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**Challenging Heteronormativity: Moving forward on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion?**

Title of the Abstract: Shared Spaces and No-Go-Areas

– Boundary Drawing by Lesbian and Gay Entrepreneurs

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While there is extant literature on gay and lesbian issues in organizations in general (e.g. Driscoll et al. 1996, DeJordy 2008, Frohn 2007, Brenner et al. 2010, Cserer/Hofmann 2010, Köllen 2010, Spychalski 2011), attempts to understand practices of homosexual entrepreneurs are relatively small in number. Journal articles published on the topic focus mainly on demography, motives, attitudes, perceptions and management practices of GLBT entrepreneurs (Schindehutte/Morris/Allen 2005) and why they are absent in research (Galloway 2007). These texts show clearly that

* there is a rationale for GLBT entrepreneurship in theory and practice,
* GLBT entrepreneurs are distinct from mainstream (heterosexual) entrepreneurs,
* there is no homogenous GLBT entrepreneur community and that this group is very distinctive.

These texts focus on the GLBT entrepreneur per se: why did he/she choose to become an entrepreneur? How does he/she act? What are the demographics of his/her firm? How successful are they? All these questions are asked without questioning the ‘construct of the entrepreneur’ itself but by comparing it with the ‘heteronormative entrepreneur’. In other words, a GLBT entrepreneur seems to be successful, if he/she does not deviate from the heternormative picture of the mainstream entrepreneur. Apart from such a perspective, the subject of how the living environments (Lebenswelten) and identity constructions of GLBT entrepreneurs intersect, has been neglected, as has how this intersection influences a GLBT entrepreneur in choosing to be publicly open about his/her sexuality, or to remain in the closet. What influences their choices? Where and what are the given boundaries of the different social spaces and how can these be transferred/blurred? For example, what influences a gay/lesbian entrepreneur in different social spaces (e.g. Rainbow Parade, formal meetings of special interest groups, vocational meetings, everyday customer contact) in demonstrating his/her sexual identity or keeping it veiled? How does he/she distinguish the different publics and spaces? How does he/she legitimize his/her behavior for him/herself in what context? How stable or porous are the boundaries that define and border the different environments? The aim of this paper is to uncover the different coping strategies of GLBT entrepreneurs, and to relate and contextualize them with the constitutive pillars of distinctive environments. We will present qualitative data from an explorative study on GLBT entrepreneurs in Austria and embed our data in a proposed theoretical framework that refers to different theories surrounding the concept of “Lebenswelten”.

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