

'Gay Space is wherever I am': The Outlines of Pink Consumption Spaces in Zagreb

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Abstract

Based on the dialectical relationship between queerness and homonormativity, the aim of this paper was to outline the spatial framework of pink consumption in Croatia. Since the LGBT community is a specific and sensitive social group, qualitative research methods were used. After calculating the gay index and determining that the city of Zagreb provides the most favourable spatial context for the study of pink consumption, the interview method was used to collect qualitative data. The sample was assembled using the snowball technique (N = 14). The research revealed that there are only few pink consumption places in Zagreb, that they are not even present in all consumption systems, and that they are located in the central part of the city without exception. Although it cannot be argued that they are completely homonormative places, evidence of social exclusivity and sexual conservatism was found. Thus, it has been shown that even fundamentally inclusive places can produce normativity, which deprives them of the potential to achieve equality and emancipation of the Zagreb's LGBT community.

Keywords: pink consumption; LGBT; Zagreb; homonormativity

Introduction

Consumption areas designed specifically and exclusively for the LGBT+ community¹ or places where there is a higher concentration of LGBT persons due to their specific spatial properties, are called pink consumption places. These appear in all four fundamental consumer systems – shopping, health and diet, entertainment, and culture and education – but most of all in the sphere of entertainment (Mak & Jakovčić, 2021). The importance of night clubs in the socialisation of LGBT persons has been documented since the 1920s (Hunt et al., 2019) and these venues are considered key places for the functioning and spatialisation of the LGBT community (Lugosi, 2007; Burmaz, 2014; Mattson, 2015).

The development of pink consumption has been largely affected by the liberalisation of social relations

in Western Europe and Anglo-America in the latter half of the 20th century, and therefore, the majority of research focus has been centred in these parts of the world. It has been widely documented that pink consumption provides a space of freedom and safety for the open communication of LGBT identities (Kates, 2002; Cattani & Vanolo, 2014; Bettani, 2015). However, there is a significant difference between the Western world and post-socialist Europe. While in Western societies pink places contribute to the public visibility of the LGBT community (Baudinette, 2017; Motschenbacher, 2020), in the post-socialist context they are still “in the closet,” i.e., they are not seen from the street (Burmaz, 2014; Dimitrov, 2014). Differences were also found in the openness of pink consumption places to different sexual and gender identities

¹ For the purpose of simplicity, referred to only as LGBT in this paper.

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within the LGBT community. While some authors emphasize that pink consumption places welcome everyone (Cattan & Vanolo, 2014), others argue that such places do not welcome all segments of the LGBT community equally (Kates, 2002; Binnie, 2004; Betani, 2015; Baudinette, 2017; Motschenbacher, 2020). In post-socialist Europe, there are not even studies on the openness of pink consumption spaces to different LGBT identities. Similarly, to date, there is no scientific interest in the consumption and consumption spaces of LGBT persons in Croatia. However, explicitly pink consumption places, for example in Zagreb, started to appear in the late 1990s. This is when the first openly gay club, called Bad Boy, was opened in 1999 in Zagreb's Ksaver neighbourhood (Štulhofer et al., 2003). However, this club was soon closed down and for a longer time (from 2002–2008), a key venue in the night life of LGBT persons was the Global club on Pavla Hatza Street. In the early 2010s, there were three gay clubs operating in Zagreb - g.CLUB on Savska Street, Rush on Amruševa Street, and HotPot on Petrinjska Street. Later, Rush was relocated to Savska Street in the venue of the g.CLUB after it closed (Hermann, 2016), though with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Rush too was permanently closed. The only remaining operational gay club in Zagreb was HotPot. Considering that pink consumption places are typically most developed in the entertainment sphere, and this was reduced to a single gay club in Croatia's largest city, then it can rightfully be said that this is but a silhouette of pink consumption. Therefore, the key task of this paper was to delineate the silhouette of pink consumption in a dominantly non-pink and heteronormative urban space.

Namely, the majority of public spaces are implicitly or explicitly heteronormative, which is then reflected in the assumption of the heterosexual identities, relations and practices as expected and desirable (Motschenbacher, 2020). Heteronormativity is reproduced through the patriarchal social structures, connections and relations (Hubbard, 2001), similar to how hegemonic groups maintain their privileged social position (Jackson Lears, 1985). On the contrary, sexual and gender minorities (in theory) act subversively, thus representing a key (or at least potentially key) point of countering the legitimacy of the patriarchal social structures (Baudinette, 2017). In that way, they become key actors in creating authentic LGBT spaces.

Authentic LGBT spaces, nonconformist LGBT spaces, or simply queer spaces² imply a liminal space that emerges by challenging established (hetero)normative social expectations (Baudinette, 2017). They are marked by a sociability that lies outside the framework of the assumed norms, implying a contention of sexual conservatism and a pronounced solidarity among individuals of varying socioeconomic status (Mattson, 2015). They are organised as places that question the very idea of normativity, by deflecting attention on the fact that normativity nearly always results in violence (Gibson-Graham, 1999 according to Brown, 2009).³ Therefore, queer spaces imply a certain resistance and secure the right to existence for marginalised gender and sexual identities (Hemmings, 2002). The rapid development of these spaces coincides with broader acceptance of sexual and gender minorities in the Western world.

Since the 1990s, there has been a liberalisation of social relations in the Western world and a gradual improvement of the legal position of LGBT persons. Through the gradual abolishment of discriminatory legislation, LGBT individuals are becoming more and more included in the public realm, as persons who can contribute to the community in which they live. Meanwhile, the demands of LGBT movement are also changing, where the socioeconomic solidarity and aspirations for sexual freedom are being replaced with striving towards achieving equal civil rights (Brown, 2009). In parallel with this process, there have been changes to spaces occupied by LGBT persons, particularly those spaces having a commercial function.⁴ Once economically determined, they gradually cease to be devoid of social norms and expectations. With the adoption of the normative impulses, such spaces cease to question (threaten) the dominantly heteronormative social assumptions (Duggan, 2004), and reduce the identity of LGBT persons to merely their consumer choices (Gorman-Murray & Nash, 2017). The homonormativity directs the LGBT community towards individualism and consumerist economic values, while in the private sphere, it favours the norms of the heteropatriarchy, i.e., long-term monogamous relationships with predefined gender roles (Brown & Bakshi, 2011). Accordingly, analogous to heteronormativity, homonormativity creates spaces which are privileged in the economic sense, and conservative in the sexual sense (Kenttama-Squires, 2019). Further, the spatial representations of the LGBT identities

² Queer implies the critical position that acts subversively towards the normative understanding of relationships between spaces, gender and sexuality (Baudinette, 2017) and therefore is a good indicator of the authenticity of LGBT spaces.

³ Normativity implies the socioeconomic layering and conservative social relations, i.e., the separation of accepted (privileged) individuals, and the positioning of undesirable identities in the margins (Brown, 2009).

⁴ Herein lies the contradiction between the previously proclaimed possibility for the flexible and free expression of gender and sexuality, and the appearance of normativity that the space begins to demand (Kates, 2002).

are based on the heteronormative conception of masculinity and femininity (Baudinette, 2017). In so doing, specific forms of homosexuality are incorporated as desirable in the capitalist society⁵ (Brown, 2009), while undesirable forms of sexual and gender identities are pushed to the margins.⁶ Therefore, the emergence of homonormative pink consumption spaces can simultaneously be considered as the emergence of spaces of social exclusion (Brown & Bakshi, 2011; Bettani, 2015). This significantly limits the emancipation potential of the LGBT space as inclusive and open to diversity (Baudinette, 2017).

Homonormativity is a locally specific phenomenon that is manifested in different ways in different spaces (Kenttamaa-Squires, 2019). This makes it a suitable framework for studying the characteristics of pink consumption in a range of socioeconomic contexts. In other words, the concept of homonormativity enables an understanding of the organisation of pink consumption spaces and how they function. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that this is the most common theoretical approach to the study of pink consumption in the past decade (Mak & Jakovčić, 2021).

As stated earlier, a key task of this study was to establish the silhouette of pink consumption in a dominantly non-pink and heteronormative urban space

of Croatia. Therefore, the first task was to determine which regions (counties) are the most relevant for geographical research of pink consumption. This is followed by the selection of the most pertinent spatial unit, i.e., the largest city in that region, and detection and classification of specific places of pink consumption within it. The largest city is typically the location of the most prominent LGBT community, since a largest population allows for greater anonymity and freer conduct, while also reducing stigmatisation, homophobia and violence (Braun et al., 2015). Finally, the characteristics of established pink consumption places are examined to determine the links between the theoretical proclamations of authenticity (subversion against the social order of the heteropatriarchy) and homonormativity.

Fulfilling the set goals would thus provide answers to the following research questions:

1. Where in Croatia is it even possible to study pink consumption places?
2. Where are pink consumption places found within the spatial structure of the city?
3. Which consumer activities (needs) of the LGBT+ community are met by these places?
4. What are the main properties of pink consumption places?

Methodology

For the purpose of achieving the aims of this research, it was necessary to employ a range of methodological procedures. In order to determine in which regions (counties) in Croatia the largest number of pink consumption places could be expected, we calculated the diversity index or gay index (Florida, 2002).⁷ Input data were obtained by the Register of life partnerships, available on the website of the Ministry of Justice and Public Administration. Gay index is a simple locational quotient that measures the number of same-sex households in a smaller spatial unit in comparison with the number of same-sex households in a larger spatial unit, and the obtained value is divided by the population of the smaller spatial unit in relation with the population of the larger spatial unit (Florida, 2002). In Croatia, the index can be formulated as:

$$\text{gay index} = \frac{\frac{\text{no. of life partnerships in the county}}{\text{no. of life partnerships nationally}}}{\frac{\text{county population}}{\text{national population}}}$$

Once the spatial unit that had the highest value of the gay index was determined, LGBT persons could be interviewed. The initial survey participants were proposed by the organisations Zagreb Pride and Iskorak, and the sample was further increased using the snowball technique. A total of 14 semi-structured interviews were held during May and June 2021. Interviews were continued until the same answers were obtained in three consecutive conversations. The interviewees were between 19 and 48 years of age (mean 29 years) and of varying sexual (lesbian, gay man, bisexual person, pansexual person) and gender (male,

⁵ Homonormativity typically favours physically attractive (standardly hypermasculine), young and predominantly white gay men of a higher socioeconomic status (Kates, 2002; Bettani, 2015).

⁶ Exclusion most often functions by the principle “no fats, no fems”. In such a space marked by hypermasculine discourse, excessive body weight and femininity are classified as moral failures in a disciplining the body, and as such as labelled as unattractive and undesirable traits (Kates, 2002). Further, other undesirable elements are typically recognised as older LGBT persons, ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, different affiliations within the queer community and all other persons who fail to confirm to the strictly set norms (Bettani, 2015).

⁷ Florida (2002) developed the gay index within the framework of his creative class (creative city) theory. For more about the limitations of the gay index, see Mak & Jakovčić, 2021.

female) identities (see Table 1).⁸ The interview protocol consisted of several thematic areas – pink consumption spaces with regard to their (non)normative properties, the significance of those spaces for the LGBT community, the four fundamental consumer systems, and consumption management. In this paper, only those statements pertaining to the properties of pink consumer spaces were addressed.

Table 1. Demographic traits of survey participants

| Code | Gender | Sexuality | Age |
|------|--------|------------------|-----|
| S1 | male | bisexual person | 26 |
| S2 | male | gay man | 32 |
| S3 | female | pansexual person | 22 |
| S4 | male | gay man | 25 |
| S5 | male | gay man | 25 |
| S6 | female | lesbian | 32 |
| S7 | female | bisexual person | 24 |
| S8 | male | gay man | 25 |
| S9 | male | gay man | 48 |
| S10 | male | gay man | 37 |
| S11 | female | lesbian | 33 |
| S12 | female | pansexual person | 20 |
| S13 | female | lesbian | 38 |
| S14 | male | gay man | 19 |

Source: Interviews

Silhouette of Pink Consumption in Zagreb

Why Research the Geography of Pink Consumption in Zagreb?

As explained before, in determining the spatial scope of the study and the regional units in which pink consumption is most prevalent, the gay index was used. In solely examining the spatial differences in the concentration of life partnerships concluded in Croatia (Fig. 1), there are only three regional units in which there can be any discussion of the geography of pink consumption: City of Zagreb (3.06), Istria County (1.95) and Primorje-Gorski Kotar County (1.46). As in the aforementioned regional units (counties), Zagreb is by far the largest city, it makes the most sense to expect the highest number of pink consumption places there. This is no way means that there are not such places elsewhere in the country, but only that their numbers are substantially lower.

'Not all LGBTQ people are from Zagreb... There are people of that profile in Knin, Zadar, Varaždin, Rijeka, Pula, and everywhere else... they then occasionally come to Zagreb to have any opportunity to visit

Finally, in order to discuss the spatial distribution of LGBT persons within a specific urban area, the gay dating application *Romeo* was used. *Romeo* enables collecting data on the locations of its users, which is important due to the lack of other means of detecting the spatial concentration of LGBT persons. Although the locations provided by *Romeo* are not completely reliable (± 50 metres), which is justified by the need for user security (*Romeo*, 2022), even approximate data can be considered useful within the scope of this research. It is certainly necessary to highlight the methodological limitations of using *Romeo* data. Firstly, the selected application completely excludes LGBT persons who do not gender identify as males. Secondly, not all LGBT persons use this application, and one person may potentially have multiple profiles open. And finally, the location of the person need not necessarily indicate the person's place of residence, as the individual can independently move their location pursuant to their own needs and wants.

The analysis of the spatial distribution of the *Romeo* profiles as well as the visualisation of the spatial distribution of the pink consumption places were made in ArcMap 10.4 software using the Kernel Density function.

their spaces, as there is nowhere except Zagreb, and maybe Rijeka where I'm from, that has any spaces of that type.' (S10)

During April 2022, data on the locations of Zagreb users of the *Romeo* dating application was collected. It was established that there was a total of 3693 profiles active in the city area. The majority of application users are located in the central part of the city (Fig. 2), which, together with the Medvednica foothills makes a traditional residential zone of wealthier inhabitants (Prelogović, 2009). It can be expected that the higher concentration of pink consumption places will also overlap with the spatial distribution of the *Romeo* application users. It is plausible to expect that a certain portion of application users will register at the location of such a place, instead of the location of their actual residence, primarily for safety purposes.

In the case that the *Romeo* users set their location at the place where they in fact reside, then it could be stated that there is a concentration of LGBT persons

⁸ Unfortunately, we were not able to reach and include all gender and sexual minorities in our research.

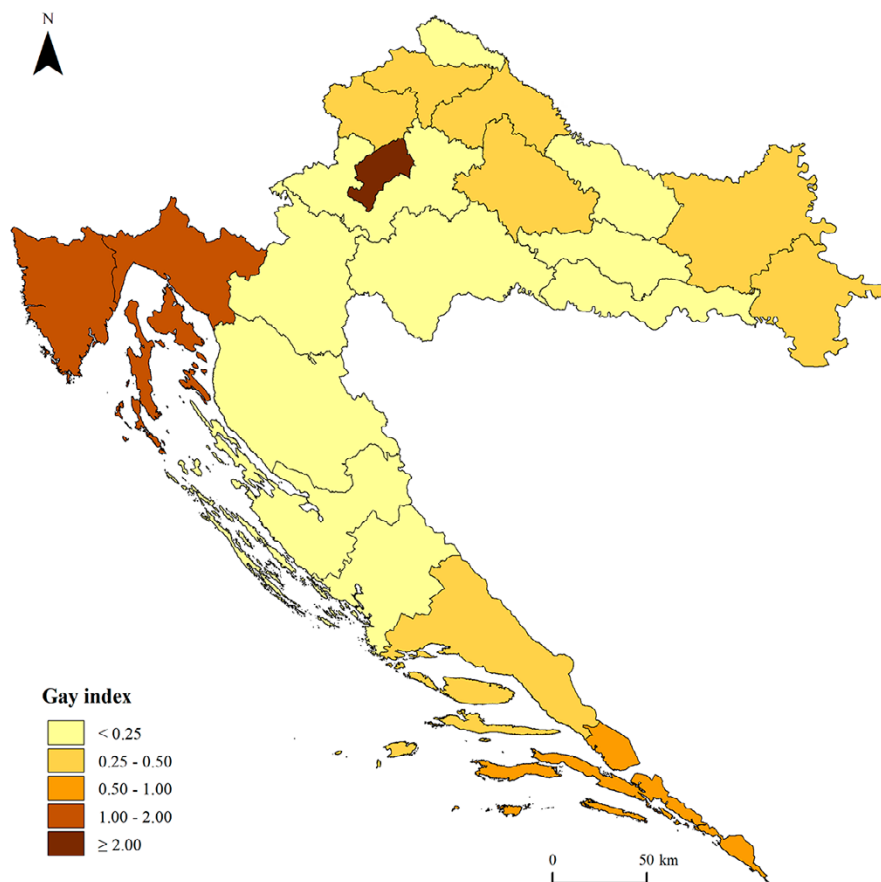


Figure 1. Distribution of concluded life partnerships in Croatian counties (2013–2021)
Sources: CBS, 2022; MJPA, 2022

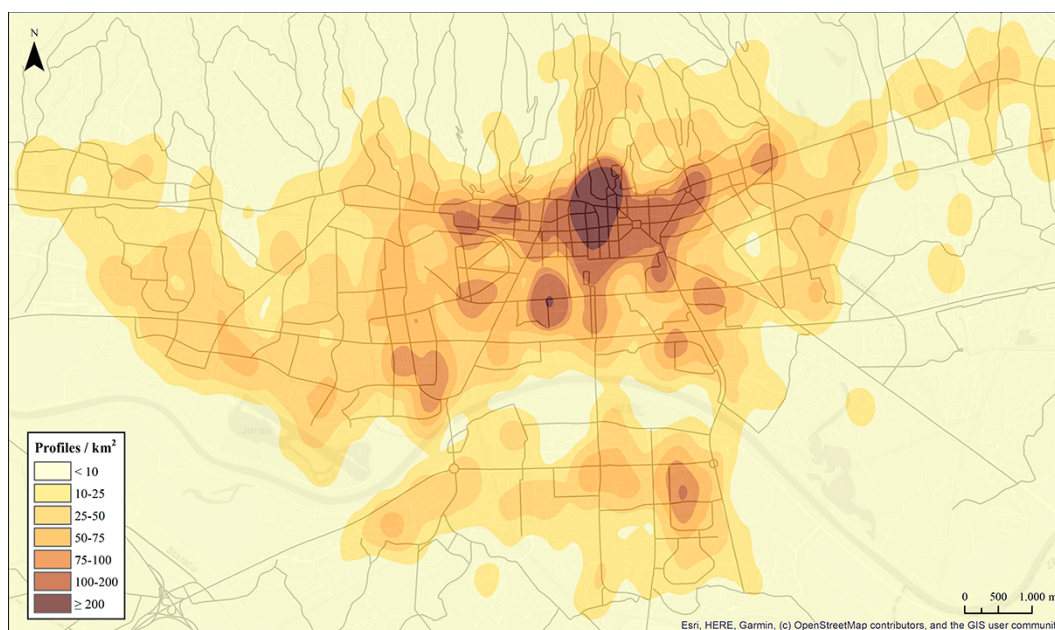


Figure 2. Spatial distribution of profiles on the Romeo dating app in Zagreb in April 2022
Source: Romeo, 2022

around the Zagreb city centre which, through the process of gentrification, could also be associated with the theory of homonormativity (Schulman, 2012). Gentrified LGBT areas are marked by a consumer-oriented population from which all undesirable elements have been removed. Namely, the security offered by such spaces relies on the higher spending power and relative homogeneity of the population (Mattson, 2015).

Position of Pink Consumption Places in the City Spatial Structure

- Nearly all pink consumption places mentioned by the interviewees are positioned in the Zagreb central core⁹ (Figs. 3 and 4), which was noted in several statements together with the remark that there are too few such places.
- 'I've noticed that more of these spaces are appearing around the centre, while there are no neighbourhood friendly cafes. I mean, this is progress (...), but come on, we need more.' (S12)
- 'I think that we need more such places. For people to realise that there are normal people there (...). There really is very little. I wish there were more clubs, cafes. This is lacking.' (S14)

Since the majority of these places are cafes and night clubs, it is possible that their concentration in the city centre is explained in part by the security that a central location offers (Skočir & Šakaja, 2017). Fur-

thermore, security has arisen as one of the fundamental, if not key, properties of pink consumption spaces. Namely

- 'I think that people in Croatian society, which has made a great deal of progress concerning LGBT rights, still don't feel safe and that these spaces offer security above all.' (S5)
- 'Simply put, they are established in such a way that everyone knows it is a safe place.' (S7)
- 'You know that they are safe places, that's how they are labelled. You don't have a feeling of fear.' (S11)

Though they should be (Mattson, 2015), the gay clubs are not a visible stage of the LGBT social scene in Zagreb. While located in the city centre core, their visibility is highly limited, out of the need for security of their visitors. The same occurrence in Belgrade was explained by Dimitrov (2014) as a consequence of exclusion and part of a survival strategy, while Burmaz (2014) interprets it as a form of new closet, i.e., the appearance of internal peripheralization. In any case, the very existence of pink consumption places contributes to the visibility of the LGBT community, though in the Zagreb (Croatian) context, this is certainly not their primary role. Therefore, they are not specially marked, and with their exteriors that give the impression of completely ordinary business premises. They are often located in the city courtyards, passages or basements.



Figure 3. Spatial distribution of pink consumption spaces in the sphere of entertainment in Zagreb in 2021.

Source: Interviewees

⁹ Although they are known to us from the interviews, we did not want to show more precise locations of the pink consumption places, since it was clear it is important to the interviewees that their places remain hidden, and thus safe. That is why we used Kernel Density function instead of just pointing pink consumption places locations on the map.

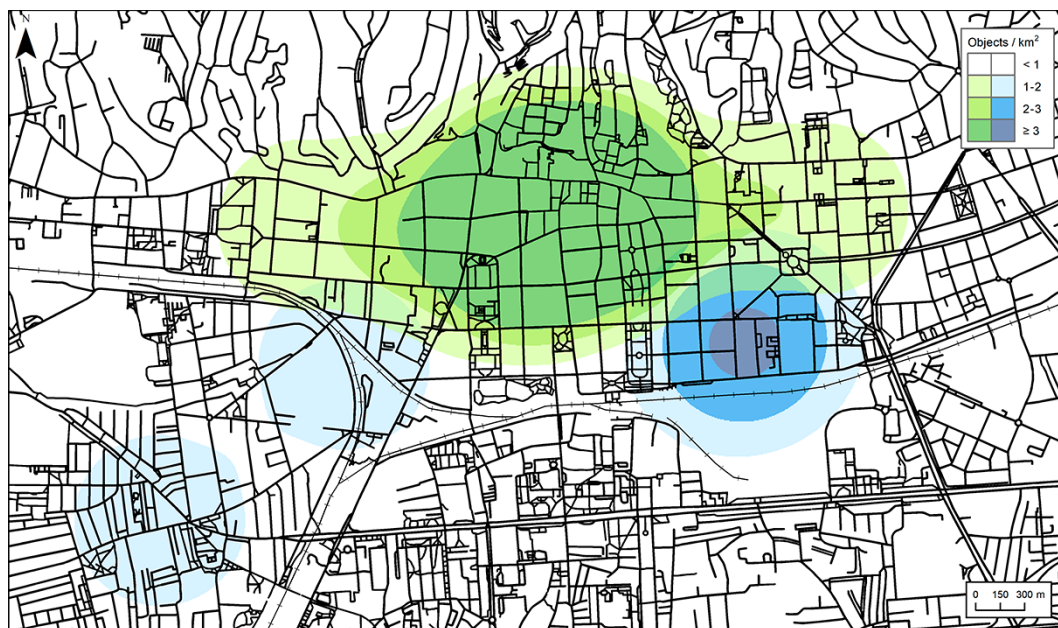


Figure 4. Spatial distribution of pink consumption spaces in the spheres of culture and education (green), and health and diet (blue) in Zagreb in 2021.

Source: Interviewees

- 'It is in the city centre, but in a basement. But still, I think that without them, then it would be even less visible. In this way, the population can meet at that bar on Friday evenings.' (S3)
- 'I have the feeling that they are all quite hidden and that they reduce LGBT visibility. But they still create a safe place. It is not as though they are widely advertised, that they have a rainbow flag on the exterior or in the windows. Instead, they are quite incognito.' (S11)
- 'I bet that if you asked anyone, for example about HotPot, they wouldn't know that it exists.' (S5)
- 'I'm not sure that these spaces are visible to the (...) general public, and so from that position we can question the range of their visibility.' (S10)
- 'I don't know how many people outside our community even notices these spaces or perceive them to belong to the LGBT community. Like Kolaž, Juta or what we talked about. I don't know if the average straight person walked right by would think, 'Aha, just another bar, though perhaps with a disproportionately higher number of women than in others' [laughter]. But I'm not sure they would associate it with the LGBT community. It's not as if there are rainbow flags hanging in the windows.' (S13)

Structure of Pink Consumption Places

Through the interviews, we received some insight into which pink consumption places in Zagreb can be discussed. As already emphasized, there are very few such places – just 29 in the whole city (Figs. 3 and 4) – which can be explained by the fact that Zagreb is

a relatively small city (population less than 700,000) and the social and historical circumstances. Although the process of joining the European Union led to an improvement in the legal status of LGBT people, after joining the EU there was a strengthening of conservative movements directed against the LGBT community (Čemažar & Mikulin, 2017). This is supported by the reports of ILGA Europe (2023), according to which the percentage of realized rights of LGBT persons in Croatia decreased from 71% in 2015 (year after the acquisition of the right to same-sex partnership) to only 45% in 2022. Therefore, the small number of pink consumption venues in Zagreb is a mere reality. Entertainment venues (48.3%) dominate the pink consumption spaces in Zagreb, primarily cafes and night clubs, though their numbers have declined since the early 2010s (Hermann, 2016). The reduction in the number of gay clubs is not isolated to Zagreb, nor was it due exclusively to the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, Collins & Drinkwater (2017) explained that the reduced demand for gay clubs and their subsequent closures is due to the increased use of dating applications that facilitate making personal acquaintances and social networking among LGBT persons outside the framework of physical space. This is also a possible explanation for the situation in Zagreb.

- 'These online platforms actually reduce socialising.' (S9)
- 'Putting COVID aside, I think that online applications certainly have reduced face to face socialising. Before these apps, we spent more time hanging out in different venues, like Global for example. There we actually socialised.' (S10)

Among the interviewees, it was clear that the general opinion is that gay men make up most of the visitors of night clubs, while other gender and sexual identities, and the heteropopulation are a minority. It is interesting that in the case of LGBT friendly cafes, there is a division as to which are more intended for gay men or lesbians. In the area of cultural consumption (34.5% of all specified places), LGBT friendly places were primarily listed as alternative theatres and cinemas, while in the area of health-related consumption (17.2% of all specified places), several gyms, saunas, and places important for sexual and reproductive health were listed.

Finally, there are no sales venues specifically intended for LGBT persons in Zagreb, nor do LGBT persons feel as though shops are particularly open to them.

- *'I think it would be fantastic for a LGBT store to open (...), that there is a shop where you can buy some cool make-up, a little unusual, or wigs, LGBT thermoses and cups, or LGBT merchandise (...). There is a huge chance that the display windows would be broken. It's questionable whether there is anyone brave enough to take on that risk, but I think that the shop would be well visited and would do very well.'* (S7)

Homonormative or Non-conformist (Queer) Spaces?

Physical Properties of Pink Consumption Spaces

According to most of the interviewees, the pink consumption spaces in Zagreb do not physically differ from any other consumer spaces, and this is likely a consequence of the broader socioeconomic situation in Croatian society. Pink consumption spaces however tend to commonly share a somewhat more alternative (more urban) interior style.

- *'They don't differ by anything visible... I don't see any differences in the interior style of pink or non-pink spaces.'* (S2)
- *'If you brought a straight crowd into our gay bars, they wouldn't even notice that it's a gay club. Generally, I would say they look like any other club.'* (S7)
- *'These institutions are more insistent that they are institutions, while smaller theatres (...), you have that welcome feeling that is more on the alternative side. Now, this depends on whether or not this alternative side is associated with queerness, and honestly that is fantastic.'* (S7)
- *'I would say that they are all, how would I put it, more urban.'* (S6)
- *'There are no specific emblems that would indicate (...) the LGTBQ population. At the end of the day,*

we live in Croatia. I think that these venues are also aware of that fact, so they don't stand out too much.' (S10)

Nearly all the night clubs to which the interviewees referred in their interviews are now closed. There is only one gay club currently in operation – HotPot on Petrinjska Street. It is relatively small (just 120 m² in area) and the interviewees stressed its humble appearance.

- *'A dump. Literally. A hole. No windows, inadequate ventilation, packed full of people who have nowhere else to go out... With that, a night out there is enormously expensive, as you have to pay at the door and for the price of drinks.'* (S5)
- *'It's too smelly. And so small, it's a small space so everyone is crammed in. You can't get any air; someone is always coming up to you...'* (S14)
- *'On the other hand, the day-time pink consumption places, above all gay-friendly cafes, are perceived to be more urban. It is possible to identify certain cafes that openly display LGBT+ symbolism, while in some cases, this is displayed only during the pride parade.'*
- *'For example, the difference at the Cat Caffe is that they occasionally put up gay flags to indicate that it is a gay-friendly space. But I have never seen anyone kiss in there, I mean same-sex couples, which would really separate that café from any other that I visit.'* (S4)
- *'For certain events, like the Pride parade, they'll be decorated, but that is only for special events.'* (S7)

Normativity in Comparison with the Heteronormative Space

We have previously observed that pink consumption places are perceived to be safe places for the LGBT community to spend their leisure time. Therefore, it is no surprise that a key role within them is tolerance and mutual respect.

- *'It is definitely a set rule of conduct that there is an anti-hate atmosphere, kindness, understanding and accessibility. At least in my experience.'* (S7)
'I think we respect one another. But that is I guess normal if all of us here are like that. Though it doesn't necessarily have to be. But yeah, we respect one another. Realistically, that is the norm everywhere. Many elsewhere there is less respect.' (S3)

Concerning pink entertainment spaces, these are marked by the looser rules of conduct in comparison with non-pink spaces. This is particularly the case for the night-time consumer landscape (Cattan & Vano, 2014). These looser rules enable freer forms of con-

duct, such as more open displays of affection towards persons of the same sex:

- ‘They are more fun [laughter], crazier, entertaining. In terms of a night out, it’s more fun where the gay people are. Rules? I have no idea. I would say that there aren’t any, though, hm, perhaps they are looser than in other places.’ (S9)
- ‘More relaxed forms of conduct are more widely accepted. So, if I were to go to Kolaž, I knew that I could (...) hug my partner at any time if I wanted to, without any problems (...), without feeling, you know, that someone might attack me or beat me up.’ (S10)
- ‘If you’re with a girl or a guy, you can hold hands or kiss, embrace... that’s not something that I would do in a classical café. In that sense, people are a bit more open. Especially in the clubs.’ (S13)

The more relaxed norms are also seen in a freer style of dressing, and in the possibilities for open discussions about topics concerning the LGBT community. These make pink consumption spaces places of freedom - places in which it is not required to hold back one’s personality or to adapt one’s conduct.

- ‘There’s no dress code like in other clubs. You can wear whatever you like. You can come in a sweat-suit. For example, you can’t do that at Roko.’ (S14)
- ‘I mean, I feel more comfortable there just because I am a LGBT person, because this is a common topic to us all, we can talk about it there, while anywhere else you can’t be one hundred percent certain that you’ll be treated respectfully.’ (S12)

On the other hand, for LGBT persons, spending free time in non-pink consumption spaces often means adapting their behaviour to avoid being “visible” and thereby risking verbal or physical attacks. Therefore, it is clear that there is a lack of a feeling of security.

- ‘I don’t think that you should hide femininity, but only to avoid any insults or threats like “ugh you fagot, gross...” Once I had to meet a guy and we shook hands, and when I went away, I could still hear him saying, “Oh no, now I have to quickly go home and disinfect my hand so that it’s not infectious,” of course, alluding to my sexuality. The thing is that I was really relaxed. I was obvious.’ (S14)
- ‘About straight clubs, let’s call them that, I have never truly felt really safe or like a member of the female sex and gender. There were a lot of situations of sexual harassment from straight men, and over the years I realised that I just didn’t want to do that and that I would rarely go to such a club. Maybe only for a birthday. I would dress up like a real lesbian to make it really clear: fuck

off. Of course, LGB people are looked at, I won’t say with scorn, but with a side look when their sexuality is obvious.’ (S7)

Non-pink consumption places are not as hostile towards all gender and sexual minorities. Judging by the statements of the interviewees, the femme lesbians are the most accepted, though this form of social acceptance often goes hand in hand with their hypersexualization.

‘I think that it’s much easier for lesbians because guys don’t look at them and thing “how gross” but it’s more like “yeah, cool!” You know, they masturbate to lesbian porn. When they see this, they like it, it’s not a threat. On the other hand, if they see two men, there will instantly be a look.’ (S14)

‘I don’t separate spaces into those that are gay, gay-friendly, or non-gay – a gay space is wherever I am. (...) Vivas is a great example, when I was there [with her girlfriend] it was a really gay space (...). I didn’t feel comfortable as I do now, but nor did I get any funny looks. (...) I have honestly only had positive experiences. (...) One girl told me: “Yes ok, you haven’t had any negative experiences because the girls you hang out with all look like girls, you know?” She on the other hand is a little boyish and she has had negative experiences. But when you look at it that way, is that positive discrimination? Because we are getting into the sphere of the “porn category” and whatever else.’ (S6)

Between Inclusivity and Exclusion

The theory of homonormativity lies in creating an accepted gay public space that retracts the marginalisation of undesirable individuals (Bell & Binnie, 2004). The day-time consumer landscape (cafes) is perceived as socially inclusive, while the night-time landscape (night clubs) as isolating (Gorman-Murray & Nash, 2017). Pink consumption places in Zagreb are primarily perceived to be open to diversity, as places in which everyone is accepted equally, and most interviewees did not observe or experience any form of discrimination there.

- ‘I have never experienced that someone was discriminated against for being, for example a Roma person, or visibly, I don’t know, of a low socioeconomic status... I’ve never witnessed it nor would I expect it.’ (S2)
- ‘They are open towards everyone. Trans and bi, and straight. From 18 to 88. Nationality also is not a factor.’ (S5)
- ‘Honestly, I think that they are accessible to everyone, regardless of nationality, race, financial status... I have not heard of any segregation. Really, it’s about equality.’ (S7)

- 'When talking specifically about entertainment, what first comes to mind about the cafés and clubs, hm, is that they are open to that population. (...) They are somehow accessible to everyone, and I think they are open to different socio-economic groups and other groups (...). I have never felt that there is less understanding or less tolerance towards a subculture within that entire population. Perhaps I'm wrong. (...) For example, if you go to HotPot, I've never noticed that a transgender person is viewed or experienced or treated differently.' (S10)
- 'I haven't experienced any, how would I put it, negative comments towards anybody, anywhere.' (S11)

From the aspect of economic viability on the market, it is very important that pink consumption spaces are also visited by heterosexual persons, i.e., that these spaces are open to them.

- 'If they would rely only on the LGTBQ population, I'm afraid they wouldn't survive. I'm not sure how pink consumption spaces could even prosper economically, if they specifically served only that niche.' (S10)
- 'If we were to make plans to meet up for a drink or socialise or whatever, and if it was exclusively a gay crowd, we would probably plan to meet up in a bar like that. Not necessarily because these places are so brilliant or great, but out of a feeling of solidarity. Let's help them out a little, let's bring in people so they can survive, so that places like this can exist.' (S13)

Regardless of the perception of the openness of pink consumption spaces, in line with the "old church split between the gays and lesbians" (S7), there are indications that predominantly gay or lesbian consumer places do exist in Zagreb.¹⁰ However, as in previous research in cities of similar size (e.g., Cattani & Vano, 2014), the majority of visitors in the most frequent pink spaces are gay men.

- 'I consider the Beertija café to be more lesbian than gay. Then there is the Juta/Kota Bar, this is more of a lesbian place.' (S6)
- 'I think that the gay male population is far more represented in all this, they go out more and are more present (...). If you go to HotPot, out of a hundred people, 80 will be guys and about 20 girls. If that (...). Let's say that Juta is more of a lesbian café. There you find mostly girls; I haven't noticed too many guys. There was that place Vimpi, in the

passageway by the Europe cinema, but I think it's been closed for a while.' (S13)

A small number of interviewees warned that the openness of pink spaces has its limits. They can boil down to being more partial to the traditionally defined gender identities and persons of homosexual orientation. Bisexuality and pansexuality are questioned and negated even within the LGBT community, and transphobic comments were also observed.

- 'They are open to everyone, as long as they are not too different from everyone else.' (S11)
- 'The situation still dictates that trans people are not accepted... If someone is clockable, or whatever it's called, you know what I mean, that's them.' (S7)
- 'Trans people, I swear, every one of those people I have met, and it's not just the sexual part, they have so many unresolved issues in their head, they are people who are so unsure of who they are, and what they are. I think the sexual part is the least of their problems.' (S6)
- 'Generally, I think that in the LGBT community, some are more discriminatory towards bisexual people, saying they can't make up their mind, stuff like that. I would say that strictly gay or strictly lesbians get by easier.' (S3)
- 'I have heard it countless times, even from people in the community, "No, you're just confused, you're actually gay". Or "No, you're just confused, you're actually straight". No, I can like both, it's fine. So there are these reactions that these people, pan people are simply straight people looking for attention, or gay people who are still afraid to come out all the way.' (S12)

The fluctuation of visitors in pink consumption spaces is relatively limited. Their visitors are more or less the same people, which does not support the thesis of some great openness.

- 'I rarely see any new faces. (...) during my time, Global was popular, but it's gone now, on Hat-zova Street, there were always the same 50–100 people. It seems as though this is still this small, narrow, closed circle and that internalised homophobia still reigns within it.' (S10)

Additionally, the existence of a cult of youthfulness or the appearance thereof was observed.

- 'Younger people get more respect than older people. There are currently more young people that

¹⁰ The literature states that the key differences between gay and lesbian consumer places is that the latter offer the opportunity for more diverse socialising with regard to age, skin colour, class or other characteristics of their visitors, particularly in early youth and through the outing process (Gieseck, 2016).

are out, and so they are much closer. There are more of them and they can understand each other much easier.' (S3)

– 'The older population, over the age of 35, is viewed differently. It is more difficult for them to access those consumption places. They are more visible among the mostly young population.' (S8)

Conclusions

Taking all the regional units (counties) in Croatia into consideration, the diversity index (gay index) was highest in the City of Zagreb. Therefore, the research on pink consumption is most applicable in that city. The locations of profiles of LGBT persons on the Romeo dating application was concentrated in the city centre, where also the most pink consumption places are located. There are not many of these places, nor are they present in all four consumer systems. The most developed is the entertainment system (in the form of cafes and night clubs), followed by alternative places of cultural consumption, and places that pertain to health-related consumption, while shops intended for LGBT persons were not observed.

Though small in number, the pink consumption places in Zagreb are exceptionally important for the spatialisation of the LGBT community. Since they physically do not differ from any other consumption place, and given their retraction from street view, these places do not act particularly subversively towards the broader heteronormative space of the city. Pink consumption places should be able to mitigate the effects of social and spatial isolation in the heteronormative space (Mattson, 2015). However, their ability to mitigate the undesired characteristics (homophobia, transphobia) of society were found to be quite limited. Contrary to the theory of homonormativity, these are not places that are especially economically privileged, though indications of social exclusivity and sexual conservatism were observed. Therefore, it was found that a generally inclusive place can pro-

duce normativity. There are indications of divisions between lesbian and gay places, and sexual and gender minorities that are not "too different" (S11) are accepted with the detection of a cult of youthfulness and the appearance thereof. Accordingly, the idealistic perception by which pink consumption places are highly inclusive did not prove to be sustainable. In examining the relationship between inclusivity and exclusivity, the pink consumption places in Zagreb are becoming quite normative, thereby losing their full emancipatory potential.

As this work pioneers the study of pink consumption places in Croatia, it opens up wide-ranging possibilities for future research on how sexual and gender identities shape spatial processes, organizations, and economic activities. Continued research is needed both in the sphere of the geography of consumption (comparison of consumption places and/or systems of consumption; refusing consumer services based on a person's sexuality...) and the geography of production (tracing Florida's concept of creative class; from the aspect of the position of LGBT people in the labour market...). For too long, research, especially in post-socialist Europe, has been blind to sexual identity and has neglected its importance in shaping spatial-economic experiences. Placing these issues into the focus of economic-geographical research finally removes the identity blindness, points to neglected but very relevant economic actors, and allows for more effective management of commercial spaces for sexual and gender minorities.

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