

THIS IS WHAT MAKES THE DIFFERENCE

ABVAKABO FNV

**SEXUAL
PREFERENCE
AND WORK**

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SEXUAL PREFERENCE AND WORK

A comparison between homosexual and heterosexual persons

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Commissioned by ABVAKABO FNV

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FOREWORD

'Sexual preference and work' is a study about the differences in the experience of work between employees with a homosexual and a heterosexual preference. ABVAKABO FNV commissioned this study in 1998. The relatively strong anti-discrimination legislation and the apparently tolerant climate in the Netherlands gave the union the impulse to reassess its position.

The study was carried out in two of the largest sectors of ABVAKABO FNV. The assumption in this respect was that the differences between sectors would lead to differences in the experience of work. This assumption proved largely to be the case. At the same time it was found that, along with gender, homosexuality also plays a role. It appears that homosexual men and women experience several aspects of their work less positively than heterosexual people do. As a consequence, it is recommended that strengthening the social cohesion at work is essential for homosexual men and lesbian women. Irrespective of the sector in which they work, social support prevents feelings of insecurity, of not belonging, of missing important information and of regularly being let down. If homosexual employees feel more valued at work and are better looked after, this can also have a positive influence on work stress, sick leave and health.

This study was carried out by the Nederlands Instituut voor Sociaal Sexuologisch Onderzoek (Netherlands Institute of Social Sexological Research - NISSO) and Gay and Lesbian Studies/Utrecht University. Researchers Theo Sandfort and Henny Bos applied themselves to the task with great enthusiasm. ABVAKABO FNV greatly appreciates this. The initiative for the research came from the gay/lesbian interest group, which is part of ABVAKABO FNV. Coordination of the project was carried out by the undersigned, the executive officer responsible for this area.

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SUMMARY

Objective of the study

The way in which being homosexual affects one's work life is of course dependent upon the social climate regarding homosexuality. In this respect it should be noted that acceptance of homosexuality is relatively high in the Netherlands. The Netherlands also has laws against discrimination of homosexuality. It is illegal to fire people because of their sexual preference. Finally, most gays and lesbians are open about their sexual preference in the workplace. It is quite likely that the situation described here is different from that in other Western societies. If the social acceptance of homosexuality was lower, gay and lesbian people could be confronted with worse as well as with different problems.

Does homosexuality play a role in the way in which people experience their work? That was the central issue in this study.

It is important to have insight into the extent to which homosexuality plays a role in employment situations. This knowledge can be used to determine whether or not it is necessary to institute measures to improve the working conditions of homosexual men and lesbian women. This was the reason ABVAKABO FNV, the Dutch union for the public sector, commissioned this study.

Until now, research into this subject has been scant. Although some literature on homosexuality in employment situations is available in the United States, this mainly concerns discrimination in the work situation, a subject that has also been studied in the Netherlands. However, homosexuality and work experience in a broader sense has not yet been the subject of study.

The study group

The question of whether homosexuality plays a role in employment situations can be answered by putting this question directly to homosexual men and women. This is the method that has been used predominantly up to now. However, the disadvantage of this approach is that it will mainly elicit negative aspects. In addition, the people who will offer to take part in such a study will be those who are frank about their homosexuality. Therefore, such an approach can be expected to distort the findings.

Therefore, we have opted for a random sample: a representative sample of 20,000 members of the ABVAKABO FNV was drawn without any information concerning their sexual preference being known. The respondents were drawn equally from the two largest sectors of the trade union: the hospital sector and local government. The number of 10,000 was based on the expectation that this would ensure that homosexual men and women would be sufficiently represented so that reliable conclusions could be drawn concerning them. The response was 24%, slightly less than had been hoped for, but certainly not unusual in a written poll. Of these respondents, 7% indicated their sexual preference to be either homosexual or bisexual.

The persons selected received a questionnaire. This type of research instrument is customary in a study group of this size. At the same time, a questionnaire was sent to almost

400 people who are registered as interested parties with Inzake, the journal of the homosexual and lesbian interest group of the ABVAKABO FNV. The report concerning this group will be published later.

The questions posed

A large number of aspects concerning the way in which work is experienced by both homosexual and heterosexual people was included in this study. The emphasis was on the personal perception of the parties involved, and not an objective assessment of the situation. Three questions formed the focal point:

- Do homosexual and heterosexual persons experience their work in different ways?
- Are there differences within the group of homosexual men and women regarding the way they experience their work?
- Do the differences in work experience between homosexual and heterosexual persons lead to differences as far as workload, health and sick leave are concerned?

On the one hand, aspects related directly to work experience were examined: the importance people attach to their work and the way in which they perceive their tasks, the extent to which they receive feedback on their work and are kept informed of events in the organisation, the relationship with their bosses and colleagues, the amount of support they receive and the extent to which they can be themselves at work.

On the other hand, the possible effects on workload and mental and physical health were studied. The issue here was the extent of job satisfaction, the amount of stress they experienced at work, possible insomnia and other complaints concerning their health, and the extent of sick leave. Questions were also asked about the personal background and employment situation of the person involved. The answers on the questionnaire could therefore not only be linked to the gender of the person involved and the sector in which he or she works, but also to age, level of education, the scope of the job and whether or not the job involved a managerial position.

Answers

It transpired that homosexuality was certainly an issue in working situations. This is the most important conclusion that can be drawn from the study. The way in which homosexual persons experience their work consistently differs from that of heterosexual persons with regard to certain aspects. Whenever differences arise, the work experience of homosexual employees is virtually always more negative than that of heterosexual employees. This does not, however, imply that each individual homosexual experiences problems at work or differs from heterosexuals. What it does mean is that - by and large - the group of homosexual employees are worse off than their heterosexual colleagues.

The study results show that work experience also depends on the gender of the party involved and on the sector in which he or she works. For instance, lesbian women appear to encounter more problems than homosexual men. Furthermore, homosexual men in the hospital sector experience their work in a positive way: it is almost completely of the same quality as that of their male heterosexual colleagues.

Differences

What are the main differences in work experience?

- Being informed about the organisation

More often than heterosexuals, homosexual persons in the hospital sector find that they are not sufficiently informed of the ins and outs of the organisation. This applies particularly to lesbian women. The findings also showed that this group received less feedback on the quality of their work than their heterosexual female colleagues.

- Relationships with colleagues and bosses

Homosexual persons find that they have a poor relationship with their bosses and colleagues relatively more often than heterosexuals. They also feel less involved with their colleagues. Lesbian women, particularly in the hospital sector, report more conflicts with their bosses and colleagues than heterosexual women. Homosexual persons in local government discuss work-related problems with their boss and colleagues less often than heterosexuals. Homosexual men at local government are also mobbed more often owing to their lifestyle. Homosexual persons are less positive in their response to questions of whether their colleagues thought of them as being spontaneous and warm. An exception to this is formed by homosexual men in the hospital sector. Their perception of their image among their colleagues is equal to or even more positive than heterosexual men experience in this sector.

- Social support at work

In both everyday and problematic work situations, lesbian women receive significantly less support from their colleagues than heterosexual women. They find that they can rely on their colleagues to a lesser extent than heterosexual women, they feel less safe among their colleagues and, more often than their heterosexual female colleagues, they feel that they should avoid making silly mistakes. Lesbian women say that they feel less appreciated and that they feel that they do not belong. They also feel that they are let down by their colleagues. This aspect also applies to men working in local government.

- Being able to be yourself at work

More than is the case among heterosexual persons, homosexuals find that their colleagues do not accept their way of life. Lesbian women in particular encounter more problems in being themselves at work than heterosexual women. They also talk less about personal matters.

- Job satisfaction and self-esteem

Homosexual persons are less satisfied with their work than heterosexuals. This applies most strongly to lesbian women, and those in the hospital sector in particular. As far as self-esteem is concerned, homosexual men in local government stand out: they regard themselves as being less valuable, have a more negative opinion of themselves, have less self-confidence and feel relatively more ashamed of themselves than heterosexual men.

- Health problems

Homosexuals suffer more from stress than their heterosexual colleagues. The feeling of being unable to draw on emotional reserves at work (emotional exhaustion) in particular and feeling less able to cope with their work (reduced personal competence) are aspects they mention more frequently. Lesbian women report such problems the most. Sick leave is higher among homosexuals than heterosexuals. A variety of health problems, such as lack of appetite, exhaustion, headaches and stomach aches are reported more often by homosexual persons. They also suffer more from sleep-related problems.

Similarities

However, similarities in work experience were also noted. When it comes to the role work plays in the lives of the respondents, it appears to be immaterial whether someone is homosexual or heterosexual. Both groups also find that they receive feedback on their performance at work. The possibilities to develop and build a career are regarded equally highly by both homosexuals and heterosexuals. Mobbing, in the form of being abused or excluded, is reported equally by homosexuals and heterosexuals.

It is striking that career opportunities and mobbing in the work situation are experienced equally. If homosexuals were discriminated against in employment situations, it would be these two aspects that would soon come to mind. This study does not show that open and systematic discrimination against homosexual persons exists in employment situations. The story is more complex than that.

Causes

Why is it then that homosexual persons have a more negative perception of their work with regard to a number of aspects? In this study, we used two approaches to establish possible causes.

In the first place, the respondents' answers were linked to their personal background. In this way, it was possible to establish whether certain groups of homosexuals often experience their work in a negative way, for instance older persons or those with a lower educational level. This does not appear to be the case. Subsequently, the answers were linked to the characteristics of the employment situation. Do homosexuals have a more negative experience in certain organisations? Objective characteristics of an organisation, such as the size of the organisation, or the male-female ratio, did not appear to play a role. This does, however, apply to the corporate culture as perceived by the respondents themselves. When someone works in an organisation that is perceived to be work-oriented rather than being geared towards the employees, homosexuals, generally, experience their work in a more negative way.

Secondly, we determined which aspects of work experience have the greatest negative consequences. The incidence of stress, health problems and sick leave is higher among homosexuals than heterosexuals. Which aspects of work are the main causes of these complaints? Three clusters of aspects were identified:

- the social support received at work
- the extent to which people feel that they can be themselves
- the extent to which people are informed of the ins and outs within the organisation.

The more homosexual men and women feel that they belong, that they can rely on others and that they are safe, the less stressed they are, the greater their job satisfaction is, the better their health and the less often they are sick.

Whereas in the first approach, the organisation emerged as the major factor in work experience, similar aspects emerged from the second approach. Important factors for a positive work experience are: pleasant relationships with colleagues so that people feel supported and are not afraid to make mistakes, the security and leeway to be themselves, and extensive dissemination of information so that nobody feels excluded. What it comes down to is the human aspect in employment situations. It is with regard to this aspect that homosexuality appears to cause problems and this is where possible solutions must be sought.

Follow-up study

As this study is unable to supply definitive answers to all the questions related to homosexuality and employment, a follow-up study is planned.

One of the remarkable findings has been that there appears to be hardly any difference in the way homosexual and heterosexual persons in the hospital sector experience their work. The most obvious explanation of this is that a relatively large number of homosexual men are employed in this sector. The follow-up study will test whether being acquainted with more homosexuals in an employment situation does indeed mean that work is experienced in a more positive manner.

Another aspect that demands closer examination is the influence exerted by the corporate culture. Although the importance of people-oriented organisations appears to have been established by this study, it was the way in which the corporate culture was perceived by the parties involved and not an objectively measured situation. What is important is that the follow-up study determines the extent to which the actual corporate culture agrees with the perceived culture.

In conclusion, the last word has not been spoken about social interaction in the work situation. Why do some homosexuals experience less social support, why do mainly lesbian women find that they are not well-informed, and why do some homosexual employees have a poor relationship with their colleagues? The data collected does not supply a definitive answer to these questions. Could it quite simply be that heterosexuals are prejudiced against homosexuality and that this has a negative effect on their relationships with homosexual colleagues? Or is it rather caused by much more neutral factors such as unfamiliarity with homosexuality? Do negative reactions depend on the way homosexuals themselves deal with their homosexuality at work? This last aspect in particular will be the subject of the follow-up study. After all, by definition interactions in the work situation are two-sided. It would therefore be unjust to target heterosexuals as the group that causes the problems. What is particularly interesting is the interaction between the attitude taken by homosexual employees themselves and the way in which their colleagues deal with this.

Recommendations

The fact that homosexual persons experience a number of aspects of their work in a more negative way than their heterosexual colleagues gives cause for concern. The study findings point to the need to develop a policy to improve the employment situations of homosexual men and lesbian women. The essence of such a policy must be that all parties involved—employees, managers, personnel recruiters, trade union managers—should be aware that homosexuality definitely plays a role in employment situations. This contradicts the prevailing idea that homosexuality is irrelevant in society. It probably also contradicts the image many homosexual men and women have. Without forcing homosexuals into the role of being victims, awareness of the fact that homosexuality does play a role in employment situations can help to understand and possibly solve problems, but what would be even better, to prevent them arising at all. This awareness is particularly important among people in managerial positions and those involved in drawing up and executing the personnel policy.

As was indicated previously, three areas of work perception play a key role when it

comes to determining stress at work and job satisfaction: 1) good relationships with colleagues, and particularly with bosses; 2) feeling secure at work, and a work situation that allows for greater diversity in lifestyles; 3) good dissemination of information on the course of events within the organisation. Policy and intervention geared to promoting these aspects will have a favourable effect on the way in which homosexual persons experience their work. This probably applies regardless of the sector in which one works. What is more, such measures will benefit both homosexual employees and their heterosexual colleagues.

Interventions can be made at various levels in the organisation and can solve as well prevent problems. While managers can play an important role, the results show that problems arise precisely between managers and employees. This emphasises the need for a personnel policy that takes account of homosexuality and involves the personnel in solving problems and creating a better climate in the organisation.

INTRODUCTION

This report contains the results of a study into homosexuality and work, which was commissioned by ABVAKABO FNV and carried out by the Nederlands Instituut voor Sociaal Sexuologisch Onderzoek (Netherlands Institute of Social Sexological Research - NISSO) and Gay and Lesbian Studies/Utrecht University. Does homosexuality play a role in the manner in which people experience their work? This was the most important question investigated posed in this study. At first sight, the subjects of sexual preference and work would seem to have little in common. Whether someone is heterosexual or homosexual primarily affects their private lives. With whom someone maintains erotic or sexual relationships contact with should not be of any relevance importance at on the work floor. Nevertheless, on further consideration, there are a number of reasons to expect that homosexuality certainly does play a role for gay men and lesbian women at their work. This is because being homosexual influences many aspects of a person's life. Homosexual men and lesbian women have something that most other people do not have, and furthermore, this 'extra something' is not considered to be 'positive' by society. This lower social acceptance means that the homosexual person has to find a way to deal with his or her own homosexuality: should he or she be open towards others regarding his or her preference and personal lifestyle or, conversely, should these aspects remain hidden? Both choices can have negative consequences. Being open about one's own preferences and lifestyle can lead to rejection and to various forms of negative treatment, such as exclusion and bullying. Not being open leads to a lack of opportunities for self-expression and can lead to isolation. The reactions someone experiences do not only



depend on how someone deals with being homosexual. The assumption that someone is homosexual can also lead to negative treatment of that person.

All in all, it is safe to assume that homosexuality also plays a role in the workplace. Homosexual employees may be treated differently by colleagues or bosses than heterosexual ones. On the basis of their homosexual preference, information could be withheld from homosexual persons within an organization, or they may be disadvantaged in other ways. In day-to-day contact with colleagues, they may receive less support, be excluded shut out from the group or discriminated against in other ways. It may be the case that, due to their homosexual preference, some people are less able to be themselves at work than others. When these negative aspects occur, work may be experienced as less satisfying, and the employees in question may suffer more work related stress and have more burnout symptoms. Other consequences could include sickness and sick leave.

The extent to which homosexuality plays a role in the workplace in the Netherlands is not known. However, there is anecdotal evidence that homosexuality in the workplace does have negative consequences for some people. The question is whether these are isolated cases, or whether homosexuality in the workplace leads to problems on a structural regular basis. As the attitude towards homosexuality in the Netherlands is relatively positive in comparison with other countries, such an influence of homosexuality in the workplace may be limited. It is quite likely that in countries with a less accepting social climates, the problems gay and lesbian people experience at work are not only worse; they may also be different. For instance, the climate in the Netherlands is such that there is almost no reason to conceal one's homosexuality, while in other countries homosexuality can be a, not even illegal, ground for discharge.

Knowledge of the extent to which homosexuality plays a role in the workplace is important for various reasons. Such knowledge can be used to determine whether or not it is necessary to take measures to improve the work situation for homosexual men and women. It can enable ABVAKABO FNV to set policy objectives and determine what strategies, if any, are necessary in the area of homosexuality in the workplace.

For her advice regarding to the design of this study, the authors would like to express their gratitude to Dr M. den Ouden, researcher associated with the department of social and organisational psychology of the Social Science faculty at Utrecht University. We are also grateful to the members of the Policy Advice Committee and Lucia van Westerlaak, executive officer of ABVAKABO FNV responsible for this study, for their comments and advice. Final editing of the text was carried out by Hansje Galesloot. The text was translated by Jim Turner at Adept Translators, Utrecht. We would like to thank both of them for their meticulousness and flexibility in the working process.

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CHAPTER I THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Most research into homosexuality and work has been carried out in the United States. These studies have largely addressed the career choices and career development of homosexuals, or discrimination in the workplace. Other aspects of the way work is experienced by homosexual employees, such as the level of work satisfaction, have been addressed only sporadically. Up to now, no such broad approach has been taken in the Netherlands. This chapter first gives a summary of existing research into homosexuality and work (1.1). There is extensive literature concerning the experience of work in general, without reference to sexual preference. A summary is given of the relevant aspects of these theories (1.2).

1.1 Previous research into homosexuality and work

Discrimination on the work floor

American literature on discrimination at work on the basis of homosexuality contains many descriptions of the negative experiences of homosexual men and lesbian women (Powers, 1993; Diamant, 1993). Other researchers chose a quantitative approach and tried to map out how often discrimination occurs. This does not provide us with a clear picture; Croteau's review of studies about research of work experience of homosexual men and women (1996) shows widely varying percentages. Some studies have also looked into whether the attitude of homosexual employees has an effect on the level of discrimination. These studies suggest that people who are open about their sexual preference experience more discrimination at work.

Discrimination is also the main theme in the existing Dutch studies of homosexuality and work. *Het topje van de ijsberg* (The tip of the iceberg - Dobbeling and Koenders, 1984) contains an inventory of discrimination on the basis of sexual preference in the day-to-day living and working situations of men and women. Without commenting on the extent of the phenomenon, the study provides an insight into the nature of such discrimination. The study also looks at the government and health care sectors.

Dercksen (1992) examined the extent to which social workers, company doctors and counsellors in various Dutch companies are faced with employees' problems and questions in the area of homosexuality. This study showed that just under half of the 17 people interviewed have had to deal with such problems and questions.

Under commission from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, Bonfrère (1992) analysed how five companies in the Netherlands are combating discrimination against homosexuals. She concluded, on the one hand, that this kind of discrimination is more frequent in a hierarchical structure than in a horizontal structure. On the other hand, she has shown that correction of discriminatory behaviour can be implemented relatively simply within a hierarchical company structure, when the hierarchy already present is used.

In *Lesbisch zijn in Nederland* (Being lesbian in the Netherlands - Jonker, Sandfort and Schyns, 1994), lesbian women speak about how they deal with the fact that they are lesbian in society. The areas discussed include experiences in their work situation. Virtually all the women seem to experience problems at work due to their sexual preference. Colleagues and managers confront them at work with a wide range of prejudices.

Van de Meerendonk (1995) was commissioned by the union Industriebond FNV to carry out research into the position of homosexuals working in the industrial sector. This revealed that discrimination on the basis of homosexuality appears to take different forms within the industry. For

example, homosexuals can have problems within job application procedures or in gaining promotion on the work floor. Many homosexual respondents also report being on the receiving end of unwanted, sexually loaded remarks, targeted against their homosexuality.

Other aspects of experience of work

Far less research has been carried out into aspects of the experience of work other than discrimination. The little literature there is relates to the situation in the United States. In 1978, Bell and Weinberg looked at the extent to which homosexuals were more dissatisfied about their work than heterosexuals, and whether homosexuals changed jobs more frequently than heterosexuals. In the case of men, they did not observe any difference. In the case of women, however, the lesbian respondents appeared to change jobs more frequently than respondents with a heterosexual preference; in terms of work satisfaction, there was no difference.

Certain studies looked at how people deal with their homosexuality at work and whether they themselves are satisfied with this. Openness about one's sexual preference appears to result in greater satisfaction than maintaining silence in the matter (Levine and Leonard, 1984; Croteau and Lark, 1995; Croteau and Von Destinon, 1994).

A number of recent studies ask the question of whether there is a connection between the experience of homosexuality at work and the level of satisfaction with one's own work (work satisfaction). Day and Schoenrade (1997) conclude that homosexual employees who are not open about their sexual preference experience less satisfaction in their work than homosexuals with an open attitude, and also less than heterosexuals. According to another study, lesbian women who experience the work climate as safe are more satisfied with their work than those who feel the work situation to be unsafe (Driscoll, Kelley and Fassinger, 1996). Satisfaction about relationships with colleagues was also the subject of a recent study among a group of homosexual respondents (Ellis and Riggle, in press, in Pope, 1996). Openness about one's own sexual preference also appears to lead to greater satisfaction in relationships with colleagues.

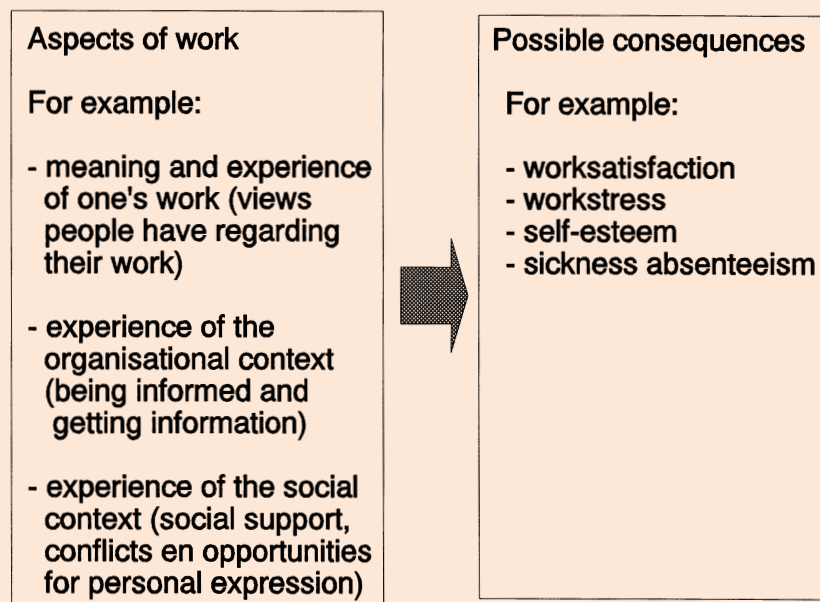
Conclusion

The current literature on homosexuality and work is primarily concerned with the extent to which discrimination occurs. Several American studies have looked at other aspects of the experience of work, but these have mainly concentrated on only one aspect. Homosexuality and the experience of work in the broadest sense have not been studied as yet. Furthermore, most studies have been carried out solely among homosexual men and women. This means that it is not possible to establish the extent to which the experience of work by homosexual persons actually differs from that by heterosexuals.

1.2 Theoretical approaches on the experience of work

For most people, work fulfils an important function in life. Work is important, because it offers people income and social status, but work also gives people a sense of usefulness (Jahoda, 1982). In the literature, it is usual to divide the experience of work into two categories: a) aspects directly related to the work, and b) possible consequences for work satisfaction, work load and psychological and physical health (Van Veldhoven, 1996; Figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1 The experience of work: theoretical design



a) Aspects of work

The aspects of the work that are distinguished depends on the theoretical approach. A *situational approach* deals primarily with the objective work environment and with the work itself (Sitter, 1990; Haak, 1994). A *socio-environmental approach* addresses the interaction between person and work environment (Kahn, 1981). The latter approach offers most starting points for this study: if the experience of work by homosexuals and heterosexuals differs, then it is most likely to be due in particular to aspects related to this interaction.

The interaction between person and work environment covers the totality of feelings and views that people have regarding the work situation, the working atmosphere and working conditions. This includes the sense that one receives status, recognition and respect at work. If an employee is dissatisfied about this, for example, because he or she has fewer chances of promotion than his or her colleagues, this is referred to in the literature as 'status problems' (Jansen and Buunk, 1990; Selles, Gerrichhauzen and De Wolff, 1985). Another aspect is the amount of information obtained about the ins and outs in the organisation: is this sufficient to be able to perform the work well? If the information available is insufficient to be able to fulfil one's role adequately, this is referred to by the researchers as 'role ambiguity' (Winnubst, 1986). Finally, relationships with colleagues and bosses form an important aspect of the experience of work; for example, whether employees feel they are supported in everyday or more problematic work situations. Recently,

research has focussed increasingly on bullying or 'mobbing' (Leymann, 1990; Knorz and Zapf, 1996). This can be of a direct character in the form of verbal or physical harassment, but it can also include indirect forms of harassment such as exclusion or many other forms of negative treatment (Einarsen, Raknes and Matthiessen, 1994).

b) Possible consequences

It has been shown in various studies that negative feelings about work can lead to negative personal consequences. It will affect one's job's satisfaction, but these consequences might also take the form of psychological and physical complaints which, in the long run, can affect health and lead to sick leave (Buunk and Schaufeli, 1993).

One of the most far-reaching consequences is what is referred to as burnout syndrome. We will use the expression 'work stress' to cover this. This can have three forms (Schaufeli, 1990a; Schaufeli, 1990b): emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation or a sense of reduced personal competence. *Emotional exhaustion* refers to a sense of being totally 'empty' or 'exhausted'. *Depersonalisation* refers to a cold, indifferent, cynical and impersonal attitude to one's work and colleagues. The concept of *reduced personal competence* relates to the sense that one is less capable of doing one's work well than was previously the case.

CHAPTER 2 DESIGN OF THIS STUDY

This chapter will provide details of the design of this study. We will first be looking into ABVAKABO FNV's objective for this study and the research questions derived from this in the study (2.1). Details of which work experience aspects are examined in the study are given in 2.2. We will then be looking at the respondents: the choice of a random sample of homosexual and heterosexual employees (2.3), the composition of the questionnaire (2.4), the manner in which respondents were recruited (2.5) and the characteristics of the group of respondents (2.6). Finally, there is a brief description of the strategy adopted in analyzing the data (2.7).

2.1 Research questions

ABVAKABO FNV, which took the initiative for this study, wants to use the report on the study to determine whether homosexual employees are faced with extra problems and, inasmuch as this is the case, what starting points for policy are available. Linked to this objective, the study looked for answers to the following three questions:

1. Are there any differences in the experience of work between homosexual and heterosexual persons?

A description is given in the next paragraph of which work experience aspects have been covered in this study. Chapter 3 examines answers to this question.

2. Are there differences in the experience of work among homosexual men and women as a group?

Not only can there be differences between homosexual and heterosexual persons. It is also possible that certain categories of homosexual employees may experience their work to be more or less positive than other homosexual persons. In order to be able to implement targeted union policy, it is important to track down these subgroups. For example, differences in the experience of work could be linked to socio-demographic factors, such as age or education. They may also be related to characteristics of the working position, such as the nature of the employment relationship (full-time or part-time, for example) and whether or not they hold a management position.

Finally, characteristics of the work organisation, such as the size of the staff complement or the man/woman ratio, can lead to differences in the experience of work. The answers to these research question are presented in chapter 4.

3. Do differences in the experience of work between homosexual and heterosexual persons lead to differences in work satisfaction, work strain and health?

A certain experience of the work can have a knock-on effect on the level of work satisfaction, the work strain experienced and the psychological and physical health. If there are differences in how homosexual and heterosexual persons experience their work, these differences are even more significant if they lead to stress and health problems. Chapter 5 looks at this research question.

2.2 Selected aspects of work experience

This study focussed on three clusters of the experience of work. The first relates to the meaning and experience of the work itself (1). The next clusters relates to the organisational context of the work (2), and to the social context in which the work is performed (3). Apart from these work

experience aspects, the study also looked at the possible consequences for work satisfaction, work strain and health (4).

1) Meaning and experience of the work

It is possible that homosexual and heterosexual persons look at their work in a different way, as an extension of the differences in lifestyle. For this reason, the study looked at the importance attached to work by people in their lives (*meaning*) and the extent to which people found their work to be creative, interesting and challenging (*experience*).

2) Experience of the organisational context of the work

This relates to the extent to which people feel that they are being kept informed about the ins and outs in the organisation and the extent to which they are informed from within the organisation about *how well they are doing their work*. Other aspects that fall within this category include the opportunities employees feel they have, to follow training courses in order to progress in their careers. The last aspect to be looked at is the manner in which the *relationship with the organisation* is experienced. If homosexuals are excluded at work in one way or another, then this will in all probability be expressed as one or more of the above-mentioned points.

3) Experience of the social context of the work

With regard to the social context in which the work is carried out, the following four clusters of work experience aspects can be distinguished: social work relationships, social support, conflicts at work and opportunities for expression.

Social work relationships: how one thinks one is viewed by colleagues (whether one thinks one is felt to be honest, warm and spontaneous); the quality of the relations with colleagues and one's boss; the extent to which one feels involved with one's colleagues.

Social support: the support one experiences from colleagues in everyday and problematic work situations; the level of satisfaction with the contact with colleagues.

Conflicts at work: the frequency of conflicts with colleagues and boss; the extent to which one discusses work problems with colleagues and boss; the extent to which one perceives that others are bullied at work and the presumed reasons for this; the extent to which one is bullied at work and what the person involved attributes this to.

Opportunities for expression: the extent to which one can be oneself at work; the extent to which colleagues and boss are informed about the person's private life; the extent to which colleagues and boss accept the personal lifestyle of the person in question; the extent to which colleagues have difficulty with that person's lifestyle.

In terms of all the aspects referred to above, there may be differences between homosexual and heterosexual persons. These differences may occur, on the one hand, because homosexual persons are treated differently by their colleagues as a result of their homosexuality. On the other hand, differences may occur due to the fact that homosexuals have a different approach to their work.

4) Consequences for job satisfaction, workload and health

If there are differences between how homosexual and heterosexual people experience their work, this could also lead to differences in the area of the workload experienced and satisfaction with the work, as these aspects are related to how the work is experienced. There may also be differences in the mental or physical health as a result of the difference in the experience of the work. Obviously a person's health is also influenced by factors outside their work. This study will, however, be examining the extent to which health is influenced by various aspects of the experience of work.

As far as possible consequences are concerned, three forms of stress and burnout have been examined. The first aspect of burnout is the feeling that one is totally 'empty' or 'exhausted'

(*emotional exhaustion*). The second aspect relates to a negative and distant attitude to the work (*depersonalisation*). The third aspect is the feeling one has that one is less able to do the work well than in the past (*sense of reduced personal competence*). Apart from burnout symptoms, this study also looks at the *level of satisfaction* with the work.

From a health point of view, the first thing that was looked at was the person's sense of self-esteem. We then drew up a list of *health problems*, such as a lack of appetite, tiredness, headaches and stomach problems, and subsequently assessed how the respondents themselves evaluated their health. *Problems with sleeping*, such as waking up too early, difficulty falling asleep and lying awake at night, can be caused by a person's work situation. These problems were addressed as well.

The study also examined whether or not the health problems experienced were attributed to the work situation. The more a person's work is experienced as stressful, the likelier this will be. Stress at work can also result in employees *continuing to work* despite actually being ill; the study looked at how often this occurred. Finally, the respondents were asked how often they had not worked during the past year as a result of sick leave.

2.3 General approach of the study

The question of whether homosexuality plays a role in work situations can be investigated in a variety of ways. One possibility is to ask homosexual men and women directly. This has been the most frequently applied method up to now. However, one disadvantage is that this method primarily brings negative aspects to light. The question must also be asked as to how much the results are influenced by the self-selection of the respondents: it is probable that only persons who clearly view themselves as homosexuals would take part in such a study.

All in all, with this type of approach it remains unclear whether a negative experience of work is actually related to homosexuality, or involves incidental or structural differences. In order to achieve a more objective and well-grounded insight, it is therefore desirable to compare the experience of work of random groups of homosexual and heterosexual persons, without any explicit reference to homosexuality. This type of approach was chosen for this study. In other words, respondents were not recruited on the basis of their sexual preference. For this reason, it was then necessary to put together a relatively large study group, as this would be the only way to ensure that there were sufficient homosexual men and women to enable reliable statements to be made about their experience of work. In order to collect data from such a large group of respondents, and partly in view of the resources available, a written questionnaire was the most suitable method of data collection.

2.4 Design of the questionnaire

In order to collect valid data, as much use was made as possible, when compiling this questionnaire, of existing scales and individual items that have been used frequently in other studies. The questionnaire also contains a number of scales and items that have been specially developed for this study.

In general, the existing scales have not been included in the questionnaire as a whole. The goal was to include as many different aspects of the experience of work as possible, without making the questionnaire too long. Existing scales have therefore been shortened, or a number of subscales have been chosen which fit in best with the objectives of the study. When selecting items,

account has been taken of the item correlations: in particular, those items which are closely related to other items in a scale.

Appendix I lists the scales used and the appropriate items and the internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha). The reliability of all the scales used in this study is in almost all cases more than adequate. The scoring of the scales is such that a high score indicates that the characteristic which the scale is intended to measure is strongly present, while a low score points to the opposite.

2.5 Recruitment of the respondents

Respondents for this study were recruited from ABVAKABO FNV's two largest sectors: local government and the hospital sector. A representative random sample of the union's members was selected in both sectors. The size of both random samples was ten thousand people; an equal number of men and women was approached in both sectors. The size of the random sample was based on the expectation that 3% of the members would be homosexual. Assuming a response of 30%, this would result in a group of homosexual men and women of more than sufficient size to enable reliable statements to be made. A total of 20,000 people therefore received a questionnaire (see Appendix 2 for the accompanying letter they received with the questionnaire).

Apart from this random sample, 368 people were approached who are registered as interested parties with *Inzake*, the journal of the homosexual and lesbian group within ABVAKABO FNV. These persons came from all the various sectors within the union. A separate report is in preparation.

The questionnaire was returned by a total of 4880 people (24%, see table 2.1). Although less than expected, this response rate is not unusual for a written survey. As will become clear, the exact number of homosexual men and women is still sufficient to make reliable statements, though.

Table 2.1 *Number of questionnaires sent out and returned*

	Sent out	Returned	Response
Local government	10,000	2220	22%
Hospital sector	10,000	2660	27%
Total	20,000	4880	24%

2.6 The characteristics of the group

Sexual preference

As stated previously, 4880 people took part in this study. The sexual preference of 6% of these is unknown: they had not indicated their gender or had not completed the question about sexual preference (answers to both questions were needed in order to divide people into the heterosexual or homosexual group). This left a group of 4570 people for this study. Of these, 46% were employed in the local government sector (2085 people) and 54% in the hospital sector (2485 people).

Of the group of 4570 respondents, 7% have a homosexual or bisexual preference and 93% a heterosexual preference. Of the 998 men in local government, 4% has a homosexual or bisexual preference; of the 1087 women in this sector, 7% has a bisexual or lesbian preference. Of the 1258 men in the hospital sector, 9% have a homosexual or bisexual preference; and of the 1227 women in this sector, 8% have a lesbian or bisexual preference.

These percentages vary to some degree from that found in a random sample of Dutch people as a whole (Sandfort and De Vroome, 1996). In particular, the percentage of women with a lesbian preference in this study group is significantly higher. One possible explanation for this is that



lesbian women have to provide for themselves more often than heterosexual women. It would therefore be safe to say that there is a higher representation of lesbian women among employees than among the population at large. Due to the greater importance that work has for them, they may also be more likely to join a union than heterosexual women.

In terms of the men, 4% in local government corresponds to representative data. The percentage of homosexual men in the hospital sector, however, is significantly higher than in the population at large. One possible explanation for this could be that there is greater tolerance of homosexual men in the hospital sector and that, in part, homosexual men are therefore relatively more attracted to this type of work.

Other personal characteristics

Table 2.2 (see the end of this paragraph) contains a list of the personal backgrounds of the respondents and the characteristics of their work situations. The most important aspects of this table can be summarized as follows.

The average age of all the 4570 men and women who took part in the study is 42, and the age range varies from 19 to 64 (Table 2.2). The homosexual men in this study are younger than the heterosexual men; there is hardly any difference in this respect between the women. Almost half the respondents studied at a higher professional or academic level. In local government, lesbian women are less well-educated than their heterosexual colleagues. Most of the people in this study live in a large city. A relatively larger number of homosexual men in local government live in a large city than their heterosexual colleagues. Most of the respondents has a Dutch background. This applies to both homosexual and heterosexual persons. However, in the hospital sector, there are relatively more homosexual men with a ethnic minority background than there are among heterosexual men.

Most of the respondents had a permanent partner with whom they live. Among the men, homosexuals more frequently did not have a permanent partner than heterosexuals. Among the women, there was no difference in this respect. As should be obvious, most homosexual men and women are unmarried, in contrast with the heterosexual respondents. Nevertheless, a relatively large number of homosexual respondents in this study are married to a partner of the opposite sex, so that the percentage of married homosexuals is significantly higher than in a random sample of Dutch people (Sandfort and De Vroome, 1996). Probably related to this a relatively large number of homosexual men and women in this study report that they have children.

Work situation

Most of the people who cooperated with this study have a permanent contract. Within the hospital sector, more homosexuals did not have a permanent job than heterosexuals.

The majority of the male respondents has a full-time job and the majority of the women has a part-time job. Homosexual employees differ from heterosexual ones in this respect. Among the men, more homosexuals had part-time jobs than heterosexuals. Among the women, this was exactly the opposite: more lesbian women have a full-time job, particularly within the hospital sector.

The length of time that people had worked for their current employer varied from 1 to 43 years, with an average of 12 years. Homosexual men in the study group have not been working as long for the current organisation, on average, as the heterosexual men. This is particularly the case in the hospital sector. There is no difference between lesbian women and heterosexual women in this respect. Most of the respondents do not have a managerial position. Fewer homosexual men in this study have a managerial position than the heterosexual men, particularly in the hospital sector.

In terms of organisation characteristics, the majority of the respondents works in a department of more than twenty people. In local government, more homosexuals than heterosexuals work in smaller departments of fewer than five people. The size of the work organisation as a whole was usually between 100 and 500 employees. Most of the organisations

employed more men than women. In local government, homosexual men gave a higher estimate of the percentage of female colleagues than heterosexual men in the same sector.

2.7 Strategy of analyses

In order to answer the study questions described in Paragraph 2.1, a number of statistical analyses were carried out. Depending on the structure of the question, analysis of variance, regression analyses or correlations were carried out. A description is given in Appendix 4 of which analysis strategy was followed for each study question. For the sake of the readability of this report, the statistical data from the analyses has not been included in the text; these are listed in Appendix 5 of this report, however. The tables in chapters 3, 4 and 5 do show whether groups differ significantly from one another; this is indicated with a *. The level of significance ($p < .05$, $p < .01$ and $p < .001$) is indicated respectively with one, two or three asterisks (*, ** or ***). For the description of the results, a minimum significance level of $p < .05$ is taken; this means that there is a maximum chance of one in twenty that a difference or association found to be significant here can be attributed to chance.

Table 2.2 Description of the respondents (in percentages, unless otherwise is indicated)

	Local government				Hospital sector				Total group			
	Men		Women		Men		Women		Men		Women	
	Homo	Hetero	Homo	Hetero	Homo	Hetero	Homo	Hetero	Homo	Hetero	Homo	Hetero
PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS												
Age												
Minimum	24.0	22.0	26.0	22.0	25.0	20.0	20.0	19.0	24.0	20.0	20.0	19.0
Means	43.0▼	45.6▲	41.4▲	40.5▲	40.5▲	42.8▲	38.8▲	38.6▲	41.2▲	44.1▲	40.0▲	39.5
Maximum	58.0	64.0	55.0	61.0	60.0	61.0	57.0	62.0	60.0	64.0	57.0	62.0
Education												
Low	10.0	20.5	7.5	3.3	8.7	10.0	5.2	7.3	9.0	14.9	6.2	5.2
Medium	40.3	35.4	22.5	29.4	28.7	30.5	35.1	37.8	31.6	32.7	29.4	33.8
Secondary	7.5	8.5	7.5▲	16.1▼	7.0	8.4	13.4	12.9	7.1	8.5	10.7	14.4
Higher	42.5	35.5	62.5	51.2	55.7	51.1	46.4	42.0	52.3	43.9	53.7	46.3
Place of residence												
Rural	17.5	18.3	11.3	14.6	15.0	16.7	16.3	17.3	15.7	17.4	14.0	16.0
Small towns	35.0▼	55.5▲	46.3	52.6	48.7	56.2	50.0	55.7	45.1▼	55.9▲	48.3	54.2
Cities	47.5▲	26.2▼	42.5	32.8	36.3	27.1	33.7	27.0	39.2▲	26.6▼	37.8	29.8
Ethnic background												
Dutch	97.6	96.4	97.6	94.1	92.3▼	96.5▲	96.9	95.5	93.7	96.4	97.2	94.8
Non-Dutch	2.4	3.6	2.4	5.9	7.7▲	3.5▼	3.1	4.5	6.3	3.6	2.8	5.2
Relationstatus												
Non permanent partner												
partner	36.8▲	9.1▼	17.5	19.7	28.4▲	7.8▼	25.8	20.4	30.5▲	8.4▲	22.0	20.1
Permanent partner; not living together												
	2.6	2.1	3.8	6.1	10.3▲	3.1▼	4.1	5.8	8.4▲	2.6▼	4.0	5.9
Permanent partner; living together												
	60.5▼	88.8▲	78.8	74.2	61.2▼	89.2▲	70.1	73.8	61.0▼	89.0▲	74.0	74.0
Civil status												
Unmarried	80.0▲	14.3▼	73.2▲	32.7▼	72.4▲	20.4▼	68.8▲	38.5▼	74.4▲	17.6▼	70.8▲	35.8▼
Married	17.5▼	81.0▲	24.4▼	55.9▲	20.7▼	74.5▲	24.0▼	53.9▲	19.9▼	77.5▲	24.2▼	54.8▲
Have been married.	2.5	4.7	2.4▼	11.5▲	6.9	5.1	7.3	7.6	5.8	4.9	5.1	9.4
Children												
No.	75.6▲	21.4▼	61.0▲	41.6▼	76.9▲	24.8▼	68.8▲	48.8▼	76.6▲	23.2▼	65.2▲	45.0▼
Yes	24.4▼	78.6▲	39.0▼	58.4▲	23.1▼	75.2▲	31.3▼	52.0▲	23.4▼	76.8▲	34.8▼	55.0▲
WORKSITUATION												
Employment relationship												
Permanent	0.0	1.4	1.2	3.1	2.6	1.8	3.2	2.4	1.9	1.6	2.3	2.7
Non permanent	100.0	97.5	96.3	94.7	94.0▼	97.4▲	92.6	94.8	95.6	97.4	94.4	94.7
Otherwise	0.0	1.1	2.4	2.2	3.4▲	0.8▼	4.2	2.8	2.5	1.0	3.4	2.5
Appointment												
Fulltime	63.4▼	90.6▲	37.8	37.8	63.2▼	74.8▲	44.3▲	30.1▼	63.3▼	82.0▲	41.3▲	33.7▲
Parttime	36.6▲	9.4▼	62.2	62.2	36.8▲	25.2▼	55.7▼	69.9▲	36.7▲	18.0▼	58.7▼	66.3▼
Service years												
Minimum	1.5	1.0	1.5	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Means	14.5	16.0	9.4	9.7	12.2▼	14.1▲	10.0	10.7	12.8▼	15.0▲	9.7	10.2
Maximum	40.0	38.5	28.0	38.0	39.0	40.0	30.0	43.0	40.0	40.0	30.0	43.0
Managerial position												
No	80.5	69.8	84.0	86.5	75.2▲	65.5▼	83.2	85.5	76.6▲	67.5▼	83.5	86.0
Yes	19.5	30.2	16.0	13.5	24.8▼	34.5▲	16.8	14.5	23.4▼	32.5▲	16.5	14.0
Number of people to whom one has a managerial position												
Minimum	1.0	1.0	3.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Mean	12.8	15.6	19.6	14.0	17.4	22.3	17.9	19.0	16.4	19.5	18.6	16.8
Maximum	300.0	300.0	53.0	300.0	90.0	280.0	100.0	300.0	90.0	300.0	100.0	300.0

Table continued

Table 2.2 *Description of the respondents (continued)*

	Local government				Hospital sector				Total group			
	Men		Women		Men		Women		Men		Women	
	Homo	Hetero	Homo	Hetero	Homo	Hetero	Homo	Hetero	Homo	Hetero	Homo	Hetero
Contact outside the organisation												
No	7.3	10.3	8.5	9.0	21.4	17.2	28.7	28.3	17.7	14.1	19.3	19.2
Yes	92.7	89.7	91.5	91.0	78.6	82.8	71.3	71.7	82.3	85.9	80.7	80.9
Size of the department												
< 5	19.5 [▲]	7.6 [▼]	9.8	10.4	8.5	8.9	12.4	10.1	11.4	8.3	11.2	10.3
5 tot 10	17.1	22.3	26.8	25.8	25.6	24.6	26.8	21.8	23.4	23.5	26.8	23.7
10 tot 20	26.8	24.9	22.0	28.4	28.2	27.5	23.7	25.8	27.8	26.3	22.9	27.0
20 >	36.6	45.1	41.5	35.5	37.6	39.1	37.1	42.3	37.3	41.9	39.1	39.1
Number of people with an ethnic background in the department												
No one	43.9	44.2	40.2	47.6	53.0	53.5	56.7	54.7	50.6	49.2	49.2	51.4
Only one	39.0	41.6	39.0	35.5	36.8	36.6	37.1	37.1	37.3	38.9	38.0	36.4
Less than the half	14.6	12.3	20.7	14.2	8.5	7.8	4.1	6.8	10.1	9.9	11.7	10.3
The half	2.4	1.0	0.0	1.7	0.9	1.7	0.0	1.1	1.3	1.4	0.0	1.4
More than the half	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.9	0.9	0.4	2.1	0.3	0.6	0.6	1.1	0.6
Size of the organisation												
< 50	12.2	14.5	7.4	11.1	4.3	2.3	4.1	3.2	6.4	7.8	5.6	6.9
50 tot 100	12.2	20.7	19.8	21.2	8.6	7.7	4.1	6.9	9.6	13.7	11.2	13.6
100 tot 500	39.0	40.6	51.9	46.4	40.5	31.9	40.2	38.0	40.1	35.9	45.5	41.9
500 tot 1000	17.2	10.6	11.1	11.0	22.4	27.6	36.1	29.5	21.0	19.8	24.7	20.8
> 1000	19.5	13.7	9.9	10.4	24.1	30.4	15.5	22.4	22.9	22.8	12.9	16.8
Percentage men-women in the organisation												
% men	60.0 [▼]	71.5 [▲]	58.1	56.6	35.4	37.3	34.1	32.2	41.5 [▼]	52.8 [▲]	44.4	43.7
% women	37.3 [▲]	28.9 [▼]	42.0	43.4	64.4	62.6	66.0	67.7	57.7 [▲]	47.5 [▼]	55.5	56.3

Proportions (or means) in a subgroup of a specific sector with a [▲] indicates a relatively bigger proportion (or higher mean) than the expected proportion (or means) of the total group in that sector; a [▼] indicates that the proportions (or means) are relatively small. The results are based on chi²-analyses for independence (two-sided) and the adjusted standardized residuals. Means have been tested with t-tests.

CHAPTER 3 HOMOSEXUALITY AND THE EXPERIENCE OF WORK

The presentation of the study results begins in this chapter. There do appear to be differences in the experience of work between homosexual and heterosexual employees, but there are no simple conclusions to be drawn across the board. The pattern is too multifaceted to allow this. An introduction about these nuances in the study results (3.1) and an explanation of the tables (3.2) are followed by an overview of the differences on the basis of gender and the sector in which the respondents work (3.3). This is followed in 3.4 by the core of the study: the differences in the experience of work between homosexual and heterosexual employees.

3.1 Introduction

People who took part in this study vary in a number of respects regarding the way they experience their work. Firstly, it appears that the experience of work depends on the sector in which they work. The gender of the employee also led to variations in the experience of work. Independent of this, it appears that whether someone is heterosexual or homosexual also plays a role.

The influence of sexual preference on the experience of work does not appear to be systematic, however. Firstly, as far as certain aspects are concerned, it makes a difference whether somebody is homosexual or heterosexual, while for others it does not. Secondly, it does not matter whether one is male or female: on occasion, there are differences between homosexual and heterosexual women, but not between homosexual and heterosexual men. And for another aspect of work, there are different results for homosexual and heterosexual men, while for the women there is no difference. Finally, the sector in which one works can play a role: in local government, it can make a difference for a certain aspect whether you are homosexual or heterosexual, whereas this is not necessarily the case for the hospital sector.

It is therefore important not only to analyse the various aspects of the experience of work separately, but also to pay attention to male-female differences and to differences between the two sectors. In order to gain some insight into the areas of these differences, Paragraph 3.3 below gives an overview of them. Only after this, in Paragraph 3.4, do we get to the core of the study: differences between homosexual and heterosexual persons. We will also continue to see variations between men and women or between the sectors.

Statements about the differences between homosexual and heterosexual persons are primarily made on the basis of the statistical analyses implemented. There were two types of analysis used. The first type of analysis reveals differences on the basis of sexual preference for the whole group, irrespective of gender and the sector worked in. The second type of analysis shows the extent to which sexual preference in subgroups plays a role in the experience of work. As shown in the tables, the results of the two analyses do not always agree with one another. For example, sometimes an effect of sexual preference can be found for the whole group, but not for one single subgroup. The opposite also applies. These apparent discrepancies can be explained as follows.

Firstly, a difference on the basis of sexual preference is only significant for the whole group and not for the various subgroups. An examination of the averages in the table reveals that most of the differences in the various subgroups are in the same range. The fact that these differences are nevertheless insignificant could be due to them not being large enough, or to the number of persons in the subgroup being too small to lead to significant differences. This is because the tests used take the size of the group into account. A difference that is significant in a larger group can more quickly

be attributed to coincidence in a smaller group. Of course, it is also possible that no differences on the basis of sexual preference exist in certain subgroups. When interpreting the findings, it is therefore important not to look exclusively at significant differences, but also to examine the other averages in the tables.

3.2 Explanation of the tables

The tables contain the study results for the total group as well for the various subgroups. The right-hand column contains the data for the total group. The averages displayed are estimated values, in the sense that they have been corrected for any confounding effect of age, educational level and level of urbanisation of the town or city where the person lives.

In order to highlight statistically significant results, two types of symbols have been used: letters and asterisks.

Letters

Whenever averages within the *total group* differ significantly from one another, this is indicated with a letter. The letter 'a' is used to indicate that homosexual and heterosexual persons significantly differ from one another. The letter 'b' indicates significant differences between men and women. And the letter 'c' indicates that differences on the basis of sector are significant. This is all within the total group.

The analysis in Paragraph 3.4 focuses primarily on the designations with the letter a (and on the asterisks, see next point). The differences with letters b and c are discussed briefly in Paragraph 3.3; while these differences did not form the primary focus of this study, it is relevant to keep an eye on them in order to better understand the effect of sexual preference.

Asterisks

If, within a certain *subgroup*, there are differences between homosexual and heterosexual persons, this is indicated by one or more asterisks (*). The higher the level of significance, in other words, the smaller the chance that a difference can be attributed to chance, the more asterisks are used. One, two or three asterisks mean that differences are significant at the five, one or one-tenth percent level, respectively (in other words, *, ** or *** for $p < .05$, $p < .01$ or $p < .001$, respectively). All the results presented as significant are at least significant at the five percent level. This means that there is a maximum chance of one in twenty that a difference or connection found to be significant must be attributed to chance.

3.3 Differences between men and women and between the sectors

Differences were revealed between men and women for a number of aspects of the experience of work. The sector in which one works also has an influence on the manner in which one experiences work. The exact data for these subgroups is shown in the tables in the text below (3.4). Only a brief summary of the differences will be given here.

Differences between men and women

Irrespective of sexual preference, men experience their jobs more positively than women: more of them feel that their work is creative, challenging and interesting. More women than men feel that they have a poor relationship with the organisation for which they work. They report more

frequently to receive too little information about the state of affairs within the organisation. They also more frequently feel that they receive too little feedback about the way in which they are performing their work. Men feel that they have more educational opportunities at work than women.

Being male or female also has an influence on the extent to which one feels involved with one's colleagues. Women feel more involved with their colleagues than men. More of them say that their colleagues and bosses are informed about their private lives, and that their lifestyles are accepted by their colleagues. Women do not experience any more or less conflict at work than men, but they do handle it differently: if conflicts occur, they are less likely to talk about them to their immediate superiors than men are.

More women than men report problems with the workload in general and health problems in particular. Women are less satisfied with their work than men. All types of health problems, sleep problems and feelings of emotional exhaustion are experienced more frequently by women than by men. Finally, in the past year, women have missed work due to illness more frequently than men.

Differences between local government and the hospital sector

Irrespective of the sector in which they work, most people feel that they benefit more from the relationship between the organisation and the employee than the organisation does. There is a difference between the sectors, however: more people in the hospital sector feel that the organisation benefits from the relationship than in local government.

Those working in the hospital sector have a different assessment of the manner in which colleagues view them than local government employees: more people in the hospital sector feel that they are viewed by their colleagues as spontaneous and warm than those in local government. People in the hospital sector also feel more involved with their colleagues and experience more support in both everyday and problematic work situations. More people in local government experience negative support from their colleagues.

Despite this, those working in the hospital sector reported having more frequent conflicts with their colleagues. People in this sector also observed more verbal and physical mobbing resulting from sexual preference or gender than in local government. More people in the hospital sector than in local government said that people in their working environment accepted their personal lifestyle. And, in the same vein, more people working in local government felt that colleagues did not accept their lifestyle. Finally, more local government employees reported that they felt less able to do their work properly than previously.

Conclusion

It can be concluded from the above, for the way in which people experience their work, that not only the gender of a person is important. It also matters whether people work in the local government sector or in the hospital sector. For a number of aspects, women, and women in local government in particular, experience their work as less positive than men. An explanation for this could be that the way organisations are run is geared more towards men than towards women. The differences between men and women in the area of workload could be due to the double load with which many women are faced (Schaufeli, 1990b; Ross and Altmaier, 1997). Finally, the differences found between men and women correspond with the stereotypical gender roles of men and women. The fact that the women in this study had more problems with emotional exhaustion could be due to gender-specific socialisation: men have a more instrumental make-up, while women are quicker to express their emotions.

3.4 Differences between homosexual and heterosexual persons

1) Meaning and experience of work

No differences were found between homosexual and heterosexual employees with regard to the meaning and experience of work (Table 3.1). This applies both to the total group and to the various subgroups. On average, homosexual and heterosexual persons respond in the same way to the question of whether they spend a great deal of their free time working, and whether the most important things in their lives are related to their work. They also do not differ in the extent to which they find their work to be challenging, creative and interesting.

Table 3.1 *Meaning and experience of work (corrected means)*

	Local government			Hospital sector			Total		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
<i>Place work has in life</i>									
<i>(1=not important; 5=very important)</i>									
Homo	2.29	2.08	2.18	2.29	2.20	2.25	2.29	2.14	2.21
Hetero	2.26	2.27	2.22	2.20	2.23	2.21	2.23	2.20	2.21
Total	2.27	2.13	2.20	2.25	2.21	2.23	2.26	2.17	2.21
<i>Experience of the task</i>									
<i>(1=negative; 5=positive)</i>									
Homo	3.62	3.40	3.51	3.64	3.53	3.58	3.63	3.47	3.55
Hetero	3.66	3.54	3.60	3.66	3.64	3.65	3.66	3.59	3.62
Total	3.64	3.47	3.55	3.65	3.58	3.62	3.64 ^b	3.53 ^b	3.59

^b Men and women differ significantly from one another ($p < .05$)

2) Experience of the organisational context of the work

Being informed about the work and the organisation

Irrespective of their gender or the sector in which they work, an equal proportion of homosexual and heterosexual persons report that they receive feedback on their own work (Table 3.2). This implies that there is no difference in terms of the information they receive from their immediate superiors or colleagues about how well they are performing their work. In the area of information provision in general, however, there are differences. In the hospital sector, but not in local government, homosexual persons feel to a lesser extent that they are informed about the most important matters in the organisation than heterosexual persons do (Figure 3.1). This applies particularly to lesbian women. Fewer members of this group report receiving sufficient information about the state of affairs in the organisation. Furthermore, more lesbian women report a lack of clarity regarding who they can approach within the organisation with specific work problems.

Table 3.2 *Being informed about the organisation and receiving feedback about one's work (corrected means)*

	Local government			Hospital sector			Total		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
<i>Feedback possibilities about one's work task</i> (1=never; 4=always)									
Homo	2.28	2.16	2.22	2.21	2.09	2.15	2.25	2.13	2.19
Hetero	2.22	2.18	2.20	2.24	2.21	2.22	2.23	2.19	2.21
Total	2.25	2.17	2.21	2.22	2.15	2.19	2.24b	2.16b	2.20
<i>Being informed about the organisation</i> (1=never; 4=always)									
Homo	2.71	2.58	2.64	2.64	2.53**	2.59**	2.68	2.55	2.61
Hetero	2.64	2.61	2.62	2.71	2.69	2.70	2.68	2.65	2.66
Total	2.68	2.59	2.63	2.68	2.61	2.64	2.68b	2.60b	2.64

Significant differences within a specific subgroup are indicated as follows with a: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ and *** $p < .001$
b Men and women differ significantly from one another ($p < .05$)

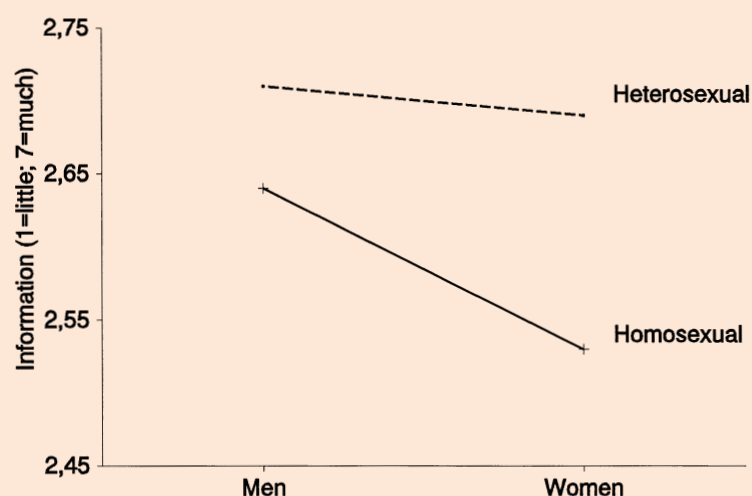


Figure 3.1 *Being informed about the organisation for men and women in the hospital sector according to preference*

Growth opportunities

It appears that sexual preference does not play a role in terms of the opportunities people feel that they have at work to learn and to progress in their careers (Table 3.3). An equal proportion of homosexual and heterosexual persons feel that they have opportunities to learn new things and to take courses. The same applies to opportunities to progress in their careers and to be promoted in their current work situation.

Table 3.3 Opportunities for growth (corrected means)

	Local government			Hospital sector			Total		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
<i>Learning opportunities</i> (1=very poor; 7=very good)									
Homo	4.34	4.09	4.22	4.24	3.94	4.09	4.29	4.02	4.15
Hetero	4.16	4.01	4.09	4.12	3.93	4.02	4.14	3.97	4.05
Total	4.25	4.05	4.15	4.18	3.94	4.06	4.21 ^b	3.99 ^b	4.10
<i>Career opportunities</i> (1=very poor; 7=very good)									
Homo	3.64	3.58	3.61	3.79	3.71	3.75	3.72	3.64	3.68
Hetero	3.84	3.69	3.77	3.92	3.75	3.83	3.88	3.72	3.80
Total	3.74	3.63	3.69	3.86	3.73	3.79	3.80	3.68	3.74

^b Men and women differ significantly from one another ($p < .05$)

Relationship with the organisation

In general, homosexual persons report that they do not have any better or worse relationship with their work organisations than heterosexual persons (Table 3.4). On average, both homosexual and heterosexual persons feel that they do not have a bad relationship with the organisation, but also not an especially good relationship. Nevertheless, sexual preference plays a role in the case of men working in local government, when they are asked who benefits more from the relationship between employee and organisation. In this sector, more homosexual men feel that the employee benefits more from the relationship than heterosexual men do.

Table 3.4 Relationship with the organisation (corrected means)

	Local government			Hospital sector			Total		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
<i>Relationship with the organisation</i> (1=very poor; 7=very good)									
Homo	4.31	4.03	4.17	4.24	3.99	4.11	4.28	4.01	4.14
Hetero	4.21	4.08	4.15	4.19	4.08	4.14	4.20	4.08	4.14
Total	4.26	4.05	4.16	4.21	4.04	4.12	4.24 ^b	4.04 ^b	4.14
<i>Balance: organisation or employee benefits from the relationship</i> (1= organisation; 7=employee)									
Homo	3.63 [*]	3.42	3.53	3.34	3.10	3.22	3.48	3.26	3.37
Hetero	3.24	3.29	3.27	3.25	3.27	3.26	3.25	3.28	3.26
Total	3.44	3.36	3.40 ^c	3.29	3.19	3.24 ^c	3.36	3.27	3.32

^b Men and women differ significantly from one another ($p < .05$)

^c People in local government differ significantly from people in the hospital sector ($p < .05$)

3) Experience of the social context of the work

Social work relationships

To a certain extent, homosexual persons have a different idea about the way their colleagues perceive them than heterosexuals (Table 3.5). This applies particularly to the extent to which people think that they are seen as warm and spontaneous by their colleagues. In general, homosexual men and women feel that they are viewed as less spontaneous and, in several cases also less warm. There is no difference in the extent to which people feel they are seen as honest by others.

For homosexual men in the hospital sector, however, the situation is very different: they seem

to be more positive about their image among colleagues. They think that they are experienced as spontaneous as heterosexual men in this sector think about themselves. With respect to warmth, they think they are experienced even more positively than heterosexual men think.

Their score for the question of whether they feel they are seen as spontaneous is just as high as that for heterosexuals in this sector. And their score for the question about warmth is actually significantly higher.

Table 3.5 *The extent to which one is felt to be honest, warm and spontaneous by colleagues (corrected means)*

	Local government			Hospital sector			Total		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
<i>Colleagues find you honest (1=not at all; 5=definitely)</i>									
Homo	4.28	4.33	4.31	4.37	4.42	4.39	4.32	4.38	4.35
Hetero	4.31	4.36	4.34	4.34	4.38	4.36	4.32	4.37	4.35
Total	4.29	4.35	4.32	4.35	4.40	4.38	4.32	4.37	4.35
<i>Colleagues find you warm (1=not at all; 5=definitely)</i>									
Homo	3.84	3.86*	3.85**	4.09*	4.08	4.08	3.97	3.97**	3.97
Hetero	3.94	4.11	4.02	3.98	4.13	4.06	3.96	4.12	4.04
Total	3.89	3.98	3.94c	4.03	4.10	4.07c	3.96	4.04	4.00
<i>Colleagues find you spontaneous (1=not at all; 5=definitely)</i>									
Homo	3.58**	3.62*	3.60***	3.83	3.87*	3.85	3.71	3.74**	3.72a
Hetero	3.80	3.93	3.86	3.82	3.96	3.89	3.81	3.94	3.88a
Total	3.69	3.77	3.73c	3.82	3.91	3.87c	3.76	3.84	3.80

Significant differences within a specific subgroup are indicated as follows with a: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ and *** $p < .001$

a Significant difference between homosexual and heterosexual people in the total group ($p < .05$)

c People in local government differ significantly from people in the hospital sector ($p < .05$)

Irrespective of the sector in which they work, homosexual persons feel less involved with their colleagues than heterosexual persons (Table 3.6). This difference in involvement is primarily noticeable among lesbian women working in local government.

Generally speaking, whether one is homosexual or heterosexual also affects how one experiences relationships with colleagues and boss. Homosexual men and lesbian women more often feel that they have poor relationships with their colleagues and bosses. This applies more for lesbian women than for homosexual men. The sector also makes a difference: in particular, homosexual persons working in local government have a more negative view of their relationships with colleagues than heterosexual persons in the same sector.

Table 3.6 Relationship and involvement with colleagues (corrected means)

	Local government			Hospital sector			Total		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
<i>Involvement with colleagues</i> (1=none; 4=high)									
Homo	3.38	3.57*	3.48**	3.58	3.73	3.66	3.48	3.65**	3.57a
Hetero	3.50	3.80	3.65	3.57	3.82	3.70	3.54	3.81	3.67a
Total	3.44	3.68	3.56c	3.58	3.78	3.68c	3.51b	3.73b	3.62
<i>Relationship with colleagues</i> (1=none; 4=high)									
Homo	3.14	3.08*	3.11*	3.13	3.08	3.11	3.14	3.08**	3.11a
Hetero	3.21	3.22	3.22	3.18	3.21	3.20	3.20	3.22	3.21a
Total	3.17	3.15	3.16	3.16	3.15	3.15	3.17	3.15	3.16
<i>Relationship with boss</i> (1=none; 4=high)									
Homo	2.69*	2.67	2.68*	2.76	2.74	2.75	2.73	2.70	2.72a
Hetero	2.86	2.83	2.84	2.83	2.81	2.82	2.85	2.82	2.83a
Total	2.78	2.75	2.76	2.80	2.77	2.79	2.79	2.76	2.77

Significant differences within a specific subgroup are indicated as follows with a: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ and *** $p < .001$

a Significant difference between homosexual and heterosexual people in the total group ($p < .05$)

b Men and women differ significantly from one another ($p < .05$)

c People in local government differ significantly from people in the hospital sector ($p < .05$)

Social support at work

Whether someone is homosexual or heterosexual influences the extent to which one feels supported at work, in a number of ways (Table 3.7).

With regard to the support one feels from colleagues in everyday work situations, it makes a difference if one is male or female: although there is no significant difference for men, there is a clear difference for women (Figures 3.2a and 3.2b). Lesbian women experience significantly less support in everyday work situations from colleagues than heterosexual women. Lesbian women report more frequently that they are not sufficiently appreciated at work and have a lesser sense that they belong at work. The sector in which they work also plays a role for lesbian women. Lesbian women in local government feel more deeply that they receive less support in everyday work situations than lesbian women in the hospital sector.

With regard to the support felt in problematic situations, lesbian women both in local government and in the hospital sector again feel less supported (Figure 3.2c). Within both sectors, more lesbian women than heterosexual women feel that they could not rely on their colleagues. Lesbian women in these two sectors also feel less safe with their colleagues and fewer of them feel they can make a silly mistake at work than heterosexual women. Homosexual men do not differ from heterosexual men regarding the experienced support in problematic situations (Figure 3.2c and 3.2d).

Whether one feels let down by colleagues also appears to depend on sexual preference (Figures 3.2e and 3.2f). Homosexual persons experience this more than heterosexual persons. Once again, this applies in particular to lesbian women. Both in local government and in the hospital sector, more lesbian than heterosexual women feel that they are let down at work or that they are excluded. Homosexual men in local government felt this stronger than heterosexual men.

The extent to which one feels supported at work by colleagues is also reflected in the extent to which one is satisfied with the contact with colleagues. In general, homosexual persons are

less satisfied about this than heterosexual persons. If we look at the situations in which one is less satisfied, this appears to apply mainly to lesbian women, irrespective of the sector in which they work.

Table 3.7 Social support at work (corrected means)

	Local government			Hospital sector			Total		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
<i>Perceived support in everyday situations</i> (1=not at all; 4=a great deal)									
Homo	2.90	2.84**	2.87***	3.16	3.08	3.12	3.03	2.96**	3.00a
Hetero	3.00	3.07	3.03	3.08	3.15	3.12	3.04	3.11	3.07a
Total	2.95	2.95	2.95c	3.12	3.12	3.12c	3.04	3.03	3.03
<i>Perceived support in problematic situations</i> (1=not at all; 4=a great deal)									
Homo	2.89	2.84**	2.87**	3.03	3.00*	3.01	2.96	2.92***	2.94a
Hetero	3.01	3.07	3.04	3.05	3.13	3.09	3.03	3.10	3.07a
Total	2.95	2.96	2.95c	3.04	3.06	3.05c	3.00	3.01	3.00
<i>Negative support</i> (1=not at all; 4=a great deal)									
Homo	1.75*	1.89*	1.82**	1.66	1.71*	1.68	1.70	1.80**	1.75a
Hetero	1.64	1.68	1.66	1.66	1.60	1.63	1.65	1.64	1.65a
Total	1.69	1.79	1.74c	1.66	1.65	1.66c	1.68	1.72	1.70
<i>Satisfaction about contact with colleagues</i> (1=very unsatisfied; 5=very satisfied)									
Homo	3.84	3.76**	3.80**	3.95	3.89*	3.92	3.90	3.83***	3.86a
Hetero	3.92	4.02	3.97	3.95	4.07	4.01	3.93	4.05	3.99a
Total	3.88	3.89	3.89	3.95	3.98	3.97	3.91	3.94	3.93

Significant differences within a specific subgroup are indicated as follows with a: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ and *** $p < .001$

a Significant difference between homosexual and heterosexual people in the total group ($p < .05$)

c People in local government differ significantly from people in the hospital sector ($p < .05$)

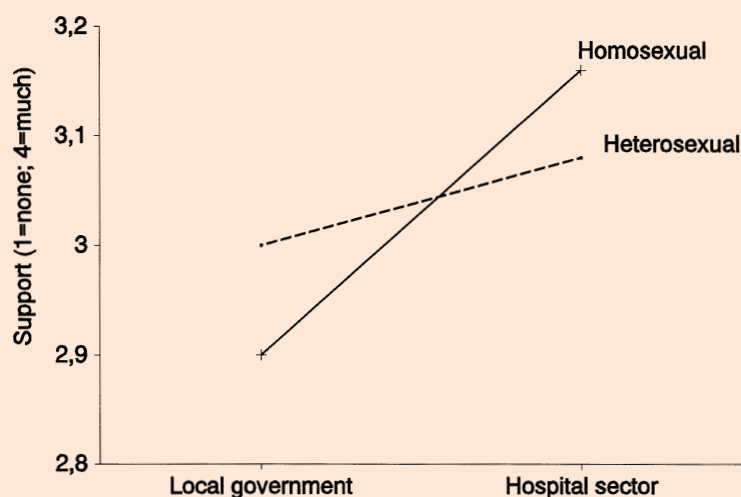


Figure 3.2a Support for men in everyday situations, according to preference and sector

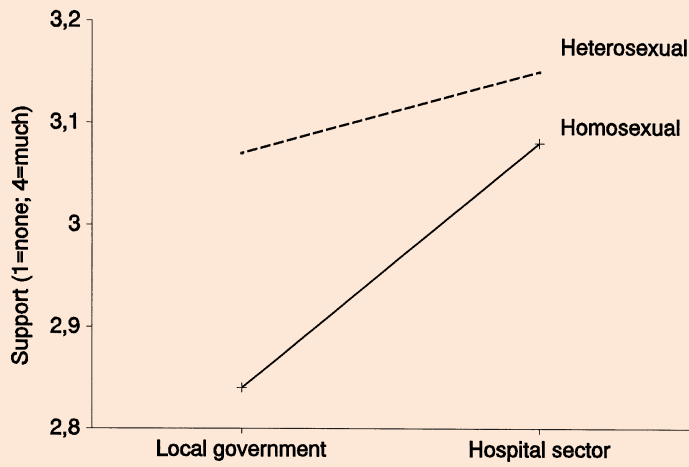


Figure 3.2b Support for women in everyday situations, according to preference and sector

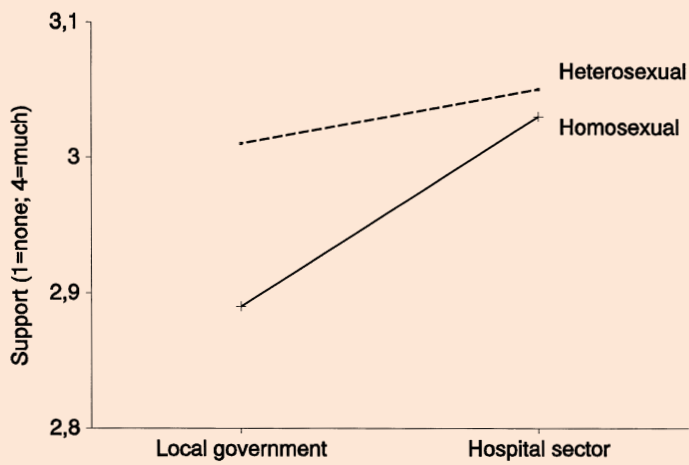


Figure 3.2c Support for men in problematic situations, according to preference and sector

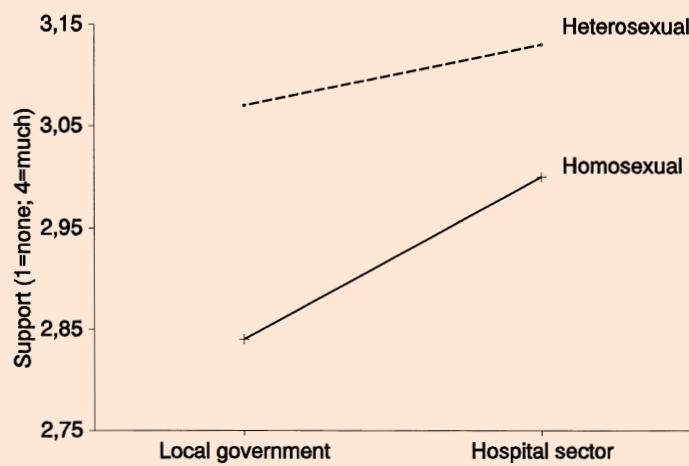


Figure 3.2d Support for women in problematic situations, according to preference and sector

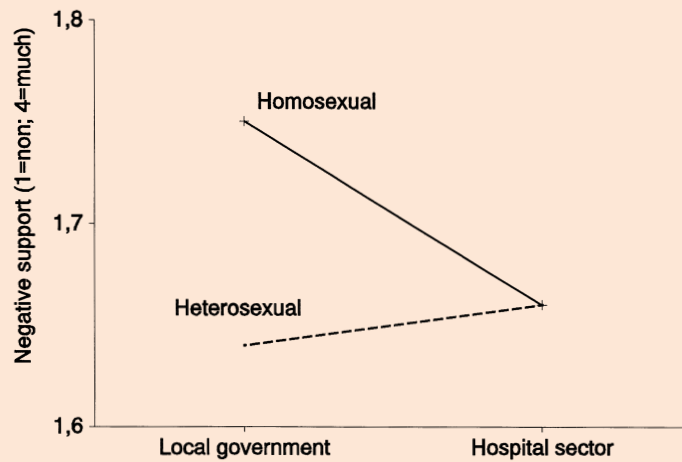


Figure 3.2e Negative support for men, according to preference and sector

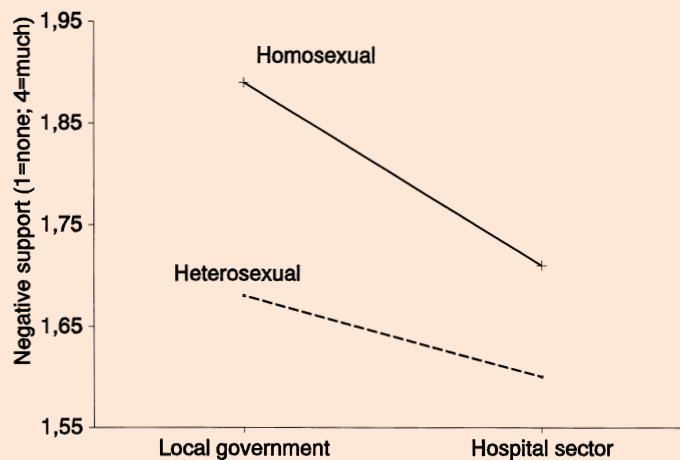


Figure 3.2f Negative support for women, according to preference and sector

Conflicts at work

When it comes to the extent to which one has conflicts with colleagues and bosses, sexual preference does not play a role for men, but it does for women (Table 3.8). Lesbian women in the hospital sector, in particular, report more of such conflicts than heterosexual women. To a certain extent, there is also a difference in the way in which one deals with conflicts. Homosexual men and lesbian women in local government talk less about work problems with colleagues and bosses than heterosexuals do. In the hospital sector, there is no difference in this respect between homosexual and heterosexual persons.

Table 3.8 Conflicts at work and discussing them (corrected means)

	Local government			Hospital sector			Total		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
<i>Conflicts with colleagues</i> (1=never; 4=very often)									
Homo	1.63	1.73	1.68	1.72	1.81*	1.76	1.68	1.77**	1.72
Hetero	1.68	1.64	1.66	1.75	1.69	1.72	1.71	1.66	1.69
Total	1.65	1.69	1.67c	1.74	1.75	1.74c	1.69	1.72	1.71
<i>Conflicts with boss</i> (1=never; 4=very often)									
Homo	1.69	1.80	1.74	1.84	1.87**	1.85	1.76	1.83	1.80
Hetero	1.74	1.74	1.74	1.80	1.73	1.76	1.77	1.73	1.75
Total	1.71	1.77	1.74	1.82	1.80	1.81	1.77	1.78	1.77
<i>Discussing work problems with colleagues</i> (1=never; 4=always)									
Homo	3.17*	3.12**	3.15**	3.31	3.25	3.28	3.24	3.19**	3.21a
Hetero	3.32	3.32	3.32	3.33	3.32	3.33	3.33	3.32	3.32a
Total	3.25	3.22	3.23	3.32	3.29	3.22	3.28	3.25	3.27
<i>Discussing work problems with boss</i> (1=never; 4=always)									
Homo	3.06*	2.89	2.98*	3.15	3.03	3.09	3.10	2.96*	3.03a
Hetero	3.19	3.09	3.14	3.15	3.11	3.13	3.17	3.10	3.13a
Total	3.12	2.99	3.06	3.15	3.07	3.11	3.14b	3.03b	3.08

Significant differences within a specific subgroup are indicated as follows with a: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ and *** $p < .001$

a Significant difference between homosexual and heterosexual people in the total group ($p < .05$)

b Men and women differ significantly from one another ($p < .05$)

c People in local government differ significantly from people in the hospital sector ($p < .05$)

With regard to the observation of mobbing, homosexual and heterosexual men report in equal amounts that they see other people at work being verbally or physically harassed (Table 3.9). Lesbian women report seeing this more often than heterosexual women, however. In terms of observing exclusion or negative treatment, there is no difference on the basis of sexual preference: homosexual persons, both men and women, report seeing this just as frequently as heterosexual persons.

A homosexual background did play a role when the respondents were asked the reason why people were mobbed at work. It was possible to give multiple responses to this question. More homosexual than heterosexual respondents indicated the gender of the person in question as the reason. More homosexual men and women than heterosexual persons also reported that mobbing took place on the basis of sexual preference.

Table 3.9 Observed mobbing (corrected means) and the perceived reasons (in percentages)

	Local government			Hospital sector			Total		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
<i>Observed mobbing: verbal and physical (1=seldom or never; 4=daily)</i>									
Homo	1.08	1.13	1.11	1.17	1.16	1.16	1.12	1.14**	1.13
Hetero	1.10	1.07	1.08	1.19	1.10	1.15	1.14	1.08	1.11
Total	1.09	1.10	1.09 ^c	1.18	1.13	1.15 ^c	1.13	1.11	1.12
<i>Observed mobbing: exclusion and negative treatment (1=seldom or never; 4=daily)</i>									
Homo	1.56	1.66	1.61	1.59	1.64	1.61	1.58	1.65	1.61
Hetero	1.58	1.60	1.59	1.58	1.55	1.56	1.58	1.58	1.58
Total	1.57	1.63	1.60	1.58	1.59	1.59	1.58	1.61	1.59
<i>Gender as perceived reason for mobbing</i>									
Homo	6%	11%*	9%*	4%	6%*	5%	5%	8%**	7% ^a
Hetero	3%	6%	4%	4%	2%	3%	3%	4%	4% ^a
Total	4%	9%	6% ^c	4%	4%	4% ^c	4%	6%	5%
<i>Sexual preference as perceived reason for mobbing</i>									
Homo	12%**	11%***	11%***	9%**	5%***	7%***	10%***	8%***	9% ^a
Hetero	2%	2%	2%	4%	0%	2%	3%	1%	2% ^a
Total	7%	6%	7% ^c	6%	3%	4% ^c	7% ^b	5% ^b	6%

Significant differences within a specific subgroup are indicated as follows with a: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ and *** $p < .001$

a Significant difference between homosexual and heterosexual people in the total group ($p < .05$)

b Men and women differ significantly from one another ($p < .05$)

c People in local government differ significantly from people in the hospital sector ($p < .05$)

Homosexual persons did not report that they had been the subject of verbal and physical mobbing any more often than heterosexual persons in the past six months (Table 3.10). There is also no difference in terms of exclusion or negative treatment. However, in terms of mobbing which focuses on a person's lifestyle, such as mocking their lifestyle or criticising their private life, sexual preference does play a role for people working in local government. More homosexual than heterosexual men in that sector report that they are mobbed, by colleagues making fools of them by imitating their manner of walking, their voice or gestures. There is no difference in this area in the other subgroups.

With regard to experiencing mobbing, the study also looked at the reasons why people think they themselves are mobbed. There was also an opportunity in this context to indicate a number of reasons. Many homosexuals and lesbians also indicated that they are mobbed because of being homosexual or lesbian. The percentage of homosexual men reporting this is significantly higher than the percentage of lesbian women. This is because lesbian women also often indicate that their gender is a reason for being mobbed. Remarkably enough, they indicate this aspect more often than sexual preference. It is also interesting to see that lesbian women more often than heterosexual women report being mobbed because of their gender.

Table 3.10 *Being mobbed (corrected means) and the perceived reasons (in percentages)*

	Local government			Hospital sector			Total		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
<i>Being verbally and physically mobbed</i> (1=seldom or never; 4=daily)									
Homo	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.03	1.03	1.04	1.03	1.03
Hetero	1.04	1.02	1.03	1.07	1.03	1.05	1.06	1.03	1.04
Total	1.04	1.03	1.03	1.05	1.03	1.04	1.05	1.03	1.04
<i>Being excluded and treated negatively</i> (1=seldom or never; 4=daily)									
Homo	1.13	1.17	1.15	1.14	1.14	1.14	1.14	1.15	1.14
Hetero	1.13	1.15	1.14	1.15	1.12	1.14	1.14	1.14	1.14
Total	1.13	1.16	1.15	1.14	1.13	1.14	1.14	1.14	1.14
<i>Being mobbed due to lifestyle</i> (1=seldom or never; 4=daily)									
Homo	1.09**	1.08	1.08	1.06	1.04	1.05	1.07	1.06	1.07
Hetero	1.05	1.06	1.05	1.05	1.04	1.04	1.05	1.05	1.05
Total	1.07	1.07	1.07	1.05	1.04	1.05	1.06	1.06	1.06
<i>Gender as perceived reason for being mobbed</i>									
Homo	1%	8%*	5%*	0%	3%	1%	0%	5%*	3% ^a
Hetero	0%	4%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1% ^a
Total	1%	6%	3% ^c	0%	2%	1% ^c	1% ^b	4% ^b	2%
<i>Sexual preference as perceived reason for being mobbed</i>									
Homo	16%***	6%***	11%***	11%***	1%***	6%***	13%***	4%***	8% ^a
Hetero	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0% ^a
Total	8%	3%	6% ^c	6%	1%	3% ^c	7% ^b	2% ^b	4%

Significant differences within a specific subgroup are indicated as follows with a: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ and *** $p < .001$

a Significant difference between homosexual and heterosexual people in the total group ($p < .05$)

b Men and women differ significantly from one another ($p < .05$)

c People in local government differ significantly from people in the hospital sector ($p < .05$)

Opportunities for expression

Whether someone is homosexual or heterosexual has an influence for women but not for men with regard to whether respondents feel they could be themselves at work (Table 3.11). In general, irrespective of the sector in which they work, lesbian women tell their colleagues less about what they do in their free time. They also feel that they can talk less about personal matters and, finally, they do speak less about personal problems than heterosexual women.

Table 3.11 *Being able to be oneself at work (corrected means)*

	Local government			Hospital sector			Total		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
<i>Opportunities for personal expression</i> (1=none; 5=a great deal)									
Homo	2.97	2.96	2.97	3.09	3.04	3.06	3.03	3.00*	3.01
Hetero	3.04	3.11	3.08	3.06	3.08	3.07	3.05	3.10	3.07
Total	3.01	3.04	3.02	3.07	3.05	3.06	3.04	3.05	3.04

Significant differences within a specific subgroup are indicated as follows with a: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ and *** $p < .001$

In general, more homosexual than heterosexual persons say that their colleagues and bosses are aware of their personal situation (Table 3.12). That *colleagues* are informed about it applies primarily to homosexual men in the hospital sector. For women in this sector, the situation appears to be the same. That the *boss* is informed about the personal situation is primarily the case for homosexual men and women in the hospital sector.

More homosexual than heterosexual persons say that their colleagues have difficulty with the way they live their lives (Figure 3.3). This applies primarily to men and women in local government and women in the hospital sector.

Table 3.12 Extent to which colleagues are informed about personal life (corrected means)

	Local government			Hospital sector			Total		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
<i>Colleagues are informed about personal life</i> (1=not at all; 5=very)									
Homo	3.45	3.60	3.53	3.55**	3.56	3.55*	3.50**	3.58	3.54a
Hetero	3.29	3.60	3.44	3.37	3.54	3.46	3.33	3.57	3.45a
Total	3.37	3.60	3.49	3.46	3.55	3.51	3.42b	3.58b	3.50
<i>Boss is informed about personal life</i> (1=not at all 5=very)									
Homo	3.18	3.38	3.28	3.27	3.27	3.27*	3.22	3.33	3.27a
Hetero	3.04	3.29	3.16	3.11	3.17	3.14	3.07	3.23	3.15a
Total	3.11	3.34	3.22	3.19	3.22	3.20	3.15b	3.28b	3.21
<i>Acceptance of one's personal lifestyle</i> (1=not at all; 5=very)									
Homo	4.09*	4.13*	4.11**	4.26	4.36	4.31	4.18	4.25*	4.21a
Hetero	4.28	4.32	4.30	4.32	4.41	4.37	4.30	4.36	4.33a
Total	4.19	4.22	4.21c	4.29	4.38	4.34c	4.24	4.30	4.27

Significant differences within a specific subgroup are indicated as follows with a: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ and *** $p < .001$

a Significant difference between homosexual and heterosexual people in the total group ($p < .05$)

b Men and women differ significantly from one another ($p < .05$)

c People in local government differ significantly from people in the hospital sector ($p < .05$)

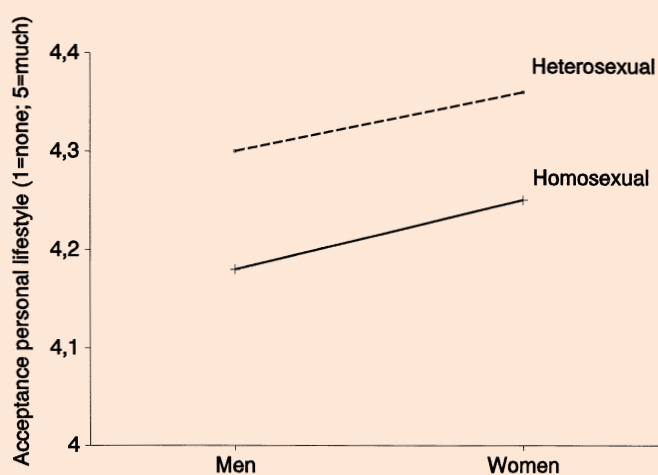


Figure 3.3 Acceptance personal lifestyle regardless of sector, according to gender and preference

4) Consequences for health and well-being

Work stress, work satisfaction and self-esteem

Whether one is burned up and exhausted by one's work, in other words is suffering from burnout symptoms, appears to be linked to their sexual preference (Table 3.13 and Figures 3.4a to 3.4c). The precise differences depend on the form of work stress examined. Emotional exhaustion, in particular (the feeling that one does not have any more emotional reserves to draw on at work) and a sense of reduced personal competence (the sense that one is less able to perform the work than previously was the case) occur more frequently among homosexual persons than among heterosexuals.

Work stress, irrespective of its form, is reported more frequently by lesbian women. The sector in which women work also has an influence. Particularly in the hospital sector, more lesbian than heterosexual women reported suffering from emotional exhaustion. Lesbian women in this sector feel more burned out and exhausted than heterosexual women. In local government, in particular, a sense of reduced personal competence is experienced more often by lesbian women than by heterosexual women. Lesbian women in this sector more often say that they doubt the usefulness of their work (depersonalisation). For example, more of them report that they have become too distant from their work, or that they are no longer as enthusiastic for their work as they were.

Table 3.13 *Workstress (corrected means)*

	Local government			Hospital sector			Total		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
<i>Emotional exhaustion</i> (1=never; 7=always)									
Homo	2.65	2.89	2.77	2.72	2.90*	2.81	2.68	2.90*	2.79a
Hetero	2.59	2.70	2.65	2.66	2.72	2.69	2.62	2.71	2.67a
Total	2.62	2.80	2.71	2.68	2.81	2.75	2.65b	2.80b	2.73
<i>Depersonalisation</i> (1=never; 7=always)									
Homo	2.88	3.07*	2.97	2.77	2.87	2.82	2.82	2.97*	2.90
Hetero	2.86	2.77	2.81	2.92	2.74	2.83	2.89	2.76	2.82
Total	2.87	2.92	2.89	2.84	2.81	2.83	2.86	2.87	2.86
<i>Sense of reduced competence</i> (1=never; 7=always)									
Homo	3.14	3.31*	3.23**	3.03	3.07	3.05*	3.09	3.19**	3.14a
Hetero	2.96	3.09	3.03	2.92	2.93	2.92	2.94	3.01	2.97a
Total	3.05	3.20	3.13c	2.98	3.00	2.99c	3.01	3.10	3.06

Significant differences within a specific subgroup are indicated as follows with a: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ and *** $p < .001$

a Significant difference between homosexual and heterosexual people in the total group ($p < .05$)

b Men and women differ significantly from one another ($p < .05$)

c People in local government differ significantly from people in the hospital sector ($p < .05$)

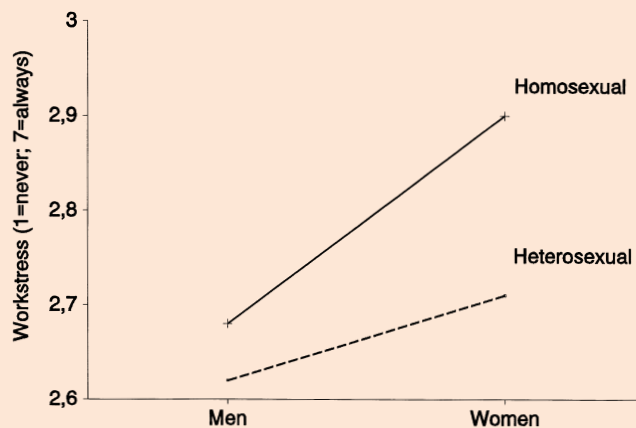


Figure 3.4a Emotional exhaustion regardless of sector, according to preference and gender

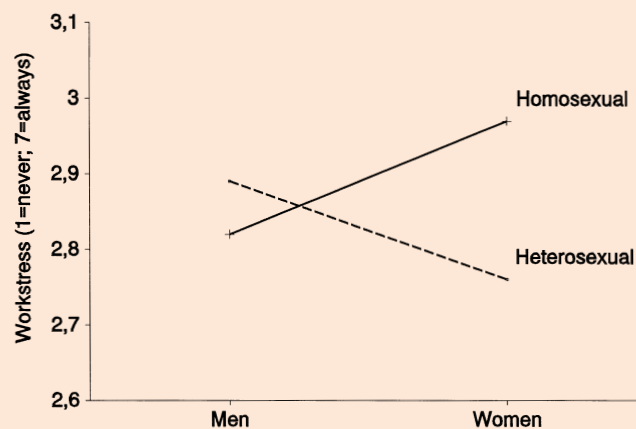


Figure 3.4b Depersonalisation regardless of sector, according to preference and gender

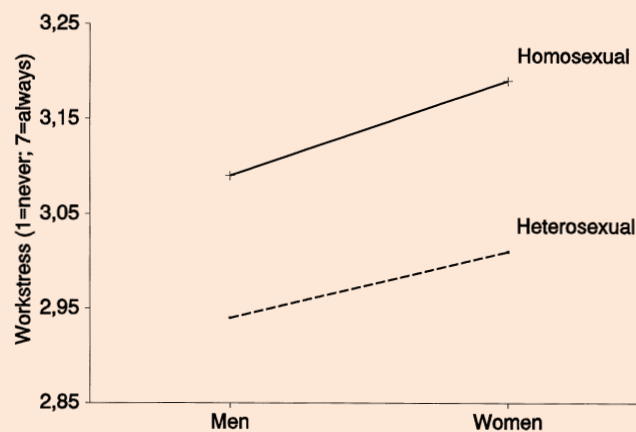


Figure 3.4c Sense of reduced competence regardless of sector, according to preference and gender

In the total group, homosexual persons differ from heterosexual persons with regard to the extent to which one is satisfied with the work (job satisfaction; Table 3.14 and Figure 3.5). This appears to be particularly the case for women, and particularly those in the hospital sector. In this sector, lesbian women are less satisfied about the work than heterosexual women.

With regard to the sense of self-esteem, there is also a difference in the total group between homosexual and heterosexual persons. In this area, homosexual men in local government stand out particularly: they see themselves as less valuable, have a less positive view of themselves, have less self-confidence and are more ashamed of themselves than heterosexual men.

Table 3.14 Work satisfaction and self-esteem (corrected means)

	Local government			Hospital sector			Total		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
<i>Work satisfaction</i> (1=very unsatisfied; 5=very satisfied)									
Homo	3.70	3.36	3.53	3.53	3.26***	3.39	3.61	3.31***	3.46a
Hetero	3.56	3.55	3.55	3.51	3.57	3.54	3.53	3.56	3.55a
Total	3.63	3.54	3.54	3.52	3.41	3.46	3.57b	3.43b	3.50
<i>Self-esteem</i> (1=low; 5=high)									
Homo	3.85**	3.99	3.92*	3.97	4.05	4.01	3.91**	4.02	3.97a
Hetero	4.05	4.06	4.06	4.09	4.04	4.07	4.07	4.05	4.06a
Total	3.95	4.03	3.99	4.03	4.05	4.04	3.99	4.04	4.01

Significant differences within a specific subgroup are indicated as follows with a: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ and *** $p < .001$

a Significant difference between homosexual and heterosexual people in the total group ($p < .05$)

b Men and women differ significantly from one another ($p < .05$)

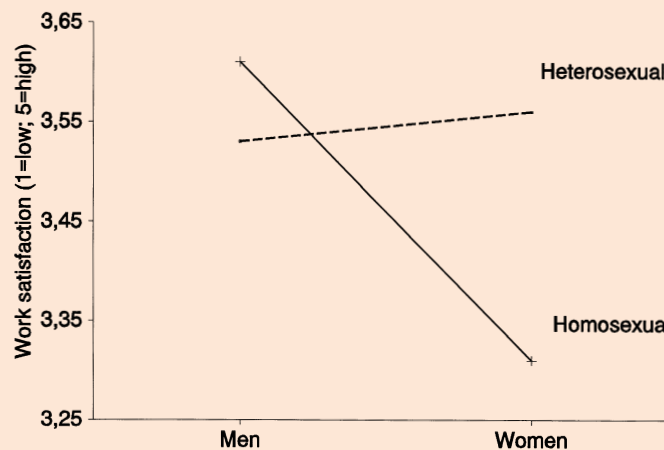


Figure 3.5 Work satisfaction regardless of sector, according to preference and gender

Health problems

In the total group, homosexuality appeared to play a role with regard to the incidence of general health problems, such as a lack of appetite, tiredness, headaches and stomach aches (Table 3.15). In particular, homosexual men in the hospital sector suffer more frequently from a variety of health problems than heterosexual men.

In general homosexual and heterosexual people do not differ with respect to the extent to which they attributed their health problems to the work situation. Lesbian women in local government are an exception, though; more often than heterosexual colleagues, they feel that their health problems result from work.

Whether or not one is homosexual or heterosexual also plays a role in respect of sleep-related problems. Particularly in the hospital sector, lesbian women and homosexual men suffer more frequently from sleep-related problems. Homosexual persons more frequently have trouble getting to sleep at night, wake up several times at night or wake up too early. Lesbian women in this sector also report more often not to get sufficient sleep during the week.

Table 3.15 Health problems (corrected means)

	Local government			Hospital sector			Total		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
<i>General health</i> (1=poor; 5=good)									
Homo	2.15	2.28	2.22	2.13*	2.23	2.18**	2.14**	2.25	2.20a
Hetero	1.99	2.20	2.10	1.99	1.16	2.07	1.99	2.18	2.09a
Total	2.08	2.24	2.16	2.06	2.19	2.12	2.07b	2.22b	2.15
<i>Work situation as perceived cause for health problems</i> (1=to very low extent; 5=to very high extent)									
Homo	2.14	2.33**	2.24	2.10	2.34	2.22	2.12	2.34**	2.23
Hetero	2.18	2.04	2.11	2.21	2.11	2.16	2.20	2.07	2.13
Total	2.16	2.19	2.17	2.15	2.22	2.19	2.16	2.20	2.18
<i>Sleep-related problems</i> (1=none; 2=many)									
Homo	1.19	1.23	1.21	1.26*	1.28*	1.27**	1.22*	1.25	1.24a
Hetero	1.19	1.24	1.21	1.18	1.22	1.20	1.19	1.23	1.21a
Total	1.19	1.23	1.21	1.22	1.25	1.23	1.21b	1.24b	1.22
<i>Sufficient sleep</i> (in percentages)									
Homo	87%	80%	84%	84%	79%*	82%*	86%	79%*	83%a
Hetero	86%	83%	85%	88%	87%	87%	87%	85%	86%a
Total	87%	82%	84%	86%	83%	84%	86%b	82%b	84%

Significant differences within a specific subgroup are indicated as follows with a: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ and *** $p < .001$

a Significant difference between homosexual and heterosexual people in the total group ($p < .05$)

b Men and women differ significantly from one another ($p < .05$)

Sickness and sick leave

Sexual preference has no effect on the response to the question of whether people had worked during the past 12 months while they actually felt ill (Table 3.16). Homosexual persons said that this was the case just as frequently as heterosexual persons did.

In general, therefore, irrespective of the sector in which one works and irrespective of one's gender, sick leave is higher among homosexual persons than among heterosexual persons (Table 3.16). The average number of days that homosexual respondents missed work due to illness in the past year is higher than the number of days missed by heterosexual persons.

Table 3.16 *Consequence of the experience of work (corrected means)*

	Local government			Hospital sector			Total		Total
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	
<i>Continued working while feeling ill</i>									
<i>(in percentages)</i>									
Homo	54%	59%	57%	64%	65%	64%	59%	62%	60%
Hetero	61%	64%	63%	62%	62%	62%	62%	63%	62%
Total	58%	62%	60%	63%	63%	62%	60%	62%	61%
<i>Number of days sick leave in the past year</i>									
Homo	12.7	20.9	16.8	16.1	22.1	19.1	14.4	21.5	17.9a
Hetero	10.6	15.9	13.2	12.5	15.7	14.1	11.6	15.8	13.7a
Total	11.7	18.4	15.0	14.3	18.9	16.6	13.0b	18.6b	15.8

Significant differences within a specific subgroup are indicated as follows with a: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ and *** $p < .001$

a Significant difference between homosexual and heterosexual people in the total group ($p < .05$)

b Men and women differ significant from one another ($p < .05$)

c People in local government differ significantly from people in the hospital sector ($p < .05$)

3.5 Conclusions

In this chapter, we have looked at a large number of aspects which are related to how people experience their work, in the broadest sense of the word. Apart from similarities, a number of differences have been described, both on the basis of gender and on the basis of the sector in which one works. But there are also systematic differences which can be attributed to sexual preference. Whenever homosexual men and women differ from heterosexual men and women, this is nearly always to the disadvantage of the homosexual persons.

It is notable that the differences are not particularly related to the meaning that the work has for the person involved, the direct experience of the work and the possibilities to learn at work and progress in one's career. The differences are revealed to be primarily in the social aspects of the work: homosexual persons experience less support from colleagues, for example, and they feel that their colleagues accept their lifestyle less. In addition, there are differences in the effects the work has for those involved: homosexual persons report that they suffer more from work stress, and their level of sick leave is also higher.

The effect of sexual preference also depends on whether one is male or female, and in which sector one works. One notable point in this context is the position of homosexual men in the hospital sector: there are virtually no areas at all in which they differ from their homosexual colleagues. On the other side of the coin are lesbian women: their position appears to be poorer than that of their heterosexual colleagues. Lesbian women appear to suffer from negative effects both as a result of being women and of being lesbians. Nevertheless, there are also differences between lesbian women, depending on the sector in which they work.

This summary of the similarities and differences makes one curious about the causes. We will be trying to obtain a greater insight into these in the next chapters.

CHAPTER 4 NEGATIVE EXPERIENCE OF WORK: WHO AND WHERE

In a number of ways, homosexual and heterosexual persons experience their work differently. This was shown in the previous chapter. Where there are differences, homosexual employees almost always experience their work more negatively than heterosexual employees. These study results point towards the necessity of developing policy to improve the position of homosexual men and lesbian women. But what should this policy look like and which groups of employees should be targeted? We will be addressing this in greater depth in this chapter. We will first be examining whether specific subgroups can be distinguished within the group of homosexual men and lesbian women whose experience of work is most negative (4.2). We will then be addressing the question of whether a negative experience of work occurs more frequently in certain organisations (4.3).

4.1 Introduction

In order to answer the above questions, a selection of the aspects of the experience of work discussed in Chapter 3 have been examined. First of all, only those aspects were examined for which a difference was found in the total group or in one of the subgroups between homosexual and heterosexual persons. That is because it is these aspects for which policy could be used to improve the situation. Secondly, only those aspects of the experience of work were examined that could be influenced by policy. This does not apply, for example, to the extent to which people think they are considered warm by others. Finally, a few aspects were reduced to three scales by combining different variables which substantively look very similar and are very closely linked to one another. This relates to the relationship with the boss, various forms of social support and various forms of work stress (see Appendix 3 for reliabilities).

In answering the questions posed in this chapter, correlations were used to examine the extent to which various aspects were linked. Furthermore, for each correlation, a calculation was made of the probability of such a correlation occurring by chance (see Appendix 4). Generally speaking, the probability must be five percent or less; this level of significances has been applied here (see Appendices 6 to 9 for all the correlations calculated).

Before the results are presented, there is one point that should be made. Whenever there is a link between two characteristics, it is impossible to state definitively - on the basis of this study - which variable is a cause and which a consequence. It is sometimes possible to substantiate these on logical grounds. For example, a low level of job satisfaction is more likely to result from conflicts with colleagues than vice versa. For other correlations, it is possible that characteristics affect one another; in such cases, no distinction can be made between cause and effect.

4.2 Specific subgroups

The question of whether specific subgroups can be identified within the group of homosexual persons which have a more negative experience of work, has been studied by linking the various aspects of the experience of work to personal characteristics and to characteristics of the position and the employment relationship.

On the basis of the *personal characteristics*, it was for example examined whether younger homosexual men and women report a negative experience of work more often than older ones. The

influence of the educational level was also examined: was it the homosexuals and lesbians with a lower educational level who had the most negative experience of work, or those with a higher educational level? Another aspect examined was whether it mattered where people lived. It could be the case that homosexual persons living in rural areas experience their work more negatively than those living in urban areas. Finally, we looked at possible links with having a relationship, being married or divorced and having children.

As far as *the position and the nature of the appointment* are concerned, these were examined on the basis of five characteristics in order to see whether they are correlated to the experience of work. Firstly we examined the influence of having a permanent or temporary employment relationship. Then we looked at the scale of the appointment (full-time or part-time) and how long people have been employed by the organisation for which they work. Finally, we examined whether lesbian women and homosexual men with a managerial position and/or have to maintain contacts outside the organisation in their work, experience their work differently.

Personal characteristics

In the group of homosexual men and women studied, it became apparent that a number of personal characteristics led to small differences in the experience of work (see Appendix 6 for correlation data). Older homosexual men, for instance, more often say they have a poor relationship with their boss, while younger homosexual men more frequently have sleep-related problems. Unmarried homosexual men more often reported being mobbed by colleagues because of their lifestyles. More lesbian women living in large cities say that, if they are mobbed, it is due to their gender, than women living in the countryside.

In general, however, there appears, to be a very small number of connections. This means that no specific subgroups of homosexual men and women can be distinguished for whom the experience of work is the most negative. It is therefore also not possible to identify groups on the basis of personal characteristics for which interventions have a greater priority.

Characteristics of the position and nature of the appointment

For lesbian women, it is clear that no single characteristic of the position or nature of the appointment is connected with a more negative experience of work (see Appendix 7 for correlation data). For homosexual men, there are only a few characteristics to which this applies. For example, whether one has a managerial position or not does matter: homosexuals with such positions reported having fewer problems keeping informed on the state of affairs within the organisation than homosexuals who do not have a managerial position. Homosexual men who have been employed for longer more often report having a poor relationship with their bosses, and also have more sleep-related problems.

As was the case for the personal characteristics, one can also conclude that the number of significant meaningful associations is too small to enable us to distinguish specific subgroups with a more negative experience of work on the basis of characteristics of the position and the nature of the appointment.

4.3 Specific organisations

In order to assess whether more homosexual persons with a negative experience of work, work in specific organisations, we looked at both a number of objective characteristics of the organisation as well as the manner in which the organisation is experienced by the person involved.

As far as the *objective aspects* are concerned, the following aspects have been examined: the size of the organisation, the numerical man-woman ratio in the organisation, the size of the

department in which one works and the number of people with an ethnic minority background within the department.

In the area of the *experience* of the organisation in which one works, we looked primarily at the standards and values that people feel apply within the organisation. The question was whether a negative experience of work occurs more frequently in certain organisation cultures. First of all, we examined the extent to which the organisation takes account of and pays attention to the personal problems and the well-being of the employees. We have designated such organisations as people-oriented organisations, with work-oriented organisations at the other end of the spectrum. We also looked at the extent to which the experience of work is linked to the following aspects of the organisation culture:

- the extent to which one feels that the organisation takes account of the private life of its employees;
- the extent to which one feels that capabilities and job suitability count within the organisation;
- the extent to which one feels that people within the organisation think ahead;
- the extent to which one feels that everybody fits in the organisation;
- the extent to which one feels that the organisation is open to new people;
- the extent to which one feels that newcomers need a lot of time before they feel at home.

It is important to point out that these various characteristics of organisation cultures were not measured objectively; in other words, the data says something about how the people involved experienced their own organisation. It can therefore not be ruled out that someone's experience of the organisation is coloured by his or her experience of work. In other words, people with a negative experience of work could have a more negative perception of their organisation than colleagues in the same organisation with a positive experience of work.

Objective characteristics of organisations

In the group of homosexual men and women studied, a negative experience of work was shown not to be linked to the size of the organisation, the percentage of men and women within the organisation, the size of the department and the number of members of ethnic minorities working in the department (see Appendix 8 for correlation data). On the grounds of these objective organisation characteristics, it is therefore not possible to predict how lesbian women and homosexual men working in the various organisations experience their work.

Organisation culture

While there is therefore no correlation with objective characteristics, it does appear that the experience of work is linked to the organisation culture (see Appendix 8 for correlation data). The experience of work is more negative the more one feels that the organisation in which one works is less people-oriented and more work-oriented. Homosexual men and women who feel that their organisation is geared towards the well-being of the people who work there more often say that they are well-informed about the organisation. They also more often feel that they benefit more from the relationship with the organisation than the organisation does. Finally, homosexuals in people-oriented organisations more often say that the relationships with their bosses are good. In work-oriented organisations, in contrast, people are less often satisfied with their work and more often suffer from emotional exhaustion or burnout.

There are also correlations in respect of other aspects of the organisation culture. Fewer homosexual men working in an organisation which takes account of its employees' private life say that they are mobbed. They also feel more accepted at work. In organisations in which people think ahead and are open to newcomers, lesbian women and homosexual men more often say that they are sufficiently informed about the state of affairs within the organisation. Lesbian women in this type of organisation also more frequently say that they have a good relationship with their bosses and are more able to be themselves at work.

4.4 Conclusions

In this chapter, we have assessed a number of ingredients of possible union policy to improve the position of homosexual employees.

Should such policy be geared towards specific groups which clearly have a more negative experience of work? The answer to this question is no. We have seen that personal characteristics do not lead to noticeable differences in the experience of work. There is therefore no reason to pay extra attention, for instance, to older homosexual employees or those with a lower educational background. It has also been shown that it makes virtually no difference what position one holds or what the nature of the appointment is.

It is a different story when we look at the organisation within which the respondents work. Is a negative experience of work among homosexual employees more common in certain organisations and does this provide any starting points for union policy? The answer to this question is a qualified yes. Although objective organisation characteristics, such as the size of the organisation, do not lead to significant differences in the experience of work. However, when we look at the *experience* of the organisation, or the *organisation culture as the employee experiences it*, then interesting differences appear. In organisations that are viewed by the employees themselves as people-oriented (in other words, which pay attention to the personal well-being of employees, handle everybody's capabilities with care and are open towards newcomers), homosexual employees more often say that they are well-informed about the state of affairs at work, have a good relationship with their bosses and can be themselves at work. In organisations that are viewed by the employees themselves as work-oriented, people are more often dissatisfied about the work and suffer more frequently from work-related stress.

Whether an organisation is people or work-oriented therefore appears to have an influence on the experience of work of homosexual employees. But we should again point out that this study only examined the view the employee has of the culture in the organisation in which he or she works; this organisation culture was not measured objectively. Nevertheless, there would seem to be sufficient reasons to target union policy intended to improve the position of homosexual employees at the organisation culture. In addition, certain aspects of the experience of work, which lead to the most problems among homosexual employees, could be targeted by specific policy. We will be looking at this in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5 NEGATIVE EXPERIENCE OF WORK AND ITS EFFECTS

What could be done to improve the work experience of homosexual men and women, so that they no longer experience their work more negatively than their heterosexual colleagues? In order to answer this question, we need to look at which aspects of the experience of work the policy or interventions can best target. This takes place in the final chapter with study results.

5.1 Introduction

The selection of aspects of the experience of work which policy can best target took place on the basis of the following criteria. Firstly, as was the case in chapter four, only those aspects of the experience of work were looked at for which homosexuals significantly differed from heterosexuals. Secondly, only those aspects of the experience of work were selected which could be directly influenced. In this context, the distinction made earlier between cause and effect was important (see Paragraph 1.2). Effects such as sick leave and work satisfaction cannot be influenced directly. This is possible for their potential causes, such as relationships at work. This therefore involves identifying those aspects of the experience of work that are most closely linked to the various negative effects. After all, the best results can be expected if these aspects are addressed.

Whether or not one's experience is directly related to effects such as work stress, work satisfaction and health has been assessed with the help of correlations between aspects of the experience of work which can be regarded as causes and aspects which can be regarded as effects. As in the previous chapter, the probability that a correlation could be attributed to coincidence was calculated for each correlation. Again, the level of significance was 5%.

5.2 Aspects of the experience of work with the greatest negative effects

The links between the experience of work in a direct sense and the effects on work satisfaction and mental and physical health have been studied for homosexual men and lesbian women separately. Below, we will firstly be giving an overview of the collective causes of lower work satisfaction and increased health problems. We will then discuss the extent to which causes and effects are linked. Finally, we will be focussing on the differences between homosexual men and lesbian women.

Collective causes for homosexual men and lesbian women

The main cause of lower work satisfaction, higher work stress and more health problems appears to be a lack of social support within the work organisation (see Appendix 9 for correlation data). Put another way: a good social context at work leads to a more positive experience of work, with all the positive effects this leads to. The more that homosexual men and women feel that they belong in their work, that they can rely on others and feel safe, the less they are affected by work stress, the greater their work satisfaction and the better their health, leading to less sick leave.

As far as other people at work are concerned, the relationship with one's boss appears to be more important than relationships with colleagues. The better the relationship with the boss and the fewer conflicts, the lower the work stress, the greater the work satisfaction and the fewer the health problems. If homosexual employees do not dare to be themselves at work, feel that their lifestyle is not accepted, or if they are mobbed for their lifestyle, this leads to more work stress and less work

satisfaction. The sense that they are insufficiently well-informed about the state of affairs in the organisation is linked to higher work stress, less work satisfaction and poorer health as well.

Link between cause and effect

What is noticeable is that the links between the various causes and effects are not equally strong across the board (see Appendix 9). The links are strongest for effects most directly related to the work, in other words work stress and work satisfaction. Effects that are less directly related to the work and which are partially determined by factors unrelated to work, such as general health problems or self-esteem are less strongly linked to the various aspects of the experience of work.

This is, however, different for men and women: the health situation, sleep-related problems and sick leave are easier to predict on the basis of the work situation for lesbian women than for homosexual men. Sick leave, in particular, seems to be more work-related for women than for men. Sick leave for both groups is inversely proportionate to the social support on the work floor. In addition, the number of days sick leave for lesbian women is higher if they have poor relationships with colleagues and bosses, and if they are mobbed for their lifestyle.

Furthermore, the various effects often occur in combination and can increase one another's effect: people who suffer from stress and burnout at work have lower work satisfaction, poorer health and take more days of sick leave.

Differences between homosexual men and lesbian women

There are several causes which play a different role for homosexual men and women. Among lesbian women, levels of work stress, work satisfaction and sick leave appear to be dependent on the number of conflicts with colleagues: the more often respondents said that they had conflicts with colleagues, the greater the work stress, the lower the work satisfaction and the greater the amount of sick leave. Conflicts with colleagues do not have these effects for homosexual men. Sick leave among lesbian women is also higher the worse the relationships with colleagues and the more conflicts the respondents had with their bosses; this difference is not significant among homosexual men.

Being mobbed about one's lifestyle plays a greater role among homosexual men than among lesbian women. The more that men were mobbed about their lifestyle, the more they reported work stress, a lower sense of self-worth and poorer health. These links were not significant among lesbian women. Furthermore, for homosexual men, the sense that one's lifestyle is accepted at work was accompanied by a greater sense of self-esteem. This was not the case for lesbian women. Being mobbed about one's lifestyle plays a role for lesbian women when it comes to sick leave: more mobbing is accompanied by more sick leave. This connection is again absent for homosexual men.

Another important difference between homosexual men and women is related to the relationship between the employee and the organisation. The less that lesbian women feel that they benefit from this relationship, the more work stress they experience, the less satisfied they are about their work and the poorer their health. These links do not apply to homosexual men.

5.3 Conclusions

The links between cause and effect reported here are not unique to homosexual employees. For example, a lack of social support also led to work stress among heterosexual persons and reduced work satisfaction. The differences between homosexual men and women found here are also found, to a large extent, between heterosexual men and women. This was not the subject of this chapter, however. The central question was which causes could best be addressed in order to improve the work satisfaction and health situation of homosexual men and women (the 'effects').

Three aspects have been shown to be relevant. The most important factor is the relationships between people at work. Improving these relationships - ensuring that lesbian women and homosexual men feel more valued and have the feeling that they can rely on others will increase their work satisfaction, reduce the work stress and reduce sick leave, the latter particularly for lesbian women. Particular attention should be paid to the relationships between homosexual people and their bosses: these seem to affect the experience of work more than relationships with colleagues.

The second aspect is related to this. It has been shown that it is important that there is room in work situations for a diversity of lifestyles so that homosexual men and women can express themselves and not run any risk of being mobbed for their lifestyle.

In terms of the organisation - the third aspect - improvements are also possible. In relation to both homosexual men and lesbian women, if they are better informed of the state of affairs within the organisation, they will experience less work stress and more work satisfaction. For lesbian women, in particular, the balance of benefits for the organisation and the employee - in other words, for themselves - must be influenced.

We will discuss these recommendations in greater depth in the final chapter.



CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter begins with a short summary of the study. Before these results are interpreted, there are some notes on the methodology used. Although plausible explanations can be given for a number of the differences found, the study certainly doesn't provide answers to all the questions about homosexuality and work. Some of the questions discussed below are addressed in the planned follow-up study. However, the results do provide sufficient starting points in order to make several concrete recommendations for improving the work for homosexual persons. These recommendations are discussed briefly at the end.

6.1 The results

The results of this study show that it does make a difference in work situations whether a person is homosexual or not. This is not incidental. In a number of ways, homosexual and heterosexual persons differ from one another in way they experience the work situation. At the same time, it should be noted that the consequences of being homosexual are not identical for the men and women who took part in this study. For example, just as the experience of work differs depending on whether you are male or female, so the consequences of being homosexual differ for men and women. Lesbian women have been shown to experience different problems than homosexual men. The sector in which one works has also been shown to be important. There is not only a general difference in the experience of work between people working in the two sectors studied. The sector in which one works also appeared - in part - to have different effects for homosexual persons. And when the effects of gender and sector are combined, it is noticeable that how homosexual men experience their work in the hospital sector hardly differs at all from how their male heterosexual colleagues experience it. Such differences do, however, occur in the other subgroups investigated.

The differences between heterosexual and homosexual persons are revealed in diverse aspects of the experience of work. Among other things, homosexual persons at work feel less valued and more often feel excluded. Homosexual persons talk about conflicts with their colleagues and bosses less frequently than heterosexual persons, while some homosexual persons - lesbian women in the hospital sector in particular - say that they more often have conflicts with their colleagues and bosses. Homosexual persons in local government feel that they their are less accepted on the grounds of their lifestyle than heterosexual persons. Lesbian women, in particular, feel that they cannot be themselves at work as much as heterosexual women do. On average, the work stress is higher for homosexual persons than for heterosexual persons, and connected with this, the work satisfaction for homosexuals is lower. Finally, sick leave among homosexual persons is also higher. These are the most important differences; this summary of the ways in which homosexual and heterosexual people differ is not complete, however.

Homosexual persons do not differ from heterosexual persons in every aspect of the experience of work. The place that work holds in the life of the respondents was the same for heterosexual and homosexual persons. This also applies to the extent to which people experienced their own tasks within the organisation as positive or negative. The amount of feedback received regarding the way in which the respondents carried out their tasks was also felt to be the same by both homosexual and heterosexual persons. The opportunities to develop oneself and progress in one's career were not felt by homosexual persons to be any greater or less than was the case for heterosexual persons.

If we look at which homosexual men and women experience their work as negative, this is difficult to predict. There are a number of differences that are linked to age or level of education, but these links are incidental. There is also almost no relationship with characteristics of the task and the appointment of the person involved. Objective characteristics of the organisation, such as size and the ratio of men to women working within an organisation, also do not lead to a more negative experience of work among homosexual persons. However, there does appear to be a link to the organisation culture: if one works in an organisation which is felt to be more oriented towards work and not towards the people who work there, then homosexual people generally have a more negative experience of work.

The work aspects that have been labelled 'causes' and the work aspects seen to be the effects of these causes are closely linked to one another. In this sense, negative effects, such as work stress and low work satisfaction, appear to be caused among homosexual men and women by three clusters of characteristics: the social support one receives at work, the room one has to be oneself and the extent to which one feels that one is kept informed about the state of affairs within the company. Effects that are not so closely linked to the work, such as self-esteem, health and sick leave, are more difficult to predict on the basis of the causes, although this applies more strongly to homosexual men than to lesbian women.

6.2 Notes on the methodology

The data for this study was collected in an objective manner. In other words, there was no reference whatsoever to homosexuality in the way in which the questions were asked. As a result of this, it is highly unlikely that the way homosexual persons answered the questions was influenced directly by their sexual preference. This means that the differences discovered are not the result of conscious distortions on the part of the respondents.

The respondents were recruited for this study by letter, sent to members in two sectors of ABVAKABO FNV. More than a quarter of the people approached completed and returned the questionnaire. A number of the people approached (6%) did not complete the questions on their gender or sexual preference, which meant that their information could not be used in this study. This means that selection took place in a number of ways in compiling the random sample. This selection certainly had an influence on the results. It was therefore also impossible to generalise on the basis of the data to all the people working in local government or in the hospital sector.

However, it is unlikely that the differences revealed here between homosexual and heterosexual persons can be attributed to the effects of selection. In that case, homosexual persons with a very positive experience of work or heterosexual persons with a very negative experience of work would not have taken part. This seems extremely unlikely. If it were the case that homosexuals who did not wish to disclose their preference have responded less, it could be expected that the differences found between heterosexual and homosexual persons would actually be greater than as they are reported here; homosexual people who do not wish to express their preference generally function less well than those who are open about it.

Finally, it should be noted that - in contrast with much of the research carried out into homosexuality and work - the homosexual persons involved did not select themselves on the basis of their homosexuality. The opposite is more likely to be the case: certain groups of homosexual men and women which are harder to reach are better represented in the study group than is usually the case in research.

6.3 Interpretation of the data

Assuming that the differences found actually reflect existing differences: how should these differences be interpreted and what could be their cause? An initial comment that can be made at this point is that this study looked at differences in means. It cannot therefore be concluded that each homosexual person is worse off than each heterosexual person. The statements about differences only apply at group level.

Looking at the extent of the differences found, it should be noted that these are not always large differences. Sometimes the differences between men and women are greater than differences on the basis of sexual preference. It is not only important, however, that many of the differences are significant, but also that the differences consistently point in the same direction.

As far as the absence of differences is concerned, it is notable that this is mainly the case when it comes to aspects of work experience in which the direct social consequences of being homosexual cannot play a role. This is the case for instance in the role that work plays in someone's life. When differences do arise, they usually occur in the realm of social interaction.

It seems to go against expectations that the situation of lesbian women at work is worse than for homosexual men. After all, generally the attitude towards lesbian women is more accepting than towards homosexual men. It may be that this greater acceptance of lesbian women is actually less in social interaction. This could be the case particularly in working situations in which women enter a field that is generally dominated by men. The fact that this situation is not identical for homosexual men and lesbian women, is in line with the general differences based on gender as were also found in this study. It is not only among homosexual persons that working relationships play a greater role outside working hours among women than men. As far as lesbian women are concerned, it was also found that both the 'negative' effect of being female and being lesbian were got expressed. It appears that differences between homosexual men and women should not always be regarded as more bad or less bad. To a certain extent the reasons for stress and job satisfaction appear to differ between them. Women found that the balance between the returns in their relationship with the organisation plays a bigger role, while being mobbed as a result of their lifestyle was a more determinative factor for men.

Regarding work sector, the most striking result is that homosexual men working in hospitals differ from their male heterosexual colleagues in almost none of the aspects mentioned here. The most obvious explanation for this is the relatively large number of homosexual men working in this sector. Possibly the follow-up study could examine whether knowing more homosexuals in a working situation actually leads to a more positive way in which work is experienced. The presence of more homosexual men may also be the reason that the organisation adjusts itself to accommodate them in some or other way. A striking finding in this context is that way in which work is experienced is not related to the relative number of women working in an organisation. This is in contrast with the prevailing idea that an organisation becomes more human when more women work there. It is not quite clear why this should be. The importance of humanised organisations seems to have been demonstrated by this study. This feature was the only one that could be used to predict the quality of the way in which homosexual persons experience their work. One problem, however, is that the cause-and-effect relationship can also be inverted here: a negative work experience can lead to a more negative opinion of the corporate culture of one's place of employment. It is important that the extent to which the actual corporate culture is in line with the perceived culture is examined in a follow-up study.

It has not yet been discussed how it actually comes about that homosexual persons experience their work in a different way than heterosexual persons. As far as some aspects of work experience are concerned the cause is obvious. This mainly involves the 'consequences' such as work stress, job satisfaction, health and sick leave. The fact that a difference is noted in this context is the

logical consequence of differences in the causative variables such as the lack of social support, low acceptance level and being excluded from information concerning the organisation.

The differences between homosexual and heterosexual persons could also be due to causes that were not included in this study. It may well be that the private circumstances of homosexual men and women cause them more stress than is the case among heterosexual persons, and that the consequences of that are expressed in the way in which they experience their work. Although this factor cannot be excluded, it is unlikely that the differences can be attributed to it. What was striking was that it was virtually impossible to explain the differences in the way in which the group of homosexual persons experience their work on the basis of their private circumstances. The fact that the previously mentioned 'consequences' are explained by previously mentioned 'causes' is also more acceptable on theoretical grounds. Private circumstances probably only play a role in those aspects that are less closely associated to work such as sick leave.

It is more difficult to interpret the origin of the various 'causative' aspects. Why do some homosexual men experience less social support? Why do more lesbian than heterosexual women find that information on the organisation is being kept from them? Why is the relationship between some homosexual men and their bosses and colleagues less positive? The collected data do not provide a definitive answer. Is it quite simply that heterosexuals are prejudiced when it comes to homosexuality and that this has a negative effect on their relationships with their homosexual colleagues? Or can a different approach be attributed to more neutral factors such as unfamiliarity? Do negative reactions depend on the way homosexual persons themselves deal with their homosexuality in the work situation itself? It is important to keep in mind that this always involves the interaction between people. In that context it is unlikely that the causes of the differences can be ascribed to one group, the 'heterosexuals'. Here too further study is required. The issues of the way in which people deal with their own homosexuality and the possible consequences of that will be dealt with in the follow-up study. In addition, a great deal of insight could be gained through qualitative analyses of the way in which interactions develop in the workplace and the role played by the homosexuality of one or more of the parties involved.

6.4 Policy recommendations

Does this study provide sufficient information to form the basis for a policy to improve the work situation of homosexual men and women? The answer to this question is both negative and affirmative. With regard to the negative answer: the study shows that differences between homosexual and heterosexual persons are related to both gender and the sector in which they are employed. This means that what may constitute a good intervention in one sector, may not be necessary in the other, let alone those sectors that were not studied. It seems reasonable that to a certain extent other processes than homosexuality are involved in an organisation such as the police force. Naturally, the findings of this study apply specifically to the situation in the Netherlands. It may very well be that other problems concerning a working environment arise in other countries where the general attitude towards homosexuality is less positive. While homosexuals run little risk in the Netherlands when they are open about their homosexuality, this is not the case in other countries, and may even have a negative effect on someone's career. However, having to hide one's sexual preference can also have a negative psychological effect that will undoubtedly contribute to more stress at work. The men and women who participated in this study did not experience any impediments to their career, and this can certainly be interpreted as being the result of the predominantly accepting climate in the Netherlands.

The question concerning the usefulness of the information can also be answered in a positive sense. The most important finding from the study is that homosexuality is still an issue in work

situations, although this does not necessarily apply to everyone. This contradicts the idea that in a social context homosexuality hardly gives rise to problems any longer. And it may also contradict the idea that many homosexual men and women themselves have. Without wishing to force homosexuals into the role of victims, awareness of the fact that homosexuality is still an issue in a working environment, could contribute to being able to understand and solve problems, and what would be even better, to prevent such problems from arising. This awareness applies in particular to those people with a managerial position and people involved in the compilation and implementation of personnel policy.

However, the study has also generated more specific points of attention for policy. After all, it is remarkable that three central clusters play such an important role in determining stress and satisfaction at work:

- the quality of mutual relationships with colleagues, and in particular with the boss;
- being able to feel safe at work where more diversity in lifestyles is accepted;
- good dissemination of information concerning the course of events in an organisation.

Policy and intervention geared to promoting these aspects will have a favourable effect on the way in which homosexual persons experience their work. This probably applies regardless of the sector in which one works. In addition, such measures will not only benefit homosexuals, but heterosexuals as well.

An organisation can be screened at various times and at various levels. Interventions can be geared to both solving and preventing problems. While managers can play an important role, the results also show that problems can arise precisely between the manager and the employee. This emphasises the need for a personnel policy that includes homosexuality and for the commitment of the personnel department in solving problems and promoting a better working environment. It goes without saying that when specific interventions are set up and implemented, it is advisable to study the extent to which they achieve the envisaged effect and how they may be improved.

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Appendix 1 Explanation of questionnaire

This appendix gives an explanation for each aspect of the experience of work, of the scales and items used in the questionnaire which was sent to the respondents. The complete scales can be found in Appendix 3.

1) Meaning and experience of work

Whether a person *considers work to be important* in life was measured by asking respondents how much they agree or disagree with three statements (for example: ‘the most important things in my life are connected with my work’ or ‘I devote a large part of my free time to my work’).

A scale was also used to measure how people *experience* their work itself. They were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with three pronouncements (for example: ‘My job is challenging’ or ‘My job stimulates me to learn new things’).

2) Experience of the organisational context of the work

The *provision of information* about the organisation was measured with a scale consisting of three items. The respondents are asked the extent to which they are informed about the organisation in which they work (‘Are you kept informed of the most important matters within your organisation?’ or ‘Do you hear enough about the state of affairs within your organisation?’).

The extent to which people receive *feedback* about the way they do their work was measured by means of a scale consisting of three items. These items related to the extent to which people felt that the work organisation offered them opportunities to discover how well they were performing their own tasks.

The extent to which people experienced opportunities to *learn* within the organisation was measured with two items. Respondents were asked to compare these opportunities with close colleagues and to indicate the extent to which they felt they were better or worse off in this respect than their colleagues. The same method was used to ask about the extent to which the respondents felt they had *career and promotion opportunities* at work.

For a general evaluation of the *relationship with the organisation*, the respondents were asked to indicate whether they felt they were better or worse off than colleagues or people outside the organisation with similar backgrounds. These two items together form a scale. In addition, respondents were asked to indicate on a seven-point scale who benefits more from the work relationship: the organisation or the respondent.

3) Experience of the social context of the work

Social working relationships

How the respondents are regarded by their colleagues was measured by asking the extent to which they felt that colleagues considered them to be *honest, warm and spontaneous*. The quality of the relationships at work with colleagues and bosses was measured separately by means of single questions. The respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they felt this relationship was good or bad.

The extent to which they felt *involved* with their colleagues was measured by asking respondents to indicate the extent to which they are interested in their

colleagues private lives and the extent to which they felt involved with their colleagues. Together, these items formed an involvement scale.

Social support

The Social Support List - Perception of Support (SSL-P; Van Sonderen, 1991) was used to measure social support. The items in the scale are reformulated in such a way that they apply to the work situation. It measured the extent to which people feel supported by their colleagues in everyday and problematic situations. Examples of the items are: 'Do you feel close to the people you work with?' and 'Do you feel you can tell people at work that you've made a silly mistake?' The respondents were also asked the extent to which they felt they received negative support from colleagues (for example, 'Do you feel that people let you down at work?'). Each subscale contains four items. The level of *satisfaction* with the contact one has with colleagues was measured independently with a five-point scale.

Conflicts at work

As far as *work-related conflicts* are concerned, the respondents were asked in separate questions about the extent to which these conflicts occur with colleagues and boss, and the extent to which they discussed these with their colleagues and boss respectively.

The Leidse Mobbing Scale (LEMS; Hubert, 1996) was used to determine the extent to which the respondents *observed mobbing* at work. Due to the length of the LEMS, ten items were selected: four items relate to verbal and physical mobbing (for example, 'How often is someone threatened?' or 'How often is the same person verbally abused?') and six items on exclusion and negative treatment (for example, 'How often is someone excluded by colleagues?'). The respondents were asked to indicate on a scale from one to four how often they had observed such behaviour at work during the past six months.

In order to determine the extent to which people *themselves are verbally mobbed or excluded*, the same scale was used as for the observation of mobbing; in view of the importance of the various items, a selection was made of six and eleven items, respectively. The wording of the items was modified to allow people to indicate the extent to which they had experienced such behaviour themselves during the past six months. The same methods were also used to measure how people are mobbed as a result of their *lifestyle*. For this, four items were used from the Dutch translation of the Leymann Inventory of Psychological Terror (LIPT; Hubert, 1996). Examples of items are the following statements to which respondents could respond: 'There are conflicts about your personal lifestyle' and 'People make fun of your private life'.

Both with regard to the observation of mobbing and being mobbed oneself, the respondents were asked for the *reasons* why they thought this mobbing takes place. They were given eight reasons and asked to indicate whether each of them played a role.

Opportunities for expression

In order to measure the extent to which people are *able to be themselves* at work, a scale was developed for this study. This aspect was measured by asking the extent to which people tell their colleagues about what they do in their free time, the extent to which personal problems could be discussed at work and the extent to which they

actually do discuss them. This scale also covers the extent to which the respondents felt that they could be themselves at work, in comparison with colleagues. In a separate question, they were also asked the extent to which they were *different* at work than in their free time. They were also asked in separate questions about whether their *colleagues and boss were informed about their private lives*.

In order to assess whether the respondents felt that they were accepted by their colleagues, they were asked whether they felt that the work environment *accepts* their personal lifestyles, or whether they felt that colleagues had difficulties with their lifestyles.

4) Consequences for job satisfaction, workload and health

In order to measure work stress, use was made of the Dutch translation of the Maslach burnout Inventory (MBL-NL; Schaufeli en Dierendonck, 1991). Various items were selected from the three subscales of which this scale is made up. For each item, the respondents were asked to indicate how often the symptoms occurred. *Emotional exhaustion*, or feeling completely 'empty' or 'exhausted', was measured with five items (for example, 'I feel mentally exhausted by my work' or 'I feel "burned out" by my work'). *Depersonalization*, or feeling negative and distant towards the work, was measured with four items (for example, 'I have noticed that I have become too distant from my work'). A sense of *reduced personal competence*, or the feeling that one is less able to do the work well than in the past, was measured with seven items (for example, 'I doubt the usefulness of my work').

The *sense of self-esteem*, or how one views and thinks about oneself, was measured with the Dutch translation of the Rosenberg scale (Sanders, 1977). Nine different items were used to ask the extent to which the respondents agreed or disagreed (for example, 'Generally speaking, I am satisfied with myself').

The state of the respondents' health was measured by asking them to indicate how often they are affected by a number of problems ('Do you occasionally suffer from one or more of the following complaints: stomach ache, shaky hands, heart palpitations, dizziness and/or headaches') and by asking them what the state of their health was. The presence of *sleep problems* was measured by asking, in several items, whether the respondent wakes up too early in the morning, has difficulty getting to sleep at night or often lies awake at night. A separate question was also used to ask whether the respondents get *sufficient sleep* at least four nights a week.

A separate question was used to assess the extent to which the respondents felt that any health problems they had were caused by the *work situation*. In addition, the respondents were asked if they had ever continued working despite actually feeling ill. Finally, the questionnaire addressed people's *sick leave* by asking them how many days they had missed work in the past year due to illness.

5) Other subjects

Apart from the various aspects of the experience of work, the questionnaire also included questions to determine the respondent's socio-demographic characteristics. In this context, the question about sexual preference was asked, on the basis of which the study group could be divided into homosexual and heterosexual persons. Questions were also asked about the nature of the respondent's employment status and about the organisation in which the respondent works. To measure whether respondents perceive the organisation where they work to be an organisation which is

oriented towards personal problems and the well-being of their employees, we used questions from the Institute for Research on Intercultural Cooperation-inventory (IRIC- inventory; Hofstede, Neuijen, Ohayv and Sanders, 1990; Hofstede, 1991). Several other items from this questionnaire were included independently as well.

Appendix 2 Letter to potential respondents



To the addressee

Date: 13 November 1997

Most people spend an important part of their time working. It is therefore important that, wherever possible, things are to their liking at work. Making sure of this is also a task for ABVAKABO. In order to achieve this, it is necessary that ABVAKABO knows how you experience your work. ABVAKABO can then take this into account in collective bargaining agreement negotiations and other consultations with employers. In order to achieve this, ABVAKABO has commissioned Utrecht University to carry out a study. We would like to ask you to take part in this study by completing the enclosed questionnaire and returning it.

Most of the questions are about what you think of your work and your colleagues. It is important for ABVAKABO to know which people are more or less satisfied with their work, and in which organisation they work. This is why the questionnaire also contains questions about your organisation and about several aspects of your personal background. We would like to emphasize that the study is anonymous: nobody will find out that you have taken part or what answers you have given.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Nevertheless, we urgently request that you cooperate. For practical reasons, not all members of ABVAKABO have been approached for this study. You are part of a group that has been selected at random. In order to obtain the most reliable picture possible, it is important that everybody who receives the questionnaire takes part.

It is not the intention that you think about the questions for a long time; you can just give your first impression. Make sure your voice is heard! If you are not in paid employment at the moment, fill in the questionnaire in accordance with your last work situation. A report on this study will appear in a future edition of the union magazine. Please return the completed questionnaire to:

ABVAKABO
Attn. Ms L. van Westerlaak
Antwoordnummer 10018
2700 VB Zoetermeer

You do not need to affix a stamp to the envelope. Please return the questionnaire to us as quickly as possible, but no later than 1 December.

Yours sincerely,

Lucia van Westerlaak
Executive Officer

P.S. Your participation in this study will help ABVAKABO represent your interests!

Appendix 3 Psychometric data for the scales used⁰

	<u>Item-total correlation</u>
<i>Position of work in life, Cronbach's alpha=.73</i>	
Scale: 1=not important; 5=very important	
Item: 1=totally disagree; 5=fully agree	
- The most important things in my life are related to my work	.61
- I spend a large part of my free time on my work	.46
- I get most satisfaction in my life from my work	.58
<i>Experience of the task, Cronbach's alpha=.87</i>	
Scale: 1=negative; 5=positive	
Item: 1=totally disagree; 5=fully agree	
- My job is challenging	.74
- My job stimulates me to perform better and better	.66
- My job is very interesting	.75
- My job stimulates me to learn new things	.73
<i>Feedback-opportunities on one's work task, Cronbach's alpha=.68</i>	
Scale: 1=never; 4=always	
Item: 1=never; 4=always	
- Does your job offer you opportunities to find out how well you are doing your job?	.50
- Does your immediate superior give you information on how well you are doing your job?	.55
- Do your colleagues give you information on how well you are doing your job?	.44
<i>Being informed about the organisation, Cronbach's alpha=.77</i>	
Scale: 1=never; 4=always	
Item: 1=never; 4= always	
- Is it clear who you need to approach within your organization with which problems?	.47
- Do you hear enough about the state of affairs within your organisation?	.68
- Are you kept well informed about the important things within your organisation?	.67
<i>Educational opportunities, Cronbach's alpha=.82</i>	
Scale: 1=very poor; 7= very good	
Item: 1=much worse off; 7= much better off	
- If you compare your educational opportunities at work to those of your close colleagues, are you...	.70
- If you compare your opportunities within your organization to take courses with those of close colleagues, are you...	.70
<i>Career opportunities, Cronbach's alpha=.81</i>	
Scale: 1=very poor; 7= very good	
Item: 1=much worse off; 7= much better off	
- If you compare your opportunities for promotion with those of close colleagues, are you...	.68
- If you compare your career with those of close colleagues, are you...	.68
<i>Relationship with organisation, Cronbach's alpha=.61</i>	
Scale: 1=very poor; 7= very good	
Item: 1=much worse off; 7= much better off	
- If you compare your own relationship with your organisation with that of close colleagues, are you...	.44
- If you compare your own relationship with your organisation with the relationship of someone else (with same age and education), are you...	.44

Table continued

Psychometric data for the scales used (continued)

	<u>Item-total correlation</u>
<i>Involvement with colleagues, Cronbach's alpha=.73</i>	
Scale: 1= none at all; 4=very high	
Item: 1=not at all; 4=very	
- To what extent are you interested in the private life of your colleagues?	.58
- To what extent do you feel involved with your colleagues?	.58
<i>Relationship and conflicts with boss, Cronbach's alpha=.69</i>	
Scale: 1= poor; 4=very good	
Item: Relationship=poor; 4=very good	
Conflicts:1= never; 4=occasionally	
- How is your relationship with your boss?	.54
- How often do you have conflicts with your boss? ⁰	.54
<i>Perceived support in everyday situations, Cronbach's alpha=.83</i>	
Scale: 1= not at all; 4=a great deal	
Item: 1= not at all; 4=a great deal	
- At work, do you feel you belong?	.65
- Do you feel a bond with the people you work with?	.60
- Do you feel valued at work?	.68
- Do you feel that people at work pay attention to you?	.67
<i>Perceived support in problematic situations, Cronbach's alpha=.81</i>	
Scale: 1= not at all; 4=a great deal	
Item: 1= not at all; 4=a great deal	
- Do your colleagues make you feel that you can rely on them?	.66
- Do you feel that you can discuss the things that interest you with your colleagues?	.67
- Do you feel that you can make a silly mistake at work?	.57
- Do you feel safe with your colleagues at work?	.61
<i>Negative support, Cronbach's alpha=.86</i>	
Scale: 1= not at all; 4=a great deal	
Item: 1= a great deal; 4=not at all	
- Do you feel let down at work?	.70
- Do you feel standing on your own at work?	.70
- Do you feel excluded at work?	.72
- Do you feel that people let you down at work?	.74
<i>Social support (total scale), Cronbach's alpha=.92</i>	
Scale: 1= not at all; 4=a great deal	
Item: 1= not at all; 4=a great deal	
- Do you feel that you belong at work?	.68
- Do you feel a bond with the people you work with?	.62
- Do you feel valued at work?	.71
- Do you feel that people at work pay attention to you?	.72
- Do your colleagues make you feel that you can rely on them?	.72
- Do you feel that you can discuss the things that interest you with your colleagues?	.69
- Do you feel that you can make a silly mistake at work?	.61
- Do you feel safe with your colleagues at work?	.64
- Do you feel let down at work? ¹	.65
- Do you feel on your own at work? ¹	.67
- Do you feel excluded at work? ¹	.69
- Do you feel that people let you down at work? ¹	.70

Table continued

	<u>Item-total correlation</u>
<i>Observed mobbing: verbal and physical, Cronbach's alpha=.88</i>	
Scale: 1=seldom or never; 4=daily	
Item: 1=seldom or never; 4=daily	
- How often is someone exposed to physical violence?	.60
- How often is the same person repeatedly verbally abused?	.44
- How often is someone threatened?	.65
- How often is someone sexually harassed?	.37
 <i>Observed mobbing: exclusion and negative treatment, Cronbach's alpha=.88</i>	
Scale: 1=seldom or never; 4=daily	
Item: 1=seldom or never; 4=daily	
- How often is someone excluded by colleagues?	.67
- How often is the same person repeatedly mocked?	.73
- How often do people gossip about the same person?	.71
- How often does the same person get an unnecessarily high level of criticism?	.76
- How often is the work of the same person repeatedly assessed incorrectly?	.73
- How often does the same person have to sort out the dirty work?	.54
 <i>Being verbally and physically mobbed, Cronbach's alpha=.63</i>	
Scale: 1=seldom or never; 4=daily	
Item: 1=seldom or never; 4=daily	
- People verbally abuse you	.56
- People threaten you	.49
- People shout dirty words or other humiliating expressions at you	.46
- You are exposed to physical violence	.37
- You are sexually harassed	.15
- People damage your property	.15
 <i>Exclusion and negative treatment, Cronbach's alpha=.88</i>	
Scale: 1=seldom or never; 4=daily	
Item: 1=seldom or never; 4=daily	
- Colleagues refuse to work with you	.60
- Colleagues exclude you	.69
- Colleagues make you look ridiculous	.63
- People treat you as if you don't exist	.65
- Someone takes out their bad temper on you without anybody else saying something about it	.50
- People gossip about you	.62
- There is a hostile atmosphere towards you	.72
- People continually assess your work incorrectly	.68
- You always have to do the dirty work	.47
- There is always an unnecessary amount of criticism levelled at you	.73
- People hide your things	.25
 <i>Being mobbed because of your lifestyle, Cronbach's alpha=.76</i>	
Scale: 1=seldom or never; 4=daily	
Item: 1=seldom or never; 4=daily	
- There are conflicts about your personal lifestyle	.57
- People mock your private life	.65
- People continually criticise your private life	.71
- People imitate the way you walk, your voice or your gestures to make a fool of you	.36

Table continued

Psychometric data for the scales used (continued)

	<u>Item-total correlation</u>
<i>Opportunities for expression, Cronbach's alpha=.71</i>	
Scale: 1=none; 5=a great deal	
Item: 1=never; 5=very often	
- Can you discuss your personal problems with your colleagues whenever you want?	.55
- How often do you talk with colleagues about personal problems?	.54
- At work, do you talk about things you do in your spare time?	.59
- Do you tell more or less about your private life at work than your colleagues?	.33
- Are you more or less able than your colleagues to be yourself at work? ^{1,2}	.21
- To what extent can you be yourself at work? ³	.43
<i>Acceptance of personal lifestyle and how one lives one's life, Cronbach's alpha=.61</i>	
Scale: 1=not at all; 5=very	
Item: 1= not at all; 5=very	
- Do colleagues have a problem with the way you live your life? ¹	.44
- To what extent does your working environment accept your personal lifestyle?	.44
<i>Emotional exhaustion, Cronbach's alpha=.89</i>	
Scale: 1=never; 7=always	
Item: 1=never;7=always	
- I feel mentally exhausted by my work	.74
- At the end of a working day I feel empty	.77
- I feel tired when I get up with a working day ahead of me	.69
- I feel burned out by my work	.80
- Working a full day is a heavy load for me	.68
<i>Depersonalisation, Cronbach's alpha=.74</i>	
Scale: 1=never; 7=always	
Item: 1=never;7=always	
- I have noticed that I am becoming distanced from my work	.58
- I am no longer as enthusiastic about my work as I used to be	.66
- I just want to do my work and not be bothered	.35
- I have become more cynical about the effects of my work	.60
<i>Reduced personal competence, Cronbach's alpha=.78</i>	
Scale: 1=never; 7=always	
Item: 1=never;7=always	
- Finishing something off at work cheers me up ¹	.49
- I have achieved a great many valuable things in this job ¹	.49
- I doubt the usefulness of my work ¹	.37
- I am capable of solving problems in my work adequately ¹	.51
- I feel that I make a positive contribution with my work ¹	.59
- I feel that I do my work well ¹	.51
- I am full of self-confidence at work ¹	.54

Table continued

	<u>Item-total correlation</u>
<i>Workstress (total scale), Cronbach's alpha=.86</i>	
Scale: 1=never; 7=always	
Item: 1=never; 7=always	
- I feel mentally exhausted by my work	.74
- At the end of a working day I feel empty	.77
- I feel tired when I get up with a working day ahead of me	.69
- I feel burned out by my work	.80
- Working a full day is a heavy load for me	.68
- I have noticed that I am becoming distanced from my work	.58
- I am no longer as enthusiastic about my work as I used to be	.66
- I just want to do my work and not be bothered	.35
- I have become more cynical about the effects of my work	.60
- Finishing something off at work cheers me up ¹	.49
- I have achieved a great many valuable things in this job ¹	.49
- I doubt the usefulness of my work ¹	.37
- I am capable of solving problems in my work adequately ¹	.51
- I feel that I make a positive contribution with my work ¹	.59
- I feel that I do my work well ¹	.51
- I am full of self-confidence at work ¹	.54
<i>Self-esteem, Cronbach's alpha=.86</i>	
Scale: 1=low; 2=high	
Item: 1=totally disagree, 5=fully agree	
- Generally speaking, I am happy with myself	.62
- I can do a lot of things just as well as most other people ¹	.45
- I don't feel that I have a lot to be proud about	.54
- I feel that I am a valuable person, just as valuable as others	.54
- I would like to have more respect for myself ¹	.62
- I am positive about myself	.74
- I feel at ease with myself	.71
- I am often ashamed of myself ¹	.53
- I am reasonably self-assured	.64
<i>General health, Cronbach's alpha=.70</i>	
Scale: 1=poor; 5=good	
Item: 1=never, 5=always	
- Do you occasionally suffer from a lack of appetite, insomnia and/or tiredness? ¹	.58
- Do you occasionally suffer from one or more of the following complaints: stomach ache, trembling hands, heart palpitations, dizziness and/or headaches? ¹	.54
- Do you occasionally use sleeping pills or sedatives? ¹	.14
- How is your health, generally speaking? ⁴	.24
<i>Sleep-related problems, Cronbach's alpha=.59</i>	
Scale: 1=no; 2=yes	
Item: 1=no, 2=yes	
- Do you wake up early in the morning?	.38
- Do you have difficulty falling asleep at night?	.34
- Do you often wake up at night?	.50

Table continued

Psychometric data for the scales used (continued)

	<u>Item-total correlation</u>
<i>People-oriented organisation culture, Cronbach's alpha= .64</i>	
Scale: 1=fully agree; 5=totally disagree	
Item: 1=fully agree; 5=totally disagree	
- Where you work, changes are introduced in full consultation with the people involved	.39
- Where you work, the organization takes direct responsibility for the welfare of its employees and their families	.52
- Where you work, they always take account of employees' personal problems, work takes second place	.43

⁰ The psychometric data shown is based on ABVAKABO FNV members working in local government or the hospital sector. ¹ Items are reserved. ² 1=I am much more myself; 5=I am much less myself. ³ 1=not at all; 5=very. ⁴ 1=poor; 5=good.

Appendix 4 Statistical analyses

In order to answer the research questions posed in this study various statistical analyses were carried out on the data collected. In this appendix, we will be describing which analysis strategy was used. Analysis of variance, multiple regression analysis or correlations were carried out, depending on the question.

1. Are there differences between the ways homosexual and heterosexual people experience their work?

In order to examine whether homosexual and heterosexual employees differ in the way they experience their work, two types of analysis were carried out for each aspect of the experience of work: analysis of variance on the data from the total group and multiple regression analysis on the data from the various subgroups. Exactly how these analyses were carried out is described below.

Analysis of variance for the total group

In order to determine whether the experience of work within the total group differs between homosexual and heterosexual persons, analysis of variance was carried out. In addition to the effect of sexual preference, the study simultaneously looked at whether there were significant differences between men and women, and on the basis of the sector in which they worked. The interaction effects were also studied: it could be the case that homosexuality makes a difference in one sector but not in another, or makes a difference for men but not for women.

During implementation of the analysis of variance, any possible effects of age, educational background and urbanisation were corrected for. This was because it became apparent from the description of the study group (see Paragraph 2.6) that homosexual and heterosexual respondents differ from one another with respect to these characteristics. Correcting any effect caused by these variables prevents any differences between the groups of homosexual and heterosexual persons being unjustly attributed to sexual preference. The analysis of variance carried out also allows us to estimate the averages, with a correction for the confounding effect of age, education and urbanisation. These estimated averages are presented in Chapter 3.

Multiple regression analysis for subgroups

Analysis of variance of the total group could reveal a primary effect for sexual preference, while the difference only actually occurred in one specific subgroup, such as among lesbian women. On the other hand, no difference could be discerned for the total group between homosexual and heterosexual persons, while this is clearly present in one of the subgroups. In order to gain more clarity in this matter, not only were variant analyses carried out for the total group, but various overlapping subgroups were also examined to see if there were differences between homosexual and heterosexual persons. The composition of these subgroups was based on gender and the sector in which the respondents work. The following eight subgroups are distinguished: 1) men, 2) women, 3) persons working in local government, 4) people working in the hospital sector, 5) men working in local government, 6) women working in local government, 7) men working in the hospital sector, 8) women working in the hospital sector.

In order to analyse the differences between homosexual and heterosexual persons in the various subgroups, use was made of multiple regression analysis. As with the variant analysis, this analysis was also corrected for the confounding variables of age, education and urbanisation. The possible influence of the sector factor in the gender subgroups was corrected, and the possible influence of the gender variable was corrected in the sector-based subgroups.

2. *Are there differences in the experience of work within group of the homosexual men and women?*

Within the group of homosexual persons, the study looked at which men and women have a more positive or negative experience of work than the average homosexual employee. In this context, it also looked separately, for each aspect of the experience of work, at whether there was a correlation with the following characteristics:

- personal characteristics (age, education, urbanisation, relationship status, marital status and whether or not one has children);
- characteristics of the work situation (type of employment relationship, scope of appointment, number of years of service, managerial position, number of people managed, contacts outside the organisation);
- characteristics of the organisation worked for (size of the department, number of people in department with an ethnic minority background, size of the organisation, ratio of men to women in the organisation, people-work oriented organisation).

In order to assess whether these characteristics are linked to the various aspects of experience of work, correlation coefficients were first calculated (Pearson's Product-Moment correlation coefficient r). This analysis reveals the strength and direction of any link. The value of a correlation can be between -1 and +1. If the correlation equals +1, there is a perfect positive link between two variables, if the value is -1, there is a perfect negative link, while a nil shows that there is no link whatsoever between the variables. The higher the absolute value of the correlation coefficient, the stronger the association. These calculations resulted in a correlation matrix, indicating correlations between two variables: one aspect of the experience of work and one specific characteristic. To determine which correlations are significant, a significance level of 5% was again applied (two-sided).

3. *Do differences in the experience of work between homosexual and heterosexual persons lead to differences in work satisfaction, workload and health?*

In order to ascertain the extent to which consequences such as burnout and sick leave are caused by the various aspects of the experience of work, the following procedure was followed. We examined the extent to which the various aspects of the experience of work correlate separately with the various consequences. This was only carried out for those aspects of the experience of work on which homosexuals and heterosexuals differed.

Appendix 5 Statistical results of analyses of variance for chapter 3 (F-values)

	Gender	Preference	Sector	Gender by preference	Gender by sector	Preference by sector
Meaning and experience of work						
Place work has in life	4.49	1.94	1.21	.79	2.94	.04
Experience of the task	3.08*	.00	.33	1.22	4.77	.38
Experience of the organisational context of the work						
Feedback possibilities about one's work task	4.56*	.46	.47	1.46	.03	1.70
Being informed about the organisation	3.76*	1.61	.09	1.50	.21	2.82
Learning opportunities	14.1***	2.82	2.57	.83	.46	.29
Career opportunities	3.59	3.64	2.70	.49	.08	.31
Relationship with the organisation	11.9***	.00	.35	1.77	.37	.18
Balance: organisation or employee benefits from the relationship	1.70	2.29	4.70*	3.41	.14	4.38*
Experience of the social context of the work						
Colleagues find you honest	1.93	.00	2.19	.00	.04	.69
Colleagues find you warm	3.39	2.87	9.11**	3.23	.18	5.37*
Colleagues find you spontaneous	3.36	9.75**	8.03**	1.14	.01	5.55*
Involvement with colleagues	27.3***	6.26**	6.64**	1.35	.98	2.40
Relationship with colleagues	.25	7.22**	.05	1.21	.05	.07
Relationship with boss	.33	5.89*	.26	.00	.02	1.08
Perceived support in everyday situations	.00	5.55*	23.9***	4.10*	.04	6.15***
Perceived support in problematic situations	.14	13.5***	7.79**	2.48	.22	1.94
Negative support	1.30	7.19**	4.36*	2.08	6.14**	2.07
Satisfaction about contact with colleagues	.20	6.67**	2.50	3.72*	.11	.58
Conflicts with colleagues	.47	1.15	4.69*	4.92*	.36	.10
Conflicts with boss	.25	1.45	2.72	1.70	3.08	1.03
Discussing work problems with colleagues	.62	8.19**	3.24	.50	.01	2.86
Discussing work problems with boss	5.39*	4.58*	1.22	.56	1.15	1.45
Observed mobbing: verbal and physical	1.00	1.09	8.74**	4.08*	7.15**	.05
Observed mobbing: exclusion and negative treatment	.63	.70	.11	.73	1.36	.16
Gender as perceived reason for mobbing	3.04	7.51**	4.33*	1.66	16.2	.82
Sexual preference as perceived reason for mobbing	5.00*	53.8***	6.10**	.06	6.75**	5.23*
Being verbally and physically mobbed	3.35	.41	.33	1.37	2.74	.72
Being excluded and treated negatively	.20	.09	.29	.31	3.74*	.02
Being mobbed due to lifestyle	.15	1.71	2.86	.53	1.61	.75
Gender as perceived reason for being mobbed	21.3***	4.03*	10.4***	4.85*	20.9	3.12
Sexual preference as perceived reason for being mobbed	93.9***	276.5***	24.9***	96.0***	.11	22.0**
Opportunities for personal expression	.04	3.50	1.63	1.64	2.35	2.58
Colleagues are informed about personal life	12.9***	4.09*	.18	3.32	9.98*	.03
Boss is informed about personal life	5.87*	5.08*	.09	.21	12.2***	.03
Acceptance of personal lifestyle	2.85	9.93**	11.5***	.01	1.81	2.98
Consequences for health and well-being						
Emotional exhaustion	5.32*	3.48	.34	1.01	.46	.01
Depersonalisation	.02	1.18	.91	4.18*	1.61	1.47
Sense of reduced competence	2.63	9.49**	6.57**	.07	5.89*	1.47
Worksatisfaction	5.43*	1.97	1.59	8.10**	1.44	1.08
Self-esteem	1.52	6.30**	1.55	3.17	1.97	.88
General health	17.0***	9.37**	.79	1.05	.55	.04
Sleep-related problems	4.20*	3.21	1.52	.14	.25	3.58
Sufficient sleep	3.70*	2.45	.03	1.41	.63	1.17
Work situation as perceived cause for health problems	.42	1.73	.03	5.96*	.30	.21
Continued working while feeling ill	.44	.41	1.29	.03	1.29	1.82
Number of days sick leave in the past year	6.03*	3.38*	.46	.37	.83	.09

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Appendix 6 Relations between personal characteristics and the experience of work

Correlations between personal characteristics with the experience of work separate for homosexual men and lesbian women (Pearson's Product-moment correlation coefficient)

	Age	Education	Urbanisation	Relationship	Civil status	Children
Homosexual men						
Being informed about the organisation	.03	.19*	-.01	-.11	.06	.04
Balance:organisation or employee benefits from the relationship	.24**	-.01	-.04	.03	.09	.07
Relationship with colleagues	-.02	.02	.02	.10	.08	.18*
Conflicts with colleagues	.10	.13	-.14	-.03	.00	-.03
Relationship and conflicts with boss	-.21**	.03	.02	.04	.03	-.12
Social support	-.13	.18*	.03	.09	.12	.02
Being mobbed due to lifestyle	.14	-.18*	-.06	-.07	-.07	-.05
Sexual preference as perceived reason for being mobbed	-.08	-.19*	.13	-.04	-.23**	-.17
Opportunities for personal expression	-.12	.11	.08	.06	.07	.02
Acceptance of personal lifestyle	-.08	.23**	.10	.11	.13	.09
Workstress	.03	-.07	-.10	-.04	-.05	-.03
Worksatisfaction	-.02	.03	.12	-.02	.08	-.01
Self-esteem	-.02	.03	.13	.18*	.15	.07
General health	.05	-.22**	.01	-.09	-.09	-.12
Sleep-related problems	-.26***	-.14	.06	-.11	.03	-.01
Work situation as perceived cause for health problems	-.03	-.06	.12	-.12	.00	-.01
Number of days sick leave in the past year	.01	-.17	-.12	-.05	-.03	-.05
Lesbian women						
Being informed about the organisation	.14	.18*	-.12	-.03	.09	-.01
Balance:organisation or employee benefits from the relationship	.05	.07	.04	-.11	-.04	.10
Relationship with colleagues	-.01	-.11	.01	.03	-.01	-.03
Conflicts with colleagues	-.21***	.05	.14	-.12	.02	-.12
Relationship and conflicts with boss	.10	.01	-.02	.04	.14	.11
Social support	.05	-.07	-.04	-.05	-.02	-.00
Being mobbed due to lifestyle	-.00	.04	-.01	-.13	.04	.09
Gender as perceived reason for being mobbed	-.10	.07	.23**	.01	-.05	-.13
Sexual preference as perceived reason for being mobbed	.06	.04	.03	-.05	-.05	-.07
Opportunities for personal expression	.01	.05	.08	.01	.06	.02
Acceptance of personal lifestyle	-.01	.13	.01	-.07	.07	-.04
Workstress	-.10	-.00	.05	-.00	-.08	-.02
Worksatisfaction	.13	.07	-.01	.01	-.02	.06
Self-esteem	.11	.06	-.01	.16*	.05	.14
General health	.01	-.10	.11	-.13	-.17*	-.08
Sleep-related problems	.04	-.16*	.10	-.04	-.06	.02
Work situation as perceived cause for health problems	.06	-.00	-.02	.08	.02	.03
Number of days sick leave in the past year	.03	-.05	.02	-.03	.09	.03
Homosexual persons						
Being informed about the organisation	.10	.18**	-.07	-.08	.08	-.00
Balance:organisation or employee benefits from the relationship	.16**	.03	-.00	-.05	.02	.07
Relationship with colleagues	-.01	-.05	.01	.06	.02	.05
Conflicts with colleagues	-.07	.09	.02	-.07	.02	-.07
Relationship and conflicts with boss	-.05	.02	-.00	.04	.09	.01
Social support	-.02	.04	-.01	.01	.04	-.00
Being mobbed due to lifestyle	.07	-.07	-.03	-.10	-.02	.02
Gender as perceived reason for being mobbed	-.08	.05	.16**	.02	-.03	-.07
Sexual preference as perceived reason for being mobbed	-.01	-.11	.09	-.06	-.15**	-.14**
Opportunities for personal expression	-.05	.08	.08	.03	.06	.02
Acceptance of personal lifestyle	-.05	.18***	.06	.02	.10	.03
Workstress	-.04	-.03	-.02	-.01	-.06	-.01
Worksatisfaction	.07	.05	.04	-.02	.02	.01
Self-esteem	.04	.05	.05	.18***	.10	.12*
General health	.02	-.15**	.07	-.10	-.13	-.09
Sleep-related problems	.15**	-.15**	.08	-.07	-.02	.01
Work situation as perceived cause for health problems	.04	-.02	.04	-.00	.02	.02
Number of days sick leave in the past year	.01	-.09	-.03	-.03	-.04	.01

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Appendix 7 Relations between position and appointment, and the experience of work

Correlations between position and appointment, and the experience of work separate for homosexual men and lesbian women (Pearson's Product-moment correlation coefficient)

	Employment relationship	Appointment	Service years	Managerial position	Contacts outside the organisation
Homosexual men					
Being informed about the organisation	.02	.06	-.01	.25**	.15
Balance:organisation or employee benefits from the relationship	-.13	.08	.04	.11	.12
Relationship with colleagues	.04	-.18	.00	-.04	.03
Conflicts with colleagues	.01	.08	.05	.19	.09
Relationship and conflicts with boss	.20**	.01	-.10	.02	.09
Social support	.02	-.04	-.07	.07	.05
Being mobbed due to lifestyle	.04	-.04	.07	-.01	-.03
Sexual preference as perceived reason for being mobbed	.05	-.13	.03	-.08	.03
Opportunities for personal expression	-.00	-.05	-.09	-.03	.08
Acceptance of personal lifestyle	.04	.05	-.18*	.09	.10
Workstress	-.03	.01	.04	-.16*	-.10
Worksatisfaction	.09	.01	.04	.16*	.18
Self-esteem	.05	.03	-.10	.12	.10
General health	.05	-.01	.05	-.17*	-.09
Sleep-related problems	.01	-.11	.26***	.01	-.04
Work situation as perceived cause for health problems	.01	.02	-.01	-.08	-.04
Number of days sick leave in the past year	.06	.00	.01	-.11	.02
Lesbian women					
Being informed about the organisation	.09	-.05	.11	.19**	.05
Balance:organisation or employee benefits from the relationship	.02	.11	.09	.03	.01
Relationship with colleagues	.08	-.08	.10	.10	-.09
Conflicts with colleagues	.01	.14	-.16*	.01	.06
Relationship and conflicts with boss	.17	-.01	.14	.06	.13
Social support	.14	.02	.19**	.13	-.07
Being mobbed due to lifestyle	.04	.05	-.10	.04	-.03
Gender as perceived reason for being mobbed	.04	.06	-.12	-.04	.12
Sexual preference as perceived reason for being mobbed	.03	-.16*	-.11	-.08	.01
Opportunities for personal expression	.17*	.02	.13	.08	.04
Acceptance of personal lifestyle	.09	.03	.07	.12	.02
Workstress	-.11	.06	-.08	-.13	.00
Worksatisfaction	.12	-.04	.15*	.10	.08
Self-esteem	.13	-.08	-.03	.08	-.03
General health	-.06	.12	.01	-.07	.11
Sleep-related problems	-.08	.09	.09	-.05	-.04
Work situation as perceived cause for health problems	-.03	-.01	-.08	.09	.06
Number of days sick leave in the past year	.01	.02	.03	-.09	-.01
Homosexual persons					
Being informed about the organisation	.06	-.02	.06	.22	.09
Balance:organisation or employee benefits from the relationship	-.04	.07	.08	.08	.06
Relationship with colleagues	.06	.13*	.06	.04	-.04
Conflicts with colleagues	.01	.13	-.07	.09	.07
Relationship and conflicts with boss	.18***	-.01	.02	.04	.11*
Social support	.09	-.02	.07	.11	-.02
Being mobbed due to lifestyle	.04	-.01	.00	.02	-.03
Gender as perceived reason for being mobbed	.03	.08	-.11*	-.04	.08
Sexual preference as perceived reason for being mobbed	.04	-.17**	.02	-.06	.02
Opportunities for personal expression	.10	-.01	.02	.03	.06
Acceptance of personal lifestyle	.07	.05	-.08*	.10	.06
Workstress	-.08	.05	-.03	-.15**	-.04
Worksatisfaction	.11*	-.04	.11*	-.14**	.12*
Self-esteem	.09	-.01	-.08	.09	.03
General health	-.01	.07	.02	-.12*	.02
Sleep-related problems	-.04	-.00	.18*	-.02	-.04
Work situation as perceived cause for health problems	-.01	.02	-.06	.01	.02
Number of days sick leave in the past year	.03	.02	.00	-.10	.00

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Appendix 8 Relations between organisation characteristics and the experience of work

Correlations between organisation characteristics and the experience of work, separate for homosexual men and lesbian women (Pearson's Product-moment correlation coefficient)

	Size of the department	Number of members of ethnic minorities in the department	Size of the organisation	Percentage men in the organisation	Percentage women in the organisation	People orientated towards organisation culture	Organisation takes account of personal life	In only suitability of work accounts	Within organisation thinks ahead	Everybody fits in the organisation	Organisation is open for newcomers	Newcomers quickly feel at home
Homosexual men												
Being informed about the organisation	.05	-.03	.00	.02	-.01	.52***	.10	.18*	-.31***	.11	.34***	.05
Balance:organisation or employee benefits from the relationship	-.19*	.01	-.08	.06	-.11	.27***	.04	-.03	-.03	.19	.28*	-.06
Relationship with colleagues	-.01	.01	.09	-.08	.03	-.04	-.06	-.03	.02	-.15	.01	.11
Conflicts with colleagues	-.07	.00	.10	-.07	.12	.01	-.11	-.12	-.03	.04	-.02	-.04
Relationship and conflicts with boss	.05	.10	.02	-.10	.10	.40***	.13	.13	-.37***	.03	.27***	-.09
Social support	.12	-.12	.20**	-.12	.10	.18*	.18*	.12	-.20**	.12	.19	-.05
Being mobbed due to lifestyle	-.16*	-.01	-.17*	.02	-.09	-.19*	-.27***	-.06	.19*	-.01	-.06	.05
Sexual preference as perceived reason for being mobbed	-.04	.06	.05	-.05	-.02	.14	-.08	-.15	.06	-.05	-.02	.10
Opportunities for personal expression	.06	-.04	.12	-.04	.02	.03	.07	-.01	-.08	.08	.11	-.08
Acceptance of personal lifestyle	.13	-.03	.10	-.03	.08	.07	.10	.10	-.21**	.07	.15	-.18*
Workstress	-.07	-.01	-.05	.03	-.02	-.27***	-.26***	-.11	.30***	-.14	-.25**	.11
Work satisfaction	.03	-.01	.10	.03	-.04	.33***	.17*	.04	-.27***	.15	.26	-.09
Self-esteem	.08	-.10	.07	.01	.02	-.02	.14	.01	-.13	.15	.03	-.08
General health	.04	.10	-.02	-.04	.01	-.23**	-.27***	-.05	-.12	-.09	-.13	-.02
Sleep-related problems	.04	.17*	.02	-.00	-.05	.01	-.08	.07	.17*	.12	.03	.02
Work situation as perceived cause for health problems	.01	.13	-.13	-.06	.06	-.17*	-.20*	.01	.18*	-.10	-.14	.05
Number of days sick leave in the past year	.02	-.00	-.04	.10	-.08	-.02	-.02	.02	.07	-.02	.04	.05
Lesbian women												
Being informed about the organisation	-.10	-.16*	-.14	.13	-.11	.54***	.01	.04	-.48***	.20**	.36***	.15*
Balance:organisation or employee benefits from the relationship	-.00	-.11	-.04	.06	-.06	.25***	-.08	.14	-.19	.05	.11	.07
Relationship with colleagues	.06	.10	-.02	-.08	.06	-.27***	-.01	.26***	-.29***	.15*	.29	.21**
Conflicts with colleagues	.06	.08	.09	.00	.00	.14	-.07	-.22**	.02	-.10	-.22	-.11
Relationship and conflicts with boss	-.14	-.03	-.14	.06	-.04	.39***	-.05	.19**	-.33***	.24***	.28***	.19**
Social support	.00	-.01	.05	-.11	.07	.34***	-.12	.11	-.42***	.19***	.33***	.21**
Being mobbed due to lifestyle	.02	-.04	.05	.01	-.05	-.07	-.03	.03	.09	-.09	-.11	-.05
Gender as perceived reason for being mobbed	.02	.08	-.01	.16*	-.15*	-.12	-.06	-.02	.21**	-.06	-.06	-.15*
Sexual preference as perceived reason for being mobbed	.08	.00	.07	.08	-.01	-.09	-.09	-.06	.08	-.08	-.06	.21**
Opportunities for personal expression	.08	-.02	.09	-.03	.03	.26***	-.19**	.07	-.37***	.14	.32***	.13
Acceptance of personal lifestyle	-.03	.07	.01	-.19**	.17*	.17*	.07	.07	-.22**	.16*	.26***	.05

Table continued

Correlations between organisation characteristics and the experience of work separate for homosexual men and lesbian women (Pearson's Product-moment correlation coefficient; continued)

	Size of the department	Number of members ethnic minorities in the department	Size of the organisation	Percentage men in the organisation	Percentage women in the organisation	People orientated organisation culture	Organisation takes account for personal life	In organisation only suitability of work accounts	Within organisation one thinks ahead	Everybody fits in the organisation	Organisation is open for newcomers	Newcomers quickly feel at home
Workstress	.02	.03	.03	-.10	.11	-.24***	.11	-.03	.28***	-.08	-.25***	-.15*
Work satisfaction	-.06	-.02	.04	.07	-.06	.38***	-.12	.08	-.36***	.09	.26***	.15*
Self-esteem	.09	.02	-.01	.04	-.01	.00	.04	-.03	-.06	.00	-.01	
General health	.04	.09	.09	-.05	.07	-.19**	.03	.02	.13	.04	-.13	-.13
Sleep-related problems	-.08	.05	.01	.00	.01	.17*	.05	.07	.14	-.02	-.07	-.17*
Work situation as perceived cause for health problems	.11	.11	.01	.03	.01	-.27***	.00	-.06	.21**	-.03	-.13	-.11
Number of days sick leave in the past year	-.01	.00	.06	-.04	.06	-.08	.11	-.03	.03	.03	-.15	-.12
Homosexual persons												
Being informed about the organisation	-.03	-.10	-.06	.07	-.06	.53***	.06	.11*	-.40***	.16**	.36***	.11*
Balance:organisation or employee benefits from the relationship	-.09	-.05	-.05	.06	-.08	.27***	-.01	.07	-.11*	.13*	.20***	.01
Relationship with colleagues	.03	.06	.03	-.08	.05	-.17***	-.02	.16**	-.23***	.17**	.25***	.04
Conflicts with colleagues	.00	.05	.09	-.02	.05	.09	-.09	-.18***	.00	-.04	-.14**	-.05
Relationship and conflicts with boss	-.05	.03	-.06	-.01	.03	.39***	.04	.17**	-.35***	.14**	.28***	.06
Social support	.05	-.06	.12*	-.12*	.09	.27***	.02	.12*	-.33***	.16**	.27***	.14**
Being mobbed due to lifestyle	-.06	-.02	-.06	.01	-.07	-.12*	-.14**	-.01	.14**	-.04	-.08	-.00
Gender as perceived reason for being mobbed	.02	.06	-.02	.13*	-.12*	-.11*	-.06	-.03	.15**	-.05	-.07	-.12*
Sexual preference as perceived reason for being mobbed	.01	.03	.07	-.02	-.01	-.09*	-.07	-.10	.07	-.04	-.01	-.01
Opportunities for personal expression	.07	-.03	.10	-.03	.03	.15**	-.07	.04	-.25***	.11*	.23***	.11*
Acceptance of personal lifestyle	.04	.02	.05	-.14**	.12*	.11*	.08	.08	-.22***	.11*	.19***	-.06
Workstress	-.02	.01	-.01	-.04	.05	-.26***	-.07	-.07	.29***	-.11*	-.26***	-.03
Work satisfaction	-.02	-.02	.08	.05	-.05	.37***	.02	.07	-.31***	.12*	.27***	.05
Self-esteem	.06	.00	.04	.00	.02	-.03	.06	.02	-.08	.04	.01	-.05
General health	.04	.09	.05	-.04	.04	-.21***	-.12*	-.01	.12*	-.03	-.14**	-.06
Sleep-related problems	-.02	.11*	.02	.00	-.02	-.08	-.01	.07	.15**	.05	-.02	-.08
Work situation as perceived cause for health problems	.06	.12*	-.06	-.00	.02	-.23***	-.09	-.03	.19***	-.07	-.14**	-.05
Number of days sick leave in the past year	.00	-.00	.01	.02	-.00	-.05	.05	-.01	.05	.00	-.09	-.06

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Appendix 9 Relations between aspects of the experience of work and possible consequences

Correlations between aspects of the experiences of work and possible consequences, separate for homosexual men and lesbian women (Pearson's Product-moment correlation coefficient)

	Workstress		Work satisfaction		Self-esteem		General health		Sleep-related problems		Sick leave	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Being informed about the organisation	-.42***	-.34***	.41***	.41***	.11	.13	-.21***	-.26***	-.04	-.14	.04	-.10
Balance:organisation or employee benefits from the relationship	-.08	-.25***	.15	.38***	.02	-.03	-.09	-.22**	.03	-.17*	.02	-.14
Relationship with colleagues	-.22**	-.25***	.31***	.26***	.09	.14	-.08	-.22**	-.08	-.23**	-.13	-.22**
Conflicts with colleagues	.05	.16*	-.02	-.35***	.03	-.10	-.02	.14	-.05	.14*	-.07	.17*
Relationship and conflicts with boss	-.44***	-.34***	.47***	.42***	.15	.07	-.35***	-.22**	-.20***	-.29***	.14	-.18*
Social support	-.52***	-.48***	.57***	.49***	.27***	.17*	-.40***	-.31***	-.26***	-.24***	-.26**	-.20**
Being mobbed due to lifestyle	.26***	.09	-.25***	-.17*	-.21**	.05	.27***	.14	.19*	.20**	.10	.24**
Opportunities for personal expression	-.33***	-.33***	.35***	.33***	.31***	.18**	-.08	-.21***	-.10	-.09	-.16	-.04
Acceptance of personal lifestyle	-.33***	-.19**	.26***	.23**	.19*	.07	-.21**	-.15*	-.19*	-.01	-.15	-.11

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Colofon

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