

# **FROM PREJUDICE TO EQUALITY**

**STUDY OF SOCIETAL ATTITUDES TOWARDS  
LGBTI PEOPLE IN ARMENIA**

**PUBLIC INFORMATION AND NEED OF KNOWLEDGE NGO  
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## FOREWORD

As historically traditional societies, Georgia and Armenia have come a long way since the fall of the Soviet Union in terms of certain aspects of development. However, numerous challenges persist in the context of human rights, foretelling a long, arduous, obstacle-ridden road towards the achievement of equal rights for all groups. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) persons represent one of the most marginalised, least visible and discriminated against groups in Armenia and Georgia. Despite a degree of success achieved in recent years, especially in Georgia with the adoption of the Law on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination in 2014, members of the group continue to face violence, oppression, and harassment from the general public, as well as specific institutions, including medical facilities and the workplace. Bias-motivated violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) frequently goes unreported and, hence, remain without proper investigation and retribution. Deep-rooted homo/bi/transphobia permeating virtually all segments of society is reinforced by traditional values, as well as binary, heteronormative gender roles, which, in turn, fuel the discriminatory culture prevalent in these two countries and prevent LGBTI persons from fully enjoying their rights and freedoms. A flawed understanding of democratic values and minority rights has also largely been inherited from the Soviet Union, and has been symptomatic of small nations with a collective memory of unresolved conflict and survivalist ideology, where LGBTI persons are seen as a threat to local customs and religion<sup>1</sup>.

In order to comprehensively combat discrimination against LGBTI people in the two countries, the South Caucasus Regional Office of the Heinrich Boell Foundation has been implementing the EU-funded action Solidarity Network for LGBTI in Armenia and Georgia, in partnership with the Women's Initiatives Supporting Group (WISG) and Human Rights Education and Monitoring Centre (EMC) in Georgia; and Society Without Violence (SWV) and Public Information and Need of Knowledge (PINK) in Armenia. The overall objectives of the action are to enhance the protection of and respect for LGBTI people's rights, combat homophobia and support LGBTI people's inclusion in Georgia's and Armenia's respective societies, while the specific objectives are to support LGBTI people in the full scale realisation of their rights through the enhancement of an LGBTI-friendly environment and to stimulate a higher cohesion of civil society actors on SOGI issues in Georgia and Armenia.

The present publication is the result of a year-long coordinated effort by the project partners, which envisioned the development and implementation of two comprehensive studies: a full-scale research of homo/bi/transphobic societal attitudes, and a situational assessment of the legal and physical conditions of LGBTI persons in the two countries.

The large-scale in-depth study of homo/bi/transphobic societal attitudes includes a thorough examination of social prejudices and stereotypes that would facilitate the investigation of the scale and specific nature of homo/bi/transphobia in Armenia and Georgia. Although, several studies to measure attitudes towards homosexuals have been previously conducted in both countries (the 2011 CRRC Caucasus Barometer<sup>2</sup> being one example), the scope and scale of the present study is unprecedented, affording an integrated perspective on prevalent attitudes towards and knowledge about LGBTI persons. An almost identical methodology for Georgia and Armenia allows for effective comparison of the data in the future.

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1 Silvia Stöber, LGBT Rights in the South Caucasus, Heinrich Boell South Caucasus Regional Office, LGBTI Web-dossier: <https://ge.boell.org/en/2013/05/30/lgbt-rights-south-caucasus>

2 Caucasus Research Resource Center (CRRC)-Armenia Foundation, Attitudes towards Homosexuality in the South Caucasus <http://crrc-caucasus.blogspot.com/2013/07/attitudes-towards-homosexuality-in.html>

The situational assessment depicting particular legal and physical conditions of LGBTI people in Armenia and Georgia provides an in-depth analysis of legal standards, existing international and local legislation, cases of discrimination in various spheres, levels of state responsibility towards LGBTI persons and their accessibility to relevant services (health care, education, etc).

The findings of the two studies and the specific areas of focus identified therein will serve as the basis for the development of country-specific evidence-based long-term advocacy strategies on the advancement of LGBTI issues, as well as a set of recommendations for specific actors. The advocacy strategy and the findings of the two studies will also be used as groundwork for a multifaceted awareness-raising campaign, as well as capacity-building activities for CSOs, LGBTI organisations, activists and initiative groups within the framework of the action.

The Heinrich Boell Foundation is particularly grateful to the four project partners mentioned above for their meticulous work and coordinated efforts in developing the methodologies, designing the study tools, producing in-depth analytical reports and ensuring the publication of the two studies; the Institute of Social Studies and Analysis (ISSA) in Georgia and the Caucasus Research Resource Center (CRRC)-Armenia Foundation and Lusine Saghumyan for the comprehensive field work, data collection and analysis; and experts, Ms Ekaterine Aghdgomelashvili, who has almost single-handedly ensured the validity of every single correlation and invested countless hours and sustained effort in producing a high-quality, comprehensive and well-rounded report, as well as Ms Elmira Bakhshinyan, Mr Jack Vahan Bournazian, and Ms Mariam Osipyan for their invaluable and exhaustive work. Heinrich Boell Foundation's own Eka Tsereteli also deserves high commendation for her work on the graphic design of the homophobic attitudes study, as do Anne Nemsitsveridze-Daniels for their contribution to the translation and editing efforts of the study and situational assessment, and Hasmik Hayrapetyan, for her assistance in the translation of the quantitative tools.

It is our hope that the two detailed studies will provide a better understanding of LGBTI rights in both Armenia and Georgia and pave the way for a long-term strategy that would ensure their protection and inclusion in all aspects of life, which would consequently strengthen democratic development and lead to inclusive and tolerant societies free from discrimination.

Tbilisi, 23 March 2016

Nino Lejava

Director

Heinrich Boell Foundation

South Caucasus Regional Office

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>CoE</b>	Council of Europe
<b>CRRC</b>	Caucasus Research Resource Centres
<b>EEU</b>	Eurasian Economic Union
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>HDI</b>	Human development index
<b>ILCS</b>	Integrated Living Conditions Surveys
<b>GDP</b>	Gross domestic product
<b>GII</b>	Gender Inequality Index
<b>LGBTI</b>	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organisation
<b>OSCE</b>	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
<b>RA</b>	Republic of Armenia
<b>UNDP</b>	The United Nations Development Programme
<b>SOGI</b>	Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity
<b>RF</b>	Russian Federation
<b>USA</b>	United States of America

## KEY CONCEPTS

**Bisexual** - person is emotionally and/or sexually attracted to persons of more than one gender.

**Gay** - (homosexual man) a man who is sexually and/or emotionally attracted to men.

**Gender** - refers to people's internal perception and experience of maleness and femaleness, and the social construction that allocates certain behaviours into male and female roles.

**Gender identity** - refers to each person's deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond with the sex they were assigned at birth.

**Genderism** - a cultural belief according to which gender is binary, there exist or should exist only two genders.

**Heterosexual** - a person, who has romantic, emotional, erotic and sexual attraction towards a person of another sex.

**Homophobia** - a phobia, fear, hatred and repulsion towards a homosexual person or individuals perceived as homosexual and homosexuality in general.

**Homosexual (lesbian and gay men)** - a person, who has romantic, emotional, erotic and sexual attraction towards a person of same sex.

**Intersex** - people, who are born with physical, hormonal or genetic features that are neither wholly female nor wholly male; or a combination of female and male; or neither female nor male.

**Lesbian** - (homosexual woman) a woman who is sexually and/or emotionally attracted to women.

**LGBTI community** - a community of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people united by common interests, problems and goals. It is also composed of various sub-communities, groups and communities.

**Sexual orientation** - refers to each person's capacity for profound affection, emotional and sexual attraction to, and intimate and sexual relations with, individuals of a different gender or the same gender or more than one gender.

**Sexuality** - a complex of each person's biological, mental, behavioural, and social characteristics, which defines a person's identity, behaviour, image and role as an individual and a member of society.

**Transgender** - is an inclusive umbrella term referring to those people whose gender identity and/or a gender expression differs from the sex they were assigned at birth.

**Transgender man** - a person born female who considers himself a man.

**Transgender woman** - a person born male who considers herself a woman.

**Transphobia** - refers to negative cultural and personal beliefs, opinions, attitudes and behaviours based on prejudice, disgust, fear and/or hatred of transgender people or against variations of gender identity and gender expression.



**PART 1**  
**QUALITATIVE RESEARCH:**  
**LITERATURE STUDY**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The current desk research was aimed at analysing the impact of social, cultural, political and other macro-social factors that influence the overall homo-transphobic environment of Armenian society. The report can be used for the elaboration of recommendations and specific strategies for overcoming homophobia in Armenia.

More than 30 reports and publications, including different policy, program, strategy and project documents were analysed to summarise prevalent social prejudices, stereotypes, stances and actions towards LGBTI people, as well as to identify their features and origins. In addition, several experts reviewed the report and provided recommendations, validating its content and structure.

A short summary of the report's key findings is presented below.

There are numerous studies indicating that the acceptance of homosexuality highly depends on the socio-economic and religious situation of a country (Pew Research Centre, 2013); therefore, it is important to depict the situation in Armenia in terms of these three spheres of society and life. After independence, Armenia undertook wide ranging and comprehensive institutional, economic and social reforms towards sustainable human development. Over the last decade, two major events have had a strong effect on the economic and socio-political life of Armenia: a significant decrease in the country's two digit GDP growth due to the 2008 global economic crisis and the country's decision to abandon the planned Association Agreement with the EU in favour of joining the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU).

Currently, the following indicators characterise Armenia: nearly one third of the population still lives in poverty; there is wide economic disparity between an elite group of citizens and the rest of the population; and elections, as a rule, do not reflect citizens' will. Other concerns are related to escalating border tensions, limitations of freedom of expression and association, and the lack of an independent judiciary system. Some reports add poor prison conditions, including overcrowding, ill treatment, and discrimination against LGBTI people to the list of concerns mentioned above (Human Rights Watch, 2015). Armenia is clearly

bound by both international and domestic jurisprudence to guarantee equality and non-discrimination with regard to sexual orientation. Thus, homosexuality ceased to be a criminal offence in 2003; LGBTI persons have the same right to legal protection under the Constitution as all Armenian citizens do; and in 2008 Armenia endorsed the United Nations statement outlawing discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Although the Armenian government has signed and ratified most of the UN, CoE, OSCE and EU covenants, treaties and other instruments, in practice, at the level of human rights pertaining to sexual orientation and gender identity, numerous reports state that the country has failed to meet those commitments. The following are some existing gaps that result in human rights violations of LGBTI people in the country: the Criminal Code of Armenia does not define hate crimes or hate speech as separate offences; there is no specific protection against discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity; no consideration is given to the family and partnership rights of LGBTI couples.

As a result of the existing gaps in Armenian legislation, LGBTI persons continue to face intimidation, threats, harassment, physical and psychological abuse in different spheres of life, including family, healthcare, law enforcement, the armed forces and closed institutions. Nevertheless, it should be noted that these discriminatory practices are caused not only by legislative gaps, but also by the deeply-rooted negative attitudes of society towards LGBTI people. Limited understanding of sexual orientation and gender identity is widespread in Armenian society. Moreover, homosexuality is perceived to be a contagious disease by the public. Unlike in other countries, age and gender do not seem to be determining factors for the level of acceptance of homosexuality in Armenia.

LGBTI people usually become targets of hate speech not only by ultra-nationalist groups, but also by public actors and officials, which fosters increased prejudice against the LGBTI community. In addition, human rights defenders working on the protection of LGBTI rights and the promotion of gender equality face violence and attacks because of the work they are engaged in. Moreover, authorities' responses to such attacks are slow and inadequate.

Other underlying factors promoting negative attitudes and discriminatory practices towards LGBTI people are the high level of gender inequality in Armenia and the high level of religiosity of society. Gender stereotypes, gender-based violence and low involvement of women in decision-making roles are highly prevalent in the country. As for the high level of religiosity, it should be stated that the Church could be an important determinant of acceptance of homosexuality. However, the viewpoint of the Armenian Apostolic Church towards homosexuality is distinctly negative, and homosexuality is viewed as a grave sin. Consequently, prevalent negative statements by the Church about the LGBTI community underpin the hostile environment and create solid ground for the harassment of and violence towards LGBTI people in the country.

Because of the high level of discrimination and psychological/physical violence prevalent in the country, it is difficult to discuss LGBTI issues in Armenia—many people prefer not to disclose their sexual orientation and/or gender identity, and LGBTI activism is limited. It is only since the decriminalisation of homosexuality in 2003 that the LGBTI community began to organise and take shape. Amongst the estimated 4,000 registered NGOs in Armenia, only three openly declared that their target group included LGBTI persons when the report was developed. These organisations provide specific services to the LGBTI community and actively advocate for the protection of LGBTI rights in the country.

Based on the desk research conducted and consultations with experts, several recommendations for the state, acting agencies, the Human Rights Defender's office and the media have been developed, which are presented at the end of this report.

## SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

Armenia is a lower-middle-income country with a population of around three million. The value for Armenia in the Human Development Index (HDI) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for 2014 was 0.730, which placed the country in the high human development category and positioned Armenia 87th among 187 countries and territories. Between 1990 and 2013, Armenia's HDI value improved from 0.632 to 0.730, an increase of 15.5% or an average annual increase of about 0.63% (UNDP, 2014). The country's gross domestic product (GDP) grew rapidly between 2002 and 2007, with an annual average growth of 13%, but dropped sharply in 2009 as a result of the global financial crisis. The economy saw growth again in 2012 with a greater focus on services including information technology, manufacturing, mining and agriculture. Armenia's development has been closely linked with a transition to a knowledge-based economy drawing on the skilled labour force, and considerable progress has been made to establish a national innovation system (EIU, 2014.) Economic growth in Armenia slowed again in 2013 (down to 3.5% from 7.2% in 2012) with higher inflation, including increases in electricity and imported gas prices. This slow-down of GDP growth continued from 3.4% in 2014 to 5% by mid-2015, and was accompanied by currency devaluation (ADB, 2014). This reflected the deteriorating economic situation in the region—particularly in Russia, Armenia's largest trading partner and the main source of remittances from migrant workers. Official foreign trade with Russia comprises approximately 23% of Armenia's GDP, while remittances from migrant workers in Russia make up approximately 17% (CB, 2014). Although the country observed a reduction of extreme poverty and hunger in the last two decades, the poverty level in the country remains high. Armenia has been using the World Bank methodology for determining the poverty rate through Integrated Living Conditions Surveys (ILCS). The recent data from ILCS 2014 indicate that nearly one third of the population (30%) still lives in poverty (NSS, 2015). A worrying and alarming sign is that the proportion of children under 5-years of age suffering from stunting and malnutrition has been steadily increasing since 2000 (EIU, 2014).

Another major concern for the country is the wide disparity between an elite group of persons who have access to a majority of resources, and the rest of the population that struggles to make a living. ILCS 2014 reported an increased Gini coefficient from 0.242 in 2008 to 0.277 in 2014<sup>3</sup>. Those involved in the process of democratisation in Armenia are highly concerned about the institutional corruption observed in the country (Carroll & Quinn, 2009; NSS, 2015). Regarding the political environment of the country, it should be noted that according to the Freedom House rating, Armenia is a “partly free” country, with the status of political rights scoring 5 and the status of civil liberties scoring 4 on a 7-point scale, where 1 is the highest degree and 7 is the lowest. No improvement has been observed in recent years (Freedom House, 2015). The legal framework for EU-Armenia bilateral relations was formulated in 1999 with the signing of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. Beginning in 2010, Armenia began to actively negotiate with the EU on an Association Agreement, with the intention of finalising the process by November 2013. In September 2013, President Sargsyan unexpectedly announced the country’s decision to join the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), the Russia-led customs union that also includes Belarus and Kazakhstan, amid widespread public disapproval.

A constitutional referendum took place in Armenia on the 6th of December, 2015, initiated by President Sargsyan, which would shift Armenia’s presidential system to a parliamentary republic. According to official results, 63% of voters supported the constitutional amendments. Law enforcement bodies received over 460 reports of alleged fraud and violence during and after the voting process. Fourteen criminal cases were launched at the time of the report development, but no arrests or charges had been made in connection with the irregularities. International observation missions<sup>4</sup> concluded that the referendum did not comply

with international norms; hence, its results did not reflect the will of the citizens of Armenia. Citizen Observer stated that, “the official results are largely forced and falsified, and the referendum and the document adopted through it are not legitimate” (Citizen Observer/EPDE, 2016).

Border violence in Nagorno-Karabakh escalated in 2014-2015, with the highest casualty rate being reported since the signing of the cease-fire agreement in 1994. In December 2015, for the first time since the cease-fire, the Armenian military reported the deployment of battle tanks by Azerbaijani forces, which fired at the south-eastern frontline positions of Nagorno-Karabakh forces. Defence Minister Seyran Ohanyan reported to the parliament that the situation has reached a new peak. Corruption is believed to be a serious problem in Armenia. Bribery and nepotism are reportedly common practice among government officials, who are rarely prosecuted or removed for malfeasance in office. Despite constitutional guarantees of freedom of expression and association, limitations are persistent in practice. The authorities use informal pressure to maintain control over broadcast outlets, the chief source of news for most Armenians. Authorities also interfere with the right of citizens to assemble, often by denying authorisation, dispersing demonstrations, or physically attacking participants. In addition, the judiciary suffers from a lack of independence and transparency (Freedom House, 2015).

As it can be derived from the analysis of the socio-economic and political environment of the country, Armenia is currently facing a number of issues that impede the country’s social and human development. Some of these issues, such as the limitations of freedom of expression and association, the independence of the judiciary system, and renewed rhetoric from politicians concerning “traditional values” as a consequence of EEU membership, create additional difficulties for the LGBTI community. Moreover, LGBTI-related topics are very often manipulated for the benefit of the state, or, LGBTI issues are considered to be secondary in comparison to other emerging problems.

<sup>3</sup> Report: Social Snapshot and Poverty in Armenia: Main Outcomes of 2014 Household Integrated Living Conditions Survey <http://www.armstat.am/file/doc/99493323.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> The observation mission was conducted by the Citizen Observer Initiative and the European Platform for Democratic Elections (EPDE), with the support of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), European Endowment for Democracy (EED), the Embassy of Federal Republic of Germany in Yerevan, and the European Union.

## GENERAL LEGAL SITUATION

The description of the legislative framework regulating and affecting different aspects of LGBTI persons' lives is crucial for any situational analysis. Therefore, this chapter of the report presents the dynamics of legislative changes in recent years, as well as addresses observed implementation gaps and challenges.

In 1922, a few years after the Bolshevik revolution, homosexuality ceased to be a criminal offence in the newly formed Soviet Union. However, it was reintroduced as a crime in 1933 under Article 116 of the Armenian Criminal Code, and was eventually removed from the code in 2003 (ILGA, 2006; Institute for War & Peace Reporting, 2009).

In general, LGBTI persons have the same right to legal protection under the Constitution as all Armenian citizens do, though sexual orientation and gender identity/expression are not listed as specific protected grounds in the Constitution. Armenia was the first nation in the South Caucasus to endorse the United Nations statement outlawing discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity in 2008 (CRRC, 2013; Institute for War & Peace Reporting, 2009). In general, however, LGBTI people do not enjoy this protection, and there is no guarantee that their rights will be upheld either in court or at police stations (The Danish Institute for Human Rights, 2010). Although the Armenian government has signed and ratified most of the UN, CoE, OSCE and EU covenants, treaties and other instruments, at the level of human rights pertaining to sexual orientation and gender identity, those commitments have not been met. In practice, discrimination and intolerance against LGBTI people remains widespread (Carroll & Quinn, 2009; Institute for War & Peace Reporting, 2009).

The Criminal Code of Armenia does not list hate crimes or hate speech as separate offences. In a number of offences, motivations involving national, racial, religious hatred or religious fanaticism are deemed circumstances aggravating liability and penalties. However, there are no specific references to hate motivated by homophobia or transphobia (Carroll & Quinn, 2009). Moreover, Armenia was one of only a few countries in the region that did not submit official data to the ODIHR on crimes motivated by bias against LGBTI people (OSCE, 2012). However,

NGOs addressing the issue in Armenia reported physical assaults against transgender people in Yerevan resulting in serious injuries, including brain trauma (Human Rights Watch, 2016). As it was stated, there is also a lack of legal mechanisms addressing hate speech cases in a comprehensive manner that would include prohibition of such speech against LGBTI people.

There have also been a number of incidents of abuse and harassment towards LGBTI persons by police authorities, but due to lack of legislation, they have not been officially recorded or investigated (Institute for War & Peace Reporting, 2009; Armenian NGOs Coalition/ Institute for War & Peace Reporting, 2014). There is no specific protection against discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity/expression in legislation. There is no definition of discrimination and other related concepts, such as types of discrimination, liability for discrimination, and burden of proof in cases of discrimination, which nullify the opportunity for legal protection against discrimination. It should be noted that, while bound by the Convention, the state shows a selective approach towards different discrimination issues, and it particularly does not recognise the applicability of international anti-discriminatory standards to LGBTI people (HRHY, 2015).

Amongst recommendations made to Armenia during the second cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (January 2015), the latter offered more than 10 recommendations advising the state to pursue actions to fight all forms of discrimination and to adopt comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation. Some states (such as Austria, Argentina, Slovenia, Uruguay) particularly emphasised discrimination towards LGBTI persons in their recommendations (UNGA, 2015). An internal Defence Ministry code banned homosexuals from serving in the armed forces in 2004. GBT males are discharged from military service because they are classified as having mental disorders, which can lead to further discrimination and human rights violations in regards to equal and adequate access to goods and services, employment opportunities, driving licenses, etc. (PINK Armenia, 2015).

Currently, no consideration is given to the family and partnership rights of LGBTI couples in Armenia. Medical, inheritance, tax rights and many other social and eco-

conomic issues in terms of same-sex partnerships have not been addressed. Marriage or civil union legislation in the country allows only married couples to adopt a child (Carroll & Quinn, 2009). As mentioned earlier in this report, Armenia held a referendum on proposed constitutional reforms on 6 December, 2015. The new Constitution contains further limitations on freedoms and rights, including those related to the LGBTI community. Article 35 of the “amended” Constitution states: “Man and woman of marriageable age have the right to marry each other and create a family according to their free will” (PINK Armenia). The new Constitution thus restricts the freedom of marriage to individuals of the opposite sex.

## BRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

It is widely believed that the negative attitudes towards homosexuals in Armenia are partly inherited from the Soviet era. Communist leaders believed that homosexuality was a product of the degradation of capitalistic society. Because homosexuality was criminalised for such a long time in Armenia, people continue to perceive it as a crime. This is particularly true for the older generation. After independence, under the influence of the Armenian Apostolic Church, the population was reminded that homosexuality is a “grave sin” and should be rejected in society. In addition, journalistic conventions consider it appropriate to address the subject of private or intimate life in reporting. All of the above factors contribute to the underpinning of hostile attitudes and practices towards LGBTI people in the country (Carroll & Quinn, 2009). Sexual relations between women were not criminalised in Armenia in the past. This was an obvious advantage for LB women compared to the situation concerning GB men. This also implies that whereas sexual relations between men became a focus of attention during the period of 2002-2003, when homosexuality ceased to be a criminal offence, sexual relations between women continued to be ignored (Carroll & Quinn, 2009). The LGBTI community began to self-organise only after the decriminalisation of homosexuality in 2003. The earliest recorded LGBTI initiative in Armenia

was when a group of eight gay men and one trans person gathered at a café in Yerevan in 2003 to discuss issues of common interest and to provide support to one another in the context of decriminalisation. That gathering was not only announced by AGLA-France and the Institute of War and Peace Reporting, but launched the foundation of an underground group. Word quickly went around and support from people with experience and status emerged. At the GROUP’S fourth meeting, around 45 people gathered aiming to organise an HIV/AIDS prevention and awareness campaign.

Amongst the estimated 4,000 registered NGOs in Armenia, only few are working with the rights of LGBTI persons. Currently, there are three NGOs (We For Civil Equality, PINK Armenia, New Generation) that openly declare LGBTI persons as their target group or one of their target groups. In addition to providing services specifically to the LGBTI community, these organisations began to actively advocate for the protection of LGBTI rights in the country, encouraging and offering hope to activists and the general Armenian LGBTI population. By placing human rights issues in the context of sexual orientation and gender identity, these NGOs educate civil society about discrimination and why it cannot be condoned, regardless of who the target is. There are a number of LGBTI-friendly establishments in Armenia, though it should be stated that an LGBTI-friendly club called D.I.Y., owned by a local activist, was firebombed in 2012. Members of the National Assembly publicly supported the attack and the two men who were arrested in connection with it (HCAV, 2012).

NGOs working on LGBTI or women’s rights have always been subjected to intimidation in Armenia; however, in recent years, an increase of violence and discrimination has been observed, which can be attributed to Armenia’s political decision to accede to the EEU. It seems that Armenia is cosying up to Russia and its “traditional values” rhetoric (ILGA-Europe, 2014). A more detailed description of the de facto situation of LGBTI people currently in the country is presented in the corresponding chapter of this report.

## DE FACTO/ACTUAL SITUATION OF LGBTI PERSONS IN THE COUNTRY

The fact that LGBTI persons in Armenia continue to face intimidation, threats, harassment, physical and psychological abuse in different spheres of life, including the family, healthcare, law enforcement, armed forces and closed institutions, has already been stated in different reports and publications. In order to depict the real situation of LGBTI people in the country and understand the underlying factors determining deeply negative perceptions and discriminatory practices, this report presents a detailed description of the four main components of those perceptions—knowledge, attitudes, stances and actions towards LGBTI people. It is important to discuss all these components, because some authors propose using the “change of social behaviour” model to mitigate the deeply negative attitudes, perceptions and discriminatory practices towards LGBTI persons that are present (Socioscope & PINK Armenia, 2012). The model is comprised of the four components mentioned above, in which each component is formed and comes into existence based on its predecessor.

### Knowledge

Socioscope and Pink Armenia NGOs conducted a survey in the cities of Yerevan, Gyumri and Vanadzor in 2011 aiming to measure public perceptions regarding LGBTI persons. The survey revealed a limited understanding of sexual orientation and gender identity in society, with a lack of information about transgender and bisexual people in particular. The survey also showed that although 80.5% of respondents answered that they know what homosexuality is, the respondents’ knowledge on LGBT persons was stereotypical and not based on scientific explanations. In particular, 18.6% of respondents believed having a “non-traditional” sexual orientation was a disease, and 12.7% believed it was a result of the negative influence of Western countries (Socioscope & PINK Armenia, 2012).

Qualitative research found that homosexuality is per-

ceived by Armenian society as a “contagious disease.” In addition, focus groups conducted in 2012 indicated that young people perceive homosexuality as a threat to the dominant masculine culture (Saghumyan, 2012). As one human rights defender said, “Our society is either illiterate and believes that homosexuality is a disease which should be treated, or people simply do not wish to accept something which is different from their traditional understanding of morality and family,” (Carroll & Quinn, 2009).

### Attitudes and Perceptions

As stated above, attitudes towards LGBTI persons are based on knowledge levels in society, which are consequently determining factors for physical actions. A survey conducted in 39 countries of North America, Europe, Asia, Latin America and Africa found that acceptance of homosexuality highly depends on the economic and religious situation of the country. In particular, it was revealed that in poorer countries with high levels of religiosity, few believe homosexuality should be accepted by society (Pew Research Centre, 2013). The surveys also indicated age and gender as being important factors in determining the level of acceptance of homosexuality, with younger respondents and women offering far more tolerant views compared to older people and men (Pew Research Centre 2013).

The 2011 Caucasus Barometer conducted by CRRC Armenia also measured attitudes towards homosexuality. The results showed that 96% of respondents believed homosexuality “can never be justified.” In contrast to many other countries, where age and gender are related to the acceptance level of homosexuality, in Armenia and in two other Caucasus countries (Georgia and Azerbaijan), attitudes towards homosexuality are relatively similar across geographic areas, sex and age groups (CRRC, 2013).

The fact that age is not a determining factor for attitudes towards LGBTI persons in Armenia was revealed by another study conducted about the attitudes of youth towards European values and the concept of tolerance. It was revealed that only 30% of young respondents believed that people should not be “condemned” for their sexual

orientation. Furthermore, the study found that only 16.5% of respondents were tolerant to sexual minorities. The study also revealed that 86.5% of respondents would not like “gays” to be their neighbours (Carroll & Quinn, 2009).

Another study conducted by Socioscope and PINK Armenia NGOs revealed 72.1% of respondents as having negative attitudes towards LGBTI persons. Moreover, 27.4% of respondents used derogatory language while referring to LGBTI persons, and 17.7% used name-calling and applied negative labels to LGBTI persons. It is interesting to note that LGBTI people explain their own vulnerability as being a result of the lack of public awareness, high levels of intolerance, and LGBT people’s “vulgar and offensive behaviour”, (PINK Armenia, 2013).

As a result of prevalent negative attitudes and non-acceptance of homosexuality in the country, numerous cases of attacks, hate speech and physical violence have been observed in previous years. A detailed description of the situation related to the harassment and intimidation of LGBTI persons in Armenia is presented below.

## Stance and Actions

Harassment, intimidation and violence towards LGBTI persons are prevalent both at the societal and institutional level. People are subjected to bullying and harassment in nearly all spheres of life, especially in cases when the appearance of an LGBTI person corresponds to the stereotypes held by society about them.

In 2005, ILGA-Europe carried out a survey to identify the areas of life where LGBTI people most often experience harassment and violence. The results showed that the place where LGBTI people had experienced harassment or violence most frequently was in public or in the street (40%), while 23% had experienced it at the university, 21% at school, 21% at a youth club, 17% at pubs and cruising areas, 15% in shops, and 13% at homes, leisure/sports facilities. At the institutional level, it was revealed that 8% of respondents had experienced violence or harassment at work, 6% at health care institutions, and 4% at a church or mosque. In addition, 23% had experienced harassment via

email or text messages (Carroll & Quinn, 2009). Harassment and physical violence towards LGBTI persons can be a one-time incident or have a permanent nature, like when committed by neighbours or relatives, or people in a person’s social environment. In many of these cases, victims refuse to apply to law enforcement bodies, stating that the bullying will continue there as well (PINK Armenia, 2011).

The fact of ill-treatment based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity in closed institutions, such as the armed forces and detention facilities, is well documented and reported by many international human rights bodies, such as the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour; Human Rights Watch; The International Helsinki Federation; Freedom House; Amnesty International; OSCE; CoE; UNAIDS and others. While serving in the armed forces, men who are openly gay suffer both physical and psychological abuse, including sexual assault, rape, harassment, isolation, etc. LGBTI people in penitentiary institutions are forced to do work considered to be the most degrading (e.g. cleaning toilets), are isolated from other prisoners in special cells, where conditions are worse than in other cells, with their dishes and other items separate as well (PINK Armenia, 2015). As one of the members of the LGBTI community stated, “The prisoners were as cruel to me as the jailers, I was like a toy to them, they used to bully me and throw me around the cell,” (Institute for War & Peace Reporting, 2009). In addition, information gathered during the ILGA-Europe fact-finding mission to Armenia indicated a high level of institutional homophobia, revealing disregard by the authorities for human rights, and even the willingness to allow human rights violations to occur (Carroll & Quinn, 2009).

## Bias-motivated Speech

LGBTI people usually become targets of hate speech not only by ultra-nationalist groups, but also by public actors and public officials. In general, politicians do little to dispel the fog of ignorance and prejudice around homophobia; indeed, some even exacerbate it. Moreover, the absence of anti-hate speech laws has further enabled gov-

ernment officials, public figures, and mass media to promote hate under the guise of freedom of speech. The state does not undertake any actions to diminish the negativity towards the LGBTI community and protect their rights.

Below are several specific examples demonstrating that public authorities do not refrain from hate speech towards LGBTI people, strengthening the atmosphere of impunity within the country. On several occasions, public officials have clearly positioned themselves as being supportive of intolerance, discrimination and hate speech against LGBTI people, and have publicly justified illegal acts against the group. Particularly, an Armenian ruling faction MP Hayk Babukhanyan publicly stated that he does not tolerate the idea of “homo-addiction”, and further stated that specific actions should be taken to combat such a phenomenon. The same deputy on several occasions during parliament hearings in 2013 officially called for the immediate closure of NGOs protecting and promoting the rights of women and LGBTI persons (Women’s Resource Centre and PINK Armenia), which, in his opinion, are “destroying the Armenian family” and promoting deviation and homosexuality (HRHY, 2015).

In November 2014, the leader of the ruling Republican Party of Armenia (HHK, right-wing) parliamentary group Galust Sahakyan stated that he would not mind supporting youth groups who oppose sexual minorities (ILGA-Europe, 2014). Republican MP Karine Achemyan told LGBT-news.am in response to a question that she was not sent to Parliament to protect the rights of LGBT people.

Another MP, Sukias Avetisyan from the ruling Republican Party noted in an interview that he does not wish to see a homosexual person beside him, that he does not accept them, and that it is his right to think so. In response to a question regarding whether he is concerned about losing votes (e.g. the LGBTI community, allies, and/or people engaged in LGBTI rights protection) for having such a stance, the MP replied that he does not wish for LGBTI people and their supporters to help his party. Prosperous Armenian MP Naira Zohrabyan noted during an interview: “...my attitude towards them [LGBTI people] is negative and it cannot be changed, because I know there is a law of nature, a law of God, commandments, and people that will go against the commandments of God, will suffer

the punishment of God. Yes, there probably is a category among them that is genetically sick, another category that has mental disorders, but we shall not pay tribute... I’ll do my best to ensure that they fail to spread their disease, I say it openly and publicly,” (PINK Armenia).

## Equality and Non-discrimination

Discrimination continues to be a major issue in the country and widespread in all spheres society, including in the family, workplace, employment, in the service sector (i.e. educational and healthcare institutions), the military and even law enforcement agencies. The absence of anti-discrimination laws and accountability mechanisms, as well as the flawed nature of current laws, largely contributes to the violation of LGBTI people’s rights, all of which make the group more vulnerable.

One specific example illustrates the highly discriminatory practices and biased attitudes prevalent in society. A so-called “anti-gender” campaign initiated by a group known as the Armenian Parental Committee, was initiated after the adoption of the “Law on Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women” in 2013. The bill included the phrase “gender equality,” which religious and conservative leaders portrayed as anti-Armenian, “untraditional,” and even sinful. The term “gender” became synonymous to transgenderism and homosexuality, raising a new wave of social anger. Those who promoted the rights of women and LGBTI persons were categorised as “national traitors,” “destroyers of families,” and seen as a “threat to Armenian values,” (ILGA-Europe, 2014).

## Freedom of Assembly and Expression

In recent years, LGBTI persons’ right of freedom of assembly has been repeatedly violated, and in some cases, LGBTI activists have been detained and subjected to harassment. In December 2013, LGBTI activists joined several hundred demonstrators marching in central Yerevan

against the ruling regime and its intention to join the Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union. Several nationalist marchers attacked and harassed the activists after noticing a rainbow flag. According to the PINK Armenia NGO report, the police detained the activists after the march for several hours without explanation (ILGA-Europe, 2014; HCAV, 2012).

In October 2015, a “Rainbow” forum was organised in Armenia aiming to discuss LGBTI issues and to develop a strategy to overcome homophobia in the country. Several online and print media published articles about the forum, and soon a new wave of aggressive homophobic rhetoric was raised, followed by threats of violence against LGBTI people. The United Nations in Armenia released a statement urging the authorities to investigate and prosecute the incidents (UN Armenia, 2015). A local NGO advocating for LGBTI rights addressed a letter to the Prosecutor’s Office with the same request. It was stated that the threat of violence against any group cannot be tolerated, and all persons should be able to exercise freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, and not be subject to discrimination and intimidation. The Prosecutor’s Office had not responded to the letter at the time of writing this report. In its 2013 report, Amnesty International termed the authorities’ response to similar attacks against LGBTI people as slow and inadequate. It stated that in failing to condemn the attacks and conducting an ineffective investigation, the country had failed to comply with Armenian law and international human rights standards (Amnesty International, 2013).

## Consequences of Hostile Attitude and Practices

Because of the high level of discrimination and psychological/physical violence prevalent in the country, it is difficult to discuss LGBTI issues in Armenia, and almost no place exists for people to come out or for LGBTI activism to take place. In addition, these hostile attitudes and practices towards LGBTI people have several negative consequences and impact the psychological and physical well-being of people.

Many LGBTI people are forced to conceal their sexual orientation and suppress their gender identity/expression. This pressure signifies that many LGBTI persons do not come out to their friends and families. “We for Civil Equality” NGO conducted a survey among 200 LGBTI persons in 2007. The results showed that 35.3% of gay, bisexual or transgender male respondents were not out at all, 43.8% were out only to close friends, and 2.5% were out to family only, while the remaining 18.4% considered themselves out to most people. For lesbian, bisexual or transgender female respondents, 20% were not out at all, 3% were out to family only, 60% were out to close friends, and 17% were out to most people (The Danish Institute for Human Rights, 2010).

Societal pressures and rejection drive some LGBTI persons to find acceptance in other countries. According to approximate estimates, 5,891 citizens of Armenia emigrated due to discrimination between 2011 and 2013 (Socioscope & PINK Armenia, 2015). Although there is no official statistical information on the number of LGBTI persons who have committed suicide, specialists are concerned with the issue. “Within the past three years, I know of at least ten homosexual men who threw themselves off the Kiev bridge in Yerevan,” said one psychologist (Institute for War & Peace Reporting, 2009; New Generation Humanitarian NGO, 2012).

## LGBTI Activists and Human Rights Defenders

Human rights (HR) defenders working on the protection of LGBTI rights and the promotion of gender equality also face violence and attacks as a consequence of their work. As stated earlier in this report, women and LGBTI rights organisations have become the target of hate speech and attacks of the “anti-gender” campaign. Extremists did not stop at exhibiting hate speech and aggression, but also started targeting independent activists, disseminating threats through fabricated virtual accounts and defamatory articles in the media. A member of Parliament from the ruling faction, MP Hayk Babukhanyan, had on numerous occasions publicly called for an end to the work of women’s rights defenders and asked the prosecutor to investigate

their “immoral” activities (HRHY, 2015). LGBTI rights defenders also receive threats and became victims of acts of intimidation. On one occasion, an LGBTI rights defender was barred from speaking at an international conference organised by a prominent Armenian political party. The reason given was “concern for his security,” but later he was told that the political party would have faced institutional problems if they allowed him to serve as a panellist and speak (HRHF, 2014; HCAV, 2012). HR defenders are concerned with the lack of evidence that the state supports human rights organisations in protecting their beneficiaries and contributing to the future welfare of the society. Furthermore, there are no legal mechanisms available to adequately address violations against human rights defenders. It is difficult to recall a situation when the state initiated protection measures for HR defenders (HRHF, 2014).

## LEVEL OF SEXISM IN THE COUNTRY

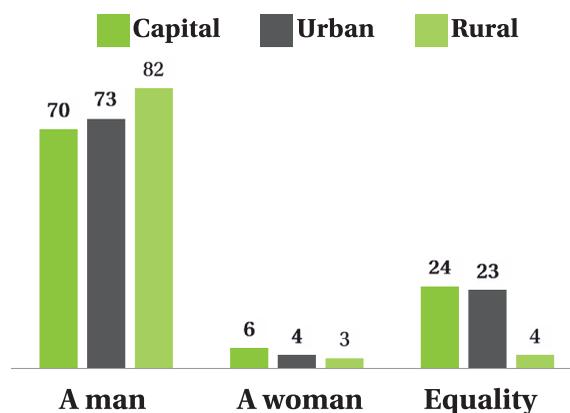
Various reports (HRHF, 2014; WBG, 2014) indicate a high level of gender inequality in Armenia reflected in all spheres of economic, social, and political life. Gender equality entails, “equal access to opportunities—that is, equality in rights, resources, and voice for women and men,” (WBG, 2014). The Gender Inequality Index (GII) reflects gender-based inequalities in three dimensions—reproductive health, empowerment, and economic activity. Reproductive health is measured by maternal mortality and underage birth rates; empowerment is measured by the level of political participation held by women and attainment of secondary and higher education by each gender; and economic activity is measured by the rate of participation in the labour market for women and men. The GII can be interpreted as the loss in human development due to inequality between female and male achievements in the three GII dimensions (UNDP, 2014). In 2013, Armenia had a GII value of 0.325, ranking the country 60th out of 149 countries.

Though the Government of Armenia has taken several steps towards the adoption of specific legislation and several strategic documents to promote gender equality in re-

cent years, the country is lacking in specific mechanisms for the enforcement of these reforms. In particular, the law on “Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women” was adopted in 2013, and Armenia is a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Violence against Women (CEDAW). In addition, in 2011, the government of Armenia developed a Gender Policy Action Plan 2011-2015 to improve the rights of women in the country, including the establishment of a Council on Women’s Affairs (HRHF, 2014). However, the country lacks specific mechanisms to facilitate the implementation of these policies. In particular, the Armenian Government rejected a draft law on domestic violence in January 2014, and there are no ad hoc programmes for the protection and reintegration of survivors of violence. In addition, there are no specific measures taken to eliminate gender stereotypes in the society, and no education on gender roles has been introduced in school curriculum.

Several studies indicate a high prevalence of gender stereotypes in Armenian society. According to the results of the Caucasus Barometer conducted by CRRC Armenia, more than 80% of the rural population in Armenia agrees that the man should be the main decision-maker in the family.

**Graph 1. Which household member should be the main decision maker in a family? (%)**



The educational system strengthens existing gender stereotypes, as well as recreates or reproduces male and female imagery, attributes, and roles. Particularly, an analysis

of elementary school textbooks revealed a disproportionate representation of gender roles with clear domination of the male roles depicted. In textbooks, female roles are mainly discussed in the context of inter-family relations, while there are more varieties in regards to male roles, which are mainly focused on public life (Tsaturyan, 2012).

Although men and women have equal access to education, with women being even more involved in higher education, women in general are not presented in the labour market. Women comprise 54% of the working age (15-64) population, but only 40% are employed or looking for work (WBG, 2014). In addition, women in Armenia are significantly less engaged in decision-making positions in business, as well as in the economic and political spheres of the country. There is a gender quota system for political parties introduced by the National Assembly in 2011. Although the number of female deputies in Parliament has tripled in recent years, the number is still very low (11% of seats). Women still have limited involvement in local government (2.1%) and practically no involvement in urban communities and regional governments (WBG, 2014). Another burning issue for the country is the prevalence of gender-based violence. There were 17 registered cases of femicide as a result of domestic violence between 2012 and 2014 (Armenian NGOs Coalition/HRHF, 2014). The Criminal Code of the Republic of Armenia regulates issues regarding violence. Legislation on gender-based violence is limited to the criminalisation of physical (Criminal Code of RA, articles 112, 113, 117, 118, 119) and sexual violence (Criminal Code of RA, chapter 18). It addresses neither psychological/emotional violence, nor financial/economic violence. Current legislation offers no protection to women in non-marital intimate relationships. There is no specific law or provision that explicitly criminalises marital rape, neither are there any exceptions that exempt the perpetrator for marital rape under general provisions of criminal law. Social workers and medical personnel do not undergo any training on the issue of domestic violence. There are no state funded shelters for victims of domestic violence (HRHY, 2015).

Linkages between the acceptance of homosexuality and the prevalence of gender inequality have been observed and demonstrated by several studies. Armenia is

not an exception with lesbians, bisexual or transgender women experiencing negative attitudes, harassment, and intimidation. It has even been noted that lesbian activists remain isolated from gay and bisexual civil society organisations as well (PINK Armenia, 2012). The survey results conducted among lesbians by the “We for Civil Equality” NGO indicate that 70% of these women were spat at, 61% had experienced verbal harassment because of their sexual orientation, 37% had personal property damaged or destroyed, 31% were threatened with violence and 1.5% had been assaulted or wounded with a weapon. In regards to sexual assault, 20% said they had been sexually harassed, 1.5% had been raped, and 89% said that they knew a friend who had become a victim of such an act (Danish Institute for Human Rights, 2010). In summary, it can be stated that the lack of legislation, lack of awareness among the general population and law enforcement agencies, absence of a monitoring mechanism, as well as cultural acceptance, are major problems that contribute to widespread violations.

## THE NATURE OF TRADITIONAL IDEOLOGIES

As stated earlier in this report, the acceptance of homosexuality highly depends on the religious situation of the country. Armenia is considered a religious country. Moreover, the Armenian Apostolic Church (henceforth, the Church) is seen as an authority for the majority of Armenian society. The CRRC Caucasus Barometer annual survey showed that the army and religious institutions are the only widely trusted establishments by the population in Armenia (Graph 2).

The position of the Church on homosexuality has been stated several times in this report. The Church has taken the view that homosexuality is a grave sin. Clergy members have frequently made statements regarding LGBTI persons during various interviews and press conferences. Through media communication, Church representatives portray LGBTI people as a threat to Armenian society, mentioning that it is a direct result of “European values and traditions,” (PINK Armenia, 2011).

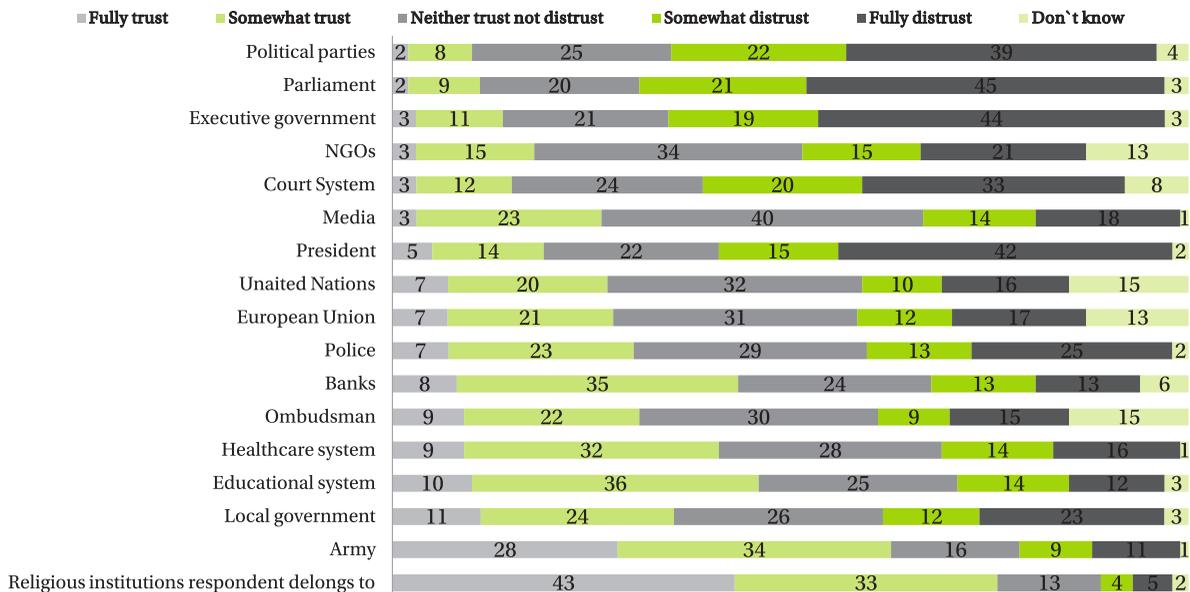
In an online program “My Priest,” where the Araratian Patriarchal Diocese provides answers to about one thousand questions regarding the stance of the Church on various issues, Deacon Tigran Baghumian said, “Homosexuality is a spiritual vice and sin,” and since such relations are “unnatural,” they should be condemned. He proceeded to cite various passages from the Bible to support his view (The Danish Institute for Human Rights, 2010).

In 2011, the Church organised a public discussion, the main purpose of which was to explain to participants that homosexuality is a form of mania and that men make independent choices to pursue “mania toward [other] men.” The approach of the Church toward homosexuality in general is that the notion has been imported to Armenia by “Western powers” aiming to destroy Armenian traditions and values (PINK Armenia, 2011). The Church is prone to represent LGBTI people as a social group that is artificially created in Armenia and aims to pervert traditional values, weaken the unity of the society and lead Armenians into immorality. Moreover, Church representatives use the opportunity to draw parallels between LGBTI people and religious minorities, who are seen as having arrived in

Armenia with the intention to destroy the country. Therefore, the Church claims that both of these groups are a risk to Armenian national security. In addition to the Church, two religious minority groups in Armenia, Jehovah’s Witnesses and the Neo Pagan Movement, have publically condemned homosexuality and transsexuality (PINK Armenia et al., 2012). Despite the fact that the Church’s negative viewpoints about LGBTI people are notorious, a survey conducted among the LGBTI community in 2013 revealed about 40% of respondents identified as followers of the Armenian Apostolic Church. Moreover, 83% of LGBTI people reported attending religious institutions often (PINK Armenia, 2013).

Hence, the level of religiosity of the country is an important determinant of the level of acceptance of homosexuality in the society. It is obvious that religious institutions exercise high authority not only for the general population, but also for the LGBTI community. Consequently, negative statements by the Church towards the LGBTI community create a hostile environment and prepare the grounds for harassment and violence toward LGBTI people in the country.

Graph 2. Trust towards ... (%)





**PART 2:  
QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH:  
ANALYSIS OF SOCIOLOGICAL  
DATA**

## INTRODUCTION

After embarking on a path toward democratisation in 1991, post-Soviet Armenia began to face a number of new realities that had either been hidden or had never previously been subject to discussion.

One of the fundamental components of democratisation is the universal protection of human rights, regardless of a person's individual characteristics, such as sex, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI). Armenia chose the path of democratisation and protection of human rights, and thus committed itself to ensuring universal tolerance for every person residing in the country.

Unsurprisingly, however, there is strong intolerance towards LGBTI persons in Armenian society. According to the World Value Survey conducted in Armenia in 2011, 93% of respondents mentioned that they would not like to have a homosexual neighbour, while 96% believed that homosexuality could not be justified.

Public discourse on LGBTI topics is a relatively new phenomenon in Armenia. Before 2003, homosexual relations between males were criminalised, fostering the absence of public discussion on such topics. In 2001, one of Armenia's strategic political priorities was to join the Council of Europe, which entailed a number of commitments, including taking measures for the protection of human rights, as well as the revision of Armenia's legal framework to bring it in compliance with human rights priorities and standards. The decriminalisation of male homosexual relations was among the list of urgent measures to be taken.

Legal reforms, however, (decriminalisation of sexual intercourse between males [2003], constitutional reforms [2005])<sup>5</sup> have not had a significant impact on public attitudes toward LGBTI persons in Armenia. As in the past, LGBTI persons continue to live in disguise in Armenia, or lead double lives, in attempts to avoid public shaming and stigma.

Despite the pressing nature of the issue, the number of studies conducted on LGBTI people in Armenia is quite

insignificant. The studies that have been conducted are produced by NGOs. Despite the fact that the Public Information and Need of Knowledge NGO has conducted several studies scrutinising the LGBTI situation in Armenia, their surveys on public perception were confined to the three largest cities in the country<sup>6</sup>. A national survey has never been conducted by any entity. This comprehensive study aims to fill the current gap and identify public attitudes towards LGBTI people in Armenia.

This report summarises the findings of a nationwide survey. It also describes the goals and objectives of the study, the fieldwork, methodological tools, and the survey sample. The analysis of the findings is presented in accordance with the thematic sections of the survey questionnaire: values of the respondents and factors influencing these values; the relationship between knowledge on LGBTI people, and stereotypes and myths about them; interactions with and attitudes towards LGBTI persons; and the boundaries of LGBTI rights. The report ends with a conclusion. The study's findings are illustrated with tables and charts.

## SURVEY METHODOLOGY

### Goal and Objectives

Within the framework of the "Solidarity Network for LGBTI in Armenia and Georgia" project, Public Information and Need for Knowledge NGO, together with its partner in Georgia, Women's Initiatives Supporting Group, has conducted a comprehensive study on public attitudes towards LGBTI persons in order to identify the depth and specifics of homophobia in Armenia and Georgia. This survey is part of a larger study that aims to measure and assess public attitudes towards LGBTI persons, and to develop recommendations and strategies to overcome homophobia in both countries based on the findings.

<sup>5</sup> Study on Homophobia, Transphobia and Discrimination on Grounds of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity; Legal Report: Armenia [http://www.coe.int/t/Commissioner/Source/LGBT/ArmeniaLegal\\_E.pd](http://www.coe.int/t/Commissioner/Source/LGBT/ArmeniaLegal_E.pd)

<sup>6</sup> Publications, PINK Armenia webpage <http://www.pinkarmenia.org/publications/>

The study specifically aims at:

- Analyzing the social, cultural, political, and other factors influencing the establishment of an overall homo-transphobic environment in the society;
- Measuring/assessing the awareness, knowledge, and sentiments of the public towards LGBTI persons and related issues;
- Measuring/assessing public disposition and attitudes towards LGBTI persons in Armenia.

The fieldwork was carried out in 1,017 households covering the entire territory of Armenia between November and December 2015.

The survey is significant not only because of its scientific nature, but also because it opens the door for future studies on LGBTI persons in the region. The survey is also important because of its practical use; the Public Information and Need for Knowledge NGO plans to use its findings to develop and implement long-term advocacy and human rights protection activities in Armenia.

## Sampling Methodology

The survey covered all of Armenia. The sampling frame of the households surveyed was designed based on lists of subscribers/consumers of the CJSC “Electric Grid of Armenia” provided by the company itself. The population surveyed was between the ages of 18 and 65. The sample was based on multistage cluster stratification by marz (administrative regions) and type of settlement (Yerevan, other urban, rural). The number of respondents was proportionally distributed over the total population of Armenia. The clusters, households, and respondents were selected randomly. 150 households on average were included in each cluster, of which 15 were randomly selected for the survey. Given the sensitivity of the topic and predicted number of refusals to participate, a reserve sample was drawn in addition to the main sample, accounting for 25 additional households for each cluster. A respondent from each household was randomly selected based on household members’ dates of birth—the member with the date of birth closest to the date of the survey was chosen to participate. As a result, the final sample included 1,017 respondents. The non-response rate was high due to the inaccessibility of some respondents, refusals, the absence of persons of a corresponding age, and other reasons. Failed interviews accounted for 30% of all interviews. The number of failed interviews by reason is presented in the Table NRR (Charts and Tables).

**Table N1**

MARZ	YEREVAN	OTHER URBAN	RURAL	TOTAL	NUMBER OF CLUSTERS
ARAGATSOTN	0	15	30	45	4
ARARAT	0	30	45	75	5
ARMAVIR	0	31	74	105	7
GEGHARKUNIK	0	30	45	75	5
KOTAYK	0	58	15	73	5
LORI	0	33	30	63	5
SHIRAK	0	45	45	90	6
SYUNIK	0	30	15	45	3
VAYOTSDZOR	0	15	13	28	2
TAVUSH	0	15	30	45	3
YEREVAN	373	0	0	373	27
TOTAL	373	302	342	1017	72

## Survey Tool

The survey tool used was the standardised questionnaire appended to this report in Appendix 2. The questionnaire was comprised of the following sections:

- Introduction of the aims of the survey, its nature, guarantees of anonymity, and aggregate use of the received information;
- Information about the next interviews, instructions on the selection of the respondents, and schedule of the survey;
- Section D. Social and demographic characteristics of the respondents;
- Clarification of a number of thematic concepts in order to familiarise the respondents with the topic and share the same concepts used in the questionnaire;
- Section A. Value system and sources of information;
- Section B. Knowledge, sources of knowledge, stereotypes and myths;
- Section C. Interactions with LGBTI persons;
- Section E. Attitudes towards lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons;
- End of the interview.

The questionnaire design is based on a number of scales that allow us to measure not only public attitudes towards LGBTI groups, but also to understand the factors that influence the formation of such attitudes. Cross-tabulation of these scales allows us to find correlations among value-based characteristics, religious and social preferences, social attitudes towards LGBTI persons, knowledge about sexuality, and stereotypes and myths surrounding LGBTI persons.

The questionnaire is built upon the following scales:

**Right-wing authoritarianism scale** (Altemeyer, 2006): 30 statements that allow for the measuring of orientation towards authoritarianism, and submissiveness to aggression and social conventions. Each statement is measured using a Likert scale of 1-9 points, where the respondent expresses their level of agreement or disagreement with the statements. The coefficient of orientation towards right-wing authoritarianism is the mean of the scores given to all the statements.

**Social dominance orientation scale** (short version, Sidanius and Pratto, 1999; Jost and Thompson, 2000): 7 statements that are measured on a Likert scale of 1-7 points. It measures the personal attitudes toward discrimination expressed among and between groups in society. As in the case of the first scale, here too, the coefficient is a mean value.

**Religious fundamentalism scale** (Altemeyer and Hunsberger, 2004): 12 statements measured on a Likert scale of 1-9 points. The religious fundamentalism coefficient is the mean value of the scores of all the statements. The scale measures conservative, militaristic beliefs.

**Attitudes towards lesbian women and gay men scale** (short version, Herek, 1980): 10 statements, of which 5 are related to lesbian women and 5 to gay men. The scale measures attitudes towards lesbian women and gay men, and the differences in these attitudes. The statements are measured on a 1-5 point Likert scale.

**Attitudes regarding bisexuality scale** (Mohr and Rochlen, 1999): 18 statements regarding bisexual men and women allowing for the measurement of general attitudes towards bisexual persons. The scale also allows us to compare respondents' attitudes towards bisexual men with those towards bisexual women.

**Genderism and transphobia scale** (Hill and Willoughby, 2005): 30 statements (2 statements removed from the original scale) measured on a Likert scale of 1-7 points that allows us to measure attitudes towards transgender persons. The scale also allows us to understand a number of factors related to transgender persons, such as prejudices towards feminine men, violence towards transgender persons, perceptions about trans persons being "unnatural" or "immoral," as well as perceptions of and attitudes towards gender overall.

The questionnaire also includes questions that allow for the study of public awareness and attitudes towards LGBTI persons and issues concerning them.

Before introducing the analysis of the survey findings, it is important to be assured of the reliability of the scales used in the survey. Cronbach's alpha (Cronbach, 1951)<sup>7</sup> is

<sup>7</sup> Cronbach's Alpha: A Tool for Assessing the Reliability of Scales  
<http://www.joe.org/joe/1999april/tt3.php>

a 0-1 point coefficient showing the internal consistency or reliability of scales. This coefficient was used in measuring the reliability of the scales applied in the survey—the higher the value of the coefficient, the more reliable the scales. A value of 0.70 or higher is considered reliable in the social sciences, which indicates correlation between the components of the scale.

Below is the description of the reliability of each of the scales used in the survey in accordance with data collected:

**Right-wing authoritarianism scale;  $\alpha = 0.757$**

**Social dominance orientation scale;  $\alpha = 0.495$**

**Religious fundamentalism scale;  $\alpha = 0.740$**

**Attitudes towards lesbians and gay men scale;  $\alpha = 0.842$**

**Attitudes regarding bisexuality scale;  $\alpha = 0.702$**

**Genderism and transphobia scale;  $\alpha = 0.920$**

As clearly seen above, the values suggest that only the social dominance orientation scale has a low value, which indicates the low reliability of this scale. Therefore, information received through this scale should be treated with reservation.

## Description of Fieldwork

The fieldwork was carried out in the months of November and December of 2015, and comprised of 1,017 interviews, 34% of which were conducted in Yerevan, and 66% in the marzes.

A meeting was organised with interviewers and field coordinators in order to discuss the progress and challenges of the fieldwork. The meeting touched upon issues related to the fieldwork, the applicability of the questionnaire, and recommendations on how to improve such surveys in the future. Issues that arose during the fieldwork can be conditionally divided into two types: issues common to similar large-scale surveys, and thematic issues arising from the type and content of the survey.

### **Common issues:**

“Closed doors” are a common issue during randomly selected large-scale surveys. This phenomenon is becoming more and more worrisome in Armenia due to the

increasing rate of emigration. “Closed doors” are cases when the interviewer is assigned a randomly selected sample house that happens to be no longer inhabited. Testimonies from neighbours confirm that the members of the household have emigrated from the country. Another issue is the growing number of households with elderly members only. The other household members live either outside the given area or the country. Therefore, these households are also left out of the survey sample.

In urban areas, the interviewers faced the issue of urban workers returning home late, or that the particular day selected was not convenient for an interview. Therefore, interviewers were unable to interview people from randomly assigned households and had to select others. At the same time, there were also challenges related to carrying out the survey that were particular to the topic of the survey. While refusal to participate in a survey is a common issue, it must be emphasised that the number of those who refused to participate in the interviews increased after they learned the topic of the survey. There were also cases when the respondent would decide to interrupt the interview and refuse to continue answering the questions, so the interview would remain incomplete.

The interviewers endeavoured to conduct the interviews in privacy in order to avoid external influences on the answers of the interviewee; however, there were cases when other household members refused to provide privacy and continued to be present during the interview. In these cases, the respondent felt stressed and answered the questions in an elusive manner. This was especially the case with young women and girls who were apprehensive of the reactions of their husbands or other family members; they gave rushed answers or avoided direct responses. There were also cases when mothers or mothers-in-law of female interviewees would intervene and interrupt the interview under the pretext of trying to keep their daughters away from negative influences.

The interviewers also indicate that male respondents were more nervous about discussing the topic. It was therefore difficult for the interviewers to receive detailed information from them. Some respondents displayed explicitly aggressive behaviour, and after hearing the topic of the survey, forced the interviewers out of the premises or

demanded that the questionnaire be destroyed.

There were also cases when the interviewers were accused of carrying out “gay propaganda,” namely after respondents were read the introduction, wherein a number of concepts were explained. This put the interviewers in a difficult position. On the one hand, if they continued with the questions, they risked inciting more anger and suspicion of a “propaganda” campaign. On the other hand, sharing the negative attitude of the respondents would entail a serious ethical violation.

During the focus group with the interviewers, a number of issues and recommendations were identified.

Based on the results of the fieldwork, the interviewers believe that it is too early to conduct a survey using a questionnaire with detailed questions for various LGBTI groups. First, the majority of the respondents were found to not understand the differences between LGBTI groups. According to their perception, non-heterosexual persons, based on their sexual characteristics, are divided into just two groups—female and male homosexuals. Thus, the detailed questions for each group are perceived as repetitions, which bothered the respondents. As a result, negative attitudes towards LGBTI persons were reinforced even more.

The interviewers suggested that fieldwork not be expedited, and that a questionnaire be designed with more generalised questions regarding the LGBTI community. According to the interviewers, the detailed questions and the contradictory answers they elicited result from the fact that the respondent does not have sufficient knowledge to differentiate between lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender groups, and therefore is confused and often times gives answers without following a clear line of logic. Many respondents have never considered this topic before, and when questions arise on topics they have never considered and do not have clear attitudes on, contradictory answers may be given.

During the questionnaire design, an introductory section was developed in order to raise awareness on LGBTI people among the respondents by clarifying a number of concepts. However, according to the interviewers, this clarification was not sufficient for the respondents to perceive the LGBTI persons unambiguously and without confusion during the course of the survey. It is perhaps

due to this lack of awareness that the number of, “Difficult to answer,” and, “Neutral,” options selected was high.

## General Overview of Respondents

The survey encompassed 1,017 persons, of whom 34% were from Yerevan and 66% were from the 10 marzes of Armenia. This ratio corresponds to the total population distribution in Armenia. In order to understand how representative the sample is for the total population of Armenia, we will compare the social demographic data with data from the 2011 population census of Armenia, which is the largest and most recent dataset on Armenia’s population available (the social demographic overview is presented in more detail throughout Tables 1-6 in the “Tables and Graphs” section).

In terms of gender distribution, there is a deviation from the census data of the population. Thirty two percent of the respondents were men and 68% women, which is different from the gender distribution of the population census by 14 percentage points (46% men, 54% women). The deviation can be a result of the labour migration of men. The average age of the respondents is 42 ( $M=42$ ,  $SD=13.8$ ,  $Mdn=42$ ). They are mainly Armenian by ethnicity (98.4%) and followers of the Armenian Apostolic Church (95.6%). These data are not very different from those of the census—98.1% ethnic Armenians, and 92.6% followers of the Armenian Apostolic Church. Married respondents constituted a majority (64.4%) of the survey sample, while non-married individuals accounted for 18% of all respondents. The survey almost equally covered persons with secondary (36%) and higher education (31%). Respondents who had completed vocational education accounted for 23%.

According to the census, 19% of the Armenian population has higher education, while 40% has only secondary education and 15% has undergone vocational training. This means that the survey covered a comparatively larger proportion of people with higher and vocational education. The deviation of the educational level of respondents from the total number in Armenia may have some influ-

ence on the responses elicited. Thirty one percent of the respondents are housewives, 16% are unemployed, 17% are public/state servants, 11% work in the private sector, and 10% are self-employed. In general terms, the social demographic background of the respondents corresponds to the census data. Still, a degree of reservation should be observed when attempting to generalise the survey data over the whole population of Armenia.

## Methodology of Analysis

During the analysis of the survey data, besides the standard analysis through tables and statistical data (frequency, mean [M], standard deviation [SD] etc.), two additional methods were used in measuring the correlations among variables: 1. Regression analysis, which was applied for the analysis of the nominal/dichotomous data; and 2. Correlation analysis, which was applied for the analysis of continuous/scale data.

The p value, which is a correlation coefficient, is of paramount importance during the analysis. If  $p > 0.05$ , then the correlation between two variables is not significant for analysis<sup>8</sup>.

Besides observing the mean (M) values, standard deviation (SD) was also analysed. Standard deviation will only be reported if the analysis has shown that it has a significant influence on the findings. It has been impossible to measure the impact of ethnic and religious affiliation on the findings, as the respondents are quite homogeneous in this regard (almost all of them are Armenians and followers of the Armenian Apostolic Church).

## KEY FINDINGS

### Value-based Attitudes of the Respondents and Factors Influencing These Attitudes

The growing diversity and influence of information sources has an important role in the formation and transformation of a person's value system, as well as in adding to their existing knowledgebase. As social beings, humans are not immune to external influences, and therefore build their attitudes and consequently their behaviour in light of these external influences.

A person's values, which in traditional societies are largely fostered by the norms and values embedded in those societies, determine her/his attitudes and sentiments towards LGBTI persons. The more conservative and traditional a society, the more draconian the attitudes are towards phenomena that are considered to be "divergent" from societal norms. In transformational societies such as the one in Armenia, the societal value system is also in a process of transformation; it is under the influence of external factors, including civilisational and cultural streams.

Discourse on LGBTI topics is a relatively new phenomenon in Armenia and considered to be a foreign value. LGBTI topics are at the crossroads of the old and the new in the transforming Armenian society. This study will attempt to identify the value-based attitudes of the society, the information flows and their relation to the attitude towards LGBTI persons. The hypothesis of the study is that attitudes towards LGBTI persons are largely related to the population's values and choices of information sources. Prior to discussing the value-based attitudes of the respondents, we will present the respondents' sources of information.

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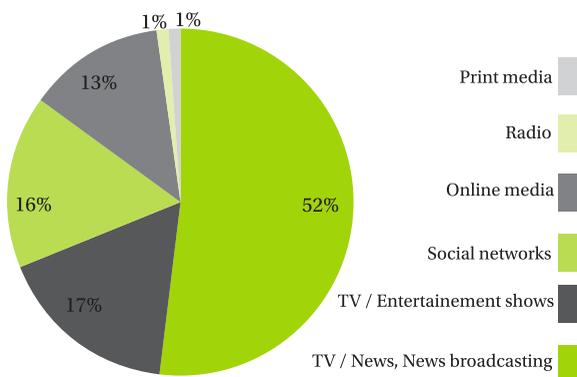
<sup>8</sup> The study reports only those data, when  $p < 0.05$ , in other words, when there is a significant correlation and it makes sense to discuss other details related to the relationship of these variables.

## Sources of Information on LGBTI and Level of Trust towards These Sources

Almost all of the respondents specified that the primary language in which they receive information is Armenian. Secondary sources of information were in English and Russian. Some respondents follow news in German and French.

TV is the primary and main source of information on LGBTI issues. The respondents specifically mentioned news and information programmes. Entertainment programmes, however, which are also primary sources of information, lag behind in terms of popularity.

**Chart 1. Information sources about LGBTI people and their issues**



Social media and online news portals were also mentioned as primary sources of information. It is noteworthy that the respondents prefer social media to online news websites. At the same time, many online media outlets disseminate their news via social media as well. Therefore, it can be stated that most of the information disseminated by online media and social networks is identical.

Secondary sources of information mentioned by the respondents were the radio and press; however, these significantly lag behind the primary sources in terms of popularity.

Besides these sources of information, the respondents also distinguished between institutions and individuals that are considered credible and reliable sources of information.

The respondents specified primary and secondary sources. The primary sources include those that provide knowledge and research on topics—scientists, researchers, and specialists who study phenomena and add to existing knowledge. According to the respondents, journalists are also a trustworthy source of information. The respondents also attached importance to information received via social networks from family members and friends, considering them to be a credible primary source.

Fewer respondents found the information on LGBTI persons conveyed by the clergy important and credible.

It is interesting to note that LGBTI persons and organisations working on LGBTI rights who are direct stakeholders in the issue seem to hold less credibility for the respondents and are only a secondary source of information.

Information sources on LGBTI issues can be classified into the following groups according to level of credibility:

<b>Primary Sources (N)</b>
Scientist/researcher/specialist (239)
Journalists (174)
Family members (101)
Friends (77)
Clergy (54)
<b>Secondary sources (N)</b>
Teachers (5)
Politicians (19)
LGBTI persons (22)
Representatives of LGBTI organisations (23)

## The Family as a Dominant Primary Value

According to the “Culture, Values, Beliefs, Behaviour Determinants in the Transforming Armenian Society” study<sup>9</sup>, the Armenian public largely adheres to conservative values, such as conformism and security. This indicates how important it is for the society to preserve the accepted norms, values, and intimate relations. Our findings also show that the top value priority of the respondents is the family, considered to be the nucleus of intimate relations. As a value, the respondents mentioned it most frequently.

**Chart 2. Value priorities of respondents**

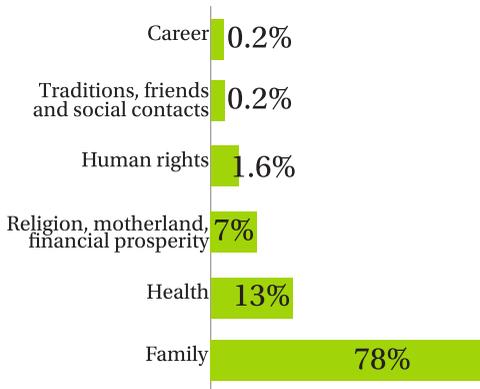


Chart 2 illustrates the classification of values, where health is ranked second, while religion, the motherland and financial welfare share the third position. Freedom of speech and human rights follow, while traditions and friends come afterwards. Career is mentioned least frequently as a value.

As seen in the graph, human rights and freedom of speech, the pillars of democracy, are ranked somewhere in the middle among the values of the respondents. They come after the pillars of a conservative society—the family, religion, and the motherland. It is interesting that traditions were not prioritised in the value system.

<sup>9</sup> Culture, Values, Beliefs, Behavior Determinants in the Transforming Armenian Society: <https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B6RwRQx-AC-taenU1VnRXTXJvQms/edit?pli=1>

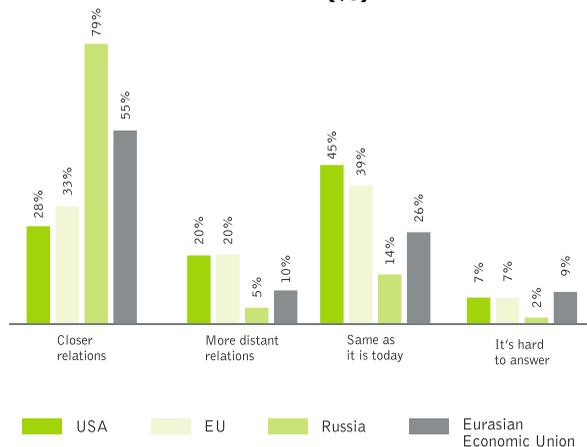
## Geopolitical Preferences Determining Values

Political/civilisational orientation and preferences also influence the formation or transformation of values. The respondents were asked to assess the type of relations they would like Armenia to uphold with a number of countries and unions of countries, in order to identify their geopolitical preferences, which are not solely political inclinations, but are also a result of value orientations.

The respondents greatly valued strengthening relations with Russia and the newly established Eurasian Economic Union headed by Russia. More than two-thirds of the respondents (N=807) prefer closer ties with the Russian Federation, while a little over half (N=556) favour closer relations with the Eurasian Economic Union.

At the same time, 20% of the respondents give preference to more restrained relations with the European Union (N=202) and the US (N=199). Twenty-eight percent of the respondents (N=280) favour closer ties with the US, while 45% (N=460) prefer that the relations between Armenia and the US remain unchanged. Closer relations with the EU are preferred by 33% of the respondents (N=337), while 39% (N=401) would like to see no changes in the current relations (Chart 3).

**Chart 3. Compared to today’s situation, what kind of relations do you want Armenia to have with ... (%)**



In summary, both the respondents of this survey and the society in Armenia clearly tend to orient themselves towards Russia and the Eurasian Economic Union.

## Value Orientations

Three types of scales were used in order to measure the value orientations of the respondents, namely, the inclination of people towards authoritarianism, social dominance, and religious fundamentalism. The hypothesis was that these value orientations also determine attitudes towards LGBTI persons.

The findings on these scales are reviewed one by one below.

### Right-Wing Authoritarianism

The respondents' inclination towards right-wing authoritarianism is measured by a scale developed by Bob Altemeyer, professor of psychology from Canada<sup>10</sup>. This is a 1-9-point scale where the higher the score, the more oriented the respondent is towards authoritarianism. Adherents of authoritarianism often support the authorities and power-holders in their societies, such as governments and religious leaders. The latter have historically been considered "true" leaders, whose authority has been instituted by force of tradition. This factor is particularly significant for many supporters of authoritarianism. From a psychological perspective, these are people who are loyal to established and acting authorities, and are willing to demonstrate aggression when triggered by these same authorities, which greatly value the conventions, norms, and rules of society. Persons inclined towards right-wing authoritarianism strive to live in a society where uniformity predominates and diversity is not encouraged. This is made possible through social control, group authority, and a high level of kinship.

In these cases, people who are inclined towards right-wing authoritarianism justify various restrictions by un-

equivocal submission to moral norms, necessary limits of freedom of speech, and loyalty to established norms.

In societies where right-wing authoritarianism scores high, marginalised groups, including LGBTI persons, face high levels of intolerance. Considered "deviant" from societal norms and oftentimes viewed as a threat to stability in the society, marginalised groups are rejected by the public and frequently subjected to violence. In this survey, the right-wing authoritarianism scale, with its range of 1-9 points, scored an average of 6.5 (M=6.5, N=553), which is higher than average. This means that the cohort of respondents is inclined towards authoritarianism, or in other words, they legitimise the established norms and traditions of society, and any deviation or new phenomenon either has not been given a common attitude or is not encouraged at all. The respondents are predisposed towards loyalty to the authorities and power-holders of society and are willing to follow their instructions. Regression analysis shows that there is a correlation between right-wing authoritarianism and the population's socio-demographic background. This signifies that changes in these features may have a significant correlation with changes in the level of right-wing authoritarianism. Socio-demographic characteristics used in the regression analysis included type of settlement, gender, age, level of education and employment. The findings show that men are more inclined toward right-wing authoritarianism than women. Inclination toward right-wing authoritarianism analysed by type of settlement shows that residents of Yerevan are less predisposed towards authoritarianism than the respondents from other Armenian cities, while the latter, in turn, are less authoritarian than rural residents.

Thus, it is not surprising that waves of social disobedience arise in Yerevan and then move to the other cities in Armenia, and are least manifested in rural communities. The findings on respondents' inclination towards authoritarianism show that submissiveness to authorities and power-holders is stronger, and social conventions are followed more strictly, in rural areas.

With increasing age, the orientation towards authoritarianism grows. There is a significant reverse correlation between the level of education and authoritarianism however, i.e. the higher a respondent's education level, the lower the orientation towards authoritarianism. Higher education

10 Altemeyer, B. (1981). Right-wing authoritarianism. Winnipeg, Canada: University of Manitoba Press

not only allows for critical approaches to “true” values and authorities, but also is a significant driving force of transformation. Interestingly, all those who find scientists, specialists and researchers a credible source of information are less inclined towards authoritarianism than those who do not prioritise this group as a primary source of information.

Aggregate data on the correlation between right-wing authoritarianism and social-demographic indicators can be viewed in Table 7 in the “Tables and Graphs” section.

### Social Dominance

Another scale measuring social relationships and relations between various social groups, making it a value orientation scale, is the social dominance orientation scale, developed by Jim Sidanius and Felicia Platto<sup>11</sup>. The scale analyses social and political sentiments by measuring personal attitudes towards group-based discrimination. The scale identifies preference for hierarchies in the social system, as well as dominance over groups of lower status. In this 1-7point scale, a higher score indicates preference for dominance over groups of various social statuses. In other words, higher scores show a willingness to dominate over other groups and people—that people are driven by a strong and indifferent desire for power. Respondents who score higher on the social dominance scale tend to adhere to the “dog-eat-dog” or “survival of the fittest” belief.

The findings of the survey indicate that the respondents scored lower than average on the social dominance orientation. In a range between 1 and 7, the average score is 4.7 (M=4.7, N=686). This means that there is some orientation toward group-based discrimination and social hierarchies.

Studies<sup>12</sup> conducted in other countries with the help of this scale show that societies or groups oriented towards authoritarianism also indicate a predisposition towards social dominance. The present study does not identify a significant correlation between the two.

11 Sidanius, J.; Pratto, F. (2001). *Social Dominance: An Intergroup Theory of Social Hierarchy and Oppression*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

12 Whitley Jr., Bernard E. Right-wing authoritarianism, social dominance orientation, and prejudice. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol 77(1), Jul 1999, 126-134. [https://my.apa.org/apa/idm/login.seam?ERIGHTS\\_TARGET=http%3A%2F%2Fpsycnet%2Eapa%2Eorg%2F%3FloadState%3D1#](https://my.apa.org/apa/idm/login.seam?ERIGHTS_TARGET=http%3A%2F%2Fpsycnet%2Eapa%2Eorg%2F%3FloadState%3D1#)

The regression analysis of relations between the variance of the social dominance coefficient and social-demographic indicators shows that changes in the social dominance orientation can be observed in terms of type of settlement, education, family status, and monthly household income. Other social-demographic features, such as gender and age did not have a significant impact on the social dominance orientation.

Unlike the authoritarianism scale, where the highest scores were observed in rural communities and the lowest scores were detected in Yerevan, we have the opposite picture in relation to social dominance orientation, despite the fact that the correlation can be considered marginal. Yerevan residents seem to have a higher orientation towards social dominance than those in other cities and villages.

The correlation between household income and social dominance orientation is also significant. For respondents with a monthly income of up to 120,000 Armenian drams (approximately 223 Euro) social dominance orientation is higher than those with a higher income. Non-married respondents and those with higher education seem to be less oriented towards social dominance.

The aggregate data on the correlation of social dominance orientation score with socio-demographic indicators can be found in Table 8 in the “Tables and Charts” section.

### Religious Fundamentalism

The third scale measuring value orientations is the religious fundamentalism scale developed by Altemeyer and Hunsberger<sup>13</sup>. The scale measures fundamental, basic beliefs on humanity, divinity and “sacred truths.” These fundamentalist beliefs are based on practices that have been constant throughout centuries. On the other hand, fundamentalist beliefs are grounded on prejudices and discrimination against other groups (atheists, women, LGBTI, etc). This scale has 1-9 points, where a higher score indicates a higher orientation towards religious fundamentalism.

The average score of this survey on religious funda-

13 Altemeyer, B. & Hunsberger, B. (2004). A revised Religious Fundamentalism Scale: The short and sweet of it. *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 14, 47-54.

mentalsm is 5.6 (M=5.6, N=547). Though it is higher than the average by 1.1 points, indicating strong inclination toward religious fundamentalism, this figure is still far from extreme religious fundamentalism. While this indicator allows us to conclude that the respondents adhere to beliefs in a one and only divine truth, it also signals discriminatory attitudes towards other social groups.

Other studies on this topic<sup>14</sup> have identified a positive relationship between religious fundamentalism, right-wing authoritarianism, and social dominance.

The discussion of the social dominance scale has already shown that there is no significant correlation between authoritarianism and social dominance orientation. The same can be said about social dominance and religious fundamentalism, as their correlation is not significant. This means that changes in any of these variables will not determine a change in the other ( $r=0.029$ ,  $p>0.05$ ). However, there is a clear positive relationship between religious fundamentalism and right-wing authoritarianism ( $r=0.419$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). This means that all those who are oriented towards right-wing authoritarianism, are also inclined towards religious fundamentalism. There are overlapping statements in both of these scales, namely, that right-wing authoritarianism measured submissiveness to persons or institutions that have authority in society, including religious authorities. Religious fundamentalism is also based on devotion and respect towards the religious “truth” and those who transmit it. Besides, many religious practices that are established in a society are the basis of societal norms and rules. The importance of societal norms is also emphasised in the definition of right-wing authoritarianism. Therefore, it is not a surprise that there is a strong correlation between the coefficients of both scales.

When cross-tabulated with the population’s socio-demographic indicators, it becomes clear that religious fundamentalism varies only in relation to type of settlement. Specifically, urban residents are less oriented towards religious fundamentalism than rural residents. No other

significant relationship with other socio-demographic indicators has been identified. Aggregate data on the correlation of religious fundamentalism with social-demographic indicators can be found in Table 9 in the “Tables and Charts” section.

In conclusion, the findings indicate that certain socio-demographic indicators correlate with the variances in the value-based orientations of respondents. The most significant of these indicators is type of residence, which demonstrated a significant correlation with all three scales.

### **Geopolitical Preference as a Factor Influencing Value Orientation**

It is not a secret that value orientations are also determined by external factors, such as political/civilisational and cultural orientations. One of the goals of the study was to understand the extent to which the value orientations and attitudes of the respondents towards LGBTI persons are impacted by their preferences for Armenia’s geopolitical orientation. Regression analysis attempted to assess whether there is a relationship between the preference for closer relations either with the US, EU, Russia or the Eurasian Economic Union, and right-wing authoritarianism, social dominance and religious fundamentalism. The findings of the analysis suggest that there is a correlation between right-wing authoritarianism and religious fundamentalism, and respondents’ assessments on Armenia’s relations with the US and Russia<sup>15</sup>.

No significant correlation was observed between social dominance orientation and preferences for Armenia’s foreign relations. Religious fundamentalism and right-wing authoritarianism both show a positive correlation with the preference for closer relations with Russia. The higher the preference levels for these foreign relations, the higher the inclination towards religious fundamentalism and right-wing authoritarianism. The reverse is observed

14 Laythe, B., Finkel, D. and Kirkpatrick, L. A. (2001), Predicting Prejudice from Religious Fundamentalism and Right-Wing Authoritarianism: A Multiple-Regression Approach. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 40: 1–10.

15 Kendall’s correlation test was applied to the data. The results showed that there is a strong correlation between preferences for closer relations with the EU and the US, as well as with the RF and Eurasian Economic Union, this means that all those who prefer closer relations with the US, also wish such relations with the EU, and the reverse, all those who wish closer ties with Russia, prefer relations with the Eurasian Economic Union. This is the reason why relations with the US and Russia were discussed.

in preferences for closer relations with the US, meaning that those who prefer that Armenia cultivate closer ties with the US seem to be less predisposed towards religious fundamentalism and right-wing authoritarianism.

This relationship is not surprising given the political situation in these countries. According to the political classification by Freedom House<sup>16</sup>, Russia is an authoritarian country, while the US is classified as being democratic. Armenia is classified as a semi-authoritarian state in transition, which is under two powerful influences—Western and Russian. This influence is not only political, but also characterised by civilisational and cultural specificities. (Table 10)

It can be concluded that orientation towards right-wing authoritarianism and religious fundamentalism prevails amongst respondents and is also under the influence of geopolitical preferences. The value orientations of the respondents are determined by factors of authoritarianism, social dominance and religious fundamentalism, as well as geopolitical preferences, and significantly vary on the grounds of demographic indicators, such as gender, type of settlement, age and socio-economic status.

## INTERRELATION BETWEEN KNOWLEDGE OF LGBTI ISSUES AND STEREOTYPES AND MYTHS

There is a clear relationship between the level of knowledge about a certain group or phenomenon, and stereotypical opinions about that group or phenomenon. Knowledge is the recognition of the phenomenon or group. The less interaction with the phenomenon or representatives of the group and the less awareness there is, the lower the level of knowledge. The lack of knowledge contributes to the dissemination of false information and

is consequently conducive to the formation of stereotypes. The lack of knowledge and the abundance and stability of stereotypes can lead to threatening behavioural patterns towards certain groups.

This section of the report discusses the respondents' knowledge, stereotypical and myth-based perceptions regarding LGBTI persons.

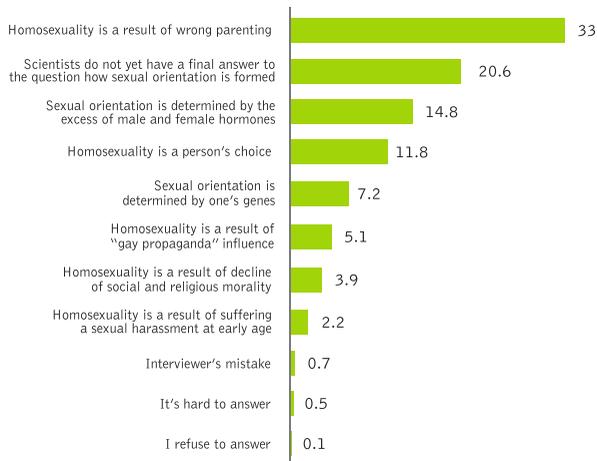
## The Grounds on which SOGI is Formed

Sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) are fundamental components of sexuality. The topic of sexuality used to be heavily tabooed in Armenia; however, it has become part of an increasingly open discourse. Nonetheless, the discourse is not in the sphere of enriching and transferring relevant knowledge but rather falls in the opposite sphere of the formation and strengthening of stereotypes. Public discourse<sup>17</sup>, which mainly takes place on social media, continues to reinforce existing stereotypes about LGBTI persons and limit the platform for disseminating knowledge. Positive or even negative attitudes towards LGBTI persons are stigmatised and the bearers of such attitudes are labelled.

When it comes to the perceptions of respondents on the formation of SOGI, in general, the respondents link SOGI formation to external and internal factors. The number of those that link SOGI formation to external factors is incomparably higher. As seen in Chart 4, one-third of respondents (N=336) believe that homosexuality is a result of improper upbringing, and is therefore related to mistakes that occurred during the process of socialisation. There are fewer respondents who believe that sexual orientation is a result of “gay propaganda” (5.1%, N=52) or the denial of social and religious morality (3.9%, N=40).

16 Freedom House: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/nations-transit-2015#.Vo-3PvI971U>

17 Prevalence of Hate Speech Towards LGBTI Community in the Internet, Report, 2014, Yerevan: <http://ngngo.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Report-on-existence-of-hate-speech-towards-LGBT-community-in-the-Armenian-Media-by-New-Generation-Humanitarian-NGO-ARM.pdf>

**Chart 4. Please note which thesis you agree with most (% in all)**

A significant number of respondents believe that sexual orientation is related to physiological specificities, namely, to an excess of male/female hormones (14.8%, N=151) and genetic factors (7.2 %, N=73).

It is noteworthy that scientific studies have disproven most of the above hypotheses<sup>18</sup>.

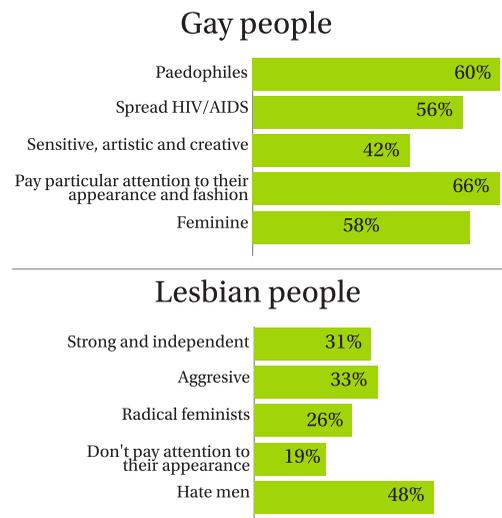
Every fifth respondent, or 20.6% (N=210) of all respondents, is prone to think that scientists have not yet found clear explanations as to the way sexual orientation is formed. This attitude is based more on knowledge.

## Stereotypes about Homosexuals

In order to identify stereotypes about homosexual men and women, the respondents were asked to express their agreement or disagreement with a number of statements, which were based on the most popular and widespread stereotypes about homosexual people.

It is noteworthy that a significantly higher number of respondents were able to give clear assessments on the statements relating to gay men, as indicated by the low

prevalence of "Difficult to answer" responses. With regards to lesbians, a large number of respondents found it difficult to express an opinion regarding the statements, falling considerably behind the answers regarding gay men. Depending on the nature of the statement, 10-40% of the respondents found it difficult to answer at least one of the questions. Chart 5 illustrates the prevailing stereotypes about lesbian women and gay men.

**Chart 5. The stereotypes about gays and lesbians**

The provided data, however, allow us to understand which stereotypes about homosexual people are most prevalent in society. Thus, gay men are characterised as being feminine (58%, N=591), paying great attention to their appearance and fashion (66%, N=670), and as emotional, artistic and creative (42%, N=427). Despite the fact that respondents frequently mentioned that the majority of gay men are feminine, only less than half of the survey participants agreed that men who have feminine mannerisms are gay (25%, N=255). This contradiction can probably be explained by the word "all" used in the statements—the respondents seemed to avoid such categorical claims. Another widespread myth is that gay men are one of the principal transmitters of HIV. The statistics on the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Armenia, however, indicate the opposite. According

18 Dr. Neil Whitehead, Common misconceptions about homosexuality, 2013, <http://www.mygenes.co.nz/myths.htm>

to the Republican Centre of AIDS Prevention<sup>19</sup>, the main avenues of HIV transmission are heterosexual practices (65%).

Despite the fact that these statistics are confirmed year after year and widely covered by mass media, the myth that gay men are the main transmitters of HIV/AIDS persists. Fifty-six percent of the respondents (N=571) agreed with this statement. Another widespread myth is that gay men are child molesters. Sixty percent of respondents agreed with this statement (N=521). Studies on this topic<sup>20</sup> show that there is no relationship between homosexuality and child molestation. This, too, is a popular myth that continues to generate a particular attitude towards homosexual people.

It is important to note that the myths that gay men are the main transmitters of HIV/AIDS and are child molesters are not unique to Armenian culture, and can be found in many other societies as well. Stereotypes about lesbian women are less explicit. The most widespread myth that also scored highest in the responses was that lesbians hate men (48%, N=483). It is noteworthy that this is the only statement with which almost half of the respondents agreed. Twenty-nine percent of the respondents (N=297) found it difficult to express any opinion on this statement.

Only 19% (N=196) of the respondents agree that lesbian women do not pay attention to their appearance. Moreover, just 3% (N=29) believe that all women who do not care for their appearance are lesbian. If, in the case of the former statement, 31% (N=314) of the respondents found it difficult to answer the question, for the later statement, the responses are straightforward: the predominant majority (85%, N=862) of the survey participants disagree that all women who do not pay attention to their appearance are lesbian. Again, an assumption can be made that the word “all” cautions the respondents, which is why the answers are distributed as such. Another attempted explanation can also be that changes in the perception of a woman’s appearance in society can lead to a belief that a woman’s presentation is not indicative of her sexual orientation. The same cannot be said of men, because the survey shows that a man’s appearance is considered to be an indicator of his

sexual orientation. Twenty-six percent (N=264) of the respondents characterise lesbian women as radical feminists, while 40% (N=406) refrained from making any judgment on this. One-third of the respondents believe that homosexual women are more aggressive (33%, N=334), and at the same time, that they are stronger and more independent (31%, N=313) than heterosexual women.

It is still important to emphasise that awareness about homosexual women is generally low amongst the respondents, which is also evidenced by the large number of respondents who “Found it difficult” to answer questions. This can be one of the reasons why perceptions about lesbians seem to be softer than those about men.

The findings also confirm that the prevalent perceptions about homosexual persons are those that contradict socially accepted gender roles and that are identified with the gender characteristics of the opposite sex.

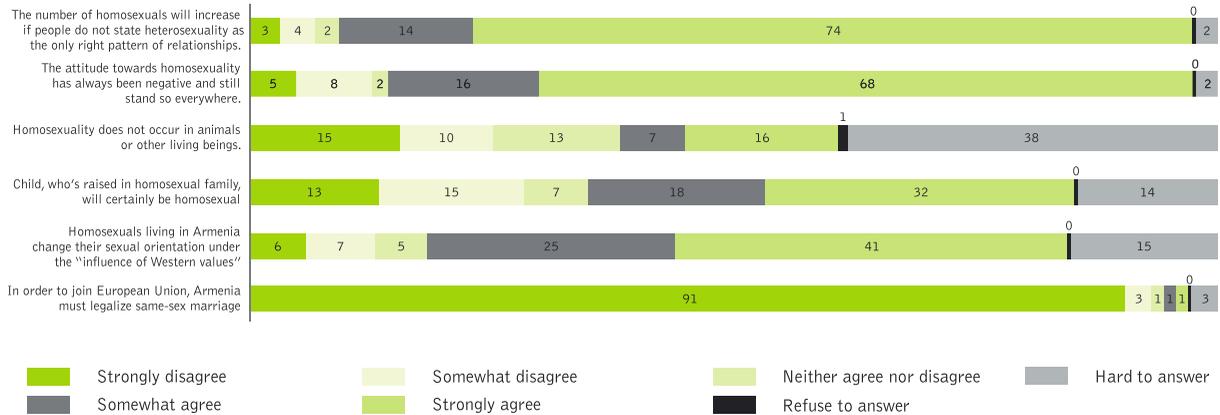
Stereotypes about homosexual persons are not limited to appearance and personal traits. There are other myths woven around the phenomenon of homosexuality, the existence of homosexual persons in society and their interrelations, which are also reflected in this survey (Chart 6).

The overwhelming majority of the respondents (84%, N=835) are assured that homosexuality has a tendency to spread, and if the public is not alert and does not take measures to contain it by “propagating” heterosexuality, it is likely that the number of homosexual people will increase. Homosexuality is viewed in the realm of normativity and the only way to put an end to it is to encourage “true” values. Moreover, the myth that homosexuality is a foreign phenomenon and has been imported into Armenia is also prevalent. Sixty-six percent (N=671) of respondents agree that it is under the influence of “Western values” that people change their sexual orientation in Armenia. The perceptions that Western countries are a cradle of perversion and uninhibited behaviour are also manifested in the myths about homosexuals. The latter is one of the most widespread myths.

The statement that homosexuality is a product of improper upbringing has already been discussed above. One-third of the respondents agree with this statement. Similarly, exactly half of the respondents (N=508) think that a child growing up in a homosexual family will also

19 Republican Center for AIDS Prevention website: [http://www.armaids.am/main/free\\_code.php?lng=2&parent=3](http://www.armaids.am/main/free_code.php?lng=2&parent=3)

20 Sexual Orientation: Science, Education and Policy) [http://psc.dss.ucdavis.edu/rainbow/html/facts\\_molestation.html](http://psc.dss.ucdavis.edu/rainbow/html/facts_molestation.html)

**Chart 6. Myths about homosexuality**

become homosexual. Again, the hypothesis that homosexuality is a result of inappropriate upbringing is confirmed.

A significant number of respondents also believe that homosexuality is rejected at all times and everywhere. Eighty-four percent (N=846) of the respondents dismiss the idea that there is or has ever been a tolerant attitude toward homosexual people in any setting.

Nonetheless, the statement about homosexuality being a phenomenon that is encountered in nature divided the respondents. Firstly, 38% of the respondents (N=390) found it difficult to express any opinion, while 13% (N=132) expressed a neutral position, which, according to the interviewers, can be interpreted as "Difficult to answer." In sum, almost half of the respondents avoided giving a clear position on this question. The rest of the respondents are divided into those who reject the existence of homosexuality in the animal world (23%, N=230), and those who agree that it does exist (25%, N=255).

The myth that the EU is an agent propagating and spreading "Western values" is also prevalent. The respondents frequently label homosexuality as a Western value, and consequently, a negative attitude is formed not only towards homosexuality, but also towards the European Union. Ninety-four percent of respondents did not agree with the statement, "In order to join the European Union, Armenia must legalise same-sex marriage," (N=951). This strict denial is a result of the double perception of this statement, which respondents probably understood as ask-

ing whether they would agree with Armenia's joining the EU, should there be a precondition of legalising same-sex marriage. It is important to note that in numerous countries and even those with a high level of tolerance towards homosexual persons, public attitudes towards same-sex marriage continue to be very contradictory and often even negative. This may be related to the fear of losing the heterosexual family as a model of society and its values.

In general, respondents demonstrate a high level of stereotypical and myth-based attitudes. A low level of awareness about sexuality, as well as the absence of interactions with representatives of these groups, conditions this.

The following section will discuss the specificities of the respondents' interactions with LGBTI persons.

## INTERACTIONS WITH LGBTI PERSONS

The previous section discussed the knowledge of the respondents about LGBTI persons, and the stereotypes and myths they adhere to. It is clear that one of the factors largely fostering the formation of stereotypes and myths is the low level of awareness of human sexuality. The survey clearly points out this gap. One of the reasons why stereotypes and myths are generated about LGBTI persons is the

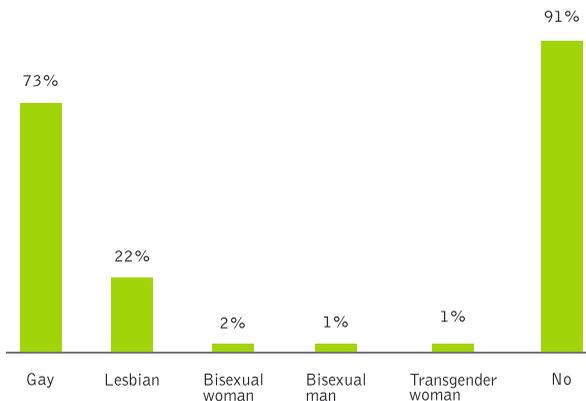
lack of interactions with representatives of these groups.

Given the fact that the LGBTI community is not so visible in Armenia and many LGBTI persons avoid speaking about their SOGI even with the people closest to them (family members, friends and relatives), the number of people who claim not to have had any interactions with LGBTI persons is large. Also, there are people who recognise LGBTI persons, however refrain from acknowledging having had contact with them in order not to be stigmatised.

Therefore, it is not surprising that amongst the respondents of the survey, people who have had any contact with LGBTI people were also few. Out of every 12 respondents, only one recognises an LGBTI person. Out of over one thousand (1,017) respondents only 86 (9%) mentioned that they know or are familiar with LGBTI persons. However, it is noteworthy that they are familiar with only one (41%, N=36) or two (26%, N=23) such persons.

Respondents who mentioned that they knew LGBTI persons specified mainly gay men (73%, N=120), and a

**Chart 7. Do you know any person who is LGBTI? If yes, indicate the information about his/her/ their sexual orientation or gender identity.**



much fewer number specified knowing lesbian women (22%, N=36). Only six and two respondents mentioned being familiar with bisexual and transgender persons, respectively. It can be concluded that despite the earlier clarification of the terms used in the questionnaire, the respondents generalised the LGBTI persons they knew into two large categories: gay men and lesbian women. These groups are the

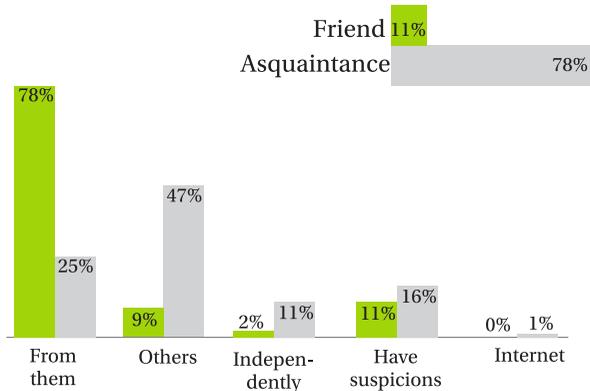
more or less known groups in society, and any event is generalised around them based on the generalised stereotypes about them. Another fact that supports this assumption is that the overwhelming majority (¾ [N=122]) of those who have had interaction with LGBTI persons presented the LGBTI persons as acquaintances. In the other 18 cases, the LGBTI persons were the respondents’ friends, 7 were classmates, 5 clients/patients, 4 neighbours, 2 teachers/students, and only 1 person mentioned having an LGBTI relative.

During the focus group, the interviewers expressed their concern that under the category of “acquaintance,” the respondents may have included cases when they have not had direct contact with LGBTI persons, but know about them from TV or other mass media.

The respondents learned about the SOGI of the LGBTI persons via many channels. Only 31% (N=51) of the respondents learned about their SOGI directly from the primary source. In the rest of the situations, the respondents had retrieved the information through secondary channels, for example, from others (41%, N=67), 17% had suspicions (N=27), while 10%(N=16) mentioned that they found out the information independently. Another two respondents mentioned that they learned about the SOGI of the LGBTI person they were familiar with from the Internet. It is worth mentioning that the secondary sources, mainly other persons or the Internet, as well as the suspicions, may be false opinions.

It is not surprising that the overwhelming majority of respondents (78% [N=49]) who have LGBTI friends learned about the latter’s sexual orientation and/or gender identity from their LGBTI friends themselves, and only 24.7% (N=79) of those who had LGBTI acquaintances learned about it directly from their acquaintances. Meanwhile, 47% (N=151) were told by others, 16% (N=52) had speculations about their acquaintances’ SOGI, and 11% (N=34) found out themselves. It is also logical that those acquaintances that happened to be clients/patients mentioned their SOGI themselves. An interesting finding is that the majority of those who mentioned having LGBTI classmates only had suspicions (77%, N=13), and did not have concrete information from any source (Chart 8).

It was unexpected to observe that the majority of those who have LGBTI friends interact with their LGBTI friends

**Chart 8. The peculiarities in connection with LGBTI people**

a few times a month or less. Only two respondents mentioned meeting frequently, on a weekly basis or almost every day. The claim that the respondents do not have frequent contact with LGBTI acquaintances is more logical.

Cases when the respondents severed contact with another person after learning about her/his SOGI was not few. These cases were recorded mainly amongst acquaintances—25 cases. Two cases of severing relations were observed in the case of classmates and two with relatives. Severance of contact due to the person's SOGI were not voiced by respondents who knew about the SOGI of other persons due to their professional work (teacher, doctor). More interaction with LGBTI persons is observed among young female respondents, who are mainly familiar with gay men. Again, it is mainly female respondents who mentioned having friendly relationships with LGBTI persons and having gay friends. In those situations when the relationship with the LGBTI person is close, the respondent learned about her/his SOGI directly; therefore, this information can be viewed as more credible.

In those cases when the respondent mentioned that the LGBTI person is just an acquaintance, their knowledge of the person's SOGI is indirect; they learned either from others or were just making an assumption. Therefore this information cannot be regarded as credible, as it may be based on assumptions or stereotypes. Interestingly, secondary sources or assumptions about LGBTI persons were mentioned in the cases of mainly gay and bisexual men. It

can be concluded that suspicions about a person's appearance may also have influenced the respondents' belief that the person is GB. As already mentioned in the section on stereotypes, stereotypes based on a man's appearance are more viable. Therefore, it is possible that the stereotypical attitudes may have a significant role in attempts of "assuming" a person's sexual identity. It is obvious that interaction with LGBTI persons has a direct impact on the formation or transformation of public attitudes. The intensity of interaction reduces the space for stereotypes and prejudice, giving way to experience-based knowledge. It is also logical that the respondents' attitudes are mostly stereotypical, because only 9% of all respondents mentioned having had encounters with LGBTI persons, or more precisely with one or two of these groups.

## ATTITUDES TOWARDS LGBTI PERSONS

The previous sections of the report addressed the two significant factors that determine the formation of a person's attitude towards LGBTI people — personal contact and awareness of the phenomenon. It was stressed that the availability of information or knowledge, as well as personal interactions, restrict the influence of stereotypical perceptions and prevent the generation of prejudice.

This section of the report will touch upon the attitudes of the respondents towards LGBTI persons by differentiating attitudes towards homosexual and bisexual women, and homosexual and bisexual men, as well as exploring the myths and attitudes towards transgender persons. As it has become clear, respondents have extremely limited contact with LGBTI persons. Moreover, stereotypical attitudes prevail amongst them. It is therefore expected that their attitudes, which are not based on knowledge but on stereotypes, will have a negative tone.

An analysis of public sentiments and attitudes towards homosexual, bisexual, and transgender persons follows.

## Attitudes towards Homosexual Persons

Homosexual persons—gay men and lesbian women—are the more recognised groups in society, as there is broader public discourse about them. Moreover, all LGBTI persons are often classified into these two groups – gay men and lesbian women. This is a result of low awareness, as knowledge about bisexual and transgender persons is less voiced in society and is largely not accessible to the public.

The interviewers also confirmed that it was easier for the respondents to understand the notion of lesbians and gays, but had difficulty comprehending the characteristics of bisexual and transgender people and in distinguishing them from homosexuals. Nonetheless, one of the advantages of the survey is that it allows us to identify attitudes towards various LGBTI groups and distinguish the differences, if they exist.

In this section, we will discuss public attitudes towards homosexual people and will focus on differences between attitudes towards gay men and lesbian women. The survey used Herek's (1980) scale of attitudes toward lesbians and gay men<sup>21</sup> widely used in many countries for similar research. For the purposes of this survey, the shorter version of the scale was used with statements assessed by a scale of 1-5 points, with 5 representing extreme negative attitudes.

A more negative attitude towards gay men in patriarchal societies is normally explained by the gender panic theory<sup>22</sup>. According to the theory, in patriarchal societies where a very high significance is attached to the role of men, any deviation from the established gender roles is deemed to be a threat to the established norms and therefore to society on the whole.

Let us now discuss the survey findings and specifically the Armenian public's attitude towards gay men and lesbian women, and the differences that can be identified by the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents.

The average score of attitudes toward homosexual persons measured by Herek's scale is 3.6 (N=608). This in-

dicator is close to the negative attitude axis, which means that in general, the attitude is negative.

There is a significant correlation between the attitude of respondents towards homosexual persons and their socio-demographic characteristics, namely place of residence, gender, education, employment, and income level. Persons with higher education seem to have a softer attitude towards homosexual persons than those with a lower level of education. Similarly, those employed have a more tolerant attitude than those who are unemployed. The most intolerant respondents are males from Yerevan. As mentioned above on numerous occasions, an important factor contributing to breaking stereotypes and decreasing discrimination is interaction with LGBTI persons. This is repeatedly observed during the survey. The respondents who know LGBTI people personally are incomparably more tolerant than those who have never had contact with LGBTI persons. The closer the personal relations with the LGBTI people (friend, neighbour, relative), the more the answers are directed towards the axis of tolerance, and vice versa—the weaker the relationship with an LGBTI person (for example, an acquaintance whose SOGI is known from third parties or is a suspicion), the more negative the attitude.

The scores of attitudes towards gays (M=3.66, N=608) and lesbians (M=3.62, N=608) show that there is minimal difference between them. There is also a very strong correlation between these two indicators ( $r=.850$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), meaning that any variation in the attitude towards gay men entails similar variation in the attitude towards lesbian women, and vice versa.

## Attitudes towards Bisexual Persons

While the discussions about gay and lesbian communities were broader, there is less reference by respondents to bisexual persons. This, however, does not mean that bisexual persons enjoy a higher level of tolerance or that there are less stereotypes and myths about them. From a binary perspective, homosexual relations are more comprehensible, while bisexual relations are often subject to misinterpretation and are pushed out of the socio-moral

21 The Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gay Men Scale <http://psc.dss.ucdavis.edu/rainbow/html/atlg.html>

22 Adam B. D. Theorizing homophobia. *Sexualities* 1 (4), 387-404, 1998.

normative framework. One of the most widespread myths about bisexual persons is that they have emotional and sexual relations with several persons of two genders at a time. Bisexual persons are stigmatised not only by the wider society, but also within the LGBTI community and are labelled as “unoriented.” These myths are at the cornerstone of perceptions about bisexuality.

Measurement of attitudes towards bisexual persons was conducted with the help of a separate scale. Mohr and Rochlen’s (1999)<sup>23</sup> scale is an effective tool for measuring public attitudes towards male and female bisexuals and includes the attitudes of not only heterosexual persons, but also homosexual individuals. The scale has 1-5 points, where the highest score indicates the most negative attitude towards bisexual persons. The survey has identified that the average score for attitude towards bisexual persons is 3.5 (M=3.5, N=321), close to the score on attitudes towards homosexual persons (M=3.6, N=608). Only 6 of the respondents mentioned being familiar with or having ever had contact with bisexual persons. Younger and unmarried respondents are more tolerant towards bisexual persons.

There are only marginal correlations between attitudes towards bisexual persons and the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents. As mentioned above, these indicators are age and marital status. With increasing age, people tend to display more intolerant attitudes towards bisexual persons, while analysis by marital status shows that married respondents have a more negative attitude than unmarried respondents.

There is very little difference between attitudes towards bisexual women (M=3.4) and men (M=3.7), with the attitude towards the latter being more negative. Analysis of the attitudes towards bisexual men and women separately and correlated with other indicators shows that there is a significant correlation between attitude towards bisexual women and the respondents’ marital status, level of income, type of settlement and gender. More specifically, married men with a monthly income of 50,000-120,000 Armenian drams (approximately 93-223 Euro) residing in urban areas

are more negatively inclined towards bisexual women. In the case of attitudes towards male bisexuals, there is a significant correlation between the factor of having had contact with LGBTI persons, the grounds based on which SOGI is formed and the attitudes of the respondents. More specifically, respondents who are familiar with LGBTI persons are more tolerant towards bisexual males, than those who have never had contact with the LGBTI group. In terms of perceived morality, those who believe that SOGI is formed based on moral factors, have a more negative attitude towards bisexual men.

## Attitudes towards Transgender Persons

Transgender persons are in the most vulnerable situation. Their identity is strictly judged both from the perspective of gender roles, as well as of social norms and order. Because public perception associates gender with biological sex, specifically in the binary female-male dimension, the nature of transgender persons is normally labelled as a “deviation from the natural,” and therefore is strongly criticised and rejected. In order to measure negative attitudes towards transgender persons, including stereotypes, anger and transphobia, researchers use various scales. For the purposes of this survey, Hill and Willoughby’s (2005)<sup>24</sup> scale measuring genderism and transphobia was used. This scale measures forms of phobia, harassment and violence towards persons deviating from gender norms. This 1-7-point scale allows for identifying negative attitudes and violence orientation towards trans people, with 7 scoring for the most extreme negative attitude.

The findings of this survey show that the average score for attitudes towards transgender persons is 5.0 (M=5.0, N=515), meaning that the attitude of the respondents towards transgender persons is higher than the average on the axis of anti-trans attitudes overall. There is a significant correlation between attitude towards transgender persons and

23 Mohr, J.; Rochlen, A. Measuring attitudes regarding bisexuality in lesbian, gay male, and heterosexual populations, *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, Vol 46(3), Jul 1999, 353-369, <http://psycnet.apa.org/index.cfm?fa=buy.optionToBuy&id=1999-05850-007#>

24 Hill D. & Willoughby B.(2005) The Development and Validation of the Genderism and Transphobia Scale, Vol. 53, 531-544

respondents' gender, place of residence, age, and levels of education and income of the respondents. More severe negative attitudes towards transgender persons are expressed in rural communities than in urban ones. Respondents from Yerevan scored lower than in the other settlements.

There is a direct relationship between age and negative attitude towards transgender persons, and a reverse relationship between level of education and negative attitude.

As in the case of the other groups, those respondents who have had contact with LGBTI persons expressed a higher level of tolerance towards transgender persons.

It is noteworthy that the attitude towards transgender persons is also determined by the respondents' perceptions of how sexual orientation and gender identity is formed. There was no such significant correlation in the case of homosexual and bisexual persons. Those respondents, who believe that sexual orientation and gender identity are formed in the realm of morality and social norms, believe that homosexuality is a result of wrong upbringing, "gay propaganda," and denial of social and religious morality. But those respondents, who believe that SOGI is formed as a result of biological factors, such as excess sex hormones or genetic factors, seem to have a more nuanced approach towards homosexual persons.

The genderism and transphobia scale also allows us to analyse some specificities related to people's attitudes towards transgender persons. We specifically measured whether there is an inclination towards violence against transgender persons, the perceptions of them being immoral and unnatural, prejudices against feminine men, and the preconditions for genderism. Each of these factors merits an in-depth discussion. Measurement of prejudices related to feminine men included questions on prejudices about men who have adopted stereotypical female manners. The attitude of the respondents of this survey scored 5.4 (M=5.4, N=515) on a scale of 1-7 points. This means that prejudiced attitudes towards feminine men are oriented towards the peak of negative attitudes. This attitude may vary by the respondents' gender, type of settlement, age, level of education and employment. The next factor is the orientation towards resorting to violence, which scored 4.9 (M=4.9, SD=1.5, N=515) in this survey. This factor is dependent upon variables of gender, type of settlement and education level.

The perception of the "unnaturalness" of transgender persons scored 4.7 (M=4.7, N=515) and can be varied by the level of respondents' education. Extreme negative assessments were made in relation to claims that transgender persons are immoral (M=6.1, N=515), which once again confirms that the limits of morality and value-based normativity are deemed extremely significant by the respondents, as well as by Armenian society as a whole.

The last factor related to the attitudes and judgments on transgender persons and gender expression scored an average of 5.0 (M=5.0, N=515), which again indicates the overall negative attitude of the respondents towards transgender persons and their gender expression. In general, the variability of all 5 factors is related to the gender, age, level of education, and value priorities of the respondents. As illustrated in Table 11, male respondents' attitudes were more negative for all these factors than those of women, and were in a direct positive relationship with age, while all those for whom family was a prioritised value were found to be more intolerant. Previous contact with LGBTI persons also impacts attitudes towards transgender persons.

Let us now discuss differences between attitudes towards masculine women and feminine men. A number of statements included in the genderism and transphobia measuring scale allow us to examine the attitude towards women and men whose traits are different from socially expected gender traits. It is firstly important to note that attitudes towards masculine women and feminine men are strongly interrelated and variance in one attitude determines a similar variance in the other (Table 12). The correlation coefficients show a significant relationship.

In general, the survey shows that masculine women were less criticised than feminine men. Moreover, female respondents expressed a more tolerant attitude towards both masculine women and feminine men. The lowest scores were observed for physical or psychological (ridicule) violence towards masculine women. Out of the types of violence, the respondents recorded a preference for indirect violence (ridicule, contempt). Male respondents felt more uncomfortable with feminine men (Table 12).

The aggregate data on the correlation of attitudes towards LGBTI persons with socio-demographic indicators can be found in Table 11 in the "Tables and Charts" section.

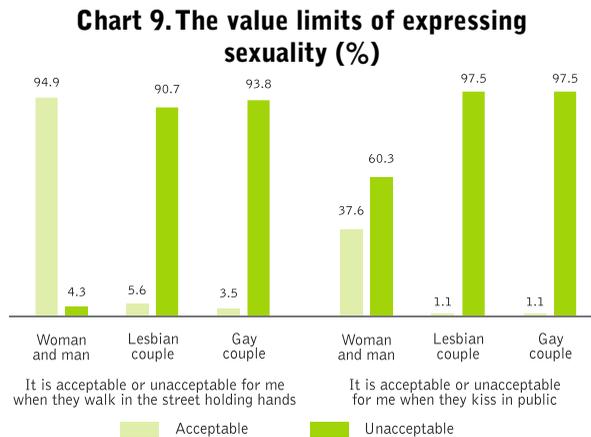
## Sentiments towards LGBTI and Myths

This section will discuss the importance of myths in forming attitudes towards LGBTI persons. The interrelation between statements based on myths and attitudes towards LGBTI people is also indicative of the intensity of the impact of the myths on people's disposition. Data in Table 13 shows that the relationship is strongest for the statement "Homosexuality does not exist in animals and other living beings" ( $r=0.136$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). This can be explained from the perspective that homosexuality is allegedly not linked to nature: the more homosexuality is rejected as a natural phenomenon, the stronger the negative attitude towards homosexual persons. Such correlation is also confirmed in the case of transgender persons ( $r=0.097$ ,  $p=0.021$ ). There is a strong correlation in the case of bisexual persons for the following statement: "Negative attitudes towards homosexuality have existed always and everywhere," ( $r=0.248$ ,  $p<0.001$ ).

## Value-based Boundaries for Expressing Sexuality

In traditional societies, where strict boundaries are set for values for all people, it is assumed that both heterosexual and homosexual people can be equally criticised. Based on the example of public demonstration of love, let us discuss whether there is a specific attitude based on sexual orientation, or whether value boundaries are a priority for all. In the first example, the respondents were asked to evaluate the acceptability of holding hands in the street by heterosexual, lesbian and gay couples. In the second case, the respondents were asked to evaluate a statement regarding public kissing among heterosexual, lesbian and gay couples. The statement on lesbian and gay couples elicited much harsher responses than the statement on heterosexual couples (Chart 9):

For both statements, value-based attitudes towards homosexual couples are expressed in an extremely negative mode. Almost all respondents find it unacceptable for a homosexual couple to both hold hands and kiss pub-



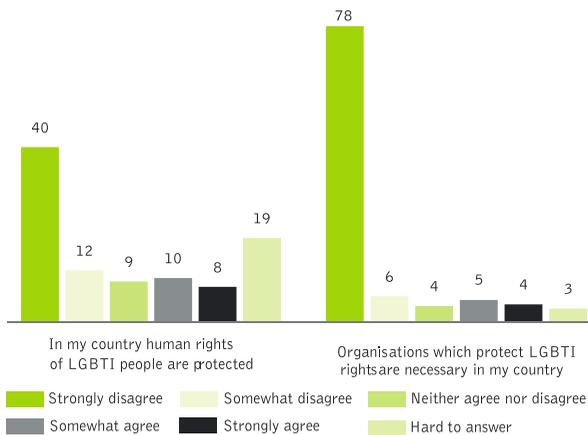
licly. The situation is different for heterosexual couples: only 4.3% ( $N=44$ ) of the respondents find it unacceptable to publicly hold hands, while the opinions on public kissing are split. More than half of the respondents (60.3%,  $N=613$ ) find it unacceptable for even a heterosexual couple to kiss in public areas. While extremely strict boundaries are drawn for homosexual couples, heterosexual couples enjoy some freedom facing only such value-based constraints that are common for all members of the society. However, even in this case, public opposition is not as strong as in the case of homosexual couples.

## BOUNDARIES SET FOR LGBTI PERSONS

### Perceptions on the Rights of LGBTI Persons

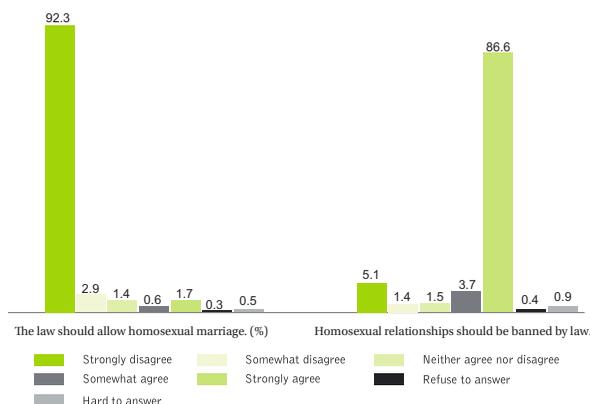
Armenian legislation does not inscribe discrimination towards LGBTI persons in general terms. The Constitution of Armenia states that all persons, regardless of her/his characteristics, are equal. However, as already concluded from the discussion of the findings of the survey, the respondents do not share the rights and freedoms prescribed by law in terms of LGBTI persons. They are inclined towards limiting people’s rights based on their SOGI. The respondents express the most restrictive attitude when it came to children and family. Fifty-two percent (N=532) of the respondents believe that the rights of LGBTI persons are not protected in Armenia, and only 7% (N=94) see the need for organisations protecting LGBTI rights. It appears, that according to the respondents, LGBTI rights are not protected, and that there is no need to take measures to protect them either (Chart 10).

**Chart 10. The importance of LGBTI people’s rights and of the organisations protecting them (%)**



The respondents are not only against the protection of the rights of LGBTI persons, but 90% (N=919) also agreed that homosexuality must be outlawed, while only 2% said that the law should allow homosexual marriage.

**Chart 11. Homosexual relationships.**

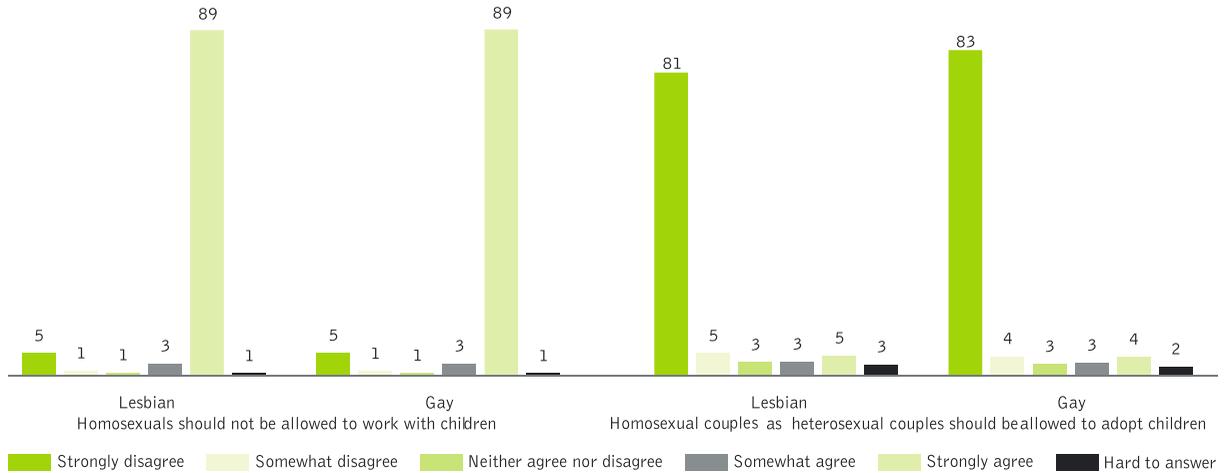


When it comes to interactions between children and LGBTI persons, the respondents are even stricter in their attitudes. Nine out of ten respondents believe that homosexual women and men should not be allowed to work with children, and homosexual persons should not have the right to adopt children (Chart 12). Here too, we see that the respondents are obsessed by the fear that homosexuality may spread by “perverting” the young generation.

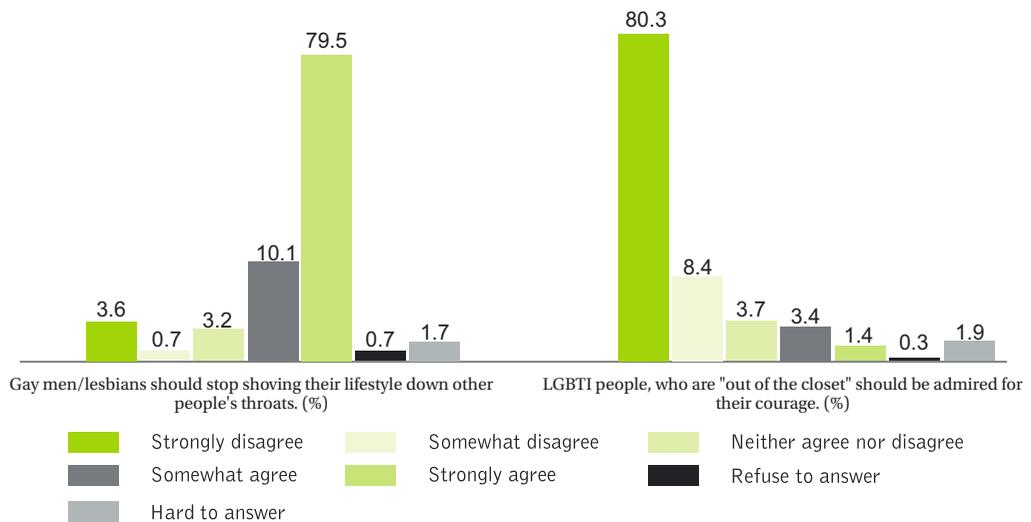
Here as well, there is a widespread belief that LGBTI persons should not disclose their SOGI, as it is characterised as “gay propaganda,” and is therefore severely criticised.

90% of the respondents agreed that gay men/lesbians should stop shoving their lifestyle down other people’s throats, while only 5% said that LGBTI people, who are “out of the closet” should be admired for their courage.

**Chart 12. The limits of interactions between homosexuals and children(%)**

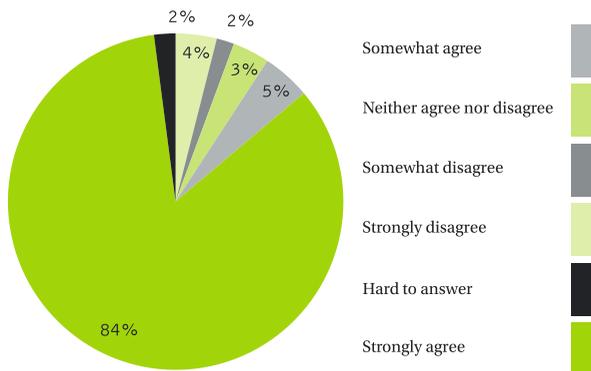


**Chart 13. Attitude towards openly LGBTI persons**



Another statement supporting this idea is the rejection of LGBTI pride parades; 84% of the respondents (N=896) strictly reject holding such public events that increase visibility of LGBTI persons and allegedly herald the possible increase of their number (Chart 14).

**Chart 14. LGBTI parade should be banned(%):**



The question regarding children deserves special attention, as it appears to be the most sensitive question both for the respondents and for the entire society. At almost every step of the survey, the positions of the respondents become more draconian when it comes to questions regarding children.

## Children as the Most Vulnerable Group of Society

Family and children in particular are deemed to be a primary value of Armenian society. The current survey findings also support this statement. The majority of the respondents classified family as their first primary value, which is also an indication of their attitude towards this social institution. It can be claimed that the family is the “Achilles’ heel” of the Armenian society; the most sensitive area that, if touched, the public reacts to it with a great resonance.

Coming back to the survey, it is important to note that LGBTI persons are perceived as a threat to the family and the young generation. It is not surprising that the respondents were more categorical in their answers regarding children. Analysis of these questions shows that the answers are almost straightforward and close to the negative peak.

The attitude of the respondents towards LGB persons teaching children is clearly negative. The average on the 1-5-point scale is 4.7. This means that almost all the respondents agreed with the statement that, “LGB persons should not be allowed to work with children.” Moreover, they do not differentiate between gays, lesbians or bisexual teachers—for them, they are all equally unacceptable as teachers (Table 14).

The same extreme attitude is observed on the matter of physical violence against LGBTI persons. In terms of questions regarding children, the attitude became uniformly negative. More specifically, to the question, “If a man wearing a skirt and makeup approaches my child and speaks in a flirtatious tone, I will stop him using physical force,” unequivocal agreement was voiced (M = 6.2). However, resorting to physical violence in other situations was not evaluated in the same manner. A diversity of attitudes was expressed regarding the use of force against feminine men (M = 4.7) or masculine women (M = 3.9).

The findings illustrate that perceived threats against children resonate strongest amongst the respondents. In this case, LGBTI persons are clearly perceived as a threat to the younger generation and people seem to be willing to turn to physical violence to “protect” their children.

## Attitudes towards LGBTI Persons and Boundaries of Rights

The attitudes of respondents towards LGBTI persons should also be analysed from the perspective of perception of rights. The findings of the survey show that the perceptions on the boundaries of LGBTI persons' rights are clearly linked to their attitudes. The more supportive the respondents are towards LGBTI rights, the more tolerant they are found to be. Similarly, the more rejecting the respondents' attitude towards LGBTI rights, the more negative their attitude is in general. The strongest correlation is observed between the statement: "Homosexual relations should be banned by law," and the attitudes towards LGBTI people. A person's attitude towards LGBTI people determines their attitude towards this statement by more than 40%. A similarly strong, however negative, correlation is observed regarding the statement: "There is a need for organisations protecting LGBTI rights in our country." Attitudes towards this statement determine the attitudes towards LGBTI persons by 24-45%. More specifically, those respondents that were against this statement, also expressed a negative attitude towards LGBTI persons (Table 15).

To sum up, the attitudes towards LGBTI people can be regarded within certain boundaries of rights only. The boundaries drawn by the respondents determine their attitudes towards LGBTI persons—the narrower the boundaries, the more oppressive the negative attitudes.

## CONCLUSION

As in any country, there are LGBTI people in Armenia who are challenged by an extremely intolerant public. The predominant majority of Armenia's population is against LGBTI persons. This survey aimed to conduct a comprehensive analysis on public attitudes towards LGBTI persons, and factors influencing those attitudes.

The findings of the survey once again confirm that there is a negative attitude towards LGBTI persons. This is evidenced by the low awareness of sexuality, as well as the strong influence of stereotypes, prejudices, and value orientations on the formation of public attitudes. The impact of value orientations is stronger when respondents have had no contact with LGBTI persons.

The respondents of this survey, and with little reservation, Armenian society as a whole, have a uniform attitude in regard to LGBTI matters. However, some variations can be observed by gender, place of residence, age, and employment status. Specifically, women, urban dwellers, younger respondents, and employed respondents were comparably more tolerant towards LGBTI persons and were less oriented towards right-wing authoritarianism and religious fundamentalism. The attitude becomes stricter when the discussion is about the family or children, considered to be a primary value for Armenian society.

Public discourse on LGBTI topics is still nascent in Armenia and exists on a superficial level, while generalised and often-false opinions prevail. This conclusion is supported by the findings that showed that the respondents found it difficult to see the differences between LGBTI groups. Due to the difficulty of distinguishing between LGBTI groups, the number of "Difficult to answer" and "Neutral" options is significantly large.

Surveys on these topics are more effective to conduct at times when there is more mature public discourse on the topic and the level of awareness of sexuality increases, so that respondents are able to clearly express an attitude towards groups differentiated by sexual orientation and gender identity. More time is required for the full formation of public discourse on LGBTI matters in Armenia.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Recommendations to the State

- Adopt comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation that condemns discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity;
- Make appropriate amendments in the RA Criminal Code on classifying the crimes with sexual orientation/gender identity motives as hate crimes;
- Respect and protect the rights of human rights defenders and journalists to undertake their legitimate work without the fear of harassment, criminal prosecution or other pressures;
- Investigate promptly, effectively and impartially all reports of attacks or threats against human rights defenders, journalists and civil society activists, identify the perpetrators and bring them to justice;
- Put in place measures to fully investigate crimes committed on the basis of sexual orientation and/or gender identity, ensure that such crimes are properly prosecuted and penalised;

- Respect and protect the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly for all;
- Ensure that public officials, including government representatives and elected office holders, refrain from making negative statements fostering hate and discrimination against LGBTI people;
  - Promote and provide training programmes and awareness-raising modules on sexual orientation and/or gender identity for state employees and especially those contracted to core state functions such as the judiciary, military, police and health service workers and providers;
    - Implement programmes and actions to educate the general population on a variety of LGBTI issues, underpinned by the message of non-discrimination and fundamental human rights of minorities;
    - Include the topics of sexuality and tolerance in the formal educational curriculum, and at the same time, address disproportionate representation of gender roles in educational materials.

## Recommendations to the NGOs and civic initiatives

- Closely collaborate with other human rights organisations and human rights defenders in order to institute and support the development of a national advocacy campaign for stronger and more robust anti-discrimination legislation as well as for the protection of LGBTI rights;
  - Document and keep records of cases of human rights violations as substantiates and proof of the existence of discrimination;
  - Increase awareness of the population on sexuality and gender identity in the frames of non-formal education;
  - Monitor the media in order to reveal and address harmful stereotypes around sexuality and gender.

## Recommendations to the Office of the Human Rights Defender

- Raise public awareness about the phenomenon of discrimination, negative consequences deriving from it, the importance of the elimination of all forms of discrimination in a democratic society, and principles of equality;
- Raise public awareness about calls for and propaganda of hate and violence and their unlawfulness;
- Conduct proper advocacy for developing and adopting effective anti-discrimination legislation and other required legislative changes.

## Recommendations to Media

- Promote the broadcasting of new informative programs, which will cover modern approaches concerning sexuality;
- Provide only scientifically-proven information about homosexuality;
- Avoid hate speech and hate propaganda;
- Reduce negative stereotypes in the media and their influence in order to contribute to the prevention of discriminatory societal attitudes towards LGBTI people.

## SUMMARY

Surveys conducted previously in Armenia concerning lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (henceforth LGBTI) people have found that Armenian society is extremely intolerant towards LGBTI people (93-96%). Though the situation for LGBTI people has changed slightly as a result of legal reforms made in the independence years following the collapse of the Soviet Union, and legislation of the Republic of Armenia is free from discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity (henceforth SOGI), no significant changes can be observed from the point of view of social perception.

This survey aims to analyze the impact of social, cultural, political and other factors on the creation of a homo-transphobic environment; to assess public awareness, knowledge and opinions about LGBTI people's existence and the issues concerning them; and to analyze people's attitudes and behavior towards LGBTI people in Armenia. The survey is significant not only because of its scientific nature, but also because it opens the door for future studies on LGBTI people in the region. The survey is also important because of its practical use; its findings can be used to develop and implement long-term advocacy and human rights protection activities in Armenia.

Field surveys were conducted in 1,017 households across Armenia between November and December 2015. Multi-layer stratified selection was applied to the survey sample. Sample clusters, households and interviewees were selected randomly.

The survey was implemented with a standardised questionnaire created using a number of scales that measure the value orientations and behavior of people towards LGBTI people.

The questionnaire looked at the surveyed population's behavior towards LGBTI people, uncovering factors that influence their behavior, such as value orientations, stereotypes, prejudices and the intensity of socialisation with LGBTI people, as well as their perception of LGBTI rights and the limits of those rights.

The results of the survey were consistent with those of an earlier survey conducted concerning negative attitudes towards LGBTI people. Attitudes towards LGBTI people were found to be the same for each demographic group surveyed and did not vary based on SOGI type. The reason different demographic groups displayed the same attitudes and behavior is probably due to the difficulty of perceiving the differences between separate LGBTI groups. Based on binary understandings of SOGI, LGBTI people are separated into just two groups—male and female homosexuals. The notion of bisexual, transgender and intersex people was found to be hard for the surveyed population to conceive. The difficulty to differentiate LGBTI groups is reflected in the survey results based on the large number of, "Hard to answer," responses received.

Based on the survey results a number of factors can be said to influence the formation or strengthening of certain behavior towards LGBTI people.

One of the reasons for the persistence of negative attitudes towards LGBTI people is the lack of knowledge about sexuality among the surveyed population. Perceptions of LGBTI people are based on stereotypes and myths, and the lack of knowledge only perpetuates existing stereotypes. The results of the survey show that stereotypes and myths about LGBTI people are very popular and widespread. The surveyed population was also found to be very intolerant of public visibility of LGBTI people, fearing that homosexuality can spread and influence young people.

Curiously, attitudes towards LGBTI people become milder when SOGI is perceived to be the result of factors independent from a persons' own will or actions, such as a hormone surplus or genetic inclinations. Those who believe that the formation of SOGI lies in ill upbringing or "gay propaganda," were found to be strict in their attitudes. Speculation about the morality of being LGBTI serves as a basis for attitudes to become more negative.

The belief that LGBTI visibility would cause homosexuality to spread and the number of LGBTI people to increase was a dominant belief among the respondents. Thus, according to them, it is necessary to follow existing social norms and deny "imported," and "new," norms, which are considered to be a threat to traditional values.

Children and their protection is a more sensitive topic in this context. The existence of LGBTI people is considered to be a threat both from the point of view of children's socialisation with LGBTI people and from the point of view of the number of homosexuals increasing among the youth of the country. Therefore, any circumstance that contributes to LGBTI visibility, e.g. a homosexual couple in the street, gay pride parades, homosexuals working as teachers, is considered to be a direct threat to children, families, and even the country.

The respondents' concerns in that regard are due also to the absence of socialisation with LGBTI people. Only 9% of the surveyed population knows/has known an LGBTI person; most of them are acquaintances, and their communication is limited. The more intensive the respondents communicate with LGBTI people, the more tolerant attitudes they expressed, and the less influence stereotypes and prejudices had on them.

Value orientations were also found to have a significant impact on respondents' attitudes towards LGBTI people.

The value orientation of respondents in this survey can be characterised as being apt to right-wing authoritarianism and religious fundamentalism. Loyalty to authorities and government, unquestionably following norms and laws of society, and intolerance towards concepts and people that are different are all strongly correlated with a negative attitude towards LGBTI people. The survey shows that the respondents find social norms and values very important, and any digression from those values, including LGBTI existence, is met with criticism or outright rejection by society.

The primary value priorities of the respondents are the family, the homeland and religion, while democratic principles such as human rights and freedom of speech are given less importance. The geopolitical preferences of the respondents also reconfirm their value orientations. The preference for the Russian Federation as Armenia's main partner in particular, and the preference to limit relations with the USA and the European Union, both speak about the value preferences of the respondents. The West is considered to be a "breeding cradle" for homosexuality, where values deemed important by Armenian society such as family, religion and traditions, yield to the priority of human rights, regardless of the SOGI of an individual. In this case, the respondents' denial of LGBTI rights and moreover their desire to limit those rights are more than obvious. 90% of the respondents agreed that homosexuality should be outlawed.

The factors conditioning attitudes towards LGBTI people are interrelated. Limiting the discussion of sexuality as a topic within the value domain, for example, limits the spread of knowledge and information, and thus contributes to the formation and strengthening of stereotypes and prejudices. The latter becomes a reason why LGBTI people do not speak about their SOGI. This in turn contributes to less communication with LGBTI people, thus creating fertile grounds for stereotypical perceptions to further develop and strengthen.

The participants of this survey, and to some extent Armenian society, have a uniform attitude towards LGBTI people. But there are some variations based on respondents' gender, age, place of residence and occupation. Women, those living in urban areas, youth and employed respondents in particular are comparably more tolerant towards LGBTI people, and by consequence are less apt to right-wing authoritarianism and religious fundamentalism. Attitudes become more strict, however, when questions referred to family or children, which are considered a primary value.

Negative attitudes towards LGBTI people are caused by family-oriented and traditional value orientations of the respondents, the absence of communication with LGBTI people, and the intensive influence of stereotypes and prejudices.

Public discourse on LGBTI topics is still in the beginning stages in Armenia, as stereotypes and myths dominate in society. This is also evidenced by the fact that the respondents find it difficult to differentiate the LGBTI groups.

## ANNEXES

***Annex 1: List of experts reviewed the report***

Full Name	Organisation	Title
Nvard Margaryan	PINK Armenia	President
Mamikon Hovsepyan	PINK Armenia	Founder
Nikolay Hovhannisyan	PINK Armenia	Projects Coordinator
Hovhannes Madoyan	Real World, Real People	Founder
Arpine Parsughyan	Independent Researcher	

***Annex 2: Tables and Charts***

TABLE NRR

Region	Conducted interviews	Refusal		Closed door		Could not connect with the respondent		No person of relevant age		
		Village	City	Village	City	Village	City	Village	City	
city of Yerevan	359		168		184		45		37	434
Aragatsotn	59	12	17	9	12	7	5	12	6	80
Ararat	75	17	24	10	15	16	13	10	4	109
Armavir	105	22	18	12	6	8	5	6	6	83
Gegharkunik	75	15	12	10	14	5	4	2	14	76
Lori	63	9	15	16	19	5	6	3	8	81
Kotayk	73	12	9	17	22	11	4	7	4	86
Shirak	90	12	11	17	55	5	8	11	19	138
Syunik	45	9	5	8	12	6	9	5	9	63
Vayots Dzor	28	4	2	13	9	2	2	2	4	38
Tavush	45	8	6	6	6	3	6	2	4	41
	1017	120	287					60	115	1229
			407							

	Refusal	Closed door	Could not connect with the respondent	No person of relevant age	
Yerevan	168	184	45	37	
Other city	119	170	62	78	
Village	120	118	68	60	
	407	472	175	175	1229

TABLE 1. THE GENDER AND AGE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS.

		D1_Gender				Total	
		Female	%	Male	%		
D2_Age	18-25	83	58.5%	59	41.5%	142	100.0%
	26-35	161	69.7%	70	30.3%	231	100.0%
	36-45	122	72.2%	47	27.8%	169	100.0%
	46-55	144	64.3%	80	35.7%	224	100.0%
	56-65	160	72.1%	62	27.9%	222	100.0%
<b>Total</b>		<b>670</b>	<b>67.8%</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>32.2%</b>	<b>988</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

TABLE 2. COMPARISON OF THE GENDER DISTRIBUTION OF THE RESPONDENTS WITH THE DATA OF CENSUS (2011)

	Gender	
	Male (%)	Female (%)
Survey data	32	68
Census data	46	54

TABLE 3. DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY MARITAL STATUS.

	N	%
Married	655	64.4
Married, no official registration	32	3.1
Not married	182	17.9
Divorced	42	4.1
Widowed	77	7.6
Single Parent	5	.5
Other	2	.2
Refuse to answer	1	.1
Mistake of the interviewer	21	2.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1017</b>	<b>100.0</b>

TABLE 4. DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY EDUCATION

	N	%
Primary education	41	4.0
Basic education	370	36.4
Vocational education	238	23.4
Secondary technical education	18	1.8
Incomplete higher education	30	2.9
Higher education	311	30.6
Student/applicant/pupil	7	.7
Postgraduate	1	.1
Mistake of the interviewer	1	.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1017</b>	<b>100.0</b>

TABLE 5. COMPARISON OF RESPONDENTS' RELIGIOUS AFFILIATIONS AND NATIONALITY WITH THE CENSUS (2011) DATA

	Survey data	Census data
Religious affiliation (%)	96	93
Nationality (%)	98	98

TABLE 6. DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY EMPLOYMENT

	N	%
Employed in the public sector	175	17.2
Employed in a private sector	107	10.5
Self-employed	106	10.4
Private entrepreneur	9	.9
Serves in armed forces	13	1.3
Farmer	3	.3
Pensioner	63	6.2
Student	47	4.6
Unemployed	166	16.3
Housewife (under the age to receive pension)	311	30.6
NGO worker	3	.3
Refuse to answer	1	.1
Mistake of the interviewer	13	1.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>1017</b>	<b>100.0</b>

TABLE 7. THE CORRELATION BETWEEN RIGHT WING AUTHORITARISM AND SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

N	Valid	1014
	Missing	3
Mean		6.5871
Median		6.6500
Mode		6.65
Std. Deviation		0.93147

AGE (P<0.001, R<sup>2</sup>=0.034)

D2_Age	M	N	SD
18-25	6.37	142.00	0.99
26-35	6.37	230.00	1.00
36-45	6.56	168.00	0.96
46-55	6.75	224.00	0.84
56-65	6.78	221.00	0.86
<b>Total</b>	<b>6.58</b>	<b>985.00</b>	<b>0.94</b>

AVERAGE MONTHLY INCOME OF THE FAMILY (P<0.001, R<sup>2</sup>=0.022)

D_11 Monthly income	M	N	SD
under 24000	6.63	215.00	0.87
24001-50000	6.81	130.00	0.82
50001-120000	6.70	340.00	0.92
120001-250000	6.47	248.00	0.84
250001-500000	6.11	71.00	1.17
500001-1000000	5.24	8.00	1.96
More than 1500000	6.29	2.00	0.70
<b>Total</b>	<b>6.59</b>	<b>1014.00</b>	<b>0.93</b>

THE TYPE OF RESIDENCY (P<0.001, R<sup>2</sup>=0.116)GENDER OF THE RESPONDENT (P<0.001, R<sup>2</sup>=0.015)

The type of residency		M	N	SD
Yerevan	Female	6.11	275.00	0.98
	Male	6.45	98.00	0.86
	Total	6.20	373.00	0.96
Other city	Female	6.65	220.00	0.79
	Male	6.66	80.00	0.85
	Total	6.65	300.00	0.80
Village	Female	6.92	195.00	0.86
	Male	7.00	146.00	0.82
	Total	6.95	341.00	0.84
Total	Female	6.51	690.00	0.95
	Male	6.75	324.00	0.87
	Total	6.59	1014.00	0.93

EDUCATION (P=0.042, R<sup>2</sup>=0.004)

D8_Education	M	N	SD
Primary education	6.98	41.00	0.79
Basic education	6.83	369.00	0.84
Vocational education	6.69	236.00	0.82
Secondary technical education	6.50	18.00	0.63
Incomplete higher education	6.50	30.00	0.95
Higher education	6.21	311.00	1.00
Student/applicant/pupil	6.17	7.00	0.56
Postgraduate	2.90	1.00	
The mistake of interviewer	5.35	1.00	
<b>Total</b>	<b>6.59</b>	<b>1014.00</b>	<b>0.93</b>

TABLE 8. THE CORRELATION BETWEEN SOCIAL DOMINANCE AND SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

AGE (P=0.026, R<sup>2</sup>=0.005)

N	Valid	1014
	Missing	3
Mean		3.11
Median		3.00
Mode		3.00
Std. Deviation		0.75

D2_AGE	M	N	SD
18-25	3.19	142.00	0.76
26-35	3.13	230.00	0.71
36-45	3.11	168.00	0.78
46-55	3.13	224.00	0.79
56-65	3.03	221.00	0.74
Total	3.11	985.00	0.75

THE TYPE OF RESIDENCY (P<0.001, R<sup>2</sup>=0.020)

The type of residency		M	N	SD
Yerevan	Female	3.21	275.00	0.74
	Male	3.36	98.00	0.86
	Total	3.25	373.00	0.78
Other city	Female	3.07	220.00	0.69
	Male	3.14	80.00	0.73
	Total	3.09	300.00	0.70
village	Female	2.96	195.00	0.76
	Male	3.04	146.00	0.75
	Total	3.00	341.00	0.75
Total	Female	3.09	690.00	0.73
	Male	3.16	324.00	0.79
	Total	3.11	1014.00	0.75

D12_How would you assess your family's economic situation?	M	N	SD
We are in hardship. We do not have enough money even for food	3.06	303.00	0.74
We have enough money for food, but we cannot afford clothes	3.07	370.00	0.74
Our income is enough for food and clothes, but we cannot afford expensive items	3.19	246.00	0.75
It is not a problem to buy durables, but we cannot afford real estate	3.28	81.00	0.79
We can afford real estate, too, for example an apartment or summerhouse	3.14	7.00	0.92
Refused to answer	2.86	5.00	0.94
Interviewer's mistake	3.58	2.00	0.59
Total	3.11	1014.00	0.75

TABLE 9. THE CORRELATION BETWEEN RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM AND SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

MONTHLY INCOME OF THE FAMILY (P=0.040, R<sup>2</sup>=0.004)

			Mean	N	Std. Deviation	
N	Valid	1014	D11_How much is the average monthly income of your family (salary, aid, income from the sale of agricultural products,etc.)			
	Missing	3				
Mean		5.61	under 24000	5.59	215	1.30
Median		5.67	24001-50000	5.72	130	1.39
Mode		5.00	50001-120000	5.75	340	1.23
Std. Deviation		1.29	120001-250000	5.51	248	1.24
			250001-500000	5.35	71	1.47
			500001-1000000	4.27	8	1.02
			More than 1500000	5.06	2	0.98
			Medium	5.614	1014	

AGE(P=0.002, R<sup>2</sup>=0.010)

AGE	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
18-25	5.47	142	1.36
26-35	5.37	230	1.23
36-45	5.69	168	1.27
46-55	5.81	224	1.25
56-65	5.67	221	1.35
<b>Total</b>	<b>5.60</b>	<b>985</b>	<b>1.30</b>

Type of residency	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Yerevan	5.55	373	1.33
Other city	5.54	300	1.28
Village	5.75	341	1.27
Total	5.61	1014	1.29

TABLE 10. THE CORRELATIONS OF VALUE ORIENTATIONS AND GEOPOLITICAL PREFERENCES

		USA	EU	RF	EEU
A8_Right-wing authoritarianism	Closer	6.34	6.28	6.70	6.76
	More distant	6.78	6.81	5.64	6.08
	Same as current	6.64	6.69	6.30	6.44
A9_Social dominance	Closer	3.02	3.08	3.11	3.13
	More distant	3.13	3.18	3.21	3.13
	Same as current	3.18	3.16	3.16	3.16
A10_Religious fundamentalism	Closer	5.44	5.46	5.73	5.71
	More distant	5.72	5.76	4.72	5.24
	Same as current	5.63	5.62	5.26	5.54

TABLE 11. THE CORRELATION BETWEEN THE ATTITUDES TOWARDS LGBTI PEOPLE AND SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESPONDENTS.

D1_Gender		The attitude											
		towards homosexual people	towards gays	towards lesbians	towards bisexual people	towards bisexual women	towards bisexual men	towards transgender people	prejudices towards feminine men	Violence towards transgender people	Transgender people are unnatural	Transgender people are immoral	The gender expression of transgender people
Female	Mean	4.38	4.35	4.40	3.97	3.86	4.07	5.28	5.19	4.04	6.21	6.06	4.89
	Median	4.60	4.60	4.60	4.00	3.89	4.11	5.37	5.25	4.00	6.25	6.50	5.00
	Std. Deviation	0.71	0.74	0.74	0.59	0.65	0.65	0.95	1.15	1.73	0.78	1.23	1.04
	N	687	687	686	688	687	678	689	689	688	689	685	689
Male	Mean	4.55	4.55	4.55	4.06	3.93	4.19	5.72	5.70	4.90	6.29	6.36	5.35
	Median	4.70	4.75	4.80	4.11	4.00	4.17	5.82	5.88	5.25	6.50	7.00	5.44
	Std. Deviation	0.56	0.57	0.62	0.54	0.62	0.61	0.81	0.98	1.70	0.72	0.98	0.95
	N	320	320	318	320	320	315	320	320	320	320	319	320
Total	Mean	4.43	4.42	4.45	4.00	3.88	4.11	5.42	5.35	4.31	6.23	6.16	5.03
	Median	4.60	4.60	4.60	4.05	3.89	4.11	5.54	5.43	4.25	6.25	6.50	5.11
	Std. Deviation	0.67	0.70	0.70	0.58	0.64	0.64	0.93	1.13	1.77	0.76	1.16	1.04
	N	1007	1007	1004	1008	1007	993	1009	1009	1008	1009	1004	1009

## CORRELATIONS WITH SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

## ATTITUDES TOWARDS HOMOSEXUAL PEOPLE

GENDER  $P < 0.001$ ,  $R^2 = 0.014$   
PROFESSION  $P < 0.01$ ,  $R^2 = 0.006$   
INCOME  $P < 0.001$ ,  $R^2 = 0.004$

## ATTITUDES TOWARDS BISEXUAL PEOPLE

GENDER  $P = 0.017$ ,  $R^2 = 0.006$   
PROFESSION  $P < 0.001$ ,  $R^2 = 0.014$   
INCOME  $P < 0.001$ ,  $R^2 = 0.062$

## ATTITUDES TOWARDS TRANSGENDER PEOPLE

GENDER  $P < 0.001$ ,  $R^2 = 0.048$   
PROFESSION  $P < 0.001$ ,  $R^2 = 0.012$   
INCOME  $P < 0.001$ ,  $R^2 = 0.024$   
THE TYPE OF RESIDENCY  $P < 0.001$ ,  $R^2 = 0.091$   
VALUE ORIENTATION  $P < 0.001$ ,  $R^2 = 0.016$

TABLE 12. THE CORRELATIONS BETWEEN MASCULINE WOMEN AND FEMININE MEN

D1_Gender		E3_I would behave violently with masculine women.	E3_I would behave violently with feminine men.	E3_I would ignore a man, who has feminine behaviour and appearance.	E3_I would tease a woman because of her masculine appearance	E3_I feel uncomfortable around feminine men.	E3_I feel uncomfortable around masculine women.
Female	Mean	3.66	4.18	5.40	3.56	5.44	4.81
	Median	4.00	4.00	6.00	4.00	6.00	5.00
	Std. Deviation	1.948	2.064	1.849	2.012	1.688	1.857
	N	673	669	676	679	632	635
Male	Mean	4.54	5.05	6.16	4.42	5.98	5.33
	Median	4.00	6.00	7.00	4.00	7.00	6.00
	Std. Deviation	2.027	1.980	1.375	2.063	1.393	1.711
	N	312	311	315	315	291	302
Total	Mean	3.94	4.46	5.64	3.83	5.61	4.98
	Median	4.00	4.00	6.00	4.00	6.00	5.00
	Std. Deviation	2.014	2.076	1.747	2.067	1.620	1.827
	N	985	980	991	994	923	937

		E3_I would behave violently with masculine women.	E3_I would behave violently with feminine men.	E3_I would ignore a man, who has feminine behaviour and appearance.	E3_I would tease a woman because of her masculine appearance	E3_I feel uncomfortable around feminine men.	E3_I feel uncomfortable around masculine women.
E3_I would behave violently with masculine women.	Pearson Correlation		.579**				
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000				
	N		959				
E3_I would ignore a man, who has feminine behaviour and appearance.	Pearson Correlation				.387**		
	Sig. (2-tailed)				.000		
	N				978		
E3_I feel uncomfortable around feminine men.	Pearson Correlation						.559**
	Sig. (2-tailed)						.000
	N						892

TABLE 13. THE CORRELATION BETWEEN ATTITUDES TOWARDS AND LEGENDS ABOUT LGBTI PEOPLE

		E1_ Attitudes towards homo-sexual people	E2_ Attitudes towards bisexual people	E3_ Attitudes towards trans-gender people
B3_The number of homosexuals will increase if people do not state heterosexuality as the only right pattern of relationships.	Pearson Correlation	-.009	.040	-.076*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.777	.206	.016
	N	1007	1008	1009
B3_The attitudes towards homosexuality has always been negative and remains so everywhere.	Pearson Correlation	.016	.071*	-.029
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.604	.024	.354
	N	1007	1008	1009
B3_Homosexuality does not occur in animals or other living beings.	Pearson Correlation	.125**	.169**	.057
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.069
	N	1007	1008	1009
B3_A child who is raised in a homosexual family will certainly be homosexual.	Pearson Correlation	.073*	.070*	.012
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.020	.025	.701
	N	1007	1008	1009
B3_Homosexuals living in Armenia has changed their sexual orientation under the "influence of Western trends".	Pearson Correlation	-.076*	.188**	.036
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.017	.000	.247
	N	1007	1008	1009
B3_In order to join European Union, Armenia should legalise same-sex marriage.	Pearson Correlation	-.001	.046	.001
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.963	.148	.978
	N	1007	1008	1009
**.		Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).		.*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

TABLE 14. THE REFUSAL OF LGB PEOPLE AS TEACHERS

		E4_Lesbians should not be allowed to work with children (ex: as teachers)	E4_Gay men should not be allowed to work with children (ex: as teachers)	E2_Bisexual man should not be allowed to teach at school.
N	Valid	1003	1004	982
	Missing	14	13	35
Mean		4.72	4.72	4.77
Median		5.00	5.00	5.00
Mode		5	5	5
Std. Deviation		.950	.951	.783
Minimum		1	1	1
Maximum		5	5	5

TABLE 15. THE CORRELATION BETWEEN THE ATTITUDES TOWARDS AND HUMAN RIGHTS OF LGBTI PEOPLE.

		E1_towards ho- mosexual people	E2_towards bi- sexual people	E3_towards trans- gender people
E4_In my country human rights if LGBTI people are protected.	Pearson Correlation	.054	-.091**	.078*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.121	.009	.026
	N	811	810	811
E4_Organisations which promote LGBTI rights are necessary in my country.	Pearson Correlation	-.448**	-.241**	-.434**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	979	979	980
E4_The law should allow same-sex marriage.	Pearson Correlation	-.335**	-.189**	-.280**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	1003	1004	1005
E4_Homosexual relations should be banned by law.	Pearson Correlation	.413**	.236**	.338**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	997	998	999
E4_Lesbians should not be allowed to work with children (for instance, as a teacher).	Pearson Correlation	.350**	.238**	.284**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	1000	1001	1002
E4_Gay men should not be allowed to work with children (for instance, as a teacher).	Pearson Correlation	.322**	.231**	.271**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	1001	1002	1003
E4_Lesbian couple, as heterosexual couple, should be allowed to adopt children.	Pearson Correlation	-.320**	-.151**	-.287**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	980	981	982
E4_Gay couple, as heterosexual couples, should be allowed to adopt children.	Pearson Correlation	-.335**	-.151**	-.294**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	985	986	987
E4_LGBTI parade should be banned.	Pearson Correlation	.218**	.130**	.262**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	986	987	988
E4_LGBTI people, who are "out of the closet" should be admired for their courage.	Pearson Correlation	-.372**	-.290**	-.343**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	987	988	989
E4_Gay men/lesbians should stop showing their lifestyle down other people's throats.	Pearson Correlation	.109**	.119**	.135**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.000	.000
	N	986	987	988
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).		*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).		

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“Public Information and Need of Knowledge” NGO (PINK Armenia) was founded and registered in Armenia, in 2007. Starting from the very first day of functioning, PINK has been leading activities to increase public awareness about sexual and reproductive health and rights, sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS.

Shortly after the functioning, the scopes of activities of the organisation were enlarged; human rights protection and gender issues have come to agenda. In the sphere of human rights protection PINK Armenia promotes the ideas of equality and acceptance of vulnerable groups towards HIV and LGBT people. Eliminating any kind of discrimination and bringing acceptance and appreciation of diversity in our society has now become an undertaking assignment for the organisation.

Our vision is society, where human rights of all are protected and everybody is accepted regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression.

PINK Armenia aims to Create safe space for LGBT people by promoting legal, psychological, social protection and well-being.

Further information about activities and work of the organisation, can be found on PINK Armenia`s official website: [www.pinkarmenia.org](http://www.pinkarmenia.org)

