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**375 Report** by Lisa de Vries, Mirjam Fischer, David Kasprowski, Martin Kroh, Simon Kühne, David Richter, and Zaza Zindel

## LGBTQI\* People on the Labor Market: Highly Educated, Frequently Discriminated Against

- Thirty percent of LGBTQI\* people experience discrimination in their work life
- 70 percent of LGBTQI\* people are out to their colleagues or superiors about their sexual orientation or gender identity
- An LGBTQI\*-friendly corporate climate is important to respondents

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## AT A GLANCE

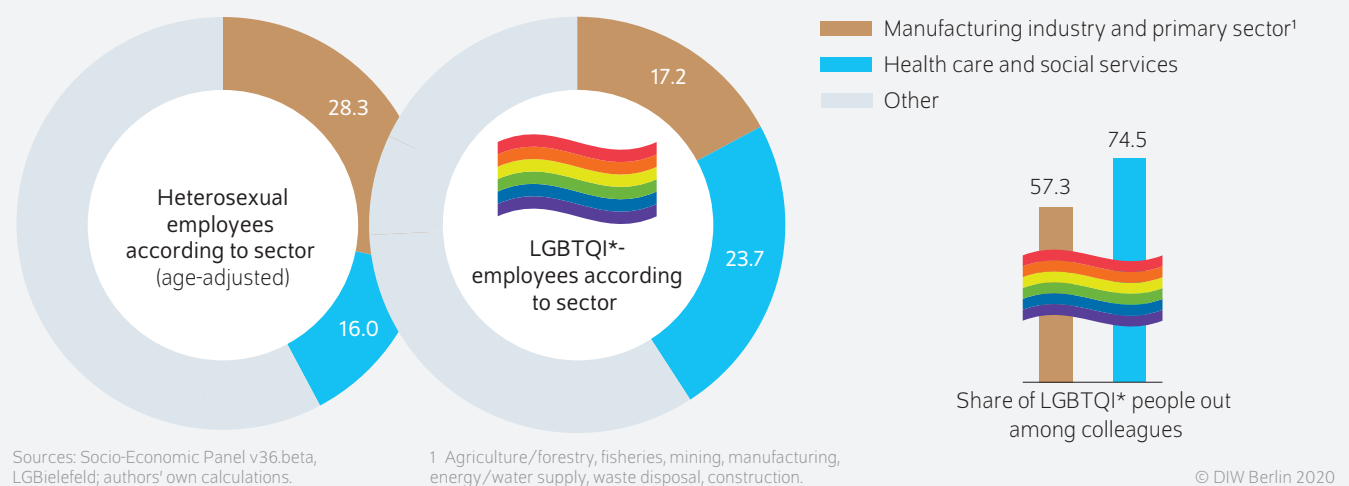
# LGBTQI\* People on the Labor Market: Highly Educated, Frequently Discriminated Against

By Lisa de Vries, Mirjam Fischer, David Kasproski, Martin Kroh, Simon Kühne, David Richter, and Zaza Zindel

- LGBTQI\* people in Germany are better educated on average than heterosexual people
- Thirty percent of LGBTQI\* people surveyed by SOEP and Bielefeld University experience discrimination in their work life
- One third of LGBTQI\* people are not out to their colleagues or superiors about their sexual orientation or gender identity
- LGBTQI\* people are more likely than average to not be out in industries where they are underrepresented
- An LGBTQI\*-friendly corporate climate is important to respondents and could significantly increase companies' appeal as potential employers

## A disproportionately high share of LGBTQI\* people work in health care and social services, where they are more often out than in sectors with less LGBTQI\* representation

Shares in percent



## FROM THE AUTHORS

*“Companies creating a more LGBTQI\*-friendly work environment, especially those in which LGBTQI\* people rarely work or do not come out, could contribute substantially to an improvement of the situation of LGBTQI\* people on the labor market.”*

— Lisa de Vries —

## MEDIA



**Audio Interview** with Mirjam Fischer (in German)  
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# LGBTQI\* People on the Labor Market: Highly Educated, Frequently Discriminated Against

By Lisa de Vries, Mirjam Fischer, David Kasprowski, Martin Kroh, Simon Kühne, David Richter, and Zaza Zindel

## ABSTRACT

Societal acceptance of the LGBTQI\* people has greatly improved over the past decades in Germany and legal equal treatment on the labor market has been improved by the General Equal Treatment Act (Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz, AGG). However, about 30 percent of those who identify as LGBTQI\* report experiencing discrimination in their work life, according to the results of a survey conducted by the Socio-Economic Panel and Bielefeld University. Similarly, around a third of LGBTQI\* people are either not out or are only partly out to their colleagues. Trans\* people in particular report experiencing discrimination more frequently in their work life. An LGBTQI\*-friendly corporate climate is one of the most important criteria when LGBTQI\* people are picking a future employer. A more LGBTQI\*-friendly work environment may reduce short- and long-term labor market disadvantages of (potential) employees substantially and may increase the appeal of companies for LGBTQI\* people, who are higher educated on average than the heterosexual population.

The intense public debate following the expansion of marriage to same-sex couples and the legal recognition of non-binary people has markedly increased the visibility of LGBTQI\* people in Germany over the past 20 years (refer to Box 1 for definitions). The legal situation of LGBTQI\* people in Germany has improved over the years: For example, homosexual acts have not been punishable since 1994 and convictions under Paragraph 175<sup>1</sup> until the end of the 1960s have been rescinded. In 2006, the AGG increased legal protection for employees and apprentices against discrimination.

Moreover, societal acceptance of LGBTQI\* people has significantly increased over the past two decades and is comparatively high in Germany in a global comparison. Compared to other Western European countries, however, Germany ranks in the middle.<sup>2</sup> Despite the progress that has been made, LGBTQI\* people continue to experience societal rejection and discrimination in different areas of life, as studies on discrimination and victimization<sup>3</sup> show.

Internationally, some studies have already been able to show differences in employment situations according to sexual orientation and gender identity.<sup>4</sup> Such research mainly focuses on income differences. In Germany, it has also been empirically shown that there are differences in employment situations and income disadvantages due to sexual orientation.<sup>5</sup> However, empirical research on the labor market situation

<sup>1</sup> Paragraph 175 was a part of the German Criminal Code from 1871 to 1994 and criminalized homosexual acts between men.

<sup>2</sup> Andrew R. Flores, *Social Acceptance of LGBT People in 174 Countries. 1981 to 2017*. (Los Angeles, CA: The Williams Institute, 2019) (Accessed on August 11, 2020; This applies to all other online sources in this report unless stated otherwise; available online); European Commission, *Perception of minorities in the EU: LGBTI people* (2019) (available online).

<sup>3</sup> Steffen Beigang et al., *Diskriminierungserfahrungen in Deutschland. Ergebnisse einer Repräsentativ- und einer Betroffenenbefragung. Antidiskriminierungsstelle des Bundes* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2017) (available online); Bodo Lipp, Tarik Abou-Chadi, and Moritz Fedkenheuer, *Homophobe Anfeindungen aus Sicht von Schwulen, Bisexuellen und Trans\* Personen (GBT). Strategien und Maßnahmen zu Schutz, Aufklärung und Prävention* (Berlin, New York, São Paulo: MANEO, 2012).

<sup>4</sup> Emir Ozeren, "Sexual Orientation Discrimination in the Workplace: A Systematic Review of Literature," *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences* 109 (2014): 1203–1215 (available online); Marie-Anne Valfort, "LGBTI in OECD Countries: A Review," *OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers* no. 198 (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2017).

<sup>5</sup> Martin Kroh et al., "Income, Social Support Networks, Life Satisfaction: Lesbians, Gays, and Bisexuals in Germany," *DIW Economic Bulletin* no. 33/34/35 (2017): 335–345 (available online).



## Box 1

## Terms and Definitions

The term "LGBTQI\* people" (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersex) refer to those who do not identify as heterosexual or whose gender identity is non-binary or does not align with the gender they were assigned at birth. The star (\*) indicates that this acronym also includes further orientations and gender identities that are not explicitly contained in the acronym itself. This applies to other terms that utilize a star.

In the SOEP and LGBielefeld surveys, the participants had the option to indicate a heterosexual, lesbian/gay, bisexual, or another orientation. A write-in answer is possible for "other," such as queer, pansexual, asexual, polysexual, or demisexual.

Gender is surveyed by SOEP and LGBielefeld according to an internationally used two-step method.<sup>1</sup> First, the participants select

the sex as indicated on their birth certificate (female or male).<sup>2</sup> Then, the respondents report their current gender identity. Those whose gender identity remains consistent with their sex assigned at birth are referred to as "cis" or "cisgendered." Those whose gender identity differs from their birth certificate are included in the umbrella term of LGBTQI\* people. This includes people who have transitioned from female to male or male to female (transgender people). Respondents also had the possibility to select "transgender" when identifying their current gender identity. We use the term "trans\* people" to include those from both groups. The gender identity question also has a write-in option when respondents selected "other gender." Common examples of write-in answers we observed are non-binary, genderqueer, gender fluid, agender, demigender, and intersex.

<sup>1</sup> Greta R. Bauer et al., "Transgender-inclusive measures of sex/gender for population surveys: Mixed methods evaluation and recommendations," *PLoS ONE* 12, no. 5 (available online).

<sup>2</sup> All respondents were born before Germany introduced a legal third gender. Therefore, at the time, they only had the option of male or female on their birth certificate.

of LGBTQI\* people in Germany has so far been hampered by numerically few LGBTQI\* people in the existing surveys. Further, register data does not make it possible to identify LGBTQI\* people. To improve the research data infrastructure, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research funded a supplementary sample to the Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP),<sup>6</sup> which enriched the SOEP core samples with a random sample of LGBTQI\* people (Box 2).<sup>7</sup> For the survey year 2019, this meant a total sample of 858 people who identify as LGBTQI\* out of 29,908 adults throughout Germany. For this Weekly Report, the SOEP results are supplemented with data from a parallel online survey of LGBTQI\* people at Bielefeld University (LGBielefeld).<sup>8</sup> Where possible, findings are cross-validated with information from the Microcensus of the Federal Statistical Office.

### Major differences in qualifications, occupations, and across economic sectors

The employment status of LGBTQI\* people largely corresponds to the rest of the German population. Only "other" employment (such as marginal employment, volunteer social/ecological year) is somewhat more common among

<sup>6</sup> Jan Goebel et al., "The German Socio-Economic Panel Study (SOEP)," *Journal of Economics and Statistics* 239, no. 2 (2019): 345-360.

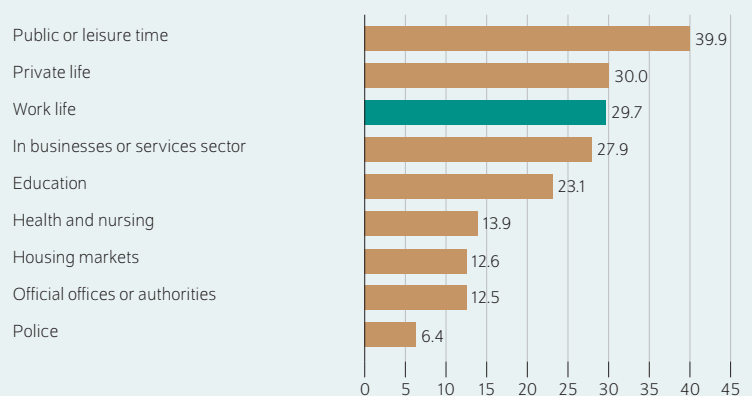
<sup>7</sup> The "Supplementing the SOEP Data Infrastructure with a sample of lesbians, gays, and bisexuals (SOEP-LGB)" Project and the "Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation Diversity in Focus: Participation and Diversity in Human Beings (SOEP-GeSMiN)" Project, project numbers 01UW1803A and 01UW1803B as well as 01UW2002A and 01UW2002B. DFG Netzwerk Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Germany (SOGI-GER) – Bundling Interdisciplinary Expertise FI 2490/1-1.

<sup>8</sup> The LGBielefeld survey is affiliated with the Working Group on Methods of Empirical Social Research (Quantitative) at Bielefeld University (available online); Simon Kühne and Zaza Zindel, "Using Facebook & Instagram to Recruit Web Survey Participants: A Step-by-Step Guide and Application," in *Survey Methods: Insights from the Field* (forthcoming).

Figure 1

### Discrimination due to sexual orientation or gender (-identity) in particular areas of life

Share of LGBTQI\* people who have experienced discrimination in different areas, in percent



Note: Discrimination due to sexual orientation or gender (-identity) within the last two years in Germany was surveyed; the shares refer to people who indicated to have experienced discrimination rarely, sometimes, or often; the total number of cases for the individual areas varies between 2,797 and 3,842 people.

Source: Socio-Economic Panel v36.beta, LGBielefeld; authors' own calculations.

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Almost 30 percent of LGBTQI\* people have experienced discrimination in their work life in the past two years.

Table 1

### LGBTQI\* and heterosexual people according to employment status, occupation, and economic sector

Shares in percent

	Heterosexual	Heterosexual (age-adjusted)	LGBTQI*
<b>Employment status</b>			
Full-time	53.1	52.1	51.0
Part-time	17.7	16.7	16.3
Other <sup>1</sup>	6.4	6.5	9.2**
In training	2.7	4.3	3.5
Not employed	20.1	20.3	20.0
Number of cases	16,880	16,880	4,289
<b>Occupational status</b>			
Self-employed	7.6	6.6	11.4***
Civil service	6.5	6.3	6.0
White-collar worker	63.9	63.5	65.2
Blue-collar worker	18.2	17.6	11.8***
Apprentice	3.9	6.1	5.6
Number of cases	13,150	13,150	2,796
<b>Economic sector</b>			
Agriculture/forestry, fisheries, mining, manufacturing, energy/water supply, waste disposal, construction	27.8	28.3	17.2***
Trade, car repair, hospitality	13.5	13.9	11.6
Transportation and storage, communication	9.2	9.2	9.4
Financial and insurance services, real estate/housing, economic services	13.4	13.0	12.4
Civil service or similar	7.7	7.5	7.8
Education	8.2	8.0	10.9*
Health care and social services	16.1	16.0	23.7***
Arts, entertainment, recreation, other service activities, private households	4.2	4.1	7.1**
Number of cases	12,817	12,817	1,515
<b>Firm size</b>			
1 to 11 employees	13.8	13.7	13.7
11 to under 20 employees	7.2	7.3	8.2
20 to under 100 employees	15.8	16.2	14.4
100 to under 200 employees	8.2	8.2	9.4
200 to under 2,000 employees	22.2	22.2	22.9
2,000 and more employees	32.7	32.5	31.3
Number of cases	12,403	12,403	1,595

1 The category "Other" refers to people with mini-jobs, irregular employment, and those participating in a volunteer social/ecological year or voluntary military service.

Significance level of the age-adjusted heterosexual people to the LGBTQI\* people: \*p<0.05 \*\*p<0.01 \*\*\*p<0.001;

Source: Socio-Economic Panel v36.beta, LGBielefeld; authors' own calculations.

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LGBTQI\* people (nine versus seven percent (Table 1)). Yet, the acquired qualifications, professional activities, and economic sectors in which LGBTQI\* people work differ more often from those of the heterosexual population.<sup>9</sup>

### Highly educated, rarely dually educated

The share of LGBTQI\* people with a technical or upper secondary degree in the used data is, at 60 percent, significantly higher than for the rest of the population of the same age (42 percent) (Table 2). This finding is consistent with a large number of earlier studies.<sup>10</sup> The Microcensus 2016 revealed similar but less major educational differences between same-sex and different-sex couples.<sup>11</sup> In addition to higher shares of university graduates, which is in line with higher shares of technical school or upper secondary school graduates, there are significantly fewer LGBTQI\* people than heterosexual people of the same age, who have completed vocational training or an apprenticeship in a dual system (27 to 39 percent).<sup>12</sup>

### LGBTQI\* people often work in health care and social services

There are a few minor differences in occupational status between groups. Compared to the heterosexual population of the same age, LGBTQI\* people are somewhat more likely to be self-employed (five percentage points difference) and somewhat less likely to work as blue-collar workers (six percentage points difference).<sup>13</sup> This is consistent with our findings that LGBTQI\* people are more highly educated compared to the heterosexual population (Table 1).

Differences in terms of economic sectors are far more pronounced. For example, there are significantly fewer LGBTQI\* people working in agriculture/forestry, fisheries, mining, manufacturing, energy/water supply, waste disposal, and construction (17 vs. 28 percent). In contrast, LGBTQI\* people work in the health care and social services sector more often than the heterosexual population (24 vs. 16 percent). There is no evidence that LGBTQI\* people work in smaller or larger companies more often than the average heterosexual population.

<sup>9</sup> In this report, we use the phrases "heterosexual people" or "the rest of the population" to refer to people who do not identify as LGBTQI\*. The more precise phrase is "cis-heterosexual people."

<sup>10</sup> Valfort, "LGBTI in OECD Countries: A Review."

<sup>11</sup> The difference in the 2016 Microcensus is, according to our own calculations, 13 percentage points. Cf. Research Data Center of the Federal and State Statistical Offices, *Mikrozensus 2016* (in German). When only individuals with a partner in the household from the SOEP and LGBielefeld data are considered, the difference is 15 percentage points. The differences are therefore of a comparable magnitude. Some studies pose the thesis that more highly educated individuals are more willing to reveal their sexual orientation or gender identity in a survey, cf. Valfort, "LGBTI in OECD Countries: A Review."

<sup>12</sup> In the Microcensus, the difference between same-sex and opposite-sex couples is seven percentage points according to our own calculations and is statistically significant. Cf. Research Data Center of the Federal and State Statistical Offices, *Mikrozensus 2016* (in German).

<sup>13</sup> According to the Microcensus 2016 figures, those in a same-sex partnership were more frequently white-collar workers than those in an opposite-sex partnership. Cf. Research Data Center of the Federal and State Statistical Offices, *Mikrozensus 2016* (in German).

Overall, the results are in line with existing evidence,<sup>14</sup> which has indicated differences in the career paths pursued by LGBTQI\* people and heterosexual people. Thereby, it is a socio-political core objective to understand to what extent the unequal distribution across economic sectors is due to free choices made by LGBTQI\* people—e.g., due to their educational backgrounds—or whether these differences can be attributed to structural barriers for LGBTQI\* people in the labor market.

### Workplace discrimination and being out

It is conceivable that attitudes towards gender and sexual diversity differ across employment sectors and, accordingly, the likelihood for LGBTQI\* people to experience discrimination at work. Therefore, the following sections observe self-reported discrimination of LGBTQI\* people in different areas of their life.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, it is analyzed what share of LGBTQI\* people is out at the workplace and how many possibly are trying to avoid negative consequences by remaining concealed.

### Trans\* people experience discrimination at work most frequently

Around 30 percent of LGBTQI\* people report having experienced discrimination in their work life over the past two years (Figure 1), making work one of the areas in which LGBTQI\* people experience discrimination comparatively often. LGBTQI\* people experience discrimination less often when interacting with the police (six percent), government offices and authorities, or on the housing market (13 percent each). In contrast, everyday discrimination in public and during leisure time is significantly more frequent (40 percent).<sup>16</sup>

Trans\* people in particular report discrimination in their work life (Figure 2). Forty-three percent of trans\* people report experiencing discrimination in their work life over the past two years; seven percent report frequent discrimination.

<sup>14</sup> Kiji Ueno, Teresa Roach, and Abrahám E. Peña-Talamantes, "Sexual Orientation and Gender Typicality of the Occupation in Young Adulthood," *Social Forces* 92, no. 1 (2013): 81-108; Heather Antecol, Anneke Jong, and Michael Steinberger, "The Sexual Orientation Wage Gap: The Role of Occupational Sorting and Human Capital," *ILR Review* 61, no. 4 (2008): 518-543.

<sup>15</sup> We use data on the respondents' self-reported experiences of discrimination. Experimental studies about the risk of discrimination against LGBTQI\* individuals on the labor market also show a measurable disadvantage (compare to job applications: Doris Weichselbaumer, "Sexual Orientation Discrimination in Hiring," *Labour Economics* 10, no. 6 (2003): 629-642; on the differences between self-reported and experimentally measured discrimination, cf. Anne-Luise Baumann, Vera Egenberger, and Linda Supik, *Erhebung von Antidiskriminierungsdaten in repräsentativen Wiederholungsbefragungen. Bestandsaufnahme und Entwicklungsmöglichkeiten*. Hg. v. Antidiskriminierungsstelle des Bundes (in German; available online). Subjective experiences of discrimination have a proven impact on the mental health, social well-being, and life satisfaction. This applies even more when a person perceives their LGBTQI\* identity as the reason for the discrimination. These findings explicitly demonstrate the analytical use of subjective experiences of discrimination. Sarah E. Jackson et al., "Perceived discrimination, health and well-being among middle-aged and older lesbian, gay and bisexual people: A prospective study," *PLoS ONE* 14, no. 5 (2019): 1-5 (available online).

<sup>16</sup> Contact with the police and administration are much less common experiences than contact with others in one's work life, in public, or during one's leisure time. Therefore, the risk of experiencing discrimination in the latter areas is much higher.

Table 2

### LGBTQI\* and heterosexual people according to educational level

Shares in percent

	Heterosexual	Heterosexual (age-adjusted)	LGBTQI*
<b>Highest level of education<sup>1</sup></b>			
No degree yet	1.8	3.6	1.4***
No general school-leaving certificate	2.3	2.2	0.9***
Secondary school degree	21.4	19.3	7.7***
Intermediate school degree	33.9	32.6	30.2
Technical school or upper secondary degree	40.5	42.2	59.8***
Number of cases	13,999	13,999	4,245
<b>Highest level of vocational degree</b>			
Still in training/at university	10.6	14.5	19***
No higher vocational degree	12.5	13.7	13.7
Vocational training/apprenticeship in dual system	42.3	39.3	27.4***
Technical college degree	14.7	13.3	11.8
(Polytechnic) university degree; Ph.D.	16.1	15.8	26.4***
Other degree	3.8	3.4	1.8***
Number of cases	16,323	16,323	4,300

<sup>1</sup> "Other degree" is not included due to differing survey methods used in the samples.

Significance level of the age-adjusted heterosexual people to the LGBTQI\* people: \*\*\*p<0.001.

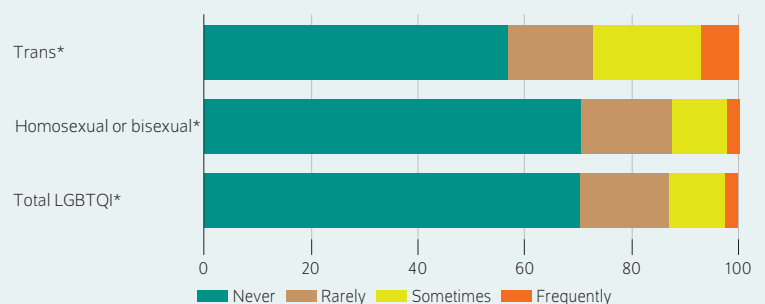
Source: Socio-Economic Panel v36.beta, LGBielefeld; authors' own calculations.

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Figure 2

### Frequency of discrimination due to sexual orientation or gender (-identity) in the work life

Shares in percent



Note: Discrimination due to sexual orientation or gender (identity) in one's work life within the last two years in Germany was surveyed; the total number of cases are 3,380 LGBTQI\* people overall; 3,120 lesbian, gay, or bisexual people, and 153 trans\* people. Here it is not considered that lesbian, gay, or bisexual people can also be trans\* and trans\* people can also be lesbian, gay, or bisexual; the total number of cases is not sufficient for analyzing further subgroups.

Source: Socio-Economic Panel v36.beta, LGBielefeld; authors' own calculations.

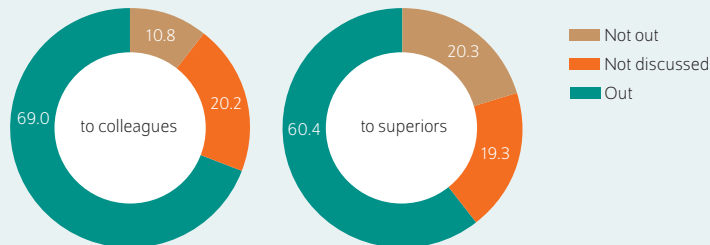
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Trans\* people experience discrimination in their work life more often than lesbian, gay, or bisexual people.

Figure 3

**LGBTQI\* people out at the workplace**

Shares in percent



Note: Unlike the previous analyses, this table refers to people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or trans\*, although the gender identity of the observed lesbian, gay, and bisexual people and the sexual orientation of the observed trans\* people also includes other sexual orientations/gender identities. The number of cases is 3,354 (open to colleagues) and 3,042 (open to superiors).

Source: Socio-Economic Panel v36.beta, LGBielefeld; authors' own calculations.

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Around two thirds of LGBTQI\* people are out at work. Being out to colleagues is more frequent than being out to superiors.

The Advisory Statistics of the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency<sup>17</sup> help us draw conclusions about discrimination in the work life. About 32 percent of all legal counseling requests from LGBTQI\* people in the year 2019 relate to their work life. Of these almost 90 labor market-related requests, almost half were made by people who describe themselves as non-binary, trans\*, or intersex. Although the actual size of this group within LGBTQI\* people is difficult to estimate, it is assumed that sexual and gender minorities are more frequently represented in the requests. The counseling requests relating to work life can be evaluated further. The majority of the requests have to do with employment conditions and promotions within companies. Hiring processes are mentioned far less frequently and only a small proportion relates to employment termination.

### LGBTQI\* people in the industrial and primary sector often remain in the closet

Remaining in the closet to either colleagues or superiors can be an attempt by LGBTQI\* people to avoid unequal treatment or discrimination in their work life. The share of

<sup>17</sup> In 2019, the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency received 3,580 counseling requests relating to the AGG. 281 counseling requests received to sexual identity or gender identity. 89 of these were related to the work life. 50 of these work life related requests were related to employment conditions and promotions, 24 to hiring processes and two to employment termination. The rest did not indicate any reason. However, as there are numerous other counseling sites in Germany, these advisory statistics represent only a small fraction of the actual need for counseling. Cf. Antidiskriminierungsstelle des Bundes, *Mit Rot zur Tat. Perspektiven der Antidiskriminierungsberatung in Deutschland* (2017) (in German; available online); Antidiskriminierungsstelle des Bundes, *Jahresbericht 2019* (2020) (in German; available online). The Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency provided us with the statistics on counseling requests by LGBTQI\* individuals. We would like to thank them for their assistance.

**Box 2****Data infrastructure in Germany and data used**

Empirical research on the living conditions of LGBTQI\* people in Germany so far has been limited. In part, this is due to the fact that information on sexual orientation or gender identity was rarely collected in surveys. To date, this information has never been included in any official register data. Even if information on sexual orientation is collected in surveys relevant to the labor market, the number of observed cases is often too small to make statistically reliable statements. The Microcensus, which is an annual survey conducted by the Federal and State Statistical Offices on one percent of all households in Germany, enables such reliable analyses, but only for same-sex couples living together in a household.<sup>1</sup> This is an incredibly limited subset of LGBTQI\* people. In terms of gender diversity, the data situation is even worse. Beyond the options of male or female (and in few cases, "other"), empirical social research in Germany offers no representative data.

For Germany, data from the Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP) therefore makes a significant improvement to the existing data infrastructure. SOEP is a representative panel survey of private households in Germany that has interviewed all household members on various life domains annually since 1984. Due to the large number of SOEP respondents (currently over 30,000 interviews in over 20,000 households per year), lesbian, gay, and bisexual people are well-represented. In 2016, respondents were asked about their sexual orientation for the first time, enabling lesbian, gay and bisexual respondents to be identified in the SOEP. In 2019, the data infrastructure was expanded by the addition of a randomized sample called "SOEP-LGB," which expanded the SOEP by over 450 further households with at least one non-heterosexual/non-cisgendered household member. These households were identified using randomized telephone screening of the entire adult population in Germany. The SOEP survey includes questions for all respondents on various areas of life such as work, family, and health. The majority of the SOEP interviews are conducted via computer-supported, personal interviews by professional interviewers.

To implement additional, smaller-scale analyses and group comparisons, this report also uses survey data from the "LGBielefeld" project at Bielefeld University. In 2019, parallel to the SOEP survey, LGBTQI\* people were recruited via social media (advertising on Facebook and Instagram) to participate in an online survey. The majority of the questionnaire corresponds to the SOEP questions, enabling the data to be analyzed in combination.

<sup>1</sup> See Andrea Lengerer and Jeanette Bohr, "Gibt es eine Zunahme gleichgeschlechtlicher Partnerschaften in Deutschland? Theoretische Überlegungen und empirische Befunde," *Zeitschrift für Soziologie* 48, no. 2 (2019): 136–157 (in German).



Since the analyses are specific to the labor market, only people between the ages of 18 and 65 were considered in both data sources. In total, survey information from 2019 is available on 16,880 heterosexual and 4,300 LGBTQI\* people between 18 and 65 years old (Table 1).

### Data weighting

All results of this report are based on analyses considering appropriate (preliminary) weighting factors. The weighting factors in the SOEP data are based on different sample drawing probabilities (design weights) and different respondent participation probabilities (non-response weights). Weighing the data this way makes it possible to make general statements on the living situation of LGBTQI\* people in Germany. The data of the non-random LGBielefeld sample were weighted using a marginal fitting procedure (also known as raking or iterative proportional fitting) in such a way that they correspond to the weighted distributions of the SOEP data with respect to the characteristics of age, state, schooling, vocational training, partnership status, and parenthood.

### Age correction

A series of analyses in this report compares a group of heterosexual people with a group of LGBTQI\* people. When observing the age distribution across both groups (Table 2), it is obvious that the average age of LGBTQI\* people (39) is below the average age of heterosexual people (43). While experiencing a non-heterosexual attraction is independent of age, age differences indicate that the development of an LGBTQI\* identity is a social process that varies over time. Accordingly, observed differences in life situations between heterosexual and LGBTQI\* respondents in the analyses could simply be due to the measured age differences. In order to mitigate this risk, the method of "propensity score weighting" by age group is applied. Here, the subsample of heterosexual respondents is weighted so that its age distribution corresponds to that in the LGBTQI\* subsample. Weighting the data in this manner enables a comparison between LGBTQI\* and heterosexual people of the same age. The calculations were conducted with and without the age adjustment, whereby the significance level of the difference between LGBTQI\* and heterosexual people is only depicted for the age-corrected data.

Table 1

### Sexual orientation and gender identity of LGBTQI\* people in the samples used

Shares in percent

	SOEP	LGBielefeld	Overall
<b>Sexual orientation</b>			
Heterosexual <sup>1</sup>	0.4	0.0	0.1
Homosexual	48.2	64.2	61.5
Bisexual	49.7	26.8	30.8
Pansexual	1.2	5.9	5.1
Asexual	0.3	1.2	1.0
Other sexual orientation	0.3	1.8	1.6
Number of cases	743	3,557	4,300
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	43.1	36.1	37.3
Female	52.6	55.6	55.0
Trans*	2.6	5.0	4.6
Other	1.7	3.3	3.1
Number of cases	743	3,557	4,300

1 People who identify as trans\*, non-binary, genderqueer, genderfluid, agender, demigender, and intersex are included in the LGBTQI\* group. If they also identify as heterosexual, it is possible that there is a small share of heterosexual people in the observed LGBTQI\* group.

Source: Socio-Economic Panel v36.beta, LGBielefeld; authors' own calculations.

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Table 2

### Age according to sexual orientation and gender identity

Shares in percent

	Heterosexual	LGBTQI**
18–29	20.0	25.9
30–39	20.5	25.6
40–49	19.7	18.8
50–59	26.3	24.2
60–65	13.5	5.4
Average (in years)	43.3	39.4
Number of cases	16,880	4,300

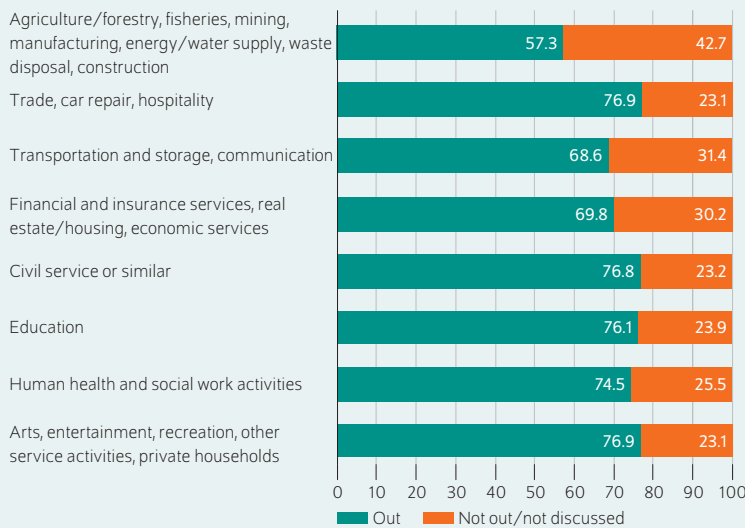
Source: Socio-Economic Panel v36.beta, LGBielefeld; authors' own calculations.

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Figure 4

### Shares of LGBTQI\* people out to colleagues at the workplace according to sector

Shares in percent



Note: Unlike the previous analyses, this table refers to people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or trans\*, although the gender identity of the observed lesbian, gay, and bisexual people and the sexual orientation of the observed trans\* people also includes other sexual orientations/gender identities. The number of cases is 1,208.

Source: Socio-Economic Panel v36.beta, LGBielefeld; authors' own calculations.

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The share of LGBTQI\* people who are open about their sexual orientation or gender identity varies between different sectors.

respondents<sup>18</sup> who do not disclose or mostly conceal their sexual orientation or gender identity to their superiors or colleagues is at about 40 and 31 percent (Figure 3).<sup>19</sup>

There are large differences between economic sectors (Figure 4). For example, especially few employees working in agriculture/forestry, fisheries, mining, manufacturing, energy/water supply, waste disposal, and construction are open with their colleagues about their sexual orientation or gender identity (57 percent). This finding, in combination with the low proportion of LGBTQI\* employees in these industries (Table 1), suggests that a lack of acceptance of LGBTQI\* people in these occupations makes disclosure more difficult and that certain industries therefore may be avoided altogether. In light of these results, it is probable that the unequal distribution of LGBTQI\* and heterosexual people across economic sectors can be attributed in part to structural barriers in the labor market.

### What do LGBTQI\* people want from employers?

LGBTQI\* people value an interesting job, safe and healthy working conditions, and a LGBTQI\*-friendly corporate climate when choosing a potential employer (Figure 5). Even if diversity measures are on average less important for LGBTQI\* people, they are similar to general career-relevant aspects (income, advancement opportunities, employer's success, and reputation). This suggests that companies can increase their attractiveness for LGBTQI\* people by improving their corporate climate.

### Conclusion: Improvements to equality measures needed

The analyses based on the SOEP and LGBielefeld data show that LGBTQI\* people are an above-average qualified group on the labor market, making them attractive potential employees. At the same time, it is clear that LGBTQI\* people are distributed unequally across industries. Our results suggest that LGBTQI\* people select their occupations in part based on how LGBTQI\*-friendly the sector is in order to avoid possible discrimination and allow for safe disclosure of their sexual orientation or gender identity at work. For employers, it is advisable to create an LGBTQI\*-friendly environment at work in order to gain LGBTQI\* people as employees. To achieve this, companies must establish equality policies and promote positive attitudes toward sexual and gender diversity in their respective workplaces.

Figure 5

### Job preferences of LGBTQI\* people

Value on a scale of 1 (not important at all) to 7 (very important)



Note: Total number of cases is 1,472.

Source: LGBielefeld; authors' own calculations.

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Diversity measures are comparatively less important; more important is an LGBTQI\*-friendly corporate climate.

<sup>18</sup> Unlike the previous analyses, the analysis on being out only applies to individuals who identify as homosexual, bisexual, or trans\*, although the gender identity of the homosexual and bisexual individuals observed and the sexual orientation of the trans\* individuals observed also include further sexual orientations and gender identities.

<sup>19</sup> Hiding one's LGBTQI\* identity can have a seriously negative impact on mental health and general life satisfaction. In contrast, living an authentic life has a positive effect. Cf. Ellen D.B. Riggle et al., "Outness, concealment, and authenticity: Associations with LGB individuals' psychological distress and well-being," *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity* 4, no. 1 (2017): 54-62 (available online).

To analyze the living situation of LGBTQI\* people in a more differentiated way, it is necessary to supplement the existing infrastructure of research data, especially in regard to gender identity. To date, almost all surveys in a non-university research context or those conducted by statistical offices still only offer binary gender identity options (female or male). Therefore, it is important that surveys in a non-university research context increasingly include the wider spectrum of sexual orientation and gender identity in order to allow for more far-reaching and differentiated research. Moreover,

statistical offices must begin to survey information on non-binary gender identities in accordance with the reformed civil status register. It is no longer acceptable to lag behind the reality of gender diversity. Failing to do so, furthermore, violates the requirement of the European Council and the EU Commission to ensure differentiated social reporting on sexual orientation and gender identity.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Council of the European Union, *Council conclusions on LGBTI equality* (2016) (available online); EU Commission, *List of actions to advance LGBTI equality* (2020) (available online).

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