Journalism is about making choices, often under tight schedules and little time to think about different options. Therefore journalistic practices are easily a breeding ground for unquestioned routines supported by unspoken house rules. In order to avoid some of the most blatant problems this gave rise in the 1990s to a European wide discussion about racism and promoting of ethnic diversity in journalistic practices (cf. ter Wal (ed.) 2002).

This discussion, however, has so far not opened up the issues of sexual diversity and heterosexism in journalism. I intend to extend the scope of problematic practices by taking a close look at Helsingin Sanomat, the leading national daily newspaper in Finland, and at the ways it deals with homosexuality.

When “The Reader” is defined in the newspaper only as a heterosexual one, one whose uncertain heterosexual orientation must constantly be affirmed by the daily news flow, it has formative effects on the journalistic practices. I discuss in my paper the strategies of sexual marginalisation and inclusion/exclusion, as well as the concepts of in/visibility in relation to outing or, here more importantly, to closeting.

The results challenge naive assumptions about the possibilities of promoting multicultural journalism simply by increasing either the number of “different” topics or the actual presence of “more colourful” staff in the paper.