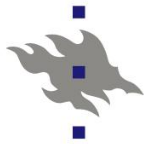


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# Sexual and Gender Minorities at Work

Jukka Lehtonen (ed.)

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# SEXUAL AND GENDER MINORITIES AT WORK

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## The Difficult Road to Equality

Nordic societies are founded on the principle of human equality. The chosen line has proved successful, especially in Finland, which has taken top positions in every possible international rating in the year 2002. Economy and culture in the Nordic Countries are flourishing, social capital is plentiful, and the international influence is multiple compared to the countries' weight in terms of population and size of economy. In a way, small countries have acted as laboratories of the human kind, testing the various social beliefs of the powers that be. Is there a roof to the national level of education? Can minorities be awarded equal rights to the majority? Can there ever be gender equality? Does sexual orientation matter in working life?

Equality is a difficult endeavour. It cannot be taken as a foregone conclusion, spontaneously arrived at through everyday reasoning. It is not a state of affairs that can be unambiguously described by statistics or kept constant once achieved. It is a perpetual challenge to intellect and activity, a social concern reflecting the constantly changing world. Our understanding is opening forever-new aspects, the variety of life presenting us with forever-new tests. Equality policies have often forged at the forefront of social movements but needed active political support to make headway. What is the current situation?

Equality in the working life has been on the social agenda for long. Nevertheless, we still fall short of many goals. The severe depression created financial insecurity and made way for measures that would have been inconceivable in a sound economy. Structural unemployment entered the fabric of Finnish working life through the backdoor. The young and the academically trained have grown accustomed to trudging from one temporary job to another well into their thirties. There is no equal pay between men and women to speak of. What is the state of Finnish leadership? What are the mechanisms of marginalisation in places of work? What is the situation with regard to prejudice, unwarranted discrimination and repression?

The present book offers a particular angle on working life, the single most important social environment of adults, and breaks new ground for equality in terms of awareness and activity.

Vappu Taipale

# I INTRODUCTION

## Jukka Lehtonen

## Employee Diversity and Heteronormativity in Working Life

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people hold a wide range of occupations and positions. Some of them are unemployed, incapacitated or retired, while others are in school or studying to qualify themselves. Nevertheless, it is not customary to discuss sexual and gender variance from the point of view of working life and employability. In the present book, a group of Finnish, Swedish and Dutch experts open discussion on the subject. The book is closely connected to the Community Initiative project Equal ("Sexual and Gender Minorities at Work"), launched in spring 2002 as a joint effort of the Department of Sociology at the University of Helsinki, the Finnish National Organisation for Sexual Equality, SETA ry, and the National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health, Stakes. The book is specifically aimed at professionals whose scope of duties include promoting the status of sexual and gender minorities in working life. In principle, this covers all those engaged in working life: employees, employers, health and safety authorities, players within occupational health, citizens' organisations and active workers in trade unions, politicians as well as trainers and researchers. The book also provides useful teaching material to be integrated in training aimed at combatting discriminatory practices in working life and vocational training as well as increasing understanding of employee diversity.

The book is divided into five sections. The introductory section presents the general scope of legislation governing working life and society, and also offers the reader an overview of the issues at hand. In the section, "Diversity – a Challenge in the Workplace", the articles discuss sexual and gender variance and the related concepts as well as the experiences of employees belonging to a sexual or gender minority, with particular reference to place of residence, family situation, age and state of health. In the following section, "On the Margins of Working Life", the articles continue on the above themes by focusing on specific groups, such as teachers, clergy and employees in the clerical and service sectors. The section "Heteronormative Social Climate and Attitudes" takes a more analytical approach, discussing gendered attitudes in places of work, such as schools and fire departments. The final section, "Working towards a Change", presents various projects aimed at tackling the problems associated with sexual inequality in working life. The various articles in the book approach the theme of gender and sexuality in working life from the perspective of the individual, the work community and the society. Special emphasis is on analysing employee diversity, various working life practices, heteronormative cultures as well as the potential for change.

In Finland, as in Sweden and the Netherlands, legislation prohibits employment discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation. This type of discrimination is criminalised by the European Union Legislation as well. Nonetheless, no country is free of discrimination, be it direct or structural. Direct discrimination occurs when a person is denied employment or promotion, or is demoted or dismissed on the grounds of his or her sexual orientation. Structural discrimination, on the other hand, can take the form of a homonegative climate in the work community, leading gay, lesbian and bisexual employees to believe they would be well advised not to reveal their sexuality and partnerships in the workplace, if they wish to avoid being discriminated against. Practices that effectually discourage discussion on any type of partnership or family life deviating from the heterosexual norm also constitute structural discrimination.
Employment discrimination against lesbians, bisexual women or transsexuals also involves the aspect of gender. Female employees who belong to a sexual or gender minority are unequal to men. In Finland, there is still a pronounced discrepancy between the average income of women and men. The amount of combined income of female couples is therefore below the average of other types of families. Employment discrimination against transsexuals can be addressed through provisions on gender equality in labour legislation, but as yet there are few rulings on the matter in courts of law within the European Union. A transsexual person who undergoes sex reassignment and changes his or her outward gender style in the workplace risks discrimination.

In the next article, Rainer Hiltunen discusses the current Finnish and European Union legislation in more detail. Christine Gilljam's article deals with Swedish labour legislation and the status of gay and lesbian employees in Sweden. She also presents the activities of the Office of the Ombudsman promoting the rights of homosexuals and bisexuals.

**Sexual and Gender Variance**

This book contains a variety of terms and concepts used to describe the sexual and gender pluriformity of employees. The title itself contains the concept of sexual and gender minorities, and the first sentence of the present article lists the terms lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people. Since there are no blanket terms that would do justice to the various manifestations of sexuality and gender, we have to settle for those in general use today.

Terms used in reference to a person's sexual orientation include homosexuality and bisexuality; lesbian, gay and bisexual; and sexual minorities. These terms are mainly used in reference to individuals who want to experience love, build a relationship and engage in sexual relations with persons of their own sex, or in reference to persons who identify themselves as belonging to one of the above categories. The various derivations of the terms heterosexuality and hetero are used to describe a person who is sexually attracted to the opposite sex, while the terms bisexuality and bisexual or bi indicate interest towards both sexes. The terms lesbian and gay refer to women and men respectively. The pluriformity of different sexualities is further increased by the fact that not all women who engage in sex with women, or men who have affairs with men, identify themselves as homosexual or bisexual. On the other hand, some people who identify themselves as lesbian, gay or bisexual do not actually have sex or partnerships with persons of the same sex. Some of them are married to persons of the opposite sex.

In addition to the simple categorisation of male and female, gender variance also includes differences involving gendered bodies, behaviour, and thinking – differences that challenge the

above-mentioned simple categorisation. More important than the anatomic and biological differences are the gender-related behaviour codes and physical appearance, especially with regard to working life. A man who acts feminine or wears feminine clothing may be given strange looks, even if he had a masculine body. A transwoman who has undergone sex reassignment, and thus had her male anatomy and hormone levels changed, will pass as a woman, unless the reassigned sex is public knowledge or her behaviour or physical appearance in some way contradict perceptions of femininity. Members of gender minorities are defined as persons who deviate from the expected gender roles and transgress gender boundaries. The category of gender minorities includes transsexuals, transvestites, transgenders and intersexuals. All these groups are covered by the umbrella term trans people. The terminology is discussed in more detail in the article on the status of employees belonging to a gender minority, written by Maarit Huuska.

The various sexual and gender minorities can be regarded as separate groups, but drawing clear distinctions is always questionable (see the article by Marja Kaskisaari). Some trans people define themselves as lesbian, gay or bisexual. There are also gays and lesbians who deviate from the preconceived gender behaviour. A lesbian may wear "too" masculine clothing, or a gay man may act "too" feminine. With sexual and gender minorities, there are no clear distinctions from heterosexual masculinity or heterosexual femininity. A married, manly man who perceives himself as heterosexual but occasionally has sex with a male co-worker is nevertheless likely to be seen as conforming to the collective norms by the other employees – provided they do not know about the same-sex encounters. On the other hand, an independent woman who wears masculine clothing and does not underline her heterosexuality may be stigmatised as lesbian in the workplace.

I have preferred to use the term non-heterosexuality in order to do away with the distinction that renders homosexuality and heterosexuality mutually exclusive (see also the article on young people). I have defined a non-heterosexual person as someone who has sexual feelings, dreams or fantasies involving his or her own sex, or same-sex behaviour, such as sexual relations or involvements. A non-heterosexual person may define himself or herself as lesbian, gay or bisexual. Some non-heterosexual people incorporate all these elements, while others incorporate only few. The same principle can be used to define heterosexuality. In addition to the above, there are also those who do not have any sexual feelings, behaviour or self-definition. Each individual incorporates elements of non-heterosexuality, heterosexuality and non-sexuality, the particular combination varying according to his or her circumstances in life. One can therefore be, for instance, non-heterosexual by emotion but heterosexual by behaviour. Instead of upholding gender essentialism, this approach places emphasis on action.

Sexuality- and gender-related boundaries and definitions are human fabrications, and as such, constantly altering. If we stopped placing undue importance on a person's gender and sexual orientation, there would be less need for pigeonholing and developing appropriate terminology.

## The Multiple Dimensions of Diversity

The pluriform make-up of sexual and gender minorities is further increased by a number of factors other than those related to sexuality and gender. These factors include age, ethnic origin, nationality, place of residence, education, socio-economic status, mother tongue and cultural background. An elderly religious Finnish-speaking bisexual man living in the countryside with his wife will have a different outlook on life than a Somali lesbian living in the Helsinki after fleeing her native country

with her family. In Finland, there has been very little research on the status of the Rom, the Saami, immigrants and other national, ethnic or cultural groups of people belonging to a sexual or gender minority. There is even less literature related to working life, even if it is often these very groups that are disadvantaged in the labour market. One can assume that a lesbian Rom, an openly bisexual Kurdish man or a transsexual Somali are not as readily employed as a traditional masculine heterosexual man or a heterosexual woman, even if the latter were not Finnish and white.

The place of residence affects in a variety of ways the manner in which lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans persons act in their places of work. The sexual or gender minority status can sometimes bear on the choice of domicile and place of work. Traditionally, people have moved away from northern, eastern or rural areas of Finland to larger cities, the capital area or other countries, and not only in search of a job but also a more liberal climate. In big cities, there are more opportunities for homosexual or bisexual men and women to find partners. In addition, they also offer a degree of anonymity difficult to find in small towns, where people seem to be too familiar with others' "personal details", and where engaging in same-sex relationships or transvestism involve the fear of being found out and rejected. During the 1960's and the 1970's, many Finnish gays and lesbians moved to Sweden because of the better job opportunities and the more accepting social climate. The fact that the Finnish rural areas are suffering from negative net migration is in small part due to the many lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people who have moved away to escape the intolerant attitudes. Teppo Heikkinen's article deals with Finnish gay men who have moved from rural towns to the capital area.

Another factor contributing to the diverse make-up of sexual and gender minorities is the wide range of family situations and partnerships. Lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people have families, and often children as well. In some families, the partners are of the opposite sex, and in others they are of the same sex. Some couples have registered their same-sex partnership, while others are cohabiting or married. Further, there are those who are single, divorced or widowed. Some have children from their previous relationships, and others have children with their current partners. Rainbow families and the status of lesbian parents in working life are discussed in the articles by Tiia Aarnipuu and Paula Kuosmanen.

The behaviour of sexual and gender minorities at work depends on the way they regard their own sexuality and gender. Many hide their partnerships, sexual self-definition or even their gender experience, in other words the gender they conceive themselves to be, because they are contrary to the expectations at work. Some reject or refuse to acknowledge their own feelings and behaviour towards members of their own gender, and this is reflected in the way they deal with the matter at work. Some find it unnecessary to share personal details, such as the type of partnership they have, with other employees. Others want talk about their same-sex relationships just as other employees talk about their heterosexual ones. Adolescents, who are only just beginning to build their own lives and self-images, are very preoccupied with questions involving sexuality and gender; my article in the book focuses on the situation of non-heterosexual young people in working life, and also discusses conscripts. Questions involving sexuality and gender may become relevant later in life as well. A widowed, once divorced woman may reconsider her life and find herself wondering whether she is actually lesbian. In her adolescence, she may have taken the heterosexual relationship, marriage and family as self-evident, but with the children grown up and the husband gone, there is room for reflecting on other possibilities. The change in personal circumstances may cause problems at work, if co-workers find out about such new feelings and their consequences.

A person's state of health or a physical handicap are factors that can trigger employment discrimination. In the case of a wheelchair-bound lesbian, a blind transvestite or an HIV positive gay man, it may be difficult to pinpoint which is the actual factor that makes many employers consider them unemployable. Unlike sexual orientation, a physical handicap or the colour of skin are often obvious, and therefore discrimination against handicapped persons or immigrants may be more widespread than discrimination against sexual minorities. On the other hand, transsexuals, who are often easy to identify especially if they are undergoing sex reassignment, suffer disproportionately from discrimination.

If employers more often knew of the job applicants' deviations from the expected heterosexual femininity or heterosexual masculinity, employment discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender might be more widespread. In his article on the experiences of HIV positive gay and bisexual men in working life, Kari Huotari touches, among others, on this subject.

## Hairdressers, Truck Drivers and Ballet Dancers

There is a variety of typecast ideas of gays and lesbians involving their being disproportionately represented in certain occupations. Bisexuals and trans persons seem to escape such generalisations. In female-dominated or traditionally feminine occupations, often involving beauty and health care, customer service and culture, male employees are easily labelled gay. Women who work in heavily male-dominated, or in working-class sectors in particular, may be suspected of being lesbian. Lesbians are sometimes referred to as diesel dykes.

In December 2001, I asked people attending a tolerance event in Tampere about their perceptions of members of sexual and gender minorities as employees. Seven people in all offered their views on which occupations or lines of work traditionally have the gay, lesbian or trans stigma. Obviously, the limited poll is not scientific, but in my opinion it nevertheless serves to indicate a relatively uniform set of images concerning sexual and gender minorities. Occupations named as traditionally having a gay or bisexual stigma included dancer, hair stylist/hair dresser, waiter, air steward and artist. For lesbians or bisexual women, stereotypical occupations included security guard, police, athlete, truck driver/other driver/mechanic, construction worker and dancer. Transmen and transwomen appeared more difficult to typecast, but occupations mentioned were media and entertainment artist, clothes shop salesperson and IT worker.

In terms of contentment at work, the limited poll showed that employees belonging to a sexual or gender minority were believed to be most content in work involving beauty care or customer service, particularly waitering, dance or other arts, private entrepreneurship, management or other independent work, as well as various jobs and duties in gay bars and organisations. Places of work listed as least suitable for gay and bisexual men were the police and the defence forces, prison, church, construction site, car repair shop, and heavy manufacturing industry in general. Lesbians and bisexual women were thought to be least happy in beauty shops and parlours, clothes shops, church, schools and kindergartens. For transsexuals, least accommodating jobs were thought to be in health care or service sector, the church, the police, and television (presenting).

Media coverage on sexual and gender minorities, and on well-known personalities in particular, mould our ideas of what are typical and preferred occupations for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people. Male-dominated sectors traditionally perceived as masculine were considered ill suited for gay and bisexual men. Female-dominated occupations traditionally perceived as feminine are often viewed well suited for gay men, but less attractive to lesbians. Gender and the gendered images of various occupations not only significantly contribute to the preconceived impressions of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people in working life, but in actual fact also render some occupations more liable to heterosexual assumption, and others to homosexual stigmatisation. All the same, lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people are found in all larger occupational groups.

In this book, Heidi Hoffman discusses the situation of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans employees within the clerical and service sectors, while Miia Valkonen explores the situation of teachers belonging to a sexual minority. Marja Suhonen deals with lesbian and gay employees within the Church and the Church's attitude towards its homosexual personnel. There are very few studies on different occupational groups conducted from the point of view of sexual and gender minorities in Finland. There are, however, some publications (see among others Lehtonen, Nissinen & Socada 1997) dealing with the status of lesbian, gay and bisexual employees within the social and health care sector. In this book, Teija Mankkinen's article on fire fighters touches on the status of lesbian and gay employees in male-dominated sectors, and Elisabet Qvarford's article briefly discusses the police and the armed forces. Many of those studies on different occupational groups that focus on sexual and gender minorities put special emphasis on sectors with academic and highly educated employees. However, attention should also be paid to working-class occupations and those employment relationships of a short-term and temporary nature. The situation of unemployed lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people remains a relatively unexplored area.

## Heteronormativity Delimits Choice

According to the dominant thinking in our culture, there are only two genders, namely the heterosexual femaleness and the heterosexual maleness. This gender construction is based on the fact that there are two types of anatomies, the male and the female. This simplified heteronormative thinking ignores the various alternative constructions. The heterosexual assumption and the preconceived notions of appropriate femininity with regard to biological females, and appropriate masculinity with regard to biological males, exclude individuals who fail to conform to these expectations. This nonconformist category includes those who are sexually attracted to persons of their own sex, those who are involved with and perhaps living together with a same-sex partner, or those who identify themselves as, for instance, lesbian, gay or bisexual. The heteronormative way of thinking also excludes those whose behaviour is not considered feminine or masculine enough, or those whose behaviour is considered too feminine or masculine. For instance, a male who behaves in a feminine way, or presents himself as a woman, has no room in the heterosexual way of thinking. The same applies to a biological woman who has a female anatomy but cross-gender identification and behaviour. Transsexuals and other gender non-conformists disrupt the preconceived notions of gender.

Heteronormative thinking and the associated practices are often automatic and customary. School children are already aware of the fact that a wrong kind of behaviour may subject boys to homophobic name-calling and girls to stigmatisation as whores. Young people's feelings towards their own sex and their same-sex relationships are virtually invisible in the school and among

students. With puberty, adolescents are supposed to become interested in the "opposite" sex, and have no more than "passing" homosexual feelings. Everyone is assumed a heterosexual future. In this respect, environments and attitudes are very similar in many workplaces.

The idea and presentation of heterosexuality as self-evident, or as the only or at least the only desirable alternative, is not the only manifestation of heteronormativity. Heteronormative practices often also entail presenting the other alternatives as inferior, forbidden or undesirable. In this book, the heteronormative social climate in places of work is explored in the articles on professional burnout by Marja Kaskisaari, sexual name-calling of teachers by Elina Lahelma, and male-dominated culture in fire departments by Teija Mankkinen.

Heteronormative practices and negative attitudes towards sexual and gender minorities at work affect not only the lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans employees, but all members of the work community. These practices limit everyone's possibilities as employees and individuals. The imposed traditional roles of heterosexual male or female prevent women from seeking responsible managerial positions and men from expressing their feelings. If there were no need to worry about homosexual stigmas attached to boys who want to become chefs or interior designers, or suspicions about a girl's gender, if she decides to take up forest engineering or a career in the army, individuals would have more diverse choice in careers.

**Planting the Seeds of Change**

Workplace culture and the society in general are constantly undergoing change. Attitudes in sexuality- and gender-related issues are also changing. Although there are still many of those who find security in constancy, regardless of the inequalities, in the past decade we have at least seen a step forward in legislation concerning gender equality. Today, many male-dominated occupations attract women, and also men are beginning to venture across occupational gender boundaries. Very often, it is lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people who are at the forefront of challenging traditional occupational divisions. The fact that they are less likely to be affected by the assumptions of the heteronormative culture possibly makes them better equipped to do so.

Employment discrimination based on sexual orientation has been tackled through legislation. Nevertheless, there have been sadly few actual measures on the part of the Government, municipalities and labour market organisations to prevent discrimination and inappropriate behaviour against lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people in working life. Employment discrimination against sexual and gender minorities is naturally distressing for the objects of discrimination and their families, but it also adds to the expenses of the state, municipalities and eventually of tax payers by increasing expenditure on unemployment benefits and public health service. Employment discrimination also costs employers and companies the input of many skilled employees.

One positive sign of the will to bring about a change is the Community Initiative project Equal, funded by the European Social Fund and the Finnish Ministry of Labour, which, among other things, enabled the publication of the present book. The project is governed by the Department of Sociology at the University of Helsinki, and it is carried out in co-operation with SETA ry and Stakes, the publisher of this book. The project and its objectives are covered in more detail in the final article of the book.

In Finland, the University of Helsinki has been a pioneer in combatting sexual orientation discrimination. In the year 2001, the University introduced its Policy Against Discrimination, where prevention of and intervention in discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation is one central concern. A number of other Finnish universities are following suit, and one can only hope that the example set by the University of Helsinki will inspire municipalities and other major employers as well. The University of Helsinki measures against discrimination are covered in more detail in the article by Marja Nykänen.

In Finland, the promotion of sexual equality in working life has so far been in the hands of regrettably few players. The Community Initiative project Equal is carried out in co-operation with transnational Equal partnership projects in Sweden (2) and the Netherlands (1), all of which aim to improve the status of sexual minorities in the labour market. The representative of the Dutch Equal project, Peter Dankmeijer, writes about equality work in Dutch Schools. The article of one of the Swedish partners, Elisabet Qvarford, explores the trade union movement's measures in combatting unjust treatment of gays and lesbians. It seems as if Finnish work communities, employers and labour market organisations have a lot to learn from their foreign counterparts with respect to prevention of discrimination.

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## Rainer Hiltunen

## Prohibition of Employment Discrimination in Finnish and European Union Legislation

The Finnish legislation on employment discrimination is stringent: employment discrimination is considered a criminal offence punishable by a fine or an imprisonment. Sections in the Penal Code and the Employment Contracts Act regarding employment discrimination also prohibit discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation. 1* Nonetheless, many gay, lesbian, bisexual and trans people are subjected to employment discrimination that can prove difficult to tackle.

The Employment Contracts Act, Chapter 2, includes equal treatment of employees in the employer's obligations, and states as follows:
Section 2. Prohibition of discrimination, and equal treatment
The employer shall not exercise any unjustified discrimination against employees on the basis of age, health, national or ethnic origin, sexual preference, language, religion, opinion, family ties, trade union activity, political activity or any other comparable circumstance.

In the Penal Code, the provision governing labour offences criminalises discrimination and stipulates a punishment:
Chapter 47. Labour offences: Section 3. Employment discrimination

An employer or its representative who upon advertising a vacancy, recruiting an employee or in the course of employment places a job applicant or an employee in a disadvantageous position without a weighty and acceptable reason
1) on the grounds of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, language, sex, age, family ties, sexual orientation or state of health, or
2) on the grounds of religion, political opinion, political or trade union activity or any other comparable circumstance, shall be punished for employment discrimination by a fine or a maximum of six months' imprisonment.

The prohibition of discrimination extends to recruitment, to the actual selection of workers. According to the law, unfavourable treatment of an employee on the grounds of his or her sexual orientation constitutes a discriminative act. In terms of recruitment, this may mean that an employer fails to appoint a person on the grounds of his or her homosexuality. What also constitutes employment discrimination, when based on the employee's homosexuality, is a termination of an employment relationship or a failure to renew a fixed-term employment relationship. A failure to promote an employee because of his or her homosexuality is also considered an unlawful act of discrimination. The condition for liability to punishment is that the employer is aware of a particular ground, such as homosexuality, for discrimination. A discriminatory act is considered punishable whether the employer had an express intent to discriminate against the person in question or not. If, for instance, when choosing between two equally qualified male applicants for an expatriate posting, the decision is based on the fact that local business partners are deemed more likely to approve of the presence of a wife than a registered male partner, this constitutes discrimination as stipulated in the law. The mere fact that the employee has effectually been placed in a disadvantageous position against another employee because of his or her homosexuality constitutes an offence in the eyes of the law.

Discrimination is often rather difficult to prove. In claims related to employment discrimination, however, the employee's burden of proof has been adapted by rendering it sufficient for the employee to substantiate the claim with "probable cause". It is then for the employer to show that there is an acceptable reason for its actions. The act of placing a person in a disadvantaged position is not considered discrimination, if the employer can establish a "weighty and acceptable reason" for its actions. Acceptable reasons may be such as a genuine occupational requirement, or according to a Government Bill concerning the sections on employment discrimination, women's organisations' right to appoint women at the top of their hierarchy. Similarly, it is considered a legitimate policy to require certain political views of a party official, or to require a religious conviction of a person applying for a church office.

The above does not, however, mean that political parties or religious communities are exempt from the prohibition of discrimination. Religious communities do have the right to require a religious conviction of their employees, but they do not have the right to discriminate against a person with a religious conviction on the grounds of his or her homosexuality. If the legislators had wanted to grant churches or the military forces, for instance, the right to deviate from the prohibition of discrimination, this should have been separately decreed on. In Finland, there is no such separate decree. In order for unequal treatment to constitute discrimination, however, it must be based on the employee's sexual orientation. Therefore, an employer who dismisses an employee without a justifiable reason, but not on the grounds of his or her homosexuality, is not guilty of discrimination. Instead, the employer might be guilty of an unlawful dismissal.

The law prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation (the Penal Code) or sexual preference (the Employment Contracts Act). In other words, the legislation does not permit discrimination on the grounds of a person's homo-, hetero- or bisexuality. In a judgement (C-13/94) binding Finland and all other Member States, the European Court of Justice rules that the Directive on the Equality between Women and Men also prohibits the dismissal of transsexual persons on the grounds of sex reassignment, thus equating discrimination against transsexuals with gender discrimination. In Finland, the Equality Ombudsman has stated that matters concerning sexual orientation are not part of the ombudsman's duties. The statement contains no reference to the aforementioned judgement of the European Court of Justice stating that discrimination against transsexuals should be included in the category of gender discrimination (Tasa-arvovaltuutetun lausunto 13.6.2001, Statement by the Equality Ombudsman).

With regard to means of intervention and evidence, the legislation on gender discrimination is more straightforward than the legislation on sexual orientation discrimination. Although it is very common that transsexuals are blatantly discriminated against in the workplace, to my knowledge there have been no discrimination cases argued in Finland on the basis of the Act on Equality between Women and Men. As yet, it is unclear to what extent the prohibition of gender discrimination applies to trans people. It is likely that the prohibition of gender discrimination will be more applicable to persons with a reassigned legal sex than to transvestites.

Intervention with employment discrimination is the statutory responsibility of the labour protection authorities. Persons who believe to have been or, in fact, have been discriminated against should therefore turn to the Occupational Safety and Health Inspectorates to have their case reviewed by inspectors. If these inspectors deem the case to meet the criteria of unlawful discrimination, they are obligated to initiate the bringing of charges in order to have the employer indicted for employment discrimination. Alternatively, the employee himself or herself can initiate a police inquiry.

**The Development of The European Union Legislation**

In November 2000, the European Union adopted a directive "establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation" (2000/78/EC). The directive stipulates that by December 2003, all Member States shall adopt in their national legislation provisions prohibiting, among other things, sexual orientation discrimination. Since the Finnish Penal Code already includes provisions on employment discrimination, the change will be less dramatic than in those EU Member States with no laws against sexual orientation discrimination. The adoption of the directive will nevertheless provide further protection for Finnish employees as well.

The directive obligates all Member States to include direct discrimination as well as indirect discrimination and harassment in the workplace in their non-discrimination legislation. To date, the Finnish legislation on employment discrimination has only prohibited direct discrimination. Direct discrimination occurs when one person is placed in an unequal (inferior) position against other persons directly on the grounds of his or her sexual orientation.

In indirect discrimination, an apparently neutral criterion or practice places particular persons at a disadvantage compared to others. Indirect discrimination might, for instance, involve the employer imposing a rule that all women have to wear a skirt to work, or a rule forbidding a close-cut hairstyle on female employees. Such rules could constitute indirect discrimination against lesbians, since at

least for some lesbians wearing trousers and having a short hair are integral parts of their identity. Although the directive prohibits indirect discrimination, it leaves at the discretion of each individual state whether unequal treatment of registered same-sex couples against married couples with regard to, for instance, employment benefits should be considered indirect discrimination or not.

In the directive, unlawful harassment is defined as unwanted conduct related to a person's sexual orientation, taking place "with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person and of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment". This provision is of particular significance to sexual minorities who very often face negative and hostile attitudes towards homosexuals and other sexual minorities in their work community. The directive also forbids employers from evading the prohibition of discrimination by way of directing or instructing recruitment and consulting agencies to take discriminatory action against applicants.

**A Critical Look at the Practical Applications of the Legislation**

The Finnish National Organisation for Sexual Equality, SETA, is regularly contacted by persons who have been subjected to discrimination in their workplace. Very typically, SETA hears accounts of oppressive and gay-negative working environments that effectively suppresses any possibility of being open about homosexuality, for instance. Cases where an employee's sexual orientation has become general knowledge in the work community have often resulted in the employee being pressured to resign, or in the employer's failure to renew the employee's fixed-term employment relationship. This kind of discrimination affects teachers as well as doctors and other health service employees in particular, whereas trans people are more likely to face discrimination upon recruitment. Some have been discriminated against or even dismissed because of starting sex-reassignment treatment during employment.

To my knowledge, there have been no cases in Finland involving an unlawful discrimination suit brought against an employer. At least in some cases of discrimination, the situation has been settled out of court with the employer compensating the employee who has not taken the matter into court. Such course of action is open to criticism, for while it does leave the employer with indemnification to pay, it does not involve any legal punishment. On the other hand, the victims' reluctance to engage in legal proceedings is understandable, because it is often deplorably difficult to prove that discrimination has been based expressly on sexual orientation. Victims also tend to avoid proceedings because they are mentally stressful, and also because they may cause the victim's homosexuality or bisexuality to become more widely known. As yet, there is no experience of the readiness and the professional skills of labour protection authorities with regard to intervening with sexual orientation discrimination.

Once in effect, the directive on employment discrimination will probably lower the threshold to intervening with employment discrimination. The directive requires that the Member States clearly specify in their legislation that in a case of a well-established discrimination claim, it is for the employer to prove that there has been no such discrimination. Moreover, with the adoption of the directive, harassment in the workplace on the grounds of sexual orientation will be included in the category of unlawful discrimination. One can reasonably assume that once the directive is adopted, sexual orientation discrimination will be tackled with increased efficiency as well.

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1* Also under section 5 of the Finnish Constitution no person, without acceptable grounds, may be afforded a different status on the grounds of sex, age, origin, language, religion, conviction, opinion, state of health, disability or any other reason related to the person. The Government Bill emphasises that the above list is not exhaustive and that, for instance, sexual orientation shall be equated with the above grounds. (Perusoikeuskomitean mietintö 1992, Report of the Fundamental Rights Committee).

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Regulations

COUNCIL DIRECTIVE 2000/78/EC ESTABLISHING A GENERAL FRAMEWORK FOR EQUAL TREATMENT IN EMPLOYMENT AND OCCUPATION
THE PENAL CODE (19.12.1889/39) Labour discrimination, chapter 47, section 3
THE EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS ACT (26.1.2001/55) Prohibition of discrimination, and equal treatment, chapter 2, section 2

## Christine Gilljam

## The Situation of Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Employees in Sweden

There is no systematic research on the situation of lesbian, gay and bisexual people in the Swedish labour market. Various existing studies, however, give us an idea about the reality in which non-heterosexual people live in their workplaces. In the so-called SEDA Report (Betänkandet om Utredning mot diskriminering i arbetslivet på grund av sexuell läggning, SEDA 1997), a report of a survey on discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, we may read about some of the attitudes met by gay, lesbian and bisexual employees at work. The survey was conducted by Sweden Statistics, the statistical centre of Sweden, and it focuses on employee attitudes toward gay, lesbian and bisexual people in working life. To the question "Would it make a difference to you if one or more of your colleagues were homosexual or bisexual?" 13 percent responded that the homosexual or bisexual orientation of a colleague was not an issue without significance. In other words, it mattered.

Another question in the survey had to do with the suitability of gay, lesbian and bisexual people for various jobs. One fourth of the respondents were of the opinion that homosexual and bisexual people should not be working in all possible jobs. As many as 15 percent thought that certain jobs should be denied to homosexuals altogether. Unfortunately, as there are no accounts of possible follow-up questions, we may only guess which jobs the respondents had in mind. The above figures refer to all respondents, and if we look at women and men separately, we may conclude that men in all age groups were more negative toward having homosexual or bisexual colleagues than women.

The same survey also provides information on discrimination. The survey included a questionnaire that was directed to members of the RFSL, the Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights. 36 percent of the respondents of the questionnaire reported personal experiences of discrimination at work, based solely on their sexual orientation. If we look at discrimination in a narrower sense, i.e. measures involving the labour laws – job transfer, differences in pay, etc. – 28 percent of the respondents said to have personal experience of discrimination of this nature. One fourth reported to have been subjected to bullying by their colleagues, superiors or union representatives. The frequency of bullying was highest among colleagues and lowest among union representatives.

A study was recently (2002) carried out by the FSI, the Research Centre for Social and Information Studies, together with The National Institute of Public Health, dealing with the attitudes of the Swedish population toward homosexuals and homosexuality (1998–2000). The data was collected through a questionnaire, and the ages of the respondents ranged from 16 to 79 years. According to the results, 37 percent of the employees who had no experience from gay or lesbian colleagues had a negative or a sceptical attitude toward working with gay and lesbian people. In the summary of the report, the FSI concludes that every third or fourth person in Sweden has a more or less negative attitude toward lesbian and gay people, and that negative attitudes are common particularly among men and the less educated people, among people living outside of cities, and among senior citizens. Moreover, the FSI concludes that knowledge and experiences gained through contacts with gay and lesbian people clearly have a positive effect on attitudes.

In her extensive study on homophobic violence, the criminologist Eva Tiby reports that approximately 25 percent of the subjects had become victims of hate crime on grounds of sexual orientation (Tiby 1999). Around 20 percent of these had also become victims of workplace bullying. Moreover, according to Tiby, women tend to become victims of hate crimes in school and working life more often than men.

In spring 2001, the Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees (TCO) carried out an opinion poll on attitudes toward gay and lesbian people in working life. Half of the respondents believed that gay and lesbian people were disadvantaged in working life while the other half believed homosexuals were neither disadvantaged nor advantaged. All in all, it is safe to say that homosexuality is not considered a merit in the Swedish labour market. Employees were also asked how they felt about having a gay man or a lesbian woman as their colleague. 30 percent of the male respondents had a negative attitude and 21 percent a sceptical attitude toward having a gay colleague. The corresponding figures for female respondents were 6 and 7 percent. One third of the men took a negative stand toward having a gay man as their superior while one fifth resented the idea of having a lesbian boss.

## HomO

In the light of the above, it was only reasonable that in May 1999, the Office of the Ombudsman against discrimination based on sexual orientation (HomO) was established in Sweden. For the first time, discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation was expressly prohibited by law, i.e. in the Act (1999:133) on a Ban against Discrimination in Working Life based on Sexual Orientation. The function of the HomO is to prevent sexual discrimination in all areas of societal life. "Sexual orientation" refers to a person's homosexuality, bisexuality or heterosexuality. Therefore, as transsexuality is seen to be a question of gender and not of sexual orientation, discrimination on grounds of transsexuality is not covered by the HomO's mandate. Such complaints, to the extent they relate to discrimination in working life, fall within the mandate of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman (JämO) dealing with gender discrimination.

An example of discrimination prohibited by the new law would be an employer treating a job applicant or an already employed person in an unequal way compared to others in equivalent situations, where the unequal behaviour can be linked with the sexual orientation of the job applicant/employee. An example of the work of the HomO is a case in which a woman working in nursing made a complaint against her employer. The woman claimed to have been discriminated on grounds of her sexual orientation because, on the one hand, she had unjustifiably been prevented from working and appointed to other tasks and, on the other hand, because the employer had failed to take measures against bullying by colleagues. The case was concluded in a settlement, and the employer was obligated to pay damages to the complainant and to find her another job.

According to the new law, the employer is responsible for seeing to it that no bullying based on sexual orientation takes place at work. If it comes to the knowledge of the employer that an employee feels he or she has been subjected to bullying, the employer is liable to examine the case and, if deemed appropriate, take measures to stop the bullying. A young man reported to the HomO that he had been bullied by his manager. According to the complainant, the manager had declared he found gay people disgusting, detestable, and abnormal. The young man told his manager that, considering the fact that he is himself gay, he finds such statements insulting. But the manager stuck to his views and claimed that he had the right to express them. After negotiations, the HomO reached a settlement in favour of the complainant, and obligated the employer to pay damages to the young man and draw up a written policy against discrimination and bullying at work. If we add complaints of discrimination addressed to the HomO to those addressed to the trade unions, it becomes obvious that gay, lesbian and bisexual employees experience significant problems in working life.

## What Needs to be Done?

In Sweden, there is a need for such research as the excellent Dutch study called Sexual Preference and Work. One of the significant findings of this study was that homosexuality matters in working life. The experiences of gay and lesbian people in working life differed from those of heterosexual people. Every statistically significant difference was negative for gay and lesbian people. The experienced differences could be related to a number of factors.

Moreover, it would be useful to carry out a study similar to a Norwegian one dealing with the living conditions and the quality of life of lesbian women and gay men (NOVA 1999). The study should

include a systematic analysis of the frequency of discrimination and bullying at work, and how it affects the working environment and the psychosocial health of gay and lesbian people.

I would also like to see studies focusing on the possible differences between gay men and lesbian women with regard to their experiences of and reactions to discrimination and other offensive behaviour based on sexual orientation. And why not carry out a Swedish study on the possible connection between gender discrimination and discrimination based on sexual orientation? In what ways does the gender perspective throw light on our understanding of homophobia as a phenomenon? Even though the situation today is, owing to the new law, much better than earlier, the Swedish anti-discrimination legislation is far from complete. A great deal of changes are also required by the EU Directive establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation (Directive 2000/78/EC). The directive covers cases of discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation, and it is supposed to take effect in the Swedish national legislation by July 1, 2003.

Other areas of legislative shortcomings or ambiguities are, for instance, the situation of employees in staff recruiting companies, trainees at work, and people doing military service. A significant shortcoming in The Act on a Ban against Discrimination in Working Life based on Sexual Orientation is that it does not obligate the employer to take active preventive measures against discrimination or bullying on grounds of sexual orientation. Such a clause exists in the law against discrimination based on gender and ethnicity.

**Openness**

Laws are a prerequisite for individuals to get redress for their harms, and they provide a signal of the necessity of attitudinal change. But laws are not enough. Working life is an important arena for today's people. Employment provides the conditions for our living and the means for improving our quality of life. For young people, the first experiences at work are an introduction to adult life. Indeed, equal rights and conditions in working life for everyone should be viewed against the background that we spend a great deal of time at work and put a great deal of value on our work.

Workplace cultures vary a lot from one field and one workplace to another, for instance, in terms of the degree of intimacy between employees or between employees and superiors. Even though the time spent at work goes mostly to carrying out the work itself, there is also a social dimension to working life. Many friendships are established at work. During coffee breaks, in the smoking rooms and at lunch, people talk about their everyday problems, their families, their worries and joys in life. The possibility to participate in such interaction with colleagues is, I should think, included in the definition of a good workplace climate by most people. Even though at present there is no exact data on how gay, lesbian or bisexual employees find their relationship with their colleagues or superiors, we do know that half of the gay and lesbian employees responding to the questionnaire of the SEDA survey had chosen not to be open about their homosexual orientation at work. This may not be a direct proof of negative job satisfaction, but it does indicate that being non-heterosexual is not unproblematic in working life.

Consequently, if we want a good work environment for everyone, the possibility of being openly gay, lesbian or bisexual at work must be seen as an integral part of measures promoting the quality of work environment. Why is openness in working life, then, important? Without it, lesbian, gay and bisexual people are forced to lead a double life and leave part of themselves at home when at work.

In order to live as a complete person and develop as a person, however, we should be able to participate in the social life in our workplace on equal terms with our colleagues. Our identity is defined less and less by birth and is, instead, constructed in the course of our entire lives and, to a great extent, in working life. Therefore, the Swedish employers' and trade union organisations have a great responsibility in including the issue of openness in their activities addressing the improvement of work environment.

**Employer Attitudes**

In 1998, Platsjournalen, published by the Swedish National Labour Market Administration, asked a number of private companies which factors they considered a plus or a minus when employing people. Homosexuality constituted a clear "no" for 11 percent and a probable "no" for 18 percent of the respondents. In other words, almost one third of the companies had a clearly negative attitude toward employing gay and lesbian people. The Confederation of Swedish Enterprise (SAF) found this attitude "regrettable" but saw no need for a law against discrimination based on sexual orientation; attitudes could be changed through information. Still today, anti-discrimination laws are considered unnecessary, and the parties in the labour market are thought to be capable of dealing with such issues on their own. Even though a number of employers have, in fact, initiated programmes with active and preventive measures, they are mostly directed against discrimination based on gender and ethnicity.

Because they are close to events in the workplace and know the local circumstances, trade unions have a self-evident responsibility in discrimination issues. They know both their members and the employer. It is a self-evident responsibility of the unions to represent their members, as laid down in the new anti-discrimination law, as well as in the Act on Employment Security and the Co-determination Act. Discrimination should be an equally self-evident part of trade union work as pay. According to union regulations, unions are to take care of the interests of their members, and this includes giving assistance in cases of discrimination. The trade unions in Sweden often take a stand for an open society, and the very idea of the trade union movement is based on the right to equal treatment.

In reality, however, things are not quite as self-evident. The Act on a Ban against Discrimination in Working Life based on Sexual Orientation has now existed for almost three years, but only a few Swedish trade unions have trained their representatives in the relevant issues. Generally speaking, there are three areas in which improvements could take place within the unions. First of all, the unions could better inform their gay, lesbian and bisexual members about the fact that discrimination based on sexual orientation is finally taken seriously. Because of the lack of such information, members do not contact their union when they get into trouble with regard to their sexual orientation. Secondly, unions can improve the way in which they handle complaints of workplace bullying or discrimination. Defects in this area probably derive from the fact that active union representatives on the section and department levels have not been properly trained to feel secure and comfortable with working with such issues. Thirdly, there is a need to battle the resistance against preventive measures within the unions themselves. It seems that, with regard to issues of discrimination based on sexual orientation, we are now in the same phase as we were with issues concerning gender equality 25 years ago.

People can work for gender equality without arousing any doubt about their own gender. Ethnically Swedish people can work against xenophobia without anyone questioning their ethnic background;

their having Swedish roots "shows". Similarly, people can combat discrimination against handicapped people without anybody necessarily assuming that they are, therefore, themselves handicapped. But heterosexual people tend to be afraid that if they act against the discrimination of gay, lesbian or bisexual people, their own heterosexuality will be called into doubt. As it is, sexual orientation does not show. Nevertheless, we can say that in the past year discrimination based on sexual orientation has stopped being a non-issue in at least some trade unions. Some of them have drawn up action plans based on a series of broad-based discussions. In others, the work lies more in the hands of committed individuals, determined to fight for the cause.

**Why So Little Has Happened in the Swedish Labour Market?**

Why has discrimination against gay, lesbian and bisexual people been, until recently, a non-issue in the Swedish working life? After all, with regard to legislation and general attitudes toward gay, lesbian and bisexual people, the country has been among the forerunners in the international context. There are probably many causes for this, and in the following, I will point out some of the factors, which I believe have contributed to the state of things.

The gay and lesbian organisations in Sweden have focused mainly on such issues as cohabitation, registered partnership, and children. Discrimination has been dealt with as a phenomenon in the society at large. It should be noted that the RFSL, the largest and oldest of the Swedish sexual minority organisations, has already for decades included a demand for an anti-discrimination law in working life in their action plans. In practice, however, the question has not been actively addressed to the Parliament, the Government or the trade unions.

As indicated above, the Swedish trade unions have not been very interested in this particular form of discrimination, either. The unions have had enough to do with preventing gender discrimination within their own circles. Historically, patriarchal structures have prevailed and are still prevailing in the unions. On the employers' side, again, the focus has similarly been on gender equality. Employers tend also to principally resist legislation within the labour market. The strategy of individual gay, lesbian and bisexual employees has, in turn, been to conceal their sexual orientation at work. At best, people have created an oasis for themselves outside of work, in which to live openly with a few selected people. Those whose sexual orientation has become disclosed or in some way known in their workplace – with the consequence of discrimination or bullying – have either remained silent and endured the situation, or just quit their job. Finally, individual gay, lesbian and bisexual union activists have seen little room within the unions to promote equal treatment of the sexual minorities. All such factors have contributed to the fact that the Swedish trade union movement lags behind many other national trade union movements in their work against discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation.

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## II DIVERSITY – A CHALLENGE IN THE WORKPLACE

**Maarit Huuska**

### Trans People – Gender-variant People at Work

According to our cultural constructions of gender, there are two genders: the man and the woman. Our gender beliefs also hold that the two genders are mutually exclusive – I am a woman, therefore I cannot be a man – and that they have different and opposite, sometimes complementary, characteristics. Gender is believed to define an individual's personality, actions, emotions, physical appearance, skills and other qualities.

In our culture, gender is regarded as an innate and immutable human characteristic: once a man, always a man. The existence and the origins of two different genders are believed to be rooted in biology. The presumption is that people can unequivocally be identified as belonging to either one gender group or the other. Those individuals who transgress and cross gender boundaries are referred to as 'trans people'. 1*

The existence of gender-variant people challenges our notions of gender. The human biological characteristics, such as chromosome make-up, hormonal activity, anatomy, and capacity to procreate, are not clearly gender-specific in that one individual can incorporate both masculine and feminine gender characteristics. There is no absolute duality between the two groups occupying distinct gender characteristics, but rather an average difference. Instead of speaking in terms of two separate categories, it would seem more realistic to refer to varying degrees of difference on a "gender continuum", or to a gender variance or a gender spectrum. Only a proportion of all people have gender characteristics that position them at either extreme opposite of the continuum, the very masculine or the very feminine. The rest are positioned somewhere between the two opposites. At the midpoint of the gender continuum there are the intersexuals, whose physical appearance is neither masculine nor feminine but a mixture of both. (Kessler and McKenna 1978, 44-75; Ruotsalainen 1995; Spanier 1991, 330-332; Pimenoff 1994, 21-22).

A person's mental construction of his or her gender can be varied and multi-faceted. The mental sense of gender is not a direct consequence of the person's biological sex assigned at birth. Children do not have any gender identity until the age of three, at which point they gradually begin to develop a permanent identification with the gender they perceive as their own. Similarly, children gradually internalise the gender expectations of the society around them. For a transsexual child, the fact that his or her spontaneous identification is completely opposite to the social expectation – that is, a biological girl identifying with boys and a biological boy identifying with girls – is very confusing. With transsexuals and other persons not conforming to gender stereotypes, permanent identification with a particular gender may occur at a later stage, sometimes as late as in adolescence or young adulthood.

Transvestites are persons who can feel comfortable with both maleness and femaleness, and who can identify with both genders. Transgenders, on the other hand, feel that their psychological sex

and their anatomic sex are incongruous, but have no desire to alter their body or their psyche – especially if they have found spheres of life and close relationships that are accepting of their gender experience 2*.

Gender as a style and a form of self-expression reflects our conceptions of our own masculinity or femininity. In our culture, many human characteristics and qualities as well as various ways of behaving, interacting and expressing oneself are labelled either as feminine or masculine. An androgynous person, however, conceptualises his or her overall personality as being both very masculine and feminine at the same time. Androgynous persons may also be gender neutral, and they may consciously want to distance themselves from gender expectations and avoid any gender-specific expression.

Gender blending involves activities and gender styles that fluctuate between femininity and masculinity – and perhaps also involves a conscious attempt to confuse the dominant gender conceptions and break stereotypes for the sheer spite and enjoyment of it. Drag shows are a form of communal fun, often associated with gay culture, where cross-dressing is used as a means of rendering visible the gender codes and of playing with them. A drag queen wants to shock and induce reactions, and also ironise gender roles and gay stereotypes.

### **Transsexuals in a Gender Migration Process** 3*

Depending on the point of view, transsexuality is defined either as a somatic or a mental disorder, a distressing but treatable handicap, a fate, or merely one form of human existence, albeit one that requires a change. Transsexuals do not feel comfortable in their own body, because they feel it does not match their gender identity. This can cause very strong anxiety and even despair. Transsexuals, like most of us, have a strong intuitive identification with one gender group, but, according to the dominant gender norms and gender reality, theirs is to the "wrong gender". It is then not surprising that a transsexual may feel like an alien stranded on a foreign planet (Huuska 1998, 28), or consider there is no solution but to break the laws of nature (Bornstein 1995, 46). Deviance from the laws of nature is a mentally and socially demanding task. In Finland, the number of transsexual people is estimated at 200 to 500. This is only a rough estimate, since there are those who never recognise and analyse their transsexual sensations in the course of their life.

Many transsexual children already have a strong identification with the gender they understand as their own, and they also express themselves spontaneously. Depending on their family, educators, maternal clinic, kindergarten, school, extended family, neighbours and playmates, these children are either allowed room for self-expression or discouraged and steered towards games, clothing and role identification that conform to the gender norms. Transsexual children who are scolded or discouraged for their behaviour may later attempt to conceal their essential being and also have a low self-esteem accompanied by feelings of shame and guilt. (Mallon 1999, 49-64).

Transsexual adolescents live under constant social and mental stress (Burgess, 1999, 35-47). For them, the changes occurring in puberty are often extremely repulsive and distressing, for they force them to give up their magical childhood fantasy of being miraculously reassigned their right sex. At this stage, adolescents tend to hide and cover their body with oversized clothing. Their own body fills them with disgust and anxiety, while social situations cause panic; after PE classes, showering seems unthinkable, and going to the toilet causes anguish. In extreme cases, the disappointment and

self-disgust over the changes of puberty may evoke suicidal thoughts or self-destructive behaviour. To cope with the situation, adolescents use various strategies – some of which are more successful than others. These strategies include social exclusion, fantasy world (daydreaming, writing, living in the Internet), alcohol or drug abuse, eating disorders (in order to do away with sexual characteristics) or risk behaviour. Transsexual adolescents are at great risk of being bullied, and there is rarely any help available that would address the real problem. It can happen that a perfectly good pupil drops out of school because he or she is experiencing so much difficulty in everyday life. Transsexual youths may also underachieve at school, because coping with gender role -related stressful situations consumes all their energy. This may permanently affect their future employment opportunities.

Most transsexuals undergo a sex-reassignment process, where their sexual anatomy is reassigned through medical treatment to match their self-image and gender identity. The treatment involves psychiatric evaluation and monitoring, hormonal and surgical treatment, and with transwomen, epilating and speech training for altering vocal characteristics. During the reassignment process, the person is given a new name and social security number. Psychosocial challenges of the process include the development of gender-related self-expression and self-assurance, maintenance and construction of a positive self-image, and coping with discrimination. Those transsexuals who are married may have to go through a divorce, rearrange their relationship and reflect upon their role as a parent. The reassignment process also involves coming to terms with the outcome and with one's past life, including the time spent trapped in a wrong gender, so that the feelings of sadness or bitterness gradually fade. In all, sex reassignment is a lengthy process that may take as long as ten years.

**Transsexuals at Work**

Transsexuals hold a wide variety of occupations and positions and occupy a wide range of personal characteristics. Those who undergo sex reassignment at an early age have the opportunity to study and work all their life as a member of the gender they understand themselves to be. Nonetheless, some of these adolescents have a tendency to underachieve at school or drop out altogether, and they may also have various problems that must be dealt with if they are to succeed at school. Transsexuals face a risk of permanent marginalisation and unemployment.

Transsexuals with a higher education or an independent job, such as entrepreneurs, physicians, researchers or IT professionals, often succeed in undergoing sex reassignment without jeopardising their job – although not without experiencing considerable mental stress; this is often the case with middle-aged transwomen who have built their career as men. All transsexuals face the fear of dismissal, discrimination and harassment. Some feel they cannot tell about their sex reassignment in the workplace, and instead seek other employment so that they will be able to assume their new role in a new work community. There may be various reasons for not being open about one's situation, including a work community where prejudiced jokes and anecdotes of minority groups abound. Such an environment will obviously make a transsexual feel at risk. If both spouses work in the same workplace, there is a risk of losing both jobs, and with that, a risk of economic distress.

Openly transsexual persons who undergo the transition from social femaleness to maleness or vice versa often meet with confusion in the workplace. The reactions of co-workers will be varied – some may be very supportive, while others may find it impossible to interact or work together with a

transsexual. For transsexuals, such inability to relate to them on a personal level is aggrieving. Co-workers are often confused about whether to relate to the transsexual person as a man or a woman. Many may find it difficult to change their concept about a person's gender and to learn to relate to this person in a new way.

Due to the lengthy course of the sex-reassignment process, transsexual persons' studies and career are often fragmented. The demanding process may cause various crises or periods of depression and take up a vast amount of mental energy at the expense of studies or work. Some transsexuals may have to spend long periods without employment because of their fear of social situations or their problems with mental health.

Transsexual persons, and transmen in particular, are more likely than other people to have a humbler education than their mental capacity would suggest. Many spend years in turmoil or hiding their true self, and may therefore reach middle-age before taking up studies that truly fit their talent and interests. Transsexuals may take 5 to 20 years longer than on average to begin their independent adult life – that is, to educate themselves, find employment, build a relationship or have a family. Our educational or employment culture does not encourage slow personal growth and maturing, nor a vision refined by years of experience, but instead emphasises completing studies and entering working life at an early age and also favours youthful energy almost at the expense of other qualities. A late entrance into working life or a fragmented career due to sex-reassignment treatment may have an adverse effect on a person's position in working life.

Some transsexuals value their privacy and the ability to have social contacts as an ordinary woman or man so much as to conceal their transsexuality when applying for a job. They may also fear being stigmatised in the work community, or being unfairly treated by an employer who prefers a non-transsexual applicant to a transsexual. What is problematic about not being open about one's transsexuality, however, is that it leaves unexplained gaps in studies and employment history, and that it may also force one to leave some achievements left unmentioned; this is the case, for instance, with a woman who underwent Reserve Officer School (RUK) training at a time when women were not allowed in the Finnish Defence Forces. Having to hide one's transsexuality in the work community causes stress and fear of being identified. Not being able to reveal one's true self is harmful to self-esteem and one's sense of self-value. Those transsexuals who have difficulty in passing as members of the desired gender are forced to live with the label "tranny" as well as the negative images and stereotypes of trans people prevalent in the culture.

On the other hand, transsexuality gives a person various strengths – a rich inner fantasy world, good social skills due to constantly having to be conscious of social expectations, or a broader view of the world as a result of being inside both the boys' and the girls' world. Furthermore, being forced to analyse difficult feelings and face challenging decisions makes a person stronger and more independent. Individuals who are socialised both into maleness and femaleness have a wider perspective, and ideally, an ability to incorporate both masculine and feminine skills, knowledge and strengths into their personality.

### Switching Camps – Gender Expression in the Workplace

Transvestites are persons who have an ability to identify with both genders; they feel the need to present themselves as both women and men, to occasionally switch to a different gender channel. A

man may occasionally identify himself as a woman by wearing make-up and feminine clothes, and by assuming feminine body language in order to be related to as a feminine person. For them, cross-gender role play serves as a means of relaxation and overall pleasure, and provides a sense of freedom from the pressures of the male role. (Kerosuo 1997; Toivonen 1997;1999) This occasional switch to a female gender channel makes a transvestite male feel more whole as a person. While transvestism is not an exclusively male phenomenon, the number of female transvestites is lower. In the gender system, women occupy a wide but flat rectangle: upwards movement is blocked by a low glass ceiling, but the floor level allows plenty of room for movement – and for masculine self-expression. For men, the rectangle is high but narrow: there is access to high positions, but limited room for role-expression. (Sirkiä 1997.) This is why male transvestism causes more controversy, admiration, denouncement or ridicule than female transvestism does.

In the Finnish mainstream culture, there is a shameful stigma attached to effeminate men – although at the same time, alternative cultures and youth cultures, such as rock, pop or drag cultures, flirt with androgyny and male femininity because of their rebellious dimensions. Transvestite males, however, often consider themselves as regular Finnish men who are straight and married with children. For these men, the process of coming into terms with their transvestism on the level of emotion, cognition and general view of the world is demanding. They have to learn to understand and analyse their own experiences and feelings that are difficult to verbalise and that are rejected by the dominant culture. Heterosexual male transvestites must find a way of combining heterosexuality with transvestism despite the strong cultural schema dictating that a heterosexual male is non-female and non-homosexual. In transvestite males, there is a bit of female as well.

Practically all Finnish transvestites, numbering at 50 000 on estimate, conceal their feminine side in the workplace. In terms of their background, transvestite men do not differ from the general male population (Larsson 1997, 100) in that they can be found in all occupations, and often in traditionally male-dominated fields. In their work and social networks, transvestites tend to adhere to traditional male gender roles and expression. For some, this is a natural part of their male expression, while for others it means a compulsory suppression of the femme inside for the sake of their own safety. Transvestites' need for female self-expression varies a great deal from one person to another; most are happy with presenting themselves as male at work and limiting their female expression to free time, while some dream of being able to express their femininity in their everyday life, be it at work or at home, according to their moods. The bravest ones may actually dress up as a woman for their company's Christmas party, or shift their gender expression towards the feminine through a feminine hairstyle, plucked eyebrows, invisible nail varnish and pierced ears; many men wear androgynous women's clothes, or women's underwear and pantyhose under their masculine clothing. Even such subtle transgressions of gender boundaries may provoke questions and comments from bewildered co-workers. The work community may try to impose the normative male self-expression on the transgressor, and the superiors may, for instance, forbid earrings on men. From the point of view of transvestism, the benefits of the masculine hegemony can also present themselves as a burden. Some men would be happy to discard the working life's prevalent male role that involves constant activity, responsibility, competitiveness and high performance, and replace these with joy, lightness, gentleness, receptiveness and people-orientation. Maleness feels like an armour one occasionally desires to be freed from.

Many transvestites live under pressure and stress caused by the double life and the fear of being identified. For a person desiring to be one's true self, part masculine and part feminine, leading a double life can be very frustrating and limiting. If a cross-dressing person cannot come to terms with

his need for feminine presentation, the need may develop into an obsession and an addiction. The result is a situation where a constant urge to cross-dress is followed by shame and remorse – a vicious circle that disturbs work and other aspects of life. In such cases, cross-dressing is often very eroticised and detached from one's overall personality. A huge amount of energy is consumed to conceal one's true self.

Gender-variant people may learn to constantly study, observe and sense their surroundings and to adapt their actions to other people's expectations. Gender-variant people would feel insecure about acting independently, for they fear they might accidentally reveal too much of themselves and break gender norms. As a result, they may be very popular in social terms and assume the role of an interpreter, mediator or diplomat in the workplace. The drawbacks are that their own personality is rendered invisible, and that a vast amount of time and energy is spent assimilating and seeking acceptance. Many gender-variant people live in constant state of self-censorship, where self-expression and presentation is very limited for the fear of accidentally revealing one's secrets. Knowledge, skills and insights are not expressed or shared with others.

In the work community, aspects of social gender and the sexual order as well as trans issues come up in conversation and in the form of jokes. However, those with special knowledge on the issues – those who are familiar with the theme of gender and have insight owing to their own experiences in life – generally remain silent. A trans person, who through his or her personal experiences and vast reading has extensive knowledge on the trans experience, daily life and sub-culture, avoids even the most general discussions on gender for the fear of seeming suspiciously knowledgeable on the subject. This leaves a considerable cultural capital untapped in the construction of everyday gender culture within the work community; perceptions of trans people are based on media coverage, even if a co-worker would be a better source of information. Trans people would have much to offer in discussions on gender, gender difference and roles, and human life, for they have personal experience of both maleness and femaleness.

### In between Genders

A transgender is a person living permanently in between maleness and femaleness. Some transgenders understand themselves to be of the opposite sex than their biological sex would suggest, and hope to be treated as a member of this opposite gender. Unlike transsexuals, they do not have the need or desire to alter their anatomy through sex-reassignment treatment. The reasons may be related to their circumstances, state of health or the fact that they feel they are able to live as a member of the other sex without a change of anatomy. Some transgenders perceive their gender differently according to circumstances, while others adjust their physical appearance to accommodate both male and female characteristics or anatomy, or highlight the existing gender ambivalence. Other people may find it difficult to understand the transgender experience, because a transgender moves somewhere between the two genders or is permanently anchored in between the two genders. Even if transgenders meet with understanding in their closest relationships, the gender-polarised world presents them with a myriad of difficulties. The transgender experience tends to be invisible, for transgenders are often defined as either transvestite males or transsexual females or males, or as boyish women or lesbians. Transgenders themselves may want to assimilate into any of the above groups and conceal their own experience for the fear of otherwise being excluded by all groups. Transgenders frequently face situations where they are only partially visible or where they are defined as something they do not perceive themselves to be. Finding a comfortable lifestyle

requires making various decisions: What female, male or transgender group do I identify with? Shall I present myself at work as a man, a woman or a transgender? What do I tell to others about my gender? Do I want to be socially identified as a man or a woman? What do I expect from my partner and will I be accepted as a transgender? How do I perceive my own sexuality? Is it possible for me to be a parent, and what kinds of roles could I have as a parent?. At work, people are generally expected to explicitly commit themselves to one gender or the other, which makes it difficult for transgenders to be themselves in the workplace.

Intersexuals, or hermaphrodites, are familiar from the fables and myths of the antiquity, but they do exist in the 21st century Finland as well. The presence of the intersexuals as the "third" gender renders visible the fact that the boundary between biological maleness and femaleness is not absolute but flexible. An intersexual person is born with an ambiguous anatomy. The biological development of the human sexual anatomy is multi-staged – some development stages are female-specific while others are male-specific (Pimenoff 1999). There are various forms of intersexuality. Of all babies born, 1 in 2000 or 1 in 10 000 have sex characteristics of both biological sexes. The estimates vary because intersexuality is not a clearly defined category. From a medical perspective, it has generally been viewed as a problem and an illness, which completely disregards a person's own gender experience. (Venhola 2001) Intersexual persons may have a dual notion of gender. On the one hand, they may identify themselves as either a boy or a girl; on the other hand, they may have an undefined gender experience that is neither male nor female. This otherness or difference may be difficult to analyse or share with others, since our culture lacks terminology and concepts for such experiences. As there is no intersexual community in Finland, people have not had the opportunity to develop concepts for describing their existence or to share their experience with other individuals dealing with similar issues. People who have difficulties in analysing their own gender experience often develop addictions in order to distance themselves from their emotions. Certain emotions might prove too difficult to deal with because they are strange and unnamed, or contrary to the normative gender expectations and even to the cultural concepts of man. There is no data available on the Finnish intersexual experience and social circumstances.

**The Gender-variant – a Resource in the Work Community and the Society?**

In some non-Western cultures, transgenderism is considered a gift. Individuals who are part male and part female have traditionally had important religious and social duties in their community; they have acted as interpreters, mentors and healers as well as mediators between the two gender groups or between the sacred and the worldly.

Can the Finnish culture accommodate trans people and allow them to become visible in their work community and social networks, so that they can openly use both their masculine and feminine skills and knowledge and freely express the different sides of their personality? This would change the gender categorisation in work communities and allow everyone more diversity in gender roles. Furthermore, a new awareness of trans people would expand the cultural concepts of gender and man and allow us all to explore our feminine and masculine sides, the anima and the animus – and also allow us to transgress gender boundaries while in search for various skills and ways of interacting as well as personal potentiality.

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1* The category of the gender-variant incorporates several groups – e.g. transsexuals and transvestites – that accommodate individuals who have partly similar and partly different sense of self and hold a variety of social and political status. Some gender-variant people emphasise the differences between the various groups, while others emphasise the similarities. The concept 'trans people' stresses the common characteristics and experiences of the different groups. This article uses a set of concepts based on discussion within the international trans community since the 1990's, developed within Finnish transgender groups in the course of their activities in the trans support centre Transtukipiste in the Finnish National Organisation for Sexual Equality, SETA ry, the patient rights group for transsexuals in Finland, Trasek ry, and the transvestite association Dreamwear Club ry. The concepts used in this article have partly been influenced by the views of the humanistically-oriented patient-care and support work as well as the social scientific gender studies. Medical language adheres to terminology originating from the 20th century Western sexology and psychiatry. This terminology defines gender variance as an illness, disorder and deviance and partly sexualises the trans experience (cf. ICD10 International Classification of Diseases, 252-255). The term 'transsexual', commonly used in medical and standard language, is in the 21st century being replaced by the term 'transgendered' on the initiative of trans groups themselves. With the new term, they wish to communicate that the essence of their being is not about sexuality but gender. The set of concepts currently in use in Finland is still variable, flexible and partly unestablished. There are some innovative terms in use, but their longevity is difficult to predict.
2* The term 'transgender' has two meanings in both Finnish and international contexts: In Finland, the term is generally used in the above-mentioned sense. It can be used as a noun and an adjective to refer to all gender-variant experience and gender-variant persons.
3* The term 'gender migration' refers to the exploratory and process-like nature of sex reassignment. Sex reassignment is not a straightforward but comprehensive and multi-faceted process of change that involves not only physical and social transformation but also self-discovery and mental growth, as well as a change of lifestyle and social relations. The process may very well change a person's fundamental view of the world and of oneself.

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**Teppo Heikkinen**

## Gay Men in Heteronormative Workplaces and Work Communities

Heteronormativity affects the way everyday life space is organised, and defines appropriate behaviour in various spaces and places. Its effects extend to working life as well. In 1995, I interviewed 15 gay men for my study on everyday situations and the ways in which heteronormativity affects and restricts gay men's use and creation of personal space. I selected my interviewees among gay men who had lived their entire childhood and adolescence outside the capital area, but moved there in their adult life. This framework enabled me to study the impacts of small town life circumstances on a person's willingness to move to the capital area. In addition, it gave me the opportunity to compare the gay cultural scene and the variety of opportunities in the capital area, and Helsinki in particular, to those in the rest of Finland, and to study their implications on the willingness to move.

For many of the interviewees, especially those originating from small towns, the social environment had contributed to their willingness to move to the capital area; the social control in a small town felt restrictive. In Helsinki, living in a homosexual relationship is easier than in the rest of Finland, especially in small towns. Another difficulty associated with living in a small town is the fact that family, relatives and friends have expectations of "regular family life" and marriage. Therefore, communications with old acquaintances, friends and, for instance, co-workers tend to wither after moving away. In the interviewees' experience, leading a gay lifestyle is considerably easier in the capital area than in the rest of Finland. The intellectual atmosphere in the capital area is conceived to be freer. The myriad of opportunities and the big city life in general allow more room for individual choice. Furthermore, it is easier to lead an anonymous life, and in the words of one interviewee, "to blend in with the crowd".

The interviewees also found that in Helsinki, it was easier to build their own communities and social networks. On the other hand, there was no need to become acquainted with people, such as

neighbours, whom they did not want to include in their social networks. For some, it was a relief to have some distance to family ties and social contacts of the childhood and adolescence home. Leading a gay lifestyle and establishing homosexual relations was found to be easier in Helsinki, where there are more meeting places, such as gay bars, in Helsinki than in the whole of Finland together. For many of the interviewees, this was an important factor. The more vibrant gay cultural scene as well as the larger and more diverse gay community were also listed as advantages of living in Helsinki. Another advantage was the fact that in a big city, it is relatively easy to clearly separate work and the work community from other areas of life, whereas in smaller towns people tend to know each other and have contacts in other spheres of life besides work.

## From Small Town Circles to Big City Freedom

In Heikki's (all names have been changed) case, it was the desire to avoid encountering acquaintances in the new situation of being divorced and becoming involved with a man that was the main motivation for moving to Helsinki. The difficulty of living in a homosexual relationship and being a homosexual teacher in a small town also contributed to his decision. In Helsinki, he felt he was more able to "live his own life".

Heikki: "That was partly the reason, although everything happened so quickly. While I lived there, I always wanted to move to Turku, but after I met my boyfriend I wanted to move to Helsinki to be near him. I thought that since I was dating, I couldn't stay [in the small town] where I kept seeing all these familiar people – students and all – on the street every day. Yeah, I did feel that in Helsinki I would be able to live the life I wanted, plus there were more recreational opportunities."

In the 1980's, it was difficult to lead an openly homosexual life in a small town. Tapio had studied in Helsinki but returned to his native district of Lapland after receiving a post. In the place of his new job, situated near his hometown, his homosexuality was widely known. In a small town of the 1980's, people tended to become too intrusive in their interest towards such a rarity. Tapio found the local newspaper reporter's questions on his sexuality too pushing. Consequently, he resigned and moved back to Helsinki. But even if he knew that an openly homosexual life was difficult in Lapland, he still missed living there. Aki, too, temporarily returned to his native district because of work. After a while, he began spending weekends in Helsinki, and because of that, did not even temporarily give up his flat in the capital.

Aki: "It's not that I don't like being on my own, and every once in a while it's good to spend some time up north, but that kind of thing eventually crops up. For instance two years ago I worked there for a year and did fine. But after a while I started coming back here every weekend. This means so much to me that I'm not giving up this flat, I need a place where I can come whenever I like."

Some interviewees had used the better job opportunities in Helsinki as an excuse for moving away from their hometown. When Tero moved to Helsinki immediately after graduating from upper secondary school, he told his parents it was to find a job, although the real reason was the better opportunities of reinforcing his homosexual identity and having homosexual contacts.

Tero: "When I moved to Helsinki, all I had to tell to my parents was that there were no jobs in Kotka. I was quite anxious to move out. I mean, when you're young you're on the lookout, and I had

heard there were gay people in Helsinki, I needed a boost to my identity. And I did, when I moved to Helsinki, dream of finding friends and, like, a lover."

The capital area, and Helsinki in particular, was considered a special place to live. Most interviewees did not even consider the possibility of moving to some other town in Finland or returning to their former hometown. While some did miss things like the nature around their native area, only few actually considered the possibility of moving away from the capital area. When asked about their willingness to move, most interviewees replied in the lines of Harri.

Harri: "Absolutely not. No change of going anyplace else. It's like with work, I've been offered jobs in places like Jyväskylä, but I've turned them down. Of course, it also has to do with me being with Keijo."

Judging from the interviews, connections with acquaintances, friends and former co-workers in the native town were infrequent. Petri avoided contact, because he wanted to avoid having to answer questions on his personal life. Furthermore, he was not keen on listening to his former co-workers' remarks on gay people.

Petri: "I sort of forgot about the place [of childhood] for a long period, because I didn't really know that many people there, basically just my parents. Of course there was the thing that old workmates and acquaintances kept barraging me with questions of whether I was hitched or not. It made me anxious. Even today, if I see these people and hear them saying things like 'her husband's boss came on to me at the Christmas party, he was a queer, how disgusting and ridiculous is that and they did get caught' and so on."

### "No Thank You" to the Work Community outside Work

Some interviewees found the anonymity and the possibility of guarding one's own privacy very important. Jouko liked the fact that in a big city people were not overly nosy, and the fact that he could choose not to know his neighbours. Jouko felt that in his new hometown, he was free to live the way he wanted. It was only at work he felt compelled to restrict both his verbal expression and his behaviour. The amount and quality of Jouko's social interaction were also limited, since he avoided close connections with co-workers in order to conceal his homosexuality. The limited freedom in the workplace is quite understandable, considering the fact that work communities, unlike the social network and community of friends in a big city, cannot be freely chosen. However, in a big city it is relatively easy to separate various spheres of life, whereas in small towns one is likely to know people through many different channels.

Jouko: "The thing I love about this place is that I don't have to have any contact even with the neighbours. Which my dad thinks is shocking. I've lived here for two and a half years, and I hardly know my next-door neighbour. People aren't overly nosy here. I'm happy that I can come and go as I please, as long as I don't go to the grocery store and announce over cartons of milk that, by the way, I'm gay. I can lead a reasonably free life, but at work I have to be more careful about what to say [...] I don't socialise a lot with my workmates, even though I want to. I've led on that I live alone, and that I have friends and hobbies. I've avoided social evenings, and only go a couple of times a year, to end-of-season parties, which are purely for having fun."

For many of the interviewees, work and spare time were two clearly distinct spheres of life. In their social networks and communities, most interviewees kept their circle of friends and the gay community (or gay friends) separate from their work community and co-workers. Only few had contact with co-workers outside work. Harri kept his distance. According to him, he was used to thinking there were two separate spheres of life: work and spare time. However, the dissociation of work from spare time was potentially harmful to his career development, since at some point one was supposed to socialise with co-workers outside work.

Harri: "I've always avoided social contacts with co-workers, almost completely even. At first I was probably repressing, separating between two lives, and I guess it just stuck. I do feel familiar with some people now, but all my closest friends definitely come outside the work circles. I've always kept those things separate."

Some interviewees, such as Niko, limited their spare time contacts to gay men and rarely socialised with members of their work community outside work. Jesse's network of friends was a mixture of heterosexuals and gay men. At work, he did not have any heterosexual friends.

Jesse: "I'd almost say my friends are split fifty-fifty between gay and straight. I've made no straight friends through work. In any case, I've said it out loud that I try too keep away from the circles at work, not that I don't have mates at work, but I don't want to see them outside work."

Some interviewees spent a great deal of time with their co-workers. Petri socialised with the heterosexual women of the workplace. However, the interviewees did not seem to socialise with their heterosexual male co-workers outside work. Heikki was close with some of his female co-workers: "I'd say I have a few friends at work that I, who know about my personal life, and maybe three female friends with who I could talk about anything."

### Gay Men's Strategies in the Heteronormative Space of Workplaces

I will conclude by giving an outline of the typical strategies of creating and using space used by the interviewees to deal with the heteronormativity of the workplace. I will discuss the matter only in brief, for I have covered the topic in my earlier work (Heikkinen 1997). At work, people are in social interaction with each other. The work itself may involve social contacts, as in care-taking work, or the employees may interact socially during breaks and staff meetings. In addition to talk on workplace relations, these situations may lead to discussions on family relations, children and, for instance, holidays taken with spouses or partners. These discussions on and presentations of heterosexual relations at work is considered so natural, normal, commonplace and inherently automatic that it almost passes unobserved, even if these relations are constantly present in the form of flirtation, sexual innuendo, talk, exchange of news, sharing of family events or discussion on marital bliss or problems, among others.

Owing to the general heteronormativity and the heterosexual assumption, many places of work can be regarded as heterosexualised spaces that force homosexual employees to rearrange their life with regard to their verbal expression and behaviour. The heteronormative environment can also affect a person's job performance. Petri told that his creativity at his work in the psychiatric ward suffered as a consequence of him failing to meet the heteronormative criteria of health and normality. In his

place of work, heterosexuality was idealised and considered superior to other forms of sexual orientation.

Petri: "I've already noticed that people are supposed to think in terms of heterosexual families. People underline how wonderful it is to have a mother and a father. I haven't given it too much thought yet, but I do know it weighs on me. It's hard to be a normal, creative person when you don't quite fit in."

Heteronormativity does not allow equal room for presentations of homosexual relationships. The interviewees employed various strategies to conceal their homosexuality or the everyday details that were related to or implied homosexual relations. Typical strategies included concealing personal matters or disclosing them only partially. In unexpected situations, some of the men occasionally either used pre-prepared cover stories or steered the conversation to other matters. Sometimes they used the heterosexual assumption at the workplace to their own advantage by "partly going along with it". Others tried to avoid being social to the extent of being deliberately intimidating, and with that, distant. Some interviewees tried to hide their partners from other employees by asking their partner to avoid calling them at work. With the widespread use of mobile phones, this particular situation will have changed.

The interviewees did not attend work-related events, such as social evenings, with their partners even if employees' spouses or partners were invited. Those homosexual employees who were willing to be openly homosexual in the workplace found their position easier, if there were other homosexual employees. However, some of these homosexual co-workers did not want to be identified as homosexual. Consequently, they avoided the company of openly homosexual employees, and possibly complicated the situation.

In some cases, the situation at work improved once the homosexual employee was able to speak openly about his everyday life. By venturing this, the employee was able to alleviate rumours and gossiping, and thus seize control of the situation and the space in the workplace. Some interviewees prepared the ground by "working" the views of their co-workers. If the interviewees disclosed their personal matters to heterosexual employees, it was mostly to women. Indeed, it appeared the interviewees had more intimate and uncomplicated relations with heterosexual female employees than heterosexual male employees. Based on this, it would seem that heteronormativity in the workplace mainly limits interaction and co-operation between gay men and heterosexual men.

## Conclusion

The interviews showed that the circumstances in small towns had clearly affected many interviewees' willingness to move to the capital area, where it was easier to lead a homosexual life. Nevertheless, the interviewees had faced some restrictions imposed by heteronormativity on their daily lives in the capital area as well. These heteronormative restrictions were mostly associated with places of work and work communities. However, such restrictions are alleviated by the fact that in big cities one can more easily separate the work community from other spheres of life.

In some aspects, it is not necessarily desirable that matters concerning family, partnerships or other areas of personal life be discussed in the work community. Therefore, it may actually be considered a positive thing, if an employee conceals these matters in the work community. But if this occurs

because the employee's sexual orientation is being marginalised, it has an adverse effect on the functioning and the integrity of the community. In an ideal situation, homosexual employees would be able to present their everyday experiences in the work communities and be met with equal appreciation to heterosexuals.

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## Tiia Aarnipuu

## Rainbow Family Members at Work and Outside Work

The term 'rainbow family' refers to those families with children that are not built around the traditional heterosexual partnership. These may be families of two same-sex parents, non-heterosexual single parents, or more than two parents. A seemingly conventional family of a heterosexual couple may also be identified as a rainbow family, if either or both of the parents are bisexual or trans persons, or if the parents do not want to define their gender or sexuality in traditional terms. The category of rainbow families incorporates a myriad of family forms and situations, and there are not many common denominators to be found.

If one wanted to find rainbow family -specific themes, one starting point would be the fact that these families rarely have children by chance. No one accidentally telephones an infertility clinic to make an appointment, or wakes up hung over in the morning to find that they have adopted a child during the night. Rainbow parenthood is generally the result of a longer and more careful consideration than on the average, and people planning to have children often need assistance and advice from others.

Rainbow parents may also have started as parents in a traditional family of a heterosexual couple. Many homosexual or bisexual people, as well as considerably many trans people, only discover their true selves or begin to live as openly L/G/B/T in their adulthood, at a stage where they already have a spouse and children. These people may face a crisis in their relationship, and they will often have to make painful decisions involving on the one hand being true to oneself and living the life that one's self-image suggests, and on the other hand, the family members' feelings and hopes of a shared future. The crisis may result in a divorce, a broken-up family, disputes over custody, trouble at work, and marginalisation. But it may also be that the trans person and his/her family survive the crisis and stay together, or that the divorced mother or father forms a same-sex step family where all members are happy.

When a heterosexual couple decides to build a family and have children, they do not necessarily have to deliberate upon what this means. Their families, friends and the surrounding culture provide them with a rather straightforward model of a family and family life. Furthermore, the social security system has more or less been designed for their purposes, with the so-called average families in mind. Heterosexual couples can also find role models and objects to identify with, and although not all of these are positive, the couples nevertheless have the opportunity to build their own identities as parents through identification. With rainbow families, these ready-made models are almost non-existent. In children's culture, the plurality of family forms is rarely discussed, and what is most manifested is the lack of realistic and versatile trans characters.

The lack of role models can also be considered as an opportunity. Typically, rainbow parents have carefully deliberated on the kind of family they want to offer their child; for instance, they may have decided on a model of two homes and two sets of parents – a situation which in the dominant culture would only exist as a result of a divorce.

### Social Policy and the Heterosexual Assumption

The fact that social security benefits for families with children are designed solely with heterosexual families in mind presents rainbow families with problems. In the case of female couples, the co-mother, who did not give birth to the child, qualifies neither for maternal nor for paternal leave, and therefore any leave at the time of the baby's birth depends on the family's economic situation and the benevolence of the employer. In some cases, the public health nurse at the maternity clinic has written a testimonial for the employer of the birth-giving mother's life partner. Such written testimonial on the partner's need for leave in connection with the birth of the child may prove crucial, considering the fact that some employers still have incredulous, negative or completely inappropriate attitudes regarding non-legal parents and female couples with children in general.

The legal father can claim for paternity allowance, provided he participates in the parenting and takes leave from work. To qualify for paternity leave and allowance, the father must live together with the biological mother as a married or a cohabiting spouse. In principle, this means that if a single man or a male couple have a child with the help of a female friend or a couple, but the birth-giving mother does not live in the same household as them, the father is not eligible for paternity allowance – not even if the baby stayed with the father or fathers immediately after birth. In practice, however, the decisive factor may be whether the father is living in the same household with

the child or not. Since the non-legal father is not eligible for paternity leave, the family is, once again, left to arrange everyday life according to their economic situation.

Parental allowance is payable to the legal parent after payment of maternity allowance ends. In the case of a multiple birth, the payment period is extended by 60 workdays for each additional child born, but the amount of the allowance remains unchanged. An adoptive parent is also eligible for parental allowance. The Sickness Insurance Act stipulates that if the mother does not participate in the parenting, the legal father qualifies for parental allowance even if the parents do not live in the same household (So 111, 2 luku, 21 §; Social Security Law 111, Chapter 2, Section 21).

After the parental allowance period, the parent of a child under 3 years of age is entitled to child care leave without interruption of the employment relationship. If there are two parents, they cannot be on leave at the same time or take more than 4 periods of leave in all. There is no precedent as to the interpretation of the law in cases involving more than two parents. The minimum length of child care leave is one month. According to the Employment Contracts Act, child care leave can also be claimed for the care of a child other than one's own legal child, the actual wording being "or some other child who lives permanently in the employee's household (Ty 101, 2 a luku, 35 c §; Labour Law 101, Chapter 2 a, Section 35 c)". In this context, same-sex families, for instance, are virtually equal to heterosexual families.

The Employment Contracts Act also governs the so-called temporary child care leave for the purpose of caring for a sick child. This, just as the actual child care leave, is an unpaid leave unless otherwise agreed with the employer. The wording is similar to that of the section on child care leave: "If the employee's child or some other child who lives permanently in the employee's household falls suddenly ill and is under 10 years of age, the employee shall be entitled to temporary child-care leave for a maximum of four working days at a time in order to arrange for care of the child or to care for the child personally (Ty 101, 2 a luku, 35 f; Labour Law 101, Chapter 2 a, Section 35 f)". Therefore, the legal parent's life partner also qualifies for temporary child care leave.

**Becoming a Carer and a Partner**

Since the Registered Partnership Act does not permit the so-called second-parent adoption, only the birth-giving mother and the male who has acknowledged his paternity are parents under law. In reality and – most importantly – from the point of view of the child, there might be two mothers or two fathers in the family, but the co-parenting is not legally recognised. In statistics, the co-mother or the co-father is seen as a roommate or a registered partner of the parent – in either case, a stranger to the child. At most, these families are regarded as step families, even if in actual fact both partners are the children's parents. As it is, the registration does not affect the legal status of the children. In the case of female couples, this may result in a situation where the mother is not the child's next of kin, and nor are the siblings in the case of both partners having given birth. The lack of legal parenthood may cause problems and insecurity at any point in life, but the problems are particularly pronounced in various family crises: an illness, the death of the legal parent, or a separation.

Currently, the only way to make the everyday life easier in the families of same-sex couples is to petition to the District Court for joint custody of the children (Si 217, 2 luku, 9 §; Private Law 217,

chapter 2, section 9). The District Court will make its custody decisions on a case-by-case basis in the best interest of the children. At least in the capital area, there have been cases where the court has awarded female couples joint custody of their children within a matter of a few weeks. Custodianship obligates the legal parent's partner to participate in care-taking and parental duties, and facilitates the everyday life by giving the right to open a bank account for the children, to sign a note of absence, and so on. Furthermore, official custodianship may prove significant in the event that the legal parent dies and one of his or her blood relatives decides to seek adoptive parenthood of the children. However, custodianship ceases after the child's eighteenth birthday, and it does not entail liability for maintenance or, in fact, give the child any rights, including the inheritance right, with respect to the carer.

Despite the fact that upon registration of same-sex partnerships, registered partners are not awarded legal parenthood, they are nevertheless in some situations treated as if they were both liable for maintenance of children. This has a bearing on their eligibility for various social security benefits: the registered partnership affects all social security benefits where the amount payable depends on the marital status and the spouse's income. For families with children, the most significant changes involve family allowance, child home care allowance, unemployment benefits and retirement benefits. However, the Registered Partnership Act as such does not affect the status of those who do not register their partnership. Furthermore, their social security benefits are unaffected by the concept of cohabitation.

Persons living in a registered partnership are considered ineligible for the supplement of family allowance awarded to single parents. The amount of home care allowance and the supplement to private day care allowance depends on the income of the legal parent's registered partner. Registered partners and dependants of persons performing military service are eligible for conscript's allowance. The child support supplement of the unemployment allowance is paid for the legal children of both partners. The income of the registered partner affects the means-tested labour market subsidy paid by the Social Insurance Institution of Finland, KELA. On the other hand, both the legal parent and the carer are eligible for an elevated income limit, provided the subsidy is payable directly to the employee. The registered partnership does not affect the amount of the earnings-related unemployment allowance paid by unemployment funds.

With regard to national pension, the registered partnership reduces the amount in the same way marriage does. A Child support supplement may be paid for the legal child of the registered partner, provided the family is living in the same household. In addition, the death of the legal parent's registered partner entitles the child to an orphan's pension. While liability for maintenance follows only from legal parenthood, registered same-sex couples with children are nevertheless equated with heterosexual families in such matters as determining day care costs, since the income of both partners are considered. If the partnership is unregistered, only the income of the legal parent is considered.

In practise, rainbow parents are not always fully aware of their rights as employees and/or non-legal parents. In addition to the need of improved rights, there is also need for more easily accessible information. Not all gay, lesbian, bisexual and trans people are NGO activists or deeply interested in legislation and human rights issues. The baby-size loopholes in legislation are not a cause of constant worry for all, and the current situation does in fact allow room for equal treatment as well. In an ideal situation, professionals deal with rainbow families in a matter-of-fact manner; the employer acknowledges the employee's family status, even if his or her parenthood was not legally

acknowledged; the work community rejoices together with the new mother or father, and the entire family is well.

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Si 210 Isyyslaki (Paternity Act)
Si 217 Laki lapsen huollosta ja tapaamisoikeudesta (Child Custody and Right of Access Act)
So 111 Sairausvakuutuslaki (Sickness Insurance Act)
Ty 101 Työsopimuslaki (Employment Contracts Act)
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## Paula Kuosmanen

## Tactics, Family Performatives and Gendered Styles of Lesbian Parents in the Labour Market

The boundaries between work and leisure are constructed in many ways in our daily lives. For instance, people do their work only at their workplace or only during certain hours. Most professionals keep strictly to their work role and do not talk about their "private" lives at work. Nevertheless, private life extends to the workplace in many ways, and vice versa. Personal affairs

and family life are present at work in the form of telephone calls, of partners picking up their partners, in the way we talk about happy family news or domestic troubles, and in the way we do our work, as well. Private family life is folded in the public sphere despite the fact that in many Finnish workplaces the "official workplace culture" seems, at first sight, to be based on the abstract idea of a 'competent working individual'. However, in the official and unofficial workplace practices - during coffee breaks and casual conversations in the corridors - this individual turns out to be gendered and heterosexualised, and positioned as either a single person without a family or a family"man". In this article, I will describe the tactics, the family performatives and the gendered styles of lesbian parents in the context of such official and unofficial workplace practices, and discuss their influence on the situation of lesbian parents in the labour market.

This article is based on my research on the everyday situations at work within a larger study called "The Everyday Spaces of Finnish Lesbian Mothers", financed by the Academy of Finland. Here, I will mainly focus on 31 in-depth interviews of twelve lesbian parents from the Helsinki area, and their tactics in the labour market and in daily situations at work. The study itself involved 40 lesbian parents whom I interviewed in 1999 and 2000. 24 interviewees came from the Helsinki area and 16 mainly from towns in other parts of Finland. The lesbian parents were living in different kinds of family constellations, i.e. in nuclear families (8), stepfamilies (14), extended families (5), as female couples whose children were not living with them or had already left home (7), or as single parents (4). In two (2) families there was a transition occuring: one lesbian parent was officially living as a single parent although her female lover stayed with them most of the time, and the other was still living in a heterosexual marriage with the father of the children. The majority of the interviewees were from 30 to 49 years old, a typical age range for parents with dependent children. In describing the gendered styles of lesbians, I will also use my own experiences in the lesbian networks in the Helsinki area, as well as my experiences in the labour market in the area of Helsinki, for instance, as a social worker in the Social Services Department of the City of Helsinki.

In this paper, I will focus on the tactics of lesbian parents with dependent children in combining the obligations of work and family life. How did the women talk about their family relationships, their partners and children in casual conversations during the coffee breaks at work? How the different kinds of family constellations of these lesbian parents were taken at their workplace? And how did these lesbian parents find a place in the Finnish labour market?

## The Tactics of Lesbian Parents in Combining Working Life and Family Life

According to British and American studies, lesbian families are not, to the same extent as heterosexual families, tied to gendered scripts in combining their working life and family life (Dunne 2000b, Sullivan 1996). In the British and American societies, the division of labour in heterosexual families is often based on the complementary roles of the man and the woman, the man being the breadwinner with his bigger so called familywages and the woman being the caretaker of children and the household. Compared to Finland and the other Nordic countries the main difference is, that there is no general child daycare system for small children organized by municipal authorities and subsidized by tax money in British and American societies. In these countries childcare is largely based on the institution of private child minders and still on the traditional housewife institution as in many Southern and Central European societies (except in France and Belgium) (Kajanoja 1999, 13-14; Takala 2000, 84-87). But according to research, the division of labour in American and British lesbian families differs from this heterosexual model: Lesbian

couples who have children together shared household tasks and parenting more equally (Tasker & Golombok 1998; Sullivan 1996) and did paid work more equally than heterosexual couples (Dunne 2000b). For instance, British lesbian partners often both cut down their working hours or took turns in who was the primary care taker of the child, irrespective of which one had given birth to the child (Dunne 1999a; 1999b; 2000a, 2000b). Indeed, Dunne (1999a) suggests that British lesbian couples were more creative in balancing the obligations of working life and family life, and were more free from the gendered scripts defining the division of labour in the family than their heterosexual counterparts.

In the Finnish society, however, the labour market is constructed according to the cultural norm of the so called dual-earner family. Women's active participation into the labour market is supported by the welfare-state in the form of a comprehensive child daycare system. But women are encouraged to take care of their children at home by long family leaves which are supported by extensive social benefit system paid only to those families who do not use municipal childcare services irrespective the economic situation of the family (Sutela 1999a, 78; Takala 2000). The gendered division of labour in the Finnish heterosexual families has also been maintained through women's low level of income (approximately 80 percent of the average income of men). The gendered scripts are tied into these family leaves and social benefits and these family rights have actually weakened the situation of childbearing aged women in the labour market in general (Sutela 1999a, 78). Especially during the depression of late 80's and early 90's many local governments raised home care allowances by additional payments in order to save in the costs of the municipal child daycare centres. This shaped the parental division of labour and child care practices in Finland toward the model of so called temporary full-time mothers and toward the Central and Southern European housewife model. (Takala 2000; Lehto 1999a; 1999b).

These family rights of labour market value first of all the heterosexual nuclear family and biological parenthood. These parental leaves and social benefits are designed for the heterosexual families. By tieing these family leaves and benefits to biological parenthood the gendered script of a one mother as a primary care taker of the children isn reinforced even in the lesbian families. This means that Finnish lesbian co-parents are not eligible for these leaves from work and are left without these allowances (see Aarnipuu in this book). From this point of view it is even more difficult for female couples and other rainbow families with one or more co-parents to share child care equally and take part in working life at the same time. Through legislation which is based on biological parenthood, these gendered scripts of the division of labour in Finnish heterosexual families also fold into the division of labour in lesbian and rainbow families.

Although the Finnish co-parents were not eligible to have "paternal leave", they resisted like their British and American counterparts these gendered scripts of one mother and found other ways to get "child care leave" in order to participate fully in the care taking of their newborn baby. The five lesbian co-parents who had had one or more children together with their lesbian partner used their paid annual leave, their overtime compensation in the form of days off, organised special arrangements if working in part-time jobs, or simply voluntarily stepped out of the labour market to stay at home with their children. Lesbian co-parents holding temporary jobs, typical in female-dominated fields, chose not to look for another job after the end of one temporary employment, and arranged a period of child care leave for themselves by living on unemployment benefits. In 2000, this was still possible as same-sex couples could not yet register their partnership (as they can now in 2002) and were, thus, not considered liable to give maintenance for each others. Lesbian co-parents working part-time, or as freelancers or as entrepreneurs had to live without personal income

during the time they stayed at home to take care of the child. Those lesbian co-parents who were studying at the time used their study time for childcare, and lived on their state-funded study grants and other benefits. In families in which both women gave birth to a child, the births were timed in such a way that the mothers could take partly their maternity leaves at the same time. With such tactics, both parents in families led by lesbian couple could fully participate in the care of their newborn baby and to build attachment relationship with the baby from the very beginning.

Even though the "family leave" practices in the Finnish working life encourage the so called one primary care taker model, none of the interviewed families were considering childcare arrangements with the one parent staying at home and the other one being the sole breadwinner. In families with newborn baby and working co-parent, the breastfeeding mother cared more for the child in terms of hours during her maternity leave. But the social mothers and co-parents tried to balance this by spending as much time as possible with the baby after the work. Social mothers who were unemployed or studying participated in all routine childcare tasks except breastfeeding, or at least assisted with all the caring routines, including night feeding and lulling the baby back to sleep. The interviewed lesbian parents made an effort to balance child care and housework responsibilities by taking turns on a daily basis. While the one mother was caring for the children, the other one was doing housework, like cooked dinner, cleaned the house or filled in or emptied the washing machine or the dishwasher. In some Finnish lesbian families, housework has been divided into tasks done with children and those done without them rather than into repairs done solely by men and cooking and laundry done mostly by women, as is the case in most of the Finnish heterosexual families (Sutela 1999a, 59).

### Performing Lesbian by Performing Family at Work

These official "family rights" prevailing in the Finnish labour market have made "private" familial relationships as part of the official workplace practices. Through the various statutory family leaves, like child care leaves, the norm of the heterosexual family has become folded in the official Finnish workplace cultures. Valentine (1993a, 400-404) carried out a study in a small English town in the early 1990's, and found that the "spilling over"of familial relationships made the workplace into a heteronormative space 1*. Employer-granted benefits, such as the family insurances, family discounts, or bonus trips for family members, were available only for employees living in official heterosexual relationships. Thus, such benefits were constructing the norm of the heterosexual family in the official level. Furthermore, stories about "private" domestic relationships, family holidays, weekend activities and children constituted an important part of the unofficial workplace practices and the exchange of social news and chatting, through which social relations were maintained between employees. The heterosexual family relationships materialised in the form of children's photographs on the office desk, as well. The Finnish workplace culture, in turn, typically encourages discreet manners towards colleagues and to protect and not to interfere with the "private matters" of the colleagues. But, particularly in female-dominated workplaces, this apparent silence is broken by the recurrent announcements of colleagues' going on maternity leave, which constitutes the workplace as a heterosexual space. Obviously, then, if a woman known to be a lesbian announces that “we are going to have a baby” without being visibly pregnant ruptures this heteronormativity based on heterosexual family model and queers the space – for a moment.

Many lesbian parents from the Helsinki area told that their colleagues and superiors were surprised when they announced that they were going on maternity leave. Colleagues made comments such as

"What a surprise!" or asked spontaneously "Well then, who is the father?" To those nosey colleagues inquiring the origin of the child, the lesbian mothers tactically emphasised the role of the donor, and gave answers such as “The child has a donor, not a father". To the question "How can two women have a child?" posed by some colleagues in one-to-one conversations, the lesbian parents explained all the different ways of having a child for lesbian couples. More distant colleagues could ask, "Whose child is this?" when the baby was in the arms of the social parent, who had not been visibly pregnant or on maternity leave. The tactics in responding to such questions was, on the one hand, to emphasise that they had got the child together, but on the other hand, to adapt and tell in the discourse of biological parenthood which one of the women had given birth to the child.

Many lesbian parents showed pictures of their new family members to their colleagues. This not only made the social parent's announcement of the new family member and later the absences from work understandable but also gave more visibility to the family of two female parents. Some lesbian parents announced the happy event at one time to as many colleagues as possible. Suvi, who was working in a male-dominated workplace, used this tactic.

Suvi: At work I sent an e-mail to the whole house, [through a list] of about hundred people working in the house, saying that "we are expecting a baby, my partner is pregnant", with this kind of a title, and to those who knew me. And then when Jaakko was born, I announced the event in the same way.
[...]
Paula: How did your colleagues react?
Suvi: Well, I got lots of responses through e-mail, lots of congratulations. At our workplace, it [the e-mail] is a very widely used way of commenting things, as everybody is sitting in their own little boxes. Lots of congratulations, people were congratulating me in the corridors, and I had talks with young fathers in the corridors and...
Paula: What sort of talks? Could you tell a bit more about them?
Suvi: Well like, how it is when you get a child, how it feels to be present at child birth, and that "it's so nice to have children" and "how nice that you are going to have a baby".

Suvi used the usual ways of telling about "private" familial relationships at work and announced the happy event in her family through the staff e-mail list. With the pronoun “we”, she expressed - as did everyone else - that she had a family, and by talking about the pregnancy of her partner she implied - without using the L-word of lesbian or emphasising the sex of her partner - that her partner was a woman. Hence, Suvi told about the forthcoming new family member in the same way as her colleagues.

Like Suvi, many other lesbian parents told their colleagues about their private life - their new partner, their engagement, their cohabiting partner, their spouse, their to-be-born child, or "our children" and "our" doings in free time and on holidays - without always specifying whom the pronouns "our" or "we" referred to. Thus, they were tactically using the prevailing practices of telling about relationships and the family at work. They did not emphasise their lesbianism although the fact was known to many of their colleagues and although it was obvious from the composition of their family.

Many biological mothers visited their own workplace and the workplace of their partner during maternity leave, to show the newborn baby. Through these visits, if not earlier, the picture of a

family of two mothers and a newborn baby became explicitly clear even to the colleagues of the social parent, thus challenging the automatic assumption of the heterosexual family. Indeed, one biological mother told that although her partner had often picked her up from work, her colleagues kept thinking of her as her sister. It was only when her partner came to pick her up together with the baby that they aroused attention as a family. For many lesbian social parents, especially those with a youthful appearance, introducing their family and the exchange of family news with colleagues provided a positive way to perform themselves at work as parents and, therefore, as responsible adults.

These lesbian family performatives highlighted the heteronormative practices prevailing in many workplaces in the Helsinki area. It also brought into light the assumption among heterosexual colleagues that only mothers who had given birth were expected to have children of "their own". Some lesbian social mothers avoided the topic of children with less familiar people because talking about their "own children" made people often assume that they had given birth to their children. People also tended to make the heterosexual assumption that there is a father or a husband in the family. All lesbian social parents did not always want to go through the effort of correcting such assumptions in their brief encounters with clients or in casual conversations with more distant colleagues. Some social mothers used the tactics of talking about their children without using the possessive pronouns.

Seven of the lesbian parents holding a permanent job in the Helsinki area (10) were working in places with a positive or liberal attitude toward lesbian and gay people. Nearly all colleagues knew about their familial relationships and, therefore, about their lesbianism. Despite the positive change in attitudes in the Helsinki area during the 1990's, some lesbian parents still felt a need to consider with which colleagues to be more specific with regarding their family. They used criteria such as how well they knew the colleague, and made assumptions about the person's tolerance and other values. By using this "attitude radar", most interviewees from the Helsinki area could find at least some colleagues at their workplace whom they could get more acquainted and share familial experiences with. Even those who had not told about their family to all colleagues found their workplace climate discreet and correct: colleagues did not interfere with each others' private lives or nose about each others' familial relationships. In some workplaces, however, especially before the weekend and at informal gatherings, there could be casual talk between some colleagues, which included gay jokes dealing with the masculinity of gay men. These jokes were, however, not directed to the lesbian women.

In 2000, it was still not possible for gay and lesbian couples to register their partnership in Finland. Lesbian parents living in small towns, in particular, had to often resort to a number of tactics in order to deal with situations in which "private" familial relationships spilled over into the workplace. For instance, they introduced their partner as their friend or colleague and talked about their partnership in terms of friendship. Thus, they avoided being defined as lesbians at their workplace (see Kuosmanen 2000, 110). Some women kept family relations and work relations completely separate: they did not talk about their partner or their family to their colleagues, they limited phone calls with their partner and minimised talking about private life on the phone at work. Occasionally, some even resorted to misleading tactics to get rid off their heterosexual colleagues and to sneak into a gay bar on a Friday night pub tour. Similar kinds of tactics of keeping working life and family life separate were used by lesbian business women in San Francisco in the 1980's, as reported by Hall (1989), and lesbians living in small town in England at the beginning of the 1990's, as reported by Valentine (1993b).

**Workplace Cultures and Gendered Styles**

In addition to gendered structures and family norms, the position and advancement of lesbians and other women in the labour market is affected by the overtly or covertly (hetero)sexualised and gendered styles inscribed in the organisation cultures and work tasks in different fields and workplaces (Hearn et al. (Ed.) 1989; Pringle 1989; Valentine 1993a, 400-404; McDowell 1995; 1999, 134-147). In her study of Swedish banks at the end of the 1980's, Acker (1994) concluded that the gender hierarchy inscribed in the organisation cultures of banks prevented women with a long career behind them from getting a promotion in the bank organisation. In comparison, men advanced quickly to managerial positions or specialised tasks, with better pay. According to McDowell (1995), success at work in banks in the London City was associated with masculinity. Successful dealers were given heterosexualised, masculine attributes such as “big swinging dick” for men, and “honorary big swinging dick” for women. Many female dealers assumed a masculine code of dress, which signified competence in the workplace culture among the dealers (McDowell 1995).

The gendered styles associated in various work tasks do not only pertain to the dress code but also define bodily movement and interaction, gestures and tones of voice. When repeated on a daily basis, they produce performatives of properly gendered styles, deemed appropriate to a competent male or female employee, and become part of the workplace culture (McDowell 1995). The norms of (hetero)sexualised styles are seldom explicit in verbal interaction or in workplace regulations. Instead, they become apparent in spontaneous, "harmless" comments made by colleagues (see e.g. Dellinger & Williams 1997, 159-165; Crawley 2002, 83). With regard to gendered styles, women in managerial or leadership positions often meet contradictory expectations in that, on the one hand, they are expected to adopt a masculine style of excerting power and, on the other hand, behave in a feminine way in line with their gender. Similarly, androgynous lesbians are often expected to behave and dress in accordance with the feminine style (Dellinger & Williams 1997, 159-162). This style - which in the Finnish context is considered (ultra)feminine - implies "dressing to please men" in its attempt to pursue heterosexual ideals of beauty in both dress and elaborate make-up (Dellinger & Williams 1997, 159-165). The ultra-feminine style also includes behaviours that reproduce the hierarchy between the genders, behaviours such as repeatedly accepting men's help - from letting the men open the door for you and ending with helpless behaviour in demanding work tasks. All such behaviours which render the woman helpless (feminine) and focus her attention on secondary matters affirm the competence of men and undervalues the woman's own competence, skills and power (see e.g. Pringle 1988). Many lesbian women, in fact, avoid fields and workplaces where the ultra-feminine style is expected because of the heterosexual norms and beauty ideals attached to the style (Dellinger & Williams 1997, 155; Crawley 2002, 82-87) 2*.

In addition to the feminine style inscribed in the work tasks, many lesbians feel alienated by the prevailing norms of social interaction in female-dominated workplaces. These norms tend to adhere to the heterosexual norms of interaction between women, and take on such forms as Tupperware parties or network marketing evenings of beauty products, which emphasise the woman's role in the heterosexual division of labour within the family. (see Dellinger & Williams 1997, 169.) Indeed, only one third of the British lesbians interviewed by Dunne (1997) worked in female-dominated fields, such as nursing and caring, as opposed to two-thirds of all British women. And of the interviewed Finnish lesbians, only a little more than one fourth worked in female-dominated fields

as opposed to one half of all Finnish female employees (Lehto 1999a, 16) *3. It is not surprising, then, that lesbian women more often than heterosexual women work in clearly male-dominated fields. Approximately one third of the 60 British lesbian women interviewed by Dunne (1997) were employed in male-dominated fields, and one third of the working Finnish lesbians worked in male-dominated fields 4*.
Lesbians tend to choose male-dominated fields not only because they want to avoid the gendered style and expectations in female-dominated fields but also because male-dominated fields tend to offer a better pay, better career opportunities, and more interesting tasks. On the other hand, many British lesbians had initial difficulties in getting promoted or build a career in male-dominated fields because they were women. (Dunne 1997, 136-172.) Nevertheless, male-dominated fields of manual labour - such as the armed forces and transportation, and technical fields requiring less training - offered lesbians an opportunity to do the same kind of work as men, to acquire technical skills, to work with other lesbians and wear comfortable work clothing as opposed to feminine outfits that confine movement (ibid., 143-160). Male-dominated fields and workplaces do not, however, always provide an avenue of escape from the ultra-feminine style. This is because in some male-dominated fields and workplaces, especially in those requiring less training, there may be anti-gay tendencies. Two Finnish lesbian interviewees reported of having such experiences. In such workplaces, women crossing their gender may in other ways have to overemphasise their femininity if they do not want to be seen as lesbians.

Heterosexualised styles signifying competence at the workplace are often folded in other styles, such as parental styles and styles for at least middle-aged people (Dellinger &Williams 1997, 167-168). In many fields, young employees working in managerial tasks are expected to behave in line with their position of authority, highlight their work experience as something "acquired with age", and dress in a style older than their biological age. The prominent lesbian style with its youthful, slender and a visible "iconic” lesbian image may, therefore, be interpreted in quite the reverse way if it spills over and becomes part of the person's office style*5. Short hair - a style generally considered male in working life -, glimpses of piercings and of tattoos associated rather with convicts and performance artists, heavy chains, earrings and rings which seem masculine compared to the jewellery of most female employees, hiking boots or sports shoes deviating clearly from the office style, and a vigorous and goal-directed, non-feminine style of walking, are all features which may prevent colleagues from seeing the lesbian employee as a competent, responsible and accountable worker equal to any female employee who dresses herself in the heterosexual feminine style and, thus, gives an "adult" appearance. It is not uncommon for colleagues to perceive a slender lesbian employee with a youthful style of dress to be considerably younger than she is. For tactical reasons, then, some of the youthful looking lesbians I interviewed made a point at their workplace about having a family, so that despite their youthful appearance they might be seen as responsible employees.

Having a visibly lesbian style of dress and refusing to adopt the styles available for the adult heterosexual woman has always been an important way for political lesbians to challenge the heteronormative structures in society 6*. For these lesbians, leaving out the icons of the prevailing lesbian style - the cargo pants, PVC pants, Doc Martens boots, the heavy necklace chains and bracelets, key chains, or pierced rings popular in the 1990's and at the beginning of the 2000's in Finland is not an option. Dressing down, like hiding your tattoos or letting your hair grow would mean to these political dykes as "dressing straight". Political lesbians tend, therefore, to choose fields in which a "radical" style may be interpreted in a positive way, for instance, as a sign of

creativity or originality. Indeed, lesbian interviewees who had the most visible lesbian style were those who were still studying, or those who worked in the arts, research, and male-dominated fields 7*.

The most widely used tactics seems to be to blend elements of the lesbian style of dress in the office style. Lesbian taste is often expressed in a discreet way in the jewellery and the style of the belt buckle, in the dark colours of the jacket and trousers; in the cut of the jacket and the simplicity of the shirt, as well as in the absence of dresses, pearls or excessive make-up. In the late 1990's, for many lesbians doing office work in the Helsinki area, it was a tempting alternative to blend the gendered styles and to wear, for instance, the jacket of the men's suit for work. New employees tend to start out with copying the gendered styles of their workplace and, after having established their status at work, gradually let their “private” styles merge into the office style. Many lesbians - intentionally or unintentionally - express internalised lesbian styles of interaction and bodily movement in a way that is recognisable to other lesbians. Some of the lesbian interviewees who had a permanent job were tactically trying to gradually shape the gendered styles at their workplace into a more liberal direction. They broke the dress code by blending their style and by defending their individual style at workplace meetings, etc. Age styles, parental styles, gender styles and the many other styles inscribed in our body inevitably merge into our office style in one way or another. According to Adkins (2000, 214), blending elements of the established gender styles at work in a discreet but visible lesbian style is the key to shaping workplace cultures into a more lesbian-friendly direction.

## Situation and Tactics of Lesbian Parents in the Labour Market

The three workplace practices described above - the official arrangements of parental and family leaves, unofficial family performatives, and the dichotomy of gendered styles - are the mechanisms through which "private" heterosexual family relationships spill over and become an established part of "public" workplace cultures, and of the criteria for a 'professional employee'. When reproduced on a daily basis, they become naturalised and construct implicit assumptions and norms of the heterosexuality of all "private" relationships. Consequently, those who enjoy working in their field and at their workplace tend to be those who fit the gendered heteronormative scripts of their workplace culture, and those who advance in their career tend to be those who copy these heterosexual gendered styles.

Half (20) of the interviewed 23- to 53-year-old lesbian parents (N=40) were leading their lives completely or partially out of the reach of the daily heteronormative workplace practices. One fifth, or eight of the interviewees, were self-employed as entrepreneurs or freelancers, and although they had to adjust their style when meeting clients, they were in control of their own workplace culture and their daily working conditions. The lesbian women were self-employed significantly more often than women in the Finnish labour market on the average. The tactic of a little less than one fourth, or of nine interviewees, was to concentrate on studying. They prolonged their student life by studying one degree after another, and, thus, tried to improve their chances of getting work later. Only three of the interviewees were living on unemployment and other social benefits.

Of all the interviewed lesbian parents, those who were over 40 and past the childbearing age (16) had the best position in the labour market. Many of them (10) were holding a permanent job. But

lesbian parents with dependent children, who were under 40 and still in the childbearing age (24), seemed to have difficulties in finding a place in the labour market. With one exception, all those who had a temporary job (6) were under 40 years old. Almost half (11) of the lesbians under 40 were supporting themselves and their family with means outside the labour market - as students (8) or as unemployed (3). Further indications of lesbian parents' having problems in finding their place in the labour market were the relatively great proportion of students among the subjects- almost one fourth of all interviewees -, the high age of the interviewees - five of them over 30 -, and the tendency to study several degrees. Moreover, one third of the lesbians who were involved in the labour market had completed more than one degree or were working in more than one field to support themselves and their family 8*.

Like their British counterparts, Finnish lesbian women tended to be freer than heterosexual women to cross the gender boundaries and to choose male-dominated fields. With regard to finding a place in the labour market, the most successful tactics for most lesbians turned out to be a partial adaptation to the gendered heteronormative structures in the labour market. They took into consideration the possible anti-gay or pro-gay environment in different fields and at different workplaces, and used statutory childcare benefits to the maximum. For those working in permanent (14) or temporary jobs (6), the most successful tactic in most situations seemed to be to adapt only slightly to the heteronormative workplace practices. The lesbian parents told about their families by tactically using the prevailing discourses of the family life and intimate relationships used at work. They were able to successfully blend the gendered styles at work and increasingly adopt their own style. And, when push came to shove, many preferred to be self-employed rather than only adapt to heteronormative workplace practices.

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*1 Using the role theory, Nieva and Gutek (1981) looked at gendered workplace styles and talked about "sex-role spillover", the spilling over of sex-role expectations (i.e. passivity, loyalty, caring and emotionality for women) in work roles.
*2 Dellinger and Williams (1997) interviewed twenty American women, five of them lesbians, about wearing make-up at work. In the American culture, in which female employees are expected to look more feminine than their Finnish counterparts on the average, two of the lesbians used make-up, one used make-up sometimes and two never used make-up at work. Make-up is also part of some feminine lesbian styles, such as the femme, the top femme, the lipstick lesbian, and the lesbian chic. See Finnish lesbian styles in Hekanaho 1996.
*3 In this study, workplaces which were included in the female-dominated fields were those in the social and health care and the educational fields, as well as secretarial tasks in non-technical fields. Managerial and leadership tasks in health care as well as work tasks within the media were designated as fields tending toward female-domination (Lehto 1999a, 16).
*4 The classification of various fields in terms of male- or female-domination varies depending on whether the classification is based on the field, the workplace, or the work tasks. The interviewed lesbian parents working in technical and agricultural fields as well as in the arts were classified as working in male-dominated fields. These fields were either defined as male-dominated fields by the interviewee or were interpreted as such by myself if women working in the field were marked by the attribute "female", such as in 'female artist'. Furthermore, guarding tasks within the field of security, technical tasks in the fields of information and media, as well as male-dominated handicraft trades were included in male-dominated fields. Mixed fields were sales and secretarial tasks in the technical fields, research work, information and organisational tasks in non-technical fields, as well

as service occupations with both male and female employees. In order to protect the anonymity of the interviewees, their fields and workplace cultures are not described in more detail in this article.
*5 The values of the "lesbian scene" in Helsinki, idealising youthfulness and slenderness, are reflected in, for instance, the nicknames given to "older" lesbians, i.e. lesbians over 30: such as "lemon" or "old tank".
*6 According to Judith Halberstam (2002), there are only heterosexualised cultural representations and codes available for performing adulthood. In rejecting these, the queer and lesbian subcultures turn to youth culture, to its representations and music - such as punk and the images of a rebellious young men - and recycle them by making their own crossgender versions out of them.
*7 The interviewees (n = 40) were classified on the basis of my recollection of their style at the interview. A 'visible lesbian style' was defined according to the style inscribed in the body, in gestures and expressed, for instance, in the hairstyle. It is a style distinct from the heterofeminine style and noticeable even to persons not familiar with the lesbian culture.
*8 Seven of the interviewees were holding two degrees. Yet, two of them were unemployed and one was studying for her third degree in higher education. In addition to those holding more than one degree, four were working in two or more fields, partly for someone else, partly as freelancers or entrepreneurs.

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**Jukka Lehtonen**

## Non-Heterosexual Young People at Work and in Military Service

The situation of young people in the labour market is in many ways difficult. Young people applying for jobs are often in a disadvantage compared to older applicants with more training and work experience. Indeed, very few young people start their full-time work career right after they finish compulsory education. Most of them continue their education and training in higher secondary schools, vocational schools or colleges, or at the university. Some take a year off and work in temporary jobs. Many students have part-time jobs, evening jobs and/or summer jobs. Others do practical training as part of their schooling. Thus, the employment of the young tends to be characterised by temporariness: Very few young people between 15 and 25 years are doing work which they believe to be still doing in ten years. They seldom hold permanent posts or long-term jobs. Temporary jobs, in turn, often involve a sense of insecurity. Terms of notice tend to be short and, from the perspective of employers, employees in such jobs are easily replaceable.

Non-heterosexual young women and men share these problems with their heterosexual counterparts. In my article, I will discuss three topics relating to non-heterosexual young people and working life. These are: the construction of a non-heterosexual lifestyle and its relation to working life, the experiences of young people in temporary jobs, and attitudes to military service. In my research, I have interviewed 30 non-heterosexual adolescents for a study dealing with gender and sexuality at school. Most of the interviewees were contacted through the youth activities of SETA ry, the Finnish gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender organisation. 16 of the interviewees were female and

14 were male, and their ages ranged from 15 to 20 years. Three of the adolescents were trans people. In this article, I will use excerpts of these interviews, as my study on the adolescent school experience included questions pertaining to views on the transition to working life.

I am using the term "non-heterosexual" as an attribute that refers to a person who has sexual feelings (love, fancying, sexual desire) toward the same sex, whose sexual behaviour is directed to persons of the same sex (dating, sex relationship), or who defines her/himself as a lesbian, gay or bisexual person. I find the concept useful particularly for studies dealing with adolescents, since many non-heterosexual youth have no clear self-definition of their sexuality, and many do not define themselves in the traditional terms "lesbian", "gay", or "bisexual". All the same, young people with non-heterosexual feelings or behaviour tend to face difficult situations at school and in working life if their feelings and behaviour become common knowledge.

**Building an Independent Non-heterosexual Life**

In a Finnish questionnaire directed to adults who define themselves as lesbians, gay men or bisexuals, more than one third of both female and male respondents said they had been aware of their homosexual feelings for as long as they could remember or from under 10 years of age. 26 percent of the women and 38 percent of the men had become aware of their feelings at puberty. And 60 percent of the women and 77 percent of the men were aware of their homosexual feelings before the age of 16, and 69 and 84 percent by the age of 18. (Grönfors et al. 1984, 139-140.) Hence, according to the study – conducted in the early 1980's – women seemed to become aware of their sexual orientation three years later than men on the average. Such a result may have its roots in cultural conceptions of women's passiveness or in a stronger heterosexualisation of girls and women. Gay men define their sexuality earlier, and become aware and experience feelings of being different from their peers earlier than lesbians (Andersson 1995, 20). Becoming aware of one's homosexual feelings does not mean the same as defining oneself as a lesbian, gay, or bisexual. According to the respondents of the Finnish questionnaire, self-definition took place a couple of years later (Grönfors et al. 1984, 139-140, see also Lehtonen 1997). As the attitudes toward homosexuality and bisexuality in the Finnish society have become more positive during the past twenty years, we may assume that people become aware of their same-sex feelings and define their sexuality earlier than before, and that increasingly more people do so.

According to the same study, 49 percent of the adult gay or bisexual women and 65 percent of the men reported to have had their first sex experience before the age of twenty. 82 percent of these women and 58 percent of the men said to also have opposite-sex sexual experience (ibid., 143). It is, then, plausible to assume that most non-heterosexual young people have sexual experiences with both sexes. This is probably true particularly for non-heterosexual girls who start having sexual relationships earlier than boys. With regard to same-sex relationships, however, it seems that non-heterosexual girls have their first experiences later than non-heterosexual boys. Many of the young women in my study told they had dated or tried dating with boys. In other words, non-heterosexual girls often have a heterosexual phase in their youth. For some, heterosexuality may provide a way to protect themselves from negative reactions to their non-heterosexuality. It may also serve as a way of escaping from a same-sex relationship or the anguish it may cause. One of the young women I interviewed said that after her first relationship with a girl she had a crisis and tried fancying men.

"At that point, I had a straight phase. I tried so hard to fall in love with boys because somehow it felt more natural and accepted by society and all that. I also had problems with my parents, mostly with my Mom. She didn't like at all that I had a girlfriend. So I was trying to please her and please myself and please the society by falling in love with boys, but it didn't work."

Women who define themselves as lesbians at a later stage often have their first sexual experiences with men. According to some studies, they have as many sexual experiences with boys and men in their youth as heterosexual girls do, but less same-sex experiences than non-heterosexual boys (Andersson 1995, 19). It is more typical for gay boys to have their first sex experiences with other boys or men. As there are often relatively few same-sex partners of the same age available, at least some boys have their first sexual experiences with men older than themselves.

In a Finnish survey on young people and sex, only a little less that one percent of the adolescents between 15 and 17 years said their sexual interest was mainly or solely oriented to the same sex (Kontula 1987, 108). Similarly, a little less than one percent said they were interested in both boys and girls. But as many as 7 percent of the boys and 10 percent of the girls reported to have some sexual interest in their own sex even though their main interest was directed to the opposite sex. Thus, a little over 10 percent of all young people reported to have at least some sexual interest in the same sex. Similarly, approximately 10 percent of the respondents had at least some same-sex sexual experience (petting and sexual stimulation) (ibid., 114). Half of them had one such experience, while the other half had more than one. Boys had more same-sex experiences than girls did. The suggestion that same-sex experimentation among adolescents is not uncommon finds support in other studies (see e.g. Andersson 1995, 17). Thus, it is likely that even some of those boys who have a negative attitude toward homosexuality have had sex with another boy. It may be, though, that boys do not tend to think of masturbating with other boys in terms of homosexuality, but give such experiences other meanings (cf. Huotari & Lehtonen 1999, 156-158).
Despite the fact that there exist non-heterosexual young people and non-heterosexual feelings and behaviours, images of adolescent sexuality are heterosexualised in the daily school and working life through the behaviour, expectations and language used by young people. The pressure of heterosexualisation is especially strong on girls. Girls face various kinds of expectations from adult men and older boys to the extent that even non-heterosexual girls end up in opposite-sex relationships. Nevertheless, the assumption that all youth are heterosexual – be it during the past school years, at the present job, or in the future – is proven wrong by the existing plurality, as also reflected in my research.

A major question for non-heterosexual young people is whether to tell others about their sexuality, their non-heterosexual feelings, behaviour, or self-definition. For many, the most important issue is what their parents and other family members may think if they told them. But many also make conscious decisions about whether to conceal or tell about their sexuality, regarding their relationships at school, studying or workplace.

Most young people under twenty continue to live with their parents. Thus, being also financially dependent, they have to consider their parents' expectations. Many non-heterosexual young people, however, seem to be more eager than others to move away from home. They find themselves an apartment, often in other towns or cities, to gain enough distance from their family and childhood environment as they try to build their own, non-heterosexual life style (cf. the article by Teppo Heikkinen in this book). Some of these young people go into working life early in order to support

themselves and to live on their own, while others choose their place of study from somewhere far away from home.

Most non-heterosexual young people conceal their non-heterosexual feelings or behaviour from all or most of their school friends and teachers. Many do tell their parents but usually only after some years, that is, after they themselves have become aware of their non-heterosexual feelings. By the time they go into working life and have their first jobs, many of the young have become well rehearsed in concealing their non-heterosexual feelings. But even though many have learned the heteronormative rules of behaviour in their society and culture, there are also many young people between 15 and 25 who actively challenge such limitations set to their behaviour.

The life of non-heterosexual youth is often, for a few years, filled with deliberations concerning sexuality and the choices it entails in terms of human relationships (see Lehtonen 1998a; 1998b). Their "puberty" may be delayed by years because the school community and other social networks do not give room for non-heterosexual experimentation and deliberations. Typically, they tell about their non-heterosexuality to friends and parents around the age of twenty. It is also at this point that many establish their first non-heterosexual relationships or participate in lesbian or gay activities.

Not all succeed in building their non-heterosexual lifestyle without problems. Some may find it impossible to accept their non-heterosexual feelings, or have difficulties in coping with negative responses when they do tell about their non-heterosexuality to others. Loneliness and relationship problems are familiar hardships to many non-heterosexual adolescents. In addition, there may be problems with alcohol, with drug experimentation or violence, which are more common among youth in general (see Lehtonen1999a; 1999b; 2000). Consequently, many issues other than working life may be more important for young people. On the other hand, problems in working life may affect the way they deal with other issues, and vice versa.

## Temporary Jobs – Temporary Solutions

Many of the 30 young people I interviewed had no experience from working life. Some had some experience mainly from short-term summer jobs, evening or weekend jobs, or from practical training. Only a few had had full-time jobs lasting for several months. Short-term jobs and the often routine-like tasks involved in such jobs tend to serve as mere sources of money for adolescents. The workplace as such is not expected to offer anything meaningful for life. Hence, they also feel no need to tell about their non-heterosexual life at work.

The work tasks reported by the interviewees in my study were, among others: cashier, shop assistant, ticket seller at a museum, cleaner, check-out person in a kiosk, fast food employee, park worker, receptionist, pool attendant, and office assistant. Even though many of these tasks involve customer service and social skills, it is easy for the employer to replace such employees. In other words, there is hardly any job security. In Finland, young people are nevertheless compelled to find either a job or a place to study because people under 25 are excluded from receiving labour market subsidy. In response to my general question "What would you like to change in Finland?" an 18-year-old young woman expressed her thoughts about the absence of cash labour support for the young as follows:

“I do think that when they took away the labour market subsidy from people under 25, that was just shit. And cutting all other kinds of benefits from young people, those are the things that are, for me, the most urgent issues. But actually it's just another example of distorted attitudes, like homophobia, what these middle-aged bastards have. If young people are discriminated, it has to do with attitudes in general, especially toward the young.”

Many young people do not tell about their sexuality at work. The reason, they say, is that they do not feel a need for it because their job is temporary or because the relationships at work are merely formal. Some say that they are afraid of negative reactions and consequent discrimination. Others, again, feel that the whole issue has nothing to do with the other employees or the boss. A 17-year-old young man said he feels no need to tell about his sexuality to anyone at work because his workplace is very small and because "they [other employees] are just these middle-aged people, the whole bunch”.

Some believe that other employees in their workplace know about their sexual orientation. A 20-year-old young man, who worked in a department store, told that some of the other young employees knew about his sexual orientation because they had seen him during free time out in the bars and were able to conclude from his company and behaviour that he was gay. He did not, however, feel comfortable with the idea that all employees should know. But he found his work environment positive particularly after a transfer to new tasks in another department.

“There are reactionary employees and the sort, I don't know. I was kind of surprised that when I started there [in the new department] everybody was really positive. I thought people would have a negative attitude there but they are really... Like our manager is really like, yeah, no problem.”

A 20-year-old man had worked in a hamburger place where he had been inquired about his sexuality.

JL: Did your being gay in any way come up at the McDonald's?
The interviewee: Yeah, I'm sure they knew, although they didn't at first. But when people started asking about a girl friend, I said right away: "No, not interested."
JL: Was it in any way a problem?
The interviewee: Someone said: "I don't believe you're gay." I hear that a lot, that they don't believe. Everybody thinks that gay men are really effeminate or feminine. But I have a friend who is straight and really feminine. Everyone thinks he's gay.

In very few workplaces people are prepared and know how to receive young employees who are openly gay, lesbian or bisexual. Thus, the reactions can often be quite awkward. The homosexuality or bisexuality of an employee may be denied or he or she is told to be quiet about it. Homosexuality and bisexuality are often associated with stereotypic ideas (cf. Lehtonen 1999c). These ideas are typically connected with gender: gay men are seen to be feminine, and lesbians are seen to be masculine. Hence, masculine women are considered lesbians and feminine men gay. An 18-year-old female interviewee told about such stereotypic conceptions and joking at her workplace.

“I've been working as a cleaner [at a centre]. There are some young blokes, my age or older, and they have pretty straight attitudes, the way they talk. Sometimes you hear comments about someone who's working there like: 'Right, this guy's a faggot, for sure'. You hear all kinds of hinting like: 'Yeah, at school, a real sissy', whispering behind the back but never straight to the face.”

The same woman told about a male employee, who fits the stereotypic image of a gay man. She said people talked about him, too, but only behind the back.

“There's this older bloke, I know he's definitely gay. He's a character. [...] The reactions are... I'm sure people know or guess but nobody says anything about it [openly]. People don't show him in any way that they know. Everybody takes him just like that. He's an okay bloke.”

The young woman had not disclosed her sexuality to her co-workers even though, she told, she had sometimes thought that her masculine style might arouse suspicion. Such a workplace culture – the joking behind people's back and the anti-gay stereotypes – does not encourage people to tell about their non-heterosexual life. Those non-heterosexual young people who consciously adopt a style of dress and appearance that crosses gender boundaries, often get astonished reactions in their workplace, and may even become bullied and discriminated: Girls in customer service tasks may be expressly demanded to use make-up, while boys are told to take off their earrings at work. For many non-heterosexual young people, however, having their own style of dress may play a major role in the construction of their sexual self-image.

Some young people think carefully about the nature of their workplace and work tasks, and whether their non-heterosexuality or their different gender experience would cause problems at work. A 20-year-old young man had been working for a church congregation but decided not to go back to the same job. Be it that he had been able to talk about his gender experience to one of his co-workers, he was afraid of negative reactions in the workplace.

“I had worked at the cemetery of a Lutheran Congregation in Helsinki. After I finished upper secondary school, I didn't want to [go back there] because I was afraid of how people would take me. There were fundamentalists and all working there. I did have one work mate, and we'd babble away a lot, so I told him. That was okay.”

An 18-year-old young woman studied in a beauty school. In her practical training she often came to physical contact with her study mates. She felt that disclosing her non-heterosexuality did not seem like a good idea.

“I come to a close and intimate contact with the customers all the time, and the way it's always done... It's always done in the way that we practice the various treatments on each other in class. For example, if we practice massage and they hear that I'm lesbian, I mean, they go like, 'Don't touch me!' That's why I've started thinking if I should tell them or not, so that things won't get too difficult.”

When non-heterosexual young people plan their studying, training, or career and professional choices, some also think about how to reconcile their life style and their future employment. Some decide not to choose tasks in which they fear discrimination or unfair treatment. Others try to choose a workplace or a field with a pro-gay climate. Others still may find occupations in which concealing one's non-heterosexuality is easy, or in which being openly non-heterosexual is likely to be easy. A 19-year-old young woman told about her career deliberations:

“I have been working at a store, and I'm also working for my parents. I don't think this job will cause me any problems. But I don't know about the future. I've been thinking about becoming a journalist.

I think that if you'd want to become a priest, you might have problems. People wouldn't accept you. But I think in this field [journalism] it would be okay. I haven't given it much thought. I'll just go and work for the SETA magazine [lesbian and gay magazine] then. I don't know."

Some young men and women, indeed, have the opportunity to work at lesbian and gay organisations and restaurants as employees, conscientious objectors, or as trainees, but the number of such jobs in Finland is quite limited. Only a few get jobs in which most of the employees belong to the sexual or gender minorities. Instead, many find their first jobs through their parents or the friends of their parents, or through their neighbours. If the relationship with parents is good and the non-heterosexuality of the child is accepted in the family – as was the case of the young woman above – working at the parents' place or in a job arranged by the parents may help the young person. But if the parents do not know or do not accept the non-heterosexuality of their child, working openly as a non-heterosexual in a workplace where people know your parents may be a problem.

**The Military Service - A Stepping Stone or Not?**

In Finland, military service is compulsory to Finnish male citizens. For many young men, it signifies an important transition from adolescence to adulthood (see Lahelma 2000, 3). Most non-heterosexual men go to the army, and only a minority does civil service. Fewer still are exempted on medical grounds, and some declare themselves as total objectors, which in Finland entails a prison service. 80 percent of all Finnish men do their military service whereas between 5 and 6 percent do civil service, and a little over 10 percent are exempted from all service. Since the 1990's, military service has been an option to women, and a small minority of women uses this possibility.

Non-heterosexual men are, on the average, less eager to go into the army than other young men. This is supported by my interviews. Only two of the male interviewees said they were interested in doing military service. Neither of them, however, had any obligation to do it: The one was a transgender man who was going through his sex-reassignment process and the other one an immigrant who had not been living in Finland long enough to be conscripted. The motive of the transgender man for doing the military service was the will “to experience what most men do at some point of their lives”. The immigrant young man said:

“Because I want to fulfil my obligation as a Finn, and I also like adventure. I want to experience what they do in the army. But not because I like to be with boys but just because, in the army, you live by the rules. It's good to have rules, too.”

Only two of the interviewees had actual experience from military service at the time. One of them was a transgender woman who had done her military service while still judicially and socially a man. The other one was a young man who had been exempted from service after the initial phase. He tells about his situation and his motives for quitting as follows:

The interviewee: They knew. They were expecting me to apply for an exemption either on the basis of my allergies or the clause on "homosexuality that disturbs oneself". It's there [the clause] so why not use it? [...] I thought, had they at least sent me to Santahamina or somewhere closer [to Helsinki] where I was hoping to be placed, but to Mikkeli... The trip back and forth was just too much. It was ridiculous with the train changes, and the schedules didn't work at all. And I ran out of money 'cause I still had to pay my rent, and, of course, you need to eat during your days off, too. I had no money

to leave the place on the weekends, and I wasn't going to spend weekends there. So I sent [an application] to the social welfare board, and they gave me a "no". Then I turned to the administrative court, and a month ago they also denied my application. [...] And I thought, no way, this is beginning to piss me off too much. So I went to the doctor. And I said I have to be placed in the barracks for allergic people. I mean, the nights were awful. I was using medication the whole time because of the wool dust but they wouldn't let me move to the allergy barracks. So I went to the doctor to complain about my allergies and everything, but nothing happens again. There was mould on the ceiling of my barrack, and they didn't bother to scratch it away and put paint on it. And the mould keeps flourishing there. Then I was thinking what to do? Let's start making a fuss. So my back was hurting and my knee was hurting and this and that was hurting. We had to do these awful things all the time, like go on a camp, and I just didn't go. I decided, that's enough! I went to the doctor and said that I'm not going back to my company, that they call me names and say "There goes the faggot again" and all.
JL: Did they do that?
The interviewee: No. But I said I would leave the next week, I won't stay there any longer. The doctor said you can get out the minute you want. When I went back [to the company] people asked me "Did you get out?" and I said “Yeah” and started packing. I put all my things in the bag and headed out. “On what grounds?” “Well, you guess.” They go “You went mental”. “Well, what then? Are you gay?" And I told them. “You're crazy!” they said. "You can't be!” "I sure am." I said. "No way, bullshit!"

It is not unusual that gay and bisexual conscripts remain invisible in the eyes of their mates and superiors, and that homosexuality is not directly confronted. None the less, homosexuality plays a role in the army, often in situations of discipline and joking (cf. Tallberg 2001). The same interviewee describes the atmosphere in the army as anti-gay, racist, and hostile to women:

“But of course it's ridiculous, the whole thing. Sometimes I was so pissed off I could burst. The last straw was, well, first of all, those racists. Officers kept talking about 'niggers' and this sort of thing. 'All sorts of Somali people come here to destroy Finland', and 'This is not the Swedish army!' [In many Finnish jokes Swedish men are referred to as gay.], and 'Eyes off the ass in front of you!' Some of the gay jokes were really vicious. And they would constantly make a point that 'When you fuck the woman' you do this and you do that."

But the army culture seems not to be entirely homogeneous. A 20-year-old man told that his trainer was a man whom he believed to be gay, and they got to know each other better.

The interviewee: I thought that if I go there, I want to get into the reserve officers' school. It was my ambition talking again. Then I was actually referred to the school, and the trainer of our platoon was [this guy], and he was gay. At least I thought he was. We were two blokes, one in the next barrack and me, although we didn't talk about the subject. But you just tend to find company of your own kind. He [the trainer] always came and talked to us, and we had loads of fun. Sometimes at camps - this was actually during basic training - where a bunch of blokes sleep right next to each other in one tent, it was very cosy sleeping next to him.
JL: Was there some action?
The interviewee: Nothing more than just holding hands. It was fun, though. It was July and warm. I really enjoyed it. And I went and said to the trainer [about the anti-gay atmosphere] that it pisses me off, I don't want to listen to all that bullshit. He said: "Let's just stay put. Have I conveyed anything

to that effect with my behaviour?" He spoke always like "When you blokes have a partner or lover", in those terms.

The non-heterosexual trainer was himself using a gender-neutral language, and by doing so wanted, perhaps, to challenge the anti-gay culture within the army.

A few of the interviewees had done or were presently doing civil service. Similarly, a few were considering that alternative. A 15-year-old boy told he was thinking about becoming a total objector.

The interviewee: I'm thinking whether I should do civil service or become a total objector. Doing civil service would be easier, and I have nothing against that. It's only good if you get done with it a bit easier. But if I think that I'm opposed to war and guns, it would be better to become a total objector [and object the whole system]. But I read somewhere that if a war breaks out, the conscientious objectors would have to join the army, with less training, and they would die easier.
JL: What is it that you don't like about the army?
The interviewee: Well, first of all, this whole mentality: "Go into the army!" "Don't think for yourself", and also that I don't like war. And I don't like that someone tells me what I have to do and I have to obey without using my brain.

Non-heterosexual young people who do not try to behave in line with the dictates of the traditional heterosexual masculinity tend also more readily to question other norms in the society. Moreover, their view on "civic duties" may be quite different from the ordinary if they feel that they themselves are not always treated as "good" citizens or full members of the society because of their non-heterosexuality. While for some men, doing their military service signifies becoming a full citizen (cf. Lahelma 2000, 5), objecting military service for some non-heterosexual men means taking a stand against a heterosexualised citizenship. Some non-heterosexual young refuse to go into the army because of its alleged or known anti-gay climate. People objecting the military service tend to be generally labelled as gay or may not be considered "real men" by their peers (cf. ibid. 2001, 12). On the other hand, for some non-heterosexual young, doing their military service is a way to show themselves and others that they can do their duty as citizens and are able to manage in a male community and heterosexual society. For others, parental pressure or staying in the closet may influence their decisions.

Most women do not go into the army, but some non-heterosexual women show an interest in doing the military service (cf. ibid., 7-9). A 20-year-old woman I interviewed was planning to apply for military service because of her "will to show everyone" but eventually couldn't because of a sudden injury. A 17-year-old young woman said she wanted to go into the army for "new experiences and ideas. It would be fun to know how it would be like". Most female interviewees, however, were not interested in military service, and some of them objected to it very strongly. A 16-year-old young woman explained her view as follows:

"I don't think it has anything to do with equality that women get to go to the army, it's not the culmination of equality in any way. Now women, too, get to learn how to shoot a gun. That's not what I think of an equal society, that women get to do those kinds of same things. They should think a little and stop the whole thing. Life could be a little nicer."

Military service is considered necessary or recommendable for men in many fields. For instance, it is a required qualification in the defence forces, the police forces, and the fire department. Having

done the military service tends to be a plus, and having not done it a minus, because in many fields and places of study there is a tendency to associate negative ideas with those who have not gone through "the men's school". Consequently, non-heterosexual young people who have not done their military service tend to be in a disadvantage in the labour market. On the other hand, some acquire a good civil service job that may turn out useful later in working life. The advantage for those who are exempted from military service or not obligated to do it at all, such as women, is that they can use the time for getting a place of study or gaining work experience. Nevertheless, the obligation to do military service treats young people unequally not only on the basis of sex but also with regard to sexuality. The military culture leaves women and non-heterosexual men in a disadvantage. The gendered practices and attitudes that young people learn in the army are likely to be carried along to future workplaces and reflected in the workplace culture as anti-gay and anti-women attitudes.

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**Kari Huotari**

## HIV Positive Gay and Bisexual Men in Working Life

For many gay and bisexual men, work and career together with sexual self-definition constitute important means of overall self-definition. In addition to giving financial security, work can boost a

person's self-esteem and give meaning to life, or serve as channel of self-expression and creativity (see Griffith & Ross 2001). Gay men who contract HIV face both a severe identity crisis and an existential crisis (Nilsson-Schönnesson & Ross 1999). An HIV infection is a threat not only to the person's health but often also to the continuity of his employment. Since gay and bisexual men are at the peak of their sexual activity from the ages of 20 to 40, they usually contract the virus in the prime of their working lives.

The threat or the actual loss of career and occupational identity as well as the associated psychosocial and financial problems were distinctly present in my study (Huotari 1999). The study consisted of interviews with 17 HIV positive gay and bisexual men. The majority were aged from 30 to 39, and all had contracted the virus through sexual intercourse. The interviewees were selected through the Finnish Aids Council. The theme interviews were conducted in 1995 and 1996.

Judging from the experiences of the interviewees, discrimination at work seems to be rather widespread. Most of those, whose HIV status had been revealed in the workplace either by their own accord or by accident, were discriminated against. The mere fact that a person is identified as gay may be enough to make others suspect him of being HIV positive. One of the interviewees had suffered unbearable pressure in the work community after his homosexuality had been discovered. He was, among other things, told that he should use a separate toilet and that he should have his own coffee mug. He was also directly asked whether he had HIV. At that point he concluded that his HIV status had been found out, probably because he had not been able to hide the disease and pretend well enough. The interviewee told that he had finally "lost it" at the workplace and subsequently left the job altogether. Prejudices can also work reversely – in other words, an HIV positive person may be suspected of being gay. One interviewee who had formerly been married told he chose not to reveal his infection to others, "because in our culture it's automatically associated with sexuality, seen as a gay disease".

Based on the interviews, it appears that the biggest change associated with HIV involves social relationships and networks, not the infection or the disease itself. In the case of the interviewees, all had immediately after learning about the infection started carefully considering with whom to share the knowledge. In the following, I will discuss the interviewees' experiences in working life by focusing mainly on three cases that are representative of the experiences of gay and bisexual men in general.

### Worse than the Plague

A mere suspicion of a person's HIV positive status may trigger dramatic reactions in the workplace. Aaro accounts his experiences after his co-workers found out about his life partner's infection and consequently suspected Aaro of being HIV positive as well. His account poignantly demonstrates one central feature associated with HIV and AIDS, namely the power of the metaphors created by the media (Lupton 1994, Sontag 1991, 11-51).

"I was a joint owner in a company where I had 40 percent of the shares. That wasn't enough, though, when my associates who owned the remaining 60 percent found out that my life partner was in the Aurora hospital. They decided that he shouldn't stop by at the office anymore. They said AIDS was even worse than the plague. They worried about the clients' reactions. Then they thought two plus two equals four, meaning that if my partner had it, then I probably had it too. At that point all this

pressuring started, and finally the 60 percent, that is my two associates, figured out this technicality of increasing the capital of the company by some half a million marks. I didn't have that kind of money to invest at that time. I had to give up my job and the business. We lost our cars, our jobs and our house."

It was particularly the metaphor of the plague that made Aaro and his life partner seem so terrifying and contagious that the others felt they had to be barred from the office. Since the plague is often equated with death, the associates presumably thought that Aaro was dying; it seems as if an infected person wears a stigma that can even have him excluded from the society. Aaro was left without income, since he first had to take time off from work, then stay on sick leave, and finally retire due to a severe depression.

According to Sontag (1991), the plague is the single most powerful image associated with AIDS. The plague has for long served as an epitome of the most grievous catastrophes and inflictions, and it has also been used as a generic term for many horrible diseases. In Sontag's view, AIDS holds more loaded meanings than any other disease today, thus making the burden of HIV heavier than that of any other disease. A heart disease, for instance, does not trigger such fears; when a person suffers a heart attack, it is considered just another "incident" and not as something that almost renegotiates the person's whole personality. A heart attack does not make the patient one of "them". With HIV, the situation is quite the opposite. For some people, there is a distinct boundary between the uninfected "us" and the possibly reckless, virus spreading "them". (Sontag 1991, 11-51).

### Smoked Out from the Workplace

Although HIV is not transmitted through social interaction or everyday contacts at work, many of the interviewees' co-workers exaggerated the risk of transmission and thus were prejudiced against the HIV positive persons. Many interviewees were subjected to continuous and blatant discrimination in the workplace. Mika had been HIV positive for eight years, working all that time for the same employer, and now he was being pressured to resign. Discrimination and pressuring had begun after he had, in a moment of distress, told two of his close co-workers that he was HIV positive:

"It was a mistake to tell them, but I panicked and let it slip out. Immediately after this a couple of these workmates had contacted the employee's health care because they were terrified of being infected. The occupational health physician gave me sick leave because of stomach problems – and I did actually have those too – first a month, then another month, then a third. After that I asked to go back to work, but everyone just squirmed and talked about retiring and all. There's been constant pressure, and lately it's become quite bad. During this year, one of my superiors has contacted the occupational health clinic at least five times to get me to apply for retirement. But the doctors have said I can't retire because there are neither internal nor mental grounds for it. So although I can't retire, these people are constantly going on about it. It does get to me. They're using mental pressure, aren't they? They are getting so canny now that they're trying to punish me for mishandlings in customer service and such. When I confront them and say there's something else at play, namely my HIV positive status, they claim that's not the issue. I don't agree."

Pressuring an HIV positive person out from the workplace can be done upfront, or by acting so cunningly that it is difficult to identify the true motives. Mika's experiences suggest that one would

be advised not to mention the infection if there is reason to believe the work community holds prejudiced views. With employment discrimination being such a widespread phenomenon, it would at least be recommendable to carefully consider the pros and cons of being open about one's HIV infection. Mika ended up socially excluded, and was at times demoted to duties that did not involve much contact with other personnel or customers.

Many of the persons interviewed said that one should carefully consider whom to confide in, because there is no way of predicting the reactions or recalling the words once they have been said. Judging from the interviewees' experiences, being open about an HIV infection in a Finnish workplace is likely to increase stress and mental pressure. Many of the interviewees concealed their infections in the work community as long as possible.

Only one interviewee expressed relief over the fact that he had told about his infection in the workplace. His co-workers encouraged him to stay at work and supported him during difficult times. If the co-workers and superiors are accepting and possess matter-of-fact information on HIV and AIDS, an HIV positive person may indeed find considerable emotional support in the work community. For an infected person, work can be a great source of pleasure as well as a means of maintaining mental and physical health despite the infection. It is therefore important to have a job. The interviewees listed the following benefits of working: it prevents one from immersing oneself in the condition, keeps one's mind off the infection, helps one to overcome the initial crisis, ensures that life continues almost unchanged, and stops one from secluding oneself in the house. Work is thus one of the daily routines that help a person to get by.

In some cases, the infected person may be in such a poor state of health that it makes working impossible or unhealthy. For these persons retirement can be a relief: "I actually gained a new life when I was pensioned", said one of the interviewees.

**Unlawful Dismissal**

Many of the interviewees were afraid of losing their jobs and therefore concealed their infections in the work community. Risto had been dismissed shortly after being diagnosed with HIV. He suspected a violation of confidentiality and began proceedings in order to fight what he thought was an unlawful dismissal.

"After I was diagnosed, I was given a month's sick leave but was dismissed before it ended. Because my supervisor's wife worked at the hospital lab, my employer was well aware of my condition. It's been a perfect scenario, straight out of a play. It took me six months getting around to starting legal proceedings, because at first I didn't have anyone to support me. It wasn't an easy process, since in the beginning I felt I had no means of proving the dismissal had been unlawful, it was done so subtly – I was told I was being made redundant for financial and production-related reasons. We didn't know if there were grounds for suing for unlawful dismissal. We had no idea how to prove it. In the end, a lawyer at the Finnish Aids Council won the case for me."

Just as Mika and Aaro, Risto had to fight for his rights. What these men also had in common was the feeling of disregard for their human worth. Their struggle against unjust treatment was made more difficult by the fact that they had concealed their infections from some of their friends and relatives as well. Being forced out of work would have meant constant covering-up by, for instance, making

up excuses for being absent from work. The interviewees worried that their infection would become public knowledge. According to Risto, the time of the legal proceedings on the unlawful dismissal was disquieting, because if reporters had found out about the case, it would probably have reached the news. He feared that his parents and siblings would learn about his HIV infection from the tabloids. Risto's account demonstrates how important it is that the health service system and its individual employees uphold confidentiality so as to avoid unnecessary personal tragedies.

For Risto, his HIV infection becoming public knowledge would have meant a double exposure, since he had not yet dared to tell her relatives about his HIV infection or his homosexuality. Several interviewees believed that if their families and relatives learned about the infection, they would also be interested in knowing how it had been contracted. Those gay and bisexual men who hid their homosexual relationships from their families worried about the reactions if their homosexual lifestyles were to be disclosed in connection with the HIV. For an HIV positive person, there is a risk of being attached a double stigma as a result of the infection and the life style that is not exactly embraced by the surrounding culture. Some interviewees ended up giving factual information and emotional support to their anxious relatives, even if it was they themselves who needed the support. The role of a comforter was considered a burden, for it involved explaining everything from the nature of HIV and homosexuality or bisexuality to the impacts of the infection on one's personal life. It is not an easy task to discuss such intimate matters involving one's own sexuality, especially if the subject matter is usually shunned in the family.

Most of those whose HIV infection had been found out in the workplace, either by their own accord or by accident, met with prejudice in the work community. This resulted in dissatisfaction at work, and in some cases in a loss of income due to sick leaves, disability pension, or unemployment. Some said they occasionally had difficulties in finding money even for the bare necessities, and therefore had to depend on the social services. Nevertheless, the interviewees refused to be altogether marginalised.

**Prohibition of Discrimination**

The workplace discrimination against the HIV positive interviewees resulted from fear, prejudice and ignorance of HIV and AIDS. In their particular work communities, the interviewees had met with unrealistic beliefs regarding the risk of transmission as well as with the fear of the unknown ("the plague"). The interviewees' experiences suggest that there is a need for education in places of work on matters concerning HIV and AIDS. This can be handled in a variety of ways (see Griffith & Ross 2001). The most typical approaches include distributing informative leaflets and videos, or designing preventive training sessions where experts and HIV positive people visit places of work to present and discuss HIV and AIDS -related issues. Based on the interviews, more information is needed at least on 1) the difference between HIV and AIDS, 2) HIV treatment, 3) HIV transmission, 4) legal and ethical questions, 5) appropriate support for HIV positive persons, and 6) appropriate course of action in dealing with discrimination.

In Finland, an act prohibiting employment discrimination on the grounds of state of health, thus including HIV positive status, has been effective from 1 September 1995. Since most cases presented in this article precede the act, it is difficult to discuss them from a legal point of view. Prior to the adoption of the act, there has been one case involving a dismissal on the grounds of HIV, subsequently ruled as unlawful by the Finnish Supreme Court (see Saarinen 1992). Cases of

employment discrimination and their possible repercussions are important indicators as to the general attitude towards HIV positive people. In Finland, a court judgement does not mean that the employee subjected to discrimination will be reinstated. Instead, the employee will be paid compensation for damage, the amount usually mounting 3–24 monthly salaries, which is relatively little considering the loss of emoluments (see Saarinen 1992).

On the other hand, the fact that a Finnish court of law has awarded a dismissed employee compensation for the loss of salary may be interpreted as a sign of contradictory views battling within the welfare state. In other words, an employer may regard an infected person as a threat and dismiss him or her, but the welfare apparatus, committed to promoting human rights, will protect the citizen's interests and punish the employer by a fine. This being the case, it is equality and ethical considerations that prevail.

The accounts of Aaro, Mika and Risto presented in this article manifest, above all, that in their work and everyday lives, HIV positive people may meet with highly stereotyped and prejudiced views of the infected as threatening and infectious "sick people", possibly on the verge of death. This idea is reverse to the fact that most of the interviewees wanted to lead as normal a life as possible and considered themselves "healthy" and capable of performing their duties. Owing especially to the new combination drugs, many HIV positive people today are able to remain longer in their jobs or re-enter working life. According to Jussi Sutinen (2000), a consultant in the Aurora hospital specialising in the treatment of HIV positive people, the modern drug treatment renders it impossible to estimate the mean life expectancy of an HIV positive person. At its best, it can be the same as it would have been without the infection.

Overall, there is no absolute way of distinguishing between sickness and health. In the words of one of the interviewees, "there is a thin line between sickness and health". It is each person's own conception of their health that counts. Those HIV positive people who conceive themselves as healthy also retain their ability to function socially; the feeling of being healthy is a resource that enables them to manage work and other activities.

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# III ON THE MARGINS OF WORKING LIFE

## Heidi Hoffman

## Well-being at Work within the Clerical and Service Sectors

Contentment at work is a consequence of an employee finding his or her job satisfying in terms of personal requirements. A key factor is the degree to which the employee is able to achieve and promote those work-related goals that he or she finds significant and that are harmonious with his or her fundamental needs and goals in life (Pöyhönen 1987, 128). In essence, well-being is based on the interaction between the employee and his or her particular work. Well-being depends on the interaction between the employee, the work and the work community as a whole. However, in order to promote well-being, the individual components of the whole must fit together and be able to interact, and at the same time, retain their ability to adapt to changes in the other components (Juholin 1999, 70).

In the present article, I will discuss the well-being at work of gays and lesbians in the clerical and service sectors. I will also present their views on the influence of their sexual orientation on their well-being, as well as the possible manifestations of this influence. The article is based on my pending study, for which I have to date interviewed ten gays and lesbians of different ages working within the clerical and service sectors. My sample consists of five women and five men, contacted by advertising in newspapers and mailing lists, and by distributing informative material on my research.

In the confines of work, a human being is as much a complete person, together with all his or her qualities, as in the other spheres of life. Employees belonging to a sexual minority may feel unhappy at work, if they for some reason find they cannot be open but have to conceal part of their identity. Contentment at work depends on the interpersonal relations in the workplace. The fundamental prerequisite for a well-functioning work community is that each person's needs of being connected and feeling secure and appreciated are satisfied. Everyone should be able to have a sense of belonging to their community, and of being accepted and appreciated as a person and an employee by the other members of the community (Vartia & Perkka-Jortikka 1994, 22).

Those interviewees who had good relations with their co-workers and the immediate superior were the most contented with their work. The ability to achieve closeness with co-workers depends on the employee's degree of openness. Openly gay and lesbian employees found it easier to establish close relations with their co-workers and superiors. The gay and lesbian persons interviewed for the study occupied a diverse range of positions in the clerical and service sectors, but in my view, there was one common denominator, namely the fact that most of them were extroverted. It would seem that customer service attracts individuals who are active and social, and that gays and lesbians conceive the service sector as easy and safe. One suggested explanation is that since the service sector is female-dominated, it is more accepting of employees belonging to a sexual minority (Nissinen

2001). None of the interviewees thought their sexual orientation had directly influenced their choice of career, but there was one interviewee who said he had left his job because he felt it was too conservative and that the work community had a negative attitude towards homosexuals.

## Factors Related to Well-being at Work

I approached the matter of well-being at work through a few selected themes. One key factor in terms of well-being at work is the manner in which the recruiting process and induction training are handled. Nearly all who participated in my study had been interviewed, and some had also been asked to take a series of tests. Upon recruiting, employers had not directly asked about the applicant's sexual orientation, but they had asked questions about their family situation. The majority of the interviewees had concealed their homosexuality in the job interview, but the matter had later been revealed in the course of work. In many cases, the induction training was inadequate, for only few interviewees had been provided with written plans and assigned responsible persons. For many, induction training had in actual fact meant learning through trial and error. Nevertheless, the interviewees did not find that the lacking initial orientation had any adverse effect on their well-being at work in the long-term. On the other hand, those who had been given sufficient induction training felt it had speeded up their accommodation to the work community and also made it easier to form relations with the co-workers.

All of the gay or lesbian employees interviewed had contact with customers or co-workers and other interest groups. The size of the work communities varied from very small to large. Nearly all interviewees had to work together with other employees, thus making interpersonal relations pivotal in terms of job performance. In this sense, choosing between being open about one's sexual orientation and covering or concealing one's sexual identity proved a significant factor. Those who were openly gay or lesbian at work had several reasons for their choice. Some saw openness as a statement. According to them, openness evoked trust and positive responses in the workplace. Some of the interviewees gradually revealed their sexual orientation, or did not actively try to hide it, because they wanted to be themselves at work. Others said that their homosexuality was so obvious that there was no need to expressly state it. Openness was felt to alleviate negative attitudes towards gays and lesbians and also to prevent rumours. A few of the gay men felt their openness abated generally held prejudices against homosexuals. In most part, openly gay or lesbian employees had closer relations with their co-workers compared to those who tried to conceal their sexuality. The latter felt they were, in some way, outsiders in the work community. They did not have very close relations to their co-workers, nor did they usually participate in staff parties and events, or socialise with their co-workers in their spare time. The interviewees who chose not to be open explained they wanted to keep their work separate from their private life.

None of the interviewees had told about their homosexuality in the work community immediately upon starting work. The general practise was to first get acquainted with the other employees and the superiors, and only then take up the subject. The matter was first shared with the closest co-worker, who usually informed others with the permission of the employee belonging to a sexual minority. All interviewees regarded relations with co-workers as pivotal aspects of well-being at work, and many said that if they did not have good relations with their co-workers, they would not be happy at work. The role of the superior was considered less important in terms of well-being. Nevertheless, it is the superiors who are responsible for safety at work, which is an integral part of

well-being. In a well-functioning work community, a person's sexual orientation should not trigger any inappropriate responses (Nissinen 2001). Those interviewees working in smaller work communities placed more weight on their relations with superiors, which was explained by the fact that in the smaller communities the superiors had closer contact with the subordinates and often participated in the daily duties.

Some openly homosexual interviewees socialised with certain co-workers outside work. According to the interviewees, workplace romances between homosexual employees are not yet common within the clerical and service sectors. However, it would be a desirable development if homosexuality emerged from within the confines of homosexual spaces, such as gay bars, and became a feature of everyday life (Nissinen 2001). One of the gay men interviewed had had a brief affair with a colleague in his previous job, but because it happened during an expatriate posting, he did not see it as having any impact on his well-being at work. A lesbian interviewee told that in her previous employment, older female customers had flirted with her so openly that even the co-workers had noticed it. A few of the lesbian interviewees told that male co-workers and customers, who were not aware of their homosexuality, had shown some interest.

For the majority of interviewees, work consisted mainly of dealing with customers, but homosexuality was nevertheless considered a less significant factor in customer and interest group relations than in work community relations. Many had only brief contacts with a large number of customers, and therefore did not develop close relations with them. For this reason, they did not consider it important or relevant to reveal their sexual orientation. Some interviewees did have long-term relations with customers, and subsequently had to consider telling the customers about their sexual orientation. Some had customers who knew about their sexual orientation, but that was not found to have any effect on the interaction.

### Workplace Bullying

In my interviews, I also touched the subject of workplace bullying of employees belonging to a sexual minority within the clerical and service sectors. Some interviewees had been subjected to bullying in the workplace. The bullying had mainly been verbal harassment. Those gay and lesbian employees who had been bullied did not, however, think it was motivated by factors related to their sexual orientation. Some explained that the workplace bully was someone who targeted all employees, or that he or she was a difficult person, or that the bullying had been triggered by a particular situation at work. One gay man did actually feel he was bullied because of his sexual orientation, since the other members of the work community had changed their attitudes towards him after finding out he was gay. Some employees were reluctant to work on the same shift as him; rumours began circulating, and it sometimes happened that he was not invited to social outings.

In most cases, the bullying had ended without third party intervention. In one case, the partner of a lesbian interviewee had confronted the bully and thus put an end to the bullying. One lesbian interviewee had managed to fend off a potential bully, and even ended up having close relations with the person.

Almost all interviewees had witnessed belittling or negative talk on sexual minorities either in the current work community or in former work communities. Their reactions to these coffee break conversations depended largely on whether they were openly gay or lesbian or not. Some openly

homosexual interviewees had protested against such offensive talk by, for instance, announcing that they found the conversation disagreeable and by encouraging their co-workers to find matter-of-fact information on homosexuality in books etc. Those who concealed their homosexuality at work had generally found these conversations awkward, and therefore refrained from commenting. They tried to avoid participating in these conversations for the fear of revealing their attitude towards sexual minorities and thus making the other employees conclude they belonged to a sexual minority.

**Career Development and Attitudes towards Difference in Work Communities**

Well-being at work is also associated with wages and career advancement. The majority of the interviewees felt that their sexual orientation did not have any effect on their wages and career advancement within the clerical and service sectors. But since not all of them were openly gay or lesbian in their workplace, they could not say how their sexual orientation would have affected their career development and wages. Many interviewees were having development discussions with their superiors, but only few found them useful in terms of personal development. Payment policies within the various companies were considered reasonably just, although many were unsatisfied with the pay in their particular field. Most of the interviewees received a monthly salary.

Attitudes towards sexual minorities and difference in general varied quite considerably from one work community to another. Some interviewees had work communities where attitudes towards different people were very positive, and where employees actually had varied background. These work communities tried to turn negative matters into positive and to embrace all kinds of people. Such communities were conducive to contentment with work and interpersonal relations. Employees belonging to sexual minorities felt no need to change or educate these work communities, since tolerance was an intrinsic part of the work environment. Other interviewees worked in more conservative and rigid work communities, where difference was not so readily accepted. The interviewees found that these work communities were intolerant of gays and lesbians, but that this intolerance extended to all different people, such as foreigners or people with an unusual appearance. According to some interviewees, their work communities only wanted employees who looked the same, thought the same and, in general, were level. Many of the interviewees found it difficult to imagine that their work communities could be made more open and accepting towards difference. According to the interviewees, there were several barriers to more accepting attitudes towards gays and lesbians, including conservative corporate culture, negative work environment, inability to think that the particular company might in fact already have homosexual employees, as well as religious beliefs of employees or proprietors, resulting in negative attitudes towards sexual minorities.

There are further factors at play in well-being at work. Many interviewees pointed out that there was room for improvement in the physical aspects of their work environments, and that their workstations were not ergonomic. Nevertheless, most considered the social climate and interpersonal relations in the work community more important than the physical aspects in terms of well-being. Another factor that bred discontent in many of the interviewees was the organisation of working hours. Those interviewees in shift work were particularly prone to be unhappy with the organisation of working hours. According to the interviewees, customer relations and the interpersonal relations in the work community were important factors in well-being at work. For some, the status of the profession and positive feedback from customers promoted well-being. One interviewee said that if all was well in life, one felt happier at work and was more able to handle work-related stress. An employee's mental well-being and ability to deal with stress is reflected in

his or her well-being and coping at work. When there is well-being at work, the employee feels well and is satisfied and productive.

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## Miia Valkonen

## Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Teachers at Work

In Finnish schools, factors related to teachers' gender or sexuality tend to be pushed aside, hidden or even completely ignored. On the other hand, the school is a gendered and sexualised environment incorporating a variety of teachers. Despite the fact that in the society at large, including television and newspapers, homosexuality is openly discussed, the subject remains a taboo in the school. (Palmu 1999.) This became evident when I interviewed a number of teachers for my study and asked them about their colleagues' attitudes towards homosexuality; some interviewees had never discussed the matter with their colleagues and consequently were unaware of their opinions, while others had overheard some remarks but ignored them.

In some countries, such as the United States, Canada and Great Britain, there has been some research on gay, lesbian and bisexual teachers (e.g. Branburg 1981; Pollak 1994; Khayatt 1992; Sguirrell 1989). The majority of these studies deal with cases and experiences involving 'coming out', in other words with the question of homosexual teachers and openness. Didi Khayatt (1992), a Canadian researcher, interviewed eighteen lesbian teachers for her study in the 1980's. Her study accounts the teachers' views on anti-discrimination legislation and its potential for promoting openness, and also includes their perceptions on their own womanhood as lesbian teachers as well as their strategies of coping in their work communities. An English researcher, Gillian Squirrell (1989), interviewed both gay and lesbian teachers for her study dealing with teachers' relations to their colleagues as well as with heterosexism and homophobia among teachers. Both studies emphasise the theme of openness, which is a central theme in my own study as well.

My research material consists of interviews with twelve teachers of different ages and career backgrounds. A majority of the interviewees live in the capital area. Of the twelve teachers, eight teach in primary school (grades from 1 to 6), one teaches in lower secondary school (grades from 7 to 9), two teach in upper secondary school, and one is a retired subject specialist teacher.

Each teacher has a different story, and obviously such a limited research material does not allow far-reaching conclusions. The purpose of the study is to present the various approaches gay, lesbian and

bisexual teachers have to their professional lives. The present article includes the stories of four teachers, all of them appearing under aliases.

**Titta**

Titta is a lower secondary school special teacher in the capital area, the current year being her fourth. Her scope of work is extensive, covering all subjects but with a focus on mathematics and languages. For her, interacting with the pupils is the best aspect of the work. She feels that gaining the pupils' confidence, and vice versa, is a slow and difficult process, yet ultimately a rewarding one.

Titta finds it difficult to define herself in terms of sexuality. She is neither lesbian nor heterosexual, but somewhere in-between, although she is not sure if she could be identified as bisexual, either. Currently, she is living together with her female partner. For Titta, discovering her own sexuality was not a big shock – suddenly she just found herself involved with a woman, and it felt right.
Titta equates openness with trust; if she trusts someone, then she also feels she can tell this person about her sexuality. But in her own opinion, she is not very open about her sexuality. At the workplace, she has only told about her sexuality and her involvement with another woman to a few colleagues. Their reactions have been very positive, which according to Titta is because she is very careful about revealing personal details. If ever there is a risk of being found out, she tries to change the subject by directing the discussion to her parents, for instance, or failing that, she lies.

Titta's pupils rarely ask her about her personal relationships, but she has nevertheless prepared herself for such questions. Generally, she either says she is single or tells the pupils it is none of their concern. Titta being a secondary school teacher, she does not often meet the pupils' parents. Therefore, she has not prepared herself for the event of a parent asking about her personal matters. She finds the prospect of someone directly asking her about her sexuality horrible. Unlike with pupils, she is not sure if there is any way to prepare for such a situation.

In order for the general situation to change for the better, Titta feels that schools should include the various forms of sexuality in their education against prejudice. At the moment, the focus is on teaching tolerance towards foreigners and the disabled, and other minorities are often ignored. According to Titta, the school is such a conservative institution that changing its rigid structures will take time.

**Reetta**

Reetta has been a teacher for almost 17 years, most of which time she has taught in primary school. Currently, she teaches second grade pupils, but she is also a qualified subject specialist teacher in music. According to Reetta, teaching young children is an all-encompassing task, and for this very reason, also a challenging one. But even though she enjoys her work, she does find its orderly nature oppressive at times.

Reetta lives together with her female partner and defines herself as a lesbian. She considers herself open towards colleagues, although says she does not advertise her lesbianism. The school Reetta works in is typical of today in that the staff is constantly changing. Long-term colleagues are aware of Reetta being a lesbian, but she has not taken up the subject with her more recent colleagues.

Whenever there is discussion on spouses, Reetta refers to her partner by using the pronoun 'we', or by calling her partner by name.

Reetta taught her previous group of pupils through all six grades of primary school. In six years, pupils are bound to realise that Reetta is living together with a woman. Sometimes the pupils ask questions such as "Have you got any kids? Why not?", or when Reetta mentions a trip she has taken together with her partner, the children will want to know who the woman is. On such occasions, Reetta will take the opportunity to talk about different types of families and about the importance of being happy. At that age, children are already quite discreet, and they also realise that even if their teacher was a lesbian, that would not make her a bad or a weird person.

The pupils' parents have never openly questioned Reetta's sexuality, which may be due to the heterosexual assumption. Reetta herself has never mentioned her being a lesbian, since "straight teachers don't make a point of their heterosexuality, do they". If the fact that a teacher does not discuss personal matters with parents is regarded as covering up, then that is what Reetta does. But if she were asked directly, she would not deny her homosexuality. She says she is very happy with her life, and that she wants this to show. For her, being a lesbian teacher is not difficult – if not all roses, either.

**Mauri**

Mauri is a class teacher currently working in the capital area. He started his teaching career in 1975 in a small village school, but at the moment he works in a large urban school. In his opinion, the best part of teaching is the social interaction and the fact that he can contribute to the children's growth and perhaps give them something to carry along all through their lives. In recent years, however, teaching has become more burdensome, particularly with the increase in domestic problems.

Mauri has led a homosexual life since his graduation. He did have homosexual feelings already in his adolescence, but at that time he tried to live as a heterosexual. He feels that today he is as openly gay as is possible for a teacher. In his opinion, he was smoked out of his previous job, even if the school never directly admitted to this. In his present place of work, Mauri has told a few of his colleagues about his sexual orientation, but the school being a large one, has decided to keep a low profile. He would like to work for SETA (the Finnish National Organisation for Sexual Equality) as a trainer, but feels his present work as a teacher does not permit this.

With regard to parents, Mauri says he would not lie about his homosexuality if asked directly. However, he is not prepared to discuss the subject in the classroom, and usually evades any questions by saying his private life is his own concern. When the subject of sexuality comes up, Mauri often compares it to the secrecy of mails: unless a person himself or herself decides otherwise, it is of no concern to others. Along Mauri's career, there have been a few instances where pupils have asked him whether he has a boyfriend, or written abusive comments about him on school walls. He has always handled these situations firmly, but without commenting on his own sexuality in any way.

According to Mauri, his process of discovering and coming to terms with his own sexuality has refined his character, and in that sense he feels he has a great deal to offer to his pupils. Belonging to a minority has given him the ability to see things from a wider perspective, which is something he also tries to teach his pupils. Mauri, just as many other teachers belonging to a sexual minority, has a

pressing need to excel in his work, since he knows that if his homosexuality ever came up in a negative context, he could be dismissed on the pretence of some work-related circumstance.

### Maija

Maija is a Finnish teacher who currently teaches immigrant children in the capital area. Previously, she has taught upper secondary students and adults. For Maija, teaching is not a calling but rather something she ended up doing. In her current job as a subject specialist teacher, she teaches a different class every lesson, which she says suits her very well. Maija is a bisexual living together with a woman.

Recently, Maija has found the lack of privacy distressing; teachers should not be seen in an off-license or a bar, let alone have homosexual relationships. Maija and her partner have a small child, but Maija is not the biological mother. Whenever pupils ask her if she has any children, she answers in the negative to avoid having to explain why she has not been on maternity leave. Obviously, this makes her feel very bad, which is why she is considering a career change.

None of the parents of Maija's pupils know about her sexual orientation. Most parents are Muslim or Catholic, and because of their cultural backgrounds, they may have a very negative attitude towards homosexuality. To ensure good co-operation, Maija has decided to conceal her family affairs. One of the pupils in the school has same-sex parents, and Maija has discussed openly with one of the mothers. Maija has, however, felt herself compelled to ask this friend not to share the details of her family matters with other parents.

As a precaution, Maija has told the school headmaster about her homosexual relationship. This ensures that if ever approached by parents, the headmaster will be prepared to answer by saying that in Finland, teachers are employed based on their qualifications, not their sexual orientation. However, Maija says she would rather change jobs than fight back in case problems arose.

Maija has not told her pupils about her family. Occasionally, the children ask about her private life, but she categorically declines discussing the matter. If someone then starts to speculate, she can only reply by saying that she never answers any personal questions. Nearly all of Maija's colleagues know about her family situation, because she was on parenting leave after the baby was born. But for the first two years, nobody at school knew about her sexual orientation. All but one colleague have reacted positively.

### Teaching and Openness

None of the teachers interviewed had kept their private lives completely separate from their working lives. Each had either personally told about their lifestyles to at least two immediate colleagues, or else the matter had come out in some other way. In nearly every case, the colleagues had reacted surprisingly positively. It would seem that colleagues are more open-minded than parents, whose reactions appear to be a cause of concern for homosexual teachers.

All four teachers presented in this article are in different stages in life. They do not appear to have much else in common than the fact that they belong to a sexual minority and have to deal with the

problem of combining work with their private lives. Based on the interviews, openness seems to be a recurrent issue. The interviewees have found varied solutions to the problem, and some of them are happy with their choices while others are still looking to change the situation. For a teacher, there is always something to reflect on – if not with respect to oneself and teaching, then to colleagues, pupils or their parents. Life is a long process of learning, and as teachers themselves know, there is no such thing as a fully learned teacher.

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## Marja Suhonen

## Closeted in the Name of God – The Status of Homosexual Employees in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland

According to the first ever questionnaire on the working environment within the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, published in April 2002, Church employees work in a markedly worse social climate than employees in other sectors. While in other sectors 10 percent of employees reported problems in superior-subordinate relations, the corresponding figure for Church employees was 40 percent. In addition, conflicts among the staff were twice as common as in other sectors. Discrimination against women also proved relatively common: 14 percent of Church employees felt women were discriminated against, while in other sectors the corresponding figure was seven percent.

The questionnaire did not include a question on sexual orientation discrimination in the workplace, but it is a widely known fact that the Church discriminates against its homosexual employees. All the same, the question would have been important in terms of illustrating employees' attitudes towards their homosexual colleagues. With no actual research data on the status of gay and lesbian employees within the Church, we will have to base our conclusions on official statements of the Church and on isolated incidents.

On Friday 28 September 2001, the Finnish Parliament accepted the bill on the registration of same-sex partnerships. The following Monday – that is, the first possible instance – on 1 October 2001, the bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland issued the following statement:

"The Finnish Parliament has accepted the law on the registration of same-sex relationships. In its statements, the Church has opposed to the establishment of same-sex partnerships as equivalent to marriage. The new law considers a same-sex partnership as a legal institution separate from the marriage. This is manifested in the form of the registration procedure as well as in the exclusion of the rights to adoption and joint family name.
The society must support such upbringing for children and the youth that strengthens the relationship between man and woman. For the Church, the marriage service and the blessing of marriage are one way of supporting this relationship. With the adoption of the bill, the Church will not perform similar ceremonies for same-sex couples. *With regard to its employees, the Church will require behaviour that is in accordance with its traditional teachings.*
Both the Church and the society shall respect the human worth of individuals with homosexual inclinations. In its pastoral counselling, the Church will continue to offer help on individual level with regard to situations homosexual persons may face in their life and relationships.
It should be noted that the newly accepted bill will not redress the legal and the financial grievances of persons living together for reasons unrelated to their sexual orientation." (Italics by M.S.)

For the employees of the Church, the statement articulates an explicit prohibition. They are required to behave in accordance with the traditional teachings of the Church, which according to the statement entails reinforcing the heterosexual institution (marriage). Although the wording is not explicit, the form of the statement implies that the Church will not allow its homosexual employees to register their same-sex relationships. The bishops' statement is not directed expressly at clerical employees, such as pastors, deacons and youth workers, but at all Church employees. In other words, the prohibition of registered same-sex partnerships extends to all employees, including office workers, cleaning staff and caretakers. In May 2002, the General Synod discussed a motion proposing that the Church explicitly deny its employees the right to register their same-sex partnerships. With regard to this proposal, the Minister of Justice, Johannes Koskinen, stated that although completely independent in doctrinal matters, the Church is not exempt from the provisions of the Labour Act.

The bishops' statement is a logical addition to the continuum of the Church tradition and practices of recent decades. In 1974, Seppo Kivistö, who worked in the Helsinki Vanhan kirkon seurakunta (Old Church parish) as a supervisor of youth work for boys, was dismissed on the grounds of his homosexuality, the reasoning being that the kind of work in question was unsuitable for a homosexual. This stand has since been moderated and readjusted. In their publication 'Kasvamaan yhdessä' (Growing Together), published in 1984, the bishops state that homosexuality is not a legitimate ground for dismissal, provided that the employee does not publicly discuss his or her sexual orientation and that the employee commits to the "teaching of the Church", that is to a life of celibacy. Seppo Kivistö did not abide to these rules, since he had made his homosexuality public.

Today, it is undoubtedly more difficult to dismiss an employee than it was in the 1970's, since officially, homosexuality is not considered a legitimate ground for dismissal. Nevertheless, I know of a case in the year 2001 where a pastor was dismissed on account of her being a lesbian. In this particular case, the decision was made by the parish reverend and the diocese bishop. In their view, the problem was that the employee in question lived together with another woman. If she had ended

the relationship or at least the cohabitation, she would have been allowed to remain in her job. As she sees it, she was expected to lie in order to remain employed. Essentially, she was forced to choose between her work and her relationship. In this case, the decisions of the bishop and the reverend were in accordance with the "official stand of the Church".

Regardless of the fact that the above-mentioned dismissal was in accordance with the official stand of the Church, it was in breach of the Labour Act. In order to prevent such incidents, the workers' unions would have to assume a more active role, since taking legal proceedings is far more burdensome for an individual employee. The Church youth workers' union has decided to "abide to the Finnish law and the ethical guidelines of the profession." As I understand this, the union does not condone discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation. I am not aware of the stand of other Church workers' unions on this matter.

Dismissal is the extreme form of discrimination faced by a homosexual employee in the Church. The Church requires its employees to "remain silent" and suppress their homosexuality. In addition to the threat of dismissal, the Church has other means of exerting its power and ensuring that its homosexual employees remain "in the closet". One means is to use short-term employment relationships. One pastor says he is only given fixed-term employment contracts, and describes himself as being "trapped". In practice, his sexual disrepute always either precedes or follows him. This ensures that the conservatives within the Church will block him from permanent office. He also says he knows other Church employees who are "trapped" and denied of career advancement. Several of them have decided to leave their employment in the parish.

Even if the Church in principle does not consider homosexuality as a legitimate ground for dismissal, it is often used as a ground for not employing a person in the first place – at least this seems to be the case with clerical employees. A homosexual person may well be denied ordinance, since he or she will first have to find employment, and then hold converse with the bishop. Ultimately, it is up to the bishop whether a person is ordained or not. The decision does not need any justification, since the fact that the bishop has deemed the person unsuitable for a church office is considered sufficient in itself. Such practice allows sexual orientation discrimination, prohibited in other employment sectors.

Although some bishops view homosexuality as a ground for denying ordinance, there are no universal guidelines concerning the ordination of gay and lesbian pastors. We do know, however, that even those bishops who knowingly ordain homosexual persons require that they conceal their sexuality, or live "in the closet". In practical terms, this entails that one is not allowed to openly live together with a same-sex partner – to what extent this rule can be monitored, that is another matter. In any event, the fact that homosexuals are subjected to fixed-term employment relationships certainly limit their choice regarding the form of family.

The Bishop of the Kuopio Diocese, Wille Riekkinen, has opted for a different stand on homosexual employees. Riekkinen does not consider sexual orientation a relevant issue in the recruitment of employees, but instead emphasises commitment to the word of the Church. The fact that he has clearly stated the Church should accept homosexuality as one form of sexuality indicates a gradual change within the institution. On the other hand, the conservative circles have also been active on the issue. One manifestation of this opposition is the complaint made to the diocesan chapter against Bishop Riekkinen. The chapter will now have to review the case and decide if Riekkinen's statements were against the Ecclesiastical Act and the Ecclesiastical Order. A similar complaint was

made nine years ago against the then archbishop John Vikström, who stated that living in a gay or lesbian relationship does not as such lead to damnation. He was consequently accused of heresy, but the diocesan chapter of Turku dismissed the charges. It seems reasonable to assume that the Riekkinen case will be resolved with an acquittal by the diocesan chapter of Kuopio.

I believe that the status of homosexual employees within the Church will gradually improve, although full acceptance will take decades. Let us at this point consider the analogous issue of the ordainment of women pastors. In 1948, the General Synod proposed a motion allowing the ordainment of women as pastors. To this end, a committee was established to consider the prospect of ordaining female pastors. In 1986, as a result of a long process, the General Synod accepted an amendment to the Ecclesiastical Act enabling the ordainment of women, and in 1988, the first women were ordained as pastors. The difference to the current issue of homosexuality is that gay and lesbian – not to mention bisexual – persons already occupy various positions within the Church, meaning that the question is not whether to accept the ordainment of gays and lesbians, since that is already happening. It is not a question of "ruling" on the issue of homosexual pastors but rather of the value assigned to gay and lesbian pastors and other homosexual employees within the Church.

It is difficult to say to what extent the Church monitors the sexuality of its secular employees, but we do know that even heterosexual cohabitation is frowned upon. I believe it is safe to assume that living together with a same-sex partner would present any Church employee with problems, unless the co-habitation was understood as communal and non-sexual by nature.

It would seem that most homosexual employees of the Church conceal their sexuality from both the employer and the colleagues (or at least most of them). In other words, most gay and lesbian Church employees probably live "in the closet". This in itself does not necessarily constitute a problem – after all, why should an individual's sexuality be a topic of discussion in the workplace? However, problems will arise if the "closeted" person is forced to use a lot of energy, and perhaps money, to keep a heterosexual front. Extra expenses might involve, for instance, having two separate flats instead of sharing one with the partner. One Church employee refers to the extra flat as a "bishop's box" that only serves the purpose of avoiding problems involved in official co-habitation and having a joint address. What is worth considering here is the effect that the forced denial of sexuality has on a person's performance at work. A member of the clergy cannot disregard his or her own personality.

In early 2002, the status of homosexual employees in the Church was discussed, among other forums, in the Readers' letters section of the Kirkko ja kaupunki (Church and Town) magazine published by the Helsinki Evangelical Lutheran Congregations. The letters illustrated the anxiety experienced by a Church employee forced to live "in the closet". One homosexual person, writing under the pseudonym "Anonymous", said that "if the employers fail to acknowledge the existence and the rights of homosexual employees within the Church, they will remain just as unprotected as before". As it is, the writer feels "unprotected" within the Church. The examples mentioned above serve to demonstrate that we are indeed dealing with a real issue and not with a few isolated incidences: gay or lesbian people who are comfortable with their sexuality face the risk of being discriminated against at work.

The readers' letters published in the Kirkko ja kaupunki magazine also included views of homosexuality as a sin. It is on this very view, rooted in the early Christianity, that the Church bases its repression of homosexuals and all other non-heterosexuals. For a religious person, it is obvious

that if homosexuality was considered a sin, the Church could not condone it, and nor could it allow its employees to be active homosexuals. If homosexuality was a sin, statements along the lines of the one given by the Minister of Justice would receive a very negative response from the Church, since they would be interpreted as orders to accept a sin. But even if the basis of the early Christian notion of homoeroticism as a sin is almost completely discarded by today's Church, the debate on homosexuality has barely begun. The fact that within the Evangelical Lutheran Church of today, homosexuality is rarely considered a sin does not signify the end of heterosexism.

In addition to the fact that the view of homosexuality as a sin still exists within the Church, there are also certain Christian circles aiming to "heal" homosexuals and convert them to heterosexuality. They believe that homosexuality is a sin and an illness, or at least a psychological disorder. While the "healing" is not part of the common activities of the Lutheran Church, some employees of Lutheran parishes have undergone training preparing them for the "healing" of homosexuals. We can only imagine the effect such activities have on the homosexual colleagues in the parishes.

What would happen to a homosexual Church employee who in the current situation decided to register his or her partnership? There is no straightforward answer to this question. Obviously, the employer should not take any measures because of the registration – a dismissal, for instance, would be unlawful. As I see it, the employer's reactions would be likely to vary according to the particular duties of the employee in question; a clerk would be less likely to be dismissed than a member of the clergy.

A case in Norway illustrates what can happen to a homosexual pastor. In 1997, the General Synod of the Lutheran Church decided that individuals in a registered same-sex partnership would not be allowed to work as pastors, deacons or in any other comparable duties. Therefore, when Pastor Siri Sunden registered her partnership, she was temporarily dismissed. She was later reinstated by the decision of the Bishop of the Hamar Diocese, Rosemarien Köhn. In this case, it was a single bishop who did not subscribe to the official heterosexist policy of the Church that made the decision.

In Finland, the outcome of similar cases would presumably depend on several factors. Firstly, there would have to be a General Synod decision stating that Church employees be prohibited to live in a registered partnership. This I find unlikely, since for one, it would place the Church in a collision course with the Finnish legislation. Secondly, the Finnish bishops govern their dioceses in a rather sovereign fashion, and they seem unlikely to agree on a uniform policy in the near future. In the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, the decision would therefore be made by a single bishop, just as it was in Norway. Thirdly, I doubt if any pastor or deacon would as yet be willing to register their same-sex partnership, since the fear of jeopardising their job and their entire future in the Church is bound to constrain their personal life.

Although the status of the homosexual employees within the Church leaves much to desire, I nevertheless believe that the situation is gradually changing for the better. For one, there is the group called Arcus that operates within the Church with the aim of improving the status of gay and lesbian people within the Church. Arcus concerns itself not only with the situation of Church employees but also with other people, such as non-heterosexual parish members. In its web site, the group defines its objectives as follows:
"Our aim is to support gays and lesbians within churches, to build contacts to church leaders, to engage in dialogue on the role and status of gays and lesbians within churches, as well as in every way strengthen the commitment of gays and lesbians to churches and their work."

Arcus has maintained a very low profile in its activities. This is partly a necessity and partly a deliberate strategy: since many members employed by the Church, they must remain "in the closet". Also, the group would probably not fare very well in the public forums within the Church, for the advocates of the heterosexist theology would be quick to point out that they are "living in sin", or that they are "heretic", and therefore not to be taken seriously but rather to be excluded from the discussion – and from the Church. As it is, Arcus attempts to change the situation by quietly operating within the Church.

Groups such as Arcus could not exist without a change towards a more positive self-image among Christian gay and lesbian people. But just as in the society at large, we can see differences between generations within the Church; those gay and lesbian people who have lived through times when homosexuality was criminalised or classified as an illness have had to go to more trouble to conceal their sexuality than the younger generations have. The stigmas of criminality and illness have no doubt created an atmosphere of fear, and it would be naïve to assume that the mere amendment of laws and classifications would rid the older generations of gay and lesbian people of their anxiety. The fear of "being caught" will still be strong among the older generations, and particularly among Christians – and therefore also those who are active in or employed by the Church. Certainly this fear cannot be alleviated by views of homosexuality as a sin. In my opinion, there lies an important challenge for the Church, or the Christian community: to bring the message of liberation to those who are forced to live in fear.

Another, and perhaps a more significant group acting within the Church is the Yhteys (Alliance) group. The group defines itself as "an ecumenical solidarity and support group that aims to uphold and promote humane and Christian attitudes towards sexual minorities, to combat discrimination against sexual minorities within the Church and the society at large, as well as to encourage matter-of-fact and respectful dialogue and interaction between all parties."

The Yhteys group states as its objectives that "churches agree to bless the households of gay and lesbian couples, that gay and lesbian employees within churches be allowed to register their partnerships without fearing repercussions, that churches take action in order to offer gay and lesbian couples the opportunity to have their registered partnerships blessed".

My understanding is that the Yhteys group is primarily a heterosexual Christian movement. While we might understand this as a sign of heterosexism, we must also recognise the significance of a group identifying themselves as heterosexuals trying to combat heterosexism – after all, those who fail to fit the sexual or the gender norms are very likely to be denounced because of what they are. As I see it, the current situation requires that the heterosexual majority be active, if the Church is ever to reduce or even completely abolish heterosexism within its own confines. Since the Yhteys group has several noteworthy Finnish theologians among its members, it is likely to gain prominence in the ecclesiastical discussion on homosexuality.

The General Synod in May 2002 discussed two motions regarding homosexuality. In the above, I have already mentioned a motion to prohibit Church employees from registering their same-sex partnerships. The second one was more positive from the point of view of gays and lesbians, namely a motion to draft a blessing formula for same-sex unions – one of the objectives of the Yhteys group. Those behind the motion dissociate themselves clearly from the bishops' statement issued in October. Their proposal is an attempt to maintain dialogue on homosexuality within the Church and

to make the Church accept homosexuality as a valuable form of sexuality alongside heterosexuality. Neither of the two motions led to a decision, and were therefore sent to be reviewed by the Doctrinal Committee. The Doctrinal Committee is a body that deals with matters concerning "beliefs and doctrine of the Church, principles of work of the Church, church-state relations, relations and co-operation with other churches, confessions and ecumenical organisations, marriage and family, human rights, livelihood and social security, religious education and schooling, oath, and other comparable questions". Based on the Doctrinal Committee's proposal, the General Synod will discuss the two motions anew in November 2002 at the earliest.

As I have already stated, the Church leaders do not currently have a uniform stand on homosexuality or the status of homosexual employees within the Church. But considering the starting point of regarding homosexuality as a sin, the current situation is rather tolerable. Although it will be long before the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland at least officially renounces heterosexism, I believe the situation will gradually improve.

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# IV HETERONORMATIVE SOCIAL CLIMATE AND ATTITUDES

## Marja Kaskisaari

## Professional Burnout and Gendered Structures in Working Life

Professional burnout is a complex challenge in today's working life. In Finland, the problem became widely recognised and a subject of research in the latter half of the 1990's. Professional burnout is

common in Finland to the extent that the government has, for their part, taken action to eliminate the phenomenon: The Finnish research and action programme called “Well-Being at Work”, a project initiated by the second government of Prime Minister Paavo Lipponen, has been designed to promote working capacity and maintain well-being at work (Työministeriö; Ministry of Employment 2001). From 2000 to 2003, several ministries, together with the labour market organisations, will be involved in the programme, and the campaign will be widely publicised both in the media and in workplaces.

Professional burnout is discussed on many arenas but often without reference to gendered workplace practices or structures. Yet, there is all the reason to ask in what ways burnout relates to gender. What do we know about how the gender/sexual minorities are coping at work? The purpose of this article is to examine professional burnout particularly from the critical perspective of the female gender, and to discuss the tools this may provide for the understanding of the situation of gender/sexual minorities. I am using the term "gender/sexual minorities" with a flash because, radically speaking, sexuality can be understood as a foundation of gender, and vice versa. Hence, it is not possible to talk about sexual minorities without the concept of gender. In practice, the term "gender/sexual minorities" in this article refers to gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, and trans people.

In literature, the definition of professional burnout varies somewhat. Generally, it refers to a condition of long-lasting emotional exhaustion, which develops gradually through a continuous overextension of personal resources (Maslach & Schaufeli 1993). It is often connected with long-standing stress and absence of job accomplishment (Cherniss 1993). Clinical psychology distinguishes three factors of professional burnout: chronic physical fatigue (physical symptoms of exhaustion), reduced professional self-esteem (lowered job involvement and loss of joy in work), and dehumanisation of other people (cynicism and inability to close interaction with others) (Kauppinen-Toropainen 1991).

Professional burnout and coping has also been defined in various self-help literature. Whereas the discipline of psychology tries to reduce the burnout experience into separate contributory factors, life-style and relationships guides look at the phenomenon in terms of a general crisis about life's meaningfulness, and talk about a loss of personality or identity. Burnout involves an “energy crisis”, a ”problem of spirituality”, or a “loss of authenticity" (Vartiovaara 1996; Hellsten 2001, 158).

Hence, it seems possible to define the experience of burnout at work as a crisis about the meaningfulness of one's work and as a negative way of protecting oneself from work-related problems and stress, which eventually affects the person's entire life through mental and physical paralysis, and alienation. There is hardly any critical social scientific research on professional burnout, and it is only recently that researchers have begun to view the problem from a more holistic perspective, that is, as a structural problem in working life.
There is some quantitative data available on the frequency of professional burnout in the Finnish working-aged population. According to some studies, it is more common among people who have been working for more than 35 years, and becomes more common with age: 14 percent of employees at the age of 55 and 56 experienced significant symptoms of burnout. New studies yet to be published, however, reveal contrary information: exhaustion at work is most common among employees between 30 and 35 years. A notable finding is that fatigue reaching the level of exhaustion (physical symptoms of exhaustion) is more common among women. There are also indications that exhaustion is more common in female-dominated fields such as teaching, banking

and insurance, in hotel and restaurant business, in health care and social work, as well as in agriculture and forestry. (Kalimo & Toppinen 1997.)

But even though sex is a commonly used variable in research, there are generally no accounts of sexual orientation or gender/sexual minorities. One way to approach the question how people of the gender/sexual minorities cope at work may be to look at what we already know about the causes of professional burnout and, specifically, about women's burnout. This approach is based on the recognition that women belong to a minority in working life, not so much with regard to their quantitative participation but with regard to status (e.g. women have lower pay) and opportunities to participate in decision making (lack of women in leadership positions). Like women, sexual minorities also belong to this "power minority". What pertains to both (conceptual) groups is that their status in terms of power is in very complex ways related to gender.

## Structural Violence in Working Life

The causes and explanations suggested for professional burnout within the various discussions may be divided into three categories: firstly, work- and organisation-related problems which create the conditions for hard work; secondly, problems relating to group dynamics and particularly to managerial relations, which create models and norms for excessive working; and thirdly, the individual personality, characteristics, and ways of behaviour which predispose the person to burnout. In the following, I will take a critical look at the individual and communal models of explanation to the extent they relate to gendered structures at workplace.

Feminine behavioural patterns have been seen to contribute to the fact that women are more predisposed to fatigue and exhaustion than men. Employees inclined to burnout are often described as conscientious workers who take personal responsibility for their work and extend their performance according to external need by, for instance, coming to work even if they are sick. The numerous life-style guides advice "perfectionists" and "people who underestimate themselves" of how to say NO and how to define their own limits. The principal target group of these seemingly universal "guides to assertiveness" is women.

The burnout discourse in the popular psychology has very much in common with another discourse also directed to women, i.e. the discourse on co-dependency. This discussion started before burnout was recognised as a problem, and it, too, relied on an explanation model of feminine and masculine behavioural patterns. Such explanation models are, however, largely based on stereotypic ideas associated with femininity and masculinity. In this line of reasoning, it is also arguable that those inclined to excessive work are employees with masculine behavioural patterns, i.e. those who depend on external recognition and emphasise performance in their work. Eventually, models focusing on the individual explain very little of the complex problem of professional burnout because they ignore structural factors causing exhaustion at work.
An examination of working life structures necessarily, then, entails a critique of interpretation models focusing on the individual. It can be observed that the degree of women's burnout is better explained by their status in the labour market than their individual characteristics. Workplaces in female-dominated fields are generally hierarchical. Women are allocated less independent tasks than men and have fewer opportunities to participate in decision making. It is, therefore, plausible to argue that women's higher risk of professional burnout has to do with qualitative differences in women's and men's work as well as with women's lower status in work communities.

The key elements in our definition of professional burnout are excessive working, non-accomplishment of set objectives, and the need to protect oneself in an overwhelming situation eventually leading to paralysis. In female-dominated fields such as nursing, both underachieving and overachieving are typical behavioural patterns under a constantly heavy workload. Both of them, together with too high objectives, can lead to burnout. (Cherniss 1993.) When the heavy workload and the mentally demanding work typical of female-dominated fields are combined with the lack of recognition and opportunities to participate in decision making, frustration is inevitable. Without intervening measures, the burnout advances and frustration gradually becomes an integral part of the person's work. Problems related to the objectives, the quality and the organisation of work are greater than generally admitted in the discussions on professional burnout. Indeed, it is possible to talk about structural violence causing burnout.

Jeff Hearn and Wendy Parkin (2001) talk about "violation" in reference to the exertion of power and long-term violence based on structural inequality. Such violation is comparable to physical violence. It may include harassment, bullying, and terror. Violence may be exerted in social interaction and take such forms as significant damage, insults, or transgression of personal boundaries. (Ibid., 17.) Violence directed toward gender and sexuality is often insidious and relies on implicit rules. The gendered structures in working life and organisations are complex: there is a gendered division of labour on both official and unofficial levels, there is a gendered division of authority, and there are gendered processes between the centres and the margins of organisations (e.g. male-set objectives in female-dominated organisations). Furthermore, there is a gendered division of responsibilities among the members of organisations, and gendered processes related to sexuality and violence (sexual harassment, discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation). (Ibid., 9-10.) All of these are indications of power imbalances, injustices that in the long run turn into violence and violations.

### Professional Burnout from the Perspective of Violation

A structural analysis of working life indicates that problems related to the meaningfulness of work constitute a fundamental basis for burnout. These problems are connected particularly with power imbalances, lack of control over one's own situation, long-standing injustices, hopelessness arising from lack of opportunities, and a sense of meaninglessness arising from repeated experiences of arbitrary situations. Problems of meaning and meaninglessness can have their origins in concrete violence, or in organisational structures that are violent and discriminatory against gender/sexual minorities. An example of a violent organisational structure would be an employer requiring too much work to be done within the normal working hours – typical, for instance, in social work – or an employer with principally discriminatory attitudes toward women and sexual minorities, such as the Church.

Violence against gender/sexual minorities may be called heteronormativity, for which the heterosexual gender dichotomy is the prevailing course of action. Heteronormativity works on both the abstract organisational level and the concrete level of workplace situations. In concrete situations, it may be as covert and insidious as structural violence. Concrete violations include systematic oppression, harassment, terror, insults, transgression of personal boundaries, and defamation. The means of violation are very ordinary and great in number: bullying, exclusion, isolation, name-calling, verbal abuse, reproaching, physical threats, belittling, emotional insults, etc. (Hearn & Parkin 2001, 17, 87.) Research supports the observation that there is a concrete connection

between the experience of bullying and insults on the one hand, and burnout on the other hand. This holds particularly true to sexual harassment and burnout (see e.g. Vartia & Paananen 1992, 28-29).

Victims of gender/sexual discrimination are mostly women (Husu 2001). Women also recognise various forms of discrimination more readily than men, and have personal experience of discrimination more often than men (Lehto & Sutela 1998, 28-31). Women (46 percent) suffer from depression because of workplace bullying more often than men (19 percent) do (Vartia & Perkka-Jortikka 1994, 57-61). Thus, women experience both burnout and various forms of harassment – which are strongly connected – more often than men. It is plausible to argue that in this regard the gender/sexual minorities have similar experiences to women. After all, gender/sexual minorities suffer from heteronormative harassment and stress caused by heterosexist violence. In the following, I will discuss how gender/sexual minorities might see the relationship between discrimination and burnout.

### The Status of Gender/Sexual Minorities in the Workplace

There are no Finnish studies on gender/sexual minorities and the stressfulness of work. We do not know how gay men, lesbians, or trans people experience exhaustion at work, how they cope with burnout, or what they see to have caused their burnout. But there are a few things we can conclude from existing studies. An analysis of working life structures throws light on how gender and sexuality are linked with power in different contexts, and with processes producing power.

Merja Kinnunen and Päivi Korvajärvi (1996) studied gendered practices in working life and concluded that a fundamental practice producing gender differentiation is, paradoxically, the simultaneous presence and absence of the female gender. By this they mean that while there is space for women in working life, it is a designated "female" space. Within this space, women work quite independently but do not necessarily have any administrative or decision-making power. (Ibid., 233-234.) The same idea may be applied to gender/sexual minorities. Their space in working life is also two-fold: On the one hand, working life welcomes employees who are committed to their work without, for instance, familial or child care responsibilities; on the other hand, sexual/gender minorities often have to keep themselves within their own space while the mainstream culture remains the only visible one in the workplace. Here, we are dealing with the heterosexual assumption that all employees lead a heterosexual life. This assumption is maintained and affirmed by explicit words, dress codes in line with gender, and by implicit rules and norms (Heikkinen 1997, 69; Kuosmanen 2000, 77). Consequently, Kinnunen and Korvajärvi (1996) suggest three levels on which it may be useful to analyse gendered working life practices: images, self-definition, and interaction.

Images associated with gender/sexual minorities vary depending on the workplace, work tasks, and the gender/sexual minority in question. It is important to note that these minorities can have very different statuses: compare a gay man working as an executive in an IT company with a lesbian working as a shop assistant in a machinery firm with a sexist workplace culture. Images of gender/sexual minorities are generally based on stereotypes and pertain to gendered behaviours. For instance, the masculinity of lesbian women is a rather common association. The use of images in the analysis of working life structures is both supported and questioned by a British study. According to the study, lesbians worked in low-paid female jobs less seldom than other women, and tended to

choose non-traditional male jobs (Dunne 1997, 127). In other words, lesbians worked in fields that are generally considered gender-neutral.

With regard to self-definition, it is important to look at the visibility of sexual/gender minority employees. Do colleagues know about their sexual or gender orientation, and what kinds of self-definitions are possible in the workplace? Before openly telling about their gender/sexual orientation people usually weigh the advantages and disadvantages of coming out, and consider both their need to protect their privacy and their need to be able to work with their whole persona. The most common approach – the tendency to avoid speaking about one's private life in the heterosexual space – may be seen as a violent form of self-definition. (Luopa 1994; Heikkinen 1997, 70.) In fact, violations and transgressions of personal boundaries often take place through silence or making silent. Having to conceal or directly lie about one's gender or sexual choices in life consumes a great deal of energy and leads to alienation (see also Kuosmanen 2000, 78). Studies on workplace bullying indicate that one of the most serious insults has to do with treating an employee as a non-person (Paananen & Vartia 1992). Such treatment may be a reaction to the secrecy of the employee or simply to the experienced difference of the person compared to others (see Luopa 1994). But gender/sexual orientation is not necessarily obvious in a person or his/her work as such. Therefore, it is easy to forget the existence of these minorities in working life, to remain silent about them, or to conceal their presence altogether.

On the level of interaction, we are looking at daily workplace situations. For instance, direct discrimination may occur when a company is recruiting employees. An example of indirect discrimination would be a decision not to employ a person as a sales representative because the person is known to belong to a gender/sexual minority, or when a person is, on such grounds, transferred from customer service to "non-visible" tasks. It is on the level of interaction that images and possibilities of self-definition become real. Different kinds of expectations and needs projected on working life become apparent in interaction between people. Indeed, in Finland, it seems that expectations and demands that were earlier attached to private life and family life are now increasingly projected on working life. The role of employment in people's lives has become increasingly important during and after the severe depression in the early 1990's: in 1990 half of the women considered employment very meaningful for their lives whereas in 1997 the percentage was 58 (the corresponding figures for men were 60 and 63 percent) (Lehto & Sutela 1998, 6-7). On the level of images, we expect "domesticity" from working life and possibilities of satisfying our need to feel connected and belong somewhere particular in the world (Sennett 2001).

### Gender/Sexual Minorities as a Communal Factor

One of the factors in the definition of professional burnout has to do with unattainable objectives of work: either the objectives are set too high or the means for attaining them are inadequate. People tend also to include social meanings to their work and its objectives. Even if the idea that important relationships and the security of the home could be constructed around work may be unrealistic, enjoying one's work and workplace, and commitment to work are nevertheless important factors in the analysis of professional burnout. If burnout means losing the sense of meaningfulness of work and one's entire life, we may ask the reverse question: Does working life provide such conditions and behavioural environments for the gender/sexual minorities that they can do their work with a sense of purpose and self-fulfilment? The fact that people are giving more and more of their

personal resources to work and expecting more and more from work indicates that they want to work with their own persona and sometimes even on the edge of their personal limits.

On the other hand, we may critically ask if it is right that employment is consuming a major bulk of human resources at the expense of other spheres of life. Investing in working life is considered meaningful, and it is reasonable to think that work is rewarding only if we can do it with our own persona. Therefore, in a deeper sense – as a result of cynicism, loss of professional self-esteem, and physical symptoms – burnout means forsaking our own persona and, as such, affects all areas of our life. The question is, are we forced to place employment first in our lives, or does work, indeed, provide room for the development of our own persona? Does working life accept people of the gender/sexual minorities as individual personas? I should like to believe that today there is more openness and tolerance with regard to these issues. There is also reason to believe that the Partnership Act that took effect in Finland in March 2002 will have a great influence in work communities: it is easier to introduce a partnership with an official status than one without a clear social definition (on the judicial outcomes of the act, see Juvonen 2002).

Belonging to a gender/sexual minority is not only an individual concern but constitutes an important social factor, which becomes defined in interaction in the workplace. It is a resource that is either used, or ignored and silenced because of prejudiced attitudes. In order for the gender/sexual minorities to commit themselves to the objectives of their work and avoid experiences of burnout-related alienation, we need openness, tolerance and flexibility in workplaces. All in all, we need to recognise that gender/sexual minority cultures are part of the workplace culture, and that it is the various gender and sexuality arrangements in the private sphere that form the infrastructure of public organisations (Hearn & Parkin 2001, 15). Gender/sexual cultures are products of negotiations in the society at large. They are not constructed in isolation. Therefore, the public spheres of power, such as working life, politics or economy, shape gender and sexuality more than the private family or partnership. This means that we need to include the power imbalance and violence in the different spheres of life as contributory factors of professional burnout. Similarly, an understanding of the status of gender/sexual minorities in the gendered practices of working life requires an analysis of structural violence. Violence, in turn, needs to be examined within a larger societal framework in terms of violations, insults, and transgressions of personal boundaries. This is necessary in order to address the status of gender/sexual minorities in an adequate way. To this end, I would like to suggest that the situation of gender/sexual minorities be included in the "Programme on Well-Being at Work" led by the Finnish Ministry of Employment.

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**Elina Lahelma**

## Teachers and Sexual Name-calling – Challenging Power Relations

"In my experience, sexual remarks directed at teachers are very rare [...] You might see writings on the walls, though: unpopular female teachers are naturally whores, and male teachers are homos."

The above is a quotation from a letter written by a North Karelian female teacher. It includes several points I have found in my study to be relevant when discussing sexual name-calling or other harassment of teachers in the school. Firstly, the writer refers to the fact that openly sexual name-calling of teachers is not commonplace. Secondly, the name-callers tend to remain anonymous or hide in groups. Thirdly, students may use sexual stigmatising as a means of expressing dislike for a particular teacher. Fourthly, there is the use of the word "naturally", which implies that such language is perhaps considered matter-of-course in the school. Fifthly, in sexual name-calling women are usually labelled as "whores", while men are called "homos".

In the present article, I will discuss the above questions through letters, telephone communications and conversations expressly invited by my column on sexual harassment in the school, published in teachers' trade paper Opettaja in the mid-nineties (Lahelma 1996). In addition, I will refer to the observations and interviews found in an ethnographic study carried out in a lower secondary school in Helsinki (Lahelma, Palmu & Gordon 2000; Gordon, Holland & Lahelma 2000).

### The Difficulty of Dealing with Harassment

Recently, there has been lively discussion on the increase of disorderly behaviour in schools, and the menace or even outright violence teachers are consequently subjected to. A questionnaire by Janne Kivivuori (1997) indicates that 73 percent of teachers have been subjected to insults, mainly in the form of sexual comments, by their students. However, teachers did not generally refer to students' comments on their sex and sexuality as sexual harassment, even if the comments had been unwanted. In the mid-nineties, the term 'sexual harassment' was not necessarily familiar or recognised among teachers.

Many of the letters I received from teachers contained strong reactions, anxiety, and occasionally relief over the fact that the issue was finally being discussed. In all, I received letters from 30 teachers, and was also approached by telephone, as well as in person after my lectures or during my visits to the schools included in the study. Most of the teachers who felt strongly enough about my column to contact me were women. Their accounts mainly involved harassment of female teachers –

themselves or their colleagues – by male students. Harassment had usually occurred in a public place. Typical contexts were the recess and situations where teachers disciplined students. Many teachers said these incidents tend to take them unawares. The female teachers had been subjected to distasteful remarks on their appearance, threats of rape, pornographic drawings and unwelcome physical contact. A very typical insult was to call teachers whores. One teacher wrote that once when she was riding her bicycle past a bus stop near the school, a group of students had pointed at her and called out "whore". She continued:

"The loudest one I knew well. Others joined in, and there was a huge burst of laughter. There were a few people around walking their dogs. Heads were turned. I felt paralysed to the core, but did not react in any way. Once I got home, I slumped and just cried and cried."
The teacher in question found it difficult to face the youths again or put the unexpected humiliation behind her.

The teachers' stories made me reflect on the role of sexuality in the school. In the lower secondary school in particular, sexuality is omnipresent. It is less pronounced in the curricular teaching and learning than it is in the informal interaction during lessons or during recession: there are crushes, teasing, sexual comments, name-calling, passing of notes and drawings. I remember a Home Economics lesson where the teacher used a word with a sexual double meaning and made the class giggle and repeat the word. The sexuality of teachers is considered a taboo, and therefore teachers often attempt to avert attention from their sex by wearing neutral clothing (Palmu 1999). According to Jukka Lehtonen (2002), young people find it difficult to see their teachers as sexual beings. Another taboo is sexuality in the teacher-student relations. These matters are not discussed in the school or in teacher training. In teaching material designed for Sex Education, there are no references to sexual harassment against teachers, nor against students. Dealing with problematic situations arising with students is part of teachers' professional skills. But when students use sexual name-calling, the set-up is not one of teacher against student or students, but one of male/female – whose sexuality is being showcased and questioned – against young male (rarely female). Such situations blur the power relations and thus make it difficult for the teacher to respond adequately.

### Homophobic Name-calling of Male Teachers

The male teachers' accounts, or the female teachers' accounts of their male colleagues' experiences, usually involved homosexual stigmatisation. None of the letters indicated that the male teachers in question were non-heterosexual, and it was quite evident that the young male students' motivation for the name-calling was not that they actually thought their teacher was homosexual. Homophobic name-calling is fundamentally about the construction of hierarchical masculinities, heterosexuality being at the top of the hierarchy. In some schools, homophobic name-calling is common among boys. Those who have noticed its power to offend may use it to insult their teachers as well.

However, this analysis is undoubtedly not the first to cross the mind of a male teacher suddenly being called homo by his students. The accounts in the letters suggest that dealing with these situations require more than average professional skills. A small-town male teacher, close to retirement, esteemed by colleagues and students alike, wrote about writings calling him a homo suddenly appearing on park benches and walls. He described his reactions: "A writing on the side of a sandbox very nearly came true: VIRTANEN GOES CRAZY OVER THIS!" (name changed). The completely unexpected and public nature of the hurtful incident, as well as the lack of means to

dealing with the problem, caused the teacher severe anxiety and feelings of shame he found difficult to overcome.

One recurring topic of discussion involving schools is the shortage of male teachers. In our research project (Lahelma et al 2000, Hakala, pending), we have analysed these discussions and arrived at the conclusion that – in addition to the speech that polarises gender characteristics and is often hostile towards women – there is a pervasive assumption that male teachers are necessary male role models and compensate for the absence of the father, especially with regard to boys. This male role model is undoubtedly heterosexual – a thing so self-evident that it is never explicitly mentioned. Male teachers who do not conform to the image of a heterosexual male teacher may be attached the stigma "homo". A 30-year-old teacher with children had the following experience:

"I don't consider myself an average (male) teacher in terms of my appearance, or my views for that matter. People usually think I'm a rock musician, artist etc. But with teaching I'm as strict as anyone, I am not the lax turn-a-blind-eye type. Once the initial curiosity waned, speculations, buzz and rumours of my homosexuality began to circulate among students. In the end, the name-calling and even physical assaults became almost daily. I was sneered at in the hallways, the bus stop and the schoolyard. Writings like "here comes a homo" appeared on my car, and finally I began to receive abusive phone calls in the night. There were a couple of those. I've found this whole affair very hurtful and offensive, since I myself uphold humanity and tolerance. I've tried to teach my students these values. This situation drove me so far as to even consciously change my style (hair, clothes) towards a more "teacher-like", greyer look, because I couldn't handle the name-calling. Situations where my privacy was publicly offended made me flushed, embarrassed and so on, and I felt like smacking the brat, but of course that would have been out of order. I had no means of defending myself. Even if I'm not gay, I didn't argue or try to prove my sexuality to these bullies – I refuse to submit to that."

As I see it, the homosexual label is used because it is an effective means of offending and challenging the authority of a male teacher. It is also commonly used among boys themselves. Some adolescents interviewed trivialised the word and said it does not necessarily mean anything. The power of homosexual name-calling lies in the fact that whether or not it is used to imply a certain sexual orientation, the name-calling always negotiates hierarchies between males. Masculinities are hierarchically organised in the school, and in this hierarchy, heterosexual masculinity is at the top. Whatever the intended meaning of homophobic name-calling in the school, it effectively manifests and maintains a social climate where non-heterosexuality is considered inferior. It is easy to see the deeply negative impact such a climate can have especially on adolescents who have a non-heterosexual orientation or are confused about their own sexual orientation (Lehtonen, pending). But being called a homo always presents a threat of sexual stigmatisation also for those young men whose developing masculine identity strongly relies on heterosexuality and its presentations. Therefore, homophobic name-calling not only hurts the object but also influences the entire school's gender culture by reinforcing heteronormativity.

Female teachers are more generally called whores than lesbians, although the letters did include some experiences involving the latter label. The whore stigma is the more commonly used against young girls as well (cf. Saarikoski 2001, Tolonen 2001, Aaltonen 2001). Non-heterosexual women are invisible – they are not considered a threat to gender and sexual hierarchies in the same way as homosexual men. Women are assigned their inferior position in the hierarchy in relation to men.

One purpose of sexist name-calling is to reinforce heteronormativity; it involves a woman's willingness to engage in sexual relations with a man.

## Teachers and Pedagogic Responsibility

The teachers' letters contained astonishing stories where even isolated comments by students had caused anguish. These experiences were described as "deeply aggrieving" or "hurtful and embittering". Some teachers had begun to fear certain places or experience problems in their own sexuality, while others had been compelled to change schools or seek therapy. Some letters showed the writers' bewilderment and embarrassment over such strong reactions to trivial comments by students, for a professional teacher should have been able to deal with such matters. The magnitude of such incidences is difficult to understand without personal experience. The following is an excerpt from a letter written by a female teacher:

"[A boy] from primary school had called a colleague lesbian, which offended her deeply. That same year, we had work counselling, and in that context, discussed the matter. I remember wondering why Taina took it so seriously – after all, the boy was only 7 years old."
The writer herself later became the object of "unfounded and outrageous talk", and that experience never escaped her memory. Of course, reactions vary from one teacher to another. Some letters contained stories that outwardly appeared similar to the above, aggrieved accounts, but the difference was that the writers expressed no distress over their experiences: "These things should not be taken too much to heart."

Although it is impossible to give general guidelines for dealing with such a wide range of situations, I am all the same inclined to suggest that these matters be taken, if not to heart, at least seriously. Teachers who had managed to cope with their particular situation told they had laughed the comments off or simply ignored them. A vocational school teacher wrote: "Should I as a teacher just accept it as normal practice that teachers are called pricks, or homos, which I was called as well." Should such name-calling be condoned between students as well? If teachers ignore comments directed at them, do they at the same time signal that students should not react to name-calling either? And if the matter is laughed off, does this support culture where offensive jokes related to gender and sexuality are permitted?

Most of those who contacted me thought that harassment should be dealt with immediately; swift punishment, communication to parents, note to the form masters of the offenders, and disciplinary talks are among measures many teachers find effective. Some use cases of harassment as examples in Sexual Education classes.

Incidents of students subjecting their teachers to sexual name-calling should not be seen as a problem of a single teacher or a student, since sexual harassment is connected with power. Teachers hold authority over students: they have the power to praise and to punish. This does not, however, mean that students are completely without power. Power is dynamic and contextual: according to the circumstances, students, girls or boys, can either choose to submit to the teacher's authority, to consciously and actively accommodate themselves to it, or challenge it. Students respond to teachers' authority in a variety of ways – and for a variety of reasons. In our society, power is intertwined with masculinity, and in particular with hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1995) that is superordinate to other masculinities (such as homosexuality) and to femininities. By turning the

student-teacher relationship into a gender-power relationship, boys can attempt to challenge and question the authority of teachers. By commenting on a female teacher's sexuality or anatomy, even young boys can – consciously or unconsciously – use masculine dominance over her by assigning her to a feminine position. The authority of male teachers can be questioned by attaching the homosexual stigma to renegotiate the masculine hierarchy.

Feedback from studies indicates that teachers should intervene with sexual harassment, be it against another teacher or against a student. Since individual teachers are often completely taken by surprise when faced with harassment, there should be discussion on the appropriate responses in teacher training and among the teaching community.

In this article, I have discussed the school as a place of work. The essential observation is that the objects of sexual insults, who in principle are vested with authority by virtue of their position and also have professional responsibilities towards the offender, may be quite unprepared for and overwhelmed by the situation. This phenomenon is also likely to be found in other places of work within the service sector.

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**Teija Mankkinen**

## Social Climate in a Male-dominated Occupation as Exemplified by the Finnish Fire Service

Characteristically of the public safety sector, fire departments are very masculine and homosocial (Lipman-Blumen 1976, 16) organisations. One indication of this male-dominance is the title 'Fireman', printed on the pay slips along with the title 'Fireman-Paramedic'. Despite the fact that the Act on Rescue Services has replaced the term with 'rescue authority' and the college training fire fighters is called the Emergency Services College, this gender neutral and, in terms of the current line of work, more accurate title 'rescuer' has not taken root in general usage. In Finnish, there are also other examples of male-specific terminology (e.g. with reference to fire fighters: crew, men) and the slang, often originating from the army, is also masculine and sexist by nature. It is only since the mid 1990's that fire services around Europe have truly awakened to equality issues. In Finland, there has been little discussion on equality in the fire service. Currently, the Finnish fire service employs one full-time woman fire fighter. This article is based on research carried out in the fire service as well as on personal experience. Since the year 2001, I have participated in the "Sankarista selviytyjäksi. Pelastajien urasuunnitteluhanke" (From a hero to a Survivor. Rescuers' Career Planning) project where I have been responsible for managing fire fighters' development meetings and carrying out interviews. In addition, I have done three months of participant observation in fire fighters' work shifts in 1999. Currently, I am writing my doctoral thesis on the on-going transition in the fire service and its bearing on fire fighters' occupational identity. In the following, I will give a brief account of the social climate in a fire department, followed by a presentation of research on the

fire service from the point of view of gender and sexuality. I will conclude by introducing some future-oriented points that I find pivotal in solving equality issues.

**"Of course this is work, but this is also living"**

Firefighting communities are partly residential communities and partly formal organisations. The communities are residential in the sense that the rescuers have friendships and family ties that extend from work to free time. On account of the atypical work shifts, fire fighters also regularly spend national holidays at work. The majority of Finnish fire departments use a system of 24-hour work shifts 1*. A 24-hour work shift means that during one day, the fire fighters both work and live together. As a result of both the nature of the work and the system of 24-hour work shifts, the firefighting community moulds into a close organisation, described by one fire fighter as follows:

"In a sense, this is like the army where we men train our social skills together. There aren't many jobs where men actually live at work. Of course this is work, but this is also living: the interaction goes so far, and so deep. Especially with the job being such that in the end my life may be in someone else's hands. There's something very deep in this job. That's what makes it special, that's what takes it beyond the limits. Wherever two fire fighters meet, that's the element that works kind of like a universal bond. There's no bond between all bookkeepers of Europe. Or between institutional cooks – that's not how it works. I mean, there's this element to the job, the fact that you put your fundamental safety at risk. And when your safety's at risk, that's something that unites you with others who experience it too."

This communality is particularly well illustrated in the memory services and collections organised in fire departments around the world (including the City of Helsinki Rescue Department) after the World Trade Center terrorist attack. One factor contributing to the intense communality within the profession is that it generally passes from one generation to another. In Finland, statistics show that firefighting is the second most common occupation to descend from one generation to the next, topped only by farming (Tolppi 2001).

The significance of communality manifests itself in studies: it has been shown that fire fighters' stress reactions are more contingent on their self-perceived ability to save face in the eyes of their workmates and the public rather than the danger posed by a fire (Inners - Clark 1985; Baigent 2001). This seems to suggest that in the firefighting community, the group is a more important unit than the individual (Stuhlmiller 1994). What is also interesting is that male fire fighters cope with the stressfulness of the job better than their wives do. This phenomenon has been assigned to the fact that fire fighters work in a closed community that is rich with its own symbols, norms and structures that strengthen commitment to dangerous tasks and thus serve as means of dealing with stress. Then again, the fact that fire fighters tend to hide their stress from other members of the work community, because displays of emotion are scorned, is considered to have an adverse effect on stress tolerance (Noran 1995). Within the community, the rescuers' social relationships go beyond mere acquaintance; new recruits are subjected to testing and probing for the purpose of getting to know them thoroughly. It might also be argued that communality is in part enforced by the nature of the work: one needs to know how the other members of the work community will act on the job, because one's own life may depend on their ability to act and think (cf. also Baigent 200). Since dealing with operational incidents or with patients always involves an element of uncertainty, a reliance on the community is a necessary precondition to successful job performance.

Dave Baigent (2001) capsules the firefighting community and its social climate into two concepts: fitting-in and getting-in. By fitting-in Baigent refers to the first "skill" any fire fighter must learn when joining a shift. Baigent defines the "skill" as an ability to conform to the community and to prove one's reliability. Once the recruit has acquired the "skill", the other fire fighters will teach him or her about fire and rescue work and the "common understanding" (the so-called protocols). Those who fail to learn the "skill" will never be regarded as "real fire fighters". With the concept of getting-in Baigent describes the act of entering a scene of fire and extinguishing the flames by using as little water as possible, even at the risk of compromising one's own safety. A good command of water is one of the criteria of a real fire fighter.

Overall, fire fighters have contradictory feelings about their work. On the one hand, they hold their trade in high regard and see the duty as an ultimate honour – in this sense, one might even call firefighting a calling. One of the allures of the trade is, in fact, the prospect of heroic missions, even if the heroic aspect is never discussed aloud (Baigent 2001). On the other hand, fire fighters' attitude towards everyday routines (duties other than the "heroic missions") is very working class (cf. Willis 1984): the work gets done, but with as little effort as possible. The routine tasks only have any true significance when they provide an opportunity to express masculinity, do something unusual or have a good laugh. This attitude towards work routines is closely connected to the attitude towards time; time is not something to be used prudently in order to attain some future goal but rather something that can be used to maintain the status quo, to be with one's friends. Time, understood in this sense, is being free from institutionalised time (cf. Willis 1984.) For some, however, these periods of inactivity at stations offer a day off of sideline jobs, and may consequently be devoted to resting.

Within the fire service, formal organisation exists mainly through subordinate relationships. Fire fighters often have disregard for the management and try to avoid contact with them. The role of the sub-officers is dual, for they have to consider the opinions of both the management and the crew and choose between being labelled either a poor foreman or a slave driver. Unlike sub-officers, the supervisors live among the crew and are part of the group and the community (cf. Pipping 1978.) In conclusion, it would seem that the higher the rank, the stronger the emphasis on the individual instead of the communal.

## A Look at Sex and Sexuality - Related Research on the Fire Service

The majority of research on fire fighters involve some aspects of physical performance. Only a few studies focus on the firefighting community (e.g. Kaprow 1991; Baigent 2001), although several studies (e.g. on stress tolerance; wives of fire fighters; traumatic and stressful situations) include descriptions of or references to the subject. Hence, there is not much research data available on the role of sexuality and gender in the fire departments. The few studies I found on the subject originate from North-America. In the following, I will give a brief account of studies on fire fighters' family relations (Fjelstad 1978; Hildebrand 1983; McCarty 1975; Martin 1980) and wives of fire fighters (Noran 1995; Zimmerman – Berace – Smith – Benezra 1988), women fire fighters and sexual harassment and abuse (Rosell – Miller – Barber 1995; Yoder – Anaikudo 1995; Yoder – Aniakudo 1996; Yoder – Aniakudo 1997; Cole etc. 1997; Baigent 1996), masculinity and gender relations in the fire service (Baigent 2001) as well as implementation of programmes against the discrimination of homosexuals (Koegel 1996).

Although firefighting communities have only been studied since the late 1990's, fire fighters' family relations and wives have been the focus of studies as early as at the end of the 1970's. These studies already hinted at the special characteristics of the firefighting communities. For instance, the number of divorces among the staff was found to be higher than on average. McCarthy (1975) stated that 45 percent of the fire fighters included in his study (sample 100 persons) felt that their work had an adverse effect on their marriage. According to Fjelstad (1978), those fire fighters with a good self-esteem, a stronger than average identification with rescue work, and a fewer number of children were most likely to succeed in their marriage. On the other hand, the divorce rate increased in correlation with the number of years in the service. Researchers have also focused on fire fighters' wives in order to, for instance, influence their firefighting husbands' health-related habits (Zimmerman – Gerace – Smith – Benezra 1988) or to obtain information on the effects of firefighting on spouses. According to Wexler and McGrath (1991), among others, the wives whose husbands were from 25 to 30 years old were most anxious about the separation and danger entailed in their husbands' job.

According to a study carried out in the United States in the early 1980's, 500 full-time women fire fighter pioneers (Floren 1981) considered their male counterparts' prejudices, scepticism, hostility and harassing acts as the biggest barriers to their career advancement. As recently as in the mid 1990's, more than half (58,2%) of all women fire fighters stated that they had been sexually harassed and abused, which indicates that harassment is a legitimate problem within the fire service. The study showed that the harassment and the abuse had caused an increase in stress and sick leaves. The fact that so many women had been harassed suggests that the fire departments had failed to successfully implement their programmes against discrimination or sexual harassment and abuse, and that the harassed women had been afraid to take countermeasures. (Rosell – Miller – Barber 1995; see also Baigent 1996.) Another study on sexual harassment and abuse focused on African American women fire fighters. The study, based on a questionnaire and an interview with 22 women, revealed that 17 of the women had been sexually harassed and abused. Generally, the harassment had taken the form of teasing, jokes and remarks, which according to the researchers manifests a hostile work environment. Furthermore, the researchers concluded that there was a clear connection between race and gender discrimination. (Yoder and Aniakudo 1995, 1996, 1997a, 1997b.)

In his study on masculinities and gender relations, Baigent (2001) defines fire departments as conservative and sexist institutions where the firefighting community excludes all individuals deviating from the norm (white, middle-class, heterosexual male) through applying various criteria that define the so-called "real fire fighter". These criteria include various skills involved in smoke diving as well as the ability to fit in the community and its social climate and views. A recruit also has to prove himself or herself to be a "real fire fighter". This process of fitting in ensures that the fire fighter standards remain unchanged. What was interesting in the study, from the point of view of gender studies, was that the male and female fire fighters' accounts of their work and its criteria were parallel. In other words, the women fire fighters subscribed to the masculine standards assigned to their work just as much as the men did. This finding might be ascribed to the process of adjusting: the women fire fighters in question had perhaps already cleared the adjusting period and embraced the "common understanding".

Baigent's study on masculinities sheds useful light on Koegel's (1996) research data on the implementation of programmes against the discrimination of homosexuals within the fire service and the police. In Koegel's study, only two out of six fire departments had openly homosexual

employees. None of the departments had more than 0,5 percent of openly homosexual employees, the median being 0,03 percent of the entire crew. According to Koegel, the departments did, in fact, employ many more homosexuals: the police department participating in the study had only seven openly homosexual employees, but at the same time more than 40 other employees were [confidential] members in a local gay and lesbian organisation. Koegel ascribes this phenomenon to the work communities' hostility towards homosexuals; the social climate in the fire departments was much more hostile than in the police departments. With regard to open homosexuality, Koegel found two explanations: either the department in question had a more permissive environment, or the persons in question had already proved their skills as a fire fighter by advancing in the fire department hierarchy.

**A Look into the Future**

All the studies I have read on sex and sexuality in the fire service seem to have one feature in common: they all describe firefighting communities as masculine, close and homogeneous communities that repress those who fail to conform or fit in the dominant norm by using means such as sexual harassment and abuse, a hostile environment etc. Since the same pattern is seen in Finland, Great Britain and the United States alike, one can assume that there are universal trends and not just local practises at play. For those who have faced or continue to face the described hostile behaviour at work, the situation is unbearable. But the situation is also unbearable for the entire Finnish fire service which is, with its current patterns and policies, unequipped to adapt to future changes.

Attitudes are, however, gradually changing. This is in part due to a shift in the scope of a fire fighter's work. While in the 1970's firefighting mainly involved extinguishing fires, the modern day fire and rescue work incorporates emergency medical care 2* and fire prevention work in the form of instruction, training and inspections. As it is, the qualities and skills required of a fire fighter have changed, which is gradually beginning to reflect in the recruitment criteria. The change in the scope and quality of firefighting coincides with discussions on how to combine the traditional fire service work, such as smoke diving, with such duties as patient transportation and emergency medical care. The point of interest here is mainly the relationship between the fire and rescue work, traditionally perceived as masculine and heroic (Kaprow 1991; Baigent 2001) and the care-taking work labelled feminine – in other words the clash between heroic firefighting and routine tasks, such as measuring a patient's blood pressure or blood sugar level, or escorting elderly people to the toilet; in hospitals, the latter are tasks usually undertaken by women. During a single work shift, fire fighters have to switch from patient transportation to fire and rescue work and vice versa, and this inevitably results in clashes. Hence, the relationship between femininity and masculinity has become a topic of interest, and dominant patterns are already being questioned in the course of everyday firefighting.

One major agent of change will be the foreseeable labour shortage that is already becoming evident in the fire departments. In all likelihood, the shortage will result in downscaling of the professional criteria, and with that, also a reform of the criteria of a "real fire fighter". In order to be able to manage its expanded line of duties, the fire service will have to learn to embrace diversity. The increasingly multi-cultural face of the clientele alone presents fire and rescue personnel with new demands.

What is truly the core issue here is well-being at work, a part of which is having a sense of command in one's work and of being equally treated in the work community. One possible solution

could be the deconstruction of the occupational identity, and with that, the social climate of the fire departments.

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1* The distribution of work among fire fighters is determined by whether the fire department is responsible for patient transportation or not. In the City of Helsinki Rescue Department, responsible for emergency patient transportation within the city, most men do both patient transportation (e.g. from 9 am to 9 pm) and fire and rescue work (e.g. from 9 pm to 9 am) during one shift.

2* Departments responsible for full-time patient transportation.

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# V WORKING TOWARDS A CHANGE

## Peter Dankmeijer

## Lesbian and Gay Emancipation in Dutch Schools

I will give an overview of how Dutch equal opportunities for gays and lesbians in education developed and what remains to be done. First, I will give an overview of general legislation, and then I will discuss the specific laws and regulations relating to education and schools. Then I will take a closer look at the current situation in schools and at the activities we expect to unfold in the next few years. Finally, I will come to a conclusion that includes some learning points possibly helpful for other countries.

In the Netherlands, homosexuality became more accepted in the late sixties and the early seventies. Thereafter, statistical research indicates a steady rise in more accepting attitudes among the general Dutch population. This turn towards more positive attitudes was mainly due to public statements of progressive vicars and reverends as well as publications of psychologists stating that the problems around homosexual people should be ascribed to discrimination and not to a genetic or developmental disorder.

In the mid-seventies, negotiations began on extending the General Equal Treatment Act to cover homosexuality in addition to gender and race. These negotiations were lengthy. One of the main discussion areas was whether gay and lesbian teachers should be allowed to work in a religious school. In 1994, the extended General Equal Treatment Act was finally adopted. After this battle was finished, the lesbian and gay movement started pressing for equal rights of marriage. The civil marriage was formally opened for same-sex couples on 1 April 2001. With this, almost all formal inequalities regarding gays and lesbians seemed to be eliminated.

However, some problems still remained. In the media, fundamentalist Islamic imams and Christian politicians made stigmatising comments, such as "society will fall apart if we accept homosexuality", "I understand why our young people get aggressive towards gay people" and "homosexuality should be equated with thievery" (according to the bible). These people were taken to court by gay people and their organisations, but it proved difficult to actually get them convicted for their comments. Judges often ruled that these comments were not actually hate speech but personal negative comments about homosexuality, and that although they did imply disrespect, they did not actually openly call for discriminatory behaviour of their religious followers. Disrespectful comments on other groups do not constitute an offence, since they fall under the freedom of speech. The above events triggered a debate on the tension between the freedom of religion and the constitutional rights of non-discrimination, as well as between the freedom of speech and the article in the Penal Code forbidding offensive behaviour towards population groups.

Another problem was, and still is, the practical application of the laws. It is one thing to adopt laws and regulations, but another to implement them in such a way as to include gays and lesbians. In the Netherlands, emancipation strategies focusing on specific target groups are rapidly being replaced by a "diversity" policy and "mainstreaming". The diversity policy combines the former target group strategies, but in practice the focus is mainly on migrants, with a special emphasis on migrant women. Mainstreaming is a term that refers to the strategy of shifting the focus of emancipation from supporting specific target groups to a full integration of relevant themes into main areas of policy. Thus, emancipation becomes a "quality aspect" of good policy. In practice, mainstreaming

often means specific attention to recruiting more women to management level positions. Some attention is given to migrant women, but gay and lesbian emancipation is usually disregarded in the mainstreaming strategies.

## Non-discrimination Laws Relevant to Dutch Schools

The touchstone for the General Equal Treatment Act was the debate over lesbian and gay teachers' right to wear a gay or lesbian liberation symbol at work, especially if they worked in a religious school. The final solution was found in the phrase "no discrimination shall be allowed based on the only fact of social preference". This means that if a religious school, prior to employing a gay teacher, explicitly states that wearing such a symbol is not in accordance with the school policy, the school is allowed to take disciplinary measures against or even fire a teacher who fails to abide by the policy. But even if in that specific case they were allowed to fire the teacher because of his or her deviance from the school policy, they could not fire the teacher on the grounds of his or her homosexuality. However, it is still unclear what this means in practice. For instance: how specifically should the school policy be formulated to give them the right to fire a gay teacher? Which forms of openness should be ascribed to the "the only fact", and which ones are relevant to the pedagogic view of the school? To date, there is very little jurisprudence on these questions.

Gay or lesbian teachers who feel discriminated against can go to court, but it is also possible to first ask a judgement from the Committee on Equal Treatment (CET) which was established as one of the tools for implementing the General Equal Treatment Act. The position and the rights of the CET have been under critical scrutiny by NGO's, because the committee has no formal power. Individuals and organisations can ask the committee for a judgement, but the verdict is not legally binding. In this sense, the CET is more an arbiter than a judge. However, if one of the parties decides to go to a formal court because they disagree with the verdict of the CET, it will be very difficult for the disagreeing party in the conflict to swing the judge towards their side in the case, for the judgement of the CET carries considerable weight in court. By now, practice has shown that not many "homosexual" cases are brought before the CET. Negative attitudes and ignoring and offensive behaviour on the part of managers and colleagues are often very hard to prove in a court of law. The legal term "only fact of social preference" is ambiguous to say the least.

In the day-to-day practice of schools, the more general laws relating to the work situation may prove much more important than the General Equal Treatment Act. These more general laws and regulations include attention for social and emotional safety as well. The most important laws are the ones concerning work situations (the so-called ARBO law) and the law to prevent sexual harassment. Both of these demand schools to develop a protocol indicating how the "safety" policy is implemented in the workplace. However, the laws do not prescribe a specific format for these protocols but only determine some general criteria. This gives schools the opportunity to develop a strategy that is tailored to their specific students and regions. The National School Inspection is required to monitor that schools actually develop and implement their protocols according to the law. However, if the management of a school does not consider homosexuality a worthy point of consideration in terms of the social climate of the school, they may altogether exclude homosexuality-related issues from the protocol and its implementation. Research shows that this is actually happening at the moment (Derriks & De Kat 1999). Thus, informing and motivating schools adequately on the need to include homosexual issues in their ARBO protocols becomes an essential strategy in promoting gay and lesbian emancipation in Dutch schools.

## The Current Situation in Schools

At the turn of the millennium, about half of the lesbian and gay teachers seem to be openly homosexual in school, but mostly towards their direct colleagues. They are seldom "out" in the classroom, and many head masters do not realise they employ gay and lesbian teachers (Kersten 1991). This presents a problem when problems arise, since it means they are often unprepared and may consequently react inadequately (Dankmeijer 2001). Conflicts generally arise when students get abusive. This may entail scolding homosexual teachers or gossiping behind their backs in a stigmatising way (Dankmeijer 1994a); Muslim boys sometimes spit contemptuously on the ground in front of lesbian or gay teachers when they walk by. When the school management condones this, the position of the gay or lesbian teacher becomes very difficult. Recently, a school "protected" its gay teacher, who was threatened by abusive students, by giving him the key to the back door of the school. This is a more extreme example of the ambiguous stand school management can take. A more common approach is to ask teachers not to reveal their homosexuality to students. However, this is often difficult, since in Dutch schools students often inquire quite directly about the marital status of their teachers. This is usually not considered rude or an invasion of privacy, unless the teacher is homosexual.

Especially in schools with a large population of students of non-Dutch origin, homonegativity abounds. The negativity is more prevalent in students with a low socio-economic status, in younger students (11 to 15 years old), in boys and in Moroccan and Turkish students (Vogels & Van der Vliet 1990). The homonegativity among Muslims has been taken up prominently in the Dutch gay press, especially after a Moroccan imam made some homophobic remarks on television. This media coverage created the impression that Muslim homophobia is the only problem in schools. However, in the past two years it was shown that a majority of the youth of non-Dutch origin is not entirely without respect, although they are not accepting either (De Vries 1998). A quick scan by the National School Inspection showed that about 25 percent of discriminatory acts against lesbians and gays involved students of non-Dutch origin (SDU 1999). This is not a small percentage, but not the majority either. Qualitative research carried out by analysing panel discussions showed that Dutch teenagers still have quite traditional views of gender roles and sexuality (Overbeek & Renkens 1998). These traditional heterosexist views deny the validity of all non-dominant views of sexuality and identity, thus creating a context of fear, denial and disrespectful behaviour towards gays and lesbians.

In the Netherlands, local branches of lesbian and gay organisations have been organising awareness sessions already for 30 years. By the mid-nineties, these groups reached about 13 percent of schools on a regular basis (Kersten & Sandfort 1994). The sessions were carried out by a large number of volunteers, who discussed matters openly with students (Dankmeijer 1994b). Towards the end of the nineties, these groups were increasingly barred from schools with many non-Dutch students for fear of violent reactions from students and parents, who might even take their children out of school (Van den Akker 1996). Because the Government allocates resources based on the number of students, the schools perceive the possible loss of students as a serious threat.

To develop an alternative to COC education sessions, the multicultural organisation Forum developed an educational video called "Burger Inn". The video shows a homophobic and racist conflict between a Moroccan heterosexual boy and a Dutch gay boy who work in a hamburger

restaurant ("Burger Inn"). The Moroccan boy is eager to date the Dutch boy's female friend, but ends up calling her a whore when she supports her gay friend. The video seemed to be a quite comprehensive effort, since it dealt both with homosexuality as well as sexism and racism. Disappointingly enough, only a very limited number of copies were sold. It may be that schools are too afraid to deal with the subject at all, or that teachers are not able to work with the strong responses the video evokes. As it is, teaching about respect and diversity remains a real challenge in Holland.

**A Look into the Future**

Recently, at the instigation of the gay movement, the Government updated the national gay emancipation policy (VWS 2001). The Government concluded that although many laws and protocols had been updated to achieve equal opportunities for lesbian and gay people, the actual implementation was still lacking. In many sectors of the society, tolerance seems to be reasonable, but it is a tolerance at a distance. There is not enough attention for gay and lesbian -specific problems and contexts. In some conservative groups, such as the fundamentalist Muslims and Christians, extremely negative attitudes towards homosexuality still prevail, which threatens the safety and respect towards gays and lesbians. This is especially obvious in schools. To sum up, the battle has until now been fought on a national and formal level of legal development, but the implementation on the grass roots level has been lacking. In the end, gay and lesbian emancipation is all about attitudes.

To focus the attention to implementation, the Government and many city councils initiated in support projects focused on implementation, on dialogue, and on attitude change.
In the education sector, five actions were planned: increasing awareness of schools on homosexual issues, making gay and lesbian safety and emancipation an explicit item in the monitoring by the National School Inspection, screening and if necessary improving school books in order to make homosexuality more visible, discussing gay and lesbian issues in key policy platforms and initiating school pilots in schools to develop models of good practice. These plans give a new impetus to school emancipation strategies.

**Conclusion**

Many countries look up to the Netherlands as almost a paradise of gay and lesbian emancipation. With this article, I hope to bring some nuances to this view. I do not wish to deny the fact that the Netherlands has a more advanced position in this area than many other countries. The Dutch Government is proud of this position and considers it an honour to defend and promote this policy among its international counterparts.

Because the situation in the Netherlands seems so advanced, other countries may feel the Dutch experience is too far off to be of benefit to them. With this, I would like to disagree. It is in fact possible for other countries to learn from the Dutch experience. One clear learning point is that the gay and lesbian emancipation is basically a question of an attitude change. Changing laws and regulations is an important precondition to equal opportunities, but in the case of homosexuals, it is not nearly enough. In the Netherlands, we have taken long to realise that developing laws and offering education by homosexuals to heterosexuals, as useful as it was, defined us too much as

outsiders. In organisations, we often worked against instead of together with heterosexuals. By starting with implementation, for instance through pilot projects on the grass roots level, other countries may be able to make a leap forward.

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**Marja Nykänen**

## University of Helsinki Measures against Discrimination

Discrimination based on gender, ethnic origin, sexual orientation or other personal qualities may derive from a variety of reasons, but the actual mechanisms and forms of discriminatory acts in the work community are often very similar. Discrimination can be either direct or indirect, and it can take various forms varying from outright physical violence to the creation of a hostile environment, or from discriminatory recruitment policy to seemingly just practices that have underlying discriminatory structures or operational cultures.

Since the year 2000, I have acted as the University of Helsinki Equality Adviser. In this article, I will give an outline of the measures the University of Helsinki has taken to prevent discrimination and to promote equality among its staff. My areas of responsibility include all matters concerning equality, but for the purposes of the present article, I will primarily focus on the characteristics of sexual orientation discrimination within the academia as well as on the various forms of anti-discrimination work.

### Towards an Equal University

Equality between women and men in higher education became a topic of interest in the 1980's. During the following decade, the Act on Equality Between Women and Men inspired almost all Finnish universities and institutions of higher education to establish Equality Committees in order to advance equality in the academia in a systematic manner. The discrepancies between male and female career development, female researcher's stagnating careers, and the existence of sexual harassment manifested themselves in several studies ("Naisten tutkijanuran edistäminen", among others; a study discussing the advancement of women's scientific careers, published by the Academy of Finland in 1998).

At first, the scope of the Equality Committees and the anti-discrimination work were expressly limited to the advancement of gender equality. On the one hand, this was due to scarce resources, and on the other hand to the fact that employers were specifically obligated to enhance gender equality under the Act on Equality Between Women and Men. It was not until 1995, upon the Penal

Code sections regarding discrimination and employment discrimination becoming effectual, that discrimination on the grounds of other personal qualities was addressed.

In the spring of 1998, a piece of news in the Yliopistolehti magazine concerning an assault on a foreign student on the campus area prompted discussion on the University's lack of a body for dealing with racism. As a result, the University Senate ruled that as of 1998, the University of Helsinki Equality Committee's scope of duties would cover all discrimination on the grounds of personal qualities, such as age, ethnic origin, religion, belief, disability and sexual orientation. Initially, the newly established Equality Committee greeted the amendment with heated discussion on available resources, and consequently set as its first goal to acquire allocation for a permanent post of Equality Adviser in the University of Helsinki. The lobbying proved successful, and the post was established in the year 2000. Owing to the new post, the University of Helsinki was the first university in Finland to be able to develop a systematic set of codes for preventing discrimination on the grounds of personal qualities.

**Non-heterosexuals' Experiences of Discrimination in the University of Helsinki**

In 1999, the University compiled a questionnaire asking the staff and the students about their experiences of discrimination. The questionnaire was sent to the various University mailing lists and to the students' organisations within the Student Union, and it was also published in the student and faculty/staff newspapers, including the Yliopisto magazine. Of the 41 people who filled in the questionnaire, only two (both men) found they had been discriminated against because of their sexual orientation. One of these cases involved a heterosexual man being subjected to inappropriate language and comments about his sexuality, which according to him were brought on by his "gayish" looks. In other words, his appearance and behaviour was construed as being "gay". The other man explained in the questionnaire that "[i]ndirect discrimination means that my homosexuality is OK just as long as I don't manifest it openly." (Raportti epätasa-arvokokemuksista yliopistolla 1999; a report on experiences of inequality within the University.)

Based on the small number of answers to the questionnaire, one might be inclined to think that the Academia is a pleasant place of work where discrimination is not an issue. One might also assume that sexual minorities in particular would find the University a tolerant and broad-minded working environment. But in the course of my daily duties as the Equality Adviser, my idea of the status of sexual minorities has come to change to the effect that I now see the answers – or rather the lack of them – to the 1999 questionnaire as poignant illustrations of the nature of discrimination against sexual minorities: the covertness, the seemingly tolerant social climate, and the difficulty of challenging the stereotypical gender roles.

In her doctoral thesis, Liisa Husu (Husu 2001) discusses discrimination against women in the academia. She refers to instances of hidden discrimination as non-events: there is no career advancement, no guidance, and no invitations to department social evenings. The same seems to apply to sexual orientation discrimination; if a person is refused a post or avoided by co-workers during the coffee break, this can seldom be clearly ascribed to his or her homosexuality. It can often happen that the person does not realise what is happening until hearing something said aloud – usually in the form of hearsay. Since discrimination often goes unrecognised, it is not considered an issue. The idea of the academia as the cradle of civilisation where everyone is cultivated, broad-

minded and sensitive still persists. This idea is also shared by many members of the academia, be they gay or straight. In spring 2001, I presented a draft of the Policy Against Discrimination at a lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans students' association, OHO ry, meeting and met with positive but genuinely surprised reactions. Those present at the meeting did find the plan a welcome addition to the University's anti-discrimination work, but none of them considered their sexual orientation a problem at the University. Consequently, I found myself slightly embarrassed at my efforts to press the students for opinions on what types of discrimination occurred in the University. The general opinion appeared to be that the university was the one place within society free from discrimination. In the course of my work, I have nevertheless come to hear quite a few stories of lecturers who seem to specialise in offensive gay jokes, of supervisors who blatantly announce that "queers and hippies need not apply", or of coffee breaks where gays and lesbians are not welcome. And there have been even worse cases of harassment, and even persecution.

The fact that the problem is easily denied can partly be ascribed to the seemingly tolerant social climate; gay and lesbian employees are accepted, provided they do not make their sexual orientation too obvious. As one of the men who answered the 1999 questionnaire put it, gay or lesbian people are tolerated as long as they are just exotic but unobtrusive additions to the work community or to a student party, or "ok for a queer". The tolerance often hinges on the very fact that gay or lesbian persons in no way manifest their sexual orientation and thereby test the tolerance of others. This is exactly the attitude I occasionally come across while giving presentations on discrimination; I have heard comments, often accompanied by an embarrassed laugh, that sexual minorities for one do not have problems in the workplace, since "we're not interested in what people get up to in their bedrooms". This indicates that homosexuality is regarded purely in terms of sex, and that the implications of sexual orientation to a person's identity as a whole, or to his or her daily life, are either ignored or denied acknowledgement. At places of work that are "tolerant of the invisible", gay or lesbian employees who openly talk about their families may face disgust, seclusion or harassment.

Just as in the society at large, gender stereotypes continue to thrive within the academia. The images of poofters and butch lesbians affect the lives of not only gay or lesbian employees but also all other members of the academic community. Despite the fact that the academia is often viewed as an informal community of eccentric researchers and bohemian students, the codes of dress and behaviour are still very much gendered. Those who do not conform to the conventional gender expression will eventually face speculation about their sexual orientation, since the conventions are primarily perceived as a means of attracting the opposite sex. The chain of thought is as follows: you do not look or behave as you should as a member of your gender, therefore you do not aim to please those you should aim to please, therefore you are not interested in those you should be interested in, therefore you must be gay or lesbian. This logic is virtually oblivious to the fact that people find different things attractive, and that many are attracted to unconventional gender expression regardless of their gender or sexual orientation.

## Anti-discrimination Work Requires Planning

The University of Helsinki Equality Regulations (2000) state that "the purpose of the policy and practice of the University of Helsinki regarding equal opportunities is to promote equality in the academic community and to prevent all discrimination on grounds of gender, age, ethnic or national origin, religion, belief, sexual orientation, disability or any other comparative grounds". The actual

implementation began during spring 2001 with the Equality Committee establishing a working party to prepare a plan against discrimination, which was to be the first of its kind in the Finnish academia.

The plan was built upon certain fundamental goals: Firstly, the form of the plan was to be concise and easy to read; the purpose was, after all, to reach the entire community, including those who were not already interested in the issue. Secondly, the plan was to give a concise and concrete definition of discrimination: its mechanisms, its various forms, its likely objects, and the appropriate means of dealing with it. Thirdly, the plan was to be structured so as to provide both the objects of discrimination and those responsible for preventing discrimination with a clear set of guidelines and rules for dealing with the situation.

In the plan, anti-discrimination measures are primarily validated in terms of human rights: everyone has the right to live, work and study as they are without fear of being discriminated against or insulted. Other arguments involve productive and economic factors: the University can no more than any other employer afford to let talented people waste their time and energy on defending their basic rights. The plan also quotes Finnish and international legislation prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of personal qualities. At the end of the plan, there is a series of attitude exercises presenting fictitious occurrences within the academic community, intended to stimulate discussion and stir the minds of everyone, including those who believe this issue is of no concern to them.

What was essential in terms of the purpose and practicality of the plan was that various experts, such as researchers and members of various interest groups minorities were consulted during the drafting stage. The plan was accepted by the University Senate in September 2001 and subsequently published in leaflet form containing the information in Finnish, Swedish and English. All departments were provided with a poster that includes the main contents of the policy as well as the address of the University's equal opportunities web site.

**From Theory to Practice – the Plan and How to Implement It?**

Without a collective plan, anti-discrimination work can be difficult, but without allocated resources it is virtually impossible. The Helsinki University Policy Against Discrimination states in eight different contexts that every University employee or student is responsible for behaving in a non-discriminatory and respectful manner. This in itself is not sufficient. There must also be a party responsible for ensuring that the entire work community commits to promoting equality and combatting structural discrimination. Furthermore, there must be an impartial body where cases of discrimination can be reported. The University of Helsinki has an Equality Adviser expressly appointed for the purpose, but the duties can naturally be assigned to some other personnel management official.

Increasing awareness is an essential aspect of anti-discrimination work. The University of Helsinki has some 10 000 employees and 30 000 registered students, which can prove challenging in terms of ensuring the flow of information. In 2001, each unit of the University was obligated to appoint a contact person for equality affairs and to establish a mailing list for communicative purposes; these mailing lists have since proved an easy means of disseminating information on training seminars, interesting lectures and projects. The contact persons for equality are also responsible for referring those interested in equality issues, or those suspecting discrimination, to the Equality Adviser. In

addition to dealing with these, the duties of the Equality Adviser include staff training, lecturing for superiors and reporting officials, visiting departments and handling external communication.

In 2001, the University of Helsinki participated in a pilot project of the EU-financed "Be Equal, Be Different" diversity training. Due to the participants' lack of time, the two-day training had to be reduced to only one day – an example that illustrates the difficulty of accommodating training schedules to the hectic working life. It is important that the employer be sufficiently committed to supporting employees in anti-discrimination work and training.

## Future Prospects

At the time of this article, the University of Helsinki has completed its first year of active work against discrimination based on other qualities than gender, and the actual plan has existed for some six months. At this stage, it is yet somewhat premature to look back and assess the results or even point out major problems.

Outside the University, the Policy Against Discrimination has created a lot of interest. Many institutions of higher education as well as various other places of work have invited me to present the plan, and several newspapers have also covered the matter. Surprisingly enough, feedback from within the University itself has been quite scarce. A few people have contacted me to criticise the fact that the University has taken trouble over stating the obvious, while others have criticised the selection of groups included in the plan. The vast majority of comments have, however, been positive. Many have pointed out that as educators of future experts, universities – among other institutions of education – must pay special attention to their practises and social climate. Judging from the feedback, it seems that the mere existence of a University anti-discrimination plan is considered a radical reform that will be instrumental in taking the University towards openness and diversity. Whether it will be painful to integrate the guidelines and obligations into the daily routines of the various University departments remains to be seen – after all, attitudes are slow to change. Nevertheless, I believe that a clear indication of the employer's commitment to the principle of equal treatment will encourage employees who belong to a minority group to defend their rights and, eventually, make people with negative attitudes reconsider their stands.

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**Elisabet Qvarford**

## The Union Goes Gay

In August 2001, the Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees (TCO) participated for the first time in the Stockholm Pride with their own tent in the festival park. In doing so, TCO made history. Never before had a Swedish trade union so openly given its support and expressed its commitment to its gay, lesbian and bisexual members.

TCO consists of 19 affiliated trade unions, and unites 1.3 million Swedish white-collar workers from all areas of society. It has no party affiliations, and its views are based on fundamental democratic values. The objective of TCO is to give professional and highly educated people a voice in matters of occupational safety and welfare at work. The members of the TCO unions work in a wide range of fields, e.g. in industry and information technology, in trade and services, at hospitals and schools, for the municipalities and the state, in the media, at pharmacies, banks and insurance companies, for the police, the defence forces and the customs, and as actors and actresses at the

theatre. Over 60 percent of our members are women, and approximately half of all members are employed by the private sector, and the other half by the public sector.

The road to the actual participation of TCO in the Stockholm Pride was long. Until quite recently, the Swedish trade union movement has been more or less avoiding issues having to do with sexual orientation in working life. "What people do in their bedrooms is not the business of bosses or colleagues", has probably been the reasoning by many. Indeed, it is a common misconception in many sectors of society – working life being no exception – that sexual orientation has only to do with sex. This is why discussing issues concerning sexual orientation has been more difficult in trade unions than discussing, for instance, gender equality or ethnic discrimination.

In spring 1999, Sweden passed a law prohibiting discrimination in working life on the basis of sexual orientation. It took, however, two years for TCO to even bring out an information brochure defining the responsibilities the unions now had in the battle against the discrimination of gay, lesbian and bisexual people. But, actually, the story starts with a debate article.

In February 2001, we came up with the idea that TCO should publish a debate article in connection with the Stockholm Pride in August. At the time, we were preparing a large national survey, called the TCO Barometer, so it seemed well in place to include questions on attitudes toward gay and lesbian people at work. These questions dealt with such issues as "To what extent do you think gay and lesbian people are advantaged or disadvantaged in working life?", or "How do you feel about having a gay man or a lesbian woman as your nearest colleague or superior?"

We then decided to make an information brochure for the union representatives about the new anti-discrimination law. Once we had a brochure and a debate article in the making, we decided to go even further and set up our own tent in the Pride Festival, as well as organise a seminar on the trade unions' responsibilities with regard to discrimination based on sexual orientation. At the Stockholm Pride, which takes place yearly at the beginning of August, the actual festival area is reserved for the paying guests. Every year approximately 8000 tickets are sold to this "Prideparken" area. Besides stages and restaurants, there are a number of tents in the park where various associations, organisations and political parties can present themselves and their activities. We thought it was more than appropriate that a trade union organisation were there, to show our solidarity to our gay, lesbian and bisexual members.

After some debate, the TCO leadership agreed that this was a good idea. In any case, it would be a new way to reach out to our present and prospective members. The idea was, then, presented to the TCO Board, consisting of the Chairpersons of all member unions, who gave their blessing to the project.
A week before the Stockholm Pride we learned that Wanja Lundby-Wedin, the Chairperson of the Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO) (blue-collar workers), would be giving the opening speech at the festival. Clearly, the very focus of the Stockholm Pride in 2001 would be on issues dealing with working life.

On the 1st of August, the opening day of the Stockholm Pride, the debate article by the TCO Chairperson Sture Nordh was published in Aftonbladet, the largest newspaper of the country. In his article, Mr. Nordh presented the questionnaire we had carried out earlier in spring. The results of the questionnaire showed that almost half of the total of 1400 respondents, i.e. 46 percent, were of the opinion that gay men and women were disadvantaged in working life. Obviously, being gay or

bisexual is hardly considered a merit in today's working life climate. As high as 30 percent of the male respondents had a negative attitude toward working with a gay man. In his article, Sture Nordh wrote further that even if the situation of gay, lesbian and bisexual people in working life has been a largely ignored and, perhaps, a tabooed issue in the trade unions, now the times of silence would be over.

Our tent turned out to be one of the most visited ones at the Pride Festival. I and my colleagues were received very positively; much more so than we had experienced as representatives at other festivals and congresses. We were able to inform visitors about trade union activities and tell young people about TCO and the purpose of unions. We could see that people were both curious and delighted that we were there.
One of the attractions in our tent was a small questionnaire on the situation of gay, lesbian and bisexual people in working life, directed to the festival visitors. Nearly 500 people responded to the questionnaire, and the results will be published at the Stockholm Pride 2002.

The seminar was similarly a success. Approximately 60 interested people came to a Friday luncheon at the Södermalm school to discuss the role of unions in discrimination issues regarding gay and lesbian people. TCO was represented at the luncheon by Inger Efraimsson, the Chairperson of the Swedish union for civil servants and clerical staff (SKTF).

The Pride Project turned out to be one of the most widely covered TCO activities in the media in 2001. We collected over 200 press cuttings dealing with the project. In comparison, the TCO Congress held in the same year – the publicity of which we worked very hard for – ended up getting 198 press cuttings.
During the Pride Festival, TCO was contacted by Gunnar Svensson, the Director of the consulting company Integratia konsult. He introduced an idea for an Equal project, called Normgivande mångfald or Normgiving Diversity, with the objective of improving attitudes toward gay and lesbian people within the Swedish Police, the Armed Forces, and the Church. Three weeks before the application deadline, TCO sat down with the Chairpersons of the three member unions the project would involve. Eventually, all parties were in favour of the idea, and the application was turned in. In mid November 2001, we were given green light from the Swedish ESF Council, and could start working on the first stage of the project.

The idea of the project Normgiving Diversity is to provide a forum for employers, trade unions and ideological organisations to work together in the battle against discrimination based on sexual orientation.
Our project focuses on the situation within the Church, the Police, and the Armed Forces, i.e. within institutions which all of them have a clearly norm-giving function in society.
In order to fight homophobia and discrimination, we will first find out what the situation looks like within the fields and workplaces participating in the project. To this end, we will be conducting studies parallel to organising programmes that will promote awareness and competence in issues relating to sexual orientation.

The research part of our project will include an extensive account of research already available, as well as carrying out our own attitudinal studies, surveys and analysis of the organisations involved. We will also do research on norm-building and the role of the participating organisations in norm-building processes. Furthermore, tools and materials will be developed for training and information purposes, and training will be provided for both union and employer representatives. While looking

inside the organisations, we will also be reaching out to the society at large: Among other things, we will organise seminars, influence politics and structures, and continue to participate in the Stockholm Pride in the coming years.

The project Normgiving Diversity will be carried out in co-operation with several other Equal Projects: with another Swedish project called Homosexuals and Bisexuals in the Care System, with the Finnish project Sexual and Gender Minorities at Work, and the Dutch project Enabling Safety for Lesbian and Gay Teachers. The ultimate goal of our project is to increase openness in the TCO organisations, in working life, as well as in the society at large, on issues dealing with discrimination and sexual orientation. We wish to promote plurality in working life, so that the competence and possibilities of all individuals will come into their own.

The following parties are presently involved in Normgiving Diversity:

TCO
Integratia konsult

Swedish National Police Board
Union of Swedish Policemen
The trade union of state civil servants

Swedish Armed Forces
The Swedish Union of Defence Employees
Union of Swedish Officers
SEKO-försvar, the trade union of civil employees in defence and the defence industry
SACO-försvar, the trade union of academic employees in defence

Riks-EKHO, the Association of Christian Homosexual and Bisexual Organisations
The federation of congregations, the Church of Sweden
The trade union of academic employees in the Church
SKTF, the trade union of municipal civil servants and clerical staff

Gunnar Svensson of Integratia konsult will be coordinating the project.

As already mentioned, the project Normgiving Diversity will work closely with the other Swedish Equal Project "Homosexuals and Bisexuals in the Care System". In this project, the RFSL, the Swedish Federation for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Rights, will work together with the Federation of Municipalities and the Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO), with the objective of changing attitudes toward gay and bisexual people working in elderly and child care.

The involvement of TCO in the project Normgiving Diversity has given more visibility to our work on attitudinal change. Our Trade Union College will include relevant teaching material in their programmes. We have been holding press conferences dealing with the project and been in the TV news several times. Moreover, the TCO Chairperson Sture Nordh gave a speech to the participants of the RFSL Congress in March 2002. He pointed out that even though there is still not enough knowledge or competence within the trade unions in these matters, instead of a non-issue, sexual orientation is becoming an issue that the TCO member unions can no longer ignore.

At the RFSL Congress, Sture Nordh was awarded the Allan Hellman (the founder of the RFSL) Award. The award is given to a person who has successfully and in the spirit of Allan Hellman been promoting sexual equality in the society during the preceding year. According to the motives for giving the award, TCO had, through its involvement in the project Normgiving Diversity during the course of the year, been in the frontline in battling discrimination against gay and lesbian people in working life.

I have personally witnessed that the gay, lesbian and bisexual members of the various TCO unions are well aware of the fact that TCO is working on issues of great importance to them. On one spring day in 2002, I was sitting at a lunch table with three middle-aged lesbian women. When I told them that I worked for TCO, they commented very positively the fact that TCO is engaging itself in issues of sexual orientation. Our work meant a lot for them. It is this kind of feedback that makes me moved and happy, and affirms that our work with these issues is useful and meaningful. A work that is only beginning.

**Jukka Lehtonen**

## Toward Sexual Equality in Working Life

I would like to summarise the contents of this book in three major points and facts of reality. Firstly, there are many kinds of gay, lesbian, bisexual and trans people working in many kinds of fields, workplaces and working environments. Secondly, people who belong to the sexual and gender minorities are discriminated against at work and when seeking work. The many workplace practices defining gender and sexuality often put lesbians, gay men, bisexual and trans people in a disadvantage. In other words, sexuality and gender matter at work. And thirdly, labour market organisations, employers and politicians who design and make decisions about labour laws have all forgotten the existence of sexual and gender minorities and been blind to discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation. Clearly, something needs to be done to change this.

To prevent such injustice and to open the eyes to the plurality of sexuality and gender in working life, we have started an Equal Community Initiative Project called "Sexual and Gender Minorities at Work". The project was launched in May 2002, preceded by a six-month planning phase. It is based in the Department of Sociology at the University of Helsinki. The two other project partners are STAKES, the National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health, and SETA, the Finnish organisation for sexual equality. The idea is to co-operate with teachers' trade union organisations and educational authorities, as well as cities and municipalities, in which we will carry out pilot projects. Our project is funded by the Finnish Ministry of Employment and the European Social Fund, and it will run until spring 2004. In the Finnish context, the project constitutes the first large-scale attempt to change attitudes toward sexual orientation in working life.

We will co-operate with two Swedish Equal Projects and one Dutch Equal Project in an attempt to contribute to each other's work. Eventually, we hope to be able to mainstream good practices emerging from the projects within the European Union at large. The transnational co-operation agreement is called "Equal Sexualities at Work", and it includes the design and implementation of a joint multimedia programme. The purpose of the multimedia programme is to improve working life practices and influence Trans-European organisations addressing working life issues. The Dutch partner is responsible for the secretarial duties within the transnational co-operation.

The Dutch project is titled "Enabling Safety for Lesbigay Teachers". The partners in this project include the Dutch lesbian and gay organisation COC, the Dutch Teachers' Trade Union, and authorities within education and training. The main purpose of the project is to improve the situation of lesbian, bisexual and gay teachers. The two Swedish projects are called "Homosexuals and Bisexuals in the Care System" and "Normgiving Diversity". The first one endeavours to improve the situation of those working within childcare and elderly care – all female-dominated fields – by looking at problems from a gay and lesbian perspective. Partners co-operating in this project are the Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights (RFSL), the Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO), and the Swedish Federation of Municipalities. The second Swedish project works together with the Lutheran Church of Sweden, as well as with employees, employers and various organisations within the Swedish Police and the Armed Forces. Elisabet Qvarford presents the project in more detail in the previous article.

**Background Research**

As mentioned several times in this book, there are hardly any studies on the situation of sexual and gender minorities in the Finnish working life. Consequently, research constitutes a major part of our project “Sexual and Gender Minorities at Work". A questionnaire will be carried out on the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people in working life. We will conduct interviews with several special groups to get an idea of the range of situations and problems, and to learn about existing good practices in working life for purposes of mainstreaming.

The questionnaire will involve 500-1000 lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people. We will collect information on topics such as career and occupational choices, training, job-seeking situations, discrimination at work, safety and health care at work, personal relations at work, workplace practices, etc. The questionnaire form will be obtainable in the Internet, and it will also be sent to members of local SETA organisations and distributed at gay events and restaurants. On the basis of the questionnaire, we will choose special groups for theme interviews. The preliminary plan is to interview, among others, unemployed people and non-heterosexual adolescents. A special focus will also be on trans people to include their perspective on working life. Moreover, we will interview lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender teachers, as well employees working in traditionally male-dominated fields, such as the Police and the Defence Forces, and in traditionally female-dominated fields, such as nursing and caring. The number of interviewees in each special group will range from five to fifteen. The purpose of the theme interviews is to deepen the information provided by the questionnaire, and to help us to understand the experiences and meanings connected with the daily working life situations of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people.

Research results will be published as we progress in our analysis of the data, and the final results will be compiled in a book and published in 2004. The results will be used for purposes of training and information within the project, and for developing a model for change in educational materials and working life. The analysis of the data will be carried out in collaboration with our transnational partners. The responsible leader of the research project is researcher Kati Mustola.

## Pilot Training Project for Teachers

Along with information activities, we will use training as the key means to change the ethos in workplaces in a way that sexual and gender minorities should feel better included in their work communities. With the help of research and co-operation on both the national and transnational levels, we will design a pilot training programme targeted to urban schools. The pilot programme will serve the purpose of developing teaching material and a model for change in discriminatory workplace practices. We will also collect information on useful training methods and ideas. The teaching material and the model for change will be published in the project web pages and partly on CD-ROM.

The pilot training programme will focus on the school and educational sector and aim at improving the situation of gay and lesbian teachers in Finland. Experiences and ideas emerging from the programme will be used in the design of teaching and information materials as well as a model for change. The pilot programme will be carried out in co-operation with cities and municipalities, the

main partners being schools and educational development service units. The idea is to involve representatives of all levels of the educational system: teachers, directors, schools as work communities, cities, teachers' trade union organisations, teacher training colleges, as well as the National Board of Education and the Ministry of Education. In co-operation with the Dutch Equal Project, we will develop an additional pilot project, which involves an analysis of employee relations in one or two schools, including a process for change.

There are several reasons for choosing teachers as the major target professional group for our training pilot programme. First of all, there is the assumption that highly educated professionals, teachers in particular, are motivated and interested in developing their work. Secondly, from the perspective of sexual and gender minorities, teachers are a special group not only because they deal with children and adolescents but also because the suitability of gay and lesbian teachers as role models has often been questioned. Furthermore, teachers constitute a large professional group, and there are both men and women working in the field. Teachers participating in the pilot project are likely to spread the information to other groups, such as teacher students or members of other professions and occupations. The impact on teachers will also be indirectly reflected on pupils. An additional positive factor is that Finnish gay and lesbian teachers have recently begun to organise themselves. Otherwise joint action has been taken by social and health care workers as well as church employees. Finally, teachers are a good target group for training that not only deals with employee matters but also addresses sexual and gender minority issues generally. Since our Dutch project partner focuses on improving the status of lesbian, gay and bisexual teachers, co-operation with their project will be useful.

In spring 2003 we will hold a training seminar in one or more of the cities/municipalities participating in the pilot project. The seminar will be open for all people from around the country interested in improving the situation of sexual and gender minority teachers. At the seminar, participants will have an opportunity to develop ideas for the pilot project and a model for change in the workplace. In 2003, there will be three training seminars. With the help of a variety of methods and experts at the seminars, we will develop the final draft for a model for change in the workplace. The purpose of the model is to help sexual and gender minority people as well as other members of a work community in coping at work and to improve the employment possibilities for gay, lesbian, bisexual and trans people. The training seminars will be organised together with the educational development service unit of the city/municipality. Each seminar will have approximately 50 participants.

Along with training, we will carry out a pilot project dealing with "change in a work community" in one or two schools. All members of the work community will participate in the project, i.e. approximately 30 people per school. The project consists of two stages. Firstly, we will offer training to all interested teachers within the city/municipality. Secondly, by following the example of our Dutch Equal Partner, we will carry out a "work community project". The idea is to look at both positive and negative workplace practices, and to effect change so that the work community will be better able to recognise the sexual plurality of its members and question heteronormative practices.

The pilot training programme will be planned together with school authorities and representatives of occupational training and teachers' trade union organisations. The programme will be designed to interest people beyond issues pertaining directly to sexual minority teachers and their situation in schools. Issues such as bullying at work, coping at work, the situation of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender adolescents, and teaching lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues, will be included.

On the basis of the pilot projects, we will develop teaching material and a model for change to help work communities shape their practices in a way that would be more inclusive of sexual and gender minorities. The model for change will be applicable to different fields and work communities. Here, we will again draw on the experiences of our Dutch and Swedish Equal Partners and their large-scale pilot projects. Their experiences will also be used in the design of the CD-ROM dealing with the situation of gay and lesbian teachers.

Besides teachers, training will also be provided to other occupational groups and people dealing with working life issues, such as representatives of labour market organisations, researchers of working life, and members of the sexual and gender minorities. The training will be organised together with the various co-operation partners. The project workers, in turn, will participate as planners, lecturers and teachers in the training activities organised by these partners.

**Public Relations and Networking**

Networking constitutes an important part in the project because, until now, there have been hardly any efforts to improve the situation of sexual and gender minorities in Finland. Individual agents – such as the SETA and its activists, and a few trade union workers – have been promoting the cause, but no networking has taken place nationally or across professional and occupational boundaries.

Therefore, we will encourage networking by supporting group action among the sexual and gender minorities with regard to occupational and working life issues. Individuals active in promoting the situation of sexual and gender minorities will be located and pooled together for purposes of information exchange. By making use of experiences gained by our transnational Equal Partners, we will seek to activate the Finnish labour market organisations in the relevant issues.

We will co-operate with Steam, an association of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender workers in social and health care. Another activist group, called Arcus, has been formed by lesbian and gay church employees. We will also encourage joint action in other professional and occupational groups, teachers in particular. The emerging co-operation of lesbian and gay teachers will be supported by providing meeting places, information, and training.

Furthermore, we will create a network between representatives of labour market organisations and researchers, NGO activists, authorities and politicians interested in promoting the equal treatment of sexual and gender minorities in working life. We will survey the views of labour market organisations, authorities and other agents on sexual and gender minorities with regard to issues in

working life, and locate individuals interested in working for a more equal work environment. In addition, an advisory committee with high authority will be formed in support of the project. Networking will take place on the level of sexual and gender minorities, on both the national and international levels. Through co-operation, we will endeavour to influence already existing activities designed to promote equality in working life, and will try to include the perspective of sexual and gender minorities in various other relevant activities. This requires keeping up with a wide range of activities addressing the development of working life, as well as flexibility and readiness to seize the opportunities as they come. One such opportunity will be a SETA project called "Solmuista silmuiksi" (From problems to solutions), financed by Raha-automaattiyhdistys (Finland's Slot Machine Association). The idea of the project is to create local employee networks and improve the service for sexual and gender minority customers.

In the course of our Equal Project, close attention will be paid to good practices already existing or developed during the project, and to possibilities of spreading and mainstreaming such practices. This will contribute to the long-term effects of the project and its applicability to other sectors in working life. In order for our project yield to achieve nationality and transnationality, we will join a co-operation network created by government ministries, work centres, economic development centres, as well as other Equal Projects.

Research results and ideas emerging from the various activities within the project will be compiled into a book and published in 2004. The writing work will be done principally by the project workers. The book will be translated into English, and it will also be published on the project web pages. Information and experiences gained from our project – from research, preliminary training activities and transnational co-operation – will be used to make a brochure with information about the project and its web pages. The brochure will additionally be designed to promote discussion on sexual and gender minority issues, such as the anti-discrimination act regarding working life.

Together with our Dutch Equal Partner, we will plan and make a CD-ROM dealing with the status and situation of gay, lesbian and bisexual teachers. The CD-ROM will also provide practical advice on how to make work environments in schools more positive toward sexual plurality. The CD-ROM will be published both in English and Finnish, and it will be distributed in libraries and teacher training colleges, as well as in municipal offices and schools. The project web pages are designed to provide information on working life issues, such as good workplace practices. The present book, published at the "Sexual and Gender Minorities at Work" conference in August 2002, will also be included in our web pages in both Finnish and English. The web pages will additionally serve as a source of information on relevant literature and projects abroad.

We will actively inform various media forums about our project, its themes and research results. A particular focus will be on publications targeted to sexual and gender minorities and trade union actives. Furthermore, discussion on the variety of working life situations of the sexual and gender minorities will be encouraged among researchers and other experts of working life. The general public will also be informed through interviews, press releases, press conferences, and articles.

**Toward a Better World**

The project "Sexual and Gender Minorities at Work" is a catalyst. The idea is to activate employees and employee organisations, as well as employers and other agents with an influence on working life. We hope that our project inspires people to reflect upon the plurality of sexuality and gender, recognise the injustice caused by heteronormative working life practices, and take action for change. Co-operation on all levels is required, and you, dear reader, are welcome to join us. You can contact the people working with the Equal Project and tell us what you can do.

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## Thanks

This book, as part of the Community Initiative project Equal titled "Sexual and Gender Minorities at Work", was made possible by funding from the Ministry of Labour and the European Social Fund. The National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health, Stakes, agreed to publish the book under a tight schedule (the English translation of this book is only available in the Internet at www.valt.helsinki.fi/talk/sosio/Equal.htm.) I would like to thank all of the above. I would also like to thank those who contributed to the making of this book. A very special thanks goes to all writers of the articles, as well as to Minna Haapanen and Tiina Holopainen, who translated the articles. I would also like to thank the editorial staff of the Stakes publication series, namely Päivi Liikamaa, Riitta Viialainen, Päivi Hauhia and Sirkka Laukonsuo, for their co-operation, and the Stakes referees for useful comments. Feedback was also given by those working on the Equal project, namely researcher Kati Mustola, management group members Hilkka Lyden and Matti Ojala, as well as trainee Aija Salo. A warm thanks to them all!

Jukka Lehtonen

## Writers

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Christine Gilljam is the Director of Education in the Swedish Office of the Ombudsman against Discrimination because of Sexual Orientation, HomO (Homo Ombudsman). Her scope of activities also includes labour market issues and contacts with labour market organisations. Gilljam was formerly the Chairperson of the Council of the Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights, RFSL.

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Elina Lahelma is a docent and a university lecturer in the Department of Education at the University of Helsinki, currently working as an academy researcher. She has published, among others, a book titled "Making Spaces: Citizenship and Difference in Schools" (Macmillan 2000) together with Tuula Gordon and Janet Holland, as well as written a doctoral thesis and several articles on schooling and gender.
Jukka Lehtonen is the Project Director of the "Sexual and Gender Minorities at Work" project. He is conducting research on the sexuality and gender of adolescents, with special regard to schools.

Teija Mankkinen, MAPolSc, works on a research and development project involving rescuers' career planning. She is currently writing her doctoral thesis in Sociology on the on the transition in the fire service and its bearing on fire fighters' occupational identity. Previously, Mankkinen has studied sexual harassment and abuse in the academia, as well as equality in the workplace.

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Marja Suhonen, MATheol, is conducting research on the ethics of gender and sexuality in the Department of Systematic Theology at the University of Helsinki. Her publications include articles "Kristillinen seksuaalimoraali ja homoseksuaalisuus" ("Christian Sexual Morals and Homosexuality", in Teologian aikakauskirja 6/1995) and "Naisten homoeroottisuus varhaiskristillisyydessä" ("Female Homoeroticism in Early Christianity", in Eevan tie alttarille, Edita, 2002).

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## Summary and key words

**Jukka Lehtonen (ed.). Sexual and gender minorities in working life.**

In this work, experts in various fields throw light on the diversity of sexuality and gender in working life, and how this diversity and its manifestations are curtailed by legal and cultural practices. The central theme is the invisibility of sexual and gender minority issues, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual individuals, both in the workplace and in discussions on work-related issues. Discrimination in working life on grounds of sexual orientation is prohibited by legislation, but it is still difficult to intervene in instances of discrimination, and the existence of discrimination may be called into question. Individuals belonging to minorities wonder whether to conceal their sexuality or different gender identity from all members of the work community, or only a part of it. As well as open and direct discrimination in working life, lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transsexuals also encounter structural discrimination. The writers describe various forms of manifestation of such discrimination. The book initiates discussion on the status of sexual and gender minorities in working life, and calls into question the hetero-normative assumption, according to which there are only two kinds of people at workplaces: heterosexual men and heterosexual women.

The book is divided into five parts. In the introduction, Jukka Lehtonen presents the themes of the book, defines the central concepts, and diversifies the picture of sexual and gender minorities, taking into consideration also ethnicity and other cultural differentials. Rainer Hiltunen writes about the opportunities afforded by the Finnish and European Union legislation to intervene in discriminatory situations, and the shortcomings of the legislation. In her article, Christine Gilljam discusses the position of homosexual and bisexual employees in Sweden, and the actions which have been initiated at the office of the Ombudsman, founded for the purpose of acting in their interest.

The second part of the book concerns the diversity of sexuality and gender. Maarit Huuska analyses the lives and employment opportunities of transsexuals, transvestites and others who transcend the expected gender boundaries. Teppo Heikkinen writes about gay men who have moved to the Capital region from other parts of the country, and their experiences in the workplace. Tiia Aarnipuu discusses rights and shortcomings afforded by legislation, which members of 'rainbow families' [families which do not have one parent of each sex, both of whom are heterosexual (transl.)] and their employers ought to know, when coordinating their family lives and working lives. Paula Kuosmanen analyses the workplace activities and styles of lesbians and lesbian parents. Jukka Lehtonen writes about the position of non-heterosexual young people in the employment market, and Kari Huotari examines the situation of HIV positive gay and bisexual men at work and outside it.

Part three concentrates on three professional groups. In her article, Heidi Hoffman deals with questions of well-being at work in administrative and service sectors. Miia Valkonen tells the stories of four lesbian, gay or bisexual teachers. Marja Suhonen analyses the attitude of the Church towards its homosexual employees.

The fourth part of the book breaks down gender-related cultural practices in the workplace. Marja Kaskisaari opens up perspectives of gender and sexual and gender minorities in the discussion on burn-out at work. Elina Lahelma examines sexual name-calling encountered by teachers, and links it to gender dominance patterns. Teija Mankkinen analyses the fire service and its male-dominated atmosphere.

The final part of the book projects into the future, and the focus is on changing workplace practices. Peter Dankmeijer describes the situation in Dutch schools, together with problems which have arisen in changing the anti-gay culture of schools. Marja Nykänen introduces the University of Helsinki anti-discrimination plan and the action associated with it, where account has also been taken of homosexuality and bisexuality. Elisabet Qvarford writes in her article about the activities of her trade union, and the changes implemented in order to improve the position of lesbians and gay men in working life. Finally, Jukka Lehtonen describes the Equal-project which is funded by the European Union and the Ministry of Labour and which has also made the publication of this book possible. The project intervenes in problems in working life, and offers good practices to replace old, hetero-normative models of operation.

Keywords

Sexual minorities, gender minorities, homosexuality, bisexuality, lesbianism, gays, transsexuality, hetero-normativity, hetero-sexism, sexuality, gender, working life, well-being at work, burn-out, discrimination at work, employment law, employment protection, working practices, teachers, education system, labour market organisations

**Jukka Lehtonen (red.) Sexuella minoriteter och könsminoriteter i arbetslivet.**

Specialister på olika områden belyser i föreliggande verk sexualitetens och könets diversitet i arbetslivet och beskriver hur denna diversitet och dess sätt att träda fram begränsas med juridisk praxis och kulturella beteendemönster. Ett centralt tema är hur ouppmärksammade sexual- och könsminoritetsfrågorna är samt hur osynliga de lesbiska, homosexuella, bi- och transsexuella är på arbetsplatserna och i debatten om arbetslivet. Diskriminering på grund av sexuell inriktning i arbetslivet är förbjuden i lagstiftningen, men det är fortfarande svårt att ingripa i diskrimineringssituationer, och det händer att det ifrågasätts om diskriminering förekommer. Individerna som hör till dessa minoriteter funderar över om det är bäst att dölja sin sexualitet eller sin avvikande könsidentitet från alla i arbetsgemenskapen eller bara från en del av denna. Utöver öppen och direkt diskriminering stöter lesbiska, homosexuella, bi- och transsexuella också på strukturell diskriminering; sådan diskriminering i dess olika former beskrivs av verkets författare. Skriften öppnar diskussionen om de sexuella minoriteternas och könsminoriteternas ställning i arbetslivet och ifrågasätter det heteronormativa antagandet enligt vilket det på arbetsplatserna bara finns människor av två slag: heterosexuella män och heterosexuella kvinnor.

Boken är uppdelad i fem partier. I inledningen presenterar Jukka Lehtonen bokens temata och utreder de centrala begreppen samt diversifierar bilden av de sexuella minoriteterna och könsminoriteterna, varvid han även går in på de skillnader som har etnisk eller kulturell bakgrund. Rainer Hiltunen redogör för de möjligheter som skapas av Finlands och EUs lagstiftning att ingripa i diskriminering och de brister som föreligger i lagarna. Christine Gilljam berättar i sin artikel om homo- och bisexuella arbetstagares situation i Sverige och om de åtgärder som vidtagits av den rättsombudsmannabyrå som grundats för att bevaka deras intressen.

I bokens andra parti behandlas den pluralitet som förekommer inom sexualiteten och för könens del. Maarit Huuska redogör för de trassexuellas, transvestiternas och andras liv – som bryter mot de hävdvunna könsgränserna – och om deras möjligheter att arbeta. Teppo Heikkinen beskriver homosexuella män som från andra delar av Finland flyttat till Helsingforsregionen och om deras erfarenheter på arbetsplatserna. Tiia Aarnipuu presenterar de rättigheter som lagstiftningen erbjuder och bristerna i dessa; detta slags information kan både för personer som hör till regnbågsfamiljer och för deras arbetsgivare vara bra att ha, med tanke på sammanjämkandet av familje- och arbetslivet. Paula Kuosmanen presenterar i sin artikel lesbiska kvinnors och lesbiska föräldrars sätt att agera och bete sig på arbetsplatserna. Jukka Lehtonen berättar om de icke-heterosexuella ungas situation på arbetsmarknaden och Kari Huotari ger oss glimtar av den situation som möter HIV-smittade homo- och bisexuella i arbetet och på fritiden.

Det tredje partiet i boken koncentreras på tre yrkesgrupper. Heidi Hoffman beskriver i sin artikel frågor om hur de anställda mår i kontorsarbete och i servicebranscherna. Miia Valkonen beskriver

fyra specifika fall som gäller lesbiska, homosexuella eller bisexuella lärare. Marja Suhonen analyserar kyrkans inställning till sina homosexuella anställda.

I bokens fjärde parti genomgås olika slag av könsrelaterad kulturell praxis på arbetsplatserna. Marja Kaskisaari tillför diskussionen om utbrändhet i arbetet nya synsätt som har att göra med kön, sexuella minoriteter och könsminoriteter. Elina Lahelma granskar de sexuella benämningar som lärare utsätts för och kopplar denna till könens kamp om dominans. Teija Mankkinen analyserar brandväsendet och dess i hög grad mansdominerade atmosfär.

Det femte och sista partiet i boken inriktas på framtiden, med huvudvikten lagd vid ändringarna av praxis inom arbetslivet. Peter Dankmeijer beskriver situationen i vissa holländska skolor och de problem som uppstått i samband med ändringarna av skolornas homofoba kultur. Marja Nykänen presenterar en plan mot diskriminering inom Helsingfors universitet och de därmed sammanhängande åtgärderna, som också tar homo- och bisexualiteten i beaktande. Elisabet Qvarford behandlar i sin artikel vissa åtgärder som företagits av hennes fackorganisation i syfte att förbättra de lesbiskas och de homosexuellas ställning i arbetslivet. Som avslutning redogör Jukka Lehtonen för projektet Equal, som finansieras av EU och arbetsministeriet och som gjort det möjligt att utge föreliggande verk. Equal inriktar sig på att åtgärda problem på arbetsplatserna och på att erbjuda nya praxisalternativ som ersättning för de gamla, heteronormativa verksamhetsmodellerna.

Sökord:
Sexuella minoriteter, könsminoriteter, homosexualitet, bisexualitet, lesbiskhet, transsexualitet, heteronormativitet, heterosexism, sexualitet, kön, arbetsliv, välmåga i arbetet, arbetströtthet, arbetsdiskriminering, arbetslagstiftning, arbetarskydd, praxis i arbetslivet, lärare, skolverket, arbetsmarknadsorganisationer.

**Jukka Lehtonen (toim.). Seksuaali- ja sukupuolivähemmistöt työelämässä.**

Eri alojen asiantuntijat valottavat tässä teoksessa seksuaalisuuden ja sukupuolen moninaisuutta työelämässä ja miten tuota moninaisuutta ja sen esiintuloa rajataan juridisin ja kulttuurisin käytännöin. Keskeinen teema on seksuaali- ja sukupuolivähemmistökysymysten ja lesbojen, homojen, bi- ja transihmisten näkymättömyys työpaikoilla ja työelämäkeskusteluissa. Seksuaalisen suuntautumisen perusteella tapahtuva syrjintä työelämässä on kielletty lainsäädännössä, mutta syrjintätilanteisiin on edelleen vaikea puuttua, ja syrjinnän olemassaolo saatetaan kyseenalaistaa. Yksittäiset vähemmistöihin kuuluvat ihmiset pohtivat, salatako seksuaalisuus tai erilainen sukupuoli-identiteetti kaikilta työyhteisön jäseniltä vai vain osalta. Työelämän avoimen ja suoran syrjinnän lisäksi lesbot, homot, bi- ja transihmiset kohtaavat myös rakenteellista syrjintää, jonka erilaisista esiintymismuodoista kirjoittajat kertovat. Kirja avaa keskustelun seksuaali- ja sukupuolivähemmistöjen asemasta työelämässä sekä kyseenalaistaa heteronormatiivisen oletuksen, jonka mukaan työpaikoilla on vain kahdenlaisia ihmisiä: heteroseksuaalisia miehiä ja heteroseksuaalisia naisia.

Kirja jakaantuu viiteen osaan. Johdannossa Jukka Lehtonen esittelee kirjan teemat ja selventää keskeiset käsitteet sekä monipuolistaa kuvaa seksuaali- ja sukupuolivähemmistöistä huomioiden myös etnisyyden ja muut kulttuuriset eronteot. Rainer Hiltunen kirjoittaa Suomen ja Euroopan unionin lainsäädännön tarjoamista mahdollisuuksista puuttua syrjintätilanteisiin sekä niihin liittyvistä puutteista. Christine Gilljam kertoo artikkelissaan homo- ja biseksuaalisten työntekijöiden tilanteesta Ruotsissa sekä toimista, joita on tehty heidän etuaan ajamaan perustetussa oikeusasiamiehen toimistossa.

Kirjan toisessa osassa käsitellään seksuaalisuuteen ja sukupuoleen liittyvää moninaisuutta. Maarit Huuska analysoi transsukupuolisten, transvestiittien ja muiden odotettuja sukupuolirajoja rikkovien elämää ja työskentelymahdollisuuksia. Teppo Heikkinen kirjoittaa pääkaupunkiseudulle muualta maasta muuttaneista homomiehistä ja heidän työpaikkakokemuksistaan. Tiia Aarnipuu esittelee lainsäädännön tarjoamia oikeuksia ja puutteita, jotka sateenkaariperheisiin kuuluvien ja heidän työnantajansa on hyvä tietää sovittaessaan yhteen perhe- ja työelämää. Paula Kuosmanen erittelee artikkelissaan lesbojen ja lesbovanhempien toimintaa ja tyylejä työpaikalla. Jukka Lehtonen kirjoittaa ei-heteroseksuaalisten nuorten asemasta työmarkkinoilla ja Kari Huotari valottaa hiv-tartunnan saaneiden homo- ja bimiesten tilannetta työssä ja työn ulkopuolella.

Kolmannessa osassa keskitytään kolmeen ammattiryhmään. Heidi Hoffman käsittelee artikkelissaan työhyvinvointikysymyksiä toimisto- ja palvelualoilla. Miia Valkonen kertoo neljän lesbo-, homo- tai bi-opettajan tarinan. Marja Suhonen analysoi kirkon suhtautumista homoseksuaalisiin työntekijöihinsä.

Kirjan neljännessä osassa eritellään työpaikan sukupuoleen liittyviä kulttuurisia käytäntöjä. Marja Kaskisaari avaa työuupumuskeskusteluun sukupuolen ja seksuaali- ja sukupuolivähemmistöjen näkökulmia. Elina Lahelma tarkastelee opettajien kohtamaa seksuaalista nimittelyä ja liittää sen sukupuolen valta-asetelmiin. Teija Mankkinen analysoi palolaitosta ja sen miesvaltaista ilmapiiriä.

Kirjan päättää tulevaisuuteen suuntaava osa, jossa keskitytään työelämän käytäntöjen muuttamiseen. Peter Dankmeijer kertoo hollantilaisten koulujen tilanteesta ja ongelmista, joita koulujen homokielteisen kulttuurin muuttamisessa on esiintynyt. Marja Nykänen esittelee Helsingin yliopiston syrjinnän vastaisen suunnitelman ja siihen liittyvän toiminnan, jossa myös homo- ja biseksuaalisuus on otettu huomioon. Elisabet Qvarford kirjoittaa artikkelissaan ammattijärjestönsä toimista ja muuttumisesta parantamaan lesbojen ja homojen asemaa työelämässä. Lopuksi Jukka Lehtonen kertoo tämän kirjankin mahdollistaneesta Euroopan unionin ja työministeriön rahoittamasta Equal-projektista, jossa puututaan työelämän ongelmiin ja tarjotaan hyviä käytäntöjä korvaamaan vanhat heteronormatiiviset toimintamallit.

Avainsanat

Seksuaalivähemmistöt, sukupuolivähemmistöt, homoseksuaalisuus, biseksuaalisuus, lesbous, transsukupuolisuus, transseksuaalisuus, heteronormatiivisuus, heteroseksismi, seksuaalisuus, sukupuoli, työelämä, työhyvinvointi, työuupumus, työsyrjintä, työlainsäädäntö, työsuojelu, työelämän käytännöt, opettajat, koululaitos, työmarkkinajärjestöt