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QUEER KOMUNITA A JAZYK

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**THE QUEER COMMUNITY AND THE
LANGUAGE**

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Prohlašuji,

že bakalářskou práci na téma Queer komunita a jazyk na ZČU v Plzni jsem vypracoval samostatně. Použitou literaturu a podkladové materiály uvádím v příloženém seznamu literatury.

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Podpis

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Abstract

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This undergraduate thesis is focused on the queer community and the specific vocabulary within this community. It aims to collect and explain these words as well as to gain information on how known they are among people within this community and outside of it.

The theoretical part contains a brief introduction, the history of the queer community, its symbols and vocabulary divided into groups according to what they are related to, i.e., gender, appearance, sexual orientation and offensive language.

The practical part revolves around two hundred respondents' knowledge of the LGBTQ+ terms. The answers were collected via an online questionnaire and are analyzed according to their percentage and the number of participants selecting them. The majority of the tasks regarding the queer vocabulary and symbols were completed correctly. Few terms, however, were either unknown or not answered by the most significant part of the respondents. The most generally known terms by participants were *faggot* (98,9% answered correctly), *travesty* (80,9%), *coming out* (79,9%), *trannie* (77,4%), *gender* (72,9%) and *misgender* (64,6%). On the contrary, the least known terms were *TERF* (61,8% of respondents did not know the correct answer), *butch* (56,1%) and *versatile* (45,5%), along with a question regarding *the Stonewall riots* (49,2%).

Keywords: the queer community, LGBTQ+, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, transgender, non-binary, homosexual, bisexual

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Introduction

This undergraduate thesis describes the history, symbols and primarily specific vocabulary of the queer community. The reason beneath this topic is the need to gather and further explain the words of this community since very few academic sources have endeavored these terms, even though the LGBTQ+ community (in one way or another) has been present throughout the history, and the number of people who identify as queer increases.

The first chapter, *Theoretical background*, consists of a brief introduction and a definition of the queer community, its history and symbols. Furthermore, it is focused on the specific vocabulary divided into several subgroups, according to their remit: gender-related, appearance-related, sexual orientation-related and offensive vocabulary.

The following chapter is called *Practical part*, and it is further divided into the *Introduction*, *Methods of the Research* and *Result & Commentary*. *Introduction* provides few general information about the *Practical part*. The subchapter *Methods of the Research* describes the way research data was gathered, what medium was used, its structure and the hypothesis of the results. *Results & Commentary* is focused on describing and evaluating the results themselves. Most respondents completed the tasks regarding queer vocabulary correctly, yet few terms were unknown or not answered by the most significant part of the participants.

The last chapter of this thesis is *Conclusion*, which involves the summary of the whole work in addition to the evaluation of the results of the practical part.

1. Theoretical background

1.1. Introduction

The queer community is a worldwide living group of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender people and many other human beings. The members of this community used to be (presumably still might be) distinguished as people who are not cisgender or/and heterosexual. Cisgender is an adjective meaning that a person's sex assigned at birth and gender identity are identical. A heterosexual (= straight) individual is a person who is sexually and romantically attracted to the "opposite" gender than their own in the binary concept of gender. Cisgender heterosexuals are often shortened into acronym CisHet (Brabaw, 2018).¹ As the queer community has obtained more worldwide recognition, cisgender heterosexuals who support queer people gained the nickname of *straight ally*. The abbreviation LGBTQ+ is also currently being used, where the plus symbol represents other gender identities and/or sexual orientations. Prior to its name of LGBTQ+ or queer, the community had the name of the gay community. As Fish and Karban (2015) maintain, "the word 'gay' was introduced in the early 20th-century to serve as an alternative to the clinical (and often pejorative) term 'homosexual'. Gay was originally used as a noun by both men and women, but from the 1980s, it was replaced by the terms 'gay man' (predominantly) and 'gay woman'. The word 'lesbian' is more commonly used to describe women who have romantic, sexual or emotional connections to other women." Yet nowadays, the phrases gay-man and gay-woman gradually return into everyday use.

For a better understanding of the following terms, it is important to further explain and distinguish the terms gender and sex. Gender, according to the WHO (2022), can be defined as a social construct, using the norms, behaviour and other characteristics of being a man or a woman, regardless of their physical appearance.² Sex, on the other

¹ Retrieved from <https://www.refinery29.com/en-us/lesbian-slang-terms-definitions>; Brabaw, K. (2018, March 30). *17 lesbian slang terms every baby gay needs to learn*. Lesbian Slang Terms, Gay Lingo Used By LGBT Community. February 15, 2022.

² Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/health-topics/gender#tab=tab>; Kari, A. (2022). *Gender and health*. World Health Organization, February 15, 2022 .

hand, is a set of anatomical and physiological features a human being is typically born with (e.g., genitalia, hormonal levels).

Within the whole community, it is possible to find many umbrella terms (e.g., transgender, non-binary, asexual). The Cambridge Dictionary defines an umbrella term as “something that includes or represents a group or range of similar things.”³ Many queer vocabulary items cannot be put in on the spectrum since they do not lie on a scale between some particular two border points.

Queer people who have not accepted or recognized their own sexual orientation or gender identity are idiomatically said to *hide in the closet*. At some point in their life, LGBTQ+ people will face *coming out* of this notional closet, which means to personally disclose one’s sexual orientation, gender identity or both. Whether it is the internal or external coming out, it is always a difficult and emotionally draining process.

According to O'Halloran (2021) “lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex people are a diverse population that not only must contend with human rights violations on the basis of their sexual orientation, gender identity and/or sex characteristics, but also face violence and discrimination based on skin colour, ethnic origin, sex, gender, disability, age, migratory status, family status, nationality, religion, health status, income level, and on other grounds.” Among these discriminations also belong homophobia, biphobia and transphobia. Another issue that queer people have to deal with is cisheteronormativity, i.e., the assumption that being cisgender and heterosexual is the default state of every human being and should be considered normal.

It used to be stated for many decades that the LGBTQ+ community is 4% of the population. Yet, as the latest Gallup.com (2022) maintains, the figure is almost double - 7,1% (in the US).⁴

³ Retrieved from <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/umbrella>; Cambridge Dictionary. (n.d.). *Umbrella*. Cambridge Dictionary. January 17, 2022.

⁴ Retrieved from <https://news.gallup.com/poll/389792/lgbt-identification-ticks-up.aspx>; Jones, J. M. (2022, February 17). *LGBT Identification in U.S. Ticks Up to 7.1%*. Gallup.com. March 25, 2022.

For the purpose of fighting the violence, many LGBTQ+ liberation movements, charities and juristic companies began taking actions. As an example, Fish and Karban (2015) mention Yogyakarta Principles and explain them as follows: “These principles form a charter or universal guide to LGBT human rights which was drawn up by a group of lawyers who met in Yogyakarta, Indonesia in 2007. They have since informed the United Nations formal recognition of LGBT rights as human rights in 2012 in the document Born Free and Equal.”

1.2. History

Although various genders and sexual orientations are perceived as relatively new, it is possible to find traces of queer people deep in history. LGBTQ+ human beings were present in many countries, empires and cultures even throughout the Ancient times.

In the cradle of civilization - Mesopotamia - one might find both transgender individuals and non-binary gender. As Mark (2021) explains “the priests and priestesses of the popular goddess Inanna (better known as Ishtar) were bisexual and transgender. One of the aspects of the goddess considered most awe-inspiring was her ability to turn men into women and women into men, the power of transformation.”⁵ A god named Enki, the father of Ishtar, was allegedly the creator of a third gender, not masculine or feminine - non-binary.

Among the members of these cultures, there was no difference between what is nowadays called homosexuality and heterosexuality; relationships were formed according to love, possessions and social status (Mark, 2021).⁶ If any two people with the same status were in a relationship, it was believed to bring good fortune. Of course, the cultures where same-sex relationships were common were those of Ancient Greek, specifically Sparta. It is believed that homosexuality in Spartans' army was one of the reasons Sparta conquered many provinces, as it created emotional bonds between soldiers and led to courageous actions and bravery (Hanson, 2009).

⁵ Retrieved from <https://www.worldhistory.org/article/1790/lgbtq-in-the-ancient-world/>; Mark, J. J. (2021, June 25). *LGBTQ+ in the Ancient World*. World History Encyclopedia. December 20, 2021.

⁶ Ibid.

The traces of normality of homosexuality might be found even in ancient literature, though female same-sex relationships are often overlooked. The authors focused merely on gender of the main protagonist's love interest, as it played a nonsignificant role in the plot (e.g., a Chinese tale *The Cut Sleeve*, a Japanese Lady Murasaki's novel *The Tale of Genji*, Egypt *The Contending of Horus and Set*).

There are dozens of other examples of homosexual relationships and various genders other than male or female, all supporting one thing - "the queerness" have been present across many cultures since Mesopotamia (approx. eight thousand years ago) and perceived as normal. It all changed with the arrival of Christianity.

Even though some signs of homosexuality or transgender people might be found throughout the Dark Ages, the majority of the Christian world had an anti-LGBTQ+ policy since it was claimed to be "against nature", sodomy and last but not least a mortal sin. As Brundage (1987) maintains: "The Old Testament (Leviticus 18:22, 20:13, Deuteronomy 22:5) condemned females who wore male attire, males who wore female attire, and males that engaged in homosexual intercourse."

Interestingly, a significant number of queer people in the Middle Ages were persecuted very selectively, as it was often motivated by political factors more so than religious ones. Their gender or sexual orientation was used only as an excuse (Betancourt, 2020).⁷

According to what is established in the Bible, God created Adam and Eve, the archetype of the first relationship whose primary purpose and greatest blessing is the appearance according to God's will and the ability to have children. For the latter reason, many LGBTQ+ relationships are not perceived as full or complete even today (mainly in the countries where Christianity still plays a distinctive role).

Due to the Cristian background or at least the following some Cristian principles, homosexuality of men was inadmissible and illegal even in modern history until 1967. The homosexual acts of women were considered indecent yet never legally forbidden.

⁷ Retrieved from <https://time.com/5896685/queer-monks-medieval-history/>; Betancourt, R. (2020, October 7). *The Overlooked Queer History of Medieval Christianity*. Time. December 14, 2021.

At the end of the 19th century and throughout the 20th century psychology thrived. Many psychological disciplines were introduced. People began to be more interested in science, therefore the former definition of homosexuality as “sodomy” or “a deadly sin” transformed into an assumption of its being a disease. As a cure, conversion therapy was invented. This pseudoscientific discipline’s task was to change the sexual orientation from homosexuality and bisexuality to heterosexuality as well as transgender to cisgender. The procedure was very controversial as it had been proved in some instances to contain aversive treatments, nausea-inducing drugs or even chemical castration (Drescher & Zucker, 2006). Unfortunately, conversion therapy still exists up to this day, such as in Africa and Latin America. However, many countries (e.g., Brazil or Canada) have already banned this outlasted way of “treatment”.

According to McGhee (n.d.), during the First World War, strong social currents were opposing same sex relationships. Most of the queer people hid themselves in order to survive as they were considered perverts.⁸

Unfortunately, the Second World War meant even more devastating outcomes for the LGBTQ+ community. Its members were arrested by Nazis and transferred to concentration camps, where they were forced to wear a pink or black downward-pointing triangle and were collectively murdered. The war, however, only triggered people’s desire for liberation. As an example, the Homophile movement occurring from the immediate end of the Second World War in 1945 to the Stonewall riots in 1969 put emphasis on replacing the term homosexual with *homophile*, since the former implicated the limited connotation connected only with person’s sexuality. In contrast, the latter was more complex in expressing love (not to link with zoophile, pedophile, etc.).

The doubtlessly most influential event for the queer community was the Stonewall (also Stonewall riots or Stonewall uprising) in 1969. It was the beginning of the official LGBTQ+ rights movement, though this name was adopted three years later and replaced the original Gay Liberation movement. The Stonewall riots were the result of

⁸ Retrieved from <http://www.eastsussexww1.org.uk/homosexuality-in-wwi/index.html>; McGhee, B. (n.d.). *Homosexuality in the First World War*. WW1 East Sussex. February 7, 2022.

many prior movements whose purpose was to normalize LGBTQ+ members and recognize them as a valid part of society (such as the already mentioned Homophile movement). During the 1960s, raids held by police on gay bars were frequent. On 28th June 1969, the police brutality reached its peak in the Stonewall Inn, a bar located in New York City.

The event is described as follows: “Armed with a warrant, police officers entered the club, roughed up patrons, and, finding bootlegged alcohol, arrested 13 people, including employees and people violating the state’s gender-appropriate clothing statute (female officers would take suspected cross-dressing patrons into the bathroom to check their sex). Fed up with constant police harassment and social discrimination, angry patrons and neighbourhood residents hung around outside of the bar rather than disperse, becoming increasingly agitated as the events unfolded and people were aggressively manhandled. At one point, an officer hit a lesbian over the head as he forced her into the police van— she shouted to onlookers to act, inciting the crowd to begin throw pennies, bottles, cobble stones and other objects at the police. Within minutes, a full-blown riot involving hundreds of people began.” (History.com, 2021).⁹ Encyclopedia Britannica gives a further insight into the situation: “After this event, thousands of people became more aware of LGBTQ+ discrimination and began to protest. Accustomed to more passive behaviour, even from larger gay groups, the policemen called for reinforcements and barricaded themselves inside the bar while some 400 people rioted. The police barricade was repeatedly breached, and the bar was set on fire. Police reinforcements arrived in time to extinguish the flames, and they eventually dispersed the crowd.”¹⁰

Immediately after the Stonewall riots, New York’s queer community formed Gay Liberation Front (GLF). Marsha P. Johnson, a prominent name in time after the Stonewall riots, was a founding member of GLF. Together with Sylvia Rivera, they led or participated in many gay/trans rights movements against discrimination towards the LGBTQ+ community. Compared with pre-Stonewall gay liberation demonstrations, the

⁹ Retrieved from <https://www.history.com/topics/gay-rights/the-stonewall-riots>; History.com Editors. (2021, June 25). *Stonewall riots*. History.com. December 28, 2021.

¹⁰ Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/event/Stonewall-riots>; Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia (2021, June 21). *Stonewall riots*. Encyclopedia Britannica. January 2, 2022.

following ones were massive and occurred more often. Both Johnson and Rivera identified themselves as drag queens. Marsha P. Johnson also helped to raise awareness of the importance of queer people of colour.

During the 1980s, the queer community as well as the whole world faced a new threat - HIV/AIDS. In the beginning, the causes of this disease had been unknown and many people died. As the years went on, it was acknowledged that HIV/AIDS is spread by blood, semen and cervical mucus. Since heterosexual couples were aware of the possibility of conceiving during intercourse, they often used condoms, which prevented the infection. Homosexual couples, though, did not have to be cautious this way; therefore many gay men and women were infected and died. Even though some heterosexual people died of HIV/AIDS as well, this infection created a misconception that it is a disease of queer people, which was later refuted. To help the situation AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power was established in 1987. It is more often used as an acronym - ACT UP. This international group has its origin in New York and aims to fight the AIDS pandemic and possibly find a cure. Larry Kramer is considered the founder, yet many other people soon joined ACT UP, such as Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera. Throughout the late 1980s and 1990s, many demonstrations occurred so that the queer community would be included in the path to finding a cure to AIDS.

In the United Kingdom, male homosexuality had been illegal since the 16th century. In Modern English history, this illegal “act” was compounded upon by the Criminal Law Amendment Act 1885. In 1967 homosexuality was decriminalized, yet the HIV/AIDS waves in the 1980s only worsened the situation of gay men and the whole queer community, as they had been associated with this disease. The long-lasting tension escalated in 1988 when Margaret Thatcher and her Conservative government introduced a series of laws prohibiting the promotion of homosexuality called Section 28.¹¹ Many gay rights activists disagreed with Section 28 and publicly spoke out. Yet, this legislative designation was in effect until 2003.

¹¹ Retrieved from <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1988/9/section/28/enacted>; Queen's Printer of Acts of Parliament. (1988). *Local Government Act 1988 (c. 9), section 28*. Legislation.gov.uk. February 8, 2022.

The queer community has gained recognition in various countries around the world; many even allowed same-sex marriage. And even though the oppression of LGBTQ+ people is still present in some places, the majority of younger generation is raised to the freedom to choose their own identity and how to express themselves.

1.3. Symbols

LGBTQ+ people, as in many other communities, have adopted many symbols as their representation. Probably the most frequently seen one is the Rainbow LGBTQ+ Pride flag. Yet, the first symbol used for the presentation of LGBTQ+ people was an already mentioned pink downward-pointing triangle, based on a similarly looking badge given to homosexual, bisexual male and transgender female prisoners in concentration camps by Nazis (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2021).¹² In addition to members of the queer community, this symbol was assigned to zoophiles, pedophiles and sex offenders. Lesbian, bisexual women and transgender men were forced to wear a black triangle (Darling, 2021).¹³ In the 1970s, the pink triangle began to be used as a symbol of continuing discrimination toward members of the queer community. The pink triangle was replaced by the Rainbow LGBT Pride flag in 1978. This flag was designed by Gilbert Baker, an American artist known for creating banners for the gay-rights movement as well as anti-war protests. Since its original debut, the flag has undergone many changes. Initially the flag consisted of eight stripes, each differently coloured, which, according to Baker, represent a value in the community (Guffey, 2014). From the top-down, hot pink represents sexuality; red stands for life, orange for healing, yellow for sunlight, green for nature, turquoise for magic/art, indigo for harmony and violet for spirit. Due to the fabric unavailability in 1978, the Rainbow flag lost a hot pink stripe. In 1979 turquoise and indigo stripes were decided to integrate into the royal blue colour, so that an even number of stripes were present on the flag. This six-stripe flag has been

¹² Retrieved from <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/lesbians-under-the-nazi-regime>; United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (2021, March 31). *Lesbians Under the Nazi Regime*. Holocaust Encyclopedia. February 18, 2022.

¹³ Retrieved from <https://www.makingqueerhistory.com/articles/2016/12/20/queer-women-and-afab-people-during-the-holocaust>; Darling, L. (2021, April 22). *Queer Women and AFAB People During the Holocaust*. Making Queer History. January 7, 2022.

considered a symbol of the LGBTQ+ community ever since, even though some other modifications were made. In 2018, Puerto Rican artist Juli Feliz reacted on modern-day discrimination of both the LGBTQ+ community and the people of colour (Feliz & McNeill, 2020).¹⁴ Feliz emphasizes an often overlooked impact and importance of the Black and Indigenous trans and the queer community. New Pride Flag consists of LGBTQ+ Pride Flag with five stripes - three from Trans Pride Flag (white, pink and light blue) in addition to brown and black stripes. All stripes are diagonally placed from the top left corner.

The importance of the Rainbow LGBTQ+ Pride flag lies even beneath the original meaning of each colour having a given value in the community. Its symbolism of different colours represents individual uniqueness and the importance of self-expression. These traits and the flag are often highlighted on a social event known as a Pride parade (also Gay Pride, Queer Pride, LGBT Pride). Although some perceive Pride as unimportant or redundant, Fish and Karban (2015) claim that “pride is an event, born out of activism against discrimination and invisibility of LGBT people, which is often held annually in June to commemorate the Stonewall riots in New York in 1969 which led to Gay Liberation Movements of the 1970s. More recently, Pride has become a celebration of LGBT rights and positive identities, but there is recognition that in many countries worldwide, being LGBT is illegal and may be punishable by imprisonment or death.”

Another symbol of the queer community is the lower case Greek letter lambda (λ). It was introduced in 1970 by the Gay Activists Alliance of New York. Immediately lambda began to be a recognition sign among the community, yet entirely ignored by the rest of the public, as it could easily be mistaken for a college fraternity symbol. Guffey (2014) asserts that the symbolism of lambda is that this Greek letter “L” stands for “liberation”, which means unity (according to the Greek Spartans) and denotes the charged energy of the gay movement since lambda is used to represent the wavelength of certain types of energy.

¹⁴ Retrieved from <https://www.ebar.com/news/news/293983>; Feliz, J., & McNeill, Z. (2020, June 24). *Guest Opinion: Stonewall 51: Moving forward*. Bay Area Reporter. January 20, 2022.

1.4. Queer vocabulary

1.4.1. Gender-related queer vocabulary

The following chapter of the present work is dedicated to the part of the queer vocabulary related to gender. Gender has already been explained at the beginning of this thesis as a social construct more closely connected with the internal feeling of an individual, whereas sex is the physical setting a person is born with. In some places, gender is considered *binary*, yet there are several examples of other genders occurring which do not fall into this category - such as *nonbinary* or *gender-fluid* people. The common expression used for all genders not fitting into the binary range is *gender-expansive*. It represents a more flexible and broader way of expressing one's gender. The distinction between gender identity and gender expression ought to be mentioned. Therefore, in addition to WHO definition of gender O'Halloran (2021) adds: "Gender identity is understood to refer to each person's deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth, including the personal sense of the body (which may involve, if freely chosen, modification of bodily appearance or function by medical, surgical or other means) and other expressions of gender, including dress, speech and mannerisms." Another term closely related to gender is a verb *to misgender*. The Cambridge Dictionary defines this word as "to use the wrong pronouns or other gender-specific words when referring or speaking to someone, especially a transgender person."¹⁵ The act of misgendering is considered one of the most verbally harmful doings toward another human being.

The importance of gender has increased in the last twenty years, as it became clear that the long-lasting binary society may outlive its functionality. As Baker, Iantaffi and Lester (2019) claim "while some aspects of non-binary thinking and feeling - non-binary genders, for instance - may seem new, the problem of rigid binary categorization is an old one that affects us all."

As for some examples to illustrate the desire for proper identification within the gender umbrella, there are neopronouns and with that connected gender-neutral title Mx. (as an

¹⁵ Retrieved from <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/misgender>; Cambridge Dictionary. (n.d.). *Misgender*. Cambridge Dictionary. February 6, 2022.

extra addition to Mr., Mrs.), pronounced [mæks] or [mʌks] or the differentiating between sex and gender.

1.4.1.1. Gender vs. sex issue

One of the most remarkable demonstrations of the increasing popularity of gender is the reality of it replacing the formerly used term sex on various occasions. The difference between gender and sex has been defined earlier. Regarding sex, there are cases, however, in which a newborn individual has atypical genitalia or a different hormonal set-up. At first, these human beings were thought to have been born as a person with a disorder of sex development. This label was later changed (due to its problematic connotations) to an *intersex* (used exclusively as an adjective) person.

Many members of the LGBTQ+ community experience *gender dysphoria (dysmorphia)* before identifying and accepting their real gender. This term “describes the discomfort or distress a person experiences because there is a mismatch between their biological sex and gender identity” (Fish & Karban, 2015).

1.4.1.2. Transgender

A *Transgender* individual is, according to Fish and Karban (2015) “a person who does not conform to the traditional binary presentation of what it means to be male or female.” In addition, the gender identity of these human beings does not align with the sex they were assigned at birth. Transgender is only to be used as an adjective, not a noun. *Transgenderism* (a former medical term) is considered offensive due to its suffix -*ism*, which connotes an oppressive and especially discriminatory attitude or belief, as in, e.g., racism, sexism and alcoholism (Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary).¹⁶

Transgender individuals belong under the umbrella term *Trans*. This term includes people of many different identities and sets of behaviour, such as *transsexual* or *travesty*. The noun *transsexual* is by some members of the queer community considered offensive, while others understand its meaning as a transgender person who has undergone gender affirmation surgeries (Fish & Karban, 2015). *Travesty* is a person

¹⁶ Retrieved from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ism>; Merriam-Webster. (n.d). *ISM definition & meaning*. Merriam-Webster. December 29, 2021.

(mostly not a transgender person) whose behaviour and dress correspond with another sex than their own. The reason for doing so might be to entertain other people. This term is quite outdated; nowadays the word *cross-dresser* is being used. *Cross-dressing* is closely connected with the term *drag show* (which a later part of this work is dedicated to), yet *cross-dressing* is more likely to occur for the purpose of fitting in and being dressed according to one's gender expression without recognition. Even though *transsexual* (prior to Trans) was used as a summarizing term for a relatively long time, its popularity decreased, as it implies a close connection with sexuality than the rightful gender identity.

Every transgender person, at some point in their life, has to cope with a complicated, emotionally challenging and often misunderstood process called *transition* (*transitioning*). It is often preceded by a differently intensive *dysphoria*. According to Fish and Karban (2015), *transitioning* is “the process of changing one's gender from that assigned at birth to one which accords with an individual's internal sense of gender. A trans woman (or trans man) is someone who is going through (or has completed) the process of changing the gender they were assigned at birth to their perceived gender. Their new gender is the ‘opposite’ to that assigned at birth.” It is connected with the shortcuts FTM and MTF when the former stands for *female to male*, and the latter the other way around. During the transition, the majority of transgender people change their name so that it would correspond with their gender identity. The former name (usually given at birth) is considered a *deadname*. Using one's deadname otherwise than by accident is perceived as very offensive and harmful.

Among many other obstacles, transgender people face *misgendering*, disbelief, deliberate use of *deadname* and, in the case of feminism, an issue connected with the term TERF. This acronym stands for *trans-exclusionary radical feminist*, a feminist that uses transphobic hate speech toward transgender people (Beresford, 2017).¹⁷ TERFs generally refuse to recognize transgender women as women, using a whole sort of terms to exclude trans women and suppress their womanhood, such as while referring to

¹⁷ Retrieved from <https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2017/04/16/what-is-a-terf-and-why-should-you-be-worried/>; Beresford, M. (2017, April 16). *What is a TERF and why should you be worried?* PinkNews. January 5, 2022.

women using the words *people who menstruate*, which emphasizes exclusively cis women.¹⁸ One of the most famous people who were, according to Thorpe (2020), called a TERF is the Harry Potter's author J. K. Rowling, who faces severe waves of criticism since she repeatedly uses transphobic tweets in the false claim of supporting feminism.¹⁹ Following this controversy, there has been an issue with Rowling stating "allowing trans women to use women's bathrooms will lead to violent men using those loopholes to attack natal girls and women" in a reaction to the request of the queer community to use restrooms according to their gender identity (Grady, 2020). In addition to this claim, Rowling has written a novel *Troubled Blood*, published in 2020, where the main protagonist is a male serial killer who dresses as a female to lure and kill women. Given the former Rowling's statements, this book is considered a direct attack on transgender women.²⁰

1.4.1.3. Non-binary gender

The term *non-binary* is an umbrella term for people who do not identify themselves with the binary genders - man/woman. The terms *genderqueer* or *gender-expansive* are also used while referring to a non-binary person. This umbrella includes, e.g., *gender fluid* or *agender identity* and many more. A *gender fluid* (also only *fluid*) person is a person whose gender identity is not set. It might change over time. Gender fluidity is connected to gender identity and expression, not sexual orientation. There are some misconceptions about its being only a phase, yet the gender of a fluid person might or might not change again - that is their decision. *Agender*, on the other hand, is an individual who does not identify with any gender. Sometimes, this might mean that the gender the person would identify with has not been defined or recognized yet, or they decided not to label their gender identity.

¹⁸ Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2020/jun/14/jk-rowling-from-magic-to-the-heart-of-a-twitter-storm>; Thorpe, V. (2020, June 14). *JK Rowling: From magic to the heart of a Twitter storm*. The Guardian. January 7, 2022.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Retrieved from <https://www.vox.com/culture/21449215/troubled-blood-review-jk-rowling-transphobia-controversy>; Grady, C. (2020, September 23). *J.K. Rowling's transphobic new novel sees her at the mercy of all her worst impulses*. Vox. February 2, 2022.

As the definition of transgender person claims, the non-binary umbrella is a part of a transgender umbrella since many queer people identify with a different gender than their sex assigned at birth. Yet not all non-binary people (or also informally “Enby’s”) agree with this classification. To prevent misgendering, it is appropriate to use proper pronouns, such as *they/them*, *ze/hir* or other, depending on the non-binary person. The way to collect such information is simply to ask.

1.4.1.4. Pronouns

Using pronouns is one of the easiest ways to express one’s gender on one side and acknowledge and respect people’s gender on the other side. Knowing each individual’s pronouns they identify with makes it possible to avoid misgendering. Usually, they are written in a personal/objective/possessive pronoun pattern.

With the increasing significance of gender correctness, the pronoun *they* began to be commonly used in situations where the author was unaware of the character’s gender (e.g., *The student hand in their assignment*). It aimed to substitute formerly used masculine pronouns, which were considered unequal. The third pronoun plural *they* has gradually become a gender-neutral *singular they* with forms *they/them/their/theirs/themself* (or plural form *themselves*). In the LGBTQ+ community, this pronoun is used by the majority of its members who identify themselves as a gender under the non-binary umbrella. While some people find the *singular they* relatively new, it was used in the past by, for instance, William Shakespeare or Jane Austen (Osmosis, 2020).²¹

Another way of expressing individual gender are so-called neopronouns. These pronouns were introduced in the second half of the 19th century, and since that time, their popularity has increased until recent days as aid with gender identification. There are many examples (e.g. *per/pers*, *ve/ver*) yet, the most widely spread neopronouns among the queer community are *ze/hir/hir*, pronounced [zi:], [hiə], [hiə], in full pattern *ze/hir/hir/hirs/hirself* (LGBTQ+ Resource Center, n.d.).²² Since there has been no

²¹ Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xCMmZUu07IQ>; Osmosis. (2020, June 18). *Sexual orientation and gender identity*. [Video]. YouTube. February 4, 2022.

²² Retrieved from <https://uwm.edu/lgbtrc/support/gender-pronouns/>; LGBTQ+ Resource Center. (n.d.). *Gender Pronouns*. University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. January 7, 2022.

official recognition yet, there is a slight inconsistency in both spelling and pronunciation of these neopronouns, mentioning some instances *xe/xem/xyr*, *ze/zem/zes*, *sie/hir/hir*. The already mentioned title Mx. is connected with neopronouns.

There is also an option to use person's surname and its possessive case to avoid misgendering. However, this method is a little clumsy, as demonstrated in the following sentence: *Alex was here for Alex's things, but I do not think it is Alex's*.

There has been an issue with gender identification in the medical field. Many LGBTQ+ people were misgendered or deadnamed by medical professionals. For this reason, an increasing number of hospitals collect patient information regarding sexual orientation and primarily gender identity (shortened SOGI). This information is consensually given by patient prior to the examination. Although cisgender people use “standard” pronouns, many of them share theirs to normalize the use of (neo)pronouns in addition to show their support to people who identify themselves with differently.

1.4.2. Appearance-related queer vocabulary

A typical appearance is in the queer community quite challenging to define, as many gender expressions of LGBTQ+ people are connected with, e.g., clothes designed for the binary construct of having either a male or female gender. For this reason, this subchapter deals with not only appearance as such, but also a complex approach to gender expression, for example, behaviour, movements, some of the physical features, etc. Generally speaking each word in this section might be considered offensive, unless the person identifies with it. It is always a good decision to ask what a person prefers to be called.

In a gay community, an extensive number of vocabulary related to appearance is connected with one's physical similarity to an animal. The most well-known instance is the word *bear*. *Bear* is a gay/bi man typical of having a large amount of facial and/or body hair. According to the LGBTQ Center of Montclair State University (n.d.), the meaning of *bear* is also “an umbrella term that refers to members of a subculture in the gay and bisexual male communities and is often defined as more of an attitude or sense

of comfort with natural masculinity and bodies.”²³ A person who is interested in *bears* is called a *bear chaser*. Another term connected with the term *bear* is a *cub*, a man too young to be *bear* yet shares many similarities (such as chubby body type, being hairy) and is likely to become one eventually. If a person from this umbrella is more passive and slender yet still hairy, he is called an *otter*. On the other side of the power spectrum, is a *wolf*, a term denoting a hairy thin, but more dominant (sometimes even aggressive) *bear*. Lastly, a slender, hairless bear with an athletic body is called a *dolphin*. Outside this umbrella, there is another essential and generally known slang word for a slim, young-looking man who has little or no facial and body hair - a *twink*. Given the analogy with animals, the *twink* is sometimes called *chicken*, which might or might not be perceived pejoratively.²⁴

Lesbian vocabulary regarding appearance revolves around the level of masculinity/femininity. The noun *butch* is generally used for a person who identifies as masculine, not necessarily a lesbian, yet many other people use this term. Masculine lesbians also prefer nouns *aggressive lesbian*, *dyke*, or exclusively for the women of colour, *stud* (HER Team, 2020).²⁵ When referring to the feminine representation of the gender expression, a noun (or adjective) *femme* was introduced. There are some terms connected with *femme* according to the level of femininity, such as *low femme* or *high femme*. Another slang expression used is *lipstick lesbian*, a lesbian identifying herself with a feminine gender expression.

1.4.2.1. Drag show

Drag is unlike cross-dressing focused on the outside world and exaggeration of the gender role by the performer mostly as entertainment for the audience. *Drag* shows are very often used as a self-expression gesture. The gender identity of the performer might or might not fall under the queer umbrella. *Drag* is divided into two main parts according to the gender role used while performing. A *drag queen* is usually a male who

²³ Retrieved from <https://www.montclair.edu/lgbtq-center/lgbtq-resources/terminology/>; LGBTQ Center. (n.d.). *Terminology*. Montclair State University. March 28, 2022.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Retrieved from <https://weareher.com/butch-lesbian-meaning-lesbian-slang-glossary/>; HER Team. (2020, February 28). *What does "butch lesbian" mean?* HER. January 16, 2022.

uses clothes, makeup and other props to imitate a female, while a *drag king* does performance the other way around. The performance mainly consists of lip-syncing (matching one's lips movement to already existing music and pretending to perform this music live), singing and dancing. Drag queens and kings often participate in Pride Parades, carnivals etc.

Recently the drag community has gained widespread recognition due to the RuPaul's Drag Race, a competition between many drag queens where they compete in lip-syncing, creating their own dresses and other events.

Many people enjoy drag shows, in fact, even some transphobic individuals. The existence of drag queens/kings is used against transgender people in a false assumption that the purpose of their gender expression is to seek attention rather than expressing their internal feelings and vision of themselves. Whether this violent act is used deliberately or due to insufficient knowledge of the difference between drag show performer/travesty and transgender identity, it is considered a very harmful act.

1.4.3. Sexual orientation related queer vocabulary

Sexual orientation or sexuality, in general, plays a major role during human's life. Its definition has changed in the past few years, as the importance and deeper understanding of gender have increased. According to O'Halloran (2021) "sexual orientation is understood to refer to each person's capacity for profound emotional, affectional and sexual attraction to, and intimate and sexual relations with, individuals of a different gender or the same gender or more than one gender." As this definition establishes, biological sex or gender a person identifies with does not determine their sexual orientation (Psych2Go, 2019).²⁶

As mentioned earlier, the majority of people still identify themselves with the concept of binary society. Sexual orientations focused on the binary concept are heterosexuality, homosexuality and, according to some opinions, bisexuality. The more significant part of the population is heterosexual. Heterosexuality has already been stated and defined at the beginning of this thesis. A homosexual person (nowadays preferably *gay*) finds

²⁶ Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SEurlKy2bN0>; Psych2Go. (2019, February 28). *10 Sexualities To Know About*. [Video]. YouTube. February 18, 2022.

sexual attraction in their own gender. *Bisexuality* used to be defined as attraction to both genders. Some, however, perceive this outdated and claim bisexuality to be a sexual attraction of your own and other genders. Bisexuality is closely connected with *pansexuality*. These terms are often incorrectly viewed as being the same. Even though, a bisexual might be sexually attracted to two or more genders, pansexual is attracted to another person fully regardless of their gender.

One of the least known sexual orientations is *androsexuality*. This sexuality is specified by being attracted to masculine gender presentation, yet with no concern for other person's gender itself. The same attraction to feminine gender presentation is called *gynosexuality*.

In opposition to all these *allosexual* orientations (an orientation with sexual attraction), there is *the asexual umbrella*. These human beings are often surrounded by the stigma of never having any sexual interactions or even a relationship. Although this might or might not be correct, it is up to their decision. *Asexual* (often used in shortened form "ace") is a person who does not feel sexual attraction to any gender. If somebody rarely experiences attraction, they might be *gray-asexuals*. *Demisexuals* are individuals who require emotional connection unless they are sexually attracted. This orientation is considered to be the half-point between *asexuality* and *allosexuality*. The same vocabulary pattern comes with *the aromantic umbrella*. *Aromantic* ("aro") people do not feel any romantic attraction to any gender. *Gray-aromantic* individuals seldom experience romantic attraction and *demiromantic* human beings feel romantic attraction if an emotional bond is present. The word *aromantic* is used only as an adjective; no converted noun form exists. Unlike asexuality, the aromantic orientation is not sexual orientation but romantic. These two terms might or might not be connected.

1.4.3.1. Sexual vocabulary

This subchapter deals with sexual vocabulary. In the LGBTQ+ community, this part of vocabulary emerged and quickly found its purpose for the members of community as an aid in recognizing a partner with "compatible" preferences.

In homosexual relationships, as well as in heterosexual ones, it is possible to more closely distinguish the role of power. In gay terminology, the nouns *top/active* represent

a man who prefers having an insertive role during anal intercourse. The *top* does not necessarily have to be in charge, though. The opposition is *bottom/passive*, i.e., a person who enjoys a receptive role during sex. If the *bottom* prefers having power and being more dominant, he is called *power bottom*. *Versatile* (“*vers*”) is the name of a sexual role standing somewhere in between this *top-bottom* spectrum. This man sometimes enjoys being *top* and other times *bottom*. The primary preference might be further given by the term *vers-top* (a *versatile* preferring more often the role of the *top*) and *vers-bottom* (the other way around). Some people replace the word *versatile* with the noun *switch*, as *versatile* is considered by some outdated (Bernard, 2018).²⁷ For instance, the gender presentation of the *twink* is often associated with the assumption of being a bottom. This assumption might or might not be correct; it depends on individual’s sexual preferences.

The terms related to dominance level in gay vocabulary were originally created merely for them. It might be nowadays seen, however, that some are becoming quite common even in other parts of the LGBTQ+ community. An excellent example is their usage in lesbian vocabulary. Initially, the words in their sexually-focused expressions of dominant aspects during sex were *butch*, *aggressive lesbian (ag)*, or *stud* (for women of colour). Speaking of the submissive role during lesbian intercourse, the terms *high femme*, *lipstick lesbian* or *pillow princess*, i.e., a lesbian who only enjoys the receiving role during sex, according to Brabaw (2018), sometimes derogatory,²⁸ were introduced. All of these words (except for *pillow princess*) are more general, though; they also represent a set of behaviours and appearances, not only sexual position. Therefore the terms *top*, *bottom*, *switch/versatile* are being gradually introduced as more closely specified sexual terms.

²⁷ Retrieved from <https://www.autostraddle.com/what-does-it-mean-to-be-a-switch-in-lesbian-sex-426583/>; Bernard, R. (2018, July 24). *What Does It Mean To Be a Switch in Lesbian Sex?* Autostraddle.com. January 21, 2022.

²⁸ Retrieved from <https://www.refinery29.com/en-us/lesbian-slang-terms-definitions>; Brabaw, K. (2018, March 30). *17 lesbian slang terms every baby gay needs to learn*. Lesbian Slang Terms, Gay Lingo Used By LGBT Community. February 15, 2022.

1.4.4. Offensive vocabulary

It is a common thing that almost every community is perceived negatively by some people standing outside of it and for the purpose of insulting members of the community new vocabulary or connotations are introduced. In fact, even the adjective *queer* used to have offensive connotations prior to its use by the LGBTQ+ community, as its original meaning was “odd” or “strange”. Most of the offensive vocabulary is nowadays called a *slur*. As Cambridge Dictionary defines, a slur is “a remark that criticizes someone and is likely to have a harmful effect on their reputation.”²⁹ Slurs might be ethnic, religious, gender-based and much more. The general slur towards all members of the queer community is the British slang word *Sod*, a particular meaning of being a *sodomite*. This again is a remnant of the Christian society where LGBTQ+ people were considered inhumane, diseased and full of sins. Even though since then some major changes have been introduced to accomplish the same rights for all people (the voting right for women, emancipation of women, changes in language to be gender-correct, LGBTQ+ marriage in some countries etc.), the society is still male-dominant. Therefore the majority of offensive words regarding gay men or lesbians revolve around the level of masculinity.

Gay men’s offensive vocabulary has its core in decreasing this level as in the nouns *sissy*, *pansy*, *fairy* or an adjective *limp-wristed*. *Sissy* is not only a homophobic but also a sexist term. It was derived from the noun *sister*. In addition to the general meaning of a person who is a coward or weak, within the queer community, it denotes a gay man who is “insufficiently” masculine. Combining both of these meanings, the word *sissy* implies that femininity is inferior, therefore is considered a sexist term. *Pansy* is used while denoting a hyper-sensitive person who cries over unimportant things. This, of course, corresponds with the unreasonable male-dominant assumption that sensitivity is a flaw and feminine. A man (yet not necessarily gay) whose behaviour is slightly feminine is called a *fairy*. This old-school word is used against gay men once again as an attempt to mock their “lack of masculinity”. The adjective *limp-wristed* is an offensive word for a feminine gay man based on the holding and movement of his

²⁹ Retrieved from <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/slur>; Cambridge Dictionary. (n.d.). *Slur*. Cambridge Dictionary. March 20, 2022.

wrists (in some contexts even expressions). The most infamous pejorative term for a gay man is the noun *faggot* (sometimes even *fag*). This word was used since the 16th century as a denotation of women, more precisely old ones. Although its original meaning was pejorative, its offensiveness dramatically increased with its use towards gay men. As Chaves (n.d.) maintains: “Faggot is also the most offensive antigay slur in history. Gay men have died with that word ringing in their ears. It’s controversial to reclaim a word that feels painful to so many people.”³⁰ Some consider the noun *faggot* to be as inappropriate and violent towards gay men as the N-word to the people of colour.

Lesbians, on the other hand, face the assumption of not being sufficiently feminine, therefore their offenders deliberately increase lesbians' level of masculinity. The word *dyke* (alternatively *dike*) is used when referring to masculine lesbian or *butch*. Both of these terms are reclaimed affirmatively by some lesbians, yet it is up to their decision of what they identify with. Another offensive term is *a tomboy*. Even though this word was originally used for women who wore clothes and enjoyed activities commonly associated with men, regardless of sexual orientation, using it towards lesbians is considered derogatory unless they identify themselves as *tomboys*. A lesbian is sometimes also called *a lesbo* in reference to the Greek island Lesbos. According to historical sources, this island is known to be a place where the Ancient Greek poet Sappho lived, wrote her poetry and among other things had sex with her female scholars. Another slur for lesbians is *a muff-diver*. *Muff-diving* is a derogatory word for performing cunnilingus (i.e., oral sexual stimulation of the vagina and clitoris). This derogatory term is often used by cis straight men in an attempt to mock lesbian intercourse.

The offensive vocabulary toward transgender people is not focused on their level of masculinity. Among being deliberately deadnamed or misgendered, their offenders often presuppose trans people to be “somewhere in between” in binary gender concept,

³⁰ Retrieved from <https://www.advocate.com/arts-entertainment/2017/8/02/21-words-queer-community-has-reclaimed-and-some-we-havent#media-gallery-media-6>; Chaves, A. (n.d.). *21 Words the Queer Community Has Reclaimed (and Some We Haven't)*. The Advocate. December 18, 2021.

meaning neither a man nor a woman. Therefore a new meaning of the word *hermaphrodite* was introduced. This pejorative noun is often used even toward intersex people. Other transphobic words are *she-male* and *he-she*, primarily present in the pornographic industry. By both of these slurs the offender mocks transgender people who have not undergone gender affirmation surgeries. For either the lack of knowledge or the deliberate refusing transgender human beings to exist, some people use the word *travesty*, while referring to transgender people. As it has been stated earlier in this thesis, *travesty* is a person who behaves and dresses in the way of the other sex than their own, yet does not identify as transgender (e.g., cis man/woman). The purpose for such behaviour might be the entertainment of others, more than an inner identity. Lastly, pejorative words *tranny* and *transie* ought to be mentioned, as they carry the same amount of offensiveness for transgender people as the word *faggot* for *gay men*.

2. Practical part

2.1. Introduction

The research of this thesis is revolved around the question of how the terms of the queer community for both its members and the people standing outside are known. To obtain such information, an online questionnaire was introduced. Given the used medium and relatively new or more accurately reintroduced diversion from cisheteronormativity, the assumption is that mainly young people will fill in the questionnaire and be acquainted with at least most of the vocabulary.

2.2. Methods of the Research

As mentioned, for the purpose of gathering research data, an online questionnaire was used. This method was chosen not only for its time-flexibility and easy access but also for the privacy of every participant, as the content of some questions contains rather sensitive information regarding, e.g., one's gender identity or being a member of the queer community.

The responses were gathered from two hundred respondents, mostly in the age of 18-25. More than half of them are members of the queer community, more than thirty percent is not and twenty-four people are not sure (deeper description of the participants provided in the next subchapter).

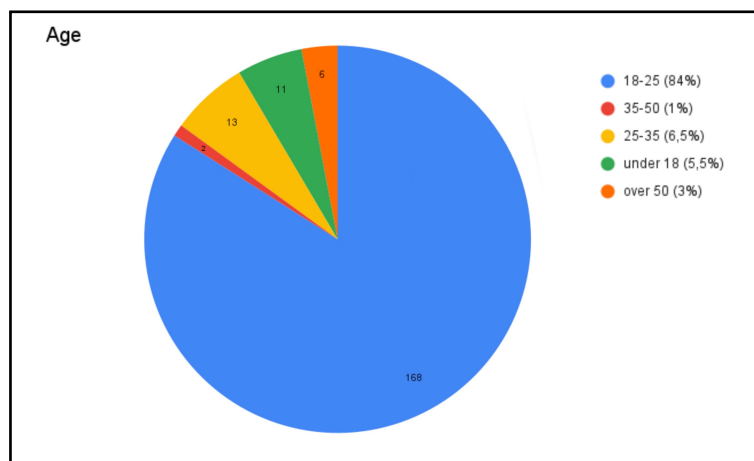
The questionnaire itself consists of twenty questions divided into two sections. The former focused on the respondent; the latter revolves around some LGBTQ+ related words and symbols. The first part contained six questions regarding age, personal gender identity, citizenship of the Czech Republic, the highest level of education achieved and two last questions which dealt with own or one's acquaintance's, friend's or relative's membership in the queer community. The first part of the questionnaire aimed to distinguish what kind of people would participate and what surroundings they came from. The other section (composed of 14 tasks) was centered on the knowledge of queer-specific vocabulary or symbols. The tasks took the form of a multiple-choice question, an open-ended question, and a multiple-answers type of question.

Two hundred people participated in the questionnaire, yet given its sensitivity; there are tasks which have not been completed by some, even though an option *I do not know* was provided. One participant fulfilled the first section yet refused to do the same in most of the second section's tasks. Therefore the highest number of answers in this section is one hundred and ninety-nine. The data was gathered through an online platform. For a better illustration of the results, pie charts with a percentage plus a given figure of the participants' answers were created.

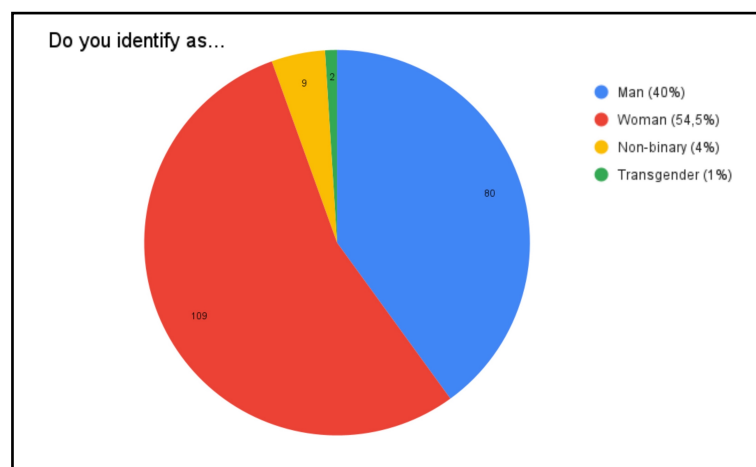
2.3. Results & Commentary

This subchapter deals with a presentation of the practical results gathered via the online questionnaire. It also aims to provide an insight into the general knowledge of LGBTQ+ specific vocabulary among its members and the people outside. To further illustrate the results, pie charts were added at the end of each question. The first section focuses on the respondent, the other on the terms of the queer community.

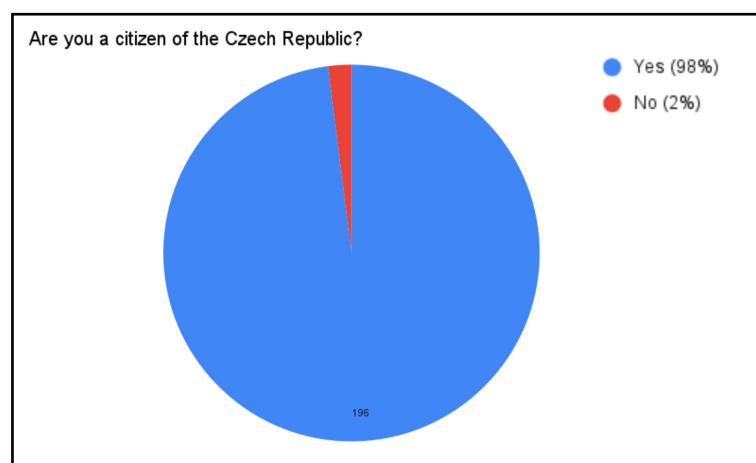
The *age* category (see Fig. 1) has five subcategories: *under 18*, *18-25*, *25-35*, *35-50* and *over 50*. All participants answered this question. Eleven people younger than 18 took part in this questionnaire, which makes a number of 5,5%. The majority of respondents, however, were between the age of *18-25*, making it 84% of the whole two hundred people. 6,5% of respondents were in the age between *25-35*. The subcategory of *35-50* consisted of only 1% of the whole mass of participants since only two people belonged here. A slightly higher figure of 3% was in the last subcategory *over 50*. These results are most likely influenced by the given medium of the online questionnaire. Mostly young people would presumably appreciate this form.



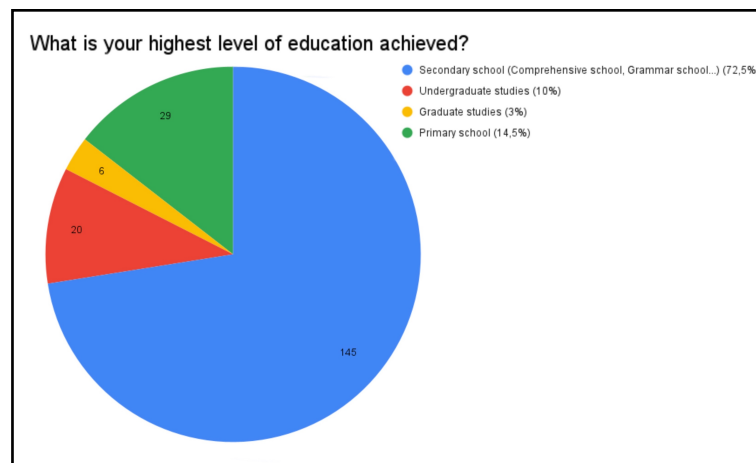
The second question regarding gender identity (Fig. 2) consisted of options *woman*, *man*, *non-binary*, *transgender*, or *other* (with the possibility to write one's own identity). The last option was not used by anyone. The question aimed to differentiate how many people of different genders participated, given, e.g., some transgender-related vocabulary. As for the results, more than half of the respondents (specifically 54,5%) were women, 40% men, 4% non-binary people and 1% of transgender people. Even though it might seem like an unsuccessful result, since 94,5% of questioned people are cisgender, this result alone only provides data on gender participation, not on being a member of the queer community. These results are demonstrated further.



The next question, *Are you a citizen of the Czech Republic?* (Fig. 3) was to determine whether the participants were mainly from the Czech Republic or came from a culture/ country that might have a different level of acceptance of the queer community. The answers provided were simply *yes/no*. As shown in figure 3, one hundred and ninety-six chose *yes*, merely 2% (i.e., four people) were not Czech citizens.

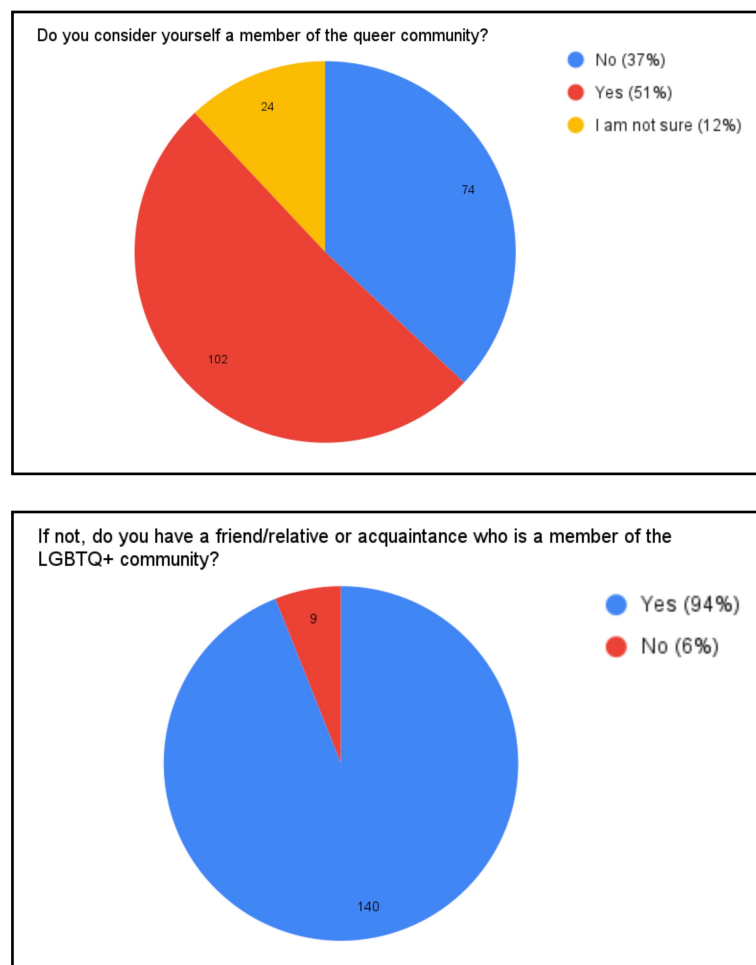


The fourth question was centred on the highest level of education achieved by the respondent (Fig. 4). Its purpose was to gain knowledge of the correlation between the level of academic education and understanding of or interest in queer specific vocabulary or community in general. It was divided into *primary*, *secondary*, *undergraduate*, *graduate*, and *doctoral studies*. Twenty-nine people have achieved primary education, creating 14,5% of the whole. The answers also showed that the majority of respondents, specifically 72,5% (one hundred and forty-five people) had finished secondary school. As for the undergraduate studies, twenty participants achieved this education, whereas the graduate studies are merely six people. None of the respondents achieved doctoral studies. The percentage is quite logical, given the fact that most of the people were in the age of 18-25, as demonstrated in the *Age* category. A part of this group is probably somewhere in the process of finishing their undergraduate programs, yet given the form of the question (highest level of education achieved), it is not relevant.



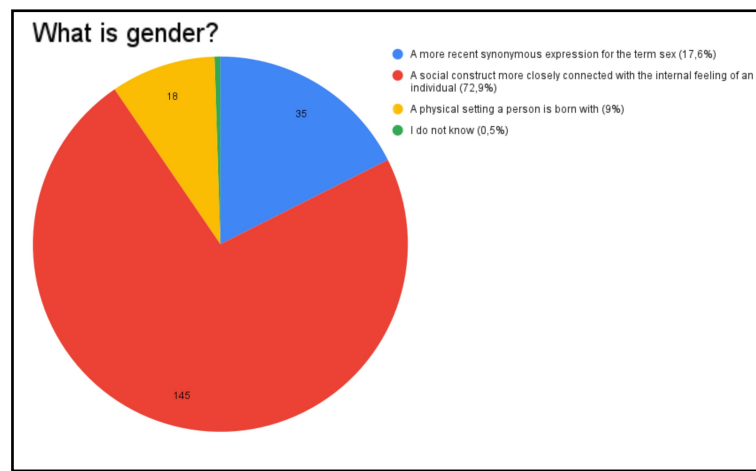
A question regarding personal membership in the queer community (Fig.5) is present to ascertain the number of queer and non-queer people participating in the questionnaire. In addition to simple *yes/no* answers, *I am not sure* was used for people who remain uncertain or have not *come out* about their gender identity or sexual orientation. All the participants answered this question. One hundred two people answered *yes* (which makes 51%), seventy-four people said *no* (37%) plus twenty-four people are not sure about their membership in the queer community (12%). For further knowledge of the

presence of queer people among participants, the final assignment of this first part was to answer (*yes/no*) if the respondent has a queer friend, relative or acquaintance (Fig. 6). One hundred and forty-nine answered the question, meaning that some participants felt the need to emphasize that they not only belong to the LGBTQ+ community themselves but also have a friend, relative or acquaintance within this community. Ninety-four percent agreed to know at least one queer person. Only nine people (6%) are neither members of the queer community nor do they have a queer friend/relative or acquaintance. This number was surprisingly low and indicated an increasing size of the LGBTQ+ community.

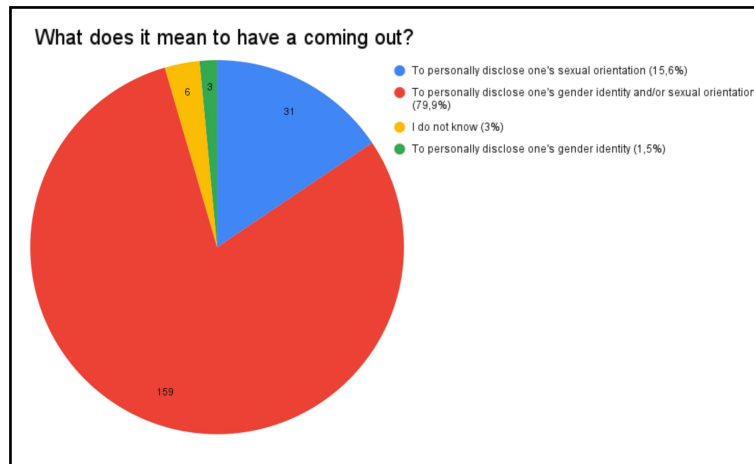


On the seventh question (or the first task of section two) *What is gender?* (Fig. 7) four options were given - the correct one, i.e., *a social construct more closely connected with the internal feeling of an individual*, a definition of sex (which ought to demonstrate how some people interchange sex for gender), an *I don't know* option and lastly a phrase

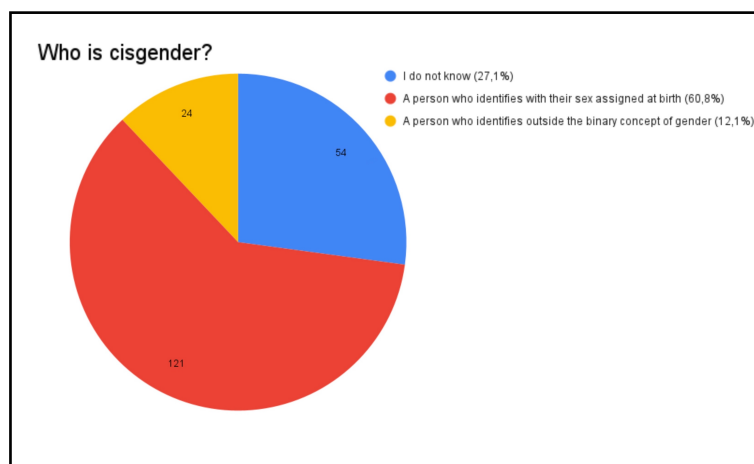
a more recent synonymous expression for the term *sex* to illustrate a misconception of gender and sex being basically the same. All participants answered this question. One hundred and forty-five people (72,9%) chose correctly the definition of gender, thirty-five (17,6%) thought that gender and sex are synonymous expressions, eighteen (9%) understood gender as a *physical setting a person is born with* (i.e., *sex*) and merely two (0,5%) did not know. Given the high figure of the correct answer, it is possible to presume that even some people outside of the queer community know this term.



The eighth question was focused on the meaning of the phrase *to have a coming out* (Fig. 8). The answers were created to differentiate whether the coming out is connected with either gender or sexual orientation, or both. The *I do not know* answer was also provided. One hundred fifty-nine (79,9%) participants recognized that coming out is connected with the possible disclosure of gender and/or sexual orientation. Thirty-one people (15,6%) answered that coming out revolves merely around one's sexual orientation, which illustrates the often overlooked impact of a personal gender identity. Generally speaking, gender identity was for many years considered a secondary expression of sexual orientation. Even though it might be occurring simultaneously, gender and sexual orientation are two separate terms, both being recognized (whether internally, externally or both) via coming out. Six people (3%) did not know the phrase and lastly, three participants (1,5%) assumed that coming out is connected only with the disclosure of gender identity.

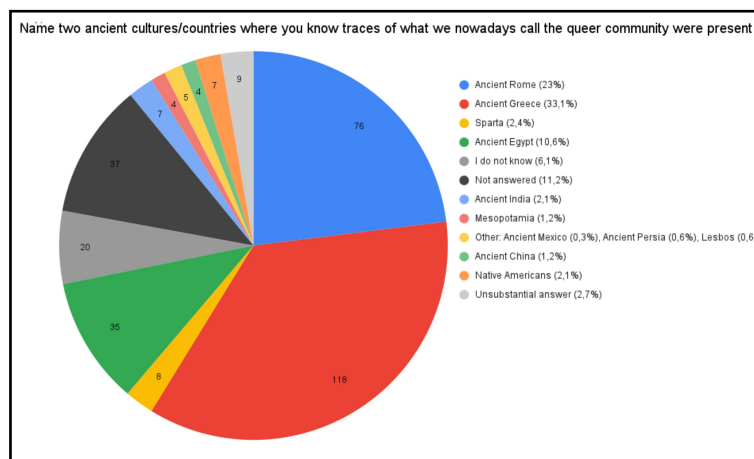


The next question *Who is cisgender?* (Fig. 9) offered the *I don't know* option, the right answer and a definition of a non-binary person. Its aim was to ascertain how the normative term *cisgender* is known, given that still majority of people might be identified so. One hundred and twenty-one (60,8%) people chose the correct option *a person who identifies with their sex assigned at birth*. Fifty-four contributors (27,1%) did not know, assumingly, since the majority of people identify as cisgender, they might have no reason to find a term under which they fall. Twenty-four (12,1%) people incorrectly stated that cisgender is *a person who identifies outside the binary concept of gender*, aka a non-binary person.

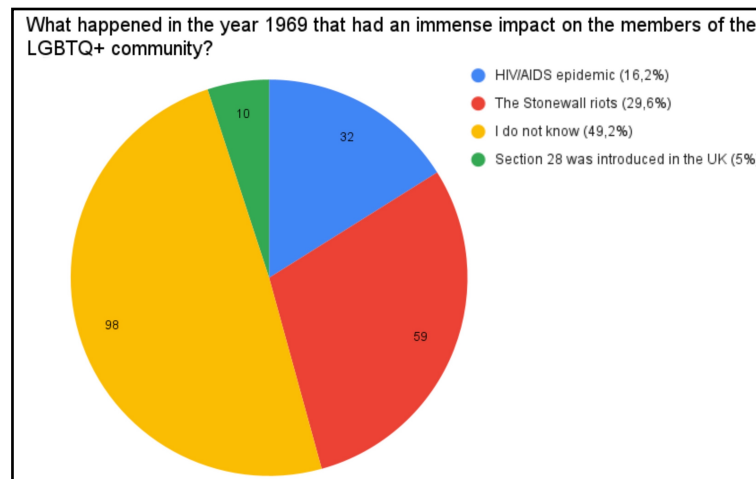


The following task *Name two ancient cultures/countries where you know traces of what we nowadays call the queer community were present* (Fig. 10) was open-ended.

Supposedly, many people would answer Ancient Greek or Ancient Rome, yet the opportunity to write other cultures/countries was provided. A particular group of people decided not to complete this task, which has been labeled as *not answered*. Since almost all participants are citizens of the Czech Republic, responses have been translated and divided into categories as follows: *Ancient Rome*, *Ancient Greece*, *Ancient Egypt*, *Sparta*, *Ancient India*, *Mesopotamia*, *Ancient China*, *Native Americans*, *other* (consisting of Ancient Mexico, Ancient Persia, Lesbos), *I do not know*, *not answered* and lastly *unsubstantial answers* (e.g., hippie movement, where it is possible to find traces of homosexuality etc., it is not an ancient culture/country whatsoever). The number of answers varies because the participants were not consistent with the two countries/cultures in the assignment. One hundred and eighteen respondents (33,1%) mentioned *Ancient Greece*, doubtlessly the most well-known ancient country, where homosexuality was accepted and respected. Surprisingly, only eight people (2,4%) filled in *Sparta*, a country closely connected with *Ancient Greece*. Seventy-six people (23%) highlighted *Ancient Rome*. Romans and their conquering pursuit of new territories in addition to trade caused their culture to incorporate aspects of the Greek one in fields, e.g., architecture, art, religion and respect for homosexual relationships. *Ancient Egypt* was filled in by 35 respondents (10,6%). Furthermore, seven people (2,1%) selected *Ancient India*; the same number goes with *Native Americans*. *Ancient China* and *Mesopotamia* both have four respondents (1,2%). Other countries/cultures, more specifically *Ancient Mexico* (0,3%), *Ancient Persia* (0,6%) and *Lesbos* (0,6%), were selected by five people. Thirty-seven participants (11,2%) did not answer and twenty (6,1%) did not know. Only nine respondents (2,7%) provided unsubstantial answers.

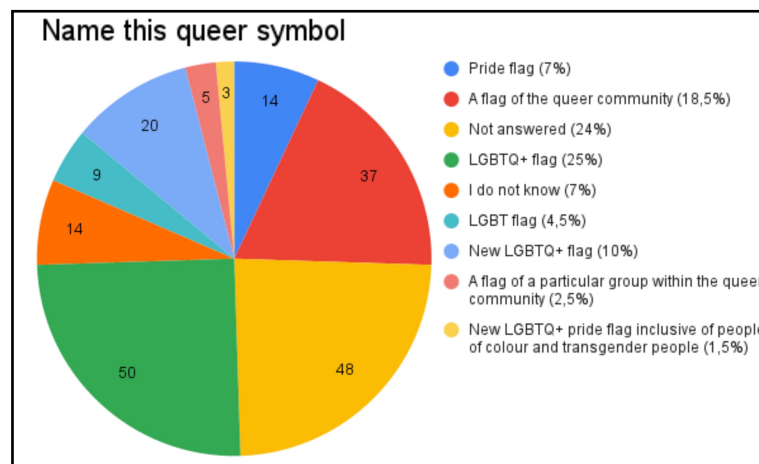


From the more recent historical point of view, the question *What happened in the year 1969 that had an immense impact on the members of the LGBTQ+ community?* was added (Fig. 11). Given its crucial importance to the queer community, it was assumed that at least the part of respondents within the community would choose the correct event. Answers of *I don't know*, *The Stonewall riots*, *HIV/AIDS epidemic* and *Section 28 was introduced in the UK* were offered. As for the results, ninety-eight people (49,2%) did not know, fifty-nine (29,6%) chose correctly *The Stonewall riots*, thirty-two (16,2%) selected *HIV/AIDS epidemic*, presumably due to its association with the gay community in the 1980s, and ten people (5%) claimed that *Section 28 was introduced in the UK*. Obviously, this event has not been recognized by many people, even though they might take part in the Pride parade which among other has its purpose in reminding this event.



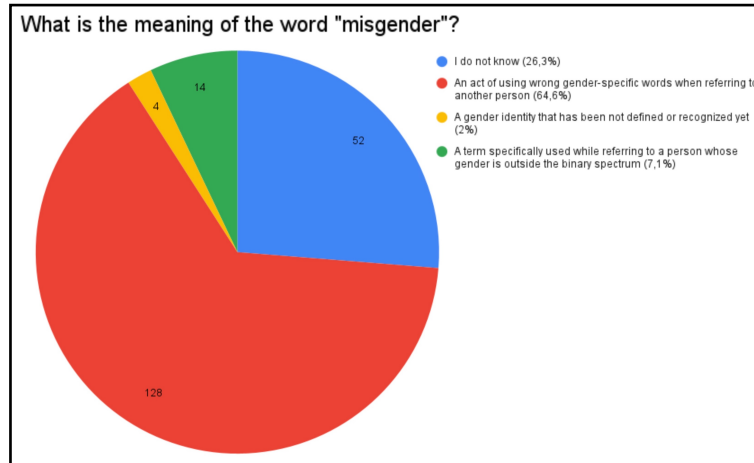
Afterward, a picture of black and indigenous trans people inclusive LGBTQ+ Pride flag (created in 2018 by Feliz) was presented to the respondents, as they were to name this queer symbol (Fig. 12). According to the rainbow stripes, many would assume it to be a Pride flag or a symbol of the queer community, which is technically correct, yet it was to be shown whether the questionnaire participants recognize the 2018 inclusion. The majority of the respondents' replies were technically correct, as they revolved around the symbol's being a flag of the queer community, yet this task was focused on the inclusion of black and indigenous trans people. Answers were translated and divided into several subgroups. The most general responses *LGBTQ+ flag* and *a flag of the queer community* were used by fifty (25%) and thirty-seven (18,5%) people,

respectively. Fourteen respondents (7%) considered it a *Pride flag*. Nine participants (4,5%) filled in that the symbol is a flag of LGBT, which is technically correct, yet either deliberately or accidentally, this answer lacks many other queer people, as the number of individuals with various sexual orientations and gender identities rises and they are a part of this community as well. Some (more precisely twenty people, 10%) recognized the difference between Baker's and Feliz's LGBTQ+ flag and stated that it is a new LGBTQ+ flag, yet did not mention what precisely is new. Few respondents, i.e., five (2,5%), thought this queer symbol was *a flag of a particular group within the queer community*, such as the transgender or asexual community. A significant group of forty-eight respondents (24%) did not answer. Fourteen people (7%) did not know. Merely three participants (1,5%) recognized what changes this flag underwent and described all its aspects - *New LGBTQ+ Pride flag inclusive of people of colour and transgender people*.

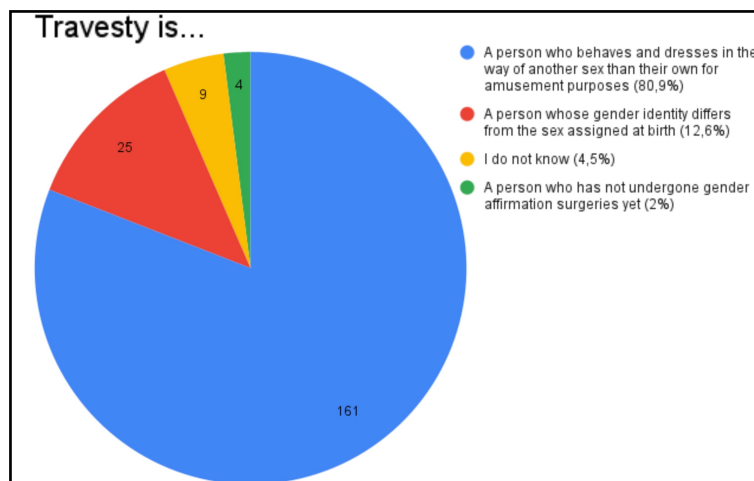


The word *misgender* (deliberately without any formal sign of what part of speech it is, presumably might be considered noun, verb, adjective) has its answers as follows (Fig. 13): the correct one (acting as a verb), *I do not know*, *a gender identity that has been not defined or recognized yet* and *a term specifically used while referring to a person whose gender is outside the binary spectrum* (given the prefix *mis-* might be presumably considered a derogatory noun for a non-binary gender). All participants but two submit their answers. One hundred and twenty-eight of them (64,6%) chose correctly the definition of *to misgender* - *an act of using wrong gender-specific words when referring*

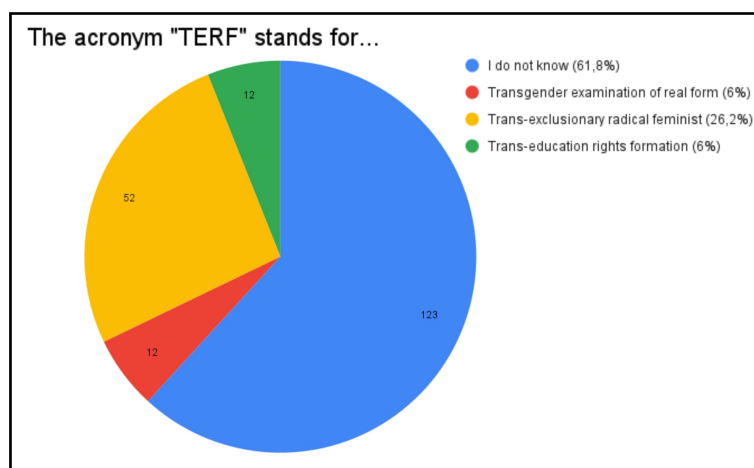
to another person. Fifty-two people (26,3%) were unaware of its meaning, fourteen (7,1%) assumed it being used when referring to non-binary people and four (2%) selected a gender identity that has been not defined or recognized yet.



The fourteenth question revolved around the meaning of the word *travesty* (Fig 14), more specifically, if its true meaning (first option) would be interchanged for a person who has not undergone gender affirmation surgeries yet, a person whose gender identity differs from the sex assigned at birth (the definition of a transgender person) plus the I do not know answer was also provided. One hundred and ninety-nine people chose to answer, out of which one hundred and sixty-one (80,9%) selected the right option (a person who behaves and dresses in the way of another sex than their own for amusement purposes). Only twenty-five people (12,6%) interchanged travesty for transgender, nine (4,5%) did not know and four (2%) understood travesty as a person who has not undergone gender affirmation surgeries yet. Given these results, most participants recognize the difference between travesty and transgender individuals.

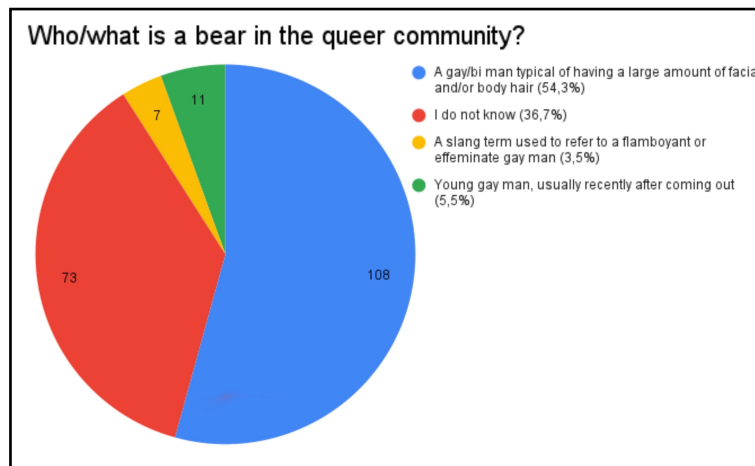


The acronym TERF stands for... (Fig. 15) was the following assignment to complete. Four possibilities were given, the correct one, the *I don't know* option and two completely made-up - *Transgender examination of real form* and *Trans-education rights formation*. The first non-existent interpretation was created for participants to assume that this real-form examination takes place before being officially recognized as a transgender person. Even though a medical exam for the transgender person is very often demanded, it does not possess such name. *Trans-education rights formation* aimed to define how many people would interchange this “formation focused on rights of trans people to be educated” for the acronym’s correct and only meaning. More than half of the participants, specifically one hundred and twenty-three (61,8%), did not know this term. Fifty-two people (26,2%) chose the correct term *Trans-exclusionary radical feminist*. For the rest of options, twelve participants (6%) answered to each. These results might have been caused by the low representation of transgender people within the participants (only 1%). The acronym *TERF* was supposedly overlooked, as it does not influence them. This word is also relatively new and not yet widespread as, for example, *travesty*.

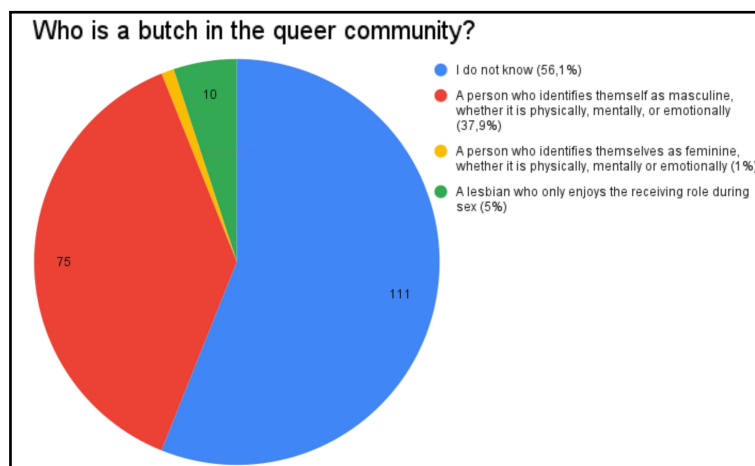


The sixteenth assignment was the question *Who/what is a bear in the queer community?* (Fig. 16) with options of *I do not know*, *young gay man, usually recently after coming out*, *a slang term used to refer to a flamboyant or effeminate gay man* or the correct answer. One hundred eight people (54,3%) chose correctly *a gay/bi man typical of having a large amount of facial and/or body hair*. Seventy-three participants (36,7%) did not know, eleven (5,5%) assumed that *bear* is a young, recently out gay man, and seven people selected *a slang term used to refer to a flamboyant or effeminate gay man*.

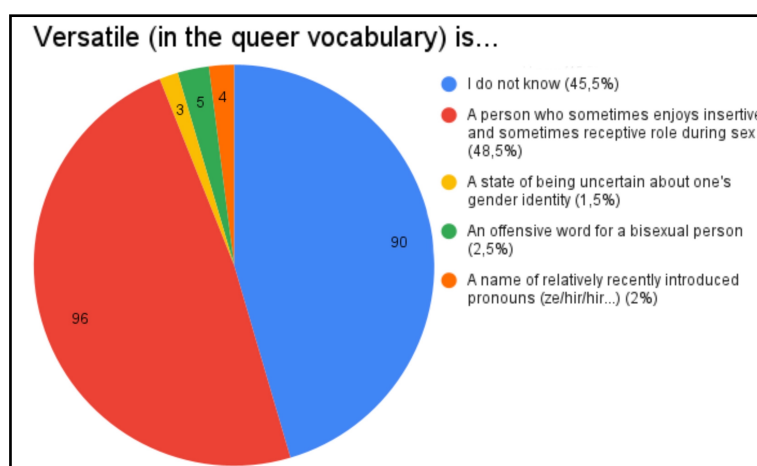
Bear is a specific term used within a particular part of the queer community, i.e., the gay community, therefore it might be unknown to even LGBTQ+ people. Yet, given its associative connotation of the animal bear, it can be assumed that the correct answer was chosen even by people who were uncertain about the specific meaning in the queer community.



The next question revolved around the meaning of *a butch* (Fig. 17). The following answers were provided: a correct one, a definition of pillow princess, *a person who identifies themselves as feminine, whether it is physically, mentally or emotionally* and *I do not know*. As for the results, the majority of people (one hundred eleven; 56,1%) did not know the term, seventy-five (37,9%) chose the right answer of *a person who identifies themselves as masculine, whether it is physically, mentally or emotionally*. A definition of pillow princess was selected by ten participants (5%), the last option by only two (1%). Like in the previous task, this term is connected with a particular part of members of the queer community and might not be recognized outside of it.

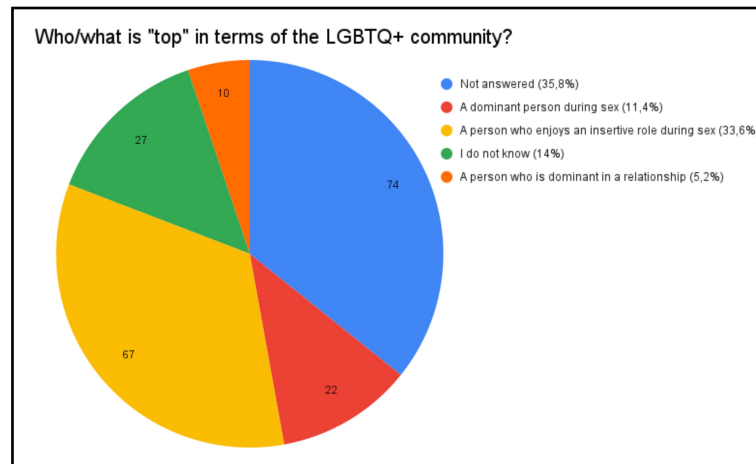


Tasks eighteen and nineteen were from the sexual vocabulary field, more specifically to choose a correct answer to the meaning of the term *Versatile* (Fig. 18) and an open-ended question *Who/what is top in terms of the LGBTQ+ community?* (Fig. 19). Speaking of the former, five options were provided. Ninety-six respondents (48,5%) chose the correct answer (i.e., *a person who sometimes enjoys insertive and sometimes receptive role during sex*), ninety (45,5%) did not know, five (2,5%) considered versatile *an offensive word for a bisexual person* (assumingly due to its meaning outside of the queer community), four (2%) selected *a name of relatively recently introduced pronouns (ze/hir/hir...)* and lastly, three people (1,5%) submitted an answer of a state of being uncertain about one's gender identity.

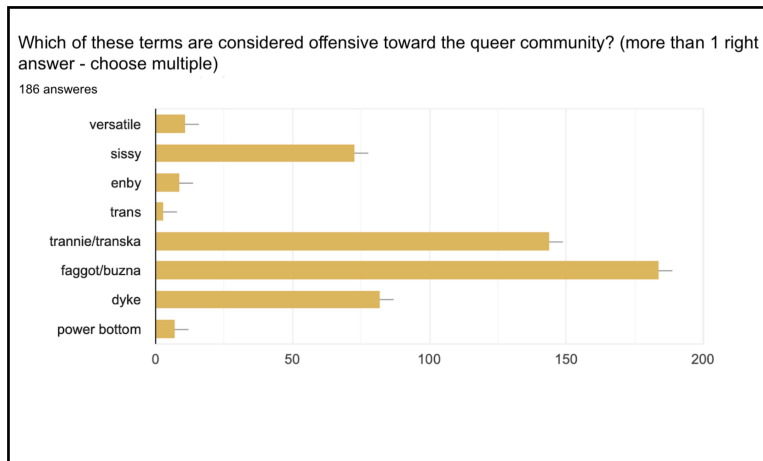


The latter task was open-ended. It aimed to ascertain if the term *top* is understood correctly. Seventy-four people (35,8%) refused to answer. This figure might be influenced by, e.g., sensitivity, misunderstanding of the question or the fact that this task was the penultimate of the whole questionnaire. Sixty-seven (33,6%) accurately defined *top* as *a person who enjoys an insertive role during sex*. Twenty-two respondents (11,4%) assumed that *a top* is a dominant person during sex and ten (5,2%) claimed this word to be a person dominant in a relationship. Twenty-seven people (14%) did not know. The term *top* has its connotation with a dominant person (not only in sex but also in a relationship, as demonstrated by the results). Even though this might or might not be true, it is not an aspect of dominance that plays the major role in its definition, yet

the insertive role during sex. For example, if a *top* has intercourse with a *power bottom*, the dominant person may be the *bottom*.



The final assignment of the questionnaire was to identify and mark multiple terms that are considered offensive when used toward queer people to distinguish how known some of them are (Fig. 20). The rest of the words were relatively neutral expressions. All terms were *versatile*, *sissy*, *enby*, *trans*, *trannie*, *faggot*, *dyke* and *power bottom*, out of which *sissy*, *trannie*, *faggot* and *dyke* were the derogatory words. For the words *faggot* and *trannie*, Czech equivalents were provided, given the citizenship of participants. These words - *buzna*, *transka* - are also used as a reminder of these slurs in the Czech surroundings. One hundred and eighty-six people completed this task, each choosing several possibilities. Overall, the majority of participants chose the correct slurs. The most well-known term was *faggot*, which given its widespread use, is not surprising. This word was selected by one hundred and eighty-four people (98,9%). *Trannie* was the second term recognized by one hundred and forty-four participants (77,4%). *Dyke* and *sissy* were marked in almost half of the answers, precisely eighty-two (44,1%) and seventy-three (39,2%), respectively. As for the neutral expressions, *versatile* was selected by eleven people (5,9%), *enby* by nine (4,8%), *power bottom* by 7 (3,8%) and lastly *trans* by merely three (1,6%).



This subchapter described and evaluated the responses from participants in the online questionnaire focused on the queer specific vocabulary, history and symbols. It has asserted that the given hypothesis was proved right. The majority of tasks were completed correctly, plus given the used medium mostly young people participated.

3. Conclusion

This undergraduate thesis deals with a still increasing community of LGBTQ+ people. It aims to provide a brief overview of some of the vocabulary, history and symbols of the queer people, as well as to obtain information on how known these LGBTQ+ terms are within and outside of this community, realized by practical research.

The first part of this work revolves around some queer-related vocabulary, history and symbols of this community. The LGBTQ+ terms were divided into several categories according to their remit: gender-related, appearance-related, sexual orientation-related and offensive vocabulary.

Furthermore, the research on the general knowledge regarding the queer community was added. Two hundred participants filled in an online questionnaire consisting of twenty tasks. In the first part, the respondents were asked about some personal information, such as age, citizenship, membership in the queer community, etc. The other part was focused on the meaning of the queer terms in addition to a recognition of an LGBTQ+ symbol. The tasks took the form of a multiple-choice question, an open-ended question, and a multiple-answers type of question.

The majority of the questions regarding queer-specific terms were answered correctly by most of the respondents, which is presumably given due to the fact that almost all (94%) of participants were either a part of the LGBTQ+ community or at least knew someone who is. The most generally known terms in the set of respondents were *faggot* (98,9%), *travesty* (80,9%), *coming out* (79,9%), *trannie* (77,4%), *gender* (72,9%) and *misgender* (64,6%). These words are generally well-established either in or outside the community, which is probably caused by their frequency of usage in media and interpersonal communication. The generally least known terms were *TERF* (61,8% of respondents did not know the correct answer), *butch* (56,1%) and *versatile* (45,5%). These words are more used specifically inside the community and/or might be more recent, therefore they are not well-established yet. In the case of the term *TERF*, its relatively low percentage of familiarity is likely to occur due to its particular usage, not affecting the major population in combination with its acronymic nature. Notably, the

results of questions regarding some parts of the queer history (tasks ten and eleven) were among the most shattered and least familiar to the respondents. Even though a significant portion of participants answered question ten correctly, the responses were rather shattered, which could be caused by the very nature of this task, meaning an open-ended question. However, the most present cultures with a positive relationship toward queer people were *Ancient Greece* and *Ancient Rome*. This choice was probably influenced by most respondents' nationality (and their related Europocentric education). In the case of task eleven, nearly half (49,2%) of participants did not know the correct answer (the Stonewall riots), which might indicate a low level of queer-related history education of this particular group of respondents. As for task twelve, only 1,5% of participants answered correctly to the full extent of the question - *New LGBTQ+ Pride flag inclusive of people of colour and transgender people*. This low percentage is foremost caused by the number of different flags concerning the queer community and the confusion arising from it. Furthermore, many of the respondents provided a technically correct answer but did not consider the difference between this particular new flag (specifically its inclusion of queer people of colour and transgender people) and its older variations. In the open-ended question regarding the meaning of *top*, a significant group of participants (35,8%) did not answer. As mentioned in the previous subchapter, it might be influenced by, for example, sensitivity, misunderstanding of the question or the fact that this task was the penultimate of the whole questionnaire. Speaking of the misunderstanding, the question was formulated in a somewhat ambiguous way so that it could have been confused with another connotation of the word *top* (i.e., something generally favored), hence the people did not answer. It has to be stated that another reason for not providing any answer could be insufficient or no knowledge of the given term.

The practical part generally proved the hypothesis that, given the research method, primarily young people would participate and the most of the tasks would be completed correctly by the majority of respondents. The exceptions occurred in tasks eleven (*the Stonewall riots*), twelve (the queer symbol), fifteen (*TERF*), seventeen (*butch*) and nineteen (a task regarding *top*). In the cases of eleven, fifteen and seventeen, the highest

number of participants did not know the answer. In numbers twelve and nineteen, the responses were either absent or not precisely formulated.

It has to be stated that queer slang, as the language in general, is linguistically evolving, increasing or decreasing along with the constant change of the popularity of its vocabulary, therefore some terms used in this thesis might be gradually replaced by new and for the time more fitting vocabulary.

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Appendix

The queer community and language - questionnaire

1. Section - focused on respondent

1. **Age:**

- Under 18
- 18-25
- 25-35
- 35-50
- Over 50

2. **Do you identify as...**

- Woman
- Man
- Non-binary
- Transgender
- Other: _____

3. **Are you a citizen of the Czech Republic?**

- Yes
- No

4. **What is your highest level of education achieved?**

- Doctoral studies (e.g. Ph.D.,.....)
- Graduate studies
- Undergraduate studies
- Secondary school (Comprehensive school, Grammar school...)
- Primary school

5. **Do you consider yourself a member of the queer community?**

- Yes
- No
- I am not sure

6. **If not, do you have a friend/relative or acquaintance who is a member of the LGBTQ+ community?**

- Yes
- No

2. Section - focused on the LGBTQ+ related words

7. What is gender?

- A social construct more closely connected with the internal feeling of an individual
- A physical setting a person is born with
- A more recent synonymous expression for the term sex
- I do not know

8. What does it mean to have a coming out?

- To personally disclose one's sexual orientation
- To personally disclose one's gender identity
- To personally disclose one's gender identity and/or sexual orientation
- I do not know

9. Who is cisgender?

- A person who identifies with their sex assigned at birth
- A person who identifies outside the binary concept of gender
- I do not know

10. Name two ancient cultures/countries where you know traces of what we nowadays call the queer community were present.



11. What happened in the year 1969 that had an immense impact on the members of the queer community?

- The Stonewall riots
- HIV/AIDS epidemic
- Section 28 was introduced in the UK
- I do not know

12. Name this queer symbol:



13. **What is the meaning of the word *misgender*?**
- An act of using wrong gender-specific words when referring to another person
 - A gender identity that has been not defined or recognized yet
 - A term specifically used while referring to a person whose gender is outside the binary spectrum
 - I do not know
14. **Travesty is...**
- A person who has not undergone gender affirmation surgeries yet
 - A person who behaves and dresses in the way of another sex than their own for amusement purposes
 - A person whose gender identity differs from the sex assigned at birth
 - I do not know
15. **The acronym TERF stands for...**
- Trans-exclusionary radical feminist
 - Transgender examination of real form
 - Trans-education rights formation
 - I do not know
16. **Who/what is a bear in the queer community?**
- A gay/bi man typical of having a large amount of facial and/or body hair
 - A slang term used to refer to a flamboyant or effeminate gay man
 - Young gay man, usually recently after coming out
 - I do not know
17. **Who is a butch in the queer community?**
- A person who identifies themselves as masculine, whether it is physically, mentally, or emotionally
 - A lesbian who only enjoys the receiving role during sex
 - A person who identifies themselves as feminine, whether it is physically, mentally or emotionally
 - I do not know
18. **Versatile (in the queer vocabulary) is...**
- A person who sometimes enjoys insertive and sometimes receptive role during sex
 - A state of being uncertain about one's gender identity
 - A name of relatively recently introduced pronouns (ze/hir/hir...)
 - An offensive word for a bisexual person
 - I do not know
19. **Who/what is *top* in terms of the LGBTQ+ community?**



20. Which of these terms are considered offensive towards the queer community?
(more than 1 right answer - choose multiple)

- versatile
- sissy
- enby
- trans
- trannie
- faggot
- dyke
- power bottom

Summary in Czech

Janík Ladislav. Západočeská univerzita v Plzni. Červen, 2022. Queer komunita a jazyk.
Vedoucí práce: PhDr. Naděžda Stašková, Ph.D.

Tato bakalářská práce se zaměřuje na queer komunitu a specifické pojmy v souvislosti s ní užívané. Cílem práce je shromáždit a vysvětlit tato slova, zároveň také zjistit, jak je jejich znalost rozšířená mezi lidmi v ní i mimo ni.

Teoretická část obsahuje krátký úvod, historii queer komunity, její symboliku a slovíčka rozdělená do skupin podle toho, s čím jsou spojená: gender, vzhled, sexuální orientace a útočnost.

Praktická část se zabývá znalostmi okruhu dvou set respondentů v oblasti LGBTQ+ termínů. Odpovědi byly získány skrze online dotazník a analyzovány podle jejich procentuálního a hodnotového zastoupení. Většina úkolů zaměřená na queer slovíčka a symboly byla vyplněna správně. Pár dotazů však buď nebylo zodpovězeno či na ně značná část respondentů neznala odpověď. Nejznámější pojmy v množině respondentů byly *faggot* (98,9% odpovědělo správně), *travesty* (80,9%), *coming out* (79,9%), *trannie* (77,4%), *gender* (72,9%) a *misgender* (64,6%). Naopak nejméně známé pojmy byly *TERF* (61,8% respondentů neznalo správnou odpověď), *butch* (56,1%) a *versatile* (45,5%), společně s otázkou ohledně stonewallských nepokojů (49,2%).

Klíčová slova: queer komunita, LGBTQ+, gender, sexuální orientace, genderová identita, transgender, non-binary, homosexuál, bisexuál