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Ana Christina Santos & Rita Alcaire

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Ana Cristina Santos[1] *& Rita Alcaire*[2]

Abstract

Drawing on work done within the CILIA LGBTQI+ study in Portugal, our aim with this paper is to provide a starting point from where to tackle both the tangible impacts and the symbolic dimensions involved in promoting or preventing equality at the workplace. In order to have a better understanding of the current situation regarding LGBTQI+ inequality in employment in the Portuguese context, we started by mapping and analysing existing literature on the subject. Three major tendencies were identified: the compulsory closet, the peripheral nature of law and the conservative rise. The need to place greater analytical focus on intersex, bisexual or non-binary identities in the workplace and on overall intersectional diversity also emerged. Finally, the analysis pointed out the deficit of research on the school to work transition and the role of discrimination in decisions about intimate life and their future impact on mental health issues and gender-based violence.

Keywords: LGBTQI+, equality policies, workplace, discrimination, Portugal

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[1] Ana Cristina Santos, Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra, cristina@ces.uc.pt

[2] Rita Alcaire, Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra, ritaalcaire@ces.uc.pt

Introduction

One goes to work to… work – in Western contemporary societies, the workplace is culturally imagined and spatially constructed as separate from personal life. And indeed that separation is partially responsible for a certain degree of protection from discrimination, for instance by rendering inappropriate and/or illegal to ask questions in a job interview which are related to what is culturally perceived to belong to the intimate sphere, including marital status or reproductive future plans.

However, intimate and family life have increasingly been integrated to inform significant advances regarding labour rights. Social policies fostering work-life balance as well as the right to a reduced shift to breastfeed or to provide care illustrate some of the links between employment and intimate life.

In relation to LGBTQI issues, expectations about heterosexuality and gender conformity in the workplace are often tacit, when not explicit, but they are nevertheless experienced as dominant by LGBTQI workers (Button, 2004; Griffith and Hebl, 2002; King et al., 2013; Ragins, 2004). Such perception is often in contrast with existing laws designed to protect the worker from any form of discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, as it is the case with the Employment Equality Directive, ratified by all member states of the EU in 2000 (Directive 2000/78/EC).

In Portugal, job-related discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity or expression can be particularly devastating if we take into account both the recent past of right-wing dictatorship (from 1926 to 1974), the culturally ingrained Catholicism[1] and the wave of precariousness that has swept across Southern Europe in the last decade (Hines et al, 2018).

If we consider the sphere of law, formal protection and recognition of LGBTQI rights have had substantial developments since the early 2000s. In 2003, the new Labour Code, approved by law nº. 99/2003 (August 27th), later regulated by law no. 35 / 2004 (July 29th), explicitly included the prohibition of direct or indirect (formal practices of) discrimination based on sexual orientation. The burden of proving or refuting the existence of discrimination becomes the employer's responsibility. In other words, faced with a sustained complaint from a worker, it is up to the employer to prove that no discrimination took place, resulting in a clear benefit of the person who was discriminated against. Also the right to the privacy of private life became safeguarded, especially regarding family, affective and sexual life, state of health or political and religious convictions.

The concept of harassment, understood as discrimination in the new legislation, was extended to include all unwanted behavior (of a sexual nature, in a verbal, nonverbal or physical form), with the purpose or effect of distressing dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or destabilizing environment.[2]

[1] According to some authors, the influence of the Catholic Church is decreasing (Dix, 2010). However, the social and political impact of the Catholic culture remains pervasive.

[2] Despite advances in the Portuguese Labour Code, there is no formal institution that investigates discrimination complaints based on sexual orientation and gender identity in the workplace.

The following year, a non-discrimination clause based on "sexual orientation" was included in the Portuguese Constitution. Portugal thus became the first European country and the fourth worldwide to establish in its Constitution that citizens could not be discriminated against based on sexual orientation. These, amongst other significant legal changes occurred between 2001 and 2018 (including same-sex marriage, adoption and assisted reproduction, as well as a gender recognition law based on self-determination), have placed Portugal amongst the most inclusive countries regarding the formal recognition of LGBTQI rights (Rainbow Europe, 2019).

Notwithstanding significant changes regarding formal recognition of LGBTQI$^+$ rights in Portugal since 2001, hetero and cisnormativity remain pervasive cultural scripts (Roseneil et al., 2013; Santos, 2013). Indeed, the impacts of legal change are often reduced to a symbolic level, remaining difficult to be assessed on a daily basis, especially in settings where a strong institutional culture inscribes lasting ways of doing and relating. The workplace is one of the spheres in which discrimination is more visible. This is demonstrated by the fact that coming out to one's line manager or co-worker as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or queer is less common than coming out in other contexts (Button, 2004; Griffith and Hebl, 2002; Ragins, 2004). Difficulties in coming out at the workplace – whether real or perceived to be real – illustrate the gap between law-in-books and law-in-action, as we will see later on in this paper. Nevertheless, and despite the vitality of the Labour Movement (especially trade unionism) in Portugal in the 1980s and the 1990s, there is little socio-political debate about discrimination at the workplace based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Gender-based inequality in the workplace has generically been discussed in terms of discrimination and pay gap between women and men (Casaca, 2012; Schouten, 2017), with little to no attention paid to LGBTQI$^+$ work-related issues. There are a few and fairly recent exceptions to this absence and those mostly stem from the work conducted by NGOs and quantitative (Dinis, 2015; Filipe, 2017) and qualitative-based research (Nogueira and Oliveira, 2010; Brandão, 2013; Machado, 2016; Carneiro, 2016) from areas such as sociology, economy and, most notably, psychology.

Our aim with this working paper is to provide a starting point from where to tackle both the tangible impacts and the symbolic dimensions involved in promoting or preventing equality at the workplace. From feeling ignored or being dismissed, having experienced negative evaluations and/or refusals of promotion, to ostracization and bullying, LGBTQI$^+$ people are overwhelmingly faced with having to remain in the closet in the spaces in which they spend most of their daily lives (Carneiro, 2016). Such unspoken expectation is part of what we suggest to call the glass ceiling in operation. According to the notion of a heterocisnormative glass ceiling, any information regarding sexual orientation or gender identity is to remain separate from the workplace. This separation is often disguised as respect for privacy, when it actually consists of replicating a new dichotomy of private and public, whilst imposing the closet as the new normativity. In so doing, the imaginary of the straight cisgender male breadwinner remains untouched and unchallenged, further contributing to a culture in which labour rights are not designed to address other equally important spheres of intersectional belonging.

Drawing on work done within the CILIA LGBTQI$^+$ study in Portugal,[3] in this working paper we offer an exploratory analysis based on relevant surveys conducted by Portuguese

[3] In the CILIA LGBTQI$^+$ research a mixed-methods research design, across five, interconnected, work-packages is used, including secondary analysis, interviews and modelling through a multi agent-based, social simulation

NGOs and a literature review of scholarly work on LGBTQI+ experiences in the workplace in Portugal. Through this analysis we identify patterns of (in)equalities that affect the professional lives of people with non-normative sexual orientations and gender identities in specific life course transitioning moments, in particular the transition into adulthood and the so-called rush-hour of life (mid-term career). In the last section of the paper, we suggest ways for reframing research and policy around inequality at the workplace by addressing LGBTQI+ specificities and also the impact of austerity measures and precariousness in Southern Europe.

Literature and survey review of LGBTQI+ discrimination in the workplace in Portugal

According to data collected for the EU LGBT Survey (FRA, 2020), 40% of the Portuguese respondents felt discriminated because of their gender or sexual orientation in at least one area of life in the year before the survey. These results are in line with the European average (42%) and with data reported by the previous EU LGBT Survey (51%, against 47% for the EU) (FRA, 2014) and other studies. For instance, a study on discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in Portugal found empirical evidence of high discrimination against LGBT population, with homosexual people feeling more discriminated than bisexual people and the same with lesbians compared to gay men (Nogueira et al., 2010). Also supporting this study, the results of the Eurobarometer show that almost half of the respondents (around 500) stated that discrimination based on sexual orientation is very common in Portugal, so much so that it is considered to be the main forms of discrimination compared to discrimination based on ethnic origin, religion or age (Eurobarometer, 2012).

International academic literature indicates that discrimination of LGBTQI+ workers in the workplace affects the recruitment process, and is connected to employment loss, difficulty in getting a promotion and inferior salaries compared to heterosexual colleagues, with performance evaluation done by superiors being strongly based on this single trait (Siqueira and Zauli-Fellows, 2006). The same literature also mentions that LGBTQI+ individuals remain in the closet and end up isolating themselves for fear of harming themselves professionally. This phenomenon contributes to the development of a work environment with low levels of satisfaction and productivity and leads to emotional distress and non-cohesive working groups where communication failures and conflicts are constant.

model. The project has been successfully approved by the hosting university's Ethics Committee and complies with all the requirements regarding data collection, data protection and data storage. Most data is gathered through qualitative methods designed to acquire in-depth information about LGBTQI+ intersectional life course inequalities, at an experiential and subjective level. It draws on a detailed examination of interconnections, reflexivity and intersections across LGBTQI+ citizens' lives. Whilst the sampling is also cross-sectional, the qualitative methods used are intended to encourage the participants to reflect on their past and future transitions in a retrospective/prospective way: for instance, younger LGBTQI+ participants are asked to reflect on their school to work transitions and then asked to consider future employment and retirement transitions. Older LGBTQI+ participants are asked to reflect on all previous transitions and consider their later life. The current article draws on work-package 1 on Life Course Intersectional Inequalities through Secondary Analysis of existing datasets and Literature.

As mentioned in the Introduction, the protection of LGB workers against discrimination is well established by the Employment Equality Directive 2000/78/EC. The results of the EU LGBT Survey (FRA, 2014) showed that only half of the respondents mentioned having prior knowledge of this law, matching the European average of 56%. However, even with the existence of the Equality Directive, the analysis of data collected from this population in Portugal showed that LGB people nevertheless feel discrimination in the workplace (19% of respondents to a European average 18%) and in the job recruitment process (12% of European respondents, with no specific percentages for Portugal). Regarding access to employment, (on average) a quarter of the Portuguese population considers that sexual orientation of a candidate is an adverse factor in accessing employment (Eurobarometer, 2012).

Literature based on LGBTQI$^+$ experiences in Portugal had already shown that work and education are spheres of contention for people who may feel trapped in invisibility and other forms of discrimination: 20% of LGBTI people living in Portugal felt discriminated against at work in the year before the EU LGBT Survey (FRA, 2020). Curiously enough, the topic remains understudied in Portuguese academia with few texts addressing issues related to discrimination of LGBTQI$^+$ workers. Considering that silence can also constitute a discriminatory practice, it is important to note that literature that we found focuses mostly on lesbian women and gay men, with bisexual people being referenced *en passant*, and trans, queer, intersex and non-binary remaining disregarded by literature in their specificities regarding the workplace.

One of the main findings of the existing academic literature on workplace experiences of lesbian and gay workers in Portugal is their constant need to manage and negotiate sexual orientation and gender identity at the workplace (Brandão, 2013; Machado, 2016), a type of persistent self-surveillance that places these workers in a disadvantaged position in relation to their heterosexual colleagues.

In our analysis of the existing literature we came across three different strategies of identity management that have been adopted by lesbian and gay workers. The focus on lesbian and gay workers in this section is a direct result of the absence of published material about the experience of bisexual, transgender, intersex and non-binary workers, a topic to which we will return later on in the paper.

The first strategy is to reveal their sexual orientation. Empirical data shows that making non-heterosexual orientations more visible can indeed bring personal benefits to workers, such as building closer and more meaningful relationships with co-workers and increasing performance and satisfaction at work. This is usually done by people to whom their LGBTQI$^+$ identity is central. Keeping one's sexual orientation and private life a secret was reported as a source of sadness, discomfort and of not feeling true to one's self with direct consequences on work performance (Machado, 2016).

A second strategy could be described as the other side of the "don't ask, don't tell" coin. This is the strategy of 'If asked, I answer'. In this case, disclosure happens only when answering a direct question posed by someone else about their sexual orientation. For these LGBTQI$^+$ workers, sexual orientation is only one part of their identity, but not central.

Finally, LGBTQI$^+$ workers may also adopt a third strategy – passing – which refers to an incorrect assessment of the LGBT person by other people, assuming their heterosexuality. This

does not mean that their identity is not important to them or that they are somehow ashamed but appears a strategy for safety, so they play along the heterosexual script.

Irrespectively of the adopted strategy, most participants in these studies felt compelled to actively construct a wall of silence around their sexuality by separating "work life" from "personal life". In this way, being lesbian or gay at work usually requires cautious negotiation concerning the crossing of the private world – one that unfolds outside the scope of work – and the professional sphere – which does not mean public and extends through multiple activities that go beyond the work context. This is also an interesting point, for choosing not to reveal their sexual orientation at work does not mean that LGBTQI^{+} workers do not reveal their sexual orientation in other social spaces.

In the academic research that composes our sample the intersection between these two worlds is clearly marked by the existence or perception of a safe workspace**.** Bringing elements of the personal and private into the professional world safely depends on non-stigmatization and the type of encouragement received in that environment. For example, LGBTQI^{+} workers have reported that, more than having inclusive guidelines in their workplace, they feel safer working in places where there is no dress code or strong formalities. More informality is perceived as leading to less power asymmetry that encourages closer bonds with co-workers and line managers.

In line with this, networks of care and friendship in the work place are crucial in terms of disclosing one's sexual orientation or not at work and consequently influence the experience of these workers in terms of work satisfaction and performance (Brandão, 2013; Machado, 2016). Other research conducted on identity and discrimination of LGBT people, Oliveira et al. (2010) corroborates this. In this study, averages concerning the importance of friendship circles in terms of coming out and openly discussing sexual orientation are explicit, pointing to the fact that LGBT people rely mainly on siblings, the mother or co-workers.[4]

In addition to the overall working environment and relationship with colleagues, identity management strategies also seem to be dependent on the type of contract, the sector of activity (public or private) and the type of permanence in the workplace. Precariousness seems to play a key role in deciding whether to come out or to stay away from unwanted attentions, based on risk assessment. Precarious jobs offer less security and, as such, vulnerable workers would rather repress their right to enjoy their "full intimate citizenship" (Roseneil, 2010) then to risk losing their regular source of income.[5]

Several factors such as class and education are at play and must be considered when it comes to identity management and perceived or real discrimination at work. In a study that explored organizational homophobia, namely its impacts on LGB workers in Portugal, Dinis (2015) declares that the respondents rarely felt discriminated against and were overall satisfied with their workplace. Nevertheless, participants with a higher levels of education reported lower levels of discrimination as opposed to participants with lower education levels who reported a

[4] The same does not seem to apply to fathers and line managers, seen as figures of authority with whom you should not discuss your personal life.

[5] According to Roseneil, the demand for a full intimate citizenship aims for "the freedom and ability to construct and live selfhood and a wide range of close relationships – sexual/love relationships, friendships, parental and kin relations – safely, securely and according to personal choice, in their dynamic, changing forms, with respect, recognition and support from state and civil society." (2010: 82).

bigger perception of discriminatory acts. Also, this study revealed that the numbers of reported discrimination increase in direct connection to the size of the company, with smaller workplaces reporting less.

Filipe (2017) provided an estimation of wage gaps on primary employment by virtue of sexual orientation. Research showed no significant statistical evidence of wage gaps for gay and lesbian workers, considering the sample and used methods (exact matching and regression methods). From the analysis of the results, the author states that what she describes as "gay characteristics" (2017: 25) – explained as features which are usually attributed by dominant culture to gay people – attenuate the negative wage gaps; for lesbian women, the observed covariates induce a more severe wage gap. Though imprecise, data also showed evidence that taste for discrimination[6] may exist in individuals disclosing their homosexuality. Although the previously described empirical results point towards a no discrimination conclusion, the small evidence of discrimination together with the non-negligible proportion of LG workers in fear of disclosing their sexual orientation at work (already stated as an important issue), demand further investigation. Moreover, because the empirical results are only a particular conclusion for the samples used in this study, a generalisation of the no discrimination conclusion requires further analysis of the sample.

Empirical data gathered by the INTIMATE – Citizenship, Care and Choice: The Micropolitics of Intimacy in Southern Europe project, a five years cross national study funded by the European Research Council between 2014 and 2019, revealed that more than two thirds of the 85 participants in Portugal, Spain and Italy had a college degree (60/85), over one third earned less than 999€ monthly (37/85) and only one third had a full time job (35/85). These figures are particularly significant when we consider that job precariousness is a crucial indicator of discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression (Santos, 2018, 2019).

In addition to published research, the INTIMATE project revealed important differences between law-in-books and law-in-action when it comes to LGBTQI$^+$ people in Southern Europe. These differences are illustrated by the daily experiences of LGBTQI$^+$ people whose harsh encounters with mainstream heterocisnormativity are not a thing from the past and have not been undone by inclusive laws (Santos, 2019).

Tendencies emerging from thematic analysis – preliminary discussion of secondary data

Caution in extrapolating results from these texts or additional material we encountered (e.g. NGO surveys and reports) is necessary, considering both the complexity of the issues involved but also the scarcity of data available. Differences in sample size, recruitment strategies and methods, as well as the geographical contexts and time-frame, and in each study's aims make it difficult to compare and contrast the results. Nevertheless, by conducting a thematic analysis

[6] Taste for discrimination (Becker, 1957) refers to when employers, considering maximisation of utility instead of profit, either offer worse employment conditions to homosexuals or prefer heterosexual employees even if they lower productivity or requiring higher wages.

that focuses on major themes and gaps in literature and surveys, the analysis produced so far will hopefully contribute to a better understanding of tendencies and absences in the field of LGBTQI$^+$ discrimination in the workplace in Portugal.

A major theme stemming from the studies about LGBTQI$^+$ discrimination we gathered is the compulsory closet. From feeling ignored or being dismissed, having experienced negative evaluations and/or refusals of promotion, to ostracization and bullying, LGBTQI$^+$ people are overwhelmingly faced with having to remain in the closet in the spaces in which they spend most of their daily lives (Carneiro, 2016). Such tacit, unspoken expectation is part of what we suggest to call a heterocisnormative glass ceiling in operation, according to which information regarding sexual orientation or gender identity is to remain separate from the workplace as structural homophobia and transphobia constitute and/or are perceived as a *de facto* blockage obstructing any prospect of a successful career development. This culturally forceful separation between intimacy and work is often framed as respect for individual's private life, but it in fact consists of replicating a new dichotomy private/public which imposes the closet as a new work-related normativity. Even at times in which the legal framework promotes equality regardless of gender identity and sexual orientation – as it is the case in Portugal from 2001 onwards (Santos, 2013) –, the compulsory closet is still supported by the lived experience of the participants interviewed in the CILIA LGBTQI$^+$ study in Portugal, in all age groups and across their life span. Furthermore, even when the closet is undone by the employee, the work-related mainstream ethics imposes a silence around the issue, replicating in the workplace what Švab (2016) has described as the "transparent closet", referring originally to the context of the family of origin: "The transparent closet refers to those social situations where a child's homosexual orientation is acknowledged within the family but is not further discussed. Parents (or other family members) refuse to accept and deal with the consequences and meanings of the new information" (Švab and Kuhar, 2014: 19).[7] We suggest the transparent closet is often in operation in the workplace, not only as the well-documented "don't ask, don't tell" policy, but also as in the culturally tacit norm of "even if you do tell, I will not acknowledge it".

A second theme that seems to run through the studies is that law occupies a secondary place in the day-to-day experience of the office. Law is imagined as a last resource, to be considered in case of conflict or an equivalent situation. Other factors such as the fear of discrimination from co-workers or line-managers concur when deciding whether or not to come out at the workplace, and legal protection is not a key aspect in that decision-making process. Therefore, unambiguous proactive measures put in place by the employer would be crucial in promoting equality at the workplace. The daily lives of LGBTQI$^+$ workers are guided by a set of normativities that run parallel and/or beyond legal provisions.

Finally, a third tendency stems from the analytic triangulation of academic literature and news reports. This tendency can be designated as the conservative rise. The conservative rise is also present in several of the interviews conducted for the CILIA LGBTQI$^+$ project, in which participants describe preventive practices to avoid street harassment and other forms of gender-based violence. Such practices include avoiding walking hand-in-hand, displaying

[7] For further reflections about the resilience of the transparent closet in the family context, please refer to Švab, 2016.

respectability and being generally cautious with people around.[8] Interviewees also mentioned having witnessed homophobic aggressions and the destruction of LGBTQI+ graphic materials (especially posters announcing the Pride March) by tearing them up or writing homophobic slurs over them. In the Portuguese context, this rise of the conservative wing is anchored in two powerful value-discourses that have recently emerged: the attack on political correctness and the emergence of the gender ideology panic.

Political correctness has been criticized as an imposition that is in striking contradiction with freedom of expression, a new form of reverse censorship. This is to say that allegedly exaggerated concerns with rights and respect for diversity have led to banning certain jokes or statements, and when people react against what they perceive as homophobic or transphobic this can be dismissed as over-reacting.

What we suggest to designate as the gender ideology panic has been consolidating from 2015 onwards in countries such as Brazil or Italy, but in Portugal no expression of such is known prior to 2018 (Mariano, 2020; Santos, 2021, forthcoming). In the early days of November 2018, a nationalistic collective self-identified as *Identitarian Shield* (*Escudo Identitário*) spread hundreds of posters in secondary schools across the country featuring the words: "Danger! Gender Ideology". Apart from this direct action, which newspapers described as part of the rise of the extreme-right[9], there are signs that add increasing support to this social panic, supported by moderate religious groups and centre-right and right-wing parties. In the early months of 2019, this topic has gained wider expression both in Parliament and in the media under the idea of "leave our children alone", with regular statements against the pro-diversity school curricula.[10] This general idea signals a demand that intersects the alleged child's best interest with parental responsibility, to claim the right of parents to prevent schools from addressing topics related to sexual and/or gender diversity. It has also been used in relation to conversion therapies, also in the Portuguese context, despite the public disapproval from the College of Psychologists.[11]

Combined, the two value discourses pose serious obstacles in attempting to tackle discrimination at the workplace in what is already a difficult terrain.

The compulsory closet, the peripheral nature of law and the conservative rise – these were the three major tendencies (and related gaps) identified through thematic analysis. These tendencies facilitate the sociological understanding of the heterocisnormative obstacles to career progression in the Portuguese context.

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[8] See, for instance, https://www.publico.pt/2020/09/07/p3/cronica/maos-dadas-direitos-percepcao-seguranca-espaco-publico-pessoas-lgbtqi-1930224.

[9] Please refer to https://www.jn.pt/nacional/interior/grupo-colou-cartazes-contra-ideologia-de-genero-em-300-escolas-10158558.html

[10] See, for instance, https://www.publico.pt/2020/09/08/opiniao/opiniao/nao-opiniao-discriminacao-1930697.

[11] In this regard, it should be noted the significant mobilization of over 250 psychologists who, faced with an apparent condoning of conversion therapies by the professional association, in January 2019 issued an Open Letter demanding clearer policies and action from the College of Psychologists. The Open Letter can be read in full in https://www.publico.pt/2019/01/14/sociedade/opiniao/carta-aberta-ordem-psicologos-portugueses-1857704 (accessed 14/04/2019).

Minding the gaps in future research and policy about inequality at the workplace

However scarce, the existing data about LGBTQI$^+$ inequalities in the workplace in the Portuguese context both illustrates and encourages future research, minding the gaps and placing greater analytical focus on the areas left unattended, including different groups/populations that have not been addressed by research in an intersectional way. For instance, there are no studies or published articles about intersex, bisexuality or non-binary identities in the workplace. Also, the meagre contemporary research on LGBTQI$^+$ inequalities in the workplace stems from and is mostly about Lisbon and other large cities which begs for research that takes into account LGBTQI individuals from other parts of the country, including the Autonomous Regions of Madeira and the Azores, to understand how these (in)equalities are experienced in different geographical and socio-political contexts. The samples also show that the participants are quite normative: no studies on sex workers, drug users, refugees, disabled people or working class. In addition, there seems to be a considerable lack of attention regarding ethnic or "racial" diversity, which reinforces the dominant narratives produced by white workers.

Besides certain identity profiles left unattended, there are also certain topics concerning LGBTQI$^+$ discrimination in the workplace that have not caught scholarly attention yet. In general, life-course studies do not exist in Portugal as a standardized research field.

A meaningful volume of academic work remains focused on LGBTQ discrimination in the school context, but there is no published data focused on the transitioning moment from school to work as it is experienced by LGBTQI$^+$ people. The relationship between bullying in school context and the decision-making process regarding pursuing a college degree or choosing a career path has not been studied. Existing literature also does not explore the impacts of bullying in school years on the intimate decision-making processes regarding the choice of having (or not having) children, of getting partnered (or not), etc., even when it is recognised that schools are the second most common locus for LGBTQI$^+$ discrimination, immediately after the family context (Vale de Almeida, 2010; ENAE Jovens LGBTI$^+$, 2018). Likewise, the future impacts on mental health issues of gender-based violence or other forms of discrimination based on sexual orientation experienced in schools remain absent from existing literature.

Outside the school context, the extent to which job-related discrimination has a negative impact upon individual lives is also not taken into account seriously by Portuguese-based academic literature so far, despite the sound work conducted by scholars in the field of Sociology of Labour and Employment. Future entanglements in this field of research will include necessarily a focus on bisexual, transgender, non-binary and intersex work-related biographies. Parallel to this, literature on older lesbians, trans, bisexuals and intersex people in Portugal must be encouraged and developed. There is no archive of theses identities and lived experiences. More specifically, it is important to advance ways of (re)thinking the logic of balancing labour and family life, as well as increasing satisfaction in the workplace taking into account the damages caused by structural homophobia and transphobia. This aspect seems to acquire greater importance when we bring into the fore the harsh impact of austerity measures and the resulting precariousness in Southern Europe.

The exploratory analysis of existing literature and surveys we conducted enables additional conclusions. New methodologies and approaches are needed to fully grasp the complexity of this subject. Although the academic materials we collected are mostly based on qualitative methodologies, biographies are rarely discussed, and their use could bring more in-depth and layered knowledge on queer realities. The study of friendship and networks of care involving LGBTQI$^+$ people in Portugal is very recent and much of the existing research has not been published yet.[12] This is the more relevant when one considers that friendship in the workplace is described in literature as a key (Brandão, 2013; Machado, 2016), positive factor with direct impact in the decision of coming out in the workplace.

In conclusion, the glass ceiling is not a rainbow-blind glass ceiling; on the contrary, it requires homophobic and transphobic complacent practices and value-discourses to maintain structural inequalities which are subjectively experienced by LGBTQI$^+$ workers on a daily basis.

Research projects such as CILIA LGBTQI+ are crucial to advance ways of (re)thinking the logic of balancing labour and family life, increasing satisfaction in the workplace, but also addressing the impact of austerity measures and job precariousness. Rethinking work/life balance from a queer-friendly perspective also entails recognizing kinship beyond biology and friends as fundamental sources of care and support on a daily basis, including balancing the emotional and material costs of inequality in the workplace.

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[12] One important landmark in this respect was the International Conference Queering Friendship, organized by the INTIMATE research project in 2018. For further information, refer to the INTIMATE website: www.ces.uc.pt/intimate and Santos, 2018.

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