WORK ORGANIZATIONS

AS GENDERED AND SEXUALIZED SPACES

IN THE CONTEXT OF TURKEY

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ABSTRACT

This thesis, as a part of the scholarly research focusing on the opportunities in working life and discrimination at the work organizations, explores the everyday experiences of sexual minorities in the context of the workplace. Workplace constitutes one of the everyday spaces that is produced and regulated through embodied social practices. The norms that regulate and structure the workplace such as gender and sexual norms are also enacted through these social practices. This thesis focuses on the discourses and practices of heterosexual normativity to shed some light both on the regulative power of heteronormativity in the workplace and the ways in which sexual minorities confront and challenge heteronormative discourses and practices on a daily basis. Based on semi-structured in-depth interviews, this thesis particularly foregrounds the role of informal relations and interactions in the workplace. Relying on the feminist literature and discussions which render the gendered and sexualized nature of workplaces, I first discuss that workplaces are spaces teemed with forms of gendered and sexualized interactions and processes. In so doing, I first focus on the interlocutors' narratives on their decisions to disclose or not disclose their gender identities and sexual orientation in the workplace and try to delineate the reasons motivating such decisions. Secondly, I focus on how normative heterosexuality is constructed and sustained through discursive and practical repetition in the context of the workplace with particular emphasis on the discriminatory and exclusionary effects of such reiteration. Finally, albeit very briefly, I try to look into how in different occupations and cultures of work organization play a significant role in shaping the work experiences of sexual minorities. This research shows that workplace cultures constitute and sustain behaviors, values and practices, which maintain the heteronormative order in place and act as a mechanism of regulation and control. Organizational culture plays a significant role in sustaining or eroding gender and sexual discrimination and shaping the experiences of sexual minorities in the workplace.

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CHAPTER ONE-INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Questions

The issues of equal opportunities in working life and discrimination at the workplace in Turkey has been mostly tackled in terms of the categories of sex, race, language, religion, political view, property and ability. The constitutive and fundamental text that regulates different aspects of working life, namely the Labor Legislation, clearly states that in any relation between the employer and the employee, it is unlawful to discriminate based on language, race, color, sex, ability, political belief, philosophical faith, religion and sect. However, a clearly articulated approach towards discrimination on grounds of gender identity and sexual orientation has been virtually wanting.

Recently, thanks to the efforts of various LGBT organizations, some labor activists and scholars, the social and political discourse addressing discrimination and equal opportunities in the working life started to address the problems and issues LGBT people face and struggle against in the workplace. However, there still exists no comprehensive research on a national scale which sheds light on the ways in which LGBT people experience discrimination in the workplace; and how these discriminatory practices affect individuals' identities, everyday experiences, work performances or patterns of socialization with others within the organizations.

Workplace constitutes one of the everyday spaces that is produced and regulated through embodied social practices. The norms that regulate and structure the workplace – such as gender and sexual norms – also become enacted through these social practices. For LGBT people, workplace constitutes another social space in which they confront heteronormative discourses and practices on a daily basis. This study, bearing on the experiences of the interlocutors, will aim to provide some insight into the ways in which

LGBT people experience discrimination in the workplace by way of analyzing the embodied discourses and practices of heterosexual normativity which structures and regulates the everyday, formal and informal interactions. In so doing, it will inevitably focus on the techniques employed by LGBT people in constructing and displaying their sexual identities as well as their methods of challenging heteronormativity at the workplace.

This study revolves around three main research questions: First, how is normative heterosexuality constructed and sustained through discursive and practical repetition in the context of the workplace and what are the effects, particularly discriminatory and exclusionary, of such reiteration? Secondly, how do LGBT people construct and display their sexual identities at the workplace? And finally, how do LGBT people challenge heteronormativity at the workplace? In so doing, this study will argue that work organizations have norms regarding gender and sexuality embedded into their workplace cultures.

1.2 Social Background: Social and Economic Problems of LGBT People in Turkey

At the second half of the year 2014, SPOD (Social Policies, Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation Studies Association) and SPF (Social Policy Forum, Research Center, Bosphorus University, Istanbul) conducted a research on the social and economic problems that LGBT people in Turkey face based on their sexual orientation and gender identity. (Yılmaz and Göçmen, 2015) Although not comprehensive enough, the results of the research reveal valuable information pertaining to the forms of discrimination that LGBT people experience in the areas of employment, housing, socialization and family life. The researchers conducted an online survey with 2875 people from 6 cities in Turkey. Additionally, they did 14 focus groups with more than 200 people.

The results reveal that LGBT people participate in a variety of sectors of the economy, from being state officials to freelancers, to doctors, teachers, employees in private companies, household workers, etc. According to the results, 62.9% of the participants (1803 people) reported that they have been in any form of income producing activity at the time when they completed the survey. 78.3% of the participants (1555 people) stated that they chose not to disclose their gender identity or sexual orientation at the workplace. Furthermore, 8.4% of the participants (241 people) thought that they have been in one way or another discriminated while searching for a new job. 55.7% of the participants (914 people) revealed that they had been treated negatively or witnesses a situation where someone was being treated negatively due to one's gender identity or sexual orientation. 29.1% of the participants (371 people) thought that they do not have access to equal opportunities when it comes to working conditions and other rights (such as parental leaves, health insurance, etc.). 5.8% of the participants (167 people) asserted that they cannot engage in a job for which they have received training due to discrimination based on their gender identity and sexual orientation.

This research sheds light on the fact that LGBT people have to deal with different forms of discrimination in different aspects of their everyday life while trying to sustain their livelihood. Majority of the LGBT people, who have experienced discrimination, stated that they refrain from appealing to courts to pursue their rights. When asked why they hold off from appealing to courts, particularly disbelief and distrust in the justice system and the concern that the secrecy of their private rights will be breached during the process appear as the most significant and repeated reasons. As it is stated by the researchers, these results reveal that LGBT people constitute a group under constant threat of discrimination, but the paths one can take to fight effectively against these forms of discrimination are very limited.

1.3 Legal Background

1.3.1 Sexual Orientation Discrimination in the Turkish Constitution

The structure of any given society affects every aspect of life in that society directly or indirectly. In this sense "regimes of the normal" (Warner, 1993) is a phrase commonly used to depict a societal organization whose different aspects are structured on an ideal standard or model that defines the "normal" or "natural" way of being or doing something. Naturally, every society is comprised of members who do not fit the norm in one way or another. Hegemonic assumptions on what constitutes the norm result in the marginalization of groups of people who do not conform to the so-called norm. The norm which considers heterosexuality as the "normal" way of being, acting and living, has been one of the powers regulating what is acceptable and what is not, what is normal and what is not, whose lives are worth living and whose are not. The concept of heteronormativity describes a system in which a whole culture is defined in accordance to the practices and values of naturalized and idealized heterosexuality which marginalizes, renders invisible, oppresses and at best assimilates as 'docile' others those who do not fit into the box of normative heterosexuality. (Çakırlar and Delice, 2012: 11) In terms of the state policies pertaining to the organization of the family institution, reproductive rights and sexual practices, since its establishment in 1923, heteronormativity has been a regulating power. This regulating and governing hegemony of heteronormativity was on the state level was not based on blatant coercion or a system of punishment, but rather it worked as a given assumption embodied in the laws, merged into the institutional practices and encoded in the minds of the political actors. (Keniş, 2012: 8) Homosexuality was never criminalized in Turkey; however, since heterosexuality is the norm informing policies as the underlying assumption, non-heterosexuals have been mostly neglected in the state discourse, political debates or legislation.

As indicated above, the current constitution of the Turkish Republic, which dates from 1982, does not prohibit homosexuality or bisexuality; however, when it comes to the principle of the equality of all citizens before the law and prohibition of discrimination against disadvantaged groups, it also does not contain any expression related to sexual orientation either. In other words, the constitution does not ban homosexuality; however, there exists no laws that regulate discrimination against non-heterosexuals either. The general ruling pertaining to the "equality of the citizens before the law" is regulated in the Article 10 of the constitution as follows: "Every citizen is equal before the law regardless of their language, race, color, sex, political belief, philosophical faith, religion, sect and similar reasons." As it can be interpreted from this expression, despite the fact that categories such as "language", "race", "color", "sex", "political belief", "philosophical faith", "religion" and "sect" are explicitly stated in the article, "sexual orientation" and "gender identity" are omitted. However, as Aydın has stated it, it is possible to interpret the vague and ambiguous delineation "and similar reasons" to address discrimination cases based on sexual orientation and gender identity in relation to this article. (Aydın, 2007: 5)

After the general elections in 2002, the ruling party AKP (Justice and Development Party) initiated a process concerning the reformulation of the Turkish Constitution. Since 2002, LGBT organizations operating in different cities and regions of Turkey have been campaigning nationwide to promote the inclusion of sexual orientation and gender identity categories into the abovementioned article on equality in the Constitution. One of these organizations SPOD (Social Policies, Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation Studies Association), a non-governmental organization that has been organizing panels and forums, conducting research, publishing reports on the field of LGBT rights and freedoms in Turkey since its founding in September 2011, published a Constitution Studies Group Report in April 2012. (SPOD, 2012) According to this report, the demand for the amendment of the Article 10

so that “sexual orientation” and “gender identity” are included in the Constitution appears to be a common demand on part of the LGBT people. The logic behind such demand not only aims to secure the equality of LGBT people before the law, but also, endeavors to challenge the silent heteronormativity of the state discourse.

Another aspect of the Constitution that affects the LGBT people indirectly are the expressions such as “general morality”, “public order” and “behavior” that are mentioned in various parts of the Constitution. These phrases can be interpreted in various contexts with results that pave the way for the repression and limitation of basic rights and freedoms since they can be used as tools of pressure, violence and discrimination against disadvantaged groups such as women and LGBT people. The Article 20 of the Constitution which states that everybody has the right to ask for respect regarding their private and family life and that the secrecy of private life is untouchable also includes in its second paragraph the phrase “general morality”. The objectivity and legitimacy of this phrase is open to discussion on the following ground: moral norms vary and change from one historical period to another, from one region to another, from one person to another therefore decisions pertaining to what is moral and what is not are always political implicated. The formulation of the concept of morality as “general morality” in the constitution, surely gives the legislators and executives the opportunity to use this expression as a yardstick or norm and thus limit rights and freedoms arbitrarily. Officials usually use this term “general” to refer to an imagined consensus on the part of the society (comprised solely of heterosexuals) regarding which lifestyles, behaviors, attitudes, discourses and practices are in accordance with the “common good” of the society. Surely, according to this tautological formulation, LGBT people are not regarded as a part of the society, since they do not practice “general morality” which is the morality of a heteronormative society which deems non-heterosexual practices as abnormal, deviant, sick or morally abhorrent. We come across many interpretations where the phrase “general morality”

is instrumentalized to deem homosexuality as an immoral act. As it has been stated in the SPOD's report (SPOD, 2012), these vague and subjective expressions were used to take action in the investigations opened against KAOS GL (another NGO focusing on LGBT rights and freedoms) and the failed decision to close LambdaİstanbuI. Thus, LGBT citizens of Turkey demand the exclusion of such ambiguous remarks that can lead to prejudicial interpretations from the Constitution.

One last remark concerning the constitutional regulations is again about the above-mentioned Article 20. Some lawyers state that sexual orientation should be treated as a part of the secrecy of private life. (Aydın, 2007: 6) According to these lawyers, in cases of discrimination based on sexual orientation, it is possible to refer to Article 20. This right is also regulated in the Article 8 of European Convention of Human Rights. Article 8 provides the right to respect for one's private and family life, his home and his correspondence. It also provides for a broad interpretation, allowing for the criminalization of the prohibition pertaining to private consensual homosexual acts. Therefore, in cases of discrimination, plaintiffs can appeal to the European Court of Human Rights based on Article 8.

1.3.2 Sexual Orientation Discrimination in the Labor Legislation

The fundamental text that regulates different aspects of work life, namely the Labor Legislation, does not refer explicitly or directly to discrimination based on sexual orientation. The Article 5 entitled the "Equal Treatment Principle" of the legislation, while omitting the expression sexual orientation states that in any relation between the employer and the employee, it is unlawful to discriminate based on language, color, sex, ability, political belief, philosophical faith, religion and sect or similar reasons. Discrimination based on sexual orientation, due to this silence, in most cases addressed based on the expression "similar

reasons". Other articles of the Labor Legislation, which can be addressed when tackling discrimination against LGBT people at the workplace, include Article 18 entitled "The Termination Based on Valid Reason" and Article 24 entitled "The Right of Repeal of the Worker for Rightful Reason". Expressions such as "similar reasons" which appear also in these articles are read and evaluated in conjunction with international documents pertaining to human rights to provide a basis for LGBT activists and lawyers in the cases of discrimination based on sexual orientation.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

This section is given to the scholarly literature and discussions that constitute the theoretical framework of this study. In so doing, at first, certain concepts that are used throughout this study will be defined.

In this study, when tackling the problems and issues of LGBT employees, lesbian, gay and bisexual are used as reference concepts regarding the sexual orientation of the interlocutors. Trans is used to designate those interlocutors who state their gender identity not in terms of binary concepts "women" and "men". A further criterion of public/private will also be applied since those who work in public sectors experience discrimination differently than those who work in the private sector. Whereas those LGBT people who work in public sectors as civil servants, teachers or police officers experience discrimination and termination of contract as a result of the investigations opened against them based on the legislation 647 of the constitution which articulate the concept of "general morality", the problems of LGBT employees working in the private sector as to the termination of contract are handled differently. When LGBT people disclose their identities they express different concerns as to the forms of discrimination from homophobic pressures to mobbing.

1.4.1 Organizations as Gendered and Sexualized Spaces

There is a growing literature focusing on the nature of organizational structures that argue that workplaces unlike commonplace understanding are not gender neutral and non-intimate places. On the contrary, it is asserted that gender and sexuality are embedded in organizations, rendering workplaces as environments teemed with different forms of gendered and sexualized interactions and processes. For instance, systematic analyses of gendered nature of organizations disclose that organizational practices are responsible for gender segregation of work as well as income and status inequality between men and women. Joan Acker, in her article, *Hierarchies, Jobs Bodies: A Theory of Gendered Organizations* argues that the gendered nature of organizations "is partly masked through obscuring the embodied nature of work". (Acker, 1990: 139) In other words, Acker states that the universal worker is represented in the image of a masculine man and images of men's bodies and masculinity pervade organizational structures. This understanding which surely dismisses, silences and marginalizes women worker's existence and experience has been severely criticized by feminist theorizing which challenge the notion that it is men's behavior, values, perspectives that represent the human in general. (Acker and Van Houten, 1974; Kanter, 1977) Interventions of feminist scholarship were counter challenged by a perspective that views organizations and the people who constitute these organizations separately. Those who argue that the organizations were gender-neutral social spaces providing equal opportunities for both genders accused the feminist scholars for bringing in general attitudes and behaviors into an environment hitherto neutrally constructed.

This research draws on the critical feminist scholarship on organizational structures and processes that assert that workplaces are not gender-neutral spaces. However, this

research takes this argument to another dimension and relying on the increasing literature on sexuality and organizational structures argues that organizations are not as they are commonly presented non-intimate, sexually-neutral entities. Sexuality, like gender, is a key organizing element in the everyday organizational life and is closely intertwined with assumptions and displays of heterosexuality. Abstract conceptions of jobs and hierarchies assume that the worker is not only a man but also a heterosexual. This results in the marginalization of not only women based on their gender identity, but also conceives and constructs workplace as a heteronormative space, thus, marginalizing, silencing, excluding and discriminating against LGBT people.

1.4.2 Organizations as Heteronormative Spaces

Social spaces are created in certain ways, often associated with gendered and sexualized norms and conventions that are historically and geographically specific. (Brown, Browne and Lim, 1997) Workplaces constitute another social space where norms are constructed, reiterated and maintained on an everyday basis. One of the major norms that play a vital role in regulating the interactions between the individuals in a workplace is the norm of heterosexuality. Heteronormativity is a relatively new term coined to describe a situation where heterosexuality is taken as the "natural" way of being. Heteronormativity can be defined as "the mutual constitution of normative heterosexuality and the rigid binary gender order, whereby there are only two genders and one can only belong to one category at a time" (Varela, Dhawan, 2011: 94). The hegemonic discourse of heteronormativity plays a role in determining, constituting and maintaining the subject's sexual identity. In other words, heteronormativity supposes heterosexuality as a normative notion that repeatedly asserts heterosexual life as the right life to live. (Martinsson, Reimers

and Reingarde, 2007: 11) In so doing, it promotes not only heterosexuality as the natural and homosexuality as an abnormal deviation from the norm, but also perpetuates and maintains the rigid division between gender categories of women and men. Heteronormativity implicates not only compulsory heterosexuality but also attributes rules and regulations for how to behave as a proper woman or a man. As a result of its normalizing functions, it renders woman and man, categories of normative construction into objective descriptions of reality or facts. The prescriptive norm further orders the relationship between these two categories, meaning that individuals who are named 'woman' should desire a 'man' and individuals who are named 'man' should desire a 'woman'. In so doing, it forces one to be either a woman or a man and in each case to desire the opposite sex. (Butler, 2004: 42) As Judith Butler states, the norm based on a binary construction of two genders governs intelligibility of the person. This implies that those who do not act in accordance with the norm run the risk of becoming unintelligible and the cases of transgression are severely punished.

Analysis pertaining to the causes and origins of women's oppression/subordination as well as methods and programs to create a society in which gender hierarchy and exploitation of women would cease to exist gave way to discussions concerning how to conceptualize the relationship between one's biological sex and one's gender. In 1972, Ann Oakley defined gender in a differential relationship to sex and pinpointed a fundamental turn in feminist social theory. In 1975, drawing on the work of structural anthropologists, Gayle Rubin coined the term "sex-gender system" to define a regulated cultural mechanism that takes biological men and women as raw materials and transforms them into certain genders through a number of cultural institutions such as the family, exchange of women amongst men, sexual division of labor, compulsory heterosexuality and the laws (i.e. the incest taboo) that initiate the psychic development of individuals. The idea was to tackle sex and gender in terms of the relationality of the terms and move the focus of analysis to a totality of social relations.

(Rubin, 1975) Such discussions gave impetus to the discussions around biological determinism/essentialism and social constructionism. In very general terms, essentialism "seeks to establish 'natural' or 'biological' explanations for sexual practices, relationships and identities" whereas constructionism "claims that these are socio-historical products, not universally applicable and deserve explanation in their own right".

Furthermore, the works of Michel Foucault on sexuality which put forward the claim that those sexual identity categories are not discrete identities but rather categories of knowledge contributed to the studies on the relationship between sex and gender and how these are shaped and experienced in different social spaces. (Foucault, 1978) Drawing on Foucault's conclusions, poststructuralist approaches conceptualize individual sexual identities as constructed and reconstructed within organizations through different discursive and non-discursive practices. Arguing that gender definitions and gender relations change and show difference from one historical place to another and from one geography to another necessitated discussions of how these definitions and relations were connected to social spaces that are both shaped by gender relations and in turn shape the nature of these relations. This research rests on the literature, which asserts that our actions and behaviors constitute the space we inhabit, just as the spaces we inhabit provide active and constitutive context that shapes our actions, interactions and identities. As Chamber and Carver denote "heteronormativity is written into the law, encoded in the every edifices of institutions, built into an enormous variety of common practices." (Chambers and Carver, 2008: 146) Workplaces, like the family institution, are social products that cannot be separated from the ideological and political processes. Thus, workplace as a space in this context is conceptualized as not only structured by the logic of free-market economy, but also by the logic of heteronormativity. In other words, workplace constitutes one of the everyday spaces that is produced and regulated through embodied social practices. The norms regulating and

structuring the workplace – such as gender or sexual norms – also become enacted through these social practices. For non-heterosexuals, workplace constitutes one of the spaces in which they confront heteronormative discourses and practices on a daily basis.

1.4.3 Functions of Silence

Silence appears as a major theme addressed in the literature affecting the lives of LGBT people. The multiple and changing forms of silence pertaining to sexuality governs the social identities of LGBT individuals. One of the key tensions of being a LGBT person involves the issue of being open or closeted (disclosing one's sexual orientation/gender identity or being silent about it). This study draws on the feminist critique of the traditional liberal conception of the division between public and private sphere in analyzing how normative understandings of sexuality plays a significant role as a regulatory mechanism in organizational contexts.

According to the traditional liberal theory, the state issues certain laws and regulations to secure the lives, rights and property of the individuals. This limitation on the part of the freedom of the individual serves to prevent and regulate the conflict between individual wills in the public sphere. This designation of the public sphere, certainly, entails the institutionalization of the private sphere as the location of the family. It was assumed by this theory that, while regulating the public sphere, the state would refrain from legally organizing the private sphere, leaving it as a free-zone. This conceptualization has been proven to be a myth. State intervenes in the so-called private sphere through many different mechanisms the most obvious of which is the civil codes through which it regulates this sphere. The division between private and public spheres suggests a divided conceptualization of the individual as a "citizen" and a "family member". The notion of the citizen, just as the individual, has been

criticized for being an abstract notion specifying a certain group of people, mainly western, white, property-owning, heterosexual men. This division, also, following a patriarchal logic, deems the public sphere as the place of "men", while the private sphere is identified as the place of "women". (Berktay, 2003: 37-42) Localization of the women in the family (private sphere) and thus exclusion from certain public, civil and economic rights have been criticized and challenged in many different contexts; and the inclusion of women in the public sphere has been a dominant theme of struggle and one of the basic tenants of liberal feminism.

In this study, this divisive logic is tackled in terms of sexuality and silence in the workplace. Paid work which typically takes outsides the confines of the house, has conventionally been seen as falling within the 'public' sphere of activities. According to this model, sexuality is a 'private' matter which has nothing to do with the workplace. (Skidmore, 2004: 238) Heteronormative sexuality, as a reproductive activity, within the abovementioned logic, is localized within the boundaries of the private sphere, associated with the family life. "Thus, the attempts to banish sexuality from the workplace were part of the wider process that differentiated the homes the location of legitimate sexual activity, from the place of capitalist production." (Acker, 1990: 151) However, as it will be shown throughout this study, heterosexual practices and discourses figure quite commonly in informal conversations in the workplace. In such a context, where conversations implying heterosexual practices are permissible and acceptable, coming out is regarded as an act challenging and violating the traditional normative division between work (public space) and home (private sphere). According to the liberal theory, the autonomous legal individuals are endowed with "freedom of contract" so that the parties have the power to negotiate and set the parameters of employment relationship. However, in practice, the economically dominant party, meaning the employer, organizes and manages and sets the parameters of the employment relationship. This has further important implications when taken into consideration in relation to the fact

that heteronormativity is the pervasive norm since it gives legitimacy to the "'private' (employer) regulation of what is perceived to be a 'public' sphere." (Skidmore, 2004) As it has been asserted by Lynne S. Giddens and Judith K. Pringle, "heteronormative mores are strongest in the social and informal aspects of work where the private-public line blurs and a common response is to be 'mute'". (Giddens and Pringle, 2011: 97) The dominant discourse of heterosexuality silences, suppresses and marginalizes the discourse of homosexuality. Paradoxically, homosexual practices and discourses, if at all permitted or condoned, should be confined within one's bedroom, and in no context whatsoever, should be claimed publicly.

In this research, the effects of discursive silence, which manifest itself mostly in interpersonal informal relations in the workplace, both as a mechanism of power and control and as a means of active resistance will be analyzed. The issues of visibility and invisibility will be tackled in relations to the rights, legitimacy and full expression of gender identity and sexual orientation. In this respect, the project dovetails with the literature deploying discourse analysis which gradually became one of the primary ways of studying organizational life and analyzing complex organizational phenomena.

CHAPTER TWO-LITERATURE REVIEW

A quick perusal of the literature pertaining to labor market and workplace discrimination reveals that studies foreground mostly women, physically or mentally disadvantaged workers, religious or ethnic minorities and migrants as the demographic groups that are highly affected by discriminatory practices. Studies that focus on the experiences of non-heterosexuals as one of the social groups facing systematic discrimination in the labor market and in the workplace are a relatively recent development. (Croteau, 1996; Day and Schoenrade, 2000; Ragins and Cornwell, 2001) This current state of affairs is related to the fact that sexuality constitutes one of the most taboo topics in contemporary organizational theory. (McQuarrie, 1998; Ward and Winstanley, 2003 Ward, 2008) As for the case of Turkey, empirical research on gender identity and sexual orientation research is nascent. This research by selecting Turkey as the target of analysis aims to contribute to the emergence of a literature, particularly on discrimination against LGBT people in the labor market and at the workplace in a country where political context is rather different than North America or Western Europe. It further aims to shed light on how LGBT people in precarious working environments come to negotiate their identities and confront heteronormativity at the workplace.

This thesis, primarily, draws on the literature that analyzes and conceptualizes the workplace as a hierarchical place where gender and sexuality are constitutive parts of the process of control. Joan Acker's article, *Hierarchies, Jobs Bodies: A Theory of Gendered Organizations* where Acker introduces feminist criticisms against the conceptualization of workplace as a disembodied and gender neutral space and thus argues that gender inequality is built into the structure of the work organizations is pivotal for this study. In other words, "gender inequality is created, maintained and resisted at structural, ideologcal and

interactional levels in an organization." (Dellinger, 2002:4) Acker specifies the division of labor, cultural symbols, workplace interaction, individual identities and organizational logic as the processes that reproduce gender in organizations. (Acker, 1990) In so doing, she asserts that organizational logic plays a fundamental role in rationalizing and legitimizing hierarchies in the work organizations. Here, organizational logic is used as a term to define the policies and principles that shape and govern work rules, job descriptions, pay scales, job evaluations. (Christine L. Williams, Chandra Muller, Kristine Kilanski, 2012) These principles are gendered in the sense that they rely heavily on gender stereotypes, privileging those qualities that are normatively associated with men and masculinity.

There is a growing literature that tackles the neo-liberal restructuring of traditional work organizations since the 1970s. Christine L. Williams' work *The Glass Escalator Revisited: Gender Inequality in Neoliberal Times* and the article *Gendered Organizations in the New Economy* (Christine L. Williams, Chandra Muller, Kristine Kilanski, 2012) discuss in detail the changes in the structures of work organizations and the social organizational of work and aim to pinpoint the changing mechanisms through which gender inequality is created and sustained in the workplace. Due to the changes in the organizational logic, for instance, whereas previously job descriptions were specifying certain tasks which were then evaluated by the managers who controlled the labor process, nowadays, work is dealing with tightly scheduled projects, the outcomes of which are evaluated often by peers. Furthermore, career ladders are gradually replaced by career maps, which give supervisors a larger space to shape and control the advancement of the employees. (Christine L. Williams, Chandra Muller, Kristine Kilanski, 2012)

Literature focusing on lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people's vocational or career experiences started to appear in the early 1970s. 1980s and 1990s witnessed an increase in the number of papers published on the subject. These literatures also tackle discrimination with

respect to its different forms ranging from a variety of exclusionary practices and discourses, verbal and/or physical abuse, derogatory and humiliating remarks and jokes to difficulties in finding jobs, unequal pay scales, mobbing and other obstacles faced in career advancement and promotion. The literature pertaining to contexts where anti-discrimination laws do not exist, focus on issues from homophobia that manifests itself through bullying and physical violence perpetuated by coworkers to the termination decisions made by corporate and non-corporate employers in the vent of identity disclosure by a LGBT person. In other words, early works reveal a growing corpus focusing largely on blatant forms of abuse, harassment and discrimination faced by LGBT people in the workplace. In short, this research agenda was a critical response to a labor context lacking in clear and concrete equality standards capable of protecting non-heterosexuals. Such literature, which is usually coextensive with the political activism targeting the passing of anti-discrimination laws, is crucial for this study for a number of reasons. It is foremost noteworthy because by rendering the problems of non-heterosexuals and gender non-confirming people visible at the workplace, it provides the policy makers with concrete information to address.

As the LGBT activism started to draw more support, there emerged in the North America and Western Europe, a relative respect for sexual orientation and gender diversity, as manifested itself in the legal sphere in the form of anti-discriminatory rules supportive of LGBT employees. However, legal protections do not always eradicate or preclude the mechanisms of prejudice and homophobia. (Öztürk, 2011) A quick look at the literature recently produced reveal that despite the improvements on the legal dimension LGBT people still face difficulties in securing career advancement, their performance is often subjected to greater scrutiny and they still have to cope with homophobic discourses manifested through belittling jokes and disparaging statements about their identities. Therefore, recently, there is an increase in research that mainly focus on identifying effective strategies to meet the

multifarious challenges experienced by LGBT people in the contexts that are seemingly more inclusive of their identities. It also aims at revealing the hidden mechanisms of prejudice responsible for different career trajectories that the LGBT people live through. Furthermore, it targets developing practical frameworks for analyzing and assessing the quality, extent and evolution of diversity policies implemented in the organizations.

As is has been suggested, there is a growing literature focusing on different aspects of experiences of LGBT people. A pivotal article titled, *Research on the Work Experiences of Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual People: An Integrative Review of Methodology and Findings* written by James M. Croteau and published in 1996 surveys the literature pertaining to the subject up until that time and examines the methodology and content of nine published studies on the workplace experiences of lesbian, gay and bisexual people. This article is significant for the purposes of this study not only because it provides an analysis of some of the empirical studies conducted on the subject, but also because of its findings. Croteau clearly identifies some of the methodological impasses that dominate the field such as the difficulty of drawing general conclusions as a result of the limited range of participation in the surveys and field studies. After a close scrutiny of the articles, Croteau comes to the conclusion that workplace discrimination against LGB people is classified under two headings: formal and informal discrimination. Formal discrimination is defined as "institutionalized procedures to restrict officially conferred work rewards", whereas informal discrimination is described as "harassment and other unofficial actions taken by supervisors and co-workers". Croteau's analysis of the studies also reveals that fear of discrimination at work, especially if sexual orientation is discovered or disclosed, amongst LGB people is real and that the fear of discrimination appears to be a major factor behind worker's choice to hide their sexual orientation. Finally, he asserts that the degree of concealment or openness regarding lesbian,

gay or bisexual identity at work varies across employees due to a number of factors such as co-worker attitudes or existence or absence of legal frameworks that bind organizations.

Another article that is valuable for this study is titled *The Absent presence: Negative space within discourse and the construction of minority sexual identity in the workplace* written by James Ward and Diana Winstanley and published in 2003. What renders this article important for this study is the fact that rather than considering the term sexuality alongside the umbrella term diversity and treating it as an individual property, the authors regarded it as a process determined by the context in which it takes place. Thus, focusing on the construction of sexual identity in relation to the organization context within which it takes shape, this article tackles the role that silence plays in organizational discourse and the creation of social identities. It endeavors to analyze how minority sexual identities are constructed in organizations through discourse. In so doing, the article raises issues as to the uncovering previously silenced voices.

Heteronormativity at the workplace is another major theme covered by a number of articles. Furthermore, workplace culture, both as an occupational and organizational culture, is significant in terms of understanding the ways in which informal norms create, maintain and reproduce gender and sexuality inequality at work. (Giddens and Pringle, 2011; Woodruffe-Burton and Baristow, 2013) Workplace culture, both as an occupational and organizational culture, is significant in terms of understanding the ways in which informal norms create, maintain and reproduce gender and sexuality inequality at work. (Dellinger, 2002) It is worthy to note here an article dating from 2008 titled *Coming Out or Not? How Nonheterosexual People Manage Their Sexual Identity at Work* written by Beatrice Gusmano. (Gusmano, 2008). Gusmano in this article argues that a restrictive model of (hetero)sexual identity is legitimized within society and reproduced within organizational contexts. This article shows how discussions pertaining to how sexual identity is created, constructed and maintained

implies reference to a broader setting in which non-heterosexual experience is still considered a transgression, a deviation from the heterosexual norm. Furthermore, as Martin P. Levine and Robin Leonard argue in their article, discrimination against non-heterosexuals is tried to be legitimized on the grounds of stereotypical misconceptions which suggest that non-heterosexuals are sinners, mentally ill people or child molesters. (Levine and Leonard, 1984) However, what is striking about Gusmano's article is how the author brings together the discussions surrounding the relationship between organizational structures and sexuality as well as how she reveals the underlying heteronormative assumptions and values that dominate the organizations in the context of Italy.

CHAPTER THREE-METHODOLOGY

This study refers to two sets of sources to collect data on the issue of workplace discrimination against LGBT people. To begin with, online newspapers, news portals and websites of NGO's focusing on LGBT rights were screened to reach the cases that found media coverage. In so doing, I conducted online research using five keywords: *işyeri* [Turkish word for workplace], *ayrımcılık* [Turkish word for discrimination], *eşcinsel* [Turkish word for homosexual], trans and LGBT. A quick perusal of the web reveals next to nothing in terms of news covering workplace discrimination against LGBT people in the mainstream newspapers and news portals. On the other hand, the websites of NGOs, specifically those of KAOSGL and SPOD provided me with rather ample information ranging from interviews with those who experienced discrimination at the workplace based on their gender identity or sexual orientation as well as news and reports pertaining to the issue at hand.

Semi-structured, in-depth interviews constitute the second set of sources. It was necessary to reach out for personal accounts thus I carried out semi-structured in-depth interviews to surface the experiences of the interlocutors. I conducted a field study in Istanbul Turkey with 6 interlocutors. The interlocutors interviewed comprised of two gay men, two bisexual woman, one lesbian woman and one trans. They were between the ages 26-40. All of them are university graduates. Of the six interlocutors, two are working in non-governmental organizations, one is working at a university, one is working at a state high school, one is working at a private elementary school, one is working at a finance corporation. Of all the six, the two teachers are the ones who have work experience in public institutions.

Snowball technique was used to reach the interlocutors. Snowball technique was used since it is a sampling technique which renders it possible to identify potential interlocutors where it is hard to locate them. I reached the interlocutors through personal connections.

Then, I asked for assistance from the interviewed subjects to help identify people whom they thought might be interested in participating in the project. It is rather complicated to carry out research focusing on LGBT people's experiences in the workplace since it is difficult to reach people who would like to talk about the subject at all. A number of highly apt concerns related to the topic inhibit people from voicing their experiences publicly. However, due to the limitations of this technique, the representativeness of the sample is questionable. The interlocutors interviewed constitute only an extremely small subgroup of the entire population.

The lack of systematically collected data pertaining to labor market and workplace discrimination constitutes a major obstacle in researching cases and forms of discrimination against LGBT people. The problem becomes all the more critical in the case of Turkey, since not only workplace discrimination but discrimination in other spheres of social life has been the subject of minimal inquiry. The evidence of discrimination at the workplace comes from personal accounts. Surely, the empirical fieldwork conducted here is a contribution; however, it could only provide a relatively small amount of data when the extent of the problem is considered. In other words, despite the fact that the anecdotal evidence provides instances of and response to workplace discrimination against LGBT people, isolated personal accounts fall short of authenticating assertions that such discrimination is widespread. Furthermore, to engage in an analysis which tackles class, ethnicity, gender and sexuality in an intersectional approach it is necessary to reach out to people from different socio-economic positions and ethnic backgrounds. One of the limitations of this study is that it focuses more on the experiences of middle class, university educated LGBT people working mostly in private institutions. What is needed is systematic data collected from a broader population. The problem gets even more complicated since due to lack of existing studies, the researchers are forced to base their findings on combined samples of lesbian woman, gay man, bisexuals and

trans people, which renders it more difficult to determine whether the problems faced in each one of these groups appears differently or not.

The interviews were based on a method of storytelling, therefore, narratives are the major sources in this study to understand the ways in which LGBT people experience discrimination at the workplace, construct their sense of self, relate and negotiate this self to their coworkers. Life stories as narratives are important tools that render it possible to explain the ways individuals construct an understanding of who they are and how they see the world. The questions addressed within the scope of this study were formulated to reveal the forms of discrimination LGBT people face at the workplace as well as to understand the everyday heteronormative practices. Therefore, the research questions are not structured from a perspective which would make it possible to take on a comparative analysis of the experience of heterosexuals. I endeavored to include the experiences of those individuals who openly lived their sexual identity at the workplace as well as the experience of those who decided not to disclose their identities. In most of the cases, the interlocutors related that they negotiate their identities in the workplace in the sense that they chose to disclose or not to disclose their identities each and every time they change jobs.

At the onset, each interlocutor was asked to provide certain demographic information pertaining to gender identity, sexual orientation, age, income, educational background and organizational affiliation. Subsequent questions delved into whether or not they were closeted or out in the family, educational environment, friend circles. Later questions probed into whether they are out at work and if their organization had any policies concerning discrimination against LGBT employees. Throughout the rest of the interview, depending on the fact that whether the interlocutor's sexual identity and gender identity is closeted or disclosed, different sets of questions were addressed. Finally, I raised the issue of heteronormativity at the workplace and asked the participants about the ways in which they

experience, confront and cope with it. The interlocutors were encouraged to tell their stories in their own way. One of the important aspects of such a field research is the role that language plays in constructing one's own gender identity and sexual orientation. Therefore, special attention was paid to the concepts and expressions that were used throughout the interviews. In so doing, the interlocutors were invited if they wish to relate why they chose a specific category with which they identify themselves.

This study is mostly about figuring out how experiences of discrimination are situated within the narratives and are therefore given different meanings. In so doing, it does not take experience as something self-evident, but rather tackles is as something always already structured and therefore looks at the mechanisms through which certain experiences and identities are configured. The narrations about different forms of discriminations experienced by LGBT people occupy the center stage since what is aimed at is to understand how a LGBT person constructs and understands discrimination based on their sexual orientation or gender identity, and develops mechanisms of coping to navigate in heteronormative working environments.

Throughout the interviews, while addressing questions to those LGBT people, who are closeted, it was a challenge to address the silence of those whose sexual orientation and gender identity were disclosed compared to those whose open. First, I tried to be as cautious as I can about maintaining the anonymity of the interlocutors. One of my interlocutors did not even want his voice to be recorded. This is all the more understandable since most of the interlocutors had experienced some form of homophobia in their lives and did not wish to risk their jobs or careers. Secondly, I was worried about how much my own voice would silence those that had been previously silenced. Throughout the interviews and the writing process, I tried to be as conscious as possible of my own voice and perspective. My aim was to analyze the forms of discrimination that they face and reveal the everyday practices that recreate and

sustain heteronormativity at the workplace using a critical perspective. In other words, I endeavored to my best to delineate the unequal relationship between us deriving from my power to order the material according to my own sense of priorities, determining the questions and framing chapters. I tried to shed some light on the ways in which silences are articulated to construct the identity of non-heterosexuals at the workplace and this process required me to take into account the asymmetrical relationship between the interlocutors and me. What made it possible was the willingness and the intent of the interlocutors to bring forward and make known the discriminations and violations.

CHAPTER FOUR-FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

This section will tackle the following questions based on the testimonies provided by the semi-structured in depth interviews conducted with six interlocutors: How is normative heterosexuality constructed and sustained through discursive and practical repetition in the context of the workplace and what are the effects, particularly discriminatory and exclusionary, of such reiteration? Secondly, how do LGBT people construct and display their sexual identities at the workplace? And finally, how do LGBT people challenge heteronormativity at the workplace?

In so doing, three main points will be argued. First, relying on the feminist articulations which have criticized the gendered nature of workplaces, it will be argued that workplaces are environments teemed with forms of gendered and sexualized interactions and processes. Secondly, as a social space that is produced and regulated through embodied social practices, workplaces, in this context is conceptualized as not only structured by the logic of free-market economy, but also by the logic of heteronormativity. Thus, it will be asserted that for non-heterosexuals, workplace constitutes one of the spaces in which they confront heteronormative discourses and practices on a daily basis. Finally, the effects of discursive silence and full disclosure of identity which manifest themselves mostly in interpersonal informal relations in the workplace, and which function both as a mechanism of power and control and as a means of active resistance, will be analyzed.

Scholars working on gender inequality at the work organizations often draw on Acker's analysis which argues that gender is not an external component but rather is built into work organizations and that through organizational logical gender discourses are embedded in work organizations. For instance, logical principles which are used to describe job descriptions are never neutral but rather are marked with gender types associated with

femininity or masculinity. Interlocutor 6, a woman who works as a manager of the IT department in a university, reveals in detail how gender inequality becomes visible in real life interactions in the workplace:

> "A guy who does not know the details as much as I do happens to make a remark in a meeting which is then taken seriously. I end up cleaning up his mess or prove myself to make others take me seriously. People with whom you work for many years know that they have to trust you. However, when you are new it is hard to make your voice heard. And it is not only me, but based on my observations, other women who are experts on the field, also have hard time expressing their ideas whereas men who do not necessarily know much or not experienced enough voice empty thoughts. I have been working there for five years, and after all, everybody knows me there by now. Because I have solved many problems and proved my competency, people do not necessarily see me as a woman or a man but rather like a human being who knows about technical stuff."

This example clearly indicates how gendered division of labor, signification of different types of work as feminine and masculine regulates and guides power relations within the context of the workplace. Despite the fact that the interlocutor is an experienced manager who has been working in the same sector and organization for years now, because of the gender stereotypes that mark the IT sector as the field of "men" and "masculine" qualities, she has the burden of proving her competency constantly. Furthermore, in cases where her male co-workers fail, she has to take on the duty of "cleaning their mess". As it has been indicated in her narrative, whereas her many years of experience, skills and know-how qualifies her as the person who is an expert and competent on the field, on the part of the male employees, just aligning with a specific gender qualifies them to express any idea that they have. What is even more striking I think in her case is that, in the end, even if she identifies as a woman, nonetheless, she is recognized by her co-workers as "a human being who knows about technical stuff". The denial to register her embodied gender expressions and recourse to the notion of a universal worker who is neither a woman nor a man might be speculated as another technique which clearly points to the gendered nature of the workplace.

As stated, workplace is a social space that is produced and regulated through embodied social practices which are structured by the logic heteronormativity. The extent to which gender normativity is bound to heterosexuality and how compulsory heterosexuality and its regulation of gender roles function to regulate the gender expressions in the workplace, dictating a certain form of being a "woman" is articulated in the words of the interlocutor 1. She gives this example to point towards the pervasiveness of sexist and heterosexist discourses and practices of her co-workers in her previous job, which was focusing on market-research and analysis. Furthermore, the specific reference of the manager to "evaluations" sheds light on how gender informs organizational logic which governs the workplace.

> "One day, one of the managers, who identifies as a woman, wore a very nice, low-necked dress, and was looking very sexy. Everybody started talking to her, telling her how beautiful she looks. Then, she replied saying that she was not well-prepared for her presentation which she has to perform to a client, so she decided to dress-up to cover up that lack. She was joking obviously, and people laughed a lot, however, even if this was meant to be a joke, it does not mean that it does not correspond to a certain reality. It was a very sexist, and actually heterosexist environment. Once another manager, who identifies as a woman, again mixing it with a hint of a joke, asked those working in her team to wear high-heals at least once every week. She even stated that the high-heels would look good on performance evaluations. She happens to dress up and wear high-heels every day, and compliment those who wear dresses like she does. Again she joked, but still…"

Surely, this narrative is open to a variety of readings; it is a double edged sword. The women managers, being in a power-position and who have managed to occupy those positions, might be mocking sexism and heterosexism through their jokes, and thus resisting the pervasive sexism and heterosexism of the workplace. However, dress norms are significant in the context of occupational and organizational culture for several reasons and as Kirsten Dellinger asserts, "dress is a well-defined site of gender construction" and "it is about sexuality and sexual expression at work". Thus, these managers, occupying more powerful positions in the organizations, are still the embodiment of a specific form of gender and sexual expression, who suggest others to act like them through mild insinuations or open promotion

promises, thus reiterating the organization's norms regarding the accepted sexual and gender expression. It has been argued that the participation of women in the labor market is "generally contingent on their performance of sexual services, catering to a male definition of attractiveness, which is not required of men." (Skidmore, 2004: 232) This example points at the propostion that women's labour is nevertheless subjected to a (hetero)sexualized discipline and gaze.

The following section tackles the workplace experiences of those whose gender identities and sexual orientation does not square with normative understandings of gender identity and sexual orientation.

4.1 To Come Out or Not to Come Out?

At the beginning of May 2009, Halil İbrahim Dinçdağ, who worked for many years as a soccer referee in Turkey in amateur leagues and who was on his way to the professional league was dismissed by the Central Board of Referees on grounds of a report that exempted Dinçdağ from mandatory military service. In the report, which was issued by the military medical authorities, Dinçdağ was deemed not suitable for military service because of his sexual orientation. The decision to sack Dinçdağ was based on a clause of the Turkish Football Federation Management stipulating that individuals who were exempt from military service by health reasons may not work as a referee. After the event got media attention, LGBT organizations got involved and Dinçdağ decided to pursue his rights. He filed a compensation claim for monetary and non-pecuniary damages against the federation after he had been banned from working as a referee because of his homosexuality. After a while, Turkish Football Federation changed its discourse by arguing that Dinçdağ's job was

terminated not because of his homosexuality but instead because he was only a second-rate referee with no talent.

Dinçdağ filed a compensation claim for monetary and non-pecuniary damages against the federation based on his constitutional right to ask for respect regarding his private and family life and that the secrecy of private life is untouchable. On 29th of December, 2015, the court ruled in favor of Dinçdağ. His struggle which began in 2009 culminated in an exemplary court decision which is significant not only for him but for the LGBT movement pursuing anti-discrimination laws and legislations.

LGBT people in Turkey are constantly under the risk of experiencing discriminatory and derogatory attitudes, remarks and practices in everyday social interactions at the workplace, if not threats against their mere existence. They run the risk of losing their jobs if their sexual identity is disclosed. As a result, any social actualization of one's non-conforming gender identity or sexual orientation almost always becomes an act that needs to be thoroughly considered. Thus, those who gender identities and sexual orientation does not square with heteronormative understandings of gender and sexuality, necessarily consider according to the context and situation when, how, to whom and to what extent they would like to hide or disclose their identities.

The decision to reveal or conceal information about one's sexual identity and sexual orientation is central and significant in interpersonal interactions at work and the strategies that LGBT people develop and employ when they try to navigate in hostile heteronormative organizational structures depend on a range of factors. These factors include the level of discrimination within the organizations in particular and the society in general, including the level of homophobia and transphobia in the workplace; the level of legal protection provided by the organizations and the laws as well as their colleagues' attitudes and treatment of them. (Reingardé, 2010: 91)

Based on the testimonies of the interlocutors, in this study, coming out is regarded as a performative act of agency that is reiterated many times in one's lifetime in different contexts. It is understood as depending on the moment, the person, and the physical and social space in which it takes place. (Gusmano, 2008: 483) The evidence from the interviews reveal that coming out is a process in terms of the different stages that lead up to act of coming out, it is a process in terms of the performative nature of the act itself, and it is a process in terms of the performative nature of living a sexual identity that is deemed as abnormal and deviant by the majority of the population. (Ward and Winstanley, 2005: 472). Coming out was defined by the interlocutors as a never-ending process, since the difference needs to be repeated to each new audience.

Diverse factors play a role in the process of deciding to disclose one's sexual identity or not in the work organizations. Such decisions are complicated by the heteronormative discursive practices within organizations that render non-heterosexual and gender non-conforming employees silent. This section explores the answers to the following questions: What are the motivations, reasons, factors that shape the individuals decision to disclose or not to disclose their sexual identity to their co-workers? How do they evaluate their environment, under what conditions they feel comfortable to disclose their identities and under what conditions they feel discomfort and threatened? LGBT people when interacting with their colleagues as well as their superiors feel the need to negotiate their sexual identities. As indicated, coming out or deciding not to disclose one's sexual orientation constitute individual matters. The evidence gathered from the interviews reveals that the reasons for deciding to come out or not to come out also diverge.

One's safety figures as the most immediate concern. Dinçdağ, the abovementioned referee, in an interview that he gave to a mainstream newspaper in Turkey stated that after his sexual identity was disclosed to public he started to receive death threats. Interlocutor 6, a 31-

years-old teacher who identifies as trans states this concern about the involuntary disclosure of their identity as follows:

> "The world is full of people who are heteronormative and identify as cisgender. When I disclose my identity as trans and try to live that identity openly then it is perceived as if I am a threat to their identity. … I am not very worried when I hang out with my lover. However, things would have been different if I was living in the vicinity of the school that I work, because, yes, things become dangerous for me. I am worried that people might find a video of me online, that they would learn that I am trans and ask questions about my identity. I am afraid that my identity would be disclosed and because of this I will find myself in violent situations. Just because I am worried about these things, currently, I do not want to work in a state or a private school. I do not want to teach."

Number of colleagues, distribution amongst the sexes, and knowledge about the anti-discriminatory policies of the institution plays significant roles in the decision process. Most of the cis-gender non-heterosexual interlocutors stated that personal analysis of the organizational context prior to coming out plays a significant role in shaping the individual's decisions. Interlocutor 1, who identifies as a bisexual woman and who currently works for an NGO underlines the fact that the social values and anti-discriminatory policies of her current workplace had a positive impact upon her decision to come out:

> "I have disclosed my sexual orientation at my current work. How did this happen? Well, I am currently working at a NGO, an institution that embraces six major principles. One of these principles is respect towards ethnic, racial, gender, sexual orientation, and ability differences. The organization includes gender and sexual orientation trainings to those who volunteer and in these trainings homophobia, transphobia and heterosexism are discussed. Therefore, since as an institution this NGO adopted gender equality and anti-discriminatory policies as a value, it wasn't hard for me to disclose my sexual orientation."

The same interlocutor states that she decided to come out when she was sure that she will not be discriminated against. This is a recurrent explanation. Fear of discrimination in the form of termination of contract or mobbing is the central recurrent reason as to why individuals decide not to come-out at the workplace. Even when some institutions embrace certain values and mention sexual orientation and gender identity equality in their mission

statements and adopt anti-discriminatory policies, people might still refrain from disclosing their identities since they are not assured that these policies would be realized. Interlocutor 2, 40-years-old manager, who works at a university, and who identifies as lesbian, and who is open at the workplace, expresses this concern as follows:

> "There is no reason as to why you should not be afraid. At my organization, the mission statement includes words such as discrimination, equality, sexual orientation and gender identity. Those who established the institution drafted that article as such. But these words mean nothing because none of the people who partake in the writing of that article currently work at the university. … I do not know whether or not somebody would stand up for those values if anything happens."

As indicated, anti-discriminatory clauses for some might provide the safety net to express their identities in the workplace, but for others, as long as solid mechanisms that would protect those who are discriminated or harassed are not established and actively put to work disclosure of identity is still a difficult option.

Another factor that shapes people's decision not to come out is relate to avoid any form of confrontation with superiors that might actually lead to the termination of contract or disapproval and silencing of one's sexuality. As one of the interlocutors, a bisexual woman working as a music teacher in a state school clearly stated, the main reason why she was not open to the students or the parents was because she thought they would openly react to her identity. She said:

> "I do not disclose my identity because I think that it is highly likely that they would say things like 'this teacher is influencing our children, this is contagious.' I do not want to get myself into a situation where the principle would come and say to me that I should confine myself to my private life, that I should practice my sexuality secretly."

Concerns and worries due to the anticipation of negative attitudes towards non-heterosexual identities are also recounted as the major reasons behind why individuals chose not to disclose their sexual identity. For instance, one of the interlocutors, a 28-years-old gay

man, explains the reason why he chose not to disclose his sexual orientation in this previous jog, where he worked at a publishing house as follows:

> "They are asking me about my lover. I used to say that I have a lover, but never disclosed his identity. I was acting out a heterosexual role because I knew that if I come out they would talk behind me and I would get into trouble at work."

Language is another factor that potentially influences one's decisions to come out or not to disclose one's identity. As stated by interlocutor 1, the language used not only derides anyone who does not identify as heterosexual, but also in doing so, reestablishes certain gender roles as well.

> "Indeed, you do not have to witness homophobic jokes to hide your orientation since sexism is too prevalent. However, people mostly joke about celebrities. I remember them talking about the son of a famous singer in Turkey. Based on the type of pants he was wearing, people were making jokes about his sexual orientation. My world is different than theirs; it was too obvious from these jokes. So I though, if I disclose my identity, then where would they put me? They would not know how to handle the situation, so they would start making up stories, just like they did about that famous person."

Here especially in the examples the interlocutor provided, the use of language refers to the pervasive derogatory jokes surrounding and about the non-heterosexual identities. From the nature of the jokes it is quite clear that the heterosexual employees do not even consider the remotest possibility of the existence of a LGBT individual in their midst. Another point to note is that for those LGBT people, who outside of work socialize in LGBT subcultures, the workplace is often a "reminder of 'heterosexual space' and of its disciplining pressures." (Skidmore, 2004: 236)

In the story of another interlocutor, even the casual friendship and camaraderie between two same-sex individuals become a joke material with homophobic undertones and insinuations. Homosexuality is not something that is completely ignored but becomes a material for jokes and lewd conversations. The jokes and the humor become another mechanism of silencing the non-heterosexual subjectivities since it promises the

discrimination to come if an individual decides to be out in the workplace. Thus this paralyzes the LGBT person and/or makes her a part of a discriminative and derogatory culture which turns non-heterosexual into a parody. Here, humor doesn't work as an emancipatory force but as a reconstruction of the heteronormative values. These jokes as components of the dominant discourse of heterosexuality puts non-heterosexual forms of sexual orientation under pressure to be silenced, suppressed or eliminated.

Another factor that plays a role in individuals' decisions to come out pertains to the concepts of honesty and personal integrity. Establishing open and trusting relationships with colleagues in the work environment is stated as an important factor given that the knowledge about colleagues' personal lives can be a critical element in establishing trust upon which work relations are built. When asked about the reasons behind why she did not choose to disclose her sexual identity in her previous workplace to the interlocutor 1, who now works at an NGO stated the following:

> "When people asked me if I have a lover, I used to lie. People ask about these things interpersonal relationships, or when we as a group of people go out after work to a dinner, etc. It is really annoying to be asked this question when you are not a heterosexual; and it is even more annoying to say no. So you lie. Indeed, your lover occupies a very important place in your life since you spend a lot of your time with this person, and she has a deep impact in your emotional life. It is really hard to act as if this person does not exist. The people who ask you this question are not necessarily bad people; you establish a certain form of relationship with them. And you lie to them. I was afraid that my relationship will be turned into a gossip subject. People would have talked about it. If you tell them that you want this to be kept as a secret, they probably would do that, but you do not want to do that either. Anyways, I had one close friend to whom I disclosed the identity of my lover, because it had become too difficult at that time to lie to her, to write fictive stories, scenarios. I did not want her to think that I do not have a sexual life, because I do have one. Before I used to lie about the identity of my lover to her too, but at one point it became to annoying, and I wanted to establish a more dignified relationship with her, so I told her the truth."

Coming out in certain cases is regarded as an action that would have positive effects. One of the interlocutors formulates the positive impact that coming out might have on one's live in the following words:

> "It is really difficult to become friends with people if you only relate to them over work. Your relationship becomes cold and distant. You cannot only become friends with your co-workers when you only relate to them over their work related problems; close friendships are not established like that. However, when you start sharing intimate information about your life, when you start seeing them outside of the office, when you start sharing your personal problems you get closer. This affects your existence at the workplace positively. A colleague who becomes your friend can try to protect you when you need it, or try to support you when you are in a difficult situation. For instance, if you are on a tight schedule, they can help you with your work. Someone, with whom you are distant, would do none of these things. Friends at work make your life easier."

As indicated by the above testimony, forming strong relations with co-workers are important, especially in organizations where people do project based team work.

As discussed above, in the context of Turkey, the need to cover and silence the alternative sexual identities generally stem from the fear of one's own safety, possible discrimination in the forms of termination of contract, mobbing, ridicule and outright physical violence. (Öztürk, 2011: 1100) Specifically the interviews I conducted revealed that the LGBT individuals' decisions to remain silent pertaining to their sexual identities were the consequence of their fears of being discriminated at the workplace, exposed to verbal abuse. Furthermore, the interlocutors also stated that in an organizational culture where heterosexuality is regarded as the norm, they feel alienated and marginalized when their sexual identity becomes a subject of hearsay and their sexual identity is treated as an exotic otherness.

4.2 Discrimination at the Workplace

One of the questions that this study tackles concerns the interlocutor's perception and understanding of discrimination. Interlocutors conceptualized and related a variety of practices and attitudes discriminatory. These diverse attitudes and practices were conceptualized differently based on whether one's gender identity and sexual orientation was

hidden or disclosed. Among those who were not open in the workplace the common experiences of discrimination voiced include, the necessity to censor one's use of language and content of informal communication, necessity to hide the identity of one's partner, exclusion from informal dialogues, and fear deriving from the anticipation of discrimination that would follow one's disclosure of sexual identity. As for those who were open or implicitly open in the workplace termination of contracts, unequal access to opportunities, derogatory jokes, pejorative and hostile language used in reference to non-heterosexuals, "othering", "marginalization" and treatment of their sexual identity as "exotic" constitute the instances of discrimination.

If we consider discrimination as an inequality in terms of access to equal opportunities, LGBT people experience discrimination not only in the form of termination of job contracts, but also during the process of searching for a job. As interlocutor 3, a gay man who is now working for an NGO clearly formulates, even if he did not experience discrimination in the form of job termination or mobbing because of his sexual identity, since he could not make public his previous experiences as a LGBT activist, in his resume he had to omit valuable skills.

> "When other people were working as an intern, I was working in LGBT organizations. I had acquired, over the years, organizational skills. However, when applying for any company, I was not able to voice these skills; I was not able to make known my previous experiences. I had given talks, written articles, and organized a lot of meetings. Other people learn about these things and how to work as a team member when they get a job. However, when asked about my capabilities as a team member in a job interview, I cannot relate these experiences. And I think being forced to be silent about these things is a form of discrimination. After I graduated, I looked around for a job but I could not find anything over a year. If these corporations or organizations were places where I can express myself, then my past experiences might have returned as a surplus value, just like it does for those people who identify as heterosexuals. In the end, I prepared two resumes, one with all the activities that I have been part of, the other with nothing. Surely, when one looks at the first one, I look like someone who takes initiatives, who is very active and hardworking. The other represents someone who only studied and did nothing much in his life. I think, not being able to talk about my experiences was a hindrance for my career."

The concern on the part of this interlocutor points at another technique of enforcing heterosexaulity and discriminating againt the non-heteroseuxals: exclusion and alienation of non-heterosexuals from the labor force. (Skidmore, 2004: 234)

Discrimination is also formulated as being in a disadvantaged position when it comes to designing your career or changing jobs. People might have variety of reasons to quit their jobs and look for other opportunities. They might want to earn more income, might think that their current job offers no chance of future promotion, or might want work at more regular hours at jobs that offer more security, or might want choose a job which is closer to their house or simply might want to try different types of work. However, as it stated one of the interlocutors, in her case, the reason for her not change her job was because she felt that she is comfortable in her current job, that she feels safe, while at the same time thinking that for the sake of her professional career she should look for another opportunity. As she has stated "Despite the fact that sexual orientation should have nothing to do with searching for another job, it my case it has, and I define this as a form of discrimination."

The necessity to censor one's use of language and content of information pertains not only to informal dialogues. 31-years-old, trans activist, who works as a music teacher asserts that derogatory jokes, pejorative and hostile language pertaining to non-heterosexual, non-gender conforming people are voiced by the students in the classroom. Any intervention, they, state, is a possible ground for them to witness a discriminatory remark on the part of school administration.

> "Once, in the classroom, the kids were cursing at each other with the words faggot and Kurd. I told them that these words cannot be used as a way of cursing. I asked them if they use Turk as a curse word and a discussion ensued in the classroom. It was great to discuss these things with the children; no one caused a fuss about it. However, when they returned to their houses, they told about this discussion in the classroom. Then, the families came to the school master and complained about me. They told him that I should not be allowed to say that these words cannot be used as a way of cursing. Then the

> administration called for me and the school master told me that I should not talk to these kids in such a way."

The feeling of discomfort among the interlocutors when their sexual relations are treated as something exotic by their colleagues is common. One of the interlocutors, a 35 years old bisexual woman who works as a music teacher at a state high school narrates her discomfort as follows:

> "Sexual and romantic conversations figure often during the breaks in the teacher's lounge. But the way heterosexual relations are talked about differs from my relations with my woman lovers. What is important and attractive about my relations is that they are not normative, but marginal. The parts that people are curious about are different. I don't like talking about these things with my colleagues. Not because I don't like talking about relations, but because I don't like them treating me like an exotic other."

Another interlocutor, a 40 years old bisexual woman in software business puts the ways in which her non-heterosexual relations are rendered exotic in the following words:

> "What you said made me think of something. Once, my girlfriend dropped by the office at a lunch break. We were having tea at the garden with friends. Everybody was so anxious and curious in meeting with my girlfriend. She is a very energetic person who converses with everyone; therefore, it was easy for people to get in touch with her. They have finally satisfied their curiosities. They said 'your relations are like ours'. I replied 'what were you expecting?'"

Marginalization and othering in certain cases of identity disclosure leads to self-distancing on the part of the LGBT people. As indicated by one of the interlocutors, the constant experiencing of othering, and constant struggle to defend one's self, and being forced to embrace a gender identity as a woman or a man, leads to self-alienation on the part of the trans people.

> "I try as much as I can to avoid confrontations, but then comes a point when I can no longer avoid it. Then, I disclose my identity, as a result of which, most of the time, they try to marginalize me more. And sometimes, I disengage myself and take a distance from those people."

4.3 Heteronormativity in the Workplace

Social spaces are created in certain ways, often associated with sexualized and gendered norms and conventions that are historically and geographically specific. Norms pertaining to gender and sexuality are constructed, repeated and maintained in the work organizations. The interviews conducted for this study reveals that, in the context of Turkey, heteronormativity guides and regulates the informal interactions of the people in the workplace. The information offered by the interlocutors clearly demonstrates that far from being asexual places, workplaces are environments where normative heterosexual sexuality is constantly rendered evident and naturalized through discursive and non-discursive means. In this respect, informal conversations play a significant role since they constitute the occasions where employees often share their experiences with heterosexual partners.

There are a number of ways by which heterosexual identity is constantly made manifest. Most of my interlocutors narrated that heterosexual marriage constitutes one of the major topics amongst the employees in informal conversations during lunch or tea breaks. In the accounts, depictions of people who disclose information about husbands and wives, display pictures of children and showing wedding rings figure frequently. The interlocutors suggest that the informal dialogues between employees about marriage assume the heterosexuality of all. Interlocutor 1 who describes her current workplace as a rather progressive environment, outlines this fact as follows:

> "Despite the fact that I am currently working at a place which is relatively alternative in terms of its stance towards discrimination against minorities, a heteronormative value system still guides people's thoughts and everyday practices. For instance, one day during lunch break, a colleague addressed me the following question: 'Do you have a boyfriend?' I replied back saying that I do not have a boyfriend and immediately added that I have a girlfriend. Nothing negative ensued after my reply, however, when the question is formulated it wasn't framed as 'Do you have a lover?' or 'Do you have a partner' but rather as 'Do you have a boyfriend?'"

Presumed heterosexuality of everyone figures in another interlocutor's account, which is particularly significant in terms of revealing how non-heterosexuals experience 'alienation' in the work context. The 28-years-old gay man relates his experience of how alienating heteronormative assumption can become as follows:

> "In my previous work the heteronormativity of the work space troubled me a lot. There was a publisher who was working this job for many years. It was a corporation that published educational books; and publishing books for educational purposes can itself become something which produces heteronormativity over and over again. This person used to make comments like 'there are boys and there are girls, children should acknowledge sexual differences at an early age'. One day after the meeting she started talking about marriage saying that it was time for us to get married, that we were running late. I used to feel like I hate the place I work after such meetings. I used to feel like I do not belong there."

These examples are not isolated. Majority of the interviews when asked about the content of informal dialogues in the workplace mentioned that marriage figures quite common. They further added that unless they indicate the opposite they are assumed to be heterosexuals.

Heteronormativity implicates not only compulsory heterosexuality but also attributes rules and regulations for how to behave as a proper woman or a man. As a result of its normalizing functions, it renders woman and man, categories of normative construction into objective descriptions of reality or facts. The prescriptive norm further orders the relationship between these two categories, meaning that individuals who are named 'woman' should desire a 'man' and individuals who are named 'man' should desire a 'woman'. As indicated by one of the interlocutors:

> "If you are identified as a woman, you are expected to have man as a lover and vice versa. And these roles are also too rigid. For instance, if a woman starts a new job, and her lover does not send her a flower or a chocolate basket, then people start talking and joking about the situation. In such an environment, where gender roles are so blatantly sexist and policed, homophobic jokes are common."

As these accounts exemplify, organizational cultures are sexualized, and their claims of not being sexualized are sustained by erasing the sexualized differences through rendering heterosexual paradigm as the universal norm. In other words, when heterosexuality is normalized and universalized in the workplace, itself becomes a landscape of all-encompassing heterosexuality rendering all non-heterosexual subjectivities invisible and silent. When these marginalized and excluded sexualities desire to be visible, then they are further accused of sexualizing the workplace.

The norms, in this case, the heterosexual norm, seems stable and appears as an expression of something natural and self-evident through constant reiteration and repetition in different contexts. Furthermore it is regulated and policed through variety of practices. Regulation mechanisms take many forms in workplaces. It might be in the form of direct injunctions such as termination of job contracts in the event of a disclosure of non-heterosexual identity or it might take place through indirect means in the form of seemingly benign jokes, mildly disparaging statements about non-heterosexual orientation or absence of interest in one's sexual life. In such a context, where non-heterosexual experience is still considered a deviation from the norm, non-heterosexual individuals when interacting with their colleagues as well their superiors feel the need to negotiate their sexual identities.

Furthermore, as it can be delineated from the story of another interlocutor, jokes or derogatory talk also functions as a mechanism to keep people in line. This interlocutor who is a 26 year old gay man working for a big finance corporation mentions a co-worker who keeps on cracking jokes about homosexuals and homosexuality. He defines these jokes as forms of abuse. He asserts that people try to classify his sexuality but when they fail to fit him under one category or the other, they deploy different strategies to deal with the ambiguity of the situation. They either dismiss him, try to fit him into the stereotype of a 'gayish cute guy' or feel intimated by him. He denotes that it is those who cannot deal with the frustration of not

being able to categorize and therefore feel intimated and threatened by it that mostly have recourse to jokes. He asserts that it is on the one hand their way of channeling all those negative feelings they harbor towards him and on the other a tool that they employ to keep him in line with the heteronormative attitudes, behaviors and values. These instances of joking at work stand as moments of assertion of heteronormative order that is threatened by the fluidity and ambiguity of sexual experience within one's self or as expressed socially. (Öztürk 2011, 1104)

Another interlocutor articulates the function of jokes as a mechanism of gender policing. He defines jokes pertaining to their gender identity as a form of discriminatory abuse. They assert that they were identified as a heterosexual guy on the part of their colleagues and treated accordingly. They stated separation of toilets according to a binary logic of gender was a theme recurrently discussed in the school meeting. One time during such a discussion, the interlocutor, mentioned that they was having menstruation and asked if anyone has a sanitary pad. They were inquiring which toilet they should be using. The interlocutor asserted that particularly the school master, not knowing how to articulate his ideas or feelings, and being prejudiced about the interlocutor's gender identity, started laughing. Laughter, in this example too, is elaborated by the interlocutor a mechanism to align them to the gender roles regulated by heteronormativity.

4.4. Organizational Structures and Challenging Identities

As it has been discussed by Williams, Muller and Kilanski, Acker's theory focuses on the ways in which gender is embedded in traditional organizations that are characterized by job descriptions, career ladders and manager-controlled evaluations. The organizational logic of neoliberal economy it has been argued by these authors have been restructured so that now

work is more precarious, teams instead of managers control the labor process, career maps have replaced career ladders and future opportunities are identified primarily through networking. (Williams, Muller and Kilanski, 2012) In this section, based on the information provided on the previous sections, I will focus on the different structures of organizations to discuss the role of informal conversations pertaining to the subject of sexuality is significant in terms of affecting the work experience of LGBT people. In so doing, I will first discuss how the experiences of LGBT people change in relation to the type of work they are doing. Secondly, I will try to show that in the case of organizations where team work and networking play a significant role both when it comes to the evaluation of one's performance as well as future possibilities based on these evaluations and access to certain networks, the LGBT people in engaging in informal interactions informed by heteronormative practices and discourses deploy different mechanisms to navigate their identities.

The interviews conducted with interlocutors reveal that LGBT people are working in different sectors of the economy. The interlocutors whom I interviewed were working in the following sectors: state high school, private elementary school, private university, NGOS, and a private corporation. The organizational structure became significantly important in terms of one's sexual orientation and gender identity when one is regarded as a representative of certain values of the organization. For instance, in the case of the interlocutors who are working for the education sector – the teachers who are working in a state high school and a private elementary school – they are regarded as people who are responsible for guiding and leading the children, thus, their choice of not disclosing their sexual and gender identity to their students and the parents is directly related to their wish not to get into a direct confrontation with those students and parents, who are very heterosexist. As it has been further elaborated by the interlocutor who works as manager at the IT department for a private university, it is all the more difficult for those who are working in direct relation to the clients

and customers – or in this case students – to disclose their gender identities and sexual orientation. As she relates:

> "This might be the case for those who work directly with clients. I think there is a difference for someone who works behind the scenes and for someone who gets into communication with others on behalf of the institution or you being open about your sexual orientation in an institution working with youth. This might become directly the issue of the institution. Normally, if you are working for the accouning department noone from outside would be aware of your existence, but it is not the same for someone who is working in the marketing department since it is that person who personally engages with the clients in the name of the institution/organization."

However, one of the interlocutors, who is a teacher at a state high school stated "schools are spaces with clear hierarchies amongst teachers and pupils." Thus, despite the fact that she is not open to her students, she uses this power position to intervene in the classroom when students use derogatory jokes pertaining to sexual orientation or gender identity to humiliate their peers. When asked about what sort of methods she uses to fight heterosexism in the classroom, she stated that despite the fact that the first thing that came to her mind was to focus on how to relate to the students, she chose to actively focus on raising consciousness about heterosexism and discrimination against LGBT people amongst the teachers first. She notes:

> "In the interactions amongst the teachers, where there are certain hierarchies, those who cannot express their identities are being effectively excluded. And those who discriminate against these people are the ones who perpetuate this system. So we thought that it makes sense to start with the teachers."

In certain instances, as a result of the organizational logic of the institution, LGBT people may find themselves as occupying the token position. I am using this term here to refer to the efforts of including an employee to a workplace to create the appearance of a social inclusiveness and diversity (racial, religious, sexual, etc.) and so deflect accusations of social discrimination. One of the interlocutors who were working for a private elementary school, which aimed at pursuing alternative pedagogical methods in the classroom, stated how their

resistance to being a token was coded by the principle as a way of manipulation. As stated by the interlocutor, who identifies as trans:

> "He said to me that they had established this school with an alternative agenda and that I was manipulating it with my gender identity. He regarded my insistence of asserting my gender identity as a form of manipulation. I thought that one of the foundational principles of this school was to fight against the binary logic. So I was fighting against this logic. However, after some time, it started to look as if I was trying to create a sterile environment. From my point of view, they were the ones who were so hygienic that they refused to see anything else then their realities, they refused to see that I was struggling to exist with my identity in that institution."

Token employees, by definition, constitute a small percentage in the work organizations. Since they are more visible, they are expected to perform better and fullfil the stereotypical expectations of the employers and co-workers. As it is stated by the abomentioned interlocutor, their refusal to give up his identity as a trans who fights against a binary system of identification and to adopt the identity of a trans-man, was seen as a way of manipulation by their superior.

> "He used to think about me as a heteroseuxal man and treated me as such. I used to tell him that he cannot act this way….However, I was accused of constantly stating this fact. He was trying to enforce something on me, and I was trying to move out of both of those boxes. I was telling him that I do not want to ascribe to the identity he assigns me."

As it has been stated by almost all of the interlocutors discussions pertaining to marriage, lovers and sexual life figure commonly in informal interactions. Furthermore, these conversations constitute the medium through which bonding amongst co-workers is established. As it has been stated by one interlocutor, in organizations where team evaluations and networking are the essential components that play a significant role in one's career, keeping good relations with co-workers becomes all the more important. However, in a heteronormative work culture where LGBT people are not comfortable about engaging in such conversations, they run the risk of missing the opportunities to constitute these bonds.

Suppression and silencing of the discourse of LGBT people renders them invisible and makes it more difficult for them to develop confidence and power through shared identity. In some cases though, for the LGBT person working in a corporate environment, suppression of one's identity and silence not becomes a navigational tool to avoid elimination and extermination (from the labor force), but also a means of resisting the established practices which are entrenched with assumptions of heterosexuality of all. For instance, one interlocutor, who identifies as a gay man working in the finance sector, a very career-centered and male-dominated sector, and who chose not to disclose his sexual orientation has a tendency to conceptualize sexuality as a rather private matter, which does not necessarily tell much about himself as a person. He asserts that he does not find conversations pertaining to sexuality as appropriate for the work environment.

> "I do not feel discomfort because of my sexuality cannot be talked about in the workplace. The fact that people do not ask about it is not a problem. What matters to me is how I am perceived. What matters to me is who I am, not whom I interact with. I am not interested in what they do, I am interested in what sort of a person they are."

His discomfort lies in the fact that he doesn't want to be reduced to his sexual identity, but rather taken into consideration as a whole person. In order to resist being treated as a minority who is reduced to his sexuality, he recourses to the prevailing distinction that regards the workplace as a public space. The fact that work organizations are teemed with informal conversations pertaining to one's sexual life, he refuses to partake in such practices by drawing on the claim that sexuality is a private matter, and thus uses the initial logic which claims that workplaces are asexual spaces to resist the constant pressure on the part of his coworkers to disclose his sexual orientation. Nonetheless, as he has further stated, one cannot succeed in a job without proper relations established with co-workers and superiors, and in cases heteronormative values and practices pervade the organizational culture, then one is

perpetually forced to police one's behaviors and discourse pertaining to one's non-normative sexual orientation.

CHAPTER FIVE-CONCLUSION

For LGBT people, workplace constitutes one of the spaces in which they confront heteronormative discourses and practices on a daily basis. These practices and discourses function to maintain the heteronormative order in place and act as mechanisms of regulation and control. Heteronormativity of the workplace varied among individuals at any one time and in different situations. In this paper, I particularly focused on indirect means of regulation and control such as assumptions about 'normal' sexuality that structure conversations, dialogues pertaining to life-plans that presume heterosexual relationships, derogatory comments and jokes about homosexuality. LGBT individuals who are not out in the workplace in order to cope with and survive in such environments develop and employ a number of strategies.

The decision to reveal or conceal information about one's sexual identity and sexual orientation is central and significant in interpersonal interactions at work and the strategies that LGBT people develop and employ when they try to navigate in hostile heteronormative organizational structures depend on a range of factors. These factors are both situational and contextual which include the level of discrimination within the organizations in particular and the society in general, including the level of homophobia and transphobia in the workplace; the level of legal protection provided by the organizations and the laws as well as their colleagues' attitudes and treatment of them.

This study aimed to show that the occupational logic as well as organizational culture plays a significant role in sustaining or eroding gender and sexual discrimination and shaping the experiences of LGBT people in the workplace. As it is seen in the case of the teachers, who are regarded and seen as the representatives of discourses of state or private institutions, one's gender identity or sexual orientation is treated differently according to the values and

practices that the organization endorses and tries to implement. Surely, as the examples provided in this study reveals, LGBT people run the risk of being treated as tokens. Restructuring wok around team work and weaker job boundaries, in cases where the organization itself ascribes to certain values pertaining to equality based on one's gender identity or sexual orientation might result in the reduction of stereotyping, since people would have the chance to interact and forms bonds with their co-workers, which would render it possible for LGBT people to have equal opportunities for career development. However, such relaxation of formal job definitions runs the risk of emphasizing social relations at work, which considering the pervasive regulative power of heteronormative discourses and practices, in the absence of any other regulatory rules or bodies of supervision, either in the form of unions or other organizational structures, might deepen disadvantages.

The interviewees asserted that whereas the implementation of anti-discrimination laws would to a certain extent curtail workplace homophobia and address inequalities, it would take a radical transformation of the heteronormative order for LGBT individuals to be able to realize themselves in the workplace. In so doing, they claimed that the discriminatory and abusive interactions in the workplace are just one manifestation of the pervasive structural homophobia that in entrenched in the society.

Research and published work pertaining to minority sexualities in workplace in Turkish context in limited. This research contributes to the existing literature in two ways. First, it opens up discursive space in which hitherto invisible alternative sexualities are rendered visible. Secondly, by surfacing and delineating the homophobia which structures the micro level interactions in the workplace, it provides insightful information for the political struggle in Turkey for implementation of anti-discrimination laws. Further research conducted with more interviewees might provide more insight into how organizational logic of neo-liberal economies affect LGBT people's work experience, the role played by organizational

discourses in constructing minority sexual identities and the ways in which LGBT individuals negotiate their own identities in the workplace.

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APPENDIX: LIST OF INTERLOCUTORS

Assigned Name	Age	Gender	Sexual Orientation	Occupation/ Work Sector	Education
Interlocutor 1	27	Female	Bisexual	NGO worker/ Civil Society	MA
Interlocutor 2	40	Female	Lesbian	Manager/ IT sector	BA
Interlocutor 3	28	Male	Gay	NGO worker/ Civil Society	MA
Interlocutor 4	26	Male	Gay	Finance/ Banking	MA
Interlocutor 5	31	Trans	Not Identified	Teacher/ Private Elementary School	MA
Interlocutor 6	35	Female	Bisexual	Teacher/ State High School	BA