24. Genders and Working Life at Different Phases of Life

Parental-leave policy for male lawyers in Helsinki and Montreal: Cultural and professional barriers to male lawyers’ use of paternity and parental leaves
Marta Choroszewicz and Diane-Gabrielle Tremblay

Family policies in Finland and French Canada (Quebec) include fathers’ rights to paternity and parental leaves, which have resulted in more fathers using parental leave. And yet, this policy has a limited outreach to male-dominated professions, including the legal profession. With our focus on male lawyers’ use of parental-leave policies in Helsinki and Montreal, we seek to expand the debate on work-life balance for men in male-dominated professions. In this article, we examine attitudes on paternity and parental leaves among male lawyers and the motives behind their decisions to use or not use them. We approach the issue from the perspective of the legal profession’s professional ethos, which impacts lawyers’ attitudes and practices regarding work-life balance. In our analysis, we draw on 20 Finnish and 18 Quebecois interviews with current and former male lawyers from private law practices in two urban civil-law contexts: Helsinki, Finland, and Montreal, Canada. The comparison between male lawyers in these two cities will help us understand how similarities and differences between Finland and Quebec in family policies, professional ethos and work organization influence men’s decisions and ideas about work-life balance. The findings indicate that in traditionally male-dominated professions, it is not enough to provide men with a statutory right to paternity and parental leave. There is also a need for organisational solutions and peer encouragement in the work environment so that men feel comfortable taking leave.

Family talk among female high performing expert professionals
Charlotta Niemistö, Annamari Tuori and Jeff Hearn, Hanken School of Economics

In the neo-liberal postindustrial service economy, the ‘long hours’ working culture remains strong and unchallenged, reproducing the images of the ‘ideal worker’ and masculinist career models (Acker 1990). The expectations of the ‘ideal worker’ today increasingly include both men and women. At the same time, we can see prevailing gendered organizational and societal hierarchies (Hearn et al. 2008; Hearn and Niemistö, 2012; Hearn and Louvrier, 2014).
In this neo-individualist era (Elliott and Lemert, 2006), it is not unusual that highly educated expert professionals with demanding jobs simultaneously expect high demands for involved parenthood in their home sphere (Lareau, 2003; Sayer, Gauthier and Furstenberg, 2004; Bianchi and Milkie 2010). This is even more visible for women, as care and caring is often still primarily seen as the mothers’ task (Kark and Weismel-Manor, 2005; Bowlby et al. 2010). In line with this, the dominant, neo-liberal work-life balance discourses ignore structural and gendered constraints in work organizations and in societies more generally (Lewis et al. 2007). These create multiple pressures, especially for female expert professionals.

In this paper, we study how female expert professionals talk about children. We are interested in the juxtaposition of children and motherhood being valued by the women themselves, and, on the
other hand, children and motherhood being combined with demanding careers in these demanding organizational settings.

Our data consists of interviews with 32 female knowledge professionals in different career stages in three organizations in four countries; 23 of the women were interviewed twice. In general, children were invisible in the organizational settings. Combining children and career was kept a private matter. Anxiety about having children was present among younger female knowledge professionals. In line with, for example, Smithson and Stokoe (2005), our study shows gendered explanations and assumptions in combining children and career, even if a gender-neutral discourse is simultaneously present in the organizations. Further, a strong notion of ‘choice’ is present in the individual interviews, fading out the gendered structures in the studied organizations (Lewis and Simpson, 2017).

**Female Executive Self-reported Perception and Experiences of Sexual Harassment from Male Subordinates in the Workplace**
Emmanuel Abiodun Fayankinnu, Adekunle Ajiasin University, Nigeria

This paper explored female executive self-reported perceptions and experiences of sexual harassment from male subordinates with emphasis on culture as determinant in defining gender and sexual harassment in Akure, South-west Nigeria. The paper relied on qualitative data collected from focus group discussions (FGDs) and In-depth Interviews (IDIs), conducted with female executives and male subordinates, respectively. Data collected were sorted, transcribed, and reported thematically. Findings showed that female executives perceived and experienced three acts/behaviours among others – male subordinates grabbed their groin before them, bragged about their sexual organs as hefty, and bragged about their prowess in bed – as most sexually harassing. In contrast, male subordinates perceived the perpetration of these acts against female executives as not sexually harassing, rather, exhibition of manhood as propagated by cultural norms in the society. The study revealed that the acts/behaviours perceived and experienced by female executives are engendered by culture, which reinforces male hegemony in the workplace such that male subordinates sexually harass female executives subtly and go unpunished. Female executives reported increased feelings of loss of control over the body and loss of gender identity resulting from harassment from male subordinates. The paper concluded that as powerful as female executives are in position of authority, they are still powerless in as regards culture.

Keywords: Culture, sexual harassment, gender, identity.

**“Machine Milking is More Manly than Hand Milking”**
Transitions in the Gendered Practices of Finnish Cattle Tending from the 1950s to 1970s
Taija Kaarlenkaski, University of Eastern Finland

During the last 70 years, mechanization has significantly changed the working circumstances of both humans and animals in cattle husbandry. In Finland cattle tending was regarded as women’s work up until the mid-20th century. According to a common view, the proliferation of milking machines, starting from the 1950s, caused men to start working in the cowsheds. In this paper, I
will examine how the conceptions of the genderization of cattle tending and especially milking were formed during the technologization process from the 1950s to the 1970s. What were the reasons for acquiring a milking machine and how did the machines affect the gendered human-cow relationships? The materials used in the study consist of answers sent to two ethnographic questionnaires, organised in 1969 and 1992, that deal with the mechanizing and changing agriculture. The focus is on the questions concerning the introduction of the milking machine, which were included in both questionnaires. In accordance with new materialist theories and cultural studies of technology, meanings attached to gender, technology and animals are seen as intertwined and intra-active. Special attention is paid to the agency of cows in the implementation of milking machines.

**Unemployment, age and everyday life: renegotiating the relation to oneself and work**

Tytti Steel, University of Helsinki  
Annamari Tuori, Hanken School of Economics

Being unemployed has often immense consequences for people’s everyday lives, for example, in terms of their economic situation, their social relationships, and their everyday life practices. In fact, experiencing unemployment can compare to losing an intimate relative or a friend. (Boyce & Wood 2015.) In this article, we examine what happens to people’s identities when they are faced with unemployment, how they renegotiate their relationship to work and themselves. We outgo from the concept of identity work meaning different types of activities individuals engage in to create, present, and sustain a relatively coherent sense of self at the interface between personal and social identities (Snow & Anderson 1987, Sveningsson & Alvesson 2003). While identity work can be seen as an ongoing activity, it tends to be intensified, for example, in challenging situations and those of change.

The article focuses on identity work of 50+ jobseekers as a specific group. As previous research shows, 50+ jobseekers meet a great deal of ageism that can be argued to render the situation even more challenging. The sources consist of 30 in-depth interviews with participants of a project aimed at improving the equality of working life for 50+ jobseekers. The interviewees live in a region that is characterized by high unemployment rates caused by structural changes in the industry. In the recent years substantial amount of jobs, for example, in the forest industry have been lost and new jobs have not sprung up.

Unemployment had consequences on people’s identity work in various ways. According to our findings, work does not lose its importance, rather the contrary; its meaning can be intensified. In a situation of unemployment, work still remains a central part of one’s personal identity. Moreover, the impact of unemployment on one’s personal identity is multifaceted, touching upon one’s conception of oneself in various spheres of life. Our findings show how unemployment meant renegotiating one’s relation not only to work or working life but also to oneself and others outside work. Age configured as an overarching theme in the identity work of the research participants.

The study contributes to the understanding of the multifaceted impact of unemployment on people’s identities and identity work going far beyond the sphere of work and configuring
differently depending on other social identities such as age. Yet, at the same time, the study also contributes to the discussion of people’s work-related identities, emphasizing the importance of studying people’s relation to work even when they are outside workforce. In ethnology, work has been researched, for example, in terms of the material aspects and social networks as well as in terms of work-related identities and organizational cultures. Research on unemployed people’s experiences and identities can be argued to become increasingly important since digitalization, robotization and new business models might lead to increased unemployment in the future.