



The social networks, general satisfaction and experienced safety of LGBTQIA+ newcomers in the Netherlands

Master Thesis in Human Geography: Conflicts, Territories and
Identities

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Preface

During the past year I have learned much during my master's in human geography: conflicts, territories, and identities. This master gave me the opportunity to combine my knowledge as a sociologist, my interests in conflict studies and my experience as a volunteer at Cocktail Nijmegen into the product before you: a master thesis study into the experiences of LGBTQIA+ newcomers in the Netherlands.

First, I want to express my gratitude towards my thesis supervisor: Dr. Roos Hoekstra-Pijpers, who has given me great advice and helped me writing my master thesis. A special thanks to the organizations that have provided their help and are committed to standing up for the rights of LGBTQIA+ refugees in the Netherlands: Cocktail Nijmegen, Cocktail Eindhoven, Cocktail Limburg, Cocktail Breda-Tilburg, Cocktail Deventer, Rainbow Nijmegen, and Rainbow Den Haag.

I want to mention the volunteers and visitors of Cocktail Nijmegen, who have allowed me to do this study and helped me through the process. I want to thank Lucas, Luke and Mark, who have given me great advice. Wilbert ten Kate, who told me about his interesting work in Kenya. I want to thank Rainbow Netherlands and the Cocktail project in particular for their support.

I want to thank my parents, brothers, and family, who have provided me support. I want to thank my friends, who never failed to give me advice or make me laugh.

And I want to thank all the participants of this study, who took the time out of their own schedule to help me with my studies. They have been willing to talk about their own experiences, which were not always nice, which has helped me enormously.

I hope that this study will provide insight into the experiences of LGBTQIA+ newcomers.

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1. Introduction

To this day there are still countries in the world that punish people for their gender identity or sexual orientation. LGBTQIA+ people continue to be the victims of violence, persecution, and dismissal of equal rights throughout the world (Mendos, 2019; O’Flaherty & Fisher, 2008; Grungras et al., 2009). In eight countries, homosexuality is still punishable by death (O’Flaherty & Fisher, 2008). In 85 UN states consensual same-sex acts are considered illegal (Mendos, 2019). As a result, some LGBTQIA+ people flee their countries to seek safety. LGBTQIA+ refugees can apply for asylum under the international refugee convention. The Convention states that LGBTQIA+ people can seek refuge because they are ‘a part of a specific social group’ (Grungras et al., 2009). Some manage to apply for asylum in countries where LGBTQIA+ rights are protected. Although it is hard to say how many LGBTQIA+ refugees there are, some seek asylum in the Netherlands. When people apply for asylum they enter the asylum procedure, in which the Dutch Immigration and Naturalization Office (IND) will determine whether people are allowed to stay in the Netherlands. The IND will determine whether the reason for fleeing is valid, which will give refugees the opportunity to stay. In the meantime, people live in asylum centres. This can be challenging for LGBTQIA+ people especially, because in some cases they are surrounded by people who have the same ideas about their rights as the people in their country of origin. The result is that LGBTQIA+ refugees and asylum seekers can feel uncomfortable or even unsafe when they are in the Netherlands (LGBT Asylum Support, 2020a; 2020b). Next to that, some feel isolated because of the lack of social contacts with like-minded people (LGBT Asylum Support 2020a; 2020b; Elferink & Emmen, 2017; Elferink & van Hoof, 2016). For my master thesis I want to study the social networks, general satisfaction and experienced safety of LGBTQIA+ refugees and asylum seekers in the Netherlands. Before explaining more about the subject of my thesis, I will clarify some of the definitions I will be using.

Defining refugees, asylum seekers- and status holders

I will first elaborate on the different meanings of asylum seekers, refugees, and status holders. Refugee is a label that is defined in the Refugee Treaty, that was introduced after the Second World War by the United Nations. The definition of a refugee is: ‘*A refugee is a person outside their country who has a well-founded fear of persecution owing to their race, nationality, religion, political opinion, or membership of a particular social group (UN General Assembly, 1951, Art 1.)*.’ When you are identified as a refugee, the treaty states you cannot be sent back to a country where you are in danger. When someone asks for asylum, the host country will identify whether this person is a refugee or not. This means that most people start as asylum seekers and are later identified as refugees.

A person can also apply for asylum because of the economic situation in their country of origin (unhcr.org, 2021). They are then considered as asylum seekers, because they have left their country for different reasons than a refugee. For writing purposes, I will refer to the refugees and asylum seekers as

‘newcomers’ in this study. The term newcomers is also used by the Dutch government to refer to immigrants or refugees (Rijksoverheid.nl, 2021). It is used as a broad term for all people entering the Netherlands, regardless of whether they already applied for asylum and for what reason they came to the Netherlands (for security, economic certainty or reuniting with family members). In general, I will refer to asylum seekers, refugees and immigrants as newcomers. However, when I discuss other literature that have specifically focussed on one group I will make the distinction between refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants. Hence, when I mention an article and refer to LGBTQIA+ refugees, it means that the scholar specifically studies refugees and did not include asylum seekers.

A status holder is someone who has completed the asylum procedure and has gotten a temporary status for five years. After five years, the immigration and naturalization office will check whether the country of origin is safe enough for the person to return. If the country is not safe, the status holder can stay in the Netherlands permanently (Vluchtelingenwerk, 2019).

This study will focus on people that have lived or live in an asylum centre, because these are easiest to approach. There are people who have never lived in an asylum centre, these people are harder to find and probably face other issues than people that have lived in an asylum centre. For the subjects that are discussed in this study and the aim to find enough respondents, the focus will mainly be on people that are in an asylum centre or went through the asylum procedure already.

Social networks, general satisfaction and experienced safety.

I would like to briefly discuss the concepts social networks, general satisfaction and experienced safety. These concepts will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3. Social networks are the formal and informal contacts people have. Formal contacts are focussed on relations with institutions, such as the government, school, work, or organizations. Informal contacts are contacts with people closer to a person, such as friends, family, neighbours, and acquaintances (Flap & De Graaf, 1985; Pichler & Wallace, 2007). The informal contacts included in this study are contact with friends, family, neighbours and residents. The formal contacts included in this study are the contact with (non-) LGBTQIA+ organizations.

To examine how satisfied the LGBTQIA+ newcomers are, this study includes the topic general satisfaction. For example, satisfaction with the social network, main occupation and living situation. Because this study examines both general satisfaction and social networks, it seemed relevant to add social wellbeing. Social wellbeing involves the feeling of belonging and the contribution to society that someone experiences (Vos & Knol, 1994; Keyes, 1998; Hone, 2014). General satisfaction also relates to the aspect social wellbeing (van Beuningen & de Witt, 2016a). Therefore, in this study social wellbeing is included in the subject general satisfaction.

Experienced safety is described as the feeling of safety of an individual. The Social and Cultural Bureau (SCP) and Central Bureau for Statistics (CBS) have studied the experienced safety in the Netherlands for years (van Noije & Wittebrood, 2008, p. 21; CBS, 2019). There are multiple factors that influence experienced safety, an individual their environment plays a big role. Eysink Smeets & Meijer (2013) describe an individual their criminal, social, institutional and physical environment as important factors that influence the feeling of safety.

LGBTQIA+ Identity

This study entails I consider people who identify with being LGBTQIA+. An example of an LGBTQIA+ person is someone who is non-heterosexual, for example, people who identify as being a lesbian, homosexual, bisexual, pansexual, asexual or queer. Another example can be non-gender conforming people. For example, this can refer to someone who does not identify with the categorization of man and women or someone who does not identify with the gender assigned to by birth. For example, people who are non-binary, genderfluid, transgender or intersex. Another example can be someone who identifies in any other way with being LGBTQIA+. In some studies people that are non-heterosexual and non-cisgender are referred to as LGBT or LGBT+ (Elferink & Emmen, 2017; Elferink & van Hoof, 2016), in this study I refer to them as LGBTQIA+.

1.1 Societal relevance

In recent years more research has been conducted regarding the challenges faced by LGBTQIA+ newcomers in the Netherlands. For example, it is known that refugees experience feelings of loneliness (De Gruijter & Razenberg, 2017; Pharos, 2007) as do LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers (Elferink & Emmen, 2017; Elferink & van Hoof, 2016). This issue is discussed by Messih (2016) as well, as he stated that LGBTQIA+ refugees often feel stressed because they are isolated. Therefore, this study will explore what kind of social network LGBTQIA+ newcomers have and how satisfied they are with certain aspects of their lives. Studying these subjects could lead to new insights, policy recommendations and suggestions for future research. On the basis of the information yielded by this study, it is possible to identify what improvements could be made for LGBTQIA+ newcomers that might lack social contact. Next to that, this study can identify what LGBTQIA+ newcomers are unsatisfied with and provide recommendations on how to improve their satisfaction.

Especially the topic of safety has recently gotten more attention in the media. An example is when a lesbian woman got boiling hot water thrown on her by fellow residents (De Zwaan, 07-08-2020). Previous studies argue that LGBTQIA+ newcomers face issues regarding safety, discrimination and the help they receive from COA (LGBT Asylum Support, 2020a; 2020b). This is worrying as the safety of LGBTQIA+ newcomers should be guaranteed in the Netherlands. The Netherlands considers itself to be a frontrunner on LGBTQIA+ equal rights, being the first country in the world to introduce equal marriage (COC.nl, 2019). COA (The central institution for asylum seekers) has a duty to protect and provide for all asylum seekers. The studies of LGBT Asylum Support show that this protection is lacking. It is important to explore whether the situation regarding experienced safety has improved since the recent studies, hence in this study the status quo on experienced safety will be described. Some of the issues mentioned by LGBT Asylum Support relate to studies conducted in other countries. For example, the UNHCR states that LGBTQIA+ refugees are exposed to discrimination, homophobia and violence inside the asylum centres (UNHCR, 2015). They also state that LGBTQIA+ refugees have issues accessing basic human rights as health care or a place to live. This is emphasized by the studies from Kivilcim (2015) and Chavez (2011). It is relevant to understand how LGBTQIA+ newcomers experience safety in the Netherlands, because their experiences might be different from other studies or what the UNHCR states. This could reflect on the policies concerning the asylum procedure in the Netherlands compared to those in other countries.

In addition to social networks, general satisfaction and experienced safety, the influence of the pandemic will shortly be discussed. In order to know whether LGBTQIA+ newcomers feel like they belong to this society and have something to contribute, the topic of social wellbeing is included as well. These subjects give more insight into the feelings of LGBTQIA+ newcomers, what they are struggling with and where improvements need to be made. Finally, in the recent year the pandemic has had a major influence on our daily lives. This could have affected the experienced safety and social networks of

LGBTQIA+ newcomers. For example, the Dutch government has introduced a lockdown twice, which both lasted a few months. Everyone had to stay inside and work from home as much as possible, which means that the newcomers had to stay inside the asylum centre for a long time. Considering the issues regarding safety and the feeling of being isolated, this could have had a major impact on them. Therefore, it is important to make a distinction between the situation *before* and *during* the pandemic. For example, in this study I have asked LGBTQIA+ newcomers if they are satisfied with their social network. If the result is that they are very dissatisfied, then it is unclear whether that is because they already were dissatisfied or if they are dissatisfied *now* because the pandemic has had a major influence on the amount of social contact they were able to have.

1.2 Scientific relevance

I will further elaborate on what scientific relevance this study has. This study can contribute to the existing literature by describing the issues the LGBTQIA+ newcomers face in the Netherlands. I will discuss four main aspects where this study contributes to the existing literature.

The first aspect is that it discusses and combines relevant issues that LGBTQIA+ newcomers face. Because of earlier studies in the Netherlands and reports worldwide it is known that LGBTQIA+ newcomers face issues with safety inside asylum camps, such as discrimination, violence and sexual abuse (LGBT Asylum Support 2020a; 2020b; UNHCR, 2015). This study builds on previous studies as it can give more insight into their feeling of safety. Moreover, studies show that LGBTQIA+ newcomers sometimes lack access to basic needs (UNHCR, 2015; Kilvicim, 2015; Chavez, 2011) and can experience feelings of loneliness (Emmen & Elferink, 2017; Elferink & van Hoof, 2016). Therefore, the subjects of social networks and general satisfaction are discussed as well. Not that much is known yet about these subjects. Therefore, this study may provide new insights and reveal important issues that remain to be relatively unknown. Especially the subject general satisfaction, which also includes social wellbeing, have not been studied yet. This study adds to the existing literature as it combines the subjects of experienced safety, social networks and general satisfaction. Hence, it is possible to paint a better and broader picture of the problems LGBTQIA+ newcomers face.

Secondly, if possible this study will explore the differences between respondents. For example: the social contacts of someone living in a large city and someone in a smaller city. This could lead to new perspectives, as the experiences of LGBTQIA+ newcomers will probably differ. Someone who lives in an asylum centre in Amsterdam could have easier access to the LGBTQIA+ organizations compared to someone living in asylum centre in Ter Apel. An important comment is that this is only possible when there are enough respondents.

Third, this study will use a mixed methods approach: combining quantitative and qualitative data. Both surveys and interviews will be conducted in order to gain this data. This approach has different advantages as it allows the researcher to further ask questions that were not included in the survey.

Moreover, the pandemic has had a major influence on our daily lives. This could have affected the experienced safety and social networks of LGBTQIA+ refugees and asylum seekers as well. Hence, questions regarding the influence of the pandemic will be included in this study.

Fourth, in a broader perspective, this study also relates to the debate on Queer migration (Mole, 2021). The debate on queer migration focusses mainly on the migration process and asylum procedure of LGBTQIA+ people. Scholars that have studied queer migration argue that the focus of Western countries lies on LGBTQIA+ proving who they are, instead of protecting their human rights (Lewis, 2013; Lewis & Naples, 2014). This study can therefore be an addition to the debate on Queer migration by introducing other relevant challenges and add to challenges that are already discussed extensively within the debate, such as the experiences with the interviews with the immigration and naturalization office (Lewis & Naples, 2014; Lewis, 2013).

1.3 Research question and objectives

The research question of this study is: *What are the experiences of LGBTQIA+ newcomers in the Netherlands regarding social networks, general satisfaction and safety and what improvements are necessary to better the lives of LGBTQIA+ newcomers?*

My main objective is to gain insight into what kind of issues LGBTQIA+ newcomers have and what changes are needed according to LGBTQIA+ newcomers. This study will be of an exploratory nature, as not that much is known yet about LGBTQIA+ newcomers. Especially their social network and general satisfaction are new study fields. A study by Elferink & Emmen (2017) does state that LGBTQIA+ refugees can feel isolated. Therefore, it is important to report the status quo on experienced safety and social networks. Next to that, this study will explore the general satisfaction of LGBTQIA+ newcomers. As argued before, there have been recent studies that included subjects as discrimination and safety (LGBT Asylum Support, 2020a; 2020b). However, it is unclear whether this has changed in the past year. The following three sub-questions can be extracted:

Sub Question 1: How do LGBTQIA+ newcomers evaluate their social networks in the Netherlands?

Sub Question 2: How do LGBTQIA+ newcomers evaluate their general satisfaction in the Netherlands?

Sub Question 3: How do LGBTQIA+ newcomers evaluate their experienced safety in the Netherlands?

This study will try to examine whether general satisfaction, social networks and experienced safety also relate to each other. For example, an individual their satisfaction in life could relate to the number of social contacts they have or how safe they feel. In order to study these relationships, two sub-questions have been formulated:

Sub Question 4: To what extent does the general satisfaction relate to the social networks of LGBTQIA+ newcomers in the Netherlands?

Sub Question 5: To what extent does the general satisfaction relate to experienced safety of LGBTQIA+ newcomers in the Netherlands?

Next to the examining the relationship between satisfaction, social networks and experienced safety I want to study whether LGBTQIA+ newcomers have different experiences with these subjects. For example between LGBTQIA+ newcomers from different regions, as they might differ in how many social contacts they have. Next to that, there could be differences between LGBTQIA+ status holders and asylum seekers. To answer this question there need to be enough respondents in order to state and seek out these differences. The sixth sub-question is formulated:

Sub Question 6: What differences are there in experiences of experienced safety, social networks, and general satisfaction between LGBTQIA+ newcomers?

Moreover, this study will try to identify what could improve the situation of the respondents. It is important to listen to what LGBTQIA+ newcomers say about what changes are necessary for them. Therefore, I have formulated the following sub-question:

Sub Question 7: What could improve the situation of LGBTQIA+ newcomers in the Netherlands?

In addition to the subjects that have been mentioned already, I want to study what kind of effect the pandemic has had on the LGBTQIA+ newcomers. The pandemic could have influenced the satisfaction, social networks, and experienced safety of asylum seekers. This has been a major part of people their lives in the past year, which is why it cannot be left out of this study. As stated before, people in asylum centres have probably had to stay inside as well, and all their activities were cancelled. Hence, the last question was formulated:

Sub Question 8: To what extent did the pandemic influence the social networks, general satisfaction and experienced safety of LGBTQIA+ newcomers in the Netherlands?

I want to use a mixed method approach by combining survey-data with interviews to answer my research question. I want to focus on LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers in the Netherlands, including status holders that have gotten their status recently.

2. Literature review

In this chapter the previous studies about LGBTQIA+ newcomers will be discussed. I will start by elaborating on the role of the UNHCR and the asylum procedure in the Netherlands. This will make it easier to understand some of the issues that are discussed in the literature. To put this study in a broader perspective, I will elaborate on the debate on Queer migration. Next, I will describe what studies in the Netherlands and studies abroad conclude about LGTBQIA+ newcomers.

2.1 Background

Status Quo according to UNHCR

The UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) is protecting the rights and lives of refugees worldwide. They also take special care of groups who are extra vulnerable, such as children, disabled people and LGBTQIA+ refugees. UNHCR acts to protect and support LGBTQIA+ refugees, for example by talking to LGBTQIA+ organizations and keeping in contact with governments. There are two main issues that LGBTQIA+ refugees deal with when they are applying for asylum, according to the UNHCR. The first is that during the time they are inside camps or asylum centres, they often deal with discrimination or even violence. Even in countries where legally LGBTQIA+ rights are protected, in practice, sometimes they are not. According to UNHCR, LGBTQIA+ refugees often have trouble accessing basic human needs, such as health care (UNHCR, 2015). The second struggle that UNHCR describes is that LGBTQIA+ refugees are not always believed by authorities. According to the UNHCR, one of the explanations is that the interview procedure is based on western stereotypes of what being LGBTQIA+ entails. An assumption can be that LGBTQIA+ newcomers are not married to someone of the opposite sex and do not have children. For example, if a lesbian applies for asylum in the Netherlands, but has a husband and children, the assumption could be made that she is not a lesbian. However, this completely disregards the societal pressure and influences that someone has experienced in their country of origin. To better understand LGBTQIA+ refugees, this process needs to change (UNHCR, 2012). Therefore, UNHCR recommends a series of guidelines to protect LGBTQIA+ refugees. For example, they state that the interviewees should remain objective and not base the interview on stereotypes of what an LGBTQIA+ individual is. This also includes expressing no judgment towards sexual orientations or gender identities using proper pronouns and language.

Asylum Procedure in the Netherlands

When people apply for asylum in the Netherlands, they are usually sent to the asylum centre in Ter Apel. The asylum seeker will get some days to rest before the interviews with the Immigration and Naturalisation office start (IND). During these conversations, the IND will determine if the reason of seeking refuge is valid. The IND will do so by asking the person questions about the journey to the host country, the nationality and the identity of the person. When a person fled their country because of war or violence, the IND will check what the situation in the country of origin is and whether the person is

a refugee as determined by the Refugee Treaty (UN General Assembly, 1951). During the interviews, the IND will assess whether the story is consistent. Afterwards, the asylum seeker will get a medical examination. The IND has different trajectories to determine how long it will take them to decide whether the asylum seeker is allowed to stay. One of the common trajectories takes eight days. Sometimes the IND cannot determine whether the asylum seeker gets asylum within eight days, so the asylum procedure will be extended. In theory the IND then has six months, starting from the day asylum is applied for, to determine whether the person is granted asylum. These six months can be extended to 15 months when more research is necessary. In practice, this can take up to a few years. When asylum is rejected, the asylum seeker can challenge the decision by going to court (IND.nl, 2021).

2.2 Debate on Queer migration

In the 1990's the debate on queer migration sparked, before that the discussion about migration remained heteronormative. Migrants were seen as mostly heterosexual (Luibheid, 2004; Manalansan, 2006). The debate on Queer migration tries to explain the complex relation between migration, sexuality, gender, race and environmental factors as political, economical and cultural influences (Cantú, 2009; Lewis & Naples, 2014). Queer migration refers to LGBTQIA+ people migrating to other countries. Queer migration can be explained in multiple ways. For example, it can be understood as people seeking asylum in another country because of their sexual orientation or gender identity (Mole, 2021). Therefore, the reason of seeking refuge is connected to the experiences an individual has because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. This does not include queer people migrating because of their work or studies (Gorman Murray, 2009). However, other scholars state that all migration of LGBTQIA+ people should be included in the term 'queer migration'. According to Carrillo (2004) queer migration has multiple dimensions and should be understood as a broader term. Carrillo argues that other societal factors need to be taken into account as well. For example, the local and foreign ideologies they are exposed to before and after migrating. Mole (2021) states that an individual their sexual orientation or gender identity can also subconsciously influence the decision to move. One of the main reasons why people migrate is because of economic reasons or the chances to acquire better skills in other countries (Stark & Bloom, 1985). However, for LGBTQIA+ people, this is not necessarily the case, because emotional reasons play a part of the reason to move (Sólveigar-Guðmundsdóttir, 2018). Gorman-Murray identifies three reasons for LGBTQIA+ people to seek refuge. One is 'coming out migration', where people seeking asylum in another country to self explore their identity and sexual desires. The second is gravitational group migration, meaning migration near a place where there is a large LGBTQIA+ presence. The third is 'relationship migration', meaning people migrate to be able to continue their relationship with their partner. An added fourth dimension is moving to another country to be able to take advantage of more progressive rights for LGBTQIA+ people. For example equal marriage or anti-discrimination laws. This study is most related to this fourth dimension, as most LGBTQIA+ people that participated in this study fled their countries because of the lack of protection and equal rights.

LGBTQIA+ people need to show a well-founded fear of persecution to be able to stay in the host country. According to Jansen (2013), some European countries believed that in order to avoid discrimination and persecution, LGBTQIA+ people could remain discrete about their gender identity and sexual orientation. This led to the denial of applications for asylum of LGBTQIA+ people because they were able to be 'discrete' about who they are, meaning that there was no well-founded fear of being persecuted. This was criticised because it implied that sexual orientation or gender identities are an act that can be engaged in or not, rather than a part of someone their identity. Moreover, it denied the societal factors that would force LGBTQIA+ people to be hide who they are. The discretion argument was overruled in 2013 by the Court of Justice of the European Union (Mole, 2021). However, according to multiple scholars there has been a shift from the discretion argument towards the argument of credibility. This relates to what the UNHCR (2012) has stated about LGBTQIA+ newcomers having to prove that they are LGBTQIA+. According to Shuman & Bohmer (2014) the asylum claims are still discussed through a heteronormative lense. As a result, asylum claims of sexual minorities and women are more challenging. Shuman & Bohmer (2014) discuss how people that are 'less visible' in their presentation as an LGBTQIA+ person are presumed to be less in danger in their country of origin. Moreover, Lewis (2013) discusses how lesbians are unable to prove that they lived openly as lesbians in the country of origin. Lewis (2013) states that these asylum regulations are created to protect human rights: to protect those in danger but seem to do the opposite. According to Lewis (2013), the LGBTQIA+ newcomers need to fit a certain description in order to get asylum. Lewis & Naples (2014) state that the focus on public demonstrations of being LGBTQIA+ needs to shift to understanding that LGBTQIA+ newcomers are used to avoiding these public displays, as it could bring them in danger in their country of origin. Therefore, we should relate queer migration to human rights, instead of focussing on their credibility.

2.3 LGBTQIA+ newcomers in the Netherlands

Through the years LGBTQIA+ organizations in the Netherlands have tried to support LGBTQIA+ newcomers. In 2016 COC Nijmegen rang alarm bells when they received disturbing messages from asylum centre Heumensoord (Nijmegen). This asylum centre hosted around 2700 refugees and was set up after many refugees crossed the Mediterranean Sea in 2015. This situation originated when many people fled their country because of the war in Syria. However, it was not only Syrian refugees that crossed the Mediterranean sea, many others also tried to get to Europe looking for safety, a better life or more economic opportunities. The department of the COC in the city Nijmegen stated that LGBTQIA+ refugees were being discriminated against and threatened by other residents within the asylum centre. They called for a safe house specifically for LGBTQIA+ refugees. A safe house for LGBTQIA+ refugees had already been introduced by the municipality of Amsterdam. In the Netherlands there are multiple organizations that support LGBTQIA+ newcomers, for example Rainbow Netherlands, LGBT Asylum Support, Cocktail, Connected, SHOUT, Queer Welfare, Vluchtelingenwerk (Refugee Work) and more. Both Rainbow and Cocktail organize meetings to offer a safe space for LGBTQIA+

newcomers. During these meetings LGBTQIA+ newcomers can get to know others, play games and share their experiences. For example, at a Cocktail meeting often a speaker is invited to explain something about an important subject. This can include someone from the GGD, to talk about physical and mental health. Another example is someone visiting from Roze in Blauw ('Pink in Blue'), which is a group within the Dutch police department focusing specifically on crimes against LGBTQIA+ people.

Challenges faced by LGBTQIA+ newcomers

As stated by the UNHCR (2015) there are certain challenges that LGBTQIA+ newcomers face when asking for asylum in a new country. A few studies have examined these challenges in the Netherlands. Mainly the issue of the safety of LGBTQIA+ newcomers as described above has been an ongoing debate. LGBT Asylum Support (2020a) has studied the safety of LGBTQIA+ newcomers. As mentioned before, they have asked 71 LGBTQIA+ newcomers across the Netherlands about their experiences with safety, violent crimes, reporting crimes, the role of police and COA (Chapter 3). The study shows that 44.4% of LGBTQIA+ people feel unsafe inside the asylum centre, 43.1% of the respondents say they feel safe. Other important results were that 40% of the respondents have encountered a violent LGBTQIA+ delict, of which 60% of the cases it was directed at the person themselves. In 40% it was directed at someone else. In 70.7% of the cases this was noticed by COA, but in most cases (70%) there was no follow-up action taken. Another study of LGBT Asylum Support (2020b) included the subjects discrimination, safety, trust-persons inside the asylum centre and the attitude of COA. As stated before, many respondents felt discriminated inside the asylum centre (85%). Next to that, 89% of the respondents think separate LGBTQIA+ units at asylum centres would help for them (LGBT Asylum Support, 2020b). As mentioned earlier, the problems that LGBTQIA+ newcomers face concerning safety is also discussed by the UNHCR (2015). Because of the issues regarding safety that LGBTQIA+ newcomers face in the Netherlands, LGBT Asylum Support has spoken out about the need to create separate LGBTQIA+ asylum centres or units to protect LGBTQIA+ newcomers. There are units included in some of the asylum centres in the Netherlands and are reserved for LGBTQIA+ people only. This way they are able to live more freely and don't have to be afraid of potential homophobia inside the asylum centres.

As argued before, another challenge that LGBTQIA+ newcomers face occurs during the asylum procedure, they sometimes are not believed by the IND. The Dutch immigration and naturalization office states they do approach LGBTQIA+ refugees differently during the asylum procedure. They say they understand that it is difficult to prove that someone is LGBTQIA+. In some countries, the immigration and naturalization offices use certain methods to determine if someone is LGBTQIA+, for example by conducting medical tests. They can also ask for the sexual contacts a person has had or videotapes to prove that someone is LGBTQIA+. The Dutch IND opposes to such methods and does not include them. Instead, they focus on other multiple aspects. The interview with LGBTQIA+ newcomers involves

questions concerning the problems they have encountered in their country of origin. They also check for consistency and similarities with what is known about the situation in the country of origin. COC (Dutch organization that fights for LGBTQIA+ rights in the Netherlands), COA (central institution for asylum seekers), Vluchtelingenwerk (Refugee Work) and the IND have organized workshops for IND officials to learn how to create an open atmosphere for the interview. They also learn about the influence of stereotypes and the role of the translator (IND.nl, 2021). This role is important because the translator might be from the same country of origin as the newcomer. Therefore, the translator could have the same ideas about LGBTQIA+ people as the people that the newcomer fled from. As a result of the issues that LGBTQIA+ newcomers face during the asylum procedure, LGBT Asylum Support started a petition by the name '*Not Gay Enough*'. This refers to the struggle of LGBTQIA+ people who are applying for asylum and are classified as 'not gay enough'. According to Vitikainen (2020), the need to prove that people are 'legitimately' LGBTQIA+ stems from countries wanting to exclude people who use the LGBTQIA+-status as means to get asylum.

This relates to the question of what can be done to improve the situation of LGBTQIA+ refugees and the struggles they face during interviews and inside the asylum centre. In a study by Emmen & Elferink (2017) multiple LGBTQIA+ newcomers, volunteers and professionals were interviewed. They interviewed seven LGBTQIA+ newcomers and asked for advice in two focus groups of volunteers and professionals. Their conclusion is that the LGBTQIA+ newcomers in most cases did not feel supported by the IND in talking about their life as an LGBTQIA+ person. Elferink & Emmen (2017) created a list of suggestions that can help the acceptance of LGBTQIA+ people by other residents. These suggestions included to inform newcomers about their rights during the interview and to train the IND- employees in being sensitive with asking questions about their sexual orientation. The IND also needs to make sure that there are no homophobic employees or translators involved in the interview. Unambiguous policies need to be implemented by COA to provide information to LGBTQIA+ newcomers and ensure their safety. COA employees should also be trained in talking about sexual orientation and supporting LGBTQIA+ people. COA needs to consider creating LGBTQIA+ units at the asylum centres and a more diverse workforce. COA should also provide seminars to LGBTQIA+ people when they have social- or mental problems.

Next to providing information, training the staff and creating LGBT units there are other options that could help improve the lives of LGBTQIA+ newcomers. Increasing the acceptance of LGBTQIA+ newcomers inside the asylum centres could help newcomers feel more safe and allow them to be open about their identity. A study by Felten et al. (2015) describes different methods to increase the acceptance of LGBTQIA+ people. Conclusions of this study were that film and social theatre can be very effective in creating more awareness and acceptance. The methods of spreading knowledge by lecturing people about LGBTQIA+ people are not necessarily helpful, research has shown that the effect is unknown. Organizing dialogue meetings can have both positive and negative effects. This is because

stating negative things about being LGBTQIA+ can ignite negative attitudes among the participants of the dialogue meetings. Van Hoof (03-02-2016) states in a reaction to this study that more education about LGBTQIA+ rights in the Netherlands needs to be given to other newcomers. But the approach to this must be right, as education in high schools is very different from educating adults who come from countries where LGBTQIA+ rights are not protected. This also includes the time and place where the educational programs are given.

2.4 Studies in other countries

As argued before, research has been conducted in the Netherlands relating to LGBTQIA+ refugees and asylum seekers (Asylum Support 2020a; 2020b; Elferink & Emmen, 2017). However, this topic has received attention in other countries as well. I would like to discuss some of the other articles regarding LGBTQIA+ refugees that provide new insights and suggestions for this study.

Some of the studies abroad discuss the issues that LGBTQIA+ newcomers face in other countries. For example, a study by Kivilcim (2015) examines what issues LGBTQIA+ Syrian refugees face in Turkey. The article states that Turkey hosts one of the largest communities of Syrian refugees as a result of the ongoing conflict in Syria. Among this group are LGBTQIA+ refugees, although it is unsure how many identify as LGBTQIA+. The ASAM (Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants) thinks the number of LGBTQIA+ Syrian refugees is probably larger than is known, because people are afraid to out themselves. The study aims to explore what problems LGBTQIA+ Syrian refugees are facing in Turkey. In conclusion, Kivilcim (2015) states that Turkey does not protect LGBTQIA+ rights. This makes LGBTQIA+ Syrian refugees vulnerable to exploitation, discrimination, and violence. One of the main issues faced by LGBTQIA+ refugees in Turkey is their living situation. This is because they often live in crowded apartments or sleep at their workplaces. They also stay in buildings with other Syrians, which is difficult because it makes them vulnerable to sexual abuse. In all of Turkey there is one LGBTQIA+ safehouse in Istanbul, they can only host a limited number of LGBTQIA+ refugees. The living situation of LGBTQIA+ refugees is also discussed by Chavez (2011). The study of Chávez (2011) in Southern Arizona explored the needs of LGBTQIA+ immigrants. As Kivilcim (2015) described that the Turkish government does not meet the needs of LGBTQIA+ refugees, this study shows that there are no specific services provided for LGBTQIA+ immigrants in Southern Arizona either. Most LGBTQIA+ immigrants make use of their own social network in order to gain their amenities such as housing, health care, clothes and food. Chávez (2011) states there is cultural incompetence regarding the LGBTQIA+ immigrants, meaning there is no proper understanding, awareness, or effective communication with LGBTQIA+ immigrants. Both studies are in line with what is discussed by the UNHCR (2015); that LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers and refugees often lack basic necessities and are not protected by the host country.

Next to facing problems with access to basic necessities, Messih (2016) describes four main challenges: traumatic stress, resettlement stress, acculturation stress and isolation stress. Traumatic stress includes

problems that people have because of events that happened in their country of origin. For example, having encountered violence or being a victim of war. Resettlement stress are issues in relation the lack of resources, for example finding a place to live or a job. This is in line with what is described by Chávez (2011), Kilvicim (2015) and UNHCR (2015). Acculturation stress is about fitting in within their new country, for example struggling to integrate and combining their culture of origin with the new culture. Isolation stress includes feelings of loneliness, discrimination and the feeling of not fitting in (Messih, 2016, p. 5). Messih (2016) states that next to these main challenges, LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers can have other issues that harden the asylum procedure. For example, not all individuals see themselves as a part of the LGBTQIA+ community because of internalized negativity. When you have faced discrimination because of being LGBTQIA+, this could have ignited negative associations with being LGBTQIA+.

Because of the injustices LGBTQIA+ refugees have faced in their country of origin, Vitikainen (2020) states that LGBTQIA+ people should be protected by other countries. She discussed the possibility to prioritize LGBTQIA+ refugees in the asylum applications. She mentions two reasons why LGBTQIA+ refugees should be given priority: 1) because of their vulnerable position and 2) because of the low number of countries that protects LGBTQIA+ refugees in the first place. According to Vitikainen (2020) the debate on LGBTQIA+ refugees has concentrated on two aspects: 1) on what exactly counts as a ‘well-founded ground of fear of persecution’ and 2) how to identify that someone applying for asylum is in fact LGBTQIA+. Vitikainen (2020) says these aspects are problematic, because it is hard for LGBTQIA+ people to prove they would be persecuted if they were open about their identity. The second issue stems from countries wanting to distinguish people pretending to be LGBTQIA+ from people who are actually LGBTQIA+. According to Vitikainen (2020) this has led to countries using physically degrading and privacy-invasive interview methods. For example, people would have to explain sexual acts they have engaged in (O’Leary, 2008; Lewis, 2014). As explained before, The Dutch immigration and naturalization office does not include these methods in process of determining whether someone is LGBTQIA+ (IND.nl, 2021).

These articles identify some of the important issues, namely that LGBTQIA+ newcomers face multiple issues in their host countries. Those issues concern their primary necessities, discrimination, violence and mental problems that come along with these issues. A few similarities and differences can be identified between the articles that were mentioned in this chapter. The common issues seem to be facing violence and discrimination and accessing basic human needs. Both studies describe LGBTQIA+ newcomers having issues concerning discrimination and violence in their host country (Chávez, 2011; Kilvicim, 2015; Messih, 2016; LGBT Asylum Support 2020a; 2020b). The studies of Chávez (2011) and Kilvicim (2015) as well as reports by UNHCR (2015) state that LGBTQIA+ newcomers face issues with accessing basic necessities. Whether LGBTQIA+ newcomers have issues with accessing medical care or a housing situation in the Netherlands specifically is unknown.

3. Theoretical concepts

In this chapter I will elaborate on the concepts that I will be using in my thesis. I will mainly focus on experienced safety, social networks, general satisfaction and wellbeing.

3.1 Social networks

The concept of social networks that will be used in this study is derived from the concept of social capital. Hence, I will first elaborate on the concept social capital before explaining more about social networks. Bourdieu (2016) introduced the concept of ‘capital’ by stating a person has cultural, economic and social capital. Cultural capital is the total of education, skills and knowledge a person has. Economic capital is the total of money or owned properties. Social capital is the total of relationships and networks a person has. These forms of capital influence the position of someone in society or referred to by Bourdieu as ‘class’. Putnam (1994) stated that social capital consists of trust, networks and shared values. He argued that participation in society and creating ties with institutions can lead to a better functioning democracy. Following the term social capital used by Bourdieu and Putnam, Pichler & Wallace (2007) have split social capital into formal and informal social contacts. Formal contacts are focussed on contacts with institutions, such as the government, school, work, or organizations. Informal contacts are contacts with people closer to a person, such as friends, family, neighbours, and acquaintances (Flap & De Graaf, 1985; Putnam, 1994).

Having a social network has an influence on society as a whole, such as wellbeing (Kroll, 2011; Portela, Neira, Salinas-Jiménez, 2013; Matsushima & Matsunaga, 2015) and prosperity (Knack & Kiefer, 1997). On an individual level, keeping social relations makes people feel good and satisfied with their social life (Mars & Schmeets, 2011; CBS, 21-06-2018) and influences their personal happiness (Leung et al., 2013; Rodríguez-Pose & Von Berlepsch, 2014). For example, a study by CBS (21-06-2018) argues that people who have frequent contact (daily or weekly) with their friends, family or neighbours are most satisfied with their social life. Moreover, we know that social support can help refugees integrate and influences their wellbeing (El-Bialy & Mulay, 2015; Fozdar & Hartley, 2013; Kovacev & Shute, 2004).

Since it is known that (LGBTQIA+) refugees experience feelings of loneliness and can feel isolated inside the asylum centres (De Gruijter & Razenberg, 2017; Pharos, 2007; Elferink & Emmen, 2017; Elferink & van Hoof, 2016). As argued before, there are multiple projects in the Netherlands that try to support LGBTQIA+ newcomers in building a social network. These organizations offer a safe space for LGBTQIA+ newcomers and allow them to meet others. LGBTQIA+ newcomers might struggle with building new relationships in the Netherlands because they live in an asylum centre. Moreover, because of the issues that LGBTQIA+ newcomers face they might not know other LGBTQIA+ people and might not have that many contacts inside the asylum centre either. Social contact has an influence on an individual their happiness and satisfaction (Mars & Schmeets, 2011; Leung et al., 2013; Rodríguez-Pose & Von Berlepsch, 2014) and also has a positive impact on refugees in particular (El-Bialy & Mulay, 2015; Fozdar & Hartley, 2013; Kovacev & Shute, 2004). Therefore, it is relevant to study what kind of

social contacts LGBTQIA+ newcomers have, how satisfied they are and whether they feel supported. This could expose whether LGBTQIA+ newcomers need more support by certain groups and if they need more help in building a social network in the Netherlands.

Following the distinction made by Pichler & Wallace (2007), the social network is split into formal and informal contacts. The LGBTQIA+ newcomers have been asked what formal and informal groups they are in frequent contact with, what kind of contacts they find important, how satisfied they are with their social life and how supported they feel by certain groups. To examine the formal social network of LGBTQIA+ newcomers, this study involves questions regarding the support and knowledge of organizations. Other studies from Vizier (2021) and LGBT Asylum Support (2020a) also involve these questions. Moreover, this study examines the informal social network, e.g. contact with friends, family, neighbours and other residents. The questions regarding the frequency of contact with informal contacts is based on multiple studies (Van Beuningen & De Witt, 2016b; Schmeets; 2014). It is important to ask how satisfied people are with the number of contacts they have. Some might answer that they do not have contact with family or friends, but that does not say much. In order to know if they are unhappy with not having that many contacts, you have to ask respondents about their satisfaction with their social networks. The satisfaction with support and contact is based on the study by Coumans & Schmeets (2020).

3.2 General satisfaction

To get an idea of how satisfied LGBTQIA+ newcomers are, I also included the subject of general satisfaction. General satisfaction consists of multiple factors, such as satisfaction with income (Moonen et al., 2015), social networks (van Beuningen, 2013; Bellani en D'Ambrosio, 2011), health, (Cronelisse-Vermaat et al., 2006; Diener et al., 1999) and living situation (Moonen et al., 2015). According to Beuningen & Kloosterman (2011) health is one of the main indicators for happiness and satisfaction with life (described as subjective wellbeing). Being able to afford vacation, contact with others and living in a nice neighbourhood are also associated with a higher satisfaction with life (Beuningen & Kloosterman, 2011). Feeling unsafe is associated with less happiness and satisfaction. In this study some of the aspects of general satisfaction are taken into consideration. Only the aspects of what was relevant for this study have been added. For example, an indicator of satisfaction can also be income and education, but since these subjects are not the main focus of this study they have been left out (Moonen et al., 2015). Moreover, some people in the asylum centre are not able (yet) to following education or work. This is due to the rules that you are bound to when being an asylum seeker. For example, not every diploma obtained in another country can be used here immediately for the same job. Furthermore, you are only allowed to work a certain number of hours when you are an asylum seeker. Because of the diverse activities that asylum seekers take part in, this study includes a question regarding satisfaction with daily activities (which can include work and study as well) instead of focussing specifically on work or education. Only the aspects that are considered to have a big influence on LGBTQIA+

newcomers have been studied. These subjects include health, social networks, daily activities, living situation and life in general.

Because satisfaction tells us something about the wellbeing and happiness of LGBTQIA+ newcomers this subject has been included in this study. These subjects have not yet been studied in the Netherlands. Since we know that LGBTQIA+ people can feel unsafe (LGBT Asylum Support 2020a; 2020b) and feel lonely (Elferink & Emmen, 2017) it is relevant to know how they consider other aspects of their lives. For example, if someone does not feel safe inside the asylum centre, they might also not be satisfied with living there. This seems like a reasonable assumption, but in order to be able to state this it has to be discussed with LGBTQIA+ people themselves. Because health (Beuningen & Kloosterman, 2011) and daily activities are important indicators of satisfaction (Moonen et al., 2015), these have been included in this study as well. By adding multiple aspects of satisfaction we can get a clearer idea of how satisfied LGBTQIA+ newcomers are and what aspects they struggle with specifically.

Social Wellbeing

Social wellbeing is considered to be the amount of social support that a person receives combined with the feeling of belonging (Vos & Knol, 1994). Another dimension added to this definition is the feeling of being able to contribute to society (Keyes, 1998; Hone, 2014). The scale concerning social wellbeing is created by Keyes (1998). It is applied by many studies and is usually connected to psychological wellbeing and emotional wellbeing (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Lamers, et al., 2011; Hone et al., 2014). Keyes (1998) has split social wellbeing into five dimensions: 1) contributing to society, 2) belonging to a community, 3) whether society is becoming a better place, 4) if people are good, 5) whether society makes sense or not (Hone et al., 2014, p. 66). Next to the relevance of general satisfaction, it is relevant to discuss social wellbeing specifically. This adds to the subject of social networks, because social wellbeing is related to interaction with others. Social wellbeing will explain how LGBTQIA+ newcomers see themselves within society and how they look at society and the connection with others. General satisfaction and wellbeing are related (van Beuningen & de Witt, 2016a), which is why social wellbeing is included in this study as well. Emotional and psychological wellbeing will not be discussed in this study for two reasons. First, this study mainly focusses on the social networks and experienced safety of LGBTQIA+ newcomers. Second, psychological wellbeing and emotional wellbeing might be difficult subjects to discuss for LGBTQIA+ newcomers, and since I am not a psychologist I did not want to bring up these subjects. Hence, only social wellbeing is included in this study.

3.3 Experienced safety

Safety can be described in different ways, there are multiple studies that split safety into different categories or mention different types of safety. In the Netherlands there are two main research bureaus that have extensively studied this subject. For example, the Social and Cultural Bureau (SCP) has studied the social safety in the Netherlands. According to the SCP, social safety includes the experienced safety, victimhood, assessment of crimes in the Netherlands, assessment of the legal system and registered crimes. Hence, they combine the feeling of safety among the population to the crimes that have been committed as reported by the police and justice department (van Noije, 2020; van Noije & Wittebrood, 2008). The Central Bureau for Statistics has also studied the safety in the Netherlands and uses more or less the same criteria as the Social and Cultural Bureau. They report their results since 2012 in their 'safety monitor' (2019), they do not necessarily use the term social safety. The CBS (2019) measures the safety of people by studying their experienced nuisance, experienced safety in general and in their neighbourhood, victimhood, satisfaction with the police and assessment of how the police acted. Overall, safety seems to include multiple factors that Pleysier (2008) describes as: police (politie), physical, civil and social safety. Even though there are small differences, both the CBS (2019) and SCP (van Noije 2020; van Noije & Wittebrood, 2008) consider experienced safety, or the feeling of being safe, to be an important factor in determining an individual their safety. In this study I will mainly focus on experienced safety, because I cannot measure registered reports specifically made by LGBTQIA+ newcomers. Moreover, I want to focus on the feeling of LGBTQIA+ newcomers and I want to prevent making the survey too long or intense. Hence, the main focus will be on experienced safety.

According to the Centre for Crime Prevention, there are many factors that influence the experienced safety of an individual. On societal level, the perception of societal disorders and the risk aversion in society can influence an individual their feeling of safety. Next to that, there are factors that include the behaviour of the government, such as social institutions, law-making, enforcement by the government and prosecution of perpetrators. Furthermore, there are individual factors, such as victimhood, experienced vulnerability and physical features of the environment that influence experienced safety (CCV, 2020; Eysink Smeets & Meijer; 2013). Eysink Smeets & Meijer (2013) add to this by stating experienced safety is influenced by the criminal, social, institutional and physical environment of someone. These factors as described by the CCV, Eysink Smeets & Meijer are also in line with the description of safety that the CBS (2019) uses. Van Noije & Iedema (2017) concluded that an individual feeling unsafe is *not* the same as someone being afraid of becoming a victim of criminal activity. To get a better idea of how LGBTQIA+ newcomers experience safety, they have also been asked about their fear of becoming a victim of crime. The subjects included in this study regarding experienced safety were based on those used by CBS (2019).

Considering the reports by LGBT Asylum Support (2020a; 2020b) and other studies that were mentioned in the previous chapter, it is relevant to study the experienced safety of LGBTQIA+

newcomers. There is reason to assume that LGBTQIA+ newcomers face discrimination and feel unsafe inside the asylum centres (LGBT Asylum Support 2020a; 2020b; ter Rele, 21-08-20). In order to get an idea of how safe LGBTQIA+ newcomers feel, the subject of experienced safety has been added to this study. To get a complete picture of how safe the respondents feel, they have been asked about their experienced safety inside and outside the asylum centre, whether they are afraid to become a victim of criminal activity, discrimination and their willingness to report incidents.

4. Methodology

In this chapter I will discuss the research approach that I have used in this study. I will start by explaining why I chose a mixed-method approach. Then, I will elaborate on the survey, interviews and confidentiality agreement. Moreover, I will discuss the survey items that were included and the limitations of the survey and interviews.

4.1 Justification of methods

The research question of this study is focused on the experiences of LGBTQIA+ newcomers, which is why I chose a research approach that allowed me to gain input from LGBTQIA+ newcomers. This can be done through quantitative and qualitative research methods. I wanted to use both and have chosen a mixed-method approach that combines quantitative with qualitative data. Therefore, I created a survey and conducted in-depth interviews. Conducting interviews with LGBTQIA+ newcomers has been done by other studies (Emmen & Elferink, 2017; Felten et al., 2015) as well as setting out a survey (LGBT Asylum Support 2020a; 2020b). The reason I chose a mixed-method approach is that the questions included in this study would be answered best by combining the two forms of data. The survey might not be able to explain all the answers, which is why interviews are valuable because it gives the interviewer the opportunity to ask follow-up questions. I expected that the survey might not reach a lot of LGBTQIA+ newcomers and might not give unambiguous results. Therefore, in order to answer the research question and sub-questions it is relevant to conduct interviews to get more information about a certain subject. For example, in the survey there was a question about how people experience the safety inside the asylum centre. The interviews gave me the opportunity to ask people what exactly makes them feel safe or unsafe inside the asylum centre. Hence, the interviews gave more information about why people felt unsafe. Both the surveys and the interviews complemented each other and gave me a better idea of the experiences of the LGBTQIA newcomers. When I would have only conducted interviews or only created the survey, I would have missed valuable information. The survey allowed me to get an overview of all the subjects and allowed me to reach more people. The interviews complemented the survey by providing context. Because the collection of data is only from one moment in time, this study is based on cross-sectional data.

4.2 Mixed-Methods approach

Survey

The collection of the data has started on the 20th of April. First, the survey was spread via the network of Cocktail Nijmegen. Other different organizations were approached as well to spread the survey. For example, Rainbow Netherlands, Vluchtelingenwerk (Refugee Work), and the other Cocktail projects in the Netherlands. To gather quantitative data, I have created a survey in Qualtrics. This program is used by the Nijmegen School of Management of Radboud University and is an easy tool which allows students to make surveys. The survey includes questions regarding five categories: personal details, social networks, experienced safety, general satisfaction and the pandemic. First, the respondents were

asked whether they agreed with their data being collected for the use of this study. They were informed about the purpose of the survey and that the survey was completely voluntary. The confidentiality agreement will be further explained at the end of chapter 4.2. In this chapter I will elaborate on the questions that I have included; all are based on existing literature. In total, 48 respondents have filled out parts of the survey, although 6 have only filled in the first question (whether they agree with participation and the terms of use). 42 respondents have answered parts of the survey and 26 completed the survey. From the 26 respondents there were 19 LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers and 7 status-holders. The number of respondents is not that large, but the group of LGBTQIA+ newcomers is small and they are quite hard to reach, especially during the pandemic. Therefore, 26 LGBTQIA+ newcomers is a great number of respondents. The respondents were between 18 and 64 years old, and all identify as LGBTQIA+. All answers of the respondents are useful; hence, the data of all respondents will be taken into account when analysing the data. An exception is made for the people that have only filled in the first question ('agree with the terms of use'), because there is no data from them included in the results. All other respondents are taken into consideration in the result section, even though not everyone filled in the survey completely. This means that in the result section, the number of respondents will differ for different results. Most respondents came from Gelderland, Noord-Brabant and Noord-Holland. All respondents are in the Netherlands for longer than a year, except for one person. The survey questions are included in Annex C.

All the answers were downloaded into an excel file and into SPSS. These questions ('items') were not changed in the dataset, as it was not needed to change anything for analysing the data. In Annex A; table 1 – 6, the full description of the variables is presented, including mode, mean, range and the number of respondents that have filled out this question.

Semi-structured interviews

Semi structured interviews are interviews with closed- and open questions, they allow the interviewer to ask follow-up questions and engage in a discussion with the interviewee. There are some disadvantages to this approach as it is quite time-consuming (Newcomer et al., 2015, p. 493). Advantages of the interviews are that they allow the interviewer to follow up on important leads and for the interviewee to speak more freely leads (Newcomer et al., 2015, p. 494). The interviews questions are less direct than the survey questions in order for the interviewee to answer more freely. Therefore, interviews can lead to new relevant subjects that surveys miss. It also allows the interviewer to ask whether they fully understand what the interviewee means, which means that it will probably lead to fully realized answers. This is not possible in the survey. Combining the two allowed me to complement the survey data with information that could not be retrieved through the quantitative data. All the questions included in the interview are connected to the survey topics.

In this study four LGBTQIA+ newcomers have been interviewed in the months May and June. They were approached via LGBT+ organizations. Two were status holders and the others were still in procedure. Three participants still lived in an asylum centre. The participants have also filled out the survey. After the interview took place all interviews have been transcribed in Word. Then the transcribed versions of the interviews are analysed with the program Atlas.ti. This program is also used to code the interviews. Hereafter all sentences have been coded into multiple categories. The interviews offer an explanation to some of the answers given in the survey. There are a few important remarks to be made before the results are discussed in paragraph 4.4. Please take these into consideration when reading the result section.

Confidentiality agreement

Before starting the survey, respondents have read about the content and the goal of the survey. In the introduction it is stated that all answers will remain anonymous and that participation in the study is voluntary. When they have read the introduction, they will only be able to continue with the survey if they agree with the terms of use and understand the content of the survey.

Before doing the interviews, I have asked respondents for their approval for using their data in my study. I explained what the research objective is, what the data is used for and that their answers are anonymous. I told them that the study is voluntarily and they do not have to answer questions if they do not want to. It is important for the respondents to understand what the study is about and what will happen to their answers. I also wanted to prevent situations where someone did not expect certain questions, for example regarding their feelings of safety or general satisfaction. When the respondents are not informed, some questions might take them by surprise. Hence, it is important to inform them fully so they can make a conscious decision whether they want to participate in the study. The participants in the interviews have also been asked if they agree with the fact that the transcribed versions of the interviews will be presented to the teachers of the Master program in Human Geography. Finally, all interviews are recorded with the permission of the participants. The participants of the interviews were able to read the transcript of their quotes before they were used in the final version of this study. The transcribed versions of the interviews and the records of the interviews will be deleted after approval of this thesis.

4.3 Survey items

4.3.1 Personal details

- Age
- Time in the Netherlands
- Gender identity
- Sexual orientation
- Province
- Living situation
- Daily activities

The items concerning personal details are included to get a basic understanding of people. In order to see if there are any differences or similarities between people with different characteristics, it is needed to ask these questions. These are standard survey questions included in many studies to get a general view of the respondent (Spierings, van Hilten-Rutten & Hasselt, 2021).

In Table 4.3.1 the personal details of the respondents are presented. For each personal detail the label, minimum value, maximum value, the mean, mode and N (number of respondents) is given. For example, the minimum age of the respondents that filled out the survey is 18, the maximum age is 64. The mean of the ages of all the respondents is 32, and the mode, or the age that was most common was 33. The N of age is 40, meaning that 40 respondents filled out this question of the survey.

Table 4.3.1 Descriptive statistics of personal details

Variables	Labels	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Mode	N
Please enter your age in numbers.	-	18	64	32.23	33	40
What do you identify with? You can give multiple answers.	1 Heterosexual 2 homosexual 3 lesbian 4 bisexual 5 pansexual 6 asexual 7 queer 8 prefer to self-describe 9 prefer not to say	2	9	-	2	42
What gender was assigned to you when you were born?	1 male 2 female 3 intersex 4 prefer to self-describe 5 prefer not to say	1	5	1.40	1	42
What is your gender identity? You can give multiple answers.	1 male 2 female 3 non-binary 4 gender-fluid 5 prefer to self-describe 6 prefer not to say	1	4	-	1	42
How long have you been in the Netherlands?	1 Less than six months 2 Six months – one year 3 One – two years 4 More than two years	2	4	3.59	4	41
What province do you live in?	1 Groningen 2 Friesland 3 Drenthe 4 Flevoland 5 Overijssel 6 Gelderland 7 Noord-Brabant 8 Limburg 9 Utrecht 10 Zeeland 11 Zuid-Holland 12 Noord-Holland	1	12	6.68	6	41
How would you describe the area you live in?	1 Small town 2 Large town 3 Small city 4 Large city	1	4	2.24	1	42

What is your current situation?	1 In asylum centre 2 Not in asylum centre	1	2	1.29	1	41
When did you leave the asylum centre?	1 Before the pandemic 2 During the pandemic 3 I have never lived in an asylum centre 4 Other	1	4	2.50	2 - 4	12
Do you live in an LGBTQI+ unit at the asylum centre?	1 Yes 2 No	1	2	1.61	2 - 3	28
How long have you lived in an LGBTQI+ unit?	1 Less than six months 2 Six months – one year 3 One – two years 4 More than two years	2	4	3.20	3	10
What is your main occupation during the day? You can give multiple answers.	1 Working 2 Studying 3 Voluntary work 4 Hobbies 5 Sports 6 Household 7 Caregiving 8 Other	1	8	4.55	2	40

4.3.2 Social networks

- Contact to friends, family, neighbours and other residents
- Support from COA, organizations, contacts
- Knowledge of organizations
- Satisfaction with support

The items regarding the amount of contact with friends, family, neighbours and other residents is based on multiple studies (Van Beuningen & De Witt, 2016b; Schmeets; 2014). Only the category ‘other residents’ is added to this study specifically. The items regarding the organizations are partly based on studies by LGBT Asylum Support (2020a) and Spierings, van Hilten-Rutten & Hasselt (2021). The satisfaction with support and contact is based on the study by Coumans & Schmeets (2020).

First, the respondents were asked what kind of contacts were important to them: friends, family, residents, neighbours or other contacts. Second, the respondents were asked how often they were in contact with these groups. The possibilities were: 1) every day, 2) every week, 3) every month, 4) every six months, 5) every year or 6) never. To get an idea of the influence of the pandemic, the respondents were asked if the contact with the groups had changed. The options were: 1) less contact because of the

pandemic, 2) the same amount of contact, 3) more contact or 4) does not apply to me. Next to personal contacts, the respondents were asked what kind of organizations they were familiar with. The following options were mentioned in the survey: 1) Vluchtelingenwerk (Refugee Work), 2) Vluchtelingen-Organisaties Nederland (Refugee Organization Netherlands), 3) COC Netherlands, 4) Open Embassy, 5) Refugee Start Force, 6) Kerk in Actie (Church in action), 7) Rainbow Netherlands, 8) Cocktail Netherlands, 9) LGBT Asylum Support and 10) Other organizations. The respondents were able to give multiple answers and add their own suggestions when choosing the option 'other organization'. Next, the respondents were asked which of these organizations they felt supported by. The answering options were the same as the previous question.

4.3.3 General satisfaction

- Living situation
- Social contacts
- Life in general
- Daily occupation
- Health

The items concerning the satisfaction with health, living situation, life in general and main occupation is based on a study by Moonen et al. (2015). Hence, questions about general satisfaction are included in this survey. Furthermore, the following questions concerned how satisfied they were by giving a grade from 0 (not satisfied at all) to 10 (extremely satisfied). The respondents who did not live in an asylum centre anymore were asked how satisfied they were with their social contacts *when* they lived in an asylum centre. Then, all the respondents were asked how satisfied they were with their social network before the pandemic and now. To understand how satisfied the respondents were with other aspects of their life, they were also asked to grade their satisfaction regarding their 1) health, 2) daily occupation, 3) living situation and 4) life in general.

The questions about social wellbeing are based on a standard scale created by Keyes (1998). As argued before, it is applied by many studies and is usually connected to psychological wellbeing and emotional wellbeing (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Lamers, et al., 2011). However, the usual scales for measuring wellbeing were quite long, which is why a shorter scale was created with 14 items for the three aspects of wellbeing. In this study, only the questions of social wellbeing will be used. This scale is classified as valid and reliable in other studies (Keyes et al., 2008; Keyes et al., 2011; Lamers et al., 2011). In this study, the five items of social wellbeing have been recoded into one variable: social wellbeing. First a reliability analysis was conducted to state whether the five items can be reliable as one variable. This scale has a Cronbach's alfa of 0,801, which is considered as reliable. This is in line with what was stated in the other studies (Keyes et al., 2008, Keyes et al., 2011 and Lamers et al., 2011).

Social wellbeing was split up into five items. The respondents were asked if during the past month, did they feel like they 1) had something to contribute to society, 2) felt like they belonged to a certain group, 3) think society is a good place or becoming better, 4) feel like people are good in general and 5) if they think the way society works makes sense to them (Keyes 1998; Hone et al., 2014, p. 66). The answer options were 1) never, 2) once or twice, 3) about once a week, 4) about 2 or 3 times a week, 5) almost every day and 6) every day. The respondents that did not live in an asylum centre got different questions, instead of answering these five questions thinking about the *last month*, they were asked to think about their time in the asylum centre.

4.3.4 Experienced safety

- Feelings of safety inside the asylum centre
- Feelings of safety outside of asylum centre
- If people are open about their sexuality/gender identity
- If people fear to become a victim of criminal activity
- If people feel discriminated against for being LGBTQIA+
- If and where people would report an incident

The items in this survey concerning experienced safety are based on the last study by CBS (2019). First the respondents were asked if they could grade the safety inside and outside the asylum centre on a scale from 0 (very unsafe) to 10 (very safe). Second, they were asked if they felt 1) safer, 2) the same or 3) less safe in- and outside the asylum centre because of the pandemic. Third, they were asked whether three statements applied to them: whether they were open about their sexual orientation inside the asylum centre, whether they were open about their gender identity in the asylum centre and if they knew who to ask for help in the asylum centre. The answer options were: 1) describes me extremely well, 2) describes me very well, 3) describes me moderately well, 4) describes me slightly well and 5) does not describe me. These three statements were followed by two other statements: how often felt they were discriminated against in the asylum centre for being LGBTQIA+ and how often they were afraid to become a victim of criminal activity inside the asylum centre. The options were: 1) never, 2) sometimes, 3) half the time, 4) most of the time and 5) always.

4.4 Limitations of the survey and interviews

1. *Respondents.* Not all LGBTQIA+ newcomers have filled out the entire survey. This made it a bit more difficult to present and analyse the data. Please take into consideration that the number of respondents (presented as 'N' in the result section) differs per subject. The reason that people might not have filled out the entire survey could be because the survey is too long, this will be discussed in the conclusion.
2. *Representation.* The number of participants in the interviews are insufficient to make general conclusions about LGBTQIA+ newcomers as a group. Please note that this study gives an indication of what the experiences are of LGBTQIA+ newcomers but cannot give a representation of the whole group. Reason for this is that 1) we do not know how big the group of LGBTQIA+ newcomers is in The Netherlands and 2) the sample size of the survey as well as the interviews are not big enough.
3. *Personal details.* The first and foremost important aspect in conducting the interviews was to protect the privacy of the participants. Hence, next to names; ages, nationalities, places or asylum centres are not mentioned in this study. To keep the respondents completely anonymous any personal details have been removed in the final product. Even places, nationalities or names of asylum centres can give hints as to who the person giving the interview is. In some cases, people are the only ones who are LGBTQIA+, from a country, from a certain age or gender identity living in an asylum centre, meaning that this would expose people even when no names are mentioned. People were given the opportunity to read the final product containing their interviews and approving it, meaning that this product has been approved by the respondents themselves. To not reveal the gender of the participants, they will be referred to as 'they' in this study.
4. *Length.* The interviews were between 25 and 40 minutes. The longest interview was with the person that no longer lives in an asylum centre. One interview was held in the train, two were inside the asylum centre. For the people still living in an asylum centre it was harder to find a safe spot to do the interview. One of the participants said that the interview could not take too long because their roommate would return soon and the roommate did not like him talking about being LGBTQIA+.

5. Results

In this section the results of this study will be provided. I will discuss the subjects separately and show visual representations of the survey data. Next to that, I will add quotes of the interviews. It was impossible to add all complete interviews to this study, which is why some sentences have been left out. This is presented in this study as: (...). In some cases participants or respondents mentioned their country of origin or the names of their towns. In order to protect their privacy these names have been replaced with my country of origin or my town.

5.1 Personal information

First, I will give an overview of whether the respondents identified as being LGBTQIA+ and what their gender identities were. Moreover, the ages, living situation and province that the respondents live in will be discussed.

Figure 5.1.1 Identifying with LGBTQIA+

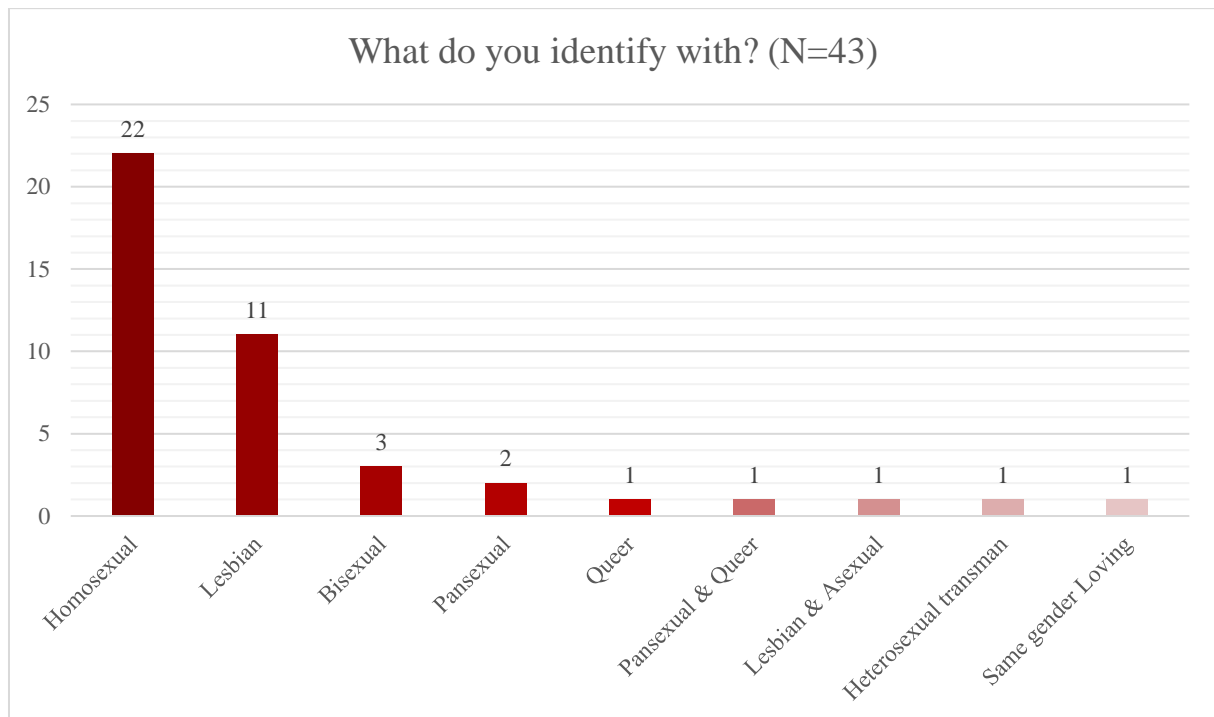


Figure 5.1.2 Gender assigned by birth

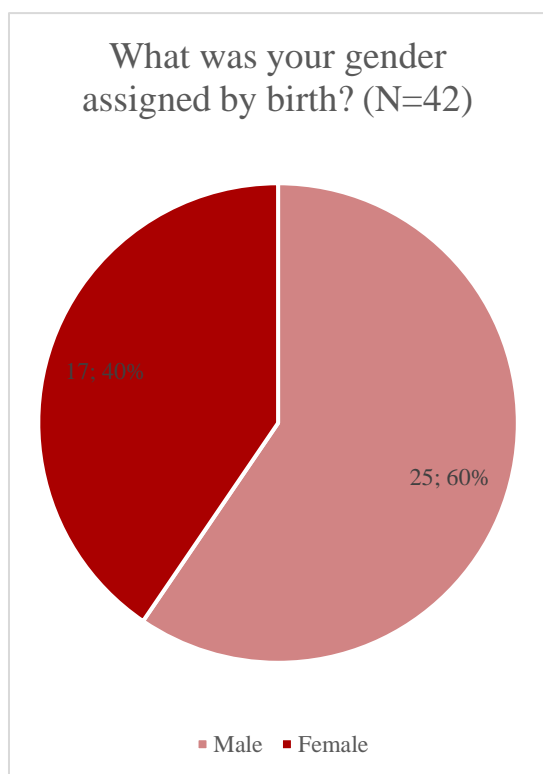
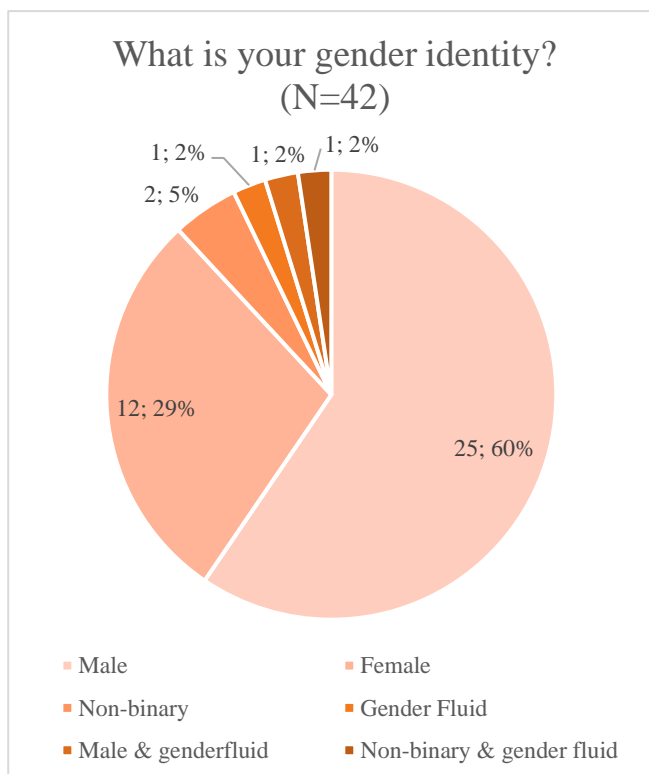


Figure 5.1.3 Gender identity



As presented in figure 5.1.1, most respondents who filled out the survey identify as being either homosexual (22) or lesbian (11). Figure 5.1.2 illustrates that 60% of the respondents were assigned as males by birth, 40% was assigned the gender female. In figure 5.1.3 it is shown that about 60% identifies as male and 29% as female. 5% identified as non-binary and 2% as gender fluid. One person (2%) identifies as being male and gender fluid and another (2%) as being non-binary & gender fluid.

Figure 5.1.4 Age

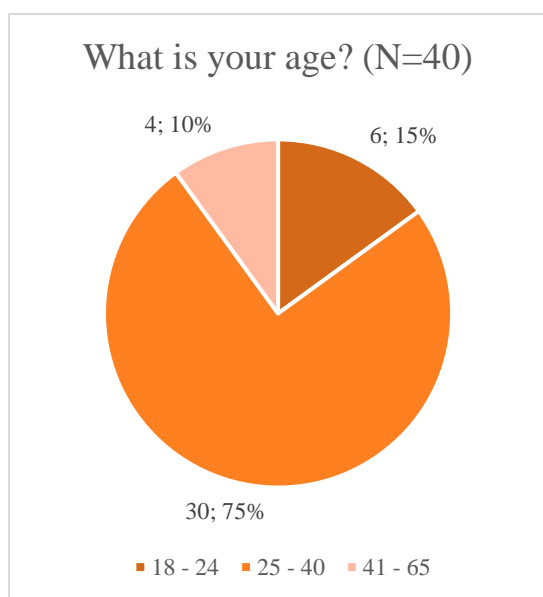


Figure 5.1.5 Living situation

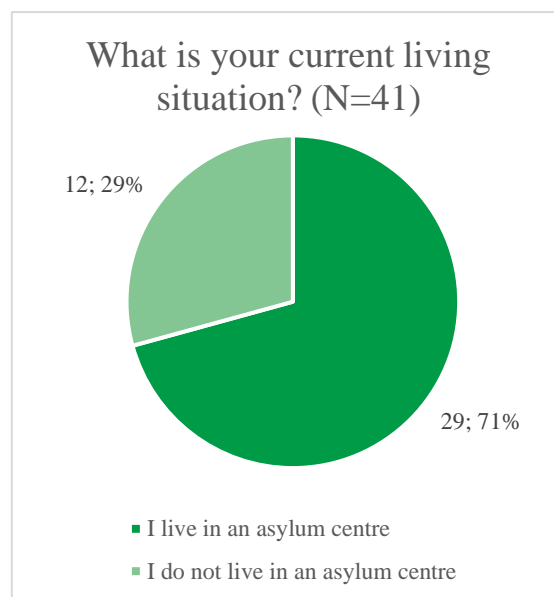
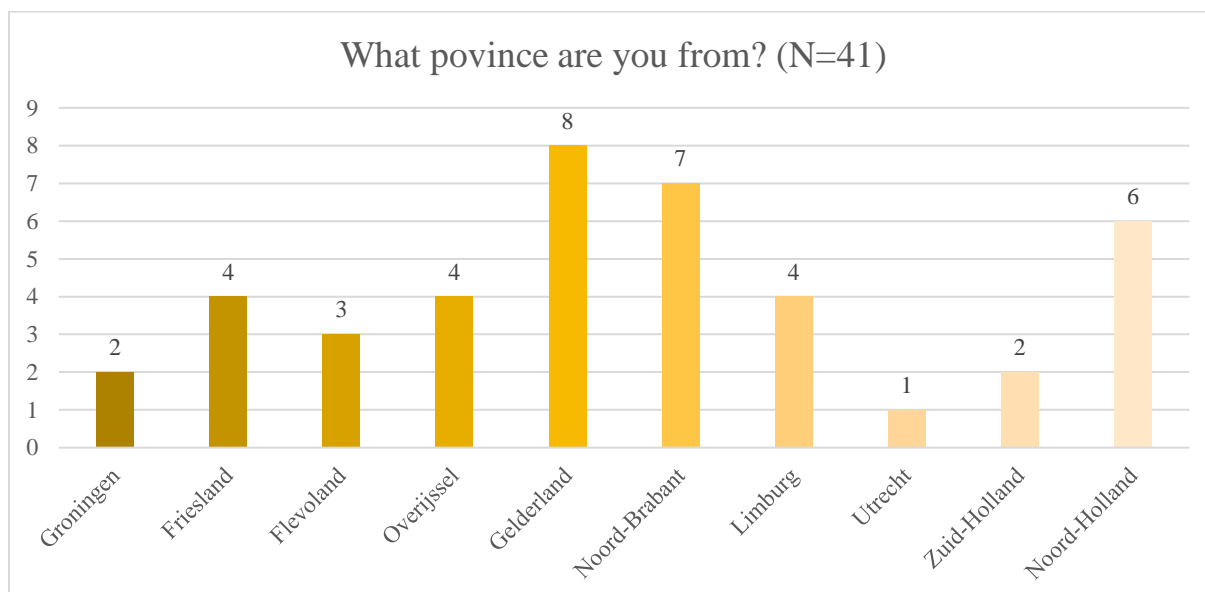


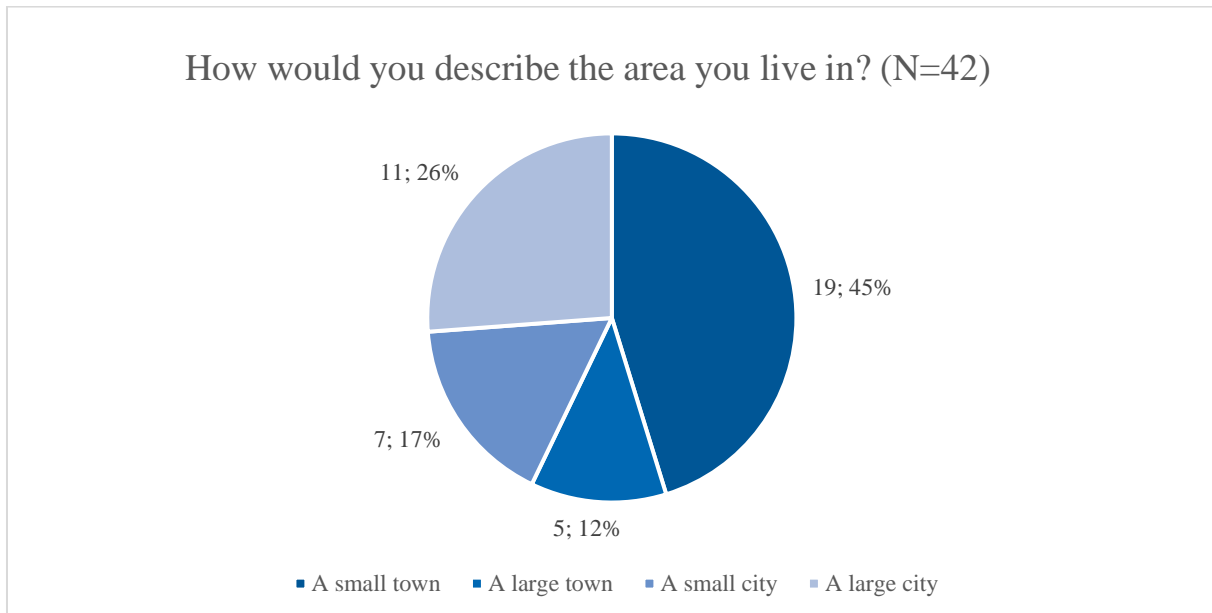
Figure 5.1.6 Descriptive numbers Provinces



In figure 5.1.4 it is shown that most respondents (75%) are between the ages 25 to 40. Six people (15%) are relatively young: between 18 and 24. Four (10%) are in the oldest category: age 41 to 65. In figure 5.1.5 it is presented who out of the respondents lives in an asylum centre and who does not. 29 respondents (71%) still live in an asylum centre while 12 (29%) do not. In this result section, the people who do not live in an asylum centre will be seen as status holders, those living in an asylum centre as asylum seekers. One of the people status holders answered that they never lived in an asylum centre. Out of the 28 asylum seekers, 11 live in an LGBT+ unit. All of them have lived there for at least six months. Figure 5.1.6 presents the provinces the respondents live in. Most are from Gelderland (8), Noord-Brabant (7) and Noord-Holland (6), and the least are from Utrecht (1), Zeeland (0), Drenthe (0).

Overall, there are people from almost every province who participated in the survey, except Zeeland and Drenthe.

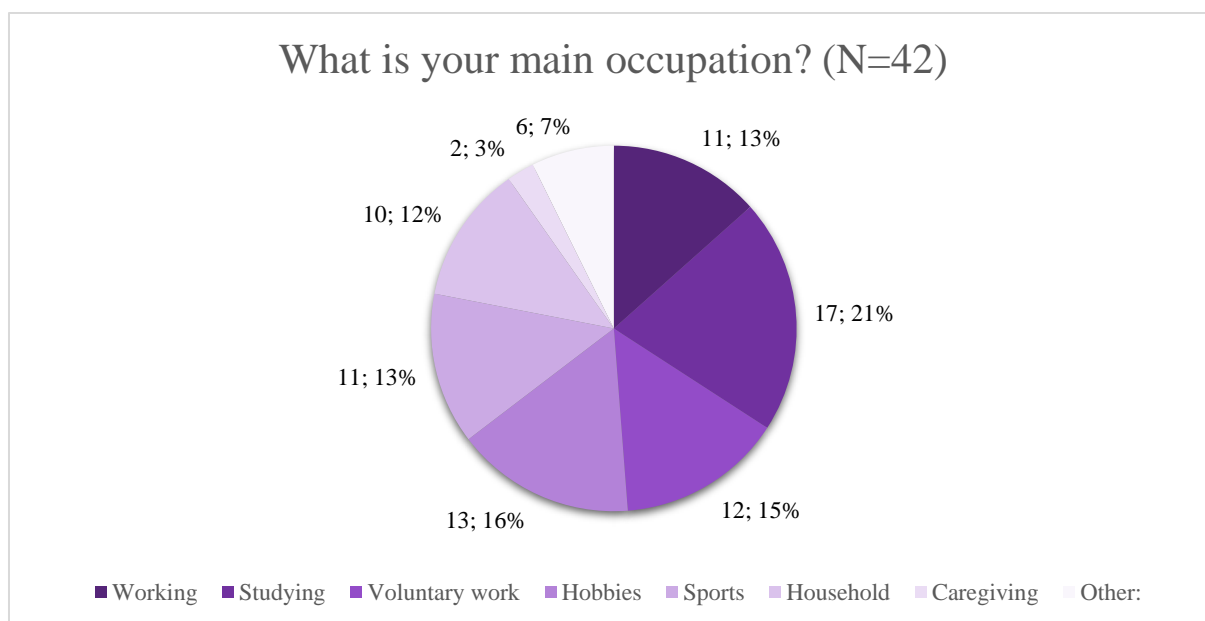
Figure 5.1.7 Description area



As shown in Figure 5.1.7, most respondents would describe the area they live in as a small town (45%), followed by a large city (26%). The last chosen options were a small city (17%) and a large town (12%). During the interviews, I asked participant A what kind of differences there were between the asylum centres in different areas. Participant A explained that there are some differences between asylum centres, as some are very remote.

'Yes, I think so, because some locations were very isolated as you said. (...) X was very, I think it was one of the worst asylum centres at that point I was actually considering what do I do right now. This is a really bad location. It was not clean, the men used the women's bathroom, it was a very bad location as an asylum centre. And then after the asylum centre itself it was like the country-side of the Netherlands. I felt like the vibe was not like, it's not like a city it's like a town. People were like very, I will not say everyone, but when I would go to the centre or supermarket they would have judgy looks.'
– Participant A

Figure 5.1.8 Main occupation



In figure 5.1.8 we see what respondents say their main occupation is. The respondents were able to give multiple answers. It is shown that studying (21%), voluntary work (16%) and hobbies (15%) were what most people are occupied with. Caregiving (3%) was the least answered option. Some respondents gave 'other' as an answer and added the following: 'nothing', 'retired', 'support out and proud Uganda, an LGBT organization worked for in Uganda before my flee', 'walking in forest with dog'.

During the interviews, I asked the participants of the interviews what they would do during the day.

'I would sit in my room, scroll through Facebook. Maybe talk to my friends in my country of origin. Text friends, play some games on my phone, watch a tv show on my laptop or something. Just staying in my room. Waiting for the day to pass.' – Participant A

'Sometimes I try to do work, I go to the football field, I do some sports. So that I do not feel weak, I keep myself busy, do some cleaning, go for shopping, just hang around. (...) Instead of just staying at home, doing nothing. I do some sports, it's better than doing nothing.' - Participant B

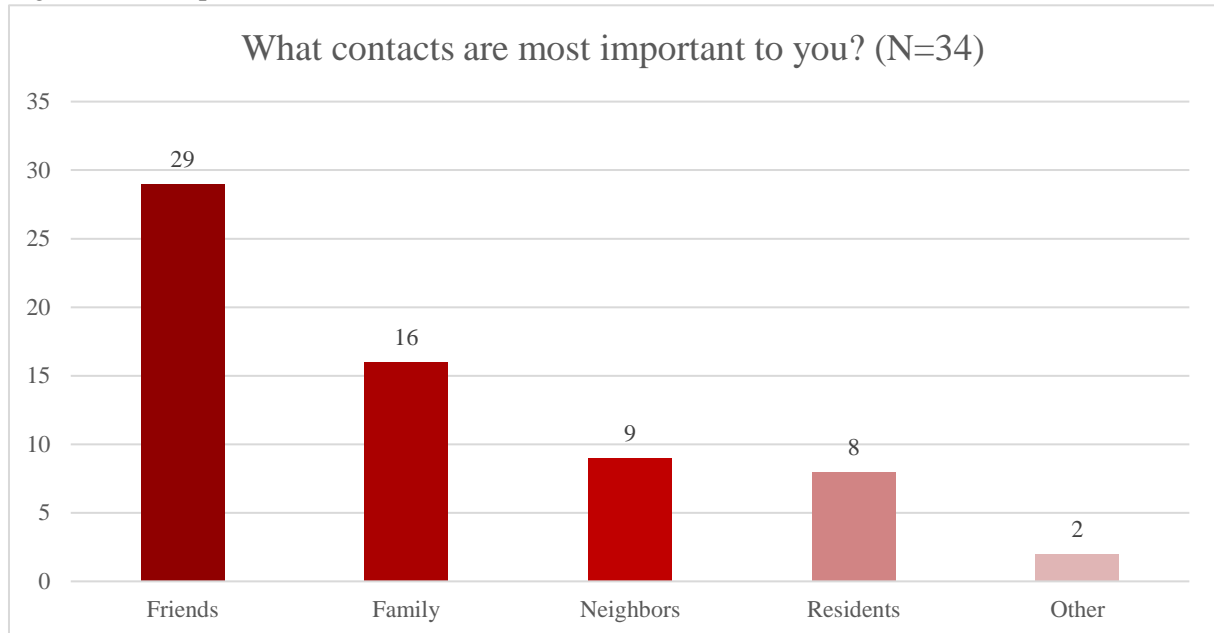
Participant C explained that they had a cleaning job. I asked participant C if it was important to keep busy.

'Yes. Yes. Keep busy it's like, yes it's very important for me. Of course I push myself a lot for that, because honestly I don't want to go out from my room. And most of the time I just sit in my room. But I know it's a good example for my daughter to go somewhere. But I try be more social.' – Participant C

5.2 Social networks

In this section I will discuss what the social network of the respondents looks like. I will present the importance of their contacts, the frequency of contact with certain groups, the knowledge of organizations, their feeling of support and satisfaction with their social network.

Figure 5.2.1. Importance of contacts



In figure 5.2.1 we can see how the respondents answered in terms of what contacts they find important. Again, multiple answers were possible. Most people, 29 (85.3%) have answered that they find friends the most important contacts, followed by family (16; 47.1%), neighbours (26.5%), residents (23.5%) and other social contacts (5.9%). Some people had filled out the other category, which entails answers like a boyfriend.

Figure 5.2.2 Frequency of contact

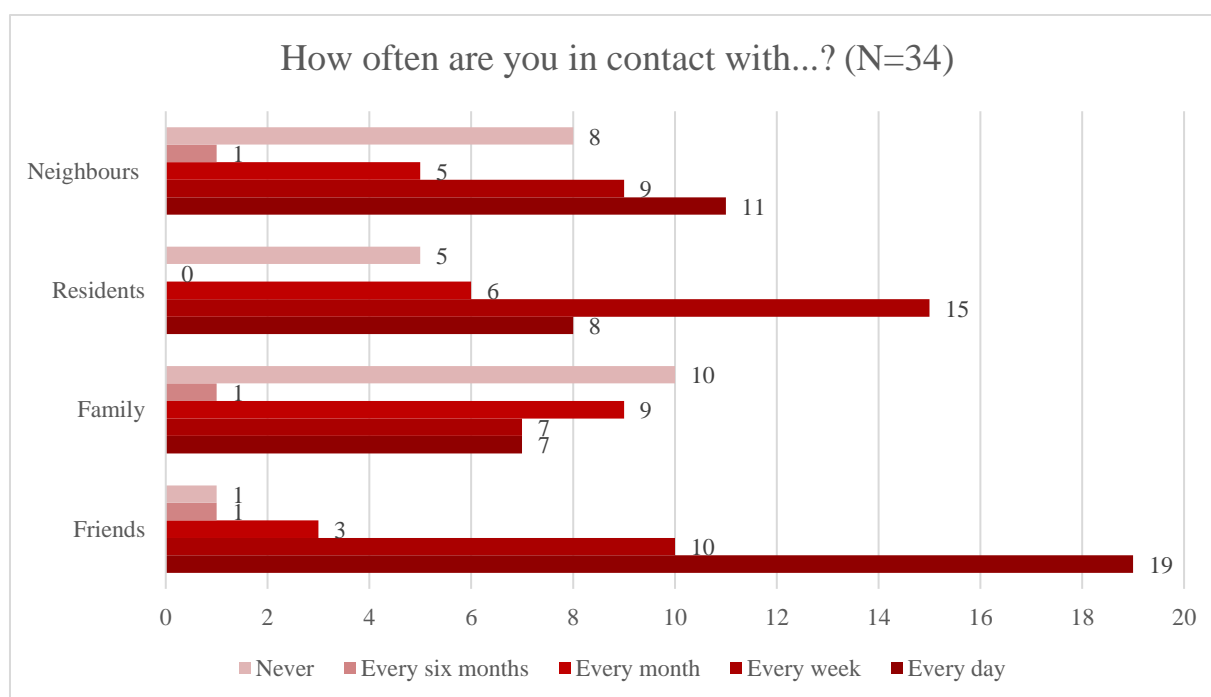


Figure 5.2.2 shows how often the respondents were in contact with others. Respondents are most in contact with friends, as 19 (55.9%) people talk to them every day. Ten (29.4%) respondents talk to their friends at least every week, and only two (5.9%) people speak with them every six months or never. As for family, seven (20.6%) respondents speak with them every day, another seven (20.6%) speak with them every week. Ten (29.4%) respondents do not speak with their family at all. 15 (44.1%) people state they speak with the other residents every week and eight (23.5%) every day. 11 (32.4%) state they speak with their neighbours every day and nine (26.5%) at least every week. In conclusion, when we consider speaking to someone at least every week, friends and residents are spoken to the most by the respondents and neighbours and family the least. Friends are also considered most important, so this result is in line with what is shown in figure 5.2.1. However, residents and neighbours are not considered that important, so the contact people have with them is probably considered less meaningful. It is of course logical that people are in contact with the residents every week, since they live in the asylum centre as well. There are 27 (79.4%) that have contact with one of these groups every day. This means that only seven have contact with one of these groups every week or less. There is no one who has no contact at all, only one person has contact with one of these groups every month.

I have asked the participants of the interviews what kind of contacts they had. All mentioned that they had contact with organizations in the Netherlands. Other kind of contacts: friends, residents, neighbours, partners, differed between the participants.

'I had contact with my old friends, my university friends for a while. But we kind of drifted apart, our relationship was hard to maintain because of the distance and everything. We just

graduated and I travelled, experiencing our lives. Our friendships/relationships kind of dated. But when I came here I met X and wife and they were really nice and we grew closer. They were the right people at the right time. – Participant A

Participant B and C explained what their social network looked like. Participant B explained they were in contact with their neighbours, COA and the people at the meetings of Cocktail. Participant C also mentioned the meetings of COC and explained that they would go to their girlfriend over the weekends.

'Yes, my neighbours, we do stay together, have contact. And also contact of COA. Also the people at our meetings.' – Participant B

'Before corona I went to COC in X. They made a party or some meeting, and I went there not often, but I had the contacts there. But every weekend I go to X, my girlfriend she lives there. So it's like fresh air for me and for my daughter. Every weekend we're there. And also I have work here, and people from my work they know about my orientation and they're okay with that. So it's not a problem.' – Participant C

Moreover, participant D explained what it is like to be in contact with other people in the asylum centres. They explained that they had no choice but to interact with people inside the asylum centres.

'Well in the asylum centre you have no choice, you have to interact with everybody, because it's, it's like a neighbourhood and everybody knows everybody's business. And it's just unavoidable because people have nothing to do with their time. (...) and besides COA if you don't interact with other people their like 'are you okay, do you need a psychologist'. Like no I don't need to stick with these people to begin with. I don't even need to talk to them, they make my life crazy. - Participant D

Figure 5.2.3 Contact since the pandemic

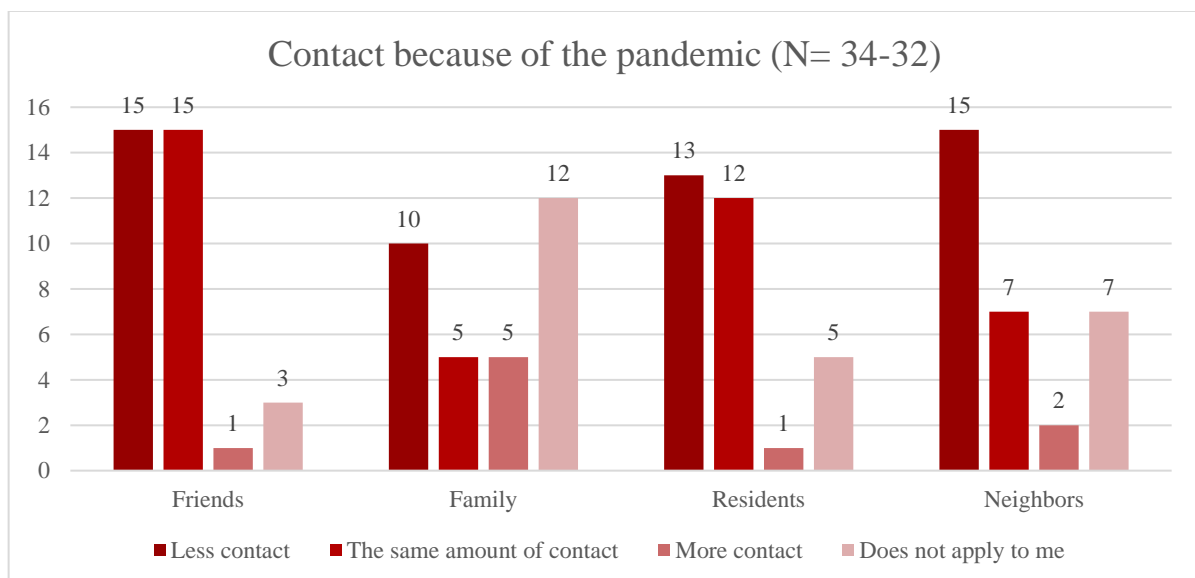
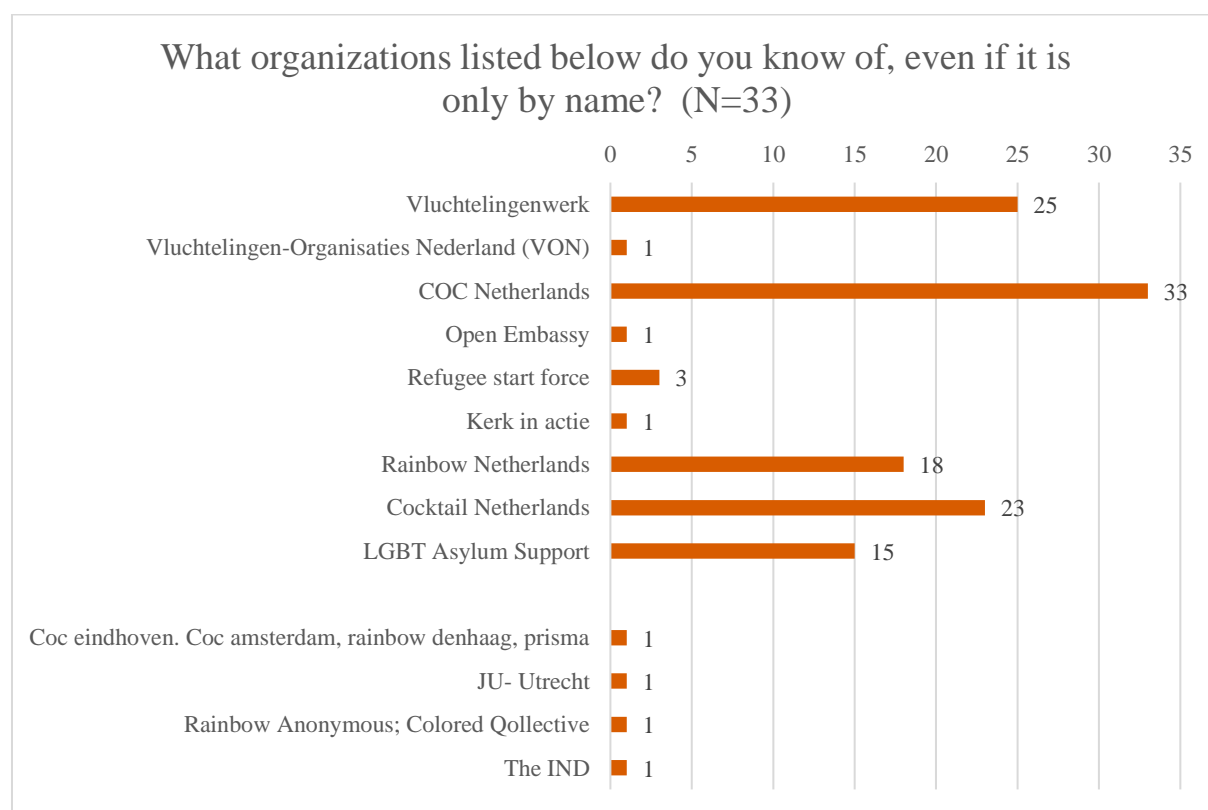


Figure 5.2.3 illustrates how the contact with friends, family, residents and neighbours changed because of the pandemic. 15 (44.2%) respondents state they have less contact with their friends. The same goes for family (31.3%), residents (41.9%) and neighbours (48.4%), as most people state they have less contact with these groups. 15 (44.2%) people state they have the same amount of contact with their friends and 12 (37.5%) state the same for residents. Only a few respondents have more contact with their friends (2.9%), family (15.6%), residents (3.2%) and neighbours (3.2%). This result seems to suggest that the pandemic has had an impact on the social contact that the respondents have. Many have indicated that they are in less contact with many of these groups, which implies that the social contact they have had has decreased. The contact with friends and other residents seems to be the most stable, as many respondents have also stated the contact remained the same.

Figure 5.2.4 Knowledge of organizations



As is shown in figure 5.2.4, most respondents know of some organizations. Most respondents are familiar with COC Netherlands (100%) and Vluchtelingenwerk (Refugee Work, 75.8%). Rainbow Netherlands (54.5%), Cocktail (69.7%) and LGBT Asylum Support (45.5%) are also well-known among some of the respondents. Vluchtelingen-Organisaties Nederland (Refugee Organization Netherlands) (3%), Open Embassy (3%), Kerk in actie (Church in action, 3%) and Refugee start force (9%) are less known. The last four categories are filled out by respondents who chose to write other organizations that they know of.

I asked the participants of the interviews what kind of organizations they were familiar with. Participant A and D explained the following:

'Before I came here I was not familiar with any of the organizations. But X was a volunteer at COC, Cocktail, and in my country of origin I had already been an activist and I wanted to do something here as well. I think I volunteered in March or February. I think it was February when I volunteered at the COC. And then I hadn't been with any other organization. – Participant A

'But outside the Asylum centre I have a lot of contact with organizations like COC. (...) I am an activist so I know many organizations. But I would like to point out that it's just me. I'd say 90% of the LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers cannot network as much as I can, because it's not their job and it's my job, I know how to be professional about networking.' - Participant D

Participant A explained they was also familiar with Vluchtelingenwerk:

'Yes they would help sometimes if I need something. But because I changed locations so many times, and the case worker or contact person that I had in every asylum centre was different. I didn't want to keep repeating my story over and over.' – Participant A

Figure 5.2.5 Support by organizations

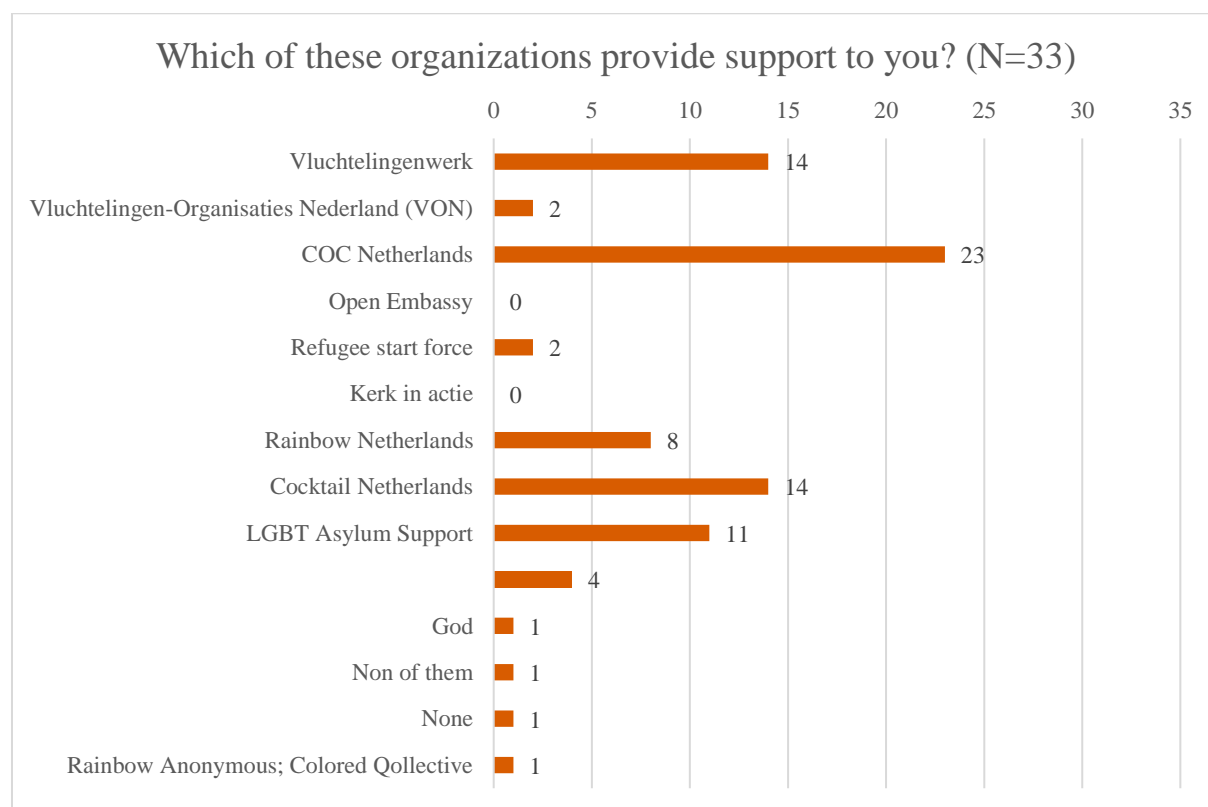
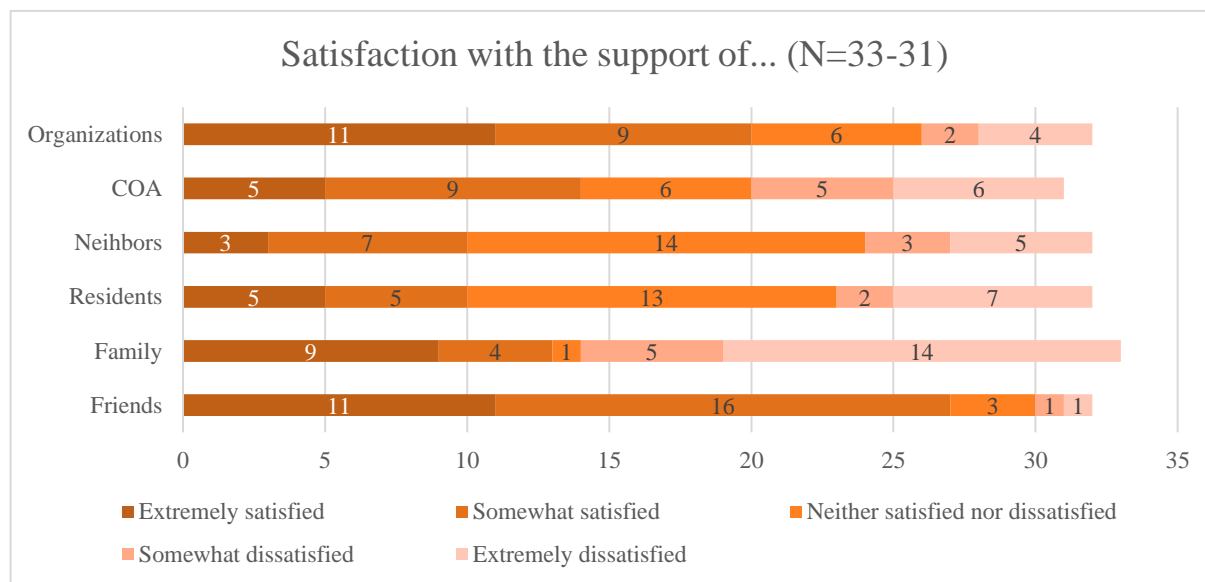


Figure 5.2.5 shows us which organizations the respondents feel supported by. Most respondents feel supported by COC Netherlands (69.7%), followed by Vluchtelingenwerk (Refugee Work, 42.4%), Cocktail (42.4%), LGBT Asylum Support (33.3%) and Rainbow Netherlands (24.2%). Some feel

supported by VON (6%) and Refugee start force (6%). Again, the last four categories are given by respondents that chose to write down their own suggestions, we can see that two (6%) answered that they do not feel supported by any organization. Overall, the respondents do seem to feel supported by the organizations in the Netherlands.

Figure 5.2.6 Satisfaction with the support of social network



In figure 5.2.6 it is illustrated how satisfied the respondents are with the support they have from their social networks. We can see that 27 respondents (84.3%) are extremely satisfied or satisfied with their friends. The following group is the organizations in the Netherlands, 20 people (62.5%) are either satisfied or extremely satisfied with the organizations. 14 respondents (40.6%) are either extremely satisfied or satisfied with the support of their family. On the other hand, 19 (57.6%) state they are dissatisfied or extremely dissatisfied with the support of their family, while only two respondents (6.3%) feel the same about their friends. The respondents seem to be most hesitant about their neighbours and residents, as 14 out of 32 respondents (43.8%) are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the support of their neighbours, 13 respondents (40.6%) share the same feeling about the other residents. As for COA, 14 out of 31 respondents (45.2%) are satisfied with their support, while 11 (35.5%) state that they are not. In conclusion, the respondents seem to be most satisfied with the support of their friends and least satisfied with the support of their family.

The participants of the interviews also mentioned COA. Some stated they did feel supported by COA, others said they did not.

'Yes I would ask them at the counter and they would give me information and really put in an effort. And at some other locations they were just like, we don't care.' – Participant A

'I cannot say COA really support LGBTQIA+ in hometown. No. (...) No no. we have not any support, any information, nothing. Just every gay person, every LGBTQIA+ person, try found some information in internet, Facebook, Instagram, so.' – Participant C

'No I don't talk to COA generally. (...) Yes, because for me I trade with the UN, so I know the job of the COA stuff and they are supposed to give you soap and a piece of blanket and just leave you like that. The job is not to do anything more than that. So I came here already knowing that.' – Participant D

'(..) Yes because in this place, I do not really feel comfortable. I still feel like we could use more support. Because where we are staying is quite uncomfortable. So many people like where were living. As I am talking to you now, I already told you I gave an excuse.' – Participant B

Participant B explained that it felt uncomfortable to be in the asylum centre. In the last sentence participant B is referring to the fact that they had to make an excuse for their roommate to be able to do the interview. Therefore, the interview also had to be quick, because we had to be done before the roommate came back. During the interviews I asked participant A whether there was enough attention from municipalities and COA for LGBTQIA+ people. Participant A answered:

'I think it's chaotic, I think especially with corona right now, it's very hectic, I'm pretty sure. I would say they are doing their job but I also would say they need to pay a little bit extra attention to the very small complaints that they not listen to, and then these complaints would escalate later on. And then it's too late to kind of do something about it. 'Oh shit a person complaints so many times about their homophobic roommate, but we kind of told them that there are no empty rooms, and know they have beaten each other or now they have hurt each other'. I understand that it is very stressful for them to have so many things, so many cases, so many complaints, so many people pretending to be LGBTQIA+ sometimes in the asylum centre. Some people they say or do horrible things. I would say they are trying to do their best, but sometimes it works sometimes it doesn't honestly.' – Participant A

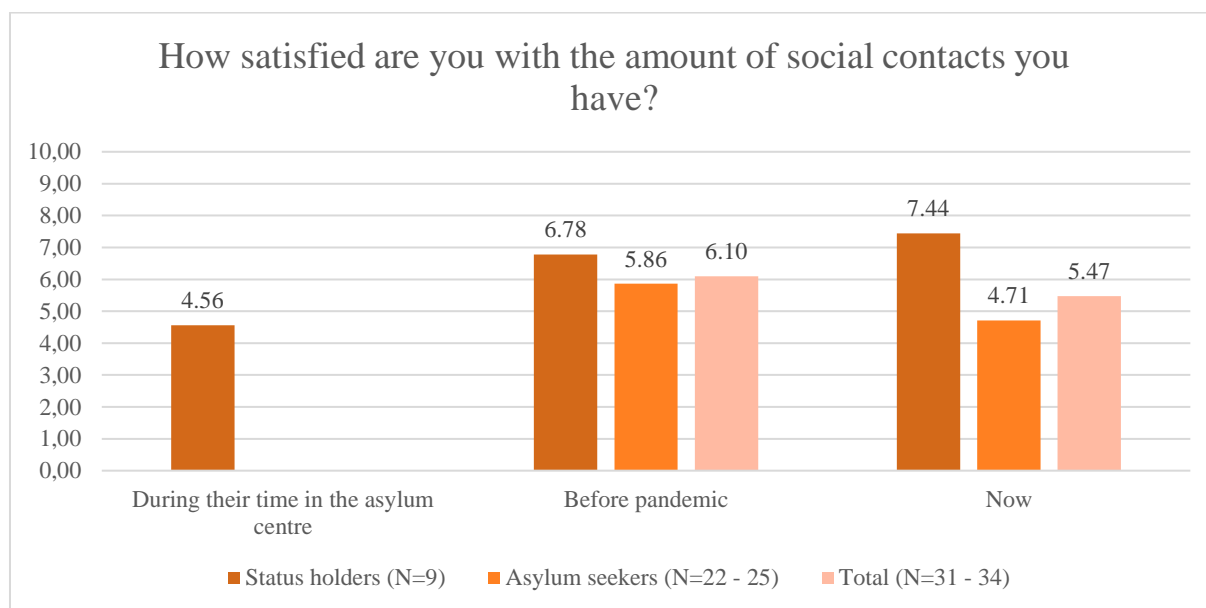
Continuing the subject of social networks and support, I asked one of the participants whether they felt supported by the COC.

'Yes. Yes. I know I can at any moment I can sent message and they reply, I can ask help, they reply. They're very good because when I came to the asylum centre, this is my first asylum centre, I always lived here' – Participant C

'Yes because anytime were in the meeting, I see that we are the same, an LGBT group, so I feel happy interacting with everybody. (...) And they are understanding, it is very nice. So that is why I always feel happy to join the meetings so I can interact with my people, I also call it my family.' – Participant B

Overall, the respondents seem to be most satisfied with the support of their friends, and least satisfied with the support of their family.

Figure 5.2.7 Satisfaction with social contacts



When looking at the satisfaction, we can see in figure 5.2.7 that status holders were not really satisfied with their social contacts when they were living in the asylum centre. Neither are asylum seekers; however they were more satisfied with their social network before the pandemic than they are now. The opposite is true for status holders, they seem to be more satisfied with their social network now than they were before the pandemic. Please note that there is just a small number of status holders that filled out this question (9).

In order to test whether there is a relevant difference between the satisfaction with social contacts before the pandemic and now, a paired t-test has been conducted. This test states whether there is a relevant difference between two means or not. To conduct this test, a few assumptions need to be met (Field, 2013; Armitage & Berry, 1994). Further information about this test and the assumptions can be found in Annex B.

Table 5.2.1 Paired Samples T-test

Satisfaction with social network before the pandemic and now, presented in means

Groups	Before the pandemic	Now	Mean Difference
All newcomers (N=31)	6.10	5.35	0.74
Asylum seekers (N=21)	5.86	4.43	1.43*
Status holders (N=9)	6.78	7.44	-0.67

Notes: ***= $p < 0.001$, ** = $p < 0.01$, * = $p < 0.05$.

The means of the satisfaction with the social network of all newcomers are presented in table 5.2.1. The difference between the satisfaction before the pandemic and now is 0.74 for all respondents. However, this difference is not significant, neither is the difference in scores for status holders (-0.67). The difference between the satisfaction before and after the pandemic of asylum seekers in scores is 1.43. This difference is significant, meaning that based on the paired samples t-test a relevant difference can be assumed which does not rely on coincidence. This result is based only on the data of the respondents in this dataset. Therefore, the small number of respondents (21 asylum seekers and nine status holders) needs to be taken into consideration when conclusions based in this result are made. Especially the number of status holders is too low to draw conclusions based on this test. Based on this test, it seems that the asylum seekers rated their satisfaction with their social network higher before the pandemic than now. An explanation could be that because of the lockdowns they were unable to go out and go undertake activities with others. The meetings that are organized by many organizations as Cocktail and Rainbow Netherlands were online as well, meaning that it was harder for LGBTQIA+ newcomers to meet others alike them in real life.

5.3 General satisfaction

Figure 5.3.1 Satisfaction about a certain topic in means

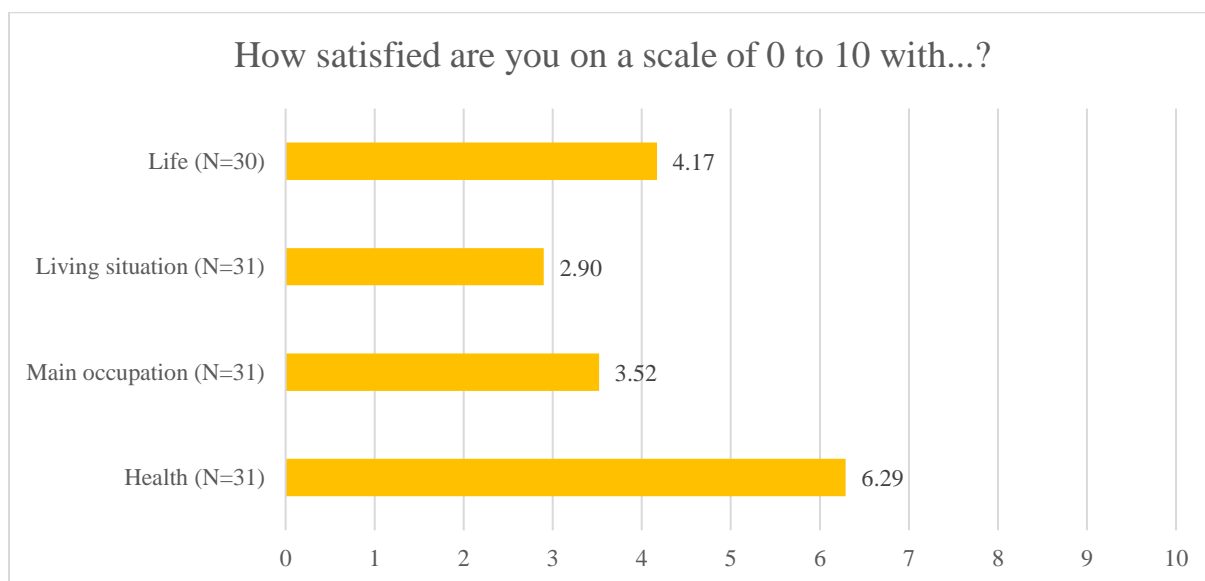
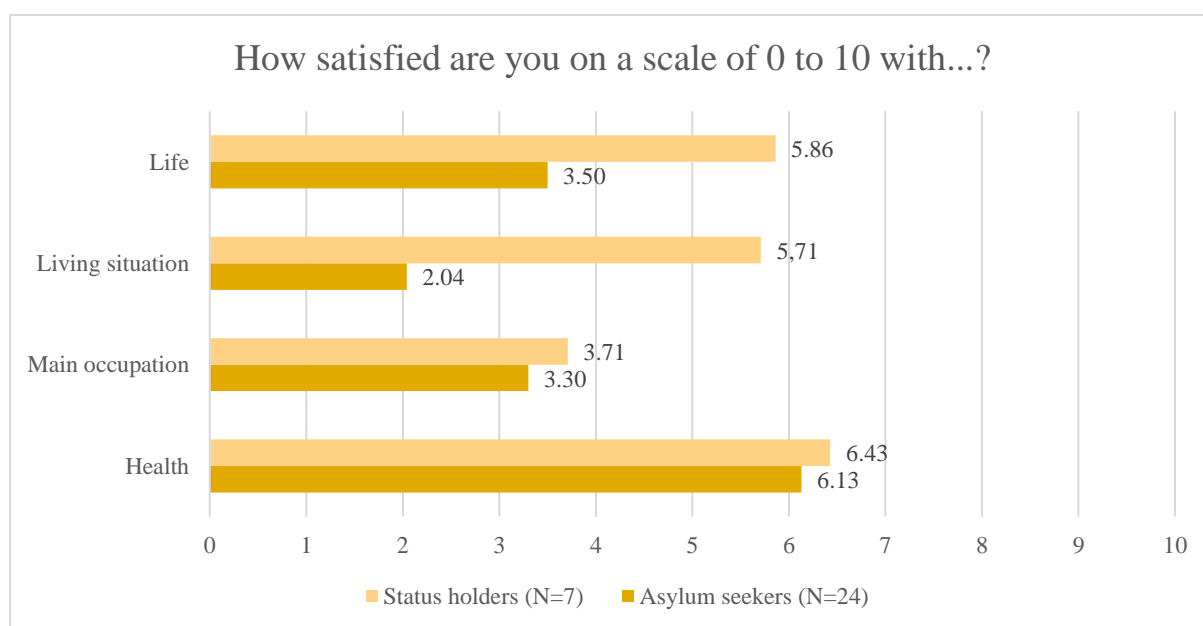


Figure 5.3.2 Satisfaction about a certain topic in means, split for status holders and asylum seekers



Figures 5.3.1 and 5.3.2 illustrate the general satisfaction of the respondents. Figure 5.2.1 shows that in general, the respondents are least satisfied with their living situation and most satisfied with their health. In figure 5.3.2 the means of general satisfaction are split between asylum seekers and status holders. The differences in means for the satisfaction about their main occupation and health are small. However, a larger difference in means is noticeable between the two groups when looking at satisfaction about life in general (2.36) and living situation (3.67). Overall, asylum seekers are least satisfied with their living situation, as the status holders are least satisfied with their daily occupation. Because the number of respondents was below 25, no t-test was conducted to measure the difference in means for general satisfaction.

Obviously, it can be hard to live in an asylum centre, especially as an LGBTQIA+ person. As shown in figure 5.3.2, the asylum seekers seem to feel most unhappy with their living situation. During the interviews, I asked each of the respondents what it is like to live in an asylum centre. Participant A explained what was the most difficult during their time in the asylum centre:

'I think not knowing what is going to happen. I would go to the reception centre every day and ask them: are there any updates, do you have letters for me? I think the most difficult thing was the waiting, the idea of not knowing okay is going to be tomorrow or later. But now seeing people waiting for years, I feel like I should not be complaining about my two months.' – Participant A.

I asked participant B, C, and D what it is like living in the asylum centre. They all explained why it was quite hard for them.

'It is quite okay, in other way it is difficult. It's not really easy. Because I'm in procedure for two years now, doing nothing, I don't have anything to do. Sometimes I'm thinking, I don't know my

fate yet. It's really quite difficult.' (...) Yes, because sometimes I do think about what brought me here. What happened to me before. That makes me feel uncomfortable. Secondly here I don't know my fate yet, I'm kind of in defence. So, it makes me sometimes worry.' – Participant B

Participant B further explained that they did not feel happy at the moment because of the situation they lived in at this moment.

'Presently, I am not that quite happy. Yes, because being in this situation is not easy. So im not really that happy. Not until like, maybe, know my fate, I have a good decision. I have the protection I really want.' – Participant B

Participant C explained that in the asylum centre, they did not really like to talk to others and had had some issues concerning their sexual orientation.

'Wait, I just, try to find the words without big drama. (...) For some people it's okay because they look like happy, they drink a lot, (...) they eat together, they have a lot of friends. But in our asylum centre, I'm only person from my country of origin.. And there also I don't really like to talk to with people. Because I had before few problems with Syrian people. They knew about my orientation and it was a problem. I had to change units. And also, it's horrible because, I cannot sleep in the night. I have insomnia, and also I cannot sleep because it's so loud around.' – Participant C

Three participants explained what is like to live in an asylum centre specifically as an LGBTQIA+ person.

'When you're living with non LGBTQIA+ person someone who is not LGBTQIA+ it is quite uncomfortable. Because you know, we don't flow. Anytime like he sees me talking about LGBTQIA+, he always distances himself away from me. He won't speak with me. I don't know if he sees me as enemy. I don't know now if I may use that word. So it's quite hard somehow.' – Participant B

'And also it's difficult to live in asylum centre because all LGBTQIA+ persons here they are closed. We cannot, it's always like secret. So I cannot say for example, my neighbours they ask me so why you came to Holland. And I, I cannot say I'm gay, I can't. Because then I got problems with them. I cannot go in the unit in shorts for example, or with a top. Because for them it's a shock. But I want to be polite for them, but I know they cannot understand. So that's why its secret yes.' – Participant C

'Very terrible. Very. Because I think the system forgets to remember that for LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers the same people that they ran away from are the same people that we find in there. And not only that you have to share a room with them you have to share the kitchen, the bathroom and the toilet. And they are in your face, really in your face and you can't avoid them.' – Participant D

Participant D also mentioned that it can be difficult to live in an asylum centre where there is a gender dynamic in sharing rooms.

‘Can you imagine being a queer and sharing a space (...) oh and there’s also a gender dynamic which is not taken into account. You know, for me, I am generally uncomfortable with sharing a space with men. But I don’t identify with men or identify as a man, you know, so, I have to change outside, I have to take phone calls outside the room and all of that.’ – Participant D

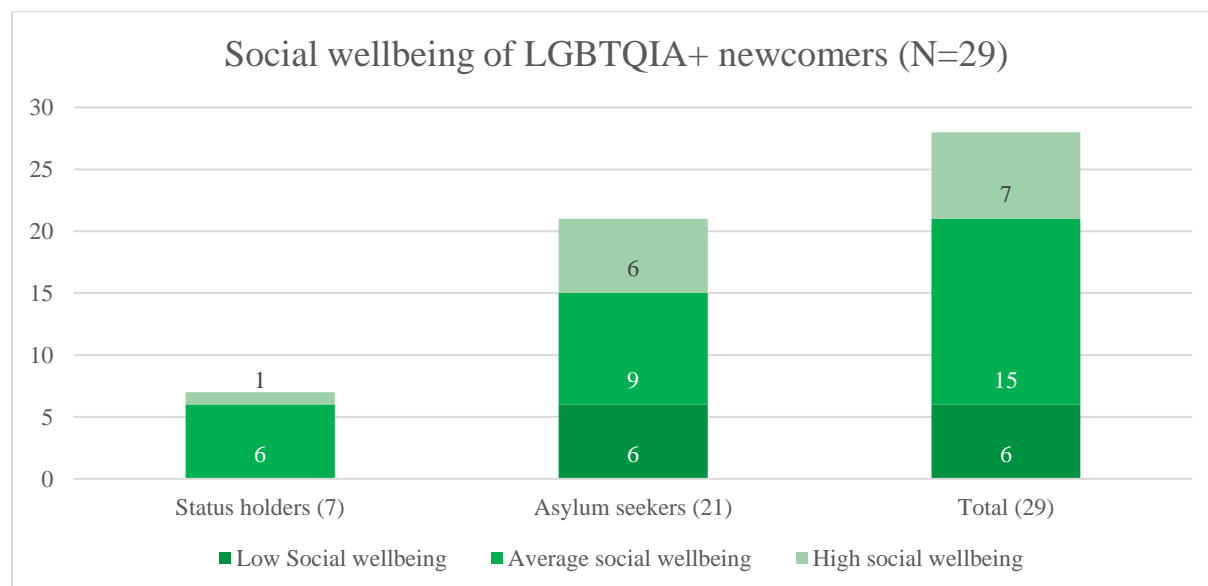
Following these questions, I asked the participants of the interviews what they felt satisfied with within the asylum centre.

‘Yes, yes. One, like, the security (...) they are trying to, they try their best to secure everyone. Secondly they also provide for us, give us accommodation, feeding, shelter. They are very nice for that. (...) And sometimes they also help in the procedure, you have a letter, on the immigration and they want to like explain it to you.’ - Participant B

‘But COA they know my name, always they ask me, how are you, C, when I go to the reception for my post, they also know me. Or I just can walk near the reception and some guy just knocks on the door, come, come, you have a post, so it’s a little bit nice feeling.’ – Participant C

‘I have to think about it. (...) I was only satisfied because of a small asylum centre in X so there were less people to deal with. (...) In the asylum centre everybody knows who you are everybody knows your story. (...) Again, its share luck to be placed in a small asylum centre. And the rooms, and the rooms there it’s for two people. So unlike other asylum centre which has four or five.’ – Participant D

Figure 5.4.1 Social wellbeing

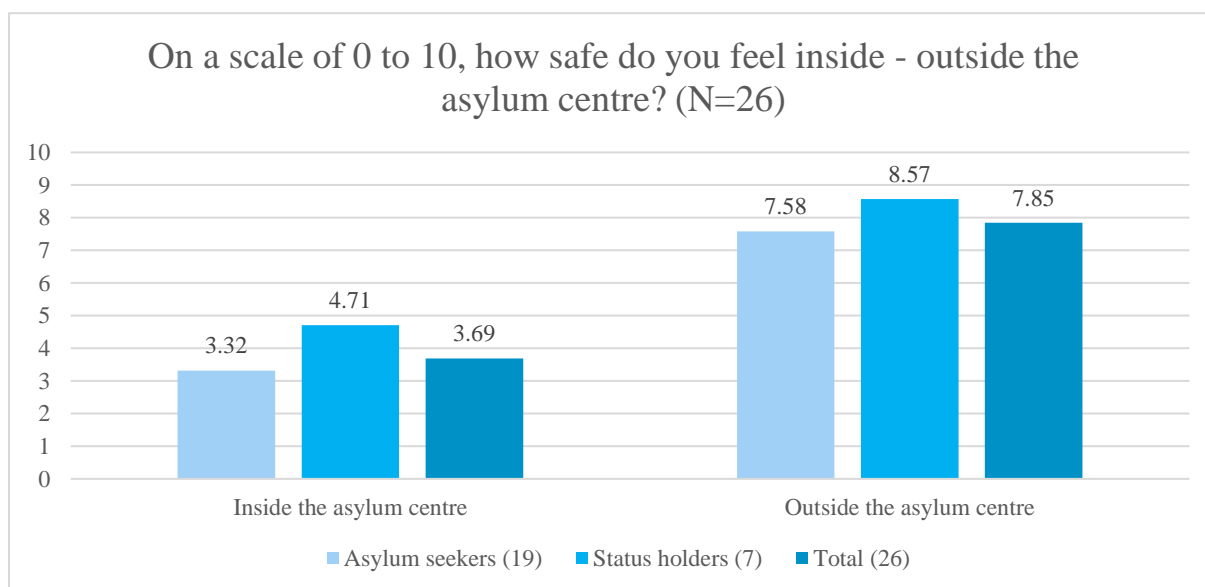


In figure 5.4.1 presents that most asylum seekers (42.9%) that have filled out the questions about social wellbeing have an average score on social wellbeing. This means that they do feel relatively positive towards society, the people around them and their own value and contribution within society. Six respondents (28.6%) score low on social wellbeing, meaning they do not feel connected. Six (28.6%)

others score high on social wellbeing, meaning they do feel connected to society and feel they contribute to society.

5.4 Experienced safety

Figure 5.4.1 Average score on experienced safety inside and outside the asylum centre, split for asylum seekers and status holders



As illustrated in figure 5.4.1, the experienced safety for LGBTQIA+ newcomers inside the asylum centre differ from the experienced safety outside the asylum centre. Moreover, the experienced safety inside the asylum centre is rated on average as insufficient (3.69). I can add to this data by stating that only four respondents out of 27 (14.8%) have scored the experienced safety inside the asylum centre an 8 or higher. The rest (85.2%) has scored their experienced safety as insufficient: a five or below. When splitting the file between status holders and asylum seekers, we see that both rate their experienced safety as insufficient. However, status holders rate their experienced safety higher on average than asylum seekers. Outside the asylum centre, both asylum seekers (7.58) and status holders (8.57) rate their experienced safety higher and sufficient. In conclusion, we can state that on average, the LGBTQIA+ newcomers that participated in this study feel safer outside the asylum centre than inside. Furthermore, it seems that on average, they do not rate their stay in the asylum centre as safe. This is in line with what was expected and shown in other studies and remains problematic.

To explore if there is a significant difference between the experienced safety inside and outside the asylum centre, a paired samples t-test has been conducted. This test states whether there is a relevant difference between two means or not. In order to conduct this test, a few assumptions need to be met (Field, 2013; Armitage & Berry, 1994). Further information about this test and the assumptions can be found in Annex B.

Table 5.4.1 Paired T-Test experienced safety inside and outside the asylum centre (N=26)

Paired T-Test	Mean difference	Standard deviation
Experienced safety inside	3.69	4.16***
Experienced safety outside	7.85	3.06

Notes: ***= $p < 0.001$, ** = $p < 0.01$, * = $p < 0.05$.

The means of the experienced safety inside and outside the asylum centre are presented in Table 5.4.1. The difference between the two means is 4.16. This difference is significant, meaning that based on the paired samples t-test a relevant difference can be assumed which does not rely on coincidence. This result is based only on the data of the respondents in this dataset. Therefore, the small number of respondents (26) need to be taken into consideration when conclusions based in this result are made. Based on this test, it seems that the respondents rate the experienced safety inside the asylum centre significantly lower than outside the asylum centre.

A Spearman correlation test was conducted in SPSS to test whether there is a relevant correlation between the satisfaction of the respondents and the experienced safety. In order to conduct a Spearman correlation a few assumptions need to be met. However, these assumptions could not all be applied to this data. If you are interested in the result, please check Annex B.

Figure 5.4.2 Experienced safety since the pandemic

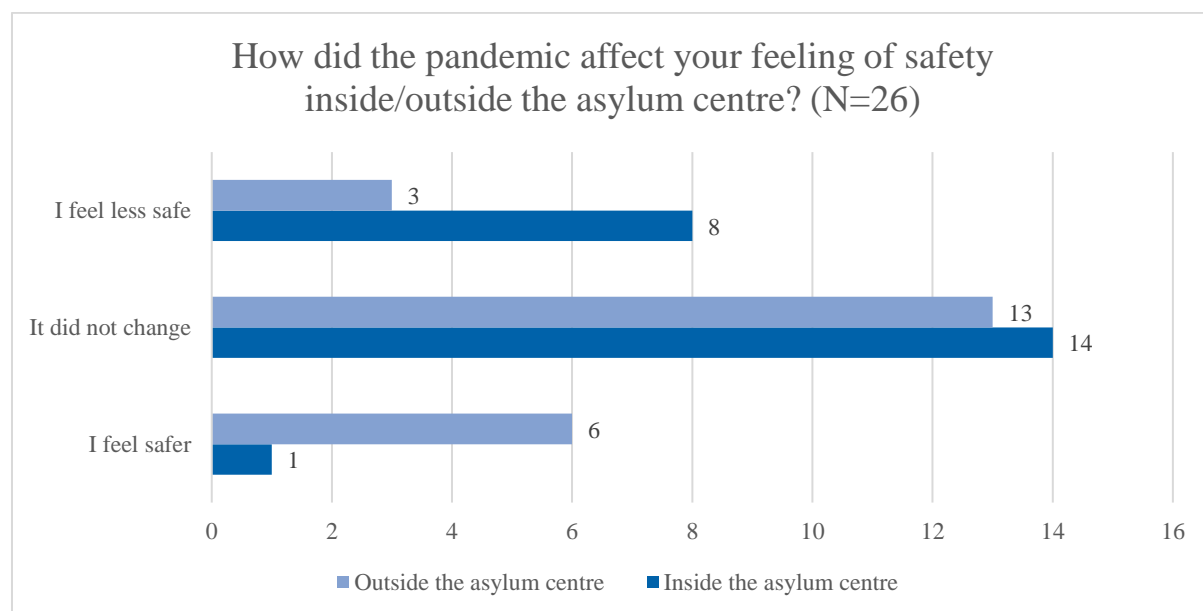


Figure 5.4.2 illustrates whether respondents feel safer, the same or less safe inside and outside of the asylum centre. The respondents answered that inside of the asylum centre they either feel less safe or their experienced safety has not changed since the pandemic has started. Only one person out of 26 (0.04%) feels safer inside the asylum centre. Some respondents do feel safer outside of the asylum centre since the pandemic started, three (11.5%) respondents feel less safe outside and for 13 (50%)

respondents it did not change. Based on this figure, it could be said that the pandemic has some effect on the experienced safety of respondents inside the asylum centre. But for most, the pandemic has not changed their experienced safety inside or outside the asylum centre. I asked the participants whether it was safe for them in the asylum centre. The answers differed between the participants, participant D said they were not safe. Participant A said they were afraid because of stories that were told to them. Participant B and C said they felt safe, although participant C said they feel safe because they are not in contact with other residents. Participant C also said they knew someone who had problems inside the asylum centre with other residents, and that they would not be open about being LGBTQIA+.

'Oh definitely not. Definitely not. (...) I was lucky that the first seven months I was in a room alone. But that's just share luck.' – Participant D

'I feel safe because I have not contact with other refugees. I just don't talk with them and so. But I had a friend before, (...). and before they lived here and they had problems with guys. But when they told COA about this person, COA called to person from COC, and I think after that, COA and person from COC maybe they talk with this person who make problem. And after that situation, it was better. Yes, but I cannot say if I would be open, just go with my rainbow bag for example. I cannot say I'm really safe and I feel freedom.' – Participant C

'Yes I feel safe.' – Participant B

'I mean, I've heard about so many homophobic incidents or attacks from people but I can't really now remember them. But I remember one distinctively, about a friend of mine who was in the asylum centre in 2009. (...) And a bunch of Moroccan drunk guys tried to attack her in her bedroom in an asylum centre here in X. So before she was in the asylum centre she told me, you have to be careful, some guys will try to like ask you for a cigarette because they smoke and they will follow you to your room so they know where you are staying. So try to stay safe. So I was really careful and I heard so many stories about harassment and bullying. I would really rather not have it happen.' -Participant A

I asked participant A if they could explain a little bit more about the accidents that have happened. I asked about the n incident that happened past August mentioned before, when a woman had boiling water thrown at her. Participant A continued:

'Yes, I think last year or the year before there was an incident. There was a lesbian who had boiling water thrown at her. I think at asylum centre X or I don't remember what asylum centre. I remember a gay guy they described him as flamboyant, and he was bullied and beaten by some Syrians in the asylum centre. (...) I think, of course it is a problem, for all the LGBTQIA+ groups and all the LGBTQIA+ refugee groups, they keep demanding that LGBTQIA+ people should get their, there should be an asylum centre for LGBTQIA+ people where it is just safe for them. And not transfer them all over the place and scatter them. Unless it's like really necessary.' – Participant A

Participant C mentioned the safety of LGBTQIA+ people when I asked what one of the main issues was that LGBTQIA+ newcomers face. Participant C said that they were not sure whether it was safe in the asylum centre for LGBTQIA+ people. They explained that it feels like a stamp is being put on you when you are LGBTQIA+. They do mention that when going outside the asylum centre, they did not experience problems with being LGBTQIA+.

'In asylum centre, im not sure if it's really safety for LGBTQIA+. Because a lot of people they hate LGBTQIA+. It's a lot of Muslim people also, just personality so some people just hate LGBTQIA+. They don't want to know who is this person, maybe they're generous. But he's gay or she's gay, but maybe they're generous but it's not interesting for them of course. It's like a stamp, you're LGBTQIA+, you're broken. That is why it's not safety. But in general, in whole, I mean because I travel a little bit a little bit in the country. I did not see problems.' – Participant C

I asked some of the participants of the interviews how they felt outside of the asylum centre. Specifically, I asked participant A whether they were happy with their life outside the asylum centre when living there. Participant A answered, 'yes definitely'. Participant D said, 'Ooh I feel free.'

Figure 5.4.3 Open about gender identity

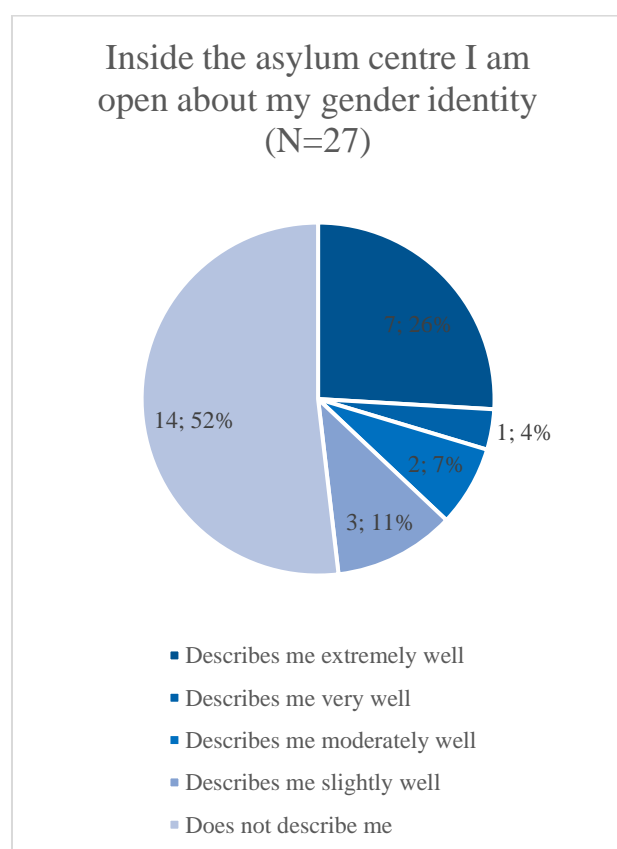
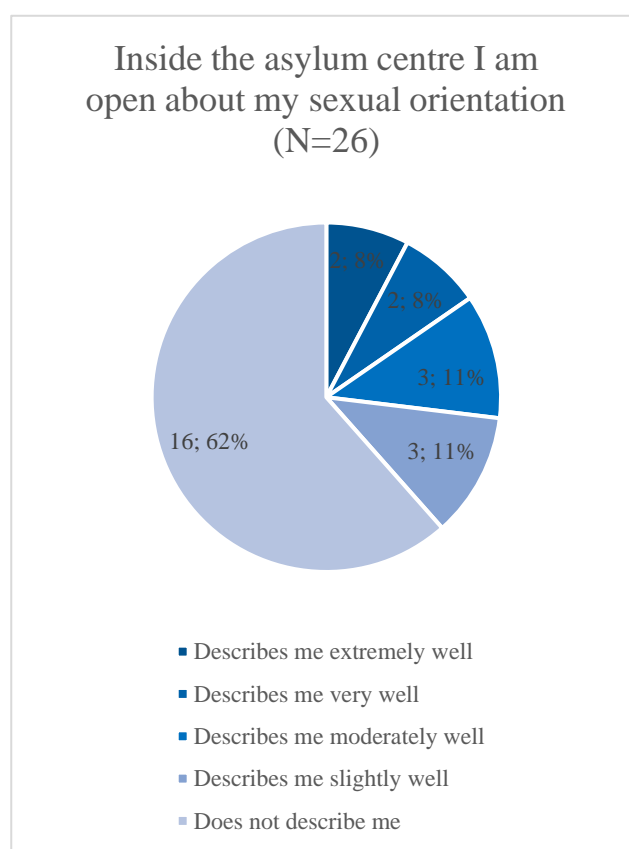


Figure 5.4.4 Open about sexual orientation



Figures 5.4.3 and 5.4.4 illustrate whether respondents are open about their gender identity and sexual orientation inside the asylum centre. Most respondents are not open about their gender identity (52%) or sexual orientation (62%). Only four (16%) respondents state that they feel they can be open about their sexual orientation. Eight (30%) respondents feel like they can be open about their gender identity. When an individual their gender identity is in line with what the heteronormative society expect them to be, it could be easier to be open about the gender identity. For example, when others perceive you as a male, and you identify as a male as well, it is not as conflicting or hard to be open about the gender identity. Participants in the interviews also mentioned whether they were open about their sexual orientation or not. The responses were very different: two said they were open, others said they were not.

'No. No no. I used to lie. If people would ask me why are you here, I would tell them it had to do with politics or something. Like a political refugee, not like an LGBT refugee.' – Participant A

'Yes, yes I am open about it. my neighbours are aware about it. so that's why. Because I can't really hide my identity, no matter how.' – Participant B

'In asylum centre no. Outside yes, I have girlfriend and her family is very friendly for me. But in asylum centre no. (...) Yes, but I cannot say if I would be open, just go with my rainbow bag for example. I cannot say I'm really safe and I feel freedom.' – Participant C

'Yes. Yes I am (...) I think that, when you're in the asylum centre, everybody knows everybody's business. So when you tried to hide it makes it much worse, because people will be talking about you. And it will be easier for household people, people will try to attack people who hide themselves.' – Participant D

When asking why participant A was not open about it, participant A explained the following:

'A part of the reason that I was not open about it is that, what happened was I told someone I was LGBTQIA+ and then I got bullied by one of the roommates. And then I told my contact person, the LGBTQIA+ contact person, and he said that we can't really do much about it. They said hopefully you're going to be out soon. I was really scared honestly. I thought I was gotten beaten up or something.' – Participant A

Figure 5.4.5 Statements regarding discrimination and becoming a victim of criminal activity

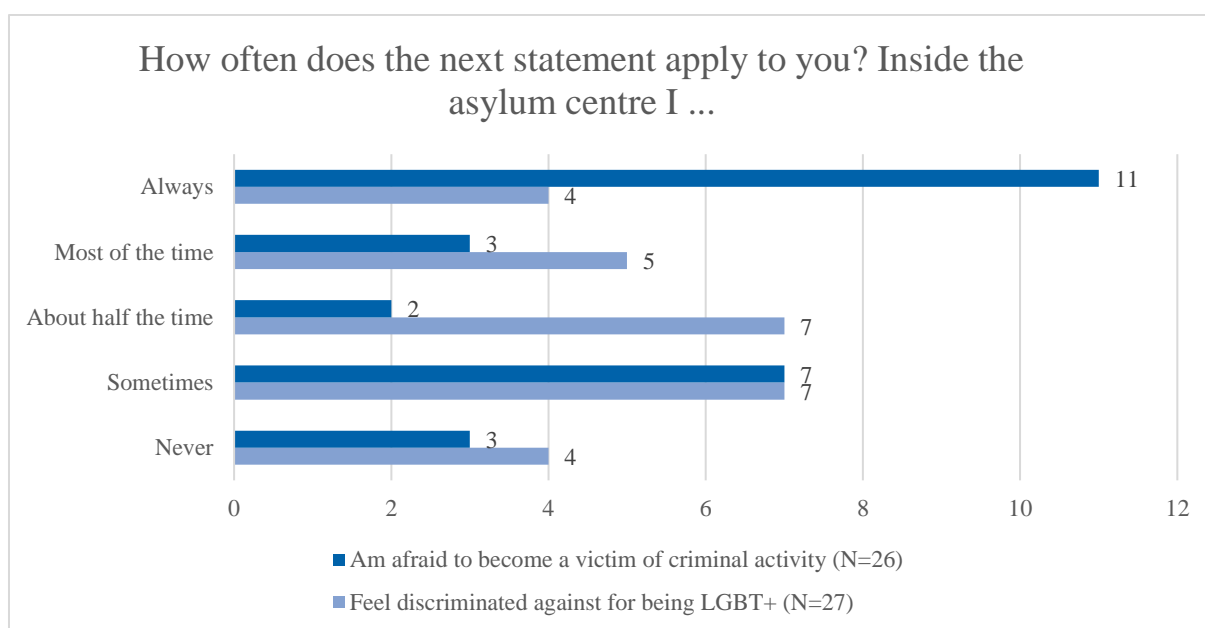


Figure 5.4.5 illustrates that 14 out of 26 people are afraid to become a victim of criminal activity either all the time (42.3%) or most of the time (11.5%). Seven (26.9%) respondents sometimes feel like they could become a victim of criminal activity and three (11.5%) respondents do not have this experience at all. In conclusion, most respondents (53.8%) are always/most of the time afraid to become a victim of criminal activity. This is in line with the fact that on average, people feel unsafe inside the asylum centre.

As for discrimination, the respondents seem to feel less discriminated than they feel afraid to become a victim of criminal activity. Nine (33.3%) people have stated they feel discriminated either most of the time or all the time. Seven (25.9%) people state they feel discriminated against half the time. Seven others (25.9%) state they sometimes feel discriminated against and only four (14.8%) respondents do not feel discriminated against. Still, this means that more than half of the respondents feel discriminated against about half the time or more.

Figure 5.4.6 Knowing who to ask for help

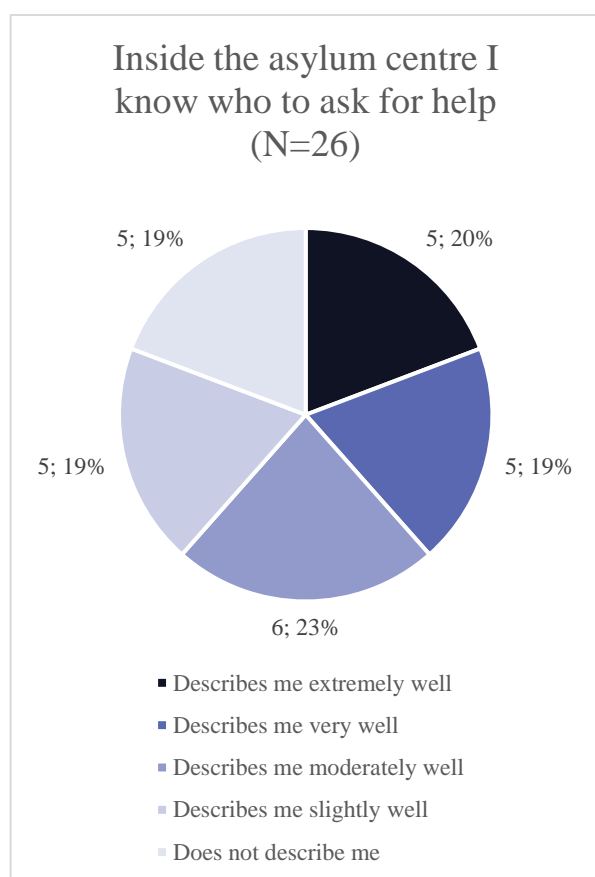
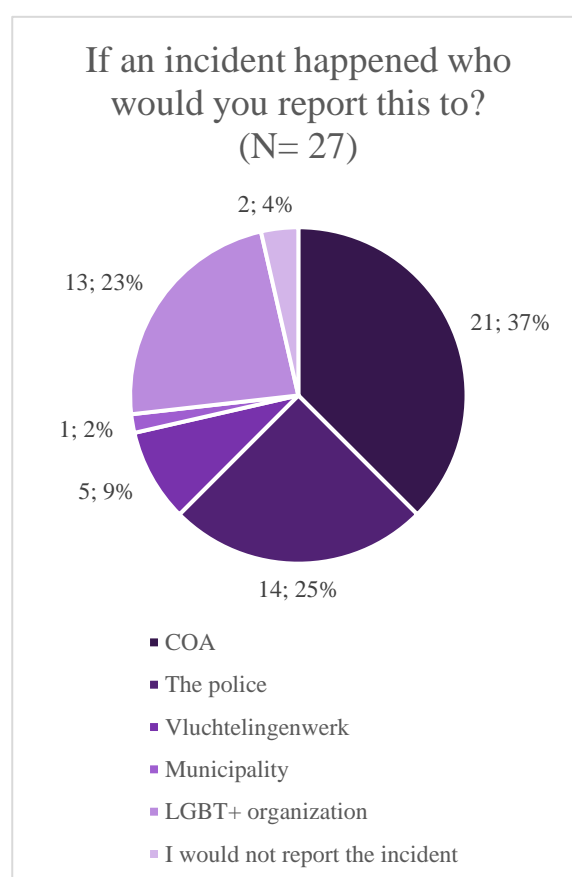


Figure 5.4.7 Reporting an incident



Finally, we are looking at the help people receive and the willingness to report accidents. As is shown in figure 5.4.6 above, people are divided when it comes to knowing who to ask for help. About 38% knows who to ask for help and 38% are less certain about who to ask or do not know. 23% states they know moderately who to ask for help. In figure 5.4.7 we can see that if an incident happens, most will report the incident to COA (38%), followed by the police (25%) and an LGBTQIA+ organization (23%). Some people would go to Vluchtelingenwerk (9%) and only one person would report the incident to the municipality (2%). Two people, (4%) would not report the incident, they mentioned the following:

'It's like as if nobody cares until you are on the verge of death'

'No nobody cares. It's an AZC.'

Improvements for LGBTQIA+ newcomers

In the survey the respondents were asked what could improve the safety of LGBTQIA+ newcomers. Multiple answers were given, six out of 20 (30%) respondents stated a separate unit or asylum centre would be an option for LGBTQIA+ newcomers. Other answers included more security, more information from COA, more space for LGBTQIA+ newcomers and more support from the employees of COA. Some examples are stated below:

'A seperate AZC for LGBTQ refugees.'

'Better security and strong rules for whoever hurts someone else, better to be not shared floors , COA who can actually do what it takes to protect every residence and believe them when they say they have been bothered by someone and do something about it.'

'Give more safe neighbours and surroundings to LGBT.'

'Separating families from single individuals.'

'It would be much better if people could have their own wc and kitchen. Then they would not be closed in one room if some neighbor has positive corona test.'

'More information, more controle.'

'Should be at least a week orientation for all new Asylum seekers and the laws of this country especially on the laws regarding LGBTQ+. Moreover, there should also be stronger laws on fighting.'

'Decrease the load in the rooms.'

'The personeel have to hear people and do what they need en try to help them to feel as safe as possible.'

In annex A table 6 all responses to this question are presented.

I also asked the participants of the interviews what their view was on separate units or asylum centres, and the responses were mixed.

'Maybe, yes. (...) I mean I know it's difficult, like being in the procedure I know that specific requests are very difficult to have because sometimes people have different cases, they come from different countries, and they need to be staying in asylum centre for a longer time. You can't really have a definitive rule for it. But as a general idea they should consider a specific location for all LGBTQIA+ people, unless something else happened or that person has a specific case.' – Participant A

'Yes I think for me, it's better. So that we can feel free, interact with each other, communicate with each other and have more ideas. Then I stay with someone who doesn't want to. So it's better to have a separate place.' - Participant B

'I thought about it, yes I thought. And honestly, I don't know. Because, so my first decision was like yes its very good. It's really, it's nice, because everybody knows who is around. And it's more safety. But, for integration, not only for LGBT, for integration all refugee, refugees maybe it's not good idea (...). It's not fair, because LGBT, it's also people, they're the same.' – Participant C

Participant C continues explaining that it feels like going back in time to have a separate asylum centre for LGBTQIA+ people.

'But sometimes, I know some asylum centres it is very dangerous for LGBTQIA+, (...) But I hear a lot of bad things about other asylum centres and hope LGBTQIA+ person there, I don't know, maybe better if they can live in other asylum centre or special building with, I don't know, with security. But it's strange, if its Europe, if it's Holland, I don't know. Im not sure if it's a good idea. It's like to back, in the past, to the past.' – Participant C

When I asked participant D what they would change for LGBTQIA+ newcomers, their answer was also related to the LGBTQIA+ units and asylum centres. Participant D explained that there is an organization who is pleading for a separate asylum centre for LGBTQIA+ people. Participant D said that in a way, this feels a bit weird, because it might send a message to heterosexual people that it is okay to behave the way they do. Participant D says it is necessary to protect the lives of LGBTQIA+ people, because they are not okay. They add that when an LGBTQIA+ asylum centre is opened, they will need to pick out the people that are pretending to be LGBTQIA+. Participant D mentions that there are heterosexual people claiming to be LGBTQIA+ to be able to stay in the Netherlands, and that they have been doing this for 15 to 20 years.

'Well that's a good question. I am also assist LGBTQIA+ asylum support and what we want right now is a separate asylum centre for LGBTQIA+ people. That is straight away, nothing else, because, it's of course, it's in a way, it's weird because, that straight people are sending a message that it's okay to behave the way they do. (...) Protect our lives. The LGBT is okay or not. (...) And also when a separate asylum centre begins you have to fish out the straight people. Because we know, we know each other. And straight people don't hide it by the way, they have been doing this for 15 to 20 years. Really' – Participant D

When participant D explained why there had to be separate asylum centres for LGBTQIA+ newcomers, they also mentioned that they would need to fish out the straight people to keep them from getting inside.

'And also when a separate asylum centre begins you have to fish out the straight people. Because we know, we know each other. And straight people don't hide it by the way, they have been doing this for 15 to 20 years. Really. (...) That's, to get a residence permit. Oh yes oh yes. They've been doing it for decades we know it. generally LGBT people from Africa don't seek asylum actually.' – Participant D

Another topic that came up during the interviews was that there are straight people who are pretending to be LGBTQIA+ to be able to stay in the Netherlands. Participant A and D both mentioned this. Participant D brought this up when I asked whether they felt safe inside the asylum centre and if it was safe for LGBTQIA+ people.

'Oh and then of course the straight men pretending to be gay, who give out sexual favours. And obviously that kind of preaches bad and then they try to just say oh tell the IND that I am gay.' – Participant D

When I asked whether this happened a lot, participant D said that it did.

'Oh yes. Oh yes. That happened to me a lot. Oh. Men that tried to rape. Actual, like actual rape. And COA said ah that's just a joke. And I go 'oh really?'' – Participant D

'Oh if we had the time I would give you a full list.' – Participant D

Participant A and D also referred to the fact that people from certain countries do not have a chance of getting asylum in the Netherlands, which leads to them pretending to be gay. When I asked participant A if it is true that people pretend to be LGBTQIA+ in the Netherlands, they answered the following:

'Yes yes yes. It really does. Yes and there are so many other countries. I've seen it happen with Uganda, some countries don't really have any political issues that would grant them automatic asylum or uplifted residency. In the most of that they pretend to be gay.' – Participant A

'So there are like places that you know to not ask asylum because there are so many people (...). You know, so, it's just, people from your own country are the worst. The complete worst, obviously. (...) Because they have, they have a special tie to you and, it is easy for them to call you out. And ... oh wauw he's from a country and LGBT.' – Participant D.

'Recently there was this woman who said she was a lesbian, she applied for asylum, she got her residence permit and after that she married a guy. Although during her procedure she says she was a lesbian and never was with a man or never wanted to be with a man. She was very specific when she said that. And then people were trying to pick up things about her. And then she said she was actually in a relationship in her country and she was married. Its just people will do whatever they can do just to get asylum.' – Participant A

5.5 Additional results from the interviews

I asked the participants of the interviews what they would improve for LGBTQIA+ newcomers. One person mentioned that more support and information from COA would be helpful. Next to that, the participant mentioned to also give more information about being LGBTQIA+ to heterosexual asylum seekers.

'Yes first its more support and information for refugees – LGBTQIA+ refugees who, who come. And second, I think it's like more information about LGBTQIA+ for heterosexual refugees. Because sometimes they are really afraid of us. They still think we can like spread, I don't know, our orientation.'
– Participant C

'Yes, for me, I would just like, just make it more stable, more okay. Like you don't need to discriminate anyone. So keep empowering LGBTQIA+.' – Participant B

Other participants stated it would help to educate heterosexual newcomers. Some thought this would be a good idea, as participant C stated above. However, participant A and D were less optimistic about the heterosexual people.

'No. knowing their culture, knowing where this homophobia is coming from, it's very religious, very, very religious actually.' – Participant A

'No. Because, - I'm trying to think they have never asked me that before. But the answer is no. and I have to think before I say, because the shock, they have never been in contact, no contact, they have never met LGBT people in their lives.' – Participant D

Participant A explained that during the integration course, one of the questions asked was what people would do if their co-worker or boss was homosexual. Participant A explained the following:

'(...) and the answers are very horrifying. And the thing is, I don't think that anything can change that mindset. Because if that is possible they would be pretending to be accepting and they really are not. And that is actually more dangerous than ever, because you might actually think you trust them and then they might do something to you. So no I don't think there is anything to change that, and also specifically when they are fresh. They just came to the Netherlands; they just started their asylum procedure. I don't think they have the capacity to accept everyone and spread love and peace.' - Participant A

At the end of the interview, participant C stated that it might be a good idea for COA to bring LGBTQIA+ people in contact with each other. Participant C said that often, LGBTQIA+ newcomers do not know each other when they are in the asylum centre. Therefore, it might be helpful for them if COA could bring them together.

'Yes and I remember one thing what I want to say. It's a little bit interesting idea, for example if a new refugee, LGBTQIA+ refugee come to asylum centre. COA can say; okay, welcome, we have few or a lot of LGBTQIA+ people here. Do you want to make contact with them? And maybe, because first time when I came, I just look around 'omygod how I can live here, I cannot- because it's all other countries, people from other countries'. So maybe it's better if LGBTQIA+ people can make contact with each other and COA support that community, LGBTQIA+.' – Participant C

Interviews with the Immigration and Naturalisation Office

When I asked participant A what needs to change for LGBTQIA+ newcomers, they mentioned the interviews that asylum seekers have with the Immigration and Naturalisation Office (IND).

'I would say, the most important thing, the interviewer needs to understand the culture of the country where people are from. It's really frustrating, when I was doing the interview and the person said well the country of origin is LGBTQIA+ friendly, that I had to say, no its not. So sometimes you have to state the obvious. (...) Sometimes you don't necessarily know which law criminalized LGBTQIA+ people. You might know some organizations but you might miss so much. You should have people who actually know what countries are safe, what countries are not, and try to focus in the interview on questions that actually matter and not questions that like are just dumb.' – Participant A

To get an idea of how these interviews go down, I asked some of the participants how the interviews went.

'I guess it wasn't that bad, I had an extra interview though. You are supposed to have three interviews and I got four. That was also nerve-racking because nobody I knew at that time had four. That was making me more nervous than I already was. But I guess the interview itself it wasn't that bad; it was very emotional because I had to dig really deep into so many traumas and try to express that. And then there was the IND person, she didn't really know that much about my country of origin, so I had to explain what was behind that. Why is it an issue, why is it a problem.' – Participant A

'Yes it was nice because, they only asked me where I came from. And my country. Yes. So that is only the few interview I have had until now. The main interview is yet to come.' – Participant B

'She asked me and I'm totally sure she is lesbian, or bisexual, I don't know, I just see. And is little bit strange when I have to make proof about my orientation. When she asked me okay what you feel when you look at the girls, or touch them, or how it was when you first fall in love with girl. (...) I understand it's maybe it's necessary to ask, because lot of people can lie about orientation. And that is why I tried also to be open and explain about everything im not shy about it, it's my life. But it is a little bit strange feeling like you have to make proof.' – Participant C

'Yes, but honestly this woman was really correct and I don't know nice. So I did not feel like she don't like me or she make something like are you really gay? (...) she was very nice for me. But just, I don't know, it's just strange, really this feeling when you have to prove.' – Participant C

Influence of the pandemic

During the interviews I have asked what kind of impact the pandemic has had on the participants who still live in an asylum centre (participants B, C and D). The responses differed between the participants. Participant B mentioned that it did have an impact, because it slowed down the procedure and many shops were closed. Participants C and D said it did not really change much for them, as they did not go out that much before.

'Yes it affected me because, one, it's getting the procedure slowing. (...) Then the procedure was like, you know, slow. So it's now like you know giving us so much time to wait. So secondly, so many like businesses, shops, they were closed for a while. The meeting was starting of fresh again. And the COC meeting we don't go in person. It was going online instead of seeing each other face to face. Because that one is better than the online. So that is a disadvantage to me.' – Participant B

'Well first, before pandemic, I cannot go to restaurant because I have not money for that. So, and it's also difficult because in land X I had other life. When I can go to restaurant, like every day. So of course its difficult for me to live here without money without any person (...) it is difficult. (...) So if, honestly, I want to go to restaurant or, I like more walking in the forest or going to the river or I don't know, to the sea. So I don't really want to be with people. Because also I feel like im not, like my level its low. And it is giving me very bad feeling about myself.' – Participant C

'It hasn't actually because, (...) I one live in the house, don't go out, I don't go party.' – Participant D

Participant C further explained:

'For me, no. (...) My mood is very bad, that's why I don't want a lot of contact now. Before pandemic and now.' – Participant C

At the end of the interview I asked every participant whether they still had something to add. Participant B mentioned that it is important for LGBTQIA+ newcomers to be able to stay in the Netherlands and to be able to ask for asylum.

'Yes, for the procedure, most especially about the way LGBTQIA+ members tried to be like, you know, because we need the protection from them. Because back in my country it's not easy, it is a difficult thing to be an LGBTQIA+ member. It's like a nightmare. (...) So try to give us the maximum protection that we want so that we can be happy.' – Participant B

6. Conclusion

In this study I have studied what the experiences of LGBTQIA+ newcomers in the Netherlands are regarding their social network, general satisfaction and safety. The research question of this study was:

What are the experiences of LGBTQIA+ refugees- and asylum seekers in the Netherlands regarding social networks, general satisfaction and safety?

The subject social network was chosen because studies argued that refugees and LGBTQIA+ newcomers in particular can feel isolated and experience feelings of loneliness (De Gruijter & Razenberg, 2017; Pharos, 2007; Elferink & Emmen, 2017; Elferink & van Hoof, 2016). This study tried to examine the social network of LGBTQIA+ newcomers and whether there are certain contacts that they miss. Social networks were split into formal- and informal contacts. Formal contacts are the organizations that LGBTQIA+ newcomers are in contact with. Informal contacts are those focussed on your personal network, in this study the contact with friends, family, neighbours and other residents (Flap & De Graaf, 1985; Putnam, 1994). General satisfaction entailed the factors main occupation, living situation, social contacts, health and life in general. These subjects were expected to have an influence on the lives of LGBTQIA+ newcomers, hence they were taken into account. In addition to satisfaction, social wellbeing has been studied as well. Social wellbeing is seen as the social support some experiences combined with a feeling of belonging and being able to contribute to society (Vos & Knol 1994; Keyes, 1998; Hone, 2014). Because social networks and general satisfaction are discussed in this study, it seemed relevant to add social wellbeing, as it explains something about how LGBTQIA+ newcomers look at and see themselves within society. The subject experienced safety was included because recent studies argued that LGBTQIA+ newcomers do not always feel safe inside the asylum centres (LGBT Asylum Support 2020a; 2020b). The newcomers have answered questions concerning their safety inside and outside the asylum centre, whether they were afraid to become a victim of crime and whether they were open about their sexual orientation or gender identity.

To answer this research question I created a survey and conducted semi-structured interviews. In total, 42 respondents have filled in parts of the survey and 26 completed the survey. Four respondents have participated in the interviews. In this chapter I will try to answer the research question by discussing the sub-questions. The main objective of this study is to gain insight into the experiences of LGBTQIA+ newcomers and what issues they face. Moreover, if there are any improvements that can be made for LGBTQIA+ newcomers and whether the social networks, general satisfaction and experienced safety relate to each other. On the basis of this study recommendations will be made to organizations, such as COC Netherlands, Rainbow Den Haag, Rainbow Nijmegen and the Cocktail projects that exist throughout the Netherlands.

6.1 Discussion of the sub-questions

Sub-Question 1:

How do LGBTQIA+ newcomers evaluate their social networks in the Netherlands?

As argued before, this study included the formal and informal social network as used by Pichler & Wallace (2007). For the informal social network of LGBTQIA+ newcomers, they value the contact of their friends most, followed by family, neighbours and residents. In conclusion, most LGBTQIA+ newcomers speak with their friends every day or at least every week. Next to friends, the respondents are most in contact with other residents, followed by neighbours. This seems logical, as LGBTQIA+ newcomers who still live in the asylum centre probably see other residents quite often. For family the result is divided, some speak to them every day, some do not speak with their family at all. On average, family is spoken to the least of all categories. The participants of the interviews mentioned they had contacts inside and outside the asylum centre. One of the participants said they had a lot of contact with organizations, but that most LGBT newcomers did not have an extensive social network. All LGBTQIA+ newcomers in this study were familiar with some (LGBTQIA+) organizations such as the COC, Vluchtelingenwerk or LGBT Asylum Support. Most of these people were approached via LGBTQIA+ organizations, so it makes sense they were familiar with some of the organizations. Followed by friends, LGBTQIA+ newcomers were most satisfied with the support of the organizations in the Netherlands.

In conclusion, LGBTQIA+ newcomers value the contact of their friends most, speak most to them and are the most satisfied with their support. This is an important result as healthy social connections have an influence on the happiness that we experience in life (Mars & Schmeets, 2011; Leung et al., 2013; Rodríguez-Pose & Von Berlepsch, 2014). However, LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers rated their satisfaction with their social network below a five out of ten, meaning that on average they are still not that satisfied with their social network. Living in an asylum centre could have an impact on the social network of LGBTQIA+ newcomers, as status holders also rate their satisfaction with their social network as insufficient when they were living in the asylum centre. That LGBTQIA+ newcomers feel slightly dissatisfied with their social network is in line with what is stated by Elferink & Emmen (2017) and Emmen & van Hoof (2016). They stated that LGBTQIA+ newcomers have more trouble building a social network and can feel isolated inside the asylum centre. Even though most LGBTQIA+ newcomers are in contact with their friends at least every week, this study suggests that improvements can be made to help LGBTQIA+ newcomers feel more satisfied with their social network. Further research needs to explore what LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers in particular are not satisfied about. For example, maybe they are in contact with the friends they have but would like to make more friends.

Sub-Question 2:

How do LGBTQIA+ newcomers evaluate their general satisfaction in the Netherlands?

In general, the satisfaction is rated as below average. The respondents are least satisfied with their living situation, followed by daily occupation, life in general and health. Overall, only health has been scored as sufficient (above five). This study identified some differences between asylum seekers and status holders. For example, asylum seekers are least satisfied with their living situation while status holders are least satisfied with their daily occupation. More about these differences will be explained by sub-question 6. The social wellbeing differs between the respondents. Most respondents have an 'average social wellbeing'. Some had a high social wellbeing and others had a low social wellbeing.

The four participants of the interviews expressed that they did not feel good or happy in the asylum centre. Some did mention that they appreciated that COA provided for them and that they were taken care of well. All expressed that they felt better outside the asylum centre.

Sub-Question 3:

How do LGBTQIA+ newcomers evaluate their experienced safety in the Netherlands?

The respondents have rated the experienced safety inside the asylum centre as insufficient. Only four out of 27 rated the experienced safety above a 5. The experienced safety is rated much higher outside the asylum centre. In the survey the respondents were asked whether they are open about their sexual orientation and gender identity. Most answered that they were not open about their sexual orientation, and at least half are not open about their gender identity. Some are open about their sexual orientation and one out of three state they are open about their gender identity. About half of the LGBTQIA+ newcomers answered that they feel they could become a victim of criminal activity either most of the time or always. One third feel like they are discriminated against either most of the time or always. Most respondents do know who to ask for help inside the asylum centre. If an incident happened to them, most would report the incident to COA, followed by the organizations in the Netherlands.

The participants of the interviews had different views on their safety. Two of the participants said they did not feel safe. The others said they did, one of them added that the only reason that they felt safe was because they were not open about being LGBTQIA+. Another participant said they did feel safe and they were open about being LGBTQIA+ inside the asylum centre. However, they mentioned that they felt very uncomfortable in the asylum centre, saying that it was not easy to live there as an LGBTQIA+ person. The other participants also mentioned that it was hard to live in an asylum centre as an LGBTQIA+ person. Three participants revealed they were familiar with cases of violence and/or discrimination against LGBTQIA+ individuals, not against themselves but against others.

These results are more or less in line with what LGBT Asylum Support found in their studies. In their study almost half of the respondents stated they felt unsafe inside the asylum centre (2020a). In this study most respondents have rated the safety as insufficient. The percentages differ between this study

and the study done by LGBT Asylum Support, but that can be for multiple reasons. First, the study by LGBT Asylum Support had more respondents than this study, meaning that their study had more data to base the results on. Second, in this study respondents were asked to grade their experienced safety on a scale from 0 to 10. In the study of LGBT Asylum Support, people were asked whether they felt safe or not. These differences in the way the question is asked can have led to different outcomes. However, both studies still indicate that there is a sufficient number of LGBTQIA+ newcomers that feel unsafe in their asylum centre. LGBT Asylum Support argues that most respondents state they have been discriminated against for being LGBT by someone else in the asylum centre (2020b). This study argues that at least one third feels discriminated against either often or always. Only one of the LGBTQIA+ newcomers have stated they *never* felt discriminated against for being LGBTQIA+. Again, the difference in numbers could be explained by the differences in respondents and the formulation of the questions. Furthermore, both studies indicate that discrimination against LGBTQIA+ newcomers does happen inside the asylum centres. LGBT Asylum Support (2020a) has also demonstrated that two out of five of their respondents have encountered a case of violence directed at LGBTQIA+ people. This could help explain why in this study about half of the respondents have stated they are afraid to become a victim of criminal activity either always or most of the time. A few respondents stated they are never afraid to become a victim.

Sub-Question 4:

To what extent does the general satisfaction relate to the social networks of LGBTQIA+ newcomers in the Netherlands?

LGBTQIA+ newcomers are most satisfied with the support they receive from friends, followed by organizations in the Netherlands, COA, family and residents, neighbours. On average, status holders are more satisfied with their social network than asylum seekers.

This relates to what Elferink & Emmen (2017), De Gruijter & Razenberg (2017) and Pharos (2007) state about refugees sometimes feeling lonely and lacking social contacts. This study shows that asylum seekers and status holders, on average graded their satisfaction with their social network as insufficient (below 5) when they were living in the asylum centre. However, asylum seekers stated they felt happier before the pandemic and graded their satisfaction. Therefore, the pandemic could explain why asylum seekers graded their satisfaction with their social network as insufficient.

Sub-Question 5:

To what extent does the general satisfaction relate to experienced safety of LGBTQIA+ newcomers in the Netherlands?

As stated before, people are most dissatisfied with their living situation. Next to that, this study has shown that on average LGBTQIA+ newcomers feel unsafe inside the asylum centres. A Pearson correlation had been executed to test if there is a connection between the satisfaction and the experienced

safety. There was no relevant relation between the satisfaction with living situation, main occupation, health and life in general and the experienced safety. This result could have been influenced by the small sample size. There was a relevant relation between the satisfaction with the social network and the experienced safety. Further research can explore whether these differences relate.

Sub-Question 6:

What differences are there in experiences of experienced safety, social networks, and general satisfaction between LGBTQIA+ newcomers?

The sample is too small to make assumptions on what the differences are between LGBTQIA+ newcomers considering experienced safety, social networks and general satisfaction. When looking at personal details as what area or province people live in, the sexual orientation or gender identity, there are not enough respondents to draw conclusions. For example, if someone living in Groningen rates their experienced safety as a 9, that does not give us enough information about Groningen as this is the answer of only one person. Hence, it was not possible to further explore the differences between the respondents and jump to conclusions.

However, this study did identify some important differences between asylum seekers and status holders. First, status holders rated their satisfaction with their social network higher than asylum seekers. However, status holders were less satisfied with their social network when they were living in the asylum centre than asylum seekers seem to be. An interesting result is that the status holders got more satisfied with their social network during the pandemic, while asylum seekers are less satisfied now than before the pandemic. Only nine status holders filled in this question, so this could have influenced this result. Asylum seekers are less satisfied with their life, living situation, daily occupation and health in comparison to status holders. Status holders are most satisfied with their health and least satisfied with their daily occupation. Asylum seekers are also most satisfied with their health and least satisfied with their living situation. Again, only seven status holders filled out this question which could have affected the answers. But it seems reasonable that the asylum seekers are less satisfied with aspects of their life in comparison to status holders. Asylum seekers have less certainty in their life because they do not know whether they are allowed to stay. Considering the situation inside the asylum centres, it is understandable that LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers seem most dissatisfied with their living situation. Both asylum seekers and status holders rate their experienced safety inside the asylum centre as insufficient and rate their experienced safety outside the asylum centre higher. Status holders also rate their experienced safety on average higher than asylum seekers do.

Sub-Question 7:

What could improve the situation of LGBTQIA+ newcomers in the Netherlands?

In the survey, many respondents pleaded for a separate asylum centre for LGBTQIA+ newcomers. The discussion about a separate LGBTQIA+ asylum centre has been going on for some time, organizations as LGBT Asylum Support plead for this option (2020a; 2020b). During the interviews this option was mentioned as well, but some of the participants said that it would feel like a step back in time. One of the participants mentioned that in the Netherlands LGBTQIA+ people should not have to live in different asylum centres in order to feel comfortable or be safe. It can be argued that this is true, as in the Netherlands we protect the rights of LGBTQIA+ people. However, it is important for people to feel safe. At this moment, this study and others (LGBT Asylum Support 2020a; 2020b) suggest that this is not the case. Therefore, a separate LGBTQIA+ asylum centre should be taken into consideration. When asked what would improve the situation of LGBTQIA+ newcomers, six respondents mentioned the separate LGBTQIA+ units or asylum centres specifically. Others states more security, more information from COA, more space for LGBTQIA+ newcomers and more support from the employees of COA. The case for creating separate units can be argued using the concept of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1990). In her study Crenshaw (1990) discussed violence against black women and introduced the concept of intersectionality. She argues that identity politics often disregard important differences within groups, such as race, class or gender. She showed that policies regarding violence against black women were lacking, because they were directed at either black people *or* women. Crenshaw described this as people standing on an intersection between race and gender. The roads towards the intersection were the policies: either focussing on one of the two. The LGBT unit is a prime example of this. In the asylum centre, it is evident that people are all asylum seekers or refugees, but we cannot forget other personal details: being from a certain country, a certain gender, being a parent, having physical or mental issues, following a certain religion or being LGBTQIA+. For LGBTQIA+ newcomers it is important that they are viewed not only as asylum seekers but as being LGBTQIA+, because this does affect their life in the asylum centre. The concept of intersectionality can be applied here and can be seen as a rationale policies, where we do not focus on people being either a refugee or asylum seeker or people being LGBTQIA+, but both.

One of the participants mentioned that COA should support LGBTQIA+ newcomers more. Another participant said it would be helpful if COA tried to bring LGBTQIA+ people in contact with each other. Educating heterosexual newcomers was also discussed, but two participants said this would not be helpful. One of the participants did argue that providing information to heterosexual newcomers could help improving the acceptance. This is in line with what is discussed by Felten et al (2015) and Van Hoof (03-02-2016) about educating other residents about LGBTQIA+ people and raising the acceptance. This could be a relevant option in order to increase the acceptance of LGBTQIA+ newcomers, as it is important for LGBTQIA+ newcomers to feel safe and for other residents to better understand LGBTQIA+ people.

Next to experienced safety, this study also indicates that LGBTQIA+ newcomers seem dissatisfied with their social network, living situation, life in general and main occupation. Further research is needed to clarify what exactly LGBTQIA+ newcomers are dissatisfied with. One of the participants in the interviews mentioned that it can be hard for LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers to find other LGBTQIA+ people inside the asylum centres. This could be an explanation for their dissatisfaction with their social network, although we do not know that based on this study. The participant mentioned that it could help if COA introduced them to each other. COA would need to approach this very carefully, because it can be harmful to tell a resident about someone being LGBTQIA+, if the other is not LGBTQIA+ as well.

Sub-Question 8:

To what extent did the pandemic influence the social networks, general satisfaction and experienced safety of LGBTQIA+ newcomers in the Netherlands?

Respondents feel less safe inside the asylum centre since the pandemic. Some LGBTQIA+ newcomers are less in contact with their family, residents, neighbours, and friends. Many respondents have stated the amount of contact with residents and friends did not change during the pandemic. Contact with friends and other residents is on average the most stable. Overall, there are quite a few respondents that state they have less contact because of the pandemic. Asylum seekers are also less satisfied with their social network while status holders are more satisfied with their social network since the pandemic.

Half of the LGBTQIA+ newcomers state their feeling of safety inside and outside the asylum centre has not changed. A few state they feel less safe inside the asylum centre and a few outside the asylum centre. During the interviews, some of the participants also stated the pandemic did not really influence their life as they did not go out much. One of the participants argue that it made a difference, because now they could not attend meetings of organizations.

6.2 Contribution to the literature

This study can contribute to the existing literature in multiple ways. First, it has studied new aspects of the lives of LGBTQIA+ newcomers in the Netherlands that not much was known about yet: their social networks and general satisfaction. Adding these aspects have highlighted important and new insights that new studies can built upon. For example, this study identified that LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers seem slightly dissatisfied with their social network. This study followed to distinction of Pichler & Wallace (2007) and split social network into formal and informal network. According to the CBS (21-06-2018) people who are frequently in contact with friends, family or neighbours are most satisfied with their social life. Most LGBTQIA+ newcomers seem to be in contact with one of these groups every week, yet they do not seem too satisfied with their social network. Especially for LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers rated their social network as insufficient. However, they rated their satisfaction higher before the pandemic, meaning that the pandemic could have had a negative effect on the amount of contact they have. Next to social networks, LGBTQIA+ newcomers rate their main occupation, living situation and life in general as insufficient. LGBTQIA+ newcomers have rated their health as sufficient, which is one of the main indicators for happiness and satisfaction in life (Beuningen & Kloosterman, 2011). Next to that, the satisfaction of LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers especially is not that high, which can have to do with living in an asylum centre, the stress of not knowing if you could stay and being LGBTQIA+ in an asylum centre. However, more research is needed to identify these relations.

Moreover, The factors for measuring safety as used by the CBS (2019) and Social and Cultural Bureau (van Noije, 2020; van Noije & Wittebrood, 2008) were also relevant to include in this study. Experienced safety, experienced nuisance and victimhood are important factors in determining how safe an individual feels (CBS, 2009; van Noije 2020; van Noije & Wittebrood, 2008). Following van Noije & Iedema (2017), questions regarding the fear of becoming a victim of criminal activity and knowing where to go for help were included as well. This study was able to give an indication on how LGBTQIA+ newcomers experience safety inside and outside the asylum centre. As was argued by LGBT Asylum Support (2020a; 2020b), the results indicate that LGBTQIA+ newcomers do not feel safe inside the asylum centres. This seems to also be in line with scholars in other countries, as they also described the discrimination and sometimes violence that LGBTQIA+ newcomers face (Chávez, 2011; Kilvicim, 2015; Messih, 2016).

In a broader perspective, this study also relates to the discussion about migration towards Western countries, queer migration in particular and identities. Scholars have indicated that European countries are trying to block newcomers (van Houtum, 2015). Devetak (2004) discusses how Western countries fear that a flow of refugees jeopardizes the economical and political stability in the country. According to Vitikainen (2020) the European immigration and naturalization offices try desperately to separate the real LGBTQIA+ from the frauds. As argued before, the result can be that the asylum applications of LGBTQIA+ people get rejected because they cannot prove their sexual orientation or gender identity

(UNHCR, 2012). The need to keep out the people who are using the LGBTQIA+ status to get asylum could relate to the need to keep newcomers out of Western countries. The debate on Queer Migration also mentions the issues that LGBTQIA+ newcomers face during the migration process. Lewis (2013; 2014) discusses how the western narrative of what being LGBTQIA+ influences the asylum applications of LGBTQIA+ newcomers. For example, Lewis (2013) discusses how lesbian newcomers are considered to be unable to show that they lived openly in their country of origin and were in danger for it. Lewis (2013) argues that LGBTQIA+ newcomers need to prove their identity in a way that the host country can understand. One of the participants also mentioned that it felt weird to have to prove you are LGBTQIA+. As another participant argued, it is important to understand the culture of the country of origin when deciding if an individual can stay in the Netherlands or not. Lewis & Naples (2014) argue that the Western countries say they protect human rights by letting in refugees, but dismiss the human rights of LGBTQIA+ newcomers by focussing on credibility specifically. Even though this study did not focus specifically on the interviews or the asylum procedure, it does argue that we need to focus more on the human rights of LGBTQIA+ newcomers. If the Netherlands wants to protect the rights of LGBTQIA+ people, they should be able to ensure that they can live here safely.

The process of identifying LGBTQIA+ newcomers as being LGBTQIA+ also relates to how we see them. Even though the IND has had multiple trainings to not misgender and use open terms, the need to specifically identify LGBTQIA+ people can lead to problems. We should be careful not to use the western identity of an LGBTQIA+ person or what an LGBTQIA+ person is and portray that too much on others. This relates to what is described in the literature as constructivism: the creation of social identities through social influences (Sen, 2006; Yeros, 1999). It also relates to the view that Oberschall (2000) and Fearon & Laitin (2000) have on identities, namely instrumentalism. This view also discusses that identities are socially constructed, but focusses on single actors or the elite. In their studies they discuss ethnic identity, but it can be applied on identities in general too. It could be argued that in the asylum applications for LGBTQIA+ newcomers, the western countries have created a dominant view on how an LGBTQIA+ person acts and values.

6.3 Recommendations

Based on this study a few recommendations can be made.

6.3.1 Recommendations *to COA*

LGBTQIA+ newcomers who participated in the interviews or filled out the survey have given multiple options in order for COA to help better the lives of LGBTQIA+ newcomers. First, it would be helpful if COA pays more attention to minor incidents as bullying, name calling, etcetera. Second, one of the participants of the interviews mentioned COA could help bringing LGBTQIA+ newcomers together. However, if COA starts doing this they need to be extremely cautious because if they are uncertain whether someone is actually LGBTQIA+ it could be dangerous. Third, COA could provide more information about LGBTQIA+ organizations to the LGBTQIA+ newcomers. This could also help improve their satisfaction with their social network, living situation and life in general. Providing more information to LGBTQIA+ newcomers is also mentioned as a recommendation by Elferink & Emmen (2016).

6.3.2 *Increasing the acceptance*

Next to providing help for LGBTQIA+ newcomers, COA could also consider working on increasing the acceptance among other residents. Felten et al. (2015) and van Hoof (03-02-2016) already discussed some of the options that could help improve the acceptance of other residents. Lecturing people is not that effective according to Felten et al. (2015), but other more creative methods as using film- and theatre can be. Van Hoof (03-02-2016) discusses developing educational programs, which could also help the increase the acceptance.

6.3.3 *An LGBTQIA+ asylum centre*

A separate asylum centre for LGBTQIA+ people is an option we should consider. Some of the participants of the interviews mentioned that this would feel like a step back in time. However, in order to guarantee the safety of LGBTQIA+ newcomers a separate asylum centre for LGBTQIA+ newcomers needs to be taken seriously. Evidently, COA would need to be careful in placing LGBTQIA+ newcomers in the separate asylum centre and make sure that people feel safe there.

6.3.4 *An overview for organizations*

It could be helpful for organizations to create an overview with organisations and contacts people can turn to for support. Many organizations already have an idea of where to direct people to, however it could be helpful to have a manual (if there is not one already). It could also be helpful for organizations to keep track of the incidents that they hear from visitors.

6.3.5 Staying in contact with LGBTQIA+ newcomers

The last recommendation is the most important one, namely that it is important that we listen to LGBTQIA+ newcomers and talk to them about their needs. When I was conducting the interviews and set out the survey, it became clear that many LGBTQIA+ newcomers have a pretty clear idea about how to better their situation. It is important that we take these suggestions seriously.

Recommendations for future research

6.3.6 Impact of the pandemic

This study concludes that the pandemic has had an impact on some of the LGBTQIA+ newcomers. For example, it seems that LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers are less satisfied with their social network because of the pandemic. However, the pandemic is not over yet and the long-term effects can be different than this study states. Therefore, it is important to study what kind of impact the pandemic has on the lives of LGBTQIA+ newcomers on the long term.

6.3.7 People pretending to be LGBTQIA+

Participants of the interviews also mentioned that there are people that pretend to be LGBTQIA+ in order to get asylum. One of the participants even mentioned that people know they can ask for asylum in the Netherlands when they pretend to be LGBTQIA+. This is an issue in multiple ways, because it could be dangerous when LGBTQIA+ asylum centres are opened and it diminishes the credibility of LGBTQIA+ newcomers. This also relates to the fact that the IND tries to find people that pretend to be LGBTQIA+ and wants to deny them asylum (Vitikainen, 2020). Therefore, future studies could explore whether LGBTQIA+ newcomers, employees of COA or the IND have the feeling that there are many people who pretend to be LGBTQIA+. It would be especially interesting to know how this issue further complicates the situation of LGBTQIA+ newcomers.

6.3.8 General satisfaction and wellbeing

General satisfaction also included social wellbeing in this study, which were relatively new subjects. It would be interesting to continue to examine the subject of wellbeing among LGBTQIA+ newcomers in particular. Especially because studies have found that refugees can experience psychological issues when they seek for asylum in another country (Giacco, Laxhman & Priebe, 2018). Considering the issues that LGBTQIA+ newcomers face, this could be the case for them as well. More research is needed in order to determine if this is true. An example of this could be to explore the wellbeing and health of newcomers with a non-gender confirming identity in the Netherlands.

6.4 Reflection

In this study there are a few limitations that need to be discussed.

6.4.1 *Small sample size*

As I mentioned in the section 7.1, this study has been conducted with a small sample size. There were four participants in the interviews and 26 out of 48 respondents that have completed the entire survey. However, as this is a vulnerable group that is hard to reach, it is not that odd that there are not that many respondents. The small sample size effects the representation, the reliability of advanced tests and the conclusions that can be made about the differences between respondents. First, because of the small sample size no conclusions can be made based on this study for LGBTQIA+ newcomers as a group. In order to do that, you would need a larger group that represent LGBTQIA+ newcomers in all their variety. However, this is very hard to do because we do not know exactly how many LGBTQIA+ newcomers there are in the Netherlands. Second, this study was unable to discover differences between the LGBTQIA+ newcomers. Because of the small sample size it was not possible to seek out differences between newcomers specifically.

6.4.2 *Concepts*

Considering the concepts that were used in this study there are a few notes to be made. The first is about the concept general satisfaction, in other studies general satisfaction also includes other aspects as income and education (Moonen et al., 2015). These are not included in this study while they can have an effect on the satisfaction of people. In this study the participants were asked what their daily activity was, but not specifically whether they are following education or have an income. This is mostly due to the fact that when you are not a Dutch citizen yet, you are not allowed to work that many hours or follow Dutch education.

Secondly, the concept of social wellbeing is usually connected to emotional and psychological wellbeing to get a full picture of the wellbeing of an individual (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Lamers, et al., 2011; Hone et al., 2014). These last two concept were not included in this study, which makes the concept of wellbeing as a whole less reliable.

Third, I want to discuss the term LGBTQIA+. The results of this study show that most people identify as being either lesbian, gay or bisexual. During the interviews, the participants mostly referred to themselves and others as LGBT. Therefore, I would also make sense to refer to the respondents as LGBT+, with everyone who is not lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender still included in the '+'. However, I wanted to choose an inclusive approach and therefore used the term LGBTQIA+.

6.4.3 Methods

In this study a mixed method approach was used by combining survey data with interview data. Some of the feedback that was given to me was that the survey was too long and that it was hard for people to complete as they had a lot on their mind. However, the small sample size did have an effect on this study. Due to multiple reasons the interviews were not as consistent as I would have liked, some participants had more time for the interview so I was able to ask more questions.

When creating the survey I made sure that LGBTQIA+ status holders were asked to fill in this survey as if they were still living in the asylum centre. However, seen the differences in the answers between status holders and asylum seekers, it seems that they have a slightly different view on some of the subjects. It could be that they filled out some of the questions relating to how they feel *now*, instead of during the time they were in the asylum centre.

The interviews were all different in length. As explained before, some of the participants had to find a place to do the interview so others would not hear them talk about being LGBTQIA+. One of the participants was traveling by train when the interview took place. Because of these circumstances I had to choose which questions I considered to be most important. Therefore, I did not have the opportunity ask many follow-up questions with some of the participants. This could have led to inconsistencies in the results.

6.4.4 Analysis & Results

In this study I used mostly descriptive statistics to present the results. I used SPSS and Atlas.ti to analyse the data. I have also conducted two t-tests to measure whether there was a significant difference in means. As argued before, t-tests are considered most reliable when the sample is larger. For example, for a t-test the assumption of normal distribution needs to be met (see Annex B for a description). When there are more than 30 respondents, you can assume the data is normally distributed (Clay, 2009).

6.4.5 Reflection on my personal process

In this study I was able to combine the skills I have gained during my study sociology with the knowledge I gained during the study human geography. I was very interested in studying the experiences LGBTQIA+ newcomers and wanted to identify what issues they face. Even though it was hard to do my master thesis during the pandemic, I am still very glad to have chosen this subject and to be able to combine my study sociology with the perspective of human geography. The concepts that I used in this study: social networks derived from social capital, satisfaction and safety were subjects that were discussed often within my studies as a sociologist. For my research methods I combined the quantitative data, which I am familiar with because of sociology, with the in-depth qualitative data, which I became more familiar with during human geography. I have learned to use the skills of a sociologist and apply them as a human geographer by looking more at the context that the LGBTQIA+ newcomers were living

in and what kind of effect it had on them. Hence, I was very interested in learning about the differences between certain environmental factors as provinces and descriptions of the area. Unfortunately I was unable to specifically identify these differences. But I did find out some interesting other factors, for example that migration from certain countries is also influenced by their political context which causes them to be able to ask for asylum in Europe or not. One of the participants of the interviews discussed that there are certain countries that people know they cannot apply for asylum in the Netherlands or other western countries. Therefore, it could increase the chance of them pretending to be LGBTQIA+ in order to get asylum in western countries. This is an interesting finding that I did not necessarily expect, but needs to be further explored before it can be determined whether this is truly the case. Hence, some of the interviews suggested that people from certain countries or certain political contexts pretend to be LGBTQIA+ in order to be able to apply for asylum in Western countries.

6.5 Conclusion

This study explored the experiences with social networks, general satisfaction and safety of LGBTQIA+ newcomers. The results have shown that LGBTQIA+ newcomers are most in contact with their friends and also see them as most important contacts. They are also in contact with neighbours and residents, but do not necessarily value these contacts a lot or feel either positively or negatively about their support from them. Family is a difficult subject, as some do have a lot of contact with their family and feel supported, while others have no contact at all and do not feel supported. All LGBTQIA+ newcomers are in touch with some type of organization, which is good news, because this means they are able to find these organizations when they need to. However, on average, especially the LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers still seem dissatisfied with their social network. All LGBTQIA+ newcomers seem satisfied with their overall health, but not with their current living situation, main occupation or life in general. There are differences between the status holders and asylum seekers, as status holders are more satisfied with these aspects. Status holders are least satisfied with their main occupation while asylum seekers are least satisfied with their living situation. Most LGBTQIA+ newcomers scored average on the social wellbeing scale, again there is a difference between asylum seekers and status holders. Status holders have only scored average or high on social wellbeing, while asylum seekers scored low, average or high on the social wellbeing scale. However, not that many LGBTQIA+ status holders were included in the survey, meaning that this could have affected this result. Furthermore, this study has explored how LGBTQIA+ newcomers experience safety. The result was in line with what was stated by LGBT Asylum Support (2020a; 2020b), who stated that LGBTQIA+ newcomers feel unsafe inside the asylum centre. This study indicates the same result, as most LGBTQIA+ newcomers rated their experienced safety inside the asylum centre as insufficient. Overall, for most LGBTQIA+ newcomers the pandemic did not influence the experienced safety. Only a few indicated that they feel less safe inside the asylum centre and safer outside the asylum centre. Related to the subject of safety, most LGBTQIA+ newcomers stated they are not open about their sexual orientation or gender identity. This study also showed that half of the LGBTQIA+ newcomers that participated in this study feel like they could be a victim of criminal activity either always or most of the time in the asylum centre. About one third of the LGBTQIA+ newcomers state they feel discriminated against either always or most of the time inside the asylum centre. The LGBTQIA+ newcomers seem divided in knowing who to ask for help, some state they do know where to go, others do not. If an incident happened to them, most would go to COA, the police or an LGBTQIA+ organization. Only two LGBTQIA+ newcomers state they would not report the incident. Based on this study recommendations can be made for further research and for organizations. For future research, it is interesting to further explore the subjects social networks, general satisfaction and wellbeing. By studying these subjects the needs and issues of LGBTQIA+ newcomers can become clearer.

7. Bibliography

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8. Annex A

Table 1. Descriptives	– Social Network					
Variables	Labels	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Mode	N
Which contacts are important to you? You can give multiple answers.	1 friends 2 family 3 neighbours 4 residents 5 other	1	5	2.44	1	34
How often do you speak with... friends	1 every day 2 every week 3 every month 4 every six months 5 every year 6 never	1	6	1.71	1	34
How often do you speak with... family	1 every day 2 every week 3 every month 4 every six months 5 every year 6 never	1	6	3.29	6	34
How often do you speak with... neighbours	1 every day 2 every week 3 every month 4 every six months 5 every year 6 never	1	6	2.53	2	34
How often do you speak with... residents	1 every day 2 every week 3 every month 4 every six months 5 every year 6 never	1	6	2.82	1	34
Do you have more or less contact with the following groups because of the pandemic ? Friends	1 less contact 2 the same amount 3 more contact 4 does not apply	1	4	1.76	1 - 2	34
Do you have more or less contact with the following groups because of the pandemic ? Family	1 less contact 2 the same amount 3 more contact 4 does not apply	1	4	2.59	4	32
Do you have more or less contact with the following groups because of the pandemic ? Residents	1 less contact 2 the same amount 3 more contact 4 does not apply	1	4	1.94	1	31
Do you have more or less contact with the following groups because of the pandemic ? Neighbours	1 less contact 2 the same amount 3 more contact 4 does not apply	1	4	2.03	1	31
What organizations listed below do you know of, even if it is only	1 Vluchtelingenwerk 2 Vluchtelingen-Organisaties Nederland	1	10	-	3	33

by name? You can give multiple answers.	3 COC Netherlands 4 Open Embassy 5 Refugee Start Force 6 Kerk in Actie 7 Rainbow Netherlands 8 Cocktail Netherlands 9 LGBT Asylum Support 10 Other organizations					
Which of these organizations provide support to you? You can give multiple answers.	1 Vluchtelingenwerk 2 Vluchtelingen-Organisaties Nederland 3 COC Netherlands 4 Open Embassy 5 Refugee Start Force 6 Kerk in Actie 7 Rainbow Netherlands 8 Cocktail Netherlands 9 LGBT Asylum Support 10 Other organizations	1	10	-	8	31

Table 3. Descriptives Variables - Satisfaction

Table 3. Descriptives - satisfaction						
Variables	Labels	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Mode	N
How satisfied are you with the support of ... family	1 extremely satisfied					
	2 somewhat satisfied					
	3 neither satisfied nor dissatisfied					
	4 somewhat dissatisfied	1	5	3.33	5	33
	5 extremely dissatisfied					
How satisfied are you with the support of ... friends	1 extremely satisfied					
	2 somewhat satisfied					
	3 neither satisfied nor dissatisfied					
	4 somewhat dissatisfied	1	5	1.91	2	32
	5 extremely dissatisfied					
How satisfied are you with the support of ... residents	1 extremely satisfied					
	2 somewhat satisfied					
	3 neither satisfied nor dissatisfied					
	4 somewhat dissatisfied	1	5	3.03	3	32
	5 extremely dissatisfied					
How satisfied are you with the support of ... neighbours	1 extremely satisfied					
	2 somewhat satisfied					
	3 neither satisfied nor dissatisfied					
	4 somewhat dissatisfied	1	5	3.00	3	32
	5 extremely dissatisfied					
How satisfied are you with the support of ... COA	1 extremely satisfied					
	2 somewhat satisfied					
	3 neither satisfied nor dissatisfied					
	4 somewhat dissatisfied	1	5	2.94	2	31
	5 extremely dissatisfied					

How satisfied are you with the support of ... organizations	1 extremely satisfied 2 somewhat satisfied 3 neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 4 somewhat dissatisfied 5 extremely dissatisfied	1	5	2.34	1	32
How satisfied were you when you lived in the asylum centre , with the amount of social contacts you had?	0 not satisfied at all 10 extremely satisfied	1	10	4.56	3	9
How satisfied were you before the pandemic with the amount of social contacts you had?	0 not satisfied at all 10 extremely satisfied	1	10	6.10	5 - 10	31
How satisfied are you now with the amount of social contacts you have?	0 not satisfied at all 10 extremely satisfied	1	10	5.47	5	34
On a scale from 0 (not satisfied at all) to 10 (extremely satisfied), how satisfied are you with your overall health?	0 not satisfied at all 10 extremely satisfied	1	10	6.29	4 - 6 - 7 - 9	31
On a scale from 0 (not satisfied at all) to 10 (extremely satisfied), how satisfied are you with your daily activities?	0 not satisfied at all 10 extremely satisfied	1	10	3.52	2	31
On a scale from 0 (not satisfied at all) to 10 (extremely satisfied), how satisfied are you with your current living situation?	0 not satisfied at all 10 extremely satisfied	1	10	2.90	0	31
On a scale from 0 (not satisfied at all) to 10 (extremely satisfied), how satisfied are you with your life in general?	0 not satisfied at all 10 extremely satisfied	1	10	4.17	5	30

Table 4. Descriptives variables – Social wellbeing

Variables	Labels	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Mode	N
During the past month, how often did you feel that you had something important to contribute to society?	1 Never 2 Once or twice 3 About once a week 4 About 2 or 3 times a week 5 Almost every day 6 Every day	1	6	3.18	2	22

During the time you were in the asylum centre, how often did you feel that you had something important to contribute to society?	1 Never 2 Once or twice 3 About once a week 4 About 2 or 3 times a week 5 Almost every day 6 Every day	1	6	2.71	1 - 2	7
During the past month, how often did you feel that you belonged to a community (like a social group, or your neighborhood)?	1 Never 2 Once or twice 3 About once a week 4 About 2 or 3 times a week 5 Almost every day 6 Every day	1	6	2.81	1	21
During the time you were in the asylum centre, how often did you feel that you belonged to a community (like a social group, or your neighborhood)?	1 Never 2 Once or twice 3 About once a week 4 About 2 or 3 times a week 5 Almost every day 6 Every day	1	5	2.86	1 - 2	7
During the past month, how often did you feel that our society is a good place, or is becoming a better place, for all people?	1 Never 2 Once or twice 3 About once a week 4 About 2 or 3 times a week 5 Almost every day 6 Every day	1	6	3.00	2	22
During the time you were in the asylum centre, how often did you feel that our society is a good place, or is becoming a better place, for all people?	1 Never 2 Once or twice 3 About once a week 4 About 2 or 3 times a week 5 Almost every day 6 Every day	2	5	3.43	1 - 2 - 4	7
During the past month, how often did you feel that people are basically good?	1 Never 2 Once or twice 3 About once a week 4 About 2 or 3 times a week 5 Almost every day 6 Every day	1	6	3.45	3	22
During the time you were in the asylum centre, how often did you feel that people are basically good?	1 Never 2 Once or twice 3 About once a week 4 About 2 or 3 times a week 5 Almost every day 6 Every day	1	5	3.29	5	7
During the past month, how often did you feel that the way our society works makes sense to you?	1 Never 2 Once or twice 3 About once a week 4 About 2 or 3 times a week 5 Almost every day 6 Every day	1	6	3.23	2	22
During the time you were in the asylum centre, how often did you feel that the	1 Never 2 Once or twice 3 About once a week 4 About 2 or 3 times a week	2	6	4.00	3 - 5	7

way our society works 5 Almost every day
 makes sense to you? 6 Every day

Table 5. Descriptives Variables – Safety

Variables	Labels	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Mode	N
On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you grade your feelings of safety inside the asylum centre?	0 very unsafe 10 very safe	0	10	3.69	0 - 2 - 3 - 4	26
To what extent did your feelings of safety inside the asylum centre change because of the pandemic?	1 I feel safer 2 it did not change 3 I feel less safe	1	3	2.30	2	23
What could be done to improve the safety inside the asylum centre?	-	x	-	-	-	-
On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you grade your feelings of safety outside the asylum centre?	0 very unsafe 10 very safe	4	10	7.85	8	26
To what extent did your feelings of safety outside change because of the pandemic?	1 I feel safer 2 it did not change 3 I feel less safe	1	3	1.86	2	22
<i>Inside the asylum centre I am open about my sexual orientation</i>	1 describes me extremely well 2 describes me very well 3 describes me moderately well 4 describes me slightly well 5 does not describe me	1	5	4.12	5	26
<i>Inside the asylum centre I am open about my gender identity.</i>	1 describes me extremely well 2 describes me very well 3 describes me moderately well 4 describes me slightly well 5 does not describe me	1	5	3.59	5	27
<i>Inside the asylum centre I know who to ask when I need help.</i>	1 describes me extremely well 2 describes me very well 3 describes me moderately well 4 describes me slightly well 5 does not describe me	1	5	3.00	3	26
<i>Inside the asylum centre I feel discriminated against for</i>	1 never 2 sometimes 3 half the time 4 most of the time 5 always	1	5	2.93	2 - 3	27

identifying as
LGBTQI+.

Inside the asylum centre I am afraid to become a victim of criminal activity.	1 never					
	2 sometimes					
	3 half the time	1	5	3.46	5	26
	4 most of the time					
	5 always					
If an incident happens who would you report this to?	1 COA					
	2 Police					
	3 Vluchtelingenwerk					
	4 Municipality	1	7	-	1	27
	5 LGBTQIA+ Organization					
Do you have anything to add to this survey?	6 Other organization					
	7 I would not report, because					
	-	-	-	-	-	27

Table 6. What could be done to improve the safety inside the asylum centre? (N=20)

- 1 A seperate AZC for LGBTQ refugees.
- 2 asylum centers should be abolished
Better security and strong rules for who ever hurts someone else, better to be not shared floors, Coa who can actually do what it takes to protect every residence and believe them when they say they have been bothered by someone and do something about it
- 3 someone and do something about it
- 4 Decrease the load in the rooms
- 5 Give more safe neighbours and surroundings to Lgbt
- 6 introduce lgbtqi units
It would be much better if people could have their own wc and kitchen. Then they would not be closed in one room if some neighbor has positive corona test.
- 7 Make separate units for those that describe themselves as gay as there is limitation to our freedoms, privacy and safety from the non accepting asylum seekers
making sure LGBT ppl are placed with other LGBT or alonje so that they dont share accomdation with straight ppl who are a threat
- 8 safety from the non accepting asylum seekers
- 9 ppl who are a threat
- 10 more information, more controle
- 11 More sensitization about shared use of machines and the LGBTQIA+ group
- 12 more space
- 13 organize LGBT units
- 14 Put lgbt people in the same places from the people they run away from at home and stop mixing them
- 15 Separate the LGBTQ+ people from the rest of the asylum seekers because they are mostly homophobic arabs
- 16 Separating families from single individuals
- 17 The personeel have to hear people and do what they need en try to help them to feel as safe as possible
- 18 The way we treated my coa.
There should be at least a week orientation for all new Asylum seekers and the laws of this country especially on the laws regarding LGBTQ+. Moreover, there should also be stronger laws on fighting.
- 19 on the laws regarding LGBTQ+. Moreover, there should also be stronger laws on fighting.
- 20 They place a special resident

9. Annex B

T-tests

A t-test is a method of analysis that determines whether there is a significant statistical difference between two means. In this study, I have chosen for a paired samples t-test, meaning that the two means are extracted from the same group (Field, 2013; Armitage & Berry, 1994). A paired samples t-test is fitting for determining the difference in means from the same group on different times, for example math students taking a test in year 1 and year 2. In this case, the paired samples t-test was used to determine whether there was a difference between the means in satisfaction concerning the social network before and after the pandemic (see table 2.1). A few conditions need to be met before a paired samples t-test can be conducted.

1. The data needs to be normally distributed.
2. The dependent variable must be at ratio or interval level.
3. Participants are independent of one another.

It is argued that in order to successfully conduct a paired samples t-test you need at least a sample size of 30 or the dependent variables are normally distributed (Clay, 2009). In this study that is not the case for the t-test that have been conducted for experienced safety, and the t-test that was conducted for social networks where the difference between asylum seekers and status holders was made. Because the data meets the conditions for the paired samples t-test, these tests have been conducted.

Correlations

To test if there is a correlation between the satisfaction of the respondents and the experienced safety, a Spearman correlation was conducted in SPSS. A few conditions need to be met in order to be able to conduct the Spearman correlation. These conditions are:

1. The variables that are used should be of ordinal, interval or ratio level.
2. Observations are paired.
3. There is a monotonic relationship between the variables (Chen & Popovich, 2002; Field, 2013)

There is no relevant correlation between the satisfaction regarding life, health, main occupation or living situation. It is possible that this is due to the small sample size. There does seem to be a positive correlation of 0.442 between the safety inside the asylum centre and the satisfaction regarding the social network. However, this is considered as a weak correlation (Moore et al., 2013).

10. Annex C

Survey - Social networks and Experienced safety of LGBTQI+ refugees and asylum seekers

Start of Block: Introduction survey

Q1 Please read before starting the survey.
Dear Reader,
My name is Rikste Knijff, currently I am doing a master's in Human Geography at Radboud University. For my master thesis I want to study the experienced safety and social networks of LGBTQI+ asylum seekers and refugees in the Netherlands. The goal of this study is to gain more insight into these topics, to describe the current situation and the issues people are facing. By participating in this study you can explain your own experiences, discuss the issues you encounter and what you would suggest to change! Based on this study I will provide general recommendations for LGBTQI+ organizations. Please note that participation in this study is **voluntary** and you are not obligated to answer questions. Your answers are completely anonymous and will not be shared with anyone. The answers will be stored for the purpose of this study only and deleted after this study is done. You can participate in this study if you are:
A) An asylum seeker or refugee who is LGBTQI+. For example because you are a lesbian, homosexual, bisexual, pansexual, asexual, intersex, transgender, queer or if you identify in any way with being LGBTQI+.
B) A person who has been a status holder for two years or less, who is LGBTQI+. For example because you are a lesbian, homosexual, bisexual, pansexual, asexual, intersex, transgender, queer or if you identify in any way with being LGBTQI+.
This survey includes the following topics: 1) personal details, 2) social networks, 3) general satisfaction, 4) experienced safety and 5) some questions regarding the influence of the pandemic. Please note that there are no questions included regarding specific people or specific events. For the purpose of this study it would help if you could answer all the questions included in this survey. The survey takes +/- 10 minutes. If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact me at: t.knijff@student.ru.nl.
Thank you so much for helping me with my thesis!

☐ I understand the terms of use and agree with participation in this survey. I understand that this survey is anonymous and the data will be used for research purposes only. (1)

End of Block: Introduction survey

Start of Block: Personal details

Q2 Thank you for filling in this survey. The first questions will concern some personal details.

Q3 Please enter your age in numbers.

Q4 What do you identify with? You can give multiple answers.

☐

Heterosexual (1)

☐

Homosexual (2)

☐

Lesbian (3)

☐

Bisexual (4)

☐

Pansexual (5)

☐

Asexual (6)

☐

Queer (7)

☐

Prefer to self-describe: (8)

☐

Prefer not to say (9)

Q5 What gender was assigned to you when you were born?

- ☐ Male (1)
- ☐ Female (2)
- ☐ Intersex (3)
- ☐ Prefer to self-describe: (4) _____
- ☐ Prefer not to say (5)
-

Q6 What is your gender identity? You can give multiple answers.

- ☐ Male (1)
- ☐ Female (2)
- ☐ Non-binary (3)
- ☐ Gender Fluid (4)
- ☐ Prefer to self-describe: (5) _____
- ☐ Prefer not to say (6)
-

Q7 How long have you been in the Netherlands?

- ☐ Six months or less (1)
 - ☐ Between six months to a year (2)
 - ☐ Between one to two years (3)
 - ☐ More than two years (4)
-

Q8 What province do you live in?

- ☐ Groningen (1)
 - ☐ Friesland (2)
 - ☐ Drenthe (3)
 - ☐ Flevoland (4)
 - ☐ Overijssel (5)
 - ☐ Gelderland (6)
 - ☐ Noord-Brabant (7)
 - ☐ Limburg (8)
 - ☐ Utrecht (9)
 - ☐ Zeeland (10)
 - ☐ Zuid-Holland (11)
 - ☐ Noord-Holland (12)
-

Q9 How would you describe the area you live in?

- ☐ A small town (1)
 - ☐ A large town (2)
 - ☐ A small city (3)
 - ☐ A large city (4)
-

Q10 What is your current situation?

- ☐ I live in an asylum centre (1)
 - ☐ I do not live in an asylum centre (2)
-

Display This Question:

If What is your current situation? = I do not live in an asylum centre

Q11 When did you leave the asylum centre?

- ☐ Before the pandemic started (more than a year ago) (1)
 - ☐ During the pandemic (less than a year ago) (2)
 - ☐ I have never lived in an asylum centre (3)
 - ☐ Other: (4) _____
-

Display This Question:

If What is your current situation? = I live in an asylum centre

Q12 Do you live in an LGBTQI+ unit at the asylum centre?

☐ Yes (1)

☐ No (2)

Display This Question:

Do you live in an LGBTQI+ unit at the asylum centre? = Yes

Q13 How long have you lived in an LGBTQI+ unit?

☐ Six months or less (1)

☐ Between six months to a year (2)

☐ Between one to two years (3)

☐ More than two years (4)

Q14 What is your main occupation during the day? You can give multiple answers.

- ☐ Working (1)
- ☐ Studying (2)
- ☐ Voluntary work (3)
- ☐ Hobbies (4)
- ☐ Sports (5)
- ☐ Household (6)
- ☐ Caregiving (7)
- ☐ Other: (8) _____

End of Block: Personal details

Start of Block: Social Networks

Q15 The next questions will be on the subject of your social network. Please keep the situation **before the pandemic** in mind.

Display This Question:

If When did you leave the asylum centre? = Before the pandemic started (more than a year ago)

Or when did you leave the asylum centre? = During the pandemic (less than a year ago)

Or when did you leave the asylum centre? = Other:

Q16 If you do not live in an asylum centre anymore, please answer these questions thinking back to the time when you did live in an asylum centre.

Q17 Which contacts are important to you? You can give multiple answers.

☐

Friends (1)

☐

Family (2)

☐

Neighbors (3)

☐

Other residents (4)

☐

Other: (5) _____

Q18 How often do you speak with...

Friends?

☐

Every day (1)

☐

Every week (2)

☐

Every month (3)

☐

Every six months (4)

☐

Every year (5)

☐

Never (6)

Q19 How often do you speak with...

Family?

- ☐ Every day (1)
 - ☐ Every week (2)
 - ☐ Every month (3)
 - ☐ Every six months (4)
 - ☐ Every year (5)
 - ☐ Never (6)
-

Q20 How often do you speak with...

Other residents?

- ☐ Every day (1)
 - ☐ Every week (2)
 - ☐ Every month (3)
 - ☐ Every six months (4)
 - ☐ Every year (5)
 - ☐ Never (6)
-

Q21 How often do you speak with...

Neighbors?

- ☐ Every day (1)
- ☐ Every week (2)
- ☐ Every month (3)
- ☐ Every six months (4)
- ☐ Every year (5)
- ☐ Never (6)
-

Q22 Do you have more or less contact with the following groups **because of the pandemic?**

	Less contact (1)	The same amount of contact (2)	More contact (3)	Does not apply to me (4)
Friends (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Family (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Residents (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Neighbors (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q23 What organizations listed below do you know of, even if it is only by name? You can give multiple answers.

- ☐ Vluchtelingenwerk (1)
 - ☐ Vluchtelingen-Organisaties Nederland (VON) (2)
 - ☐ COC Netherlands (3)
 - ☐ Open Embassy (4)
 - ☐ Refugee start force (5)
 - ☐ Kerk in actie (6)
 - ☐ Rainbow Netherlands (7)
 - ☐ Cocktail Netherlands (8)
 - ☐ LGBT Asylum Support (9)
 - ☐ Other organizations that you know of that are not included in this list: (10)
-

Q24 Which of these organizations provide support to you? You can give multiple answers.

- ☐ Vluchtelingenwerk (1)
 - ☐ Vluchtelingen-Organisaties Nederland (VON) (2)
 - ☐ COC Netherlands (3)
 - ☐ Open Embassy (4)
 - ☐ Refugee start force (5)
 - ☐ Kerk in actie (6)
 - ☐ Rainbow Netherlands (7)
 - ☐ Cocktail Netherlands (8)
 - ☐ LGBT Asylum Support (9)
 - ☐ Other organizations that you know of that are not included in this list: (10)
-

Q25 How satisfied are you with the support of ...

	Extremely satisfied (1)	Somewhat satisfied (2)	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (3)	Somewhat dissatisfied (4)	Extremely dissatisfied (5)
Family (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Friends (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other residents (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Neighbors (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
COA (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Organizations in the Netherlands (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Display This Question:

If When did you leave the asylum centre? = Before the pandemic started (more than a year ago)

Or when did you leave the asylum centre? = During the pandemic (less than a year ago)

Or when did you leave the asylum centre? = Other:

Q26 How satisfied were you **when you lived in the asylum centre**, with the amount of social contacts you had?

☐ 0 (0)

☐ 1 (1)

☐ 2 (2)

☐ 3 (3)

☐ 4 (4)

☐ 5 (5)

☐ 6 (6)

☐ 7 (7)

☐ 8 (8)

☐ 9 (9)

☐ 10 (10)

Q27 How satisfied were you **before the pandemic** with the amount of social contacts you had?

☐ 0 (0)

☐ 1 (1)

☐ 2 (2)

☐ 3 (3)

☐ 4 (4)

☐ 5 (5)

☐ 6 (6)

☐ 7 (7)

☐ 8 (8)

☐ 9 (9)

☐ 10 (10)

Q28 How satisfied are you **now** with the amount of social contacts you have?

- ☐ 0 (0)
- ☐ 1 (1)
- ☐ 2 (2)
- ☐ 3 (3)
- ☐ 4 (4)
- ☐ 5 (5)
- ☐ 6 (6)
- ☐ 7 (7)
- ☐ 8 (8)
- ☐ 9 (9)
- ☐ 10 (10)

End of Block: Social Networks

Start of Block: Block 6

Q29 I have already asked you some questions about the satisfaction in relation to your social network, these questions will concern the topic of satisfaction as well.

Display This Question:

If What is your current situation? = I do not live in an asylum centre

Q30 Please remember that the following questions concern your time in the asylum centre.

Q31 On a scale from 0 (not satisfied at all) to 10 (extremely satisfied), how satisfied are you with your overall health?

☐ 0 (0)

☐ 1 (1)

☐ 2 (2)

☐ 3 (3)

☐ 4 (4)

☐ 5 (5)

☐ 6 (6)

☐ 7 (7)

☐ 8 (8)

☐ 9 (9)

☐ 10 (10)

Q32 On a scale from 0 (not satisfied at all) to 10 (extremely satisfied), how satisfied are you with your daily activities?

☐ 0 (0)

☐ 1 (1)

☐ 2 (2)

☐ 3 (3)

☐ 4 (4)

☐ 5 (5)

☐ 6 (6)

☐ 7 (7)

☐ 8 (8)

☐ 9 (9)

☐ 10 (10)

Q33 On a scale from 0 (not satisfied at all) to 10 (extremely satisfied), how satisfied are you with your current living situation?

☐ 0 (0)

☐ 1 (1)

☐ 2 (2)

☐ 3 (3)

☐ 4 (4)

☐ 5 (5)

☐ 6 (6)

☐ 7 (7)

☐ 8 (8)

☐ 9 (9)

☐ 10 (10)

Q34 On a scale from 0 (not satisfied at all) to 10 (extremely satisfied), how satisfied are you with your life in general?

- ☐ 0 (0)
- ☐ 1 (1)
- ☐ 2 (2)
- ☐ 3 (3)
- ☐ 4 (4)
- ☐ 5 (5)
- ☐ 6 (6)
- ☐ 7 (7)
- ☐ 8 (8)
- ☐ 9 (9)
- ☐ 10 (10)

Display This Question:

If What is your current situation? = I live in an asylum centre

Q35a During the past month, how often did you feel that you had something important to contribute to society?

- ☐ Never (1)
- ☐ Once or twice (2)
- ☐ About once a week (3)
- ☐ About 2 or 3 times a week (4)
- ☐ Almost every day (5)
- ☐ Every day (6)

Display This Question:

If What is your current situation? = I do not live in an asylum centre

Q35b During the time you were in the asylum centre, how often did you feel that you had something important to contribute to society?

- ☐ Never (1)
- ☐ Once or twice (2)
- ☐ About once a week (3)
- ☐ About 2 or 3 times a week (4)
- ☐ Almost every day (5)
- ☐ Every day (6)

Display This Question:

If What is your current situation? = I live in an asylum centre

Q36a During the past month, how often did you feel that you belonged to a community (like a social group, or your neighborhood)?

- ☐ Never (1)
- ☐ Once or twice (2)
- ☐ About once a week (3)
- ☐ About 2 or 3 times a week (4)
- ☐ Almost every day (5)
- ☐ Every day (6)

Display This Question:

If What is your current situation? = I do not live in an asylum centre

Q36b During the time you were in the asylum centre, how often did you feel that you belonged to a community (like a social group, or your neighborhood)?

- ☐ Never (1)
- ☐ Once or twice (2)
- ☐ About once a week (3)
- ☐ About 2 or 3 times a week (4)
- ☐ Almost every day (5)
- ☐ Every day (6)

Display This Question:

If What is your current situation? = I live in an asylum centre

Q37a During the past month, how often did you feel that our society is a good place, or is becoming a better place, for all people?

- ☐ Never (1)
- ☐ Once or twice (2)
- ☐ About once a week (3)
- ☐ About 2 or 3 times a week (4)
- ☐ Almost every day (5)
- ☐ Every day (6)

Display This Question:

If What is your current situation? = I do not live in an asylum centre

Q37b During the time you were in the asylum centre, how often did you feel that our society is a good place, or is becoming a better place, for all people?

- ☐ Never (1)
- ☐ Once or twice (2)
- ☐ About once a week (3)
- ☐ About 2 or 3 times a week (4)
- ☐ Almost every day (5)
- ☐ Every day (6)

Display This Question:

If What is your current situation? = I live in an asylum centre

Q38a During the past month, how often did you feel that people are basically good?

- ☐ Never (1)
- ☐ Once or twice (2)
- ☐ About once a week (3)
- ☐ About 2 or 3 times a week (4)
- ☐ Almost every day (5)
- ☐ Every day (6)

Display This Question:

If What is your current situation? = I do not live in an asylum centre

Q38b During the time you were in the asylum centre, how often did you feel that people are basically good?

- ☐ Never (1)
- ☐ Once or twice (2)
- ☐ About once a week (3)
- ☐ About 2 or 3 times a week (4)
- ☐ Almost every day (5)
- ☐ Every day (6)

Display This Question:

If What is your current situation? = I live in an asylum centre

Q39a During the past month, how often did you feel that the way our society works makes sense to you?

- ☐ Never (1)
- ☐ Once or twice (2)
- ☐ About once a week (3)
- ☐ About 2 or 3 times a week (4)
- ☐ Almost every day (5)
- ☐ Every day (6)

Display This Question:

If What is your current situation? = I do not live in an asylum centre

Q39b During the time you were in the asylum centre, how often did you feel that the way our society works makes sense to you?

- ☐ Never (1)
- ☐ Once or twice (2)
- ☐ About once a week (3)
- ☐ About 2 or 3 times a week (4)
- ☐ Almost every day (5)
- ☐ Every day (6)

End of Block: Block 6

Start of Block: Experienced Safety

Q40 The last questions will concern your experienced safety. Please note that participation in this study is voluntary and your answers will be stored anonymously.

Display This Question:

If What is your current situation? = I do not live in an asylum centre

Q41 The following questions will be about your time inside the asylum centre again, so please answer these questions thinking back to when you lived there.

Q42 On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you grade your feelings of safety **inside the asylum centre?**

☐ 0 (0)

☐ 1 (1)

☐ 2 (2)

☐ 3 (3)

☐ 4 (4)

☐ 5 (5)

☐ 6 (6)

☐ 7 (7)

☐ 8 (8)

☐ 9 (9)

☐ 10 (10)

Display This Question:

If What is your current situation? = I live in an asylum centre

Or when did you leave the asylum centre? = During the pandemic (less than a year ago)

Q43 To what extent did your feelings of safety **inside** the asylum centre change because of the pandemic?

- ☐ I feel safer (1)
- ☐ It did not change (2)
- ☐ I feel less safe (3)

Q44 What could be done to improve the safety inside the asylum centre?

Q45 On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you grade your feelings of safety **outside** the asylum centre?

- ☐ 0 (0)
- ☐ 1 (1)
- ☐ 2 (2)
- ☐ 3 (3)
- ☐ 4 (4)
- ☐ 5 (5)
- ☐ 6 (6)
- ☐ 7 (7)
- ☐ 8 (8)
- ☐ 9 (9)
- ☐ 10 (10)

Display This Question:

If What is your current situation? = I live in an asylum centre

Or When did you leave the asylum centre? = During the pandemic (less than a year ago)

Q46 To what extent did your feelings of safety **outside** change because of the pandemic?

- ☐ I feel safer (1)
 - ☐ It did not change (2)
 - ☐ I feel less safe (3)
-

Q47 Below three statements are presented, please fill in whether these **apply to you or not**.

Q48

Statement 1:

Inside the asylum centre I am open about my sexual orientation.

- ☐ Describes me extremely well (1)
 - ☐ Describes me very well (2)
 - ☐ Describes me moderately well (3)
 - ☐ Describes me slightly well (4)
 - ☐ Does not describe me (5)
-

Q49

Statement 2:

Inside the asylum centre I am open about my gender identity.

- ☐ Describes me extremely well (1)
 - ☐ Describes me very well (2)
 - ☐ Describes me moderately well (3)
 - ☐ Describes me slightly well (4)
 - ☐ Does not describe me (5)
-

Q50

Statement 3:

Inside the asylum centre I know who to ask when I need help.

- ☐ Describes me extremely well (1)
 - ☐ Describes me very well (2)
 - ☐ Describes me moderately well (3)
 - ☐ Describes me slightly well (4)
 - ☐ Does not describe me (5)
-

Q51 Please fill in **how often** the next statement applies to you:

Inside the asylum centre I feel discriminated against for identifying as LGBTQI+.

- ☐ Never (1)
 - ☐ Sometimes (2)
 - ☐ About half the time (3)
 - ☐ Most of the time (4)
 - ☐ Always (5)
-

Q52 Please fill in **how often** the next statement applies to you:

Inside the asylum centre I am afraid to become a victim of criminal activity.

- ☐ Never (1)
 - ☐ Sometimes (2)
 - ☐ About half the time (3)
 - ☐ Most of the time (4)
 - ☐ Always (5)
-

Q53 If an incident happens who would you report this to?

- ☐ COA (1)
- ☐ The Police (2)
- ☐ Vluchtelingenwerk (3)
- ☐ The Municipality (4)
- ☐ LGBTQIA+ organization (5)
- ☐ Other organization: (6) _____
- ☐ I would not report the incident, because: (7) _____

End of Block: Experienced Safety

Start of Block: Block 6

Q54 Do you have anything to add to this survey?

Q55 This is the end of the survey. Thank you for participating! If you have questions regarding my thesis, please contact me at **t.knijff@student.ru.nl**.

Next to setting out this survey, I am also conducting interviews. If you are interested in doing an interview with me and talking more about your experiences regarding social networks & experienced safety, please fill in your email address below.

End of Block: Block 6
