

INCLUSION HANDBOOK

FOR
RESEARCHERS
USING SURVEY
METHODOLOGY





Inclusion Handbook for Researchers Using Survey Methodology

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1. INTRO- DUCTION

This handbook is the result of a collaboration between the RESISTIRÉ project team and Social Policy, Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation Studies Association (SPoD). The RESISTIRÉ project team aims to address knowledge gaps and support researchers, to understand how a gender+ approach and analysis can underpin their future research activities. SPoD uses inclusive survey research as a tool to address the economic and social inequalities faced by LGBTIAQ+ persons since 2011. Although the work of RESISTIRÉ and SPoD is not limited to these, this collaboration has emerged to transform SPoD's knowledge on inclusive survey research into a handbook in line with the aims of the RESISTIRÉ project.

The objective of this handbook is to offer insights into the inclusion of oppressed social groups by drawing on survey research that has been successful in including LGBTIAQ+ persons. It targets everyone, specifically researchers and civil society organizations, who use survey methodology and want to make their research inclusive. Its main objective is to encourage and guide researchers to make their surveys more inclusive and intersectional and thus contribute to addressing research gaps on the experience of oppressed social groups.

The handbook provides guidance and support to researchers, academics, and professionals working with LGBTIAQ+ communities and wider socially oppressed groups on applying gender+ and intersectional approaches when collecting, analysing and presenting data, in a way that avoids reproducing existing inequalities. The handbook provides easily accessible recommendations,

based on focus group discussions and interviews with researchers involved in studies targeting LGBTIAQ+ people in Turkey.

This handbook consists of three main parts. In the first part you will find considerations for researchers on how to engage with participants in a more inclusive and intersectional approach and to operate the research process through this lens. In the second part, there are practical recommendations for each stage of the research process. In the last section, I look at research and activism through the lens of inclusivity and provide a discussion on how research can be practiced as a form of activism.

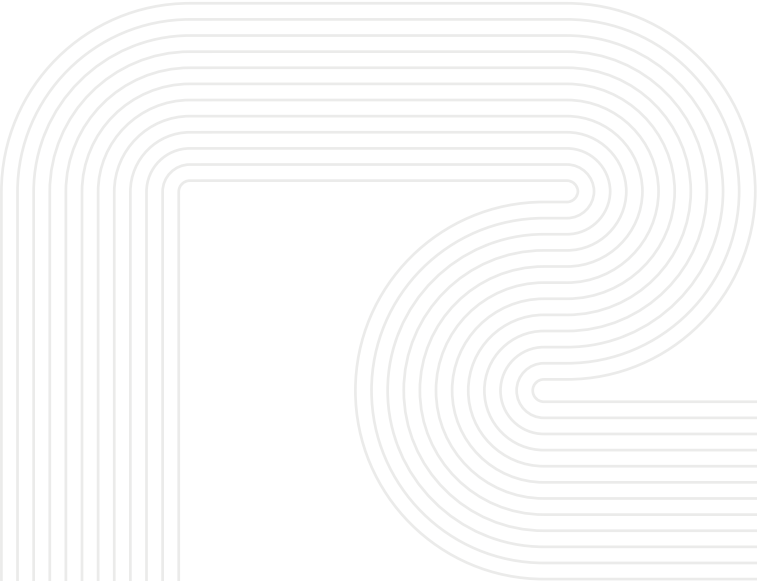


2. BRIEF METHOD- OLOGICAL NOTES

Before writing the handbook, I conducted one-on-one semi-structured interviews and focus groups with the researchers of three major surveys conducted on LGBTIQ+ people in Turkey since 2015¹. One of the three surveys was conducted by SPoD to explore the problems experienced by LGBTIQ+ people while accessing social services during the pandemic in Turkey and published the results of this survey with the name of “A Report on LGBTI+ Persons’ Access to Social Services during the Pandemic ” in December, 2020. The SPoD survey was considered a great example of including hard to reach groups such as LGBTIQ+ and thus the RESISTIRE team (Oxford Brookes University and Sabancı University Gender and Women Studies Excellence Center) discussed how this experience can be transferred into a handbook that could be used by researchers, professionals and individuals who work on understanding inequalities and involving hard to reach groups. On the basis of this collaboration, it was decided to conduct focus groups and interviews with researchers from three inclusive surveys - including SPoD - focused on LGBTIQ+ people in Turkey. Thus, this is a collective effort and this handbook is an account of what I have personally absorbed from these meetings, interviews, and focus groups. This handbook has been reviewed by the RESISTIRE team (OBU and SU).

At this point, I would like to reflect on my own positionality because although I tried to make the process of producing the handbook participatory, what I could see from my own perspective was key in shaping the handbook. I am an openly gay person and I can tell that it is the primary

identity that shapes my perception of self in social life. Moreover, I have been an LGBTQIA+ rights defender since 2016. As a result, when I was writing the handbook, I often had in my mind the experience of oppression of LGBTQIA+ people and I have a reflex to oppose it. Although this sometimes allowed me to bring the ignored experiences and perspectives of LGBTQIA+ people into the handbook, sometimes I may have overlooked other experiences and perspectives because I am very engaged with the experience of oppression of LGBTQIA+ people and LGBTQIA+ activism. Even though I have a basic knowledge of the survey method, my main experience lies in qualitative research. This may have helped me to avoid the often criticized positivist perspective of the quantitative method, but my perspective and recommendations may have sometimes remained limited.



**3. WHAT ARE
THE KEY
CONSIDER-
ATIONS FOR A
RESEARCHER
AIMING TO
CONDUCT
INCLUSIVE
RESEARCH**

In general, LGBTIAQ+ people are a hard-to-reach group for researchers because LGBTIAQ+ people commonly hide their identity as a strategy to protect themselves from discrimination, stigmatisation and violence. The targeting of LGBTIAQ+ persons at the state level in Turkey has increased privacy concerns among LGBTIAQ+ persons. Therefore, researchers are often only able to reach a small segment of LGBTIAQ+ people who are open about their identity in Turkey. Considering that educational level and socio-economic status are among the most important factors affecting the decision for coming out, studies with a sample of LGBTIAQ+ persons have limitations in that they can only represent the experiences of a relatively advantaged group among LGBTIAQ+ persons. Especially for researchers using methods such as surveys, where the number and diversity of people reached may be more important than other methods, it has become even more difficult to collect data on LGBTIAQ+ persons. In other words, research targeting LGBTIAQ+ individuals in Turkey suffers from many problems related to inclusivity.

However, as it is currently the case in Turkey, the alternative methods that oppressed groups have found to survive and resist under difficult conditions have always been inspiring. Researchers in Turkey are also seeking new methods to overcome these obstacles and are experimenting and trying to improve the methods they find. One of the surveys that reached the highest number of LGBTIAQ+ participants in Turkey emerged precisely as a product of a search brought about by such

challenging conditions. In the focus group I held with the researchers who conducted this survey, they told me about the method they found to overcome barriers in reaching LGBTIAQ+ people, the discussion process of finding this method and the factors that made this method successful.

Researchers have used every online channel to spread their research during the pandemic, from WhatsApp groups to advertising on Facebook. Yet their reach was limited. In their discussions as a team of researchers, they were looking for ways to reach more people. One of the team suggested using a dating app used mostly by gay men to spread the survey. The person who suggested it knew a person from the Turkish representative office of the company that owns the app through personal contacts. As a result, they advertised in this app for surveys for free. The result was successful. After this app ran ads for the survey, the number of respondents almost doubled. According to one of the focus group participants, people using the app have sent each other this questionnaire to fill out while flirting with each other on the app.

Despite the success of this innovative method, it has also brought some limitations. For example, some groups and demographics are likely to have been better represented as a result and some are likely still be underrepresented whether due to them being ineligible in that route (i.e. queer women) or unlikely to access the survey through that route (e.g. gay men without internet access, rural gay men, or perhaps trans gay men or disabled gay men or gay men from

ethnic minorities who maybe aren't so welcome in those spaces). Thus, when using innovative approaches like this one, it is also very important to include in your research an analysis of how this will have affected your sample.

Yet understanding what makes this innovative approach successful can inspire us to find more inclusive ways forward. Firstly, the researchers are familiar with the LGBTIAQ+ community as they are also employees of an LGBTIAQ+ rights organisation. They know the ethical codes, communication styles and socialising spaces of LGBTIAQ+ people. For example, dating apps are one of the most used socialising spaces for so many LGBTIAQ+ people. Note that dating apps can be particularly hostile spaces for queer people who are trans, of an ethnic or religious minority or disabled. The reason why these applications are highly preferred is the privacy concerns of LGBTIAQ+ people and the fact that these applications offer people the opportunity to remain anonymous. It is an advantage for researchers to know the importance of dating apps in LGBTIAQ+ socialisation and which dating apps are used the most by LGBTIAQ+s in Turkey. Someone unfamiliar with the LGBTIAQ+ community might not have even heard of the app the researchers advertised in for the survey.

The researchers' use of the dating app to disseminate the survey was not the only factor that enabled the survey to reach a large number of people. The second factor was that the LGBTIAQ+ community embraced the survey and sent it to each other even while flirting with

each other. One of the focus group participants reported that the adoption of this research by the LGBTIAQ+ community was due to the fact that the study was researching urgent needs of the community at that period. For this reason, the community cared about the research and was committed to its successful completion. Moreover, the spaces for LGBTIAQ+ people to voice their problems were very limited and the research gave them a platform to be heard. The research was a participatory mechanism for them. In summary, the researchers were in collaboration with the LGBTIAQ+ community. They benefited from the knowledge and experience of NGOs and activists. There was a relationship of reciprocity between participants and researchers and, therefore, the research became a space for inclusion.

My focus groups and one-on-one interviews with researchers provided me with many inspiring stories like this one. These stories showed me that oppressed groups, including LGBTIAQ+ people, do not have to be a hard-to-reach group and that inclusion and intersectionality is not an impossible task. I will not present all of these stories in this handbook, but I have written the handbook based on these stories, and throughout the handbook I have tried to understand what makes them 'better stories'. Below you will find some recommendations that I have absorbed from this attempt to understand.

3.1. REFLECT ON YOURSELF AND IDENTIFY YOUR POSITION!

The researchers cannot be completely neutral and unbiased, because they live within the world they study and this world shapes them too. To be more clear, social divisions such as gender, race, and class have a decisive influence on a person's beliefs and values. Based on these beliefs and values, anyone comes into research with certain assumptions, ranging from choosing your research topic to the interpretation of your findings, and about the research context and participants. These assumptions have a direct or indirect impact on the design, execution, and interpretation of the research. You are in an interaction with all the stages and elements of your study. The epistemological, ontological, and moral assumptions that you have, construct your positionality in relation to your research. Your positionality also influences whom you include in research and whose experiences you hear most about. **If you are aiming to do inclusive research, you should reflect on your positionality from the beginning to the end of the research and constantly check whose experiences you are making visible and whose experiences you may be missing.**

3.2. DO NOT ASSUME ANYTHING!

When conducting your research, approach your interviewees with as much curiosity and interest as possible. Do not take anything about their experience for granted and do not try to fit the answers you get into the categories you already have in your head about them. In order to achieve this, you should define your positionality in a critical way and constantly reflect on your positionality during the research process. For example, if you are a non-LGBTIQA+ researcher in a study where your sample is LGBTIQA+ persons,

your knowledge about LGBTIQ+ persons may be limited to what you have learned from the media, and therefore may be incomplete, inaccurate or biased. For example, you may have ingrained in you the stereotype that a gay man will have more feminine body language. This may hold you back from engaging in deep listening about a non-feminine gay man's experience of homophobia. Even more basically, when such a person talks about their relationship, you may assume that their partner is a woman and this restrain your understanding of their life situation and challenges altogether. Alternatively, if you are a lesbian researcher, you may be assuming that the experiences of the lesbians who participated in your study will be similar to yours, and you may be underestimating differences within these experiences. In parallel, if you are a rights advocate and a researcher at the same time, you may be focused on seeing a rights violation in every experience you hear about. This can prevent you from seeing people's resistance strategies and empowering stories because you are too engaged with a rights-based point of view aimed at a critique of the larger system of oppression. Moreover, if you approach your research participant as a 'poor victim' of oppression, this may place you in a position of arrogance where you are unable to learn from the resilience and strength of your research participant, and the strategies they have developed to respond to their challenging life circumstances. For a rights-based researcher, it is also important not to assume that you know what is right for the research participant. If you have certain assumptions about what they should do, you will not be able to learn from their

actual life, agency, and resistance strategies. In short, having knowledge of the participant's identities can help you understand them better, but it can have the opposite effect if you take this information for granted. Do not assume anything about the participants, do not impose your own agenda and do not give directions accordingly.

3.3. DO NOT OBJECTIFY THE LIVES OF FLESH-AND- BLOOD HUMAN BEINGS!

Sometimes, researchers tend to treat participants and their responses as mere 'data' in the name of 'professionalism'. This approach causes the researchers to ignore the agency of the participants, and to place themselves in a divine position with a disembodied and an infinite point of view. However, there is a human relationship between the researcher and the participants. Being aware that both the participants and you are flesh-and-blood people is crucial to developing an authentic and ethical research relationship. When you consider yourself as a 'mortal', you realise that you have traces of the world you are discovering and that you are open to being influenced by it. Perhaps it would be more accurate to **consider the relationship between researcher and participants as a conversation rather than a discovery** and make our judgments about the world not based on a logic of uncovering, but on a dynamic and socially charged interaction of dialogue in order to avoid this tendency for objectification². This logic of conversation is also related to positionality, which I mentioned above, and empathy, which I will talk about in the next point. There is a common idea among researchers that you need to be disconnected

or even cold towards the interviewee whereas a good interview is an empathetic conversation grounded in empathy driven by respectful interest in hearing and learning about that person's experience. This would be "granting the status of agent/actor to the 'objects' of the world"³. In parallel to our discussion regarding agency, to the extent that you grant participants the status of agent, you would be able to design research as a field for inclusion.

3.4. RECIPROCALITY AND EMPATHY ARE IMPORTANT!

For a researcher, reciprocity can mean two things. First, you should not reduce any research to work that needs to be done for your academic career. This is not to demonise the personal benefit that any research you do can bring to your academic career per se. However, you should be careful to ensure that your research is in the best interest of the participants. The absence of reciprocity may not solely arise from an individual prioritizing their own career at the expense of other considerations. It can also occur when junior or less powerful researchers hesitate to voice concerns when a research project isn't aligning with the participants' best interests. Similarly, researchers with low confidence may feel compelled to adhere to the initial plan even if it becomes evident that the original assumptions about participants were incorrect. Reciprocity unequivocally means including the statement about conducting research that prioritizes the well-being of participants. This entails not only shifting focus away from a researcher's career objectives, but also a dedication to genuinely listening to participants, understanding their concerns, and

being open to adjusting plans and priorities to ensure the research remains in the participants' best interests. Therefore, ethical research is not just about adhering to the initial plan, but about exemplifying reciprocity by actively listening to and modifying the research at any stage to consistently prioritize the participants' best interests. If your research uncovers needs, good practices or the root cause of the problems experienced by the participants, this is the first step towards building a reciprocal relationship with them.

Secondly, empathy is one of the most crucial traits you need to have to be able to build this reciprocal relationship. Empathy refers to the ability to understand the other person's perspective cognitively, their feelings physically and what they need sensibly. Therefore, it is also related to the principle of 'not to assume' because having empathy for the other person may help prevent you from making assumptions about that person.

3.5. YOU ARE NOT A HERO!

You have an ethical responsibility to the participants and are obliged to not harm them. There is also the potential of the research to benefit the research participants. However, being empathetic towards participants and looking out for their best interests should not make you feel like a savior. I suggested avoiding non-empathic relationships by considering the experiences of your participants as sheer data in the name of professionalism. On the contrary, fostering trust, displaying kindness, respect, and empathy, and establishing a

secure environment are crucial in enhancing the likelihood of them opting to open up and share their experiences with you. You may even establish a critical intimacy with the participants instead of a critical distance. However, this does not mean that there should be no boundaries between you and the participant. For example, the participant may choose to stay in the family home where they are being abused and you feel an ethical responsibility to help them get out, however telling them to leave and being insistent on it will probably not help them and not change anything in their life. You cannot make decisions on behalf of your participants. Not only is this often unhelpful, but it is also ignoring the agency of the other person. You are not a hero and you cannot know what is best for your research participant. **Each participant is the protagonist of their own life. You should show empathy but not overstep your boundaries.**

3.6. AVOID BEING SENSATIONAL!

Researchers are sometimes tempted to seek sensationalism for many different motivations. Sometimes they may be doing this out of a desire to have more people read their research and to have more people hear their name. Or their motivation could be stemming from overvaluing sensational aspects of information as a result of seeing the truth as something that is always hidden from everyone and therefore should cause a sense of shock when it is revealed. However, this may lead you to directing the participants to get the answers you want to hear, or to manipulate their answers so that they fit your agenda. You should accurately represent the stories of your participants in the

research findings and center the stories and experiences that your participants most want to share. It's essential to narrate participant stories in a manner that honors their preferences for representation, rather than molding their experiences to fit our own objectives. **You must guarantee that the portrayal of their stories is considerate and aligns with what resonates with the participants, steering clear of objectification or sensationalism.**

3.7. LET PEOPLE SPEAK ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCES AS THEY LIKE!

We should pay close attention to the terminology employed in characterizing various groups, especially when individuals or groups use language to depict those who don't share their identity. It's important to acknowledge that frequently used terms to describe others can carry a history of oppression and harm. Even if used without malicious intent, we must understand that perpetuating such language when referring to others in our research or publications can cause harm. However, it's worth noting that this is different from advocating for control over the language individuals use to define themselves. The language that any person uses to describe themselves is language that we should respect and not police. Note that having access to rights based language can be a privilege closely correlated with class, education and status. You should therefore avoid turning rights-based terms that the community has agreed upon into an exclusionary mechanism for disadvantaged people. For example, a man who has sex with men may identify as 'top' instead of gay, or a person whose gender identity is not the same as the gender assigned at birth may identify

as 'transvestite' instead of trans. You should give them space to describe their experiences in any way they wish. If you want to conduct inclusive research, you should not judge them for the words they use to describe their experiences.

3.8. LOOK FOR WAYS TO COLLABORATE!

To conduct inclusive research, it should be a collective production. The way to a collective production is to be in collaboration with different actors during the research. For example, if you have LGBTIQ+ people in your sample, you should collaborate with the LGBTIQ+ community in order to make your research inclusive. However, for someone unfamiliar with the LGBTIQ+ community, it can be difficult to seek collaboration. Since oppressed groups such as LGBTIQ+s are excluded from the public sphere, they create alternative public and a subculture of their own. As a result, these groups have their own ethical codes, a way of communicating and socialising in spaces. In order to collaborate with them, **it is important to know their code of ethics, the way they communicate and how they socialise. Otherwise, they may see you as an "outsider" and may not cooperate with you.**

If we continue to think through the LGBTQIA+ example, building collaboration with the LGBTQIA+ community may not be enough for a collective production. You should also collaborate with LGBTQIA+ rights organisations and LGBTQIA+ activists. I mentioned above that rights organisations advocate in the light of data. By collaborating with rights organisations, you can find out in which areas there is a lack of data and shape your research accordingly. Collaborating with rights organisations can also be a good way to build a mutually beneficial relationship with the group you are researching. Otherwise, posing probing questions to oppressed communities in studies that don't directly improve their well-being can result in a sense of exhaustion from the research process which is named as 'research fatigue'. In addition, shaping your work in the light of the first-hand knowledge and experience of rights organisations prevents your research from being read only by a small number of researchers studying your subject and finds readers outside the academy. Moreover, collaborating with these organisations and activists, and being familiar with the political, economic and social agendas of the group you are researching; will help you gain a comprehensive perspective at every stage, from writing your questions to interpreting the findings. For example, if you don't know the Minister of Religious Affairs' Friday sermon targeting homosexuals in 2020, the anti-LGBTQIA+ statements made by state officials during the Boğaziçi protests in 2021, and the government's proposed Constitution portraying LGBTQIA+s as 'perverts' in 2022, it is almost impossible to know what it is like to be LGBTQIA+

in Turkey. Apart from that, learning the rights-based language used by these organisations prevents you from re-circulating discriminatory and stigmatising statements while conducting the research. For example, in Turkey, the government is trying to criminalise the struggle for the rights of LGBTQIA+ people by making it seem as if being LGBTQIA+ is not an existence, but a membership of an organization with reference to terrorism by popularizing terms such as “LGBT member”. Learning rights-based language from activists will prevent you from spreading terms like this or alienating and harming your research participants with these terms. What I have recommended about collaboration by examining the LGBTQIA+ example is also valid for other oppressed groups.



4. **PRACTICAL** **ADVICE** **ON THE** **RESEARCH** **PROCESS**

4.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

4.1.1. CHALLENGES IN SURVEYING MARGINALIZED GROUPS

Background Information

Firstly, marginalised groups are struggling for “recognition” against dehumanising discourses and practices, and therefore a research method that does not compress lived human experiences into survey options is preferable for many researchers who have a perspective on inclusiveness.

Secondly, a significant proportion of researchers conducting large-scale survey research do not have a perspective on inclusiveness or do not have the necessary know-how to survey marginalised groups.

Challenge

A significant portion of the existing research trying to include marginalised groups is conducted with qualitative research methods and there is a literature gap for inclusive survey research.

Coping Strategy

Different research methods yield data that can serve different purposes. Therefore, inclusive surveys can reveal seminal findings on the experiences of oppressed groups. Even if your means are limited, your efforts to conduct an inclusive survey will be a valuable contribution to the literature.

Background Information

Existing survey research that claims to be inclusive can be roughly divided into two groups.

The first group is the research of civil society organisations that publish reports using the survey method. While these studies are good from an ethical point of view, they often have technical problems in terms of research methods.

The second group is based on research conducted by academics and students. There are many shortcomings in terms of academic ethics in these studies. The reason for these ethical violations is that researchers in academia often do not know how to approach marginalised groups. As a result, marginalised groups are not represented in these surveys.

Challenge

A significant portion of the existing surveys that claim to be inclusive are of poor quality in terms of academic ethics or academic methodology.

Coping Strategy

Civil society organizations, academics and researchers need to work more together. Academics can provide some of the technical expertise and civil society organisations can be key in helping academics understand, access and engage these marginalised groups.

4.1.2. CHOOSING THE RESEARCH TOPIC

Background Information

One of the researchers I interviewed stated that a significant portion of the LGBTIAQ+ inclusive studies he came across claimed to be 'the first study' in the field. However, it should not be forgotten that the history of marginalized groups is also a history of oppression. Thus, inclusive and intersectional studies, especially by researchers and writers from marginalised groups themselves, may not be as accessible and available as others. Research on hegemonic social groups may be much more widely circulated or as widely read than inclusive research.

Challenge

It is always significant to review the literature and identify what the gap in the literature is before conducting research. However, if you aim to include marginalised social groups in your research, it may be additionally important to review the literature carefully.

Coping Strategy

A careful literature review will prevent you from repeating research that has already been done and will allow you to study a subject on which there might be no data available yet. To achieve this, you can look at the publications of civil society organizations, follow the blogs of independent rights defenders and members of the marginalised groups in question, and research the publications of political groups organized through websites and magazines. It is also important to identify researchers conducting academic studies on the social group targeted by the survey and to contact them to exchange ideas. Therefore, if you aim to do inclusive research, you need to review the literature very carefully and be able to uncover the hidden histories and knowledge of marginalised groups.

Background Information

A researcher who will conduct a survey on LGBTIAQ+ persons for the first time may choose a topic such as “violations of rights experienced by LGBTIAQ+ persons” without a specific focus. However, rights violations experienced by LGBTIAQ+ persons are not a new problem and LGBTIAQ+ rights organizations have been routinely reporting on this issue for many years.

On the contrary, some surveys focus too much on specific issues and this results in only a small group of academics with a niche specialisation reading this research before it is forgotten forever. For example, in the field of psychology, there are theoretical discussions regarding the coming out processes of LGBTIAQ+ persons and a large literature has emerged in this field. Recently, the discussions of this literature have gone beyond understanding the general dynamics of the coming out process and the interest in this research has been limited to experts in the field.

Challenge

The majority of research aiming to be inclusive is not relevant to current problems of marginalised social groups.

Coping Strategy

In order to conduct current and relevant research, you should be familiar with the current problems of the social group you are researching and the effects of the current political atmosphere on them. For example, with the strengthening of the anti-gender movement, there have been setbacks to trans rights in many countries, with particularly negative consequences for the right to health, such as access to hormone treatment. Knowing the current political climate can also help to identify emerging problem areas.

Moreover, if you want your research to find readers outside academia, you can choose your research topic to feed into the advocacy work of civil society organisations and activists. In other words, it is useful to have a conversation with rights-based associations and activists when choosing or refining your research topic.

4.1.3. ABOUT THE SURVEY METHOD

After choosing your research topic, you need to determine the most appropriate research method according to what you aim to reveal with the research. If you have decided to conduct inclusive research using a survey, you should be aware of some of the challenges and opportunities of this method.

Challenge-1

We do not have reliable data on the share of LGBTIAQ+ people in the population, as no state except Canada and England collects data on gender identity and sexual orientation in the census. For this reason, it is difficult to measure the representativeness of surveys conducted for LGBTIAQ+ people.

In addition, census figures from the UK and Canada may not be sufficiently reliable because LGBTIAQ+ people may not respond to this question due to privacy concerns. For instance, in the last census in England, 7.5 percent of the population did not answer the question on sexual orientation.

Challenge-2

Apart from this, it may not be possible to use a random sampling when conducting a survey involving LGBTIAQ+ people. In societies where LGBTIAQ+phobia is widespread, it may be risky to ask randomly selected people about their gender identity or sexual orientation. This can be a shortcoming for research studies because random sampling allows researchers to represent different segments of the population equally in the sample. Considering that one of the most powerful aspects of the survey method is that it quantitatively shows us the prevalence of a phenomenon and enables us to make comparisons between different segments of the population, it would be a challenge to conduct survey research for oppressed social groups such as LGBTIAQ+s.

Challenge-3

Researchers I interviewed stated that although their surveys targeted the LGBTIAQ+ community, gay men were the most dominant group among the participants. The reason why gay men are more visible in the LGBTIAQ+ community is the structural gender inequality brought about by patriarchy, and this has often been criticized by those who struggle for LGBTIAQ+ rights. If you were to use the interview method, you may be more likely to limit the number of gay men who participate in your research. However, this is not always possible with the survey method. Since researchers do not have the power to end structural inequalities, they may be limited in what they can do to prevent the dominance of gay men among survey respondents. However, it is important to be aware of these inequalities and to relate them to your chosen research method. For example, the researchers did not compare the findings in terms of different identities belonging to the umbrella of LGBTIAQ+ as they anticipated that gay male participants would dominate. They reported that a comparison between different identities would not yield meaningful results due to the fact that different identities are unevenly represented in the research. For example, in a study with 25 lesbian and 300 gay participants, the difference in the number of participants would cause the comparisons between these two groups to be far from representing the reality.

Coping Strategy

One of the greatest strengths of the survey method is that it allows you to collect a lot of information from a lot of people in a short period of time. With qualitative methods you collect information from a limited number of people in a limited space. However, the survey method may help you overcome these limitations. This is how participants explained why they chose the survey method despite all its disadvantages. Their main aim was not to conduct a survey to represent all LGBTIAQ+ people in Turkey. The aim of their research was to reach people they could not reach through qualitative methods before due to privacy concerns. Participants stated that by accessing the largest number of individuals through the survey method, they revealed the general landscape of LGBTIAQ+ people in Turkey and that this was the innovative aspect of their research compared to previous studies. In fact, one of the participants stated that since a significant part of LGBTIAQ+ people in Turkey are in the closet, their experiences are not known, and therefore he likened conducting a survey targeting LGBTIAQ+ people to 'shining a flashlight into a huge darkness and seeing who is there'. The reason for this analogy is that although it would not be possible to conduct a study to represent the entire LGBTIAQ+ population with the survey method due to the methodological difficulties I mentioned above, his research shed light on the experience of a part of the LGBTIAQ+ population by reaching the experiences of the maximum number of people it could reach thanks to survey method.

In short, each research method has its pros and cons. These pros and cons may vary depending on who you are going to include in your sample or what topic you are going to research. You should evaluate these pros and cons by considering the specificities of your sample and your research topic. The important thing is to decide what you want to uncover with the research and choose the most appropriate method in response.

4.1.4. DETERMINING THE SAMPLE

How to determine the sample in an inclusive manner?

In the previous section, I mentioned that the type of participants you want to reach with the research will bring some specificity to the study. Conducting inclusive research means taking these specificities into account and reflecting the experiences of the audience you want to reach in the most appropriate way. That is, inclusiveness is not a claim to represent in your findings the entirety of an imaginary group of people whose time and place of residence is uncertain. For example, it is not enough to select gays as the target group for your research. Where do these gays live? What does it mean to be gay in the time period you are conducting the research? What kind of socio-economic background do the gays in your target group come from? Who are these gays? Gay is a word used to describe a particular sexual orientation, but make sure that the target group you choose to research are real people who don't just exist on paper. You must realistically select and concretely define the target group you aim to reach. Otherwise, such an understanding of inclusiveness is likely to lead to the generalisation of the experience of the more advantaged to the group as a whole, and to the treatment of that group as a static and homogeneous category. For example, if you aim to reach roughly 'gay people' without defining the characteristics of your target audience, you are likely to reach a small group who are openly gay with many privileges in terms of class, race, education, etc. Ultimately, because you have not defined your target audience concretely, you will report the experience of an advantaged group of gays as the experience of

all gays. However, the intersectional perspective shows us that the experience of homosexuality is very diverse. Moreover, any research conducted with such an approach has the risk of reaching a privileged group with similar characteristics and thus repeating similar findings. **However, no identity is static and homogeneous. This type of inclusion can itself turn into a mechanism of exclusion.** Therefore, realistically selecting the audience you aim to reach and accurately identifying the specific conditions of that audience is important for inclusive research.

Benefits of determining the sample concretely

The sample your research aims to reach requires you to consider the pros and cons of the survey method. If you limit your sample to people from a particular background or location, you can conduct surveys with a high representativeness. For example, you can limit your sample to students at a university where LGBTIAQ+phobia is not prevalent. Therefore, you can achieve a high level of representativeness by using random sampling and reaching a high number of participants. Since this kind of research reaches a very small group of people, it may seem to you that it cannot be inclusive. However, collecting data on oppressed social groups in an inclusive way is not something that a single researcher or a single study can achieve. **Ensuring inclusivity in academia and producing knowledge of oppressed groups is a collective task.** There is a need for further literature and studies on these groups to further enhance our understanding of them. Each study contributing to the literature complements and feeds one another. For instance, by making

comparisons between the results of various surveys, we can also understand how social divisions such as class, age and educational status shape the experience of being LGBTIAQ+ in Turkey differently.

4.1.5. COLLECTING DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

How to ask for gender identity and sexual orientation?

Gender is a complex phenomenon that can have biological, cultural, behavioural, psychological, social elements. Therefore, the widespread distinction between sex –which is generally used to refer to biological components of gender identity– and gender –which is generally used to refer to social and cultural components of gender identity– can lead to inaccurate and incomplete findings in your research because it is too simplistic and fails to capture the world in a comprehensive way. Likewise, sexual orientation is a complex phenomenon because it can be harder than we think to categorize people’s experiences of attraction. How you collect information about people’s gender identity and sexual orientation depends on the field and topic you are researching. You should always think in detail about what is the most appropriate question based on the information you are trying to learn from the participants. You should know the pros and cons of each choice you make to formulate your question. At this stage, it is a good idea to consult with civil society organisations, research centers and academics studying in the field of gender. In short, there is no given formula for asking gender identity or sexual orientation. Nevertheless, I will discuss below the most common question formats used in the social sciences and common mistakes made.

First step

I am not suggesting that you should definitely include questions for gender identity and sexual orientation in the survey. You should first ask yourself whether my research needs any information about gender identity and sexual orientation. Is gender identity or sexual orientation of people relevant to your research question? Will knowing the gender identity or sexual orientation of the person benefit you when analysing your findings? If not, do not ask your participants about their gender identity and sexual orientation as this is private information, and it is unethical to collect this information when it is not necessary.

Second step

How should you ask for the gender identity or sexual orientation of the participants in your survey? The answer to this question will depend on the specificities of your research. However, one of the most inclusive ways to ask this question is to allow people to name their gender identity and sexual orientation as they like. Thus, you can leave a blank option when asking about these to allow people to write their gender identity or sexual orientation. An open-ended option may be the most appropriate in terms of inclusivity, as it may not be possible to make an exhaustive list of gender identities and sexual orientations. Allowing people to name their gender identity as they wish means respecting their autonomy. Respecting people's autonomy is one of the most fundamental principles of inclusive research.

Third step (How to ask for gender identity?)

When you ask about gender identity with an open-ended question, you can end up with too many different answers and more categories may mean less generalizable sample size. In particular, in contexts where it is difficult to access oppressed groups, such as Turkey, generalizability is further reduced as the number of people accessed will be smaller. In these cases, you can combine some identities and present them as a single option in order to reduce the number of options. For example, you can add options such as “woman”, “man” and “non-binary” and note in parentheses that non-binary option refers to all identities outside or opposite to the binary gender system such as genderqueer, genderfluid, agender. You can also add some context-specific options such as Hijra in Pakistani culture and called Māhū in Hawaiian culture. Before adding context-specific options, you should consult local civil society organisations and researchers studying in the field of gender. Apart from that, there should be a ‘I prefer not to disclose’ option. Even if participants prefer to disclose, they may see it as an indication that you respect their autonomy and privacy.

Third Step (How to ask for sexual orientation)

If asking about sexual orientation with an open ended question is not feasible for your survey, you can reasonably combine various options. For example, you may put heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bi+ and ace+ options and add an open-ended option. Heterosexual people may not be familiar with these concepts. They may not even be aware that their sexual orientation is defined as heterosexual. You can add an explanation for this option. Apart from that, the bi+ option can also be confusing. Many people may know the word bisexual, but the umbrella term bi+ may not be as well known. You can also note next to bi+ in a parenthesis that it includes all identities who are attracted to more than one gender identity or regardless of gender identity such as bisexual, pansexual, etc. Also, participants may not know what ace+ is. It is an umbrella term that refers to identities who do not experience sexual or romantic attraction or experience it partly such as asexual, aromantic, demisexual. It is good to note this in a parenthesis next to ace+ option.

Fourth Step

In addition, if you choose putting a limited list of sexual orientation and gender identity in the questionnaire as I recommended in the previous steps, I would strongly suggest to include an open-ended option too and allow people to write their gender identity and sexual orientation as they define it. There are two reasons for this. First, people may find it difficult to relate their own experiences to one of the options you present. For example, a person may be questioning their sexual orientation and it may be difficult for them to identify with any of these identities. Thus, it is important to put an open-ended option because the sexual orientations listed above do not cover all sexual orientations that exist. Secondly, allowing people to identify themselves with the identity they want means respecting their autonomy, which encourages them to participate in the research and can make your research more inclusive. On the contrary, people may not want to participate in the research if they feel that their autonomy is not respected, and those from oppressed social groups may be more sensitive to this due to negative experiences in the past. In parallel, you should put a “prefer not to disclose option” while asking gender identity and sexual orientation as well.

Not to-do list

Each survey will have its own uniqueness. Therefore, there is no formula for how to choose the options when asking about gender identity that fits in all cases. You should always be aware of the specificities of your research and consider how to ask about gender identity in the most inclusive way. Above, I have evaluated how to collect gender identity information in surveys in terms of inclusiveness and made some suggestions, but it should not be taken for granted. You can think about how the experiences of the people you want to collect data about in your research can be most inclusively represented in your findings, both in terms of research methodology and research ethics, and find new ways of asking about sex and gender identity. Nevertheless, it may be useful to illustrate the mistakes that are often made by researchers seeking new pathways to inclusion.

For example, adding a closed ended 'other' option next to women and men does not make your survey inclusive. First of all, the binary gender system's mechanism of exclusion works primarily by rendering invisible the identities of those who do not identify as women or men.

Writing the identities of these people as 'other' instead of explicitly naming them serves to erase these identities. You can combine various gender identities as a single option, but it is crucial for inclusivity to offer an option such as 'non-binary' except for women and men. Even if it is not possible or necessary to offer all gender identities in the options for your research, this is not a justification for adding the 'other' option next to men and women without offering any option such as non-binary.

Secondly, the 'other' option does not give you information about trans women, trans men and intersex people, because a trans man can simply select the male option and continue with the survey. The same is true for an intersex person. An intersex person may identify as a woman, and in the questionnaire, they can select the woman option and continue. Being trans or intersex radically affects people's social and inner experience and differs from the experience of cis and endosex people in many aspects. If you do not know that people are intersex or transgender, you could evaluate their answers under the assumption that they are cisgender or endosex and therefore reach incomplete/false findings. Moreover, you cannot include their experiences in the findings properly. You should not include transgender and intersex options in the section asking for gender identity, because the categories of trans or intersex do not necessarily refer to a gender identity. For example, a trans woman may identify as a woman and deems transness as part of the experience of womanhood rather than a gender identity. Similarly, while being intersex defines a person's sex, it may not correspond to a person's gender identity. Do not forget that sex and gender are different categories. It would therefore be better to ask people whether their sex assigned at birth matches their gender identity (i.e asking whether they are trans) and to ask whether they are intersex in a separate question. In recent years, the correspondence (or lack thereof) between a person's gender assigned at birth and their gender identity has been referred to as gender modality⁴. Cisgender and transgender represent the main terms for gender modality, yet the terminology explicitly invites conversations about additional gender modalities.

Another common mistake made when asking about people's gender identity is to put sexual orientations such as lesbian or gay as an option in this section. LGBTIAQ+ is an umbrella term, but this does not change the fact that gender identity and sexual orientation are two different things. Sexual orientation refers to whom a person is sexually or romantically attracted to, and is different from how this person identifies in terms of gender. For example, a person can identify as a trans woman and a lesbian at the same time. You should always ask about sexual orientation in a separate question.

Finally, I suggested explaining identities in a parenthesis. However, it may not be useful to limit these explanations to the language of activism and academia. To make them more understandable, you can relate them to the everyday language and slang of the community you are researching. An example of this is men who have sex with men calling themselves 'top' instead of gay or bisexual in the Turkish context.

How to ask about residency?

Another important issue is to collect information about participants' residency. People living in sparsely populated or less developed areas may be more difficult to reach than those living in metropolitan areas. When it comes to oppressed groups, it may be even more difficult to reach those living in rural areas. For example, LGBTI+ persons living in rural areas may resort to a strategy of secrecy more often than those living in the urban area. Otherwise, it may be almost impossible to stay anonymous in less populated areas and it increases their privacy concerns and the further discrimination and stigmatization. Therefore, people living in big cities may be over-represented in the sample of your survey, which poses a problem in terms of inclusiveness. If you want to increase the representativeness of your study, especially when you cannot use a random sampling and do not know the proportion of the group you are surveying to the total population, make sure that a balanced mix of people from different regions and cities of the country you are surveying participate in your research. An online survey method where respondents can maintain their anonymity can help overcome this problem.

How to ask about education?

Similarly, those with higher levels of education have certain advantages due to the cultural, social, and economic capital that their education brings, making them more reachable than those with less level of education. This may cause them to be overrepresented in the research sample. To be inclusive, make sure that people from

different educational levels participate in your research. If the literature on your research topic is dominated by studies representing highly educated people, conducting research directly targeting people with lower levels of education can also be a good way to ensure inclusiveness. Comparisons based on educational attainment also include the assumption that people without formal education are necessarily unable to improve themselves. This may mean the reproduction of the status hierarchy created on the basis of people's level of education. Research that directly targets people with low levels of education can help us understand the differences of this group in more complex ways.

How to ask about occupation?

Information on the occupations of the participants may also be important for assessing the inclusiveness of your study. The most inclusive method for collecting information on people's occupations would again be to include an open-ended option. However, researchers who use the occupation of individuals as a variable when analyzing their findings may sometimes prefer to include a list of closed-ended options based on sectoral distinctions. If so, make sure to include informal occupations as oppressed groups commonly work in informal jobs. For example, sex work is common among transgender women and in many countries sex work is illegal. Likewise, cleaning is common among migrant women, and they often work informally. Make sure to find out the sectors in which the group you are researching is working intensively, even if they are informal, and include them in your research.

4.2. RESEARCH EXECUTION

4.2.1. INFORMED CONSENT FORM

The consequences of any ethical breach when conducting research with oppressed groups may be more damaging than in the general population. Therefore, informed consent forms are very important to prevent these ethical violations. Moreover, informed consent forms establish the framework and boundaries of the relationship between researchers and participants. I have emphasized above the importance of the reciprocity relationship between the researcher and the participant in terms of inclusiveness. When preparing the informed consent form, make sure that this framework and boundaries are established in a way that includes as much reciprocity as possible.

What should an informed consent form include?

- To establish a reciprocal relationship, be sure to explain your research topic to the participant in an appropriate language, considering their background. This can help your participant to better engage with the research questions and to generate the knowledge of their own experience in a way that best suits your research topic. Be sure to explain where and how you will use the information you receive from them, how you will store it, who will have access to it, and what you will do with it after the research is over.
- Also, include a statement in your informed consent form that participants can withdraw from the study at any time and that any information they provide will be destroyed. In particular, when studying with oppressed groups, explaining the confidentiality procedure of your research in detail may encourage them to participate in the research or make them feel more comfortable answering questions, as oppressed groups may find talking about their experiences embarrassing or fear discrimination and stigmatization in the event of a breach of confidentiality.
- Another pillar of the reciprocity relationship is to convey the benefits of the study to the participants in the informed consent form. Demonstrating that the research does not only benefit the researcher strengthens the sense of reciprocity in the relationship between the researcher and the participants.
- In addition, participants, especially if they belong to an oppressed group, may relive negative memories when recounting their experiences and may need psychological support following the interview. In case of this possibility, make sure to include contact information of organisations where they can receive psychological support. Also, you should establish a mechanism for participants to complain about any ethical violations you may be guilty of as a researcher, and inform participants on the form about how this complaint mechanism works.

4.2.2. DISSEMINATION OF THE SURVEY AND REACHING PARTICIPANTS

The pros and cons of disseminating the survey online

+ Especially in countries like Turkey, where oppressed groups experience privacy issues more intensely, online surveys seem to be the best way to reach them. For example, one of the researchers I interviewed stated that sixty percent of the participants answered no to the question “is there a place you know within an hour of your home where you can exist without hiding your LGBTI+ identity?” in his survey. This finding does not necessarily mean that there are no LGBTI+ friendly spaces in the city where sixty percent of the respondents live. This response gives us information about the perception of the participants. However, we can argue that the online survey reached many people who do not openly experience their identity outside of the online environment. This shows that online surveys can be successful in reaching hard-to-reach groups.

+ Another advantage of online surveys is that they are cost-effective and timesaving as they are conducted without an interviewer.

- However, with online surveys you can only reach people who have access to the internet. Internet access can depend on many variables such as socio-economic background and age. This may exclude groups such as older people, the poor and people with certain disabilities that limit their access to the internet.

How to decide to disseminate online or face-to-face?

Whether the survey is online or face-to-face may have an impact on whether respondents complete the survey without getting bored. For example, a university student may prefer to complete the survey quickly online rather than wasting time with an interviewer, while a person with visual disabilities or an elderly person may prefer to complete the survey by talking to the interviewer. As a result, you can choose the method that best suits the audience you want to reach, or you can use both methods.

A Reminder

You may be reaching out to participants by circulating a poster online with a call for participation in the research or by contacting relevant individuals. You may have criteria for participation in the research, such as “being gay” or “living with HIV”. It is good practice to be honest about which audience you want to reach. However, do not use language that reduces people to the characteristics or identities you are looking for, such as “I need three gay people and five trans people”. Such language objectifies the participants and should be avoided.

4.2.3. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTERVIEWERS AND RESPONDENTS

If you are conducting a face-to-face survey, the interviewer should avoid discriminatory and stigmatizing language when communicating with respondents. If you are not conducting the survey yourself, you can organize a training for the surveyors you employ on how to use rights-based language. Although positionality and self-reflexivity are commonly used for qualitative research, they are also useful tools for surveyors. You can inform your interviewers on how to use these two tools and raise their awareness. Note that there is a duty of care to ensuring good practices from sub-contracted researchers, and that one training may be insufficient for ensuring LGBTIQ+ positive practice. I think LGBTIQ+ awareness and attitudes would need to be a component in the selection of companies or individuals to do sub-contracted work, and that where you are not confident in the LGBTIQ+ positivity of researchers you should not be using them to undertake research that is intended to be inclusive. It is also good practice for interviewers to take notes during fieldwork. For example, it can provide data on which questions respondents hesitated or had difficulty answering.

4.3. RESEARCH ANALYSIS

If you have conducted survey research involving hard-to-reach groups, you may have some problems with the reliability, representativeness, and validity of your research. You should be aware of these problems and be as humble as possible when reporting your findings. You should avoid generalizing the findings of your research to the social group you are researching. It may be best to report your findings as representative only of the people who participated in your research. Being honest about the limitations of your research will help you to show the extent to which your research is or is not inclusive. In this way, you will not give readers inaccurate information about the experiences of groups you did not include.

Apart from this, when analyzing, consider how you disseminated the survey questions (online or face-to-face). For example, if you used an online survey, you should be aware that your research is representative of people with access to the internet. If you have access to data on the percentage of internet access and the demographic characteristics of people who access the internet in the country where you are conducting the research, critically engaging with this data when presenting your findings can help you understand the extent of inclusivity of your research.

Similarly, people of different identities and classes may not have participated in your study in equal numbers. Some social groups may be underrepresented in your work. However, you may not see this as a limitation

related to inclusion. For example, if you have conducted a survey of private sector workers and there are fewer women respondents than men respondents, this may not be due to the inclusiveness limitations of your research. The share of female employees in the private sector may be lower in your country due to structural gender inequalities. You can check whether the balance of the number of female and male participants in your research corresponds to the proportion of female and male private sector workers in that country and discuss this when presenting your findings.

Finally, when you conduct a survey involving oppressed groups, it is your ethical responsibility to conduct a risk analysis before reporting your findings to see if they could be used against these groups. For example, if you find that substance use is prevalent among LGBTI+ people, this finding can be used by anti-LGBTI+ people to criminalize LGBTI+ people or to stigmatize people who use substances as “deviant”. If you decide to report your findings, you should frame and contextualize them in the most appropriate way to mitigate potential risks. However, you may also consider not reporting based on the political and social atmosphere in your country and at that time. You can discuss your findings with the communities/civil society organisations to identify the framework and language in which sensitive findings can be shared publicly.

The background features a large, faint number '5' composed of multiple parallel lines. A series of concentric, wavy lines are positioned behind the main text, creating a ripple effect.

5.
**LOOKING AT
ACTIVISM AND
RESEARCH
THROUGH
THE LENS OF
INCLUSIVITY**

5.1. ACTIVISM AND INCLUSIVITY⁵

In modern societies, there are socially and historically constructed power structures that lead to the oppression and exploitation of certain segments of society. For example, the assumption that heterosexuality is the only normal way to have sexual and romantic relationships, namely heterosexism, leads to systematic discriminatory, stigmatising and exclusionary treatment of gays, lesbians and bisexuals. These power structures are reflected in the institutions that regulate social life and shape our perception of social conditions, such as parliament, bureaucracy, judiciary, media and corporations. For example, open LGBTQIA+ persons cannot take decision-making positions in public institutions due to the systematic discrimination, stigmatization and exclusion they face. Therefore, public and political institutions (as well as many private ones) are dominated by people of privileged backgrounds. As a result, these institutions may be reluctant to develop policies tailored to the needs of disadvantaged groups, or even if they are willing, they may be misinterpreting their social conditions and needs. Shortly, these institutions generally do not develop policies in line with the needs of oppressed groups. In addition, oppressed groups face obstacles in accessing existing rights and services. These groups may be subjected to discrimination and rights violations while using these services and exercising rights, or may not even try to use these services and to exercise these rights because of the fear of being discriminated against. To sum up, these institutions reproduce existing inequalities while regulating social life.

On the other hand, these institutions also shape our perception of social conditions in favor of the advantaged. For example, many governments do not provide tailored services to key groups such as LGBTQIA+ persons, sex workers, and intravenous drug users when developing their policies on HIV because they consider becoming infected with HIV as a consequence of the moral corruption or irresponsibility of these groups. However, research shows that HIV infection is common among these groups because the discrimination and exclusion they face makes them more vulnerable to HIV infection. Another example is that many governments claim that LGBTQIA+ people are not discriminated against despite their anti-LGBTQIA+ practices, or worse, they deny the existence of LGBTQIA+ people in their countries. In fact, this kind of perception of social conditions based on denial and manipulation both leads to the lack of developing policies for oppressed groups and legitimizes it. It invalidates the experience of oppression and exploitation not only in the eyes of the advantaged but also in the eyes of the oppressed groups. They may feel like they exaggerate their experience of oppression and exploitation. They may have the sense that they are the only person in the society having this kind of experience and therefore they are alone.

For these reasons, these groups historically have not been able to effectively influence political decision-making processes with conventional political participation methods and their demands for access to rights and services are not sufficiently visible in the political arena. Hence,

these social groups used various strategies, tools and methods such as advocacy, campaigning, protesting and rallying to participate in politics and make their demands visible. Today, we call the repertoire of acts used by these groups to challenge power structures and to make social change, activism. While engaging with activism, people notice that they are not alone in the experience of oppression and exploitation, but that it is a collective experience. Activism provides an opportunity to close the gap between the hegemonic perception of social conditions and the shared lived experience of oppressed groups by making their voices heard. Activists articulate their experience of oppression and exploitation and therefore shape our perception of social conditions. This reveals that our perceptions of social reality cannot be independent of our shared lived experiences. There is no disembodied, transcendent, and impartial mind to tell us what the social reality is because it is open to human intervention. This is what makes us think of the possibility of new worlds. Activists imagine a new world since they cannot find a place for themselves within the existing world. They regain their agency by acting to change the world in the direction they desire. In fact, activism is a way for people who are excluded and ignored to engage with the world. On closer inspection, activism is a way of both demanding inclusion and practicing it.

5.2. RESEARCH AND INCLUSIVITY⁶

Conducting inclusive research means being able to reflect the experiences of all the interlocutors on the subject you are researching in the findings, or at least knowing you cannot reflect their experience and expressing this honestly.

Inclusivity... I think we are talking about the inclusion of all the subjects of the content that the study aims to explore. In other words, it is important whether your study really has the ability to represent or not of the sample you choose. Or does it really include everyone who is having trouble with that issue? It may be out of inclusiveness to interview with an audience that does not experience this problem instead of with people who are suffering from this problem. In other words, are the owners of the problem reached and does it cover all of them, together with their differences? (Participant 4)

How can you know who the interlocutors of your study are and whether you have reached them? How can you be sure that people's experiences within the sample you reach are reflected in the findings comprehensively? For example, is it sufficient to include social groups such as 'disabled people' or 'LGBTQIA+s' in the research sample for the sake of inclusion? Having an intersectional approach will help make your research more inclusive and understand to what extent your study is inclusive because intersectionality is the tool to show you where people's experiences diverge and where they converge. Thus, you can evaluate the extent to which you can include differentiated experiences in the research sample and findings without reducing them into one another. For example, a cis woman living with HIV and a trans woman living with HIV

may have different experiences of living with HIV. A cis woman living with HIV may be considered as a victim of the HIV epidemic or her husband's irresponsibility by society, while a transgender woman living with HIV may be seen as an immoral person who is the cause of the HIV epidemic. In this example, we see that being a woman living with HIV intersects with the experience of gender identity/transness. It is only through the lens of intersectionality that we can notice how different social divisions shape people's experience when they come together. This makes it possible for us to evaluate who should be involved in our study and who should not.

When we say inclusiveness, we make an issue of seeing the needs and differences from an intersectional perspective in a world where the needs of LGBTI+ are not visible. So, inclusivity is not just a matter of adding the LGBTI+ issue on top of something for us. The issue of being a Kurdish queer, the issue of being a sex worker, the need of being a disabled queer.
(Participant 6)

Without an intersectional perspective, inclusion of all identities in the sample of the study in the name of being inclusive may, on the contrary, become a source of exclusion. For example, the presence of gays among the participants may not directly mean that you include the entire experience of being gay in your study. It is because the probability of reaching a Turkish gay person and a Kurdish or Armenian gay person is different due to structural inequalities in contemporary Turkey. A Kurdish gay person living outside of a big city may have difficulty

coming out because of the unique conditions brought by the intersection of ethnic minority status, geographical location and sexual orientation, and this may reduce the possibility of reaching Kurdish gays. Similarly, due to small size and minoritized, oppressed status of their community, an Armenian gay person may be reluctant to openly talk about their sexual orientation. When you include only or predominantly Turkish gays in your study and claim that you have included the experiences of all gay people, you homogenize the experience of being gay in favor of the privileged group.

Accordingly, intersectionality does not mean superimposing experiences of oppression and exploitation stemming from various social divisions. For example, having more than one oppressed identity may not directly mean more oppression. There may or may not be a hierarchy between intersecting identities. Intersectionality requires understanding how different forms of oppression mutually construct one another. For example, a highly educated middle-class single woman may be hypersexualized by society and her neighbors may be exerting neighborhood pressure, claiming she is a “slut” even if she doesn’t enjoy having sex in general. On the other hand, a housewife mother who graduated from primary school may be desexualized by society even though she has sexual desires. Due to structural inequalities, this woman may not be able to free herself from family life and lead a lifestyle where she can live her sexual desires freely. As we can see in these two examples, various social divisions such as educational status, class, and marital status combine to construct the experience of womanhood for these people. Also, you shouldn’t take for granted any experience

stemming from social divisions. For example, being a primary school graduate may not necessarily mean not being able to step outside of family life directly for a woman. Intersectionality is a lens to see the world, not an absolute knowledge of oppression and exploitation.

Inclusivity is vital but did we collect the proper data? For example, in a neighborhood, locals call one of the neighborhood residents as Gay Ziya because he used the non-turkish word "degeneration" once... The problem that he suffers from and the problem I suffer from is not the same in this neighborhood. It is not the same as what he will tell us and what I will tell you. You provide the same services in the name of inclusiveness but our needs, our capacity to reach these services and our ability to express ourselves are not the same. There is a very cliché phrase: If you are taking no sides, you are on the side of the oppressor. It is unavoidably the same for inclusivity. You include the ones you have the power to be included. Therefore, you should conduct your research carefully. (Participant 3)

In short, effort to make your research inclusive allows you to reflect the diversity of the human experience in your research findings. In order to do this, you should not take human experience as a given, and you should pay attention to understanding how this experience is constructed in society. An intersectional perspective is a tool to understand how different social structures and social divisions come together to construct that experience.

5.3. INCLUSIVE AND INTERSECTIONAL RESEARCH AS A WAY OF ACTIVISM

Feminist and LGBTQIA+ movements have historically taken a critical stance against science and academia. The main criticism of feminists and LGBTQIA+ activists was that science and academia reduce their experiences to data and objectify them and that these data may be used as a tool of oppression. For example, the World Health Organization classified homosexuality as a mental disease until 1990 and it legitimized discrimination and stigmatization against LGBTQIA+s to some extent. In addition, feminist scholars criticized the claim of scientific knowledge for objectivity⁷. According to this feminist critique, sciences and social sciences have often assumed the norm as a masculinist scientist who is disembodied and having an infinite point of view and this scientist traditionally has the power to decide which knowledge is valid in the name of objectivity. Not surprisingly, this claim of objectivity invalidated the knowledge of the oppressed. As a result, while many feminist and LGBTQIA+ activists (and scholars) have a critical stance against academia and science, can we imagine research as a form of activism?

There is a criticism of positivism in Europe, but it becomes a problem only when that data is used for malicious purposes or when human experiences are reduced to data. We've never reached that stage yet. We're still wondering "what's going on, what's happened?". We don't have the data for that. It is the same in the field of feminism. (Participant 4)

In the first section, it was argued that activists may intervene in the truth by articulating their experience-informed insights into experience of oppression and exploitation and therefore the truth cannot be conceived independent of our shared lived experiences. In the same manner, activists also reclaim their agency by articulating their experiences of oppression and desire to change it through activism. Therefore, people who are excluded from society engage with the world through activism. In short, activism is a way of demanding inclusiveness and practicing it.

In parallel, you can contemplate research as a field for inclusivity in several ways. Firstly, society considers academia and science as the authority for producing objective knowledge of the truth in the modern age. Based on your authority position regarding truth as a researcher, you can assert that the effort to include the experiences of the oppressed in research is a powerful activist intervention in truth. Moreover, the advantaged social groups are mostly overrepresented in research because they have more tools to produce and disseminate knowledge of themselves. However, an inclusive approach will help you to eliminate the disproportionate representation of the advantages in your study and strengthen the claim of objectivity.

Secondly, including people from oppressed social groups in the research as participants may be empowering for them. For example, many LGBTI+ person cannot come out because of the fear of discrimination and stigmatisation. They do not have social spaces to exist in the way they are

and to tell their story out loud. Being a participant in the research will give them an opportunity to tell their own story and see themselves as the protagonist of that story. This may help strengthen their sense of agency. In that sense, having an inclusive approach in the research can be seen as a form of activism.

For God's sake, which poll has a category for pansexual? We decided to put it as a distinct category by discussing with each other instead of putting an open-ended option. The emphasis on this is a way for us to be in solidarity with each other. Yes, it is a form of activism. Making visible various identities is a part of activism. When I open the survey, seeing my own identity as an option would make me happy so much because these are invisible in general. (Participant 5)

Apart from that, the experience of discrimination and stigma faced by oppressed social groups is often the result of government denial policies against these groups. For example, Erdogan made a statement in 2021 that "LGBT, there is no such thing".⁸ Including LGBTI+s in your research would prove otherwise against this denial policy. Moreover, revealing the needs of these groups and the oppression they are exposed to with scientific data is the first step to demand rights. For this reason, many rights-based non-governmental organisations adopt a data-based advocacy approach. Your study may contribute to these organisations' effort to advocate and lobby.

To summarise, embracing an inclusive approach while conducting research and producing the knowledge of the oppressed is an activist endeavor in itself. There is historically a tension between academy and activism, but it does not mean that they inherently exclude each other. On the contrary, the tension between academia and activism creates a dynamic relationship feeding both to flourish.

1 Below you will find the citation of the three surveys I mentioned. The survey conducted by Kaos GL to explore the situation of LGBTI+ people in employment has been conducted every year since 2015. The results of this survey were published as two separate reports in 2022. In addition, to the best of my knowledge, research of Volkan Yılmaz and İpek Göçmen is the survey that reached the largest number of LGBTI+ people in Turkey.

Mary Lou O'Neil et al., Türkiye'de Kamu Çalışanı Lezbiyen, Gey, Biseksüel, Trans, İnterseks ve Artıların Durumu, Ankara, Kaos GL, 2022

Mary Lou O'Neil et al., Türkiye'de Özel Sektör Çalışanı Lezbiyen, Gey, Biseksüel, Trans, İnterseks ve Artıların Durumu, Ankara, Kaos GL, 2022

Volkan Yılmaz & İpek Göçmen, "Exploring Perceived Discrimination Among LGBT Individuals in Turkey in Education, Employment, and Health Care: Results of an Online Survey", *Journal of Homosexuality*, 64, 8 (2017): 1052-1068

2 Donna J. Harraway, "Situated knowledge: the science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective", *Feminist Studies*, 14, 3 (Autumn, 1988): 575-599

3 ibid

4 Florence Ashley, "Gender Modality: Proposal for New Terminology", <https://medium.com/@florence.ashley/gender-modality-proposal-for-new-terminology-d78df51b299f>

5 In this section, I benefited from <https://www.activisthandbook.org/>

6 In this section, I benefited from the following articles:
Nira Yuval-Davis, "Intersectionality and Feminist Politics", *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 13, 3 (2006): 193-205

Ann Phoenix and Pamela Pattynama, "Intersectionality", *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 13, 3 (2006): 187-192

7 Donna J. Harraway, "Situated knowledge: the science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective", *Feminist Studies*, 14, 3 (Autumn, 1988): 575-599

8 <https://bianet.org/bianet/siyaset/238667-erdogan-lgbt-yok-oyle-bir-sey>



S P O D