Labor, work, and action: the unmaking of an LGBTIQ+ migrant network of interpreters compounding a cross-border minority tax

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International organizations have long championed principles of human rights, dignity, and equality. However, the lived experiences of LGBTIQ+ interpreters working under temporary contracts reveal structural inequalities, particularly as remote interpreting and neoliberal labor policies reshape the profession. This study conceptualizes their experiences through Hannah Arendt's tripartite distinction between labor, work, and action to reveal how institutional structures produce and sustain a minority tax—an accumulation of burdens placed disproportionately on non-dominant identities. The research draws on semi-structured interviews conducted with twelve LGBTIQ+ interpreters employed under temporary arrangements in international organizations. Using a phenomenologically informed thematic analysis and guided by Arendt's framework, the study explores interpreters' narratives across three intersecting axes: gender identity, migratory status, and temporary employment. Following a hermeneutic interpretive cycle with participant feedback, the analysis reveals an increase in survival-based tasks (labor), difficulties in establishing professional continuity and recognition (work), and curtailed opportunities for political engagement (action). Arendt's categories illuminate how the erosion of political space within international organizations depoliticizes LGBTIQ+ interpreters and impedes the formation of solidarity networks. Reforms are suggested to simultaneously address survival conditions, professional stability, and participatory agency to dismantle the mechanisms that perpetuate exclusion under the guise of flexibility and technological innovation.

KEYWORDS

LGBTIQ+ interpreters, labor, work, action, Hanna Arendt, international organizations, migration, minority tax

1 Introduction

The international system emerged in the aftermath of major global conflicts, aiming to provide multilateral platforms that could promote principles such as peace, dignity, and equality (United Nations, 2025). The ideals of this system, which encompasses several intergovernmental bodies, align with historical analyses that emphasize the role of inclusive institutions in the success of civilizations (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2012). International organizations have been recognized as significant drivers of political evolution at a global scale (Emmerij et al., 2001; Thérien and Joly, 2014). Yet, their practical impact on national policies and regulations varies considerably, as implementation is mediated by entrenched sociocultural and political norms, which are not always in agreement with international frameworks

(Risse-Kappen, 1995). Indeed, the negotiation of these norms is a core feature of the international system, in which multilateralism—inter-state cooperation in negotiations, and participation in crafting and achieving shared objectives (e.g., Caporaso, 1992)—serves as a foundational principle (e.g., United Nations Secretary-General, 1995), and also as an essential process for maintaining legitimacy (von Billerbeck, 2020).

In multilingual and multicultural organizations, multilateral dialogue is contingent on interpreters and translators, who facilitate diplomatic discussions, legal proceedings, and policymaking in the countries hosting the organizations and in meetings and missions abroad. While these organizations typically employ staff interpreters, most activities, including meetings, conferences, and missions, rely on temporary contract workers, with some organizations depending entirely on freelancers. Although international organizations have traditionally been considered models of best practices (Hale and Stern, 2011), recent scholarship in translation and interpreting studies has identified challenges in the working conditions of translators and interpreters, including increasing workloads, technological shifts, and job-related stress (e.g., Monzó-Nebot, 2024b). For interpreters in particular, the transition to remote interpreting (RI)—where interpreters are not in the same meeting room as speakers (Moser-Mercer, 2011; Constable, 2015)—has brought both benefits and challenges (Buján and Collard, 2022; Diur and Ruiz Rosendo, 2022; Zhu, 2022; De Boe et al., 2023). These have been explored for interpreters in general (see, e.g., the chapters in Liu and Cheung, 2022a) and specifically zooming in on women (Arzik-Erzurumlu, 2024; Monzó-Nebot and Dowd, 2024) and LGBTIQ+ individuals (Monzó-Nebot, 2024a). Considering for LGBTIQ+ interpreters specifically, RI has enhanced physical and mental safety by reducing the need to travel to countries where their identities are criminalized, but it has also led to increased isolation and a reduction in opportunities for collective action and support (Monzó-Nebot, 2024a). This study further explores the issues experienced by LGBTIQ+ interpreters in these organizations, examining their intersectional stratification as migrants and temporary workers.

LGBTIQ+ interpreters working on temporary appointments for international organizations are necessarily citizens of member states who have been schooled in the language to which they interpret. They typically become residents of the host country where a specific organization or group of organizations are based and may travel to foreign states for commissions or temporary appointments in organizations headquartered in different countries. They are not generally approached as migrant workers because of the relatively high status they enjoy. Indeed, interpreters working for international organizations benefit from certain institutional privileges, yet they remain vulnerable to modes of stratification that reinforce broader structures of inequality affecting non-dominant identities. As migrants, they often lack stable ties to the countries they reside in, which makes it more difficult to access administrative support, for example. As LGBTIQ+ individuals, they face additional burdens when being assigned to missions in countries that criminalize their identities, forcing them to develop strategies to secure both professional opportunities and personal safety. Finally, as temporary workers, their income security is never fully guaranteed, and the growing influence of neoliberal policies on interpreting services disproportionately affects their ability to remain in the high-income countries where international organizations are based. This instability threatens their continued inclusion in the institutional network that sustains their professional opportunities, exacerbating their precarity.

This investigation draws on semi-structured interviews conducted by the author with interpreters working for international organizations. These interviews are part of a larger project that seeks to understand the dual spectrum of empowering and challenging outcomes stemming from the introduction of technological advancements in the translation and interpreting professions. The results of a previous analysis (published in Monzó-Nebot, 2024a) evidenced how LGBTIQ+ interpreters were experiencing a *minority tax* (Rodríguez et al., 2015), that is, additional burdens and responsibilities that individuals from marginalized groups bear in their professional and personal lives due to systemic inequalities and discrimination. Specifically, RI implies certain advantages for these interpreters—such as physical safety—yet it also exacerbates isolation, reduced administrative support, and the erosion of professional networks. This study explores such effects focusing on the intersection of specific modes of stratification some of them experience—being migrant, temporary workers, and LGBTIQ+. Although other characteristics may further shape participants' intersectional experiences, fine-tuning the analysis may risk indirect identification. Therefore, additional social classifiers—such as specific gender identities, social class, or the social capital associated with their nationalities—will not be discussed.

Building on previous research that has demonstrated the erosion of LGBTIQ+ interpreters' political agency (Monzó-Nebot, 2024a), this article articulates the experiences of interpreters along the lines of Arendt's (1998) distinctions between labor, work, and action. The distinctions between labor, work, and action provide a means of tracing how the demands of survival (labor), the struggle for professional continuity (work), and the constraints on collective voice (action) intersect in ways that reinforce structural inequality. Applying these categories, the analysis bridges individual experiences and political exclusion, thereby identifying how workplace practices and institutional labor policies increase the cost of interpreters' intersectionalities.

2 Technology in interpreting as a political experience

The translation and interpreting professions have undergone profound changes due to digital transformations and neoliberal labor policies (Baumgarten and Cornellà-Detrell, 2018). Translators were the first to experience these shifts, facing increasing automation within a culture war (Hunter, 1992) that reshapes the principles and standards of their profession while undermining their right to compensation for work used to train the very systems that technology companies now claim can replace them (e.g., Forcada, 2024)—without redistributing the profits. Interpreters are now facing similar challenges. Like translators before them, they are experiencing the dual effects of digital technologies: on the one hand, these tools bring benefits, such as expanding their ability to access diverse markets (e.g., Zhao, 2022); on the other, they impose external circumscriptions that reshape their work to fit technological limitations rather than professional standards (e.g., Seresi and Láncos, 2022).

The expansion of digital technology in the case of interpreting, particularly RI and platform-based work was accelerated by the

COVID-19 pandemic. The urgent need to adapt to changing conditions following measures to contain the progress of the COVID-19 virus [see Knowledge Centre on Interpretation (KCI), 2021] provided an opening for technologies such as RI (Liu and Cheung, 2022b). As Wajcman (2004) illustrates, these technologies are built on and shaped by entrenched power structures, favoring those already in dominant positions. This rapid digital expansion reflected a broader trend, where the development and deployment of technological tools are not undertaken within an egalitarian framework. In effect, the digital transformation—far from leveling the playing field—has systematically amplified pre-existing social and economic inequalities, by channeling benefits toward established elites while marginalizing less privileged groups (Varoufakis, 2020).

As a reflection of the cultures that produced them, the design of technological systems—such as machine translation and RI—usually reproduces patriarchal logics (see Criado Perez, 2019). In machine translation, the output biases have received attention (Savoldi et al., 2021), but the resulting efforts to debias these systems have yielded limited success (García-González, 2025). In the field of interpreting, gender biases have been explored through the social practices these systems create (e.g., Monzó-Nebot and Dowd, 2024)—practices that interact with societies historically biased against non-dominant identities. In a time where societies have gradually become more sensitive to the benefits of inclusion for their prospects (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2012) and developed protections for non-dominant groups—largely supported by the organizations in the international system—these new sites of interaction pose challenges to our collective social efforts by not incorporating such protections into their design. The hierarchies of needs considered and neglected within the cultures where these systems develop consequently shape the possibilities and implications of their implementation.

These possibilities and the newly shaped realities they create highlight the consequences of neglecting the interests of those disadvantaged by social stratification. Exploring the shift to RI, which initially appeared as a technical and logistical challenge, has exposed the gendered nature of interpreting work in new and troubling ways. Female interpreters, especially those with caregiving responsibilities, experienced a compounded burden during the pandemic (e.g., Arzik-Erzurumlu, 2024). They had to adapt to new technologies and remote platforms like her male colleagues, while at the same time facing increased domestic responsibilities that disproportionately fall on women. This shift emphasized the persistent gendered division of labor, showing how social expectations continue to shape how women are perceived and treated in both professional and domestic spheres. Additionally, stereotypes have influenced the development of norms for digital interactions, confronting women with behavior that challenges their authority and makes it more difficult for them to adhere to established professional practices and ethical imperatives (Monzó-Nebot and Dowd, 2024).

Also LGBTIQ+ interpreters experience heightened vulnerability in the face of digital labor shifts. RI has indeed offered some protection for personal and emotional safety, yet it has also led to increased professional and social isolation (Monzó-Nebot, 2024a). Before the pandemic, interpreters often relied on informal workplace networks for support, advocacy, and knowledge exchange. However, remote work has eroded these connections. The absence of casual, in-person interactions has resulted in LGBTIQ+ interpreters perceiving more difficulties when identifying allies, discussing workplace challenges,

and advocating for inclusivity (Monzó-Nebot, 2024a). Additionally, the weakening of their professional associations due to neoliberal restructuring has left LGBTIQ+ interpreters with fewer institutional mechanisms to address workplace inequities. Historically, professional associations and informal peer networks played a significant role in maintaining professional standards, securing fair wages, and advocating for interpreters' rights (Baigorri-Jalón, 2014). Interpreters leveraged these networks as sites of dissent and to provide advantageous capital (Bourdieu, 1972): social capital—through professional mentorship and solidarity—cultural capital—by demanding specific credentials, experience, and professional development for continued inclusion—economic capital—by negotiating better working conditions—and also symbolic capital—presenting interpreters as extraordinarily gifted and qualified professionals, connecting with the legitimation strategies employed by international organizations (von Billerbeck, 2020). Nonetheless, the digital turn has fragmented these support systems. With interpreters increasingly working in isolated digital environments, delocalized, and increasingly hired on temporary appointments both in international organizations (Monzó-Nebot, 2024a) and in national markets (Lázaro-Gutiérrez and Nevado Llopis, 2022), collective bargaining and knowledge-sharing have been undermined.

For LGBTIQ+ interpreters, the structural changes ushered by technological transformations interact with existing modes of marginalization, compounding their professional precarity. The concept of a *minority tax* (Rodríguez et al., 2015) illustrates the additional burdens they face. This term refers to the systemic challenges that underrepresented individuals face, with an emphasis on their experiences in predominantly majority environments. Encompassed in the minority tax are systemically embedded additional responsibilities that individuals from underrepresented groups are expected to assume, as well as the interactional and structural discrimination they experience. In this context, the term *minorities* does not necessarily refer to groups smaller in number but rather underrepresented and not dominant within institutional and societal structures. This underrepresentation has tangible material dimensions and consequences. For instance, linguistic minorities contribute tax revenue to fund education in dominant languages, often to their own disadvantage (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000), and in some countries, women must pay luxury taxes on essential hygiene products such as menstrual pads (del Álvarez Vayo and Belmonte, 2018; Calderón-Villarreal, 2024). Nonetheless, the minority *tax* is most often metaphorical, representing additional time, effort, and emotional labor.

The minority tax manifests in multiple forms. It includes emotional labor, such as the additional effort required to educate colleagues and supervisors about diversity, equity, and inclusion issues (Anthym and Tuitt, 2019). It also presents professional obstacles, such as bias in performance evaluations, limited opportunities for career advancement, and the siphoning away from career-advancing activities and personal growth (Faucett et al., 2022). In that respect, increased workloads are a key factor, as underrepresented professionals are often expected to participate in diversity initiatives, serve on committees, and mentor other underrepresented individuals—labor that is typically unpaid and unrecognized—while still being required to meet their regular job responsibilities, thereby further compounding their minority tax (Ray, 2024). Additionally, isolation and exclusion can result from being one of the few representatives of a minority

group in a given environment, which also reduces access to mentorship and advocacy networks (Thompson and Brenner, 2020). The tax has an emotional toll and health consequences, as persistent discrimination and microaggressions contribute to chronic stress, burnout, and physical illness (Geronimus, 2023).

Although initially conceptualized in relation to race and ethnicity, the minority tax applies more broadly to other marginalized groups, including sexual and gender minorities and individuals with disabilities (Aldalur et al., 2022). Its pervasiveness underscores the need for institutional reforms that foster more equitable and inclusive workplaces. In this article, the minority tax is used to illustrate how LGBTIQ+ migrant interpreters face compounded burdens across administrative, professional, and emotional domains, making their precarity structurally embedded rather than incidental. By integrating this concept with Arendt's labor, work, and action framework (see section 3), the article evinces how these burdens sustain professional inequalities and limit collective advocacy and political agency.

3 For a political phenomenology of interpreting

The present study takes a phenomenological approach. Phenomenological approaches have evolved into distinct methodological traditions across different disciplines. Originally formulated by Husserl (1952) in the realm of philosophy, phenomenology sought to uncover the essential structures of conscious experience through a process of *bracketing* or setting aside presuppositions. However, this initial focus on individual consciousness evolved as later thinkers emphasized the contextual, social, and political dimensions of experience. In particular, Heidegger (1967) underscored the contextual nature of human existence— arguing that it is always situated. Acknowledging the inescapable embeddedness of individuals in historical and social contexts implied that researchers could not possibly detach from their experiences in approaching the structures of consciousness, rendering *bracketing* of limited use. In Heidegger's development of phenomenology, the hermeneutic cycle—an iterative process of interpretation—asked researchers instead to continuously move between a holistic understanding of the data and its distinct components adopting diverse lenses for different meanings to emerge. The purpose was to allow for initial interpretations to be reexamined from diverse perspectives and therefore challenged and refined. In essence, the hermeneutic cycle seeks to reflect the complex, multifaceted nature of social experience.

Also Schutz (1970) expanded phenomenology, adapting Husserl's *lifeworld* to explore intersubjectivity, demonstrating how individuals co-construct shared meanings through social interactions. Schutz laid the groundwork for understanding how everyday subjective experiences gain significance through collective practices and become institutionalized in social structures. Berger and Luckmann (1966) integrated Schutz's perspectives in the examination of social life, arguing that reality itself is socially constructed through repeated interactions that institutionalize meanings and norms.

Husserl, Heidegger, and Schutz can be considered first-generation phenomenologists. Their insights inspired a second generation of phenomenologists (Arendt along with Franz Fanon, Simone de Beauvoir, Simone Weil, Jean-Paul Sartre, or Maurice Merleau-Ponty)

that continued expanding the approaches to lived experience as a legitimate source of knowledge. Arendt specifically turned her attention to collective political life. Her concerns detached from ontological efforts and rather than examining the *truth* behind experiences she became interested in the processes surrounding the *doxa*, that is, the opinions on which our actions are based. Her work was inspired by the political and social developments of Europe in the twentieth century, most notably the first halve. Observing the political climate and the personal positions and responses that enabled the dramatic transformations brought about by totalitarian regimes and the unfolding of the Cold War, Arendt analyzed the mechanisms of power, authority, violence, and evil, particularly in relation to Nazi Germany. Her reflections illuminated the nature of totalitarianism, the conditions of political responsibility, the role of public discourse in democratic systems, and the diminishing space for plural, dialogic interaction in modern societies in ways that remain relevant today.

Arendt's (1998) distinction between labor, work, and action shed light on how individuals move from mere biological survival (labor) to the creation of stable social structures (work), and ultimately to political engagement (action), where they assert their agency within the public sphere. Labor is cyclical and tied to mere existence, work introduces a level of stability, and action allows individuals to shape public life and others' experiences through discourse and solidarity. The erosion of any of these spheres disrupts an individual's capacity for full participation in social and political life. In Arendt's views, such disruption is detrimental to the political sphere, since it is through engagement with diverse perspectives that individuals exercise political agency and become able to begin something new. Therefore, limiting individuals' participation in action is detrimental to the polis as a whole.

Plurality is indeed central in Arendt's work—the idea that political life is constituted through the coexistence and interaction of diverse perspectives. This focus adds a distinctly political dimension to phenomenology's concern with lived experience. For Arendt, human existence is not only defined by individual perception but also by the capacity to appear before others, engage in dialogue, and contribute to a shared political world. Thus, Arendt grounds subjectivity in a public realm where individuals assert themselves through speech and action. Action, in this sense, is not merely an expression of will but a fundamental mode of being-in-the-world (Heidegger's *Dasein*) that enables political agency. However, agency is not exercised in isolation; it depends on public spaces where individuals can come together, deliberate, and initiate change. When such spaces are eroded— whether by authoritarianism, bureaucratic depoliticization, or social fragmentation—the conditions for political action are undermined, and individuals become isolated and reduced to passive subjects rather than active participants in shaping their collective reality (Arendt, 1973). In Arendt's views, public spaces for action need to be protected, ensuring that people continue to have access to shared forums (physical or digital) in which they can participate as political agents. When those spaces are lacking and action is stifled, plurality is silenced and the very nature of politics becomes distorted.

Arendt emphasized that political action is both irreversible and unpredictable—once words and deeds enter the public realm, their consequences cannot be controlled (Arendt, 1998, p. 233–247). Action demands courage because it takes place in a shared public realm where one's words and deeds are visible to others, without full control over the outcome and with no guarantee of recognition or success. There

lies the irreversibility: in actions that unfold within a web of human relationships where outcomes depend not solely on the actor's intentions but on the responses of the plurality of others. Similarly, unpredictability stems from the fact that action initiates something new—something that cannot be fully anticipated or confined by rules. For Arendt, this openness is not a defect but a defining feature of political life, one that underscores the transformative potential of appearing before others to speak and act.

Yet it is precisely this exposure to the irreversible and unpredictable nature of plurality that bureaucracies may seek to neutralize. Arendt (1964) examined how specific bureaucratic apparatuses obscure individual accountability, but argued that responsibility can persist even in the absence of sovereign control. This concern with *responsibility without sovereignty* underpins her analysis of administrative complicity in political violence and her critique of institutional structures that enable actors to defer moral judgment to procedural roles. As a shield against the risks and demands of action, bureaucratic systems may offer a form of depoliticized activity in which individuals no longer appear as agents among others but operate instead as replaceable parts within an impersonal structure—evading both judgment and initiative.

Arendt's phenomenology is not just a method for understanding human experience but a call to recognize and preserve the conditions that make politics possible. Phenomenology's trajectory from Husserl to Arendt can be understood as an expansion from an inward analysis of consciousness to an outward interrogation of how individuals experience, shape, and are shaped by the structures of power, institutions, and collective life.

In TIS, phenomenological approaches have been significantly influenced by the developments in phenomenology within psychology, particularly interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) (e.g., Pugh and Vetere, 2009). In this vein, phenomenology has been used to explore interpreting needs (e.g., Napier and Kidd, 2013) and how interpreters face the challenges of their work (e.g., Monacelli, 2009), among other concerns. This body of work offers insights into how personal experiences and contextual factors converge to shape the practice and ethics of translation and interpreting as a resource and as a service. However, the present research shifts the focus of phenomenological translation and interpreting studies to examine how interpreters experience the development of their political clout, emphasizing their lived experiences of power, political participation, and citizenship as they interpret and make sense of their social realities within broader social structures and contexts. Therefore, the study engages with the political dimension of interpreters' roles, considering how they act as political agents in shaping their own working conditions. Given this focus on the political aspects of interpreting, Arendt's approach to phenomenology emerges as a more fitting theoretical framework.

4 Study design

The present study reanalyzes a previously collected dataset (Monzó-Nebot, 2024a), which examined the lived experiences of LGBTIQ+ interpreters employed on temporary assignments within international organizations. Semi-structured interviews were conducted during the second quarter of 2023 with 12 LGBTIQ+ interpreters. The original analysis of these interviews employed a phenomenological approach and a narrative analysis to capture first-person narratives, focusing on the *lived world* as experienced by participants. The interviews are part of a larger project involving interpreters working for international organizations, and it questions participants about their experiences regarding technological shifts and workplace; identity and workplace dynamics; migration and work mobility; health and wellbeing; organizational policies and inclusivity; coping strategies and support systems; perceptions and external discourses on translators and interpreters and translation and interpreting from colleagues and other professionals and from the general public and media; exposure to and impact of external discourses; perceptions, stereotypes, and external discourses on TIS; stereotypes about individuals with sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) in interpreting and translation; and organizational responses and resistance to stereotypes.

These interviews elicited detailed personal accounts of working under RI arrangements in a post-pandemic context, where the shift to digital modalities showed implications for both professional agency and workplace inclusion. Their accounts were anonymized, and the researcher's interpretation was refined through a hermeneutic cycle that included follow-up interviews in the third quarter of 2023. The original study employed thematic and narrative analysis to distill recurrent patterns and emergent themes—ranging from technological adequacy and misgendering to experiences of isolation and collective solidarity—while foregrounding the challenges faced by non-dominant gender identities. To ensure confidentiality, their accounts were presented as narratives that represent their collective experience rather than individual cases. These narratives illustrated specific challenges faced by these interpreters—professional isolation, institutional discrimination, and the effects of digitalization. The results provided valuable insights into recurring struggles, but they did not fully account for the broader structural mechanisms that shape these experiences.

To address this gap, the present study applies Arendt's distinction between labor, work, and action as an interpretive lens. This framework allows for a more systematic examination of how different modes of being are disrupted under RI and temporary employment structures. Whereas the initial analysis primarily documented individual hardships, Arendt's categories provide a theoretical structure to explain why these challenges persist and how they are embedded in institutional policies. Rooted in a phenomenological tradition, Arendt's framework emphasizes plurality and the political agency of individuals, making it a compelling perspective for this study. By reframing the data through this lens, the study moves beyond descriptive accounts of marginalization to analyze the mechanisms that sustain professional precarity and inhibit political agency. This shift enables a deeper understanding of the stratification of labor within international organizations, the barriers to professional identity formation, and the suppression of collective action.

4.1 Data coding

The specific approach taken can be described as a phenomenologically informed thematic analysis, with a hermeneutic interpretation of the data that applies Arendt's framework. The analysis applies the distinctions between labor, work, and action as a conceptual framework for understanding the institutional mechanisms

that sustain precarity and barriers to collective advocacy. To systematically implement this framework, a thematic analysis was conducted using a deductive coding approach, where Arendt's categories structured the analytical process. The coding identified themes corresponding to labor (e.g., administrative precarity, emotional labor, bureaucratic constraints), work (e.g., efforts to secure contracts, build industry-specific networks, and establish career stability), and action (e.g., advocacy, collective organizing, and constraints on political agency). Although the coding process was guided by this theoretical framework, it remained adaptable to emergent themes. Codes that did not align neatly with the predefined categories were examined to determine whether they revealed additional structural dimensions of labor, work, and action in the interpreting profession.

All interviewees were invited to participate in reflexive dialogue with the researcher to ensure that the reanalysis remained faithful to the original lived experiences. Seven participants finally reviewed preliminary findings to assess their alignment with lived experiences. Their feedback, an iterative hermeneutic approach of continuous data re-examination, informed refinements to the theoretical interpretation of institutional structures shaping professional precarity.

4.2 Positionality and ethical considerations

Given the sensitive nature of the data and the complex positionality of the researcher—who is not a member of the LGBTIQ+ community but has a long-standing commitment to allyship—the analysis was undertaken with continuous reflexivity. Efforts were made to mitigate potential biases by documenting interpretive decisions, engaging in debriefing sessions with participants, and explicitly acknowledging the researcher's own social and cultural background in relation to the study. All original ethical procedures adhered to in the initial data collection (e.g., informed consent,

confidentiality, and secure data storage) continued to be maintained in this secondary analysis.

All data are presented in an anonymized and aggregated form, in accordance with the confidentiality commitments outlined in the informed consent process. Individual responses were synthesized into thematic categories to minimize traceability. However, specific consent was obtained for the creation of paradigmatic narratives (used in Monzó-Nebot, 2024a) and the preservation of a limited number of carefully selected, de-identified excerpts used in this article to illustrate core analytical themes. These excerpts have been edited to remove contextual or linguistic details that could enable identification, thereby preserving anonymity. Participants have also exercised their right to withdraw specific quotations; only unchallenged excerpts have been retained.

5 Labor, work, and action: a phenomenological perspective of interpreters' experience

The experiences of LGBTIQ+ interpreters engaged in temporary contracts with international organizations reveal a set of interwoven challenges related to their gender identity, migrant status, and employment precarity. Drawing on Arendt's (1998) distinctions between labor, work, and action, this section analyzes the lived experiences of these interpreters, shedding light on how institutional structures shape their realities and contribute to what has been described as a minority tax (Rodríguez et al., 2015).

Below, a table maps the issues identified in the interviews onto Arendt's three categories across three dimensions: LGBTIQ+ identity, migrant status, and temporary appointment (Table 1).

Although some experiences provide information at the different levels, their different aspects have been separated for the analysis. Experiences classified under the category of *labor* mainly involve repetitive, survival-oriented efforts required to exist in professional

TABLE 1 Challenges faced by LGBTIQ+ interpreters in international organizations: categorization by Arendt's concepts of labor, work, and action.

Categories	Labor	Work	Action
LGBTIQ+ identity	• Microaggressions, misgendering • Emotional and psychological toll	• Efforts to create safe, supportive networks in the workplace • Managing identity in bureaucratic systems (e.g., document mismatches) • Emotional labor to sustain self-affirmation networks	• Limited opportunities for collective advocacy due to institutional constraints • Self-censorship and risk-avoiding responses to protect professional prospects
Migrant status	• Extra bureaucratic work (e.g., document renewals and identity validations) • Strain caused by mismatches between official documents and lived identity	• Challenges with administrative processes that fail to recognize risks associated to specific gender identities in specific countries • Construction of official artifacts (e.g., passports, laissez-passer) that may not reflect gender identification	• Seeking assistance from supportive colleagues or advocacy networks • Negotiating safety measures when traveling to or working in hostile environments
Temporary appointments	• Precarious conditions with added administrative burdens (e.g., self-managed travel arrangements, reimbursement delays) • Isolation and extra *hustle* to meet work demands	• Lack of durable, stable work environments and proper institutional support • Underinvestment in creating long-term, supportive professional structures	• Reduced capacity for collective action due to isolation and temporary status • Fear of jeopardizing future opportunities, limiting open grievance reporting and advocacy

spaces not designed for non-normative identities. These acts—such as correcting misgendering, anticipating microaggressions—are not recognized as productive work nor as political acts; instead, they resemble the cyclical, unacknowledged maintenance of life that Arendt associates with labor. Experiences categorized as *work* involve attempts by LGBTIQ+ interpreters to create professional continuity and institutional recognition despite structural precarity. These include managing bureaucratic misalignments between lived identities and official documentation, sustaining cross-border professional networks, and negotiating informal systems of support. Finally, experiences classified as *action* include interpreters' attempts to engage in collective advocacy, participate in institutional diversity initiatives, and support colleagues facing identity-related challenges. These actions, though limited and often constrained by their contractual status, reflect attempts to intervene publicly and collaboratively in the conditions shaping their profession.

The following subsections explore experiences related to (1) their LGBTIQ+ identities, (2) the additional burdens faced by migrant interpreters and their need to cross borders for work, and (3) the instability of temporary appointments.

5.1 LGBTIQ+ identity experiences: negotiating daily interactions and bureaucratic landscapes

For LGBTIQ+ interpreters, workplace interactions and administrative procedures hide subtle yet persistent challenges. These include microaggressions and misgendering, the psychological toll of navigating non-affirming work environments, the struggle to establish supportive networks, and the obstacles that arise when official documentation fails to represent personal identities. The following narratives illustrate how these interpreters experience and manage the resulting challenges.

Microaggressions emerged as a recurrent theme among interviewees, who also reported a perceived intensification of such incidents following the pandemic. It remains unclear whether these experiences have objectively increased or whether the pandemic created affirming environments of more personal connections that rendered subsequent encounters more conspicuous by contrast. In either case, interviewees described situations in which their identities were either disregarded or subtly undermined. One interpreter described the vigilance and self-affirmation required to avoid being misgendered in professional settings: "I've learned to introduce myself strategically—to say my pronouns quickly, to avoid situations where people have to guess. Every email, every badge, every form."

Another interpreter recalled an instance where a colleague made an assumption about their personal life, forcing them into a difficult choice: "They asked if I had a *husband*, and I hesitated for just a second—long enough for them to notice. I could correct them, but then what? Will I have to deal with awkward silence, the shift in tone, the lingering discomfort? So I just nodded and changed the subject."

The cyclical nature of this aspect of their professional interactions aligns it with the fulfillment of basic needs (what Arendt describes as *labor*), rather than with transformative actions capable of effecting change. The unrecognized, repetitive efforts required simply to exist in a space not designed for one's identity and the need to self-censor

or carefully manage interactions add a further burden, reinforcing a sense of professional and emotional exhaustion.

Regarding *work* in relation to their gender identities, the analysis identified experiences involving the management of identity within institutional settings, efforts to build professional relationships that foster stability, and the performance of emotional labor aimed at sustaining networks for self-affirmation. For instance, one interpreter, who had not been allowed to change their legal name and gender marker in their home country found themselves having to explain why their looks did not match the expectations triggered by these documents. This need to repeatedly revisit their oppression had become an issue for their work from the moment institutions stopped making travel and accommodation arrangements for temporary interpreters. The symbolic capital of the organization was not transferred to individual workers, which not only displaced the associated burdens downstream—thereby multiplying them—but also intensified these difficulties, as the interpreters lacked the equivalent symbolic capital to prevent or mitigate challenges.

Nonetheless, RI had also alleviated certain burdens in this respect, as when allowing LGBTIQ+ interpreters to avoid the risks associated with traveling to countries that criminalize their identities. As a result, their need to find colleagues willing to take such assignments in their place had diminished, although not disappeared. When required to travel to these regions, interviewees reported having to secure substitutes to avoid being perceived as uncooperative or difficult for declining commissions. In cases where they chose to accept the assignment, the responsibility for ensuring their own safety fell entirely on them, with institutional responses often slow and inadequate (see section 5.2).

In response to work-related challenges, interpreters used to rely on informal networks of support, providing mentorship to newcomers to share and expand cultural resources and informal institutional memory to support their identities. With the increasing reliance on RI, such networks have become harder to maintain. As an interpreter explained, "Working on-site, we can at least commiserate between sessions. When I log off, it's just me. There's no one to validate what I'm going through." Interviewees also noted that they no longer shared identity-related information with new interpreters, as opportunities for such conversations had become increasingly scarce. Some reported developing strategies (specifically, mentioning general diversity initiatives or institutional support structures in neutral terms) to elicit cues from others and assess whether identity-specific information— such as the existence of institutional LGBTIQ+ organizations—would be welcomed.

The shift to RI has reinforced institutional barriers that make it difficult for LGBTIQ+ interpreters to advocate for policy changes. Several interviewees noted that discussions about inclusivity had been deprioritized in their workplaces, with diversity initiatives losing traction in virtual settings. An interpreter described the difficulty of raising concerns in remote environments: "In a physical space, you might pull someone aside, mention an issue, and get an informal sense of support. Online, everything becomes 'official' or nonexistent. There's no in-between."

Some interpreters further noted that they are now less familiar with colleagues participating remotely from other countries and cannot take their support for granted, which discourages side interactions where the issues regarding their identities may be discussed. Despite the existence of digital support networks for

LGBTIQ+ individuals, scholarship has shown how online organizing has contributed to fragmentation in activist interpreter networks (Boéri, 2023), which obscures the possibility of alternative modes of organization. Moreover, interpreters working for the international system did not seem to trust these digital sites. They recounted cases of individuals being imprisoned over WhatsApp messages in countries they had visited in missions, and when asked about digital activism, they showed ambivalence. Their comments seemed to suggest that interpreters' action, in Arendt's terms, is becoming systematically constrained as RI gains traction.

While labor and work efforts require increased attention, the ability to collectively advocate for change seems stifled. The constrained opportunities for group-driven advocacy—the space for public, political action—are evident in the self-censorship and risk-averse behaviors interpreters adopt to avoid disrupting the digital flow and protect their career prospects (see specially Section 5.3). This limitation in acting to seek support and challenge systemic inequities underscores how the realm of action has become restricted.

The impact of RI on action is particularly severe. In physical workspaces, interpreters can engage in informal conversations, gradually building solidarity and raising concerns collectively. The transition to digital platforms has removed these spaces for dialogue. With diminishing casual interactions in hallways, cafeterias, or post-meeting discussions, opportunities for organizing and collective advocacy have also shrunk. An interpreter noted that while diversity and inclusion committees still existed, they had become more performative than functional. The overall effect of RI and its implementation policies has been to push LGBTIQ+ interpreters into deeper isolation, making it harder for them to resist structural inequities.

Together, these dimensions—labor, work, and action—shed light on the minority tax experienced by LGBTIQ+ interpreters as a consequence of their identity. The cumulative effect of having to continuously manage daily microaggressions, build support in an unsupportive bureaucratic environment, and confront limited avenues for collective resistance creates a multifaceted burden.

5.2 Migrant and cross-border experiences of LGBTIQ+ interpreters: bureaucracy and safety

The interviewed interpreters are also migrants working under temporary appointments. For them, working internationally is routine—they are hired because they were schooled in one of the six languages of the international system, they usually reside in a different country, and are regularly dispatched on assignments abroad. In this respect, LGBTIQ+ interpreters face an additional layer of difficulty, as their gender identities and sexual orientations may be criminalized in the countries where they work or transit and they may endure varying degrees of discrimination in these countries. Such misalignments generate persistent strain, compelling interpreters to devise adaptive measures in systems that routinely overlook their needs, including needs for physical protection.

Obtaining travel authorization and documentation stands out as a particularly challenging hurdle for those working internationally. An interpreter described the repeated administrative roadblocks they faced when trying to obtain a laissez-passer for an assignment in a

country where being openly LGBTIQ+ carried significant risks. Although the organization had the capacity to issue the document, internal policies discouraged its use unless absolutely necessary, leaving the interpreter in a precarious position. Obtaining protection turned into a rigid negotiation process, where interpreters had to justify their safety to a system that overlooked their specific vulnerabilities. In the end, it was only through personal connections with permanent staff and informal advocacy that the document was issued in time, showing both how the bureaucratic system dodged responsibility for the safety of a plural workforce and the importance of work-related connections, limited for temporary workers (see section 5.3). The interpreter recalled the stress of the situation, the uncertainty of whether they would be granted safe passage, and the realization that their security depended more on individual allies than on institutional safeguards.

This experience reflects the nature of labor in Arendt's framework. Navigating administrative systems that ignore diverse identities demands a taxing, monotonous effort that often goes unnoticed. LGBTIQ+ interpreters must engage in additional bureaucratic labor simply to gain the same level of access and protection that their cisgender and heterosexual colleagues enjoy. Rather than spurring systemic reform, these efforts illustrate an endless pattern of solitary challenges imposed by a non-responsive bureaucratic system.

Beyond administrative barriers, the interpreters' experiences reveal how crossing borders also involves negotiating personal safety. An interpreter recounted their anxiety about being assigned to a country where homosexuality was criminalized. Despite a non-discrimination policy being upheld by their employer, it did not offer concrete protections for interpreters in the field, which in practice means that all those who need specific protections face discrimination by default. Interpreters were left to determine their own risk and choose assignments accordingly, with all responsibility for safety being displaced to the individual. Interpreters described the emotional strain of having to choose between turning down work opportunities and potentially exposing themselves to danger. The absence of policies that effectively account for the needs of non-dominant identities left them isolated in their decision-making, without institutional mechanisms to ensure their well-being.

This experience embodies what Arendt describes as work, as it is intended to construct a reliable framework that provides security and predictability. Yet, the interpreters' accounts show that this stability is largely absent for LGBTIQ+ professionals who cross borders. Their ability to build long-term professional security is undermined by institutional ambivalence, as organizations fail to proactively address the specific risks they face. Instead of developing policies that recognize the realities of LGBTIQ+ mobility, these institutions place the onus on individuals to construct their own safety nets. Despite reducing the need to travel to these countries, the shift to RI has exacerbated the lack of direct institutional connections. The transition to remote work has further fragmented professional networks, making it harder to seek informal guidance from colleagues or find support within the workplace. Their increased isolation also limits their ability to advocate for structural improvements, reinforcing a system in which each interpreter must navigate risks alone, multiplying as a result the efforts made to meet the same goal and diverting their time from action to labor.

Action has also become particularly constrained in relation to the migratory status of LGBTIQ+ interpreters. Several interpreters noted

that despite recognizing systemic problems, they were reluctant to speak out, fearing that doing so might jeopardize future commissions. Their temporary status made them vulnerable to contract instability, and the professional culture discouraged anything that could be perceived as disruptive (see also von Billerbeck, 2020). Associations also recommended that individuals take specific actions themselves, rather than contacting the institution to advocate for broader structural change. Some interpreters described how, after facing different difficulties, they considered raising issues formally but ultimately decided against it. They explained that their position as temporary workers (see section 5.3) was too precarious to risk drawing negative attention, even though they knew other interpreters were facing similar problems.

5.3 Temporary appointments: precarity and the self-regulation of voice

For interpreters employed under short-term contracts, temporary appointments grant access to esteemed institutions, yet they often come with unstable job security and cumbersome administrative hurdles. The precarious nature of temporary contracts transpires in several ways. First, in relation to the dimension of *labor*, interpreters on temporary appointments frequently face administrative complications, such as the need to organize their own travel and contend with extended delays in expense reimbursement. Contrasting with the institutional stability afforded to staffers, temporary interpreters must independently finance and arrange travel logistics, including securing proper documentation. Reimbursement delays exacerbate financial instability, increasing the burden to meet basic needs on those with already precarious employment, especially on those with working-class backgrounds.

A second dimension of precarious employment is related to *work* and manifested in professional isolation. Unlike permanent employees who benefit from institutional integration, a space within the walls of organizations, and long-term professional networks, temporary interpreters find themselves on the periphery of organizations, often sidelined in institutional communication, with fewer opportunities to access peer support and advocacy mechanisms, and to create networks of job-related social relations. This isolation is intensified in RI settings by eliminating opportunities for face-to-face interactions that nurture mentorship, solidarity, and community-building. Many interviewees report that the move to RI has led to an erosion of professional ties, weakening their capacity to seek assistance or address discrimination in interactions. The additional effort required to establish and maintain professional relationships, without the structural support of stable employment, compounds the burden borne by temporary interpreters.

Another obstacle in the area of work is the scarcity of support systems tailored to their specific needs and experiences. Not integrated into long-term organizational planning, they often lack access to resources such as career development programs (including linguistic training), legal assistance for work-related disputes, and formal avenues for raising concerns. Without lasting support, temporary interpreters are forced to champion their own rights individually and tackle bureaucratic hurdles—a burden less felt by staffers.

Temporary roles also curtail the ability of these interpreters to engage in collective *action*. Many interviewees fear that voicing concerns could endanger future job prospects, effectively stifling advocacy. Unlike staffers, who may have greater job security when raising concerns, temporary interpreters must calculate the risks of drawing attention to institutional shortcomings. As a result, some systemic inequities persist unchallenged, and the concerns of temporary workers remain largely invisible within broader organizational discourse.

Together, the lack of acknowledgment of their specific needs and experiences, their employment instability, and self-regulated advocacy constrained by institutional practices reveal how the systemic conditions of temporary appointments contribute to the disproportionate burdens experienced by these interpreters.

While the present analysis highlights how isolation and precarity have constrained collective action among LGBTIQ+ interpreters, it is possible that new forms of solidarity or collective awareness may be emerging outside the institutional spaces examined here. The narratives collected during the initial phase of the study were shaped by the immediate context of post-pandemic adjustments and institutional restructuring, which may have foregrounded experiences of fragmentation and vulnerability. However, the longer-term implications of this isolation and the strategies in place to overcome them remain underexplored. A follow-up study, for which ethical approval has already been secured, will investigate whether interpreters have begun to cultivate alternative forms of connection— such as informal digital networks, transnational solidarity initiatives, or emergent counterpublics—that respond to their shared conditions of marginalization. This inquiry will enable a more nuanced understanding of whether isolation can, under certain conditions, foster also new sites of collective identification and agency.

6 The minority tax through the labor, work, and action perspective

Using Arendt's framework of labor, work, and action unveils how the complexities faced by LGBTIQ+ interpreters working in their host countries on temporary contracts extend beyond individual struggles, reflecting deeper systemic inequalities that shape both their professional and political lives. This perspective exposes the multiple layers of oppression at play. If the focus remains solely on labor—the immediate survival needs of interpreters—there is a risk of overlooking how they are structurally excluded from influencing policies and practices (work) or advocating for structural change (action). Conversely, centering the discussion on action—collective advocacy—without acknowledging the daily, exhausting labor required to sustain themselves fails to account for why many cannot participate in broader efforts for change. When considering all three levels, marginalization emerges as being reinforced across multiple dimensions. These interpreters experience discrimination in their professional roles and find themselves unable to alter their conditions due to the precarious nature of temporary contracts and the increasing isolation brought on by neoliberal policies.

RI, in particular, shifts power in such a manner that entrenched imbalances are reinforced, adversely affecting marginalized groups. It does alleviate some labor-related burdens, such as reducing the need to travel to dangerous locations, but at the same time, it deepens feelings of isolation and heightens mental strain. In terms of work, it weakens professional structures by eroding workplace recognition and

reducing interpreters' influence within institutional settings. Most critically, it restricts the potential for political organization and coordinated efforts to improve working conditions. This perspective underscores why RI is not a neutral technological shift but an institutional change that reinforces existing disparities.

The erosion of action intensifies the minority tax experienced by LGBTIQ+ interpreters who cross borders. The administrative burdens they face in managing documents and securing safe assignments represent an added cost that their cisgender and heterosexual colleagues do not experience. The emotional labor of gaging risk, deciding when to disclose their pronouns or identities, and anticipating the potential consequences of travel creates an additional layer of stress that institutions seem to overlook. The loss of collective advocacy opportunities means that these burdens remain individualized, with no clear path toward systemic improvement. Without the benefits of robust institutional safeguards, interpreters must rely on personal connections and informal interventions to cope with a system that remains fundamentally unaccommodating.

While RI has introduced certain benefits, such as reducing the need to travel to unsafe locations, it has also simultaneously reinforced the structural inequalities affecting LGBTIQ+ interpreters. By dispersing traditional networks and shifting responsibilities onto individuals, it obstructs stability and action. The interpreters' experiences show that the ability to move freely and safely across borders remains a privilege that is unequally distributed. For those whose identities do not conform to rigid bureaucratic norms, every such assignment requires additional effort, negotiation, and risk management. These cumulative burdens exemplify how the extra cost borne by marginalized professionals is also intersectional.

Applying Arendt's framework also helps illuminate where meaningful change is urgent. If the issue were solely about labor, solutions would center on improving travel policies or administrative support. If it were purely a work-related problem, efforts would focus on securing permanent contracts or strengthening institutional diversity policies. If the core challenges were about action, then advocacy, unionizing, and collective organizing would be the primary remedies. However, because all three dimensions are deeply intertwined, solutions should be multi-layered. At the labor level, institutions must assume and assign responsibility for interpreter safety by guaranteeing measures such as laissez-passers. At the work level, increasing reliance on permanent positions and strengthening workplace diversity policies can foster stability and inclusion. At the action level, new—potentially virtual—spaces for solidarity must be created to counteract the isolating effects of RI and enable collective advocacy.

Arendt's approach also allows attention to be reoriented from personal hardships toward the broader dynamics of institutional power. When labor, work, and action are not seen as interacting, an LGBTIQ+ interpreter's safety concerns in a hostile country might appear as a personal burden. Nevertheless, when analyzed from this framework, institutions emerge as actively failing to support this group—whether by ignoring the additional protection required for traveling to specific countries that criminalize some identities, neglecting the need for enhanced policies to foster inclusive workplace environments, or ignoring the biases inherent in technological development and their obstructing avenues for political engagement. The responsibility for addressing these challenges should not rest solely with individuals but should instead be recognized as a matter of institutional accountability aimed at safeguarding plurality.

Ultimately, the analysis contests the assumption that international organizations are naturally inclusive sites. A closer look at their bureaucratic legibility suggests that, despite advocating for human rights on a global scale, the organizations' internal practices may be treating inclusivity as a token commitment rather than part of the structural culture, especially with the move to digital interpreting. Examining this issue through the lens of labor, work, and action highlights that inclusivity is a structural necessity that requires tangible policy changes at multiple levels. The organization's failure to redress these disparities aligns with previous scholarship that identified how these organizations show resistance to deal with their internal contradictions as a mechanism to preserve their internal legitimacy (von Billerbeck, 2020). Transforming the conditions that impose the minority tax demands a layered strategy to dismantle the entrenched apparatus of exclusion—an apparatus that the technological shifts implemented have reinforced.

7 Conclusion

LGBTIQ+ interpreters on temporary contracts face specific issues—from daily microaggressions to legal uncertainties and job instability—that not only affect them individually but also mirror systemic inequities. These issues appear as daily microaggressions, legal and bureaucratic complications related to migration, and vulnerabilities resulting from short-term appointments. Viewed through Arendt's framework of labor, work, and action, the role of institutional structures in constraining both professional development and opportunities for political engagement becomes evident, alongside the disproportionate burden imposed by a bureaucratic system that deflects responsibility for plurality onto non-dominant groups.

At the level of *labor*, LGBTIQ+ interpreters must navigate additional burdens in specific, foreseeable circumstances to ensure their safety and well-being. These burdens include the emotional labor of self-monitoring in professional interactions, the logistical hurdles of securing safe travel and accommodations, and the persistent uncertainty of their employment conditions. At the *work* level, they encounter institutional barriers that prevent them from shaping a more inclusive professional environment through continued interactions across the institutions' divisions. The reliance on temporary contracts erodes job security and limits opportunities for interpreters to contribute to policy discussions that could enhance workplace diversity and inclusion, and the implementation of technology without relevant protections dismantles their deliberative spaces (Habermas, 1962). Finally, at the level of *action*, the shift toward RI has fragmented the collective power of interpreters, making political mobilization and advocacy increasingly difficult. The isolation associated with remote work, the disruption of traditional networks due to delocalization—absent targeted measures to foster community—and the precarious nature of temporary contracts, which have increased under neoliberal reforms, collectively discourage LGBTIQ+ interpreters from speaking out against discriminatory practices for fear of jeopardizing future professional opportunities.

These structural constraints are not incidental but rather consequential, as they depoliticize and isolate marginalized groups within international institutions. The developments regarding

interpreting arrangements in these institutions, with temporary, remote, and stratified employment structures building oppressive hierarchies that obscure the needs of specific identities, undermine the ability of LGBTIQ+ interpreters to transform their conditions rather than simply endure them. The reliance on short-term contracts and remote arrangements exacerbates the burden on marginalized workers by outsourcing logistical responsibilities, failing to provide adequate safety measures, and shifting institutional risk onto individual interpreters. The failure to redress these inequities is not merely an oversight but a reflection of broader modes of stratification related to neoliberal labor policies that prioritize institutional flexibility over worker protections and a broader institutional trend that legitimizes itself at the expense of individuals (von Billerbeck, 2020). Institutional policies and practices discipline and depoliticize the workforce (Foucault, 1975), reinforcing pre-existing hierarchies rather than challenging them.

The intersection of migrant status with LGBTIQ+ identity intensifies the structural disadvantages identified. Although interpreters are not usually approached as migrant workers, their experiences of precarity, exclusion, and systemic disadvantage closely resemble those of other migrant laborers. As RI has become more prevalent, professional networks are breaking down, leaving interpreters without the informal support they once relied on to provide a degree of stability. As a result, LGBTIQ+ interpreters find themselves more vulnerable to institutional neglect, with fewer avenues to contest unfair treatment or advocate for necessary reforms.

These findings suggest the need for structural reforms to avoid reinforcing systemic exclusion within the ranks of organizations committed to human rights and diversity. The unmaking of an LGBTIQ+ migrant network within the interpreting profession is not an inevitable consequence of technological change but a direct result of policy decisions (and lack thereof) that fail to account for the vulnerabilities of marginalized workers and fail in their role of protecting plurality. Ensuring meaningful labor protections, workplace inclusion, and political agency for LGBTIQ+ interpreters requires a multi-layered approach that tackles these challenges at all three levels. Securing institutional responsibility for interpreters' safety, strengthening workplace diversity policies along with enhanced stabilization, and fostering new spaces for collective action in the digital age are options that merit further scrutiny.

Viewing the minority tax as layered captures the compounded disadvantages faced by LGBTIQ+ interpreters, illustrating how their migrant status amplifies precarity, weakens institutional protections, and isolates them from collective organizing. Their professional status does afford them some privileges compared to low-wage migrant laborers, but their temporary contracts, lack of local rights and ties, and exposure to work environments that evidence a need for increased awareness and sensitivity are taxing and place them in a vulnerable position. Systemic reforms to enforce inclusive policies and provide meaningful protections are required to disrupt conditions that currently reinforce a cycle of exclusion that is fundamentally at odds with the stated values of the international system.

Applying Arendt's framework of labor, work, and action reveals how these challenges emerge and persist. Moving beyond individualistic explanations, her insights illuminate the ways in which power, policy, and daily survival interact to sustain systemic inequality, particularly the structural mechanisms that perpetuate exclusion, highlighting concrete areas where change is needed. Particularly, Arendt's distinctions help uncover how digital work environments, by

restructuring opportunities for engagement, can suppress political participation and collective advocacy, jeopardizing the plurality on which meaningful political actin relies. Adapting professional associations to digital realities and fostering online networks that replicate the solidarity and advocacy functions of pre-digital professional communities are measures that seem particularly necessary in the interpreting field to address the fragmentation caused by recent developments. Additionally, incorporating intersectional protections into digital labor platforms, with active involvement from LGBTIQ+ interpreters in the design of these protections, can contribute to correct their disproportionate disadvantages. Addressing technological and structural challenges can revitalize professional solidarity in translation and interpreting in the digital age.

Data availability statement

The data analyzed in this study is subject to the following licenses/restrictions: requests to access these datasets should be directed to EM-N, monzo@uji.es.

Author contributions

EM-N: Formal analysis, Writing – original draft, Project administration, Data curation, Visualization, Methodology, Validation, Investigation, Resources, Conceptualization, Writing – review & editing.

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The author declares that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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