Bergholm, Tapio SAK, University of Helsinki and University of Eastern Finland), *After Harmaja We are All Bachelors - Bachelor culture reconsidered.*

This paper is a critical evaluation of my earlier hypothesis, which was first vague but then developed to become a more precise, detailed and general theory about the bachelor culture of dock workers. There was tension and even contradiction between a theory that tried to be at the same time precise and general.

I developed it as a criticism of earlier theories posited as interpretations of the general short-sightedness of port workers and – at the other extreme – theories about the unity, solidarity, radicalism and therefore strong and effective strikes of dock workers all around the world in nearly all periods of history. I found both these cross-cultural and diachronic generalizations about dock workers’ subculture and strike behaviour very problematic and highly unlikely.

I based my criticism on my own empirical research about Finnish dockers during casual period of harbour employment. Sociological, ethnological and anthropological studies gave new insights into dockers’ behaviour and culture in different ports. These impulses were then connected to what at that time was a new interest in the gendered structures of working life and sexuality at work. From these discussions, theories and research I made my own hypothesis or theory about masculine individualism of dock workers, which was based in my view on bachelor culture.

The international applicability of bachelor culture theory got several blows when ethnological and historical research from other countries became more familiar to me. In Finland and northern Sweden ports were not exclusively male environments. The majority of dock workers were probably not such loose drifters as described in the Finnish literature and in my articles. In this paper I try to develop more flexible theory – inspired also by Judith Butler – about transport workers bachelor culture.