

## Questions of discrimination and the Finnish results

Hanna Sutela & Marjut Pietiläinen

Expert Group meeting on MQE, 4-6 October 2017, Geneva



# Discrimination at work

- Unequal treatment or being placed in an unequal position without acceptable grounds.
  - Finnish legislation decrees on the prohibited grounds of discrimination in several Acts.
- Consequences of discrimination may be significant
  - employee, employer, work community, employee's family and whole society
  - working careers, sickness (mental and physical) and sickness absences, weakened motivation and job satisfaction, costs for the employer and society: shorter working careers, early exit from the labour market ...
- More information about discrimination experiences and consequences needed in order to find out ways to reduce discrimination at work and its consequences
- Framework on Monitoring Discrimination in the Labour Market in Finland (Ministry of Employment and Economy)

# Grounds of discrimination prohibited by Finnish legislation

- Gender
- Age
- Ethnic or national origin
- Nationality
- Language
- Religion
- Conviction
- Opinion
- Political activity
- Trade union activity
- Family relations
- Health
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Other personal characteristics

# Challenges in measuring discrimination at work in surveys

- Subjectivity => different interpretations, cultural norms, sensitivity
- May be vague, hard to catch - the respondent not always able to specify the reason for the discrimination experienced
- Cross-sectionality => Fails to see the processive nature of the phenomenon
- How to catch continuity, consequences?
- Working condition surveys cover only those in employment => what about discrimination in recruitment or in terminating a work contract?
- Discrimination based on a particular reason can be experienced only if one belongs to the group that could potentially be discriminated against based on the reason in question (eg. only disabled persons can potentially experience discrimination based on a disability)  
=>
- The prevalence of personal experiences of discrimination among employees in the data partially reflects the proportional share of the different target groups among employees and how well the sample survey manages to reach the various target groups

# Finnish Quality of Work Life Surveys

- 1977, 1984, 1990, 1997, 2003, 2008, 2013, 2018
- 3 000 – 5 800 respondents in each data  
Employees aged 15 to 64 years, regular working hours at least 10 h
- Response rate 68-91 %
- Face-to-face (appr. 60 min)
- Provides information on the state of work life for policymaking
- Provides data and analysis for research, possibility to link survey data to register data
- Provides reliable information on working conditions for public debate
- Funding of the fieldwork in co-operation with different stakeholders

# Questions on discrimination in FQWLS 1/3

C20. In working life, unequal treatment and discrimination can occur in pay, hiring, opportunities for career advancement or access to further training.

Do you reckon that unequal treatment or discrimination occurs at your own workplace on the basis of:

	A. Observed at workplace			B. Experienced by oneself	
	Yes	No	Not appl.	Yes	No
1. Age, especially the young?	1	2	3	1	2
2. Age, especially the old?	1	2	3	1	2
3. Sex, especially women?	1	2	3	1	2
4. Sex, especially men?	1	2	3	1	2
5. Political views or activity in the trade union movement?	1	2	3	1	2
6. Having a family or being pregnant?	1	2	3	1	2
7. Favouritism?	1	2	3	1	2
8. Temporary or part-time employment relationship?	1	2	3	1	2
9. Nationality or colour?	1	2	3	1	2
10. Knowledge of Finnish (Swedish)	1	2	3	1	2
11. Disability or invalidity?	1	2	3	1	2
12. Sexual orientation, such as lesbianism or gayness?	1	2	3		

AT THE END, ASK THIS SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION IN RESPECT OF ALL POSITIVE REPLIES FOR 1-8(11):

Have you personally been discriminated against at your current workplace on the basis of (REASON)?

# Questions on discrimination in FQWLS 2/3

C21. Have you fallen subject to unequal treatment or discrimination at your workplace in the last five years in the following situations:

	Yes	No
A. At the time of hiring or appointment?	1	2
B. In remuneration?	1	2
C. In gaining appreciation?	1	2
D. In career advancement opportunities?	1	2
E. In distribution of work or shifts?..	1	2
F. In access to training arranged by the employer?	1	2
G. In receiving information?	1	2
H. In gaining employment fringe benefits?	1	2
I. In the attitudes of co-workers or superiors?	1	2

# Questions on discrimination in FQWLS 3/3

ASK THIS SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION IN RESPECT OF ALL POSITIVE REPLIES FOR C21A – C21I:

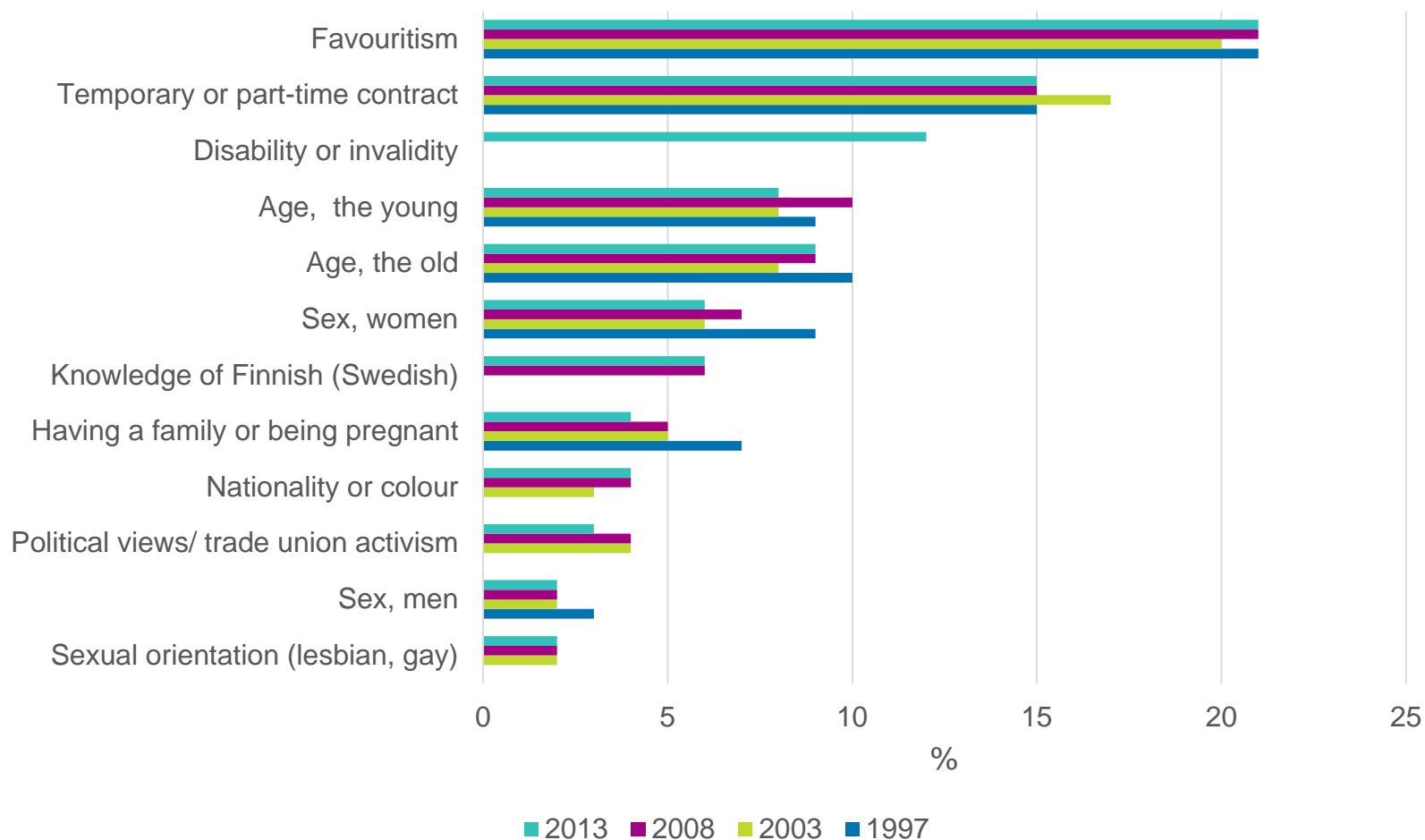
You said you have fallen subject of discrimination in (SITUATION). In your opinion, what was this discrimination based on? Choose among the alternatives of the card:

SEVERAL ALTERNATIVES ALLOWED

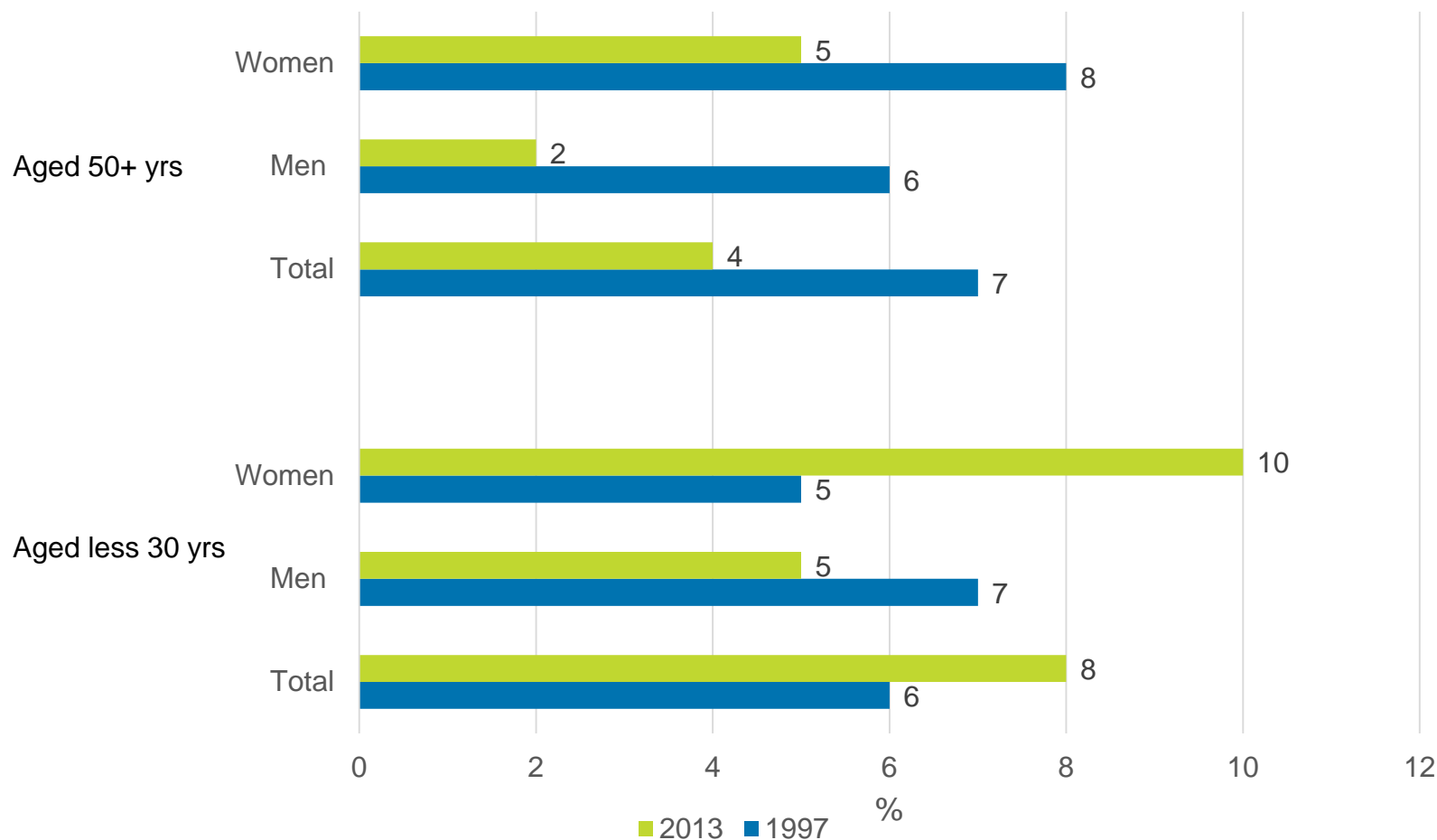
1. Age, especially the young?
2. Age, especially the old?
3. Sex, especially women?
4. Sex, especially men?
5. Political views or activity in the trade union movement?
6. Having a family or being pregnant?
7. Favouritism?
8. Temporary or part-time employment relationship?
9. Nationality or colour?
10. Knowledge of Finnish (Swedish)
11. Disability or invalidity?
12. Sexual orientation, such as lesbianism or gayness?
13. Other reason, which?



# Has observed discrimination at the workplace by grounds of discrimination, employees aged 15 to 64 yrs, FQWLS 1997-2003

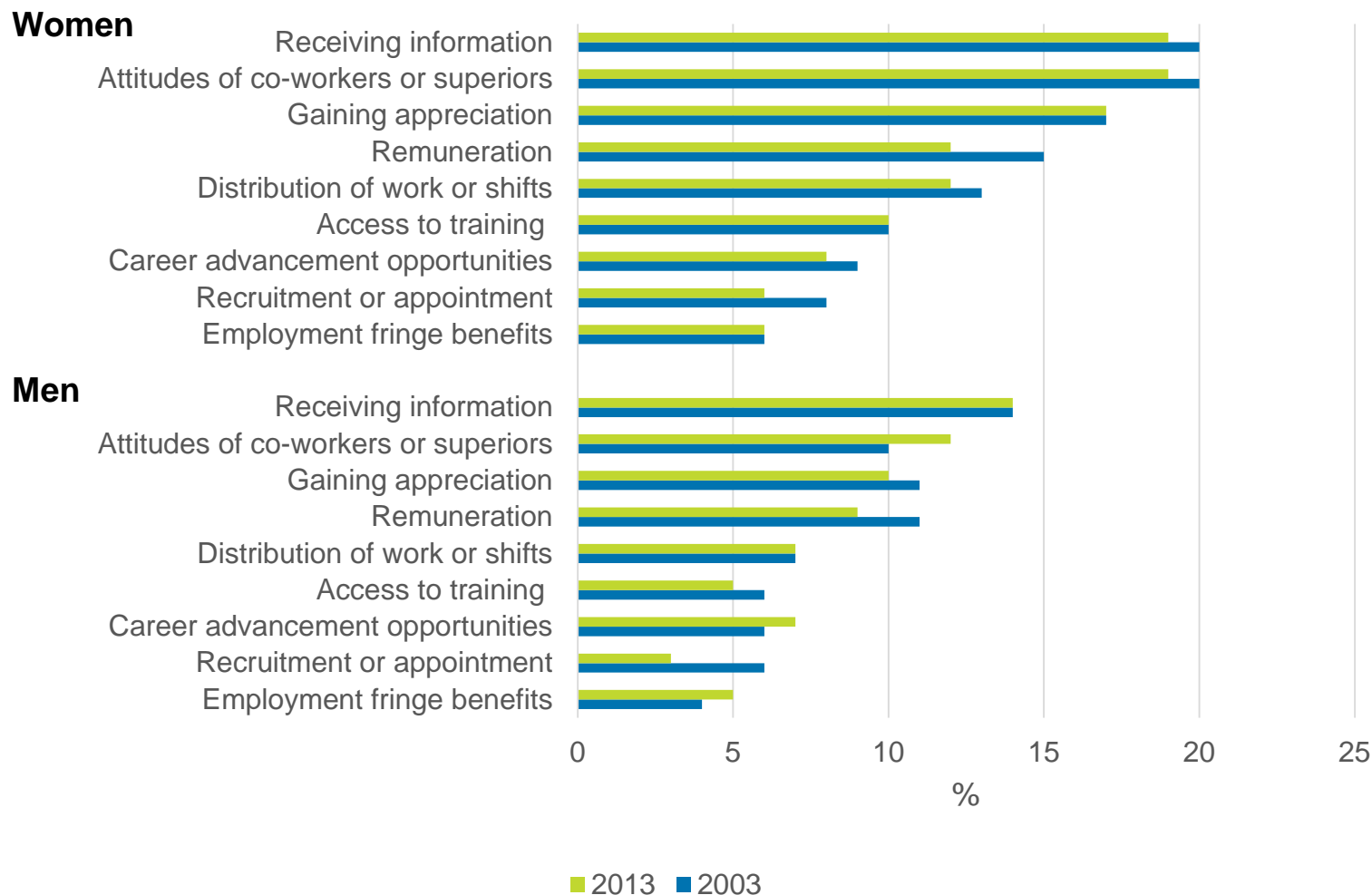


# Discrimination on grounds of age experienced by oneself, Employees by sex and age group, FQWLS 1997 and 2013



# Situations of discrimination experienced by oneself

## employees by sex, FQWLS 2003 and 2013



# Most common combinations of grounds and situations of discrimination, FQWLS 2013

- 5 % of employees experienced discrimination on grounds of favouritism in receiving information, 5 % on grounds of favouritism in attitudes and 5 % on grounds of favouritism in getting appreciation
- 5 % of women have experienced unequal treatment based on grounds of gender in receiving appreciation; 4 % on grounds of gender in remuneration and 4 % on grounds of gender in attitudes of co-workers and superiors
- Among all those aged under 30, the share of those having experienced unequal treatment based on the young age
  - in receiving appreciation (8%)
  - in attitudes (8%)
  - in possibilities of advancement (3 %)
  - in distribution of work or shifts (4 %)
- Among all those aged over 50, the share of those having experienced unequal treatment on grounds of their age
  - in receiving appreciation (3%)
  - in attitudes (2%)
  - in possibilities of advancement (2 %)
  - in distribution of work or shifts (1 %)

# Web-survey as a post-test to FQWLS 2013

- Target group
  - those FQWLS 2013 -respondents who had observed or experienced discrimination or unfair treatment at their workplace + a smaller reference group (n=915).
  - 187 respondents in the data (response rate 20 %)
    - 57% having own experiences, 9% only observations, 24% having neither observations nor experiences
- Survey conducted in the Autumn 2016
- Content analysis, descriptive methods, classification
- The targets of the survey
  - To find out the suitability of the internet questioning to questionnaire testing instead of cognitive interviews.
  - To investigate the questions and answering process, continuity and consequences and the seriousness of the discrimination.

# Qualitative interviews as a post-test to FQWLS 2013

- Targeted to the respondents of the web-survey who had experienced discrimination and were willing to participate in interviews.
  - 23 interviews conducted in the Spring 2017
    - (10 f2f , 10 phone, 3 Skype interviews)
  - Content analysis, classification
- To investigate deeper the answering process and the discrimination experiences of respondents
- To test the functioning of FQWLS questions
- Respondents were asked to describe their experiences
  - Discrimination grounds, situations, answering to these questions, consequences of discrimination, ways to cope
- Follow-up: how the situation has changed from 2013 to 2017

# Results of the post-test 1/5

- Discrimination questions
  - Results of the discrimination grounds in the web-survey are in line with FQWLS 2013 results
  - Respondents of the web-survey and focused interviews found the discrimination questions clear and mostly interpreted those similarly, in some cases situations and grounds were mixed
  - In some cases respondents may find it difficult to choose the discrimination ground which can be seen in choosing "other reason" (personal characteristics, bad management, family background, education, jealousy)
  - According to the open-ended answers of the web-survey discrimination experiences are often connected to the management

## Results from the post-test 2/5: Web-survey as a method

- Some respondents found the web-survey very suitable for them, the others preferred traditional f2f survey
  - Some liked the privacy of the web-survey, some found it difficult to put their experiences in to a limited written format
  - Traditional interview seems to be also a way in coping
- More detailed instructions may be needed (definitions)
- Problems: low response rate, the limited space in open-ended questions, might weaken the quality of the answers (too fast answering, no personal interaction)
- Advantages: privacy in answering (sensitive issue), answering at own pace, fast, lower costs
- People with bad experiences and serious consequences may be more willing to answer to the survey



## Results 3/5: Examples on gender-based discrimination

- Women are supposed to make coffee and arrange things
- Disrespectful speech
- Superior (male) discusses only with men
- Women are ignored (no good morning wishes etc)
- Women need to talk on the men's style and be angry in order to be heard
- A female mechanic was not allowed to work as the mechanic but she had to work in the office
  - Men clients asked for a male mechanic
  - Sexual harassment by a client
  - Male colleagues supposed that she was lesbian because she has chosen an occupation which is typical for men
- Over 45-year-old woman will not even achieve a work interview
- Men get important roles even at old age, women get hardly a role (actors)

# Results 4/5: Examples of consequences of gender-based discrimination

- In the workplace:
  - Weakening work climate
  - Problems in co-operation
  - Weakening motivation
  - Losing the job
  - Changes in tasks
- Personal and social life
  - Weakening self-confidence
  - Doubt own professional skills
- Losing hobbies
- Losing friends
- Relationship problems
- Economical problems
- Physical and mental consequences
- Continuously sick
- Not able to take care of family
- Troubles in taking care of normal things
- Feeling that one is worth of nothing
-

# Proposals for the FQWLS 2018

- Current questions seem to function well (based on the web-survey and the focused interviews)
  - respondents seem to interpret the current discrimination questions similarly
  - Respondents find questions clear in general
  - Continuity missing
  - Consequences missing
- To add:
  - Ask the perpetrator?
  - Ask about whether one time / continuous behaviour?

The background of the slide features a complex, abstract geometric pattern. It consists of various overlapping shapes, including circles, triangles, and polygons, in different shades of blue (from light sky blue to deep navy) and white. The pattern is dense and layered, creating a sense of depth and movement.

**Thank you**

Statistics Finland 