

No HOMOPHOBIA
RACISM
SEXISM
CLASSISM

"AS LONG AS THEY STAY AWAY"

Exploring Lebanese Attitudes Towards
Sexualities and Gender Identities

Cover photo: Graffiti in Beirut central district,
created during the 2015 social movement protests.

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Exploring Lebanese Attitudes Towards Sexualities and Gender Identities

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For

Arab Foundation for Freedoms and Equality

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This survey constitutes a main deliverable of a project entitled “Lebanese Attitudes towards Private Liberties”. It is designed to fill a serious information gap in advocacy work relating to sexual and gender rights in Lebanon by providing critical and previously unavailable information by measuring and qualifying attitudes towards sexual and gender rights in Lebanon.

With the groundwork knowledge acquired from our activist backgrounds, we had embarked on this project not knowing to what extent Lebanese public attitudes would reflect tolerance and acceptance towards this delicate topic, especially when looking at the national context, not just Beirut. While some results were expected, this project did yield promising and unexpected results on which future advocacy work could be based.

Views on sexuality highlighted the importance of the right to sex for enjoyment, free from coercion, judgment and criminalization. While the Lebanese public primarily saw homosexual and transgender identities as a medical or psychological issue, results consistently and repeatedly point in the direction of general disapproval of the use of violence, punitive actions, and imprisonment. Personal attitudes towards individuals with non-normative sexualities and gender identities ranged from a position of advising, helping and medicating, to a position of avoidance, ostracization and marginalization.

It is no secret that attitudes with regards to sex, sexuality, and sexual and gender minorities in Lebanon have yet to develop towards more equality and inclusivity.

What this first large-scale study in the region suggests, however, is that the Lebanese public’s belief in any individual’s human rights to safety and non-violence is a ground on which we can work towards a more just society.



1- CONTEXT & BACKGROUND

Sexual, bodily, and gender rights and activism in Lebanon

The past six years have witnessed an unprecedented change for sexual and gender rights activism in Lebanon, with several developments exposing the early beginnings of a shift in perceptions, attitudes, and reactions. While triumphs and tangible achievements remain sporadic and rare, the socio-cultural topography facing activists working on sexuality and gender in Lebanon today is starkly different from that of 2004 during the early days of an LGBTQ rights movement.

Indeed, activists had begun to notice an increased frequency of promising developments, witnessed through landmark legal rulings, amended organizational policies, positive media coverage, and increased activism and visibility.

Ten years after activism began in earnest, individuals with alternative sexualities and gender identities are still periodically arrested, detained, and tortured by Lebanese security forces, while incidents of societal and family-based discrimination have not abated, and discriminatory laws and policies have remained. Several articles within the Lebanese penal code remain in effect, imposing a regulatory role of bodily rights and expressions, chief among them is Article 534, which states that any “sexual intercourse against the order of nature” is punishable by up to one year in prison. This article is frequently cited in cases involving individuals who do not conform to state-sanctioned sexual orientations and gender identities, and is often grouped with other articles concerning public decency, drug use, and prostitution. Such articles are often invoked without convincing evidence, and arrests are frequently based on physical appearance, mannerisms, or suspected sexual activity of individuals in question. State abuse of bodily rights has also included rectal examinations and vaginal exams in detention.

From a societal standpoint, individuals with alternative sexualities and gender identities still lack protection and support from societal and family-based discrimination.

Anti-discrimination policies, including those in schools/universities and those that safeguard employment and economic opportunity, are non-existent. While sexual health and psychosocial support is provided by some local organizations, these services are largely limited to the capital city of Beirut and are not widely available. In addition, misconceptions concerning sexual rights, gender identity, and sexual orientation are still frequent among the Lebanese public, often reinforced by religious authorities and the larger portion of Lebanese media.

It is worthy to mention that media figures have taken part in causing one of the worst cases of human rights violations in recent history. In 2012, a talk show host secretly aired hidden camera footage of clients frequenting an adult cinema, and then actively called on Lebanese authorities to shut it down and arrest those inside for “public indecency”. What resulted was the 2012 Cinema Plaza Raid and the subsequent utilization of rectal examinations by the Lebanese Internal Security Forces (ISF), which caused an international outcry and received wide media attention.

Despite these challenges, the past few years have witnessed a set of unprecedented developments in which activists were able to impact perceptions and instigate meaningful change. In the wake of the 2012 Cinema Plaza arrests, activists were able to lobby the Beirut Syndicate of Medical Physicians to prohibit all licensed doctors from cooperating with ISF personnel when asked to administer rectal examinations to ascertain sexual orientation, and were also able to pressure the ministry of Justice to issue a memorandum to all Lebanese police stations prohibiting the application of such examinations on detainees. Activists were also able to work with the Lebanese Society of Psychiatrists and the Lebanese Psychological Association to officially remove homosexuality from their list of disorders and to announce that decision publicly in 2013. Several public protests have taken place in Beirut in support of sexual rights, which have gone on without incident. In addition, two landmark rulings by Lebanese judges have constituted notable exceptions to the usual sentence for individuals charged with violating 534. The first ruling occurred in December 2009 in the Batroun district court, which overruled 534 as inapplicable on the basis that homosexual relationships were not “against nature”. The other ruling occurred in 2014, when a judge in the Jdeideh district court also ruled out 534 in a case relating to an intersex woman. Their rulings remain unique at the time of writing this report.

Study rationale and objectives

As major advancements in sexual and gender rights have been more sporadic, it was evident that more effective advocacy strategies and programming were needed in order to achieve greater impact. The goal of this project was to explore Lebanese public views on sexuality and their perceptions towards homosexual and transgender identities.

It constitutes the first large-scale attempt to harvest detailed information about public attitudes and position with regards to gender, bodily, and sexual rights. The data gathered constitutes an essential foundation whose aim is to inform and support future research, advocacy and programming related to sexuality, homosexuality, and transgender identities.

The aim of gathering this information was to reveal what Lebanese people were likely to think and act towards these issues, not only for the sake of measuring levels of tolerance but also to reveal how and where they are manifested. Another goal was to acquire statistically sound and corroborated data that would aid in designing and enacting more effective advocacy strategies and programs to spread information and implement change. This data will also be useful in evaluating the conduct of state institutions (whether official or non-official) and for providing state actors with concrete evidence as to the opinion of the public towards policies that concern these issues. Finally, measuring attitudes towards genders and sexualities in the future will allow stakeholders to compare those results with ones gathered by this survey. It is our hope that the knowledge generated by this project will impact the evolution of these attitudes and beliefs as Lebanese public grows more cognizant of alternative sexualities and genders and see those that practice them as equal citizens in the eyes of society, state, and law.

2- METHODOLOGY

a. Objectives and rationale

The overall objective of the study was to measure Lebanese attitudes on matters relating to sexual and gender rights. It aims to specifically determine the extent of societal acceptance with regards to the dialogue and debates concerning sexuality as well as homosexual and transgender identities.

The specific objectives were as follows:

- Measuring attitudes towards (cis) women’s sexuality and (cis) men’s sexuality
- Measuring attitudes towards homosexual and transgender identities
- Exploring reasons behind these held attitudes
- Recommending legal/social action at different levels (e.g. legally, socially, religiously...)

b. Sampling and target group

This study represents the first national attempt at investigating attitudes towards sexuality and gender identity issues. Current and previous sexual and gender rights activism has traditionally been limited to Beirut, with little information concerning the general Lebanese context and its regional, social, religious and political specificities. Through a carefully selected representative sample of the Lebanese society at large, we thus attempt to gauge “the average Lebanese” attitude towards sexual and gender rights. Knowledge gained from the wider population is vital for informing advocacy based on education and awareness, namely by evidencing existing myths and misconceptions, bases of prejudice, discrimination, as well as possible protective factors.

A nationally-representative sample was carefully selected following a stratified random sampling technique which took into account the repartition of the Lebanese population over a number of demographic variables, namely region, gender, age, educational level, economic activity, income, and religious affiliation.

The benefit of selecting such a diverse pool of respondents lies not only in collecting relevant and important data, but also in the opportunity to sensitize and prompt respondents’ thinking about private liberties, human rights, sexual freedoms, and gender rights. It is expected that by merely taking part in the study, respondents are incited to think about those matters further and deliberate in their daily life accordingly. It is important to note that survey questions are designed in a way that is not just tapping into attitudes but also providing valuable information about the difference between gender identity and sexual orientation, defining what transgender is, what homosexuality is, while also reminding about marital rape and virginity testing, and about the different laws that are applicable in Lebanon, among others.

c. Attitude scale

The formulation of the survey tool and protocol was based on previously existing research scales that were primarily tested in the West. In fact, there have been plenty of surveys measuring attitudes towards homosexuality but never those that have been created specifically for Lebanon and other Middle Eastern countries. In addition, the tools developed not only looked at attitudes towards homosexuality, but also towards individuals who identify as transgender, as well as general issues with relation to sexuality, which were directly relevant to the context of the MENA, such as sexual freedoms, sexual education, premarital and extramarital sex, marital rape, and others. To our knowledge, the tools developed for this study were the first of their kind to look at this diversity of issues in relation to sexuality, gender, and alternative sexualities and gender identities, in a historically under-researched region as the MENA. Furthermore, the framing of survey questions has taken into account the sensitivity of the topic in the region and the cultural relevance of common religious and moral beliefs. In addition, the tools were translated into and administered in Arabic, with culturally-relevant terms and concepts being represented clearly and accurately.

d. Data collection

The questionnaire was designed to tap into attitudes towards sexuality, alternative sexualities and gender identities in a representative national sample of 1200 respondents. Before starting fieldwork, a pilot test was carried out to verify the flow and answers collected.

The questionnaire was composed of structured, close-ended statements. Respondents rated their agreement on a 5-point scale, with a rating of 1 representing “Strongly Disagree”, 2 “Disagree”, 3 “Neither disagree nor agree”, 4 “Agree”, and 5 “Strongly Agree”. Two open-ended questions were also included. The questionnaire was administered over the phone, and as such its length was limited to 20 minutes. Questionnaire data was anonymous, though demographic data such as age, region, profession, income, religious affiliation, and educational level was collected.

Data collection for the questionnaire was conducted through Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI), an interactive front-end computer system that aids interviewers to conduct the questionnaire over the telephone. The answers were then keyed into the computer system immediately by the interviewer.

e. Data analysis

Both quantitative and qualitative data analyses techniques were used to make sense of the massive amount of data gathered by this study. For one, quantitative, scale-level data was first cross-tabulated by demographics and by question. In addition, descriptive statistics were computed per response set on the rating scale. Pearson’s correlations between items were conducted and significant results were flagged and reported where relevant.

Taking the analysis a step further, t-tests and Analysis Of Variance –ANOVA- tests were conducted to look at differences in response patterns across demographic groups. As such, we were able to determine, per item, whether there were any differences in the responses according to gender, religious affiliation, region, and income. Significant differences between groups were also flagged and reported where relevant.

For open-ended questions, content analysis was conducted and answers were coded under themes and sub-themes with a count of statements for each. Where possible, if questions and themes were identical, response sets were compared side-by-side.



3. KEY SURVEY FINDINGS

a. Public Awareness and Attitudes towards Sexuality

In a first instance, we sought to examine general attitudes towards (normative) sexuality, in an attempt to determine the degree of societal tolerance towards sexually-active individuals. With increasing visibility of sex within the media, it is hard, at face-value, to assess the degree of openness to sex on a broader, national level. To this end, the sexuality subscale focused on a few select topics such as the relationship between marriage and sex, sexual freedom, and the perceived need for sexual education in school curricula.

Sexual freedom and education

The central focus of this study has been on personal freedoms in relation to one's sexual practices as well as gender expression and identity. To this end, a "sexual freedom" subscale was designed to look into attitudes and feelings towards sex.

Respondents were generally supportive of sexual freedom, with 55.7% agreeing with the statement "Any sexual act between consenting adults should not be legally prohibited," (M = 3.40, SD = 1.41) and 56% agreeing with "A person's sexual behavior is his or her own business and nobody should make value judgments about it" (M = 3.45, SD = 1.40).

In general, respondents overwhelmingly believed that the main purpose of sex is to enjoy oneself (M = 4.37, SD = 0.90), with 88.8% agreeing to this statement. The majority of the sample believed in the necessity of sex education in schools (M = 4.01, SD = 4.01), with 73.8% agreeing or strongly agreeing to this item. Interestingly, however, almost half the sample (47.1%) also thought that sex education would probably lead to experimentation and increased sexual activity (M = 3.16, SD = 1.42).

Extramarital sex

While the previous section highlighted a relatively positive and open outlook on sex among respondents, further questions were designed to measure the extent to which sexual activity was viewed as a practice that is rooted within the marriage norm. In addition, we sought to examine whether societal approval of sexual activity presented a gender bias. Findings evidenced a strong and significant correlation between how sex outside of marriage was perceived for men and women ($r = .52, p < .001$), meaning that extramarital sex was perceived negatively for both men ($M = 3.10, SD = 1.64$) and women ($M = 3.94, SD = 1.55$).

Nevertheless, extramarital sex was perceived more negatively when done by women than when done by men. In fact, we note that 73.6% of the sample disapproved of extramarital sex for women but only 49.4% answered the same for men. This highlights a known societal double-standard whereby women's sexuality outside the realm of marriage, family, and reproduction is the subject of scrutiny and disapproval.

Marital rape

Marital rape has been an important lobbying point in light of the recent ratification of the law protecting women from domestic violence. Activists and organizations working on the matter, were deeply concerned that this recent law did not include protections in case involving marital rape. The arguments put forth ranged from reservations by religious authorities, to those limiting the woman's role to serving her husband's needs, to others that pointed to the presumed difficulty in documenting “what happens behind closed doors”. As such, one question sought to gauge the extent to which marital rape was acknowledged and perceived as a serious issue.

In general, participants disagreed with the statement: “There is no such thing as marital rape” ($M = 1.42, SD = 0.84$). In fact, 90.4% of the sample acknowledged marital rape. In addition, it was noted that gender differences were evident, whereby men agreed significantly more with this statement than women ($t(1127.541) = 3.75, p < .001$). That is, men acknowledged marital rape less than women.

In addition, there were significant differences across level of education ($F(5, 1194) = 15.19, p < .001$). Respondents who attained elementary levels of education and those who attained intermediate education agreed with this item significantly more than those who attained secondary and university degrees. This points to the fact that acknowledgment of marital rape increased with levels of educational attainment.

b. Public Awareness and Attitudes towards Homosexuality

The aim of the survey was to measure public attitudes towards homosexual identity, whether real or perceived, through a set of carefully selected questions with social, cultural, and policy relevance. The goal was to collect and assess statistical data that reflected public sentiments as they are on the ground, in order for stakeholders to use this information in their work, be it advocacy, awareness, services, policymaking, or legislation. Questions were geared towards visualizing tolerance levels and how parameters of acceptance and rejection, if any, existed within the general Lebanese mindset.

A societal threat

The authors of this report were interested in how Lebanese people thought society should behave towards homosexuals. Responses were fairly consistent across the survey with regards to whether homosexuals belong to society and how they should be treated. In fact, 64.6% felt that homosexuals should not be accepted into society and the majority (75.9%) disagreed that it would be beneficial for society to recognize homosexuality as normal with more than half, 51.5% feeling very strongly about their view. In addition, some 66.3% perceived homosexuals to be a threat to society and 72% were opposed to homosexuals having meeting places. A clear 82.2% majority viewed homosexuals as a threat to the traditional family, 85.1% saw homosexuality as endangering the institution of the family, and more than half of respondents felt strongly about both of those views.

In addition, homosexuality is frequently described and interpreted in the media as a form of sexual deviancy, which resulted in the survey asking respondents if they considered homosexuality to be related to issues such as rape and pedophilia. Responses were split halfway with around 46% of respondents in agreement that homosexuals were more likely to commit deviant acts (such as child molestation and rape), and 43.6% disagreeing with that statement. Comparable results were also found when respondents were specifically asked whether they thought homosexuals were pedophiles. Overall, the results indicated that, not only did most respondents not feel strongly about these views, but both questions indicated a higher number of individuals who were undecided (10.4% and 14.1% respectively).

Finally, the survey sought to examine whether homosexuality was perceived as an external intrusion on Lebanese culture brought over by the West, a popular sentiment expressed by several detractors of homosexuality throughout the Middle East as well as other regions. To this end, it is worth noting that more than half of respondents (55.5%) disagreed that homosexuality was a Western intrusion.

Seeking treatment

The majority of respondents revealed a dominant view of homosexuals as individuals afflicted with a physiological/psychological condition and in need of treatment. 81.2% disagreed that homosexuality was normal and natural; with 79.5% also disagreeing that it was a natural expression of sexuality. Similarly, around 79% of respondents thought homosexuality was a hormonal sickness, with around 72% and 68% viewing it as a mental disorder and/or a genetic condition respectively. When asked 60.7% of respondents actually disagreed with the decision of the Lebanese Psychiatric Society, which officially removed homosexuality from its list of disorders in 2013. The majority (79%) actually agreed that homosexuals should be taken in for psychological or hormonal treatment while 15.6% disagreed with that statement and 5.4% were undecided.

Interestingly, this view of homosexuals as people afflicted with a condition that requires a remedy (physiological or religious) did not necessarily mean respondents thought homosexuals were individuals deserving of security, with 61.7% disagreeing that society should offer homosexuals some form of protection from discrimination. Indeed, half of those surveyed disagreed that homosexuals were mistreated in Lebanese society to begin with, a possible indication of limited awareness of documented and recurrent state and societal discrimination against homosexuals in present-day Lebanon.

Punishment and penalties

Throughout the survey, a distinction was made between how the Lebanese public thought society should react to homosexuals and the government’s position and role on the matter. Questions were geared to explore what Lebanese people thought of existing legislation as well as what penalties would be advocated for homosexual behavior.

Most of the respondents believed that laws against homosexuality were necessary in order to keep down the number of homosexuals in the population (65.6%), although it was evident that the majority were not aware of Article 534 of the Lebanese penal code (76.7%) which penalizes those caught doing “sexual acts against the order of nature” with a sentence ranging from a monetary fine up to one year in prison if convicted.

Half of the respondents (49.9%) said they agreed with this law but a close 40% still disagreed that it was an appropriate or suitable form of punishment.

According to the results, however, the more severe a punishment, the less likely respondents would agree with it. The survey showed that clear majorities opposed more severe or violent punitive actions such as state identification (77.4%), corporeal punishment (79.7%) and capital punishment (85.3%). Residents of all Lebanese regions largely did not agree with capital punishment as a punitive measure, with residents of Mount Lebanon and Beirut being the highest (95% and 96% of residents respectively).

A significant result of the survey was that the majority of respondents were also opposed to the suggestion that homosexuals should be taken to prison (65.5%) with almost half of all those surveyed feeling strongly about this view. Similarly, more than half of all respondents (57.3%) disagreed that homosexuals should be subjected to a monetary fine.

The strong opposition to fines and imprisonment, as well as the relatively larger number of respondents who were undecided about Article 534 (10.3%) exposes a division between respondents on whether homosexual acts should be penalized through the current punitive mechanisms employed by the Lebanese state. The results suggest that, while respondents were opposed to various forms of punishment, they were in favor of some form of law against homosexuality. The demand for this could be interpreted as the Lebanese public's preference for an established mechanism that de-legitimizes homosexual acts in society, especially in light of the perceived correlation between laws and the "spread" of homosexuality. Inclinations towards this view were also revealed through the majority's disagreement with allowing homosexuals to have publicly known meeting places (72%), where tolerance and acceptance of these places could have otherwise been seen as tacit approval of homosexuality as a part of Lebanese society.

These results can also be interpreted as further re-enforcing the view of homosexuals as individuals in need of physiological/medical treatment, psychological counseling, or to a lesser extent, religious intervention. The opposition to punitive action suggests that respondents are not in favor of homosexuals being treated as criminals.

A religious and moral lens

Lebanese religious authorities have been largely unanimous in their condemnation of homosexuals, and Lebanese media outlets have frequently featured them to present their views on the subject of homosexuality, equating their opinions with that of medical doctors and psychologists. In this section the authors sought to understand to what extent respondents saw homosexuality as a religious and/or a moral issue.

When it came to religious and moral opinions about homosexuality, attitudes were more negative ($M = 4.23$, $SD = 0.88$). Participants strongly agreed with statements such as “I believe homosexuality is immoral,” and “Religious books condemn homosexuality.” In addition, there were significant differences across religious affiliation on this subscale ($F(7, 1188) = 11.50$, $p < .001$), with Sunnis and Shi’ites perceiving homosexuality as significantly more immoral than Christians and Druze.

More than 80% of those surveyed found homosexuality to be both immoral as well as sinful (or haram). 63.2% of all respondents felt strongly that homosexuality is a sin, with similar numbers also affirming that religious books condemned homosexuality. The majority (81.3%) also saw homosexuality as immoral, which suggests a strong correlation between religion and morality when it comes to this issue, and the significant influence of scripture on Lebanese perceptions of homosexuality. The question of morality, however, is relevant when compared to results found when respondents were asked whether they thought homosexuality should be legal even though it is immoral. 38.1% of respondents agreed with that statement, which suggests that while most respondents saw homosexuality as immoral (and sinful), this did not necessarily mean that they thought this view should extend to legislation or, as previously shown, punitive measures against homosexuals.

Born this way?

A portion of the survey was also dedicated to identifying the major beliefs and viewpoints of respondents with regards to what homosexuality was. Questions revolved around the issue of nature versus nurture, and whether homosexuality was seen as merely an alternative expression of sexuality.

Respondents seemed to be split more or less down the middle in their opinion on whether homosexuality was a choice or not, despite that fact that a large majority still considered it as a hormonal/mental sickness or a genetic condition. This would suggest that homosexuals are perceived to have little control over their orientation. In fact, results showed that 56.8% of respondents believed that homosexuality was a choice.

In an apparent contradiction, 50.7% saw that homosexuals were “born that way”. This could perhaps signify that the “choice” being referred to is seen as the decision to act upon one’s orientation, in spite of being born with certain tendencies. It is worthy to note that both of these questions had a relatively high percentage of responses who were undecided, 12% and 14.1% respectively, as well as having most respondents somewhat agreeing to these questions as opposed to strongly agreeing. The prevalence of opinions that support hormonal/psychological treatment for homosexuals also suggests that respondents adhere to the belief that homosexuality is something that can be resisted and overcome. In fact, 65% of all respondents surveyed agreed that one could stop being a homosexual, with 20.6% in disagreement and a larger percentage than usual (14.4%) of individuals who were undecided.

We also looked at whether respondents believed that one should stop being homosexual even if one could or could not. A large majority of respondents believed that both men and women who possess homosexual feelings should do their best to overcome them (89% and 87.7% respectively).

Gender norms

A portion of the survey was dedicated to understanding how respondents viewed homosexual identities in terms of perceived gender roles, particularly pertaining to perceptions of masculinity and femininity being interlinked with sexual orientation. Homosexual identities are frequently stereotyped into specific roles such as the effeminate gay man or the butch lesbian, especially through portrayals in the Lebanese media. In this section, the authors were interested in measuring the extent to which respondents determined another person’s sexuality based on his/her physical presentation (e.g. choice of clothing, mannerisms).

While 54.4% agreed when asked whether lesbians lacked femininity, a larger number of respondents (63.7%) agreed that gay men lacked masculinity, which suggests that respondents were more disapproving if men deviated from the perceived masculine norm.

Homosexuality-by-association

A significant indication of widespread homophobia in Lebanon has manifested in the rejection, ostracization, and even expulsion of homosexuals by their social networks or their families, primarily out of concern for family/community “honor”, being seen as sympathizers, or out of fear of being labelled as homosexuals themselves. As such, the authors of this report wanted to verify whether these sentiments were widespread, or isolated in certain regions or communities.

More than half of respondents did not think that people in favor of homosexuals tended to be homosexual themselves, suggesting that there is a degree of awareness that those who tolerate or “defend” homosexuals, are not necessarily homosexuals themselves. However, this view is somewhat lessened when respondents were asked if they would want to be publicly linked to known or suspected homosexuals through their social or professional networks. More than half of respondents agreed that they would not want to be part of a group or company with known or suspected homosexual members. While numbers do not signify a majority in either case, it is reasonable to assume that respondents remained concerned about their public image despite their personal belief that one is not “homosexual by association”.

Personal attitudes and behaviors

The authors of this report also wanted to gauge levels of societal and family tolerance of homosexuals, and to possibly juxtapose it with recorded discrimination or human rights abuse incidents archived by local sexual rights organizations.

Results showed that a majority of respondents tended to avoid homosexuals if they could possibly help it and slightly more than half stated that they would be nervous if a person who looked homosexual sat next to them in public. A majority (72.3%) said they would become angry if they saw a homosexual acting in the mannerisms of the opposite sex, with an even larger number said that they would be offended if a homosexual asked them out or made advances.

The open-ended question posed by the survey asked all respondents to describe in detail how they would react if a family member or a friend told them that he/she were gay, or “came out”. Several of the 1200 respondents expressed multiple views in their answers which resulted in a total of 1339 responses. The highest number of responses (27.71%) expressed negative emotions, with most stating that they would feel shocked, annoyed or disturbed, with some even expressing feelings of disgust and anger albeit to a lesser degree. The next to highest number of responses was split almost equally between two categories: 18.45% of responses expressed disapproval, with a little less than half objecting or outright refusing to acknowledge their friend/family member’s announcement. On the other hand, 18.30% of responses expressed the exact opposite, instead indicating that they would accept the announcement. Most respondents in this category justified their decision by stating that “each person is free to make their own decisions”, while the next most common responses either did not wish to interfere or thought it was normal. 16.06% of responses clearly stated that they would avoid or stay away from anyone who divulged their sexual orientation, while 8.07% stated they would consider their friend/family member abnormal, and 7.47% would attempt to help the individual. The smallest number of responses (3.96%) expressed violent reactions, with almost half stating they would kill or shoot him/her.

It is worthy of note that the overwhelming majority of respondents always referred to the friend or family member in question as “he” or “him”, with very rare instances where they would refer to a homosexual using female pronouns.

c. Public Awareness and Attitudes towards Transgender identities

Individuals who identify as transgender have historically and systematically been marginalized and silenced, not just within the larger society, but also and especially within LGBT circles and movements. A major contribution of this study is its aim to provide previously undocumented attitudes towards transgender identities, which are often confused and conflated with homosexuality within the Lebanese context. This distinction between sexual orientation and gender identity figured heavily within the design of the questionnaire, and respondents were read standardized statements and instructions in order to highlight this distinction. It is hoped that by reaching out to more than 1200 respondents across the country, we have not only been able to collect attitudinal data on gender identities, but also contributed, in some minor way, to more visibility and understanding of transgender identities as separate from homosexuality.

Furthermore, while the Trans* umbrella represents a wide spectrum of personal meanings that one attributes to their gender expression, performativity, identity, and its relation to assigned or perceived sex, the questionnaire scope and focus was unfortunately limited in this respect. As such, questions revolved around binary identities as well as issues of transition and reassignment.

Non-binaries

Respondents were probed for their views of how gender identities were constructed and whether they would be able to accept gender beyond the traditional gender binary of man and woman. In fact, when asked whether people could identify not strictly as either a man or a woman, 71.8% disagreed, while 23.4% agreed. The general trend was also an adherence to the idea of “two sexes only”, with 97.5% agreeing with this item. This is in line with our expectation that gender was construed in terms of two mutually exclusive categories rather than a spectrum. This has profound implications for Trans*-identified individuals who may wish not to undergo reassignment procedures and/or surgeries in full or at all. In fact, the Lebanese legal requirements for changing one’s official identification papers would require a full and irreversible transition, thus guaranteeing that transgender individuals would move from one gender to another, with no “in-betweens”. The visibility of one’s gender was deemed important by respondents, with 82.1% asserting the need to be able to identify one’s gender when they first meet them, and 80.2% disliking if someone whose gender was not clear made advances at them.

Cross-dressing and transitioning

There was a clear sense of disapproval in response sets in relation to gender expression through dress. In fact, “men who dress as women” and “women who dress as men” were seen as perverts by 87% and 80.5% of respondents respectively. 79.7% and 68.4% of respondents expressed feelings of disgust regarding cross-dressing men and women respectively. In addition, joking about cross-dressing men and women was fairly commonplace, with respectively 66.4% and 58.5% of respondents stating that this was something they would easily do.

On the other hand, reassignment procedures were seen as morally wrong by 58.5% of the sample. However, the reason for seeking reassignment procedures and surgeries was seen as warranted in the case of a certain biological/hormonal condition (54.6%) rather than personal choice (11.3%). In fact, our open-ended question confirmed this view of transgender identities being perceived as more of a pathology/medical issue than homosexuality, with this question yielding the single most notable difference. In fact, the question asked respondents how they would react if a family member or a friend told them that they were gay, versus if they told them that they were transgender. Results showed that “trying to help” as a general theme was significantly more mentioned for transgender individuals (29.67%) than for gays (7.47%). This suggests that the issue of transgender identities seems to gain much more sympathy from the general public, under the view that this is primarily a medical/hormonal issue.

Transgender violence

One major finding is the fact that the overwhelming majority of respondents did not advocate the use of violence against transgender individuals, or individuals who cross-dress. As such, 72.5% of the sample disagreed with physical or verbal abuse of transgender individuals, while more than three quarters of the sample disagreed with physical or verbal abuse of cross-dressing men and women. Across the board, then, the use of violence has repeatedly been documented in our study with significant disapproval, both for homosexual and transgender identities. It would appear that, in spite of disapproval and intolerance, violence was not a primary course of action advocated by the average Lebanese.

In addition, the open-ended question asking about respondents’ reactions if a family member or a friend told them that he/she were transgender yielded an overwhelming level of support for transgender individuals, with 29.67% of respondents saying they would try to help. This theme was by far the most recurrent one, and it departed significantly from what was stated in the case of a homosexual friend or family member, with only 7.47% of responses. The least common theme across all our response data was violence and physical abuse, with 2.62% of responses only and an even smaller proportion than if the person was homosexual (3.96%). Taken together, the results suggest that public perceptions see individuals who are transgender primarily as victims of a biological condition, who need to be helped not punished.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

One of the principal goals for conducting the survey and producing this report was to identify a series of recommendations for human rights activists and other stakeholders working gender and sexual rights, including state institutions and international organizations. The survey was structured to reveal levels of information and awareness among Lebanese respondents towards questions of sexuality, gender rights and identity, inclusion, security, and health. Results from the survey revealed a significant lack of awareness among respondents with regards to a multitude of fundamental issues. The following recommendations are highlights from the extensive amount of data gathered. The numbers indicated a strong likelihood that work on these issues is likely to yield more tangible results as it factors in public perceptions into awareness campaigns, programming, or services.

The control of sexual and gender rights in Lebanon

- **Increase public awareness of state legislation that is used to regulate, control and criminalize non-normative sexualities and gender identities, and how it is being enforced in Lebanese police stations**
- **Increase state awareness of current results showing public rejection of established punitive actions and the use of corporeal punishment, especially as an interrogation method against individuals with alternative sexualities and gender identities**
- **Increase public awareness of human rights abuses and recurrent incidents of state and societal discrimination against individuals with alternative sexualities and gender identities in Lebanon**

At the time of conducting the survey, 50% of respondents agreed with Article 534 of the penal code, while a close 40% disagreed with it. Article 534 states that any person convicted of performing sexual acts against the order of nature will be fined and can face a prison sentence of up to one year. When looking at the statistics more thoroughly, one discovers that 10% of respondents remain undecided on this issue, a larger than average number. The results also show a large degree of ignorance of this issue, as 77% of respondents have not even heard of Article 534. Again, judging by respondents' rejection of fines (57%) and imprisonment (65%) as an appropriate punitive action, one can deduce the possibility of an inversely proportional relationship between awareness and agreement levels with Article 534.

Consequently, more outreach and engagement with governmental officials and members of the judiciary is needed in order to relay the significant levels of popular disapproval with current methods employed by the state security apparatus. Data has shown that, despite the fact most respondents are supportive of some sort of law, and despite the thin margin of approval with Article 534 (particularly with such high levels of unawareness of its existence), they are clearly against the punitive actions commonly practiced by state officials.

In addition, 50% of respondents in the survey did not agree that homosexuals were mistreated in Lebanon, which exposes a significant lack of awareness regarding the frequent human rights abuses archived and recorded by local rights organizations. Abuses have been perpetrated largely by state institutions such as the Internal Security Forces (ISF) and the General Security (GS) as well as Lebanese prison authorities. Despite media attention, and in some cases support, half of respondents did not agree or were not aware that abuse and mistreatment was taking place.

Judging by respondents' substantial rejection of imprisonment (65%) and corporeal punishment (80%), there is good reason to believe that further awareness on the arbitrary detention and practice of torture taking place would significantly impact perceptions in this regard.

Debunking myths and misconceptions

- **Counter public perceptions of homosexuality as a mental disorder or hormonal sickness**
- **Highlight the ineffectiveness and damaging effects of (all forms) of conversion therapy and societal ostracization**
- **Counter public and state perceptions that associate homosexuality with pedophilia and rape**
- **Counter public and state perceptions that homosexuals choose to be attracted to members of the same sex, and that one can stop being gay through conversion, legislation, and any other methods**
- **Counter public perceptions that homosexuality is a threat or danger to the institution of the family**
- **Highlight the precedence of basic human rights and protections from abuse of all individuals with alternative sexualities and gender identities rather than marriage equality**

A disproportionately large percentage of Lebanese respondents firmly believe that homosexuality is a mental disorder (72%) as well as a hormonal sickness (79%). This was one of the most supported beliefs in the survey, with the majority of respondents agreeing that homosexuals should be taken in for treatment (79%). Responses suggest a significant level of unawareness of the ineffectiveness and often damaging effects of any form of conversion therapy on homosexuals. 60% of respondents still adhered to the belief that homosexuality is a disease even after they were informed of the Lebanese Psychiatric Society’s decision to remove it from its list of disorders. Educating the public on the ineffectiveness and harmful nature of all forms of conversion therapy while also supporting the decision of the Lebanese Psychiatric Society constitutes a vital future step for activists to focus on.

In addition, while results have revealed that approximately 51% of all respondents agreed that homosexuals were born that way, it did not seem to diminish the perceptions that sexual orientation could be “cured” or “reversed”. The more or less even split between those who think it is a choice (57%) and those who think homosexuals are born that way (51%) reveals a split in views that has little effect on countering beliefs linked to conversion and other related issues. Both questions revealed a larger than usual number of respondents who remained undecided (12% and 14% respectively), which suggests that more individuals are prone to reaching a decision on the matter given more information.

Also 46% of respondents agreed when asked if they believed homosexuals were also pedophiles, or child molesters; and cross-dressing in both men and women was also seen as a perverse act by 87% and 81% of respondents respectively. This substantial number in agreement exposes significant misinformation which confuses alternative sexualities and gender identities (and their expressions) with perceived sexual deviancy. One potential area of intervention, however, stems from results that show an unusually large number of respondents who remained undecided on this issue (14%), which again suggests that more individuals are likely to reach decision either way with more information.

Finally the majority of respondents (85%) indicated that they believed homosexuality to be a threat to the family, with more than 55% of all respondents strongly agreeing with this statement. The sanctity of the traditional family was revealed to be an issue of paramount importance to respondents and future messaging should concentrate on countering this perception by debunking misinformation and factually uninformed opinions regarding this matter. One factor that may prompt the view of homosexuality being a danger to the family is the idea of marriage equality. It would be essential to highlight, then, that when specifically considering the Lebanese context at this stage, more tolerance of individuals with alternative sexualities and gender identities would start with affording basic human rights and protections from harm, abuse, and discrimination.

Stereotypes and Gender Roles

- **Raise public awareness as to the pervasiveness of gender norms that constrain and stigmatize individuals' human right for sexual enjoyment and activity**
- **Raise public awareness as to the distinction between sexual orientation and gender identity, especially when linking either to perceived biological factors or to socially defined behaviors, roles, and attributes that constitute femininity/masculinity**
- **Counter public perceptions of binary gender roles, especially with their impact on attitudes and discrimination on the basis of gender expression and identity**

Societal norms were notable in our study where sex outside the realm of marriage, family, and reproduction is the subject of scrutiny and disapproval, in combination with the gender factor whereby it was met with more disapproval for women (74%) than for men (50%). This highlights the common gender norm that views men as more sexual beings than women, in addition to the question of “honor” that women are socialized to obey. To this end, fostering a critical look that is aimed at deconstructing societal gender norms would be of paramount importance.

Responses have shown that some of the most divisive beliefs linked to homosexuality involved perceptions of homosexuals as individuals who lacked masculinity/femininity and liked to dress in the clothing of the opposite sex. Lebanese media portrayals of homosexuals in this light have dominated public perceptions, and the results show that not only are division levels close, but that the percentage of those who are yet undecided on these issues is higher than usual. For example, 52% agree that lesbians like to dress in opposite sex clothing, but 11% of respondents remain undecided on the issue. Similarly, the relatively higher percentage of responses that indicated perceptions of gay men lacking masculinity was accompanied by 11% of undecided responses.

There was a clear sense of disapproval of non-normative gender identities and expressions (55%). This is clear through cross-dressing being overwhelmingly perceived as a perversion (87% for men and 80.5% for women), while 80% and 70% of respondents expressing feelings of disgust regarding cross-dressing men and women respectively.

*In the Recommendations section, percentages were rounded to the nearest integer.

5- DEMOGRAPHICS AND BETWEEN-GROUP ANALYSES

a. Demographic information

The mean age of participants was 37.28, where participants ranged from 18 to 64 years old. The majority of participants (86.4%) were from urban areas, while a minority (13.6%) were from rural areas. Around half the sample (50.7%) reported that their biological sex is male, while 49.3% reported that it is female. The same percentages were revealed when participants were asked about their gender. It is worth noting that 2 males identified themselves as women and 2 females identified themselves as men. The majority of participants were married (54.7%), 42.2% were single, 1.5% were widowed, and 1.7% were divorced. 39.4% of the sample had finished secondary school, 24.6% graduated from university, 3.3% received higher specialized education, and the rest (32.7%) had either never been to school, or finished elementary or intermediate education. 28.2% of participants were Maronite, 22.9% Sunni, 28.7% Shi’ite, 7.1% Druze, 5.7% Greek Orthodox, 5.1% Greek Catholic, 1% “other Christian” and 1.3% “other Muslim”. Average personal income in US Dollars was 1,432.80, and average household income was 2,612.30.

b. Between-Group Analysis

Given the availability of data on our sample’s demographics, statistical analyses of between-group differences were conducted where relevant in order to identify whether certain response and attitude trends were more present in one demographic group than the other. Statistically significant trends were highlighted in the discussion of results in each section above. Nevertheless, in the following section, we isolate some significant observed differences on the basis of age, geographical location, religious affiliation, and level of educational attainment. Surprisingly, however, gender differences rarely appeared to be a significant dividing factor in attitudes across the entire study. Where notable, these differences were highlighted, but the overall trend does not point to gender being an important determinant of attitudes.

Age

A common trend indicated that the older the respondent, the more they tended to endorse the statement that “The main purpose of sex is to procreate”, with a small but statistically significant positive correlation between age and agreement on the item ($r=.172$, $p<.05$). Respondents from the ages of 35-64 tended to have less tolerant or accepting attitudes towards homosexuals than younger respondents aged 18-34. Older respondents also tended to agree more with Article 534 of the Lebanese penal code ($r=.155$, $p<.01$), and to perceive homosexuality as a Western intrusion to Lebanon ($r=.136$, $p<.01$). In fact, close to 62% of all respondents aged 18-29 disagreed that homosexuality is an intrusion, followed by 57% of individuals’ aged 30-44. Older respondents also tended to perceive homosexuals as more likely to commit deviant sexual acts ($r=.123$, $p<.01$), and were to be more nervous if homosexuals approached them in public ($r=.126$, $p<.01$).

Finally, they also had less tolerant attitudes to people who were accepting or tolerant of homosexuality, and were likely to agree more that people in favor of homosexuals tend to be so themselves ($r=.103$, $p<.01$).

Geographical location

On the whole, respondents living in rural areas tended to maintain more conservative attitudes than in urban regions. One major exception, however, was that respondents from rural regions were in favor of sex education in schools significantly more than respondents in urban regions ($t(1198) = 0.24$, $p<.05$).

Reporting statistically significant findings, we find that respondents from rural regions were less accepting and tolerant of homosexuality than respondents in urban regions. Respondents living in the South and Bekaa regions of Lebanon tended to disagree the most that it would be beneficial for society to recognize homosexuality as normal (77% and 71% of residents respectively), while respondents living in Mount Lebanon tended to disagree the least (51% of residents). It was clear that most respondents viewed homosexuals as a threat to society (66.3%), especially to the institution of the family. Again, respondents from the Bekaa and South tended to agree more (86% and 76% of residents), while respondents in Mount Lebanon tended to agree the least (57%).

For attitudes towards transgender individuals, there were also significant differences across geographical regions ($F(5, 1194) = 32.16$, $p < .001$), such that respondents in Beirut and Mount Lebanon advocated significantly less abusive behaviors than those living in the South, Nabatieh, and Bekaa.

Religious Affiliation

Generally speaking, Christian and Druze respondents tended to acknowledge the existence of marital rape ($F(7, 1188) = 18.83, p < .001$) more than Sunnis and Shi'ites.

Christian and Druze respondents have also been found to have a less negative attitude towards homosexuals and transgender identities in general, by agreeing more often that gay people should be accepted into society ($F(2,1193) = 47.61, p < .001$), agreeing less with Article 534 of the Lebanese penal code ($F(7,271) = 3.96, p < .001$), and agreeing less that cross-dressing for men and women is an act of perversion ($F(2,1193) = 40.85, p < .001$) and ($F(2,1193) = 45.96, p < .001$).

Level of educational attainment

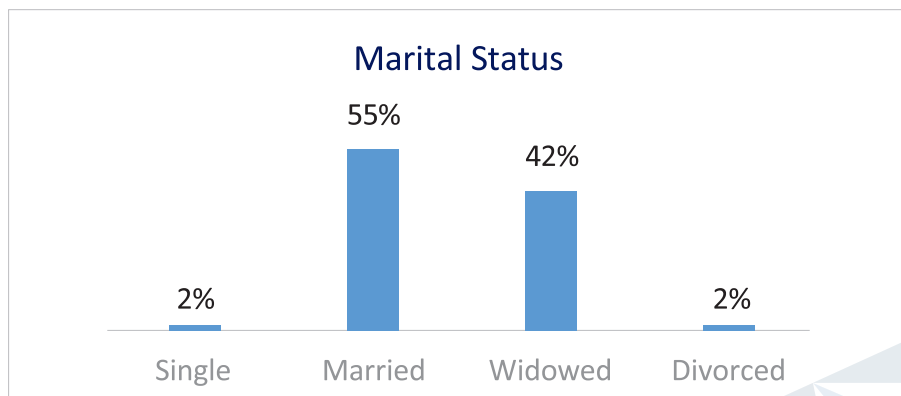
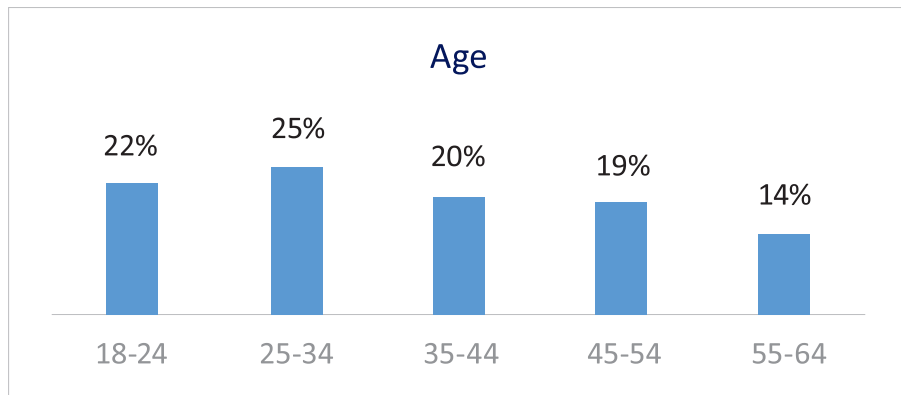
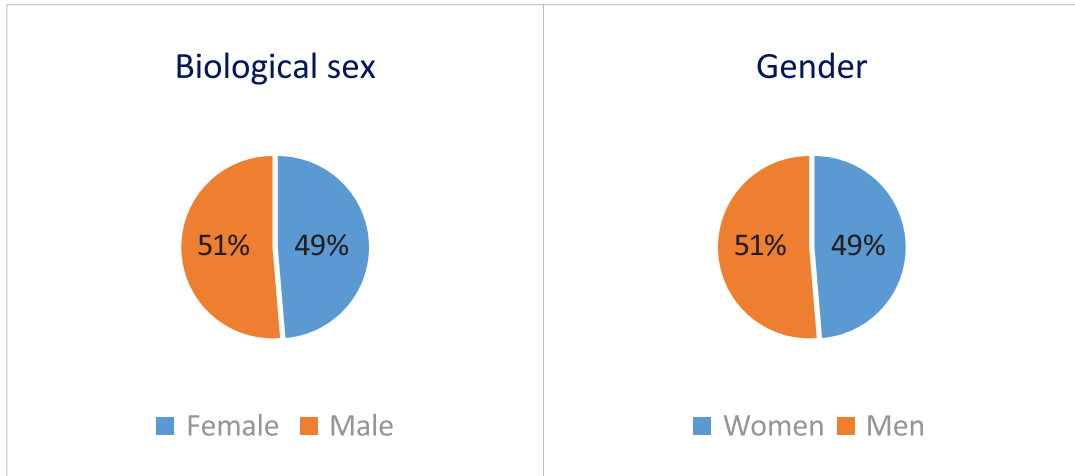
When examining responses vis-à-vis levels of educational attainment, respondents in possession of a graduate or post-graduate degree showed a consistent trend towards more openness, tolerance, and support of personal freedoms. For instance, they agreed with items related to sexual behavior being a personal choice ($F(2,1197) = 11.48, p < .001$) and the need for sex education in schools ($F(2,1197) = 7.23, p < .001$) significantly more than respondents with a lesser level of educational attainment.

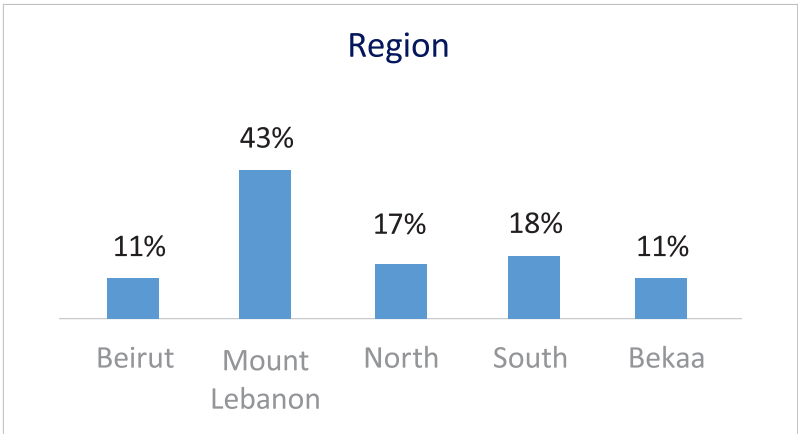
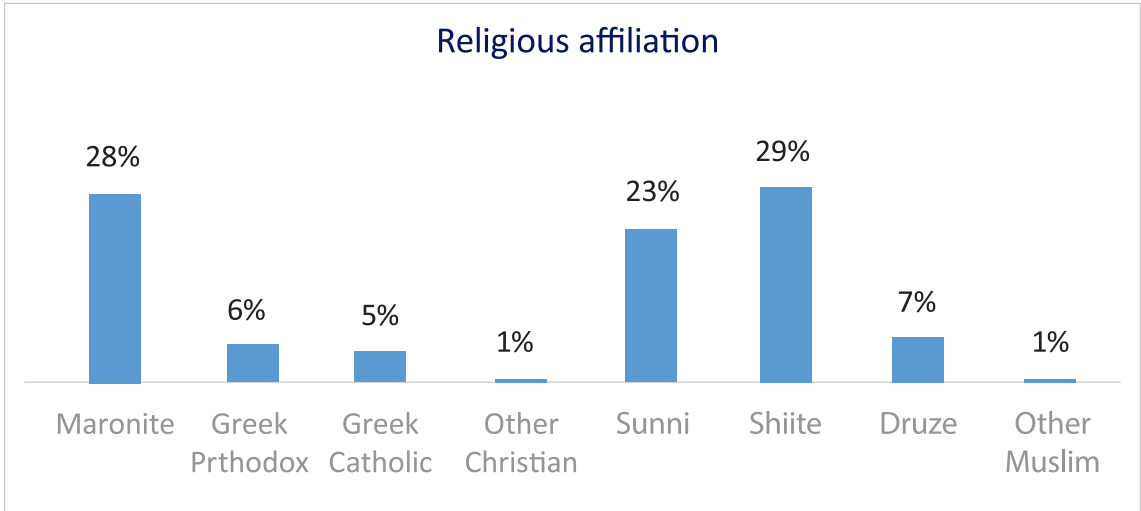
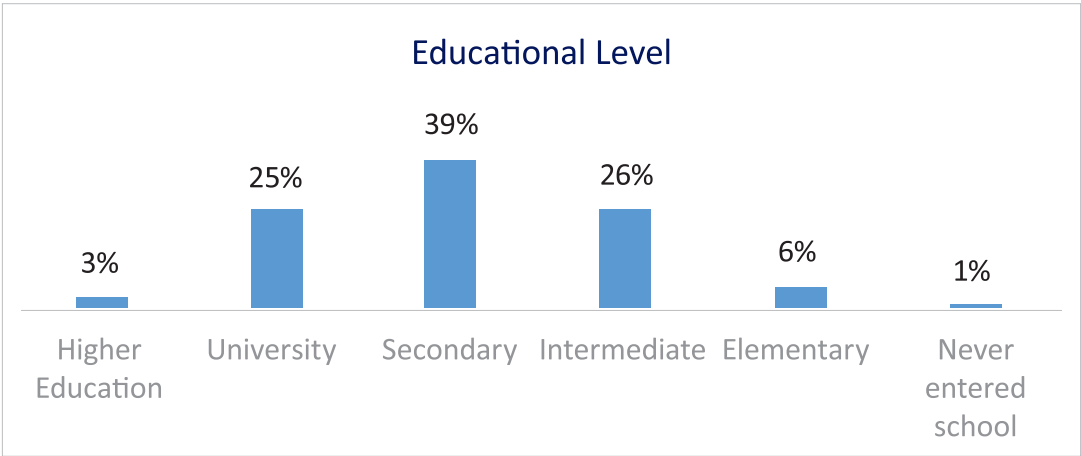
In addition, respondents with Master's degrees tended to be exclusively most tolerant and accepting of homosexuals ($F(2,1197) = 20.92, p < .001$). The trend across the survey saw high school students scoring significantly lower, or having a less tolerant and accepting attitude towards homosexuals than university graduates and post grads.

Finally, attitudes towards transgender individuals also differed by educational attainment along the same trend, with examples showing that higher levels of education were associated with accepting gender transition when based on personal choice ($F(2,1197) = 6.60, p < .001$), and lack of perception of gender transitions as immoral ($F(2,1197) = 12.80, p < .001$).

6. RESULTS TABLES

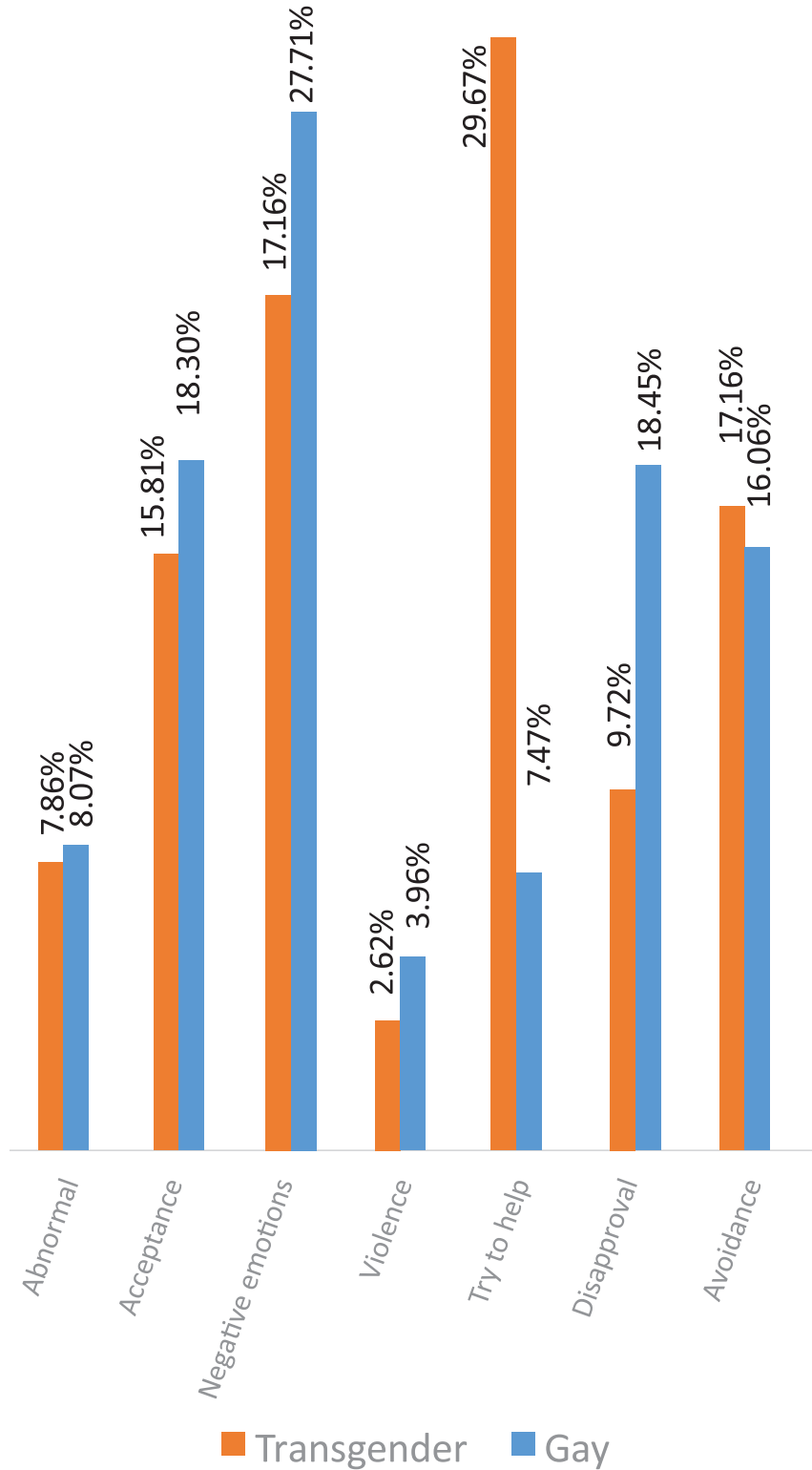
Demographics



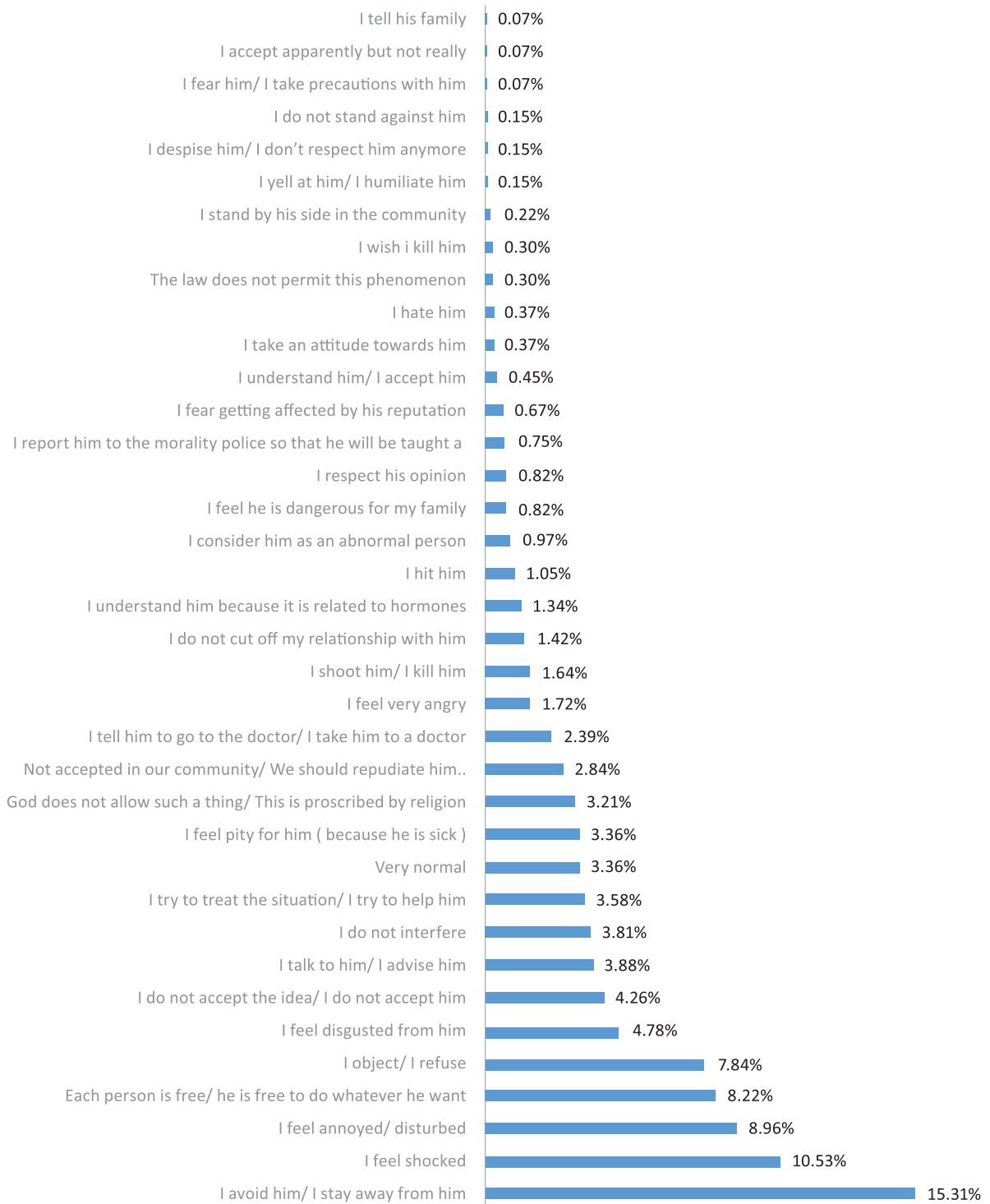


Average (USD)	Income
Personal Income	1,432.80
Household Income	2,612.30

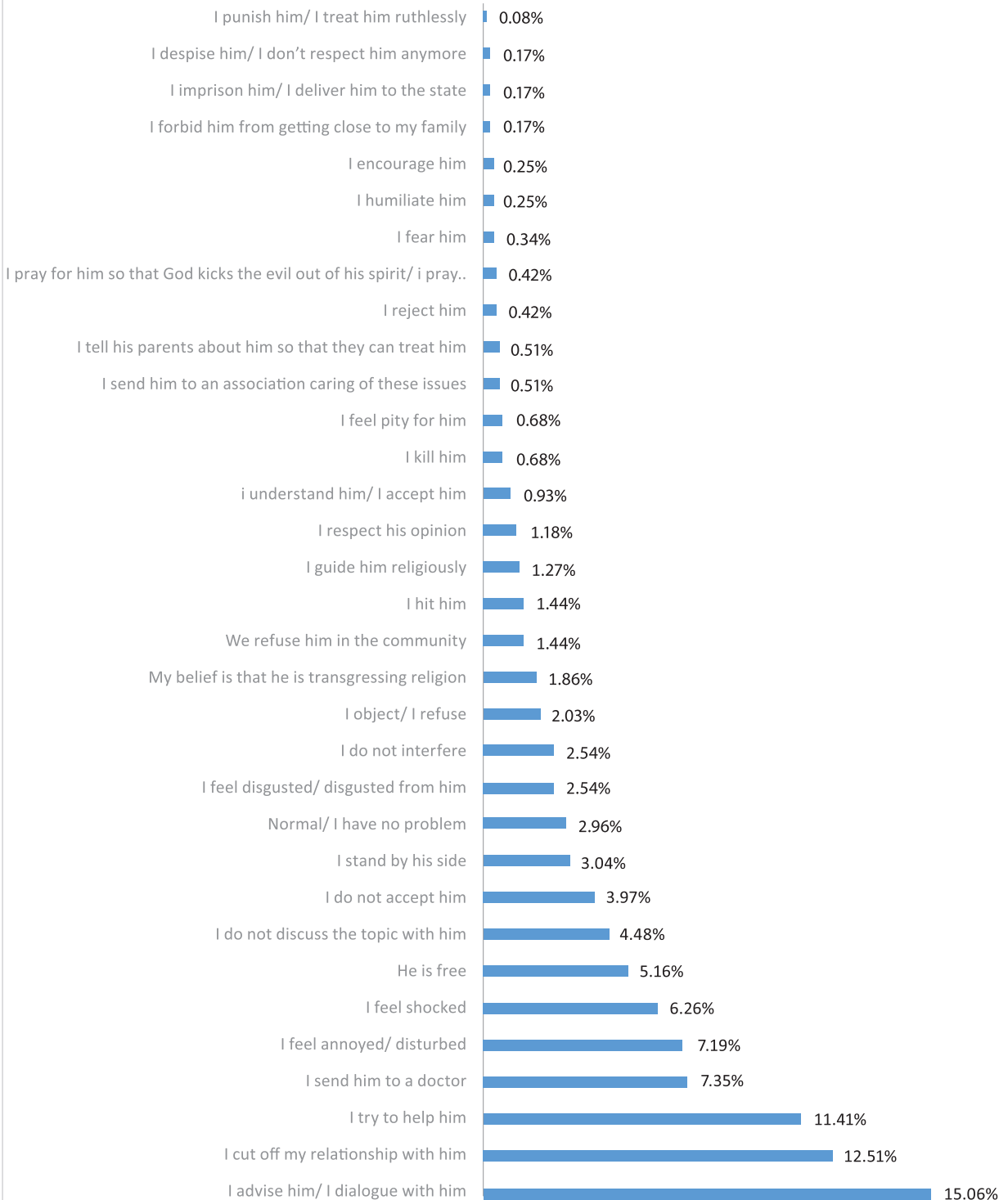
What would be your reaction if a family member or a friend told you that he/she were:



What would be your reaction if a family member or a friend told you that he/she were gay?



What would be your reaction if a family member or a friend told you that he/she were transgender?



Below is the comprehensive table of results by question.

For replication purposes, questionnaires were designed using the same questions and order, with a 5-point Likert scale where 1= Strongly Disagree; 2= Somewhat Disagree; 3= Neither Agree nor Disagree; 4= Somewhat Agree; and 5= Strongly Agree.

		Neither Agree nor Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree + Somewhat Disagree (%)	Strongly Agree + Somewhat Agree (%)	Mean (1-5)
Sexuality as related to marriage					
Q1_1	Sex outside of marriage is wrong for women	3.7	22.7	73.6	3.94
Q1_2	Sex outside of marriage is wrong for men	7.3	43.3	49.4	3.1
Q1_3	A man has the right to have sex with his wife even if she doesn't want to	5.4	90.4	4.2	1.42
Sexual Freedom or Restrain					
Q2_1	Any sexual act between consenting adults should not be legally prohibited	11.4	33	55.7	3.4
Q2_2	A person's sexual behavior is his or her own business and nobody should make value judgments about it	12.6	31.5	56	3.45
Sexual Education					
Q3_1	The main purpose of sex is to procreate	8.8	61.8	29.4	2.5
Q3_2	The main purpose of sex is to enjoy oneself	5.3	5.9	88.8	4.37
Q3_3	Sex is primarily a bodily function, like eating	12.8	25.5	61.7	3.59
Q3_4	Sex education probably leads to experimentation and increased sexual activity	13.5	39.5	47.1	3.16
Q3_5	There should be sex education in schools	10.4	15.7	73.8	4.01
Legal or Social Actions Regarding Homosexuality					
Q5_1	It would be beneficial for society to recognize homosexuality as normal	6.1	75.9	18	1.97
Q5_2	Homosexuals are mistreated in our society	8.8	50	41.2	2.86
Q5_3	Homosexuals are a normal part of society	6.7	60	33.3	2.44
Q5_4	Homosexuals should be allowed to have meeting places	6.8	72	21.3	2.05
Q5_5	Homosexuality is merely a different kind of lifestyle: it should <i>not</i> be condemned.	5.4	63.6	31	2.4
Q5_6	Laws against homosexuality are necessary to keep down the number of homosexuals in the population	4.6	29.8	65.6	3.61
Q5_7	Gay people are a threat to society	5.8	27.9	66.3	3.65
Q5_8	Gay people belong in society	6.1	39	54.9	3.2
Q5_9	Gay people should be accepted in society	7.4	64.6	28.1	2.32
Q5_10	It is morally wrong to be gay but it should not be illegal	6.9	55.1	38.1	2.71

		Neither Agree nor Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree + Somewhat Disagree (%)	Strongly Agree + Somewhat Agree (%)	Mean (1-5)
Q5_11	Recently, the Lebanese Psychiatric Society removed homosexuality from its list of disorders. Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with this decision?	5.4	60.7	33.9	2.59
Q5_12	Gay people should be taken in for psychological or hormonal treatment	5.4	15.6	79	4
Q5_13	Gay people should be taken to prison	4.6	65.5	30	2.29
Q5_14	Gay people should be fined	4.5	57.3	38.2	2.58
Q5_15	Gay people should be subjected to corporeal punishment	3.9	79.7	16.5	1.75
Q5_16	Gay people should be subjected to capital punishment	3.8	85.3	11	1.5
Q5_17	Gay people should be identified by the state	6.8	77.4	15.8	1.91
Q5_18	Society should accept gay people	7.2	64.6	28.3	2.32
Q5_19	Society should protect gay people	8.3	61.7	30.1	2.38
Q5_20	Gay people should be ostracized and isolated	5.3	55.3	39.5	2.66
Q5_21	Gay people should be exorcized	12.3	50.8	36.8	2.65
Article 534					
Q6a	There is a law called Article 534, which criminalizes sexual relations that are "contradicting the laws of nature." Have you heard of this law?		"No": 76.7%	"Yes": 23.3%	
Q6b	To what extent do you strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree with this law?	10.3	39.8	49.9	3.24
Homosexuality from a religious or moral opinion					
Q7_1	I believe that homosexuality is immoral	6.2	12.5	81.3	4.18
Q7_2	I believe that homosexuality is a sin/haram	4.5	12	83.5	4.28
Q7_3	I believe that homosexuality endangers the institution of the family	5.2	9.8	85.1	4.26
Q7_4	I believe that homosexuality is normal and natural	6.2	81.2	12.7	1.8
Q7_5	Religious books condemns homosexuality	8.3	10.7	81	4.26
Q7_6	Gays are a threat to the traditional family	6.6	11.2	82.2	4.19
Some beliefs linked to homosexuality					
Q8_1	I believe that homosexuality is a mental disorder	8.7	19.1	72.2	3.87
Q8_2	People in favor of homosexuals tend to be homosexuals themselves	7.2	55.7	37.1	2.67
Q8_3	There is an element of homosexuality in all men and women	8.3	70.2	21.6	2.16
Q8_4	I believe homosexuality is a hormonal sickness	11.8	9.2	79	4.05
Q8_5	I believe homosexuality is a genetic condition	13.1	18.9	68.1	3.73
Q8_6	I believe homosexuality is a choice	12	31.2	56.8	3.41
Q8_7	I believe homosexuals are born that way	14.1	35.2	50.7	3.21
Q8_8	I believe homosexuals are pedophiles	14.1	39.6	46.4	3.07
Q8_9	I believe there is no homosexuality in our culture, it is a Western intrusion	8.2	55.5	36.3	2.68
Q8_10	I believe homosexuality is a natural expression of sexuality	7.2	79.5	13.3	1.85

		Neither Agree nor Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree + Somewhat Disagree (%)	Strongly Agree + Somewhat Agree (%)	Mean (1-5)
Q8_11	Lesbians are such because they have never been with men sexually	13.8	54.7	31.6	2.58
Q8_12	Gay men are such because they have never been with women sexually	10.9	54.9	34.1	2.63
Q8_13	Homosexuals are more likely than others to commit deviant sexual acts such as child molestation, rape, and voyeurism,	10.4	43.6	46	3.05
Q8_14	If a man has homosexual feelings, he should do everything he can to overcome them	6.6	4.4	89	4.49
Q8_15	If a woman has homosexual feelings, she should do everything she can to overcome them	8.1	4.2	87.7	4.48
Q8_16	Most lesbians like to dress in opposite sex clothing	11.4	36.8	51.8	3.18
Q8_17	Most gay men like to dress in opposite sex clothing	10.8	39.6	49.6	3.12
Q8_18	Gay men lack masculinity	10.6	25.7	63.7	3.58
Q8_19	Lesbians can't be feminine	11.1	34.5	54.4	3.3
Q8_20	One can stop being gay	14.4	20.6	65	3.66
Thoughts, feelings, and behaviors towards homosexuals					
Q9_1	I avoid homosexuals whenever possible	5.5	25.5	69	3.77
Q9_2	If a family member told me he or she were gay, it would distress me greatly	5	15.4	79.7	4.09
Q9_3	I would be angry if I see a homosexual acting in the mannerisms of the opposite sex	6.1	21.7	72.3	3.79
Q9_4	I would be offended if a member of the same sex asked me out/ made advances	6.5	16.1	77.4	4.06
Q9_5	I would be nervous if a person who looked homosexual sat next to me in public	8.7	34.3	57.1	3.36
Q9_6	I would not want to be part of a group or company with known or suspected homosexual members or staff	8.4	36.2	55.3	3.32
Q9_7	If I discovered a friend of mine was gay, I would end the relationship	4.3	38.2	57.5	3.29
Q9_8	If two people love each other, then it shouldn't matter whether they are a woman and a man, two women, or two men	6	83.7	10.4	1.66

		Neither Agree nor Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree + Somewhat Disagree (%)	Strongly Agree + Somewhat Agree (%)	Mean (1-5)
Behaviors towards transgender individuals					
Q10_1	If I found out that someone I know used to be the other sex, I would get physically or verbally abusive	6.8	72.5	20.7	2.07
Q10_2	I would easily joke with my friends about men who dress like women.	8	25.6	66.4	3.63
Q10_3	I would easily joke with my friends about women who dress like men.	9.1	32.6	58.5	3.36
Q10_4	If I encountered a man on the street wearing women's clothes, I would consider being physically or verbally abusive	4.4	77.4	18.2	1.9
Q10_5	If I encountered a woman on the street wearing men's clothes, I would consider being physically or verbally abusive	5.9	80	14.1	1.78
Beliefs about transgender individuals					
Q11_1	God made two sexes and two sexes only	1.5	1.1	97.5	4.82
Q11_2	A man who dresses as a woman is a pervert	6	7	87	4.32
Q11_3	A woman who dresses as a man is a pervert	8.6	10.9	80.5	4.13
Q11_4	People do not have to identify strictly as either a man or a woman	4.8	71.8	23.4	2.08
Q11_5	Sex-change operations are not morally wrong	10.6	58.5	31.1	2.5
Q11_6	It is okay to change one's sex if there is a medical or biological (hormonal) condition	11	34.5	54.6	3.25
Q11_7	It is okay to change one's sex based on one's personal choice	6.3	82.5	11.3	1.72
Feelings towards transgender individuals					
Q12_1	Men who cross-dress (i.e. who wear women's clothes) disgust me	7.8	12.4	79.7	4.17
Q12_2	Women who cross-dress (i.e. who wear men's clothes) disgust me	12.3	19.4	68.4	3.81
Q12_3	If someone I'd known a long time revealed to me that they used to be another gender, I would have a problem accepting them	10.3	35	54.8	3.31
Q12_4	When I meet someone it is important to me to be able to identify them as a man or a woman	5.8	12.1	82.1	4.18
Q12_5	I don't like it if someone is flirting with me, and I can't tell if they are a man or a woman	9.8	10.1	80.2	4.18
Q12_6	The government should pay for the operation of transgender individuals	9.9	65.5	24.6	2.22

7. ABOUT AFE, HELEM, AND MARSALA

المؤسسة العربية
للحريات والمساواة
arab foundation for
freedoms and equality



Arab Foundation for Freedoms and Equality

The Arab Foundation for Freedoms and Equality (AFE) is an organization that supports grassroots activist groups and organizations that are working on a wide range of initiatives including human rights, gender and sexual health.



The Gender and Sexuality Resource Center (GSRC)

The Gender and Sexuality Resource Center (GSRC) is a program of AFE that aims to address knowledge gaps and create an alternative site of knowledge production in Arabic. The GSRC is an information hub that brings together activists, academics, and researchers who work and produce knowledge on Gender and Sexuality in the MENA region.



Helem

Helem is a Lebanese non-profit organization working on improving the legal and social status of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people (LGBT). Helem translates as “Lebanese Protection for Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals and Transgenders” and is the first official LGBT advocacy group in the Arab World. Helem means dream in Arabic, and an acronym for Lebanese Protections for LGBTQs.

marsa ●● مرسى
sexual health center مركز الصحة الجنسية

Marsa

Marsa is a sexual health center based in Beirut, Lebanon. It has been operating officially since February 2011. The purpose behind the center is to provide confidential and anonymous services related to sexual health. Services are provided to the public in a friendly environment free of stigma and discrimination against age, sex, gender and sexual orientation.



8. ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Nour Nasr

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