

Axis 2. The fight against inequalities and the defense of minority rights

Title of the proposal:

Situation of LGBTI * migrant people living in Barcelona. Needs assessment and design of intervention proposals.

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to present the results of the first phase of a research project aiming at understanding the social situation of LGBTI * migrants living in Barcelona and Toulouse, with the aim of fighting against discrimination and improve inclusion. This work was done in collaboration with the Catalan association Acathi and Toulouse entities that work to defend this collective. This research was made possible thanks to the cross-border ProspeCTsaso European project, which is part of Axis 5 of the Operational Program for Territorial Cooperation Spain-France-Andorra 2014-2020 (Interreg - POCTEFA) with the aim of reinforcing skills and inclusion within the territories.

The situation of LGBTI people * varies greatly from country to country: some countries are characterized by respect and laws protecting sexual diversity, while others, on the contrary, clearly violate the most fundamental human rights (CEAR, 2015, Amnesty International, 2009). Moving to other territories in search of greater respect has often been a characteristic of persons belonging to sexual minorities.

Two main triggers explain the migratory phenomenon: the economic factor and the violation of rights and freedoms. What drives the LGBTI * collective to migrate? Although there may be doubts about the causes (to emigrate to improve the situation or to survive), the authors generally mention the persecution in the country of origin as the main factor of the migratory fact (Hopkinson, 2017, Karban, 2015, Yue 2013)

2. The host country and its contradictions

If for migration in general, beyond the single LGBTI * collective, the authors mention a loss of status during the migration transition (Achotegui, 2007), an opposite phenomenon can be detected when one is specifically interested in the LGBTI*collective. In the case of Spain, the access of the LGBTI * collective as refugees (Braga do Nascimento, 2017) allows a better social adaptation.

Regarding the experience of people who have migrated, Bennet (2013) notes the effect of sexual freedom as a positive experience in the destination country; Stella (2017) mentions the idea of safety and normal life for LGBTI* collective.

It is obvious that, although coming to countries with a greater development of individual liberties, LGBTI* collective must face a dual level of discrimination in the host country to the extent that migrant status and sexual orientation Heteronormative behaviour may still be grounds for discrimination in most Western countries (Adur 2018, Moore 2016, Östlund 2016).

3. LGBTI Refugee Activism *: A Protective Factor

Social action for LGBTI people includes both professional actions carried out in the framework of social services and those carried out by non-governmental or third sector social organizations. In the first case, the provision of services to the refugee-seeking population of international protection is subject to limited coverage, a consequence of the austerity policies applied in recent decades. The social support provided by entities is therefore of paramount importance, whether for its function of subsidiarity to institutional protection systems, its proximity and its capacity to respond.

In this context, LGBT activism includes in its programs the action in support of these people. As Monferrer (2010) points out, international protection is prefiguring a new mobilization framework in a dynamic similar to that at work with work for family diversity, education, territorial decentralization and helping LGBTI seniors.

4. Social work with LGBT * refugees or applicants for international protection

There is no great tradition of social work in Spain for LGBTI* collective. It was from the 80s and 90s that social work in the area of sexual diversity began to develop based on actions taken with people affected by HIV. The hiring of social workers in organizations and the provision of public and private funding specifically for the LGBTI * population provides guidance, support and individual assistance to individuals in this group. In Barcelona, the specific work for the group of LGBTI * refugees is only done by the ACATHI association, while the city's social services have not developed a specific line of work in this respect.

5. First results

The methodology used in the first phase of the study is qualitative and consisted in carrying out 20 interviews with LGBTI * refugee people involved in the ACATHI association. The interviewees are between 23 and 83 years old and arrived in Barcelona between 2013 and 2016. 60% of them come from Latin America, 20% from Africa and 20% from non-EU Europe. 50% have a higher level of education. More than half had jobs at the time of the interview.

The results show that these collective experiences different types of discrimination that interact with each other and thus generate new inequalities working independently. Faced with the situation of discrimination and violence in their country of origin, 85% of the people participating in the study explain that they took the decision to undertake a migration project to escape homophobia and transphobia. 50% explained that they had experienced discrimination because of their sexuality or gender identity in their country of origin.

On arrival in Barcelona, most of the LGBTI * refugees who participated in the study experienced their sexual orientation, gender identity or sexual preference more freely, which made them feel safer and more secure. to improve their social condition. LGBTI * people in the study explained that they had the support of different social actors such as ACATHI.

6. References

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