree)	Urban

Table1. Informants' characteristics

A semi-structured interview was employed as information collection techniques. Information was collected from a previous script on information behaviour of LGBT in general, their information needs, and the way to obtain such information. Once the informants agreed to carry out the interview, we proceeded to the explanation and the signing of the informed consent.

The interviews were recorded in audio, and besides, field notes were taken, from both the behaviour analysis and the remarks made by the informants themselves, apart from the information provided in such interview. The interviews lasted an average of 60 minutes and were conducted during the months of February, March and April 2014.

In view of the sensitivity of the subject under consideration and the fear of rejection, the carrying out of these interviews was not easy. Some people with whom contact was established rejected to participate in the study, some other accepted, but once the interview was started they refused to continue with it. Finally, some people who eventually participated in the study experienced certain discomfort with the fact of recording their answers in certain questions.

Once the interviews were conducted, the recordings were listened to and the responses were transcribed. These transcriptions, along with the field notes, were analysed through a qualitative analysis of content (González Teruel y Barrios Cerrejón, 2012). Out from this analysis, a series of categories which represented the description of the situation were obtained, which gave place to an information-seeking behaviour and the tools that provide the information needed. In order to guarantee the speed and credibility of the research, the outcomes obtained and analysed were contrasted and discussed by a researcher external to the process.

## **Results**

The results are expounded according to the categories resulting from the analysis of qualitative content (table 2). Initially, these categories emerged from the scripts used in the interview. Nevertheless, as data gathering and analysis progressed, new categories based on these data were generated.

**a) PERSONAL AND INFORMATIVE SITUATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

Age and initial development

Birthplace and growing up

Familiar environment

**b) EMPLOYED MECHANISMS/TOOLS**

Social relationships

Formal institutions (medical units, libraries, collectives, professionals, etc.)

Digital tools

*Table 2. Categories resulting from the content analysis of the interviews*

a) Personal and informative situation and development

This first category describes the circumstances of the beginning of the sexuality acceptance and how it influences over their information behaviour. This process of sexuality acceptance occurs mainly at an early stage or during adolescence.

*It happened when I was 15. Well, around 14 or 15. Well, I think I've always known what I was, but I didn't accept it (...) I think I found the support I needed to face reality when all those TV series which talked about it began to be broadcasted, and in all those people who had already come out (...) I was really scared, I tried to hide it (...) I didn't talk to anyone [Informant 2].*

The place where people lived was a feature that conditioned the sexuality acceptance process. Despite the availability of information via Internet, social relationships were not that open in rural areas:

*I didn't know any girl who liked girls (...) I searched for films in the video shop, but I had to illegally download them from the Internet. So if I could not find them in a video shop let alone would I find them in my village's library...*

The family reaction had an influence over their development, since in some cases, families led them to regard homosexuality as something negative or confusing and in other cases it normalised completely.

*It caused fear, but never rejection; (...) I will give you the example of my father, mother and brother. They only knew about transsexuals through TV or from prostitution, or by social stigmas associated with it. [Informant 5].*

Finally, the views of friends on sexual diversity had an influence on the informants' behaviour in their "coming out of the closet" process.

*The models which led me to accept myself were those TV series which tackled homosexuality and friends who were homosexuals (...) they got really hooked on "Queer as Folk" a series which was about gays (...) everybody loved that series (...). It depends much on the person, it depends on if you hear them commenting or stuff like that [Informant 2].*

b) Mechanisms/tools employed to obtain information

This category describes the strategies used by the people interviewed to obtain information. The first of these strategies is the relation with those acquaintances who are known to have experienced a similar process to theirs: *My friends told me about lesbian pubs and they took me to the pub "Mona Lisa", "ADN" [when she arrived in Valencia] (...)[Informant 4]*

On the other hand, another strategy considered at the beginning was to resort to institutions which provided help to people living this kind of situations (LGBT collectives, psychologists, specialised medical units, etc.):

*The good thing about a collective is, that if you turn to one of them, you will find people like you (...) you will ask for help to people like you (...) sometimes the collective doesn't know, but people do (...) I turned to them because a friend suggested it to me [Informant 5].*

Finally, while the consult to the library stock did not turn out to be as an actual information search strategy in any interview, the same cannot be said for information-seeking via Internet. In general, digital tools are widely employed, both to obtain information and to look for friends or sexual partners.

*There was a section in the forum to ask about any issue wanted to be exhibited, anyone overstepped the mark (...) Tumblr is a microblogging network which is based on the reblogging of news regularly, and these reblogging are not about opinions made by anyone, as Twitter (...) Twitter is not very reliable (...) [Informer 4].*

### **Conclusion**

In the first place, taking a qualitative approach in this work enabled us to obtain an in-depth knowledge of aspects that statistics on LGBT populations does not enable us to know, since it describes the situation superficially. The results presented in this document are a first exploration prior to future works which delve deeper into the most relevant aspects that emerged from the research.

As described above, the identification and acceptance process occurred at early ages. Moreover, in the process of sexual identity acceptance, informants resorted to a person from who they knew they could obtain information. It involves the mentor's figure who, according to Yeh (2008), are people that become into social agents who facilitate the informants' integration. Informants make a big effort to understand something which does not fit well in a society dominated by heterosexism. Along with the figure of the mentor, it is important to highlight the importance of electronic information.

It involves a fundamental tool in the seeking and the dissemination of information of the LGBT collective, as Martel (2013) asserts. Information is better used, but the quality of information available via this means of communication is not always the appropriate. In this sense, with the aim of filtering inadequate information, information literacy of Internet users is important, concretely of the collective of LGBT teenagers. In this way, the importance of the mentor's figure, along with the great use of social media as strategies for the information gathering, are two aspects that should be taken into account from the viewpoint of the information services planning geared towards the LGBT teenagers.

In general, our society is considered "out of the closet" but the information LGBT is not visualised properly, due to prejudices or ignorance. It is necessary to carry out further researches in order to optimise resources and to make public information services also consider providing quality services for those citizens generically included in the LGBT collective.

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# Intersectionality: Persons with Disability who identify as LGBTQI

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*Introduction and Aim: Sexual identity and sexual expression are an integral part of the life of persons with disability. However these persons still face prejudice, stigma and discrimination when expressing non-heteronormative sexual identity. This paper explores the experiences of people with disability who identify as LGBTQI in a Maltese socio-cultural context. Method This qualitative research explores the lived experiences of participants using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. Results The research identifies lack of awareness amongst stakeholders, service providers, parents and the local community about the intersectionality between LGBTQI persons and disability. Such lack of awareness leads to fear and ignorance that contribute to the barriers encountered by persons with disability. Discussion Being a minority within a minority amplifies the vulnerability and isolation of persons with disability. Thus persons with disability require further support from organisations that promote the rights of the LGBTQI community. Awareness and education about intersectionality is required to uphold the rights of persons with disability who identify as LGBTQI.*

*Keywords:* Intersectionality, Disability, Gender Identity, Sexuality, Trans

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## **Sexual orientation and well being**

Disclosure of sexual identity to oneself and to others is likely to occur during the transition from to young adulthood (Needham and Austin, 2010). This is the period in the course of life when patterns of behaviour that have lasting consequences on overall health and well being are established (Arnett, 2000). Sexual minorities report increased symptoms of mental health issues such as depression, psychological distress and suicidal tendencies than their heterosexual peers (D'Augelli 2002; Ueno, 2005; Needham and Austin, 2010). Increased psychological risk in LGBTQI youths is known to be due to problems particular to their sexual orientation, including increasingly distressing experiences, fewer sources of information and lack of support especially from their families (D' Augelli and Hershberger, 1993; Ueno, 2005). One identified reason for depressive symptoms (Ryan et al., 2009) is in fact parental rejection due to sexual orientation. The emotional difficulty of disclosure of ones sexual orientation encountered by LGBTQI persons is worsened by negative reactions from significant others, discrimination and harassment (Garnet, Herek and Ley, 1990).

Minorities including sexual minorities have been reported to experience social oppression, resulting in mental health issues (Balsam et al. 2011). Mental health problems constitute a disabling condition for the individual. People with disability are considered to be the world's largest minority as 10 per cent of the population is known to be living with a disability. Being a minority within a minority, people with intellectual disability who identify as LGBTQI describe feelings of isolation, marginalisation and exclusion from the both the wider disability and gay communities (Thompson et al., 2001).

## **Sexuality and Disability**

Although sexual identity and relationships are an integral part of life, they have been historically feared and as a result either controlled or overlooked in people with intellectual disability (McCarthy, 1998). Furthermore researchers (Cambridge & Mellan, 2000; Abbott & Howarth, 2005; Wheeler, 2005; Wilson, 2006) agree that sexual identities and behaviours of persons with intellectual disability, including homosexuality and trans-sexuality "have remained less visible and on the margins of sexuality work" (Cambridge, 2012 p.260). Cambridge (2012) asserts that the sexuality of men with intellectual disability particularly tends to be highly controlled and policed by family members and care staff. The latter's attitudes are therefore highly influential when it comes to possibilities of sexual expression and experiences of people with intellectual disability. Such sexual behaviours are often

judged, kept under scrutiny and linked to deviance (Cambridge 2010). Exclusive sexual expression such as cross dressing by men with intellectual disability has even been met by medical responses (Cambridge, 2012).

### **LGBTQI Malta**

The inclusion and promotion of equal rights for LGBTQI people in Malta has never been advocated for as much as now. A number of NGOs have given voice to Malta's LGBTQI's community on a variety of platforms, including political, community and student platforms. However as the Malta Gay Rights Movement (MGRM) notes, prejudice and discrimination are still strong in a number of national spheres (MGRM, 2013). Notwithstanding the introduction of Civil Union Laws in 2014, same-sex partners still report avoiding intimate behaviour in public to avoid harassment or violence (Desira, 2014). Transvestites working in gay nightclubs have also reported regularly facing offensive taunts and at times the threat of physical violence (Martin, 2015). Moreover Despite the increase in visibility of LGBTQI communities, intersectionality between persons who identify as LGBTQI and persons with disability has been hardly heard of.

The study is intended to make the gender identity of people with intellectual disability who identify as LGBTQI more visible in society. Moreover the research aims at identifying lacuna of service provision and support and make recommendations that can improve the holistic well-being of persons with intellectual disability who identify as LGBTQI.

### **Methodology:**

This case study was constructed from individual sex education work and an interview conducted with the main participant, a young individual with intellectual disability and mental health issues. Interviews were also carried out with three of his service providers; two who give him support through their managerial role in the community residence where he has been living for 3years. The other service provider supports the main participant through a community LGBTQI NGO. Anonymity in naming the participants and the organisations has been preserved. The data retrieved from the interview recordings was analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis.

### **Findings:**

#### **Self-identity and Sexual relations:**

The main participant showed an insightful understanding of his self-identity. She explained;

*"I am like a woman, and I want a man who respects me and that I respect. I would like to wear women's things. I like women's things. I feel like a women inside".*

Although the individual explained clearly how she felt about herself, and used female pronouns to refer to herself, her terminology did not reflect current practises. Possibly due to a lack of opportunities to acquire knowledge about terminology the individual described herself as "gay". However the participant could identify when a term was being used inappropriately and in an insulting manner;

*"I don't like it when they call me "pufta" [puff], I tell them "I am gay". They tell me that "pufta" and "gay" is the same but I told them that "pufta" is a word used to insult someone, "gay" has a certain respect about it".*

During the sex education work, the individual opened up several times to the researcher and shared her experiences. She explained how her sexual identity caused her to suffer and to be exploited and abused. The individual reported having been the victim of sexual abuse as a child by an older non-disabled person. She recalled having kept this fact secret due to fear till much later in life. She also recounted episodes of sexual exploitation by nursing staff at a mental health institution where she was recovered for long periods of time when her mental health deteriorated. The participant gave examples such of exchanging sexual favours, such as giving oral sex to a male member of staff, in exchange for a cigarette. The participant recounted further episodes of sexual relations with other patients at the mental health institutions that never had positive outcomes.

## **Rejection and Acceptance**

Rejection of sexual identity was experienced by the main participant in various contexts. Having told her mother that she was "gay" she reported that the mother took it very badly and asked her why she was doing this. She also recalled how her mother, an elderly Catholic woman, explained to her that God had created man and women and connecting this topic to the book of Genesis in the bible.

At community level, the individual also felt rejected because of her sexual identity, she recounts;

*"People didn't accept me, because I was gay they used to say I am bad and that I am crazy".*

Service Providers working with the individual believed that the fact that she believed that being gay was a negative thing certainly helped to fuel her depression. Acceptance of her gender identity took long to settle in the life of this individual. Service Providers at the community residence where she now has resided for the past 3 years stated that residential staff tried to avoid and ignored this sexual identity issue. However when the service user kept insisting that she identifies as a woman, staff had no choice but to face this issue, also because they felt they were not helping the service user by ignoring this fact. The Service Provider claimed that as a service they had to learn to see what the individual required, not what they thought she needed;

*"It was a big step for instance when we started to call him Rosanne. For us it had not been such an important thing but for him it made a very big difference".*

The lack of awareness about intersectionality between LGBTQI persons and disability is discussed by the Service Provider from the local LGBTQI NGO who admitted that when the NGO was thinking of setting up the service, there was never the consciousness that there would be the possibility of persons with disability attending such a service. However she claimed that;

*"... fact that Rose started coming here has helped us to make the service more disability friendly ... I believe there are other people who could come to our service but we haven't reached them yet, it helped us a lot ...if we are helping her (Rose) she has helped us too".*

## **Discussion**

The intersectionality between LGBTQI non-disabled and disabled minorities is evident in the accounts given by the main participant and the Service Providers who work with him. Experiences by both minority groups such as; harassment, exploitation, abuse, rejection by family members, friends and the community, lack of supportive networks and problems with mental health are amongst the researched and documented commonalities.

The findings also underscore the need for comprehensive intervention directed towards persons who identify LGBTQI and who also have a disability. Such support could consist of crisis intervention, tackling self-esteem uncertainties, addressing issues related to sexual orientation disclosure and social support located in community settings (D'Augelli and Hershberger, 1993). Empathy and positive regard for the person's experiences and help to combat negative self-image and low self-worth, whilst recognising the right to safe and consenting sexual expression, are amongst the first steps that need to be taken. Intervention directed towards family members and service providers, such as parents support groups and the training of professional personnel is also recommended.

## **Conclusion**

Involvement in LGBTQI communities and services is seen as essential to the social well-being of persons with disability, thus overcoming isolation and combating myths of asexuality and heteronormativity surrounding persons with disability. Services thus require to be equipped with the necessary resources in order to cater for persons with disability such as wheelchair accessible premises and accessible information for people with sensorial impairments or intellectual disability. Finally being aware of the intersectionality between LGBTQI and disability will help service providers reach out and support these individuals in our communities.

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# Are perceptual distortions in political area consequences of gender stereotypes?

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*Most of our experiences are acquired in social environment and they are related to the roles affiliated to our gender. This paper tries to present the influences that gender stereotypes have upon perceptual distortions, in particular in the political area where there are other factors that influence the social opinions. It also presents the gender attributes that are signified, in Romania, for politicians to be chosen and the perceived roles that politicians play. The conclusions are relevant not only for the political marketing, but also for a better understanding of the gender influences.*

*Keywords:* type here social perception, gender stereotypes, gender attributes, gender roles, politics

## 1. Introduction

We live in the world where most of the time the first impression counts. This first impression is in fact related to a complex process of social perception and mainly to the process of categorizing the other. Generally, the social perception act is shaping self- imagine and outlining the other's impressions. People use in Alter social perception act the continuum model of impression (R.Fiske, L.Neuberg, 1990). This model stipulates that the answers based on categorises has priority towards the individual one and the movement from the categorised answers to the individual one is based on interpretation, motivation and attention. Most commonly, people use themselves as references poles when they perceive binary categories. In this situation, the members of their own group are favoured (emphasizing intra-categorical similarities) and the members belonging to the other group are discriminated (emphasizing inter-categorical differences). This process involves assessment criteria that are permanent in a restructuration state and they are influenced by the personality traits, roles and professions, by the gender stereotype.

The stereotype has a special status in social cognition: it appears as a "mental role schema", bringing together the social beliefs that are shared by a specific group of people, influencing their behaviour in different social contexts, as a strategy for organizing social information. In this approach, the accent is on individual psychological mechanisms of the stereotype activation and operation. Gender Stereotype customizes these beliefs on existing issues around gender institution.

Considered social representations, the gender stereotypes are presented both as a product and as a process: as a product of genre institution -the static one- and as a process of exaggeration the reality due regard to external stimuli (tradition, institutions, environmental) or internal stimuli -the need of each person to have predetermined mental constructs- which is the dynamic part, the flexible one. (apud. Neculau, 1998, p. 65-67).

Stereotypes approaches vary on a continuum between normal (cognitive approach), emphasis on the justification of attitudes and feelings (positive, neutral, negative) and abnormal (psychodynamic approach), emphasis on strengthening of prejudice. The stereotype is the result of a complex learning process, achieved through socialization, primary and secondary (W. Lippmann), it is a products of a normal cognitive functioning, resulting in access filtering mechanisms and treatment information (after categorization processes) (G.W. Allport, H.Tajfel) or not, the result of deficiencies, inadequacies in the functioning of cognitive processes (near pathology) (authoritarianism theory of Th. Adorno).

## 2. The structure of research

In the political field, in Romania, especially when people are in the position to choose their representative persons (senators or deputies) for the National Parliament, or to choose their future

president, the gender stereotype affects judgment imposing itself to current reality. The presence of women in political structures exists in the Romanian society, but there is still the belief that the involvement in the political structure is "bypassed" by female population. Social psychology offers an explanation for this, linking aspirational level success with the perception of chances of success, perception which is "directed" by gender stereotypes and still "validated" by Romanian society.

So, this situation raises the following questions: Are politicians described / perceived by the feminine representatives in masculine terms?

To answer this question we developed an investigative research that had the aim **to identify whether the policies are still being described in masculine terms by the feminine representatives**; the wider goal was to see if the politics is suitable for a woman in Romania.

Our research focused on two major objectives: a) investigation of the politicians' gender attributes; b) investigation of the politicians' gender roles. We started from the following hypothesis: *taking into consideration the personality' features of the feminine representatives, depending on their age , we will find specific influences of gender stereotypes reflected in social perception of politicians.*

### **3. The target group. Characteristics of the investigated population**

Our research had an initial testing procedure on 35 feminine representative and the Cronbach Alpha index ( $\alpha = .681$ ) obtained allowed us to proceed to an extended psychological research.

We performed our research on 167 female students aged 21-24 years (with mean of 23.05 years and median =23,01 years), 96 coming from different departments of the University of Bucharest (57, 48%) – and 71 coming from different departments of the Polytechnic University (42,52%) ; 91 % coming from urban environment and 9% from rural environment. The female students' participation to this investigation was voluntary. Distribution is uniform, skewness index values of 1.254, and with a standard error of skewness of .465, and kurtosis index values of .594, and with a standard error of kurtosis of .642.

### **4. Methods of research**

In our research we used the following psychological instruments: a) the Romanian Gender Scale Attributes (internal consistency index = .749, fidelity index= .794,); b) Romanian Gender Roles Inventory (internal consistency index = .757, fidelity index= .826,); c) statistical processing methods.

### **5. Research's findings**

#### **5.1 Investigating gender attributes of politicians realised by Romanian female students**

We used the Romanian Gender Scale Attributes which contains a set of 60 attributes that the subjects have to choose when they have to describe the politicians. The data, related to the calculated impact factor of significances, are presented in figure no.1

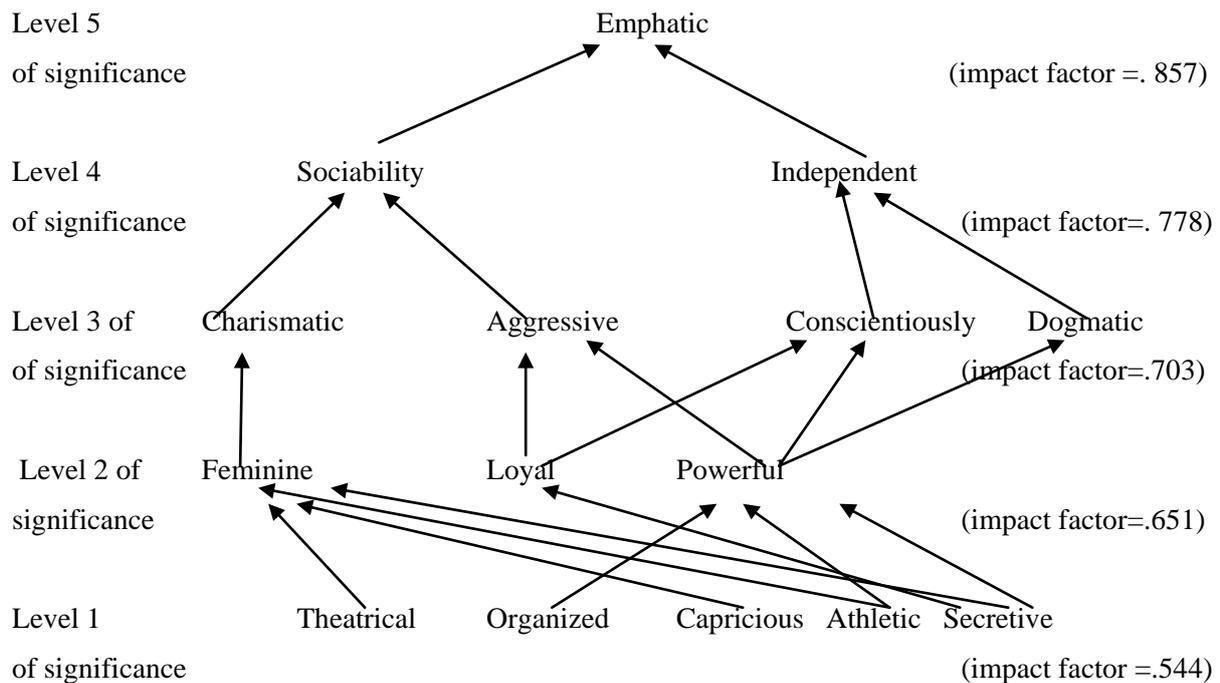


Fig.no1. The relevant perceived gender attributes for politicians by our investigated subjects

From the figure presented above, we notice that the gender stereotype is present on the first and the second level of politicians perceptiveness by the investigated Romanian female students. On the middle level of perceptual schema revealed by the investigated Romanian female students, we notice that there are present male attributes and on the superior levels (level four and five) there are present the neutral attributes. We also see how these attributes are developed from each other. But what do these levels of significances mean in the today's process of perceptual Romanian politicians?

The first two levels are the levels of attributes that draw attention to the female electorate and determine the first preferences, the first opinions in choosing the future politician. The last levels (in particular four and five) are the levels of attributes that determine the female electorate to vote for a politician.

So, we can say that *the gender stereotype is at the base of the first social perception of politicians in Romania.*

### 5.2 Investigating gender roles of politicians realised by Romanian female students

The second step of our research was to see the politician's roles that are perceived by the investigated female students.

We used the Romanian Gender Roles Inventory which contains a set of 35 roles and the subjects have to point the frequency of these role that politicians play.

The collected data are present in table no.1.

Table no.1. The frequent roles play by the politicians

The roles play by politicians	Frequency (%)
Leader of opinions	74,3
Authority	66,2
Clear head	65,4
Manager	58,2
Feminist	50,4
Diplomat	48,5
Promoter of new solutions	44,3
Activist	39,2

We can see that mainly the roles that a politician plays in the Romanian political field are the neutral ones. We are surprised to see, that among these roles, one is direct linked to the gender stereotypes of our investigated Romanian female students: the feminist role. The other perceived roles are consequences of the politicians' tasks, political platform, and current economic realities.

We can say, *that the perceived roles played by politicians in the Romanian political field is partially related with gender stereotypes.*

## 6. Conclusions

From the beginning of our research we wanted to reveal whether the policies are still being described in masculine terms by the feminine representatives

Based on the statistical analyses, we found that the Cronbach Alpha index has the value .842. This value is a sign of the high reliability of the psychological instruments that were used in our research

We found that:

1. There is a direct link between the gender stereotypes and the gender attributes that a politician has to have in order to be detached from other people who run for a position of senator or deputy, which is the first step for being elected. **The politician gender attributes have a specific dynamic and they will be constantly under the pressure of individual' requirements.**
2. There is no direct link between gender stereotypes and the politician's perceived role. The perceived roles played by the politicians in Romania depend on the political platform of the party to which they belong as members, on their professional background.
3. The assumption of our research was confirmed.

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## Power to Promote. LGBTQI empowerment

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**Abstract:** The Programme “Power To Promote. LGBTQI Empowerment” of the project “Empowerment LGT young people against violence: a P2P model” (Daphne III) was aimed at training different professionals and public service providers on theoretical references and direct practice of the work with LGBTQI people. The main purposes of the programme were to improve first responders’ knowledge on LGBTQI issues related to violence and its impact on mental health and to reinforce relational and communicational skills. The major topics addressed were: sexual and gender identity; phobia and stigma; sexism, heterosexism, and cissexism; minority stress; gender-queer theory; stigmatization in workplace; history of LGBTQI movement; empowerment and resilience; communication skills; project ideations and development. Participants were provided with theoretical materials and were directly involved in active learning during the training sessions. Themes addressed and references to deepen them have been collected in a manual which can be used by any training and educational figure.

**Keywords:** LGBTQI stigma, empowerment, training, active learning

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### Introduction

LGBTQI people represent a diverse population highly stigmatised because of their gender or sexual non conformity (e.g., Kenagy, 2005; Lombardi, Wilchins, Priesing, & Malouf, 2001; Xavier, 2000). Thus, scientific community is paying a great attention to those discriminations acted within institutional settings. To this end, Hatzenbuehler (2010) has theorised a particular form of stigma, called *structural or institutional stigma*, defined as “societal level conditions, cultural norms, and institutional policies that constrain the opportunities, resources, and well-being of the stigmatized” (Hatzenbuehler & Link, 2014, p.2).

Therefore, the focus on first responders’ training becomes a core question in the prevention and contrast of all forms of discrimination against LGBTQI people. As a matter of fact, professionals, pertaining to different help relationships areas (doctors, psychologists, police forces, and public services providers), are often lacking, because of obsolete employees’ training and updating policies, in knowledge and skills that are necessary to approach and efficiently help sexual minorities. As a consequence, LGBTQI people might often experience a *secondary victimisation* acted by first responders themselves (Jordan, 2001; Coxell & King, 2002).

In the light of these premises, the present contribution will be addressed at reporting some issues related to the Programme 2 of the Project “Empowering LGT young people against violence: a P2P model”, a project co-financed by European Union within Daphne III Programme for the empowerment of LGBTQI youth victims of violence and for the training of professionals in working with LGBTQI realities. In particular, the Programme 2, entitled “Power to Promote. LGBTQI Empowerment” was aimed at training different professionals and public service providers on theoretical references and direct practice of the work with LGBTQI people. Specifically, the main objectives of the training programme were to improve first responders’ (a) knowledge on gender and sexual violence against young LGT people, (b) awareness of the impact of the violence on young LGT people, and (c) relational and communicational skills.

### Structure and modules of the Programme

The Programme has been structured in 6 different and interrelated modules, organised as follows: 1) *Sexual and gender identity/LGBTQI issues*, aimed at explaining concepts and general objectives of the project and of the training, introducing action learning, concept and styles and providing scientific

basic knowledge regarding the themes related to sexual and gender identity in a psychological and social life-span perspective; 2) *Phobia and stigma/Heterosexism, cissexism and sexism*, aimed at providing a theoretical framework useful to identify the harmful effects of discriminations and sexual and gender stigma, homophobia and transphobia dimensions, intersectionality and gender normativity; 3) *Minority stress/Gender-queer reflections and resistances*, finalised at deconstructing superstructures linked to specific discriminated categories and recognising the impact of minority stress on LGBTQI population; 4) *Socio-political landscape/LGBTQI history*, addressing social and political scenarios related to human rights and legal, economic and politic equality of the LGBTQI population; 5) *Professional, personal and social levels/Interpersonal and communication skills/Stigmatisation in workplaces*, aimed at deepening consequences of ideological and stigmatising devices on LGBTQI people's different life contexts and at facilitating empathy toward social categories at risk of social stigma; 6) *Resilience and empowerment/Development of the project idea* aimed at providing theoretical references about resilience and empowerment, and developing a project idea to be implemented in service providers' workplaces.

### **Manual**

Reflections and thoughts about structure, contents, and implementation of the Programme 2 have taken place within group meetings in which all project partners participated, and collected into a manual. Following the modules structure abovementioned, this manual was intended to provide a theoretical and pedagogical framework for a work on LGBTQI issues in different contexts and with different addressees. Specifically, each module comprises a theoretical framework followed by thematic glossary and many references useful to deepen concepts addressed. Such a tool constitutes a useful booklet, which can be used by any training and educational figure, thanks to its flexibility and adaptability to different training settings and workplaces.

### **Materials and methodology**

According to the purpose of the Programme, not only participants were provided with theoretical materials, but they were primarily and directly involved in active learning during the training sessions. The main materials used by all the partners of the project have been: exercises on empathy and communication skills; videos and short movies; products from previous projects on the same matters; focus groups and role playing.

As an example, within the training carried out in Naples, they have been used the following role playing stimuli:

1. *Context:* Emergency room of a hospital (at the moment of the police report)  
*Character:* Policeman/policewoman who has to listen to a 45 years sex worker transgender woman filing a compliant  
*History:* The desperate woman comes in an emergency room of a hospital. She shows signs of percussions and tattered clothes. After the first medical examination, she vehemently asks to complain to local authorities. When the representative of the police arrives at the hospital, she tells him to have been a sex worker for years; tonight she has been approached by a 30 years man who wanted to have sex with her. He has been aggressive with her and, with a knife, hitting her arm. The woman has been able to escape and go to the hospital. The policeman/policewoman has to welcome the complaint of the hurt woman, trying to consider her situation, her condition and using everything learned during the training.
2. *Context:* The room of a school headmaster  
*Character:* Professional who intends to promote a project for social inclusion  
*History:* The professional goes to a high school to propose a project aimed at fighting homo-transphobia. The school headmaster lets him/her speak. Then, he tells him/her to be not interested to that idea because the problem does not exist in his school. The professional should be able to discuss with the school headmaster, explaining him the importance of

awareness and how the problem of homophobia, transphobia and homophobic bullying can be often concealed.

This kind of activities has been very useful and appreciated by trainees, because one can work on the emotional impact generated by the situation and can directly face one's own prejudices and stereotypes acted in the play. Furthermore, group reflections about the activities allow to share feelings and emotions activated *hic et nunc*, and to create a collective thought about possible good practices to use in the respective workplaces.

### **Evaluation**

The Programme has been evaluated through different tools administered at pre (T1), post (T2) and 3 months follow-up (T3). Specifically, an expectations form has been used during T1 and T2, two focus group sessions at T2 and T3, and two vignettes – one asking personal feelings elicited by a same-sex couple kissing at the airport, and the other one asking your behaviour in front of a gender realignment request by a transgender colleague – at T1 and T2.

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When asked if their aspirations/plans for the future had been affected by any experiences/fear of bullying/discrimination connected to their identity the majority (46%) of the respondent thought that they had; slightly fewer (41%) thought that they had not.

The majority did not think that their educational aspirations (88%) or career aspirations (74%) had been restricted, 88% did not think their ability to do well at university had been affected, 87% did not believe their ability to do well at work had been affected 67% did not think their ability to get a job had been affected however, 37% thought that their experiences had influenced their choice of job/career (e.g. what job, which location) and/or their choice of studies (e.g. what course, what institution) (29%).

45 respondents provided further detail about impacts on their aspirations/plans for the future, including related to migration issues, and choice of career/area of interest:

*“I think it affected me in a positive way because I chose to study to become a teacher/educator, because I want to have the opportunity to talk about homophobia and bullying to boys and girls”.*

Some participants suggested that their experiences had heightened their motivation:

*“Caused me to retaliate with an ‘I’ll show them’ attitude causing me to aim higher”.*

Some also emphasised that it was not individual bullying but broader societal discrimination that impacted upon them most. When asked if there were difficulties or barriers to accessing further/higher education or training, 24 responded that there were not:

*“I think higher education is much, much more accessible and a better place for LGBTQ students. For me as a gay man I found it very open and encouraging and friendly”.*

However, 23 responded that there were difficulties or barriers to accessing further/higher education or training, concerning migration issues, restricted subject choices, isolation/segregation, and broader fears:

*“I worry if it will be a safe space for me. I worry about repeat experiences similar to school. I worry about being able to participate as fully as I want to”.*

Participants were also asked if there were difficulties or barriers to gaining employment. This question had the largest volume of open responses: 17 were not sure or thought that there were not, but 45 felt that there were, for instance regarding fear, poor experiences of/lack of faith in fair recruitment practices, limited choice of career, relationships at work, pressure to remain closeted, and migration:

*“Trying to navigate how much to disclose at interview is a constant reminder that you’re ‘other’”.*

Specific points were raised by people wishing to work in schools (primarily in Ireland) and believing their opportunities were limited by institutions led by religious organisations:

*“Education in Ireland [is] still mostly under Catholic church control so as a gay man it is close to impossible to find a teaching position unless I hide my sexuality. This discrimination is allowed under Irish law”.*

### **Experiences of studies since leaving school.**

Respondents were asked if their time at university or in higher education had been affected by any bullying/discrimination (or fear of) connected to their identity: for the majority (63%) it had not, but for 29% it had. Those who had been to university or continued in their studies reflected on impacts on their studies since leaving school: the clear majority (91%) had felt left out or isolated at some point, 69% struggled to concentrate, and 67% did not always feel motivated, 62% chose not to participate in class questions or discussions at some point, 57% thought they had achieved lower marks for their work, 55% did not feel they acquired skills as well as they should have done, just under half (49%) had missed classes more than once.

### **Seeking employment**

Respondents were asked if they thought their ability to gain employment had been affected by any prior experiences of bullying/discrimination connected to their identity: the majority thought that it had not (62%), but 19% felt that it had. Participants were then asked about specific impacts: 27%

thought their confidence in their abilities had been adversely affected, 20% thought their ability to perform well at job interviews had been affected, 17% felt that their CV was not as good as other people's, 13% said that having fewer or lower qualifications had affected the range or level of jobs they could apply for. Other issues highlighted included lack of confidence impacting upon interview and/or job performance, and pressure to remain closeted:

*"I tend to be quieter than the other employees at work, and don't always allow for my employer to see my full potential".*

### **Experiences of employment since leaving school.**

Participants were asked if their time at work had been affected by any bullying/discrimination (or fear of) connected to their identity: for just over half (54%) it had not, but for nearly a third (30%) it had. Those who had experienced a job were asked about the impact of bullying/discrimination in their work: the clear majority had felt left out or isolated more than once (83%), 70% struggled to concentrate at times, and 63% did not always feel motivated, 61% felt their career progression was restricted, 44% had changed jobs, and 41% had quit their job, 43% called in sick or missed days at work as a result of their experiences 42% did not feel they had acquired skills at work as well as they should have. Other issues emphasised by respondents included feeling isolated or stereotyped, and remaining closeted.

### **Conclusions**

Experience or fear of bullying and/or discrimination can have specific impacts on young LGBTQ people's education and employment opportunities. These impacts include loss of confidence, isolation, attendance and/or participation issues, and lack of motivation and/or concentration, resulting in potential disadvantages in academic attainment and/or achievement.

Not all experiences of prejudice or harassment were from peers; teachers and/or family members were also sometimes responsible. Broader societal discrimination/pressures were also experienced negatively by participants. These issues are often not understood or acknowledged within a focus on 'bullying. Identifying as LGBTQ can impact upon a person's plans or aspirations for the future, regarding choice of studies and/or career, as well as migration concerns. Migration issues were apparent in people's desires to avoid certain areas of education and/or employment, and in people's desire to move to locations with more progressive legislative frameworks in which to live their lives.

Ongoing issues about fear, apprehension and/or a belief in the need to stay 'closeted' were apparent, including pervasive fears about securing and retaining employment as an 'out' LGBTQ person. Fear of prejudice can be as significant and influential as actual experiences of discrimination, for some people. LGBTQ identities are still experienced as, or assumed to be, stigmatised; even advocates and campaigners in this field were wary of acknowledging their (often voluntary) work on CVs and/or in job interviews.

Caution is needed to not portray LGBTQ people as 'victims'; not all experiences of being young and identifying as LGBTQ are negative, so a 'one size fits all' approach from professionals working with young people may not be helpful.

### **Recommendations**

From the research two sets of recommendations emerges, one more general in the research publication and another that is more targeted and included in the advocacy recommendations and minimum standards. The general recommendations mention amongst others adopting inclusive education practices, providing information or support that doesn't assume negative, work related support, school and university-based support services, facilitation of mutual or peer support amongst LGBTQ young people, accessible online information about education, social and employment related issues, informing and improving general awareness about LGBTQ lives and identities, supporting young people with family relationships if appropriate, offering non-stigmatising sex education, and promoting the need for LGBTQ awareness and inclusive practice among all professionals working

with young people, further research, especially on the needs of young trans people.

The advocacy recommendation and minimum standard recommend the following measures. On a European level this includes the implementation of anti-discrimination policies and guidelines, providing funding and supporting research. On a national level IGLYO encourages the development of anti-bullying policies, anti-discrimination law and teachers education. On a school system level training, student support systems, systematic data collection and multilevel policies.

### **IGLYO and research**

IGLYO knows as the representative umbrella organisation for over 80 youth and student organisations from all over Europe the challenges young LGBTQ-people face. Working to raise the member capacity and lobby for improvement in European legislation for young LGBTQ gives IGLYO a unique understanding on the different aspects and consequences of homophobia and transphobia on society. Through the commissioning of research, IGLYO as an international non-governmental youth organisation (INGYO) can highlight areas where the competence is lacking. IGLYO's role is also to use research actively as a tool for developing effective actions and advocating for positive change.

Taking into consideration the competencies of the European Union, the EU makes laws and monitors their implementation in areas like employment and rights at work, while on the area of education each country is responsible for its own education and training system. This division of competences reflects on the development of legal protection from discrimination, where one of the controversies is how far the EU will go in protecting LGBTQ people in the area of education. This is a very relevant topic, especially in the ongoing discussions around the EU horizontal anti-discrimination directive that if implemented should ban discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, religion or belief and sexual orientation in all areas of EU competence.

Research like "the impact of homophobic and transphobic bullying on education and employment opportunities" is ground breaking in the sense that it in this way connects different areas of EU competencies and support the need of an horizontal directive in order to have a strong strengthen the labour market. The importance of the research was confirmed when IGLYO in January 2014 launched the research at the European Parliament with the then president of the LGBT Intergroup lead the launching event and several MEPs attended. Accompanying the research IGLYO has developed a set of minimum standards and advocacy recommendations that functions as tools that can be used to address the problem of homophobic and transphobic bullying towards the European institutions, national governments and schools systems and administrators and lead to political and systemic change. Still, this is only the starting point and more research is needed to understand the complex and long-term effects of homophobic and transphobic bullying on society.

### **Reference**

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All publications are available at <http://www.iglyo.com/resources/>



# LGBTQI rights: anti-discrimination policies at the University of Turin

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*This contribution aims at describing the positive actions undertaken by the University of Turin through its Guarantee Committee and the Confidential Counsellor, in order to support students in gender transition. Such positive actions rely on both regulations internal to the University and norms at the national and European levels. We will briefly overview the normative framework and the issues raised at both European and Italian level. We will, then, describe the positive actions undertaken by the University of Turin through its Guarantee Committee and the Confidential Counsellor, in particular the ones devoted to education and counseling. We will also discuss the 2002 initiative to provide students in gender transition with a document with the chosen name, now replaced by the “electronic academic transcript alias”, available on the University web platform, providing the students with a temporary identity and an anticipatory alias associated with the official one, which is kept confidential.*

*Keywords:* “positive actions”, “gender identity”, “students”, “alias career”, “Confidential Counsellor”

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## Introduction

This contribution aims at describing the positive actions undertaken by the University of Turin through its Guarantee Committee and the Confidential Counsellor, in order to support individuals, students in particular, undergoing gender transition. Indeed, the particular situations and issues we had to address, concerned exclusively transgender students. We hypothesize that this may be due to the fact that - in light of the current normative framework at the international level and, especially, national level – Italian people with gender dysphoria are allowed to start the medical and legal process of gender reassignment only after they are 18 years old. Unfortunately, such process takes several years that often coincide with the period of university studies.

The University of Turin, which since 2000 adopted a Code of Conduct for the defence of the dignity of its students and employees, has felt the need, first, to set out an explicit and general anti-discrimination framework to provide protection for LGBTQI people and, then, to apply actions and policies as effective as possible for supporting students in overcoming the difficulties they daily meet during the transition period, when the elective and outward identity do not match the official one.

## Normative framework and regulatory actions

Under the general anti-discrimination framework the protection invests *in primis* the normative and common language to use, since the primary sources of discrimination are often just the lack of knowledge, the improper use of and/or the terminological confusion between ‘*homosexual*’, ‘*transsexual*’, ‘*transgender*’, ‘*queer*’, ‘*intersex*’, as well as the widespread stereotypes. With this in mind, we proposed an amendment to the first version of Article. 2 of the University’s Code of Conduct, which explicitly mentions also **gender identity** among the factors of possible discrimination (in addition to other factors such as gender and sexual orientation). Furthermore, we organized training courses addressed in particular, but not exclusively, to administrative staff dealing with transgender students. In 2013 training programmes consisted in lectures by the Confidential Counsellor; such activities were recorded and used as on-line teaching material in the following years.

Also the anti-discrimination legislation, at national and international level, for years has fuelled such confusion in terminology, for instance not expressly providing gender identity among the factors of discrimination. The need of protection for LGBTQI people has been, however, satisfied by applying, reasoning by analogy, the rules of protection against other factors of discrimination (homosexuality and, more often, gender). Let us mention, among all, Article 14 of the European Convention on

Human Rights (*"The enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in this Convention shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status"*), but also Article 21 of the Charter of Nice, ratified by the Lisbon Treaty (*"Any discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation shall be prohibited."*). Only in Directive 2004/83/CE for first time, gender identity is explicitly and autonomously mentioned as an independent factor of discrimination, so unlatching the protection for gender identity from the one for gender discrimination.

Similarly, at the national level, neither Art. 2 of the Constitution, nor Art. 2 Legislative Decree no. 216/2003 (general and foundational norm against all forms of discrimination) make express reference to gender identity. Thus, once again, the discipline against gender discrimination has been used and adapted (Legislative Decree no. 198/2006, so-called code of equal opportunities) in order to apply by analogy the safeguards, based on European Court of Justice, which in 1996 had explicitly extended the principle of equal treatment between women and men (in the workplace) also to transgender people, claiming that: *"the scope of the directive [76/207, in force at that time, and later replaced by dir. 78/2000] cannot be confined simply to discrimination based on the fact that a person is of one or other sex. In view of its purpose and the nature of the rights which it seeks to safeguard, the scope of the directive is also such as to apply to discrimination arising, as in this case, from the gender reassignment of the person concerned"*).

Needless to reaffirm, that an explicit recognition of gender identity as autonomous and independent factor of discrimination, would allow a better protection reflecting the specific case, overcoming gaps and distortions still, unfortunately, present in the current normative framework. Consider, for example, the only norm that deals *expressis verbis* with transexual people, Law 164/1982, which, however, is not an anti-discrimination norm, but only regulate the judicial procedure of rectification of attribution of sex (now modified art. 31, Legislative Decree no. 150/2009). The procedural nature of the norm, which is not a substantive anti-discrimination norm, leaves open the relevant legal issues and the problem of the actual protection of people that start the process of rectification of sex in the period of greatest weakness and fragility. Indeed, the procedure consists in a very long and complex process, articulated in a dual stage: the first is that of authorizing the medical treatment and/or the sex-reassignment surgery, and the second is that of obtaining the rectification of name and gender in public registries. For both phases of the procedure reaching the age of 18 is generally required (let us notice, however, a significant opening by the Court of Rome, which since 2011 has allowed the application submitted by a parent in the interest of the minor child), the presence of a PM and of a disputant (spouse, children, or the Ministry of the Interior). Such a procedure, however, seems to overlook the fact that, in this case, the focus is on personal rights, which fall into the categories mentioned in Article 2 of the Constitution, where it is not tolerable any interference by third parties.

Also the Judge's power of investigation must be properly monitored, in order not to turn a purely procedural discipline in a substantive rule where the Court is pursuing checks and assessments significantly invasive and/or limiting. A significant testing ground of the Judge's powers of investigation and decision is, in particular, the aspect related to the surgery: of great interest, in this respect, is a judgment of the Court of Rome, 10/18/1997, according to which the sex reassignment surgery "is not itself a prerequisite for the rectification of sex, but it should be proposed only when it appears to be necessary." Other judgments, in particular the Court of Turin, but also of the Court of Rome, considered, conversely, sex reassignment surgery as a necessary prerequisite, at least for what concerns the removal of the ability to procreate (Court of Rome, judgment of 07/18/2014).

Law 164/1982, however, requires surgery "only when necessary", thus admitting that it may not be

essential. Moreover, sometimes to undergo surgery is impossible (e.g. because it is not possible to undergo general anaesthesia for other medical problems, or simply because people are scared of surgery); sometimes the person at issue just does not consider it necessary (e.g. because she/he does not reject her/his body image).

All in all, as already mentioned above, an anti-discrimination legislation that protects the transgender people in their free choices of life, is missing. For instance, there are not norms ruling the following aspects:

- the consequences on marriage already contracted before the rectification of sex (this gap has made it necessary the intervention of the Supreme Court at first – 2013 - and then of the Italian Constitutional Court – 2014 - to avoid that the rectification of sex itself could provoke the dissolution of marriage *ex lege*, as though it had been claimed);
- relations with minor children, where:
  - a) for the children of the marriage conducted before the rectification of sex: according to Const. Court judgment 161/1985, the transsexual person retains all parental obligations and rights; there were, however, cases of non-foster care and lack of recognition of visiting rights (Turin Juvenile Court 07/20/1982 "for incapacity of the father as transgender to fulfil a paternal role", a striking example of a court order discriminatory in itself).
  - b) for children born after the process of rectification of sex: it has been recognized the possibility of adoption by couples of parents, one transgender, because "the best interests of the child must be assessed without any a priori conviction about parental suitability of transgenders (Perugia Juvenile Courts of Appeal 02/25/1998, confirming Perugia Juvenile Court 07/22/1997).
- employment relationships: for example, it was considered legitimate to fire a police officer for showing, outside working hours, a "cross-dressing" behaviour, because it was considered to negatively affect the image and the decorum of the administration (Veneto Regional Administrative Court judgment of 12/06/2006). In 1996 the European Court of Justice had, on the contrary, considered discriminatory the dismissal of a transgender, precisely because transgender (Eu.C.of Just. 04/30/1996).
- the free choice of the name in the (long) transition phase: the Presidential Decree no 396/2000 states that "the name must match the sex" (Art. 35), but in the case of "misalignment" between sex and name, rectification needs to follow the judicial process established by Law 164/1982. Before that decision, there have been only administrative measures - for internal use only - by some institutions: first of all the University of Turin.

### **Positive actions**

Let us now describe the second line of action of our University. In order to overcome inequality and obstacles to a peaceful approach to the university studies, the University has adopted some concrete tools, which are listed in the following:

- **Double booklet for academic transcript of records.** In order to deal with the inevitable discomfort resulting from the need to use official documents attesting an identity that do not correspond to the outward identity, in 2002 the Equal Opportunities Committee and the Confidential Counsellor promoted the amendment of Art. 14 of the Student Regulation, ruling on the personal data processing issue, by inserting the clause n. 7, which expressly provides for students who are "waiting for the Court to rule on the question rectification of sex and for the subsequent rectification of name by Registry Office" the delivery of a second academic transcript (paper booklet) containing all the student data but indicating only chosen name (name of election). Obviously, such second paper booklet could have an internal use only, but it allowed transgender people to avoid to show an identification booklet with a name

associated to a sex opposite to the outward one, by protecting privacy, sexual identity, and, in a word, diversity.

- **Identification badge.** A different and further problem occurred for students studying in the Faculty of Science and Medicine, in particular with reference to the necessary training to be performed at hospitals and health care institutes. In such situations, students must be equipped and exhibit an identification badge, and various other documents for the insurance and social security (e.g. accident insurance). For what concerns documents related to insurance, it was not possible to do anything but trying to sensitize employees devoted to the compilation to keep the strictest confidence, since no formula of insurance coverage can be hypothesized without the official personal details of the person concerned. For what concerns the identification badge, it was allowed to release it equipped with photography, serial number and exclusive reference to the surname, but omitting of the name. Such solution has also been adopted for the documents that must be signed by the transgender student. The signature is affixed with the surname alone. For what concerns the transcript of traineeship records and the evaluation board, it has adopted the same procedure in Art. 14, clause n. 7 of the Student Regulation, with the release of a second traineeship booklet and a dual training board bearing the name of election.
- **Alias career:** The recent adoption of electronic administrative procedures at our University, with abandonment of the paper transcript of records' booklet, has actually weakened the positive action of 2002, making it necessary to adapt the need to protect the elective identity of the transgender students to the new IT technologies and processes that regulate academic careers. On this line, in 2014 the Guarantee Committee and the Confidential Counsellor have proposed and promoted the creation for students in gender transition of the so-called "Alias Career", for the activation of the double digital identity. As a result of this initiative, interested parties may obtain a magnetic card, an email account and an identity for accessing the information services of the University, bearing the chosen name. For this purpose a special regulation was elaborated, governing a Confidentiality Agreement between the parties concerned and the University, under which the latter agrees to recognize a provisional identity, which is temporary, by modifying the student's actual career; such modification constitutes an anticipation of the measures that will be necessary at the end of the process of gender transition, when the applicant will have new official personal identity documents, as a result of the judgment that rectifies the attribution of sex and - consequently - the name given at birth. The alias career will be inextricably linked to that already active and referred to the applicant, and will remain active as long as the actual career will continue. Interested parties undertake to communicate the definition and/or interruption of the gender transition process and to use the alias career exclusively within the University context.