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University of Southampton

Faculty of Environmental and Life Sciences

School of Psychology

Gender Representation Beyond the Binary: New Possibilities and Understandings

by

Jamie Thomas Wilson

Thesis for the degree of Doctorate in Educational Psychology

June 2022

University of Southampton

Abstract

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In Western society, there is a pervasive view that only two fixed, biologically determined, gender identities exist (e.g., 'male' and 'female'). These constructions form the basis of hetero- and cis-normativity: the dominant societal assumptions that heterosexuality and binary models of gender are natural and normal. These assumptions do not represent everyone (e.g., LGBTQ+; gender-diverse populations) and problems related to these assumptions are evidenced within society (e.g., school systems). This thesis understands that, for some, gender beyond the binary is possible. To engage with these possibilities, it is recognised that multiple realities exist and are placed within an individual's language, interpretations, and interactions. The aim of this thesis is to attend to multiple *representations* of gender and additionally *represent* the voices of individuals who are marginalised within societal assumptions.

With these ventures in mind, two research enquiries were undertaken. Using meta-ethnography, a systematic literature review was conducted to explore how those who identify outside of the gender binary, around the world, construct their gender or related constructs. This review placed emphasis on how some individuals (e.g., 'non-binary'; 'genderqueer') are held particularly accountable to Western constructions of gender and the social worlds around them, making their truths difficult to exist. Following this, an empirical research project was undertaken that took constructions elicited from the systematic literature review to a panel of young people based in the UK. Through a consensus building methodology, the panel were asked to consider what they feel is important to the way in which gender is viewed. From their views, a new framework to the ways in which gender could be viewed was co-created and is represented within the empirical paper. Through both research enquiries, implications for educational professionals, researchers, and policy makers are considered in relation to the dominance of hetero- and cis-normativity. This includes recognising that, for some, gender can transcend fixed and biologically determined possibilities, gender can exist outside or within binary constructions, and gender can fluctuate through time and social worlds. Recommendations are made to allow marginalised voices the autonomy, space, and understanding to construct a gender possibility that is true to them. Strengths and limitations of each research enquiry are considered.

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	i
Table of Tables	v
Table of Figures	vii
Research Thesis: Declaration of Authorship	ix
Acknowledgements	xi
Definitions and Abbreviations	xiii
Chapter 1 Introduction	15
1.1 Overview.....	15
1.2 Rationale and relevance to Educational Psychologists	15
1.3 Aims	16
1.4 Ontology and epistemology	17
1.5 Reflexivity and queer theory	18
1.6 Dissemination plan	20
1.7 References.....	21
Chapter 2 Co-constructing a gender identity outside of the binary: A systematic review and meta-ethnography	27
2.1 Introduction.....	27
2.2 Method	30
2.3 Findings	39
2.3.1 Overview of included studies	39
2.3.2 Identifying and negotiating possibilities through introspection.....	43
2.3.3 Considering how to name and place their identity, within available terminology	45
2.3.4 Considering when to make a gender-diverse identity visible and invisible.....	47
2.3.5 Considering how to employ physical embodiments of gender	49
2.3.6 Validating their identity, whilst managing transnormativity	50
2.4 Discussion	52
2.4.1 Limitations.....	53
2.4.2 Conclusion	55

Table of Contents

2.5	References	56
Chapter 3 Co-creating a new theory of gender beyond the binary: A Delphi study63		
3.1	Introduction	63
3.1.1	Normative school environments	64
3.1.2	A perpetual, binary model of gender	64
3.1.3	Contemporary models of gender.....	65
3.1.4	Rationale for the current study	66
3.2	Method	66
3.2.1	Design and procedure.....	66
3.2.2	Participants	69
3.2.3	Analysis	74
3.3	Results.....	75
3.4	Discussion.....	79
3.4.1	Gender can transcend essentialism and determinism	80
3.4.2	Gender can exist outside, or within, binary constructs.....	80
3.4.3	Gender identities can fluctuate through time and social worlds.....	81
3.4.4	Gender can exist on a continuum.....	82
3.4.5	Language can act as a tool to interpret and construct gender.....	83
3.4.6	Strengths and limitations.....	84
3.4.7	Conclusion.....	85
3.5	References	87
Appendix A Critical appraisal of empirical studies using qualitative CASP checklists.....95		
Appendix B Meta-ethnography tables		
B.1	Phase 5: Translate the studies into one another.....	117
B.2	Phase 6: Synthesising the translations	126
Appendix C Definitions provided to panellists during Delphi study.....133		
Appendix D Recruitment flyer.....135		
Appendix E Participation consent form.....137		
Appendix F Delphi feedback report examples.....141		
F.1	Delphi feedback report example: Round one.....	141

F.2 Delphi feedback report example: Round two149

Appendix G Delphi statements that did not reach consensus.....157

List of References161

Table of Tables

Table 1 <i>The phases of meta-ethnography (Britten & Pope, 2012)</i>	30
Table 2 <i>Terms and Boolean operators used in systematic literature search</i>	31
Table 3 <i>Inclusion and exclusion criteria</i>	32
Table 4 <i>Study characteristics</i>	35
Table 5. <i>Stages of the meta-ethnography process (adapted from Britten & Pope, 2012)</i>	41
Table 6 <i>Participants' demographic information</i>	70
Table 7 <i>Participants' self-constructed identities</i>	71
Table 8 <i>Summary of total number of statements included in this Delphi study.</i>	75
Table 9 <i>'Very important' to the way in which gender should be viewed</i>	77
Table 10 <i>'Important' to the way in which gender should be viewed</i>	77
Table 11 <i>'Not at all important' to the way in which gender should be viewed</i>	79

Table of Figures

Figure 1 <i>PRISMA diagram</i>	33
Figure 2. <i>Visual representation of final translation of concepts</i>	43
Figure 3 <i>Summary of Delphi process</i>	68
Figure 4 <i>Visual representation of statements reaching consensus</i>	76

Research Thesis: Declaration of Authorship

Print name: Jamie Thomas Wilson

Title of thesis: Gender representation beyond the binary: New possibilities and understandings

I declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
7. None of this work has been published before submission

Signature:

Date: 03/06/2022

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Definitions and Abbreviations

BBC	British Broadcasting Company
BPS	British Psychological Society
CASP	Critical Skills Appraisal Programme
ERIC	Education Resources Information Center
EP	Educational Psychologist
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, and the '+' is intended to encompass all other sexual and gender minority identities
LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Androgynous, and the '+' is intended to encompass all other sexual and gender minority identities
PRISMA.....	Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

This thesis is organised to the PhD three paper format. Chapter 1 provides the rationale and relevance to Educational Psychologists (EPs), aims, research positions, and my own reflexivity. Chapters 2 and 3 should be read as self-contained pieces of work, which have been prepared for submission to publication in selected, peer-reviewed journals. The overarching aim of the thesis is to represent diverse possibilities and constructions of gender, which have been collected from the voices of gender-diverse populations and allies who seek to support them. “Gender-diverse” captures a range of individuals who do not conform to society’s norms or values of their assigned fixed gender at birth (e.g., ‘male’ or ‘female’) (Thorne et al., 2019).

1.2 Rationale and relevance to Educational Psychologists

This body of work has been created during a period of challenge for gender-diverse communities in the UK. At the time of writing, political leaders have excluded transgender identified individuals from a proposed ban on conversion therapy (Gallagher & Perry, 2022), organisations (such as the BBC) have withdrawn Stonewall support due to the charity’s trans-inclusive stance (Waterson, 2021), and the Prime Minister has expressed their desire to ‘protect’ single-sex spaces (Allegretti & Brooks, 2022). Such messages are problematic for gender-diverse communities, especially where research suggests that when leaders distribute polarising messages, an increase in these behaviours from the public is expected to follow (Jones & Brewer, 2020). Some have expressed opinion that the current conversation bears resemblance to a moral panic (Barker, 2017; Jones, 2022), which has been compared to public opinion and restrictive policies in the latter half of the last century, including Section 28 of the Local Government Act (1988), which prohibited the ‘promotion of homosexuality’ in schools and the ‘teaching... of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship’ (Section 2A1).

Current and historic messages are rooted within heteronormativity: the dominant societal assumptions that heterosexuality and binary models of gender are natural and normal (McBride & Schubotz, 2017). Binary models may also be explained by cisnormativity: the assumption that everyone identifies with the fixed gender assigned to them at birth (McBride & Neary, 2021). These assumptions are relevant to young lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people, and those whose sexual orientations or gender identities do not conform to heteronormativity (henceforth LGBTQ+ people); their lives pose a direct challenge to these normative assumptions.

Chapter 1

Research shows that heteronormative assumptions exist within institutions (such as schools), often creating adverse experiences for some youth populations, such as discrimination, victimisation, and rejection (Bradlow et al., 2017; Kosciw et al., 2020), impacting young people's social, emotional, and academic outcomes.

LGBTQ+ issues are relevant to the work of Educational Psychologists (EPs) in the UK, who have an ethical duty of care of respect and responsibility to all humans (British Psychological Society, 2021). A duty of care towards LGBTQ+ populations is evidenced in the recent history of educational psychology; EPs previously voiced concerns related to Section 28 within research publications (Monsen, 2001), which posed a direct challenge to public policy and discourse at the time (see Sargeant et al., 2022 for a summary). Two decades on, the challenge remains *whether* and *how* EPs should support these young populations. For example, there is currently no guidance from our professional body, the BPS, about working with young LGBTQ+ populations; Standards created in 2019 were later repealed, with the BPS clarifying that the guidance should only be applied to people aged 18 or over. Whilst there remains a lack of support from our institutions, EPs seem keen to exercise their duty of care and have expressed their desire to advocate for the needs and perspectives of these populations (Allen-Biddell & Bond, 2022; Yavuz, 2016).

1.3 Aims

This thesis attempts to attend to contemporary understandings of gender through educational psychology. This was achieved through two studies that explored the views of gender-diverse populations. Within my systematic literature review, I explored the question: "How do those outside of the gender binary, around the world, construct their gender or related constructs?" This study was conducted via meta-ethnography, which elicited constructions from qualitative papers identified via a systematic search strategy. It was hoped that findings would elicit constructions offered by those outside of the gender binary, which may be able to inform a research response against the rigidity of society's assumptions of gender, thus acting as a vehicle for change.

The empirical paper continues along tracks laid by the systematic literature review and took these constructions of gender outside the binary to consultation with young people based in the UK. A consensus building tool, with the aim of co-constructing knowledge, was employed to achieve this aim. An online Delphi methodology (Keeney et al., 2011) allowed a panel of young people across the UK to co-create new understandings of gender. The panel considered constructions elicited from the systematic literature review and additionally contributed their own perspectives. A diverse youth population were recruited, all united with the view that our current models of

gender fail to represent everyone in our society. This allowed a wide reach of individuals to take part, including those who identify as LGBTQ+, allies, and those who may not hold singular identities. The framework is represented within the paper and implications for its use in school settings and educational psychology are discussed.

1.4 Ontology and epistemology

This thesis makes a deliberate shift away from positivist research enquiry, historically found in work with queer populations (Semp, 2011). An interpretivist epistemological position is adopted within both papers. Interpretivism recognises that multiple social realities exist and are placed within the individual's interpretations, language, and interactions (Berryman, 2019). Meaningful interpretations are referred to as 'constructions': they come from the importance that individuals give to their experiences and represent the broad experiential and socio-cultural contexts from which they are formed (Hiller, 2016; Kaplan, 2015). Importantly, it is recognised that value-free data cannot be obtained through interpretivism: researchers are an active participant of knowledge creation and employ their own preconceptions to guide enquiries (Chowdhury, 2014).

Within the research, I considered the specific interpretive paradigms employed. The systematic literature review is underpinned by a constructivist position. Constructivism understands that phenomena derive from experiences and understandings held by the individual (Adom et al., 2016) I felt that meta-ethnography would serve as a useful synthesis approach as it is purposely interpretative: assuming there are multiple truths and meanings to the topic under investigation (Britten & Pope, 2012; Bullivant Ngati Pikiāo et al., 2021; Noblit & Hare, 1988). These positions allowed me to recognise the variety of constructions across individuals to describe their gender or related constructs. Whilst recognising my own role in shaping findings (Adom et al., 2016), I also found it useful to consider how my own interpretations were informed by the interpretations of others offered within the research papers (e.g., the researchers' own interpretations and the direct quotations from participants).

The empirical paper is underpinned by a social constructivist position. This position was applied via Delphi methodology, placing emphasis on the social nature of the enquiry. According to Kim (2001), social constructivism makes three assumptions: 1) reality cannot be discovered and is constructed through human activity), 2) knowledge is a human product, socially and culturally constructed via interaction, and 3) learning as a social process, occurring when individuals are engaged in social activities. These assumptions guided the methodology: the Delphi panellists were recruited for the study based on their "own interpretations of reality" (p.55, McQueen, 2002) that binary models of gender do not represent everyone. Knowledge and learning were

Chapter 1

constructed by the panellists who initially provided their individual opinion, which was later merged through consensus building within the wider panel (Engels & Kennedy, 2007; Hanafin, 2004)

Interpretivists approach the subjective reality of their participants and seek knowledge by forming multiple understandings of the individual's worldview (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). Thus, the interpretivist perspective is ontologically relativist: it is bound to the natural contexts in which individuals enact their lives and does not attempt generalisation to those in differing contexts (Hiller, 2016; Kaplan, 2015; Scotland, 2012). It is important to understand that this is not a limitation: interpretation is a key and necessary component of analysis within some educational psychology research designs including case studies, ethnography, and action research (Kaplan, 2015). While positivist researchers may ponder generalisability, interpretivists consider transferability: the extent to which their interpretations could be transferred to other contexts (Guba & Lincoln, 1982). Therefore, readers of interpretative papers should be provided with details of the specific settings, processes, and descriptions to allow the readers themselves to evaluate how research may be applied to other contexts (Junjie & Yingxin, 2022). This has been considered throughout the thesis with attempts to demonstrate transparency in how the findings were generated.

1.5 Reflexivity and queer theory

Within interpretivist paradigms, reflexivity is described as the researcher's examination of their own assumptions, considering how these may influence research. This "interpretation of interpretation" (p.11, Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2018) allows readers to consider how the research process shapes outcomes. Additionally, self-introspection allows readers to consider how the researcher's own positions and identities relate to the work conducted (Corlett & Mavin, 2018).

My own queer identity and personal journey is relevant to both my desire to train as an Educational Psychologist and in selecting this research area for my thesis. At school, I did not accept nor understand my own identities. It did not feel safe to disclose my identities to others until I reached university. Whilst studying psychology at undergraduate level, I learnt about Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1976) and the histories of LGBTQ+ communities. These represented a pivotal reflection towards my own school experiences; it seemed possible that wider socio-political systems (such as Section 28) may have implicated myself and others attending school environments as we attempted to understand, or even accept, our own identities in a normative society. I hold the view that it should be possible for education settings and their policies to set a tone of acceptance, understanding, and advocacy of diversity for all

young people. On starting the Doctorate in Educational Psychology, I met with my personal tutor and shared my story, reasons for training, and desire for advocacy within my professional work. It is from here that this research journey began. Together, we reflected on the themes of heteronormativity that exist within my personal stories and additionally recognised research which suggests normativity remains a problem for some young people today, especially those who transcend gender essentialism.

Throughout this research, I adopted a position of social justice. I have positioned the work contained in the subsequent chapters within queer theory. Queer theory can be broadly defined as a rethinking of social constructions of gender, identity, and sexuality by noticing how oppression manifests for individuals whose experiences oppose heteronormative ideals (Sauntson, 2021; Wozolek, 2019).

Queer researchers additionally critique research itself: some shine a light on historical publications that conflate individuals' experiences through categorisation (e.g., subsuming gender experiences with sexuality), some question research which makes direct comparisons to normative populations, and some highlight how researchers attempt to speak for queer people rather than providing platforms for queer voices to speak themselves (Jones et al., 2019; Warner, 2004). These themes were notably present within the systematic literature search contained within Chapter Two. Here, it was necessary to employ a search strategy to avoid research that inadvertently conflated the constructions of non-binary identifying participants to those who identify as binary transgender (e.g., trans men and trans women). Further, within education and LGBTQ+ youth psychological research, there remains a bias towards the investigation of negative experiences, such as victimisation and bullying within schools (Formby, 2015; Jones et al., 2019).

Some queer theorists call for the suspension of individual and institutional classifications, wishing for their readership to understand the perspective that identities are performed and contextually dependent (Abes & Kasch, 2007; Semp, 2011). For example, a queer researcher may avoid offering readers definitions of terms to avoid essentialism and reducing individuals' experiences; instead, they refer their readers to the ways in which these terms unfold in their work (Warner, 2004). Although this represents a departure from usual empirical writing styles, some argue that a "scientific attitude" (p. 331, Warner, 2004) may hinder researchers in embracing their role to actively construct their objects of inquiry (Semp, 2011). Warner (2004) further suggests that methodologies cannot be seen as a neutral tool; they should be reflexively aware of how they create topics of investigation and the implications of such knowledge creation. Therefore, it was felt that queer approaches aligned well with aims of this thesis and the selected interpretivist research epistemologies, as discussed earlier in this chapter.

Chapter 1

Looking to the studies themselves, I made attempts to answer to the reflexivity required for queer approaches. Within the systematic literature review, I considered the extent to which my own interpretations are likely to have guided findings, and selected meta-ethnography as an approach which allowed multiple queer perspectives to be represented, rather than aggregating individuals' experiences (Britten & Pope, 2012). In the empirical study, I made my own queer identities transparent within the recruitment process. I offered these to support panellists in feeling safe to construct their own, truthful perspectives to inform my research and my desire to advocate for their views. This action also represents a further ethical consideration for LGBTQ+ research: it is built on the unspoken premise that individuals offer their perspectives in the hope that their lives (and people in similar situations) will improve via scientific approaches (Warner, 2004).

Not only is construction of knowledge at the heart of this thesis, but it is a core belief of my practice and worldview as an Educational Psychologist. Within my work, I endeavour to gather and represent constructions in a world where, I believe, there may not be a singular truth that governs a whole population. Therefore, the tone represented within this thesis reflects my ideals of interpretivism, queer theory, and advocacy: it may be possible to elicit and represent the multiple truths of marginalised youth who are discovering themselves in a heteronormative society.

“Why do we gotta tell each other how to live? The only prisons that exist are ones we put each other in” (Lady Gaga, 2016)

1.6 Dissemination plan

The two research papers have been written with intention to publish in peer-reviewed journals. Both papers have been prepared to the styles required by the journal publishers and I have selected journals that represent queer research approaches. The systematic literature review will be submitted to the International Journal of Transgender Health. This journal covers a wide reach of topics related to gender, with a focus on representing research from a wide range of academic disciplines. I felt that this would be an appropriate choice, given the combination of academic disciplines contained within the paper. The empirical paper will be submitted to the Journal of LGBT Youth. This international journal additionally covers multiple disciplines, with the aim to improve the quality of life for LGBTQIA+ young people. I felt that this would be appropriate, given the paper's aims to advocate for the narratives of queer youth populations and their allies. The open access nature of this journal is also very appealing, making the perspectives and frameworks contained within the paper readily accessible to the young people it seeks to represent, in addition to professionals, organisations, and policy makers.

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Chapter 1

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Chapter 2 Co-constructing a gender identity outside of the binary: A systematic review and meta-ethnography

Abstract

This systematic review aims to interpret the ways in which those who identify their gender as outside of the binary, around the world, construct their gender or related constructs. Recent research evidence suggests that not all who fall within the transgender (or trans) umbrella identify specifically as binary transgender (e.g., 'transgender male' or 'transgender female'). Terminology, such as 'non-binary' and 'genderqueer' has recently gained prominence in Western societies, but there is limited research which explores the subtleties of how these individuals construct their identities. Using meta-ethnography, 15 papers provided the basis for an interpretation that explored how those who identify outside of the binary construct their identities. The findings were translated into five concepts related to: identifying and negotiating gender possibilities through introspection, naming and placing their gender within the available terminology, making their identities visible and invisible, considering their physical embodiments of gender, and validating their identity whilst managing transnormativity. Findings indicate that individuals who identify outside of the binary are held particularly accountable to the social worlds around them. This review suggests these challenges occur in relation to cisnormativity: the dominant Western assumptions that privilege dimorphic gender choices ('male' and 'female'). Researchers, and wider society, should allow gender-diverse individuals space, time, and opportunities to construct their identities to avoid conflating their nuanced experiences and allow their truths to exist.

2.1 Introduction

In Western society, there is a pervasive binary view of gender. Social constructions of gender are typically endorsed from birth, where individuals are assigned as "male" or "female". From this, Western society prescribes individuals into one of these two gender categories. West and Zimmerman (1987) refer to this as "doing gender": Western societies teach individuals strict ideals of what it means to be 'male' or 'female', which are performed through repeated acts (Butler, 2006, Deutsch, 2007). These acts include behaviours, language, and appearances; they create socially accepted performative standards, which reinforce the Western gender binary to which all, across the world, are held accountable to today (Eisenberg, 2020). Feminist theory

Chapter 2

addresses this problem, making clear distinctions between sex and gender, and specifically raises awareness of the social construction of gender and its effects (Eisenberg, 2020).

Although governed by a persistent gender binary, certain populations subvert, or “undo gender” (Deutsch, 2007) through their lived existence. The term ‘trans’ is an umbrella term for people whose gender identity is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth, including a variety of terms such as transgender, non-binary, or genderqueer (Stonewall, n.d.). In some instances, *transgender* has been used to describe an individual who has transitioned from one binary category to the other (Gires, 2019). Transgender is now more recognised as an umbrella term for individuals who identify as any gender other than, or in addition to, the sex and gender categories they were assigned at birth, including multiple genders and no gender at all (Bragg, Renold, Ringrose, & Jackson, 2018; Thorne et al., 2019).

Within academia, transgender issues are gathering momentum; Matsuno and Budge (2017) report that more than half the total number of publications on these topics have been printed since 2010. Yet, a large proportion of these concentrate on binary ‘male’ and ‘female’ identities, failing to account for the diverse gender possibilities that are beginning to emerge outside of the binary (Hyde et al., 2018; Matsuno & Budge 2017; Thorne et al., 2019). This issue has recently been noted by young people themselves, who raised concerns about inherent bias within cis-binary research, ignoring and erasing the experiences of gender diversity (Dixon et al., 2022). The problem of misrecognition is markedly different for those whose genders are not binary than for binary trans individuals (Nicholas, 2019). It is possible that these difficulties are present in research: researchers may have previously failed to clarify individual’s gender identities, often prescribing, or conflating, experiences within the trans umbrella.

In recent years, researchers have begun to acknowledge that not all who fall within the trans umbrella identify specifically as binary transgender. Kuper et al.’s (2011) study invited those who self-identified within the trans umbrella, or gender variant in some way, to communicate their identity. Their results indicate that individuals endorse a variety of terms, with more than 70% of their sample using multiple terms to communicate their identity. Expanding gender vocabulary was also reported in a UK sample of young people: 23 different terms for gender identity were used by participants (Bragg, et al., 2018). Despite the emergence of a variety of gender terminology, there remains a distinct lack of cohesive description within research for diverse gender identities, specifically for those that do not align with the binary (Thorne et al., 2019).

The notion of gender identities outside of the binary is a relatively new research concept (Thorne et al., 2019). Language used to describe identities outside of the binary are developing at a fast pace; yet even within these, there is little consensus between terminology and identifiers, with

most containing their own subtle nuances (Dixon et al., 2022; Matsuno & Budge, 2017). To support our understanding of these emerging terminologies, Thorne et al.'s (2019) systematic review of publications in the last half century allows us to consider how identities that are not binary in nature are pushing the boundaries of what it means to be trans-identified. They discovered that 'non-binary' and 'genderqueer' are the two leading umbrella terms to emerge from the existing literature but argue that these alone cannot represent the complexity of diverse identities, which is also complicated by the constructions of the language it is based upon (e.g., 'non-binary' suggesting an individual's gender identity is still discussed in relation to the binary). Outside of Western cultures, a plethora of terminology exists to describe a gender identity outside of the binary; for example, the 'Hijra' in India, 'Two-Spirit' in Native American society, and 'third gender'. However, colonial regimes of the 1800s redefined these terminologies, as part of wider attempts to eradicate divergent cultural practices (Dutta, 2012; Greensmith & Giwa, 2013). It seems that terms have become reclaimed by communities in the 20th century, whilst searching for ways to describe gender-diverse practices (Dutta, 2012; Dutta & Roy, 2014).

Within their review, Thorne et al. (2019) note a key limitation: it was not possible for researchers to interrogate the complexity of nuances and characteristics that individuals employ to describe a gender diverse identity. Matsuno and Budge (2017) raise concerns that there is limited research which focuses on non-binary gender identity development: suggesting that linear identity development pathways typically prescribed to binary trans populations fail to represent the possibility of holding identities outside of the binary. It is hoped that by exploring individuals' personal constructions of their identities outside of the binary, it may be possible to uncover nuanced, alternative constructions of gender and its associated identity processes.

The current study aims to address these areas: it is hoped that exploring the subtleties of how individuals construct their identities may allow us to understand the complex, yet personal, journeys of holding identities outside of the binary. The aim of this review is to answer the following question: "How do those outside of the gender binary, around the world, construct their gender or related constructs?" To recognise the pace at which constructions are developing, the current study will focus on gender-affirmative empirical research produced in the last ten years; where gender possibilities have only just begun to make specific reference to, or include, gender identities that are not binary (Matsuno & Budge, 2017). To capture a range of diverse possibilities, it would be useful to start with terminology that have been used to identify people outside of the binary across the world.

2.2 Method

Meta-ethnography is a seven phase (see Table 1) synthesis approach developed by Noblit and Hare (1988; 1999). Meta-ethnography synthesises findings from multiple qualitative studies with the aim to reflect various experiences, meanings, and perspectives of a target population (Cahill et al., 2018; Tong et al., 2012). The approach is interpretative, rather than aggregative: it is designed to reveal new understandings between accounts, rather than averaging the results of several studies (Britten & Pope, 2012). The aim of the approach is to translate studies into one another to provide new interpretations, which are greater than that offered by the individual studies (Britten & Pope, 2012).

Table 1 *The phases of meta-ethnography (Britten & Pope, 2012)*

Phase 1 Getting started
Phase 2 Deciding what is relevant (e.g. mapping, searching, selecting literature)
Phase 3 Reading studies, appraising, and identifying concepts
Phase 4 Determining how the studies are related
Phase 5 Translate the studies into one another
Phase 6 Synthesising the translations
Phase 7 Disseminating the findings

It was felt that meta-ethnography would be a suitable approach to the current study as it enables multiple understandings of the same phenomena, offering equal validity to all ways of knowing without necessarily competing amongst each other (Bullivant Ngati Pikiāo et al., 2021); this is important when considering the current topic under investigation. The aim is to examine multiple perspectives of how those outside of the binary construct their gender; therefore, the analysis should not privilege one individual account over another and the process should allow concepts to emerge. Concepts are defined as an idea that develops by comparing particular instances (Cahill et al., 2018; France et al., 2014; Sattar et al., 2021): they seek to explain, not just describe data. Concepts are described as having analytic or conceptual power, unlike descriptive phenomena that is typically identified through themes (Britten & Pope, 2012).

In Phases 1 and 2, a systematic search was conducted using Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses guidelines (Moher et al., 2009). An initial list of terms was gathered via the Public Broadcasting Service's map of gender-diverse cultures (PBS, 2015); more

terms were added as the researcher came across them. Alternative spellings of terms, as highlighted by PBS (2015), were also included. Over 100 key terms, alternative spellings, and Boolean operators were included (see Table 2).

Table 2 *Terms and Boolean operators used in systematic literature search*

“non-binary” or “gender-fluid” or “two-spirit” or hijra or “khawaja sira” or chhakka or khadra or moorat or khadra or moorat or berdache or mashoga or yan daudu or sekrata or fa’afine or fa’afafine or fa’afatama or fakaleti or fakaleiti or leiti or fakafefine or mahu or mähū or “mahu vahine” or whakawahine or “akava’ine” or wahine or burrnesha or “balkan sworn virgins” or “albanian sworn virgins” or kathoey or katoey or kathoey or ashtime or kinner or kinnar or aravani or aruvani or jogappa or jagappa or femminiello or femminielli or femmenielli or mino or bangala or köçek or köçekler or skoptsy or xanith or khanith or khaneeth or metis or meti or anya or acault or waria or calabai or calalai or bisnu or bakla or binabae or bayot or agi or bantut or bading or “lakin-on” or tomboy or sistergirls or brotherboys or whakawahine or alyha or hwame or ninaupostkitzipxpe or lhamana or winkte or wíñtke or hadleehi or dilbaa or nádleehi or muxhe or muxe or “biza’ah” or guevedoche or quariwarmi or travesty or “gender bender” or genderqueer or genderfuck or “third gender” or akava’ine or khanith or khaneeth or koekchuch or “mak nyah” or maknyha or mukhannathun or takatāpui or takataapui or tāne or “x-gender” or chibados or quimbandas or “palao’ana”

The databases used were Web of Science, PsychINFO, and ERIC. These databases were chosen as they contain a wide selection of original research publications relevant to the topic under investigation. Terms were searched in title and abstract fields of the selected bibliographic databases. A grey literature search was also conducted to elicit unpublished material, via ProQuest. Within the grey literature search, two relevant filters were applied (“Dissertations and Theses”; “Gender Studies”) to narrow the scope.

The current study included peer-reviewed articles and unpublished dissertations and theses reporting original research to reflect the aims of the review. Publications between 1 January 2012 and 31 January 2022 were included. Akin to Thorne et al. (2019), the scope of this review was to understand how those who do not identify as ‘male’ or ‘female’ construct their gender; therefore, it was crucial that literature selected contained clear description(s) of terminology used in the study’s recruitment strategy (or description of the participants) to enable specific foci on the

Chapter 2

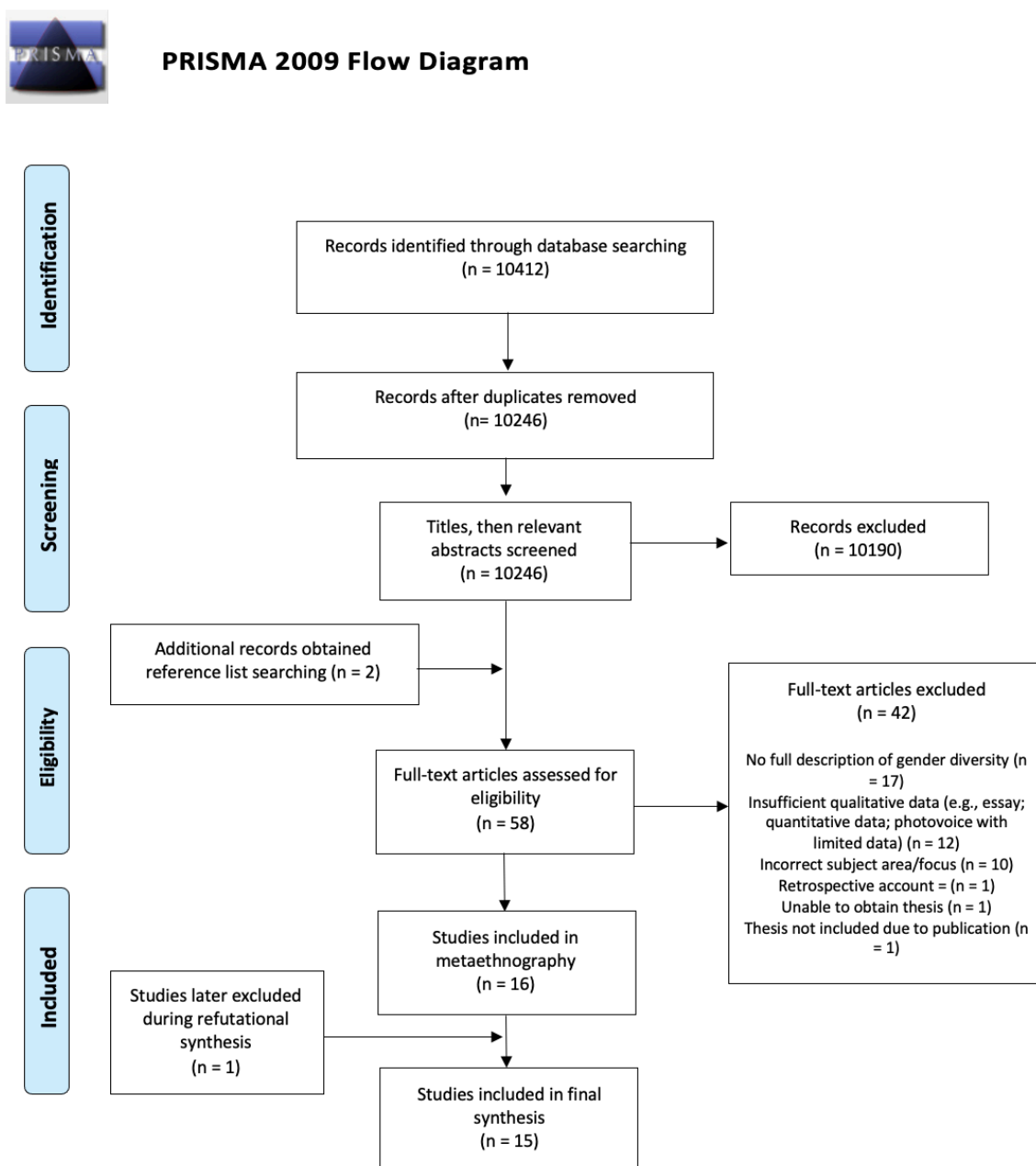
accounts of individuals who identify outside of the binary. Reviews, meta-analyses, and essays were excluded as this review focused on original research.

After the removal of duplicates (n = 166), papers were first selected by their title. Abstracts of titles that satisfied the inclusion and exclusion criteria were then read (see Table 3). Those that did not meet the criteria were excluded at this stage.

Table 3 *Inclusion and exclusion criteria*

<u>Inclusion</u>	<u>Exclusion</u>
Empirical studies	No description or identifier (e.g., conflates gender with sex, or sexuality)
Views of participants (qualitative)	Focus on dependent variables and contexts (e.g., impact studies; lived experiences such as substance abuse, accessing healthcare, gender inequalities, mental health etc.)
Participants describe, or construct, their own identity outside of the gender binary	Not the views of individual (e.g., parent/carer perspectives)
Clear distinction made by the researcher to those outside of the binary as a distinct population (direct attempts made to avoid conflation with LGBTQ+)	

Figure 1 PRISMA diagram



During Phase 3, 58 papers were read alongside the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Excluded papers were grouped according to reasons of omission, including those that did not provide sufficient descriptions of how, and if, participants identified outside of the binary. Following advice from Boland et al. (2017), one thesis was excluded as qualitative findings were sufficiently represented within a published article (Stachowiak, 2017). After full-text reading, 16 papers were taken forward for inclusion in the synthesis (see Table 4). A refutational synthesis was later employed to explain differences between studies (Barnett-Page & Thomas, 2009). One study (Garrison, 2018) contained a competing explanation within one of the concepts. This paper was excluded as it made no contribution to the synthesis, but its competing account was explained via

Chapter 2

methodological implications, explored in subsequent publications (Garrison, 2019; Vega et al., 2019) and the discussion section of this paper.

Table 4 Study characteristics

Authors	Title	Location	Study setting	Sampling approach	Data collection approach	Analysis
Balius (2018) Unpublished Master's thesis	<i>"I want to be who I am": Stories of rejecting binary gender</i>	USA	Non-binary identified (n=10) (aged 20-36)	Purposive and snowball sampling	Semi-structured interview	Thematic analysis
Bradford et al. (2019) Peer-reviewed article	<i>Creating gender: A thematic analysis of genderqueer narratives</i>	USA	Genderqueer and non-binary identified (n=25) (aged 15-26) from a wider trans sample (n=90)	Purposive sampling	Semi-structured interview	Thematic analysis
Cosgrove (2021) Peer-reviewed article	<i>"I am allowed to be myself": A photovoice exploration of non-binary identity development and meaning-making</i>	USA	Non-binary identified (n=9) (aged 19-23) enlisted as 'co-researchers'	Purposive sampling	Participatory action research (PAR) method known as photovoice	Interpretative phenomenological analysis
Darwin (2017) Peer-reviewed article	<i>Doing gender beyond the binary: A virtual ethnography</i>	Online	Online ethnography of existing Reddit content, unclear on number of participants	No sampling approach required	Online ethnography of existing Reddit content	Discourse analysis
Darwin (2020)	<i>Challenging the cisgender/transgender binary:</i>	USA	Genderqueer and non-binary identified (n=41) (aged 19-35)	Snowball sampling	Semi-structured interview	Thematic coding (Charmaz, 2006)

Peer-reviewed article	<i>Nonbinary people and the transgender label</i>					
Eisenberg (2020) Unpublished Doctoral thesis	<i>The individual under the transgender umbrella: An exploration of themes in nonbinary gender identity development</i>	USA	Non-binary identified (n=3) (aged 20-25)	Purposive sampling	Semi-structured interview	Narrative analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2016)
Hilário and Marques (2020) Peer-reviewed article	<i>Trans youth in Portugal: Gendered embodiments</i>	Portugal	Non-binary identified subsample (n=5) in a wider trans sample (n=12) (aged 18-29)	Snowball sampling	Semi-structured interview	Thematic coding (Bryman, 2012)
Horowitz-Hendler (2020) Unpublished Doctoral thesis	<i>Navigating the binary: Gender presentation of non-binary individuals</i>	USA	Non-cisgender identified (n=26) No ages provided but all over 18	Purposive and snowball sampling	Semi-structured interview and researcher observations (only interview data included)	Thematic coding
Losty and O'Connor (2018) Peer-reviewed article	<i>Falling outside the 'nice little binary box': A psychoanalytic exploration of the non-binary gender identity</i>	Ireland	Non-binary identified (n=6) (aged 19-29)	Purposive sampling	Psychoanalytically informed interview (Cartwright, 2004; Holmes, 2013)	Psychoanalytic principle code generation and analysis (Morse, 1994)
Merlini (2018) Peer-reviewed article	<i>Other genders: (Un)doing gender norms in Portugal at a microsocial level</i>	Portugal	Non-binary identified subsample (n=11) from a wider sample (n=38)	Snowball sampling	Semi-structured interview	Biographical interpretative method (Cochler &

						Hostetler, 2003; Wengraf, 2000)
Robinson (2017) Peer-reviewed article	<i>Two-Spirit and bisexual people: Different umbrella, same rain</i>	Canada	Two-Spirit identified (n=21)	Unclear	Two-Spirit roundtable project	Thematic coding according to the Anishinaabe Medicine Wheel
Romero (2019) Unpublished Master's thesis	<i>The "gender outlaw": Exploring gender identity negotiation among non-binary individuals</i>	USA	Non-binary identified (n=10) (aged 19-42)	Purposive and snowball sampling	Semi-structured interview	Thematic coding (Tracy, 2013)
Savoia (2017) Unpublished Master's thesis	<i>"Neither of the boxes": Accounting for non-binary gender identities</i>	USA	Non-binary identified (n=15) (aged 18-48)	Snowball sampling	Semi-structured interview	General inductive coding (Thomas, 2006)
Stachowiak (2017) Peer-reviewed article	<i>Queering it up, strutting our threads, and baring our souls: Genderqueer individuals negotiating social and felt sense of gender</i>	USA	Genderqueer identified (n=10) (aged 21-38), including the researcher themselves	Snowball sampling	Semi-structured interviews and focus groups	Inductive thematic analysis (Guest et al., 2011)
Vijlbrief et al. (2020) Peer-reviewed article	<i>Transcending the gender binary: Gender non-binary young adults in Amsterdam</i>	Netherlands	Non-binary identified (n=11) (aged 20-30)	Snowball sampling	Ethnographic research: observations to inform semi- structured interviews	Thematic coding (Saldana, 2013)

Chapter 2

These papers were quality assessed using the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) for qualitative research (CASP, 2018). Following this, the researcher identified the main findings and started to note possible concepts from each paper. This was done concurrently with the quality assessment, as both processes required detailed reading of the papers (Britten & Pope, 2012). Many published examples of meta-ethnography employ the notion of first order constructs- (the participants' understandings), second order- (researchers' interpretations of the participants' understandings), and third order- (the synthesis of first and second). However, Atkins et al. (2008) reflect on the difficulties and utility in doing so, especially given that extracts within published papers have already been selected by researchers. In the current study, the researcher found it easier to identify first-order constructs within grey literature. Within the published papers, there was naturally a heavier emphasis on second order- constructs; the researcher identified concepts by triangulating with first order- constructs, where available.

Phase 4 considered how the studies were related to one another. This was achieved by using the initial collection of concepts gained in earlier phases and re-reading papers to further refine concepts, noting possible relationships between accounts, and employing refutational synthesis to explain competing accounts. Themes reported by the researchers varied, which made it challenging to identify ways to group the studies; therefore, the researcher identified initial concepts relating to each study, which provided the basis for an interpretation of the relationships.

Phase 5 and 6 interpreted the initial concepts and noticed whether concepts in one paper were describing the same idea in another paper. A reciprocal translation process was employed. This iterative process involves translating initial concepts into one another, which later evolve into overarching concepts (Barnett-Page & Thomas, 2009; Britten & Pope, 2012). This required a repeated reading of the papers in order to identify conceptual values via first- and second- order constructs, make comparisons between the concepts, and form assumptions about the relatedness of the accounts. Conceptual values were decided upon where the researcher felt that examples between accounts go further than descriptive themes to provide more analytical or conceptual relevance to the research question; this was achieved by interpreting the concepts for each of the studies and signalling the relationships between them (Britten & Pope, 2012). During Phase 5, this resulted in a table that summarised initial concepts, the relationships between them, and the way they translated into each other (see Appendix B.1). Instead of drawing lines to represent relationships (Britten & Pope, 2012), each study was assigned a number: if a concept was noticed in one paper, other papers that also featured the concept were numbered to signal the relationship. This process was repeated sequentially, covering all papers, until concepts were

further translated via Phase 6 (see Appendix B.2), which then formed the basis of the textual synthesis. Some labels used to describe the concepts derived from the papers, but most were reconceptualised by the researcher throughout the stepped approach to synthesis (Britten & Pope, 2012).

2.3 Findings

2.3.1 Overview of included studies

Searches identified 10 published papers and five grey literature studies. Data from two papers were derived from the same large European study (data in the synthesised papers focused on Portuguese respondents), meaning findings from 14 empirical studies were included.

Characteristics of the included papers are detailed in Table 4. In this table, differences are highlighted in relation to study setting, participant demographics, sampling approach, and data collection methods. The studies were conducted between 2012 and 2022 in the USA (n = 10), Canada (n=1), Portugal (n=2), Netherlands (n=1), and Ireland (n=1) involving 203 participants (one study did not report on participant numbers) ranging from 15 to 48 years. All included studies were conducted in Western cultures, thus there is a Western bias to the synthesis produced. Most of the included studies recruited young adults, aged 15-30). One study employed an ethnographic analysis of online forums, which made it unclear how many participants and relevant demographics were included within their synthesis.

The included papers elicited perspectives from individuals who identified as non-binary (n=9), genderqueer (n=1), non-binary and/or genderqueer (n=2), Two-Spirit (n=1), or other gender categories (n=1). In a small proportion of papers, it was made clear that individuals identified themselves with multiple gender labels (e.g., transgender non-binary). Of those papers that reported on binary transgender identifying participants, only data pertaining to the responses of those who identified as outside of the gender binary was extracted for synthesis.

Data was collected using individual interviews (n=10), focus groups (n=1), combined methods (e.g., interviews and focus groups (n=2), an online ethnographic analysis (n=1), and a participatory action research method (known as photovoice) and subsequent focus group (n =1). Participants were mostly recruited via purposive and opportunity sampling techniques, such as recruiting through LGBTQ+ centres and online forums via posters. Snowball sampling methods were also

Chapter 2

employed, where participants were encouraged to share knowledge of the studies through their own communities and forums.

An example of the meta-ethnography process is provided in Table 5. Throughout the synthesis, findings were reciprocally translated into the following concepts (see Figure 2).

Table 5. Stages of the meta-ethnography process (adapted from Britten & Pope, 2012)

Stage of meta-ethnography process	Example of process
Phase 3: Reading studies, creating a list of metaphors, ideas, appraising, and identifying concepts	<p data-bbox="1059 344 1957 400">“opportunity to develop a level of self-reflective introspection they did not think they would have otherwise experienced” (Cosgrove 2020, p.91); second-order construct</p> <p data-bbox="1059 432 1957 488">“Gender is not something <i>who I am</i> but rather is <i>what I feel</i> right now” (Vijlbrief et al., 2020, p. 96); first-order construct</p> <p data-bbox="1059 520 1957 600">“I tend to use a lot at once because there are so many overlapping terms and they don’t necessarily all mean the same thing depending on who’s using it” (Horowitz-Hendler, 2020, p. 97); first-order construct</p> <p data-bbox="1059 632 1957 711">“what we may call a language concession... in order to make his identity legible to others, he distils it, which partially obscures its true content” (Savoia, 2017, p. 36); second-order construct</p> <p data-bbox="1059 743 1957 799">Discourses moving “freely between their own story and the story of LGBTQ and non-binary community” (Losty & O’Connor, 2018, p.53); second-order construct</p> <p data-bbox="1059 831 1957 911">For some, motivations behind medical treatments are “related to personal feelings of bodily rejection and/or misgendering in social interactions” (Merlini, 2018, p. 359); second-order construct</p> <p data-bbox="1059 943 1957 1031">“it would seem that some nonbinary people have internalised a sense of accountability to the binary transgender model that positions trans men and trans women as more legitimately trans than others” (Darwin, 2020, p. 372); second-order construct</p>
Phase 4: Determining how the studies are related	<ul data-bbox="1059 1062 1615 1241" style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing a gender identity - Terms can mean different things to different people - Language concessions - Keeping aspects of their identity to themselves - Bodies and physical markers of gender - “Am I trans enough?”

Identifying and negotiating possibilities through introspection

- Developing a gender identity

Considering how to name and place identity within available terminology

- Terms can mean different things to different people

Considering when to make a gender identity visible and invisible

- Keeping aspects of their identity to themselves
- Language concessions

Considering how to employ physical embodiments of gender

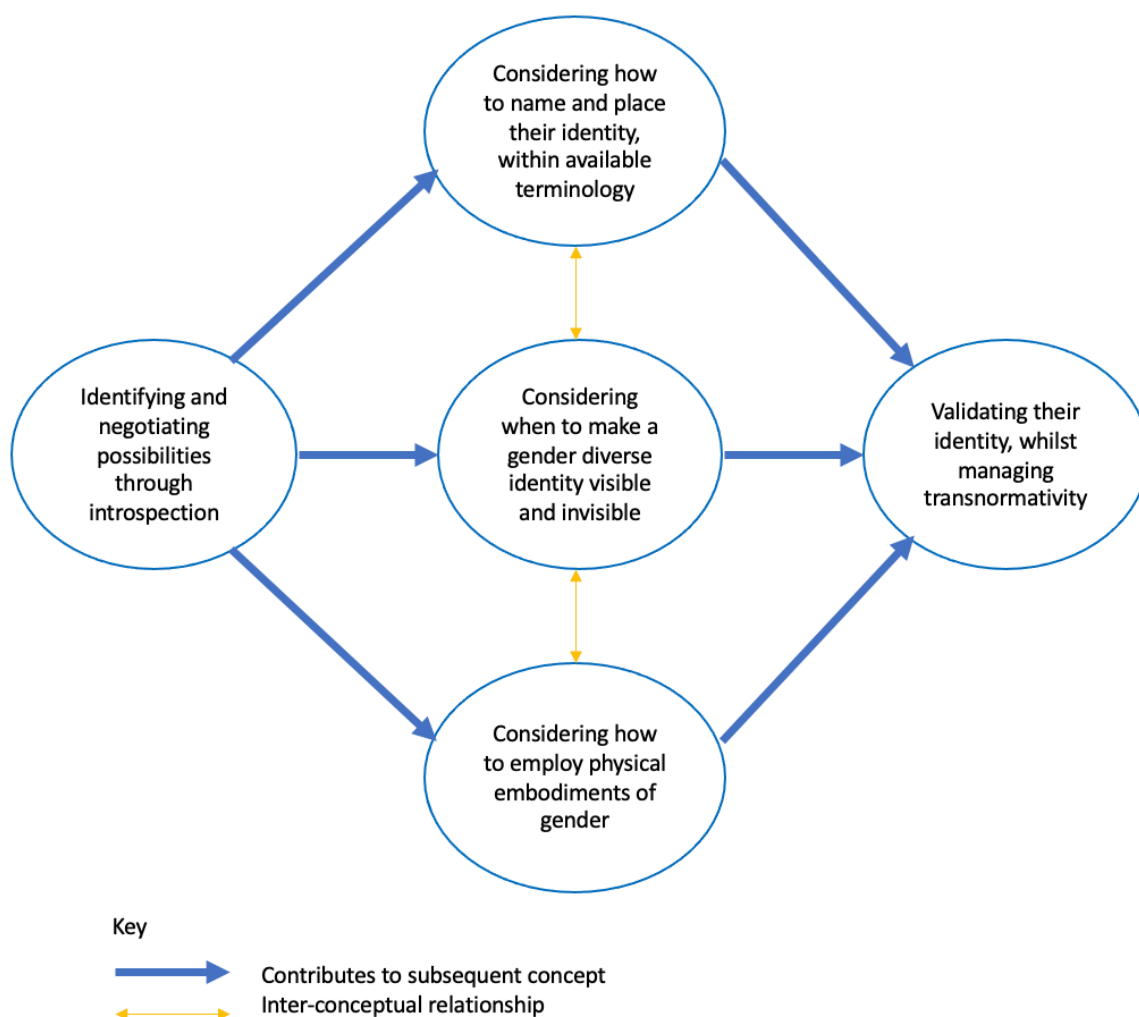
- Bodies and physical markers of gender

Validating their identity, whilst managing transnormativity

- "Am I trans enough?"
-

Phase 5 and 6: Translate the studies into one another and synthesising the translations

Figure 2. Visual representation of final translation of concepts



2.3.2 Identifying and negotiating possibilities through introspection

“When looking back, finding the state of mind I have today was quite a search. I did not understand myself during puberty. I didn’t understand my body, my sexual desires, my thoughts. I just always tried to fit in with society”. Bo (Vijlbrief et al., 2020)

Across the selected papers, individuals share their introspective journeys of arriving at gender possibilities outside of the binary. Individuals reflect on acknowledging an internal gender difference within themselves during childhood or adolescence. Some reflect on a lack of knowledge of the possibilities of different gender identities in their earlier lives; specifically, how binarism acts as a barrier for individuals to “finding a name” (p. 88, Cosgrove, 2020) for their experiences with gender. For example, some individuals first identified with sexual orientation labels before later identifying themselves with the possibility of a gender-diverse identity (Losty & O’Connor, 2018). Some individuals reported how they initially identified with the opposite binary gender because of pervasive societal norms that endorse two binary genders (Eisenberg, 2020).

Chapter 2

For many, their introspective descriptions are populated by dialogues of internal conflict between their felt sense, and wider social constructions, of gender. Some describe a prior history of identification with, and later disidentification from, their biological sex (Balius, 2018; Losty & O'Connor, 2018), which creates feelings of confusion and self-doubt (Eisenberg, 2020; Romero, 2019). In Savoia's (2017) study, most individuals describe a level of reliably acknowledging gender difference within themselves throughout their lives, even before acquiring knowledge which suggest possibilities outside of the binary. Some positively construe this level of "self-reflective introspection" (p. 91, Cosgrove et al., 2020) as a necessary and beneficial part of becoming at one with a new gender possibility. Such introspective journeys do not seem to occur within a singular trajectory across individuals (Bradford et al., 2019; Stachowiak, 2017); for some, the possibility of an alternative gender identity may be discovered at various points in their lives (Cosgrove, 2020) and through exploration over time (Romero, 2019).

Once arriving at the possibility of holding a diverse gender identity, individuals seem to construct its development via an introspective sense of fluctuation, or fluidity, which occurs over time. Bradford et al. (2019) describes this phenomenon as distinct from other identity developmental processes, which usually promote individuals to arrive at a stable identity. Instead, individuals describe fluidity as a "stable, enduring, and consistent dimension of their gender identity" (p. 160, Bradford et al., 2019). Some construe this exploration as a temporary state of trial and error (Eisenberg, 2020; Horowitz-Hendler, 2020), whilst some construe a level of constant self-discovery that shifts within a period of time, or over time (Horowitz-Hendler, 2020). Stachowiak (2017) construed their participants' fluctuating gender identities as a place of "becoming" (p. 540), rather than a fixed, permanent state.

For some, this state of fluidity seems to shift across social environments, influencing how individuals present, or behave, dependent on contexts (Vijlbrief et al., 2020). Some enjoy the fluidity offered in a range of experiences, seemingly playing with binary gender norms: "challenging the status quo is empowering, confusing strangers is a riot" (p. 8, Darwin, 2017). However, others report that levels of fluidity are stressful and upsetting, often resulting in the individual doubting the legitimacy of their emerging identities (Bradford et al., 2019). Another study also reports on individuals who oppose the language of the fluid identity, as it may inadvertently imply that holding a gender-diverse identity is effortless and uncomplicated, thus failing to account for the high levels of introspection required to hold identities outside of the gender binary (Stachowiak, 2017).

For some, once arriving at the possibility of holding gender identities outside of the binary, the significance of this may decrease over time as they arrive at a sense of clarity in understanding

themselves (Bradford et al., 2019; Cosgrove, 2020). For others, their identity outside of the binary is no longer fluid, but their introspective path is still discussed within their historical, developing selves (Horowitz-Hendler, 2020). Some also describe introspection as a lifelong search, unbeknownst whether they will continue to identify outside of the binary forever (Vijlbrief et al., 2020). What is clear within this concept is a marked level of individuality across those who identify outside of the binary; arriving at the possibility of holding a gender-diverse identity seems deeply personal and can occur throughout the lifespan.

2.3.3 Considering how to name and place their identity, within available terminology

*“The language still isn’t really there, like I don’t have a good word or a short way to put it”
Ben (Horowitz-Hendler, 2020).*

To describe their introspective experience, individuals communicate the need to have language available to do so. Some note that there is a plethora of labels that enables the individual to construct an identity outside of the binary (Vijlbrief et al., 2020). For some, finding labels can be empowering (Romero, 2019). An additional benefit is the ability for labels to enable connection: an individual’s identification of a diverse gender possibility is synonymous with others’ in the world (Cosgrove, 2020; Losty & O’Connor, 2018; Romero, 2019). A sense of belonging, via language, appears to bridge the gap between the individual’s introspective world and the external. For many, this is created and fostered within wide-reaching online spaces, such as social media platforms (Bradlow et al., 2017; Darwin, 2017; Vijlbrief et al., 2020).

Although labels allow the individual to connect to those who may share similar experiences, differences within language and their interpretations do exist. Robinson (2017) notes that a variety of individuals who employ the term “Two-Spirit” make it inappropriate to use the term as if it is synonymous with a singular identity (e.g., Two-Spirit is used by some to communicate gender difference; others may use Two-Spirit to express sexual difference, or both). The researcher makes links to the constructions of bisexuality and transgenderism, noting that it is becoming known in these fields that language cannot be used to assume one identity.

This is supported by other papers, noting that emerging Western terms for those who identify with gender difference (such as transgender, non-binary, and genderqueer) mean different things to different people (Darwin, 2020; Horowitz-Hendler, 2020; Merlini, 2018). Savoia (2019) provides a specific example of this, where a majority reported they were not deeply invested in the term ‘non-binary’ as it fails to fully describe how they feel about their gender identity. These individuals use the label ‘non-binary’ to communicate what their gender is not, rather than what it is. Differences can also make it difficult for the individual to place their experiences within the

Chapter 2

available terminology (Cosgrove, 2020; Losty & O'Connor, 2018), requiring them to manage a level of uncertainty towards how their language will be interpreted by others. To manage this difficulty, some individuals use multiple labels at once (Bradford et al., 2019; Horowitz-Hendler, 2020; Savoia, 2017):

"I tend to use a lot at once because there are so many overlapping terms, and they don't necessarily always mean the same thing depending on who's using it" Skye. (Horowitz-Hendler, 2020)

Beyond labels, individuals construct their gender experiences using continua language and frameworks. These frameworks have become increasingly popular in the new millennium, having been originally conceived Bem (1981) and later popularised by Lev (2004) to communicate the possibility of gender identities and gender-role expressions existing on a dual-spectrum between male/female and masculinity/femininity poles.

Within the papers, some communicate that their gender identity outside of the binary exists between male and female, whereas some report existing as both male and female at the same time (Losty & O'Connor, 2018). Alternatively, some note that their gender expression is represented as a combination of masculine and feminine attributes (Eisenberg, 2020; Hilário & Marques, 2020; Stachiwak, 2017). Darwin (2017) notes that a significant proportion of their online ethnographic sample construct gender expression via a five-part model (including masculine, masculine-of-centre, androgyny, feminine-of-centre, and feminine). Within this five-part model, some also refer to themselves as 'weak masculine' and 'weak feminine' simultaneously. Darwin (2017) also notes that others in their study prescribe to a three-part gender identity model of men, women, and 'other' categories. Constructions within these papers seem to support the continua language that is made available by Lev (2004) and its more recent iterations (Killermann, 2017; Pan & Moore, 2019).

However, others specifically construct themselves as living with a gender absent of male/female dichotomies, such 'man' or 'woman' (Cosgrove, 2020; Darwin, 2017; Horowitz-Hendler, 2020). Some individuals indicate that continua language between masculine and feminine attributes is too confining and simplistic for their identities which are in constant motion (Vijlbrief et al., 2020):

"The line between man or woman and masculine or feminine is extremely thin for me. Actually, they are always intertwined. I don't feel a hundred percent male or female". Quinn. (Vijlbrief et al., 2020)

Merlini (2018) reflects on four participants who construct gender as a continuum between masculine and feminine, with the ideal that energies should be balanced. The researcher suggests

that these frameworks represent, “a kind of hybridisation logic that instead of homogenising gender differences, multiplies them within the biological binary” (p. 365, Merlini, 2018). Perhaps it is possible that language for those who identify outside of the binary is not yet available, which leaves individuals no choice but to engage in Western dimorphic constructions. Vijlbrief et al. (2020) ties this phenomenon to queer theory, recommending the continued deconstruction of our linguistic structures and meaning.

From this concept, it is possible to begin to understand that terminology, and how individuals place their gender within this, holds different interpretations across individuals. A universal language does not exist due to the pervasiveness of Western gender binaries. Holding this to mind may allow us to attune to the diverse possibilities of those who position their gender, or related constructs, as outside of the binary.

2.3.4 Considering when to make a gender-diverse identity visible and invisible

“I am often invisibilised by false categories created by settler-colonial Canada making me into something that I am not” (Robinson, 2017).

Due to the availability of terminology, the individual who holds a gender possibility outside of the binary must manage their identity as being seen and unseen. An area where this occurs is represented by the individual’s intent to communicate their identity to others, especially where Western societies pressurise them to define themselves to others (Merlini, 2018; Vijlbrief et al., 2020). Some report they are more likely to disclose their identity to others who they perceive are likely to understand, or to those who they engage with frequently (Losty & O’Connor, 2018). Some are less inclined to disclose their identity to others, especially to those who the individual does not know well (Balius, 2018) and those that the individual believes are likely to lack the relevant conceptual frameworks to understand their experience (Bradford et al., 2019; Robinson, 2017).

“And also just explaining the whole like, I’m not male or female, but... in between. People have a problem with that. It’s like, they are so used to the binary, like, ‘No you know, obviously you have a vagina, you’re female” (Bradford et al, 2019)

For those outside of the binary that make the decision to disclose their identity, it appears to be a regular and pervasive experience. Disclosing an identity requires them to explain gender dimorphism to others who live in a Western society that gears most to interpret only two genders; others who are likely to be unaware of other gender possibilities. (Darwin, 2017; Romero, 2019). To manage this, those outside of the binary discuss how they alter their linguistic

Chapter 2

self-presentation based on their environments. Bradford et al. (2019) noted that for identities to be perceived as legitimate, they employ different language and identity labels dependent on the audience; this is especially important, given that identities outside of the binary are little observable in most contexts, requiring the individual to engage in discussion (Merlini, 2018). The authors of these papers make it clear that the practice of altering language to make non-binary identities visible/invisible is conceptually distinct from the individual's passively fluctuating gender identity, as explored earlier within this meta-ethnography.

As a result, it is often easier for the individual to speciously present on the binary; this can have some benefits, such as providing a sense of safety (Horowitz-Hendler, 2020). However, the pervasive influence of gender dimorphism often results in binary misgendering: the negative experience of being labelled as a gender with which the individual does not identify (Cosgrove, 2020; Darwin, 2017; Losty & O'Connor, 2018). It appears as if experiences of misgendering are permitted by those outside of the binary. These may be understood as "language concessions" (p. 36, Savoia, 2019): strategies in which meaning is obscured, by the individual or those they are communicating with, when discussing diverse gender identities. It seems that language concessions assume the stability and existence of the gender binary; the gender-diverse individual accepts others' use of incorrect language, allowing themselves and audiences to map onto binary structures (Balius, 2018; Romero, 2019; Savoia, 2019).

For those outside of the binary, managing identities as being visible and invisible seems to foster a sense of invalidation in their relationships with others (Balius, 2018; Losty & O'Connor, 2018; Romero, 2019). One study's application of reflexive psychodynamic theory allows the researchers to analyse their interview dynamics. Losty and O'Connor (2018) suggest how individuals narrate their identities with specific foci to others around them. They also note that individuals move freely between telling their own life story and the story of the LGBTQ community; for example, reflections upon their life experience tended to be immediately followed by remarks about how their experiences were consistent among their LGBTQ friends, or reflective of the community as a whole. Losty and O'Connor (2018) suggest this strategy is used by individuals to create distance between the interviewer and the individual's personal stories. However, upon consideration of the earlier concept about the importance of community in creating shared languages (Cosgrove, 2020; Losty & O'Connor, 2018; Romero, 2019), it may also be possible to consider that these identities are constructed in relation to the LGBTQ+ community and their histories to further make their identity visible. This would go some way to validate holding a gender identity outside of the binary to a relatively unknown researcher.

2.3.5 Considering how to employ physical embodiments of gender

“Just even getting dressed every day, like what kind of message am I sending to people by the way I dress? What are they gonna think about me?” Sarah. (Cosgrove, 2020)

This concept suggests gender identity is somewhat related to (yet not completely determined by) an individual’s body, which makes constructing physical embodiments a critical part of holding an identity outside of the binary (Merlini, 2018; Vijlbrief et al., 2020). For many individuals, they discuss themselves as adopting, and/or altering, socially constructed expressive symbols that communicate gender to position themselves outside of the binary. For many, this creates congruence between their internal sense of identity and outward expressions (Cosgrove, 2020; Horowitz-Hendler, 2020; Losty & O’Connor, 2018).

Many discuss clothing as a specific example of a gendered embodiment: some discuss how they clothe according to their own comfort and preferences (Balius, 2018; Horowitz-Hendler, 2020; Romero, 2019). Others employ clothing to deliberately allow audiences to categorise them, or to avoid gendered attributions, in keeping with their identity (Darwin, 2017; Savoia, 2017). They also discuss a key role that audiences play in how they comment and perceive physical gender embodiments, affecting the ways that the individual understands themselves (Savoia, 2017). This seems to create a sort of feedback loop, in that individuals employ physical embodiments to complement their identity (Merlini, 2018), testing how others perceive their gender identity.

One paper makes specific reference towards categories of gendered embodiments. Horowitz-Hendler (2020) created a theme of ‘salient markers and indexes of gender’. Horowitz-Hendler (2020) noted three possible physical embodiments of gendered expression: physical appearance (e.g., facial hair vs. no facial hair), body language (e.g., talking without one’s hands vs. talking with one’s hands) and linguistic (e.g., low pitch vs. high pitch). Others note similarities to this paper, noticing how individuals’ constructions of their physical embodiments appear to map closely to linguistic binary structures of masculine and feminine (e.g., having a low pitch is considered “masculine” and a high pitch is considered “feminine”) (Merlini, 2018; Savoia, 2017).

Horowitz-Hendler (2020) suggests that those who identify outside of the binary enlist dimorphic structures where Western society gears us all to interpret genders as male or female. Further, the researcher noted discrepancies between those assigned male at birth (AMAB) and assigned female at birth (AFAB). The results suggest that AFAB must work harder to avoid being read as an incorrect binary category than their AMAB allies. This was discussed in their analysis, where they hypothesise that AFAB individuals may need to pay more specific consideration to manipulating their body language and linguistic markers (e.g., AMAB-identifying participants in their study only

discussed embodiments in specific relation to physical appearance). The researcher reflects on their small sample size, and this finding has not yet been noted within the other synthesised papers.

Medical transitions and interventions are also a physical embodiment by some individuals who identify outside of the binary. Some discuss how medical treatments (e.g., hormone therapy; reassignment surgery) help them to overcome rejections with parts of their bodies (Merlini 2018; Romero, 2019) and support them to describe an intelligible self that others could understand (Hilário & Marques, 2020). For others, they report an ambivalence towards medical interventions, suggesting how these interventions oppose their ideals of constructing a gender outside of the binary (Bradford et al., 2019; Hilário & Marques, 2020). Instead, these individuals discuss how their embodiments of gender are wider than body alterations, opting to create more fluid forms of physical gender expression:

“I feel in a transition, because as I told you a year ago people would see me as a woman. Now it’s less and less obvious, so it’s a process and this is something I’m doing with my gender expression and tweaking things a little bit and things are changing and for me it’s a transition, but it’s not a medical transition” Micha. (Hilário & Marques, 2020).

Darwin (2017) considers how those outside of the binary are not always passive victims of norms, but strategically exploit society’s interpretation of physical embodiments to construct and validate their identities. Some create embodiments to fluctuate between the two binary genders (Darwin, 2017), whilst others seek to combine typical masculine and feminine embodiments (Hilário & Marques, 2020). For some, seeing the embodiment of another, whether gendered or not, can act as an affirmative marker for their own gender experience (Cosgrove, 2020). Therefore for individuals constructing a gender outside of the binary, it seems possible that how their body is interpreted by others plays a significant role.

2.3.6 Validating their identity, whilst managing transnormativity

“I identify as Trans, but people are either frustrated or confused by the fact that I choose to present femininely... And I’ve gotten a lot of, actually bad, names thrown at me from the queer community about that because I’m [giving] them a bad name” Anonymous. (Male/Gender Fluid/Gender-Neutral/White/Age 19) (Bradford et al., 2019)

At a personal level, individuals construct how they engage with their own internal validity measures, prompting them to authenticate a gender identity outside of the binary. This appears to be construed within dominant language discourses, employing language to validate their

identity using linguistic markers such as ‘congruent’, ‘genuine, and ‘authentic’ (Balius, 2019; Eisenberg, 2020). Some researchers consider an additional level of internal validation occurs within a quantitative rhetoric, such as the individual considering they are not “trans enough”, not “non-binary enough”, or “am I faking it”, as if they were still in an active the process of understanding their identity (Darwin, 2020; Garrison, 2018; Losty & O’Connor, 2018). From these constructions, it seems possible that individuals who identify outside of the binary may inadvertently hold themselves accountable to the trans population.

This difficulty is described as ‘transnormativity’: a social framework by which transgender people’s experiences and presentations of gender are held accountable based on a medicalised, binary framework (Bradford et al., 2019; Horowitz-Hendler, 2020; Johnson, 2016). A notion of being ‘legitimately trans’ permeates the narratives of those who identify outside of the binary. For example, some construct an assumption that individuals need to struggle while navigating medical transitions to adopt a trans label (Darwin, 2020; Garrison, 2018). For some individuals, these normative understandings of transgender group membership discourage gender-diverse individuals from identifying under the trans umbrella (Savoia, 2017).

For a proportion of the included participants, individuals suggest their constructions of a gender outside of the binary does not constitute a valid trans identity (Bradford et al., 2019). This can lead to feelings of uncertainty as they attempt to validate themselves with an identity outside of the binary, where society’s understanding is only beginning to emerge (Darwin, 2017). Darwin’s (2020) study carries a particular focus on individuals’ complicated and diverse relationships with trans group membership. A great degree of variability is reported by individuals: some construct their non-binary identity within the trans umbrella (usually as a default authoritative system which places them in this category), and some dissociate from the transgender category via their own quantitative (“I’m not trans enough”) or qualitative (defining how they interpret trans) validation rhetoric.

These conversations reflect the difficulties in how those outside of the binary must manage wider societal norms about their gender-diverse identities, deciding whether their experiences align with those who may as trans. Transnormativity appears problematic for gender-diverse populations as they must not only consider how to construct a gender identity outside of the binary but they are then required to validate how their identities may be distinct, or align with, trans-identifying individuals. Ultimately, policy makers should allow space for the individual who identifies as outside of the binary, paying specific attention to the ways in which they construct their identities. By doing so, it will be possible to avoid conflation between a plethora of possible gender identities and accurately represent populations.

2.4 Discussion

“Genderqueer isn’t something we can trust society to handle right now, because they’re not even good to the binary trans people. So those of us who feel it’s not safe to be out aren’t coming out of nowhere. The thing to keep in mind is that this time is akin to a generation ago for gay people” Anonymous. (Darwin, 2017)

This meta-ethnography generated concepts to consider how individuals identifying outside of the binary (predominantly non-binary and genderqueer-identified) construct their own gender identity. Across the concepts, there appears to be a great deal of consideration made by individuals to remain accountable to the social worlds around them. Those who identify outside of the binary seem to acutely consider how their language is understood by others, how they make their identities visible and invisible, and how their physical embodiments of gender are to be interpreted by others. In some instances, they also appear to employ a sense of community to construct their identities and validate their experiences: whether online or referring to LGBTQ+ communities and their histories more generally. Remaining accountable to the social worlds around them is likely to come at a heavy burden (Matsuno & Budge, 2017): it seems these individuals are constantly considering how they construct a gendered embodiment that is intelligible to others.

It is possible to view these findings as rooted within cisnormativity: the notion that our society privileges and naturalises cisgender bodies via the assumption that our gender is biologically determined by sex characteristics (Bauer et al., 2009; Frohard-Dourlent et al., 2017). The concepts constructed via meta-ethnography suggest that cisnormativity is so prevalent that those who identify outside of the gender binary must monitor how their behaviours, language, and constructions are interpreted by others around them. These difficulties are further exacerbated by transnormativity: the social, medical, and legal arrangements in which trans individuals are held accountable to a set of protocol which determines what it means to deviate from gendered norms (Johnson, 2016). For those who identify as outside of the binary, they not only seem to grapple with cisnormativity, but are also required to validate whether their identity aligns with, or is distinct from, trans labels.

Therefore, it seems possible that to construct an identity outside of the binary, individuals must employ language that is rooted within Western constructs related to gender dimorphism (e.g., ‘masculine’ vs ‘feminine’). This language is employed by LGBTQ+ communities to support their constructions of gender today. Models popularised by Lev (2004), and more recent iterations like the Genderbread Person (Killermann, 2017) and the Gender Unicorn (Pan & Moore, 2019), represent the possibility of dimorphic constructs existing on dual continuums (e.g., masculinity

and femininity exist on two separate continua, between not present at all and masculine/feminine). Although this language may be useful for some, from the findings generated in this synthesis, it seems possible that it may not be helpful for all who identify with diverse gender possibilities.

Some who identify outside of the binary note their frustration at the lack of language currently available: for some, even the 'non-binary' label is unhelpfully built on the notion that the binary exists (Savoia, 2017). These findings link more broadly to queer theory, specifically the importance of deconstructing essentialist language for more natural possibilities to begin (Dilley, 1999). Some suggest that individuals outside of the binary should not carry the burden of social change to disrupt these pervasive systems (Garrison, 2018). However, the findings from this synthesis seem to suggest that the constructs employed by these populations may attune us to the difficulties that some experience to conceptualise their truths within our dimorphic structures. By becoming aware of Western society's cis-normative assumptions, only then may it be possible to ease the heavy burden placed upon marginalised populations to educate wider society about their experiences (Matsuno & Budge, 2017).

Further, our current understandings are likely to have derived from research which may have inadvertently conflated the experiences of those identifying outside of the gender binary with other LGBTQ+ populations. Some researchers still fall foul of this today: for example, Vega et al. (2019) and Garrison (2019), the original researcher, reflect on a published paper (Garrison, 2018) which inadvertently conflates and holds those who identify as non-binary accountable to trans populations. An understanding of the impact of these connotations is starting to emerge in recent literature (Fiani & Han, 2019), but this remains in its infancy. Further research into gender possibilities should clearly define and construct the key features of fluid identities and expressions with the participants they seek to represent; it may then be possible to create frameworks which improve measurement of these concepts (Bradford et al., 2019). This synthesis raises awareness of these key issues, making implications to ensure researchers hold their responsibilities to understand and communicate the perspectives they gather accurately.

2.4.1 Limitations

This synthesis was generated through the analysis of empirical studies conducted within the last 10 years. This decision was made to avoid the conflation of the experiences of those identifying outside of the binary with other LGBTQ+ populations, thus allowing a focus on the specific accounts of those who identify outside of the binary. It was not possible to explore and dissect literature prior to this, in which there may have been some useful voices represented, although

Chapter 2

possibly conflated, within wider LGBTQ+ research. Due to the scope, the current study also excluded papers that may have inadvertently conflated sexuality with gender. This may have limited the researcher's ability to observe intersectionality: the recognition of how the individual's unique identities intersect and affect interaction within their social worlds (Crenshaw, 1992). Future research should account for this, observing how those who identify outside of the binary also construct and manage other aspects of their identity (e.g., ethnicity; age; disability), noting the nature of these intersections with gender.

As language around identities outside of the binary continues to evolve at a quick pace (Dixon et al., 2022; Matsuno & Budge, 2017), it was challenging to identify and create a search strategy that could possibly capture all possible identities, labels, and possibilities around the world. Nevertheless, this study identified over 10,000 possible papers, although like Thorne et al. (2019), the term 'non-binary' left results which included computer science papers. From the concepts generated via meta-ethnography, it is important to recognise that language may be used as a proxy by some, where they feel that Western terminology cannot clearly define their unique identities (Darwin, 2020; Savoia, 2018). Researchers and organisations have recently begun to endorse the term 'gender-diverse' (Thorne et al., 2019), which was not included within the current study's search strategy. Therefore, there may be some voices which were not represented within the meta-ethnography. This also bears some implications to the possibility of participation bias within the included studies: the voices captured may have participated based on the language used in the recruitment stages (e.g., non-binary; genderqueer; transgender) and may not have represented the possibility of those who struggle to clearly define their gender within a label or are actively experimenting with their gender constructs.

Furthermore, a Western bias is present throughout the meta-ethnography. The current study employed a variety of possible gender-diverse terms from around the world, which were not represented within the final synthesis. This is likely to be caused by the study's scope, which sought empirical projects that provided populations with a qualitative research platform to communicate their views. On reflection, it is likely that a Western bias prevails within these forms of evidence, which may have resulted in the exclusion of more diverse research approaches such as those captured within complex ethnographic fieldwork with Indigenous populations (Goel, 2016; Snigdha, 2021). It is also possible that there is a lack of research that explores how other societies construct gender, which limits the ability to observe cisnormativity in non-Western cultures. Therefore, future studies would benefit from decolonising research: the process of challenging underlying Western research assumptions to place Indigenous voices and epistemologies at the core of the research enquiry (Datta, 2018). It may be possible that research reflected within alternative forms of empiricism could have important implications when

considering how to deconstruct Western constructions of gender, especially within communities around the world who may not be held accountable to dimorphic gender structures.

Additionally, meta-ethnography was selected due to its interpretivist stance and its focus on participants' first-hand experiences (Craggs & Kelly, 2018). Although there are key features of the approach, the reporting of meta-ethnographic processes seems to vary since its original conception (Noblit & Hare, 1988) and the approach does not seem to have reached a methodological consensus across its published examples (Barnett-Page & Thomas, 2009; France et al., 2019; Soundy & Heneghan, 2022). Nevertheless, the approach was selected due to its aims to generate new theory via a focus on translating individual accounts and concepts. Worked examples, such as Britten and Pope (2012), were helpful in providing a methodological basis for the current synthesis.

2.4.2 Conclusion

Through a research process that has gathered constructions, this meta-ethnography has generated concepts and implications for those who identify outside of the gender binary and the wider social worlds in which they live. It appears that these individuals are held particularly accountable to our Western constructions of gender, which makes it difficult for their truths to exist. Our society is guilty of this by privileging structures that favour gender dimorphism, including those from colonial roots. These difficulties are ever present in research institutions, which further honour certain approaches and omit the lens to attend to multiple truths. These lessons may be uncomfortable, but it is important to acknowledge and learn from histories to pave new routes forward to hear and represent marginalised voices. Ultimately, it would be beneficial to avoid conflating or misinterpreting their nuanced experiences to allow their truths to exist. Space, time, and opportunities should allow those who identify outside of the binary to construct their identities truthfully; listeners should attend closely to unpick pervasive, societal beliefs.

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Chapter 3 Co-creating a new theory of gender beyond the binary: A Delphi study

Abstract

This study recognises that a pervasive, binary view of gender does not accurately capture everyone (e.g., LGBTQ+, transgender, non-binary, and gender-diverse communities). The study sought to develop new understandings about what might be important to the ways in which gender is viewed for young people in the United Kingdom (UK). A three-round online Delphi methodology was employed via a panel of young people aged 16-25, who all recognised that current models of gender do not represent everyone. The panel rated a series of statements related to the importance of the way in which gender is viewed, and additionally contributed their own statements. A consensus level of 70% agreement was set to include statements in a final framework. The panel agreed consensus on 69 statements, which were used to inform new guiding frames of gender that capture a diverse range of possibilities. These include: allowing some individuals to transcend gender essentialism and determinism, allowing multiple possibilities to exist, allowing language to act as a supportive tool, and understanding that gender may fluctuate through time. The panel's framework is discussed in relation to the current evidence base, such as contemporary models of gender, queer theory, and counternarratives. The panel's framework can be used to communicate their core messages about gender possibilities.

3.1 Introduction

West and Zimmerman's (1987) influential paper examines how people are held accountable to 'do gender' in everyday interactions. 'Doing gender' requires individuals to dress, behave, and interact in social worlds through ways that express their assigned sex (Lorber, 1994; West & Zimmerman, 1987). When people 'do gender', they construct an array of social differences between male and female categories; differences that West and Zimmerman (1987) suggest are artificial. These assumptions form the foundations of hetero- and cis-normativity: the privileging of social and cultural inequalities which derive from the maintenance of an essentialist, binary model of gender (Bauer et al., 2009; Butler, 2007). Theorists suggest that hetero- and cis-normativity are entrenched in social worlds: taught and reinforced as early as birth and are socially maintained within family environments and schools (Donelson & Rogers, 2004; McGuire et al., 2016).

3.1.1 Normative school environments

In comparison to their peers, young people whose lived experience challenges hetero- and cis-normative assumptions (such as LGBTQ+ communities) experience discrimination, lower academic achievement, and negative impacts on their psychological wellbeing (Bradlow et al., 2017; Kosciw et al., 2020). More specifically, those who identify as transgender, or gender-diverse, can feel particularly unsafe within these environments, reporting higher levels of discrimination and victimisation than their cisgender peers (Day et al., 2018; Toomey et al., 2012).

Research is beginning to show how school environments may reinforce the gender binary through institutionalised hetero- and cis- normativity. Gender-segregated practices, such as administrative procedures, bathrooms, and sports (Bragg et al., 2018; McBride, 2021), have a particular impact on gender-diverse youth; for example, young people in Bragg et al.'s (2018) research reported on hearing gendered assumptions such as "girls couldn't throw" (p.430). Yet not everyone accepts these cis-normative standards, and research suggests that young people and their parents/carers are advocating for change, especially where school policies to support these populations are non-existent, or where they are available, or appear individualistic or tokenistic (Bower-Brown et al., 2021; Davy & Cordoba, 2020). Further, Bragg et al. (2018) reports the views of young people who noticed teachers challenging heteronormative assumptions but, sometimes, how these may be received by further discrimination: "And then there's some boys that go 'oh here she goes again about girls being equal to boys' and it's like, well we should be equal to boys because it isn't fair that boys see themselves as being higher than girls" (p.430). Although it is critical to implement policies to facilitate the inclusion and belonging of gender-diverse populations (McGowan et al., 2022), it remains evident that for some young people, whose lived experience challenges hetero- and cis-normative structures, they remain unavoidably counter-normative within school environments (Austin, 2016; Bragg et al., 2018).

3.1.2 A perpetual, binary model of gender

Difficulties in young people navigating normative school environments can be linked to the prominence of hetero- and cis-normativity, pulling individuals to enact essentialist gender choices (Bragg et al., 2018). In a review, Hyde et al. (2018) note that the binary model of gender fundamentally misrepresents psychological and biological systems of those who identify as gender diverse. These findings are well rooted within the thinking of contemporary feminist theorists, who argue that when individuals are governed by normative narratives, their lives are compared against a 'top-down' binary model of gender that fails to represent everyone in our society (Butler, 2007; Renold, 2000).

3.1.3 Contemporary models of gender

Following critiques of hetero- and cis-normativity, new models of gender have begun to emerge which challenge binary structures and aim to represent more diverse identities and experiences. Lev (2004) approached gender through a constructivist frame to develop the four components of sexual identity model (2004, see Jourian, 2015 for a summary). The model represents four key components as markedly distinct from one another: biological sex, gender identity, gender-role expression, and sexual orientation. Lev (2004) suggests these four components exist on independent continuums and can change throughout the individual's lifespan.

Lev's (2004) model allows representation for those whose experiences may not fit traditional binary models of gender. Strengths of the model are in its conception from the narratives of gender diverse people and how it directly challenges cisnormativity as an environmental problem, rather than individuals (Jourian, 2015). The model also celebrates self-determination in that individuals are permitted agency to construct their own identities. Its utility has been adapted within contemporary interpretations, which are more accessible to young people and the adults that support them, such as the Genderbread Person (Killermann, 2017) and the Gender Unicorn (Pan & Moore, 2019). These adaptations are iterative and continue to develop Lev's (2004) original model. For example, in the fourth iteration of Killermann's (2017) Genderbread Person, "biological sex" is represented as "sex assigned at birth" and "anatomical sex". These revisions allow space for new constructions to capture a developing gender language accurately.

However, these models are not without their limitations. Jourian (2015) highlights how Lev's (2004) model still privileges the binary within its fixed constructs, which exist on a continuum between two stable opposites (e.g., "man" and "masculine" on one end; "woman" and "feminine" on the other). These critiques may also be applied to more contemporary adaptations: the latest versions of the Genderbread Person (Killermann, 2017) and Gender Unicorn (Pan & Moore, 2019) reflect current constructs in wide use (e.g., "woman-ness" is used to move away from the fixedness of the "woman") but are still rooted within binary, fixed qualities. Therefore, there is a need to reconstruct our models of gender to move beyond innate binary assumptions, especially given the increasing numbers in Western societies who are beginning to challenge cis-normativity by identifying as outside of the binary (Dargie et al., 2014; Thorne et al., 2019; Vijilbrief et al., 2020).

Jourian (2015) created a dynamic model, which expands language to allow a breadth of gender possibilities to be represented beyond the binary (see Jourian, 2015, for examples). However, the researcher reflects on the complexity of their model for a lay audience and the need for testing

with populations it seeks to represent. The language also does not seem to derive from communities themselves.

3.1.4 Rationale for the current study

The extent to which these emerging models of gender provide a valid alternative to traditional binary models and are supportive of young people in affirming their identities, is unclear. To the researcher's knowledge, there is no research which takes these models to young people and gathers their perspectives, despite being a suggested focus by Jourian (2015) seven years ago. Although Lev (2004) consulted with gender-diverse communities, this must be recognised in the early millennial context and since then, constructions related to gender have emerged and evolved (e.g., more young people now identify outside of the gender binary). Therefore, there is scope to build a framework of gender from the 'ground-up', with young people themselves, to represent the diverse possibilities.

Young people have also begun constructing new possibilities for themselves and since Lev's (2004) original conceptions, the internet has emerged as a platform for young people to seek and understand their own experiences, experience belonging with others, and allow experimentation towards new constructions of gender possibilities (Bradlow et al., 2017; Bragg et al., 2018; Darwin, 2017; Vijlbrief et al., 2020). Despite this observed level of creativity in online spaces, its potential is yet to be fully captured within empirical research that seeks to work with these populations. Sargeant et al. (2022) further suggests that young people have become their own 'agents of change': they have developed new ways to recognise themselves in the absence of research and policy. This is linked to Brown's (1989) 'normative creativity': the notion that those perceived as 'deviations from the norms' engage in a level of creative necessity to construct their truths where no clear guidelines exist. Therefore, it is possible to consider gender as an ever-evolving construct that could be explored with young people who are already at the helm of its development.

3.2 Method

3.2.1 Design and procedure

The current study employed a modified online three-round Delphi approach (Keeney et al., 2011). Delphi is an iterative methodology, which consists of questionnaires (known as 'rounds'), to build consensus on a topic of interest with panel members (Powell, 2003; Jago et al., 2020). After each

round, feedback regarding the overall results is shared with panel members, as well as providing them subsequent opportunities to amend their responses whilst considering other panellists' views. Typically, questionnaires are sent out until consensus is achieved (Niederberger & Spranger, 2020). Delphi's use is well documented, having recently benefitted the creation of evidence-informed guidelines and competency frameworks across educational psychology; for example, gathering young people's perspectives on mental health provision (Jago et al., 2020), defining key features Educational Psychologist (EP) practice such as cultural responsiveness (Sakata, 2021), the quality of dynamic assessment tools (Green & Birch, 2019), and defining curriculums for EP training (Dunsmuir et al., 2015). The current study sought to employ Delphi to co-construct possibilities of gender with young people.

Delphi panellists are expected to have more expertise on topics under investigation than the general population and have experience concerning the target issue (Hsu & Sandford, 2007). For the current study, panellists (aged 16-25) were required to understand that existing models of gender fail to represent everyone. It was felt that an online Delphi approach would encourage young people from around the UK to contribute their perspectives and capture their possible prior experiences of using the internet to co-construct their identities. Another perceived advantage it was that it would enable panellists to provide their views anonymously, avoiding social and power balance effects which may occur in face-to-face approaches (Jago, 2019; Sakata, 2021). It was also felt that anonymity would keep vulnerable community members safe, allowing them to fully explore gender possibilities without judgement.

Items in the first round were identified via a systematic review of relevant literature, which answered the question, "How do those outside of the gender binary, around the world, construct their gender or related constructs?" It was felt it would be useful for panellists to begin at a starting point of statements from the conceptualisations of those with genders outside of the binary (e.g., non-binary; genderqueer), whose own lived experiences challenge the dominant binary system. Findings from the systematic review were collated to form an initial set of gender statements which meant that the panellists started from a 'common base' of knowledge (Jago et al., 2020; Keeney et al., 2011;) in relation to the question: "Which of these are important to the way in which gender is viewed?" All statements were checked by two young people and relevant changes made accordingly. Panellists rated all statements using a four-point Likert scale ('very important', 'important', 'slightly important', and 'not at all important'). Some statements were considered in relation to provided definitions (see Appendix B). Panellists were also provided with the opportunity to generate their own statements to be included in subsequent rounds. Upon completion of all three rounds of Delphi, panellists were paid a £10 Amazon voucher for their time. The Delphi stages are summarised in Figure 3.

Figure 3 *Summary of Delphi process*

Systematic Review of Current Literature

To inform the content of round one, a systematic literature search was conducted to identify how those outside of the gender binary, around the world, construct their gender, or related constructs. Using relevant search engines (PsychINFO, Web of Science, ERIC), relevant empirical papers were selected, critically appraised, and read multiple times to elicit content for Delphi.

Recruitment and Registration

Recruitment started. Young people interested in taking part read all relevant information, confirmed they understood their role within the Delphi approach, confirmed they met the expert panellist criteria, and consented to take part. Those that provided consent were immediately provided with a demographic survey and asked to provide an email address to be used throughout the study. All information was collected via Microsoft Forms. All who completed the demographic survey were assigned a unique personal identification number (PIN) to be used throughout the study.

Delphi Questionnaire Created and Piloted by Research Team

Based on a systematic review of literature, statements were developed and reviewed through an iterative process by the research team. Statements were also included to reflect constructs from contemporary models of gender, such as the Genderbread Person (Killerman, 2017). Statements were then used to formulate the first questionnaire to be used in round one. All statements were checked for understanding by two young people (aged 16-25). Statements were presented in a randomised order. The questionnaire was developed on Microsoft Forms and pilot tested.

Analysis and Feedback of Round One Delphi Questionnaire

Round one was analysed. Panellists' written contributions were also analysed, and 22 new statements were created. The overall responses were reported back to panellists in an anonymised format. This enabled the participants to understand how their answers positioned in relation to the wider panel.

Round Two: Delphi Questionnaire

Upon receiving feedback reports, panellists were invited to complete round two and asked to consider their initial responses whilst completing. The second questionnaire required participants to re-rate original statements and consider the 22 additional statements produced in round one. Statements that had already reached strong consensus were not included.

Analysis and Feedback of Round Two Delphi Questionnaire

The results of round two were analysed. The overall responses were reported back in an anonymised format, prompting panellists to observe how their answers positioned in relation to the wider panel.

Round Three: Delphi Questionnaire

Upon receiving feedback reports, panellists were then invited to complete the final round and asked to consider their initial responses whilst completing. Statements that had reached strong consensus by this stage were not included in round three.

3.2.2 Participants

The quality of a Delphi study is contingent on the definition and selection of expert panellists (Kennedy, 2000). Close attention was paid by the researcher to the identification of panellists through purposive selection criteria (Jorm, 2015; Powell, 2003).

Young people were invited to register their interest in the current study if they confirmed they met the following expert panellist criteria: 1) willing and motivated to contribute their expertise towards identifying components to inform a new theory of gender 2) Have experienced their own personal discomfort, or be aware of the discomfort experienced by others, within current models of gender 3) Confirm they have understood the purpose and aims of the study and how this will be achieved through individual contribution within Delphi. Particular attention was also given in recruitment materials for the participation of underrepresented groups (e.g., ethnic minority communities; religious minority communities; LGBTQIA+ communities; people with disabilities). The researcher made it clear that the study was fully inclusive: the team were keen to hear from anyone who met the expert panellist criteria and wished to take part, whether LGBTQIA+ identified or not, as laid out in criterion (2) above.

To support interested young people in understanding Delphi, clear written explanations were provided and an optional video, created by the researcher, was offered. To help ensure young people felt safe in engaging with this research, all aims of the project were clear and the researcher disclosed their own identities and reasons for being interested in this research.

Schools, colleges, and further education settings across the UK were contacted with information about the study and asked to share an information flyer with young people who they believe may be interested in taking part (see Appendix C). UK-based youth and charity organisations (e.g., Mermaids) were also approached to support recruitment. The information flyer was also made available for online distribution and circulated via advertisements on social media platforms (e.g., Twitter and Facebook). Educational professionals in the UK were welcomed to share knowledge of the study, which led to a 'snowballing effect'.

In total, 47 young people registered their interest to take part by completing consent forms and providing demographic information. In order to take part, young people confirmed they met the requirement and expert panellist criteria via the consent form (Appendix D). The first round was completed by 35 young people. Due to the high levels of commitment required to participate in Delphi (Keeney et al., 2011), some attrition was expected. In the current study, 31 panellists completed round two and 26 panellists completed round three (see Table 6 for demographic information). For some demographic questions, recommendations from Jones et al. (2019) were

Chapter 3

employed to recognise the diversity of the population under investigation and to value self-determination (Vincent, 2018): participants were asked to describe their identity in their own words (ethnicity; gender identity; sexual identity; religion and/or faith; special educational need or disability) (see Table 7 for further demographic data). All data related to the Delphi study was collected between November 2021 and February 2022.

Table 6 *Participants' demographic information*

Characteristics		Round 1 participants		Round 3 participants	
		(n = 35)		(n = 26)	
Age		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
			20.54	2.94	20.96
Location	London	7		4	
	South East	10		8	
	North West	2		2	
	East of England	1		0	
	West Midlands	1		1	
	South West	3		2	
	Yorkshire and the Humber	3		2	
	East Midlands	0		0	
	North East	3		2	
	Scotland	4		4	
	Northern Ireland	0		0	
	Wales	1		1	
Employment	Full-time student (School/College)	10		8	
	Full-time student (University)	11		9	
	Part-time student (University)	1		1	
	Full-time employed	8		5	
	Part-time employed	1		1	
	Self-employed	1		1	
	Unemployed	3		2	

Table 7 *Participants' self-constructed identities*

Age	Ethnicity	Gender identity	Sexual identity	Religion/faith	SEN and/or disability (including self-identified)	Round One Completed	Round Three Completed
21	Caucasian	Transgender female	Bisexual	Atheist	Processing speed difficulty	✓	✓
19	White British	Strongly feminine, occasionally masculine	Biromantic, asexual	Non-religious	N/A	✓	
21	British	Transgender	Gay	N/A (did not disclose)	N/A	✓	✓
25	White British	Questioning cis-female	Pansexual, demiromantic, polyamorous	Agnostic, atheist	ADHD	✓	
22	British	Male	Straight	Christian	N/A	✓	✓
16	White British	Transgender male	Bisexual	Non-religious	Autism	✓	✓
16	White Irish	Transmaculine, bigender	Bisexual, queer	Agnostic	Autism	✓	✓
23	White British/Irish	Transgender man	Bisexual, pansexual	Christian, paganism	Dyspraxia, with traits of dyslexia	✓	✓
24	Mixed	Male, but not very masculine	Asexual	Atheist	N/A	✓	✓
24	White British	Trans man	Biromantic, asexual, queer	Atheist	Autism	✓	✓
23	White British	Transgender male	Pansexual	Atheist	N/A	✓	✓

Chapter 3

22	Scottish	Trans woman	Lesbian	Atheist	ADHD, Autism, Dyslexia	✓	✓
22	White British	Non-binary, occasionally agender	Bisexual	Atheist	ADHD	✓	✓
17	White	Transwoman	Bisexual	Agnostic	Anxiety	✓	✓
22	White German	Non-binary, masculine leaning	Bisexual	Pagan leaning	ADHD	✓	
17	Indian	Transgender male	Straight	Agnostic	N/A	✓	
17	British Pakistani	Demiboy	Gay	Non-practicing Muslim	N/A	✓	✓
19	White Mixed	Between neutral/third gender and male	Omnisexual	Exploratory	Autism	✓	
20	White British	Non-binary	Queer	Non-religious	ADHD	✓	
25	Indian	Male	Gay	Hindu by birth, but no strict religious beliefs	N/A	✓	✓
19	White British	Trans male	Queer	Buddhist, atheist	Neurodivergent (ADHD and Autism), Physical disability (ME/CFS)	✓	✓
21	White British	Genderqueer, gender non-conforming, female aligned	Lesbian	Atheist	N/A	✓	✓
21	Mixed South-Asian, White	Female	Bisexual	Agnostic	N/A	✓	✓
25	White British	Non-binary	Bisexual	Non-religious	ADHD, mental health history	✓	✓
18	White	Non-binary	Bisexual	Atheist	Autism	✓	✓

19	White	Demigirl, plural	Asexual, caedsexual	Vaguely pagan	C-PTSD with frequent amnesia and motor control loss	✓	
25	White European	Female	Bisexual	Non-religious	N/A	✓	✓
21	White	Trans woman	Lesbian	Agnostic	N/A	✓	✓
20	White British	Questioning male	Gay	Atheist	N/A	✓	✓
25	White British	Genderfluid	Queer	Unsure	Autism	✓	✓
17	White British	Ambivalent	Queer	Wiccan	Autism	✓	✓
16	White European	Trans masculine, non-binary	Queer	Atheist	Dyslexia, undergoing Autism diagnosis	✓	
18	White	Demigirl	Bisexual	Atheist	Autism	✓	✓
22	White	Woman	Questioning	Atheist	N/A	✓	✓
17	White European	Non-binary	Pansexual	Atheist	Autism	✓	

3.2.3 Analysis

An individual feedback report was produced for each panellist for every completed round. These reports reminded panellists of their individual ratings for each item and allowed comparison to the wider panel (see Appendix F). Additional items, generated by the panellists themselves, were included if they described a concept or idea that had not been previously represented.

Data frequencies and descriptive statistics were conducted to identify consensus levels on each item. There is no definitive way of defining consensus for Delphi studies: Keeney et al. (2011) report this can range between 51% and 100%. For this study, consensus was set at 70%, based on a review of the literature conducted by Green and Birch (2019), reporting that levels of consensus typically ranged between 70-80%.

Delphi researchers have also collapsed categories based on the levels of importance (Green & Birch, 2019; Phillips et al., 2014; Sawford, et al., 2014). Therefore, in the following study, consensus was approached in the following way:

- Strong consensus: If 70% or more panellists rated an item as 'very important' this was viewed as strong consensus. Equally, strong consensus was considered for statements that were not important to the ways in which gender should be viewed if 70% or more panellists rated a statement as 'not at all important'.
- Consensus: If 70% of panellists rated a statement as 'very important' or 'important', then it was considered that consensus had been reached

3.3 Results

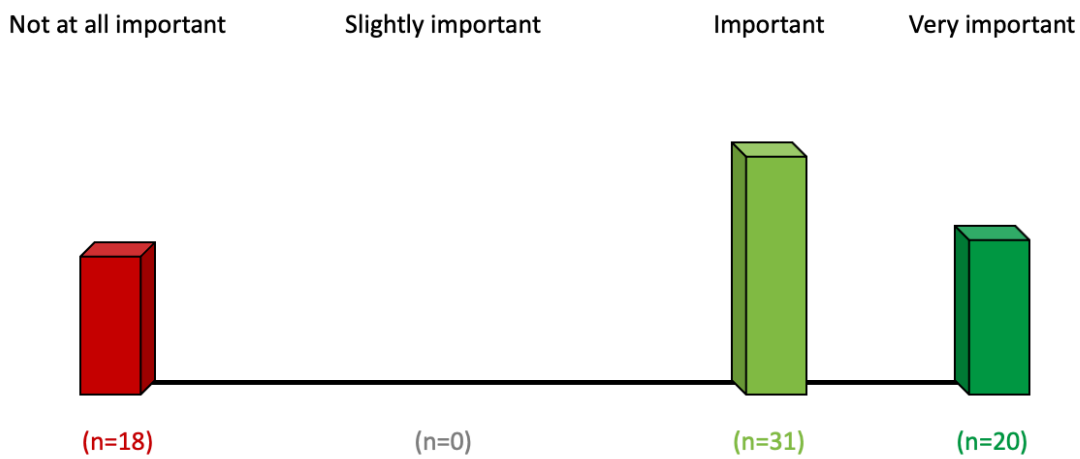
Table 8 provides a summary of the overall results of this Delphi study. Overall, a total of 105 statements were generated, 83 from the systematic literature search and 22 from the panellists' own conceptualisations.

Table 8 *Summary of total number of statements included in this Delphi study.*

Number of statements generated from the systematic literature review	83
Number of statements contributed by panellists during round one	22
Total number of statements rated by panellists across all three rounds	105
Total number of statements that met strong consensus and were deemed very important to the way in which gender is viewed	20
Total number of statements that met consensus and were deemed important to the way in which gender is viewed	31
Total number of statements for which there was strong consensus that were not at all important to the way in which gender is viewed	18
Total number of statements for which there was no overall consensus as to whether or not they were important to the way in which gender is viewed	36

All statements were rated by the Delphi panel. Consensus was achieved for 69 statements and a visual representation is represented within Figure 4. Statements that did not reach consensus can be found in Appendix G.

Figure 4 *Visual representation of statements reaching consensus*



Of the 69 statements that reached consensus, the Delphi panel identified that 20 were 'very important' (see Table 9) and 31 were 'important' (see Table 10) to the ways in which gender is viewed. Additionally, 18 of these were considered 'not at all important' (see Table 11). The statements are recorded in their entirety to allow the panel's views to be fully represented. In the following table, the '*' symbol represents a statement that was contributed by the panellists themselves.

Table 9 *'Very important' to the way in which gender should be viewed*

A person can feel that their body doesn't match their experience of their gender
Sex and gender are two separate constructs
A person can identify with another sex more than their assigned sex
A person's gender identity can differ from their birth-assigned sex
A person can identify as neither male or female
Ideas and systems of classification related to male and female are outdated
A person may not have a gender
A person may identify as having a specific, further gender outside of the binary
Gender identity can be fluid for some and static for others*
A person's gender identity does not always match their gender expression
A person's expression of their gender can change over time
Gender identity is fluid and can fluctuate over time
Society's understanding of gender can change over time*
Use of identity terms continues to evolve over time
Non-binary is an umbrella term to capture a range of identities and experiences
Transgender identities are valid with and without medical interventions*
Gender and pronouns are not always connected*
Not all people who alter their gender expression are transgender
The way a person expresses themselves is inherently non-gendered; we apply a construct of gender to our understanding of a person's expression (e.g., a person dressing a certain way)
A transgender man may present as 'feminine', or a transgender woman may present as 'masculine', without compromising their identity as a transgender person*

Table 10 *'Important' to the way in which gender should be viewed*

People should maintain a less gender-based outlook across all areas of life*
People are inherently non-gendered; we apply a construct of gender to understanding our bodies
People are inherently non-gendered; we apply a construct of gender to our understanding of how people experience themselves
A person can alter their gender expression to match their gender identity
A person can identify as a mixture of male and female

A person's experience of gender can change over time

A person can identify as more male or more female

A person can experience themselves to be more or less masculine, or more or less feminine

A person can experience themselves to be both masculine and feminine

The way a person expresses themselves can combine masculine and feminine elements

The way a person expresses themselves can possess neither masculine nor feminine elements

A person can identify equally with both sexes

Gender identity can fluctuate over contexts and social environments

A person's experience of their gender can change because of their lived experience

The way we can experience gender can be influenced by other factors (e.g., ethnicity, disability, age)*

A person's experience of their gender can change because of external pressures (e.g., expectations of other people – parents/teachers etc.)

A person can change their expression of their gender to fit the norms of the environment (e.g., a person following a school uniform code)

A person can change their expression of their gender to challenge the norms of their environment

Terms such as "genderqueer" and "non-binary" help label gender

What a term means to one individual may mean something different to another

You do not need to label gender with an identity term (e.g., genderqueer; non-binary; male; female)

Gender expression is the ways in which an individual presents their gender

Some transgender people identify with binary genders (e.g., man/woman)

Changing your gender expression, even to the point of medical intervention, is not exclusive to transgender people*

They/them pronouns should be used for all, unless you have been told the pronouns a person uses*

Not every non-binary person uses they/them pronouns*

Pronouns are an important and affirming expressive marker*

Pronouns are not indicative of gender*

Individuals are allowed to decide how they would like their physical markers to be interpreted by others*

There is a lack of gender-neutral expressive markers

Physical markers should be an individual's personal choice*

Table 11 *'Not at all important' to the way in which gender should be viewed*

Gender is exclusively male and female
Sex and gender are the same constructs
A person can only express themselves as male and female
A person's experience of gender is fixed and cannot change
You can confirm someone's gender with physical markers
You can confirm someone's gender with expressive markers
A person should express their gender in line with the gender they have been assigned at birth
In choosing a gender, individuals accept a binary narrative
Only transgender people need to alter their bodies through physical markers
Being transgender means your gender identity is either male or female
How someone was assigned at birth should be reinforced through socially required identification, which places a person in one or the other male/female category (e.g., use of bathrooms)
A person should learn to act in accordance with their gender (e.g., a person being assertive due to their gender)
A person should learn beliefs about themselves in accordance with their gender (e.g., a person feeling more confident in their maths or English abilities due to their gender)
A person's expression of their gender cannot change over time
A person should be gendered using physical markers
Certain expressive markers tells us the individual belongs to another gender (e.g., using make-up implies you are female)
Medical measures, that result in permanent changes to the body, oppose the idea of gender fluidity)
Gender should be assigned at birth

3.4 Discussion

The following section will describe the lessons that the expert panel would like us to know about gender and take forward to future models. This study consulted with young people in the UK to understand what they feel is important to know about gender possibilities. It was felt that employing Delphi, a consensus building tool, would allow young people to construct new guiding frames of gender which may represent those whose lived experiences challenge hetero- and cis-normative assumptions.

The panellists' engagement and response to a 105-statement Delphi study identified 51 items that were deemed 'important' or 'very important' to the ways in which gender is viewed. A further 18

items were also identified as 'not at all important'. Whilst this study is relatively small scale, exploratory, and cannot be viewed as the "correct answer" (p. 1013, Hasson et al., 2000), the framework generated by the Delphi panel represents what may be important for wider populations to consider in terms of how gender is conceived. The following section will discuss key findings, how constructions align with current knowledge, and identify ways forward to develop this field further.

3.4.1 Gender can transcend essentialism and determinism

In this study, some statements that achieved strong consensus related to what panellists thought was 'not at all important' to the ways in which gender should be viewed. All 18 competencies achieved a strong consensus during round one (e.g., "Gender is exclusively male and female"; "A person's experience of their gender is fixed and cannot change"; "A person should express their gender in line with the gender they have been assigned at birth"). These results suggest the panel agree that essentialist (e.g., "Gender is exclusively male and female"; "A person's experience of gender is fixed and cannot change") and biologically determined (e.g., "A person should express their gender in line with the gender they have been assigned at birth"; "How someone was assigned at birth should be reinforced through socially required identification...") understandings of gender fail to capture the breadth of gender possibilities.

At present, difficult conversations in the UK are yet to conclude over how we understand gender (Sargeant et al., 2022). For example, in the UK media, perspectives are increasingly positioned through two opposites, juxtaposing essentialism and biological determinism against the diverse gender possibilities that some may identify with (Faye, 2021). These juxtapositions appear to have been alluded to within Delphi: the panellists have made it clear they do not see essentialist, determined models of gender as representing the diverse possibilities of what gender should be. Instead, the panel arrived at a strong consensus that it is 'very important' to know that, for some, it is possible to transcend gender essentialism (e.g., "A person may identify as having a specific, further gender outside of the binary") and biological determinism ("A person's gender identity can differ from their birth-assigned gender or sex"; "A person can feel their body doesn't match their experience of their gender").

3.4.2 Gender can exist outside, or within, binary constructs

To support their desire to transcend biological determinism, the panel further communicated that it is 'very important' to understand that "sex and gender are two separate constructs". The panel made several suggestions which relate to moving away from essentialist models of gender.

Competencies that reached strong consensus relate to deconstructing the gender binary (e.g., “A person may not have a gender”; “A person can identify as neither male or female”). The panel made their opinion clear that it is ‘very important’ to understand that “ideas and systems of classification related to male and female are outdated”. The panel’s perspective supports research that is starting to notice individuals identifying against, or even deconstructing, pervasive Western systems that favour two binary genders (Dargie et al. 2014; Thorne et al., 2019; Vijilbrief et al., 2020).

However, the panel also strongly agreed that binary models may represent some, despite their indication that the gender binary should be deconstructed (e.g., “Gender identity can be fluid for some and static for others*”; “Some transgender people identify with binary genders”). Through a positivist lens, this could be interpreted as contradiction where the panel have also supported statements which may indicate a deconstruction of the gender binary. However, this should be considered within the constructivist approach of the selected methodology: Delphi has allowed the panel freedom to co-create gender possibilities which represent diverse populations, moving away from approaches that seek to uncover universal truths (Semp, 2011). In the current study, the panel have indicated a possibility that multiple gender truths can exist: they have shown an understanding that it is possible for some to identify with a binary gender, whereas for others, they should be permitted self-determination to construct an identity that may sit beyond the confines of gender dimorphism.

3.4.3 Gender identities can fluctuate through time and social worlds

Related to their ideals of fluidity, the panel arrived at a strong consensus that an individual’s gender may change through their histories and experiences (e.g., “A person’s expression of their gender can change over time”; “Gender identity is fluid and can fluctuate over time”; “A person’s experience of gender can change over time”). This is well supported by recent literature, which has started to dissect the gender binary’s fixed qualities and alternatively communicate that, for some, it requires high levels of reflection to engage in gender discovery (Bradford et al., 2019). For some, this may even occur after identifying as gender-diverse (Whittle et al., 2007). The panel’s perspective holds important implications for governing models and structures: society may need to allow space for individuals to engage in a level of creative freedom to discover identities. These identities may fluctuate within a contained range of time (Horowitz-Hendler, 2020), but could alternatively fluctuate across the lifespan (Bradford et al., 2017; Stachowiak, 2017).

Panellists also indicated an importance of gender being recognised as a product of social worlds and experiences. The panel communicated it 'important' to understand how "gender identity can fluctuate over contexts and social environments", understand that "the way we experience gender can be influenced by other factors (e.g., ethnicity, disability, and age)*", and "can change as a result of external pressures (e.g., parents and teachers)". The panel's opinions should be considered in relation to the broader theoretical frameworks of hetero- and cis-normativity, evidenced to present within social worlds, such as families and schools (Bragg et al., 2018). The panel's opinion perhaps represents a poignant finding: some alter their truths, actively moving their identities between visibility and invisibility, to fit or feel safe within systems that favour dimorphic gender choices (Tan & Weisbart, 2021). The findings of the current study stand in solidarity with implications made within this emerging evidence base: hetero- and cis-normative structures should be questioned to ensure individuals who challenge assumptions can present comfortably as their true selves.

These are interesting implications, possibly suggesting new dimensions for contemporary models of gender. At present, models such as the Genderbread Person (Killermann, 2017) and Gender Unicorn (Pan & Moore, 2019) do not clearly indicate that some may experience identity fluctuation over time or across social contexts. The panel also noted it is very important to understand that "society's understanding of gender can change over time*", which perhaps alludes to the developing constructions of gender diversity since the new millennium, or possibly reflects the recent identity experiences of participants themselves.

3.4.4 Gender can exist on a continuum

Despite considerations made for contemporary models, many statements that the panel considered 'important' relate to continua frameworks for gender (e.g., "A person can identify as more male or more female"; "A person can be more or less masculine, or more or less feminine"). Continua understandings were also reflected in the panel's reflections on gender expression (e.g., "The way a person expresses themselves can combine masculine and feminine elements"; "The way a person expresses themselves can possess neither masculine nor feminine elements"). The combination, or lack of, masculinity/femininity is accurately reflected within the Genderbread Person (Killermann, 2017) and Gender Unicorn (Pan & Moore, 2019); the panellists' opinion seems to provide strength to these models in the way they represent continua aspects of gender, how these may combine, and how these also may not be present for some.

3.4.5 Language can act as a tool to interpret and construct gender

The final consideration relates to interpretations and constructions of language and labels. The panel suggested that it is 'very important' that "non-binary is an umbrella term to capture a range of identities and experiences", something which has also begun to emerge within contemporary literature (Thorne et al., 2019). The panel also indicated it is 'important' to allow individuals autonomy to communicate gender (e.g., "Terms such as 'genderqueer' and 'non-binary' help label gender"; "What a term means to one individual may mean something different to another"; "You do not need to label gender with an identity term (e.g., genderqueer; non-binary; male; female)"). The panel's perspective is well supported by other exploratory approaches, where gender-diverse young people have communicated it is important to recognise the discrepancies between gender terms and how these hold different meanings and interpretations across individuals (Bradford et al., 2019; Vijlbrief et al., 2020).

Although the panel's opinion represents difficulties in wider society's search for a universal definition of gender, perhaps the panellists have suggested society should relish a level of discomfort caused by these discrepancies. This could allow individuals the autonomy to self-define their own possibilities. This aligns very closely to Wagaman's (2016) application of counternarratives: the production of alternative narratives by marginalised populations to grant a level of autonomy. Although originally conceived as a critical race theory, Wagaman (2016) delivers a compelling argument to suggest that young people should be supported to discover their own discourses, allowing them to construct their own identities. The employment of counternarratives has been recently observed in some gender-diverse populations, such as non-binary identified young people (Vijlbrief et al., 2020).

To further build on the notion of counternarratives, it seems that the panellists engaged with this to a degree themselves, when invited to suggest their own statements. A high proportion of those considered 'important' relate to pronoun use and, interestingly, how these are understood by others within social interactions (e.g., "pronouns are an important and affirming expressive marker*"; "not every non-binary person uses they/them pronouns*"; "pronouns are not indicative of gender*"). Further, the panel suggested it is very important to understand that "gender and pronouns are not always connected*". It is possible that the panel have indicated a misconception associated with pronoun use: they may be interpreted as representing a person's gender identity, but this may not always be accurate. This aligns with Matsuno and Budge's (2017) review of the literature on non-binary/genderqueer identities: some use a combination of different pronouns, some avoid pronoun use altogether, and some employ pronouns that align closest to their gender identity at that given time. Therefore, it is important to avoid assumptions

towards an individual's choice of pronouns and inferences towards their gender identity; like consideration on counternarratives, these young people must be allowed space to construct their own linguistic markers of gender.

3.4.6 Strengths and limitations

The originality and utility of this study is a clear strength. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, the current study is one of the first to employ a consensus building tool to attend to young people's perspectives on gender and co-construct an initial framework of shared understandings. An online methodology was employed, which experienced success in its reach to recruit from all areas of the UK and provided a safe space for panellists to anonymously contribute their views. The proportionately low rate of attrition, in comparison to other Delphi studies, may represent the panel's vested interest in the activism and importance of this research: to afford marginalised populations opportunities to validate their experiences and co-create shared understandings which may inform change.

The study also made clear considerations to value self-definition and heterogeneity within marginalised populations: allowing individuals to communicate identities in their own words (Jones et al., 2019; Vincent, 2018). Deliberate attempts to avoid segregating experiences via their identities were avoided via a recruitment strategy which required individuals to self-identify with expert criteria, which additionally allowed LGBTQ+ allies to participate. These considerations are understood within intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1992): acknowledging the complexities of how an individual's multiple identities intersect to create unique experiences and responses to the social worlds around them. The selected methodological processes created a shift in power dynamics: it has been possible to privilege voices that are not always represented (Wagaman, 2016) to signal the difficulties experienced within hetero- and cis-normativity, particularly within dimorphic gender choices.

Despite this, some populations were underrepresented in the current study. Over 70% of panellists identified themselves as 'White' and most identified as LGBTQ+. Further, no information was collected regarding socioeconomic status and how the panellists heard about the study. It may have been possible that a majority responded to advertisement via social media channels, with access to utilities that may not be available to all populations (e.g., access to technology; internet). The researcher would have welcomed more young people from a variety of cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds to participate, including allies, to increase the range of perspectives represented within Delphi.

Statements were informed by a relevant systematic literature search, which considered how those who consider their gender as outside of the binary construct their identities. This, in conjunction with included statements representing contemporary frameworks (Killermann, 2017; Pan & Moore, 2019), were clear strengths. Yet, although this process resembles recent applications of Delphi (Jago et al., 2020; Sakata, 2021), it could be argued that employing an open-ended round one to ensure statements represent the panel, could provide further power to the respondents as well as ensuring relevance (Green & Birch, 2019; Keeney et al., 2011). For example, statements were generated from an international systematic search, which may not have specific relevance to a predominantly White, UK based population.

Furthermore, while a level of difficulty in interpreting some statements can be expected due to the dynamic, individual, and nuanced experiences of gender (Jourian, 2015), it may have been possible that panellists experienced challenges in considering some statements. Some may have been difficult for individuals to understand, or transfer to their own realities, without relevant conceptual frameworks or personal experiences (Bradford et al., 2019; Robinson, 2017). To support the panellists' interpretation of statements, definitions of key terminology were offered (see Appendix B). Through consultation with two young people who checked the statements prior to data collection, it was felt that providing definitions may support panellists in their interpretation of some constructions, without necessarily having direct personal experiences themselves (e.g., 'biological markers' and 'physical markers' of gender). However, this could be considered as a limitation: for example, they may have guided panellists to rate some statements based on their reading of the definitions. Despite these considerations, and potential limitations, the researcher felt that, on balance, providing a common base of knowledge supported the panel in engaging with Delphi. The option to contribute their own statements importantly allowed alternative constructions to be represented.

3.4.7 Conclusion

The study represents a commitment to inclusion by providing a forum to young people. The researcher hopes this Delphi study can be used as a positive example of an iterative methodology designed to work with marginalised populations, rather than for them. Through their dedication and engagement, the Delphi panel have created an initial framework for us all to understand what they feel is important to the ways in which gender should be viewed. Their framework can be used to communicate core messages about gender possibilities, whilst still recognising levels of diversity and uniqueness that exists within this. Educational Psychologists (EPs) are well placed to communicate and advocate for the views of marginalised populations; it would be useful for EPs to support school and community settings in understanding and responding to the perspectives

Chapter 3

represented within this study. EPs are also further invited to apply research skills to develop this field further, which may further enhance the transferability of findings communicated by the Delphi panel.

The framework created by this study is positioned within a relative period of time, co-created when a conversation about how society understands gender in the UK remains divisive. The panel themselves have indicated that personal and societal understandings of gender have, and are still likely to, evolve. Language and constructions may continue to emerge as a breadth of new gender possibilities are navigated. Advocates cannot be complacent and must continue to challenge and re-define their own understandings, to learn with those whom current frameworks seek to represent. If positions continue to be adopted to promote these marginalised voices, it may not only be possible to advocate for change on behalf of those who are objectively oppressed within systems, but possibly liberate us all.

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Chapter 3

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Appendix A Critical appraisal of empirical studies using qualitative CASP checklists

Questions	“I want to be who I am”: Stories of rejecting binary gender (Balius, 2018)	Creating gender: A thematic analysis of genderqueer narratives (Bradford et al., 2019)
1. Was there a clear statement and aims of the research?	Yes <i>Understanding the narratives of individuals that adopt identities that not much is known about. Three research questions explicitly listed (gender identity construction stories; held accountable to gender binary; perceive and make meaning of gender in their lives)</i>	Yes <i>Characterise phenomenological experiences of a sample of genderqueer individuals, explore their descriptions of master and alternative narratives, and document strategies individuals employed in navigating narrative constraints</i>
2. Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes Narrative approach (Somers, 1994) selected to find stories of gender identity construction for those who reject gender binary. Thesis alludes to a constructionist epistemology.	Yes Recognition of the unique nature of individual’s narratives and experiences which co-relate to a genderqueer identity; positioned within the Master Narrative framework (McLean & Syed, 2015), which is outlined and explained clearly
3. Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Yes	Yes
4. Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	Can’t tell Researcher reflects that they are a member of the groups they recruited from – could have benefited from further reflection here. Mixture of online and in-person support groups; these are not listed. Participants opted in. Some considerations made towards intersectionality and are reported upon in methods section	Yes Subsample: only responses pertaining to genderqueer or nonbinary identity included in analysis (n = 25); use of subsample elicitation suitable given the difficulties in attracting and recruiting this specific sample. Majority (n = 90) recruited at weekly support/drop-in sessions; some responded online

5.	Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Can't tell Topic guide provided in appendix, but researcher suggests that conversation went beyond this; describes as "not required for interviews to be regimented". Not made explicit enough. Not sure where in-person interviews were held.	Yes Setting (support venues) explained; clear that data was collected via semi-structured interviews; methods justified by author; methods made explicit in that discussion from this subgroup seemed to derive from participant's direction/flow of conversation; interviews recorded Saturation not discussed, but I would view this in context of analysing subset of data from wider study
6.	Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	No Researcher obtained access to these communities through their own personal membership prior to study; researcher has not critically examined their dual role as a community participant and researcher	No No specific reference to relationships between researcher(s) and participant. Inter-rater reliability between two coders shared to strengthen reliability of coding
7.	Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	No Privacy and comfort of participants considered during the interview process, which is a strength. However, no report of approval from Ethics Committee/informed consent. Confidentiality alluded to by providing participants opportunity to provide a pseudonym, but not clear if done for all	Can't tell Study approved by Institutional Review Board of Washington State University, but not clear if this is ethical approval. No specific discussion related to ethics of participants in study. Some wider ethics inferred from findings during discussion section (e.g., impact of master narratives/cisnormativity; clinician affirming care)
8.	Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Yes Appears transcriptions were made from recordings, but not clear. Re-reads/codes generated, but an appropriate analytical framework has not been referenced. Unclear on saturation. No critical examination of researcher's role	Yes Multi-stage standardised thematic analysis used, following recommendations from Braun and Clarke (2006). Themes derived from codes, which were then sorted/based on similarity to provide themes; inductive reasoning used
9.	Is there a clear statement of findings?	Can't tell Findings presented in relation to research aims and are explicit (extract for meta-ethnography). However, credibility of findings not considered and no evidence of for/against researcher's conclusions	Yes Findings coded into three broad themes; some triangulation is inferred throughout (e.g., "many" used to infer agreement between participants); discussed in relation to research

			question and conceptual framework employed; respondent validation not used
10.	How valuable is the research?	Some interesting findings that can give weight to other research within the systematic search. However, limited by methodological shortcomings, especially critical appraisal of the researcher's role	Findings considered in relation to LGBTQ identity development theories; discussion of language as a symbolic cultural tool (Vygotsky, 1986); clinical applications made re: affirming care

Questions	“I am allowed to be myself”: A photovoice exploration of non-binary identity development and meaning-making (Cosgrove, 2021)	Challenging the cisgender/transgender binary: Nonbinary people and the transgender label (Darwin, 2020)
1. Was there a clear statement and aims of the research?	Yes Draws upon critical theory’s investigation of the constructs of power to answer research questions. Aim of research to explore how young people understand, conceptualise, and articulate their genders whilst navigating cisnormative and binary-centric environments. Current paper answers one (out of four) RQs: <i>What do others need to know about being non-binary?</i>	Yes <i>Aims to analyse nonbinary people’s complicated and diverse relationships with transgender group membership when asked whether they identify as transgender</i> <i>Sought to reveal a range of gender constellations (Snow and Anderson, 1987) that coexist under the nonbinary label</i>
2. Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes Recognition of providing power to participants, identifying them as “co-researchers” as theories were created by research team. Data elicited from group discussions and Wang’s (1999) SHOWeD analysis method/worksheets on photovoice	Yes Recognition of diversity within the nonbinary population they sought to recruit: current article focuses on the responses when asked at beginning of a larger interview schedule (also asked about experiences; relationships; institutional settings)
3. Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Yes	Yes
4. Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	Yes Purposive sampling techniques used to recruit co-researchers. Flyers distributed to health and human service, community-based organisations serving LGBTQ young people, college campuses, and electronic version on social media. Eligibility criteria (self-identify as non-binary; aged 18-25) is clear.	Yes Snowballing sampling techniques employed: used pre-existing nonbinary contacts in New York and San Francisco to spread an advertisement through their social networks. Participants self-identified with nonbinary or genderqueer label: rationale included in article about inclusion of both labels
5. Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Yes Multiple forms of qualitative data collected: group discussions recorded. Primary data also included researchers’ photographs, descriptive narratives for photos, personal analysis worksheets, and finally group discussions. Data co-constructed between	Yes Setting for in-person and online data collection justified. Semi-structured interview employed. Article focuses on particular questioning at the start of a wider interview schedule (topic

		research team and co-researchers. Seems group met on seven occasions (including exhibit presentation). Although, unclear over period of time.	guide). Audio recordings and transcribed with research assistants. Author has not described data saturation.
6.	Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	No Lack of specific critical reflection on role/possible bias of the researcher and research assistant. However, individual codes were generated during IPA analysis, so there is some consideration implied	Yes Also includes reflection on the researcher's status as an outsider to the nonbinary community; reflecting on the limitations and opportunities this yields
7.	Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Can't tell Study approved by Institutional Review Board. No specific discussion related to co-researcher recruitment, what was communicated, how they managed effects on co-researchers during and after study. Some ethical implications are made within the discussion section (e.g. critical reflection on role of group creation/lack of anonymity etc.)	Can't tell Ethics not alluded to within article, unsure in study was approved by a governing body. No specific discussion related to recruitment strategy; participant care; managing effects of participation.
8.	Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Yes Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) employed post-data collection. Process clearly defined and cross-checking codes between research team. Contradictory findings/some individual accounts provided within findings. Although, could be strengthened with critical analysis of research team	Yes Paragraph provided on code generation, re-reading of transcripts, thematic content to identify topics. Charmaz (2006) cited. Results checked against research assistants analytical memos, so not quite engaged in same level of analysis but some checking of codes has been considered
9.	Is there a clear statement of findings?	Yes Findings are clearly presented within four themes. Clear throughout the paper that the findings represent group discussion at multiple stages/meetings; discussed in relation to the RQ	Yes Findings are clearly presented within three subthemes, although there is some duplication (e.g. "trans enough") that seems to be present across all three. Reflected upon in conclusion section. Credibility of findings discussed in relation to pre-existing literature
10.	How valuable is the research?	Valuable – some clear implications are made to Social Work/ethics during discussion section; use of ground-up approach/consideration of power is particularly commendable	Valuable – some interesting implications and developments upon Garrison's (2018) work. Demonstrating growth of language/critical thinking of marginalised communities and

suggests a diversity of experience that research is not yet accounting for

Questions	The individual under the transgender umbrella: An exploration of themes in nonbinary gender identity development (Eisenberg, 2020)	On the limits of 'trans enough': Authenticating trans identity narratives (Garrison, 2018)
1. Was there a clear statement and aims of the research?	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p> <p><i>Purpose of this study was to identify the chronological account of how an individual becomes aware of their nonbinary gender identity through a narrative approach – highlighting the unfolding events/epiphanies that led to identity as nonbinary</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p> <p>Sought to identify the identity narratives produced by “two cohorts of trans respondents – binary and non-binary identified”</p>
2. Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p> <p>Keen to elicit stories/events experienced by individuals as they begun to identify as nonbinary. Creswell and Porth’s (2016) narrative approach is cited as the framework underpinning qualitative method</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p> <p>Employs a narrative approach (loosely based around the Life Story Interview guide, McAdams 2008): beginning with an open-format exposition of the participant’s “life story” to elude their lifetime experience of gender</p>
3. Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p>
4. Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p> <p>Inclusion criteria is clear and present (e.g. over 18; identify as nonbinary for at least a year) and rationale is explained. Although, researcher does reflect on the exclusion of those who are questioning in their discussion, so I am left</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">No</p> <p>Opportunity sample from across the US. 82% of respondents recruited online (author makes a note of caution regarding these demographics), and efforts to broaden the scope via LGBTQ focused organisations. Key limitation in the use of</p>

wondering if this is opposing the fluidity the researcher is discussing throughout the paper? I think this could serve as a criticism for research in general...
Also ,implications of other social identities are discussed.

‘transgender’ label to recruit non-binary participants (Vega, 2019).

<p>5. Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?</p>	<p>Yes Gathering of data is clear and explicit from the point of initial recruitment (e.g. introductory telephone calls to interested participants); not clear if any decided not to take part/withdraw data etc. All methods are clearly justified and a strong rationale is threaded throughout the thesis</p>	<p>Can't tell Collected via interviews (remotely) and sampled across the USA. Not clear about those deciding not to take part/withdraw etc. Related to the recruitment strategy, it is unclear whether participants knew that they were recruited to look at the differences between binary and non-binary respondents, so this might have implications to collection, including ethical responsibilities</p>
<p>6. Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?</p>	<p>Yes Researcher has critically examined their own role and aspects of their own identity that may have influenced. Measures have been put in place to account for bias (e.g. member checking; triangulation; bracketing), which are all key considerations from the narrative framework employed (Creswell & Poth, 2016)</p>	<p>No No discussion related to researcher critically examining their role. No critical examination of data collection methods (e.g. conducting online; via telephone) and discussion of sample of participants collected (related to recruitment implications discussed above)</p>
<p>7. Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?</p>	<p>Can't tell No report of discussion/ethical considerations. Right to withdraw is mentioned, providing autonomy over meeting time etc. However, not clear if research had gained consent from Ethics Committee (I would assume it has as it is a Clin Psych Doctoral thesis), but processes are not discussed</p>	<p>Can't tell No report/discussion of ethical considerations. Not clear if consent from Ethics Committee has been sought. Pseudonyms seem to have been used to communicate participant's contributions. Ethics related to recruitment not considered.</p>
<p>8. Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?</p>	<p>Yes Analysis is positioned within the narrative methodology: researcher's interpretation of transcriptions are re-ordered to make a clear story. Not familiar with the Creswell and Poth (2016) method myself, but seems to provide top-down</p>	<p>Can't tell Coding seems to have been employed in two rounds (open, inductive first round; focused second round). Focused coding seems to make reference to narrative issues (e.g., narrative revisionism; narrative inconsistency), but does not make an</p>

codes/themes for the researcher to map on to (e.g. places; settings; problems; actions). Checked with a participant.

explicit reference to an analytical approach. Might be positioned within the narrative methodology used (Life Story), but not sure. This would have some implications if so (e.g., is there an analytical focus on identifying inconsistencies within a story, as opposed to the content?). Difficult to tell without researcher providing a critical appraisal

<p>9. Is there a clear statement of findings?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Findings are presented within a chronological order, as determined by the researcher. Credibility of their findings is alluded to by mapping onto pre-existing gender identity models (included in the Appendix), and limitations of these models are also considered. Triangulation used to support</p>	<p>Can't tell</p> <p>Findings are presented within two main themes: "Tracing the dominant discourse" and "Am I Trans enough?" Clear distinctions made between binary and non-binary identifying participants. However, credibility of findings and evidence for and against has not been discussed</p>
<p>10. How valuable is the research?</p>	<p>Valuable – interesting piece which develops a running thread of fluidity/gender identity evolving over time. More concerned about identity <u>development</u>. Just a shame that there was exclusion and researcher had not consulted with those who were not static with a nonbinary identity</p>	<p>Implications in recruitment/ethical responsibilities make it difficult to credit findings</p>

Questions	Trans youth in Portugal: Gendered embodiments (Hilário & Marques, 2020)	Navigating the binary: Gender presentation of non-binary individuals (Horowitz-Hendler, 2020)
1. Was there a clear statement and aims of the research?	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p> <p>Aims to identify how trans youth in Portugal make sense of different models/frameworks available to construct an intelligible version of their gender identity and embodiment. Data drawn from a wider EU Council funded TRANSRIGHTS project conducted in 5 EU countries (2015-16). Project had a more in-depth understanding on Portuguese trans youth</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p> <p>A dynamic, evolving, research process is discussed, in which (somewhat due to participants registering to take part), researcher worked primarily with non-binary respondents (but also some trans identified) to explore how identities were constructed. Theory (e.g. schemas) created through interviews with 26 young people, then performativity of the schemas are tested by the researcher</p>
2. Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p> <p>Narrative approach (Chase, 2011) employed in which participant narratives were used as a way of gaining access to trans experiences.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p> <p>Justifies the qualitative methodology well, acknowledging the change and evolving process throughout research. Uses the notion of shifting performance to suggest the need for performativity, thus suggesting a need for qualitative methods (p. 80). RQ changed from: 'how do participants create their identities' to 'how do they manipulate their performances' Another RQ formulated later: "what registers, markers, and indexes of gender exist, including (and especially) non-binary genders". Also observations used to gather natural speech (although these not reported on in SLR as more concerned performativity other individual's construction)</p>
3. Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p>
4. Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p> <p>Initial selection through LGBTI organisations and transgender activists); snowballing process allowed team to recruit additional participants. Not quite explained why Portuguese</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p> <p>Noted the focus would depend on who volunteered: bulk of participants were non-binary, so this shifted focus. However, I wonder if this occurred within context of recruitment: posters</p>

		respondents had a more in depth understanding than other participating populations	around Boston area asking for those non-cisgender. Snowballing sampling occurred. Boston geek community.
5.	Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Can't tell Collected via interviews in a way that best suited participant (e.g. at a place of the participant's choosing). Tape recorded and transcribed by the TRANSRIGHTS team. However, not clear if interviews were semi-structured/based off a topic guide. Interviews also varied between 1-5 hours in length, so this further raises questions about schedule	Yes Semi-structured interviews, with follow-ups determined by researcher. Interview schedule, and basic questions for form a wider discussion with participants are provided (p. 84)
6.	Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	No Researchers do not provide a critical examination of their own role, possible bias, and influence during question formation and sample recruitment. This may be positioned within the wider TRANSRIGHTS project. There are some ethical indicators which suggest relationship may have been considered (e.g. participants choosing location etc.)	Yes Researcher discusses their own non-binary identity and reconceptualization of their own gender during research process. Consideration of a specific sub group in the Boston area also considered, and the protections that this community offers in allowing them to explore gender (e.g. location; community)
7.	Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Yes Autonomy provided to participants in choosing an interview location that suits them. Ethical approval provided by University of Lisbon and the European Research Council Executive Agency. Information sheet and consent forms provided. Full informed consent and voluntary participation	Can't tell Autonomy provided to participants and snowball/opportunity sampling discussed. Not clear if ethical approval was sought from a governing body.
8.	Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Yes Thematic coding (Bryman, 2012) within broad themes (gender discourses, emotions, embodiments and practices, social and bodily gender transition processes; discussion and experience within health; informal and/or activist groups). First-order themes, then more focused coding occurred to reduce categories. Maxqda 18 used (a mixed methods analytical tool)	Can't tell Analysis discussed on p.84. Multiple viewings of recordings, open coding, then compiled every gendered marker into charts, which are provided in Chapter 5. Researcher counted every feature discussed by at least two participants as significant (due to the small sample size). Analytical method not listed, so might be difficult to replicate. Codes/themes also do not seem to have been checked by others

9.	Is there a clear statement of findings?	Yes	Can't tell
		Findings presented within three overarching themes; credibility discussed in consideration with pre-existing literature (including contradictions)	Due to evolving nature of the study (see 1.), findings are not considered in relation to original RQs, although new RQs are discussed in introduction sections. Adequate discussion in relation to existing literature and performative theories. Credibility of findings not discussed (e.g. triangulation; respondent validation)
10.	How valuable is the research?	Somewhat – useful in the context of non-binary responses, although these are only presented within one of the three key themes. Unclear from article if non-binary people engaged in discussion related to the other two key themes.	Useful – schemas regarding how individuals construct and perform their gender are elicited from participants directly and then tested by the researcher. Useful consideration regarding how we need to consider identity away from performance

Questions	Falling outside of the 'nice little binary box': A psychoanalytic exploration of the non-binary gender identity (Losty & O'Connor, 2018)	Two Spirit and Bisexual People: Different Umbrella, Same Rain (Robinson, 2017)
1. Was there a clear statement and aims of the research?	Yes <i>Drawing on a psychoanalytically informed approach to research and functioning of the person, research aimed to go into aspects of the psychological realities of people identifying themselves as gender non-binary</i>	Yes <i>Exploring similarities/comparisons between bisexuality and two-spirit identity, pondering whether they are strong enough to bringing two-spirit participants under the bisexual umbrella</i>
2. Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes Appropriate methodology, given aims of research. Psychoanalytical approach, informed by recommendations from Cartwright (2004) and Holmes (2013), employed during the interviews. Three interviews conducted for each participant – first two more exploratory/free-flow, third had further direction elicited from prior interviews	Yes Data presented from two separate data gathering processes (Risk and Resilience study of bisexual mental health and Two-Spirit Roundtable project) Data extraction focuses on the latter. Epistemological approach of <i>Etuaptmumk</i> is cited: Indigenous and Western epistemologies operate in tandem without overwriting one another
3. Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Yes	Yes
4. Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	Yes Recruited through an online campaign, facilitated by a national transgender organisation in Ireland. Aims of study, inclusion criteria, and participant requirements posted to the Facebook account of the organisation. Information sheet prior to participants registering their interest in study	Can't tell No discussion related to the recruitment of participants and how they were identified. Could make assumptions that they are linked to the elders, but unclear from article. Recognises complexity of identities. Participants were reimbursed (payment) for their time.
5. Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Yes Interviews largely unstructured to allow participants to engage in a relatively free-associative style of interaction with the researcher.	Can't tell Roundtable discussion keen to explore two-spirit identity and links/comparisons to bisexuality. Yet, there seems to have been data collected from talking circles and private interviews, but the differences/rationale behind these two approaches is not

			explored. Unclear from report if data derived from group/private interview discussions
6.	Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	Yes Relationship considered throughout the paper, largely due to the psychoanalytical process chosen having a focus on the relationship between researcher/participant. Researcher discusses her identity and how this may inform analysis (including her discomforts/challenges throughout the study). Interactions within the participant-researcher dyad were also considered as part of the analysis. Interviews transcribed alongside a reflective log of interviewer observations and reflections kept throughout study.	Can't tell Researcher interweaves their own two-spirit identity throughout the paper. Analysis is also informed from their own understanding of their own identity – which is made very clear for the reader. However, there is no discussion about the relationship between researcher and participants, which makes it difficult to ascertain the extent of which the researcher's identity/bias is present within the participant's data
7.	Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Yes Ethical issues are considered throughout, especially relevant to the participant-researcher dyad. Informed consent and right to withdraw communicated. One participant withdrew during final interview stage	Can't tell Participants deidentified. Unclear from methods whether ethics have been considered/maintained throughout the study. However, ethical considerations towards two-spirit (and other research strands, e.g., gender/sexuality/LGBTQI+ populations) are discussed and clearly justified (e.g. recommendations to consider how we collect/group data to ensure variation in identities is adequately considered, without erasure)
8.	Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Yes <i>Analysis informed by psychoanalytic principles and involved identifying themes which emerged from conscious material across participant narratives, as well as information gathered from discussions of the reflective log and participant-interviewer dynamic. Data analysed through a process of comprehending, synthesising, theorising, and re-conceptualising (Morse, 1994)</i>	Can't tell Interviews and talking circles were transcribed verbatim, and deidentified. Multiple listens; textual analysis was secondary to analysis of the audio recording. Responses coded according to the Anishinaabe Medicine Wheel, whose four quadrants represent physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual health. Framework reflected the cultural framework of many of the participants. However, no report of the researcher has not critically examined their role within the analytical process

9.	Is there a clear statement of findings?	Yes	Can't tell
		Findings are clearly presented within three themes. Researcher's analysis is throughout, and it is clear where information was elicited from in order to support themes generated (e.g. conscious discussion; unconscious behaviours/reflective logs).	Findings clearly presented within five key themes, as determined by the researcher. However, no discussion of triangulation/checking of codes/themes, so there is difficulty in determining the for and against researcher's arguments
10.	How valuable is the research?	Valuable research – psychoanalytical perspective allows this researcher to consider how identities are constructed by the participants. Psychoanalytical theory does position much of identity formation during formative childhood/adolescent experiences, and age of participants mean a lot of experiences are touched upon in relation to identity formation.	Valuable research that supports answering the SLR question – some very clear implications here about the danger in simplifying the data we collect and the erasure of communities as a result. Despite methodological shortcomings as elicited by this QA, I am left wondering whether there is also a need to be critical of Western research frameworks (e.g., QA tools) on the use of Indigenous research

Questions	The “gender outlaw”: Exploring gender identity negotiation among non-binary individuals (Romero, 2019)	Neither of the boxes: Accounting for non-binary gender identities (Savoia, 2017)
1. Was there a clear statement and aims of the research?	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p> <p><i>To understand how non-binary individuals experience, express, and navigate their identity in multifaceted social relationships, through the lens of the communication theory of identity. Applied the Communication Theory of Identity (CTI) to explore: “identity as a communicative process and the way in which it is understood is through a transaction in which messages are exchanged (Hecht, 1993)”</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p> <p>Seeks to answer two RQs: 1) How do non-binary individuals understand and perform their gender identities? 2) What are the experiences of non-binary individuals in the workplace, in intimate partner relationships, with friends, and in the LGBTQ+ community</p>
2. Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p> <p>Interpretive approach employed: discussed as valuing the subjective experience of participants. Cites papers which recommend the use of qualitative methodologies when working with these participants – although the author fails to develop these points, reading the cited papers does</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p> <p>Makes specific reference to the lack of qualitative sociological research that works with non-binary participants. Highlights the conflation of non-binary identities within other LGBTQ research, especially under the trans umbrella</p>
3. Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p>
4. Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p> <p>Appropriate purposeful and snowballing sampling techniques employed. Communities targeted for research purposes. Approached LGBTQ centres with posters and flyers – participants encouraged to contact researcher to take part</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p> <p>Purposeful and snowball sampling techniques used – participants shared knowledge of the study with their own networks. Author discussed the impact of the lack of incentive and the distrust of queer communities for academia and the implications this may have had on recruitment</p>
5. Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p> <p>Clear thread throughout which discusses the creation of qualitative data collection and why it is important to this sample (e.g. choosing semi-structured to allow individual</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p> <p>Data collected via semi structured interviews, with the use of a topic guide. Author considers the use of reflexivity in their</p>

		nuance as they communicate their identities). Points also allude to epistemology/ontology throughout (e.g. creating understandings, rather than observing phenomena)	interview approach – with an aim of providing agency to the participant during the interview process.
6.	Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	No Considerations made re: ethics (e.g. allowing individuals choice; creating a safe space to conduct interviews) but there is a lack of critical reflection into the researcher’s role (e.g. possible biases that may have influenced; researcher’s own identities; motivations for conducting research in this field)	Yes Author discussed their own queer identity and consideration of this in the recruitment phase (not disclosed) and the impact this may have had. Discusses moments of shared understanding (e.g. “you know”) implied by participants. Critical reflection of researcher’s role is interwoven.
7.	Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Yes Study approved by IRB Board at New Mexico State University. Choice provided for participants to participate in a place of their choosing if outside of state (i.e. safety considerations made). Anonymity applied and considered. Participant protections appeared to be in place throughout	Yes Ethical issues are discussed throughout (e.g. researcher’s role; keeping participants safe throughout all stages of process). Strong narrative thread throughout method section with good consideration of ethics. However, does not state whether ethical approval was sought.
8.	Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Yes Coding and analysis conducted according to Tracy (2013). Primary coding phase discussed to create researcher’s familiarity with the data produced. Later analysis moulded within the four analytical frames, as considered within CTI	Can’t tell General inductive coding (Thomas, 2006) approach used to analyse data. Theoretical traditions, such as individual, interaction, and institutional levels (Risman & Davis, 2013) kept in mind during analysis. However, this section is limited and unclear whether codes were checked/consideration of bias
9.	Is there a clear statement of findings?	Yes Findings are clearly structured into the two RQs; use of CTI helps structure the first RQ and the themes that emerge from the second are discussed in relation to findings from RQ1	Somewhat Findings flow from first research question, into the next. Makes for a nice exploration of internal self (Risman, 2009), before leading on to experiences. Not always clearly coded into themes, which made it difficult to neatly lift, but then again, this topic is complex and has no neat lifting!
10.	How valuable is the research?	Interesting findings, but will need some careful dissection towards the SLR question. Use of CTI naturally leads down to participants describing experiences (e.g. large focus on	Useful findings re: gender accountability and links to West and Zimmerman. Some good justification of non-binary language use and how this is positioned within binary accountability

relationships with others), rather than an individualised focus on how they construct their identity. Likely to be a 'light touch' to answer SLR. Some useful considerations in the data

systems. Also, good paragraph on the difficulties of attaching genderised terms (e.g. masc/fem) to non-binary individuals (p. 11) – useful for write-up

Questions	Queering it up, strutting our threads, and baring our souls: Genderqueer individuals negotiating social and felt sense of gender (Stachowiak, 2021)	Transcending the gender binary: Gender non-binary young adults in Amsterdam (Vijlbrief, Saharso, & Ghorashi, 2020)
1. Was there a clear statement and aims of the research?	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p> <p>Presented in the form of two critical questions to aide researcher's thinking: 1) What it means to claim a genderqueer identity 2) How genderqueer is experienced, embodied, and understood</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p> <p>Clear, succinct rationale to exploration of topic of interest. Two main RQs employed for investigation: 1) How do Amsterdam gender non-binary young adults experience their identity? 2) Insofar as they experience their identity as a stigmatised identity, how do they cope with this stigma?</p>
2. Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p> <p>Appropriate in relation to the critical questions asked by the researcher. Links made between individual interviews and the focus groups (e.g. interviews to provide background, context, and logistics; focus groups centred on themes that emerged in interviews and journals)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p> <p>Ethnographic approach employed: participant observations at queer events/venues, then lead to interviews with 11 participants. Appropriate in relation to the questions under exploration</p>
3. Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p>
4. Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p> <p>Hard to reach populations, so snowball sampling used through two closed Facebook groups for genderqueer individuals. Author notes they are also a member of these groups, and was also a participant of the research project</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p> <p>Snowball sampling – recruitment happened at the events and debates – however, this could lead to possible bias (see relationship section)</p>
5. Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p> <p>Data collected via semi structured interviews, individual journaling, which then fed in to focus group discussion between participants. Appropriate in that the methodology seeks to triangulate, but then also builds upon phases in the design (e.g. interviews informed focus groups)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p> <p>Data collected through semi structured interviews. Researchers worked with a topic list – topics derived from theory (evidenced in introduction) and data collected during participatory observations. Data saturation discussed and evidenced.</p>

6.	Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	Yes Opening paragraph on critical reflexivity and the researcher's own personal positionalities that are important to consider (e.g. identities; epistemology). Researcher was also a participant in this study.	Can't tell Unclear about power balance/ethics during participant recruitment as snowball sampling not effectively explained. No critical evaluation of the researcher's role provided. However, findings are presented in relation to interpretations (author vs participants), which is helpful
7.	Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Can't tell Participants deidentified and offered space/opportunities to communicate their identities in a way that suited them. This was particularly present within the findings. However, in this article, there is no explicit consideration of the researcher's role as a participant of the study/focus group (e.g. power dynamics; possible bias)	Can't tell Pseudonyms used. Unclear in recruitment strategy how participants were approached at queer events and invited to interview – unsure on incentive. Not clear if study had gained ethics approval from an agency. No active consideration of the researchers' role/possible bias. Lack of critical reflexivity of their own interest in this topic area
8.	Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Yes Inductive thematic analysis (Guest, McQueen, & Namey, 2011) employed. Researcher strived for trustworthiness, so employed member checks, triangulation, thick description, peer review and debriefing to check analysis. However, process of checks is not made clear in report (e.g. triangulated with whom, or what?)	Yes Data saturation reached after 11 interviews. First level of coding followed topic list (using a-priori codes). Second reading provided additional codes (descriptive; in vivo; process) (Saldana, 2013). During second level analysis, codes were combined into broader themes and classifications. Code groups compared for similarities and differences.
9.	Is there a clear statement of findings?	Yes Presented in relation to three distinct experiences: 1) Gender as a social construction; 2) Gender as a felt sense; 3) Gender as becoming	Yes Findings presented within five main themes regarding how participants deal with and experience their identity
10.	How valuable is the research?	Valuable in its argument as 'gender as a rhizome' and sheds a light on the energy required for individuals to hold a genderqueer identity. Nice critiques from participants about the 'fluid and flexible' language that is present within this field. However, there are some implications in relation to ethics and researcher's influence/participation in their own study	Valuable in its consideration of language and constructions at the heart... "we need language to exist". Queer theory approaches runs as a thread throughout and author interpretations vs participant constructions are quite clear throughout

Questions	Doing gender beyond the binary: A virtual ethnography (Darwin, 2017)	Other genders: (Un)doing gender norms in Portugal at a microsocial level (Merlini, 2018)
1. Was there a clear statement and aims of the research?	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p> <p>Virtual ethnography with non-binary participants. Sought to answer three questions: 1) How do people attempt to do “nonbinary” gender 2) Under what circumstances does nonbinary gender “succeed” in interactionist terms? 3) Does the doing of nonbinary gender contribute towards redoing or undoing of (binary) gender?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p> <p>Overarching TRANSRIGHTS project: <i>“The primary goal of this work is to understand the contribution of transgressive gender practices to the (re)definition of gender beyond the masculine/feminine opposition”</i></p> <p>Current paper seeks to analyse interview responses from a subsample that identify with other gender categories</p>
2. Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p> <p>Rationale explained into the employment of a virtual ethnography – online communities as a “safe space”, or a Goffmanian “back space” to explore identities. Reddit selected over other platforms due to length of posts, interaction across members (“the interface fosters virtual communities”)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p> <p>Interviews used to explore various dimensions of gender identity. A script was used (authors cite 18 dimensions considered), but includes self-identification of gender, narratives and experiences considered significant, and questions about future predictions and expectations of change</p>
3. Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p>
4. Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	<p style="text-align: center;">Can’t tell</p> <p>Positioned within theories of online communities/Goffmanian theories. Use of anonymity offered by these forums/communities also discussed within relation to the strategy. However, due to ethnographic approach, ethical questions are posed as content creators would not know their content has been included in a research study</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p> <p>Sub-sample of those who identify with other gender categories (n = 11). Researchers provide examples (p. 355) and construction of the subsample considered not only “beyond the binary”, but also gender fluidity over life course. Wider project was recruited via snowball sampling method: author notes there was a focus on heterogeneity with defined criteria, but also accounted for variations within trans umbrella</p>

5.	Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Yes Ethnographic approaches justified, and clearly explained, in relation to discussions of anonymity etc. Open reading of sub-Reddit threads, then open coding, then categorical schema created	Yes Data collected via interviews, with use of an 18 dimension script, so assuming this is a semi-structured interview process. Context of data collection also explained (e.g. collected during 2015-16, before a new bill in 2018 which is based on self-determination and abolished all medical requirements for access to a legal change of gender and name)
6.	Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	No Likely that this has not been explored due to ethnographical approach and the use of content already created to inform analysis. No researcher/participant contact	No Unclear from article how the relationship was considered (e.g., who conducted the interviews; researcher bias). I would hypothesise that this is likely to have occurred as report analyses a specific sub-sample of a wider project
7.	Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Can't tell See earlier point regarding ethics of recruitment strategy/content creation. There is a consideration of this during photo analysis, where the researcher discusses their ethical obligation not to include images in the paper	Can't tell Not specifically reported upon within the article – wondering if the reader is required to assume ethical approval has been sought due to scope of project? There are some considerations around participation bias (e.g. activist sample) and possible implications.
8.	Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Can't tell Discourse analysis cited. Some discussion re: coding and re-doing this throughout process (see Q5). However, not discussed in terms of theory generation and use of codes to inform findings. No examination of the researcher's reflexivity and possible measures they may/may not have used to account for this	Can't tell Guided by biographical-Interpretative method (BIM) (Cochler & Hostetler, 2003; Wengraf, 2000), which has a focus on how socio-historical circumstances relate to individual and particular lives. However, specific details of analytical process are not considered within the paper; it is difficult to determine who conducted analysis, how codes were developed, triangulation, bias etc.
9.	Is there a clear statement of findings?	Yes Findings presented within three categorical schemas, as determined by the researcher. "Gender expression" category has two subsections	Yes Findings are presented within Butler and Connell's theoretical perspectives (negotiating change through micro-interactions)

10.	How valuable is the research?	Useful – interesting to also consider how the data was gathered, in direct contrast to other studies? “What can anonymity online lend this population?” could be worth considering. Also quite a useful summary on the “un/re/doing gender debate” originating from West and Zimmerman’s initial theory	Useful – not the easiest read as it uses Butler and Connell’s theories to present findings, which could further lead to some questions about the analytical method applied – findings seem to have come from this ‘top-down’ lens. Some useful considerations re: bodies and markers – similarities to the Horowitz-Hendler paper
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Appendix B Meta-ethnography tables

B.1 Phase 5: Translate the studies into one another

<p><u>Concept: A developing gender identity (10)... that still moves today</u></p> <p><i>Lack of knowledge in the past selves (2)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dynamic interplay of gender and sexual identities (2) • Allowing individual opportunity to make sense of history/earlier experiences (10) • Binarism as a barrier to people “finding a name” for their gender (3) <p><i>Internal conflicts</i></p> <p>Mixed history of identification with, and disidentification from, their biological sex (1; 10): discomfort and confusion (6); self-doubt (13); active rejection of reproductive sex difference (11) at a later stage; most describe persistently and reliably acknowledging gender difference within themselves throughout their lives, even before acquiring the language (14); tension as a necessary and beneficial part of becoming (15); identifying with the “opposite” binary identity (6) and conforming with binary gender (6), before then rejecting</p>	<p><u>Concept: Correct and incorrect language (10)</u></p> <p><i>Connections with others via language</i></p> <p>Connected to a community, belonging, via language (3; 10; 13)</p> <p>Accepting of incorrect language/pronouns (1; 13) – “as good as it gets”; some accept NB as a proxy term, few were deeply invested as it does not fully describe their identity (14): using NB to communicate what their gender is not, rather than what it is (14)</p> <p>“A language concession” where language is gendered, it assumes the stability and existence of a gender binary (14)</p> <p>Misgendering can have a negative impact (10); but sometimes this isn’t a slip and can actually affirm one’s identity (14)</p>
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<p><u>Discovery</u></p> <p>A ‘discovery/realisation’ of their NB identity (10); a self-reflective introspection (3); not always simple as identifying internally, often turbulent (14)</p> <p><u>Different timeframes of identification across individuals</u></p> <p>No singular trajectory (2); everyone is in a separate space of becoming and being GQ (15); and can occur at different points in life (3); an understanding that finding identity is going to take time (13)</p> <p>Interwoven forces (assemblage) – going beyond intersectionality (15)</p> <p><u>What happens once identifying a diverse identity</u></p> <p>Once finding identity, significance decreases over time (2) and there is a sense of clarity (3)... for some it stays the same once they have found identity, but path of discovery was still there (9); a lifelong search for some, don’t know if their NB identity will stay forever (16); A felt sense – highly contextual and personal (15), but puts GQ at an in-between space, being both outside and inside the binary</p>	<p>Language allows individuals to ‘flip’ (1)</p> <p><u>Power</u></p> <p>Power in having language available (13); there are many labels to describe the phenomenon of gender non-binarism (16)</p> <p>Feelings of uncertainty about specific gender labels (10)</p> <p>Feelings of reluctance towards not having gender labels (10)</p> <p>Sense of isolation/personal difficulties locating their gender within broader social gender constructs (3)</p> <p><u>Individual difference</u></p> <p>Some say nuances matter, others say subcategories are essentially interchangeable – identifying with various labels simultaneously (4; 14)</p>
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<p>Sense of freedom from rigid gender expectations associated with assigned sex (3)</p> <p><u>Fluidity (2)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A stable, enduring, consistent dimension of gender identity (2); exploring (6); constant discovery (9) • Shifts over time (9) or within a range of time • Stressful/upsetting – doubt legitimacy of identity (2); some also do not like the language of fluidity as it implies being GQ is effortless and uncomplicated (15) • Gender as “becoming”, rather than a fixed state – tied into rhizomatic thought (15); feelings of gender are changing all the time (15); “gender is not what I am, but rather is what I feel right now” (16) • Shifts depending on the social environment (e.g. whether I behave more masculine or feminine) (16) 	<p>Labels mean different things to different people (9) and terminology is still in flux... link to being seen/unseen</p> <p>Some still don’t think they have the words or language available to describe their experience (9); “it is more complex than the words, vocabulary, we use to describe it” (16); some say it is easier to ignore as it seems too difficult (13)... link to moving – seen and unseen</p> <p>Being saddled with task of co-constructing new narratives to guide their own identity development (2)</p> <p><u>Two-Spirit (12)</u></p> <p>Similar to bisexual and trans – inappropriate to use the term as if it is synonymous with a single identity</p> <p>One individual likes the ambiguity</p>
<p><u>Concept: Being seen and unseen (3; 10)</u></p> <p><u>Invalidation in relationships with others (1; 10)</u></p>	<p><u>Concept: “Am I trans enough?”: a validity measure</u></p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family (1; 10) • Focusing their stories on those around them (10) • Isolation due to difficulties placing themselves within broader social gender constructs (3) <p><u>Keeping aspects of their identity to themselves (1; 10)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disclosing others who are likely to understand (10) • Those who they engage with frequently (10) • Not to explain to strangers/less known (1) • Struggle to explain to those who lack conceptual frameworks (2; 12) • Use of different identity labels in different communities (2) • Use/present on the binary for a number of reasons: causing issues with systems/safer/easier/some it aligns with gender assigned at birth/some prefer a presentation that matches the other binary gender (9); alternative gender positions are little readable in most contexts (11)... even androgyny has interpretive constraints (11) <p>Some seek to find a term that feels most right to them, rather a term that will best explain their identity to others (9), but conveyance of info is still part of their choice (9) (e.g., “queer makes life easier”)... link to language concept</p> <p>Some wish to evade binary gender attribution in keeping with their GQ/androgynous identities (4)</p>	<p>A quantitative rhetoric (5): some questioned their own identity – “Am I NB enough?” “Faking it” (10) “Am I trans enough” (5; 7)</p> <p>Diversity can sometimes act as a barrier to feeling connected to other like-minded individuals (10)</p> <p>Authenticity – using words such as congruent, genuine, authentic, always been this way (1; 6)</p> <p>Sometimes authenticity leads to self-doubt (13)</p> <p>Notion of “legitimately trans” – you need to struggle while navigating medicalised transition (5)... discourse of struggle and unhappiness are critical to establishing authenticity as trans (7); normative understandings of transgender may discourage NBs from using the term trans (14)</p> <p>NBs relying on heavily gendered stereotype tropes to communicate identity (7) – NB participants “must do more” ... counter argue this! (Vega, 2019)</p>
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<p>Discrepancies in how individuals view themselves and how they are viewed by others – personal-relational gap (13) and personal-communal gap</p> <p>Coming out never ends – NBs have to explain/discuss binaries (4) and educate others (13); pressure or influence from society to define who they are (16)</p> <p>Discourses moving freely between their own life story and the story of the LGBTQ community (10) – possibility of seeking more studies that investigate what strategies individuals use to construe their identity</p> <p>Pervasive influence of binary leads to misgendering (3)</p> <p>Importance of community (1; 10)</p> <p>Lack of social representations of NB (3)</p> <p>Important for others to become aware of binary assumptions (3)</p>	<p>Not all NBs identify as trans (4; 5)</p> <p>Fluidity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doubting legitimacy of identity – “failing to be trans” (2) <p>Transnormative social pressures – “striving” for transgender identities that closely approximate cisgender ones (2; 9)</p> <p>Transnormativity (5) – direct influence over GQ/NB disidentification from the trans label</p> <p>GQ identity insufficiently similar, to constitute a valid trans identity (2)</p> <p>Unsure whether they qualify as GQ and seek clarification from others (4)</p> <p>Gender policing (15): all participants named times of working to adhere to norms that matched their biological sex</p> <p><u>A whole paper is on this (5)</u></p>
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<p>More than half the sub-sample questioned meaning of a legal name and gender change – an arbitrary and irrelevant criterion (a formalisation to others) (11)</p> <p>Becoming more visible and implications (16)</p> <p>(7): “NBs find themselves walking a treacherous tightrope, with invisibility on one side and unintelligibility on the other”</p>	
<p><u>Concept: Spectrum (4; 10) – a lot of difference and diversity within the studies themselves</u></p> <p>Experiences of gender vary between fixed and fluid (10)</p> <p>Existing between male and female (10); some argue that this is too simplistic (16) and their identity is in motion</p> <p>Existing as both male and female at the same time (10); embracing masc and fem (6); express self as some kind of combination of m and f (15)</p>	<p><u>Concept: Bodies and physical markers (9) – appearance managing (13)</u></p> <p>Discoveries of bodies, revelations, and decisions of body transformations throughout life are critical events for improving self-image (11); gender is somewhat related, yet not completely determined, by their bodies (16)</p> <p>(9): notes that this schema in their report comes directly from participants, noting that they map closely to linguistic binary categories... every feature was labelled by participants as either masc or fem (9); presentation as either masc, fem, or a combination of the two (14)</p>

<p>Living with a gender absent of male/female (3); men, women, other (4; 9)... third gender – outside of the spectrum</p> <p>Five part model (masc, masc of centre, androgny, fem of centre, fem) (4)</p> <p>Weak masc and weak fem (4)</p> <p>Use/present on the binary for a number of reasons: causing issues with systems/safer/easier/some it aligns with gender assigned at birth/some prefer a presentation that matches the other binary gender (9)</p> <p>Gender as a spectrum of diversity (11)</p> <p>Gender as ambivalent – practices tightly separated as a cumulative gender (un)doing modality (11)</p>	<p>Adopting, altering, or “queering” socially constructed symbols that communicate gender (3); changing aspects of body (incl. voice) (9; 10)</p> <p>Being in touch with masc/fem parts once understood NB (3)</p> <p>Some differences between AFAB and AMAB (14); Horowitz-Hendler too</p> <p>Some strategically use the rules of binary attribution in order to move between the binaries (4); combining together fem and masc attributes (8); how bodies are read by others is a large part of how these individuals decide to present (9); gestures and mannerisms (11)</p> <p>Clothing (1; 9; 13); some clothe, occupy, and modify their physical bodies according to their own comfort and preferences, rather than curating their appearance to allow others to categorize them (14), but this does come with risks (14)... link to Risman (2009); failing at GQs because felt sense of gender did not match biological sex (15)</p>
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	<p>Helps to create a sense of congruence between identity and outward expression (3)</p> <p>Seeing others present through their own visible forms helps to affirm one's own gender (3)</p> <p>The way others perceive and comment on gender presentation affects the way the individual understands themselves (14)... link to reflexivity in West and Zimmerman</p> <p>Ambivalence/indifference towards medical transition/interventions (2); names (11)</p> <p>Reluctance to take measures that would result in permanent changes (2); transition can be wider than just medically altering body (8)</p> <p>Social: Medical procedures to construct an embodiment they feel at home in and construct an intelligible self for others to understand them (8)... <u>links to being seen section</u></p>
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	<p>Self: For some, medical treatments are key for overcoming rejections with part of their bodies (11; 13)</p>
<p><u>Concept: Society/other levels changing over time (2)</u></p> <p>Pervasive influence of binary leads to misgendering (3)</p> <p>Use of identity labels evolved over time (2)</p> <p>Possibilities of diverse identities to serve/benefit all (2)</p> <p>Influence of systems, society, and culture is pervasive (6)</p>	

Key for papers: 1) Balius (2018); 2) Bradford et al. (2019); 3) Cosgrove (2021); 4) Darwin (2017); 5) Darwin (2020); 6) Eisenberg (2020); 7) Garrison (2018); 8) Hilário and Marques (2020); 9) Horowitz-Hendler (2020); 10) Losty and O'Connor (2018); 11) Merlini (2018); 12) Robinson (2017); 13) Romero (2019); 14) Savoia (2017); 15) Stachowiak (2017); 16) Vijilbrief et al. (2020)

B.2 Phase 6: Synthesising the translations

<p><u>1) Identifying and negotiating possibilities through introspection</u></p> <p><i>Lack of knowledge/awareness leading to internal conflict</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dynamic interplay of gender and sexual identities (2) • Allowing individual opportunity to make sense of history/earlier experiences (10) • Binarism as a barrier to people “finding a name” for their gender (3) • <p>Mixed history of identification with, and disidentification from, their biological sex (1; 10); discomfort and confusion (6); self-doubt (13); active rejection of reproductive sex difference (11) at a later stage; most describe persistently and reliably acknowledging gender difference within themselves throughout their lives, even before acquiring the language (14); tension as a necessary and beneficial part of becoming (15); identifying with the “opposite” binary identity (6) and conforming with binary gender (6), before then rejecting</p> <p><i>Fluctuation and fluidity (2) once arriving at gender-diverse possibility</i></p> <p>A ‘discovery/realisation’ of their NB identity (10); a self-reflective introspection (3); not always simple as identifying internally, often turbulent (14)</p>	<p><u>2) Considering how to name and place identity, within available terminology</u></p> <p><i>Connections with others via language</i></p> <p>There are many labels to describe the phenomenon of gender non-binarism (16); Power in having language available (13); Connected to a community, belonging, via language (3; 10; 13)</p> <p>Accepting of incorrect language/pronouns (1; 13) – “as good as it gets”; Use of identity labels evolved over time (2)</p> <p><i>Variation in language interpretation/use</i></p> <p>Some say nuances matter, others say subcategories are essentially interchangeable – identifying with various labels simultaneously (4; 14)</p> <p>some accept NB as a proxy term, few were deeply invested as it does not fully describe their identity (14): using NB to communicate what their gender is not, rather than what it is (14)</p>
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- A stable, enduring, consistent dimension of gender identity (2); exploring (6); constant discovery (9)
- Shifts over time (9) or within a range of time
- Stressful/upsetting – doubt legitimacy of identity (2); some also do not like the language of fluidity as it implies being GQ is effortless and uncomplicated (15)
- Gender as “becoming”, rather than a fixed state – tied into rhizomatic thought (15); feelings of gender are changing all the time (15); “gender is not what I am, but rather is what I feel right now” (16)
- Shifts depending on the social environment (e.g. whether I behave more masculine or feminine) (16)

Variation in time frames and significance

Once finding identity, significance decreases over time (2) and there is a sense of clarity (3)... for some it stays the same once they have found identity, but path of discovery was still there (9); a lifelong search for some, don't know if their NB identity will stay forever (16); A felt sense – highly contextual and personal (15), but puts GQ at an in-between space, being both outside and inside the binary

Sense of freedom from rigid gender expectations associated with assigned sex (3)

Different timeframes of identification across individuals

Labels mean different things to different people (9) and terminology is still in flux...

link to being seen/unseen

Some still don't think they have the words or language available to describe their experience (9); “it is more complex than the words, vocabulary, we use to describe it” (16); some say it is easier to ignore as it seems too difficult (13)... link to moving – seen and unseen

NBs often have the task of co-constructing new narratives to guide their own identity development (2)

Some seek to find a term that feels most right to them, rather a term that will best explain their identity to others (9), but conveyance of info is still part of their choice (9) (e.g., “queer makes life easier”)... link to language concept

Two-Spirit (12): Similar to bisexual and trans – inappropriate to use the term as if it is synonymous with a single identity

Sense of difference associated with language Feelings of uncertainty about specific gender labels (10); Feelings of reluctance towards not having gender labels (10); Sense of isolation/personal difficulties locating their gender within broader social gender constructs (3); More than half the sub-sample questioned meaning of a legal name and gender change – an arbitrary and irrelevant criterion (a formalisation to others) (11)

<p>No singular trajectory (2); everyone is in a separate space of becoming and being GQ (15); and can occur at different points in life (3); an understanding that finding identity is going to take time (13)</p> <p>Interwoven forces (assemblage) – going beyond intersectionality (15)</p>	<p><u>Continua frameworks</u></p> <p>Five-part-model and three-part-model (4)</p> <p>(9): notes that this schema in their report comes directly from participants, noting that they map closely to linguistic binary categories... every feature was labelled by participants as either masc or fem (9); presentation as either masc, fem, or a combination of the two (14)</p> <p>Living with a gender away from male/female constructions (3; 4; 9)</p> <p>Continua language is too simplistic for some whose identities are in constant motion (16)</p> <p>Using Western constructions where language is not yet available? (11;16)</p>
<p><u>3) Considering when to make visible/invisible</u></p>	<p><u>4) Considering physical embodiments of gender</u></p>

Keeping aspects of their identity to themselves (1; 10)

- Disclosing others who are likely to understand (10); Those who they engage with frequently (10); Not to explain to strangers/less known (1); Struggle to explain to those who lack conceptual frameworks (2; 12); Pervasive influence of binary leads to misgendering (3)
- Use of different identity labels in different communities (2);
- Use/present on the binary for a number of reasons: causing issues with systems/safer/easier/some it aligns with gender assigned at birth/some prefer a presentation that matches the other binary gender (9); alternative gender positions are little readable in most contexts (11)... even androgyny has interpretive constraints (11)

Invalidation in relationships with others (1; 10)

- Family (1; 10)
- Focusing their stories on those around them (10)
- Isolation due to difficulties placing themselves within broader social gender constructs (3)

Employing different language depending on audience

Some wish to evade binary gender attribution in keeping with their GQ/androgynous identities (4); Discrepancies in how individuals view themselves and how they are viewed by others – personal-relational gap (13) and personal-communal gap; Coming out never ends – NBs have to explain/discuss binaries (4)

Embodiments are important

Discoveries of bodies, revelations, and decisions of body transformations throughout life are critical events for improving self-image (11); gender is somewhat related, yet not completely determined, by their bodies (16)

Helps to create a sense of congruence between identity and outward expression (3); Gender policing (15): all participants named times of working to adhere to norms that matched their biological sex

Use of socially constructed objects (e.g., clothing)

Adopting, altering, or “queering” socially constructed symbols that communicate gender (3); changing aspects of body (incl. voice) (9; 10); Clothing (1; 9; 13); some clothe, occupy, and modify their physical bodies according to their own comfort and preferences, rather than curating their appearance to allow others to categorize them (14), but this does come with risks (14); failing at GQs because felt sense of gender did not match biological sex (15); The way others perceive and comment on gender presentation affects the way the individual understands themselves (14)

<p>and educate others (13); pressure or influence from society to define who they are (16)</p> <p>Accepting of incorrect language/pronouns (1; 13) – “as good as it gets”; some accept NB as a proxy term, few were deeply invested as it does not fully describe their identity (14): using NB to communicate what their gender is not, rather than what it is (14)</p> <p>“A language concession” where language is gendered, it assumes the stability and existence of a gender binary (14); Discourses moving freely between their own life story and the story of the LGBTQ community (10) – possibility of seeking more studies that investigate what strategies individuals use to construe their identity</p>	<p><u>Medical measures</u></p> <p>Ambivalence/indifference towards medical transition/interventions (2); names (11); Reluctance to take measures that would result in permanent changes (2); transition can be wider than just medically altering body (8): Social: Medical procedures to construct an embodiment they feel at home in and construct an intelligible self for others to understand them (8)... <u>links to being seen section</u>; Self: For some, medical treatments are key for overcoming rejections with part of their bodies (11; 13)</p> <p><u>Interpretation of their own (and others’) markers – social links</u></p> <p>Some strategically use the rules of binary attribution in order to move between the binaries (4); combining together fem and masc attributes (8); how bodies are read by others is a large part of how these individuals decide to present (9); gestures and mannerisms (11)</p>
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<p><u>5) Validating their identity</u></p> <p><i><u>Internal validity measures</u></i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authenticity – using words such as congruent, genuine, authentic, always been this way (1; 6); Sometimes authenticity leads to self-doubt (13)... <u>link to language concept</u> • A quantitative rhetoric (5): some questioned their own identity – “Am I NB enough?” “Faking it” (10) “Am I trans enough” (5; 7) • Unsure whether they qualify as GQ and seek clarification from others (4) <p><i><u>Transnormativity</u></i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity of experience can sometimes act as a barrier to feeling connected to other like-minded individuals (10) • Transnormative social pressures – “striving” for transgender identities that closely approximate cisgender ones (2; 9); Transnormativity (5) – direct influence over GQ/NB disidentification from the trans label; GQ identity insufficiently similar, to constitute a valid trans identity (2) • Notion of “legitimately trans” – you need to struggle while navigating medicalised transition (5)... discourse of struggle and unhappiness are critical to establishing authenticity as trans (7); normative understandings of transgender may discourage NBs from using the term trans (14) • Not all NBs identify as trans (4; 5); doubting legitimacy of identity – “failing to be trans” (2) 	

Appendix B

<p>NBs relying on heavily gendered stereotype tropes to communicate identity (7) – NB participants “must do more”... conceptually different to other papers in synthesis... discuss in discussion section</p> <p><u>A whole paper is on this (5)</u></p>	
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Key for papers: 1) Balius (2018); 2) Bradford et al. (2019); 3) Cosgrove (2021); 4) Darwin (2017); 5) Darwin (2020); 6) Eisenberg (2020); 7) Garrison (2018); 8) Hilário and Marques (2020); 9) Horowitz-Hendler (2020); 10) Losty and O’Connor (2018); 11) Merlini (2018); 12) Robinson (2017); 13) Romero (2019); 14) Savoia (2017); 15) Stachowiak (2017); 16) Vijilbrief et al. (2020)

Appendix C Definitions provided to panellists during Delphi study

Gender: Often expressed in terms of masculinity and femininity, gender is largely culturally determined and is assumed from the sex assigned at birth *provided by Stonewall]*

Sex: Assigned to a person based on primary sex characteristics (genitalia) and reproductive functions. Sometimes the terms 'sex' and 'gender' are interchanged to mean 'male' or 'female' *[provided by Stonewall]*

Binary: The classification of gender into two distinct, opposite forms of masculine and feminine *[provided by Stonewall]*

Physical markers: Biological characteristics (e.g., genital differences; chromosomal differences) *[created by researchers, based upon Chapter 2 systematic literature review]*

Expressive markers: Social choices (e.g., use of make-up; hair style; language; tone of voice) *[created by researchers, based upon Chapter 2 systematic literature review]*

Appendix D Recruitment flyer

Research opportunity

Creating a new theory of gender: A Delphi study



I'm Jamie Wilson (he/him), a Trainee Educational Psychologist at the University of Southampton. I am looking to consult with a diverse group of young people to [create an inclusive theory of gender by young people, for young people.](#)

Are you:

- Aged 16 to 25
 - Living in the United Kingdom
 - Motivated to contribute views to identify components towards new understandings of gender
 - Aware of discomfort of others, or have experienced it yourself, within binary models of gender
- ...then I am keen to hear from you!

I am particularly keen to consult with individuals from underrepresented groups (e.g. ethnic minorities, religious minority communities, LGBTQIA+, people with disabilities). You do not necessarily need to be LGBTQIA+ to take part.

What you will be asked to do:

- Register your interest to take part by completing a short demographic survey
- Later, selected panel members will complete up to three online surveys over a short period of time

Panel members will be paid a £10 Amazon voucher. Interested? Scan the QR code and you will be taken to more information about this research project and the opportunity to register your interest.



If you have any questions about the project, please feel free to contact me (J.T.Wilson@soton.ac.uk)

Appendix E Participation consent form

Creating a new theory of gender: A Delphi study

* Required

Consent

Study title: Creating a new theory of gender: A Delphi study

Researcher name: Jamie Wilson

ERGO number: 66939

Please complete the questions to confirm that you have read/watched the information provided thus far, that you meet the requirements for this study, and that you consent to take part in the demographic survey and subsequent online rounds of Delphi surveys (if you are selected as a panel member).

Then, please click 'Next' to continue to the demographic survey. If you select 'No' for any of these options, you will be taken to the end of the survey.

Thank you very much.

Please tick/check the box(es) if you agree with the statement(s):

1

I have read/watched the information sheet provided *

Yes

No

2

I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time for any reason without my participation rights being affected. *

Yes

No


Appendix E

3

I understand that should I withdraw from the study then the information collected about me up to this point may still be used for the purposes of achieving the objectives of the study only. *

- Yes
- No

4

I understand that special category information (age, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual identity, biological sex, current mode of study or employment status, Special Educational Need, disability) will be collected about me to achieve the objectives of the study * 


- Yes
- No

5

I confirm that I am aged between 16-25 years old. *

- Yes
- No

6

I confirm that I live in the United Kingdom. * 

- Yes
- No

7

I confirm that I have access to a laptop/computer/tablet/mobile device, the internet, and can access a series of online surveys and my emails. *

Yes

No

8

I confirm that I have a minimum reading age equivalent to GCSE level. *

Yes

No


9

I confirm that I am willing and motivated to contribute my expertise towards identifying components to inform a new theory of gender. *

Yes

No

10


I confirm that I have experienced my own personal discomfort, or are aware of discomfort experienced by others, within our current models of gender. * 

Yes

No

Appendix E

11

I confirm that I have understood the purpose and aims of the project and how this will be achieved through individual contribution within a wider group of panellists. * 

Yes

No

12

I agree to take part in this research project and agree for my data to be used for the purpose of this study. *

Yes

No

Appendix F Delphi feedback report examples

F.1 Delphi feedback report example: Round one



Creating a new theory of gender: A Delphi study

Round One Feedback Report

Participant Identification Number (PIN): 0000

Thank you for completing the first round of the Delphi poll. This is where things get exciting, and we start to collaborate on our understanding together! Your feedback report includes your responses and the collated responses of other young people who completed the questionnaire. Each item will show you your response and the responses of other young people.

You will be able to see the number of people in brackets who rated the item as either 'not at all important', 'slightly important', 'important', or 'very important' and the percentage (%) for this. You will also be able to see which items have already gained group consensus and will not be included in subsequent rounds. Definitions that were included are provided on the final page of this report.

In the second round, you will be given the opportunity to change your responses in light of this report. We are interested in your opinion as we create our understanding together.

		Group response (including the percentage and number of responses for each item)				Consensus achieved? (70% rate)
		Not at all important	Slightly important	Important	Very important	
Which of these are important to the way in which gender is viewed?						
	Your response					
A person's sex determines how they experience their gender	Slightly important	25.7% (9)	48.6% (17)	17.1% (6)	8.6% (3)	
A person can identify with another sex more than their assigned sex	Important	0% (0)	8.6% (3)	22.9% (8)	68.6% (24)	
A person should express their gender in line with the gender they have been assigned at birth	Not at all important	91.4% (32)	2.9% (1)	2.9% (1)	2.9% (1)	✓
A person's body can be more or less masculine, or more or less feminine	Very important	14.3% (5)	40% (14)	22.9% (8)	22.9% (8)	
A person can identify equally with both sexes	Slightly important	0% (0)	11.4% (4)	28.6% (10)	60% (21)	

		Group response (including the percentage and number of responses for each item)				Consensus achieved? (70% rate)
		Not at all important	Slightly important	Important	Very important	
Which of these are important to the way in which gender is viewed?						
	Your response					
Sex refers to being male or female	Not at all important	42.9% (15)	22.9% (8)	22.9% (8)	11.4% (4)	
A person's expression of their gender can change over time	Important	2.9% (1)	0% (0)	14.3% (5)	82.9% (29)	✓
A person may not have a gender	Slightly important	2.9% (1)	5.7% (2)	28.6% (10)	62.9% (22)	
A person can alter their gender expression to match their gender identity	Very important	2.9% (1)	0% (0)	31.4% (11)	65.7% (23)	
Expressive markers are important in determining the gender of a person*	Not at all important	28.6% (10)	45.7% (16)	17.1% (6)	8.6% (3)	
A person can identify as more male or more female	Slightly important	2.9% (1)	11.4% (4)	40% (14)	45.7% (16)	
The way a person expresses themselves is inherently non-gendered; we apply a construct of gender to <u>our understanding of a person's expression</u> (e.g., a person dressing in a certain way)	Important	2.9% (1)	8.6% (3)	42.9% (15)	45.7% (16)	
You can confirm someone's gender with physical markers*	Not at all important	85.7% (30)	8.6% (3)	2.9% (1)	2.9% (1)	✓
Gender identity is fluid and can fluctuate over time	Very important	2.9% (1)	8.6% (3)	31.4% (11)	57.1% (20)	
Gender is exclusively male and female	Not at all important	94.3% (33)	0% (0)	2.9% (1)	2.9% (1)	✓
A person's sex can change over time	Important	11.4% (4)	28.6% (10)	34.3% (12)	25.7% (9)	
It is important to know someone's gender	Not at all important	37.1% (13)	45.7% (16)	14.3% (5)	2.9% (1)	
Only transgender people need to alter their bodies through physical markers*	Not at all important	80% (28)	11.4% (4)	8.6% (3)	0% (0)	✓
A person may identify as having a specific, further gender outside of the binary (male or female)	Not at all important	2.9% (1)	8.6% (3)	17.1% (6)	71.4% (25)	✓
A person's experience of gender can change because of their lived experience	Very important	0% (0)	25.7% (9)	25.7% (9)	48.6% (17)	

		Group response (including the percentage and number of responses for each item)				Consensus achieved? (70% rate)
		Not at all important	Slightly important	Important	Very important	
Which of these are important to the way in which gender is viewed?						
	Your response					
Sex refers to the physical markers of classifying individuals as male or female (e.g. genital differences at birth or chromosomal differences)*	Slightly important	17.1% (6)	51.4% (18)	17.1% (6)	14.3% (5)	
A person can only express themselves as male or female	Not at all important	91.4% (32)	2.9% (1)	5.7% (2)	0% (0)	✓
A person can change expression of their gender to challenge norms of their environments	Important	0% (0)	17.1% (6)	48.6% (17)	34.3% (12)	
A person can feel that their body doesn't match their experience of their gender	Very important	0% (0)	0% (0)	28.6% (10)	71.4% (25)	✓
Seeing other's present their gender helps to affirm one's own gender	Important	2.9% (1)	34.3% (12)	42.9% (15)	20% (7)	
Gender should be assigned at birth	Not at all important	80% (30)	11.4% (4)	2.9% (1)	0% (0)	✓
Not all people who alter their gender expression are transgender	Very important	2.9% (1)	8.6% (3)	34.3% (12)	54.3% (19)	
A person should learn to act in accordance with their gender (e.g., a person being assertive due to their gender)	Not at all important	88.6% (31)	8.6% (3)	2.9% (1)	0% (0)	✓
No attention should be paid to determining gender by physical and/or expressive markers*	Very important	17.1% (6)	40% (14)	25.7% (9)	17.1% (6)	
A person influences their surroundings and alters the expression of their gender to fit	Important	11.4% (4)	45.7% (16)	34.3% (12)	8.6% (3)	
You can confirm someone's gender with expressive markers"	Not at all important	54.3% (19)	31.4% (11)	8.6% (3)	5.7% (2)	
People are inherently non-gendered; we apply a construct of gender to our understanding of <u>how people experience themselves</u>	Slightly important	8.6% (3)	28.6% (10)	28.6% (10)	34.3% (12)	
What a term means to one individual may mean something to another	Important	0% (0)	5.7% (2)	42.9% (15)	51.4% (18)	
Use of identity terms continues to evolve over time	Very important	0% (0)	11.4% (4)	25.7% (9)	62.9% (22)	
Gender identity can fluctuate over contexts and social environments	Important	2.9% (1)	5.7% (2)	40% (14)	51.4% (18)	

		Group response (including the percentage and number of responses for each item)				Consensus achieved? (70% rate)
		Not at all important	Slightly important	Important	Very important	
Which of these are important to the way in which gender is viewed?						
	Your response					
The way a person expresses themselves can combine masculine and feminine elements	Very important	2.9% (1)	5.7% (2)	28.6% (10)	62.9% (22)	
A person can experience themselves on a spectrum from more masculine to more feminine	Very important	2.9% (1)	11.4% (4)	25.7% (9)	60% (21)	
Sex and gender are two separate constructs	Not at all important	0% (0)	8.6% (3)	25.7% (9)	65.7% (23)	
Being non-binary means living with a gender that falls between masculine and feminine	Not at all important	42.9% (15)	25.7% (9)	28.6% (10)	2.9% (1)	
A person can identify as neither male nor female	Very important	2.9% (1)	0% (0)	17.1% (6)	80% (28)	✓
A person influences their surroundings and alters the way they express themselves to fit	Important	2.9% (1)	57.1% (20)	28.6% (10)	11.4% (4)	
How someone was assigned at birth should be reinforced through socially required identification, which places a person in one of the other male/female category (e.g. use of bathrooms)	Not at all important	82.9% (29)	11.4% (4)	5.7% (2)	0% (0)	✓
You do not need to label gender with an identity term (e.g., genderqueer; non-binary; male; female)	Very important	5.7% (2)	22.9% (8)	22.9% (8)	48.6% (17)	
Sex and gender are the same constructs	Not at all important	82.9% (29)	11.4% (4)	5.7% (2)	0% (0)	✓
A person can experience themselves to be more or less masculine or more or less feminine	Very important	8.6% (3)	14.3% (5)	31.4% (11)	45.7% (16)	
A person's gender identity does not always match their gender expression	Slightly important	0% (0)	8.6% (3)	25.7% (9)	65.7% (23)	
A person's experience of their gender can change because of external pressures (e.g. ,expectations of other people – parents/teachers etc.)	Very important	8.6% (3)	17.1% (6)	37.1% (13)	37.1% (13)	
In choosing a gender, individuals accept a binary narrative (e.g., male or female)*	Not at all important	80% (28)	17.1% (6)	2.9% (1)	0% (0)	✓

		Group response (including the percentage and number of responses for each item)				Consensus achieved? (70% rate)
		Not at all important	Slightly important	Important	Very important	
Which of these are important to the way in which gender is viewed?						
	Your response					
Identity terms (e.g., non-binary; transgender) are important because you can only be what you are by naming it	Not at all important	51.4% (18)	31.4% (11)	17.1% (6)	0% (0)	
People are inherently non-gendered; we apply a construct of gender to understanding our bodies	Not at all important	20% (7)	28.6% (10)	25.7% (9)	25.7% (9)	
Medical transition (e.g., hormone therapy or surgical interventions) are important to gender identity	Slightly important	20% (7)	37.1% (13)	28.6% (10)	14.3% (5)	
A person influences their surroundings and alters how they experience their gender to fit	Important	11.4% (4)	48.6% (17)	22.9% (8)	17.1% (6)	
Non-binary refers to the deconstruction of gender boundaries	Not at all important	20% (7)	34.3% (12)	31.4% (11)	14.3% (5)	
Being transgender means your gender identity is either male or female	Not at all important	85.7% (30)	5.7% (2)	5.7% (2)	2.9% (1)	✓
Non-binary is an umbrella term to capture a range of identities and experiences	Not at all important	5.7% (2)	0% (0)	25.7% (9)	68.6% (24)	
A person can identify a mixture of male and female	Important	2.9% (1)	11.4% (4)	22.9% (8)	62.9% (22)	
The way a person expresses themselves can possess neither masculine nor feminine elements	Slightly important	0% (0)	25.7% (9)	17.1% (6)	57.1% (20)	
A person's expression of their gender cannot change over time	Not at all important	88.6% (31)	5.7% (2)	2.9% (1)	2.9% (1)	✓
Terms such as "genderqueer" and "gender non-binary" help label gender	Slightly important	2.9% (1)	28.6% (10)	42.9% (15)	25.7% (9)	
A person should learn beliefs about themselves in accordance with their gender (e.g., a person feeling more confident in their maths or English abilities due to their gender)	Not at all important	91.4% (32)	5.7% (2)	2.9% (1)	0% (0)	✓
There are some moments where a binary understanding of gender (male and female) is useful (e.g., seeking medical transition/intervention)	Important	22.9% (8)	31.4% (11)	42.9% (15)	2.9% (1)	

		Group response (including the percentage and number of responses for each item)				Consensus achieved? (70% rate)
		Not at all important	Slightly important	Important	Very important	
Which of these are important to the way in which gender is viewed?						
	Your response					
Transgender identities are valid where people have had medical intervention (e.g., hormone therapy)	Slightly important	48.6% (17)	22.9% (8)	17.1% (6)	11.4% (4)	
A person should be gendered using physical markers*	Not at all important	80% (28)	17.1% (6)	0% (0)	2.9% (1)	✓
Gender is the continuous searching and switching of identities	Very important	20% (7)	42.9% (15)	28.6% (10)	8.6% (3)	
Discovery of gender identities is somewhat related to, yet not completely determined by, a person's body	Slightly important	5.7% (2)	40% (14)	45.7% (16)	8.6% (3)	
A person's gender identity can differ from their birth-assigned gender or sex	Very important	0% (0)	2.9% (1)	2.9% (1)	94.3% (33)	✓
A person's experience of gender is fixed and cannot change	Not at all important	91.4% (32)	2.9% (1)	2.9% (1)	2.9% (1)	✓
Gender expression is the ways in which an individual presents their gender	Important	2.9% (1)	17.1% (6)	37.1% (13)	42.9% (15)	
A person can experience themselves to be both masculine and feminine	Important	2.9% (1)	5.7% (2)	37.1% (13)	54.3% (19)	
There is a lack of gender-neutral expressive markers*	Important	14.3% (5)	14.3% (5)	40% (14)	31.4% (11)	
Individuals who are non-binary erase their gender by choosing a gender (e.g., selecting 'male' on a form)	Not at all important	42.9% (15)	31.4% (11)	17.1% (6)	8.6% (3)	
Certain expressive markers tells us the individual belongs to another gender (e.g. using make-up implies you are female)*	Not at all important	71.4% (25)	17.1% (6)	8.6% (3)	2.9% (1)	✓
A person can experience themselves to be only male or female	Very important	60% (21)	2.9% (1)	17.1% (6)	20% (7)	
A body can range from more masculine to more feminine	Very important	14.3% (5)	37.1% (13)	28.6% (10)	20% (7)	
A person's experience of gender can change over time	Important	2.9% (1)	14.3% (5)	20% (7)	62.9% (22)	
Being non-binary means living with a gender absent of a male/female role	Not at all important	60% (21)	17.1% (6)	20% (7)	2.9% (1)	
A person can choose how they experience their gender	Very important	17.1% (6)	28.6% (10)	2.9% (1)	51.4% (18)	

		Group response (including the percentage and number of responses for each item)				Consensus achieved? (70% rate)
		Not at all important	Slightly important	Important	Very important	
Which of these are important to the way in which gender is viewed?						
	Your response					
Medical measures, that result in permanent changes to the body, oppose the idea of gender fluidity	Not at all important	80% (28)	17.1% (6)	2.9% (1)	0% (0)	✓
Ideas and systems related to male and female are outdated	Important	2.9% (1)	14.3% (5)	17.1% (6)	65.7% (23)	
A person's expression can be more or less masculine, or more or less feminine	Very important	14.3% (5)	31.4% (11)	25.7% (9)	28.6% (10)	
A person can change their expression of their gender to fit the norms of their environment (e.g., a person following a school uniform code)	Important	5.7% (2)	20% (7)	48.6% (17)	25.7% (9)	

You may find the following definitions useful (with thanks to Stonewall):

Gender: Often expressed in terms of masculinity and femininity, gender is largely culturally determined and is assumed from the sex assigned at birth

Sex: Assigned to a person based on primary sex characteristics (genitalia) and reproductive functions. Sometimes the terms 'sex' and 'gender' are interchanged to mean 'male' or 'female'

Binary: The classification of gender into two distinct, opposite forms of masculine and feminine

Some statements are marked with a * symbol. These are to be considered in relation to the following definitions:

Physical markers: Biological characteristics (e.g. genital differences; chromosomal differences)

Expressive markers: Social choices (e.g. use of make-up; hair style; language; tone of voice)

F.2 Delphi feedback report example: Round two

Creating a new theory of gender: A Delphi study

Round Two Feedback Report

Participant Identification Number (PIN): 0000

Thank you for completing the second round of the Delphi poll. Your feedback report includes your responses and the collated responses of other young people who completed the second questionnaire. Each item will show you your response and the responses of other young people.

You will be able to see the number of people in brackets who rated the item as either 'not at all important', 'slightly important', 'important', or 'very important' and the percentage (%) for this. You will also be able to see which items have already gained group consensus and will not be included in subsequent rounds. Definitions that were included are provided on the final page of this report.

In the final round, you will be given the opportunity to change your responses in light of this report. We are interested in your opinion as we create our understanding together.

		Group response (including the percentage and number of responses for each item)				Consensus achieved? (70% rate)
		Not at all important	Slightly important	Important	Very important	
Which of these are important to the way in which gender is viewed?						
	Your response					
A person's sex determines how they experience their gender	Important	25.8% (8)	54.8% (17)	9.7% (3)	9.7% (3)	
A person can identify with another sex more than their assigned sex	Important	3.2% (1)	3.2% (1)	16.1% (5)	77.4% (24)	✓
A person's body can be more or less masculine, or more or less feminine	Very important	12.9% (4)	35.5% (11)	16.1% (5)	35.5% (11)	
A person can identify equally with both sexes	Slightly important	0% (0)	9.7% (3)	22.6% (7)	67.7% (21)	
Sex refers to being male or female	Not at all important	45.2% (14)	32.3% (10)	16.1% (5)	6.5% (2)	

Which of these are important to the way in which gender is viewed?		Group response (including the percentage and number of responses for each item)				Consensus achieved? (70% rate)
		Not at all important	Slightly important	Important	Very important	
	Your response					
A person may not have a gender	Not at all important	9.7% (3)	0% (0)	9.7% (3)	80.6% (25)	✓
A person can alter their gender expression to match their gender identity	Important	3.2% (1)	3.2% (1)	35.5% (11)	58.1% (18)	
Expressive markers are important in determining the gender of a person*	Not at all important	32.3% (10)	51.6% (16)	16.1% (5)	0% (0)	
A person can identify as more male or more female	Not at all important	6.5% (2)	12.9% (4)	35.5% (11)	45.2% (14)	
The way a person expresses themselves is inherently non-gendered; we apply a construct of gender to <u>our understanding of a person's expression</u> (e.g., a person dressing in a certain way)	Slightly important	0% (0)	3.2% (1)	22.6% (7)	74.2% (23)	✓
Gender identity is fluid and can fluctuate over time	Very important	0% (0)	6.5% (2)	16.1% (5)	77.4% (24)	✓
A person's sex can change over time	Not at all important	12.9% (4)	29% (9)	38.7% (12)	19.4% (6)	
It is important to know someone's gender	Not at all important	41.9% (13)	38.7% (12)	19.4% (6)	0 (0%)	
A person's experience of gender can change because of their lived experience	Very important	0% (0)	22.6% (7)	41.9% (13)	35.5% (11)	
Sex refers to the physical markers of classifying individuals as male or female (e.g., genital differences at birth or chromosomal differences)*	Important	16.1% (5)	41.9% (13)	25.8% (8)	16.1% (5)	
A person can change expression of their gender to challenge norms of their environments	Not at all important	9.7% (3)	6.5% (2)	45.2% (14)	38.7% (12)	
Seeing other's present their gender helps to affirm one's own gender	Important	0% (0)	32.3% (10)	54.8% (17)	12.9% (4)	
Not all people who alter their gender expression are transgender	Very important	0% (0)	6.5% (2)	22.6% (7)	71% (22)	✓
No attention should be paid to determining gender by physical and/or expressive markers*	Important	6.5% (2)	41.9% (13)	38.7% (12)	12.9% (4)	

		Group response (including the percentage and number of responses for each item)				Consensus achieved? (70% rate)
		Not at all important	Slightly important	Important	Very important	
Which of these are important to the way in which gender is viewed?						
	Your response					
A person influences their surroundings and alters the expression of their gender to fit	Slightly important	3.2% (1)	54.8% (17)	41.9% (13)	0% (0)	
You can confirm someone's gender with expressive markers*	Not at all important	54.8% (17)	41.9% (13)	3.2% (1)	0% (0)	
People are inherently non-gendered; we apply a construct of gender to our understanding of <u>how people experience themselves</u>	Important	3.2% (1)	9.7% (3)	38.7% (12)	48.4% (15)	
What a term means to one individual may mean something to another	Very important	0% (0)	3.2% (1)	38.7% (12)	58.1% (18)	
Use of identity terms continues to evolve over time	Important	3.2% (1)	3.2% (1)	25.8% (8)	67.7% (21)	
Gender identity can fluctuate over contexts and social environments	Not at all important	3.2% (1)	12.9% (4)	32.3% (10)	51.6% (16)	
The way a person expresses themselves can combine masculine and feminine elements	Very important	3.2% (1)	6.5% (2)	22.6% (7)	67.7% (21)	
A person can experience themselves on a spectrum from more masculine to more feminine	Not at all important	3.2% (1)	19.4% (6)	22.6% (7)	54.8% (17)	
Sex and gender are two separate constructs	Very important	0% (0)	3.2% (1)	16.1% (5)	80.6% (25)	✓
Being non-binary means living with a gender that falls between masculine and feminine	Not at all important	58.1% (18)	25.8% (8)	12.9% (4)	3.2% (1)	
A person influences their surroundings and alters the way they express themselves to fit	Very important	3.2% (1)	58.1% (18)	25.8% (8)	12.9% (4)	
You do not need to label gender with an identity term (e.g., genderqueer; non-binary; male; female)	Important	0% (0)	19.4% (6)	35.5% (11)	45.2% (14)	
A person can experience themselves to be more or less masculine or more or less feminine	Not at all important	12.9% (4)	16.1% (5)	38.7% (12)	32.3% (10)	
A person's gender identity does not always match their gender expression	Not at all important	3.2% (1)	3.2% (1)	29% (9)	64.5% (20)	

		Group response (including the percentage and number of responses for each item)				Consensus achieved? (70% rate)
		Not at all important	Slightly important	Important	Very important	
Which of these are important to the way in which gender is viewed?						
	Your response					
A person's experience of their gender can change because of external pressures (e.g., expectations of other people – parents/teachers etc.)	Very important	6.5% (2)	6.5% (2)	61.3% (19)	25.8% (8)	
Identity terms (e.g., non-binary; transgender) are important because you can only be what you are by naming it	Important	54.8% (17)	35.5% (11)	6.5% (2)	3.2% (1)	
People are inherently non-gendered; we apply a construct of gender to understanding our bodies	Important	3.2% (1)	22.6% (7)	45.2% (14)	29% (9)	
Medical transition (e.g., hormone therapy or surgical interventions) are important to gender identity	Important	22.6% (7)	51.6% (16)	25.8% (8)	0% (0)	
A person influences their surroundings and alters how they experience their gender to fit	Very important	12.9% (4)	45.2% (14)	32.3% (10)	9.7% (3)	
Non-binary refers to the deconstruction of gender boundaries	Not at all important	22.6% (7)	25.8% (8)	25.8% (8)	25.8% (8)	
Non-binary is an umbrella term to capture a range of identities and experiences	Important	3.2% (1)	3.2% (1)	22.6% (7)	71% (22)	✓
A person can identify a mixture of male and female	Important	0% (0)	6.5% (2)	35.5% (11)	58.1% (18)	
The way a person expresses themselves can possess neither masculine nor feminine elements	Important	0% (0)	3.2% (1)	35.5% (11)	61.3% (19)	
Terms such as "genderqueer" and "gender non-binary" help label gender	Important	0% (0)	25.8% (8)	45.2% (14)	29% (9)	
There are some moments where a binary understanding of gender (male and female) is useful (e.g., seeking medical transition/intervention)	Very important	16.1% (5)	38.7% (12)	29% (9)	16.1% (5)	
Transgender identities are valid where people have had medical intervention (e.g., hormone therapy)	Not at all important	48.4% (15)	25.8% (8)	19.4% (6)	6.5% (2)	
Gender is the continuous searching and switching of identities	Slightly important	25.8% (8)	32.3% (10)	35.5% (11)	6.5% (2)	

		Group response (including the percentage and number of responses for each item)				Consensus achieved? (70% rate)
		Not at all important	Slightly important	Important	Very important	
Which of these are important to the way in which gender is viewed?						
	Your response					
Discovery of gender identities is somewhat related to, yet not completely determined by, a person's body	Very important	9.7% (3)	41.9% (13)	38.7% (12)	9.7% (3)	
Gender expression is the ways in which an individual presents their gender	Very important	0% (0)	12.9% (4)	38.7% (12)	48.4% (15)	
A person can experience themselves to be both masculine and feminine	Very important	3.2% (1)	3.2% (1)	32.3% (10)	61.3% (19)	
There is a lack of gender-neutral expressive markers*	Important	12.9% (4)	22.6% (7)	35.5% (11)	29% (9)	
Individuals who are non-binary erase their gender by choosing a gender (e.g., selecting 'male' on a form)	Important	41.9% (13)	22.6% (7)	22.6% (7)	12.9% (4)	
A person can experience themselves to be only male or female	Not at all important	45.2% (14)	9.7% (3)	22.6% (7)	22.6% (7)	
A body can range from more masculine to more feminine	Very important	25.8% (8)	38.7% (12)	16.1% (5)	19.4% (6)	
A person's experience of gender can change over time	Important	0% (0)	9.7% (3)	29% (9)	61.3% (19)	
Being non-binary means living with a gender absent of a male/female role	Not at all important	51.6% (16)	12.9% (4)	29% (9)	6.5% (2)	
A person can choose how they experience their gender	Very important	9.7% (3)	35.5% (11)	9.7% (3)	45.2% (14)	
Ideas and systems related to male and female are outdated	Very important	6.5% (2)	6.5% (2)	12.9% (4)	74.2% (23)	✓
A person's expression can be more or less masculine, or more or less feminine	Important	12.9% (4)	25.8% (8)	32.3% (10)	29% (9)	
A person can change their expression of their gender to fit the norms of their environment (e.g., a person following a school uniform code)	Slightly important	6.5% (2)	19.4% (6)	48.4% (15)	25.8% (8)	
Pronouns are not indicative of gender	Very important	6.5% (2)	16.1% (5)	22.6% (7)	54.8% (17)	
Some transgender people identify with binary genders (e.g., man/woman)	Important	0% (0)	6.5% (2)	35.5% (11)	58.1% (18)	

		Group response (including the percentage and number of responses for each item)				Consensus achieved? (70% rate)
		Not at all important	Slightly important	Important	Very important	
Which of these are important to the way in which gender is viewed?						
	Your response					
Gender is a way of grouping members of society to assign traits (e.g., clothing style; interests; height; social role; etc.)	Important	35.5% (11)	41.9% (13)	6.5% (2)	16.1% (5)	
Not every non-binary person uses they/them pronouns	Very important	9.7% (3)	0% (0)	25.8% (8)	64.5% (20)	
Sex is generally fixed, but there are outliers (e.g., intersex; those who change through medical interventions)	Not at all important	25.8% (8)	25.8% (8)	32.2% (10)	16.1% (5)	
Gender identity can be fluid for some and static for others	Very important	3.2% (1)	6.5% (2)	16.1% (5)	74.2% (23)	✓
Gender is biological in nature, but does not have to match sex	Slightly important	51.6% (16)	22.6% (7)	16.1% (5)	9.7% (3)	
Individuals are allowed to decide how they would like their physical markers* to be interpreted by others	Very important	0% (0)	12.9% (4)	48.4% (15)	38.7% (12)	
Being non-binary means a person does not identify as a man or a woman	Important	16.1% (5)	35.5% (11)	29% (9)	19.4% (6)	
Society's understanding of gender can change over time	Very important	3.2% (1)	3.2% (1)	6.5% (2)	87.1% (27)	✓
They/them pronouns should be used for all, unless you have been told the pronouns a person uses	Important	6.5% (2)	22.6% (7)	38.7% (12)	32.3% (10)	
It's okay to assume someone's gender based on their physical and expressive markers*; individuals should understand it's not possible to be right all the time	Very important	16.1% (5)	48.4% (15)	19.4% (6)	16.1% (5)	
Society should strive to move away from models of gender, using sex to accommodate for when needed (e.g., medical reasons)	Very important	29% (9)	12.9% (4)	32.3% (10)	25.8% (8)	
A transgender man may present as 'feminine', or a transgender woman may present as 'masculine', without compromising their identity as a transgender person	Not at all important	3.2% (1)	3.2% (1)	12.9% (4)	80.6% (25)	✓
Gender is a product of the cultural norms it conforms to	Slightly important	9.7% (3)	41.9% (13)	25.8% (8)	22.6% (7)	

		Group response (including the percentage and number of responses for each item)				Consensus achieved? (70% rate)
		Not at all important	Slightly important	Important	Very important	
Which of these are important to the way in which gender is viewed?						
	Your response					
Transgender identities are valid with and without medical interventions	Very important	3.2% (1)	0% (0)	3.2% (1)	93.5% (29)	✓
Changing your gender expression, even to the point of medical intervention, is not exclusive to transgender people	Very important	6.5% (2)	16.1% (5)	12.9% (4)	64.5% (20)	
Gender and pronouns are not always connected	Important	0% (0)	22.6% (7)	22.6% (7)	54.8% (17)	
Physical markers* should be an individual's personal choice	Very important	3.2% (1)	16.1% (5)	32.3% (10)	48.4% (15)	
People should maintain a less gender-based outlook across all areas of life	Very important	6.5% (2)	16.1% (5)	25.8% (8)	51.6% (16)	
Pronouns are an important and affirming expressive marker*	Important	0% (0)	9.7% (3)	54.8% (17)	35.5% (11)	
The way we can experience gender can be influenced by other factors (e.g., ethnicity, disability, age)	Important	6.5% (2)	9.7% (3)	38.7% (12)	45.2% (14)	

You may find the following definitions useful (with thanks to Stonewall):

Gender: Often expressed in terms of masculinity and femininity, gender is largely culturally determined and is assumed from the sex assigned at birth

Sex: Assigned to a person based on primary sex characteristics (genitalia) and reproductive functions. Sometimes the terms 'sex' and 'gender' are interchanged to mean 'male' or 'female'

Binary: The classification of gender into two distinct, opposite forms of masculine and feminine

Some statements are marked with a * symbol. These are to be considered in relation to the following definitions:

Physical markers: Biological characteristics (e.g., genital differences; chromosomal differences)

Expressive markers: Social choices (e.g., use of make-up; hair style; language; tone of voice)

Appendix G Delphi statements that did not reach consensus

In the following table, the '*' symbol represents a statement that was contributed by the panellists themselves.

Delphi statements that did not reach consensus

A person can experience themselves to be only male or female

Sex refers to being male or female

Sex refers to the physical markers of classifying individuals as male or female (e.g., genital differences at birth or chromosomal differences)

Sex is generally fixed, but there are outliers (e.g., intersex; those who change through medical interventions)*

It's important to know someone's gender

It's okay to assume someone's gender based on their physical and expressive markers; individuals should understand it's not possible to be right all the time*

There are some moments where a binary understanding of gender (male or female) is useful (e.g., seeking medical transition/intervention)

A person's body can be more or less masculine, **or** more or less feminine

A person's expression can be more or less masculine, **or** more or less feminine

Transgender identities are valid based on a medical diagnosis

Transgender identities are valid where people have had medical intervention (e.g., hormone therapy)

Gender is biological in nature, but does not have to match sex*

A body can range from more masculine to more feminine

A person can experience themselves on a spectrum from more masculine to more feminine

Being non-binary means living with a gender that falls between masculine and feminine

Identity terms (e.g., non-binary; transgender) are important because you can only be what you are by naming it

Seeing others present their gender helps to affirm one's own gender

Gender is a way of grouping members of society to assign traits (e.g., clothing style; interests; height; social role, etc.)*

Gender is a product of the cultural norms it conforms to*

A person's sex determines how they experience their gender

Gender should be assigned at birth

Discovery of gender identities is somewhat related to, yet not completely determined by a person's body

Medical transition (e.g., hormone therapy or surgical interventions) are important to gender identity

A person's sex can change over time

A person influences their surroundings and alters the way they express themselves to fit (e.g., changing their clothing)

A person influences their surroundings and alters how they experience their gender to fit

A person influences their surroundings and alters the expression of their gender to fit

Gender is the continuous searching and switching of identities

A person can choose how they experience their gender

Expressive markers are important in determining the gender of a person

No attention should be paid to determining gender by physical and/or expressive markers

Non-binary refers to the deconstruction of gender boundaries

Being non-binary means a person does not identify as a man or a woman*

Being non-binary means living with a gender absent of a male/female role

Individuals who are non-binary erase their gender by choosing a gender (e.g., selecting 'male' on a form)

Society should strive to move away from models of gender, using sex to accommodate for when needed (e.g., medical reasons)*

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