



intimate

CITIZENSHIP, CARE AND CHOICE

The Micropolitics of Intimacy in Southern Europe

PORTUGAL | SPAIN | ITALY

INTIMATE is a 5-year long research project focused on **LGBTQ+** (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans*, queer) intimate citizenship in Southern Europe. It involves a pool of international consultants, as well as an interdisciplinary team of researchers coordinated by Ana Cristina Santos.

TOPICS AND STUDIES

- PARTNERING** 2015 > 2016
- LESBIAN COUPLEDOM STUDY 1
- POLYAMORY STUDY 2
- PARENTING** 2016 > 2017
- ASSISTED CONCEPTION STUDY 3
- SURROGACY STUDY 4
- POLITICS OF NAMING A CHILD STUDY 5
- FRIENDSHIP** 2017 > 2018
- TRANSGENDER AND NETWORKS OF CARE STUDY 6
- LIVING WITH FRIENDS STUDY 7

TEAM

- Ana Cristina Santos PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR
- Ana Lúcia Santos
- Beatrice Gusmano
- Luciana Moreira
- Pablo Pérez Navarro
- Tatiana Motterle
- Mafalda Esteves RESEARCH MANAGER

ces.uc.pt/intimate
intimate@ces.uc.pt
facebook.com/ces.intimate

SUMMARY

Friendship is a crucial component of intimacy. Networks of friends, which often include ex-partners and their current partners, play a central role in the daily management of **LGBTQ+** everyday life, especially in situations of structural vulnerability and precariousness.

Friends as well as family further contribute towards destabilizing the heterosexual/homosexual binary, challenging (hetero)normative expectations about who belongs to the most intimate space.

By providing an empirically-grounded analysis of friendship, **INTIMATE** offers invaluable insights for rethinking care practices and intimate citizenship beyond kinship in Southern Europe.

FINDINGS & ADDITIONAL ONLINE RESOURCES

<https://www.ces.uc.pt/intimate>

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INTIMATE is the first research project addressing LGBTQ intimate citizenship in Southern Europe, funded by the EUROPEAN RESEARCH COUNCIL. It is based at CES (CENTRE FOR SOCIAL STUDIES) UNIVERSITY OF COIMBRA, PORTUGAL, between 2014 and 2019 (Starting Grant n. 338452).



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LGBTQ+ FRIENDSHIP in Southern Europe today

RESEARCH BRIEF 3 2017 2018

LGBTQ+ FRIENDSHIP in Southern Europe today

PORTUGAL
SPAIN
ITALY

OVERALL DATASET 2014-2019

120 LIFE-STORIES
LGBTQ PEOPLE

72 INTERVIEWS
TO EXPERTS

WHO WE INTERVIEWED IN 2017

30 BIOGRAPHICAL INTERVIEWS
Participants aged 25 – 49, with experience in **providing care as transgender or non-binary**, and self-identified LGBTQ+ PEOPLE COHABITING WITH FRIENDS in adult life

12 IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS
EXPERTS: Health professionals, lawyers, researchers, activists, civil servants, politicians, legal scholars, volunteers and architects

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Boundaries** between **love, friendship and kinship are blurred and dynamic**.
- **Caring for others** takes up a substantial part in **trans biographies** and is fundamental in the lives of **LGBTQ+ people who decide to cohabit**.
- As people with invaluable embodied knowledge, **trans and non-binary** people provide crucial **material, emotional, symbolic and technical support to others**. This support remains largely unacknowledged in literature on care.
- **Friendship** is related to **self-care** and described as a **space of liberation** from oppressive dynamics within the family of origin and/or coupledness.

RESULTS WHAT THE DATA SUGGESTS

- Participants rely on **friendship networks of care in everyday life**.
- **Friends** emerged as a **main source of emotional and material support**, particularly for transgender and non-binary participants.
- LGBTQ+ people choose to live with friends for a great **variety of reasons**. These include **unaffordable prices, precariousness and past experiences of transphobia and homophobia** whilst house-hunting or cohabiting.
- Rent rates increase due to **gentrification thus** making living on one's own unaffordable. This becomes particularly serious when **LGBTQ+ people are forced to share housing with people** who might compromise their **safety and personal well-being**.
- Having **pets** and sharing **pet care provision** consolidates relational **bonds** between friends.
- For **LGBTQ+ migrants**, living with friends who have already migrated represents a way of finding **emotional and practical support**.
- Cohabiting with friends can become a **survival tool for racialized and/or latina trans asylum seekers**.

RECOMMENDATIONS

LEGAL PROTECTION FOR LGBTQ+ PEOPLE WHO COHABIT

We **recommend the extension of conjugality-related rights to all forms of cohabitation**, regardless of the sexual or affective bonds and of the number of cohabitants. The number of months required to access cohabiting status should be reduced. Taking the Portuguese law on shared economies as a starting point and pushing it further, these would **include**:

- Juridical **regime of days-off, paid leaves and tax regimes** equivalent to marriage and de facto unions.
- Specific **protection in case of death of the tenant** (e.g. transference of lease contracts, priority when buying the house).
- Eligibility for **fostering and adoption** equivalent to marriage, de facto and/or civil union.
- **Property regimes** equivalent to marriage (e.g. community of property, inheritance rights).
- Right to choose **cohabitants** as significant others for **hospital visits and next of kin**.
- **Protection from violence between cohabitants**.
- Respect for cohabitation related bonds in terms of access to **elderly care homes**.
- **Residency and work permits for migrant cohabitants** as established for married couples.

ADDRESSING LGBTQ+ HOUSING VULNERABILITY

LGBTQ+ people face specific difficulties in the access to housing. In order to develop effective policies regarding this issue, **we strongly encourage public-funded research on**:

- Juridical regime of **days-off, paid leaves and tax regimes** equivalent to marriage and de facto unions.
- **LGBTQ+ homelessness**.
- Forms of **dispossession and displacement** of LGBTQ+ people resulting from gentrification.
- Forms of **intersectional discrimination** that LGBTQ+ people face.

We also recommend the development of:

- Social **housing policies** addressing LGBTQ+ housing vulnerability.
- Extending social housing policies for couples and families to **friends and/or cohabitants**.
- Housing policies for **LGBTQ+ asylum seekers** (during and after the asylum procedure).

ADVANCING THE RIGHTS OF TRANS, INTERSEX AND NON-BINARY PEOPLE

- Social **awareness** of the **differences** between and specificities of **trans, non-binary and intersex** people.
- **Protocols** between Employment Centres and NGOs to tackle unemployment rates.
- Adequate **training to health professionals, teachers and childcare services** employees regarding gender diversity, with involvement of trans-identified speakers.
- **Depathologisation** of law, language and sociomedical practices.
- Creation of a state-based **LGBTQ+ National Support Centre** to provide legal, juridical, psychosocial and/or medical support.
- Revision of **textbooks to represent household beyond the heteronormative nuclear family, acknowledge gender diversity and promote friendship** as a valuable intimate relationship.
- Permanent **public funding** for cutting-edge research in **Gender Studies**.

