

Encounter between same sex minorities sub culture and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Finland

Auli Vähäkangas, University of Helsinki, Finland (IAMS member)

Group: other

This study analyses the experiences of same sex couples of a religious rituals related to establishment or consolidation of their relationships. The data consists of 7 in-depth interviews conducted in 2015. The results indicate that there exists a clear sexual minorities' subculture relating to religion and the encounter between the sexual minorities and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Finland is not always very smooth. The interviewees told stories of denial of the usage of church buildings for the ritual and difficulties in finding pastors to conduct the services. However, many of them also had stories of joy how they felt acceptance and love of God through the conducted ritual and feelings of care from the religious community present during the service. Some found recognition through the ritual but others felt that the Evangelical Lutheran Church did not recognize them as full members through the way how the preparations or the actual ritual was conducted.