Swedish Agency for Work
Environment Expertise

The organisational and social work environment of LGBTQ people

– A systematic literature review

Systematic literature review 2022:7

The organisational and social work environment of LGBTQ people
– A systematic literature review
Systematic literature review 2022:7
ISBN 978-91-89747-26-5
Published in 2022

The Swedish Agency for Work Environment Expertise
Telephone: +46 (0)26-14 84 00, Email: info@mynak.se
www.sawee.se

The organisational and social work environment of LGBTQ people

– A systematic literature review

Systematic literature review 2022:7

Preface

In 2020, the Swedish government instructed the Swedish Agency for Work Environment Expertise to map the organisational and social work environment of LGBTQ people. The agency was specifically instructed to highlight the work environment of trans people.

The agency conducted a systematic systematic literature review and a qualitative original study in response to the government commission. The overall purpose of the review was to map and compile research on the organisational and social work environment of LGBTQ people, focusing on health-promoting as well as prohibitive factors. The qualitative original study specifically focused on the work environment of trans people.

Earlier research and investigations have indicated significant shortcomings in the work environment of LGBTQ people. Studies have indicated that LGBTQ people are more likely to experience discrimination, harassment and bullying in the workplace, and that people of trans experience are particularly at risk.

The group of experts that produced the systematic literature review and the original study presented here in the agency's name consisted of Associate Professor Andrea Eriksson, KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Doctors of Philosophy Sofia Björk and Sara Andersson, the Department of Sociology and Work Science at the University of Gothenburg, and Carin Hellström, Doctoral Student, the Division of Ergonomics, the School of Engineering Sciences in Chemistry, Biotechnology and Health, KTH Royal Institute of Technology.

Associate Professor Rickard Brännström, Karolinska Institutet, Michael Rosander, Associate Professor of Psychology, the Psychology Division, the Department of Behavioural Sciences and Learning, Linköping University, and Emmie Särnstedt Gramnaes, Process Manager, the Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex Rights (RFSL), quality-controlled the systematic literature review on behalf of the agency. Library staff at KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Gothenburg University and Lund University contributed literature and information research. Peter O'Reilly at Gothenburg University assisted with reference management.

The authors themselves chose their theoretical and methodological starting points and are responsible for the results and conclusions presented in this report.

The agency's process manager responsible for producing the systematic literature review was initially Doctor of Philosophy Pinar Aslan Akay and subsequently Associate Professor Mikael Nilsson. Camilla Wengelin was responsible for managing text and accessibility in addition to other outreach activities.

I wish to thank the external researchers, the reference group and quality control reviewers, and the agency employees, who have contributed to producing this systematic literature review.

Gävle, June 2022

Nader Ahmadi, *Director General*

The systematic literature review was written by:

Andrea Eriksson, Associate Professor, the Division of Ergonomics, the School of Engineering Sciences in Chemistry, Biotechnology and Health, KTH Royal Institute of Technology.

Sara Andersson, Doctor, the Department of Sociology and Work Science at the University of Gothenburg.

Sofia Björk, Senior Lecturer, the Department of Sociology and Work Science at the University of Gothenburg.

Carin Hellström, Doctoral Student, the Division of Ergonomics, the School of Engineering Sciences in Chemistry, Biotechnology and Health, KTH Royal Institute of Technology.

Reference group

The reference group consists of representatives from other government bodies and key organisations. The purpose of the reference group is to support, make suggestions and give comments during the systematic literature review production process, through dialogue and collaboration.

For this project, the reference group consists of:

Jonah Akleye, the Public Health Agency of Sweden.

Olle Andersson Brynja and Magdalena Sievers, the Equality Ombudsman.

Ulrich Stoetzer, the Swedish Work Environment Authority.

Edward Summanen, the Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex Rights (RFSL).

Summary

The government assignment

Following a government decision in 2020 (A2020/01002/MRB), the Swedish Agency for Work Environment Expertise was commissioned to map and summarize existing research conducted on the organizational and social work environment for LGBTQ people. In response to this, the agency initiated a systematic literature review project focusing on factors that promote or hinder LGBTQ people within the organizational and social work environment. The systematic literature review was based on the following questions:

- What main work environment risks for LGBTQ people have been identified?
- What main health factors affecting LGBTQ people have been identified in the work environment?
- What are the differences between homosexual, bisexual, transgender, and queer people in their different work environments? Are there common points of contact? Are there important differences?
- What characterizes an inclusive workplace; that is, a work environment that LGBTQ people themselves experience as good?

Method

Literature searches were carried out in 15 databases to find as much as possible of the relevant research carried out in the field in 2010–2021. Almost 300 studies were analysed to identify organizational and social work environment risks as well as health factors at the individual, group, and organizational level. Differences and similarities in the work environment situation for homosexual, bisexual, and transgender people were also noted. It was not possible to include queer people in the comparative analysis as few studies on this group were found.

Work environment risks, health factors and the importance of increased efforts to create an inclusive workplace

The results from the systematic literature review indicate that homosexual individuals do not always have a worse work environment than their heterosexual counterparts, but they do face specific risk factors in the work environment. Although positive work environment factors are often also present, many LGBTQ people experience:

- discrimination
- harassment
- microaggressions (i.e., subtle and sometimes unconscious aggressive actions in the form of, for example, comments, jokes or questions)
- other negative work environment factors.

The results further indicate that a heteronormative climate has a negative impact on the working environment of LGBTQ people. In a heteronormative climate, heterosexuality is taken for granted, which contributes to a perception that other sexual orientations, such as homosexuality and bisexuality, are deviant. Heteronormativity also includes the expectation that women and men should behave in a certain way, and the expectation of a certain chronological life course. In line with this, the systematic literature review points out that a heteronormative work climate constitutes a risk factor for LGBTQ people in the work environment, by making LGBTQ issues invisible and creating uncertainty among LGBTQ employees about others' perceptions of LGBTQ people. This can contribute to LGBTQ people being less open about their sexual orientation or gender identity, out of fear of how others will react. This lack of openness can in turn contribute to lower levels of:

- perceived fellowship with colleagues
- job satisfaction
- work commitment
- well-being.

The systematic literature review further indicates that a lack of visible support or non-action by managers leaves room for the occurrence of microaggressions, discrimination and harassment. The presence of heterosexism (i.e., the assumption that people are heterosexual by default and that homosexuality is unnatural and exceptional), discrimination and harassment are associated to lower levels of job satisfaction and work ability, and higher levels of stress and mental illness. This type of environment can also affect the individual's choices in several ways, namely the choices around:

- vocational orientation
- to be open about their sexual orientation or gender expression
- intent to quit their jobs.

Transgender people and bisexuals seem to be more exposed to discrimination, harassment and/or bullying compared to homosexual and heterosexual cisgender individuals. For transgender people, discrimination and harassment seem to be due to the presence of transphobia. In a supplementary study which was carried out as part of the government assignment to map transgender people's organizational and social work environment, a majority of the 105 transgender people who participated in the study said they had been exposed to microaggressions. Some described experiences of harassment, even death threats, or great fear of what the consequences might be if they were open about their transgender experiences. In parallel with these negative

experiences, many of the people who participated in the supplementary study also had positive work environment experiences; for example, experiences of high support from managers and colleagues. However, it was not clear from the results in the systematic literature review why bisexual people are exposed to discrimination and harassment to a greater degree than their homosexual counterparts.

The results from the systematic literature review indicate that various forms of organizational support are an important health factor in the work environment of LGBTQ people. This means that an organizational climate that is perceived as supportive towards LGBTQ people is also related to experiences of a good work environment, job satisfaction and health, including the willingness to be open about one's sexual orientation and/or gender identity. A supportive work climate includes:

- organizational policies
- activities that, for example, aim to combat discrimination
- a general climate that is perceived as supportive and accepting of LGBTQ people.

According to the results in the systematic literature review it is important that managers and colleagues show active support by standing up against discriminatory abuse and in various ways showing that they stand up for LGBTQ issues. The results further point to the importance of the work organization actively working to ensure that policies are complied with.

Contents
Part 1

Part 2

Qualitative study of trans people's organisational and social work environment in a Swedish context

Appendices in separate documents

Part 1

1 Introduction

Investigations made into the situation of LGBTQ people in the workplace suggest that their working conditions are worse than those of heterosexual cis people. It has been over 15 years since any major Swedish systematic literature reviews were produced on this subject, however. Following a government decision (A2020/01002/MRB) on 30 April 2020, the Swedish Agency for Work Environment Expertise was commissioned to map existing research on the organisational and social work environment of LGBTQ people. In response to this decision, the agency initiated a project to map and compile research on the organisational and social work environment of LGBTQ people, focusing on health-promoting as well as prohibitive factors. During this project, a decision was also made to conduct a qualitative study of the organisational and social work environment of trans people in a Swedish context. The results of this study are detailed in part two of the report.

1.1 Purpose

The overall purpose of the review was to map and compile existing research on the organisational and social work environment of LGBTQ people.

The following questions formed the starting points for the production of the systematic literature review.

- Which main work environment risks have been identified for LGBTQ people?
- Which main health-promoting factors affecting LGBTQ people have been identified in the work environment?
- What are the differences in the work situations of homosexual, bisexual, trans and queer people? Are there common factors? Are there important differences?
- What characterises an inclusive workplace; that is, a work environment that LGBTQ people themselves experience as good?

1.2 LGBTQ

In this report, we use LGBTQ – lesbian, gay, bi, trans and queer – as a collective term for people who are not heterosexual and/or who are trans. There are several variants of this abbreviation, such as LGBT and LGBTQI+. These abbreviations and terms reflect the fact that there are many categorisations for which the gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexuality, type of romantic attraction, and/or relationship patterns do not follow the prevailing norms. We have chosen the term LGBTQ as it includes lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer people, the group covered by this commission.

Additionally, there are some other terms that describe norm-breaking love/lust, such as pansexuality, which is mentioned in some of the studies included in the report. Pansexuality is the ability to fall in love with/be attracted to people regardless of their gender (RFSL, 2021).

The term LGBTQ is in itself an expression of the simplifications that are often made, including in scientific studies. People who identify as lesbian, gay, bi, trans or queer are diverse, however, and have different experiences, but what they have in common is that they don't meet the existing norms for sexual/romantic relationships, gender identity, and/or gender expression. In the results part of this systematic literature review our ambition is to show, as far as possible, the complexity and differences between the different groups included within the term LGBTQ. The term LGBTQ is used in the report for results for which the groups have not been separately analysed.

The abbreviation LGBTQ includes:

- L/G – Lesbian/Gay, i.e., the ability to feel romantic and/or sexual attraction to people who have the same gender identity.
- B – Bisexual, meaning the ability to feel romantic and/or sexual attraction to other people regardless of their gender.
- T – Trans; a trans person breaks social norms regarding gender, gender expression, and/or gender identity. It could, for example, be that the person was assigned the wrong legal and biological gender at birth, or that they do not meet the expectations of how a man or a woman, respectively, should behave and look. Binary trans people are either women or men. Non-binary trans people don't define themselves according to this division. They may be neither women nor men, both women and men, or have a fluid gender identity. The term trans only refers to gender, gender expression and gender identity, and trans people may have any sexual orientation. In this report, we use the term "trans person" when it appears in the studies in question. We have, however, also often chosen to use "people of trans experience", as people who have undergone gender-affirming care, and/or who have completed a transition process, sometimes no longer identify as trans, but only in accordance with the gender they have transitioned to. By using the term "trans experience", these people can therefore also be included.
- Q – Queer. When this expression is used as an identity description, it may refer to a conscious breach of norms in relation to gender or sexuality. A queer gender identity may, for example, mean that a person breaches the norms that prescribe that a person should be either a man or a woman, or how a man or a woman, respectively, should behave and look, for example by being non-binary or having a fluid gender identity. A queer sexuality may mean that a person engages in sexual practices that are stigmatised by society, such as BDSM (bondage/discipline, dominance/submission and sadomasochism). It may also refer to a person who has open, multi-partner, or in other ways norm-breaking relationships, or creates a family outside the nuclear family norm. To be queer can sometimes be used more generally for anyone who breaches norms connected with gender identity or sexuality.

1.2.1 Heteronormativity

Heteronormativity, meaning that heterosexuality is the norm and is taken for granted, is exemplified by cultural and societal perceptions of other sexualities – such as homo- and bisexuality – as deviant (Rosenberg, 2002). Similarly to other dominant norms in society, the spotlight in a heteronormative society is on what is different, i.e., homo- and bisexual, trans or queer people. Homo- and bisexuals are, for example, forced to "come out" as homo- or bisexual, a demand that is not made of heterosexuals as their sexuality is the norm and therefore doesn't have to be explained. By expecting heterosexuality, other sexualities are mainly visible when mentioned or presented, which can lead to other sexualities being perceived to be more unusual than they actually are (Lindholm, 2003).

Heteronormativity does not, however, only cover sexuality; heteronormativity also includes an expectation that women and men should act in a certain way to be viewed as comprehensible. In other words, this means that a certain biological gender is expected to be linked to a specific gender identity, which in turn is expected to include a certain sexuality. The heteronormative expectation therefore also means that sexual desire should be directed towards people of the opposite gender (Butler, 1990). For example, desiring people who have the same gender identity means breaching heteronormative standards and thereby not being regarded as a comprehensible woman/man to the same extent, which can have consequences for every aspect of a person's life. In the same way, heteronormativity includes an expectation of certain chronological steps towards a successful life, such as meeting a partner, moving in together and starting a family, in accordance with the convention (Ambjörnsson and Jönsson, 2010). This has consequences for how people who deviate from heteronormativity are regarded by others and themselves.

In terms of heteronormativity, gender is defined as two distinct and mutually exclusive categories (Rosenberg, 2002). The term 'gender' could be described as including four dimensions:

- Legal gender – legally recognised gender
- Biological gender – the body, including chromosomes and genitals
- Gender identity – a person's own perception of their own gender
- Gender expression – different attributes such as clothing, body language and voice.

A person who identifies with the gender that they were assigned at birth is categorised as cisgender (RFSL, 2021). The term *cis* (Latin: on the same side) covers all four gender dimensions mentioned above and a cis person is on "the same side" in all four dimensions. A person who is on "different sides" in the various dimensions, or who isn't clearly on one side, is categorised as trans. The expression *trans* also comes from Latin, and has the meaning "across from or on the other side of".

In societies characterised by heteronormativity, everyone is assumed to be cisgender (Serano, 2007). This is referred to as cisnormativity, which includes the notion that there are two genders and that each of them has specific gender expressions. People who breach cisnormativity – i.e., trans people – appear to be less comprehensible from a cisnormative perspective.

Heteronormativity can mean that, within different types of organisations, there may be specific expectations of how employees should behave according to their gender. This may, for example, be reflected in a male-dominated workplace having macho-oriented cultures ruled by stereotypical male norms of how "men" and "women" should behave (Berlant and Warner, 1998).

1.2.2 Discrimination against and bullying of LGBTQ people

A systematic literature review written by Hoel et al. studies the risk of homo- and bisexual people who are open about their sexuality being exposed to stereotypical attitudes, categorisations, and prejudice from colleagues (Hoel et al., 2018). These prejudices can contribute to LGBTQ people being more likely to become victims of bullying and discrimination in the workplace, including degrading and sexualised comments and threatening and violent behaviour (Hoel et al., 2018). According to the Discrimination Act, Chap. 1 (4) (SFS 2008:567), discrimination is defined as:

a) When someone is at a disadvantage due to being treated less favourably than someone else, if this is connected with gender, transgender identity or expression, ethnicity, religion or another form of belief, disability, sexual orientation or age (defined as direct discrimination)

b) When someone is at a disadvantage due to the application of a provision, criterion or procedure that appears neutral but that may put people at a particular disadvantage, based on the bases of discrimination mentioned above (defined as indirect discrimination)

c) Inadequate accessibility for disabled people

d) Harassment – i.e., conduct that violates a person's dignity and that is associated with one of the bases of discrimination

e) Sexual harassment – i.e., conduct of a sexual nature that violates someone's dignity

f) Instructions to discriminate.

A form of offensive behaviour that is mentioned by Hoel et al., and that homo- and bisexuals are specifically at risk of being subject to, is being "outed" – that is, the risk of someone revealing a person's non-heterosexuality without the consent of the person that the information concerns (Hoel et al., 2018).

With regard to bullying and discrimination, LGBTQ people are also at risk of being exposed to homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, and/or heterosexism. Homophobia, biphobia and transphobia refer to people having an irrational fear or terror of homosexual, bisexual and trans people. Homophobia means having a negative view of homosexuals, or thinking that it's worse to be homosexual than heterosexual (RFSL, 2021). Biphobia means thinking that it's wrong to be bisexual, or thinking that bisexuals are worth less than heterosexuals and sometimes also homosexuals. Bisexuals may encounter homophobia, but also, specifically, biphobia (UMO, n.d.). Transphobia refers to having a negative view of trans people, or people whose gender expression breaches the norm. Transphobia and homophobia often overlap (RFSL, 2021). Some criticism has, however, been made of the use of the term homophobia in relation to LGBTQ people's experience of discrimination and bullying. Hoel et al. state that recent research questions how beneficial it really is to use the term "phobia", as it focuses on psychological issues and thereby tends to individualise the problem (Hoel et al., 2018). Another reason, according to the authors, why some researchers now choose not to use the term homophobia, is that homo- and bisexuals are often reluctant to use homophobia as a label when they describe their own negative experiences in the workplace. We have chosen to use the phobia-based terms when they are used in the studies in question.

Regarding heterosexism, this is a term that largely overlaps with heteronormativity. Heterosexism is a socially constructed ideology that puts sexual minorities at a disadvantage based on assumptions that people are heterosexual by nature and that homosexuality is unnatural and exceptional (Thorne et al., 2021).

1.2.3 Microaggressions

Being treated as deviant and/or less comprehensible has consequences for people's private as well as work lives. Despite the fact that LGBTQ rights have been strengthened, and heteronormativity is ever more frequently problematised by people in general and in public debate, LGBTQ people are still being discriminated against and harassed. According to the research, these types of actions have become less tangible, however, and so, less visible (Giuffre, Dellinger and Williams, 2008; Hoel et al., 2018). Instead of direct and obvious attacks, which can be simpler to address or report, minorities instead have to suffer a subtle undermining, for example in the form of jokes and comments. Some researchers call such unspoken forms of harassment microaggressions. This term has traditionally included conscious as well as unconscious harassment of minorities (Nadal et al., 2011) and has therefore been criticised, based on the argument that the term aggression should only be used to explain actions that are intended to cause harm (Lilienfeld, 2017). The prefix "micro" used in descriptions may also seem to minimise the discrimination that LGBTQ people face.

The term does, however, emphasise the subtle and elusive types of discrimination in social interactions referred to above, which it is important to highlight in societal contexts where a more tangible or systematic kind

of discrimination is no longer accepted. Hoel et al. don't refer to the term microaggressions in their description of homo- and bisexuals' experience of derogatory jokes in the workplace (Hoel et al., 2018). They instead use the term "discursive violence", which may capture the power imbalance that this type of jokey comment involves.

1.2.4 Minority stress

Having to deal with prejudice and discrimination, as a member of a minority group, and running a higher risk of being exposed to negative attitudes, contributes to increased stress, which some researchers call minority stress (Meyer, 2003). A factor contributing to this stress is the increased vigilance that is often necessary for minorities due to their fear of and/or actual vulnerability to threats, hate and microaggressions (Nadal et al., 2011), and also internalised societal attitudes towards LGBTQ people, for example (Meyer, 2007). Internalised attitudes are negative attitudes towards the societal group that a person themself belongs to that have been allowed to shape the person's own perception of the group. An example would be a homosexual person embracing the idea that homosexuality is something unnatural. It is not uncommon for prejudice and negative perceptions of a specific group within society to also be embraced by the people exposed to them (Meyer, 2007), despite such prejudice and ideas limiting their own group's opportunities to exist and operate in society. This type of internalisation can also contribute to an adverse self-image and lower self-confidence in the individual. It is common for LGBTQ people to hide their sexual orientation or gender identity to counter the stress and fear of being exposed to negative events in their private and professional lives. Being open could, however, make support from managers and colleagues more likely. According to Meyer's (2003) minority stress model, social support is especially important to avoid adverse health effects, while social exclusion caused by minority stress generates them. From a work environment perspective, social support is therefore important for people identifying as homo- or bisexual, queer and people of trans experience. This social support has been shown in studies using the minority stress model to mitigate the negative effect of minority stress (see, e.g., Sattler et al., 2016 or Verrelli et al., 2019). Social support is generally a significant work environment factor that can contribute to reducing the negative effects of stress (for more on this subject, see section 1.3 *Organisational and social work environment)* (Häusser et al., 2010).

1.2.5 Openness

It is desirable to create a climate where it is possible for a person to be open about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Being able to choose to be open is an important work environment issue as it can, among other things, affect a person's mental well-being (Meyer, 2007; Pachankis et al., 2020). Not being open can create stress, as it demands increased vigilance regarding what colleagues can be told or shown. It can lead to LGBTQ people who are not out withdrawing from social relationships at work.

Not being open can further contribute to social exclusion, as close relationships with colleagues normally involve openness (Forsberg et al., 2003; Lindholm,

2003). It also lessens the individual's opportunities to receive the support that might be given by other LGBTQ people (Meyer, 2007).

Openness is not always an entirely positive experience, however. You don't just "come out" once. It is something you have to do again in every new relationship and context. Because, due to the assumptions of heteronormativity, homo- and bisexuality are seen as private matters, unlike accepted heterosexuality, a person's openness about their homo- or bisexuality may sometimes be perceived to be demanding (Lindholm, 2003). Being open also involves taking a risk. By being open about their sexuality or gender identity, people with a norm-breaching sexuality risk being exposed to discrimination and harassment.

1.2.6 The intersection of sexuality, class, gender, ethnicity/race, functional ability and age

Taking an intersectional perspective on the work environment of LGBTQ people means highlighting social conditions based on the different categories that a person belongs to and has available to them in different contexts (Crenshaw, 1989; Taylor, 2009). This may, for example, refer to how an LGBTQ person from an ethnic majority may have more scope for action in a context where there are members of an ethnic minority, but the same person may have less scope for action in a context that is strongly regulated by heteronormativity. The intersectional perspective therefore highlights the social conditions and circumstances that both enable and limit an LGBTQ person's scope for action and well-being in their work environment, and which organisational and social aspects contribute to such enablement/limitation.

In this systematic literature review, sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression, are assumed to create conditions that shape LGBTQ people's experiences of the labour market and their work environment. From an intersectional perspective, it will also be indicated whether the studies included investigated the interplay between these sexuality and gender aspects, and other relevant aspects, such as ethnicity, position, education level, functional ability, and/or age, and what impact this interplay has on people's experience of the work environment.

Research has shown, for example, that a person's position in the labour market – that is, where in the labour market and in the workplace hierarchy an individual lies – plays an important role in the person's perceptions of the labour market. A person's position in the labour market, their educational background, and/or class background, has an effect on factors such as their current health, prospects, and risk of premature death (Kjellsson, 2014; Wilkinson and Picket, 2010). Manual workers often have more physically demanding tasks, but factors in the social and organisational work environment may also differ depending on their position in the labour market.

An organisational work environment characterised by high job demands combined with few opportunities for control and limited social support at work contributes to stress symptoms and mental illness (Nieuwenhuijsen et al.,

2010; SBU, 2014; Westerholm, 2008). A report from the Swedish Trade Union Confederation describes how manual workers, especially women, are less likely to be able to take short breaks when needed. This group is also the least likely to be able to decide on their own work rate, and the most exposed to threats and violence at work, and sexual harassment from service users/customers (Larsdotter, 2018). Diagnoses of mental illness are also the most common cause of long-term sick leave in female-dominated workplaces in the healthcare field. A severe stress reaction is generally one of the most common psychiatric diagnoses leading to sick leave (Swedish Social Insurance Agency, 2015).

Functional ability is another aspect that may affect an individual's circumstances at work and for which there may be an interplay with their gender and/or sexuality. Functional ability may be seen as a spectrum, and people lie at different points within this spectrum – for example, having full functional ability or some form of disability (Hernandez-Saca et al., 2018). In a survey conducted by the Public Health Agency of Sweden, more than half of a group of 800 trans people in Sweden stated that their capacity for work or everyday life is limited by mental or physical illness (Public Health Agency of Sweden, 2015). A relatively large proportion of the trans people who participated in the survey also stated that they were unemployed.

1.3 Organisational and social work environment

Regulations and general guidance on the organisational and social work environment have been compiled in Swedish Work Environment Authority regulation AFS 2015:4. Among other things, this governs competency requirements for managers and supervisors, and emphasises the importance of preventive work environment management for the social and organisational work environment. The regulations aim to manage work environment risks in the social and organisational work environment by covering issues such as:

- unhealthy workloads
- working hours
- victimisation.

In connection with the organisational work environment, the regulations include conditions related to the following:

- management and governance
- communication
- participation
- scope for action
- assignment of job tasks
- demands
- resources
- responsibilities.

With regard to the social work environment, work conditions are included that relate to social interaction, collaboration and social support from managers and colleagues. The regulations also include victimisation, defined as abusive actions against employees, which can lead to ill-health or to the exclusion of employees from the workplace community (AFS 2015:4).

The Swedish Work Environment Authority has chosen to replace what was previously known as the 'psychosocial work environment' with the term 'organisational and social work environment'. The psychosocial work environment covers the interplay between a person's health and the social work environment. The term organisational and social work environment is used instead of psychosocial work environment to shift the focus from the individual to the significance of the organisational context for the work environment and people's health.

1.3.1 Demands and resources at work

Research has shown that high demands at work, combined with inadequate individual and organisational resources, can contribute to ill-health (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007; Rattrie and Kittler, 2014). High demands in themselves do not necessarily have a negative effect or induce ill-health; it is the imbalance between demands and resources that contributes to it. The more risk factors the individual is exposed to/experiences at work, the higher the risk of them suffering ill-health (Schütte et al., 2014). The Swedish Work Environment Authority regulations on the social and organisational work environment are based on the same idea: an imbalance between demands and resources at work can cause ill-health.

Work demands include, according to the regulations, those aspects of a job that require repeated effort, and they may be cognitive, emotional or physical (AFS 2015:4). In our systematic literature review there is mainly a link to the emotional demands of work, that is, demands involving a person having to adapt and manage their feelings and how they are expressed in different work situations. It can be emotionally demanding to have to deal with customers or service users who have prejudices against LGBTQ people.

In the regulations, resources are defined as those things at work that help to manage work demands or to achieve work objectives. Resources may, for example, be social support from managers and colleagues, or having the skills to manage demands.

1.3.2 Health-promoting factors

Resources at work may be compared with health-promoting factors. Studying health-promoting factors means focusing on those factors that mean that employees feel good at work. Traditionally, work environment management has been focused on problems in the work environment and eliminating work environment risks. Focusing on health-promoting factors means focusing instead on how we can create good working conditions enabling us to be happy and healthy in the workplace/at work. Health-promoting factors include, according to the research (Lindberg and Vingård, 2012):

- A present, trusting and involved management;
- Opportunities for participation and impact;
- Communication and feedback;
- Active, systematic work environment management;
- Fairness;
- Transparency;
- Continual opportunities for professional development.

Based on research into health-promoting factors, it is especially worthwhile establishing which organisational factors affect the possibility of leadership developing in the workplace that is present, trusting, and involved in relation to every employee, regardless of their background, sexual orientation or gender expression. The research indicates, for example, that employees' general experiences of organisational support, i.e., experiences showing that the organisation that they work for appreciates their work and cares about their wellbeing, are beneficial for employees and employers alike (Eisenberger et al., 1986).

Furthermore, there are significant health-promoting factors connected with Antonovsky's model of a "sense of belonging", which suggests that we as individuals experience wellbeing when our existence is meaningful, comprehensible and manageable (Antonovsky, 1987). From a workplace perspective, it may therefore be considered relevant to suggest how we can increase LGBTQ people's sense of belonging at work from a gender identity perspective. This could, for example, include trans people being given social support in the workplace to make it manageable for them to go through a gender-affirming transition process. Social support might be described as the feeling that others care about you and are there when you need them, and that you are part of a supportive social network. Social support may be emotional (e.g., others showing that they care) or informational (e.g., the possibility of getting advice) (Langford et al., 1997). A sense of belonging could also be created by LGBTQ people being able to be open about and refer to their experiences as LGBTQ people in a way that feels meaningful. Other relevant health-promoting factors are a high degree of trust in the workplace and the feeling of being understood and accepted there (Oksanen et al., 2008, Olesen et al., 2008), which may be linked to factors in the social work environment. Meyer's minority stress model also indicates that a sense of belonging to a workplace and of social support from employers and colleagues are likely to be important health-promoting factors (Meyer, 2003).

1.3.3 The role of leadership and employer responsibility

We especially want to stress the significance of the role of leadership, as the research suggests that leadership/managership directly affects the health, wellbeing, job satisfaction, absenteeism and presenteeism of employees (Skakon et al., 2010). It is often highlighted that leadership is built on trust and relationships and that it is an important part of a manager's role. Leadership can affect LGBTQ people's work environment and wellbeing through management strategies, the way in which relationships with employees are

handled, how the conditions establishing a social climate are created, and through the support that is given (DeSouza et al., 2017; Kelloway et al., 2008; Skakon et al., 2010).

Managership plays a role in LGBTQ people's work environment through the formal responsibility as employers that managers have to investigate and prevent risks in the work environment, including responsibility for actively countering and managing any victimisation, i.e., by conducting systematic work environment management (AFS 2001:1). According to the work environment regulations on organisational and social work environment management, employers are responsible for making it clear that victimisation will not be tolerated at work, and for taking measures to eliminate work environment conditions that could give rise to victimisation. According to the work environment regulations, managers and supervisory staff have a special responsibility to prevent, detect and deal with victimisation. (AFS 2015:4). Managers are also required to comply with the Discrimination Act (2008:567), which includes a ban on discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression, and on reprisals against people reporting discrimination. The Discrimination Act means that the employer is responsible for mapping, analysing, addressing and evaluating impediments to equal rights and opportunities. Areas for active measures to combat discrimination include physical and psychological working conditions, wages and other terms of employment, education and other professional training, and measures for working parents.

Because this report is focused on the organisational and social work environment of LGBTQ people, we have not included studies on discrimination in connection with recruitment or parenthood.

1.4 Systems theory perspective

A systems theory perspective can create a greater understanding of the development of health-promoting and risk factors (Dellve and Eriksson, 2016) for LGBTQ people. Systems theories include individual, team, organisation and societal perspectives, and enable holistic analyses of how the interplay and relationship between various factors affect conditions determining and perceptions of the work environment (Bone, 2015; Bronfenbrenner, 1999; Dellve and Eriksson, 2016). A systems theory perspective has been used in the report to analyse what is important to create an inclusive workplace based on different levels within a work system. With regard to the perspectives at organisation level, in this systematic literature review we have included research into how organisations work to be inclusive, what the systematic efforts to counter discrimination look like, and what organisational support is provided. At team level, in this report we have covered the social climate, attitudes, culture and norms prevailing in teams, including social support from managers and colleagues. At individual level, we have included strategies that individual LGBTQ

people use to handle questions connected with their gender identity and/or sexuality in the workplace. Societal perspectives may refer to laws and norms in society that affect the workplace. We do not include studies that only take a societal perspective in this systematic literature review, but we have chosen to consider whether the studies included take into account societal factors/societal conditions in their analyses of the organisational and social work environment of LGBTQ people.

2 Method

2.1 The overarching method used for the literature review

A systematic literature review was conducted based on the so-called Mynak model. This means that we systematically searched numerous databases as broadly as possible to find as much of the relevant research in the area from the past 10 years as we could. The systematic literature review was primarily exploratory in nature, as the study's theses were broad, focusing on compiling the characteristics of, and the health-promoting and risk factors linked to, the organisational and social work environment of LGBTQ people. The objective was therefore to compile the content of the current research to answer the questions posed in the study. During the first stage, the focus for the systematic literature review's content was defined based on the questions asked through the commission, and the inclusion and exclusion criteria (see Table 1). The inclusion and exclusion criteria were formulated based on the PICo framework (see below), which is suited to studies of a more exploratory nature. A search for relevant articles to include in the review was then conducted to see how they were indexed in databases.

Table 1. The inclusion and exclusion criteria were formulated based on the PICo framework

P (population or problem)	I (interest)	Co (context)
Inclusion criteria: LGBTQ participants in the study (including homosexual, bisexual and other non-heterosexual people, trans, intersex and non-binary people, and people who otherwise define their gender identity or sexuality as queer)	Inclusion criteria: Empirical research addressing characteristics, work environment risks and/or health-promoting factors at individual, team, and/or organisation level, connected with the organisational and social work environment for LGBTQ people Studies published in scientific journals Studies that were conducted in Sweden, or that include Swedish participants, and that weren't published in scientific journals	Inclusion criteria: Studies on work environment issues that are relevant to a Swedish context Studies published in either Swedish, Norwegian, Danish or English
Exclusion criteria: Studies on how companies address or respond to LGBTQ issues but that don't include LGBTQ people's perceptions of the measures/approaches Studies on the attitudes of employees and managers towards LGBTQ people in the workplace Studies where the author reflects on their own experiences as an LGBTQ person and where no other LGBTQ participants have been included	Exclusion criteria: Studies regarding the induction of LGBTQ people into working life, including, for example, discrimination during the recruitment process Studies only addressing the physical work environment, with no link to the social and/or organisational work environment Studies of students Studies based on non-empirical material Studies that do not comply with quality criteria according to Hong et al. (2018)	Exclusion criteria: Studies regarding a national context where same-sex relationships are illegal Studies concerning national employment legislation that are irrelevant to a Swedish context Studies conducted in a cultural context that cannot be considered relevant to a Swedish context

During the next stage, the researchers, together with information specialists at the KTH Royal Institute of Technology library, developed search strings to find relevant articles answering the questions posed by the study (see Appendix 2). Trial searches were performed before information specialists from KTH Royal Institute of Technology and Gothenburg University carried out the first definitive searches in October and November 2020. The initial trial searches included search terms such as "psychosocial work environment", "social work environment" and "organisational work environment", but, during the development of the search string, it became apparent that the search term "work environment" was sufficient to cover existing publications in these areas. Updated searches were conducted in September 2021 by information specialists from KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Gothenburg University and Lund University. Because research into the organisational and social work environment of LGBTQ people is a broad field that can cover a large range of scientific subjects, searches for relevant articles were made in 15 different databases (see Table 2). A large number of databases were used to ensure that the study covers national and international research in the gender, social, work life and health fields, for instance. The initial searches were limited to articles and reports published in the last 10 years. Updated searches in the same databases were performed in order to include studies that were published between the autumn of 2020 and September 2021. The search strategies, including search strings and the number of matches per database, are described in Appendix 2.

Table 2. Databases searched for literature

Database	Comment: initial database, subject/discipline, etc.
Pubmed	Medical research. In order to include articles covering health aspects.
Web of science: Social sciences citation index	Contains 3,400 social science journals.
Libris	Literature from Swedish libraries. In order to include studies relevant to a Swedish context.
SveMed+	Contains references to articles from Scandinavian journals in the fields of medicine, odontology, healthcare, occupational therapy, nursing and physiotherapy.
Swepub	Articles, conference contributions, theses, etc., published by Swedish higher education institutions and government agencies.
Scopus	This is self-declared to be the largest database for referee reviewed literature. Covers most research areas.
Arbline	An interdisciplinary database of literature focusing on work life, the work environment, and the labour market.
Kvinnsam	Swedish theses with a gender perspective.
Gender studies database	The Gender Studies Database contains research publications on LGBTQ and gender issues.
Social services abstracts	Literature focusing on social work and related areas, including social welfare, social politics, and societal development. The database summarises and indexes serial publications and contains journal articles and theses.
Sociological abstracts	International literature on sociology and related disciplines within the field of social and behavioural science.
PsycInfo	International literature on psychology and related disciplines. The database contains literature from a range of psychology-related disciplines, such as psychiatry, education, economics, medicine, nursing, pharmacology, law, linguistics and social work.
International bibliography of the social sciences (IBSS)	International database of social science and interdisciplinary research.
Social Science Database	Covers core areas of the social sciences, including sociology, social work, anthropology, politics, and other fields, containing journals from over 50 countries.
Applied social sciences index and abstracts (ASSIA)	Covers health, social work, psychology, sociology, economics, politics and education.

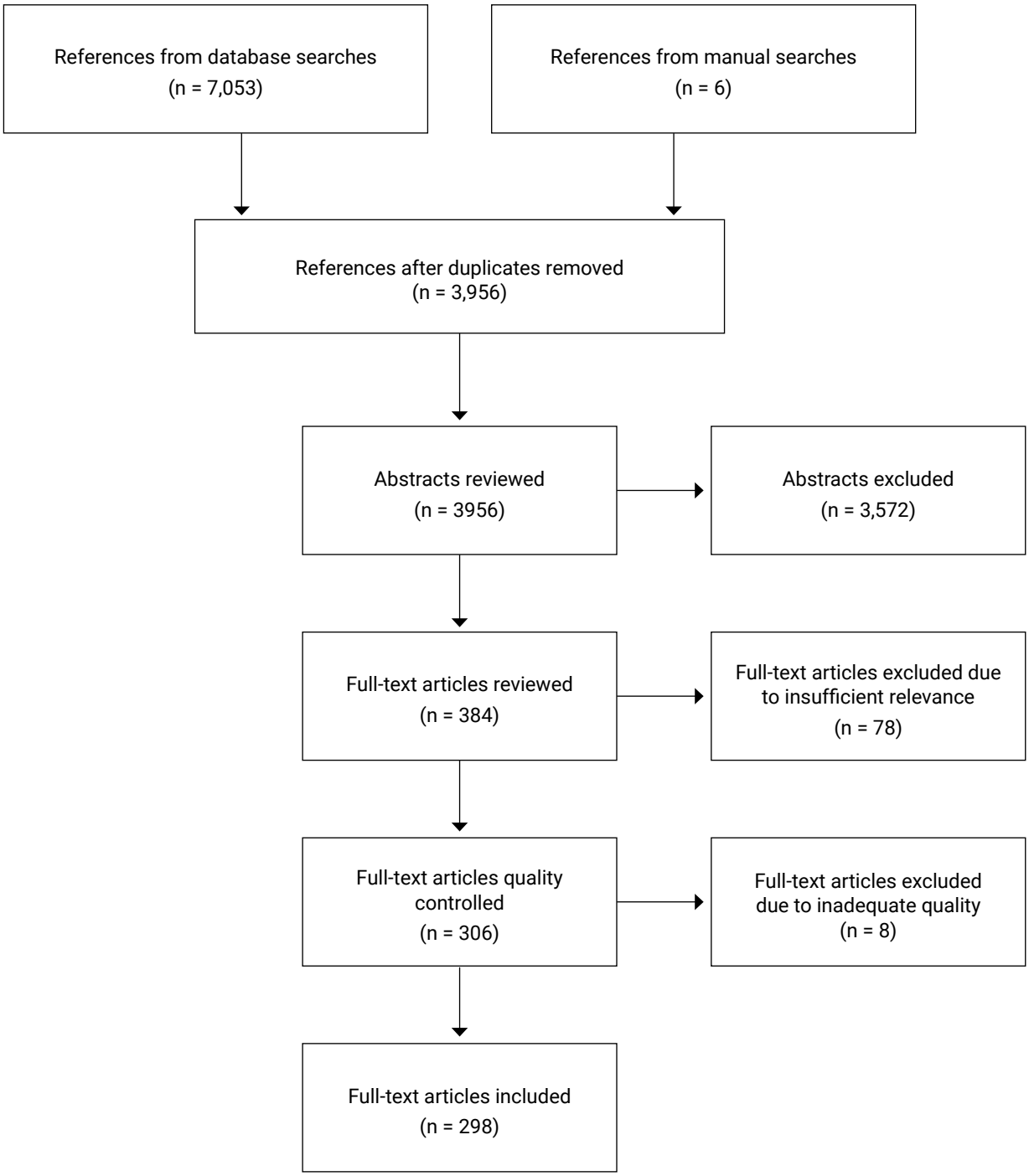

Figure 1. PRISMA flow chart of the number of publications reviewed during the various stages of the process

Once the information specialists had delivered titles and abstracts for all the search matches, all the references were compiled in a database and duplicates were removed (n = 3,956). The database was supplemented by references from manual searches, which included reports that had been recommended to the researchers by experts, or that they knew of themselves (n = 6). All the matches were transferred to the software programme Rayyan, where the abstracts and titles underwent an initial screening based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria (see Table 1). One of the inclusion criteria was articles published in scientific journals. Also included were Swedish studies/international studies that studied Swedish populations and were published in a report, book, or book chapter, as it was essential that studies that could be relevant to a Swedish context were not excluded. All the remaining full-text references were reviewed based on the selection criteria in Table 1 and based on their quality. The researchers AE, SA and SB divided up the reading and selecting of full-text references between them. A compilation of the full-text references excluded can be found in Appendix 3. Where there was doubt regarding inclusion, at least two of the researchers read and assessed the reference. In case of doubt, the inclusion/exclusion of the reference was discussed until a consensus was reached.

A protocol was followed during the quality controlling of all the full-text references included (see Appendix 5). The quality control took into account whether there was a clear research question, and whether the question could be answered through the data collected. The protocol also contained review questions about the adequacy of the method, the analysis and the interpretation of the results (Hong et al., 2018). The articles included are based on studies that used a qualitative method, quantitative method, or mixed method. Qualitative studies often analyse data from interviews or observations, their objective generally being to understand a phenomenon in-depth, for example to obtain a thorough understanding of people's perceptions and experiences. Quantitative studies analyse data from, e.g., surveys or archives, and their objective is often to study statistical links or to draw general conclusions. In studies using a mixed method, qualitative and quantitative data are combined.

The reasons for exclusion for each abstract or full-text article were compiled in an Excel file. In the end, 289 full-text articles (Appendix 4) were included in the systematic literature review (see flow chart in Figure 1).

2.2 Analysis

During the first stage, the articles were subject to global categorisation based on the following fixed categories:

- Methodology – qualitative, quantitative or mixed method studies
- Target group – LGBTQ, homosexuals, homosexual women, homosexual men, bisexuals and trans people
- System level – individual, group or organisation level, as well as interplay with societal level

- Work environment focus – risk and health-promoting factors
- Research themes – social work environment, organisational work environment, discrimination and harassment, "coming out" in the workplace, career, job satisfaction and health, intersectional perspectives, and wage differences.

The categories are not mutually exclusive. One article could for example be categorised based on both target group and work environment. The category LGBTQ contains studies that included anyone who broadly identified as LGBTQ, in which there were no separate analyses of differences between different sexual/gender identities. The category homosexuals included studies of homosexual women as well as homosexual men, in which no separate analyses were made of these two groups. When a study was categorised as covering homosexual women, homosexual men, bisexuals, or trans people, there were separate analyses of, and results for, the specific target group. Simultaneously with the global content analysis, all of the studies were summarised in an Excel spreadsheet where we noted which of this report's authors had analysed the study, in which country/countries the study was conducted and in which industry (classification in accordance with SNI 2007, see Appendix 6), the education level and type of job of the study's participants, short summaries of the method used for the study, the main focus of the study, the main theoretical perspectives, any quality issues with the study, and any results based on a class perspective.

During the second stage, we identified and summarised which organisational, social, risk and health-promoting factors, respectively, appeared at individual, team or organisation level. Because health-promoting and risk factors are often two sides of the same coin, no distinction has been made between health-promoting and risk factors. Instead, we have chosen to make clear from the summary descriptions the different ways in which a factor can be negative and/or positive from a work environment perspective. The results concerning intersectional perspectives on the work environment of LGBTQ people were also summarised, and the interplay with the societal level, as indicated by the studies. Note that the studies often covered several different thematic areas, which means that the same reference may be found under different headings and themes. For example, an article may contain results regarding a range of factors at different system levels. Based on the division of the articles above and the compilation in the Excel spreadsheet, we identified which groups of LGBTQ people, perspectives, themes, countries and industries were more or less well researched in the material and where there were gaps in knowledge.

3 Results

The summarised results and holistic picture of the work environment problems revealed by the literature study are first presented in 3.1 *Focuses and themes of the studies*, and 3.2 *Overall results.* The results are then presented in greater detail, sorted under:

3.1 *Factors at organisation level*

3.2 *Factors at team level*

3.3 *Factors at individual level*

3.4 *Intersectional perspectives*

3.5 *Interplay with societal perspectives*

The systematic literature review incorporates studies focusing on bisexual and trans people in the sections presenting more detailed results related to the work environment of LGBTQ people, but the specific experiences reported in the studies are also described and discussed in the final discussion of the results. Very few studies have specifically analysed work environment aspects with regard to individuals who identify as pansexual or non-binary, for example, but where this is the case this is mentioned in the results section. There are, however, no specific studies in the material on queer groups such as polyamorous people, polysexual people, or people participating in BDSM (BDSM is short for bondage/discipline, dominance/submission and sadomasochism). When the term queer is mentioned in the included studies, it is most often mentioned in passing and generally includes non-binary people, or is used as an overarching term for LGBTQ people, e.g., to refer to anyone who in any way breaches norms connected with gender identity or sexuality.

3.1 Focuses and themes of the studies

Table 3 lists methodologies, target groups and examples of common and overarching themes for the 289 articles included.

Table 3 Methodologies, target groups and examples of common and overarching themes in the included studies

Methodologies	Qualitative studies	140 (mainly qualitative interviews)
	Quantitative studies	146 (mainly survey studies)
	Mixed method	13
Target groups	LGBTQ (broad perspectives)	93
	Homosexuals (women and men, no separate analyses based on gender)	57*
	Homosexual men	83
	Homosexual women	69
	Bisexuals	25
	Trans people (binary and non-binary)	55
Themes	Social work environment	221
	Organisational work environment	177
	Discrimination + harassment	70 + 18
	“Coming out” in the workplace	84
	Career	41
	Job satisfaction + health	42 + 25
	Intersectional perspectives (the studies include analyses from intersectional perspectives)	30
	Pay gap	18

** 24 of these studies included bisexuals, but no separate analyses were conducted where a distinction was made between homosexuals and bisexuals.*

A large proportion of the studies were carried out entirely in the US (N = 167) or with the US as one of several countries of origin for the participants (N = 11). The second most frequently occurring country where studies were entirely or partly conducted was the UK (N = 53 + 7). Twelve of the studies were conducted in Sweden. Six of the Swedish studies have been more widely published as reports, book chapters, or a whole book, respectively (Björk and Wahlström, 2018; Eriksson-Zetterquist and Solli, 2016; Eriksson-Zetterquist et al., 2011. FRA, 2020; Ohlström, 2017; Rennstam, 2021). Other studies were mainly conducted in EU countries, Australia or Canada, with a few exceptions for studies carried out in other countries outside Europe, or in European countries that are not EU members. Most of the survey studies included are cross-sectional studies; only 14 of the survey studies were longitudinal. The number of participants varies between the different studies, both qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative studies included 1–254 participants, and studies including trans people tend to have a lower number of participants.

One or two participants might, from a quality standpoint, be considered to be too small a number of participants for any reliable conclusions to be drawn. We have chosen to include these studies nonetheless, as long as they had a solid theoretical foundation, or a foundation in previous research, and the qualitative analysis was performed in a scientifically adequate way. The specific reason for including studies with such a low number of participants is that these studies mainly covered people of trans experience, for which there are generally a limited number of studies. When results from a study with one or two participants are reported, this fact is mentioned in this report.

The material covers large survey studies from the US and the UK in the public sector including up to 12,000 LGBTQ people. The results of these surveys may be considered to be partly transferable to a Swedish context, as the public sector in these countries has inclusive policies, and the public organisations studied actively work on discrimination issues from a diversity perspective. The material also contains multiple smaller survey studies with a more limited number of participants. This is particularly the case for studies including trans or bisexual people. Many of the surveys include answer options such as trans, queer, pansexual, and other alternatives, but very few of these studies have a sufficient number of respondents to carry out separate analyses of these groups. Many of the surveys have bisexual as an answer option, and despite the fact that there may be enough respondents in this category, few studies perform separate analyses of the conditions and outcomes for bisexuals compared with other sexual identities. Furthermore, a majority of the studies studied white participants with middle-class professions, and only a smaller number of studies covered intersectional perspectives. Many studies (N = 131) include participants representing several different areas of activity and industries, or the industry in question isn't specified (N = 49). In cases where the industry is specified, the most frequently occurring industries are education, healthcare, nursing and social services (N = 46), followed by public administration and defence (N = 31). See the different categories of industries in Appendix 6.

3.2 Overall results

3.2.1 Experiences of a positive or neutral work environment

Many of the studies report that a large number of homosexuals perceive their work environment to be positive and accepting, or at least neutral. A Swedish survey on discrimination in the Swedish Armed Forces showed, for example, that relatively few people in the study reported that they had personally experienced discrimination based on their sexual orientation (Eriksson-Zetterquist and Solli, 2016; Eriksson-Zetterquist et al., 2011). In addition, a majority of the homosexuals who participated in a study in Gothenburg municipality stated that they felt involved, safe and accepted in the work community (Björk and Wahlström, 2018). This is comparable with international studies. For example, in an American survey, a large percentage of LGBTQ nurses (78%) declared that they work in an LGBTQ-friendly workplace (Eliason et al., 2011a). Moreover, 74% of the homo- and bisexual respondents in a survey of the British police force reported that they are satisfied with their work, and 82% that they had never felt discriminated against (Jones, 2015). An American qualitative study indicates that homosexual university employees experience a low degree of discrimination and a high degree of respect for their work (Dozier, 2015). The homo- and bisexual law lecturers participating in a survey study of American universities also did not report that they were exposed to more hostile behaviour or discrimination in the workplace than heterosexual law lecturers (Zürbrugg and Miner, 2016). Homosexual men in an Australian interview study reported that, over the past 15 years, their work environment had developed from being homophobic to being more inclusive, with a positive attitude towards them (Aaron and Ragusa, 2011). The decrease in discrimination that has been noted in the last few decades was also evident in a British survey study of LGBTQ people in the police force (Jones and Williams, 2016). The American federal agencies regularly conduct survey studies involving questionnaires that are given to all employees and have hundreds of thousands of respondents.

The survey study from 2013 showed no difference between the LGBTQ and other employees participating in the study in terms of satisfaction with personal safety, work and the handling of diversity issues (Federman and Rishel Elias, 2017). There are also cases where the study participants have described their workplaces as neutral rather than LGBTQ friendly (see, e.g., Mattheis, De Arellano and Yoder, 2020). This may, for example, be because they didn't really know other people's views of their sexual orientation, or because they felt tolerated rather than welcomed (Eliason et al., 2011a). Detailed perspectives on positive and/or neutral work environment factors are presented in the results section below.

3.2.2 Experiences of negative work environment aspects

The studies included also indicate that a substantial proportion of the LGBTQ participants experience discrimination, harassment, or a work environment that is negative in other ways, quite often alongside positive work environment

factors (see, e.g., Aaron and Ragusa, 2011; Björk and Wahlström, 2018; Dozier, 2015; Ferfolja and Hopkins, 2013; Nelson et al., 2019; Rengers et al., 2019). A Swedish interview study showed, for example, how the participating homo- and bisexual police officers' experiences of exclusion and inclusion exist in parallel (Rennstam, 2021).

There are studies showing that LGBTQ people rate different work environment aspects and/or their wellbeing lower than heterosexual cis people. A survey study performed in 2012, as part of the survey studies of American federal agency employees mentioned above, showed that the LGBTQ people in the study were less satisfied than the heterosexual participants with the attitude towards them and how they were treated in their workplaces. They were less content with their wages, their development opportunities, and their relationships with colleagues and managers, and also reported a higher degree of intent to resign (Lewis and Pitts, 2017). Another study, based on the same survey, showed that a high level of work commitment wasn't linked to job satisfaction to the same extent for LGBTQ employees as for other employees in the study. The results indicate that there are differences in the organisational conditions affecting work commitment (Jin and Park, 2016). According to a Canadian survey study, homosexual men and women reported a somewhat lower degree of job satisfaction than their heterosexual counterparts (Leppel, 2014). Another American survey study showed, however, that there were no differences in the job satisfaction and experiences of stress at work between the hetero-, homo- and bisexual social workers in the study. The study does, however, show that the homo- and bisexual social workers often had a background of psychological and physical health issues (Senreich et al., 2020). Analyses from a survey of the American federal agencies carried out in 2015 also showed that the LGBTQ people in the study were more likely to resign than other employees (Cech and Rothwell, 2020).

There are also studies indicating that discrimination, harassment and microaggressions against LGBTQ employees are a significant work environment problem. A large recurring European survey study conducted in 2019, including 2,500 LGBTQ people from Sweden, showed, for example, that one in five LGBTQ participants in the study felt discriminated against at work (FRA, 2020). An American survey study showed, moreover, that lawyers identifying as LGBTQ had been exposed to open as well as subtle discrimination to a larger degree than the heterosexual, white lawyers participating in the study (Black et al., 2021). A Swiss study of homo- and bisexual employees at 20 different companies showed that:

- 43% had experienced verbal stigmatisation
- 26% felt excluded from their team, interesting projects or social events
- 29% had experienced harassment
- 20% rated their mental health lower due to their sexual orientation

Despite this, 93% reported that they were generally happy at work. The study also showed that homosexual women experienced discrimination more

frequently, followed by bisexual women (Lloren and Parini, 2017). In a qualitative study from the UK, the interviewees reported that harassment and discrimination are the main issues raised with unions (Colgan and Wright, 2011). The abovementioned study from Gothenburg municipality also showed that LGBTQ people were more likely to be victims of victimisation, bullying or sexual harassment than people not identifying as LGBTQ (Björk and Wahlström, 2018).

A large number of studies report microaggressions particularly. The study from Gothenburg municipality showed that most LGBTQ people participating in the study had experienced more subtle, and perhaps unconscious from the perpetrator's perspective, forms of harassment, such as prejudiced jokes or comments (Björk and Wahlström, 2018). Various specific aspects of work environment problems connected with discrimination, harassment, bullying and microaggressions referred to in this systematic literature review are described in further detail below.

3.2.3 Studies on "coming out" in the workplace

A large proportion of the studies deal with different aspects of coming out in the workplace (e.g., Baker and Lucas 2017; Björk and Wahlström, 2018; Capell et al., 2018; Cavalier 2011, Galvin-White and O'Neal, 2015). A Swedish study showed that two-thirds of the LGBTQ participants were out to at least half of their colleagues (Björk and Wahlström, 2018). This can be compared with an American survey study where 57% of the nurses had "come out" to their colleagues (Eliason et al., 2011a), and an Australian qualitative study where 22 of the 27 men were out to their colleagues (Aaron and Ragusa, 2011). The Swedish study also showed that the respondents were more likely to be out to colleagues than to service users, and that people of trans experience were out to a lesser degree than those who were homo- or bisexual (Björk and Wahlström, 2018). Furthermore, the study indicated that those who were open about their LGBTQ orientation were also less likely to feel less included in the social community in the workplace (Björk and Wahlström, 2018). A study of school counsellors in the US showed that half of the participants didn't feel comfortable "coming out" in their workplace, especially not to students and parents, and that a quarter hadn't "come out" to anyone in their workplace (Chen, Hernando and Panebianco, 2020). A Swedish study showed that it's more common for men to "come out", especially in workplaces dominated by women, and that bisexuals "come out" to a lesser extent than homosexuals (Björk and Wahlström, 2018). Another study indicates that it was perceived to be easier to "come out" in an environment where heterosexuality in men isn't the norm, but where it's more common and accepted to be a homosexual man (Christofidou, 2018). Different aspects of the individual's decision to "come out" in the workplace, connected with the organisational and social work environment, are described in detail below.

3.2.4 The work environment of trans people

The results of the systematic literature review indicate that trans people often experience a poorer organisational and social work environment than

homosexual cis people (e.g., Björk and Wahlström, 2018; Kattari et al., 2016). An American survey study showed that there was a difference in how discrimination at work was experienced when comparing cis participants from the LGBTQ community with trans people in the study (Kattari, et al., 2016). The study indicated that trans people generally experienced a higher degree of discrimination than cis people. Factors affecting the experience of discrimination included, according to the study's results, how long the person had been out (the longer they had been out, the more experiences of discrimination they had had), gender identity, age and ethnicity (Kattari, et al., 2016).

A quantitative study carried out in several countries, such as Germany and England, also showed that trans people, in comparison with cis people, reported a higher degree of exhaustion, were more likely to resign from their jobs, and felt that their workplace had a poorer climate with regard to gender issues (García Johnson and Otto, 2021). In a smaller Italian survey study in which 72 trans people participated, 15% of the respondents stated that they had been fired from their job because of their identity (Prunas et al., 2018). A study from Gothenburg municipality also showed that the people of trans experience participating in the study felt less safe and accepted within the work community, and also experienced less social support. For example, approximately one fifth of the participants had been exposed to some form of harassment or discrimination from colleagues, managers or service users, on a daily basis or fairly frequently (Björk and Wahlström, 2018).

3.2.5 The work environment of bisexual people

The systematic literature review showed that bisexuals are a vulnerable group compared with homo- and heterosexuals. We did not, however, find any studies that specifically studied how bisexual people experience the workplace in Sweden. The 25 studies specifically focusing on the work environment of bisexual people show to some degree that bisexual men and women have unique experiences of discrimination and harassment at work (e.g., Arena and Jones, 2017; Corrington et al., 2019; Green et al., 2011; Hoel et al., 2017; Kuyper, 2015; Periard et al., 2018; Popova, 2018; Sabia, 2014). A Dutch survey study based on random selection showed that bisexuals reported a higher degree of experienced discrimination and bullying in the workplace than homo- and heterosexuals and that, comparatively, bisexual women experience the highest level of discrimination and bullying (Kuyper, 2014). Bisexuals also reported higher levels of fatigue than homo- and heterosexuals. According to the study, there were no major differences in job satisfaction between the homo- and heterosexual participants. While earlier studies have tended to investigate the LGBTQ community as a whole, this study, which investigated homo-, bi- and heterosexual men and women as different cohorts, showed that the increase in work environment-related problems among the LGBTQ people participating in this study was mainly related to reports of work environment problems from bisexuals (Kuyper, 2014). An American mixed method study showed that bisexuals employed in the state, public sector gave a lower rating for polite attitudes, support from the

leadership, psychological security and job satisfaction than heterosexuals and, for psychological security, also compared with homosexual men (Periard et al., 2018). A smaller Canadian survey study including 110 bisexuals showed, on the other hand, that the percentage of bisexual men and women in the study who reported that they were very satisfied with their work was significantly higher than the corresponding percentage for the heterosexuals (Leppel, 2014). Leppel argues that this result could be a consequence of bisexual men and women looking for and finding jobs in physically and emotionally safe environments, and them thereby achieving higher degrees of job satisfaction. Leppel also states that more studies are needed in order to make generalisations based on these results (Leppel, 2014).

3.2.6 The work environment of pansexual and non-binary people and other groups

There are in general very few studies that specifically study the work environment of LGBTQ people not identifying as homosexuals, bisexuals or trans people, such as pansexuals, non-binary people (who may also fall into the trans category) and people who are unsure of their sexual orientation. An Australian survey study of emergency service employees showed, however, that the pansexual employees in the study, and people who were unsure of their sexual orientation, along with bisexual employees, were significantly more likely to report suicidal thoughts, suicidal plans, emotional pain and drug use compared with heterosexual employees (Kyron et al., 2021). Non-binary people are often analysed in surveys as a group together with trans men and trans women. An American survey study of trans people, including non-binary people, did, however, conduct separate analyses of trans men, trans women and non-binary people. The study showed that the trans women in the study were more exposed to discrimination than the trans men and non-binary people (Davidson and Halsall, 2016). People identifying as queer or pansexual have also been included in some qualitative studies, meaning that specific work environment experiences may be reported by these study participants (see, e.g., Alfrey and Twine, 2017).

3.3 Factors at organisation level

The factors at organisation level emerging from the studies and presented in detail below include:

3.3.1 *Different forms of organisational support and an inclusive climate*

3.3.2 *The significance of organisational policies*

3.3.3 *Spatial and physical dimensions in a work organisation*

3.3.4 *The significance of staff training in LGBTQ issues*

3.3.5 *Career opportunities and barriers*

3.3.6 *The significance of different types of work organisations*

3.3.7 *Harassment and discrimination from clients, service users and students*

3.3.8 *The significance of active development processes for an inclusive workplace*

3.3.1 Different forms of organisational support and an inclusive climate

The following different forms and aspects of organisational support and an inclusive climate are presented in this section:

- *A supportive organisational climate*
- *A generally good work climate for participation, equality and diversity*
- *Active support and a proactive attitude from immediate managers*
- *Senior management as a condition for a supportive organisational climate*
- *The significance of support functions*
- *nternal and external communication and dialogue within the organisation*
- *Access to LGBTQ networks and mentors*

The results partly overlap with the aspects of social support and respect from colleagues and managers, and a sense of fellowship with other LGBTQ people, presented in section 3.4 *Factors at team level,* 3.4.6 *Fellowship with other LGBTQ people, and* 3.4.7 *The significance of active development processes for an inclusive workplace.* The difference is that in this section the emphasis is more on the organisational aspects, i.e., policies and activities supporting the organisational climate, networks, the work environment responsibilities of managers, and formal networks provided by the work organisation. The more social and informal aspects of support and fellowship are highlighted in section 3.4 *Factors at team level.*

A supportive organisational climate

For the period covered by this systematic literature review, we found 34 studies, many of which are survey studies, investigating the significance of an organisational work climate understood to be supportive to LGBTQ people. A "supportive organisational climate" is in this context defined as to what extent the study participants feel that their work organisation has policies (i.e., explicit principles and/or guidelines for decisions and actions), activities, and/or a general climate that is felt to be supportive or accepting towards LGBTQ people. A study including three surveys conducted over three weeks showed that an organisational work climate that was felt to be supportive towards LGBTQ people through its policies and activities was also linked to better working conditions for the LGBTQ people in the study, including good physical, social and organisational working conditions (Smith et al., 2020). Similar results can be found in two American survey studies of trans people, which showed that an organisational work climate that was felt to be supportive towards trans people was linked to job satisfaction (Huffman et al., 2021; Law et al., 2011). Another American survey study of trans people showed that experiencing a supportive work climate in the form of supportive policies and a supportive climate correlated positively with satisfaction with colleagues, managers and work (Brewster et al., 2012). A Chinese survey study of homo- and bisexuals showed that an accepting organisational climate, where

managers and colleagues are felt to be accepting towards sexual minority groups, was linked to increased job satisfaction and a lower occurrence of anxiety symptoms (Jiang et al., 2019).

Another American survey study of LGBTQ people showed that a less supportive LGBTQ climate was linked to lower rates of wellbeing, higher degrees of burnout, and higher levels of internalised homophobia (Singh and O'Brien, 2020). An Australian survey study showed more specifically that organisational support was linked to a lower occurrence of heterosexism, which in turn was linked to wellbeing among the LGBTQ participants (Smith and McCarthy, 2017).

A supportive organisational climate has also been shown to be linked with feelings of daring and/or wanting to be open about sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Two qualitative studies of homosexuals show, for example, that experiencing a lack of a supportive organisational climate towards LGBTQ people affected the participants' feelings of not daring to be open about their sexual orientation (Felix et al., 2016; Walker and Melton, 2015). An American survey study showed that a supportive organisational climate affected openness among employees, and that there was a stronger link between a person being open about their sexual orientation and job satisfaction when LGBTQ people felt that there was a supportive organisational climate (Tatum, 2018). An American survey study from the research and university field showed similar results. The homo- and bisexual participants were more likely to be open about their sexual identity if they worked in workplaces that they felt were safe and welcoming and if there was specific support for LGBTQ people (Yoder and Matthei, 2016). Tatum's study also showed that a person being secretive about their sexual identity was linked to a lower degree of job satisfaction, but that this correlation was not affected by whether or not there was a supportive work climate (Tatum, 2018). An American survey study indicated, moreover, that an organisational climate where heterosexism wasn't tolerated, where, for example, issues connected with harassment and discrimination were taken seriously and addressed, also correlated with the homosexual participants' openness about their sexual orientation in the workplace (Brenner et al., 2010). A German survey study showed that an organisational climate felt to be supportive towards bisexuals, compared with a climate that was only generally supportive towards LGBTQ people, was linked to bisexuals being more likely to come out in the workplace (Köllen, 2013).

A supportive organisational climate can also have a positive effect on people who are not open about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. In an American interview study, young adults from the LGBTQ community reported that, despite some of them not being open about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity, many in the study still felt accepted. They could, for example, be accepted despite not revealing their sexual orientation and/or gender identity (Ueno et al., 2020). In an American qualitative study, the homosexual participants did, however, say that there was a difference

between an accepting and a truly supportive and inclusive environment. They described how the workplace may have a leadership whose intention was to be inclusive, but when colleagues didn't always behave in an inclusive way, this affected the extent to which they felt included, and the contexts in which they felt comfortable being open about their sexual identity.

The interviewees also described frustration about the company using generalising and non-committal slogans about the company "promoting diversity" or being "an accepting workplace", instead of describing in practical terms how they are working to eliminate sexism and racism (Cox, 2019). A British qualitative study of LGBTQ people working at a company endeavouring to be LGBTQ friendly showed that the interviewees mainly felt accepted and included as long as they behaved in a way that was felt to add value to the organisation. This did not include advocating for equality issues in the workplace in a threatening and loud way (Burchiellaro, 2020). An American survey study showed, however, that organisations are generally not either hostile or supportive towards LGBTQ people – both attitudes can coexist within the same organisation (Holman et al., 2019).

An Australian survey study showed that organisational support in the form of policies and activities supporting the policies affected the occurrence of direct heterosexism (i.e., heterosexism targeting individuals in the workplace), but that indirect heterosexism (heterosexism in the workplace that does not target individuals) increased (Smith and McCarthy, 2017). In line with these results, a British qualitative study showed how a changed social climate, where discrimination against sexual minorities was banned, meant that more subtle forms of discrimination occurred based on heterosexual assumptions (Fielden and Jepson, 2016). A lesson from these two studies is that vigilance is needed regarding the possibility of subtle and indirect forms of discrimination occurring even when a work organisation actively strives to combat discrimination.

To summarise, the research indicates that an organisational climate that is felt to be supportive towards LGBTQ people also correlates with the people in question experiencing a good work environment, job satisfaction, and health, in addition to wanting to be open about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

A generally good work climate for participation, equality and diversity

Eight studies, both quantitative and qualitative, indicate that workplaces that are felt to be inclusive for LGBTQ people are characterised by a generally good work climate for participation, equality and diversity. More specifically, studies suggest that a generally good work climate is important for LGBTQ people's health and job satisfaction. For example, one study showed that working in an organisation with a more developed diversity culture contributed to the LGBTQ people in the study feeling that their

expertise was used in a better way, which in turn contributed to greater job satisfaction (Pink-Harper et al., 2017). A large survey study from 2015 including approximately 400,000 American federal agency employees showed, moreover, a link between work methods focused on collaboration, support and empowerment and the job satisfaction of the LGBTQ participants. The study also showed that work methods focused on equality (for example, fair treatment), collaboration and empowerment were most likely to create a sense of belonging to a work organisation in LGBTQ people (Hur, 2020). According to a survey study with LGBTQ participants from several countries, there was also a positive link between people having a general feeling of trust in an organisation and them "coming out" in the workplace (Capell et al., 2018).

In addition, three qualitative studies also show that homosexual people working in workplaces characterised by a work culture of diversity and inclusion experience job satisfaction and generally feel accepted (Dozier, 2015; Ferfolja and Hopkins, 2013; Melton and Cunningham, 2014b). In two qualitative studies, homosexual men also said that they found it easier to develop friendships with heterosexual men in organisational cultures that are open to diversity (Rumens 2018; Rumens and Broomfield, 2014).

A generally good work climate might also be described as one where LGBTQ people are treated "just like everyone else". The participants in an American qualitative study noted that, for them, an inclusive workplace meant that they were just like everyone else; i.e., sexual orientation was a non-issue, they were treated the same way as everyone else and had the same rights (such as the right to bring a partner to an event) (Melton and Cunningham, 2014b). In a qualitative British study, homosexual men reported that when there was a workplace culture where they felt they were equally treated they could also feel more normal. The same study describes more macho-oriented organisational cultures as less favourable for an equality culture characterised by equal treatment (Rumens, 2018).

Note that the studies in this section mainly categorise LGBTQ people as a group or are about homosexual men. It is therefore not clear if a generally good work climate is favourable for specific groups such as bisexuals or trans people.

Active support and a proactive attitude from immediate managers

The specific dimensions of organisational support include the leadership exhibited by LGBTQ people's immediate managers. Six studies show that specific support from immediate managers is an important factor in the wellbeing of LGBTQ people and in them daring to "come out" in the workplace (Allan et al., 2015; Colgan and Wright, 2011; Edwards et al., 2016; Goldberg and Smith, 2013; Magrath, 2020; Stavrou and Solea, 2020).

Studies also show that managers' actions and attitudes towards diversity issues are important for creating a workplace that is felt to be accepting (i.e., Ueno et al., 2020)

and for the job satisfaction of LGBTQ people (i.e., Pink-Harper et al., 2017). For example, a mixed method study including surveys and interviews with homosexual teachers from Australia showed that strong leadership against discrimination is important for feeling that a workplace is supportive (Ferfolja and Hopkins, 2013). According to the participants in a qualitative study, a practical, proactive attitude from managers may mean taking action when it emerges that an employee has negative attitudes towards LGBTQ issues, for example sending the employee for diversity training (Melton and Cunningham, 2014a).

The opposite is also true. The research showed that immediate managers who greet LGBTQ issues with silence or fail to act on harassment are a clear risk factor for a less healthy work environment.

According to qualitative studies of homosexuals, so are managers who don't act or offer support when there are incidents of homophobia (Aysola et al., 2018; Colgan and Wright, 2011; Hooker 2019; Roberts 2011). More generally, a lack of support may also mean a manager not communicating about or mentioning LGBTQ issues due to a heteronormative climate (Colgan and Wright, 2011; Simone et al., 2014).

According to two British qualitative studies, there is a link between a lack support from managers and male homosexual participants choosing not to report or speak up in cases of harassment or homophobia, due to fear of being a person who causes unnecessary drama (Roberts, 2011; Rumens and Broomfield, 2014).

Studies also show that if a manager has a negative attitude towards LGBTQ people, it means that any subordinates who are homosexual are less willing to "come out" in the workplace. According to a qualitative study, homosexuals may be afraid of the personal consequences that it might have for their career if their homophobic manager finds out about their sexual orientation (Galvin-White and O'Neal, 2015), or, according to another qualitative study, fear actually being discriminated against by their manager (Rumens and Broomfield, 2012). An American survey study suggests, moreover, that a manager's background may be of significance to the kind of support they give. The study indicates that of the head nurses at a hospital, the older and more religious participants were less willing to work towards an inclusive workplace, i.e., less willing to initiate LGBTQ-focused training and policies (Klotzbaugh and Spencer, 2015).

To summarise, studies indicate that LGBTQ people's experiences of active and visible support from their immediate managers, especially in connection with discrimination and harassment, are significant to LGBTQ people's openness and wellbeing at work.

Senior management as a condition for a supportive organisational climate

Some, mainly qualitative, studies, show that a supportive environment also includes support from the senior management within an organisation. A British qualitative study of homosexual women also showed that having senior managers who actively demonstrated that they were doing what they could to

counter discrimination and harassment was significant to women feeling that a climate was supportive (Wright, 2011). A qualitative study of trans people suggested the importance of genuine support from the leadership for them to feel that a work climate was supportive (Bates, Thomas and Timming, 2021). Conversely, an Italian qualitative study showed how a lack of commitment with LGBTQ issues from the senior management means that LGBTQ issues remain invisible (Simone et al., 2014). A non-supportive climate is characterised, according to a major British qualitative study of homo- and bisexuals, by senior managers not speaking out when junior managers make homophobic statements (Colgan and Wright, 2011). A lack of visible advocacy for diversity from an organisation's senior management means, according to a British mixed method study, that managers at a lower level don't embrace the cultural change needed to create an inclusive workplace (Senyucel and Phillpott, 2011), or, according to an American qualitative study, that the homosexuals in the study felt that they were made to feel invisible in the workplace (Dozier, 2015).

In a Swedish study of the Swedish Police Authority, the interviewees criticised and expressed anger about the senior management's inability to handle LGBTQ-related issues (Rennstam, 2021).

Note that the significance of senior management was mainly covered by a smaller number of qualitative studies, which means that generalisable conclusions cannot be drawn on its link to LGBTQ people's experiences of their work environment. The studies that do exist, however, highlight the importance of senior management creating the conditions required for organisational changes in culture (e.g., Colgan and Wright, 2011; Simone et al., 2014; Wright, 2011), which may also contribute to LGBTQ people benefiting from active support and a proactive attitude from their immediate managers.

The significance of support functions

Two qualitative studies highlight the significance of support from HR as a key factor in ensuring an inclusive workplace (Colgan and Wright, 2011; Felix et al., 2016). A Brazilian study based on interviews of 65 homosexual men described the importance of LGBTQ people being able to trust HR, for example as a result of HR advocating for LGBTQ issues in an effective way, and people reporting discrimination not being left to handle the problem on their own. Individuals always run a certain personal risk when mentioning discrimination issues, which makes support from managers and HR especially important (Felix et al., 2016). According to the studies, active efforts are required from HR for a more supportive climate in the workplace. An American study of how LGBTQ activists employed by universities lobby for LGBTQ-inclusive policies showed that HR adopted a reactive or passive role in policy issues, i.e., HR did not actively work themselves to bring about change and more inclusive policies (Githens, 2012).

There are studies suggesting the importance of HR developing specific expertise in various LGBTQ issues. An American qualitative study of LGBTQ people moving between countries when changing positions at work stressed the importance of HR developing the expertise required to provide support with the social and cultural dilemmas that LGBTQ people stationed abroad are faced with (Gedro et al., 2013). There are some qualitative studies that specifically address the importance of HR having expertise and working proactively during the period when an employee is undergoing gender-affirming care (which is sometimes described as the transition process in the systematic literature review). An American study showed that most trans people interviewed started their transition process at work by contacting HR. Many of the HR departments had never handled a gender-affirming care process before, but drew on other employers' experiences. Some arranged specific meetings where the employees could ask questions. According to the study, this was much appreciated by the trans people in question. Not all the interviewees had equally good experiences of their HR departments, however (Budge et al., 2010).

That there are support functions in place for a gender-affirming process is important according to several studies. American qualitative studies give examples of support that makes things easier for trans people during this process. One study highlights that a factor that helped to ensure that trans people have positive experiences of the transition process from a workplace perspective was reviewing the management of the gender-affirming process in the workplace before the process began, together with the manager or HR officer. The same study showed that having a support function could mean offering training to colleagues in order to prepare them for the change and the process of their coworker undergoing gender-affirming care. Support from unions was also shown to be of great importance for trans people (Brewster et al., 2014). Another success factor, according to a different American study, was having a person coordinating the gender-affirming process, providing advice to the trans person on what action to take, and making sure that the workplace is welcoming and actively shows support for LGBTQ issues when the person returns after treatment. The study also describes how thorough policies provide formal support and a structure for handling the process, instead of issues being managed reactively (Rishel Elias, 2017). Rishel Elias' study only included the experiences of one trans person, however, which means that it isn't possible to draw conclusions on the importance of having a person in the workplace coordinating the transition process.

An American study also highlights the need to simplify the administrative processes for the revising of company records concerning the name and gender of employees (Jones, 2020). A British qualitative study showed, however, that HR's efforts to support trans people could be misguided, as they might impose demands on a trans person to declare the name they want to use, the pronoun that should be used, etc., before they have even decided these things for themselves. The feeling was that an organisation's willingness to be supportive was based on the administrative procedures that needed to be

completed rather than offering support according to the situation and process of mental change experienced by the trans person (Burchiellaro, 2020).

The studies presented in this section indicate that LGBTQ people experience a need for support functions, such as HR having general LGBTQ expertise as well as specific expertise in transition processes. None of the studies on the importance of support functions were conducted in Sweden. No conclusions can therefore be drawn on whether experiences of support functions differ or are similar in Swedish workplaces. The studies do, however, give specific advice on how HR departments might handle transition processes, which is something that Swedish employers could also learn from. There is no research though on the connection between the efforts of support functions and the work environment of LGBTQ people.

Internal and external communication and dialogue within the organisation

In this review, three smaller survey studies and three qualitative studies show that a work organisation can be more inclusive by developing inclusive forms of internal and external communication and dialogue. The studies mainly offer examples of how internal and external communication can be significant, but they were not conducted in such a way that generalisable conclusions may be drawn regarding the specific ways in which communication is connected with the work environment and health of LGBTQ people. In an American survey study, the use of gender-affirming pronouns/titles and the preventing of degrading comments at work were linked to trans, queer and non-binary people feeling supported in the workplace (Huffman et al., 2021). Examples from other studies also highlight the importance of using more inclusive language in an organisation's communication, for example using the gender-neutral partner instead of husband or wife (Walker and Melton, 2015), or working actively to eliminate gender stereotypical language (Goryunova et al., 2021). Another example could be actively working to create a forum for dialogue regarding diversity issues, for example by creating diversity committees (Eliason et al., 2011a). Marketing on the intranet directed specifically towards bisexuals has also, in a smaller survey study, been shown to create a positive work climate for bisexuals, while measures specifically directed towards homosexuals instead have a negative effect on how bisexuals experience their work climate. The results may be due to bisexuals feeling invisible when LGBTQ issues receive attention from more narrow perspectives (Köllen, 2013). A British study of five global companies showed that union representatives and members of LGBTQ networks are positive about and proud of the companies' strategy of externally communicating their commitment through membership of national organisations for LGBTQ good practice. A company receiving awards for their LGBTQ efforts and using targets and key figures to measure the development of a more equal workplace is also seen as a way of creating internal acceptance, and communicating about results and achievements in their diversity efforts related to sexual orientation and gender identities (Colgan, 2011).

Access to LGBTQ networks and mentors

In total, 14 qualitative and quantitative studies show that access to LGBTQ networks in workplaces promotes job satisfaction and career progression for LGBTQ people. These may be formally organised associations or more informal contacts and networks. Formal support groups and matching with mentors organised by a company are highlighted as an important part of creating an inclusive workplace where an individual can develop their peer networks (Aysola et al., 2018; Denissen et al., 2019). Qualitative studies show, for example, that LGBTQ networks in the workplace operate as a "safe haven" where a person can receive support (Baker and Lucas, 2017; Mulé, 2018; Prock et al., 2019; Rengers et al., 2019; Schneider, 2016; Wicks, 2017) and, according to American studies, vital support and mentorship linked to success in their own careers (Hebl, Tonidandel and Ruggs, 2012; Lyons, Brenner and Lipman, 2010; Prock et al., 2019; Tindall and Waters, 2012).

An American qualitative survey study of care staff showed that the presence of LGBTQ networks working to advance the rights of LGBTQ people in the workplace was critical for creating a sense of belonging. While some were active members of such networks, others said that just knowing that such a network existed meant that they felt less lonely at work (Eliason et al., 2018). Another British qualitative study indicated that, according to the participants, it was easier to "come out" as a homosexual man in a workplace if there were established LGBTQ networks, and if there were numerous other openly homosexual members of staff (Roberts, 2011). An Irish qualitative study showed, however, that the majority of the LGBTQ interviewees didn't want to participate in networks, either because they didn't want to be open about their sexual identity, or because they didn't think a network would be useful to them (McFadden and Crowley-Henry, 2018).

Moreover, qualitative studies show that LGBTQ networks in the workplace can be a way for LGBTQ people to make themselves heard, for example by working together to combat discrimination and isolation at work (McFadden and Crowley-Henry, 2018; Rennstam, 2021). According to a German quantitative study, LGBTQ networks were not hugely significant for LGBTQ people to experience the existence of a supportive organisational climate in various industries. The study did, however, emphasise that such networks can be important for highlighting the need to work on specific LGBTQ issues within an organisation (Köllen, 2016). A large British study of seven British companies in the private and public sector underscores the presence of LGBTQ networks as indicators of an inclusive workplace, and the fact that one of the important functions of networks is to act as a visible point of contact for LGBTQ people for questions or support (Colgan and McKearney, 2012). The study showed that the companies participating in it that had set up online networks enabled the providing of support and information to LGBTQ people working abroad, or in more isolated parts of the UK, or to people who weren't open about their sexual identity at work. The study also showed that the LGBTQ groups in the companies studied had an advisory

function involving training and lectures in diversity, and people from the groups volunteered to speak about their experiences at internal training sessions and events. It was emphasised, however, that the people leading and working within the networks didn't always have resources or working hours set aside to meet their commitments, and that they were sometimes also expected to manage the company's inclusion efforts without compensation. Another aspect of networks that was highlighted in the study was that people from a blue-collar background don't have the same opportunity to participate in conference calls and web meetings and could feel excluded when they actually did participate due to the other participants having a higher level of education and using a language that might feel foreign. Finally, the British study underscored the tensions and dynamics between LGBTQ networks started by the company and previously existing union networks within the company. The results showed that the networks sometimes worked well side by side, but that there could also be tensions, as the company-initiated networks were sometimes customer focused in their LGBTQ work (for example, seeing this as an opportunity for the company to enter new markets), while the union networks had a stronger focus on traditional equality issues (Colgan and McKearney, 2012).

The significance of access to mentors for career progression, the feeling of being supported and job satisfaction were highlighted in four studies. An American study pointed to the possibility of having a mentor as a key factor, alongside the presence of an inclusive climate, in LGBTQ people achieving academic success and career satisfaction (Sanchez et al., 2015). An American qualitative study of homo- and bisexuals highlighted the importance of more senior homosexual colleagues acting as informal mentors, and also introducing their mentees to larger informal and/or formal networks of other LGBTQ people (Schneider, 2016). An American survey study showed that the homosexual employees in the study who had homosexual mentors reported a higher degree of job satisfaction and work commitment (Hebl, Tonidandel and Ruggs, 2012). Mentorships were shown, in a smaller survey study of American school counsellors, to be especially significant for those who were exposed to more than one risk, for example the risk of racism and homophobia, or for those living in a rural location where they felt more isolated (Chen et al., 2020). A survey and focus group study of university employees of medical departments in the US showed that access to a mentor was a key factor in individuals and, in the study, LGBTQ people particularly, achieving academic success (Sanchez et al., 2015). It is worth mentioning in this context that a smaller American survey study showed that fewer LGBTQ participants working at universities reported that they had received a career-oriented mentorship than their heterosexual cis colleagues (Cech et al., 2021).

3.3.2 The significance of organisational policies

This section presents:

- *The general significance of policies*
- *Discrepancies between policies and practice*

The general significance of policies

Research into the significance of organisational policies (i.e., work organisations' explicit principles or guidelines governing decision-making and actions) indicates that inclusion policies have a positive effect on the work environment of LGBTQ people. One American survey study showed that organisational policies that were inclusive of LGBTQ people, and that were also complied with within the organisation, had positive effects on employees, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender (Nowack and Donahue, 2020). Moreover, an Australian quantitative study showed that work organisations with policies promoting equality, diversity and inclusion were also more likely to apply structural measures and initiatives to combat discrimination against and the harassment of LGBTQ people (Tulloch, 2020). A British survey study also showed that the homosexual men and women working for an organisation with a diversity and equality policy had a significantly higher salary than those working for an organisation without such policies (Wang, Gunderson and Wicks, 2018). In a qualitative interview study from the US, trans people reported that the absence of policies was a cause of work-related stigma, whereby not including gender expression in equality statements, for example, and a lack of anti-discrimination training for employees, contributed to experienced work environment risks (Mizock et al., 2018).

Furthermore, a Swiss study showed that LGBTQ policies also helped to reduce the sense of isolation and amount of harassment of the homo- and bisexuals in the study (Lloren and Parini, 2017). More specifically, studies also show that the presence of policies that include LGBTQ people plays an important role in an individual's decision to "come out", as it is seen as a sign of a more inclusive and supportive organisation where the person can feel safe and supported (Compton, 2016; Eliason et al., 2011a; Tindall and Waters, 2012; Walker and Melton, 2015; Wessel, 2017). An American qualitative study of homosexuals also showed that an organisation's policies were an important signal contributing to the participants in the study feeling appreciated as employees (Dozier, 2015). In addition, an American qualitative study reported that the LGBTQ participants felt it was unfair if organisational policies didn't recognise alternative families and if the organisation had policies and practices that mainly made things easier for families from a nuclear family perspective (Dixon and Dougherty, 2014). A British qualitative study of homosexual men showed, furthermore, that working at a company with explicit diversity strategies also contributed to the interviewees feeling safer to act and speak out in cases of homophobia (Roberts, 2011). A large British qualitative study of 77 employees in the public sector indicated that the introduction of policies helped to increase the self-confidence of the homo- and bisexual employees participating in the study (Colgan and Wright, 2011).

A major British survey study showed, however, that any LGBTQ-related workplace polices had no real effect on the LGBTQ participants' job satisfaction (Bayrakdar and King, 2022). An American survey study reported that organisational support in the form of policies was less important than strong support from a colleague. The study did, however, indicate that policies had an effect when the social support was more average (Wessel, 2017). This can be compared with the results of an American-British survey study of veterinarians, which showed that the experience of a supportive work climate was more important when deciding to "come out" in the workplace than the presence of inclusive policies. The study also showed that it was the total number of LGBTQ policies and support resources in the workplace that had an impact on the LGBTQ veterinarians' job satisfaction (Witte et al., 2020).

Policies within an organisation can cumulatively be seen as important indicators that discrimination isn't tolerated. The research shows that policies can be a significant factor in a work organisation working actively to be more inclusive and combat discrimination, and in LGBTQ people feeling safe to be open and daring to report discrimination and harassment. However, the research does not show any direct link between the mere presence of policies and the job satisfaction of LGBTQ people. Their job satisfaction seems to be affected, to a larger extent, by feeling that the work climate is supportive. It should be pointed out, however, that no studies on the effect of Swedish companies' policies could be found. It therefore remains unclear what significance company policies have in a Swedish context.

Discrepancies between policies and practice

Seven, mainly qualitative, studies, emphasise the importance of work organisations working actively to ensure that the policies formulated are also complied with. An Australian qualitative study showed that the homosexual men in the study felt that homophobia existed despite policies to combat discrimination against LGBTQ people (Aaron and Ragusa, 2011). American qualitative studies suggest that discrepancies between policies and actual practice were considered to be a negative work environment factor (Comptom, 2016; Tindall and Waters, 2012). This might be linked to insufficient efforts being made for the policies to reach managers and employees (Colgan and Wright, 2011). A qualitative study showed that anti-discrimination policies that were not underpinned by actions such as LGBTQ training or active support for victims of homophobia contributed to a feeling that the organisation was "covering up" homophobia and heterosexism (Mizzi, 2013). In a study of LGBQ people in Australia, the interviewees stated that they had chosen not to report harassment as they didn't think it would lead anywhere, and they didn't feel that they were actually supported by organisational policies on equal rights for sexual minorities (Willis, 2012). A British survey study of public sector employees suggested that the presence of policies without an active discussion of diversity strategies hindered the development of an inclusive culture (Senyucel and Phillpott, 2011). This is in

line with a major qualitative study of the UK public sector that showed that the implementation of new policies was prevented by managers who avoided, or didn't feel comfortable raising and discussing, issues involving sexual orientation (Colgan and Wright, 2011).

3.3.3 Spatial and physical dimensions in a work organisation

According to seven studies, it is important to highlight and clarify different aspects of the spatial and physical dimensions of and in work organisations, such as issues involving toilets, changing rooms and clothing. In two American studies, the participants expressed a need to improve access to gender-neutral toilets at their workplace (Goryunova et al., 2021; Huffman et al., 2021). An American qualitative study of trans people showed that colleagues of women with a trans background could be opposed to individuals who had undergone gender-affirming care using gendered toilets and changing rooms. The same study showed that a problem experienced was managers demanding that people who had undergone gender-affirming care use the same changing rooms as previously (Brewster et al., 2014). An American qualitative study showed that, in changing room-related situations, the participating homosexual men might feel worried about others thinking they had sexual intentions (Cavalier, 2011). An American qualitative study examined a number of federal policy documents to investigate how government agencies had managed trans issues in the workplace through formal policies, and what could be done to improve future policies. The study stressed the importance of using inclusive language in connection with toilets and changing rooms in the organisations' policy documents to enable trans people to experience a good work environment where they would feel included (Kelly et al., 2021).

Some qualitative studies also showed that clothing is an important factor to consider for LGBTQ people to feel safe to be themselves. An American qualitative study of LGBTQ women working in finance, law and sales showed that the formal dress codes signalled by the companies were often gender neutral (e.g., a jacket), but that the informal dress codes limited the opportunities experienced to wear a tie, for example (Reddy-Best, 2018). The study also showed that some of the women interviewed chose to adapt to informal dress codes, instead of dressing in a way that actually made them feel comfortable, out of a fear that this would affect their performance and career opportunities, including a fear of microaggressions and prejudice from others (Reddy-Beest, 2018). Two American studies also showed, on the other hand, the way in which homo- and bisexual women in the study used symbols such as rainbow flags or masculine clothing to signal and make their gender identity visible (Helens-Hart, 2017; Schneider, 2016). Formal dress codes can also be problematic. A major qualitative study showed that working in environments that, for example, required gendered clothing in the form of uniforms led to a form of discrimination that limited the opportunities for people to choose their gender expression themselves. The study indicated that in this context trans respondents considered working in an environment with gender-neutral clothing to be a positive thing (Brewster et al., 2014).

To summarise, the studies indicate that access to gender-neutral changing rooms and toilets can be significant, especially to trans people's perceptions of a good work environment. The studies also suggest that it may be beneficial for employers to reflect on whether their formal dress codes could be discriminatory and how informal and formal dress codes alike affect LGBTQ people's satisfaction with the workplace.

3.3.4 The significance of training in LGBTQ issues

Workplaces that take specific measures, such as diversity training, were perceived to be more inclusive according to an American survey study in the healthcare sector (Eliason et al., 2011a). Furthermore, ten predominantly qualitative studies list examples of ways in which training is perceived to be an important measure in creating an inclusive workplace. In an American qualitative study with open-ended survey responses from employees at six American hospitals, the respondents emphasised the importance of staff training in unconscious bias in creating an inclusive workplace (Aysola et al., 2018). They said that, when changes are made to policies, LGBTQ policies need to be disseminated through training so that employees within work organisations know about them. A British study suggested a specific need for training in LGBTQ issues for middle-management, for them to be able to pursue equality efforts that include these issues (Colgan and Wright, 2011). It also called for the development of managers' expertise in handling and supporting LGBTQ people working in situations where they are more likely to be vulnerable (Rengers et al., 2019). Other studies highlighted the need for general training in LGBTQ issues for all employees (Eliason et al., 2011a), for example from the perspective that colleagues of LGBTQ people are not always aware of the harassment that such people experience (Björk and Wahlström, 2018; Rengers et al., 2019).

In American studies, trans participants emphasised the need for both general diversity training and specific training, in order for the management mainly, but also employees, to be better able to take into account the work environment situation of trans people (Goryunova et al., 2021; Huffman et al., 2021; Jones, 2020). A study of Gothenburg municipality showed, for instance, that it can be stressful for trans people to repeatedly have to correct colleagues with regard to name and pronoun issues, and that the colleagues' lack of awareness of trans people made it more difficult to get them to accept the use of the correct pronoun, for example (Björk and Wahlström, 2018).

In other studies, the authors stressed the need for training in the workplace as an implication of the study results. Such recommendations included:

- Training in the importance of inclusive language (Walker and Melton, 2015)
- Equality training for all members of staff that also includes LGBTQ issues (Tindall and Waters, 2012)
- Training at different levels in the handling of transphobic and homophobic comments in a school environment (Chen et al., 2020).

To summarise, the participants in the studies above expressed the need to develop managers' and employees' expertise in LGBTQ issues in order to combat different forms of discrimination. They also emphasised the importance of training in order for managers to actively choose to include LGBTQ issues in their diversity efforts.

3.3.5 Career opportunities and barriers

The 60 or so studies in this review reported different forms of discrimination that limit the career opportunities of LGBTQ people, and how discrimination affects how LGBTQ people relate to their sexual/gender identity in their workplace. A number of studies showed, for example, that LGBTQ people felt that they had to work harder than others to prove their skills, advance and overcome the career obstacles encountered by them due to their sexuality (Aaron and Ragusa 2011; Baker and Lucas, 2017; Dozier, 2019; Jones and Williams 2016; Parnell, Lease and Green 2012; Stenger and Roulet, 2018). Below is a summary of what emerged from the included studies on career opportunities and barriers, presented under the following headings:

- *Gender norms that affect opportunities for advancement*
- *Choice of profession*
- *Visibility, openness and career*
- *Dissatisfaction with career*
- *Pay*

Gender norms that affect opportunities for advancement

In the systematic literature review, 20 studies are included in which the authors investigated gender normative expectations of people in senior positions in organisations, and how such gender norms often prevent LGBTQ people from advancing in their careers (Aksoy et al., 2019; Baker and Lucas, 2017; Burchiellaro, 2020; Dozier, 2019; Goryunova et al., 2021; Mennicke et al., 2018; Mizock et al., 2018; Laurent and Mihoubi, 2012; Levitt and Ippolito, 2014; Lewis and Mills, 2016; Purcell, 2013; Rafferty, 2020; Riach et al., 2014; Roberts, 2020; Rosvall et al., 2020; Rumens, 2011; Speice, 2020; Stenger and Roulet, 2018; Tindall and Waters, 2012; Yavorsky, 2016).

Some of these studies suggested the perception of a pink or glass ceiling in some organisations, i.e., that there is a ceiling for far high homosexual men can go career-wise and how high their pay can become (Aksoy, et al., 2019; Lewis and Mills, 2016; Purcell 2013; Speice, 2020). The fact that it is mainly homosexual men who are exposed to, and have reported, such glass ceilings, could be due to many organisations having a masculinity norm that also affects women's opportunities to reach senior positions. Several qualitative studies also show that homosexual men are encouraged by their management to "act in a masculine way" in order to be considered for more senior positions (Aaron and Ragusa, 2011), and that homosexual men also adjust their way of acting and dressing so that they are regarded as more traditionally masculine

and thereby more professional (Speice, 2020; Stenger and Roulet, 2018). Two studies specifically address the fact that LGBTQ people felt that they in particular were prevented from accessing, or were considered to be unsuited to, senior management positions (Baker and Lucas, 2017; Tindall and Waters, 2012). These mechanisms can also be found in a Swedish context. A Swedish qualitative study on homosexual men's careers highlighted, for example, experiences of being excluded from management positions (Rosvall et al., 2020).

The results are contradictory, however, which could be explained by the fact that the management positions studied were at different levels (see Tindall and Waters, 2012). An American survey study showed that the homosexual men and women participating in the study were more likely to be given a management role than their heterosexual colleagues (Aksoy et al., 2019). The study showed, however, that this advantage was mainly due to homosexual men being given management roles at lower levels in organisations; the results thus showed that homosexual men were significantly less likely to be given management positions in the top tier of organisations. Moreover, the study showed that the likelihood of the bisexual men and women in the study reaching various types of positions of influence in the workplace was considerably lower (Aksoy et al., 2019). In a British interview study, several homosexual men holding senior positions in their workplaces reported that they were open about their sexual orientation. The study indicated, however, that, according to the participants, it was difficult to present non-normative masculinity when exercising authority and leadership; this further demonstrates how professionalism reproduces specific gender-normative and conventional rules of behaviour (Roberts, 2020). A Canadian qualitative study of homosexual men and women, all of whom were legal professionals, highlighted that the organisational culture was above all characterised by a heteronormative regime in the workplace, where heterosexual men's family commitments were expected to be limited, which contributed to them being able to spend more time on their careers. According to the participants in the study, this could also be beneficial to the careers of homosexual men and women with no children (Alkoby and Alon-Shenker, 2017).

A study investigating survey responses from just under 60,000 participants in 30 different European countries showed that the minority groups in the study, including sexual minorities, often felt that they were overqualified for their work tasks (Rafferty, 2020). In order to overcome career obstacles caused by regulating and restrictive gender norms, the studies' respondents recounted that they had embraced a traditionally masculine way of being so as to be perceived to be more competent in their role. An American study also showed that women who had embraced a traditionally masculine way of being were perceived to be more competent in male-coded workplaces, which gave them more authority, more support from male colleagues, and more opportunities for professional training (Dozier, 2019). People may, however, be more or less forced to adapt to a heteronormative climate; an interview study conducted in the UK showed, for example, that the homosexual men and women in the study were forced to adjust to the heteronormative work culture if they wanted to obtain, or retain, senior positions (Rumens, 2011).

One Swedish and one American study described how homosexual female police officers were perceived to be more masculine than homosexual men, who were instead perceived to be more feminine (Mennicke et al., 2018; Rennstam, 2021). In the American study, homosexual men reported more obvious forms of discrimination (for example, being fired or derogatory jokes), while women reported more implicit discriminatory actions towards them (for example, not being considered for opportunities for advancement within the organisation) (Mennicke et al., 2018). A French qualitative study showed, however, that, in the accounting industry, there was no advantage, as a woman, to acting in accordance with a traditional masculinity norm (Stenger and Roulet, 2018). The homosexual women in the study reported that they had instead been punished twice over, for being women and also for belonging to a sexual minority group in an organisational climate where masculinity is rewarded (Stenger and Roulet, 2018). A qualitative study exemplified this double punishment. Some of the women in the study stated that, despite having chosen to act in a more masculine way, they could still find themselves low down in the social hierarchy (Dozier, 2019), which could be due to there being many workplaces with strongly regulating heteronormativity.

The influence of heteronormativity on a person's career opportunities is clear in studies focusing on the careers and career paths of trans people (e.g., in Mizock et al., 2017; Mizock et al., 2018). These studies tangibly demonstrate the difficulties arising from having to deal with gender norms. In an interview study conducted in Australia, trans and non-binary people reported that they had been victims of discrimination in the labour market and workplaces. The participants highlighted, among other things, the emotional labour demanded of a person who is hiding their gender identity (their genus), and stressed the fear of others not identifying them as the gender they define themselves to be (Bates, Thomas, and Timming, 2021). An American qualitative study also showed that the trans people in the study experienced a high prevalence of sexism in their workplaces, which affected their job satisfaction and career advancement (Goryunova et al., 2021).

Two studies further showed specifically that trans women have been forced, or have themselves decided, to abandon certain tasks after their gender-affirming treatment. The trans women in the studies said that this was due to the management and/or they themselves finding that they were less suited to certain tasks as (trans) women (Riach et al., 2014; Yavorsky, 2016). In a British qualitative study, trans women stated that, even in organisations that were making an effort to be LGBTQ friendly, they felt that their career progression stopped once they had undergone gender-affirming care (Burchiellaro, 2020). In an American interview study, the trans participants said that their non-traditional gender expression stood in the way of a fair valuation of their work performance (Levitt and Ippolito, 2014). This meant, for example, that they were unfairly evaluated by employers and customers/clients. Some participants felt that they had been denied jobs that they were qualified for, or that they had been fired from jobs when they started to assume a non-traditional gender expression (Levitt and Ippolito, 2014).

Research on links between undergoing gender-affirming care and work environments and careers is relatively lacking. A Danish qualitative study investigated a trans person's experiences of being a manager while and after receiving gender-affirming care, and the employees' perceptions of her leadership. In the study, both the trans person who was the focus of the investigation and her employees were interviewed. The study demonstrated how the employees, who saw themselves as tolerant and open to their manager's gender-affirming treatment, experienced some difficulties dealing with their manager during the treatment. The authors of the study suggested that these difficulties could be explained as being due to the manager's body and leadership style breaching the heteronormative template that prescribes how men and women should act. The manager's employees felt, however, that it was easier for them to seek support and relationship advice from their manager after the treatment; something that the authors link to normative gender ideals. In accordance with such gender ideals, she was subsequently also ignored and drowned out in meetings after the gender-affirming treatment. In conclusion, the study showed how our understanding of leadership is deeply rooted in perceptions that there are two genders and these genders are each other's opposites (Muhr and Sullivan, 2013).

There is very little research on the work environment of bisexuals, but the research that does exist suggests that bisexuals have worse career opportunities than homosexuals (Aksoy et al., 2019). A survey study conducted in a number of countries showed, for example, that the bisexual participants felt that their homosexual colleagues didn't see them as reliable, and also that the management saw them as unreliable and not worthy of promotion (Green et al., 2011).

To summarise, heteronormativity and gender norms mainly have an adverse affect on the career opportunities of homosexual men and trans women, according to the research presented here. The studies indicate that for people to advance within organisations characterised by heteronormativity they must adjust not only to the prevailing heteronormative climate, but also to a gender identity and gender expression that is compatible with heteronormativity and traditional masculine norms.

Choice of profession

The research showed that the professions that individuals choose are highly affected by gender norms, which can also be seen in research focused on the professional lives of women. Qualitative studies from Sweden and the UK demonstrated that LGBTQ people choose to work in industries or organisations perceived to be LGBTQ friendly (Fielden and Jepson, 2016; Rosvall et al., 2020; Rumens, 2010). While homosexual men in a Swedish study with five participants reported that they chose professions that are compatible with their sexual identity in order to avoid marginalisation and harassment (Rosvall et al., 2020), a British qualitative study, for example,

showed that, among the 28 homosexual men interviewed, there was a tendency to seek female-dominated professions due to heterosexual women being perceived to be more accepting of homosexuals than heterosexual men (Rumens, 2010). Another British qualitative study showed that the homosexual women interviewed had chosen to work in the public sector as it tends to be policy-driven and therefore cannot discriminate against LGBTQ people, despite the public sector, according to the study's participants, being slower in terms of career progression (Fielden and Jepson, 2016). Moreover, an American survey study of trans people demonstrated that, for the people participating in the study, the ability to choose their own career was more strongly linked to their professional and emotional wellbeing than a perceived overqualification for their work (Tebbe, Allan and Bell, 2019).

A Swedish quantitative study discussed occupational sorting (i.e., the fact that homosexual and heterosexual men tend to work in different professions) as a reason why homosexual men, according to the study's results, have lower ranking positions and pay than heterosexual men (Hammarstedt et al., 2015). The researchers conducting the study reasoned that it could be that homosexuals with the potential to earn higher pay move to geographical areas where there is less prejudice against them and they have better work opportunities. At the same time, this could mean that homosexuals with less potential to earn higher pay (i.e., due to a lower level of education) stay in geographical areas where there is more prejudice against them. The researchers believed that this self-selection in terms of geographical mobility could explain some of the results of the study, and pointed out that, in addition to creating less favourable conditions for homosexuals in the Swedish labour market, prejudice against sexual minorities also contributes to geographical inequality with regard to labour market effects in Sweden (Hammarstedt et al., 2015). The results of another Swedish survey study of people who were in a registered partnership or were married, emphasised the differences between the homosexual and heterosexual participants' job satisfaction, whereby the homosexual men were generally more satisfied, and homosexual women less satisfied, than the heterosexual participants. These differences could, however, be partly explained by people working in different industries, for example. The study didn't find any difference in high job satisfaction between homosexual and heterosexual women (Aldén et al., 2020).

Overall, LGBTQ people in qualitative studies on choices of profession state that they choose to work in industries or organisations that are perceived to be LGBTQ friendly, such as in female-dominated workplaces and/or the public sector. Swedish quantitative studies also show that occupational sorting could explain differences in pay and job satisfaction between homosexuals and heterosexuals.

Visibility, openness and career

In the review, 23 studies focused on how visibility/openness with regard to a person's sexual orientation and/or gender identity can represent an obstacle

in their careers. Note that the studies predominantly exemplified aspects connected with homosexual men and trans women. A major theme in the research on the work environment of LGBTQ people is handling the discomfort or fear that may precede a person "coming out" in the workplace, partly as it may affect opportunities for advancement (Baker and Lucas, 2017; Brickner and Dalton 2017; Burnett, 2010; Cavalier, 2011; Chan, 2013; Ferfolja and Hopkins, 2013; Galvin-White and O'Neal, 2015; O'Ryan and McFarland, 2010; Reddy-Best, 2018; Sanchez et al., 2015; Stenger and Roulet, 2018; Tindall and Waters, 2012; Walker and Melton, 2015). For example, in an American study, homosexual female police officers described how they waited to "come out" until they were more senior and professionally recognised in their roles so that their orientation wouldn't affect their careers to the same extent (Galvin-White and O'Neal, 2015). In four qualitative studies, homosexual managers also described how they didn't want to be open about their sexuality with their employees out of a fear that this would undermine their leadership role (Chang and Bowring, 2017; Dixon and Dougherty, 2014; Simone et al., 2014; Tindall and Waters, 2012).

Two studies exemplified career discrimination in connection with visibility/openness. In an American survey study, 10% of the doctor respondents who identified as LGBTQ reported that they had experienced colleagues not referring patients to them due to their sexual identity (Eliason et al., 2011b), and in an Australian qualitative study the homosexual men in the study, who were open about their sexuality, said that they had been rejected for positions abroad, on the grounds that the countries they had applied to had a negative view of LGBTQ people (Aaron and Ragusa, 2011).

An American survey study of homo- and bisexual young adults showed that, for some participants in the study, there was a conflict between the development of a career identity and the development of a sexual identity (Lyons, Brenner and Lipman, 2010). The study showed that for some career development was given priority, whereas for others their sexual identity was prioritised. In the study, nobody reported a high level of sexual identity conflict alongside a high level of career conflict, most likely due to these conflicts being mutually exclusive (Lyons, Brenner and Lipman, 2010). The study highlighted the effect that career barriers had on the young homosexual and bisexual participants, as those who reported a higher level of sexual identity conflict also reported experiencing career barriers (Lyons, Brenner and Lipman, 2010).

A Swedish qualitative study demonstrated that there are experiences of advantages as well as disadvantages for career progression in being open about sexual orientation and/or gender identity (Rosvall et al., 2020). The study showed that some of the male homosexual participants' careers took shape after they started to feel more confident about their sexual orientation (Rosvall et al., 2020). Two of the men said that postponing "coming out" had affected their career progression negatively (Rosvall et al., 2020). At the same time, the participants in the study stated that "coming out" was relative and

situation based – despite all the men in the study having chosen to be open about their sexual orientation in their private lives, there were situations in the workplace where they would adjust to prevailing gender norms. Rosvall et al. suggest that this is connected with the compatibility of different workplaces and professions with homosexual people's private attitudes and/or lifestyles (Rosvall et al., 2020). All five participants in the study emphasised that they felt less comfortable being open about their sexual orientation in a homogenous and "laddish" culture.

With regard to trans people, their openness about their experiences and/or gender identity has more to do with visibility. In an American interview study, trans women who were not open about their trans identity at work described how they avoided showing their male-coded skills as they felt they would be at risk of being exposed (Yavorsky, 2016). According to another American interview study, being a woman as well as a trans person results in having a low status in certain professions, and some in the study stated that they didn't believe they could be given customer-facing roles as this would make them visible to customers and the public (Budge et al., 2010).

In conclusion, openness/visibility is a dilemma for many LGBTQ people because of the perception and experience that it can affect their careers. See section 3.5.1 *Decision to "come out" in the workplace* for further reasoning on how people's job satisfaction, effectiveness and careers are affected by the choice of whether or not to "come out".

Dissatisfaction with career

Studies suggest that LGBTQ people's dissatisfaction with their careers may be linked to fear of, and direct exposure to, discrimination. A survey study conducted in the US showed that homo- and bisexual men and women's dissatisfaction with their careers was in part due to them choosing a career based on what was expected to be a safe environment rather than based on their interests (Parnell et al., 2012) (also the section *Choice of profession* above). In studies, however, LGBTQ people report that their dissatisfaction with work is due to discrimination with regard to career opportunities, and discrimination as a cause of dissatisfaction with their careers (Charles and Arndt, 2013; Colvin, 2015; Jones, 2015).

These mechanisms have been studied mainly within the police profession where, for example, homosexual male participants in the UK experienced discrimination at work and in their career opportunities to a higher degree than homosexual women (Colvin, 2015). An American survey study showed that there was a significant link between being a sexual minority in the workplace and having an intent-to-quit, even after taking into account psychological and professional factors, such as work commitment (Klare et al., 2021). A European survey study showed that the homosexual men and women in the study had a significantly shorter employment period than their

heterosexual counterparts. These differences were constant, even after taking individual, workplace and professional factors into account (Fric, 2021). More research is needed, however, to gain a better understanding of whether the shorter employment period could be due to discrimination and dissatisfaction with their work environments or their careers. A major survey study of government authorities in the US showed that LGBTQ employees in the study didn't feel more dissatisfied with their pay, performance evaluations and career opportunities than other employees (Lee et al., 2021). A smaller, qualitative study of five faculty employed homosexual women working at American universities showed that the women in the studies were not worried about future opportunities for advancement. They rather felt that they were in a good position with regard to their future careers due to them sharing responsibilities in their private lives, for example household and childcare responsibilities, more equally with their partners than is generally the case for heterosexual women (Reinert and Yakaboski, 2017). This mechanism is tangibly reflected in studies focused on pay gaps, which is covered in the next section.

The studies summarised above demonstrate that the LGBTQ participants in many, but not all, cases have experienced dissatisfaction in their careers due to discrimination. There are, however, only a few studies (eight) covering this topic, and none of them were carried out in a Swedish context (see Rosvall et al., 2020 for an investigation in to five homosexual men's reflections on their careers in a Swedish context).

Pay

Studies on LGBTQ people's pay and any differences within the LGBTQ community and compared with heterosexual cis people's pay, are partly focused on exploring such differences, and partly on explaining them based on contextual factors. The research indicates in general that homosexual men earn less than heterosexual men, and that bisexuals and trans people earn even less (e.g., Ahmed et al., 2013; Mize, 2016; Waite and Denier, 2015; Wang, Gunderson and Wicks, 2018). Among these, one longitudinal survey study in the US showed that sexual orientation was the sole factor in the study that could explain the pay gap between hetero-, homo- and bisexual men and women (Mize, 2016). In other words, demographic factors and occupational category could not explain this pay gap in the study. The difference in pay between homo- and heterosexual men could, however, be explained by parenthood and marriage, which were two factors that were shown in the study to result in higher pay for heterosexual men.

The data also showed that bisexual men and women tended to be lower paid than their heterosexual counterparts, despite equivalent characteristics (Mize, 2016).

Regarding the lower pay of homosexual men compared with heterosexual men's salaries, there are, however, no general explanations in the research.

For example, an Australian survey study showed that the negative pay gap for homosexual men cannot be explained by factors such as personal characteristics, level of education, or professional status (La Nauze, 2015). An American survey study showed that the homosexual men in the study earned less than heterosexual men in similar professions and industries, despite there being local policies to combat discrimination. The study did show, however, that such policies resulted in the homosexual men receiving higher wages in the private sector (Klawitter, 2011). An American survey study showed that a number of so-called "heterosexist variables" were significant in the level of pay of the homosexual male participants in the US (Church, 2012a). In the study, the variables were defined as:

- Existence of state legislation to counter discrimination based on sexual orientation
- Openness from the employee about their sexual orientation
- Percentage of female colleagues
- Percentage of homosexual colleagues
- Supportive policies and procedures
- Experience of discrimination in the workplace

The study showed, for example, that the more homosexual colleagues a homosexual man had, the lower his pay was (Church, 2012a). An American longitudinal survey study showed that the young homosexual men in the study were paid 12% less than their heterosexual counterparts, after checking for factors such as ethnicity, age, place of residence, education and profession (Sabia, 2014). Several studies investigated whether the pay gap between homo- and heterosexual men is due to so-called occupational sorting, which refers to the fact that different demographical communities tend to belong to and/or choose different professional categories or professions. For example, a Swedish survey and register-based study demonstrated such a mechanism whereby discrimination, social norms and geographical mobility also explained why the homosexual male participants were being paid less (Hammarstedt et al., 2015). A Canadian survey study showed, however, that occupational sorting could not be regarded as an explanation of why the homosexual male participants were being paid less (Waite and Denier, 2015). Despite the homosexual men earning less, the study indicated that homosexual men were overrepresented in the top five and fifteen highest paid professions, which suggests that wage discrimination based on sexual orientation does indeed exist. The study showed, furthermore, that the largest pay gap was in these highly paid professions (Waite and Denier, 2015). A French study also partly demonstrated this, as the results showed that a high level of education wasn't a safety net against discrimination for the homosexuals in the study; on the contrary, the study showed that the higher the level of education, the greater the extent of wage discrimination against homosexual men (Laurent and Mahoubi, 2012).

Moreover, a Swedish register-based study showed that there were large differences in pay between the highly paid homo- and heterosexual men in the study, which indicates that discrimination and occupational sorting have an effect on pay (Ahmed et al., 2013).

Although occupational sorting isn't always the explanation for homosexual men's lower wages, most of the research included in the overview points to a negative pay gap for this group. This pay gap can be seen in:

- Sweden (Ahmed et al., 2013; Hammarstedt et al., 2015)
- France (Laurent and Mahoubi, 2012)
- UK (Wang, Gunderson and Wicks, 2018 et al.,)
- US (Elmslie and Tebaldi, 2014, et al.,)
- Canada (Waite and Denier, 2015)
- Greece (Drydakis, 2015)
- Australia (La Nauze, 2015).

An American survey study revealed a narrowing of the negative pay gap experienced by this group, from the late 1990s until the 2000s, and the same study also showed that the homosexual men participating in it earned more than the unmarried, heterosexual men (Elmslie and Tebaldi, 2014). In the administration, trade and security sectors, the same countervailing effect on pay was not reported, however. Being married or in a civil union was also shown to affect pay in other studies. A British survey study showed that marriage or civil union was associated with a higher salary for the homosexual men and women in the studies, which suggests that the negative effects of discrimination towards them might be partly offset by the positive effects of marriage (Wang, Gunderson and Wicks, 2018). The same study also showed that the pay gap between the homosexual and heterosexual male participants was small. The abovementioned Swedish survey and register-based study (Ahmed et al., 2013) further showed that the homosexual men in the study earned less than the heterosexual men. The study did, however, present a more complex picture, as the difference in monthly pay was smaller than when looking at the yearly wages for these two groups. The results indicate that the pay gap is partly related to the degree of part-time work, at least for low earners; but they also indicate that there is discrimination and occupational sorting in the labour market, as these differences in pay were also seen for high earners. Furthermore, the homosexual men earned less than the heterosexual men in the Swedish private and public sectors, but the difference was smaller in the private sector (Ahmed et al., 2013). This complex picture is also confirmed in a French survey study (Laurent and Mahoubi, 2012). This study showed that the pay gap between the hetero- and homosexual men and women in the study was lower than in other, comparable countries. The authors of the study claimed that this is due to the fact that many studies conducted in Anglo-Saxon countries don't take into account variables such as marriage, work commitment and industry, which tends to lead to the pay gap being overstated (Laurent and Mahoubi, 2012). An Australian study showed that it wasn't

personal characteristics contributing to lower pay, but that there is structural discrimination against sexual minorities (La Nauze, 2015).

An American survey study also showed that the homosexual male participants earned less than the heterosexual males, and that this was due to lower pay and a lower number of hours worked (Klawitter, 2011). The study investigated whether the presence of anti-discrimination policies affected pay, with the result that they only affected the number of weeks that a person worked. This suggests, according to the author, that the most likely source of discrimination isn't unequal wage setting, but employment/dismissal.

As mentioned initially, studies show that homo- and heterosexual women earn fairly equally, or that homosexual women even earn more than heterosexual women in the same work sector (Ahmed, et al., 2013; Hammarstedt et al., 2015; La Nauze, 2015; Mize, 2016; Sabia, 2015; Waite and Denier, 2015; Wang, Gunderson and Wicks, 2018). Mize (2016) and Waite and Denier (2015) highlight the motherhood penalty for heterosexual women – i.e., the fact that, for heterosexual women, parenthood tends to create a risk of lower pay, partly because many start working part-time – as an explanation for their lower pay compared with homosexual women. A Swedish survey and register-based study showed that societal prejudice against homosexuality negatively affected homosexual women's employability, but not their pay once they were employed (Hammarstedt et al., 2015).

The abovementioned Swedish survey and register-based study revealed relatively small differences in pay between the full-time-employed homo- and heterosexual women in the study (Ahmed et al., 2013). This is also clear from the other studies mentioned above – Laurent and Mahoubi's study showed, for example, that the homosexual women in the study worked more hours and had a higher level of education than the heterosexual women participating in the study (Laurent and Mahoubi, 2012). Furthermore, homosexual women earned more than heterosexual women in the Swedish public sector, but the difference between these two groups was smaller in the private sector (Ahmed et al., 2013). In studies from other countries, such as Australia and the UK, the difference in pay between homo- and heterosexual women was more significant (e.g., La Nauze, 2015; Waite and Denier, 2015; Wang, Gunderson and Wicks, 2018). One of these studies showed that, just as with homosexual men's wages, the differences in pay were mainly centred on highly paid professions (Waite and Denier, 2015). An American survey study conducted in 2018 showed no tendencies for homosexual women to earn more than heterosexual women holding similar positions (Curley, 2018). The author's explanation of this was that earlier studies, which showed a positive pay gap for homosexual women, mainly took sexual behaviour into account rather than self-identification, while the data in this study separate these two factors (Curley, 2018). Furthermore, the participating men and women who worked for organisations with a diversity and equality policy earned substantially more than the homosexual men and women working for organisations without such policies (Bryson, 2016; Wang, Gunderson and Wicks, 2018).

There are few studies on bisexuals' and trans people's pay, but the research that does exist shows that there are large pay differences in these groups relative to heterosexuals and homosexuals. An American survey study, containing data from just under 28,000 trans people, showed that the trans people in the study had significantly lower wages and were more likely to be unemployed or working part-time than cis men (Shannon, 2021). The study also showed that trans people assigned female at birth had significantly lower wages than those assigned male at birth. Bisexuality is an understudied factor for lower pay, but emerges as a risk factor in the studies that map bisexuals' pay. An American longitudinal survey study showed that the bisexual men in the study earned 12.4% less than the heterosexual men, and that the bisexual women in the study earned 3% to 5% less than the heterosexual women (Sabia, 2014). A British survey study also showed that the bisexuals in the study earned 20% less per hour than the heterosexual men (Bryson, 2016). A person not being "consistent", or being "unclear", about their sexuality, also seems to affect pay: the abovementioned American survey study showed, for example, that the male participants who had had a sexual partner of the same gender but who identified as heterosexual earned approximately 32% less than those who had had a more consistent sexual history (Curley, 2018).

Overall, the research shows that homosexual men in general earn less than heterosexual men, and that bisexuals and trans people earn even less in the few studies that have examined these groups' pay. Studies also show that homo- and heterosexual women are at a fairly similar level pay-wise and, occasionally, homosexual women earn more than heterosexual women. This difference is explained, according to a couple of studies, by the so-called motherhood penalty for heterosexual women, entailing a lower number of paid working hours, for example. Several studies investigated whether the pay gap existing between homo- and heterosexual men is due to so-called occupational sorting, which refers to the fact that different demographic communities tend to belong to and/or choose different professional categories or professions. The results show, however, that, in addition to the existence of geographical and occupational sorting, the difference in pay in the labour market seems to be partly due to discrimination. The Swedish studies included produced the same results.

3.3.6 The significance of different types of work organisations

Sixteen studies in the review show that various factors that may be connected with the type of work organisation affect the degree to which the homosexual community, or LGBTQ people, perceive a workplace to be inclusive. We did not find any studies specifically addressing the interplay between the type of work organisation and the work environment of bisexuals and trans people. The results of these studies are presented in this section under the following headings:

- *Work organisations that may be less tolerant professional environments*
- *Male- and female-coded organisational contexts*
- *Homonormative climate*

Work organisations that may be less tolerant professional environments

A factor mentioned in the studies concerns professional environments characterised by more prejudice and less tolerance towards LGBTQ people. These are often reported to exist in religious work organisations, for example. Qualitative studies from Australia and Canada emphasised that the teachers in the studies who had "come out" at Catholic schools experienced greater silence on the issue and discrimination than teachers at state schools (Ferfolja and Stavrou, 2015; Wells, 2017). A Swedish qualitative study suggested similar issues in certain work-related contexts in Sweden too (Rosvall et al., 2020). In a British qualitative study, male homosexual priests described the ambivalence they experienced when they were victims of homophobia and discrimination in an institutionalised homophobic environment that they, based on their own religious beliefs, felt should be more tolerant and accepting (Connell and Yates, 2021). This ambivalence between having a profession that is perceived to be a calling, and then not being treated within the organisation in a way that is aligned with their own view of what a Christian attitude should be, was described as affecting their mental health (Connell and Yates, 2021). A Dutch qualitative study of international aid workers showed that a key reason for not "coming out" when the study participants conducted fieldwork in countries that were intolerant of LGBTQ people due to the religious context, was to not harm the organisation's reputation (Rengers et al., 2019). Less tolerant, or at least inhibitory, organisational contexts, are not necessarily religious, however. In a qualitative study of three homosexuals working as radiographers in Canada, it was reported that there was a culture within the health and care sector according to which it wasn't considered to be professional to be open about being homosexual. The participants described this as an inhibitory factor in deciding whether or not to be open about their gender and/or sexual identity (Bolderston, 2021). A qualitative study of teachers in American schools discusses the fact that there doesn't have to be a link between less tolerant environments and the type of work organisation. The study showed that there can be large differences in the work climate between state schools that are geographically close to each other, whereby some schools have a climate characterised to a larger extent by homophobia and harassment from students and colleagues than others (Connell, 2012).

Male- and female-coded organisational contexts

The perception of how inclusive a workplace is may also be linked to whether it is male or female coded. By male- and female-coded workplaces we mean workplaces with stereotypically male or female job tasks, and where the majority of the employees are generally also men or women. An American survey study with 12,000 LGBTQ participants showed that the respondents working at female-coded federal agencies had a lower intent to resign than those working at male-coded authorities (Sabharwal et al., 2019). An American study of homo- and bisexual employees in the research and university sector showed that the respondents in male-dominated STEM

subject areas were less open about their sexual orientation than respondents working in more female-dominated subject areas, such as the social sciences (Yoder and Matthei, 2016).

A qualitative study of British police officers showed that the police officers who were homosexual might avoid hyper-masculine (i.e., exaggeratedly stereotypically male) workplaces in order to avoid discrimination. The study did, however, show that homosexual men may also be given more service-focused responsibilities, without choosing them themselves, as these are considered to be more suitable tasks for homosexual men based on the stereotype that they are more emotionally competent (Rumens and Broomfield, 2012). Qualitative studies demonstrate how homosexual men employed in male-coded work environments, such as restaurant kitchens or the manufacturing, sport or financial industries, experienced a homophobic climate, with frequent degrading comments about homosexual men (Magrath, 2020; Melton and Cunningham, 2014b; Willis, 2012). Moreover, a qualitative study of the US police force showed that a heteronormative and stereotypically male climate regarding how men should be and behave led to the male homosexual participants not feeling safe to "come out", and that, in some situations it was not even possible to "come out" at all, due to the obvious, serious discrimination and harassment occurring (Collins and Rocco, 2018). An Australian qualitative study showed that the younger homosexual men in the study adjusted their gender expression and degree of openness about their sexual identity based on how safe and inclusive they felt their workplace was. This meant that, in more macho-oriented cultures (i.e., a culture regulated by stereotypical male norms for how "men" and "women" should behave), they pretended to be heterosexual and more masculine in their expression than in workplaces that were more inclusive and accepting towards homosexual men (Willis, 2011). An American survey study showed that a high degree of conformity with stereotypical male behavioural norms was connected with safety risks at work (risk-taking behaviour, accidents, injuries and under-reporting of injuries), and also that this link was stronger for the group of homosexual men participating in the study. The results, according to the study, are due to homosexual men taking more risks in order to avoid being labelled as feminine (Austin and Probst, 2021). In an American focus group study of homosexual police officers, several of the 16 participants reported that their safety would be compromised if their colleagues found out about their sexual orientation. They said that they didn't fully trust their colleagues and were doubtful of their colleagues' loyalty in critical situations (Mennicke et al., 2018).

To summarise, the studies suggest that LGBTQ people had a lower intent to resign in female-coded workplaces and were less able to be open in male-coded workplaces. Qualitative studies indicate that more macho-oriented work cultures could be a breeding ground for discrimination and harassment, due to the more stereotypical ideas of how men and women should behave. The studies presented in this section were largely conducted in the US, and no conclusions may be drawn as to whether or not they are also applicable to a Swedish context.

Homonormative climate

Two qualitative studies in this review also emphasise organisational-contextual factors that are perceived to be advantageous for homosexuals, and homosexual men particularly. One example is the entertainment industry, where, contrary to other industries, there may be a homonormative climate, which means that the presence of homosexual men in certain workplaces in these industries is taken for granted. A British survey study showed, however, that even in industries that the general public and LGBTQ people perceived to be LGBTQ friendly, such as the musical and theatre industry, the homosexual participants in the study were encouraged to act in a stereotypically masculine way so as to be offered a greater variety of roles (Rumens and Broomsfield, 2014). In another Australian qualitative study of younger LGBQ people, the participants described positive experiences of working in a homonormative climate, for example, in a smaller team within a larger organisation, or in a workplace with a smaller number of employees, where homonormativity prevailed. At the same time, there could be a huge contrast when they were exposed to verbal harassment from customers, or when they moved to another part of the organisation characterised by a macho-oriented and homophobic environment (Willis, 2010).

3.3.7 Harassment and discrimination from customers, service users and students

International studies highlight harassment and discrimination from customers, service users and students as a significant work environment issue for homosexuals and trans people (no studies in this area connected with bisexuals were found). In a Swedish study, the LGBTQ participants reported that harassment/discrimination from service users did occur, but that harassment/discrimination from colleagues was more common (Björk and Wahlström, 2018). In an American qualitative study, the queer/trans people in the study said that they feared for their physical safety at times when they were victims of verbal harassment from restaurant customers, for example (Baker and Lucas, 2017). In a British study, a trans person described how customers would misgender, mock and harass her, and how this behaviour was often ignored by the management (Hadjisolomou, 2021). There is harassment from students in schools, as shown in five international studies. An American survey study showed that the LGBTQ people in the study had been exposed to homophobic and transphobic comments from students (Chen et al., 2020). An American qualitative study of homosexual teachers showed that the teachers in the study mainly had to deal with disrespectful communication from students, in the form of general degrading comments about LGBTQ people. The study participants didn't experience the same kinds of homophobic comments from colleagues (Hooker, 2019). In an American qualitative study, teachers described how homophobia and harassment from students made them less willing to stay in the profession, especially if the school also didn't have a supportive climate (Connell, 2012). An Australian study of teachers found that trans people were more exposed to verbal harassment from students than homosexuals, something that also

affected their self-confidence as teachers (Ullman, 2020). In an American survey study of teachers, nearly all the participants stated that they had regularly heard degrading comments about their identities, especially from students. The study also showed that some of the homophobic behaviours that the teachers had to deal with came from the students' guardians (Wright and Smith 2015).

In a Canadian qualitative study, homosexual teachers stated that they had mainly been discriminated against by parents who were opposed to their children having a homosexual teacher (Wells, 2017). American, British and Australian qualitative studies of homosexuals also showed that the interviewees didn't feel that they could be open about their sexual orientation for fear of being labelled as paedophiles (Reddy-Best, 2018; Roberts, 2011; Willis, 2011), or being considered to have a bad influence on children or students (Helens-Hart, 2017). An American study showed that homosexuals had received anonymous emails saying that parents probably wouldn't let the person care for their children if they knew about the recipient's orientation (Eliason et al., 2011a).

Note that only one of the studies referred to in this section was conducted in Sweden, and it doesn't provide any specific information about the occurrence of discrimination and harassment from students.

3.3.8 The significance of active development processes for an inclusive workplace

SOverall, the results from several of the studies in this section (3.3 *Factors at organisation level*) emphasise the importance of working actively to create an inclusive workplace, and the fact that employers need to work on several levels and on several strategies simultaneously. The possible strategies include active and process-focused work on training, policies and activities connected with diversity and inclusion (Katz-Wise et al., 2021; Kelly et al., 2021; Pink-Harper et al., 2017; Rennstam, 2021). The studies show that organisations that are actively pursuing diversity efforts, in the form, for example, of policies, network groups, mentorships and marketing, have a better organisational climate for LGBTQ people (i.e., Eliason et al., 2011a; Kamasak et al., 2019; Köllen, 2016). Participants in a major qualitative study of the British public sector emphasised, for example, the value of using surveys and key figures to highlight the problems within an organisation, and following up on efforts to create a more inclusive workplace for homo- and bisexuals (Colgan and Wright, 2011). In a British interview study of homosexual men, the participants felt that, despite progress being made in terms of rights for LGBTQ people on a legal level, work organisations should actively work on inclusive strategies in order to respect these rights (McKearney, 2020). In an American qualitative study, homosexuals described how working in a workplace that did not act against discrimination and harassment contributed to an unsustainable work situation and resulted in them ultimately leaving the workplace (Dozier, 2015).

Two studies emphasised that efforts to create an inclusive workplace should be pursued at organisation level rather than directed towards specific individuals. A Turkish interview study exemplified how the development of an inclusive workplace had gone from taking an individual perspective to an organisational one, whereby individual employee training was replaced by institutional changes, to avoid stigma, for example by working on a wide range of policies (Kamasak et al., 2019). The study highlighted policies for recruitment, diversity and an inclusive organisational climate (Kamasak et al., 2019).

A British survey study showed that encouraging openness about sexual orientation (homo, bi, trans and queer) was not necessarily the best way to improve the health and wellbeing of LGBTQ employees (Fletcher and Everly, 2021). The study showed that creating inclusive environments instead could be more beneficial, for example by encouraging employees to add their preferred pronoun to email signatures, or including exercises exploring heterosexism in their diversity training (Fletcher and Everly, 2021, also see Llwefellyn and Reynolds, 2021). The rest of this section has been sub-divided under the following headings:

- *Policies and active efforts aimed at trans people and bisexuals*
- *Dynamic progress towards a better work environment*
- *Factors obstructing progress*
- *Summary*

Policies and active efforts aimed at trans people and bisexuals

The importance of policies and active efforts that include trans people and bisexuals is emphasised in eight of the studies included in this review (four on trans people and four on bisexuals). In a smaller American survey study of trans people, a third of the respondents felt that, in order to create a more inclusive work environment, their work organisation needed to develop, clarify or drive forward policies connected with the work situation of trans people (Huffman et al., 2021). A qualitative study of only two interviewees at an American government agency highlighted the importance of a comprehensive policy, established and supported by the senior management, on the handling of trans people's situation, including the process when an employee is undergoing gender-affirming care (Rishel Elias, 2017) The participants in the study also described what such policies might look like: for example, trans people should have the right to use the appropriate changing room for their gender identity without having undergone gender-affirming care, the right to dress in accordance with their gender identity, and the right to be addressed using their preferred pronoun and name, verbally and in writing (Rishel Elias, 2017). Another American study also showed that equality policies based on gender identity were linked to a lower occurrence of discrimination against trans people (Ruggs et al., 2015). Note, however, that, under the heading *the significance of support functions,* there are specific results on the role that HR might play in creating a more inclusive workplace for trans people.

In addition, the research emphasises the importance of policies and diversity efforts also specifically aimed at bisexuality. Otherwise, there is a risk of bisexuality being lumped together with homosexuality and the unique experiences of bisexuals in relation to the rest of the LGBTQ community being ignored, which decreases the likelihood of bisexuals feeling accepted in the workplace (Arena and Jones, 2017; Corrington et al., 2019; Green et al., 2011; Popova, 2018).

Bisexuals in a British study describe, for example, experiences of being assumed to be either hetero- or homosexual, depending on the relationship they are currently in, meaning that it feels like a larger step to "come out" as bisexual (Popova, 2018). A survey study conducted in a number of, predominantly English-speaking, countries, underlined the importance of diversity efforts and policies that explicitly refer to bisexuality, rather than it being mentioned in conjunction with monosexuality (homo- and heterosexuality). The study showed that bisexual respondents were more willing to "come out" in workplaces where the organisation had a non-discrimination policy that included both sexual orientation and gender identity (Green et al., 2011).

Dynamic progress towards a better work environment

Four qualitative studies touch on the significance of LGBTQ people participating in the development of inclusive workplaces, and how this takes place as part of a dynamic interplay with the organisation's policies and organisational climate. A qualitative study based on interviews of 18 homo- and bisexuals described progress towards a more inclusive workplace as a collective process in which social support from colleagues and managers, in addition to organisational policies, played a key part in counteracting a homophobic culture (Rennstam and Sullivan, 2018). In the study, the interviewees described a macho-culture including microaggressions and a homophobic employee and leadership culture. At the same time, the interviewees experienced a dynamic interplay whereby they had friendships and organisational support, meaning that they could also retaliate against the macho-culture, for example by threatening to report it or contact the media if managers conducted themselves badly or failed to address harassment. In other words, they stated that the organisation's policies for being an inclusive employer gave them a platform from which they could make themselves heard, and demand that their managers act in case of events characterised by homophobia or harassment. The interviewees did, however, state that they themselves had to act as the driving force, and that there was a culture of silence whereby managers wouldn't always act on their own initiative (Rennstam and Sullivan, 2018). A French study showed, along similar lines, that LGBTQ activists can successfully lobby for measures to counter homo- and transphobia by pointing out that companies are not complying with their own diversity policies (Buchter, 2020). In a similar spirit, an American case study described policy changes at universities. This showed that LGBTQ activists could lobby for and demand changes to policies, and that this was probably enabled by the core value of equality in the

university environment. The study did, however, illustrate that the university leadership wasn't open to activists pressuring them by demanding changes, but that the changes needed to be lobbied for and demanded by the leadership (Githens, 2012).

A major American qualitative study investigated the significance of, and conditions for, homosexuals' participation in the development of more inclusive companies (Creed and Scully, 2011). Analyses of the interview answers indicated the importance of LGBTQ people creating networks in order to lobby for and drive the development of inclusive workplaces, and that an important part of this work is the ability to create alliances with and receive support from specific managers and heterosexuals within the company (Creed and Scully, 2011).

A French study similarly showed that LGBTQ networks at five different major work organisations had driven the development of an inclusive workplace by participating in the designing and completion of, e.g., training, communication campaigns and reporting systems for discrimination. The study showed how all the networks initially ran the activities and programmes on a voluntary basis without any financial support, but they gradually convinced the companies to support the activities and programmes. Support from the diversity manager was often a key success factor in convincing the companies to take charge of the efforts to combat homophobia and transphobia (Buchter, 2020).

An American qualitative study showed that organisations can listen to and draw on homosexuals' *various* stories as part of their own organisational learning, for example through managers listening to and taking on board homosexuals' various accounts of their experiences of the workplace (McKenna-Bachanan, 2017). A British study of five global companies indicated, moreover, that LGBTQ networks were key to enabling the companies to gain perspectives and insights on how they could work to develop an inclusive workplace. The same study showed, however, that the networks weren't always happy to be used as "focus groups" for how the company could enter new markets of LGBTQ customer groups (Colgan, 2011). The study also showed that representatives from the union and from the LGBTQ networks participating in the study voiced concern about managers lacking expertise in, or being unwilling to tackle, homophobia in the workplace, and that often a diversity manager is appointed to deal with inclusion issues on their own (Colgan, 2011). In a major British qualitative study of the public sector, homo- and bisexuals said that it often fell to them to advocate for issues linked to sexual orientation, and that they themselves were often the ones making sure that general equality issues were discussed at meetings (Colgan and Wright, 2011).

Two qualitative studies also demonstrate that silence on LGBTQ issues within an organisation can mean that LGBTQ people feel invisible and that they themselves therefore also choose to remain silent. An American qualitative

study of LGBTQ people showed that experiences of "silent" (i.e., not visible and active) organisational policies, practices or conversations between managers and employees, on issues linked to sexuality, contributed to the respondents feeling invisible and insignificant (Compton and Dougherty, 2017). An Irish qualitative study showed that some of the LGBTQ people participating refrained from mentioning LGBTQ issues in the workplace as they feared that this would lead to negative consequences or have no effect at all (McFadden and Crowley-Henry, 2018). The study showed that some of these LGBTQ people didn't speak up for themselves about discrimination because they didn't want to be categorised as troublemakers (McFadden and Crowley-Henry, 2018).

Factors obstructing progress

A British qualitative study underlined reorganisations and budget deficits as factors obstructing the creation of inclusive workplaces in the public sector. Large reorganisations affected the conditions for carrying out diversity efforts, and also contributed to creating stress for the homo- and bisexual participants as they faced the prospect of having to "come out" again in a new workplace context. The study also emphasised that people in public sector workplaces felt that it had become more difficult to argue that resources should be allocated to LGBTQ efforts in situations where there were budget deficits or changed political contexts (Colgan and Wright, 2011).

Summary

To summarise, the studies covered in this section on *the significance of active development processes for an inclusive workplace* showed that active efforts are required from the organisation in order for LGBTQ people to feel accepted and heard, and to combat discrimination. The studies presented here are, however, largely focused on what development efforts to help create an inclusive work environment for homosexuals or, more generally, for LGBTQ people as a group, might look like. Other groups under the LGBTQ umbrella were not specifically mentioned in these studies.

3.4 Factors at team level

There are many studies showing that factors and processes at team level constitute both health-promoting and risk factors for LGBTQ people. The following aspects and factors are covered here:

- 3.4.1 *Socially hostile work environments*
- 3.4.2 *Stereotypical attitudes*
- 3.4.3 *Heteronormative climate that makes the work environment worse for LGBTQ people*
- 3.4.4 *Feeling excluded from the social community*
- 3.4.5 *Consequences of socially hostile work environments*
- 3.4.6 *Social support and respect from colleagues and managers*
- 3.4.7 *Fellowship with other LGBTQ people*
- 3.4.8 *Interplay between being people open about their sexual orientation and the social climate*

The results partly overlap, with factors relating to leadership, support, and the significance of different types of work organisations, which were covered in the previous section on factors at organisation level. The difference is that this section is focused on the various social aspects of a work environment. For example: The previous section discussed whether different types of industries may be more or less advantageous for LGBTQ people, taking into account the prevailing norms in the industry in question, while this section instead describes the characteristics and experiences of working in socially hostile environments, for example. There is a certain overlap between the sections, however, as norms in a certain type of work organisation are socially constructed.

3.4.1 Socially hostile work environments

A large number of studies describe how LGBTQ people are exposed to a socially hostile work environment. By socially hostile environment we mean environments and/or climates that are unpleasant or uncomfortable for LGBTQ people to work in, in various ways, due to behaviours that are hostile towards LGBTQ people. This could include expressions of stereotypical attitudes, or different forms of discrimination, harassment and bullying directed towards LGBTQ people. Working in a socially hostile environment means working in an environment where the employee is constantly worried about being exposed to microaggressions, discrimination, harassment or bullying, based on their sexual orientation or gender identity (Asquith et al., 2019; Bates, Thomas and Timming, 2021; Björk and Wahlström, 2018; Burnett, 2010; Cavalier, 2011; Eliason et al., 2018; Galvin-White and O'Neal, 2015; Götz and Blanz, 2020; Mattheis et al., 2020; Rumens and Broomfield, 2018; Wright, 2011; 2013). This also includes fear of:

- A negative impact on work relationships (Ferfolja and Hopkins, 2013)
- A negative impact on career opportunities (Tindall and Waters, 2012;
- Walker and Melton, 2015)
- Harassment or being excluded from social communities (Björk and Wahlström, 2018; Chester et al., 2014)
- In the worst-case scenario, the person losing their job (Chen et al., 2020; Collins and Rocco, 2018; Compton, 2016; Galvin-White and O'Neal, 2015; Speice, 2020)

According to the research, it largely consists of *subtle harassment or general LGBTQ-hostile comments,* which may be used consciously or unconsciously (Aaron and Ragusa, 2011; Baker and Lucas, 2017; Björk and Wahlström, 2018; Brickner and Dalton 2017; Cavalier, 2011; Chan, 2013; Chang and Bowring, 2017; Chen et al., 2020; Corlett et al., 2019; Cox et al., 2018; Di Marco et al., 2019; Di Marco et al., 2018; Dispenza et al., 2012; Dozier, 2015; Eliason et al., 2011a; Eliason et al., 2011b Ferfolja and Stavrou, 2015; Fielden and Jepson, 2016; Galvin-White and O'Neal, 2015; Hooker, 2019; McFadden and Crowley-Henry, 2018; Papadaki et al., 2021; Rengers et al., 2019; Rumens and Broomfield, 2012; Sinacore et al., 2017; Stenger and Roulet, 2018; Willis, 2011, 2012).

Studies indicate that it consists of discrimination, hostility, or threats from colleagues or managers directed:

- Specifically towards trans people (Brewster et al., 2014; (Mizock et al., 2018)
- Towards LGBTQ people generally (Capell et al., 2018; Chen et al., 2020; Compton, 2016; Eliason et al., 2011a; Ineson et al., 2013; Mattheis et al., 2020; Singh and O'Brien, 2020; Tindall and Waters, 2012; Viehl et al., 2017)
- Towards homosexual women and men generally (Velez et al., 2013)
- Specifically towards homosexual men (Jones and Williams 2016; Magrath, 2020; Mizzi, 2013)
- Specifically towards bisexuals (Kuyper, 2015)

Several studies mention *disrespectful communication,* in the form of degrading comments made, for example, about homosexual men (Baker and Lucas, 2017; Compton, 2016; Sinacore et al., 2017; Singh and O'Brien, 2020; Tindall and Waters, 2012). Studies show that such disrespectful communication is used by students (Hooker, 2019) and customers (Willis, 2012) (for more about discrimination from customers, service users and students, see 3.3.7 *Harassment and discrimination from customers, service users and students)*. The comments can make LGBQ people feel unsafe in their workplace (Willis, 2011; 2012). A British interview study showed that homophobia and anti-homosexual attitudes in workplaces are maintained through the disclaimer "it's nothing personal" (Einarsdóttir et al., 2015). Disrespectful communication also includes not addressing trans people using

their preferred name or pronoun (Björk and Wahlström, 2018; Brewster et al., 2014; Dozier, 2019; Eliason et al., 2011a; Mattheis et al., 2020; Pitcher 2017). In two qualitative studies, trans people also describe serious forms of harassment where they have been victims of flagrant transphobia (Yavorsky, 2016), or other forms of aggression from colleagues, sometimes including explicit death threats (Mizock et al., 2018).

Seven studies compared whether LGBTQ people are exposed to bullying and discrimination to a larger extent than heterosexuals and cis people. According to a Swedish youth survey, described in a report from the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society, the LGBTQ people aged 16–25 participating in the study were more likely to be the victims of bullying, and had a lower level of job satisfaction than young heterosexuals and cis people (Ohlström, 2017). A survey study sent out biannually to teachers and students in the Netherlands showed that the LGBTQ teachers in the study experienced were at greater risk, and had more experiences, of violence than employees not who did not identify as LGBTQ at the same school. These results were at approximately the same level in 2006, 2008 and 2010 (Mooij, 2016). A British survey study based on a representative sample found that the homo- and bisexual employees participating in the study experienced more bullying and discrimination in their workplace than heterosexual employees (Hoel et al., 2017). The study more specifically showed a significantly higher likelihood of the homo- and bisexuals in the study being exposed to jokes or comments with sexual undertones. The homo- and bisexual participants also reported unwanted physical contact to a higher degree than the heterosexual participants. The study also showed that homosexual women, bisexuals, and those categorising themselves as unsure or "other" in the survey, reported a higher degree of bullying in the public sector than in the private sector (Hoel et al., 2017). An American survey study of university employees showed that the female participants in the study experienced the most workplace incivility, and there was no difference in this regard between heterosexuals and sexual minority groups (Zurbrügg and Miner, 2016). The participating women who belonged to a sexual minority did, however, experience the highest percentage of workplace incivility, compared with both heterosexual and homosexual men (Zurbrügg and Miner, 2016). A study from a university medical department showed that the LGBTQ participants in the study had been exposed to heterosexist harassment to a higher degree than other employees (Vargas et al., 2021). A Canadian survey study of federal public employees showed differences in their experiences of discrimination and harassment depending on their gender identity (Waite, 2020). This study compared people who in the study are referred to as "gender diverse" (a category including trans people, non-binary people and others who breach gender norms) with cis people and other individuals from groups representing other bases of discrimination. Compared with people belonging to visible minorities and indigenous populations, gender diverse people and people with visible disabilities reported that they were more exposed to harassment and discrimination. The group that reported the most harassment and discrimination of all was the group of people with visible disabilities (Waite, 2020).

To summarise, the research indicates that LGBTQ people are exposed to microaggressions, discrimination, harassment and bullying to a larger extent than heterosexual cis people. There is an interplay between this exposure and intersectional perspectives, however, meaning that LGBTQ people are not always more exposed than other minority groups, and that there is an interplay between this exposure and factors such as gender, ethnicity, professional position and age. Learn more about this in section 3.6 *Intersectional perspectives.*

3.4.2 Stereotypical attitudes

Different aspects of exposure to stereotypical attitudes are covered in a number of qualitative studies, mainly on homosexuals (Baker and Lucas, 2017; Cavalier, 2011; Corlett et al., 2019; Di Marco et al., 2018; Einarsdóttir et al., 2016; Riach et al., 2014; Roberts, 2011; Sinacore et al., 2017; Stenger and Roulet, 2018; Van Laer, 2018). This may include people feeling subject to one-dimensional labelling in the workplace based on their sexuality and colleagues only seeing them as a "queer-feminist lesbian", or people having a general perception of homosexual men as promiscuous (Chang and Bowring, 2015; Corlett et al., 2019; Galvin-White and O'Neal, 2015; Melton and Cunningham, 2014a; Riach et al., 2014). It can also include feeling lumped together with other people of the same orientation in the workplace (Dozier, 2015). Furthermore, an American qualitative study showed that homosexual female police officers felt pressured by stereotypical ideas of homosexual women as being more masculine (Charles and Arndt, 2013). For homosexual men, they may instead be labelled as feminine (Einarsdóttir et al., 2016) and, according to experiences described in an American study, they may therefore be assumed to be more similar/closer to the women in workplaces (Tindall and Waters, 2012). In an American qualitative study of the military, homosexual women stated that they found it easier to fit into the military culture due to their more masculine expression, while homosexual men felt pressured to act in a hyper-masculine way in order to not be subject to stereotypical preconceptions of weakness and femininity that are often associated with homosexual men (Van Gilder, 2019). One study showed direct discrimination against homosexual men based on how colleagues, managers and customers perceived their tone, manners and looks (Einarsdóttir et al., 2016). Men who didn't have an expression that was perceived to be similarly stereotypical flew more under the radar in this context. The same study showed that homosexual women experienced prejudice and an unwelcome focus on their sexuality as a result of them not complying with a stereotypical preconception of what a homosexual woman should look like and how she should act, i.e., preconceptions about homosexual women being more masculine in their expression (Einarsdóttir et al., 2016). Other aspects of stereotypical preconceptions presented in the studies include, moreover, people unwillingly being seen as representatives of a community (Baker and Lucas, 2017; Wicks, 2017), or standing out, or being seen as different in the workplace, and a wish to be treated like everyone else (Cox et al., 2018; Reddy-Best, 2018; Roberts, 2011). According to qualitative studies, it may also involve choosing, as a homosexual man/queer person, to conform with

male or female gender expressions in order to fit in better and feel safer in the workplace (Cox et al., 2018; Sinacore et al., 2017; Stenger and Roulet, 2018). Not "coming out" is in this context a choice that the individual makes in order to be judged on their work performance and nothing else (i.e., Aaron and Ragusa, 2011).

Stereotypical preconceptions in the work environment can also include colleagues focusing a lot on LGBTQ people's private lives, for example by asking intimate questions that they wouldn't ask a heterosexual person (Dixon and Dougherty, 2014; Riach et al., 2014; Roberts, 2011).

A British qualitative study showed that homosexual men found it more difficult to develop close friendships with heterosexual men at work due to a fear of being perceived to be making a pass at the men (Rumens, 2018). Another aspect of stereotypical preconceptions is the experience of a person's professional opinions always being judged based on their sexual orientation (Felix et al., 2016), or them choosing not to show anger or speak out on heterosexism in order to prevent LGBTQ people from getting a bad reputation as a group (Cox, 2019). According to a British qualitative study, being subject to stereotypical preconceptions can also contribute to homosexual men wishing to leave the workplace (Roberts, 2011).

The research on experiences of stereotypical preconceptions of bisexuals, trans people, queer people and non-binary people is more limited. That stereotypical preconceptions exist and affect the work environment for, e.g., trans people, is clear anyway, however, from the studies showing the occurrence of transphobia (see above). To summarise, qualitative studies indicate that many LGBTQ people feel that they are subject to stereotypical preconceptions in their workplace. For some, this can contribute to them feeling subject to one-dimensional labelling or pressured to behave in a more stereotypically masculine or feminine way.

3.4.3 Heteronormative climate that makes the work environment worse for LGBTQ people

Several studies suggest that a heteronormative climate where LGBTQ issues are invisible leads to a negative social climate for LGBTQ people. One example is a climate where norm-breaching sexual identities are not spoken about at all (e.g., Mizzi, 2014 Sawyer, Thoroughgood and Ladge, 2017), where there is an absence of positive comments about LGBTQ issues, and there is therefore uncertainty about what people's colleagues think about sexual minorities (Aaron and Ragusa, 2011; Compton, 2016; Compton and Dougherty, 2017; Dozier, 2015; 2017; Gray, 2013; Willis, 2011). A Swedish qualitative study of the Swedish police force showed that a heteronormative climate contributed to homosexuals staying silent about their orientation (Rennstam, 2021). Qualitative studies indicate that such a climate contributed to LGBTQ people avoiding, or feeling uncomfortable, speaking about their private lives, as they never knew how colleagues will react (Gray, 2013; Lewis and Mills, 2016; Mattheis et al., 2020; Tindall and Waters, 2012;

Willis, 2011). In a British qualitative study, homosexual men working in a university environment stated that they often had to construct a "normality" in relation to heteronormative ideals in the workplace (Ozturk and Rumens, 2014). Being open about their sexuality meant, for the participants, being categorised in one of two possible subject positions: either the fastidious homosexual man who maintains the heteronormative order or the queer person who makes radical demands (Ozturk and Rumens, 2014).

Heteronormativity also contributes to a stressful process of often having to "come out" in new professional contexts (Björk and Wahlström, 2018; Chang and Bowring, 2017; Colgan and Wright, 2011; Creed and Scully, 2011; Mattheis, 2020). Furthermore, it leads to people with other sexual identities often having to consider how and in which contexts to present their sexual identity (Creed and Scully, 2011; Tweedy, 2019).

This must be weighed up against a fear of less accepting colleagues perceiving you negatively or your sexual identity being used against you (Melton and Cunningham, 2014a). Two American qualitative studies demonstrated that a heteronormative climate contributed to the LGBTQ participants not wanting to create a bad atmosphere by correcting other people's use of pronouns, references to the gender of partners, or assumptions regarding sexual orientation (Baker and Lucas, 2017; Cox et al., 2018). Another consequence of a heteronormative climate can be seen in an example from a qualitative study where two homosexual colleagues chose to tell their colleagues about their relationship and were then accused of concealing their identities (Willis, 2011). This implies, in other words, that other people perceive homosexuals to be hiding something if they don't choose to declare their sexual identity. An American survey study showed that homosexuals' sense of stigmatisation, i.e., their feelings of being different, lonely and vulnerable in the workplace, affected how open they were in the workplace (Brenner et al., 2010). The same study showed that an organisational climate perceived to be actively combating heterosexism was significant for homosexuals' experience of stigmatisation(Brenner et al., 2010).

In qualitative studies, LGBTQ people describe strategies that they have adopted to deal with a heteronormative climate, such as carefully testing reactions in the organisation (Baker and Lucas, 2017), and looking, in different ways, for signs of an inclusive social climate based on the behaviour of colleagues and managers. In a qualitative study from Australia and the UK, a heteronormative climate contributed to LGBTQ people feeling that at best they have been conditionally accepted, and that their work life was characterised by a constant struggle for recognition (Riach et al., 2014). In an American qualitative study of people working for NGOs, LGBTQ people reported that, despite the purpose of their work being to combat gender-based violence, the organisations that employed them were characterised by a tangible heteronormative culture. In a study including three LGBTQ people, this led to none of them feeling a sense of belonging to the organisations that they worked for (Cayir et al., 2021).

According to two studies, a heteronormative climate can also contribute to a person's family relationships or lifestyle culture being invisible in the workplace (Dixon and Dougherty, 2014; Dozier, 2015), contributing to the LGBTQ person feeling uncomfortable, for example, about bringing their partner to a social event (Dixon and Dougherty, 2014; Melton and Cunningham, 2014a; Tindall and Waters, 2012). In this context, it can also mean colleagues assuming that everyone is heterosexual, and that everyone's partner is of the opposite gender, which contributes to homosexuals feeling uncomfortable and excluded at work (Aydin and Ozeren, 2020). An American interview study showed that heteronormative assumptions regarding "family" in workplaces could add another dimension to the conflict between work life and family life for members of the LGBTQ community (Sawyer, Thoroughgood and Ladge, 2017). While previous research has shown, according to Sawyer et al., that conflicts between work and private life are usually caused by, e.g., a lack of time and the effort required, for the LGBTQ people in their study, this conflict was largely caused by family stigma (Sawyer et al., 2017).

Qualitative studies demonstrate that stereotypical preconceptions can also affect the balance between work and free time. Homosexual men state that they are expected to be the ones working overtime or offering to help others because they don't have a wife or family (Dixon and Dougherty, 2014; Tindall and Waters, 2012; Wicks, 2017).

To summarise, studies suggest that LGBTQ people often have to relate to a heteronormative climate in the workplace. This means that they often have to decide if and when to be open about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. It also contributes to them feeling uncomfortable and/or excluded in different work-related contexts. More specific research on experiences of social exclusion is summarised in the section below.

3.4.4 Feeling excluded from the social community

Different aspects of feeling excluded from the social community are considered in 16 studies in this review. A British study based on a representative sample showed that homo- and bisexuals experience a higher degree of social exclusion at work than heterosexuals (Hoel et al., 2017). Other than in the above quantitative study by Hoel et al., (2017), the feeling of being excluded from the social community is mostly described in qualitative studies mainly covering homosexuals. This may, for example, include not feeling part of the community as the topics of conversation during lunch or coffee breaks revolve around heteronormative family life (Björk and Wahlström, 2018) and, in this context, also not feeling comfortable sharing stories about their own family (Rengers et al., 2019). Other forms of social exclusion described by openly homosexual men in an Australian study were colleagues not asking about their partners and private lives, which meant that the study's participants felt that their colleagues didn't consider their relationships with partners to be as important as heterosexuals' relationships (Aaron and Ragusa, 2011). Further forms of social exclusion include experiences of colleagues avoiding speaking about relationships due to the person's sexual orientation (Tindall and Waters,

2012). It may also include colleagues being supportive and inclusive on the whole, but LGBTQ people receiving subtle signals about being different and therefore having a general sense of not being part of the social community, and therefore also not choosing to join in with social events (Reinert and Yakaboski, 2017).

Experiences of social exclusion may, however, vary between different types of organisations. In a smaller American survey study, homo-, bi- and heterosexual university lecturers reported no differences in opportunities to build friendships (Gates et al., 2019). In a qualitative study, homosexual men stated that it was easier to build friendships in the workplace with heterosexuals if there was also a general work organisational culture where homosexual men were valued as employees (Rumens, 2010).

Studies of mainly homosexuals revealed a correlation between the degree of openness about their sexual identity in the workplace and experiences of social inclusion. In survey studies conducted in the Netherlands and the US, LGBTQ people who concealed their sexual identity stated that they had less of a sense of fellowship with their colleagues (Newheiser et al., 2017). Qualitative studies described how a person not being open about their identity reduced the possibility of them building close relationships with colleagues. In these cases, the colleagues of the LGBTQ people did not consciously socially exclude them, as they did not know about the person's sexual orientation or gender identity. It has instead been stated that it is the secretiveness that creates a distance from colleagues (Björk and Wahlström, 2018; Galvin-White and O'Neal, 2015; Stenger and Roulet, 2018), and a sense that others perceive a person to be unfriendly and inaccessible if they avoid speaking about private matters (Chang and Bowring, 2017), or of being continuously vigilant about which private information to share with colleagues, which in turn affects the person's relationships with colleagues (Chang and Bowring, 2017; Stenger and Roulet, 2018). In a qualitative study of male homosexuals in the American police force, the distance from colleagues has in turn been reported to affect both work commitment and work performance (Collins and Rocco, 2018). A person choosing to tell colleagues about their sexual identity was perceived, in an American qualitative study, to affect social relationships in a positive way, including opportunities to build closer relationships with colleagues (Galvin-White and O'Neal, 2015).

Different forms of social exclusion that may be categorised as victimisation are also reported in qualitative studies. These may include:

- Not being invited to company social events (Baker and Lucas, 2017; Brewster et al., 2014)
- Colleagues no longer speaking to a person after finding out about their sexual orientation (Aaron and Ragusa, 2011)
- Colleagues feeling uncomfortable associating and/or spending time with homosexual men and therefore excluding homosexuals from the social community, within and outside the workplace (Roberts, 2011).

There is no research on trans people's experiences of social exclusion. To summarise, the research does, however, show that homo- and bisexuals may experience social exclusion from the community in the workplace. This may be a general feeling of a distance developing due to a person not being open about their orientation, or a consequence of a heteronormative climate, but it may also take the form of exclusion due to victimisation. Note that the studies on experiences of social exclusion mainly reflect the experiences of homo- and bisexuals.

3.4.5 Consequences of socially hostile work environments

In this review, 31 studies describe the consequences for LGBTQ people of working in socially hostile environments. 16 studies describe how the risk of being a victim of harassment and discrimination is connected with higher levels of stress, ill-health and lower job satisfaction for LGBTQ people.

In an American survey study of teachers identifying as LGBTQ, a majority of the participants stated that rumours, harassment and a fear of losing their job were sources of stress in the work environment (Wright and Smith, 2015). Four American survey studies showed that, for the LGBTQ participants, a heterosexist work environment contributed to:

- Psychological stress (Velez et al., 2013);
- Burnout (Viehl et al., 2017);
- A limited work capacity (Miner and Costa, 2018);
- Self-harm, lower self-esteem, stress, and deteriorated mental health and wellbeing (Singh and O'Brien, 2020)

An American longitudinal study showed that experiences of heterosexism were connected with a subsequent limitation of work capacity for homo- and bisexual women (Landes et al., 2021). An American survey study showed that there was a range of negative effects on health and job satisfaction for both sexual minorities and heterosexuals working in organisations characterised by heterosexism (Miner and Costa, 2018). A quantitative study of staff at an Australian university demonstrated that a fear of heterosexism was closely linked to not daring to report experiences of heterosexism, a feeling of being less safe, and less of a willingness to intervene when someone else was poorly treated (Brady et al., 2020).

A Swedish study showed that LGBTQ employees experienced lower mental wellbeing than non-LGBTQ employees. This could be partly explained by feeling of being unsafe and different forms of harassment, including less social support from their teams (Björk and Wahlström, 2018). In an American survey study, young men who had had sex with men and who had experienced discrimination at work during the past year, reported worse self-perceived health, and more days of reduced physical or mental health (Bauermeister et al., 2014). In an American qualitative survey study of care staff, the respondents said that the stress of being LGBTQ in the workplace had effects such as depression and fatigue (Eliason et al., 2018). American survey studies

showed that discrimination against trans people was linked to emotional fatigue and a lower degree of job satisfaction (Thoroughgood et al., 2017), and indicated a link to an increased risk of suicidal thoughts and behaviours among those exposed (Cramer et al., 2022). Three studies showed that the frequency of discrimination was significant to these links. Another American survey study, which monitored a number of trans people during a two-week period, showed that the more experiences of discrimination an individual reported, the higher their reported levels of emotional fatigue on the next working day (Thoroughgood et al., 2020). In an American study, trans people who had more frequently been victims of discrimination from colleagues reported a lower level of wellbeing (Ullman, 2020). A survey study of American and British veterinarians also showed a link between how frequently LGBTQ people had been exposed to negative comments about gender expression or homophobia, and how supportive the workplace was, and emotional stress at work, fatigue and job satisfaction (Witte et al., 2020) An American longitudinal survey study did, however, show that a hostile work climate only affected the life satisfaction of homo- and bisexual people who reported less confidence in their own ability to achieve their own goals (this was defined in the study as hope).

The study showed that a hostile work climate couldn't predict changes in the life satisfaction of homo- and bisexual people (Kwon and Hugelshofer, 2010).

Moreover, four studies in the review show how a hostile work environment affects a person's work commitment, choice of profession, and decision to leave the workplace. A smaller American quantitative survey study of homosexual women and men showed that discrimination due to sexual orientation was linked to lower work commitment and burnout, which in turn contributed to an intent to resign (Volpone and Avery, 2013). In a qualitative interview study of five homosexual women, the participants described how handling homophobic colleagues was a significant theme throughout their careers, greatly affecting their work and private lives (Burnett, 2010). The study showed, furthermore, how homophobia and negative stereotyping affected the career choices of the participants (Burnett, 2010). An Australian qualitative study of homosexual female teachers showed how harassment contributed them to changing their workplace and looking for a workplace where there would be no harassment (Ferfolja, 2010). A Brazilian qualitative study described the processes that could contribute to homosexuals choosing to leave a workplace (Felix et al., 2018). It was found that mentioning problems and prejudices connected with homophobia could create disharmony and damage relationships. When discrimination was brought up but not dealt with, or when matters deteriorated after a problem had been raised, it contributed to a wish to leave the workplace (Felix et al., 2018).

Five studies showed that a hostile climate creates insecurity whereby it is perceived to be, or it actually is, unsafe for a person to be open about their identity or experiences. Three studies also demonstrate that an LGBTQ-hostile climate creates extra stress in the form of constantly being afraid of

unwillingly being "outed" by colleagues (Baker and Lucas, 2017; Rengers et al., 2019; Riach et al., 2014). An Australian study showed, for example, that microaggressions contributed to LGBQ people self-censoring, including by using gender-neutral language about their partner, or being vigilant regarding their own gender expression in order not to reveal their sexual orientation (Willis, 2011). The study indicated that hearing colleagues voice prejudices against LGBTQ people contributed to the interviewees not feeling safe to "come out" in the workplace (Willis, 2011). A Belgian survey study showed a link between a homosexual being very open about their sexual orientation and being exposed to homo-hostility. A reason for this could be that it is mainly those who are most open who are also at greater risk of being a target for hostility (Dewaele et al., 2019).

Five studies investigated specific negative effects that a hostile work environment can have on trans people. An American survey study focusing on medical students and medical practitioners who were trans, showed that a majority of the participants in the study had experienced hostile comments about trans people in their learning environment or in their workplace (Dimant et al., 2019). The study showed, for example, that approximately half of the doctors didn't want to reveal that they were trans, one of the reasons being a fear that this could affect their career negatively (Dimant et al., 2019).

A British qualitative study highlighted how trans people had chosen to tone down aspects of their gender identity in environments where they risked being victims of discrimination (Hines, 2010). An American survey study showed that university-employed trans people were more inclined to want to change job than cis people on the queer spectrum. The study showed that for those who perceived a generally negative attitude towards LGBTQ people and/or trans people in their institution, both contributed to the occurrence of harassment and an intent to resign. (Garvey and Rankin, 2016). An American qualitative interview study of academics showed that trans people experience a range of different types of microaggressions in their work life, such as being misgendered, or being described as difficult to deal with. All of these microaggressions are described as causing stress in the workplace (Pitcher, 2017). Furthermore, in an American survey study of trans people, a majority of the participants reported that their colleagues' unwillingness to acknowledge or accept their gender identity resulted in them feeling less engaged in their work (Tebbe, Allan and Bell, 2019).

The studies listed in this section describe the consequences for LGBTQ people on a community level, meaning the homosexual community and the trans community. There are fewer studies on the effect of socially hostile climates for other LGBTQ communities, such as bisexuals. An American study showed that bisexual men, in contrast with bisexual women, were less willing to reveal their sexual orientation at work, and they were more inclined to use various strategies to avoid having to reveal it. Bisexual men also reported a higher degree of workplace discrimination than bisexual women, and also more negative consequences, such as minority stress, anxiety and substance use (Corrington et al., 2019).

To summarise, studies show that exposure to heterosexism is connected with lower job satisfaction, experiences of stress, mental ill-health, limited work capacity and lower life satisfaction. Exposure to discrimination is also linked to ill-health. The frequency of discrimination also seems to play a role in how closely connected it is with ill-health. A social climate that is hostile to LGBTQ people also affects their work commitment, choice of profession, and choice to leave the workplace, and is a factor in LGBTQ people's choice to be open about their sexual orientation or gender expression.

3.4.6 Social support and respect from colleagues and managers

At least 17 studies in the review demonstrate the importance of colleagues and managers providing different forms of social support and respecting LGBTQ people's identity (Allan et al., 2015; Baker and Lucas, 2017; Eliason et al., 2011a; Ferfolja and Hopkins, 2013; Fielden and Jepson, 2016; Goldberg and Smith, 2013; Magrath, 2020; Melton and Cunningham, 2014b; Mulé, 2018; O'Ryan and McFarland, 2010; Rennstam, 2021; Reinert and Yakaboski, 2017; Rumens, 2010; 2011; 2018; Rumens and Broomfield, 2012; Ueno et al., 2020). In a smaller American survey study of university staff, LGBTQ people stated that they felt they were supported and respected by their colleagues to a lower extent than their heterosexual cis colleagues (Cech et al., 2021).

In two qualitative studies, the interviewees stated that their managers and colleagues didn't take a stand against homophobic statements or other forms of derogatory attitudes (Björklund and Wahlström, 2018; Chen et al., 2020), which may be seen as inadequate forms of social support. A qualitative interview study conducted in the US showed that trans people experienced, to a large extent, a lack of support from colleagues, managers and potential allies in the workplace. The participants reported harassment from colleagues, and other types of discrimination, in addition to a lack of support from managers who didn't intervene in incidents of transphobia (Mizock et al., 2018). Various specific forms of experienced social support that was perceived to contribute to a positive work environment, and the effects of social support, are described below under the following headings:

- *Different forms of social support*
- *The effects of social support on the work environment and health*

Different forms of social support

Twelve studies exemplify different ways and different situations in which colleagues and managers can provide support to LGBTQ people. According to American qualitative studies, support can include being the kind of colleague who speaks up when they see LGBTQ colleagues being exposed to heterosexism or discrimination, or otherwise reacting when LGBTQ people are being treated badly (Aysola et al., 2018; Melton and Cunningham, 2014b; Ueno et al., 2020), so that the victim does not always have to be the one to speak up (Cox, 2019). An American experimental study demonstrated that

an effective way for colleagues to provide support to homo- and bisexuals is to calmly and directly confront people in the workplace who are exhibiting heterosexist behaviour. The study did, however, show that colleagues who might gladly have been supportive might be unsure of the best way to act when there are incidents of heterosexism, which might have contributed to them not confronting people behaving in a heterosexist way. The results indicated that supportive colleagues lacked the knowledge and tools to properly stand up for homo- and bisexuals (Martinez et al., 2017a).

Two American qualitative studies described the positive significance of seemingly smaller actions from managers and colleagues, such as asking about a person's partner if they are not present at social events, or in other ways acknowledging the person's partner/family status (Reinert and Yakaboski, 2017; Schneider, 2016).

Support may also include positive reactions when a person chooses to "come out" (Magrath, 2020; Ueno et al., 2020).

The significance of emotional support for a person's career and experience of a good work environment is also described in three qualitative studies. In a British qualitative study, homosexual women stated that emotional support from colleagues and management, i.e., people being empathetic towards them as homosexual women, was a key factor in their careers (Fielden and Jepson, 2016). In two qualitative studies by Rumens, homosexual men expressed that emotional support and friendship from heterosexual female colleagues was important for their experience of a good work environment (Rumens, 2010; 2012).

Some of the interviewees in one of Rumens' studies described how they could share experiences of being victims of a sexist and homophobic organisational culture with their female colleagues (Rumens, 2010).

The effects of social support on the work environment and health

In the review, seven studies emphasise the importance of social support for people's health, wellbeing and job satisfaction. One study demonstrated, for example, that there is a link between general support from managers and colleagues and the job satisfaction of trans people (Huffman et al., 2021). An American mixed method study stated that if the trans people in the study felt that their colleagues (cis people) stood up for them at work, their feeling of being valued at work and their job satisfaction increased, and they experienced lower levels of emotional fatigue (Thoroughgood et al., 2021). A survey study conducted in several countries found that trans people (trans men, along with trans women and non-binary people) who experienced support from colleagues also had more positive attitudes towards their work and were less likely to want to resign (Cancela et al., 2020). An American survey study of trans people showed that support from colleagues was a protective factor

against self-harm connected with discrimination in the workplace (Cramer et al., 2022). Experiencing social support from colleagues and managers in the workplace has also been shown, in a smaller survey study, to have a protective effect against burnout connected with heterosexism among LGBTQ people (Viehl et al., 2017). A British qualitative study of homosexual female senior managers exemplifies how experiencing a lack of social support can affect a person's wellbeing (Heintz, 2012).

The women in the study described anger, frustration and anxiety about their performance being judged based on their sexual orientation, because others didn't show them the same empathy regarding their situation that they showed others, and because the women had to hide their identity in order not to risk their relationships with subordinates, other managers or clients (Heintz, 2012).

An American survey study of homo- and bisexuals compared the significance of social support with the significance of organisational policies (Wessel, 2017). The study more specifically indicated that feeling strong social support from at least one colleague is more important for "coming out" in the workplace than more moderate support from several colleagues or organisational policies (Wessel, 2017). It should, however, be noted that the study showed that organisational policies are important when the social support is more moderate. The same study showed that strong support (including practical as well as emotional support) from a colleague also increases the likelihood of a person daring to "come out" to less supportive colleagues (Wessel, 2017).

To summarise, based on these studies, we can conclude that social support from colleagues and managers is an important factor for LGBTQ people's health and job satisfaction.

3.4.7 Fellowship with other LGBTQ people

Six studies highlight the importance of knowing that there are more LGBTQ people in the workplace. This knowledge gave the LGBTQ person a sense of community and psychological safety, and also made it easier for them to also "come out" (Brewster et al., 2014; Dewaele et al., 2019; Ferfolja and Hopkins, 2013; McKenna-Bachanan, 2017; Prock et al., 2019; Ueno, 2020). According to an American qualitative study of homosexual women, knowing other LGBTQ people in the workplace can contribute to reducing the sense of isolation (Van Gilder, 2019). The opposite situation can increase the sense of isolation and of feeling different due to "being the only queer person" in a workplace (Reinert and Yakaboski, 2017). An American-Canadian qualitative study demonstrated that feeling alone in being divergent gave the trans participants, working in the technology industry, an increased sense of vulnerability and isolation (Mattheis et al., 2020). An American qualitative study of homosexual women showed that a workplace climate where it wasn't acceptable to be open complicated the establishing of informal networks with other homosexual women and this constituted a risk factor. The study showed

that it meant that the homosexual women felt even more alone and vulnerable at work (Walker and Melton, 2015). An Australian qualitative study of homosexual women showed that the experienced support was limited, but the support the participants had received from other homosexual women had been crucial for the advancement of their careers. In this context, the support from homosexual colleagues was important for the participants in the study to feel less isolated and alone in the workplace (Burnett, 2010).

The importance of fellowship with other LGBTQ people may, however, vary. One participant in a qualitative study emphasised that it is not a given that a sense of community will develop just because two people are homosexual, as this can be prevented by different interests and beliefs (McKenna-Bachanan, 2017; Willis, 2010). An American-British survey study of veterinarians showed that being aware that there were other LGBTQ people in the workplace didn't affect their decision to "come out" (Witte et al., 2020). A recurring theme in the interviews conducted by Rumens in the UK was that the participants emphasised the importance of friendships in the workplace for their careers (Rumens, 2011). This was stated to be significant for the individual's development as a manager and for their manager identity, among other things as a result of friendships with other LGBTQ people in management positions, and also friendships with heterosexual colleagues who facilitated their advancement. A survey study conducted in 35 countries demonstrated that there was a positive relationship between being a member of networks of colleagues characterised by diversity, rather than those characterised by homogeneity, and psycho-social support. According to the author, this indicates that it is more likely that networks characterised by diversity offer greater psycho-social support than those characterised by homogeneity. These results are contrary to other research showing that women and minority groups mainly seek support from like-minded colleagues (Trau, 2015). Other studies show that homosexuals may distance themselves from, and not want to be a part of informal networks for homosexuals, as they don't want to be associated with being homosexual and want to avoid stereotypical preconceptions about their own sexual orientation (Galvin-White and O'Neal, 2015; Rumens, 2011).

To summarise, opportunities for community and friendships with other LGBTQ people can, for some, reduce their sense of vulnerability and isolation.

3.4.8 Interplay between a person being open about their sexual orientation/trans experience and the social climate

Four studies in the review indicate an interplay between LGBTQ people being open about their sexual orientation/gender identity and them feeling that their workplace has an inclusive social climate. A study of younger LGBTQ people showed that other LGBTQ people being visible in the workplace confirmed that it's okay to be LGBTQ, and that seeing other LGBTQ people being treated with respect created a sense of security, even if they were people whom they had limited contact with (Willis, 2010). This link was further

supported by a qualitative study (Melton and Cunnigham, 2014b). Another American survey study indicated that talking about your sexual orientation as something positive was linked to being treated less negatively by colleagues (Lynch and Rodell, 2018).

Studies also suggest that, after "coming out", LGBTQ people have had less negative reactions than they expected (Björk and Wahlström, 2018; Rennstam, 2021; Rumens and Broomfield, 2014), and that there can be a discrepancy between the reactions expected based on the comments made in the workplace and how colleagues actually react (Cavalier, 2011; Magrath, 2020). Other studies of trans people show that, during the transition process, many participants were positively surprised that their colleagues and managers were much more supportive than they had expected (Brewster et al., 2014; Budge et al., 2010). In the American qualitative study by Budge et al., it also transpired that half of the respondents had experienced different forms of rejection (Budge et al., 2010). Some were dismissed, physically threatened, or emotionally pressured, while others were victims of more subtle forms of rejection.

Studies show that LGBTQ people may have strategies for actively trying to contribute to a positive spiral whereby, by being role models who are open about their sexual orientation/trans experience, they create the work environment they want for themselves and other LGBTQ people (Baker and Lucas, 2017; Björk and Wahlström, 2018; Cavalier, 2011; Edwards et al., 2016; Mattheis et al., 2020; Prock et al., 2019; Rumens and Broomfield, 2014; Wells, 2017). Other reasons for being open may be to combat the stereotypical preconceptions that exist about LGBTQ people (Creed and Scully, 2011; Prock et al., 2019). A British qualitative study demonstrated that homosexual men could also view being the person educating others about LGBTQ issues as a positive role, but that the amount of energy that homosexual employees were willing to put into educating others could vary over time during their professional careers (Roberts, 2011). Another study described how the homo- and bisexual university library managers in the study took on the role of acting as mentors and forming networks for students (Schneider, 2016).

In this context note that some of the ten LGBTQ interviewees in one study expressed disappointment that more people aren't out and acting as role models (Cavalier, 2011). In another study of 18 homosexuals, the participants expressed their disappointment in themselves at not being the ones to take the lead and dare to be out so that others would dare to follow (Stenger and Roulet, 2018). Another American qualitative study also showed that LGBTQ people can feel a lot of pressure from the self-assumed responsibility to act as a role model in the workplace (Prock et al., 2019).

3.5 Factors at individual level

Just over two-thirds of the included studies at least partly include an individual perspective, e.g., in the form of analyses of the strategies that individual LGBTQ people use to deal with issues connected with their gender identity and/or sexuality in the workplace (e.g., Björk and Wahlström, 2018; Brewster et al., 2014; Corlett et al., 2019; Drydakis, 2015; Einarsdóttir, 2016; Fielden and Jepson, 2016; Fric, 2019; Galvin-White and O'Neal, 2015; Helens-Hart, 2017; Mattheis et al., 2020; Roberts, 2011; Rumens, 2012; Schneider, 2016; Singh and O'Brien, 2020; Tindall and Waters, 2012; Turner et al., 2018; Wicks, 2017). The individual strategies are analysed in most articles based on an interplay with workplace factors (such as the attitudes of colleagues, the approaches taken by managers, or organisational policies), and this interplay is presented above in the results sections on factors at team and organisation level. Individual differences in how organisational and social work environment issues are experienced and handled can, however, be distinguished in the studies; these are presented below.

This section covers different perspectives on and aspects of the following:

- 3.5.1 *The decision to "come out" in the workplace*
- 3.5.2 *The significance of internalised homophobia and individuals' own acceptance*
- 3.5.3 *Individual experiences of being an asset in the workplace*
- 3.5.4 *Coping strategies for handling and avoiding exposure*

3.5.1 The decision to "come out" in the workplace

In this section, the presentation is divided under the following headings:

- *Reasoning behind whether or not to be out*
- *Bisexuals' reasoning behind whether or not to be out*
- *The effects on health and performance of being out or not*
- *The effects on trans people's health and wellbeing of being out or not*
- *The effects on bisexuals' health and wellbeing of being out or not*

We want to emphasise here that people often have to "come out" multiple times, and that the decision regarding whether or not to be out also isn't a one-time decision. Many study participants report that "coming out" is an ongoing process rather than something that only happens once, and that this openness can often result in a person continually having to "explain" their sexuality and/or gender identity (see, e.g., Fielden and Jepson, 2016; Lent et al., 2021; Papadaki and Giannou, 2021; Rumens, 2012). Homosexual teachers in an American study described different degrees of openness; from not having "come out" to anyone at their workplace, to having come out to some close colleagues, to having "come out" to all their colleagues, to having "come out" to everyone, including students and parents (Connell,

2012). Homosexuals in another study said that working in a generally accepting workplace can make it easier to be open, but there may still be specific situations where they have chosen not to be open – for example, situations where they risked being exposed to stereotypical preconceptions or heterosexism (Cox, 2019). This was also shown in an American study that used repeated surveys to investigate in which situations the LGBTQ participants had been open about their sexual identity. The results showed that strategies regarding openness varied in different situations (when, where and to whom) based on risks assessed for the specific situation (King et al., 2017).

A study showed that people revealing their own sexual orientation, i.e., "coming out", needed to happen more often for bisexual employees as bisexuality was perceived to be less comprehensible than homosexuality, for example. The interviewees in the study stated that they had developed a number of strategies for repeatedly "coming out" to their colleagues (Popova, 2018).

Reasoning behind whether or not to be out

The research also shows LGBTQ people have different reasons for being open, or not being open, with their colleagues or service users. In a Swedish study by Björk and Wahlström, the most common reason for the participants was that they hadn't found any cause to be open (Björk and Wahlström, 2018). Another common reason that the participants gave was that they didn't want to discuss their private lives in the workplace. In the study, both of these reasons are explained by the fact that heteronormativity makes homo- and bisexuality, and trans experience, appear more private than heterosexuality (Björk and Wahlström, 2018). Many LGBTQ people also state that they consider sexual identity and/or trans experience to be a private matter, and that it isn't consistent with a professional identity for a person to discuss their sexuality/gender identity (Baker and Lucas, 2017; Cavalier, 2011; Compton and Dougherty, 2017; Ferfolja and Hopkins, 2013; Galvin-White and O'Neal, 2015; Roberts, 2011). A British interview study showed that "coming out" may be seen as a regulating practice for homosexuals, whereby disclosure means that the person takes a new problematic position, as there are expectations of how "normal homosexuality" should be expressed (Benozzo et al., 2015).

According to an international survey study, the choice of whether or not be open was connected with how open the person was outside the workplace, and to what degree the person identified as LGBTQ (Capell et al., 2018). Sometimes the disclosure of the person's sexual orientation and/or gender identity wasn't planned. "Coming out" is also not necessarily an explicit strategy: homosexuals describe in qualitative studies that they found it easier to "come out" if they had a partner, and that referring to their partner was a natural way of "coming out" (Einarsdóttir et al., 2016; Gray, 2013). Several studies report how disclosure may occur in the spur of the moment, for example through a position adopted when interacting with colleagues. According to homosexual employees in a British study, it is important to

stand up for yourself in situations where colleagues express homophobia, or stereotypical preconceptions about homosexuals, or misgender their partner, by declaring your sexual orientation or your partner's gender (Einarsdóttir et al., 2016). Other studies also show that some people "come out" in situations where colleagues reveal stereotypical preconceptions about LGBTQ people or are homophobic (Einarsdóttir et al., 2016; Gray, 2013; Heintz, 2012). According to a French survey study of homosexuals, individuals protect their identity by concealing it if the individual perceives a threat of discrimination, whereas individuals who experience actual discrimination instead emphasise their identity through self-affirmation and increased visibility (Thuillier et al., 2021).

A person being open about their sexual identity, despite a possibly homophobic environment, can in the context above also be explained as the person being loyal to themselves (Magrath, 2020). Female homosexual participants in American qualitative studies state that the risks and negative effects of a person being open about their sexual identity are outweighed by it feeling more important to be open and be your full self in the workplace (McKenna-Bachanan, 2017; Reinert and Yakaboski, 2017). An American qualitative study of LGBTQ university employees reported that an important reason for the participants in the study being open about their sexual and/or gender identity was the possibility of feeling authentic, both in their personal and professional identities (Prock et al., 2019).

Qualitative studies of homo- and bisexual participants show, in line with the results above, that a person's wish to stand up for themselves and other LGBTQ people can contribute to a conscious strategy of being open about their sexual orientation. An American interview study showed, for example, that being open also could be a strategy for working towards a more inclusive workplace (Heintz, 2012). In the study, homosexual women stated that the disadvantages of being open were outweighed by being able to contribute to an inclusive organisational culture. A Swedish qualitative study of homo- and bisexual educators showed that the participants adopted a strategy of being a good role model for the students: by being an example of an LGBTQ person, the students were able to create a more nuanced picture of what an LGBTQ person might be like (Lundin, 2013). People wanting to combat homophobia by being open about their sexual identity was also given as a reason for being open in a qualitative study of British homosexual teachers, who found it important to stand up for themselves and other homosexuals in their contacts with students (Gray, 2013). The same reason was also given in a British study of homosexual female senior managers (Heintz 2012).

According to an American survey study, a person integrating their personal identity with their professional identity can be a positive circumstance for managers identifying as LGBTQ (Henderson et al., 2018).

Despite the reported experienced benefits of a person being open about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity, as previously mentioned, being open

is not an obvious choice for everyone. An American survey study showed that two of the possible reasons not to be open were mainly given by the participants: not being open as a coping strategy or as part of an activist act. Choosing not to be open as a part of an activist act meant, for example, making a statement that sexuality/gender identity wasn't relevant in the context (Holman et al., 2021). An American interview study showed that a fear of being exposed to microaggressions and the prevailing work climate contributed to LGBTQ people not wanting to be open about their sexuality/gender identity at work (Hastings et al., 2021). It may also be too risky for a person to "come out" in the workplace. Reactions after "coming out" may be so negative that it affects their safety and/or wellbeing (Chang and Bowring, 2017), or increases the risk of physical threats (Baker and Lucas, 2017). A qualitative study from Sweden discussed the choice regarding openness as a matter of risk management, where the risk of discrimination or negative attitudes was an important factor when LGBTQ people considered being open at work (Nygren et al., 2016). Seven studies from other countries also demonstrate that the decision not to "come out" was based on a fear of being discriminated against in different ways or being met with hostility (Edwards et al., 2016; Di Marco et al., 2015; Einarsdóttir, 2016; Eliason et al., 2018; Fric, 2019; Helens-Hart, 2017; Roberts, 2011). In two studies, LGBTQ people reported that they were afraid of not knowing how others would react and of it negatively affecting their career (Cox, 2019; Helens-Hart, 2017). A qualitative Canadian study showed that homosexual men at the start of their careers might be worried about their career opportunities being affected by prejudice, and that this did not always remain a worry once they were established in their careers (Wicks, 2017). This can also mean LGBTQ people taking great care when choosing who to come out to and in what context (e.g., Sinacore et al., 2017), or calculating the risk when deciding whether to be open about their sexual identity (Helens-Hart, 2017). A smaller Australian qualitative study showed that the five homosexual women participants based their decision not to come out on potential homophobia and potential violence. Although the women in the study hadn't been victims of physical violence or threats of violence, all of them knew of cases where homosexual women had been victims of physical violence (Burnett, 2010). An American qualitative survey study of care staff showed that, of the 62% of the participants who were open in their respective workplaces, 41% had experienced discrimination in the form of misgendering by colleagues, being denied a permanent position within the organisation, harassment, losing patients, and delays in pay rises. Several also reported that they had previously changed their jobs due to discrimination (Eliason et al., 2018). In this context, it is important to note that, for trans people, openness is sometimes imposed on them, but many developed strategies to counter a much too sudden disclosure of their own gender identity.

According to an American qualitative study, trans people chose to be open about their gender-affirming process at work only after they started being open in their private lives (Budge et al., 2010).

Bisexuals' reasoning behind whether or not to be out

Seven studies analysed reasons why bisexuals were or were not open about their bisexuality. In the studies, bisexuals reported that they perceive it to be especially problematic for them to "come out", compared with homosexuals, due to the prejudice against bisexuals (Arena and Jones, 2017; Gray, 2013; Green et al., 2011; Popova, 2018; Rumens, 2012; Turner et al., 2018). An American survey study showed that homosexual men and women were more likely to "come out" in their workplaces than bisexuals. Bisexual men particularly stood out as a group who reported that they didn't reveal their sexual orientation at work (Arena and Jones, 2017). A British interview study investigated the difficulties and problems encountered by bisexual employees (Popova, 2018). The results demonstrated that more was required for a bisexual employee to "come out" in the workplace, because bisexuality was perceived by many in their environment to be part of a person's identity rather than as a combination of their partner's gender and the person's own sexual orientation. The study also showed that it was problematic to "come out" as bisexual in a climate where bisexuals tended to be invisible. The interview study, consisting of 10 people, reported that, while revealing a homosexual orientation could lead to more or less tangible support from an organisation, the participants didn't necessarily experience the same support when revealing a bisexual orientation. In another British qualitative study, bisexuals also stated that the choice of whether or not to "come out" was difficult because of the preconception that bisexuals are confused about their sexual identity, leading to them having to explain and defend their sexual identity (Rumens, 2012). In another British qualitative study including homo- and bisexual participants, the bisexual participants said that they weren't open about their sexual identity due to the dichotomous discursive standpoint in the workplace that employees were either hetero- or homosexual. Bisexuals stated that they lacked a language with which to speak about their own sexuality, which meant that they stayed silent in the workplace about their sexuality and private relationships (Gray, 2013). Similar results emerged from a minor American qualitative study where a bisexual woman said that she didn't feel queer enough in an LGBTQ context, but that she also didn't fit into a heterosexual template, meaning that she generally stayed silent about her sexual orientation (Turner et al., 2018). An American survey study including just over 1,000 homo- and bisexual participants showed that the bisexual men and women who participated were less willing than the homosexuals to reveal their sexual orientation, to their family and friends, or at work (Doan and Mize, 2020). The study showed, moreover, that the reason for this was partly that bisexuals didn't feel as connected with identity-confirming practices introduced by other LGBTQ people.

The effects on health and performance of being out or not

The research indicates that a person being open about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity in the workplace can have positive as well as negative

consequences. Several studies suggest that a person being open about their sexuality at work (e.g., Salter and Sasso, 2022) can have positive consequences, and not being open can have negative consequences (e.g., Walker and Melton, 2015). The studies investigated, among other things, the consequences of being open or not on a person's job satisfaction and health. A survey study of veterinarians in the US and UK showed that the participants' openness about their sexual and/or gender identity was linked to a lower level of fatigue, but their level of job satisfaction was unconnected (Witte et al., 2020). A person's fear of having their sexual and/or gender identity revealed was, however, linked to a lower level of job satisfaction. An American survey study of homo- and bisexuals demonstrated a link between participants concealing their sexual orientation and anxiety, tiredness and anger, and a lower level of positive feelings and wellbeing (Mohr et al., 2019). An American study of same-sex couples also revealed a link between openness and wellbeing and job satisfaction (Williamson et al., 2017). The same study also showed that experiences of private family problems could have a negative impact on work if a person was not open about their orientation/gender identity with their manager, and that this link was stronger for homosexual women. In an American-Canadian qualitative study, LGBTQ people employed in the technology and science sector said that it was a relief to "come out" and be open (Mattheis et al., 2020). Two studies also showed that the homosexual men and women participating in the study who were out in their workplaces had greater job satisfaction. Those who were not out reported that not being out at work required a lot of energy (Drydakis, 2015; Schneider, 2016).

A person being silent about their sexuality/gender identity with colleagues and managers has been shown in several studies to negatively affect their wellbeing and job satisfaction. Survey studies also show a link between an LGBTQ person concealing their sexual identity and a lower level of job satisfaction, work commitment (Newheiser et al., 2017) and wellbeing (Lloren and Parini, 2017; Simone et al., 2014; Viehl et al., 2017), social stress and symptoms of depression (Sedlovskaya et al., 2013). An Australian study of young LGBTQ people indicated a connection between a person not being open about their sexual identity (in their private life and at work) and an increased risk of self-harm (Watson and Tatnell, 2019). An American survey study of homosexuals showed, moreover, that heterosexist discrimination (discriminatory actions directed towards LGBTQ people, such as prejudice, harassment and hate crime) and internalised heterosexism (internalised derogatory thoughts about sexual minorities) contributed to a larger extent to psychological stress for people who weren't open about their sexual orientation. The same study showed, however, that discrimination and internalised heterosexism contributed to a lower level of job satisfaction in people who were open about their sexual orientation (Velex et al., 2013). A smaller Canadian quantitative study indicated a link between a homo- or bisexual man being secretive about their sexual identity and being more likely to plan for their retirement, which could be a consequence of not being happy in the workplace (Mock et al., 2011).

Furthermore, a major European study showed that secrecy in connection with a person's sexual identity was a barrier to reporting discrimination, which could potentially contribute to a continued negative work environment situation (Fric, 2019). Not being open is described as being significant for a person's work performance, to varying degrees, i.e., it is described by some as affecting their work performance negatively (Corlett et al., 2019). An American qualitative study of male homosexual police officers reported that "coming out" in the workplace was also a path to becoming fully committed to work, and that this applied especially when the person's work performance was appreciated (Collins and Rocco, 2018). A person's productivity was also felt to be affected by the feeling of being forced to hide their orientation, and it was felt that hiding their orientation required a lot of negative energy and stress (Ferfolja and Hopkins, 2013). A negative consequence of not being open could also consist of a sense of ambivalence regarding one's own identity. This might occur, for example, through a person being open with their colleagues, but not their clients.

There are, however, also studies indicating an increase in mental ill-health after "coming out" at work. An American survey study demonstrated that the longer a person had been open about their sexual and/or gender identity, the more discrimination they had experienced. According to the authors, this could be due to there having been more occasions for discrimination the longer a person has been out (Kattari et al., 2016). An Italian survey study also showed that a heterosexist work climate mitigated the positive effect on job satisfaction seen in the research of a person "coming out" or being open about their sexual orientation (Prati and Pietrantoni, 2014). Note, however, that the above studies describing positive experiences of being open in the workplace were conducted in contexts that are LGBTQ friendly in some form, *or* in contexts that are difficult to translate to a Swedish context. For example, Schneider's study (Schneider, 2016) was conducted at a university, and Simone et al. (Simone et al., 2014) investigated the lower level of wellbeing of LGBTQ people who conceal their sexuality in an Italian context of social workers' co-operatives. In addition, a majority of the studies referred to in this section are American, which also may make them more difficult to translate to a Swedish context.

The effects on trans people's health and wellbeing of being out or not

GThrough searches, we found 8 specific studies dealing with the link between trans people's openness about their trans experiences and their health and wellbeing. A British longitudinal survey study showed that people undergoing, or who had undergone, gender-affirming care, and especially trans women, experienced a higher level of job satisfaction (Drydakis, 2017). One study did, however, show that for many of the participants in the study, the transition process was a source of serious worry, and for some these worries were so strong that they considered suicide (Budge et al., 2010). An American study of trans people showed that signs of depression and anxiety linked to the transition process in the workplace were common.

The study showed, moreover, that there was an increased risk of a person losing their job during a transition process, and that the trans participants felt pressured/worried about not presenting their gender identity in a convincing enough way in the workplace. At the same time, the study highlighted a sense of joy and relief at openly undergoing a transition process in the workplace, contributing to the people's wellbeing (Brewster et al., 2014). Not revealing their gender identity and/or trans experience can, however, lead to increased emotional stress for trans people. An American study showed that the trans people participating in the study had tried to hide their trans identity in order to avoid being victims of harassment, but that constantly trying to hide a significant part of themselves was also draining (Levitt and Ippolito, 2014). In a North American study, the following was recounted by a woman of trans experience, who described the stress of having to maintain separate identities at work and in her private life: *I'm living a double life. And many of my colleagues have never even seen me presenting as a woman … being trans is a very public thing, that has created a rift between public and private, or the professional and private* (Mattheis et al., 2020, p. 1856).

The positive consequences of being open at work are also recounted in other studies; an American survey study showed that trans people's job satisfaction and emotional commitment at work was higher if they were open about their trans identity in the workplace, and that the degree of openness correlated with the work organisation's tolerance and support towards trans people (Law et al., 2011); and an American survey study showed that a person's openness about their own trans experiences was linked to a higher level of job satisfaction, and a lower level of experienced discrimination, partly because the participants felt a greater coherence between their inner experience and their outer gender expression (Martinez et al., 2017b). At the same time, an American survey study of 646 trans people demonstrated that the risk of discrimination was three times as high for those who were open about their trans identity at work (Rosich, 2020).

The effects on bisexuals' health and wellbeing of being out or not

The studies mentioned above indicate that bisexuals who are open about their sexual identity may be an especially vulnerable group. An American survey study showed that the non-bisexual members of the LGBTQ community participating in the study tended to have negative views of bisexuals (Arena and Jones, 2017). A survey study conducted in a number of, mainly English speaking, countries, showed, however, that the bisexual study participants who were open about their orientation were more at peace with all aspects of their lives than those bisexuals who weren't open about their orientation (Green et al., 2011).

Summary

In summary, the research shows that it may be important for LGBTQ people's job satisfaction and wellbeing at work to be open about their sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or trans experience. The interplay between openness and wellbeing at work applies for homosexuals, bisexuals and trans people alike.

In the studies where openness doesn't affect a person's health positively, there is an interplay with the risk of being exposed to discrimination and harassment.

3.5.2 The significance of internalised homophobia and individuals' self-acceptance

There are studies of homosexuals that look at so-called internalised homophobia, i.e., a homosexual person's own negative attitudes towards homosexuality and unwillingness to accept their own sexual identity (Singh and O'Brien, 2020). According to these studies, such homophobia can contribute to some homosexuals choosing not to be open about their sexual identity (Goldberg and Smith, 2013; Jiang et al., 2019; Singh and O'Brien, 2020) and be linked to the experiencing of stress at work (Singh and O'Brien, 2020). An American survey study showed that internalised homophobia was linked to deteriorated mental health, especially for the homosexual men participating in the study (Goldberg and Smith, 2013). Another American survey study, on the other hand, demonstrated that the homosexual women in the study who presented with a high level of internalised homophobia, were at risk of experiencing more psychological stress due to heterosexism in the workplace than homosexual men (Velez et al., 2013). The difference between the studies may be explained by the fact that Goldberg and Smith didn't take the occurrence of actual discrimination in the workplace into account.

An American survey study of LGBTQ people also showed that a person's so-called psychological flexibility, for example, their ability adapt in various demanding situations and think in a solution-oriented way, was linked to their wellbeing (Singh and O'Brien, 2020). Another American survey study demonstrated that the homo- and bisexual participants in the study who to a large extent felt that they could influence events in their environment were also less likely to suffer ill-health due to prejudice in the workplace (Carter et al., 2014). The same study showed, however, that an inner sense of control didn't affect the connection between internalised homophobia and mental stress (Carter et al., 2014).

It should, however, be emphasised that a person's acceptance of their own sexual orientation is likely to reflect, and be influenced by, the general climate in workplaces or in society. For example, a Chinese survey study showed that a social climate that was accepting at organisation level was a factor that was at least as important in determining a person's openness about their sexuality and the effects their mental health (Jiang et al., 2019). An American survey study showed that factors such as the reactions of colleagues or inclusive policies were especially important for lower levels of discrimination. Being

open as a trans person was not as significant for the level of discrimination in this study (Ruggs et al., 2015). An Australian survey study also demonstrated that LGBTQ people's openness about their orientation wasn't linked to the occurrence of heterosexism in the workplace, but that the experienced organisational support for LGBTQ issues was linked to a lower level of occurrence of heterosexism (Smith and McCarthy, 2017). To summarise, the results indicate that the onus cannot be put on the individual to combat discrimination themselves by being open and positive with regard to their orientation; it is the workplace first and foremost that should be working to prevent discrimination and heterosexism.

3.5.3 Individual experiences of being an asset in the workplace

A person being open about their sexual and/or gender identity in the workplace may also be advantage in terms of work itself. A Canadian qualitative study showed that managers who were open about their orientation felt more accessible in relation to their employees, felt that it was easier for other people of homo- and bisexual experience to approach them, and felt that they acted as good role models within the organisation, especially for younger employees struggling with how to relate to their own sexual identity (Chang and Bowring, 2017). Another dimension described as advantageous is when homosexuals are perceived to be able to contribute to giving the company a competitive edge. It may be the case, for example, that homosexual employees are considered to be beneficial to the company as they attract homosexual customers, which, in a Brazilian qualitative study, was described as contributing to the homosexual employee feeling valued (Felix et al., 2016). An American study showed that the homosexual study participants, all of whom worked in the PR industry, perceived it to be positive to have other homosexual men as the target group for their work (Tindall and Waters, 2012); and in another American study homosexual police officers stated that their experiences as LGBTQ people were an asset in their work (Charles and Arndt, 2013).

An American qualitative study also showed that the trans participants tended to be involved in trade union and labour relations activities in their workplace (O'Brien, 2020). According to the participants, this involvement was due to these groups having previously been involved in social movements and having experienced exclusion and harassment in the workplace (O'Brien, 2020). Some of the participants in a Swedish qualitative study of the careers of homosexual men also described how in some cases it had been an advantage to be homosexual in the workplace (Rosvall et al., 2020). This was mainly because, as a member of a minority group they were able to relate to other minority groups. Furthermore, a survey study conducted in 28 different countries all over the world, but 70% of whose respondents were residents of Australia or New Zealand, showed that the LGBTQ participants felt they had a unique perspective on experienced discrimination and career progression, which could be both an advantage and a disadvantage at work (Gacilo et al., 2017). A majority of the respondents felt that they had a unique perspective compared with their heterosexual colleagues. The more a respondent felt that they had a unique perspective, the more they felt discriminated against in their workplace. Despite this, the results showed that this unique perspective increased their

experienced career opportunities, especially if their employer showed that they appreciated it (Gacilo et al., 2017). That this unique perspective is an advantage as well as a disadvantage is also reported in other studies. The study of homosexual men in the PR industry referred to above also showed that some participants felt it was a strain to always be the expert and educator when it came to homosexual issues (Tindall and Waters, 2012). Some of the participants in two qualitative studies said that they didn't want to stand up for LGBTQ issues in their workplace as they could be perceived to just be doing it because they were LGBTQ themselves (Chang and Bowring, 2017) and for their own benefit (Felix et al., 2016).

A smaller American study relates further how a homosexual academic was accused of pushing his own agenda too far when he mentioned LGBTQ aspects in his university lectures on social work (Turner et al., 2018). An American interview study showed that the teachers in the study who identified as queer had to make decisions that other teachers didn't need to make, such as regarding policy issues and curricula, which needed to be explained and interpreted by them as LGBTQ people (Mayo Jr., 2020). Having to deal with LGBTQ issues in the workplace as an LGBTQ person is therefore a double-edged experience, as the person's own experiences of the difficulties that LGBTQ people encounter in their professional lives may be seen as a resource, but they may also be opposed precisely because they identify as LGBTQ.

3.5.4 Coping strategies for handling and avoiding exposure

In the selection included, there are 35 studies in which the authors have focused on what strategies LGBTQ people use to handle difficulties created by heteronormativity, microaggressions, discrimination, and so on. These study results above all show that numerous coping strategies are required to manage such difficulties as an LGBTQ person. An American qualitative study (Mizock et al., 2017) showed that trans people applied a number of different strategies to deal with transphobia at work, such as:

- Presenting their gender identity in a normative way/toning down their gender identity;
- Emotionally distancing themselves at work;
- Creating strategic relationships in the workplace;
- Striving for leadership positions within the organisation in order to have an impact on transphobic attitudes in the workplace.

The remainder of this section is presented under similar and other individual coping strategies found in the research into the work environment of LGBTQ people:

- Seeking support within and outside the organisation
- Seeking an LGBTQ-friendly context
- Ignoring harassment and discrimination
- Adjusting to the organisation
- Separating work and private life.

Seeking support within and outside the organisation

One strategy consists of turning away from and looking outside the workplace to actively seek support from support groups, family and friends, and organisations that can provide advice about rights (Asquith et al., 2019; Brewster et al., 2014; Eliason et al., 2018; Mattheis et al., 2020; Singh and O'Brien, 2020; Turner et al., 2018). Support within the workplace is also important, however. This may include forming an alliance with a colleague or being friends with a colleague outside the workplace (Chan, 2013; Ferfolja and Hopkins, 2013; Wessel, 2017).

There are also examples of transitioning trans people seeking support from HR or from managers (Brewster et al., 2014; Budge et al., 2010).

Seeking an LGBTQ-friendly context

Another strategy mentioned in studies, aimed mainly at avoiding situations where coping strategies might be required, is choosing or looking for a workplace based on their attitude towards LGBTQ issues from the outset. This means choosing organisations that have policies/a culture/a reputation indicating a positive attitude towards LGBTQ people. This may also include seeking out certain geographical areas, such as larger cities (Baker and Lucas, 2017; Brewster et al., 2014; Compton, 2016; Connell, 2012; Schneider, 2016). It also involves avoiding organisations that have a reputation for being conservative with regard to LGBTQ issues (Baker and Lucas, 2017; Brewster et al., 2014; Compton, 2016). According to an American qualitative study, another approach is for a person to be clear about their sexual orientation during the recruitment process to ensure that the workplace is LGBTQ friendly and can provide support (Collins and Rocco, 2018; Schneider, 2016).

Ignoring harassment and discrimination

A common strategy is to ignore discrimination and prejudiced comments (Björk and Wahlström 2018; Brewster et al., 2014; Eliason et al., 2018; Fielden and Jepson, 2016; Roberts, 2011; Rumens and Broomfield, 2012; Singh and O'Brien, 2020), or to focus on not caring what other people think (Heintz, 2012). An American study showed that individuals' active coping strategies, which included trying to change their work situation, helped to reduce the negative effects of discrimination, while avoidant, and therefore more passive, coping strategies, such as mentally distancing themselves from discrimination, contributed to lower levels of burnout, but also lower levels of work commitment (Volpone and Avery, 2013). A related strategy may be for a person to lower their career ambitions and adjust their understanding of success. A qualitative study of homosexual women in the UK, most of whom held management positions, showed that the women still considered climbing the career ladder to be less important than self-development. According to

the authors of the study, this could indicate that the women are protecting themselves against experiences of discrimination by emphasising the fact that their self-development is more important than advancement within the organisation (Fielden and Jepson, 2016).

Adjusting to the organisation

There are several examples of LGBTQ people adjusting in order to fit in within an organisation (e.g., Lundin, 2013). In a number of different ways, they choose how to act in the workplace based on the workplace's attitude towards LGBTQ issues. This may, for example, include looking for signs that an organisation is inclusive before deciding to "come out". This may take the form of looking to see whether diversity is included in organisational policies or listening to what colleagues and managers say (Reddy-Best, 2018; Walker and on, 2015).

It also includes carefully choosing which contexts to be open in, based on what people say, do and dress (Reddy-Best, 2018; Woodruffe-Burton and Bairstow, 2013). A related strategy consists of a person adjusting their gender expression/expression of sexual orientation until "the right time" in their career. An example of this is trans people carefully planning their transition process based on when would be the right time in their career, or preparing to change job (Brewster et al., 2014; see also Budge et al., 2010). Another example is a homosexual not "coming out" before they have achieved certain career goals, as there is a common perception that organisations doesn't see homosexuals as potential candidates for senior positions (Galvin-White and O'Neal, 2015; Wicks, 2017). The strategy may also include a person first making sure that they are high performing and are contributing to the success of the business and waiting to "come out" until their colleagues appreciate them as a person or for their work (Baker and Lucas; Corlett et al., 2019; Galvin-White and O'Neal, 2015; Heintz, 2012; Mattheis et al., 2020; Melton and Cunningham, 2014a; Rumens and Broomfield, 2012; Tindall and Waters, 2012). It may also include a person emphasising aspects of their personality/interests that are consistent those of their colleagues and create acceptance from them (Melton and Cunningham, 2014a). For trans people, this may also mean giving their colleagues space to get used to working with a trans person (Brewster et al., 2014). A Danish study, whose empirical documentation consists of recurring interviews with a trans woman in a management position at a company, recounts how the transgressive (gender and therefore political transgression) shifts depending on the context (Muhr et al., 2016). In order to either tone down the political aspect of the transgressive body, depending on whether she's meeting colleagues or potential clients, she uses a type of traditional form of professionalism whereby she conveys expertise and control with the aim of mitigating *"the potential disruptiveness of her body"* (Muhr et al., 2016, p. 64).

Separating work and private life

The studies also report a number of strategies for avoid being out and thereby more easily fitting in in a heterosexual and cis gender organisation (Baker and Lucas, 2017; Cavalier, 2011; Corlett et al., 2019; Felix et al., 2016; Lynch and Rodell, 2018). A strategy described by people concealing their sexual orientation in the workplace is mentally separating their private and professional lives to avoid conflicts between the two spheres. This is described as a simpler strategy for people who don't see their sexual orientation as that significant a part of their identity (Corlett et al., 2019).

3.6 Intersectional perspectives

LGBTQ employees generally report worse working conditions, including worse treatment and lower job satisfaction than heterosexuals and/or cis people (see, e.g., Aaron and Ragusa, 2011; Björk and Wahlström, 2018; Dozier, 2015; Ferfolja and Hopkins, 2013; Nelson et al., 2019; Rengers et al., 2019). Major survey studies of government agencies in the US that have a clear diversity approach and guidelines to prevent discrimination against LGBTQ people show that these results also apply after accounting for gender, ethnicity, work position and age (Cech and Pham, 2017; Cech and Rothwell, 2020). These results for LGBTQ people are regardless of age or managerial position. There are also studies that emphasise the dominance of a person's sexual identity in the various forms of interplay between, e.g., sexuality, gender and ethnicity that affect people's experiences at work. An American study showed that there was no additive effect of belonging to several different minority groups based on race, disability, gender, sexuality or age on the experience of organisational factors such as satisfaction with pay, organisational efficiency, development opportunities and leadership (Salter et al., 2020). At the same time, the studies described in the following sections indicate that concurrent factors such as race, ethnicity, age and gender shape LGBTQ people's vulnerability at work. For example, an American study of lawyers identifying as LGBTQ showed that the participants had an increased risk of being exposed to discrimination, and that this risk increased if they also belonged to an ethnic minority/were black and had a disability (Blanck et al., 2021). An American survey study showed that discrimination in the labour market differed for LGBTQ people depending on their ethnicity/race. It was more likely for multi-ethnic individuals to report discrimination based on their sexual and/or gender identity than for people who were either white, black, Asian, Latin-American or Native American. People of Latin-American origin were more likely to report that they were unsure whether the discrimination that they had been exposed to was motivated by their sexual orientation or gender identity (Kattari et al., 2016). An American survey study showed, for example, that trans people working as doctors reported that they were oppressed, not only by the fact of being trans, but also by their ethnicity, disability or class. These respondents reported, in response to an open-ended question, that they had experienced racism or prejudice in connection with a disability or their class background (Dimant et al., 2019).

The intersectional aspects of an individual's work environment can also affect the job tasks that an employee is given and the level of trust in them. An American qualitative study, showed, for example that such aspects were significant in determining who could advocate for LGBTQ issues in the sports industry (Melton and Cunningham, 2014b). The study showed that it was easier for male, married, heterosexual coaches to successfully advocate for LGBTQ issues than for female coaches, who instead risked having a negative reputation. Studies touching on and looking in-depth at the interplay between sexuality and/or gender identity and race, functional ability, gender, sexuality or age are presented below.

This section covers further dimensions that emerged at the intersection between being LGBTQ and the following aspects:

- 3.6.1 *Ethnicity and race*
- 3.6.2 *Gender*
- 3.6.3 *Professional position, labour market status and level of educational*
- 6.4 *Functional ability*
- 3.6.5 *Age*

3.6.1 Ethnicity and race

17 studies in this review highlight the fact that, and how, sexuality intersects with ethnicity and therefore affects people's situation at work. For example, a major recurring European survey study, which included 2,500 LGBTQ people in Sweden, showed that 40% of those who belonged to an ethnic minority, or had an immigrant background, felt that this was yet another cause of discrimination against them, including at work (FRA, 2020). This type of result appears in several studies, all of which are American or Canadian (except for one, which is British). One of the studies showed that LGBTQ employees who belonged to ethnic minorities had more negative experiences in the workplace than the white LGBTQ employees in the study (Cech and Rothwell, 2020). A British survey study of police officers who identified as LGBTQ showed that it was police officers who identified as homosexual men and who identified as belonging to an ethnic minority who experienced discrimination (Jones and Williams, 2016). Another smaller survey study showed that the participants who identified as black/ethic and LGBTQ were more likely to say that they risked losing their job if they were open about their sexual orientation (Chen et al., 2020). An American qualitative study of homosexual men belonging to an ethnic minority, all of whom worked in higher education, recounts experiences of being obstructed and discriminated against in their careers and of being excluded from informal academic networks (Misawa, 2015). Homosexual men belonging to ethnic minorities also felt that their expertise might be questioned by students and colleagues alike, and that students might give them negative feedback about courses, referring to their sexual identity, for example. An American survey study involving approximately 24,000 trans participants demonstrated that white trans people encountered less discrimination than trans people of other

ethnicities (Suarez et al., 2020). A major survey study of trans people revealed that the participants who identified as non-binary, and who were black/ethnic, were more likely to be victims of discrimination than non-binary white people (Davidson and Halsall, 2016).

LGBTQ people in 8 studies report that the interplay between their sexuality and their ethnicity contributes to them being both visible and invisible as employees. An American interview study, including interviews with 63 homo- and heterosexual women in the construction sector, showed how perceptions of sexual orientation, and perceptions of gender expression, ethnicity and body size, limited the women in different ways.

For example, it was more likely that homosexual women who were perceived to be "one of the guys" would use slang with a sexual undertone than heterosexual women. White respondents, both homo- and heterosexual, were more likely to incorporate a more emphasised femininity, while black, large, homosexual women were more likely to highlight who skilled they were at the heaviest, dirtiest and most dangerous tasks at work (Denissen and Saguy, 2014). Participants in an American-Canadian qualitative study in the technology industry shared how they felt that standing out too much as a member of several minority groups (for example, as someone who was both ethnic and queer), made them feel even more vulnerable (Mattheis et al., 2020). In an American qualitative study, the respondents reported that they felt "invisible" due to belonging to two minority groups (black and homosexual woman) in a male-dominated industry (sports), as they belonged to a "non-existent" combination (Walker and Melton, 2015). The participants stated that expressing ethnicity was more accepted than expressing sexuality. The participants in the study said that it was difficult as a black homosexual woman to be accepted by both black and white heterosexual women. The women described it as an untenable work situation, contributing to them either leaving the industry or being in the process of leaving it. White homosexual women, on the other hand, stated that they felt it was a privilege to "at least" be white, in comparison with black homosexual women (Walker and Melton, 2015). A British qualitative study indicated similar results. In the study, one of the interviewees, a black homosexual woman working in a male-dominated industry, exemplified how a combination of minority statuses contributed to alienating her from certain colleagues (Wright, 2011). Another American qualitative study showed that in the male-dominated technology industry, white and Asian people who identified as queer, bisexual, homosexual women or pansexual could be respected and accepted by not expressing femininity, and by behaving in a way more suited to the male culture (Alfrey and Twine, 2017). Women in the study with a similar background who identified as black, stated, however, that it was more difficult for them to fit in and be accepted in the same way (Alfrey and Twine, 2017). A Canadian qualitative study showed that belonging to more than one stigmatised social category resulted in the interviewees, all of whom were lawyers, having a stronger sense of otherness in the workplace (Alkoby and Alon-Shenker, 2017). The study also showed that a divergent

ethnicity was perceived to be a more central stigma than a divergent sexuality (Alkoby and Alon-Shenker, 2017). A major survey study of American federal agencies showed that LGBTQ people in organisations with a higher number of LGBTQ employees experienced less injustice. LGBTQ people in organisations that were more diverse in terms of ethnicity and gender identity did not, however, report better working conditions than other respondents (Cech and Rothwell, 2020).

The intersection between bisexuality ethnicity/race has been investigated to a lesser extent. An American mixed method study investigating the mental health of bisexual Latin-American men found that this group had mental health issues due to the pressure put on them by their families and work (Muñoz-Laboy et al., 2015).

The study showed that the focus in this context on, e.g., raising and providing for a family could lead to internalised stress taking the form of anxiety and depression. Furthermore, this group were at risk of being given less help with their mental health issues (Muñoz-Laboy et al., 2015).

The interplay between sexuality and ethnicity is also revealed by looking at pay. An American register-based study showed that ethnicity was a significant factor contributing to the unequal levels of pay of the homo- and bisexual men and women in the study (Douglas and Steinberger, 2015). The study showed that white and Asian homosexual men earned less than heterosexual white and Asian men. Black and Latin-American homosexual men earned more than heterosexual black and Latin-American heterosexual men, however. Homosexual women earned more than heterosexual women, regardless of their ethnicity. There was also a pay advantage for white homosexual women compared with homosexual women belonging to ethnic minorities (Douglas and Steinberger, 2015).

The studies in this section indicate that sexual orientation and gender identity intersect with ethnicity and/or race. There is, however, a need to study how LGBTQ people experience and are victims of discrimination in connection with both sexuality and ethnicity in a Swedish context, as very little material has been produced on this complex link.

3.6.2 Gender

The issue of gender and how it intersects with sexuality in the work environment of LGBTQ people is covered by 17 studies in this review. A quantitative study investigating sexism and heterosexism in workplaces in the rural US, described in the study as conservative, showed that harassment rooted in heterosexism was rare in the absence of gender-based harassment (Rabelo and Cortina, 2014). In accordance with the above, the participants reported that they had experienced harassment based on their gender as well as their sexuality, rather than only their gender or sexuality. An American study of LGBTQ people in the military showed that the LGBTQ women

reported a higher percentage of sexual harassment than the LGBTQ men (Gurung et al., 2018). A Canadian survey study showed that differences in pay were distributed hierarchically: the heterosexual men in the study had the highest pay, followed by homosexual men, and then homosexual women, while heterosexual women earned the least. Gender was therefore the main stratifying labour market principle *"When gay men and lesbians make decisions, whether by choice or constraint, they are made within a gendered institutional framework that places value on masculinity"* (Waite and Denier, 2015, p. 581).

A Swiss study showed a similar interplay. The study revealed significant gender differences in experienced workplace discrimination, as female employees reported more discrimination than men (Lloren and Parini, 2017). Many of the participants in a British qualitative study of homosexual women in senior positions argued that the fact that they were women was more significant in terms of the discrimination that they had been exposed to than the fact that they were homosexual.

The interplay between gender and sexual orientation was also a recurring theme in many of the women's stories, however (Fielden and Jepson, 2016). Two American qualitative studies produced similar results (Galvin-White and O'Neal, 2015; Helens-Hart, 2017), and many of the women in both the British and the American studies found it difficult to determine whether their experiences of discrimination in the workplace were due to their gender or their sexuality. In an Australian qualitative study, young homosexual women stated that they felt that homosexual men had a higher status than them (Willis, 2010). Other perspectives highlighted relate to working in an organisation where there were many homo- and bisexual employees, but the majority of them were homosexual men, leading to a climate perceived to be sexist by homosexual women. A survey study of homo- and bisexual law lecturers at American universities showed, on the other hand, that homosexual women don't feel more exposed to hostile behaviour in the workplace (such as microaggressions) than heterosexual law lecturers, and that the homosexual women also weren't as negatively affected by hostile and discriminating behaviour from colleagues as heterosexual women (Zürbrugg and Miner, 2016). An American qualitative study of university employees showed, however, that the homosexual men were much more likely to have had negative experiences of prejudice and discrimination in their workplace than the homosexual women in the study (Dozier, 2015). This could be due to homosexual women being perceived to be less threatening and less norm-breaching than homosexual men. In a Swedish survey study of the Swedish Armed Forces, women, particularly, stated that there was little support from colleagues following harassment due to sexual orientation (Eriksson-Zetterquist et al., 2011). The organisational support following harassment due to sexual orientation was reported to be limited for both women and men, however (Eriksson-Zetterquist and Solli, 2016).

The intersectional aspect of LGBTQ people's work environment is also mentioned in studies focused on career progression. In these studies, it is

mainly the careers of female LGBTQ people that are highlighted. A survey study of American female police officers' experiences of career guidance at work paints a picture showing that homo- and bisexual women were given a smaller proportion of such guidance than their heterosexual female colleagues (Barrat, Bergman and Thompson, 2014). The study also showed that homo- and bisexual women benefited from a gender expression characterised by both masculine and feminine traits, in contrast with heterosexual women who benefited at work from a gender expression that wasn't gendered in the same way. A survey study conducted in the US found that a majority of the 241 homo- and bisexual participants had experienced other career obstacles than those considered to be related to their sexual orientation (Parnell, Lease and Green, 2012). Despite other career obstacles having dominated these respondents' past, a high percentage expected to encounter career obstacles based on their sexual orientation. Homosexual and bisexual women expected more career obstacles due to their sexual orientation than due to their gender. The study also showed that it was significantly more likely that the homosexual and bisexual women in the study had encountered, and expected to encounter, career obstacles based on their gender than the homosexual men in the study. Another study that interviewed homosexual women showed that personal characteristics were considered to affect a person's career more than their sexual orientation (Fielden and Jepson, 2016).

Exposure to discrimination or harassment, exclusion and exposure to microaggressions is not only based on biological gender, but is also largely linked to gender expression. In an American interview study, homosexual women wo identified as masculine stated that they fitted in better in male-dominated workplaces than normative feminine women (Dozier, 2017). In an American qualitative study, heterosexual feminine women described how they had been exposed to microaggressions that LGBTQ people with less feminine expressions weren't exposed to in the same way (Alfrey and Twine, 2017). Another American qualitative study from Dozier, who used the same empirical data as in their article from 2017, produced similar results, i.e., the results showed that people who aren't feminine in their expression find it easier to fit in in male-gendered professions (Dozier, 2019). The same study showed that people from ethnic minorities who had a working-class background, and who were perceived to be women but didn't present in a feminine way, were often sexualised at work. The individuals in the study who were exposed to this often feared that the relationship with the person sexualising them (a client or a colleague) could jeopardise their job. A British qualitative study of women working in the construction industry showed, however, that while the heterosexual women were exposed to sexual harassment, the homosexual women in the study were instead exposed to bullying and harassment for not conforming to heterosexual femininity in their interactions with male colleagues (Wright, 2011; 2013). An American survey study of trans people showed that the trans women in the study were more exposed to discrimination than the trans men and non-binary people (Davidson and Halsall, 2016). They were more likely to have had job tasks taken away from them, or to have lost their jobs, for being trans. On the other

hand, another American qualitative study highlights the fact that the trans men in the study were less visible and had a lower status than the trans women (Dispenza et al., 2012).

Non-binary people's experiences of discrimination/harassment/exclusion/ microaggressions are implicitly described in these studies, which deal with gender expression. There are no studies that specifically focus on the work environment/situation of non-binary people, however.

To summarise, the studies indicate that homosexual and bisexual cis women, and trans women, are more at risk of harassment and discrimination. For homo- and bisexual women it is sometimes difficult to determine whether the exposure is attributable to their gender or sexual orientation.

3.6.3 Professional position, labour market status and level of educational

Ten studies in the review specifically look at how an LGBTQ person's position in the labour market (e.g., being in a working-class profession) affects their organisational and social work environment. They implicitly and explicitly show that professional position, labour market status and level of educational are significant.

For example, a Swedish study indicates that the LGBTQ participants who had a university education were less exposed to microaggressions at work (Björk and Wahlström, 2018). In an American survey study, people classified as working class reported more stigma at work than the other participants (Gates and Mitchell, 2013). A British qualitative study showed that companies actively working to be inclusive towards sexual minorities contributed to a good work environment for those working at the head office, but that the company policies didn't extend to the whole organisation. Less educated homosexual women in male-dominated workplaces who worked at a greater remove from the head office stated that they were exposed to harassment and discrimination. The inclusion efforts did not therefore extend to the whole company, and especially not in male-dominated workplaces characterised by a macho culture (Wright, 2011). Moreover, an American mixed method study of bisexual Latin-Americans in New York showed that a person's position in the labour market was significant for their sexual health (Muños-Laboy et al., 2014). An American survey study, including approximately 24,000 trans people, showed that social class (based on income and education) and ethnicity were risk factors for discrimination among trans women (Suárez et al., 2020). Low-earning trans women and women with a lower level of educational attainment were at greater risk of being discriminated against than high-earning well-educated trans women. For trans men, however, the picture was more nuanced. While a higher level of education reduced the risk of discrimination, a higher income didn't have the same effect. According to the authors, this could be due to there being a weaker link between education and income in male-dominated professions.

In qualitative studies, LGBTQ people report that they are forced to choose, but sometimes also actively choose, professions with low pay and low status because they belong to a sexual minority. This is partly due to LGBTQ people being exposed to discrimination in the labour market, and partly owing to the fact that LGBTQ people tend to avoid better-paid work in macho-oriented workplaces (Brickner and Dalton, 2017; Lewis and Mills, 2016). In a Canadian study, young LGBTQ people working in a café in Canada reported that LGBTQ people may find it difficult to find jobs other than those with the lowest pay, such as café jobs (Brickner and Dalton, 2017). Interviewees who identified as LGBTQ also described experiences of cis male café staff being favoured, which could be interpreted as there being a hierarchy in the workplace in which LGBTQ people were lower ranked (Brickner and Dalton, 2017).

LGBTQ people having to opt for low paid, low status jobs was further reported in a qualitative American-Canadian study of homosexual men, which described how the homosexual men without a higher education had avoided better paid industrial jobs as the environment was felt to be homophobic (Lewis and Mills, 2016). They looked instead for café and restaurant jobs, which, according to the participants, offer a less homophobic environment. These environments are lower paid, however, and the career opportunities are limited.

This contributes, according to Brickner and Dalton, to LGBTQ people often having to tolerate poor working conditions and a homo- and/or transphobic environment if they wish to work in better paid industries (Brickner and Dalton, 2017). The authors describe how efforts to unionise staff in café businesses are driven/led by LGBTQ people, due to the factors driving them to improve their working conditions.

A high position in the workplace hierarchy can, however, offer advantages that make the situation easier for LGBTQ people. A Canadian study showed how a queer manager can have more uncomplicated relationships with their subordinates than with other managers (Chang and Bowring, 2017). A British qualitative study of female homosexual senior managers showed that they felt freer to "come out" when they had reached a higher position. It gave them a position of power within the organisation, making it less risky for them to be open about their orientation (Heintz, 2012). They stated that male colleagues were more likely to find it an advantage that they were homosexual, and that the dilemmas linked to their managerial role were more likely to be connected with their gender (as a woman) than their homosexuality. In a qualitative study, homosexual university employees said that their job satisfaction could be connected with their privileged social position; white homosexual people weren't felt to stand out in the workplace and they could blend into a middle-class environment due to their lifestyle, which, could, for example, include a partner and children (Dozier, 2015). The focus was therefore on the work that they did rather than on them as norm-breaking people.

Note, however, that a Swiss study partly contradicts the significance of professional position for LGBTQ people. The study showed that the participants' position in the workplace did not affect the occurrence of discrimination, but it instead affected the LGBTQ people's mental health (Lloren and Parini, 2017).

Overall, studies demonstrate that the professional position and educational background of LGBTQ people may be significant for their organisational and social work environment. In qualitative studies, some LGBTQ people report that they partly tend to choose themselves to opt for lower status professions, as they are perceived to be more LGBTQ friendly; at the same time, discrimination exists nonetheless in the labour market, meaning that LGBTQ people, and especially those with a lower level of education, are not always able to choose professions or workplaces where there is a lower degree of discrimination.

3.6.4 Functional ability

Few studies, in fact only two, cover disabled LGBTQ people.

A quantitative study of staff at an Australian university showed that the disabled LGBTQ people in the study were more likely to fear heterosexism (Brady et al., 2020). A Canadian survey study showed that the trans participants who were also disabled, or who belonged to a visible minority, experienced more harassment and discrimination than trans people who conformed to norm positions (Waite, 2020).

3.6.5 Age

The significance of age for LGBTQ people's social and organisational work environment is discussed in 13 studies. An American survey study showed that older homosexual women had experienced homophobia, heterosexism and ageism in several different contexts, including the workplace, and the participants also reported frequent discrimination based on sexual orientation (Averett et al., 2012). An Australian-British survey showed that the older LGBTQ people in the study felt that they could be themselves and cared less about what others thought. These results were especially applicable in LGBTQ-friendly workplaces, and in workplaces where being different and offering another perspective was valued (Riach et al., 2014). An Austrian survey study of 1,177 LGBTQ people showed that middle-aged members of staff and people who had been employed for at least 10 years at the same workplace were more likely to be open about their sexuality at work than other groups (Markovic et al., 2022). A Swiss survey study showed, on the other hand, that older employees had been exposed to verbal discrimination to a larger extent than younger ones (Lloren and Parini, 2017). Note, however, that the studies are too few and the sample is too small in order for general conclusions to be drawn about the significance of age for discrimination. Those that do exist give somewhat varied results. A qualitative study from the American police force showed that the older homosexuals in the study had more negative and stress-related experiences connected with discrimination and harassment, while the younger homosexual participants experienced a lower

level of discrimination and more support in their workplace. According to the study's conclusions, these results should be understood in the context of the older participants having worked in the military at a time when it wasn't permitted for employees to be homosexual. The younger employees had not experienced this. Public opinion in the US has also shifted towards a more positive view of homosexuals (Van Gilder, 2019). Furthermore, qualitative studies show that younger homo- and bisexuals feel that it is easier and more of a given to come out than the older homo- and bisexuals (Willis, 2010; Wright, 2011). In a qualitative Canadian study, younger homosexual men stated that it had been more of a given for them to be open about their sexual identity for their entire professional lives, while, for older people, there had been a more gradual process whereby they had been more open as they grew older (Wicks, 2017). These results were also reported in an American quantitative study in which younger homo- and bisexuals were more likely to be open about their orientation than older people (Yoder and Matthei, 2016). Studies also show, however, that being young and having limited work experience also can have a more limiting and negative effect. An American study also showed that the occurrence of heterosexism contributed to burnout to a larger extent in younger employees than older LGBTQ people (Viehl et al., 2017). Furthermore, a British qualitative study showed that homosexual men, all between the ages of 50 and 65, who were in management positions in their organisations, negotiated and practised masculinity, both by reproducing the heteronormative order in the workplace and/or by acting to change heteronormative stereotyping (Ozturk, Rumens and Tatli, 2020). The study also showed that the men's age affected how they practised masculinity as a strategy for preventing negative age-related discrimination.

Other age-related perspectives emerged from a British qualitative study included the fact that younger homosexual men felt that it was easier to build friendships in the workplace with heterosexual men than older ones (Rumens, 2018). Older homosexual men could, however, also state that it was easier for them to have friendships in the workplace with heterosexual men today than when they were younger. This could be linked to a more generally accepting social climate. Overall, the results show that a workplace may be experienced in different ways depending on age-related norms and perspectives, but also due to changed norms and laws in society and in the workplace, which may affect older homo- and bisexual people's attitudes and fears regarding "coming out". On the other hand, it isn't necessarily easier for younger people to "come out" in the workplace. The Australian study mentioned above also describes young homo- and bisexuals' experiences of coming out in the workplace while they are also in the process of coming out to family and friends. According to the interviewees, this is perceived to be a big and not always self-evident step (Wilis, 2011).

Based on the studies presented, it is difficult to draw conclusions about the significance of age for the work environment of LGBTQ people. The studies to some degree indicate, however, that changed societal norms and laws may be contributing to a better work environment for younger LGBTQ people.

3.7 Interplay with societal perspectives

There are 24 studies in the review showing the interplay between different societal contexts and how LGBTQ people experience and manage their work environment. Note that these studies are mainly focused on homosexuals or LGBTQ people as a group. Several studies highlight the significance of the workplace's geographical location (see, e.g., Dozier, 2015; Everly and Schwarz, 2015; Melton and Cunningham, 2014b). A study of school counsellors who identified as LGBTQ showed that those who worked as counsellors in a large or medium-sized US city were more likely to feel that their rights were protected by laws and guidelines (Chen et al., 2020). Other studies show that LGBTQ people in the US more frequently looked for jobs in larger cities or less conservative regions (Connell, 2012), including regions that have made more progress with anti-discrimination legislation (Lewis and Mills, 2016). Furthermore, studies also indicate a wish among homosexuals to change workplace to a larger city or region where there are more opportunities to build a network with other homosexuals (Lewis and Mills, 2016; Reinert and Yakaboski, 2019). One study showed, moreover, an interplay between experiences of working in an LGBTQ-friendly workplace in the care sector and the following:

- Type of workplace (e.g., whether or not the hospital was religious);
- Size of the city where the workplace was located (Eliason et al., 2011a);
- The US region that the workplace was located in (Connell, 2012; Eliason et al., 2011a).

One survey study from Germany showed similar results, whereby homosexuals living in more politically conservative states were less open about their sexual orientation in their workplace (Götz and Blanz, 2020).

An American survey study of senior nurses at a hospital also showed that the managers' inclination to work in an inclusive workplace was affected by the US region that the hospital was located in and whether it was in an urban area (Klotzbaugh and Spencer, 2015). A British mixed method study compared homo- and bisexual teachers working in rural and urban areas respectively. The results showed that those working in rural areas felt less able to be open about their sexual identity at school, that they were more likely to feel that their private and professional identities weren't compatible, and that this contributed to lower self-esteem, depression and anxiety (Lee, 2019). A British survey study showed that homo- and bisexual immigrants were more inclined to undergo acculturation, i.e., the adjusting of their own cultural values to the host country's values (Foroudi et al., 2020). The study states that this could be linked to the fact that, in some cases, homo- and bisexual immigrants have left less tolerant societies, and so it is easier for them to adjust to and be content with the probably more tolerant work environment found in the UK.

An Australian study showed that the participating LGBTQ teachers' positive experiences of their work environment correlated with their school being located in a more heterogeneous sociocultural area where schools also worked on diversity issues to a greater extent (Ferfolja and Hopkins, 2013). A Dutch study showed that working in a multicultural workplace in Amsterdam, considered by the participants themselves to be a city with a generally open view of LGBTQ people, made it easier for the participants to be themselves and to be accepted (Rengers et al., 2019).

Seven studies covered how trends and changes in the rest of the society affect how workplaces handle LGBTQ issues. A Canadian study showed, for example, that union commitment with LGBTQ issues in workplaces was affected by the issues advocated for by LGBTQ movements in the rest of society in a Canadian city (Brickner and Dalton, 2017). A qualitative study conducted in Italy showed that unions could operate as what the authors call "institutional entrepreneurs". In short, this means that unions may work for the social integration of LGBTQ people in different companies and also to address discrimination against LGBTQ people (Pulcher et al., 2019). Studies in the public sector in the UK showed that changes in national governance and new laws on discrimination affected unions' efforts to implement policies and individual homo- and bisexuals' self-confidence with regard to coming out in the workplace, for example in connection with same-sex civil unions being normalised through legislation (Colgan and Wright, 2011; Colgan, 2011). One of the studies showed that the new law on discrimination also affected homo- and bisexuals, in the sense that they felt that if they were victims of discrimination they would report it (Colgan and Wright, 2011). Qualitative studies from the UK and the US indicated that legal changes can contribute both to companies choosing to engage with LGBTQ issues (Colgan, 2011) and a better work environment (Wooton et al., 2019). An American qualitative study of homo- and bisexual women showed, for example, that new laws allowing same-sex marriage were also significant for how the work environment was experienced (Wooton et al., 2019).

The women in the study described how they had felt safer to come out in the workplace after the new laws came into force, and had also experienced increased tolerance and a positive attitude from colleagues. At the same time, not all the participants experienced a positive change, and some reported that microaggressions and heterosexism continue, and that the US company context in general was unfavourable for sexual minority groups. Some participants reported, however, that the legislation helped them to assign the cause of the problem to certain heterosexual individuals, as it is them who have problematic views that are contrary to the legislation. The study highlighted the complexity of a society where legislation may affect the workplace climate, but this also intersected with a general national climate and meant that a change in legislation didn't affect the climate in every workplace context, especially when other national legislation does not combat discrimination against sexual minorities in the workplace (Wooton et al., 2019). A large American longitudinal survey study showed that married homosexual men and women were more likely to be employed and have a

college education than their unmarried counterparts, which may, however, be a consequence of the legislation on same-sex marriage meaning that private employers now have to offer health insurance to same-sex partners (Elwood et al., 2020). In the UK, the government has developed a guide to enable employers to comply with the law and contribute to creating awareness, understanding and support structures for trans people. This also includes support during the transition process. A quantitative study of how trans people perceived the guide found that few of them were aware of it, but that it increased their self-confidence to see that such a guide had been produced (Bozani et al., 2020). At the same time, they didn't believe that it would mean that they were treated better at work or that it would reduce the risk of discrimination during recruitment.

Only four studies have compared aspects of the work environment in different national contexts. A British study of five global companies committed to being inclusive workplaces reports challenges posed by different national contexts, in cases where the company operates in countries where homosexuality is illegal, for example, and special training is required in how to manage diversity issues in different cultural and national contexts (Colgan, 2011). A study conducted with participants from the US and Canada showed that homosexual mentors of homosexual mentees, i.e., senior employees assisting junior colleagues with their career progression, acted in different ways when encountering organisational heterosexism. The results showed that the Canadian context seemed to create conditions in which the mentors could give their mentees better psychosocial support (Church, 2012b). A qualitative interview study analysed homo- and bisexual people's experiences of being open or concealing their sexual identity in Spanish and Ecuadorian workplaces to compare experiences in countries with different legislations and cultural contexts (Corlett et al., 2019). In Spain, sexual minorities are more protected by anti-discrimination legislation. Both countries are religious, but religious beliefs are more significant for workplace culture in Ecuador.

The study showed that the interviewees in Spain felt that there was a more supportive organisational climate for coming out and that they were more likely to use strategies where they normalised their sexual orientation in the workplace, i.e., presenting it as one among several of their characteristics, while the interviewees from Ecuador used strategies that meant that they emphasised that their sexual orientation meant that they were different from other people. Even though there were interviewees in both countries who were not open about their sexual orientation in the workplace, only interviewees from Ecuador used strategies where they pretended to be heterosexual. Furthermore, only Spanish participants said it was a relief to come out in the workplace, which could be linked to the support and attitudes present in or absent from workplaces in the two countries (Corlett et al., 2019). An American survey study of trans people demonstrated a link between the presence of legal protection against discrimination, a person being overqualified for their job, and their job satisfaction and the experienced meaningfulness of their work (Tebbe, Allan and Bell, 2019). Among the trans people participating in the

study who worked in a region that lacked anti-discrimination legislation, there was a link between being overqualified and lower job satisfaction, while there were no emotional consequences for trans people who were legally protected in the region where they worked but felt that they were overqualified for their job. The study therefore showed that legal protection against discrimination worked as a buffer against low job satisfaction for the participants in the study (Tebbe, Allan and Bell, 2019). The study also showed that victimisation, a stigma-based stress resulting from verbal harassment and sexual/physical abuse, above all adversely affected the trans person's motivation to work if they worked in a region that lacked legal protection against discrimination. Their perceived social status in the workplace – where they felt they were in terms of status on a scale of 1 to 10 – was also clearly linked to the presence or absence of legal protection against discrimination. In a location with legal protection against discrimination, more trans people felt that they had a higher social status (Tebbe, Allan and Bell, 2019).

Finally, a Swedish study showed that the general public's attitudes towards homosexuals affected the relative employment and pay of homosexual people. Hammarstedt et al. showed, in a quantitative study of surveys and register-based data, that the relative employment and pay of homosexual men was negatively affected by the general public's attitudes towards homosexuals (Hammarstedt et al., 2015). The results also showed that the general public's attitudes towards homosexuals affected the relative employment of homosexual women, but not their (relative) pay.

Overall, the results indicate that the development of an inclusive and positive work environment for LGBTQ people is positively affected by the extending of anti-discrimination legislation and an increase in generally positive attitudes in society.

4 Discussion

The results of the review are discussed below under the following headings:

- 4.1 Discussion of results
- 4.2 Discussion of method

4.1 Discussion of results

The overall purpose of the review was to map and compile existing research on the organisational and social work environment of LGBTQ people. More specifically, its purpose was to map research into:

- Risk factors;
- Health-promoting factors;
- Differences and common elements in work environment situations for homosexuals, bisexuals, trans people and queer people;
- What characterises an inclusive workplace; that is, a work environment that LGBTQ people themselves experience as good?

The results indicated that homosexuals don't always have a worse work environment than heterosexuals, but that there are specific risk factors in their work environment. The results show that many LGBTQ people experience – often while also experiencing positive work environment factors – discrimination, harassment, microaggressions or other negative work environment factors. Swedish studies also indicate that positive and negative work environment factors may occur simultaneously (Björk and Wahlström, 2018; Eriksson-Zetterquist and Solli 2016; Eriksson-Zetterquist et al., 2011; Ohlström, 2017; Rennstam, 2021; Rennstam and Sullivan, 2016). The results from international studies suggest that people of trans experience may experience a worse work environment than others who identify as LGBTQ, including a higher risk of exposure to discrimination (see, e.g., Kattrari et al., 2016). Similar results were also shown in a Swedish study that includes trans people (Björk and Wahlström, 2018). There are few Swedish studies specifically about the work environment of trans people, however. In the study conducted as part of the government commission to map the organisational and social work environment of trans people, a majority of the 105 participants described experiences of being exposed to microaggressions. Some described experiences of harassment, and even death threats, or a great fear of what the consequences would be if they were open about their trans experiences. At the same time, the study showed that many of the people of trans experience participating in the study had positive work environment experiences alongside the negative experiences, such as a high level of support from managers and colleagues.

The systematic literature review shows, furthermore, that bisexuals often experience a worse work environment, and are more likely to report being victims of bullying and discrimination, than homosexuals and heterosexual cis people (see, e.g., Hoel et al., 2017). It is unclear, however, whether the results regarding the work environment of bisexuals can be generalised to a Swedish context, as the systematic literature review does not contain any Swedish studies that focus specifically on the work environment of bisexuals. It is also not possible to draw conclusions in this overview on the work environment for people identifying as queer, as there are too few studies analysing their work environment experiences (see, e.g., Kyron et al., 2021).

The discussion below first discusses the various risk factors that emerged in the systematic literature review, including the global differences between the risk factors for homosexuals, bisexual and trans people revealed in the included studies (4.1.1 *Risk factors in the work environment of LGBTQ people*). This is followed by a discussion of the characteristics of an inclusive workplace, including LGBTQ people's experiences of various health-promoting factors (4.1.2 *Experiences of an inclusive workplace*). This section also covers specific aspects of the creation of an inclusive workplace for trans people and bisexuals, where the systematic literature review includes studies with specific results regarding the work environment of these groups. The results discussion concludes with a section on the areas where there is a lack of knowledge (4.1.3 *Knowledge gaps*).

4.1.1 Risk factors in the work environment of LGBTQ people

The results of the systematic literature review indicate that a heteronormative climate has a negative effect on the work environment of LGBTQ people. In a heteronormative climate, heterosexuality is taken for granted and contributes to other sexual orientations, such as homo- and bisexuality, being seen as deviant (Rosenberg, 2002). Heteronormativity also includes the expectation that women and men should behave in a certain way, and the expectation of a certain chronological life course (Ambjörnsson and Jönsson, 2010). The systematic literature review suggests that a heteronormative work climate constitutes a risk factor in the work environment of LGBTQ people as it makes LGBTQ issues invisible and creates uncertainty in LGBTQ employees about other employees' perceptions of LGBTQ people (Aaron and Ragusa, 2011; Compton, 2016; Compton and Dougherty, 2017; Dozier, 2015; 2017; Gray, 2013; Willis, 2011). This may contribute to them being less open about their sexual orientation or gender identity out of a fear of how others will react (Gray, 2013; Lewis and Mills, 2016; Mattheis et al., 2020; Tindall and Waters, 2012; Willis, 2011). Not being open may in turn contribute to less of a sense of fellowship with colleagues (Björk and Wahlström, 2018; Galvin-White and O'Neal, 2015; Stenger and Roulet, 2018), as well as lower levels of job satisfaction, work commitment (Newheiser et al., 2017) and wellbeing (Lloren and Parini, 2017; Simone et al., 2014; Viehl et al., 2017). The results emphasise the importance of managers and colleagues not making assumptions about sexual identity, gender identity and gender expression, i.e., not assuming that everyone is heterosexual and cis, and that they live a heteronormative lifestyle.

A person's choice not to be open, and to instead conceal their orientation and/or gender identity, may also be motivated by the risk of being exposed to discrimination and harassment. Discrimination against, and the harassment of, LGBTQ people, are often due to stereotypical preconceptions of LGBTQ people or heterosexism (e.g., assumptions according to which people are heterosexual by default and homosexuality is unnatural and exceptional). The systematic literature review shows, for example, that stereotypical preconceptions of how people must behave, based on gender norms, to be considered for senior positions in a work organisation, contribute to career discrimination against homosexual men and trans women (Speice, 2020; Stenger and Roulet, 2018; Baker and Lucas, 2017; Tindall and Waters, 2012; Rosvall et al., 2020; Riach et al., 2014; Yavorsky, 2016). Furthermore, qualitative studies indicate that many LGBTQ people feel that they have been exposed to stereotypical preconceptions in the workplace, which for some may contribute to them feeling that they are subject to one-dimensional labelling (Chang and Bowring, 2015; Corlett et al., 2019; Galvin-White and O'Neal, 2015; Melton and Cunningham, 2014a;

Riach et al., 2014), or feeling under pressure to behave in a more stereotypically male or female way (Cox et al., 2018; Sinacore et al., 2017; Stenger and Roulet, 2018). The results therefore highlight the importance of workplaces combating the negative effect of a heteronormative climate on the work environment of LGBTQ people. In this context, it may be considered important to make managers and employees aware of the different forms of prejudice that can exist, and to include subtle and unconscious actions, based on heteronormative assumptions, for example, in preventive efforts. Based on the results, it might also be advisable to recommend to work organisations that they introduce guidelines on how to combat stereotypical preconceptions and prejudices when employees are recruited internally and externally and throughout their careers.

In the study, several people of trans experience stated that they had chosen not to be open about their background at work for fear of the negative consequences of sharing this information. The examples of such negative consequences that were given included social exclusion or other forms of discrimination and harassment. Qualitative studies indicate that there more male-coded macho-oriented work cultures could be more of a breeding ground for discrimination and harassment, due to the prevalence of more stereotypical ideas about how men and women should behave (Magrath, 2020; Melton and Cunningham, 2014b; Willis, 2012). By male- and female-coded workplaces we mean workplaces with stereotypically male or female job tasks, and where the majority of the employees are generally also either men or women. The study including people of trans experience sometimes gave examples that showed that male-coded workplaces with a macho-oriented work culture were perceived to be more negative work environments. There were also examples of experiences of a negative culture, where there were microaggressions and discrimination, in other workplaces that did not have a specific macho-culture, such as certain schools or care organisations. No conclusions can therefore be drawn, based on the study, on how female-

or male-coded workplaces affect the occurrence of microaggressions, discrimination and harassment against trans people. The results of the study suggest more that it is the lack of a generally supportive work climate within a work organisation, or rather a lack of support from managers and colleagues in specific workplaces, that creates the perception of a worse work environment.

The systematic literature review also indicates that a lack of visible support, or a lack of action, from managers, can create leeway for microaggressions, discrimination and harassment (see, e.g., Mizzi, 2013; Roberts, 2011; Rumens and Broomfield, 2014). The results of the systematic literature review (Fielden and Jepson, 2016; Rosvall et al., 2020, Rumens, 2010) and the study both suggest a degree of occupational sorting, however, where industries perceived to have a macho-culture, or workplaces that do not take active steps to be inclusive, may be perceived to be hostile towards LGBTQ people, or to be an unsafe work environment, and are therefore rejected by LGBTQ people.

To summarise, trans people and bisexuals appear to be more exposed to discrimination, harassment and/or bullying (see, e.g., Hoel et al., 2017; Waite, 2020). For trans people, the discrimination and harassment seem to be due to transphobia (see, e.g., Mizock et al., 2017). It is not as clear why bisexuals seem to be more exposed to discrimination and harassment than homosexuals. It does, however, appear from the studies that there are specific prejudices against bisexuals (Arena and Jones, 2017; Green et al., 2011; Popova, 2018; Rumens, 2012; Turner et al., 2018), which may be due to the dichotomous normative standpoint that people are either heterosexual or homosexual (Gray, 2013; Turner et al., 2018).

To summarise, the systematic literature review shows that socially hostile work environments, where there are instances of heterosexism and a risk of being exposed to heterosexism, discrimination and harassment, affect LGBTQ people's choice of profession (see, e.g., Burnett, 2010), LGBTQ people's choice of whether or not to be open about their sexual orientation or gender expression (see, e.g., Willis, 2011), or choice to leave the workplace (see, e.g., Ferfolja, 2010). Furthermore, these conditions are linked to factors such as lower levels of job satisfaction, experiences of stress, mental ill-health and a limited work capacity for LGBTQ people (Miner and Costa; Singh and O'Brien, 2020; Velez et al., 2013; Viehl et al., 2017). Exposure to discrimination is also linked to ill-health, and the frequency of discrimination also seems to affect how strong the link is - the more frequently somebody is exposed to discrimination, the stronger the link to ill-health. It is important to keep in mind, however, the fact that the work environment risks that LGBTQ people are exposed to have been revealed by the research to be intersectional, multifaceted and varied, and to depend on gender/gender expression, sexuality, ethnicity and position in the labour market. For example, people from ethnic minorities reported that they experienced discrimination and harassment based on their sexuality/gender identity as well as their ethnicity (FRA, 2020). In the study, several women of trans experience working in

male-dominated industries stated that they had been questioned and harassed due both to their trans identity and their gender identity as a woman. This makes it especially important for employers, unions, or other stakeholders and support organisations to work to create better conditions in the work environment. Support needs to be developed for LGBTQ people exposed to work environment risks because of the various identity categories that they belong to, i.e., not only sexuality, but also gender, ethnicity, age, functional ability and/or socio-economic background.

These efforts are therefore likely to also be beneficial for other groups, such as women and/or various minority groups.

4.1.2 Experiences of an inclusive workplace

The results of the systematic literature review also suggest that different forms of organisational support are an important health-promoting factor in the work environment of LGBTQ people. This means that an organisational climate that is felt to be supportive towards LGBTQ people is also linked to perceptions of a good work environment, job satisfaction and health, including people wanting to be open about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity (see, e.g., Huffman et al., 2021; Law et al., 2011; Smith et al., 2020; Tatum, 2018). A supportive work climate depends on the organisation having policies, activities and a climate that are generally perceived to be supportive and accepting of LGBTQ people (Smith et al., 2020). This means that it might be advisable to recommend that work organisations initiate the development of inclusive policies, activities and organisational goals that explicitly refer to and exemplify LGBTQ issues. According to the results, policies may be seen as important indicators within an organisation that discrimination isn't tolerated, and they can be important for making LGBTQ people feel safe to be open and to dare to report discrimination and harassment (Compton, 2016; Eliason et al., 2011a; Tindall and Waters, 2012; Walker and Melton, 2015; Wessel, 2017). The examples of policies and guidelines mentioned in the studies include policies aimed at introducing gender-neutral language within an organisation (Goryunova et al., 2021; Walker and Melton, 2015).

Note that many of the studies that are focused on policies were conducted in the US, where the anti-discrimination legislation is less rigorous than in Sweden. The results may therefore not be translatable to a Swedish context, as a company's policies may be more significant in countries where LGBTQ people are less supported by legislation.

The results of the systematic literature review emphasise, furthermore, the importance of work organisations actively following up on and making sure that policies are complied with (Allan et al., 2015; Colgan and Wright, 2011; Goldberg and Smith 2013, Magrath, 2020; Simone et al., 2014). The studies highlight the importance of an employer's senior management creating the conditions required for organisational changes of culture, which may also contribute to LGBTQ people benefiting from active support and proactive measures from their immediate managers (see, e.g., Colgan and Wright, 2011;

Simone et al., 2014; Wright, 2011). A tangible way to create such conditions may be to establish diversity-related organisational goals and key figures and to continuously monitor them (Colgan and Wright, 2011; Goryunova et al., 2021; Huffman et al., 2021; Jones, 2020). According to the results of the systematic literature review, another way to create these conditions could be to ensure that managers have expertise in LGBTQ issues (Colgan and Wright, 2011), which could be achieved, for example, by including the importance of norm-aware leadership in leadership training and leadership development programmes.

Again according to the results of the systematic literature review, it might also be considered important for managers and colleagues alike to show active support by standing up against discrimination and victimisation and thereby also showing support for LGBTQ issues (Allan et al., 2015; Colgan and Wright, 2011; Goldberg and Smith 2013, Magrath, 2020; Simone et al., 2014). Specific examples of how support may be shown include confronting people exhibiting heterosexist behaviour (such as making degrading comments about LGBTQ people) (Aysola et al., 2018; Melton and Cunningham, 2014b; Ueno et al., 2020), or providing emotional support in situations of vulnerability in the workplace (Rumens, 2010; Rumens, 2012). In the study, several participants highlighted the fact that they would have liked their managers to be informed about trans people, and that the managers' lack of knowledge meant that they didn't feel that they were treated professionally when it came to work environment and discrimination issues. This could include managers lacking knowledge about LGBTQ issues generally or about trans people specifically. Other examples of ways to create good supportive conditions include enabling networking with other LGBTQ people during working hours, which is something that the research also reveals to be a health-promoting factor (see, e.g., Goryunova et al., 2021; Huffman et al., 2021; Jones, 2020). The study showed that a majority of the people of trans experience participating didn't have access to networks of other LGBTQ people in their workplaces, and several participants specifically stated that it would have meant a lot to them to have had this, including networks set up by trade unions, for example.

The results also highlight the importance of work organisations signalling internally and externally in their communications that their workplaces are inclusive towards sexual minority groups and people of trans experience. Specific aspects of experiences of an inclusive workplace include, as previously mentioned, the use of more inclusive language in the organisation's communications, for example using the gender-neutral partner instead of husband or wife (Walker and Melton, 2015), or working actively to eliminate gender stereotypical language (Goryunova et al., 2021). According to the study, many non-binary participants had experienced being misgendered, and many had managers and colleagues who had no understanding of the importance of using the right pronoun. Not being addressed using the right pronoun and continuously having to correct others when they used the wrong name and pronoun was experienced as stressful by the participants in the study and in a Swedish study (Björk and Wahlström, 2018). In the study, some participants

stated that this had a strong negative impact on their wellbeing. Work organisations should therefore more proactively work on using inclusive language and ensuring that managers actively support and affirm the use of the right pronoun in the workplace.

Broader aspects of an inclusive workplace may be linked to LGBTQ people's experiences of a need for support functions, such as HR, to have general LGBTQ expertise (e.g., Felix et al., 2016), and specific expertise on transition processes (e.g., Budge et al., 2010). Other support functions may include formal LGBTQ networks, career guidance counsellors with LGBTQ expertise, and action plans developed for use if an employee undergoes gender-affirming care (see, e.g., Rishell Elias, 2017 regarding this last example).

The systematic literature review provides examples of practical support, such as a manager or HR representative reviewing the management of the transition process in the workplace together with the employee, and the existence of administrative procedures and support from HR in order to support trans people during the transition process. The results also highlight the importance of being sensitive to the support that trans people need during their transition process, in order to adjust the support based on where the person is in the process (Burchiellaro, 2020). Furthermore, the systematic literature review shows that LGBTQ people are exposed to discrimination and harassment from customers, service users and students (see, e.g., Baker and Lucas, 2017; Chen et al., 2020; Colgan and Wright, 2011; Hooker, 2019; Ullman, 2020). In the supplementary study of trans people, participants highlighted the importance of support from within the organisation, above all from managers, with handling the difficult situations that may arise when dealing with customers or service users, for example. The results of the systematic literature review (Goryunova et al., 2021; Huffman et al., 2021) and the study also show that, for many trans people, gender-neutral toilets, changing rooms and shower rooms where they can shower on their own are important elements of the physical work environment. Moreover, the results of the systematic literature review indicate that, in cases where the workplace has a dress code or requires a uniform, this is a positive work environment factor if all the employees are free to choose their uniform regardless of their gender (Reddy-Best, 2018; Brewster et al., 2014).

The results of the systematic literature review also emphasise the importance of diversity efforts specifically aimed at and referring to bisexuality for bisexuals to feel accepted, and more willing to be open, in their workplace (Green et al., 2011). According to the research, there is a risk of bisexuality otherwise being lumped together with homosexuality and the specific work environment experiences of bisexuals being ignored (Arena and Jones, 2017; Corrington et al., 2019; Green et al., 2011; Popova, 2018). By specifically mentioning bisexuals, a climate may also be created where bisexuals feel appreciated and recognised for who they are (Köllen, 2013). It is likely that similar aspects of diversity efforts are relevant for people who identify as queer, but there are no studies that explore this more closely.

Finally, the results indicate that work organisations need to take both open and concealed identities into account in order to be truly inclusive workplaces (Sabharwal et al., 2019). This means that nobody should assume that someone has a particular sexual orientation or gender identity in the workplace. It should be each LGBTQ person's choice to be open or not at work. This entails having an organisational climate that gives the individual the choice "to be themselves", including control over their level of openness, which may be considered to be a key factor in an inclusive workplace. This is a climate where, for example, it's acceptable to be open and advocate for LGBTQ issues without also feeling pressure from colleagues or the management to be a representative for LGBTQ issues (Felix et al., 2016).

4.1.3 Knowledge gaps

All in all, there are few specific studies on the work environment of bisexuals, and we have not found any Swedish studies on this subject. Likewise, the research regarding trans people, especially in a Swedish context, is negligible. There are also extremely few studies on the work environment of people who identify as, e.g., queer, pansexual or non-binary.

Many of the studies included in the systematic literature review mention experiences and/or the occurrence of, e.g., microaggressions, discrimination, harassment, a supportive climate and the degree of openness of LGBTQ people. The studies conducted mainly studied whether there are any links between the existence of policies, activities, support or climate and, e.g., wellbeing, ill-health or the degree of openness of LGBTQ people.

No studies were found investigating the effect of work organisations taking specific work environment-related measures to improve the work environment of LGBTQ people, or how specific measures may play a role in mitigating specific risks in the work environment, for example the measures that a work organisation might take in order to combat and mitigate the negative effects of a heteronormative climate.

A majority of the studies in the systematic literature review also cover white LGBTQ people in middle-class professions. Less research has been done into the conditions of LGBTQ people in working-class professions, and this also includes research that takes intersectional aspects into account. In addition, there is a lack of research into whether homo- and bisexuals, and trans and queer people, are more likely than other societal groups to be employed in industries that have worse working conditions, and if and how the working conditions in specific industries affect LGBTQ people's health and wellbeing.

4.2 Discussion of method

The overall purpose of the systematic literature review presented here was to map and compile existing research into the organisational and social work environment of LGBTQ people. Broad searches of a large number

of databases were undertaken in order to identify existing research in the field. The fact that the included research was indexed as "work environment" is a limitation, as there may be research mentioning aspects of the work environment of LGBTQ people that don't use "work environment" as a keyword. This could, for example, include research covering LGBTQ people's career-related experiences. A large proportion of the included research was also conducted in the US, whose national context differs from Sweden's, in terms of both legislation and culture. It should also be noted that 80% of the studies were conducted in the US, Canada, the UK and Australia, all of which are anglophone countries. This means that not all the work environment risks and health-promoting factors identified in this systematic literature review are guaranteed to be generalisable to a Swedish context.

Relatively few of the studies are from Sweden, and the organisational and social work environment in Swedish workplaces is likely to be positively affected by the fact that Swedish anti-discrimination legislation is more comprehensive, and there is greater acceptance of LGBTQ people than in the US, for example. Working life in the US is also partly characterised by a more politically conservative and religious context. This could mean that there is a higher level of negative attitudes towards LGBTQ people there than in Sweden, which could also affect degree to which the results from the study are transferable. It may also be that Anglo-Saxon work environment culture differs from participation-oriented Nordic work environment culture, which could also have affected the results. In addition to the Swedish studies, we only found two Danish studies and no other Nordic studies in the material. Some of the results of this study have, however, proved to be meaningful in different national contexts and in a larger number of studies, including in some cases Swedish studies, which shows that these parts of the results are likely to also be relevant to a Swedish context. It should, however, be noted that most of the studies included a small number of participants, and the samples were not representative, which limits how generalisable they are. The small study populations apply especially to the studies that included trans people and bisexuals. Furthermore, only 14 studies were longitudinal, which also limits the ability to draw conclusions on cause and effect, for example whether risks in the work environment cause ill-health.

We wish to stress that this systematic literature review is intended to be exploratory and descriptive rather than an assessment of the evidence for example that a specific work environment risk poses a health issue for LGBTQ people. Almost all the included studies have been published in scientific journals, however, and have been quality controlled by the authors of this study based on quality criteria (Hong et al., 2018). Exceptions were made for Swedish studies, however, when it came to the criterion of publication in a scientific journal, in order to capture as many relevant studies as possible on the work environment of LGBTQ people in Sweden. This means that five reports and one book studying LGBTQ people in Sweden were included in the material (Björk and Wahlström, 2018; Eriksson-Zetterquist and Solli., 2016; Eriksson-Zetterquist et al., 2011. FRA, 2020; Ohlström, 2017; Rennstam, 2021).

5 Conclusions

To summarise, the research indicates that LGBTQ people are victims of microaggressions, discrimination, harassment and bullying to a larger extent than heterosexual cis people. There is an interplay between this exposure and intersectional perspectives, however, meaning that LGBTQ people are not always more exposed than other minority groups, and that there is an interplay between this exposure and factors such as gender, ethnicity, professional position and age.

The results of the systematic literature review suggest, furthermore, that a heteronormative climate has a negative effect and constitutes a risk factor as it makes LGBTQ issues invisible and creates uncertainty in LGBTQ employees about other people's perceptions of LGBTQ people. This may contribute to them being less open about their sexual orientation or gender identity for fear of how others will react. Not being open may in turn contribute to less of a sense of fellowship with colleagues and lower levels of job satisfaction, work commitment and wellbeing. The systematic literature review also highlights the fact that a lack of visible support or inaction from managers may create leeway for microaggressions, discrimination and harassment.

The results indicate overall that it is important to combat all forms of microaggression and discrimination in order to create a healthy workplace where LGBTQ people are willing to stay and can perform according to their full potential, without being hindered by stereotypical preconceptions or different forms of social exclusion that impede their wellbeing at work and work commitment.

Moreover, the review indicates that an inclusive workplace is characterised by different forms of support for LGBTQ people from the leadership at different organisation levels, in addition to an employee climate that is generally good for diversity. Something that might be particularly highlighted is the importance of diversity efforts permeating and actively being complied with from the top of an organisation (by the senior management taking a stand and driving diversity efforts, for example) to the bottom (manifested, for example, in the conversational climate in break rooms). The significance of active processes for the development of an inclusive workplace might also be emphasised. This includes work organisations working proactively, tangibly and systematically on various LGBTQ issues and perspectives. This could mean including LGBTQ issues in systematic work environment management, and ensuring that work environment risks for LGBTQ people are monitored and combated within work organisations. Clear and systematic work on equal treatment and diversity policies and action plans also emerge as an important part of active inclusion efforts. These results are in line with Meyer's minority stress model, which also suggests the importance of people feeling a sense of belonging in the workplace and experiencing social support from their employers and colleagues (Meyer, 2003). The results thereby highlight

the importance of work organisations reflecting on how they might develop specific support at different organisation levels that also take into account the specific support needs of homo- and bisexuals, and trans and queer people, in their work lives.

Such a climate may contribute to a sense of belonging (Antonovsky, 1987), i.e., to LGBTQ people feeling that the work situation for them is meaningful, manageable and comprehensible from an identity perspective.

Homo- and bisexuals, and trans and queer people, also have certain elements in common in terms of the work environment. All of these groups reported a relatively large amount of discrimination and harassment in the studies conducted. They also all have to confront the career and health risks of being open about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Work environment risks specific to trans people and bisexuals also emerge. When diversity efforts focused on sexual orientation are initiated, bisexuality should therefore be specifically highlighted and not lumped together with other LGBTQ issues. Diversity efforts should also include the specific challenges faced by trans people in their work situation.

Overall, there are a limited number of Nordic studies on the work environment of LGBTQ people, which limits the ability to translate the results of the systematic literature review to a Swedish context, especially compared with countries whose anti-discrimination legislation is not comparable with Sweden's. The Swedish studies that do exist, including our study of people of trans experience (see Part 2), indicate that microaggressions, discrimination and a lack of organisational and social support also seem to be a significant problem in the work environment for many LGBTQ people in Sweden.

Part 2

Qualitative study of trans people's organisational and social work environment in a Swedish context

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to gain knowledge about trans people's organisational and social work environment in a Swedish context.

Questions:

1. Which main work environment risks may be identified in the work environment for people of trans experience?
2. Which main health-promoting factors may be identified in the work environment for people of trans experience?
3. How does the work environment differ for people of trans experience from different backgrounds (gender identity, education and type of work)? Are there common factors? Are there important differences?
4. What characterises an inclusive workplace, i.e., one in which the work environment is perceived to be good by people of trans experience?

People of trans experience

The term trans person refers to a person who has experience of not identifying as the gender assigned to them at birth, or experience of breaching gender norms (RFSL, 2021). The report uses the term *people of trans experience* as people included in the definition of a trans person don't always see themselves as trans people, but may instead identify as, e.g., a man, woman or non-binary person. Their transition is therefore an experience, but not a part of their identity.

Both binary and non-binary trans people are included in the group. The term binary refers to something that consists of two parts, namely the division of human beings into one of the two legal genders: woman or man. A binary trans person is a person who doesn't identify with the gender that they were assigned at birth, but who identifies as a man or a woman. Non-binary trans people don't define themselves according to this division. They may be neither women nor men, both women and men, or have a fluid gender identity. There are large variations in these identities, however, and they may consist of a combination of the binary genders or something beyond the binary. Being trans may also mean a person identifying with their assigned gender but always, frequently, or sometimes, having a gender expression that breaches gender norms, e.g., regarding clothing. Being trans is about gender identity and/or gender expression, rather than sexuality. A trans person may therefore identify as, e.g., heterosexual, homosexual or bisexual. Moreover, trans person, trans woman, or trans man, are not always labels that a person of trans experience would give themselves.

People who don't identify with the gender they were assigned at birth are able to undergo a gender identity assessment through which they may diagnosed with "gender identity disorder" (National Board of Health and Welfare, 2015). Use of the diagnosis "gender identity disorder" is subject to debate and the guidelines for diagnoses connected with gender identity are being revised. When a person receives such a diagnosis they are able to change their legal gender, undergo gender-affirming care, such as hormone therapy, chest surgery or genital surgery, or have access to devices (depending on the region this may include prostheses or wigs) and voice coaching with a speech and language therapist (National Board of Health and Welfare, 2015). Non-binary people often receive the diagnosis "other gender identity disorder", and they are not currently offered the opportunity to change their legal gender or undergo genital surgery. People with this diagnosis may undergo chest surgery, however (National Board of Health and Welfare, 2015). Many, but not all, people of trans experience also change their first name and pronoun to align it with their gender identity, e.g., to she, they, he or ze. Many non-binary people use 'they', but others wish to be referred to in other ways, such as she and/or him, or by using their names instead of pronouns in the third person.

Data collection and selection of respondents

The empirical material used in the study was gathered through both semi-structured qualitative interviews (20 people) and surveys mainly containing open-ended questions (85 respondents). By means such as the social media channels of the Swedish Agency for Work Environment Expertise and the RFSL (the Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex rights), potential interviewees were able to register their interest in participating in the study and answering questions about their gender and profession. 155 people responded that they were interested in participating in the study. The potential participants were first divided into groups based on the gender or gender identity that they identified with. Approximately one-third of the people who expressed an interest were women, one third were men, and one third were non-binary. A selection was then made aimed at ensuring that there was a broad range of different gender identities and professions, and these people were contacted requesting an interview. 20 people were then interviewed for the study. Seven identified as women, seven as men, and six as non-binary. Thirteen people were aged 26 to 35, four were aged 36 to 45, two were aged 46 to 55, and one person was under the age of 25. Six of the interviewees were educated to secondary and/or vocational training level, and the rest were university educated. Seven people lived in Stockholm County, three in Västra Götaland County, three in Skåne County, one in Skaraborg County, one in Halland County, one in Kalmar County, one in Jönköping County, and three didn't state their county of residence. In the table below, and in the study, the interviewees are referred to by gender identity (W = woman, M = man, N = non-binary), number and *interview*.

Table 1. Description of the interviewees (=20)

	Gender/gender identity	Educational background	Occupational sector
W 1	Woman	Secondary education and/or vocational training	Healthcare/nursing/social work
N 2	Non-binary	University education	Student, previously worked for a government agency
W 3	Woman	Secondary education and/or vocational training	Transport
W 4	Woman	University education	Healthcare/nursing/social work
W 5	Woman	Secondary education and/or vocational training	Healthcare/nursing/social work
M 6	Man	Secondary education and/or vocational training	Healthcare/nursing/social work
W 7	Woman	University education	Technology/IT
M 8	Man	University education	Government agency
M 9	Man	University education	School
N 10	Non-binary	University education	Healthcare/nursing/social work
M 11	Man	University education	NGO
M 12	Man	University education	Healthcare/nursing/social work
M 13	Man	University education	Healthcare/nursing/social work
N 14	Non-binary	University education	School
W 15	Woman	University education	Healthcare/nursing/social work
W 16	Woman	Secondary education and/or vocational training	Transport
N 17	Non-binary	University education	Law
N 18	Non-binary	University education	Healthcare/nursing/social work
N 19	Non-binary	University education	Trade
M 20	Man	Secondary education and/or vocational training	Production

In the interview guide, a number of question areas were constructed based on the knowledge gathered from the systematic literature review on the work environment of LGBTQ people. The focus was on the following question areas: a) individual attitudes adopted and experiences in the workplace, b) overall experiences of the work environment, c) work adaptation, d) overall support and culture within the work organisation, e) recruitment process, d) changing rooms, toilets and clothing, e) the work organisation's attitudes, policies and anti-discrimination efforts, f) discrimination, g) fellowship and support from colleagues, and h) intersectional perspectives[1] (level of educational, ethnicity, age, gender and sexuality). The interview guide was checked by a representative from the RFSL who gave feedback on the phrasing of interview questions and question areas based on the RFSL's experiences and knowledge of the situation in Sweden for people of trans experience.

Given the large number of expressions of interest, a survey was designed containing qualitative open-ended questions based on the question areas in the interview guide. The survey also contained closed-ended survey questions asking about the person's gender, city of residence, the city where they worked, age, experience of gender-affirming care, and any experiences of discrimination. The survey was distributed to everyone who registered their interest in participating in the study and wasn't interviewed. Of the 135 people that the survey was sent to, 92 responded to all or parts of the survey. Out of these people, 7 only responded to the background questions, and therefore did not answer any questions that contributed to the results. The final number of respondents was therefore 85. In the report, we refer to the people who responded to the survey by their gender identity (W = woman, M = man, N = non-binary, O = other option), number and *survey.*

For ethical reasons, i.e., to make it impossible to identify the participants, their profession is not stated in the report. Instead, a main professional category is stated for the respondents and an occupational sector for the interviewees. The study was approved by the Swedish Ethical Review Authority (reference number 2021-06758-01) and informed consent was collected whenever data was collected.

1 An intersectional perspective might be, for example, the fact that a person of trans experience from an ethnic majority may have more scope for action in a context where there are members of an ethnic minority, but that the same person could have less scope in a context that was strongly regulated by heteronormativity. The intersectional perspective therefore highlights the social conditions and circumstances that both enable and limit a person's scope for action and wellbeing in their work environment, and which contextual aspects contribute to such enablement/limitation.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for the survey's respondents (= 85)

Gender identity	**Percentage**
Women	35% (n = 28)
Men	26% (n = 22)
Non-binary people	39% (n = 33)
Other option	2% (n = 2)
Age	**Percentage**
<26	6% (n = 5)
26–35	49% (n = 42)
36–45	29% (n = 25)
46–55	12% (n = 10)
>55	3% (n = 3)
City, number of residents	**Percentage**
<5,000	6% (n = 5)
5,000–10,000	5% (n = 4)
10,000–50,000	13% (n = 11)
>50,000	76% (n = 65)
Highest level of educational attainment	**Percentage**
Secondary education	16% (n = 14)
Tertiary education, other than college or university (e.g., adult education centres or vocational training)	18% (n = 15)
University or college (less than 3 years)	12% (n = 10)
University or college (3 years or more)	54% (n = 46)
Professional category	**Percentage**
Healthcare/nursing/social work	21% (n = 18)
Technology/IT/engineering	19% (n = 16)
Teaching/education	15% (n = 13)
Service role in transport, logistics, the restaurant industry, sales, civil protection or management	15% (n = 13)
Creative professions in the culture, leisure and marketing fields	14% (n = 12)
Administration/inquiries/politics/development/research	14% (n = 12)
Other	1% (n = 1)

The interview and survey responses underwent a qualitative content analysis (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). This meant that a number of prominent themes were first identified in the interview transcriptions. The survey material was then subject to the same thematic reading. In qualitative terms, the interview material was the main source of knowledge in the study, since the responses given in the interviews are more exhaustive. The survey material, for which the number of respondents is higher, was used to highlight, prove and elaborate on the points that emerged from the interviews. The survey responses were able to show recurring patterns in the experiences of a greater number of respondents and also provided an additional and broader perspective on some of the themes that emerged. Where we state that several participants in the study report specific experiences of the work environment, the results are based on responses from both interview and survey participants.

Results

In this section, the overall results of the study will be presented first, including summaries of the study participants' general experiences of their work environment. This will be followed by the results regarding work environment experiences in the following thematic areas:

- People being open about their trans experience in the workplace;
- The importance of using the right pronoun;
- Minority status as an asset;
- Intersectional aspects;
- Discrimination, harassment and microaggressions;
- Support from managers and managers' knowledge and actions;
- Social cohesion, inclusion and support from colleagues;
- Organisational support functions;
- Customers and service users;
- The physical work environment;
- Interplay with mental illness;
- Support during the transition process;
- The significance of the workplace culture;
- The importance of organisational policies, procedures and expertise.

Overall results

The results revealed that the majority of the interviewees and survey respondents were open about their trans experience in the workplace. Eleven women, thirteen men, and six non-binary people who participated in the study responded that they were completely or partly open about their trans experience. Some were only open to their immediate managers and trusted colleagues, but many were also open to everyone in the workplace. From the interviews, it emerged that of the men and women who didn't pass as their gender identity, i.e., who weren't read as their gender identity by the people around them, two men and one woman said that they had to continually come out in the workplace as many people didn't recognise their gender identity. The non-binary participants also said that they had to be open in order not to be misgendered.

In total, eleven people responded that they weren't open to anyone about their trans experience in the workplace. Four people didn't hide their trans experience but also didn't tell everyone about it. There were also those who said that they would have preferred not to come out, but that the rumour of their trans experience had been spread by their colleagues, and sometimes

even by their managers. The aspects of the choice to be open or not are presented in greater depth in the more detailed results section below.

Six women, two men, and four non-binary people/people of other genders, said in their survey and interview responses that they had had predominantly negative work environment experiences, including experiences of serious harassment and discrimination, and a low level of support from their colleagues and managers. In the most alarming case of harassment, one person said that she had received death-threats from colleagues and, in three other cases, the managers were the perpetrators of more serious forms of harassment, or actively discouraged the reporting of harassment.

Thirteen women, twelve men, and twenty-eight non-binary people/people of other genders, reported mixed experiences of their work environment in the survey responses. In some cases, the respondents had very negative experiences of earlier workplaces, but said that they had moved to a workplace where, at the time of the interview or survey, they were happy and were given adequate support. In other cases, the respondents worked in workplaces where they said that managers and/or colleagues did offer support but, at the same time, there was a lack of knowledge about trans people, prejudice, harassment, and/or different forms of microaggression.

Thirty-nine people said that they had had predominantly positive experiences. They said that they worked in an inclusive workplace with a high level of support from both managers and colleagues and that they felt there was a good sense of community in the workplace. The respondents differed in their opinions of the aspects that make up an "inclusive workplace". According to the study participants, the management's proactiveness with regard to LGBTQI issues varied between workplaces. Some workplaces were described as actively working to be inclusive from on an organisational perspective, while in other cases LGBTQI issues were part of their business strategies or workplaces. The study participants said that some workplaces, where the creative professions operated, generally had a high awareness of norm-breaching issues. Other workplaces where the study participants had predominantly positive experiences were said to have a generally good work environment without a specific focus on LGBTQI issues. Some people who reported predominantly positive experiences also said that they felt privileged to work in an inclusive workplace, and two people who planned to move to a different industry in the near future expressed concern that future workplaces might not be equally positive work environments for them.

Two women and three men participating in the study said that they had had predominantly positive work environment experiences but that they didn't want to be open about their trans experiences for fear of this worsening the work environment, e.g., for fear that it would lead to discrimination or that colleagues would be prejudiced towards them. One person described a fear, in the worst-case scenario, of being killed if it emerged that they had undergone gender-affirming treatment.

People being open about their trans experience in the workplace

Several of the interviewees and survey respondents described being open about their trans experience in their workplace as difficult for several reasons. Of the 85 survey respondents, 51% said that they were open in their current workplace, 20% that they were not open, and 29% that they were open to a certain extent, i.e., to some colleagues in the workplace. Of those who were not open, many said that their work environment was generally positive, but that they still didn't dare to be open about their trans experience for fear of this worsening their work environment. This fear was mainly felt by those who said that colleagues sometimes made prejudiced comments. Many also stated that it wasn't relevant to be open about their trans experience as it wasn't important for their work, while others said that there weren't really any natural opportunities to open up about their trans experience. Most of the participants stressed, however, that their trans experience was an important part of them. One survey respondent said that she felt she had no choice but to be open. She describes her decision about whether to be open as a given, and continues: "there [was] no real question about starting to live life as myself as soon as possible" (W 105 *survey*). According to several study participants, secrecy about their trans experience could limit opportunities to get to know their colleagues, or for their colleagues to get to know them.

People opening up about their trans experience

Several of the interviewees said that their secrecy about their trans background was due to it simply not being relevant. One man explained it as follows: "I'm not hiding anything, but I'm not going to randomly announce it to my colleagues at the coffee table" (M 9 *interview*), and another man explained it this way: "It's not something I'm hiding in any way. But there are perhaps not that many good opportunities...to talk about it" (M 12 *interview*). Others stated that it was more difficult to be open about their trans background if people around them read them as binary and in accordance with the gender that they identified as. If opportunities seldom arise, it's more difficult for a person to be open about their experiences with, for example, colleagues. One man said that it could become difficult to open up after two years of being obliged to work remotely due to the Covid-19 pandemic:

> If I told them about it now, two years later, would that not seem strange? And then I think that perhaps you internalise some sort of heteronormativity or cis normativity, this idea that you are in some way lying by not saying that you're a, well, "you're not actually a real man", or "you're not a real woman", I think there's something in that. And each time that I don't say it, it's still there. Well it's hard to describe, but I feel like it perhaps gets more and more difficult the more time passes. To be open about it. (M 8 *interview*)

One man said that his trans identity was more tangible at the start of his transition:

> When I'm not open, I do choose not to share certain things. It's not that I'm lying and making things up, but you maybe still have a certain distance from colleagues, if you're not open at work and such. (M 8 *interview)*

Similarly, many of the interviewees reported the distance from colleagues that they had experienced in the workplace, and that had emerged as a consequence of them not sharing their trans experience with their colleagues. One woman said that she sometimes felt a need to "be a complete person, to share her baggage" (W 4 *interview*), which was more difficult as she wasn't open about her trans experience in the workplace.

Some also said that they felt under pressure to share their trans background in the workplace, especially if they encountered young people with trans identities in their work, or if any of the issues that they worked on related to being trans. Some survey respondents described, for example, the dilemma they were put in as they passed as their gender identity but felt almost forced to come out in order to be a good role-model for others. One interviewee said that it felt important to be a role-model for trans students at his school, but that, at the same time, it wasn't very easy: "I haven't said anything openly to them yet. I plan to. I just don't quite know how" (M 9 *interview*).

Choosing not to be open

Despite most interviewees stating that they would prefer to be open about their experiences, many were unsure of the consequences of being open. Some also said that they were happy to be read as the gender they identified as, and that they didn't want to raise the issue of their background, at least not in a new workplace. One woman said that she's just happy she "passes under the radar" (W 4 *interview*). Many who were not open about their trans background were worried about not being able to choose to come out themselves, or about being "found out". This applied regardless of whether they worked, or had experience of working, in organisations with a strictly heteronormative and sometimes tough climate, and/or worked in an organisation perceived to be more tolerant. One man shared the following:

> I was quite stressed in social situations with colleagues [...] I was also very anxious about that, we would go to places where we would, like, go swimming, for example, and share...we always shared rooms with colleagues and things like that. So that was very stressful. (M 8 *interview*)

Several of the survey respondents stated that they didn't dare to be open in their current workplace. One non-binary person shared that they didn't dare, or have the energy, to be open in their workplace:

> I'm not sure what kind of support I would get from the company, my manager, and the colleagues around me. I feel that if I wanted to be, I would have to carry that burden myself, and right now I don't have the energy. (N 94 *survey*)

One man responded that he preferred not to be open in his workplace:

> I prefer nobody knowing because I'm worried about being treated worse, not being taken seriously, and others distancing themselves from me. (M 92 *survey*)

To summarise, about half of the participants in the study chose not to come out to everyone at work, due to being worried about discrimination and poor treatment, for example.

Being forced to be open

Several of the respondents who had just started a transition process, or who felt that they weren't read as the gender they identified as, said that they had no choice in the issue of whether or not to be open. This forced openness was either due to them wanting to live in accordance with their gender identity and therefore, for example, dressing accordingly, or because they had been forced to answer questions from people around them about their gender expression or pronoun. For some participants in the study, being open was therefore not *a decision to be made*, but rather a *must*, partly due to a wish to be treated in accordance with their gender identity, and partly due to reasons linked to the questions or perceptions of the people around them.

Openness for non-binary people

Several of those who identified as non-binary felt that the disclosure of their gender identity wasn't a one-time event, but was a frequent and repeated process, even in cases where they had been in the same workplace and surrounded by the same colleagues for a long time. It mainly involved correcting colleagues when they used the wrong pronoun, which was an experience that all non-binary people had had. For some, the disclosure itself had been difficult, as the people around them didn't always understand. One non-binary interviewee expressed it as follows:

> Having a norm-breaching gender identity that isn't binary, and I also think that just trans women or trans men are quite confusing for normative people already…being outside the binary creates even more confusion. (N 10 *interview*)

Some of the non-binary interviewees also felt that they had to be open about their gender identity at work as they would otherwise be misgendered:

> Of course it's a choice…but it's…there's no alternative to being recognised, and recognised in the right way in such cases, at least not if you're non-binary. (N 10 *interview*)

For many, being addressed using the right pronoun meant being recognised, accepted and respected.

To summarise, many of the non-binary participants in the study said that being open was a frequent action, which can also be the case for trans people who identify as binary. Constantly having to come out, for example by reminding colleagues to use the right pronoun, affected the work environment negatively for several of the participants. Colleagues using the right pronoun was important for nearly all of the participants in the study. Several non-binary people also said that they had had positive experiences of being open in their workplace and/or during the recruitment process.

The importance of using the right pronoun

People around them using the right pronoun was fundamental for most participants in the study. According to the participants, correct pronoun usage gave them a sense of greater integrity and acceptance, and the possibility to be who they wanted to be. Some respondents underscored the relevance of informing colleagues and external contacts about the correct pronoun to be used and the fact that it was the manager's responsibility to inform others. Many said that it was very important to ask the individual employee how they wanted to be addressed, and what their individual wishes were regarding pronoun usage. One non-binary person said that it was important to change their name and use the right pronoun, and that it was also important that the workplace was aware of the change of name and pronoun: "It's been super important, since I have always hated my name (N 14 interview). Similar perspectives emerged from the survey responses: "The right name, the right pronoun, and otherwise inclusive language. It's as simple as that. (Even if it seems to be like rocket science for many)" (N 80 survey). One suggestion from a non-binary person participating in the study was to introduce a pronoun round when meeting new people (i.e., introducing a process of going through the pronouns that everyone in the workplace uses for each other). Some people, however, felt a need not to have to deal with issues relating to pronouns in such an open way, sometimes because they were more introverted or had a strong sense of personal integrity. For some people, pronoun rounds could be problematic, for example due to the risk of being outed involuntarily as a trans person:

> I think that this [issue] is quite delicate. I know there are people who think that it's always great, but I really don't agree. I think that it's great if you are able to handle the situation and it doesn't risk outing trans people. Or making trans people feel really uncomfortable. (M 12 *interview*)

The responses of several participants in the study showed that non-binary people, above all, often needed to have a conversation with colleagues about pronouns, and that it could be tiring for the person in question. Most non-binary people reported the experience of managers and colleagues struggling to use the right pronoun, and one non-binary person said that they started using a female pronoun instead: "it was easier when I started using she" (W 77 *survey*).

Minority status as an asset

Being a person of trans experience might also be considered to be an asset in some work-related contexts. A benefit of a person being open in the workplace might be being viewed as an asset for their employer, for example because of their expertise in trans issues. This is illustrated in a survey response from a non-binary person:

> I feel that my trans identity, or being an LGBTQ person in general, has given me more respect and status so to say. As my identity gives me an advantage when it comes to knowing about a minority group, I have been expected (and am able) to share my knowledge in the workplace. And because of this I have gained the status of someone who is well-informed and able to impart important knowledge, which has spilled over into other areas where I'm considered to be someone worth listening to. (It's great!) (N 84 *survey*)

Having trans experience was also said by some of the respondents to enable an increased understanding of clients or students from different backgrounds and the ability to be a supportive person when required. For people whose experiences of, e.g., minority stress could be translated into something that provided increased security, the study participants therefore felt that they could be an asset at work when meeting new people

> I understand minority stress, at least some of it, and I also understand different dynamics, and being read as a man or a woman. And vulnerability and drug abuse and some other things. All the things that might be mental illness or other things. (W 4 *interview*)

Intersectional aspects

Many of the people participating in the study stated that they had a Swedish background, i.e., they were not born abroad and also didn't have parents who were born abroad. Several responded that they hadn't experienced any problems in their workplace, neither with their trans experience, nor with other factors such as age, education or ethnicity. None of the participants mentioned disability, being differently abled, or religion, as a factor that was relevant to them. Some did, however, highlight the significance of the intersectionality of having trans experience and *age, gender,* such as man, woman or non-binary, and/or *status/position* in society.

One non-binary person expressed it as follows: "Education and class background and race are always significant in all the contexts that I'm in, absolutely!" (N 94 *survey*).

Age

Several participants stated that age was a factor that had an impact on how they were perceived or treated. One non-binary person said that others might think that younger people were experimenting and they were perhaps not taken seriously:

> I think mainly the age people think I am has an impact. I'm in my 30s but I'm often read as 20. Something that I feel has quite a big effect – people generally take younger people less seriously, and there's this idea that young people "experiment" and they'll change their minds, and so on. That they don't quite know what they're doing and who they are. (N 22 *survey*)

Some said that the experience that comes with age could mean being questioned less by others. When you were older, you could be more sure of yourself, as one of the men interviewed described: "So, I am old and privileged enough to be able to be open without it harming me in any way" (M 9 *interview*). One woman described her experience of age as her now being seen as a woman who has expertise rather than being seen as a threat or being objectified like when she was younger:

> Age has an impact, and especially now that I'm middle-aged, and I'm treated as a middle-aged woman. My best years are behind me and men don't see me as a threat or a sex object. And my colleagues trusted me and my experiences more than a younger student who was trans. It was as if my colleagues wanted to double-check with me that her experiences were valid. (W 33 *survey*)

Trans men and men of trans experience

Being read as, or passing as, a man was described by several people as something that helped with their career progression in the workplace. Some men said they were given a higher status and better pay than when they didn't pass as men. One male interviewee described the increase in his pay progress in relation to his transition:

> But I have dared to take up more space. And I have actually increased my pay by quite a bit these last…I have changed workplace three times during the last ten years. And I've increasingly dared to ask for higher [pay] and I don't know whether, that I have actually been given higher [pay], if it's because I'm actually partly a man. (M 13 *interview*)

It was also mentioned that the transition brought with it expectations from others that the person would be interested and have expertise in tasks that could be perceived to be masculine. Another male respondent confirmed the experience of having a higher status as a man and also described expectations of performing more "masculine" tasks:

> I feel that I'm afforded a completely different level of respect as a man than as a girl. Colleagues speak to me in a different way than my male colleagues, and the students do the same. Especially the guys, both students and colleagues. They can also ask me to do more "masculine tasks and "carry things etc.". Technology, but I'm quite good at computers and so on, so I don't know whether it has any greater significance. But with how I'm treated as a person, there's a difference as a man compared to as a woman. It's not just at work that it's that way. (M 101 *survey*)

One man also reported more negative sides to being read as a man in the workplace, in the form of being included in new conversations in accordance with societal standpoints that are expected by men in a previous workplace with a more macho-oriented workplace culture:

> I was treated completely differently after I started to be perceived by cis people as one of them – a cis man. I was included in different conversations, which was often uncomfortable as they were based on sexism and racism, which I'm expected to be OK with due to my "new" position in society. This occurred in different workplaces than XX. (M 104 *survey*)

Trans women and women of trans experience

Several women said that they had a greater understanding of women's work situation and work environment since transitioning. Some women explained that they had changed the groups they belonged to, that men were more

distant than previously At the same time, they said that there was no guarantee that a woman of trans experience would be included and accepted as part of a female community, or that others would understand them as women of trans experience. Being a woman, but not being read as one by other people, could mean a more difficult situation in the workplace for some. One woman describes her experience as follows:

> Men don't take me as seriously as they take each other. As a trans woman, you're looked down on in all interactions. This might include me trying to ask a male colleague about procedures or input and him giving an indifferent response. Or a customer complaining and looking down on me, thinking they can do my job better than me. (W 93 *survey*)

Non-binary people of trans experience

Some of the participants in the study described how being a non-binary person of trans experience could also mean being vulnerable, to experiences of others finding it more difficult to define and understand you as a person. Some non-binary people didn't want to be open in the workplace as it could give rise to prejudice or worry in colleagues, and sometimes also customers or clients. Being non-binary meant often being misgendered and having to correct colleagues, while at the same time constantly being prepared for someone to use the wrong pronoun. One non-binary person described their situation as follows:

> As I'm not open and non-binary, I feel invisible on a daily basis. Every day I'm gendered in a way that I don't identify with, by both colleagues and clients. (N 46 *survey*)

Professional position

The study participants reported some positive consequences of being a person of trans experience while also being in a management position or a manager. Several participants described how being a manger could give them status and respect, which in turn meant that they were treated better. A woman described her position as a manager as a factor that had a positive effect on the way she was treated:

> Definitely. Working in procurement means that I can make demands and suppliers have to deal with me or lose business. Internally, the whole company is dependent on me. (W 39 *survey*)

Another non-binary person stated that the experience of having a management position contributed, to a certain extent, to being given more respect, but that they could still hear negative comments indirectly:

> I think more people have respect for my identity because I'm a manager, or at least they have been smart enough not to make any comments in front of me. No one has ever said to my face that the pronoun I use, they, is strange or absurd, but I have heard this indirectly or when others thought I couldn't hear. (N 57 *survey*)

Training

Some people said that their level of educational played a role in their own increased awareness of bases of discrimination and in ensuring they were treated respectfully in the workplace. One non-binary person discussed their education and class and said that respect and being questioned less were linked to their level of education:

> I think that my middle-class background and the fact that I went to university has had an impact in the sense that I'm still treated with a certain amount of respect, which I'm guessing would have been less the case if I'd been lower class. Me being able to express myself in an academic way means that people generally don't question me in the same way, I'm quite sure of that. (N 32 *survey*)

One woman also said the combination of her being middle-class and going to university were important factors in a work context that she described as more open:

> I think it's been easier for me because of my background. I'm from a middle-class family with many academics. It's helped me to study and establish myself in an industry that I think is, at least to a certain extent, a bit more open-minded than other industries. (W 59 *survey*)

Ethnicity and race

Several participants expressed an awareness that other people's perceptions of their ethnicity and/or race most likely affected how they were treated. A few of the participants described themselves as not white, and one person said that they had been exposed to harassment or discrimination due to their race in combination with transphobia. A majority of the respondents said that they believed that being white or of Swedish origin was a factor protecting them against discrimination. This is exemplified by how a woman explained her thoughts about how she was treated by others:

> Yes, I'm white and Swedish. That means I'm treated better than ethnic colleagues. I've not worked with many other trans people, but one of my black colleagues (cis person) often had to put up with a lot more crap than me. (W 93 *survey*)

Discrimination, harassment and microaggressions

A majority of the interviewees stated that they had *not* experienced discrimination at work. Those who had experienced discrimination had mainly had to put up with verbal abuse and comments or being misgendered. To summarise, a large percentage, approximately half, of the interviewees, had experienced mainly microaggressions at their previous or current workplace. In some cases, these were unconscious microaggressions from colleagues, but in many cases the interviewees had experienced an unwillingness from colleagues to use the right pronoun, and/or being asked inappropriate questions about, e.g., genitals and operations.

When it came to the survey responses, 51% stated that they had *not* been discriminated against in their workplace. The remaining respondents did, however, share that they had been discriminated against in accordance with one or several of the following options: 16% stated that they had been exposed to career-related discrimination, 8% that they had been exposed to pay-related discrimination, and 49% that they had been exposed to other forms of discrimination in their workplace. To summarise, the survey responses showed that out of the people who reported that they had experienced discrimination, 35% were women, 20% were men, and 45% were non-binary/other option. This suggests that non-binary people, and people responding "other option" to the question of gender identity, are more likely to feel that they have been exposed to discrimination. According to the study participants, this type of discrimination is often related to being misgendered, but several people also mentioned a general feeling of not being a part of the community at work.

Most responded that they had experienced "another form of discrimination", rather than career- and/or pay-related discrimination. "Another form of discrimination" included, according to the respondents, being misgendered, for example, or having to put up with inappropriate and offensive comments.

Many of the study participants also experienced various forms of social exclusion. Even though the majority of the study participants experienced a neutral or supportive climate, they could still feel excluded from the social community, and especially experience a general feeling of being different. Other cases involved explicitly exclusion from the social community in the workplace. The various forms of harassment and microaggressions, including social exclusion, that emerged from the interview and survey responses are described in more detail below.

Discrimination from the management

Some participants in the study described different forms of discrimination from the management. This included not receiving support, being labelled as problematic, being asked intrusive questions during interviews, etc. In

some cases, it included managers not wanting to deal with matters relating to discrimination and/or harassment. One interviewee shared, for example, that in her current job she is exposed to discrimination from her immediate managers, among other things because she is not receiving support for the harassment she experiences from customers at work. She also felt that, due to her trans background, she had been labelled as problematic and had also been questioned by her managers. One survey respondent stated that she had been exposed to adult bullying and not received any support from the management or the union: "All I could do was get study leave, and move to another city […]" (W 21 *survey*). Another person who responded to the survey stated that she had been exposed to different forms of explicit discrimination that the management either didn't act on of their own accord or were the ones contributing to the discrimination:

> I am implicitly not being rewarded because I am who I am. Once I was made redundant because I was too feminine and the service users were embarrassed. One colleague made negative and untrue comments about my gender in front of other colleagues and a discrimination report was filed against her. But I had to force through this report. I had to threaten my manager so that they would take responsibility. My pay progression is poor despite being well educated and making progress in my work. Students and patients make transphobic comments and I simply have to live with it. (W 33 *survey*)

Being asked intrusive questions by members of the management was something that several interviewees and survey respondents had experience of. Different forms of intrusive questions are described below.

Intrusive questions

The discrimination that several survey participants reported that they were exposed to largely consisted of comments, jokes or inappropriate questions from colleagues (things that should be considered to be microaggressions or harassment). This was an experience shared by approximately half of the interviewees and it also appeared in several survey responses. Many people reported that they had been asked inappropriate questions or been questioned by colleagues, but the survey responses showed that managers were also behind the questioning and intrusive behaviour and questions. Some of the participants in the study said that colleagues and/or managers seemed to think it was completely acceptable to ask boundless or intrusive questions about, e.g., the genitals of trans people, questions they wouldn't have asked cis people.

One man said that the questions he had been asked by colleagues had been personal but well-meaning: "So in that case I've just taken it, and said that's a bit too personal but I'm happy to answer questions about other things" (M 13 *interview*). A woman working in a traditionally masculine industry said, on the other hand, that she had often been questioned: "Then there are often questions

about whether I'm capable of working on what I'm working on given my situation [i.e., the transition process]" (W 5 *interview*). One man said that he had often been asked "what's in your trousers?" (M 20 *interview*), a question that other interviewees had also been asked. One survey respondent described the following:

> When it [the transition] started being noticeable there were two managers who started asking questions about my body and genitals, who commented on changes, and grabbed my beard when I grew one. (M 101 *survey*)

Being misgendered

Most of the interviewees said that being misgendered was the most common form of harassment or microaggression. The majority, especially those who identified as non-binary, stated that being misgendered was a common experience in their work life, contributing to a worse work environment. This was an especially significant problem for non-binary people, or for people just starting a transition process and therefore not always being read as the gender they identified as. Being misgendered was also experienced by several study participants as being socially excluded, as it was felt to be a way for others to make it clear that they didn't accept their gender identity.

One interviewee stated that misgendering wasn't always meant maliciously by the perpetrator, but that it was still a discriminatory action when it happened repeatedly:

> …especially before, that people still…well, misgender, even though they should understand or know that they shouldn't do it, or it's getting weird. A lot of that, I would say. So it's…I don't think…there's never anyone who's behaved badly, it's very low level and I'd say it's a bit… It's a kind of borderline situation. But, repeatedly misgendering someone is still…even if it's not a hundred percent intentional, it's still somehow discriminatory. (M 12 *interview*)

In some survey responses it also emerged that it was the managers who misgendered, or who didn't support, the non-binary person when they were misgendered by colleagues. One non-binary participant stated that they had been labelled as problematic in their work organisation after reminding people to use the right pronoun and that it was "an escalating conflict" (N 18 *interview*). One non-binary person said that they had spent two years trying to get their manager to use the right pronoun and that she had experienced this as a "disaster" (W 65 *survey*).

Social exclusion

For several of the study participants, social exclusion meant them not feeling included in the social community at work, and/or them distancing themselves from this community. Social exclusion could also mean more active exclusion from colleagues, in which case the exclusion could be defined as victimisation or bullying.

Some described how the feeling of being socially excluded was linked to not being a part of the norm. One non-binary person described the social community as ambivalent, and said most colleagues were nice, but they still felt excluded due to having different interests and experiences as a trans person compared with their colleagues. One woman explained that when her colleagues were talking, she sometimes felt like she was excluded and not participating in the context. The conversations might include topics that she felt were typically heteronormative:

> It was perhaps the colleague who mentioned that she was really tired of me going on about my trans experience, or my transsexuality, as she said, which… They kept going on, every day, about their children the whole time, and makeup, and everything they had to do. And weight and diets and a lot of… The heteronormativity was really strong and very constricting. (W 4 *interview*)

Some reported a direct form of social exclusion that might be described as victimisation or bullying. Three of the study participants said that colleagues distanced themselves and spoke to them as little as possible, or even ostracised them, because they were trans. One interviewee gave an example of how ostracisation at work can make the general difficulties and vulnerability due to being trans, worse:

> Well, that you are shunned. Shunned, not a part of the team. And you…I think often you end up in this situation because you exclude this person so much, and then you bad-mouth them. I think there's quite a lot of talk about…that maybe you make fun of them or something. What I feel generally sometimes is what I often say. I don't think anyone who hasn't made this journey themselves will understand how hard it is. It's a journey that involves a lot of loneliness. Not only do you need to accept and like yourself, you need to somehow step into a role at work and actually convince yourself that you'll be liked. I think all human beings want to be liked. (W 3 *interview*)

To summarise, many of the study participants experienced social exclusion, either as a consequence of them choosing to distance themselves from the community, or as a method of ostracisation. Even if they chose to distance themselves, many stated that this was due to them not wishing to be open about their trans experiences at work, for reasons described in more detail in the section *People being open their trans experience in the workplace* above. This

self-chosen distancing may for many be a consequence of an intolerant work environment. In order to combat social exclusion, a male survey respondent suggested that increased awareness is needed in the workplace so that everyone is represented. The basis for how to act in a workplace should be, for example, that all kinds of possible experiences are represented in the room.

Reporting discrimination to bodies outside the workplace

Ten people in the study stated that they had reported discrimination to various bodies, such as the Equality Ombudsman, the Swedish Work Environment Authority or the relevant union, when their employers didn't provide support or take on board the events experienced. None of them felt that this had led to any action, however. Three cases were reported to the Equality Ombudsman. The response they got was that the Equality Ombudsman could not take the matter further, or that too much time had passed since the incident reported had occurred:

> And so I sent an email to the discrimination representative about what happened to me. But I've never received a reply. The matter hasn't been taken further at all. (W 1 *interview*)

Another woman reported her incident to the Swedish Work Environment Authority, but didn't receive a reply about whether they had acted on her report. She described her experience of discrimination as bullying and said that she hadn't received any support from her employer or the union:

> I was completely ostracised in the workplace, I experienced bullying, and got no support from the management or the union. All I could do was get study leave, move to another city, and report the employer anonymously to the Swedish Work Environment Authority. I have no idea whether they have acted on the report. (W 21 *survey*)

Another person made a report to their safety representative without any action being taken as a result, and three other people contacted their unions without receiving any help. One woman described her experience with the union as follows:

> I asked for help from both the safety representative and the union. The safety representative didn't act at all, the union was also passive, but at least helped with the severance pay negotiations. The employer and the managers were the ones putting pressure on me. My colleagues were supportive, but they didn't dare support me openly. (W 63 *survey*)

Several of the people who had experienced discrimination and reported it in some way said that they didn't really know who to turn to:

> Because it was my manager and colleagues who treated me badly I had nobody to turn to. I tried to speak to my manager, but with no result. It ended with me leaving the workplace. (W 78 *survey*)

Support from managers and managers' knowledge and actions;

The study participants said that leadership played a role in inclusion efforts in the workplace. Many of the participants stated that they had really been supported by managers. Examples of significant support included managers supporting the tacking of discrimination issues and taking them seriously. Other forms of significant support and actions from managers that were reported included never having any difficulty getting time off to receive care, the implementation of communication in the workplace about various issues related to the transition process, the resolving of practical issues connected with name changes or changing rooms in a simple way, and the conducting of regular reviews of various work environment problems. The survey responses give examples such as relief that a manager had taken charge of telling new colleagues the right pronoun to use, as this was something that the person didn't have the capacity to do themselves at that time. Emotional support from managers was also described as important, e.g., in the form of managers being clear that they could always be turned to in case of any problems in the workplace, and managers who were thoughtful and sensitive to the person's situation. Examples of thoughtfulness given were managers frequently asking about their health in relation to the transition process. Opportunities for dialogue with the person's immediate manager was also mentioned as an important form of support, i.e., dialogue about how to handle the transition process in the workplace.

A clear majority of those undergoing gender-affirming care were open with their manager(s) about the process. Most participants said that their managers had been very understanding, that there hadn't been any difficulties or problems getting time off for doctors' appointments, that their managers had been positive and supportive, and that they had been treated with respect:

> My managers have been clear that I should inform them if I have any problems. The management has also supported communication and information efforts regarding trans issues and pronouns. (N 77 *survey*)

> My manager is inclusive, thoughtful, and spreads positive energy. (W 87 *survey*)

Many interviewees pointed out, however, that there is a lack of knowledge about transition processes on the part of organisations' managers, which can lead to practical and logistical problems for those undergoing a transition process. One woman describes this as follows:

> …the employer needs to have this knowledge about how to treat a trans person… Not just "Yes, I accept everyone. But I understand the situation. I know you want to become a woman, and I see you as a woman". But there's a lot of different…you need to know. This person who is employed by you will need care, which will mean you will need to give them time off. There will be changes in their body, in their body's strength, emotions, and so on. (W 1 *interview*)

Several participants also described their managers as well-meaning, but with a generally low awareness of trans issues and the kind of tangible support it's important for them to give: One man expressed this as follows:

> They had no experience or knowledge, but were supportive and well-meaning. They said that they wanted to help if they could. (M 68 *survey*)

Some managers were described as completely oblivious, which was also considered to contribute to a low level of experienced support, or at worst direct discrimination, from managers, such as in the case of one non-binary participant:

> They laughed nervously and said "yes, okay, I understand, you say your pronoun is they. I will say she anyway". (N 32 *survey*)

Several participants said that they wished that their managers had more knowledge about trans people, and that the managers' lack of knowledge meant that they didn't feel they were treated professionally, or were able to be given adequate support with work environment and discrimination issues. One survey respondent mentioned that he wished there was a guarantee that managers had some sort of knowledge about trans issues, and that currently managers' knowledge about and attitudes regarding trans issues vary too much. Examples of the lack of knowledge referred to included managers lacking knowledge generally about LGBTQ issues, or specifically about trans people, which was described as affecting the support they might expect to receive from their managers:

I know, for example, that my manager would try to help me if I asked for support. But there is (as I see it) a lack of knowledge of a level that makes it difficult to raise more subtle issues (e.g., minority stress, stress about how my physical transition will be received, etc.). (O 80 *survey*)

> In general, my managers are appreciative of me and what I do at work, but I don't know what would happen if I ran into tangible problems with my identity in relation to my work, such as vulnerability with regard to other colleagues […]. I think the tools my managers have to handle this are quite limited. N 74 *survey*)

Social cohesion, inclusion and support from colleagues;

Several of the participants said that they had a good sense of fellowship with their colleagues that made them feel part of the team. They mentioned having largely supportive colleagues who accepted or respected them, or that they had at least been treated properly or neutrally by their colleagues. It emerged from the responses that an important factor in people feeling happy at work was the experience of colleagues standing up for them and doing their best to be inclusive. This could include colleagues correcting others who misgendered people, being introduced to other people using the right pronoun in a natural way, or colleagues using the right pronoun so that this usage would spread within the team. Other forms of significantly support were described as seemingly simple gestures, e.g., colleagues taking the initiative to ask what pronoun to use, or colleagues otherwise validating them in a positive way when you came out in the workplace. Having someone to talk to, or at least one person in the workplace who gave various kinds of support, was also described as an important aspect for a person's wellbeing in the workplace. One non-binary interviewee described the importance of being happy at work and part of a context. Other important aspects of having a healthy work life that were described included being able to laugh with colleagues or the person feeling that their work is meaningful:

> Mentally, I think it's the social aspect. Having a context where you feel you are included and belong, and having people you can laugh with so you feel that there's a good atmosphere. And then, personally, that I feel that I'm doing a meaningful job and that I have a certain… That there are opportunities for stimulation in terms of thoughts about norm criticism, etc. (N 18 *interview*)

A degree of curiosity or lack of knowledge resulting in, e.g., various questions from colleagues about the transition process was considered by some to be positive, or at least something that could be tolerated, as long as it came from a place of respect and thoughtfulness, and there was no aggression behind it. Some said, however, that the best support they could be given is to be treated like everyone else, and some said that it's nice not to be asked too many questions, or be given too much attention for being trans.

Being supported and treated positively in the workplace was felt to be of even greater importance for people who had experienced people around them distancing themselves from them. One woman explained how important the workplace and work environment can be for people of trans experience, especially if they don't have that support in their private lives:

> But what I'm getting at is, that if you have a good workplace and you feel happy, and you have a lot of people supporting you, then you feel good as a trans person in your identity. Because often you don't have your family or your siblings, you have lost… Because when you choose to make this journey, you lose everyone around you… But I think a lot of trans people go to their job because you need to earn money, you need to survive. But I think a lot of people carry an incredible amount of pain". (W 3 *interview*)

Some participants said that it can mean a lot to have another LGBTQ person in the workplace that you can share your experiences with and get support from.

Organisational support functions

A few individuals said that they had received, or know that they are able to receive, support from HR or their safety representative if they have problems in the workplace. Some said, on the other hand, that they wished that both their union and HR were more knowledgeable about trans issues and could therefore also have given greater support. One survey respondent expressed this as follows:

> I think unions need to know more about this issue and pursue it more persistently where needed. (N 65 *survey*)

Several participants in the study requested a support line that they could call and get advice or support from in relation to LGBTQ issues at work. Some also expressed a need to be given psychological or counselling-based support with exposure to violence, harassment or discrimination at work. Others expressed a need for mentors or networks bringing together other trans people in the same profession or industry. A small number of study participants mentioned having access to a network through their work, and two of the survey participants said that they themselves had been involved in starting a network through their company or union.

Overall, a majority of the study participants said that they did not have access to a network of other LGBTQ people through their work. It was mentioned in the survey responses that it would have been good to be able to participate in a network during working hours, and several said that they believed having access to a network would have meant a lot to them, which is exemplified by the following quote:

> Having access [to a network] like that would have been very meaningful. It would have made an enormous difference to my wellbeing. I wouldn't have been completely alone and isolated in the work environment as the only non-normative person. I can't express in words what a difference it would have made to my quality of life to have a professional LGBTQI context. (W 78 *survey*)

> No! [I don't have access to a network] But it would have meant so much to me! It would have given me strength and a sense of community, and a will to improve things for other people to. There's strength in numbers. (N 80 *survey*)

Some stated that while there were networks of other LGBTQ people that they had access to, they would have liked to see networks that were more suited to their needs. The examples given were that existing networks were only made up of younger people who they didn't have much in common with, and they would have liked to have access to networks of people of their own age, with similar trans experiences as themselves and/or in the same industry.

Customers and service users;

A majority of the interviewees who dealt in person with customers, clients, students or service users at work felt that they were treated well by them. Some said that they weren't open about their trans experience to customers/service users at work and that they therefore didn't have to deal with any prejudice, while some said that their customers/service users treated them with more respect in relation to their trans experience than their colleagues did. Other interviewees said that their customers/service users either didn't react at all or saw their trans experience as something positive. Several participants described experiences of being treated respectfully by students and service users, including service users who made sure to use the right pronoun.

In the survey responses, it emerged that most participants had positive experiences of working with customers, service users, clients or students. Their negative experiences often involved being misgendered, but many said that it didn't matter as much during brief contact, such as meetings with clients, as when they were misgendered by their colleagues. Those working with students said that they had had both positive and negative experiences, with a lot of support from their students, but also a lot of pushback. Fears of, and concerns about, threats or threats of violence were sometimes reported in both interviews and surveys, however: One survey respondent described it as follows:

> I am still often read as a woman (despite having had a mastectomy and several years of hormone therapy). It can be tough, but I know that most people don't mean any harm, it's just a mistake. Sometimes I feel concerned about us being such an open place where everyone is welcome. What if someone who hates trans people saw me and understood that I'm trans? What if one of them waited for me or followed me home one evening? It makes you feel quite vulnerable, but I try not to think about it too much. (N 54 *survey*)

Some interviewees also reported negative experiences of working with customers and service users. One woman working in the civil protection sector said that she had received "serious threats" from clients, for example (W 5

interview). Another woman said that she had been the target of serious insults and physical confrontation in her work, and that, as a professional in uniform, she was expected to be able to take insults. She said that she had been verbally abused by customers due to her trans background, but that she believed the customers thought: "It'll just bounce off your uniform. In other words, 'your uniform can take it'. But you can't always deal with it" (W 3 *interview*).

To summarise, a clear majority of the study participants had positive experiences of meeting with customers, service users, clients or students at work. Some did, however, report harassment and aggression towards them from customers, clients and service users due to their trans identity, and some participants were worried when meeting with customers, clients or service users.

The physical work environment

Many of the study participants highlighted the worry and stressed caused by having to choose a toilet and/or changing room, especially at the beginning of a transition process or as a non-binary person. Most participants did, however, have gender-neutral toilets in their workplace, which for several was crucial. When it came to changing rooms, the situation in the workplace was sometimes more difficult, however. To summarise, the physical facilities affected all of the interviewees' work environments in some way, even though most of them worked in a workplace with gender-neutral toilets. This could mean not having to decide which toilet to use, for example. In workplaces that had changing and shower rooms, which were also used, the issue was more problematic, however, as these were less likely to be gender-neutral. The existence of gender-neutral changing rooms was perceived to be positive, but several participants also emphasised the need for privacy, both when getting changed and when using the shower.

Toilets

The importance of the workplace having gender-neutral toilets was emphasised by most. Many stated that there was no problem as the toilets were gender-neutral. Several had experiences of workplaces where the toilets were gendered, however, and, as mentioned above, this was felt to be especially difficult at the start of a transition process or for people who were non-binary. One man said that gendered toilets still cause him some concern, although he is read as a cis man by other people:

> I've felt a lot of anxiety and stress about gendered rooms in general. And gendered toilets. So I think it's stayed a bit in my body somehow, this stress. Even though I haven't been challenged for several years, I still… But I don't think…if there had been gendered toilets in my workplace, I don't think it's something I would have struggled with in

> that way. But I guess it triggers something. And I still think that it's significant in some way. It signals something, I think, choosing not to gender the toilets. (M 8 *interview*)

Changing and shower rooms

According to the study participants, changing and shower rooms were not as obviously gender neutral in several workplaces. People whose workplaces had gender-neutral changing rooms often experienced this as a relief. One non-binary participant expressed this as follows: "you don't have to decide 'should I use the gents' or the ladies'?' It is a difficult decision after all (N 17 *interview*). Gender-neutral changing rooms were, however, also sometimes perceived to be "difficult at the start [of the transition], in the grey zone where you don't quite pass…it can be hard during this period using changing rooms where everyone comes in to get changed" (M 13 *interview*). As mentioned above, few interviewees had gender-neutral changing rooms in the workplace, however. If the workplace had changing and/or shower rooms, these were often gendered. One man said that he had chosen to get changed in the ladies' changing room when he started at a workplace with gendered changing rooms. When he then wanted to start getting changed in the men's changing room, this was also fine: "They sorted it out in, like, a second. So there have never been any issues" (M 12 *interview*).

Interplay with mental illness

To summarise, most of the interviewees said that they were not suffering from mental illness at the time of the interview. Those who had experienced some form of mental illness said that the background to the illness could be linked to several factors: issues in their private lives, loneliness, exclusion in the workplace or their private lives, or a poor psychosocial work environment in the workplace. Several of the interviewees drew a clear distinction between the time 'before' and 'after' coming out in the workplace. The time before coming out was described by some as a period of more frequent illness (especially mental), with many shorter periods of sick leave. Several people said that they generally felt better after transitioning or after coming out.

One risk identified was psychological vulnerability or exclusion in the workplace. Some interviewees confirmed that their workplace, work environment or colleagues affected their health negatively. Two women were on sick leave at the time of the interview due to mental illness. Both of the women explained, however, that the sick leave was neither directly nor indirectly linked to their experience of transitioning, but to their psychosocial work environment. The women were on sick leave as a result of many different factors. In the words of one of the women:

> And now, lately, there was so much insane stuff that happened and led to me crashing. And of course, my trans identity is part of that. I just wish that I looked like what I feel myself to be. Because if I go out on the streets wearing gender-neutral clothing, it's clear as hell that they see me as a bloke. I dress as femininely as I can, but you notice when people are looking, whispering or pointing at you. And some just say that I "Well, it's just… You're just imagining it". But no, unfortunately I'm not. I wish it was just my imagination, but it really isn't. (W 5 *interview*)

The other woman responded to the question about how she feels now generally as follows: "It's mixed. That's a difficult question. At the moment I'm feeling quite unwell. I'm on sick leave right now, but that's because of an immediate crisis" (W 15 *interview*).

Other people described social exclusion as a contributing cause of their illness (see the section on harassment, social exclusion, and microaggressions above). For the people in the study, the reason for their illness was more than just their health in their workplace.

Another situation that sometimes had an impact on mental health and wellbeing was remote work, according to some of the interviewees. Some stated that it had made things easier to work remotely, given that, as trans people, they didn't have to be worried or constantly vigilant, because they didn't need to be physically present in the workplace or to travel to and from it. One woman who found this positive described it as follows: "I think it's nice based on my experience as a trans person, because I don't have the energy to go out into society every day" (W 15 *interview*).

Support during the transition process

Of the survey respondents, 68% had undergone gender-affirming treatment and, out of those, a majority (81%) had a job during the period when they underwent this treatment. A majority of those who had recently been through a gender-affirming process, or who were going through one at the time of the interview, were satisfied with the support that they received from their employer while they went through this process, despite many also reporting that their managers didn't have much knowledge about such processes. The support most frequently mentioned was, firstly, being given time off for doctors' appointments and surgery, for example, and, secondly, administrative support in the workplace with, e.g., changing name. Those who didn't feel that they were supported during the transition process underwent their gender-affirming treatment a while ago, which made it difficult to draw any conclusions about how the same process would have been handled today. One woman did say, however, that she recently wasn't given any support from her manager when she needed time off for her gender-affirming treatment, which resulted in her returning to education instead.

Support from management and HR during the transition process

Several of those who had a job during the period when they underwent their gender-affirming treatment said that the support that they received from the management and HR had been adequate, but that their knowledge about transition processes was quite limited. Support that the interviewees and survey respondents said was important included being given time off for doctors' appointments/surgery, job adaptations after surgery, and an action plan to be applied when an employee undergoes gender-affirming treatment.

Several also highlighted the need for knowledge and an understanding of transition processes as a fundamental keystone. One man said that it would have made things easier if it had been understood that a gender-affirming process might not always happen at the most convenient time. He was due to have surgery two to three months after starting a new job and didn't feel that his manager really understood. He said that undergoing gender-affirming treatment while also being in an unsecure form of employment can make you feel even more insecure: "because then, like now, there was no security, especially because I was employed by a staffing agency" (M 20 *interview*).

In addition to receiving support from their managers during the period of their gender-affirming treatment, many interviewees also experienced more or less adequate administrative support during their gender-affirming process. Most stated that the administrative support provided during their transition in the workplace, e.g., the changing of their names in IT systems, was efficient. One non-binary person said that they experienced problems changing their name in the IT system at work, and one man encountered resistance when he wanted to change his name, before being assisted by HR, but otherwise the interviewees had positive experiences. Different factors made it more difficult, however, for some of the study participants to get support from HR and/or the management, even if such support was already in place. Some interviewees stated that they didn't feel completely comfortable being open with their managers about undergoing gender-affirming treatment.

Support from colleagues during the transition process

In terms of support from colleagues during the transition process, most study participants had positive experiences. From the survey responses it emerged that most were treated well or neutrally by colleagues during the period when they underwent gender-affirming treatment. Being misgendered was common, however. One non-binary person described it as follows:

> I had a man's name before and I have a woman's name now. But it's not a problem, it's been two and a half years now, everyone has got used to using the name. We mustn't forget this, that other people actually need a bit of time to also get used to the fact that something has changed now. (N 14 *interview*)

The significance of the workplace culture

According to many of the participants in the study, the type of culture in the workplace where a person works has a significance for their wellbeing and job satisfaction. In the interviews, some of the trans people reported workplaces characterised by a masculine, more constricting culture, while others said that they work in workplaces that are female-dominated and are perceived to be more open to gender diversity. In the surveys, people used various expressions to describe their workplaces.

Most participants (37 people) used descriptions such as normative, heteronormative, or cisnormative. 30 people described their workplace as inclusive or accepting in their survey responses. 15 people used the expression male-dominated, while 11 described their workplace as macho. Sometimes one or more of the expressions were combined, but male-dominated and macho, for example, weren't always combined; sometimes a workplace was described as male-dominated with an inclusive workplace culture. A few people used positive words such as friendly, tolerant, queer friendly, ground-breaking or norm-critical. A few individuals used words with negative connotations such as suffocating, ignorant, culture of silence, LGBTQ phobic, excluding or sexist.

A majority of the interviewees stated that their current workplace was characterised by both heteronormativity and openness, even if most associated strong heteronormativity with male-dominated workplace cultures. Many said, however, that heteronormativity - which, among other things, dictates masculine and feminine behaviour - is also strongly regulating in female-dominated workplaces, even if, according to the interviewees, there was more space for differences in workplaces where a majority of the employees were women. Workplace culture was also listed as a factor that could have an impact on some of the interviewees' choice of profession. A majority said, however, that they didn't choose their profession based on them being trans or having trans experience, but that their choice was mainly based on interest. Those who did say that they had chosen their profession based on their trans experience chose professions where "there is an understanding of and knowledge about [trans people]" (M 11 *interview*), or because they had specific professional interests due to their experiences of, e.g., working with trans issues and/or LGBTQ issues in general.

Working in a workplace characterised by masculine norms

Even if most interviewees stated that they worked in female-dominated workplaces and had experienced tolerant workplaces, many also said that they either had experiences of, or were currently working in, workplaces with a clearly masculine culture. These workplaces were associated by many with more explicit regulating of gender expressions, e.g., through comments and questioning. In most cases, a male-oriented workplace culture was perceived to be negative for job satisfaction and wellbeing by the interviewees. One

woman who had worked in different workplaces in the same field within the public sector stated that there were differences between different geographical contexts, but that generally there was a masculine environment that affected her negatively at work:

> If we look at the field that I'm in now in [city name], it's very masculine, very macho. And it's baked in… It's as if you can feel that it's baked into the walls… It's baked into the door handles, the staff room, this constant macho attitude that keeps showing up. (W 5 *interview*)

Many also felt that masculine workplace cultures are characterised by people making comments and jokes at the expense of others. One woman stated, for example, that at her current workplace, below-the-belt humour was used and there were a lot of laddish jokes (W 3 *interview*), and she had also been asked inappropriate questions by her colleagues, including about her body. One survey respondent stated that the masculine culture in the workplace affected their wellbeing. The respondent described their workplace as "male-dominated, macho, and sexist" and said that they " [are] often very tense because of worrying about comments" (N 82 *survey*).

For a couple of interviewees, the strongly regulating heteronormativity was also clear during the application process. Although they weren't sure whether the workplace they had applied to was characterised by heteronormative values, they chose not to talk about their trans experience before they had been offered a job, to make sure that they weren't judged in advance. One non-binary person described it as follows: "If you want a job, then you want to show that you're perfect for the job. There mustn't be any interference, any biases…" (N 14 *interview*).

The interviewees believed that a constricting or controlling heteronormativity existed in most of the workplaces that they had had experiences of. The majority of the interviewees and survey respondents stated, however, that they were currently working in a workplace that was perceived to be more neutral, value driven, and/or LGBTQ friendly. For some this was because they had moved away from work environments characterised by clearer heteronormativity, or work environments that were directly hostile, while for others it wasn't viewed as a choice based on their trans experience.

Value-driven and/or LGBTQ friendly workplace cultures

Working in the public sector, or in a value-driven organisation, was considered by several interviewees to offer a good prospect of a good work environment for trans people and people of trans experience, as such workplaces often work explicitly on equal treatment and/or diversity issues. There were examples of workplaces in the public sphere not necessarily being inclusive, however. As one person described it, the public sector workplace that they worked at were behind with their trans-inclusive efforts, while another person had experienced

harassment and discrimination from managers in a governmental workplace.

Many also felt that female-dominated workplaces can be more open to diversity and differences. Many associated female-dominated workplaces with more open and tolerant work environments, but stated that female-dominated workplaces are also characterised by heteronormativity. Some of the survey respondents said that their female-dominated workplace was characterised by intolerance of differences. One non-binary person described their workplace as follows:

> Heteronormative, female-dominated, toxic/unhealthy psychosocial work environment, culture of silence/fear of making mistakes, and an authoritarian manager. The place gives me no safe ground to stand on because many people around me feel unsafe and afraid. It's kind of baked in - a toxic, silent and unhealthy culture where the manager acts irrationally, unpredictably and unprofessionally. (N 46 *survey*)

In terms of organisations actively working to promote equal treatment and inclusion, several interviewees felt that their colleagues and managers were often open to differences. One non-binary person said that, when they started working for the organisation, their colleagues were "forced to really examine their values" (N 19 *interview*). Others had experiences of working in sectors with a high proportion of trans and other LGBTQ employees, such as the transport sector. The private companies referred to as LGBTQ friendly during the interviews did not have any explicit LGBTQ or inclusion measures and/or policies in place, at least not as the interviewees saw it, but, on the other hand, they did have a high proportion of LGBTQ employees. One person with experience of one of these workplaces stated that it was "a very LGBTQ-friendly workplace" where you could never "assume that anyone belonged to this broad societal norm (N 19 *interview*).

Some interviewees described their workplaces as more neutral, i.e., as workplaces with a neutral attitude towards LGBTQ people, or where there was a certain acceptance, but not necessarily a complete understanding, of all aspects of being LGBTQ. Some of the interviewees highlighted that the social interaction in a "neutral" workplace, where certain differences were tolerated, was still shaped by perceptions of which norm-breaching behaviours were "acceptable". Being trans in such an environment could in some cases still be stressful. One non-binary person describes their municipal workplace as "fairly normative" (N 10 *interview*) and continues:

> …still, there are experiences and standpoints that are norm-breaching in some sense, but I would say that it's still a…I'm trying to find the right word, still a normative queerness, as these are standpoints that are generally socially acceptable. There are still… I see it in any case as a general acceptance of homosexuality by society. While gender identity isn't really something that people have thought about or had experience of feeling or meeting people of trans experience, and so on. (N 10 *interview*)

To summarise, a majority of both the interviewees and the survey respondents felt that female-dominated workplaces are often more tolerant towards trans people and people of trans experience. In several cases, female-dominated workplaces were still strongly and clearly dominated by heteronormativity, however, which the study participants had to deal with in different ways.

The importance of organisational policies, procedures and expertise

The experiences of the extent to which the participants' workplaces advocated for LGBTQ issues were mixed, ranging from a clear commitment whereby the management was felt to take equal rights issues seriously with a number of different commitments made, e.g., with regard to LGBTQ issues, to no commitment at all, i.e., there was no LGBTQ perspective in the workplace. Several study participants highlighted that commitments made through, e.g., policies can be important as a way of affirming the workplace's awareness of various LGBTQ issues, and that it is therefore good if the policies are specific and include trans people, including non-binary people. Some workplaces seemed to have introduced more or less solid and thorough diversity and LGBTQ policy measures, although this did not always trickle down throughout the organisation. One woman described any commitments made or policies at her workplace as not being visible within the organisation, if they even existed at all:

> Not that I know of. It would have been nice if they had them. There's probably something about LGBTQI+ issues in some statement of values, but issues relating to queer people aren't really brought up in the workplace. (W 93 *survey*)

Other workplaces had not made any formal commitments to LGBTQI issues, but there were still active efforts to address LGBTQI issues in day-to-day activities. If a workplace hadn't formally made a commitment, but in practice it turned out that the workplace was inclusive, it might also be perceived to be inclusive. In workplaces where policy measures, certification, or formal commitments were actively ongoing, some of the study participants experienced a safer work environment where all employees could feel welcome. One study participant described it as follows:

> EVERY workplace should be LGBTQIA certified! Regular lectures and internal conversations about LGBTQIA issues should be arranged, and every workplace document should include something about attitude, language, etc. (N 83 *survey*)

If a workplace didn't show that it had actively made a commitment, it could be more difficult for an employee of trans experience to feel safe, according to some of the participants in the study. Without an inclusive commitment from the employer, it could be felt to be more difficult to dare to be open in the

workplace. One survey respondent emphasised the need for workplaces to have better procedures to help any trans people to come out in the workplace, such as name badges that include pronouns, or trans-inclusive clothing/equipment.

One non-binary person who wasn't out in their workplace said that it would have meant a lot to them if the workplace had supported people of trans experience more proactively. At the time of the survey, there were no clear equal rights measures in the workplace in question.

> no, I wouldn't say that. Nothing except it saying somewhere in the "code-of conduct" that they "stand for the equal value of all" and "believe diversity is important". But then I don't know how much they live up to this. I think some of these measures should be PRO-active. Not just working on crisis management when/if something happens. It would mean a lot if I knew I was supported and appreciated for who I am at work, and I would definitely be out at work then. It would mean so much to me. (N 94 *survey*)

Introduction process during recruitment

In terms of the introduction of new hires and the treatment in the new workplace of people going through transitions, many of the interviewees above all highlighted the significance of managers and colleagues understanding how to use the right pronoun, for example. Several participants in the study explained that it would also be good if colleagues were provided with information and knowledge about trans people, both general and specific, when the new colleague was about to start, e.g., about the individual needs of the new employee, so that colleagues could include the person appropriately. This could include needs related to their trans background or identity, and also needs in terms of disabilities or similar, which would also apply not just to LGBTQ people. Several of the interviewees said that when a person of trans experience joins a new workplace or team, it would be beneficial if the manager brought up the issue of working in an inclusive way with the team, if this was something new to the team or needed repeating. Below is an example from an interview where a non-binary person explains how they think the introduction should be:

> Refer to it explicitly, speak to the team before I arrive. Like this: "Our new colleague is arriving, they are good at this and that and we have chosen to hire them for this and that reason. And when they arrive, they will do this and the date… Something important that you should know about this person is that they is their pronoun, and it's everyone's responsibility to make sure that you use it, and you're welcome to help correct each other. We'll start talking about this person as from now, a long time before they start, so start practising". (N 2, *interview*)

The interviewee exemplified this by saying that it may be a good idea to have an individual discussion with the person in question about how they would like things to be done:

> "well, I'd like you to correct everyone you hear and that my colleagues correct everyone they hear". And depending a bit on the kind of workplace it was, I have decided to have this chat with my colleagues myself, or let my manager do it after I'd arrived. (N 2, *interview*)

Another interviewee, a woman, described how she accepted her new position and was clear and open about how she wanted to be introduced:

> "yes, I'm accepting this position, and just for your information, I'm trans", I said to my manager, "so I'd like you to mention this to the team before I start, so that people know, so that they're prepared for it". (W 15, *interview*)

Need for increased awareness and training in the workplace

A majority of the interviewees highlighted that a lack of knowledge was one of the major work environment risks for trans people and people of trans experience. The interviewees emphasised that in most workplaces that they had had experience of more knowledge was needed about different aspects of being trans, e.g., transition processes and gender-affirming treatment, pronouns, vulnerability, exclusion and discrimination. Many stated that the unwillingness in some workplaces to use the right pronoun, for example, could be due to a lack of knowledge. One non-binary person described it as follows:

> Well, I think that one of the major risk factors is indeed a lack of knowledge, or maybe, when there's a direct unwillingness, which I know is the case in some workplaces, that people actually think that there's something wrong with people of trans experience. In this case there's an incredibly large risk that something bad will happen to this person or people. (N 19, *interview*)

Several study participants underscored the need for compulsory, basic training in the workplace in trans issues and for workplaces to also be given support with educating themselves in trans and LGBTQ issues. The need for training material and better general information about different spectra and dimensions of trans issues was also mentioned. One survey respondent expressed the following wish: "More information material to show or hand out to colleagues. Maybe a video about non-binary people and 'they' (that is better than the video currently available). And brochures" (N 77 *survey*).

Some of the study participants said that they were the ones educating their managers and colleagues about trans people, which they were sometimes

the driving force behind and were happy to do, while it was sometimes felt to be a role that they had to take on due to the lack of knowledge in the workplace. Several participants stated that it would be good if an external person informed and increased knowledge about differences, so that any employees of trans experience wouldn't need to feel singled out or be forced to share private experiences. They also highlighted that a few training hours rarely had any actual effect on an organisation, even if training was generally regarded to be something positive by the participants. Increasing the level of knowledge meant for many, e.g., working long term to normalise what in some workplaces was perceived to be divergent.

To summarise, many interviewees emphasised the importance of continually working on knowledge creation and active inclusion efforts, including ensuring that the knowledge gained through various training courses in the workplace is also applied. One woman expressed this as follows: "Knowledge in itself isn't particularly helpful unless it is truly integrated in the organisation" (W 15 *interview*).

Conclusions and implications

The purpose of the study was to investigate the work environment for people of trans experience in a Swedish context. More specifically, the study aimed to investigate risk and health-promoting factors, and intersectional aspects (i.e., differences and similarities in experiences due to a person's gender identity, education and type of work), in the work environment of people of trans experience, and what characterises an inclusive work environment for this target group. Within the scope of the study, 20 people participated in qualitative interviews and 85 people responded to a survey asking qualitative questions. There was a wide range of participants in both the interviews and surveys in terms of gender identity and professional background. As the study was focused on the work environment, the aim was mainly to gather the views of people who are professionally active. Some of the study participants were currently unemployed, students, or on sick leave, but had professional experience. It emerged, however, that some of these people were unemployed, studying or on sick leave as a consequence of a work environment that they had experienced as hostile.

The study's conclusions include the fact that the *workplace culture* constitutes both a significant risk and a health-promoting factor for trans people and people of trans experience. The study participants reported more tangible risks of discrimination, harassment, microaggressions and social exclusion when the workplace culture was clearly heteronormative and/or macho-oriented. The results also indicated that organisations that are actively working on equal treatment may be more inclusive workplaces for trans people and people of trans experience. Examples of factors in equal treatment efforts that are specifically significant for trans people and people of trans experience are, according to some study participants, gender-neutral facilities, and the importance of using the right pronoun. The managers' and the management's handling of risks in the work environment, e.g., efforts to address and prevent different forms of discrimination, was also very important, according to the study participants. Managers working proactively, for example, through continual individual dialogue on work environment issues or communication efforts (e.g., about which pronouns to use in the workplace) is an important condition for a good work environment. It was generally stated that knowledge and expertise in the workplace on trans issues (e.g., transition processes) are important health-promoting factors, in addition to support from both managers and colleagues. The results of the study therefore imply that factors such as active work on equal treatment, increased knowledge of trans issues, a supportive leadership, and strong support from at least one colleague, create work environments perceived to be positive and inclusive for people of trans experience. The possibility of receiving support through networks or outside the workplace, in order for individuals to cope with challenges, discrimination and harassment in the workplace, was also described as important.

Work environment risks for people of trans experience

The interview and survey results show that a work environment risk for people of trans experience was if the organisation that they worked at was characterised by a heteronormative or macho-oriented culture. It emerged from the study participants' accounts that such a workplace culture seems to promote harassment, discrimination and microaggressions directed towards people of trans experience. Another risk, according to several study participants, is being or feeling socially excluded in organisations characterised by such a climate. According to the results, this may due to a person being open about their trans background and in so doing being excluded because of this background, or, vice versa, not being open about their trans background and thereby not feeling like they are an obvious part of the community in the same way as other colleagues, who they felt were more able to talk freely in the workplace about, e.g., their backgrounds or interests.

Workplaces and organisations that lack knowledge of trans issues may also be identified as a risk factor in the study. In such workplaces there seems to be a greater risk of people of trans experience being exposed to discrimination or harassment. If there is a lack of knowledge in the organisation's management, according to some participants' experiences, there are clear work environment risks, especially for those undergoing gender-affirming treatment, as there may be less of an understanding of, e.g., the need to take time off for doctors' appointments. According to the results, a lack of knowledge, especially when combined with a general lack of understanding of people of trans experience, may also lead to managers not acting on discrimination or harassment, or, in the worst-case scenario, managers being responsible for the discrimination or harassment.

Almost half of the study participants (49% of the survey respondents) stated that they had been exposed to discrimination in the Swedish labour market. To summarise, the survey responses show that, out of those declaring that they had experienced discrimination, 35% were women, 20% were men, and 45% were non-binary/other option. This suggests that non-binary people, and people responding "other option" to the question of gender identity, are more likely to feel that they have been exposed to discrimination. According to the study participants, this type of discrimination is often related to being misgendered, but several people also mentioned a general feeling of not being a part of the community at work. Being misgendered was an experience shared by many study participants, but something that happened particularly often to non-binary participants.

Another work environment-related risk mentioned by the study participants is gendered rooms in the physical work environment. Such rooms can lead to experiences of stress and worry, according to the study's results, for people who have just started a transition process or who identify as non-binary. This mainly includes gendered changing and shower rooms. Another risk factor for harassment, threats, and physical confrontations is, according to the results,

situations where people meet with clients, customers, service users or students in their work. Most study participants did, however, have good experiences of meeting with clients, customers, service users or students.

The participants in the study weren't selected randomly, but based on potential participants registering their interest in participating. This may potentially have led to an overrepresentation of people who wanted to share their bad experiences of their work environment and/or discrimination and therefore registered their interest in participating in the study. The majority of the study participants had a university education and lived in larger cities, which, on the other hand, may have led to greater opportunities to work in workplaces where they are well treated by managers and colleagues. Of those participating, a majority did, however, have mixed experiences – both negative and positive – of work environments in a Swedish context.

Intersectional perspectives on the work environment for people of trans experience

A majority of the interviewees were born in Sweden to Swedish parents. Most of the survey respondents (66%), and 14 out of the 20 interviewees, also had a university education lasting more or less than three years. Approximately half of the study participants were 26–35 years old, and a majority lived in cities of more than 50,000 inhabitants. Despite this homogeneity, some intersectional aspects that were felt to be significant in the work environment for people of trans experience did still emerge.

One such aspect was *age*. Several participants said that their age had been significant in how they had been perceived and treated based on their trans identity at work. Younger people felt, for example, that their trans experience wasn't taken seriously in the same way it might be for older trans people. *Gender* was also a factor that had an impact for many. Being read as a man was something that was described by several participants as a promoting factor for their career progression, for example. Some men described being given a higher status and better pay when they passed as men. Several women said that they had a better understanding of the work situation for women after transitioning, but many simultaneously felt that it had become harder for them to be accepted in the social community in the workplace. According to some study participants, being non-binary meant being vulnerable as others find it more difficult to define and understand you as a person. In terms of *ethnicity and race*, the selection of study participants was somewhat too homogeneous to shed a light on the significance of these aspects, but one participant stated that, having a divergent race/ethnicity, combined with her trans identity, has made her more exposed to victimisation and discrimination in the workplace than most.

To summarise, the results indicate that trans men/men experience a lower level of exposure to discrimination than trans women/women and non-binary

people, which suggests an interplay between the type of gender identity and the occurrence of discrimination against people of trans experience. It also highlights the need for efforts to combat the specific forms of discrimination experienced by women of trans experience and non-binary people.

Experiences of an inclusive work environment

Working in the public sector, or in a value-driven organisation, was considered by several interviewees to partly offer a good prospect of a good work environment for trans people and people of trans experience, as such workplaces often work explicitly on equal treatment and/or diversity issues. Some study participants working in public sector workplaces also described a low level of active work on equal treatment and diversity in such workplaces. Many also felt that female-dominated workplaces could be more open to diversity and differences, even though many stated that the social interaction in female-dominated workplaces was also often regulated by heteronormativity. A health-promoting factor in work organisations suggested by the results may be active work on equal treatment, e.g., in the form of the application of equal treatment policies and regular training sessions in trans or LGBTQ issues. Access to a network of LGBTQ and trans people may also be defined as a health-promoting factor, according to the results, in addition to the possibility of seeking support outside the workplace. The study participants requested, among other things, increased access to external support, e.g., in the form of a support line that they could call, or greater knowledge of trans issues within unions.

Several study participants also said that the leadership was significant for inclusion efforts in the workplace. The important factors described here are managers providing support, taking discrimination issues seriously, and taking responsibility for current work environment issues, e.g., by being the one who makes sure that everyone in the workplace is using the right pronoun. Other aspects of significant support and actions from managers that were reported included never having any difficulty getting time off to receive care, the implementation of communication in the workplace about various issues related to the transition process, the resolving of practical issues connected with name changes or changing rooms in a simple way, and the conducting of regular reviews of various work environment problems. It emerged from the interview and survey responses, moreover, that an important factor in people feeling happy at work was colleagues standing up for them and doing their best to be inclusive. They said that, in these cases, this could include colleagues correcting others who misgendered people, being introduced to people using the right pronoun in a natural way, or colleagues using the right pronoun so that this usage would spread within the team.

Having trans experience was also said by some to enable an increased understanding of clients or students from different backgrounds and the ability to be a supportive person when required. For people whose experiences of, e.g., minority stress could be translated into knowledge about vulnerability, the respondents therefore felt that they could be an asset at work when meeting new people A manager or the management seeing a person's trans experience as an asset may therefore be identified as a health-promoting factor. Managers should not *assume* that a person of trans experience wants to use their experience as a resource, however, according to some of the participants in the study.

Swedish Agency for Work
Environment Expertise

www.sawee.se

ISBN 978-91-89747-26-5