Hochschule für
Wirtschaft und Recht Berlin
Berlin School of Economics and Law

Institute for International Political Economy Berlin

Labour market barriers beyond the binary gender construct : cis-normativity in the labour market

Author: Judith Waltl

Working Paper, No. 255/2025

Labour market barriers beyond the binary gender construct: cis-normativity in the labour market

Judith Waltl
Institute for International Political Economy (IPE) Berlin

Abstract

Labour market discrimination based on gender identity remains a significant yet understudied phenomenon. This paper examines the labour market experiences of trans and nonbinary individuals, focusing on how gender transition intersects with career development, institutional support, and labour market access. While traditional labour market research has largely centred on gendered outcomes for cisgender women, this study extends the scope to include gender-diverse individuals, drawing parallels and identifying unique discriminatory mechanisms. Using qualitative interviews, the research explores how participants navigate their gender identity within educational and work environments shaped by cisnormative and binary expectations. The analysis engages with Human Capital Theory, Gender Socialisation Theory, and Discrimination Theory to contextualise the ways in which structural barriers, stigma, and identity-based exclusion impact professional trajectories. Findings indicate that participants often feel forced to prioritise either their gender affirmation or their vocational development, with nonbinary individuals facing particularly severe forms of institutional invisibility and marginalisation.

JEL Codes: B54; J71; M54;

Key words: Labour market discrimination, queer economics, trans and nonbinary gender identities, cis-normativity, gender norms

Contact: Judith Waltl: judith.waltl@hwr-berlin.de

Acknowledgements: This paper origins from my Master's thesis in 2023. Therefore, I would like to thank my supervisors Martina Metzger and Alyssa Schneebaum for their valuable feedback and thoughts. I learned most from my interview partners, hence the biggest acknowledgement goes to them. Of course, all remaining errors are my own.

1 Introduction

Labour market discrimination based on gender is a long-standing research field, yet the experiences of trans and nonbinary individuals remain underexplored. The different situation and outcome of women and men in the labour market are depicted in gender income gaps, labour market participation rates and distribution of care responsibilities. While theories and research can explain the reasoning and mechanism that drive these differences partly, there are remaining unknowns. What role gender, in particular, has is difficult to capture and/or measure (Schilt, 2006). Gender in this regard is understood as a social binary concept of female or male (Davidson, 2016) , where women can be made out as the vulnerable, marginalised group within the labour market. Integration, protection and support institutions established to address equal inclusion in the labour market continue and manifest the binary gender understanding. Labour market research on the LGBT+ population (Badgett, Choi, and Wilson, 2019), while contributing important and eye-opening insights on discrimination and economic outcome, are mainly able to cover the socieo-economic situation of lesbian, gay or bisexual people. The T of the acronym, standing for trans(gender) individuals, remains a mostly blind spot (Badgett et al., 2024) so far. The intersection of minority gender identities and sexual orientation can provide deeper understanding of additional *gendered* discrimination mechanisms on the labour market, as both group members still represent a deviance from the norm; the cis gender and heterosexual norm.

The growing visibility of the trans and nonbinary community highlights the limitations and biases within institutional frameworks. Trans and nonbinary individuals experience higher unemployment rates, income disparities, and workplace discrimination compared to their cisgender counterparts (Badgett, Choi, and Wilson, 2019; Waite, 2021; Shannon, 2022; Eames, 2024). From a labour market research perspective, understanding the experiences, challenges, and opportunities of trans and nonbinary individuals is crucial for obtaining a comprehensive understanding of workforce dynamics. Incorporating their perspectives enhances the accuracy and validity of data, leading to a more nuanced analysis of labour market trends, disparities, and inequalities. Recognition of the unique needs and rights of these individuals prompts the reassessment and reformulation of such frameworks, aiming to foster more inclusive, equitable, and diverse work environments. Their voices and contributions are essential for dismantling gender norms, challenging cis normative assumptions, and advancing social justice in the realm of work for all marginalised groups.

In this context, this paper is contributing to a small body of research that addresses the labour market barriers and experiences of the trans and nonbinary community. It

seeks to identify discriminatory mechanisms the population faces, and grasp the barriers to and on the labour market that arise with gender nonconformity. It seeks answers and relations from existing gendered labour market theories, queer theory and discrimination theories of sexual identity. The aim is to shine light on the nuanced ways discrimination can unfold and barriers can arise for individuals outside of a binary gender understanding. Thereby, to my current knowledge, being the first paper to explicitly focus on labour market discrimination of nonbinary individuals.

The research will be contextualised within the theoretical frameworks of labour market discrimination based on gender and sexual orientation as well as social theories around human capital, socialisation and discrimination. It adapts an intersectional research narrative, following Black feminist theory (Crenshaw, 2013). Intersectionality recognises that individuals hold multiple social identities, such as gender, race, class, and sexuality, which intersect and interact to shape experiences and opportunities. Applying this lens to labour market research reveals how institutional dimensions and intersecting identities compound discrimination against trans and especially nonbinary individuals, offering a more nuanced understanding of their challenges.

With explorative in-depth interviews trans and nonbinary community members share insights to labour market experience and enhance the knowledge gained from the existing stock of related research. Thereby the mechanisms that can influence discriminatory behaviour towards the community are revealed and make future research possibilities apparent. A precise regional elimination of the researched field has not been fostered since the emphasis is on the existing general mechanisms and patterns rather than a specific and detailed assessment of one country. It is assumed that discriminatory barriers arise from general phenomena rather than national specifics. Nevertheless, the basic assumptions and structures on institutional settings, the labour market and gender norms are centred around a Global North perspective, and outcomes and conclusions mainly apply in this context. For Emerging Economies and Global South countries, societal and institutional structures differ too profoundly to allow generalised applicability.

This paper is structured as follows: Section 2 provides the theoretical embedding and will place gender identity and a gender transition within institutional settings. Section 3 draws out the labour market situation for woman, lesbians, gays and bisexuals and the trans and nonbinary community. Section 4 introduces theories and concepts that shape labour market discrimination research and section 5 will continue with research methodology and design. Section 6 will combine the new findings to explain the discrimination mechanisms that affect the trans and nonbinary community and discuss them with institutional shortcomings and labour market barriers. A conclusion will summarise the main findings and highlight their significance for future research and institutional change.

2 Sex, Gender Identity, and Sexual Orientation: Conceptual Distinctions and Their Interconnected Realities

It seems that the difference between gender and biological sex is not considered relevant in the labour market and its institutional setting. While sex and gender are related, they are distinct from each other (Ciprikis, Cassells, and Berrill, 2020). Similarly, gender identity and sexual identity or orientation may be related but are not necessarily linked. Biological sex, assigned at birth based on primary indicators, is typically linked to a corresponding social gender. A cisgender person aligns with this assigned gender, reflecting congruence between identity and societal expectations. Gender identity, on the other hand, is an individual's personal perception of their own gender (Davidson, 2016). When an individual's assigned gender matches their gender identity, the distinction becomes less significant. However, this distinction becomes crucial when a person's gender identity does not align with their assigned gender.

Trans and nonbinary individuals do not identify with the gender they were assigned at birth and strive to live in accordance with their true gender identity. This process, known as gender transition, can occur at any stage of life. However, trans and nonbinary individuals often encounter significant institutional barriers throughout this transition, directly impacting their position in the labour market. A gender transition should be understood as a multifaceted process rather than a singular event (Collins et al., 2015; Schulz, 2018). It involves various public and private spheres, including personal acceptance, social dynamics, and access to transition-related resources such as healthcare and legal support (Drydakis, 2020; Köllen, 2021; Schilt and Wiswall, 2008; Koch et al., 2020; Carpenter, Eppink, and Gonzales, 2020; Collins et al., 2015; Schulz, 2018). Transitions can be legal, medical, or social, and each path is unique.

These institutional barriers highlight that the framework governing labour markets is not only inherently binary but also deeply cisnormative. Cisnormativity positions cisgender individuals as the social norm, resulting in a lack of institutional knowledge and infrastructure to support gender minority groups. As a result, minority gender identities—particularly those of trans and nonbinary individuals—remain inadequately recognised within the understanding of gendered labour market discrimination. This paper aims to address this gap by incorporating trans and nonbinary perspectives into the discourse on labour market discrimination and examining the barriers they encounter.

The umbrella term 'trans and nonbinary' is used throughout this research to create a representative terminology, including all transgender identities within a binary gender

concept of female and male, as well as nonbinary identities. 'Trans' is an inclusive term encompassing minority gender identities that do not align with binary gender norms (Collins et al., 2015; McFadden and Crowley-Henry, 2016; Davidson, 2016; Dray et al., 2020). In contrast, 'nonbinary' refers specifically to gender identities outside the binary understanding (nonbinary, agender, genderfluid, gender-neutral, trigender) (Davidson, 2016; Shannon, 2022; Geijtenbeek and Plug, 2018). Understanding this distinction is crucial when exploring concepts such as cisgender bias, cisnormativity, and the notions of passing and stealth. Stealth trans women and men pass as their affirmed gender without revealing their trans history. 'Passing' means that a trans person transitioning within the binary gender conception is presenting in their new gender and considered by outsiders as a cisgender person, therefore passing as one (Schilt and Wiswall, 2008; Collins et al., 2015).

Further, it is important to understand the complex relationship between sexual orientation and gender identity, as both are central variables in related research (Corlett, Stutterheim, and Whiley, 2023; Schilt, 2006). Sexual orientation refers to a person's romantic and/or sexual attraction to others, while gender identity refers to a person's sense of their own gender, which may or may not correspond to their sex assigned at birth. The LGBTQI+ term suggests interdependencies that are also reflected in policy, advocacy, and public discourse. Theoretical insights from gender and queer studies indicate that central to understanding discrimination mechanisms is the distinction between gender and sexuality, while acknowledging their interconnectedness within dynamics of inequality and heteronormative constructs of normality (Bereswill and Ehlert, 2023). These constructs reinforce hierarchical structures, placing cis before trans and hetero- before homosexual.

Building on this perspective, it is essential to recognise that gender, as a socially embedded category, is often subject to immediate and unconscious attribution, leading to automatic role expectations and structural positioning (West and Zimmerman, 1987). In contrast, sexual orientation—while equally fundamental—is not always immediately visible, nor does it necessarily demand instant categorisation. This distinction results in differing experiences of discrimination: while gender-based attributions frequently occur involuntarily and without conscious intent, the disclosure of sexual orientation often hinges on self-disclosure or external speculation, creating a distinct form of vulnerability (Seidman, 2013). This insight highlights the necessity for an intersectional research approach that not only distinguishes between gender and sexuality but also accounts for the interconnectedness of multiple social identities.

In terms of theoretical terminology, it is important to note that within the binary categorisation of sexual orientation into heterosexuality and homosexuality, a binary un-

derstanding of gender manifests as well. A relationship between a nonbinary person and a (trans) woman or man may not be strictly homosexual but can be perceived as such. Similarly, a relationship between two nonbinary individuals might be labelled as heterosexual. Hence, this paper will use the umbrella term 'queer' to refer to sexual orientation when no clear indicator is provided.

3 Gendered Labour Market Outcomes

Research on gender-based labour market discrimination has primarily focused on disparities between men and women—such as wage gaps, occupational segregation, and career advancement. Despite progress, these inequalities persist due to structural constraints like employer bias and societal norms (Seguino, 2020; Drydakis, 2020). Addressing them requires a nuanced understanding of systemic barriers.

Although gender norms have evolved, the labour market remains slower to adapt, reinforcing binary and cisnormative structures. Traditional expectations around femininity and caregiving continue to influence occupational segregation and income inequality.

Female labour market participation has grown since the 1950s, driven by economic need, service sector expansion, and educational progress (Lippe and Van Dijk, 2002; England, 2005). Yet, women remain overrepresented in lower-paid service roles, with persistent wage disparities and structural barriers such as inadequate childcare and biased hiring (Seguino, 2016; Anker, 1998; Samtleben and Müller, 2022).

Income inequality persists due to the undervaluation of female-dominated work and ongoing care responsibilities (Blau and Kahn, 2017). The motherhood penalty—especially affecting heterosexual mothers—continues to reduce wages and advancement opportunities (Budig, Misra, and Boeckmann, 2012; Möhring, 2018). Reproductive potential alone places women at a structural disadvantage. However, lesbian mothers may face less severe penalties, suggesting the influence of heteronormative norms (Andresen and Nix, 2022).

While female labour market discrimination is well documented, research on LGB, trans, and nonbinary individuals remains limited. Most studies focus on binary gender comparisons (Shen, 2022), with some attention to sexual orientation (Badgett et al., 2024; Schneebaum and Badgett, 2019), often overlooking gender-diverse populations. Recent work begins to reveal parallel barriers faced by trans and nonbinary individuals (Schilt, 2006; Leppel, 2016; Geijtenbeek and Plug, 2018; Carpenter, Eppink, and Gonzales, 2020; Badgett et al., 2024).The following sections will therefore focus on examining labour market outcomes specifically for LGB individuals, followed by a closer look at trans and nonbinary populations, addressing the unique barriers and discrimination patterns they face.

3.1 Labour market outcomes for Lesbians, Gays, and Bisexuals (LGB)

LGB individuals face distinct labour market outcomes shaped by discrimination, social norms, and legal protections. Their workforce participation is influenced by economic necessity, social acceptance, and anti-discrimination policies (Badgett et al., 2024; Tilcsik, 2011; Weichselbaumer, 2022). Historical biases have led to workplace exclusion, particularly in traditional industries where heteronormative expectations prevail (Mishel, 2020). Occupational segregation affects LGB individuals differently. Studies show overrepresentation in certain sectors, such as arts, education, and healthcare, while underrepresentation persists in manual labour and leadership roles (Tilcsik, 2011; Carpenter, 2008). Discrimination in hiring and promotion contributes to this disparity, reinforcing workplace inequalities (Gould et al., 2024).

Income disparities remain a critical issue, likewise as for (heterosexual) women. Gay men often earn less than heterosexual counterparts, partly due to occupational segregation and bias in promotion (Klawitter, 2015). Conversely, lesbian women sometimes earn more than heterosexual women, potentially reflecting differing career choices and work-hour preferences (Klawitter, 2015; Drydakis, 2022; Weichselbaumer, 2022). However, bisexual individuals often experience the most significant wage penalties due to compounded discrimination (Mishel, 2020).

The distribution of care work in queer households differs from traditional gendered norms. Studies indicate that same-sex couples tend to share unpaid care and household responsibilities more equitably compared to heterosexual couples (Downing and Goldberg, 2011; Bauer, 2016; Goldberg, 2013). However, external pressures such as workplace discrimination and legal barriers can still shape care-giving roles, particularly for LGB individuals with children (Álvarez Bernardo, Romo Avilés, and García Berbén, 2018). Additionally, bisexual individuals in mixed-gender relationships may experience caregiving expectations similar to heterosexual norms (Biblarz and Savci, 2010).

Structural barriers hinder LGB career advancement. Fear of discrimination leads some individuals to conceal their identities, impacting networking and promotion opportunities (Ragins, Singh, and Cornwell, 2007). Bias in leadership selection processes further limits in the representation in senior positions (Carpenter, 2008).

For LGB workers, gendered norms impact their labour market outcomes in seemingly different ways than for heterosexual woman. If their sexual identity is shared within their workplace environment, gay men experience worse outcomes than heterosexual men, whereas lesbian women are able to earn more than heterosexual woman. The different distribution of care work and the absence of heterosexual gendered household and fam-

ily norms allow for a better labour market situation and career development compared to heterosexual woman, not to heterosexual men though, and only if the legal framework fosters LGB equality. Addressing these still existing disparities adequately requires comprehensive policies, including the different discrimination channels LGB people face. Stronger anti-discrimination laws, and targeted diversity initiatives can foster acceptance following inclusivity. However, existing LGB interventions may not fully address the specific situation gender identity minorities, trans and nonbinary people, find themselves in.

3.2 Labour market situation of the Trans & Nonbinary community

Research on the labour market situation of trans and nonbinary populations has increased recently, primarily due to improved data availability. Historically, the lack of sufficient quantitative data has hindered comprehensive studies (Leppel, 2016; Shannon, 2022; Geijtenbeek and Plug, 2018). Nevertheless, a growing body of research now contributes to a deeper understanding. Quantitative studies by Geijtenbeek and Plug (2018), Leppel (2020), Carpenter, Eppink, and Gonzales (2020), Shannon (2022), and Grant et al. (2011) provide insights into participation rates, unemployment, income distribution, and socioeconomic status. Meanwhile, qualitative approaches explore workplace experiences, gender perception, and the impact of transitioning in professional contexts (Schilt, 2006; Schilt and Wiswall, 2008; Schilt and Westbrook, 2009; Connell, 2010; Corlett, Stutterheim, and Whiley, 2023; Fontana and Siriwichai, 2022; McFadden and Crowley-Henry, 2016; Davidson, 2016).

3.2.1 Employment, Participation, and Discrimination

Trans and nonbinary individuals often face challenging labour market conditions across affluent nations, including higher unemployment, poverty, and workplace discrimination rates (Collins et al., 2015; Dray et al., 2020; Ciprikis, Cassells, and Berrill, 2020). Despite high participation rates, driven by an increased need to earn income due to higher poverty risk and reduced family support, unemployment remains significantly higher than among cisgender populations (Leppel, 2016; Calderon-Cifuentes, 2021; James et al., 2016; Davidson, 2016; Dray et al., 2020). Discrimination in hiring and employment practices often stems from both taste-based and statistical discrimination, with transphobia reflecting a societal distaste for gender nonconformity (Hill and Willoughby, 2005; Van Borm and Baert, 2018). Employers may perceive trans and nonbinary individuals as less productive, often due to assumptions about health struggles or perceived instability (Drydakis,

2017).

3.2.2 Occupational Segregation and Career Development

The labour market challenges faced by trans and nonbinary individuals are often exacerbated by occupational segregation. Trans and nonbinary workers are under-represented in highly gendered industries—such as male-dominated blue-collar jobs or female-dominated care work—due to pervasive cisnormativity and heteronormativity (Mills and Oswin, 2024; Dowers et al., 2019). Career development is also impacted, as transitioning within the workplace often leads to occupational shifts. For example, trans women who initially chose traditionally male occupations may transition into more female-dominated roles, aligning personal identity with professional choices post-transition (McFadden and Crowley-Henry, 2016).

Studies indicate that trans men may benefit from male labour market privileges post-transition, such as increased authority and career opportunities, if they align with masculine norms. In contrast, trans women often face compounded disadvantages, particularly if they do not conform to normative femininity (Schilt, 2006; Van Borm and Baert, 2018). The experience of transitioning itself, especially when accompanied by a name change, can disrupt career capital, as individuals may face challenges in maintaining professional continuity (McFadden and Crowley-Henry, 2016; Ciprikis, Cassells, and Berrill, 2020). Research also shows that LGBTQ career perspectives differ, with nonbinary individuals particularly facing challenges when navigating professional environments (Ueno et al., 2023).

3.2.3 Income & Social Security Inequality

Income disparities are prevalent among trans and nonbinary workers compared to their cisgender counterparts. Trans women often experience wage decreases post-transition, while trans men may maintain or even improve their income (Geijtenbeek and Plug, 2018; Schilt and Wiswall, 2008). Nonbinary individuals, especially those assigned female at birth, face the most severe income disadvantages, likely due to perceived alignment with female socioeconomic outcomes (Carpenter, Eppink, and Gonzales, 2020). These patterns reflect broader structural inequalities and reveal how labour market discrimination operates differently across diverse gender identities.

Due to barriers in formal employment, trans and nonbinary individuals are disproportionately represented in the informal labour market, including sex work and undeclared jobs. These roles often expose them to heightened risks of violence, harassment, and legal precarity (Ito, 2018; Graham et al., 2014). For many, informal work becomes a necessity rather than a choice, driven by economic exclusion and limited opportunities within the

formal sector (Nadal, Davidoff, and Fujii-Doe, 2014; Operario, Soma, and Underhill, 2008; Poteat et al., 2015). Moreover, difficulties in job searches due to discrimination and bias can push trans and nonbinary individuals into precarious and informal job arrangements (Bell, 2017).

The labour market outcomes for trans and nonbinary individuals are shaped by structural discrimination, social stigma, and occupational segregation, leading to pervasive income inequality and employment challenges. Although high participation rates indicate a strong will to engage in the labour market, systemic barriers persist. Discrimination seems to be driven by nonconformity and less pronounced if a binary transition, aligning with known gender norms, takes place. In what follows, the underlying theoretical mechanisms of discrimination are examined in greater depth.

4 Theories of labour market discrimination

With the lenses of potential and discrimination theories, the various discrimination channels become more visible. To evaluate if, from known labour market barriers for women and LGB people, parallels can be drawn to gender identity minorities such as trans and nonbinary individuals, it is crucial to understand how gender- and identity-based discrimination in the labour market evolves initially. Based on the analysis of Figart (1997), Altonji and Blank (1999), Valian (1999), Schilt (2006), Schilt and Wiswall (2008), and Lorenz-Meyer (2023) and others, three main discrimination theories are outlined which show to be the analytical standard in the explanation of gender- and minority-related labour market discrimination. Beforehand, the field of vision is determined by a definition for labour market discrimination by Altonji and Blank (1999, p. 3168) as:

> "[...] a situation in which persons who provide labour market services and who are equally productive in a physical or material sense are treated unequally in a way that is related to an observable characteristic such as race, ethnicity, or gender."

According to this definition, unequal treatment can be understood either as different wages for the same service or different services for the same wage. This definition captures essential aspects of labour market discrimination. Nevertheless, it can be expanded by additional criteria such as ethnicity, age or disability, which is essential for an intersectional analysis. Acknowledging that certain individuals may combine several characteristics which the labour market is discriminatory towards is crucial to understand the hardship these labour market participants may face. It is the basis for a later intersectional policy perspective. An already intersectional and multidisciplinary definition is

formulated by Figart (1997, p. 7), saying:

> "Labour market discrimination is a multidimensional interaction of economic, social, political, and cultural forces in both the workplace and the family, resulting in differential outcomes involving pay, employment, and status."

The *multidimensional interactions* of this definition emphasise the structural and institutional characteristics labour market discrimination can originate from. It places the labour market within an institutional framework rather than something to analyse for itself, an important perspective outside the neoclassical theory (Cain, 1986). These interactions between the individual, the market and the institutional network are the basis for some of the following theories of workplace gender and identity discrimination.

The first theory presented, the human capital theory, comes from a mainstream economic perspective and underlies most empirical research on gender differences (Altonji and Blank, 1999; Becker, 1985). The gender socialisation theory origins in sociology but is used by feminist economic scholars to explain parts of gender-related labour market discrimination based on an understanding of gendered socialisation (Carter, 2014; Padavic and Reskin, 2002; Hoominfar, 2019). A different approach is used in the set of discrimination theories. Statistical and Taste-Based Discrimination is to be found on the employer side, resulting in different labour market outcomes for men and women (Schilt and Wiswall, 2008; McFadden, 2020). The following elaborations will introduce the theoretical framework of these discrimination theories and point out their potential and limitations for analysing labour market discrimination based on gender identity.

4.1 Human Capital Theory

Human capital theory posits that the labour market is impartial, rewarding workers based on skills, experience, and productivity (Becker, 1962), regardless of gender identity. It attributes gender segregation to women taking career breaks for caregiving, leading to lower qualifications and work experience. This results in distinct "reproductive capital," which holds little market value. The theory argues that gender inequality arises from differences in skills and career choices rather than discrimination (Schilt, 2006). Women are perceived to prefer lower-paid, traditionally female occupations, while employers' biases also shape disparities (Altonji and Blank, 1999). However, this fails to explain why women with similar qualifications still lag behind men in pay and promotions. Skills associated with unpaid care work (Becker, 1985) are undervalued, highlighting the theory's limitations. Furthermore, it overlooks structural and institutional factors contributing to gender disparities and disregards intersectional dimensions, such as ethnicity (Valian,

1999; Altonji and Blank, 1999), sexual orientation (Drydakis, 2009), and gender identity (Geijtenbeek and Plug, 2018). Finally, it lacks a comprehensive explanation of the origins of gender-based preferences, underscoring its need for further theoretical development (Altonji and Blank, 1999).

4.2 Gender Socialisation Theory

Gender socialisation theory asserts that childhood and adolescence are critical in shaping gender identities, expectations, and behaviours through socialisation agents like family, peers, media, and institutions (Carter, 2014). These agents instil societal norms about how men and women should behave, communicate, and which careers suit them (Valian, 1999; Hoominfar, 2019).

From an early age, children experience gender socialisation as caregivers assign roles based on biological sex (Carter, 2014). This includes preferences for toys, clothing, and career aspirations, reinforced by peer interactions, media representation, and institutional structures (Hoominfar, 2019; Padavic and Reskin, 2002).

This process significantly influences career choices and labour market outcomes. Gendered norms often steer women toward female-dominated professions, reinforcing occupational segregation (Schilt, 2006). As Schilt (2006, p. 467) states: "As women are socialised to prioritise family, they are expected to seek part-time jobs with flexibility but lower wages, whereas men pursue higher-paying positions to reinforce masculinity." Additionally, gender norms discourage women from salary negotiations and promotions, contributing to the wage gap and career stagnation. Employers' biases in hiring and promotions further institutionalise gendered assumptions.

Linked to this theory is the concept of doing gender, which highlights how gender is constructed and reinforced through social interactions (West and Zimmerman, 1987; Fenstermaker and West, 2013). Gender does not exist outside social contexts but is performed in ways that align—or not—with societal expectations (Carter, 2014). Those who do not conform to their assigned gender may adopt alternative expressions of gender identity. This challenges rigid norms and expands gender theory, particularly concerning trans and nonbinary identities [1].

Labour market disparities reflect gendered socialisation, as seen in occupational segregation and wage inequality. Women are often channelled into care-related jobs due to social expectations, while men are perceived as more suited for technical and leadership roles (Paap, 2006; England, 2005; Gould, 1974). This reproduction of gendered labour divisions perpetuates disparities in earnings, career advancement, and unpaid care work.

[1] For further discussion, see Connell (2010) and Schilt and Westbrook (2009).

Although gender socialisation theory explains many labour market disparities, it has limitations (England, 2005). It frames gender as a learned and reinforced social construct (Hoominfar, 2019; Alvesson and Billing, 2009), aligning with doing gender theory. This perspective connects to human capital theory, explaining how socialisation shapes career preferences, thus influencing skills accumulation and labour market standing (Corcoran and Courant, 1985). However, it overlooks structural factors like inadequate care infrastructure and institutional biases, leading some sociologists to critique it for focusing on individual agency and inadvertently blaming victims for their disadvantages [2]. Nonetheless, understanding collective socialisation is essential for addressing gender-based labour market discrimination.

4.3 Discrimination Theory

Discrimination in the labour market extends beyond gender disparities, affecting ethnic minorities, individuals with disabilities, elderly employees, queers and minority gender identities. These employment barriers and wage disparities fall into two main categories: taste-based and statistical discrimination.

Taste-Based Discrimination: Originally developed in racial discrimination studies (Becker, 2010), taste-based discrimination occurs when employers favour or reject certain groups based on prejudice rather than productivity (Schilt and Wiswall, 2008). For example, an employer may assume women will leave due to pregnancy, resulting in lower wages, fewer promotions, or less training. The concept of homosocial reproduction further reinforces discrimination, as employers tend to hire individuals similar to themselves or existing employees (Padavic and Reskin, 2002; Schilt and Wiswall, 2008). This behaviour contributes to the Leaky Pipeline and Glass Ceiling effects, disproportionately impacting non-white individuals, women, disabled and elderly workers, as well as minority gender identities (McFadden and Crowley-Henry, 2016; James et al., 2016; Collins et al., 2015). Sexual orientation also plays a role, as LGB individuals frequently encounter biases in hiring, wage determination, and promotion (Drydakis, 2009) and can therefore find themselves in similar situations.

Statistical Discrimination: Statistical discrimination arises when employers rely on group-based statistical averages rather than assessing individuals independently (Arrow, 1972; Phelps, 1972). For cost-efficiency, they assume characteristics such as education, experience, or turnover rates based on demographic stereotypes (McFadden, 2020). For instance, a female applicant may be presumed less qualified than a male counterpart despite possessing equal credentials (England, 2005). Similarly, LGB workers may face

[2] For further discussion, see England (2005).

assumptions about commitment or career trajectory, impacting job opportunities and earnings (Tilcsik, 2011).

Both types of discrimination reduce efficiency by misallocating talent, hindering diversity, and reinforcing social inequalities (Seguino, 2020). Discrimination theory highlights employer-employee interactions but often neglects structural factors such as segregation in education or housing, which shape labour market disparities. Additionally, it assumes discrimination is always intentional, whereas internalised biases may influence decisions unconsciously (Delgado and Stefancic, 2023).

4.4 Theoretical nexus of gender, identity and discrimination

Looking back at the barriers women face in the labour market, it becomes apparent that all barriers or their impacts can be linked to two main factors: the ability to engage in reproductive practices at a certain point in life and the socialisation of women into primary caregiving roles and occupations, lesbians and bisexuals are also (partially) reflected in that. However, it does not fully capture possible discrimination channels for sexual orientation, similar as for gender identity. The evaluated labour market discrimination theories support this observation. Table 1 provides an overview of the linked and categorised results.

If motherhood or potential motherhood is the primary reason for women's marginalisation and difficulties in the labour market, this is rooted in a biological understanding of women, therefore, as cis women. Discriminative mechanisms like the uneven assumption of care responsibilities based on gender norms function regardless of whether or not a female worker wants to be a mother and is hetero or queer. Human Capital Theory and Gender Socialisation Theory lead to the assumption that this "penalty", to a different extent between possible and actual mothers, applies to all cis women. Statistical discrimination supports this assumption by stating that even if not all cisgender women wish to or can use their reproductive abilities, they are still considered as women who potentially can do so. Employers might use statistical averaging to draw their conclusion and therefore consider a woman the less reliable employment investment or consider her to be more suitable for specific, feminine positions. If women do not conform to feminine, mother- or womanhood stereotypes, they can face the penalty of non-conformity similar to lesbians and the trans and nonbinary community (Van Borm and Baert, 2018). Non-conformity for cis woman can be from choosing a male-dominated occupation over a female one, not wanting to be pregnant and bear a child, or not conforming to the norms set for mothers in the labour market (Benard and Correll, 2010).

The labour market discrimination of trans and nonbinary individuals origins in non-conformity with set norms and perceptions linked to gender. However, the underlying

mechanisms can not be explained sufficiently with possible discrimination based on reproductive practices and gendered care responsibility norms. Therefore, the trans and nonbinary community is not yet fully included in the understanding of gendered discrimination patterns. By not aligning with the common understanding of a cis-normative culture and gender binarity, the trans and especially nonbinary population includes additional dimensions to gender discrimination (Ciprikis, Cassells, and Berrill, 2020) which need to be explored.

Labour Market Barrier	Human Capital Theory	Gender Socialisation Theory	Taste-Based Discrimination Theory	Statistical Discrimination Theory
Labour Market Participation	• preference of the worker over a lifespan, • capital that is not part of the market (unpaid care work, community aid)	• historic socialisation of gender roles/norms, • the female domain of household & family rather than labour market	• based on the *taste* of the employer, hiring decisions are made • women and queers less hired, gatekeeping of the labour market due to *gender-taste*	• employer assumption that women would rather want to engage in reproductive practices & be the main care provider, • assumption that all women prefer to work part-time because they statistically still do more than men
Occupational Segregation	• individual preferences for certain sectors, • market preferences for women for certain sectors, • demand for *female* capital only in certain sectors/levels	• gendered norms and expectations about career aspirations, • gendered hiring practice and co-working, • female/male-dominated sectors	• not considering women or gay men *suitable* for male-dominated sectors, • hiring women, or gay men only for *female labour* (e.g. care sector)	• assumptions based on statistically female-dominated sectors, • only females are considered for new hirings for female dominated positions and vice versa
Income Inequality	• preferences for low wage sectors (income over lifespan), • different value of capital that men and women bring to the market, • *female* capital outside of the market (unpaid care work)	• gendered socialisation impacts income and/or promotion negotiations, • female socialisation not demanding more income, • female role as primary caregiver (no market income)	• not hiring women for high wage sectors/positions, • dominantly hiring women for part-time positions, • mainly (not) offering part-time contracts in female (male) sectors	• women statistically work for less money than men (care = low wage sector), • women and queers have a worse bargaining power than men, • lower wages are acceptaed be women (gender pay gap)

Labour Market Barrier	Human Capital Theory	Gender Socialisation Theory	Taste-Based Discrimination Theory	Statistical Discrimination Theory
Distribution o. Care Work	• personal preference to *become primary caregiver*, • less costly if women stay at home (lower loss of income compared to men)	• socialisation and established gender roles place women within care environment, • social interaction of "doing" gender assigns care responsibility to women, • care qualities are derived from reproductive practices	• parental leave schemes mainly accepted (and available) for women (and hetero couples), • part-time employment preferably for women, • considering care responsibilities only for women	• statistically, men still earn a higher wage than women, • therefore, less income is lost if a woman takes on more unpaid care work
Career Development	• different capital accumulation by women and men, • less training, development and career opportunities for women, • *no need for development* due to leaving the labour market for care responsibility	• women socialised to be less demanding for career development opportunities, • negotiating practices, • socialised to be in supporting roles rather than management	• not considering women suitable for management or leading positions, • 'leaky pipeline' and 'glass ceiling', • different support for women and men with career development	• statistically women leave the labour market more often than men for care responsibilities, • investment in career development is lower over lifespan

Table 1: Discrimination Theories & Labour Market Barriers

Most theories rely on binary gender frameworks, overlooking nonbinary individuals. While trans individuals transitioning within the binary may partially fit these models (while at the same time disputing others substantially (Schilt, 2006)), nonbinary workers challenge existing assumptions profoundly. Similarly, sexual orientation-related disparities are only partly accounted for in these theories, further complicating comprehensive labour market analysis. Moreover, labour market research on women and men benefits from extensive data sources, whereas data on trans and nonbinary populations remains scarce. Qualitative insights from trans and nonbinary individuals in the labour market can help shine some light on how discrimination channels operate outside the binary frameworks of *gender* and *hetero-/homosexuality*.

5 Methodology

In order to explore the nuances of discrimination and labour market barriers faced by the trans and nonbinary community this paper applies a mixes method approach. It will combine the theoretical perspectives from different academic disciplines, such as economics, sociology, psychology, and gender and health studies, with in-depth interviews with members of the trans and nonbinary community.

The theoretical perspectives so far and continuing provide an overview of the current knowledge about labour market barriers for women and discrimination theories regarding gender and minority group inequalities. It makes parallels in structural and institutional shortcomings for women, queers and the trans and nonbinary community evident and allows first assumptions of discriminatory patterns. Building on this, semi-structured interviews with trans and nonbinary community members were conducted. Their shared experiences and insider knowledge (Merton, 1972) contributes to a better understanding of the interrelationship of discrimination experiences, gender identity and the labour market. The decision for in-depth interviews was made for several reasons. First, the lack of empirical data capturing the intersection of minority gender identities and labour market discrimination longed for an explorative approach. Further, qualitative research is highly applicable to understanding the experience of stigmatised groups (Stutterheim and Ratcliffe, 2021) such as trans and nonbinary individuals. Due to the growing visibility of trans and nonbinary individuals in the formal labour market, their personal experiences and impressions can help to understand the phenomena of identity construction and its contextualisation in social relations. Moreover, these perceptions shed light on structural and institutional settings and their excluding or including mechanisms from an inside perspective, which expert-based knowledge might overlook or dismiss (Campbell

et al., 2020). As the scientific and statistical terminologies yet often fail to capture the distinction between (binary) trans and nonbinary individuals, interviews allowed for an active engagement and clarifications. Combined with the explorative process, this allows for an equitable and open research approach. Lastly, the interview partners can also be understood as experts within their field of everyday knowledge. As Schilt (2006) and Geijtenbeek and Plug (2018) state, trans and nonbinary individuals come with a set of socioeconomic backgrounds and knowledge before their gender transition, which is then expanded by experiences and interactions post-transition. This opens up a unique research window that can best be explored with the individuals themselves. However, it must also be noted that this research would improve tremendously by the participation or lead of a trans or nonbinary researcher (Austin, 2016; Pratt, Sonenshein, and Feldman, 2022) since cis*gender biases would be reflected accordingly and eventually left out of research design and results.

At the commencement of my research, I was unaware of how I will be received as a female cisgender person researching inclusivity and equality demands of the trans and nonbinary community. I followed the example of Schilt (2006) and Corlett, Stutterheim, and Whiley (2023) and embarked into the study very open with my research agenda and political affiliation with queer-feminist and trans and nonbinary politics. Data collection in this social field is very sensitive and needs not only awareness and sensitivity for communication patterns, but also the knowledge of specific cultural codes. Learning from them and knowing not to educate or patronise, I hope to build a relationship with the community further to bridge the gap between "outsider and insider" (Merton, 1972). I am mindful that I am part of the majority system (for me, being a white cisgender middle-class woman) at the same time as being part of other oppressed groups (as a queer ciswoman) by the patriarchal system. Therefore my basic assumptions, interpretations and analysis are shaped by my own lived experience as an academic white cisgender researcher and influenced in their outcome. During the research, interpretation and analysis, I continuously engaged in self-reflection to dismantle any preconceived biases. A helpful orientation can be the concept of queer reflexivity by McDonald (2013). For instance, it is necessary to frequently question cognitive patterns, e.g. the tendency to focus only on negative experiences and instead make a conscious effort to consider positive accounts as well to portray a comprehensive and true lived experience more accurately.

5.1 Sampling and recruitment

The in-depth interviews seek to capture the experiences and perspectives of the participants on discrimination within their educational path and career development, financial opportunities and limitations and their unique gender transition. They contribute to understanding population-group-specific discrimination patterns and resulting labour market barriers. This aligns with qualitative research tradition seeking depth of understanding rather than generalisation by means of exploratory, in-depth interviews, including follow-up questions to encourage participant reflection and sensemaking (Boddy, 2016). This is especially crucial when studying stigmatised groups that have experienced marginalisation and discrimination (Stutterheim and Ratcliffe, 2021). The sample size in similar studies is usually larger (Corlett, Stutterheim, and Whiley, 2023; Schilt, 2006; Muhr, Sullivan, and Rich, 2016) than in this research design and thus poses a limitation to the research. However, as it is the quality and not the quantity that matters in this respect, novel insights which help to better understand this phenomenon in a widely under-explored field, are expected. A second round of interviews, consisting of the participants of the first round and 7-10 new nonbinary participants will be complementing this research in a future version.

All participants were selected based on a set of criteria, including self-identification as a trans and/or nonbinary person, current active participation in the formal labour market and a minimum of two years of experience in the formal labour market of a developed economy. The selection process followed the guidelines of purposive sampling to ensure the match between the sample and the research question (Campbell et al., 2020). The selection criteria specifically left the definition of gender transition open to all participants themselves to capture as many understandings of a gender transition as possible, resulting in a diverse group of trans and/or nonbinary interview partners (Pratt, Sonenshein, and Feldman, 2022). Generating a random sample of interview partners is not possible since the research is not bound to a specific region or country other than developed economies, nor is there a dispersal of trans and nonbinary individuals in general. Further, it was important to build a minimum level of trust with all participants to ensure safe participation and confidence in the interview situation. All interviewees were therefore recruited via personal relationship to corresponding social milieus and through word-of-mouth enquiries in different community circles.

5.2 Data collection

The interviews were conducted between February and May 2023 in English and German, one online, while all others were face-to-face. Regardless of the format, the interviews

lasted approximately 1.5 hours (range: 55-120 minutes) and were conducted in a semi-structured way. All participants received the lead questions in advance. All interviews were preceded by informed consent, including the permission to record and take notes, standards of confidentiality, and the right to withdraw without an explanation required. As the interviewer, I indicated that the interview would be a casual conversation using the prepared questions as a guideline. I was mindful of facilitating a safer interview environment and encouraged comments at any time.

In reporting the demographics of the interview partners, self-chosen pseudonyms and general categories for occupation and education are used to guarantee their anonymity. Anonymity was important to half of the participants in particular and not requested by the other half at all, depending on their personal career development and/or public standing. Nevertheless, the same generalisations are applied to all of them. Table 2 provides a demographic overview of all participants in the order of the interviews conducted.

Participant[3]	**Age**	**National Identity**	**Occupation**	**Education level attained**	**Gender Identity**	**Sex assigned at birth**
Juno	30	United Kingdom	employee	Bachelors	nonbinary	AFAB
Emilia	49	United States	academic employee	PhD	female	AMAB
Francis	28	Germany	student & employee	Masters	nonbinary	AFAB
Sam	32	Sweden	employee & free-lancing	Diploma	male	AFAB
Mari	33	Venezuela	employee & free-lancing	Masters	nonbinary	AMAB

Table 2: Interview Participants Overview

Of the five interview participants, two were assigned a female sex at birth (AFAB), and three were assigned a male sex at birth (AMAB). Three participants identify as nonbinary, one as female and one as male. The terminology of the gender identity category was left entirely to the participants themselves. It is based on understanding gender as a fluid spectrum rather than two determined categories (Alvesson and Billing, 2009). On this spectrum lie all different sorts of gender identities, including female and male, which an individual can identify as (Ozturk and Tatli, 2016).

[3]Pseudonyms are used to ensure anonymity

According to the criteria, individuals without sufficient experience in the formal labour market are left out as potential interview partners. The lack of experience mostly refers to young people, but not necessarily. This shall not suggest that this group is not facing similar barriers and challenges. Corlett, Stutterheim, and Whiley (2023) provide a recent research example showing the challenges young trans and nonbinary individuals face in a largely cisgender labour market. However, within this thesis's scope, including inexperienced participants and their needs in the analysis was not possible. A further limitation of the selection pool is the dominance of academic education or background. This most likely refers to my professional context in an academic milieu and the above-mentioned sampling strategy based on personal connections. This may lead to false conclusions about the dispersal of trans and nonbinary individuals within the general society and/or occupations and thus needs to be critically reflected in the end (De Vries, 2012). Building on De Vries (2012), another limitation is that the sampling group is exclusively white except for one person. This limits the analysis in its intersectionality especially knowing that trans studies must also be understood as studies of Blackness as well and foremost (Graham et al., 2014).

5.3 Data analysis

Due to time constraints, the interviews were not transcripted verbatim[4]. Extensive notes were taken during the interview and subsequently complemented and structured using the recordings. The data was then analysed thematically, according to the guidelines proposed by Clarke and Braun (2021) and the research design of Corlett, Stutterheim, and Whiley (2023). Theme baskets based on the theoretical framework resulting from the literature review were created, and pieces of information matched accordingly. Answers were highlighted due to seeming noteworthy, interesting or appearing in several interviews similarly. The process involved iterative backward and forward movement between interviews and themes and entailed critical reflection about cis normativity bias. The material of the interviews has been coded according to the following key categories which are defined deductively with reference to literature: gender identity and vocational development, workplace experiences before and after transitioning, as well as job performance and satisfaction. Due to the openness of the analysis process, further sub-categories, like visibility and acceptance of trans identities, gender transition in an institutional setting, support networks and institutional contact points and financial independence, have been generated inductively.

[4]This decision was made in accordance with the two supervisors.

The concluding discussion of the interview results synthesises the findings from the theoretical perspectives. It provides insight into the labour market barriers and obstacles faced by the trans and nonbinary community when navigating the labour market. Potentials and strengths which become evident from the interview results complement the analysis. The limitations of the study and future research prospects and policy direction conclude this research.

6 Interview Results & Discussion

The interview results presented to structure around the two main aspects of 'Transition and Vocational Development' and following a 'Changing Work Performance and Career Development'. The following quotes will provide exemplary insight into the experiences the interview participants made within their upbringing, time in education systems and participation in the labour market. They include findings about socioeconomic backgrounds, financial constraints and transition possibilities.

6.1 Transition & vocational development

Participants discussed their gender transition or considerations regarding their gender transition as a time and personal resources-consuming process in their different social environments. For example, Sam, who transitioned at the age of twelve while still in school in Sweden, shared:

> "Whenever you are trans, you are very much on your own, and it takes a lot of your energy and focus. Having to argue for your basic existence all the time, that takes away energy. You can't focus on maths afterwards for example, it is not your main focus at the time."
>
> (Sam, 32 years old)

Having to navigate the personal transition alongside participating and performing in school or work can be challenging. In Sams's account, it had a negative impact on his school performance. Additionally, administrative barriers and the lack of support can leave individuals mostly alone in their situation. Sam further explains:

> "The system has never really been working for me, but I found ways around it in many ways. There was no support system or knowledge; you just had to make it work. You learn to hustle pretty well when you come out early. (...) I had teachers lowering my grades. I failed a paper because I wrote my chosen name on it; just completely failed it because of that. My

> sports teacher lowered my grade just because I was not conforming. I lost trust in the institution and realised I have to figure this [transition] out on the side and it [school] will not be a supportive environment for it."
>
> (Sam, 32 years old)

Here, it becomes evident that alongside his educational attainment, he always needed additional capabilities to find his way in, at that time, an exclusively cisnormative environment. He experienced unequal treatment from teachers and the school administration, directly affecting his grading. Emilia perceived her education environment as similarly challenging, growing up and studying in Texas in the 90s. She shared:

> "If I would have done this [come out as trans and transitioned], there would have not been space for anything else in my life - like going to uni. (...) Neither I nor my parents would have had any words for all that back then; there was no support at uni or anyone who would have just known."
>
> (Emilia, 49 years old)

As Emilia comes from an academic upbringing, proceeding an academic path was important for her and her family. She assumed that coming out in her social environment at the time would have taken up most of her capabilities, not leaving enough space for academic attainment and career development. Both participants indicated that their environment in educational institutions lacked support or a feeling of acceptance. Sam experienced it throughout his entire school experience, whereas Emilia did not see a transition possible for her at the time and therefore transitioned at a later point in life. For both, this had implications for their following working life. Sam was left with a general distrust in institutions and support structures, whereas Emilia continued to navigate her personal transition within institutional settings positively.

Mari also finished their academic education before transitioning. Growing up in Venezuela, with two siblings and parents that fostered an academic career for all of them, they found themselves in a different socioeconomic situation than Emilia. Mari was aware of their gender identity from a young age but unable to act on it, they explained:

> "Because I was in this society, I was doing the best I could to get good grades and just to try to escape this, just to move out of this, my home town for example. I focused on school and uni to get someway out."
>
> (Mari, 33 years old)

Similar to Emilia, Mari prioritised their education over a gender transition, knowing there would not be capabilities for both. Mental capacity and a safer and stable environment at a later point in life, allowed Mari to explore their gender identity. They further

explained:

> "Financial issues never allowed me to think about gender or transitioning or anything else. Whenever I moved here [Germany], I was focused on staying here legally first. Now, where I feel I am settled, I have a stable income, I have a permanent residency, I can think about it."
>
> (Mari, 33 years old)

Francis, who grew up in a settled and progressive family, explained that coming out as nonbinary within a studying and working environment has not always felt safe for them. At university, they explained, that "when I was asking to be addressed in a gender-neutral way after the lecturer offered to do so, I immediately was called out and treated differently"[5]. Regarding their experience in different work environments, they said:

> "I've been in work environments where I knew I didn't want to and couldn't come out here. And even now, I would still very rarely come out in a workplace. I fear that I might not get jobs or opportunities for advancement because of it, that I am not safe in a work context, that there is a lack of understanding. That it will lead to difficulties that I don't want to be forced to deal with. It's difficult and stressful enough not to come out, but the fear of how bad it can be just outweighs it."
>
> (Francis, 28 years old)

Only at their most recent employment, in a progressive work environment, they felt safe to present as nonbinary. However, they still pointed out that making co-workers aware of misgendering and the right pronouns for them takes up additional capacity alongside the daily working routine. This especially highlights the little knowledge about or relation to nonbinary identities, as they, not even after disclosing their identity or transitioning openly, can be categorised in known (gender) categories.

Juno provided a related experience whenever deciding to disclose their nonbinary gender identity at their workplace. They had been working at a small, family-run company for four years prior to their transition and explained:

> "I started exploring my gender identity and transition while working at this job. I was the first one [nonbinary employee], and for a while, I didn't come out at work because I thought I was too much of a hassle for people, and I could deal with the constant misgendering based on them not knowing."[6]
>
> (Juno, 30 years old)

[5] Author's own translation.
[6] Author's own translation.

Juno describes their employer as presenting as open-minded and progressive in public, representing trans and nonbinary artists. So whenever they decided that they wanted to come out in their working environment as well, they asked to have their pronouns in their email signature to let people know about their transition "in a subtle and low level" way, Juno said. They continued:

> "There was no reaction for weeks. [...] In the end, they didn't allow me to put my pronouns in my signature because they said it would be a political statement. There was no HR structure or support, and they kept misgendering me all the time. I then got asked If I can put a presentation together on 'pronouns and why it matters' and present it to the CEO and Management."
>
> (Juno, 30 years old)

While confronted with little acceptance or recognition of their transition, Juno was additionally asked to invest resources to educate their employer on why their visibility matters. They explained that their performance and social interaction at work was impacted by this reaction and treatment from their employer.

For the interview participants, support was not only limited to facilitating a gender transition within institutional settings, as Sam, Emilia, and Francis show with their experiences in school and academia. Companies are also important environments that can exacerbate participants' transitioning experience, as Francis and Juno's experiences show with coming out in a workplace environment. All were asked about their experience in educational institutional settings with their gender perception. None of them could remember being taught about trans and/or nonbinary identities, nor anything widely related. None of them knew a trans or nonbinary teacher or member of school staff they could have reached out to for advice. Also, in their working environments, Francis, Juno and Sam felt left out by institutional guidelines, knowledge and support.

Navigating a trans and/or nonbinary identity within a cisnormative and binary society remains challenging and resource-demanding. The interview results elucidate that participants generally leaned towards prioritising either their educational and vocational development, or their gender identity. Some participants chose to delay their transition until after completing their education. Primarily, because of expected or actual stigma associated with their gender identity as well as the lack of support and institutional infrastructure. One participant with an early gender transition described the stigma and discrimination the others feared whenever delaying their transition. Corlett, Stutterheim, and Whiley (2023) find similar prioritisation patterns. This indicates that the institutional conditions that can facilitate a gender transition are not sufficient and therefore

demand extensive resources from an individual to be able to still transition. Therefore they seem forced to prioritise one development over the other to participate in society and the labour market. The interview results reflect that substantial effort is invested in not disclosing their own gender identity in order to safeguard themselves from discrimination and/or harassment. This can lead to feeling forced to live stealth, if the appearance of an individual allows for that, in order to ensure self-protection. This shows parallels to the concept of doing gender (West and Zimmerman, 1987; Fenstermaker and West, 2013); the individuals convince in their affirmed gender through learned social interactions so successfully, that they pass as cisgender.

Acceptance of trans and nonbinary identities and access to legal gender recognition and transition is therefore a key factor in labour market participation in general, but particularly in early career development and equal opportunities. This influences early career development even before individuals enter the labour market. Career aspirations and choices already develop during time spent in the education system (Scott, Belke, and Barfield, 2011). Schools, teachers and educators can tremendously influence children and teenagers in their career development and understanding of gender (identity). This also becomes evident with gender socialisation theory which sees learning gender norms and roles as essential in the later development of career aspirations (Schilt, 2006). If children are already socialised in a non-cisnormative way and thought about minority gender identities within their educational path, an inclusive and safer environment for trans and nonbinary adolescence could be created, giving them the opportunity to have their vocational development shaped by personal interest rather than existential safety concerns. Currently, trans and nonbinary young adults are more likely to discontinue formal education or contemplate leaving school (Calderon-Cifuentes, 2021), which creates a significant obstacle in their socialisation process as future professionals. Therefore becoming apparent that the timing of a transition has long-lasting impacts. A later transition can prevent young trans and nonbinary individuals from experiencing exclusion and discrimination at a younger age. However, attempts to conceal a trans or nonbinary gender identity can lead to increased negative workplace outcomes, lower job satisfaction, and lower levels of acceptance and integration within the workplace (Dray et al., 2020). To be someone's true self and experience acceptance for it in private as well as in the work sphere can increase life satisfaction, well-being, and workplace performance (Drydakis, 2020).

6.2 Changing work performance and career development

Most participants pointed out, that their gender transition influenced their work performance and pro-active work participation. Sam indicated that since he transitioned before entering the labour market, he was working in his first few jobs as a passing male teenager, not disclosing his trans identity in order to find employment. However, he still was not able to fully focus on his performance. He explained:

> "I started working when I was 14 and it was all kind of dependent on if someone had my back. I hadn't changed my name back then, I could only work at queer spaces, I tried a few things but always needed someone who would help me cover up. It was dangerous if people found out. I had to quit a few jobs, because of that. It is a bit of a hassle and it limits your options. The working market just never felt like something that is open for me."
>
> (Sam, 32 years old)

In Sams's account, this indicates existential safety concerns that had to be considered whenever first accessing the labour market as a teenager, and again extensive capabilities dedicated to basic security rather than job performance or career ambitions. He continued:

> "If you don't know if you can really stay on a job if that is what you learn at the beginning of your working career, it does not really open up the feeling that there are options to advance anywhere. You never know when you will have to leave, you never know if you have any backup. So my investment in being in a working market has been affected quite a lot."
>
> (Sam, 32 years old)

This was further affirmed by not knowing if any career investment would have long-lasting outcomes since it was tied to him living stealth. Up until today, Sam does not disclose his trans history in official contexts or work environments where he does not feel safe enough to do so. Due to his early transition, and considering himself a "trans grandpa", he passes as a cis man whenever he wants to, also in working environments.

Juno's job investment was also influenced after they disclosed their nonbinary gender identity in their work environment. They explained:

> "Their reaction to my transition affected my performance massively. I was always a real, social team member, and I withdrew quite quickly after an unofficial meeting with the only HR person. (...) There were a lot of changes that came off the back of that. I was treated badly, I was suddenly put on a

trial period, after already being with the company for four years. I was not in a position to leave the job since I just moved countries and depended on the job security. I felt quite small within it all. It is a lot to deal with; I stopped getting involved, lost motivation and disassociated myself for the following 2.5 years. I started *quiet quitting*."

(Juno, 30 years old)

'Quiet quitting' refers to the phenomenon where individuals disengage or withdraw from their work or professional roles without overtly resigning or formally leaving their positions, often accompanied by a decline in performance or reduced effort (Henke, 2023). Juno's description makes it apparent that not only their work performance was affected but also their mental health and well-being. They described feeling gaslighted by their employer and line managers and found themselves in a hostile work environment. Gaslighting refers to a manipulative tactic in which one person, typically in a relationship or social context, deliberately distorts or denies the reality of another person's experiences, emotions, or perceptions, causing the targeted individual to doubt their own sanity, memory, or judgment (Kukreja and Pandey, 2023). It affected their performance and social standing in their team.

Many participants referred to safety concerns when transitioning within their working environment or negative consequences that might follow the transition. Juno and Francis therefore both passed as their former cis identities at work or waited with their outing, whereas in other social contexts, they were presenting fully in their nonbinary gender identity. Sam, on the other hand, passed as cisgender within his chosen gender identity at the beginning of his working life. All of them were navigating feared discrimination and potential bias with their employers and colleagues upon disclosure of their trans and/or nonbinary history. Which lastly negatively impacted their work performance and engagement.

On the contrary, Emilia, who works in the same academic institution as before her transition, feels confident about her transition within her working environment and described positive impacts on her work. She experienced that being out as a trans woman has positively changed her ways of connecting with students and shifted her research perspectives, she stated:

"My teaching has improved in that sense that it is so much easier to connect to the students, for whatever reason. The students who come to my classes are interested in what I am saying in a different way than they were before. But also, what I am teaching has changed, and also my research has changed, which started before transition but continued much more after that,

do something more socially engaged, which is also something the students are more interested in. So teaching has improved, research topics and interests have shifted. Perhaps my performance has not gotten worst there, but it has changed because I have many, many more things going on now than before; priorities have changed."

(Emilia, 49 years old)

Emilia's positive and supportive working environment allowed her to unite her gender identity with her vocational identity. It further led to a different engagement with her work while being able to keep all her previous career and reputation achievements. Later in the interview, Juno also discussed how they had a positive experience regarding their new work environment. They are working in a senior head of department position, still within the same industry, and explained:

"My new CEO there deliberately used my correct pronouns straight away when introducing me to the rest of the company - he made a point of making it clear in a very subtle and nice way, so I didn't have to. They have an inclusivity person who I had a meeting with right in the beginning, and there are also other people using gender nonconforming pronouns in their email signatures, which is really cool to see."

(Juno, 30 years old)

In Juno's account, the encouraging new work environment led to an increased active engagement at work, re-identification with their work content and improved motivation. Their performance was positively influenced and they engaged in additional commitments and advocacy for the community:

"I would also say that me coming out has led to me being part of employee network groups and holding space on committees that I don't know I would necessarily otherwise, I'm a bit of a diversity box tick, I think. I'm trying to make that work for me as much as I have the capacity to do because I know that like, if I'm not up there, representing a perspective - a trans perspective - that it won't be represented at all."

(Juno, 30 years old)

Juno, similar to Emilia, was able to stay within the same industry before and after their gender transition and also successfully transferred their reputation and social networks. Both participants noticed a change in their perspectives and priorities, which they included and positively contributed to their work engagement. They both referred

to little things that made a significant difference, like email signatures or an unexcited reaction to their new pronouns or names. Additionally, the expertise they gained with their gender transition and identification as trans and/or nonbinary was acknowledged by their employers and considered a potential. Francis, who works part-time for a progressive radio station, echoed this experience, saying:

> "I know I am in a privileged, fortunate situation right now. In one of my current jobs, where my nonbinary identity is seen as an expertise I bring with, I notice what a difference it makes to have that in a work environment. Even if it remains exhausting to keep pointing out to people what pronouns to use."
>
> (Francis, 28 years old)

Summarising, the data suggest that once trans and nonbinary individuals are advanced in their gender transition, their experience generally enables performance growth, career development, and job satisfaction. These developments are made possible by a working environment that facilitates a gender transition and inclusion of trans and nonbinary identities. Whenever safety concerns or feared negative consequences are present, non-disclosing of a trans and/or nonbinary history can lead to losing already acquired work experience and/or social networks. Additionally, aggravating work environments can limit career planning, feeling of belonging and opportunities to show potential for the participants. The data suggests that personal resource management, financial constraints, and the availability of support can demand choosing between focusing on gender identity development or vocational development.

The findings illustrate the multidimensional experiences trans and nonbinary individuals can have within their vocational development, their gender transition, and workplace environment. They suggest that a gender transition at any point in life can be complex and non-linear, especially for individuals who have to manage the additional burden of real and perceived stigma due to their trans identity. They generally align with the findings of Corlett, Stutterheim, and Whiley (2023) and show similar patterns as the work from Schilt (2006) and Schilt and Wiswall (2008). Institutional barriers and obstacles are evident in these findings, which link the educational path, administrative bureaucracy, and career development. This can influence the labour market situation of the trans and nonbinary community (Leppel, 2016; Scott, Belke, and Barfield, 2011; Köllen, 2016). The mechanisms that drive discrimination of trans and nonbinary populations in the labour market, become apparent to be centred around two main factors. First, the cisnormative and binary institutional setting that interacts with the education system and the labour market and second, the general acceptance of trans and nonbinary gender identities.

Trans young adults who give precedence to their gender identity simultaneously acquire essential skills and resources they do not have to fear losing with a gender transition (Dickey et al., 2016). The human capital transition from before a transition to then living in the affirmed gender identity presented as a common obstacle in the literature (Schilt and Wiswall, 2008; Van Borm and Baert, 2018; Ciprikis, Cassells, and Berrill, 2020; Köllen, 2021; Dickey et al., 2016). The results here show that individuals could partly transfer their human and social capital with them whenever they had already built a reputation for them before transitioning. Whereas, especially when entering the labour market and accumulating first experiences, sudden disclosure of trans history can lead to losing social and human capital. It is difficult to determine the exact impact a gender transition has on continuous education, labour market participation, and job performance. Nevertheless, a supportive environment in these areas eases the inclusion of gender minority individuals and can allow them to show their full potential. The findings nuance that a gender transition, or being able to present as the affirmed gender identity, can positively impact work performance and job satisfaction. Thereby the results contribute to the findings from Drydakis (2017), Drydakis (2020), Schilt and Wiswall (2008), and Corlett, Stutterheim, and Whiley (2023) and others.

Interview participants noticed that after their transition, they included advocacy and political activism for their community within their work environment and priorities, which is not least due to the experts they themselves have become through navigating their transition in challenging settings. Inclusivity actions and representation opportunities from the employer side were noted positively whenever participants felt they were sincere rather than tokenising. Similar findings were also reported by Corlett, Stutterheim, and Whiley (2023).

Van Borm and Baert (2018) and Schilt (2006) find that trans individuals within the binary gender construct find themselves within the gender norms of their chosen gender identity. This means trans women face similar barriers to cis women regarding income inequality, occupational segregation and career development. However, trans men can access the favoured position of cis men in the labour market and experience higher acceptance rates. The trans participants of this research could not echo these experiences. However, the nonbinary participants experienced these relations by being treated as their gender assigned at birth, even after their transition to a nonbinary gender identity. Nonbinary individuals do gender, including social interactions from all genders, diluting and breaking up all gender categories. By not aligning with the mainstream gender understanding in any other aspect than their sex assigned at birth, they face the lowest acceptance rate and find themselves in the most difficult labour market situation as

first findings from Shannon (2022), Geijtenbeek and Plug (2018), and Dray et al. (2020) also confirm. This indicates that nonbinary individuals face a different labour market situation than binary trans individuals. As there is no gender group and therefore *norms* nonbinary individuals can be related or compared to, they do not only face misgendering but also the denial or degradation of their gender identity. Hence, having to even argue for their pure existence.

The experiences of all participants made structural, institutional barriers apparent to complicate a gender transition. The additional capabilities required for navigating their gender identity, visibility, and safety concerns influenced their transition possibilities. The data analysis showed that financial constraints appeared in multiple transition-related answers. The lack of sufficient transition care access and the institutional binary understanding of health care excluded multiple interview participants from official and institutionalised transition care, leaving them no other option than privately funded care. This links to research from Koch et al. (2020) about extensive medical transition costs, and Leppel (2016) who relates an increased need to obtain an income for transition costs. Interview participants emphasised that they would be at different, further steps in their transition without these financial constraints.

From the institutional setting for the trans and nonbinary community, parallels can be drawn to the barriers women face in the labour market. Insufficient care infrastructure, with a different care in mind, can exclude or limit the possibilities of women and trans and nonbinary individuals in the labour market. Gendered discrimination, for both groups, is based on a biological understanding of gender and respective roles, cisnormativity and bigotry. The research results align with Correll, Benard, and Paik (2007), England (2005), Corlett, Stutterheim, and Whiley (2023), Ciprikis, Cassells, and Berrill (2020), McFadden (2020), and Drydakis (2017) in finding that without adequate institutional support, both groups will continue to experience inequality and barriers.While certain support structures and inclusion policies—such as affirmative action, recognition of care responsibilities, and access to high-quality (reproductive) healthcare—can benefit cis women, trans, and nonbinary individuals alike, there remains a clear need for labour market policies that specifically address the experiences and barriers faced by gender minorities. Improving labour market inclusion for minority communities requires concrete measures such as universal pronoun visibility, recognition of employment gaps related to legal or medical transition, equitable workplace facilities, and comprehensive gender awareness training. These steps contribute to greater equality by addressing everyday barriers and dismantling outdated gender norms for everyone. Crucially, such policies should avoid reinforcing binary classifications. Instead, a de-gendered policy approach—focused on addressing structural frictions rather than labelling target groups—offers a more inclu-

sive path forward. While it remains important to recognise the distinct mechanisms of discrimination affecting women, trans, and nonbinary individuals, these can be integrated within a unified, intersectionally informed labour market policy framework.

7 Conclusion

This paper has explored how trans and nonbinary individuals navigate their gender identity alongside educational and vocational development, focusing on the structural, institutional, and interpersonal factors that shape their trajectories in the nexus of the labour market. Drawing on qualitative interviews and informed by theories of heteronormativity, gender attribution, and "doing gender" ((West and Zimmerman, 1987; Fenstermaker and West, 2013) the analysis revealed that the timing, context, and visibility of a gender transition are deeply entangled with labour market participation and vocational identity formation.

The methodological approach was rooted in a qualitative, exploratory design that privileged the voices and lived experiences of trans and nonbinary individuals, allowing for nuanced insight into how gendered expectations and institutional barriers are experienced at different life stages. Participants described navigating education and work within rigidly cisnormative structures, which frequently required them to suppress, delay, or strategically manage their gender identity. In many cases, gender transition was perceived as incompatible with academic or career development due to stigma, anticipated discrimination, and a lack of institutional support.

A core contribution of this study lies in its articulation of the specific burdens placed on trans and nonbinary individuals to manage their gender identity in environments that are not structured to support it. These burdens include navigating misgendering, concealing identity to maintain safety or employability, and being expected to serve as educators or advocates without adequate institutional recognition or compensation. The findings also nuance current understandings of human capital transfer, indicating that individuals who transition after establishing a career may be better positioned to retain their social and professional standing, while early transitions, though affirming, often come at the cost of institutional trust and labour market access. This leads to a either-or situation for many individuals.

Notably, the experiences of nonbinary participants highlight a distinct and undertheorised form of exclusion, wherein their identities are often unintelligible within binary institutional frameworks. This results in a double marginalisation: they are not only misgendered but also structurally unacknowledged. As such, the data underscore that

nonbinary individuals face unique and heightened challenges in comparison to binary trans individuals, a finding that aligns with and extends the work of Shannon (2022), Dray et al. (2020), and Schilt (2006).

These findings also affirm the relevance of queer theoretical perspectives that critique the foundational binaries embedded in labour market institutions. Queer theory urges us to question not only who is included, but on what terms inclusion is granted. Concepts such as institutional illegibility, emotional and identity labour, and the misfit between normative workplace expectations and queer lived realities help make visible the less quantifiable costs of navigating cisnormative and heteronormative systems. In this sense, the experiences of trans and nonbinary individuals—and particularly those of nonbinary participants—do not merely reflect the absence of support, but expose the limitations of current inclusion frameworks grounded in binary gender models. While it was not a frequent topic in the interviews, LGBTQ labour marker discrimination can cover certain aspects of trans and nonbinary experiences the gendered labour market theories can't. Incorporating queer critique into policy design and empirical research is therefore essential to dismantling systemic inequality at its root, not only accommodating difference but transforming the norms against which that difference is measured.

Therefore, a more focused exploration of nonbinarity, especially within institutional and public health contexts, is recommended. While the qualitative design offered valuable insights into trans and nonbinary labour market experiences, the small sample size limited generalisations regarding income inequality and occupational segregation. Future research should include larger samples, quantitative data, and focused questions on income and career trajectories to deepen structural analysis. Additionally, linguistic patterns observed in participant narratives—such as overcompensating behaviours prior to transition—present a promising area for further inquiry. Intersectional approaches and improved quantitative data, including newly available census information, are essential to fully capture the complexity of labour market disparities for gender minority populations.

The findings speak to the urgent need for a rethinking of labour market and institutional policy frameworks. Rather than replicating binary structures through targeted inclusion measures, a de-gendered policy approach—one that addresses structural inequities without reinscribing normative categories—may be more effective in fostering inclusive environments. Crucially, any such effort must be grounded in an intersectional understanding of gendered inequality and be sensitive to the lived complexities of transitioning across social, institutional, and professional domains.

In sum, this research demonstrates that gender identity and vocational development are not parallel paths but interwoven processes. The ability to access employment, education, and public life as one's affirmed gender identity is central not only to individual

well-being but also to equitable participation in society. A labour market that fails to account for gender diversity thus limits the potential and contributions of a significant and growing segment of the population. As this study has shown, where institutions affirm and support trans and nonbinary people, individuals thrive—not only personally, but professionally.

Bibliography

Altonji, Joseph G and Rebecca M Blank (1999). "Race and gender in the labor market". In: *Handbook of labor economics* 3, pp. 3143–3259.

Álvarez Bernardo, Gloria, Nuria Romo Avilés, and Ana Belén García Berbén (2018). "Doing gender in Spanish same-sex couples. The distribution of housework and childcare". In: *Journal of gender Studies* 27.6, pp. 672–682.

Alvesson, Mats and Yvonne Due Billing (2009). *Understanding gender and organizations*. Sage.

Andresen, Martin Eckhoff and Emily Nix (2022). "What causes the child penalty? Evidence from adopting and same-sex couples". In: *Journal of labor economics* 40.4, pp. 971–1004.

Anker, Richard (1998). *Gender and jobs: Sex segregation of occupations in the world*. International Labour Organization.

Arrow, Kenneth J (1972). "Some mathematical models of race discrimination in the labor market". In: *Racial discrimination in economic life*, pp. 187–204.

Austin, Ashley (2016). ""There I am": A grounded theory study of young adults navigating a transgender or gender nonconforming identity within a context of oppression and invisibility". In: *Sex Roles* 75, pp. 215–230.

Badgett, MV, Soon Kyu Choi, and Bianca DM Wilson (2019). "LGBT poverty in the United States: A study of differences between sexual orientation and gender identity groups". In.

Badgett, MV Lee et al. (2024). "A review of the economics of sexual orientation and gender identity". In: *Journal of Economic Literature* 62.3, pp. 948–994.

Bauer, Gerrit (2016). "Gender roles, comparative advantages and the life course: The division of domestic labor in same-sex and different-sex couples". In: *European Journal of Population* 32, pp. 99–128.

Becker, Gary S (1962). "Investment in human capital: A theoretical analysis". In: *Journal of political economy* 70.5, Part 2, pp. 9–49.

— (1985). "Human capital, effort, and the sexual division of labor". In: *Journal of labor economics* 3.1, Part 2, S33–S58.

— (2010). *The economics of discrimination*. University of Chicago press.

Bell, Mark (2017). "Analysis and comparative review of equality data collection practices in the European Union: Data collection in relation to LGBTI People". In: *Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union*.

Benard, Stephen and Shelley J Correll (2010). "Normative discrimination and the motherhood penalty". In: *Gender & Society* 24.5, pp. 616–646.

Bereswill, Mechthild and Gudrun Ehlert (2023). "Diskriminierung aufgrund des Geschlechts und der sexuellen Orientierung". In: *Handbuch Diskriminierung*. Springer, pp. 581–595.

Biblarz, Timothy J and Evren Savci (2010). "Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender families". In: *Journal of Marriage and Family* 72.3, pp. 480–497.

Blau, Francine D and Lawrence M Kahn (2017). "The gender wage gap: Extent, trends, and explanations". In: *Journal of economic literature* 55.3, pp. 789–865.

Boddy, Clive Roland (2016). "Sample size for qualitative research". In: *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal* 19.4, pp. 426–432.

Budig, Michelle J, Joya Misra, and Irene Boeckmann (2012). "The motherhood penalty in cross-national perspective: The importance of work–family policies and cultural attitudes". In: *Social Politics* 19.2, pp. 163–193.

Cain, Glen G (1986). "The economic analysis of labor market discrimination: A survey". In: *Handbook of labor economics* 1, pp. 693–785.

Calderon-Cifuentes, Paulie Amanita (2021). *Trans Discrimination in Europe. A TGEU analysis of the FRA LGBTI Survey 2019*. https://www.tgeu@tgeu.org. TGEU.

Campbell, Steve et al. (2020). "Purposive sampling: complex or simple? Research case examples". In: *Journal of research in Nursing* 25.8, pp. 652–661.

Carpenter, Christopher (2008). "Sexual orientation, income, and non-pecuniary economic outcomes: new evidence from young lesbians in Australia". In: *Review of Economics of the Household* 6, pp. 391–408.

Carpenter, Christopher S, Samuel T Eppink, and Gilbert Gonzales (2020). "Transgender status, gender identity, and socioeconomic outcomes in the United States". In: *ILR Review* 73.3, pp. 573–599.

Carter, Michael J (2014). "Gender socialization and identity theory". In: *Social sciences* 3.2, pp. 242–263.

Ciprikis, Klavs, Damien Cassells, and Jenny Berrill (2020). "Transgender labour market outcomes: Evidence from the United States". In: *Gender, Work & Organization* 27.6, pp. 1378–1401.

Clarke, Victoria and Virginia Braun (2021). "Thematic analysis: a practical guide". In: *Thematic Analysis*, pp. 1–100.

Collins, Joshua C et al. (2015). "The problem of transgender marginalization and exclusion: Critical actions for human resource development". In: *Human Resource Development Review* 14.2, pp. 205–226.

Connell, Catherine (2010). "Doing, undoing, or redoing gender? Learning from the workplace experiences of transpeople". In: *Gender & society* 24.1, pp. 31–55.

Corcoran, Mary E and Paul N Courant (1985). "Sex role socialization and labor market outcomes". In: *The American Economic Review* 75.2, pp. 275–278.

Corlett, Sara, Sarah E Stutterheim, and Lilith A Whiley (2023). ""I only wanted one thing and that was to be who I am now": Being a trans young adult and (re) negotiating vocational identity". In: *Gender, Work & Organization*.

Correll, Shelley J, Stephen Benard, and In Paik (2007). "Getting a job: Is there a motherhood penalty?" In: *American journal of sociology* 112.5, pp. 1297–1338.

Crenshaw, Kimberlé Williams (2013). "Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color". In: *The public nature of private violence*. Routledge, pp. 93–118.

Davidson, Skylar (2016). "Gender inequality: Nonbinary transgender people in the workplace". In: *Cogent Social Sciences* 2.1, p. 1236511.

De Vries, Kylan Mattias (2012). "Intersectional identities and conceptions of the self: The experience of transgender people". In: *Symbolic Interaction* 35.1, pp. 49–67.

Delgado, Richard and Jean Stefancic (2023). *Critical race theory: An introduction*. Vol. 87. NyU press.

Dickey, Lore M et al. (2016). "Career decision self-efficacy of transgender people: Pre-and posttransition". In: *The Career Development Quarterly* 64.4, pp. 360–372.

Dowers, Eden et al. (2019). "Transgender experiences of occupation and the environment: A scoping review". In: *Journal of Occupational Science* 26.4, pp. 496–510.

Downing, Jordan B and Abbie E Goldberg (2011). "Lesbian mothers' constructions of the division of paid and unpaid labor". In: *Feminism & Psychology* 21.1, pp. 100–120.

Dray, Kelly K et al. (2020). "Moving beyond the gender binary: Examining workplace perceptions of nonbinary and transgender employees". In: *Gender, Work & Organization* 27.6, pp. 1181–1191.

Drydakis, Nick (2009). "Sexual orientation discrimination in the labour market". In: *Labour Economics* 16.4, pp. 364–372.

— (2017). "Trans people, well-being, and labor market outcomes". In: *IZA World of Labor*.

— (2020). *Trans People, Transitioning, Mental Health, Life, and Job Satisfaction*. Springer.

— (2022). "Sexual orientation and earnings: a meta-analysis 2012–2020". In: *Journal of Population Economics* 35.2, pp. 409–440.

Eames, Taryn (2024). "Pronoun Disclosure and Hiring Discrimination: A Resume Audit Study". In: *Available at SSRN*.

England, Paula (2005). "Gender inequality in labor markets: The role of motherhood and segregation". In: *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 12.2, pp. 264–288.

Fenstermaker, Sarah and Candace West (2013). *Doing gender, doing difference: Inequality, power, and institutional change*. Routledge.

Figart, Deborah M (1997). "Gender as more than a dummy variable: Feminist approaches to discrimination". In: *Review of social economy* 55.1, pp. 1–32.

Fontana, Enrico and Prapassorn Siriwichai (2022). "Understanding transgender persons' careers to advance sustainable development: The case of Trans for Career Thailand". In: *Sustainable Development* 30.6, pp. 1573–1590.

Geijtenbeek, Lydia and Erik Plug (2018). "Is there a penalty for registered women? Is there a premium for registered men? Evidence from a sample of transsexual workers". In: *European Economic Review* 109, pp. 334–347.

Goldberg, Abbie E (2013). ""Doing" and "undoing" gender: The meaning and division of housework in same-sex couples". In: *Journal of Family Theory & Review* 5.2, pp. 85–104.

Gould, Robert E (1974). "Measuring masculinity by the size of a paycheck". In: *Men and masculinity*, pp. 96–100.

Gould, Wren Ariel et al. (2024). "Improving LGBT labor market outcomes through laws, workplace policies, and support programs: a scoping review". In: *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, pp. 1–18.

Graham, Louis F et al. (2014). "Interpersonal relationships and social support in transitioning narratives of Black transgender women in Detroit". In: *International Journal of Transgenderism* 15.2, pp. 100–113.

Grant, Jaime M et al. (2011). "Transgender Discrimination Survey". In: *National Center for Transgender Equality and National Gay and Lesbian Task Force: Washington, DC, USA*.

Henke, Rachel Mosher (2023). "The Great Opportunity for Workforce Health". In: *American Journal of Health Promotion* 37.4, pp. 566–582.

Hill, Darryl B and Brian LB Willoughby (2005). "The development and validation of the genderism and transphobia scale." In: *Sex roles* 53.

Hoominfar, Elham (2019). "Gender socialization". In: *Gender Equality içinde*, pp. 1–10.

Ito, Felipe Massao Milanez (2018). "Transgender individuals employed in the formal labour market: a distant dream?" In.

James, Sandy et al. (2016). "The report of the 2015 US transgender survey". In.

Klawitter, Marieka (2015). "Meta-analysis of the effects of sexual orientation on earnings". In: *Industrial Relations: A Journal of Economy and Society* 54.1, pp. 4–32.

Koch, Julie M et al. (2020). "The cost of being transgender: where socio-economic status, global health care systems, and gender identity intersect". In: *Psychology & Sexuality* 11.1-2, pp. 103–119.

Köllen, Thomas (2016). "Sexual orientation and transgender issues in organizations". In: *Global Perspectives on LGBT Workforce Diversity*.

— (2021). "Sexual orientation and gender identity in the workplace". In: *Handbook of Labor, Human Resources and Population Economics*. Springer, pp. 1–15.

Kukreja, Priyam and Jatin Pandey (2023). "Workplace gaslighting: Conceptualization, development, and validation of a scale". In: *Frontiers in Psychology* 14.

Leppel, Karen (2016). "The labor force status of transgender men and women". In: *International Journal of Transgenderism* 17.3-4, pp. 155–164.

— (2020). "Labor force status of transgender individuals". In: *Handbook of Labor, Human Resources and Population Economics*, pp. 1–16.

Lippe, Tanja Van der and Liset Van Dijk (2002). "Comparative research on women's employment". In: *Annual review of sociology* 28.1, pp. 221–241.

Lorenz-Meyer, Mara (2023). "Drawing from the experiences of transgender individuals to study workplace gender inequalities in the Dutch labour market". In: *A Note to Our Readers*.

McDonald, James (2013). "Coming out in the field: A queer reflexive account of shifting researcher identity". In: *Management Learning* 44.2, pp. 127–143.

McFadden, Ciarán (2020). "Discrimination against transgender employees and jobseekers". In: *Handbook of labor, human resources and population economics*, pp. 1–14.

McFadden, Ciarán and Marian Crowley-Henry (2016). "A systematic literature review on trans* careers and workplace experiences". In: *Sexual orientation and transgender issues in organizations: Global perspectives on LGBT workforce diversity*, pp. 63–81.

Merton, Robert K (1972). "Insiders and outsiders: A chapter in the sociology of knowledge". In: *American journal of sociology* 78.1, pp. 9–47.

Mills, Suzanne and Natalie Oswin (2024). "Finding work in the age of LGBTQ+ equalities: Labor market experiences of queer and trans workers in deindustrializing cities". In: *Economic Geography* 100.2, pp. 170–190.

Mishel, Emma (2020). "Contextual prejudice: How occupational context and stereotypes shape bias against gay and lesbian employees". In: *Social Currents* 7.4, pp. 371–391.

Möhring, Katja (2018). "Is there a motherhood penalty in retirement income in Europe? The role of lifecourse and institutional characteristics". In: *Ageing & Society* 38.12, pp. 2560–2589.

Muhr, Sara Louise, Katie Rose Sullivan, and Craig Rich (2016). "Situated transgressiveness: Exploring one transwoman's lived experiences across three situated contexts". In: *Gender, Work & Organization* 23.1, pp. 52–70.

Nadal, Kevin L, Kristin C Davidoff, and Whitney Fujii-Doe (2014). "Transgender women and the sex work industry: Roots in systemic, institutional, and interpersonal discrimination". In: *Journal of Trauma & Dissociation* 15.2, pp. 169–183.

Operario, Don, Toho Soma, and Kristen Underhill (2008). "Sex work and HIV status among transgender women: systematic review and meta-analysis". In: *JAIDS Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes* 48.1, pp. 97–103.

Ozturk, Mustafa Bilgehan and Ahu Tatli (2016). "Gender identity inclusion in the workplace: broadening diversity management research and practice through the case of transgender employees in the UK". In: *The International Journal of Human Resource Management* 27.8, pp. 781–802.

Paap, Kris (2006). *Working construction: Why white working-class men put themselves–and the labor movement–in harm's way*. Cornell University Press.

Padavic, Irene and Barbara F Reskin (2002). *Women and men at work*. Pine Forge Press.

Phelps, Edmund S (1972). "The statistical theory of racism and sexism". In: *The american economic review* 62.4, pp. 659–661.

Poteat, Tonia et al. (2015). "HIV risk and preventive interventions in transgender women sex workers". In: *The Lancet* 385.9964, pp. 274–286.

Pratt, Michael G, Scott Sonenshein, and Martha S Feldman (2022). "Moving beyond templates: A bricolage approach to conducting trustworthy qualitative research". In: *Organizational research methods* 25.2, pp. 211–238.

Ragins, Belle Rose, Romila Singh, and John M Cornwell (2007). "Making the invisible visible: fear and disclosure of sexual orientation at work." In: *Journal of applied psychology* 92.4, p. 1103.

Samtleben, Claire and Kai-Uwe Müller (2022). "Care and careers: Gender (in) equality in unpaid care, housework and employment". In: *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility* 77, p. 100659.

Schilt, Kristen (2006). "Just one of the guys? How transmen make gender visible at work". In: *Gender & Society* 20.4, pp. 465–490.

Schilt, Kristen and Laurel Westbrook (2009). "Doing Gender, Doing Heteronormativity: "Gender Normals," Transgender People, and the Social Maintenance of Heterosexuality". In: *Gender & society* 23.4, pp. 440–464.

Schilt, Kristen and Matthew Wiswall (2008). "Before and after: Gender transitions, human capital, and workplace experiences". In: *The BE Journal of Economic Analysis & Policy* 8.1.

Schneebaum, Alyssa and MV Lee Badgett (2019). "Poverty in US lesbian and gay couple households". In: *Feminist Economics* 25.1, pp. 1–30.

Schulz, Sarah L (2018). "The informed consent model of transgender care: An alternative to the diagnosis of gender dysphoria". In: *Journal of humanistic psychology* 58.1, pp. 72–92.

Scott, David A, Stephanie L Belke, and Hannah G Barfield (2011). "Career development with transgender college students: Implications for career and employment counselors". In: *Journal of Employment Counseling* 48.3, pp. 105–113.

Seguino, Stephanie (2016). "Global trends in gender equality". In: *Journal of African Development* 18.1, pp. 9–30.

— (2020). "Engendering macroeconomic theory and policy". In: *Feminist Economics* 26.2, pp. 27–61.

Seidman, Steven (2013). *Beyond the closet: The transformation of gay and lesbian life*. Routledge.

Shannon, Matthew (2022). "The labour market outcomes of transgender individuals". In: *Labour Economics* 77, p. 102006.

Shen, Kailing (2022). "Gender Discrimination". In: *Handbook of Labor, Human Resources and Population Economics*. Springer, pp. 1–23.

Stutterheim, Sarah E and Sarah E Ratcliffe (2021). "Understanding and addressing stigma through qualitative research: Four reasons why we need qualitative studies." In: *Stigma and Health* 6.1, p. 8.

Tilcsik, András (2011). "Pride and prejudice: Employment discrimination against openly gay men in the United States". In: *american Journal of sociology* 117.2, pp. 586–626.

Ueno, Koji et al. (2023). "LGBTQ identities and career plan changes in young adulthood: Implications for occupational segregation and disparities". In: *Socius* 9, p. 23780231231215682.

Valian, Virginia (1999). *Why so slow?: The advancement of women*. MIT press.

Van Borm, Hannah and Stijn Baert (2018). "What drives hiring discrimination against transgenders?" In: *International Journal of Manpower* 39.4, pp. 581–599.

Waite, Sean (2021). "Should I stay or should I go? Employment discrimination and workplace harassment against transgender and other minority employees in Canada's federal public service". In: *Journal of homosexuality* 68.11, pp. 1833–1859.

Weichselbaumer, Doris (2022). "Discrimination due to sexual orientation". In: *Handbook of Labor, Human Resources and Population Economics*, pp. 1–27.

West, Candace and Don H Zimmerman (1987). "Doing gender". In: *Gender & society* 1.2, pp. 125–151.

Imprint

Editors:
Sigrid Betzelt, Eckhard Hein, Martina Metzger, Martina Sproll, Christina Teipen, Markus Wissen, Jennifer Pedussel Wu (lead editor), Reingard Zimmer

ISSN 1869-6406

Printed by
HWR Berlin

Berlin, July 2025