



Gendered Rural Spaces

Edited by
Pia Olsson & Helena Ruotsala

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Introduction

Georges Perec has argued that he cannot say much about the countryside: 'Countryside does not exist, it is an illusion.'¹ The people living and working in the countryside, on the other hand, have a lot to say. For us, the authors of this publication, the countryside is not an illusion: it is the focus of our interest. It is not a neutral space, but is rather loaded with different cultural, economic, social and political codes and meanings. The emphasis here, however, is on rural spaces as gendered spaces. Space and place, together with time and the social context, are considered the major dimensions in ethnology. Ethnological research has always held fast to its place, and for a long time its place was the countryside.

The articles comprising this book have evolved within a research network called Gendered Rural Spaces. They are all elements of the authors' larger projects connected to their postgraduate or post-doctoral research. The network was established when a new kind of interest in the countryside and its rural residents became visible at the beginning of the 21st century among Finnish ethnologists. At the same time questions of both gender and space seemed to be increasingly topical in the discipline.

Rural spaces and the peasant culture are traditional subjects of interest in Finnish ethnology. Thus, in a way our network has come back to the roots of the discipline as we again bring rural issues into focus. However, the traditional viewpoint on rural questions has been labelled gender neutral, thus promoting the idea of rural homogeneity. In this respect the peasant culture was equivalent to the national folk culture. Ethnological research has thus produced a Finnish national rural space, as Kaija Heikkinen argues in her article on gendered spaces and displacement in the countryside.² Both the male and the female have been the subject in traditional research on the peasant culture – which in itself is exceptional in comparison with research in history, for example – but the emphasis has been on the external consequences of gender, as in the gendered division of work. Its more experiential consequences and symbolic meanings were not included in these discussions. Thus, research dealing with rural questions was based on and formulated gender ideals at the same time. Ideas of manhood and womanhood affected its practices, emphases and interpretations.³

The members of our network are all involved in cultural research and have found gender to be an important basis on which to analyse the phenomena under investigation. As the articles show, our relationship with theories of gender varies, but we all share the basic objective behind the studies. With our various sources we have sought to understand how both society and individual lives are structured by gender.⁴ We believe that our research themes also clearly show the process of producing gender and the ways in which accepted gender-based behaviour has been constructed at different times and in different groups. We understand that gender is not a separate category, but is always related to other kinds of differences.⁵ This idea of intersectionality in which subjectivity is seen as constituted by ‘mutually reinforcing factors’ such as ethnicity, nationality, age and religion has also been the implied principle in our project.⁶ Discussion of gendered spaces leads to wider questions such as power relations and displacement in society, which globalisation makes even more relevant.

Our project focuses on changing rural processes on the micro level, in other words how the changes affect people’s everyday lives. The fieldwork material consists of interviews, written oral-history material and material collected by means of participant observation. The context of the collective memory is formed by stories that transmit meanings and help us to understand the past. We wanted to analyse oral-history material as motivated and constructed by a multiplicity of different factors, and to see how the informants used these discourses to reconstruct – to understand and explain – their life histories. Working with this kind of material has meant that, at least in principle, we have been working with sources that make it possible to place personal and experiential knowledge in the spotlight of the research. We nevertheless understand that true and authentic experience is always transient to researchers, and that we can only produce interpretations and conceptualisations of real experiences.⁷

The individual articles in this volume are connected in that the shared starting point was the occupational, structural and environmental changes that took place after the Second World War. Even though the concept of livelihood and how it has changed is an essential background factor, this is only one of our research themes. Our main objective was to map the life of rural people as an entity in which their occupations, social relations and values are interconnected. The articles thus focus on the way of life and the pressure of change that affects it, and the relationship between locality and individual places. How are individuals responding to these changes? What are their strategies, solutions and tactics? How have they experienced the change process?

One of the effects of occupational change concerns how individuals experience control over their lives, in this context the opportunities rural inhabitants have to make choices and to exercise spatial control. The deep change in the countryside has marked a turning point, if not a break, in the lives of individuals and families living in rural areas. This level of individual and multi-vocal experiences is the focus of our articles.

Rural Spaces

The concepts of *rural* and *countryside* are ambiguous. In traditional ethnological research they were taken as given, however. This is understandable because the majority of Finns lived in the countryside until the 1970s, and rural life was considered to be typical Finnish everyday life. The shift in research focus from the rural towards the urban happened in ethnological studies at the same time as big social changes were taking place in the countryside. The social changes were therefore not considered focal in the discipline, something that was later criticised.⁸ The countryside is seen in recent ethnological research as an area for production and dwelling. It has also become the object of different kinds of visions, goals and projects, and this is also visible in the research that has been carried out.⁹

Interest in spatial issues, space and place has continued in ethnology and anthropology. Ethnologist Johanna Rolshoven writes that cultures do not simply occupy space but also produce, design and maintain it. Therefore, space is a central notion in the ethnography of everyday life, evolving from a concept to a tool for contextualising knowledge from fieldwork.¹⁰ Globalisation as well as increasingly dense time and space, are challenging our perceptions about place. Cultural globalisation creates new trans-local spaces and forms of public culture embedded in the imaginations of people that dissolve notions of state-based territoriality.¹¹ One example of contemporary trans-local everyday life in the countryside is that of the long-distance shift workers who leave their home area in Mari El to work for a month either in distant places several thousands of kilometres away or in their neighbouring republics. This could be the future of the adolescents Mari Immonen interviewed in her study on Mari youth living in a rural village.

The environment – in this case the countryside – has become an arena of different discourses and views, and it is not seen merely as a geographic location of, or background for, human activities and daily life: it is a complex structure consisting of time-stratified meaningful experiences.¹² According to Doreen Massey, ‘place’ should not be understood only in a physical or integrated sense, as separate and stable, but should rather, as a concept, incorporate the idea of a meeting place in which connections, relationships, impacts and movements are intertwined.¹³ Interest in space and place is necessary in terms of understanding the world we are constructing and producing, and of being able to participate in the discussion in our disciplines.¹⁴

The different developmental processes in rural areas have a lot in common on both national and international levels. People in the countryside have experienced occupational and environmental, social and cultural, political, ecological and economic changes in recent decades. Migration from the country to the cities and the other way around is one reflection of these changes. Today over half of the Finnish population are town dwellers, and migration from rural areas has escalated in recent years. Structurally the countryside is changing in some places to a sort of middle *rurban* ground in which rural and urban spaces meet, and the rural landscape is becoming integrated into the

urban milieu. These changes are also evident in the landscape. At the same time, modern agriculture and new sources of livelihood are also changing the 'traditional' rural landscape: huge plastic cubes of fodder have replaced hay poles, for example. These traces of modern agriculture do not fit in with the images holidaymakers have of the countryside. There has been a tendency to advocate locking the countryside into the value systems of outsiders, people who are not living there.

As a way of coping with this structural change people living in rural areas have developed new strategies and occupations to enable them to live and /or work there. At the same time, a contrary development is taking place: people from the cities want to move to rural areas to live permanently or to find occasional 'peace' in their second homes. The same processes are going on in different parts of Europe, but in this publication we focus on Finland and also on a rural village in the Morki region in the Mari Republic of Russia, and a small agricultural village in Spain. In some cases rural spaces are also contested spaces – in other words the actors at these sites have different levels of control over resources or access to power, and this could lead to confrontation or conflict in terms of engendering change in the environment.

Rural and urban spaces are not opposites, however, and they have rather, in the course of history, been complementary in terms of 'feeding' each other. Nevertheless, the norm in modernisation theories involving Western countries and engaging in the notion of 'development' has been the urban phenomenon, and the rural phenomenon differs from this norm in being outside or under-developed. Questions concerning the urbanisation of rural areas are complex and global, and attract different individual solutions and strategies. What will happen to the people living in rural areas, and how will they experience the changes? It would also be beneficial to determine what kinds of strategies people use in these processes, and how they have found solutions in the new situations.

Through the concept of space we are also implicitly addressing questions of identity. What is the relationship between space, place and identity on both the local and the individual level? Local identity explains the meaning of a place in situations in which either the individual or the community is obliged to leave their home because of a project that changes the environment or because the community is under economic pressure, for example. Thus, this study adds a new dimension to global processes. In addition, our local case studies diversify the image of developments in rural societies in the border areas of the European Union in that they raise various new questions: What alternatives or strategies do the inhabitants have in order to respond to the events that have taken place in different parts of the European countryside? Are the similarities gendered? What are the differences and similarities? Could these processes be developed? Can we learn something from the experiences of people in different areas and societies?

As we see it, the countryside is a gendered space and place. Space and its formation are considered cultural and social phenomena. The focus is on the *lived space* with its social practices, incorporating the senses, the imagination,

symbols and utopias.¹⁵ Edward S. Casey emphasised the meaning of place as something in which we are all immersed. To exist is to be somewhere, in some kind of place.¹⁶ In Michel de Certeau's view place represents continuity and stability. It forms a kind of outline or set of outlines around space. Space, in turn, is created when different variable aspects are taken in. Place becomes space through usage, i.e. places become meaningful only through the experiences and interpretations of human beings. Attitudes to the environment may be either tactical or strategic.¹⁷

Gendered space has been considered an important factor in traditional rural societies (see Östman 2000). Both space and gender could be considered ordering principles. Our milieus are often seen as largely generated by men, the only exception being the domestic space of which women are the prime users. The fact that domestic space has traditionally been regarded as women's space has been criticised by both Shirley Ardener (1981) and Doreen Massey, among others. According to Massey, women and local space are often combined, because it is thought that women live/act more locally than men. This argument refers to the dichotomy between public <> private, and women are more often connected with private than with public space. She suggests that the purpose of placing women in the domestic sphere has to do with both special spatial control and also social control of identity. Generating space is not the only way of influencing the environment, however, and it is also important to see how women themselves understand, experience and see their social surroundings. Space, place and gender are all interrelated as culturally specific ideas. The way we think about space and place is connected to the way we think about the social constructions of gender relations. Furthermore, these concepts are also linked to the concept of time. This means that both social phenomena and space are constituted from social relations that are inherently dynamic.¹⁸

The dichotomy of gender-based private and public spaces has been – and still is – constructed and re-constructed both in research and in everyday practices. We want in our articles to unravel both of these constructions, and to show how the dichotomy has guided values and activities in rural spaces, but also how it has been actively challenged in people's private lives.

By studying spaces and places as gendered we can open up new rural perspectives, and analyse the social, economic and cultural dimensions of everyday life. We could also open up discussion on the macro and micro levels, and on the power structures and relationships between them. As Lefebvre pointed out, every type of economy and social system has its own spaces and spatial practices. Gender is an essential part of using and exploiting space, and space shows how it is constructed and understood. On the other hand, the way in which gender is understood constructs spaces, although it is not explicitly seen to do so. Users of space and space as a network of social relationships are entwined, and are undergoing a process of continuous integration. Spatial practices both create and maintain gender differences, meanings and social practices. These differences are formed in the spatial practices of everyday life as Kirsi Saarikangas has shown in her studies.¹⁹

Gendered rural spaces

The research themes in our project form an entity incorporating multiple time levels and spaces in both Finland and other countries. The anthology starts with a historical account and then proceeds to address questions of the present day. Gendered spaces are also analysed from the viewpoints of both women and men, and we hope that the articles portray both as active producers and interpreters of space. The informants also show – explicitly and implicitly – how important this active role is in terms of the quality of life, and respectively what the consequences of potential spatial control and constriction may be.

The long tradition of research on Finnish rural history is illustrated in Ann-Catrin Östman's article about its relationship with peasantry and the preparation of the various volumes of *Finnish Cultural History*. The multidisciplinary group of writers included historians, ethnologists, sociologists, archaeologists and folklorists who considered the agrarian community an important subject of research during the 1930s. The resulting contributions, written by men and focusing mainly on male activities, reveal gendered meanings connected to the use of land and the formation of communities that were assumed to be linked to one another. Ann-Catrin Östman unravels the disciplinary web of values – manhood, independence, individualism and responsibility – that were interwoven into the interpretations that were made in a specific historical context. She identifies the formulation of masculine ideals in her analysis of the traditions of rural historiography. The contributions to *Finnish Cultural History* also exemplify how research is one factor in the production of gendered functional spheres starting from the choice of the main themes and narratives. Peasantry was given agency, but only a certain part of it represented the group in the written history.

The historical perspective continues in Pia Olsson's article dealing with women's space relationships before and after the Second World War. In 1985 the Finnish National Board of Antiquities prepared a questionnaire asking about the status of Finnish women. The broad questionnaire material offered a chance to examine how the women themselves described their relationship with spatial factors. Women's place relationships are analysed from the descriptions in which the features considered necessary for a woman are pictured, but more is revealed by reading between the lines when the women describe their work and everyday life. Because of the way the questionnaire was formulated the descriptions are often written in relation to men, and could be read as emancipatory in that they make gendered differences in the rural use of space visible. Pia Olsson describes the expectations placed on young girls, and the way these expectations impinge on the lives of adult women. The dominant feature of the descriptions is the feeling of a restricted use of space and being tied to the home surroundings. The women's use of place was not only a question of the practical division of work, it was also connected both to ideas about suitable behaviour and family hierarchies, and to the symbolic meanings of places. The reminiscences convey the women's feeling of a lack of total control over their use of space, which influenced their lives in terms of their mobility, social life and identity.

While Pia Olsson's questionnaire material depicts a quite stable and unchanging rural society, at least on the surface, Katariina Heikkilä's article gives a fairly different picture of Finnish gendered space. Rural areas, especially those connected with agriculture, have encountered big structural changes in recent years in Finland, and the process is continuing. The number of farms in the countryside has fallen by 28 per cent since 1995 and membership of the European Union. There were about 68,700 farms, in 2006, but as the number of farms dwindles the size is expanding and productivity is growing. Traditional agriculture is increasingly failing farmers in terms of subsistence, and they are carrying on other businesses as well. The number of diversified farms, therefore, is also growing. The most common area of business is machine contracting, and other sectors include tourism, wood and food processing, and nursing. Katariina Heikkilä studied female entrepreneurs in the countryside in south west Finland. She considers entrepreneurship from a constructionist point of view, as a constantly altering social process. She focuses on how female entrepreneurs on present-day farms make use of space and reshape it around themselves. Her examples are from farms that engage in different subsidiary activities such as tourism, selling summer and Christmas flowers, baking and handicrafts. Some of the women are working on their childhood farms, some of them on their husbands' farms and some of them have returned from towns. Heikkilä's article shows how female entrepreneurs do not just live in the countryside, but also actively create rural space and images and representations related to it. She also shows how versatile the business networks of rural female entrepreneurs can be, and how multifaceted their relationship with the rural environment is. They participate actively in it and they have managed to devise new uses for rural space through their entrepreneurial activities.

Gendered space has also been reassessed in northern areas in recent decades. Helena Ruotsala wonders in her article whether there is room for women in the reindeer forest. The answer is yes and no. The forest has been regarded as a purely masculine space, and reindeer herding as a male profession, but she sees a space for both genders. On the evidence of her field work she argues that women have a decisive role in today's reindeer herding: they not only make up about one quarter of reindeer owners in Finland, they also perform many of the necessary herding tasks. Moreover, in the current economic climate reindeer-herding families depend on income from other sources. Thus the responsibility and power of women, who often work outside the home in the tourism industry or in the administrative sector in northern Finland, are increasing. However, work in the reindeer forest often remains in the hands of men, who hold the official power, especially on issues concerning reindeer management. Young women, who are willing to embark upon a career as a reindeer herder, are facing the challenges that arise from male dominance. The use of power is relevant in terms of career choice, and in reindeer herding this is viewed in relation to physical gender and sexuality. The assumed physical weakness of women is implicitly present in the debate on the future of occupations. From the perspective of bodily politics, spatial, verbal and physical power and conflict are subject to the

individual's body, its size, form and strength. The politics of the body in this case is a matter of physical juxtaposition or the separation of men from women. Young women hear – and feel – the insufficiency of their own bodies. Thus they also displace themselves and define their own space outside their livelihood. Patriarchy lives on in the rural areas in the North, and the local patriarchal government is regarded as one major reason why women leave the northern countryside either for towns or to go south. Under the male control of regional and local political affairs women are ignored, and their work and engagement are neither appreciated nor acceptable.

Nancy Anne Konvalinka discusses a similar type of process, which was affected by the inheritance system, in her study on the gender-linked use of land throughout the 20th century in northern central Spain. Under the inheritance law in this area estates are basically divided equally among a person's children, male and female. During a good part of the 20th century men and women used their equivalent inheritances in somewhat different ways, in connection with the gendered division of work. Men, within their family of orientation,²⁰ worked to accumulate resources for marrying and forming their own family farm, whereas women worked for the benefit of their family of orientation, transferring themselves and their property to their family of procreation upon marriage. Changes in the second half of the century – emigration, mechanisation, the shift from agriculture to dairy farming, transformation in the educational system and at moments of decision in newly-diversified life trajectories, and the reorganisation of production in family farming – led to the masculinisation of production and the distancing of women from participation in the family business. The interaction between the objective structures and the actors' perceptions from their gendered positions has created a social space in which a certain number of men continue to position themselves as dairy farmers by choice, but women do not, and few women choose to occupy the position of dairy farmers' wives. Choices made early in life trajectories, which are linked to the different relationships of men and women with land and the division of work, result in men remaining in a social space in which it will be very difficult for them to form families, and women exiting this space in order to seek a future elsewhere.

Women's status in a changing rural society is also the focus of Mari Immonen's article on the ideas, values and choices of both women and men of the younger generation in a rural village in Mari El, central Russia. The main sources of livelihood in this area have been farming and cattle breeding, which young people do not consider as a future profession. Moreover, the post-Soviet era has brought deep changes in economic structure in the countryside, and people have had to find new ways of surviving. The Mari identity lives on strongly in the village, where people speak the Mari language and practice their old indigenous religion. Life in the home village may not be the future the young people dream of because it entails hard work and duties at home, where there is no difference between working time and free time. According to Immonen's study, the youth will leave the village and build a future somewhere else. Young people often leave it to study either in their own republic or in Kazan, the capital of the neighbouring republic

of Tatarstan. If they find a life somewhere else they carry aspects of their childhood and the place in which they spent it with them. They have the Mari language, the teachings of their parents and grandparents about the folk religion, and Mari customs and belief systems as fixed points to hold onto in their new dwelling place. Mari youth, like youth elsewhere, are facing an uncharted future full of alternatives.

Although the two final articles in this collection are both based on the same extensive oral-history project on forestry professions in a changing society, in which the interviews were biographically constructed, the spaces differ slightly. Whereas Tiina Suopajarvi focuses on space in the past, the childhood forest of forest professionals, Katri Kaunisto's space has a masculine label. Forests as places are considered to have multiple meanings for Finns – on both the economic and the mental level. In this respect, forest professionals are an interesting group to analyse from the perspective of gendered spaces in that their relationship with the forest and with nature is formed on several levels of action. This specific relationship between a professional group and its professional place is analysed in the two articles. The forest is not only a source of livelihood for these groups, it is also a place of mental welfare. It is thus one example of how an environment is not only a physical but also a mental and social space. Tiina Suopajarvi analyses how the childhood experiences of forestry engineers and technicians – both men and women – may be visible in their way of experiencing the forest as adult professionals, and in the kind of individual histories that can be traced behind their perceptions of it. Her starting point is Robert B. Edgerton's idea that values and attitudes learned during childhood socialisation are strongly reflected in an individual's current perceptions of his or her environment. For most of the forest professionals Tiina Suopajarvi studied the childhood forest was both a working place and a playground. As a childhood working environment it had gendered but also economic and spiritual meanings. These perceptions are evident in the different actions taken in the forest. As a working place it was a place of controlled actions, while as a playground it offered children somewhere to do what they wanted to do outside of adult control. Simultaneous analysis of forest memories and current meanings make the changes and the permanencies visible. The tension develops as the economic and mental values are seen in the context of constant transformation in the human-nature relationship.

Physical forestry work – logging and transporting timber – has traditionally been a male profession with specific masculine values. This means that the image of working-class masculinity can also be traced from the way in which forest workers have pictured their own ideal of a professional. Katri Kaunisto analyses the relationship between these masculine values and the multiple – and ongoing – occupational changes in the profession in recent decades. The workers themselves have had to re-assess the required and valued features in a forest professional. Sometimes these features have seemed to confront each other, such as in the need for education and physical strength, and for control and freedom. It is interesting that these value confrontations have often been overlooked in organisational changes. Changes in working

processes, however, have also made it possible to see forest work in terms of different kinds of masculinities, as more heterogeneous than before. The specific nature of the forest as a working place has also influenced the way the workers have analysed their profession. The forest is connected to freedom and independence, which are experienced as the most positive features in the work of forest professionals. They are also the features that are experienced as being on the line when working processes change. However, as Katri Kaunisto shows, there are features in the forest profession that persist decade after decade, including uncertainty with regard to its future and thereby to employment, and the physical strength needed for the work. The masculine forest is one example of how place, gender and modernisation processes connect with each other in multiple ways.

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NOTES

- 1 Pereg 2002, 81.
- 2 Heikkinen 2006, 21, 29.
- 3 See e.g., Heikkinen 2007, 31; Östman 2007, 42.
- 4 Koivunen & Liljeström 2004a, 16.
- 5 See also Heikkinen 2006, 29.
- 6 On intersectionality see e.g., Nash 2008.
- 7 See Koivunen & Liljeström 2004b, 274–278; on the relation between the event and the experience see e.g., Salmi-Niklander 2006.
- 8 Heikkilä 2003, 91–92; Räsänen 1993.
- 9 Heikkilä 2003, 94–96.
- 10 Rolshoven 2003, 213.
- 11 Gupta & Ferguson 2002, 65, 67; Low & Lawrence-Züñiga 2004, 25.
- 12 Åström & Korkiakangas 2004.
- 13 Massey 2002, 55.
- 14 See Low & Lawrence-Züñiga 2004.
- 15 Lefebvre 1991; in the context of ethnology, see Åström, Korkiakangas & Olsson 2004.
- 16 Casey 1997.
- 17 De Certeau 1988.
- 18 Ardener 1993, 5, 9–10; Massey 2003, 9–11.
- 19 Saarikangas 1999, 283–284.
- 20 The family of orientation is the family in which a person grows up (Ego, parents and siblings) as opposed to the family of procreation, which is the family a person forms in adulthood (Ego, spouse and children).

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Land and agrarian masculinity – space and gender in *Finnish Cultural History* 1933–1936

The history of the peasantry and rural society were emphasised in an exhaustive series of interdisciplinary work, *Finnish Cultural History* [*Suomen Kulttuurihistoria (SKH) I–IV*] published 1933–1936. The texts about rural society and the peasantry presented in a four-volume series on cultural history dealt with a wide range of topics. A major contribution discussed colonisation and settlement during the middle ages, while other texts considered local self-government and the village community. Also, agriculture and animal husbandry were presented. Furthermore, many aspects of folk culture in the past centuries were dealt with, as were themes relating to the household and the spheres of women. In these volumes, the material culture and social institutions of rural society – labelled agrarian – were made visible.

The article discusses how the peasantry was described in this series of Cultural History. Furthermore, I point to the connections between the traditions of rural historiography, that is, scholarly historical research, and formulations and understandings of masculine ideals. In short, the peasant – or the people – are given their position in the discipline of history, although as a gendered figure, as I argue.

This synthesis was published by an interdisciplinary group. In the introduction, it is stated that ‘the depiction of the cultural development of nations has become as important as political events’. The main editors were historians, and the editorial team was led by Professor Gunnar Suolahti (1876–1933). After his death his work was continued by Professor Väinö Voionmaa (1869–1947). Eino Jutikkala (1907–2006) was the editorial secretary. Besides historians, sociologists, archaeologists, folklorists and, last but not least, ethnologists were involved in this work. Altogether 52 scholars contributed to the work.¹ These volumes presented many aspects of history, that is, culture, education, warfare, economy, and different social strata. In this article I analyse those texts concerned with the rural or agrarian community.

Land and historiography: themes and methodologies

At the turn of the century several historians focused on Finnish identity as it was reflected in the country's economic, social and cultural institutions. This led to an early concentration on questions which were somehow related to the history of agriculture, with the Middle Ages, especially, attracting attention. In these studies, the system of landownership, forms of taxation and fiscal questions were considered. However, earlier studies had focused more on agriculture itself than on the people.

Partly influenced by the German historian Karl Lamprecht, some Finnish historians tended to stress collectivistic methods in the early 20th century. These approaches, with their emphasis on mass phenomena and social questions, were the opposite of traditional political history with its focus on individuals and events. For Lamprecht cultural history was – as were economic and social history – considered important. Although this approach did not become the most influential trend in historical writing, it did provide a framework for studies of the peasantry and other rural groups. Both Suolahti and Voionmaa stressed collectivistic approaches, focusing on social groups rather than individuals, but they did not emphasise causality and the ideals related to the natural sciences in a lamprechtian way.²

During the interwar period, history was practiced in different ways. While the term societal history (social history, cf. the German *Gesellschaftsgeschichte*) was emphasised in several studies, the notion of cultural history was stressed when a holistic synthesis was presented. Approaches like these were characterised by an emphasis on mass phenomena and collective groups, whereas questions concerning state affairs and national politics were set aside. Furthermore, those scholars strived to use new types of source material. Methodologically farsighted, the Finnish historical society arranged for a wide collection of oral sources in 1926. Leading historians considered it important for the discipline that oral sources be collected and attention paid to the culture of ordinary people. This gathering focused on life on the estates and in manors, at the vicarage, and lastly on the peasant farm.³ Both of the main editors, Suolahti and Voionmaa, are said to have combined 'a bird's eye view' and 'a grassroots perspective'.⁴

Nevertheless, the prevalent customs related to the writing of history at that time depended on a historicist mode, and the resulting series of cultural history was not appreciated within the academic community. When the cultural history series was published, the most critical voices were raised concerning the lack of political history and the overlooking of individual actors.⁵

The cultural history series has been regarded as the main work of the Finnish collectivist school. These traditions of writing history have been related to the early 20th century influence of collective methodologies.⁶ Nevertheless, the volumes on cultural history can also be related to common, western traditions of writing the history of civilisation. In the introduction to the first volume it is stated that the world *sivistys* (*Bildung* in German, civilisation) must now be understood as 'cultural'. The Cultural History of Finland also covered other social groups and other forms of economy. It

also contained other chapters on tradition and cultural history and depicted church art, universities and schools.

Furthermore, these texts on rural society can also be compared to ways of writing history in other European countries during the interwar period. In Eastern and Central Europe, folk-life studies early became established as a field of study. In Germany interdisciplinary methodologies were stressed in the period between the wars, and the term *Volksgeschichte* has been used to depict attempts to bring the people and the land, not the state, to the forefront.⁷ Various European traditions of *Volksgeschichte* put rural societies at the centre of attention. Whereas some German studies depicted an organic community bound to the soil and united by blood and language, others used new and progressive methodologies to study social structures. The Finnish historiographic tradition shows a close affinity to German traditions. Also, in Finland, there were institutionalised forms of cooperation between the disciplines of ethnography (cf. *Volkskunde*) and history, and similar attempts at focusing on people and rural culture instead of the state can be detected. In addition, there were comparable efforts to depict the spreading of settlement and various forms of cultivation.⁸ Nevertheless, economic and social questions were dealt with, and the SKH can be regarded as playing a pivotal role in the history of social historiography.⁹

Scholars from several disciplines contributed to the book. The authors were later depicted as a group of young and ‘angry’ men, as later recalled by editorial secretary Eino Jutikkala¹⁰ and presented in a review in the historical journal published in Swedish.¹¹ There were, however, also several female authors involved. A couple of the younger historians, who contributed to the volumes, would later become eminent ethnologists and sociologists. The concepts of ethnology had changed; whereas earlier ethnographical and folkloristic traditions were characterised by more evolutionistic, psychological and material methods, new cultural and historical approaches were evolving within these disciplines. The texts on rural society were written by scholars influenced by similar methodologies.¹²

Space and gendered hierarchies of historiography

In the early 20th century, the cultural representations of the peasantry had been contradictory and ambivalent; the idealised peasant was described in terms of freedom and independence, but at the same time the peasantry was viewed as undeveloped, childish and uncivilised. The peasantry was a part of the imagined nation, but it had an ambiguous role; the figure of the peasant was an image *against whom* and *with whom* middle and upper class groups could identify.¹³ Historiography focused upon aspects that were critical to the development of a middle class man – often equated with rationality, responsible citizenship in public spaces and individualism. Characterised by methodological individualism, these traditions marginalised women and other men in the disciplinary field; these groups were excluded from the central themes and narratives.¹⁴

One of the authors was the young scholar Kustaa Vilkuna, from the 1940s onwards a leading scholar of Finnish ethnology. His work, focused on folk economy and ethnological mappings of regions, was characterised by eclectic methods.¹⁵ In the Cultural History he wrote about agriculture and the household economy. He described a harmonious and homogenous society, formed by and keeping good traditions. But this writer also produced an ambiguous picture of the peasantry: 'Country life was mainly about producing and collecting food and drink. And when it was gathered, it was also consumed.'¹⁶ The most negative description of the peasant was presented in the final volume. In a chapter on agriculture, the historian Niilo Liakka compared the Finnish peasant with the Russian peasant. Not being able to understand the need for development, this group was considered irrational. Furthermore, these peasants were incapable of cooperation.¹⁷ Thus, the most negative texts dealt with modern times. In the 1930s rural culture enjoyed greater prestige, and the term 'peasant', now more positively charged, was often used. Peasant culture [talonpoikaiskulttuuri] was used.¹⁸

As a discipline historical writing is, according to the American historian Joan Scott, the representing of relations to political power; its discursive practices and metaphorical employments create and negotiate gendered meanings and gendered subject positions.¹⁹

In the following, my article argues that understandings of masculinity are invoked and employed in order to place the peasantry and peasant society in the realms of history, within the disciplinary field of history. I show that understandings of masculinity were formulated and used by historians.²⁰ From this point of view, understandings of land, settlement and colonisation played a key role in the period between the wars. Furthermore, notions of egalitarianism and individualism were invoked.

In ordinary historical work, as for example in historical journals published during the interwar-period, women were seldom mentioned. As far as texts on agriculture and peasant society are concerned, women were in some cases seen as responsible for primitive forms of agriculture. In the well-known book *Suomen talonpojan historia* [The History of the Finnish Peasant], published in 1942 by Eino Jutikkala, women were mainly alluded to in discussions on their legal status in the past.

In Cultural History, women were made visible mainly through writings by ethnologists and folklorists. How were peasant women portrayed in the so-called 'folk sciences' focusing on 'folk-culture', the cultural history of ordinary people? Various aspects of material and non-material culture were discussed. Handicrafts of both women and men were presented, and also several chapters were devoted to folklore ('the wisdom of the people'). Furthermore, women were rendered visible in chapters about family patterns, handicrafts and domestic chores. In the early studies women are placed within the household and are mostly visible in studies on textiles. The representations of peasant women in ethnographical studies can be related to theories and understandings of race, evolution and civilisation current in the early 20th century. Women are seldom described as workers in these texts, but their position is used to show that Finland was a civilised society. Hard-working

women had been related to areas seen as underdeveloped. In the SKH, women's work was portrayed. But women's work in agriculture, the tradition of women taking part in out-door work, was not emphasised – it was just mentioned in one chapter written by Kustaa Vilkkuna. It is noteworthy that the Swedish-speaking scholars studying 'folk-culture' stressed agricultural work to a higher degree. This image was further strengthened during the war in a book by Vilkkuna.²¹

In a major chapter about '*asutus*', that is, settlement and colonisation, in the first part of the SKH, Eino Jutikkala, the young editorial secretary later to become professor, states that the gradual settlement of the interior is the most important aspect of Finnish history. This was a process, which, according to Jutikkala, lasted right up to 20th century.²² The book starts with a presentation entitled 'The geographical basis of Finnish history', in which Väinö Voionmaa presented, among other things, the various natural surroundings. Forms of settlement and forms of cultivation were introduced as main themes: 'The interplay between land and people does not appear anywhere as clearly as it does in the settlement, which contains a major part of the historical life and work of our people.'²³ Furthermore, he emphasised the active position of the people. Finland had often been depicted as an inhospitable, cold and poor land, but despite the barren land the nation had succeeded in developing. In the overview of the geography of Finland, Voionmaa criticises the assumption that the character of the people [*kansa*] can be explained by the nature and the land.²⁴

In line with the traditions of various forms of *Volksgeschichte*, *Suomen kulttuurihistoria* focused on, among other things, the connection between space, history and the people. In explorations of these themes, aspects, which were connected to men and to understandings of masculinity, were often paid attention to.

The idealised local community

The agrarian society was made visible in different ways, especially in the two first volumes about the earlier periods. Besides including depictions of the institutions in the local community and the settlement, various aspects of economical life and social stratification were discussed. Several texts in the SKH stressed far-reaching forms of co-operation and far-reaching systems of local administration: the idea of a communal peasant society is stressed much more intensely than in earlier survey books or studies on rural society.²⁵ In the first volume on prehistory and the Middle Ages, E. A. Virtanen wrote about the popular judicial systems. In a later volume he wrote about the village community. Väinö Voionmaa wrote the chapter entitled 'Medieval society'.

Esko Aaltonen wrote a chapter on local self government prior to the birth of the municipal system. In the following, Aaltonen, a historian who later became a professor of sociology, described village society before the enclosure periods:

Local government was above all founded on equality and co-operation, the initiative and self control of the inhabitants, and to high degree necessitated compromise. An important task of local self-government was to maintain peace and unity among the members of the parish, necessary for the fulfilment of common tasks and obligations.²⁶

He depicted a homogenous society of duty, characterised by democratic structures. In Aaltonen's text it is suggested that a number of matters that in other countries would have been handled by other authorities, were dealt with by the local community in Finland. The country is compared to 17th century England and also to Germanic traditions.²⁷

Extensive chapters on rural societies were written by Väinö Voionmaa. Voionmaa published studies on a variety of themes. In 1915, after writing at length on the Middle Ages and economic history, he published his most famous book, *Suomen karjalaisen heimon historia* [The History of the Karelian Tribe in Finland]. This book, which dealt with a special form of agriculture, slash-and-burn cultivation, was described by the author as 'societal history'. By writing the book about the history of the Karelian people Voionmaa wanted to widen the circle of 'historical people'; he wanted to ascribe to this group a history based on developed forms of government, but he did not focus on the state and national administration. Furthermore, as Juhani U. E. Lehtonen asserts, the discipline of ethnology, and especially Professor U. T. Sirelius, focused to a large extent on the 'community aspects' of folk culture.²⁸

Notably, several chapters deal, as does Voionmaa's famous book, with understanding communities at the local level. In a chapter on mills in the local communities, Esko Aaltonen explicitly follows the interpretation put forward by Voionmaa. He stresses that mills were founded because the crown needed taxes, although at the same time he also tries to emphasise voluntary cooperation: 'As Voionmaa strikingly remarked, the building of mills and the practice of slash-and-burn cultivation were similar undertakings: both needed men and axes and both had rights and regulations.'²⁹

Thus, the role of men working collectively and their rights are stressed. A homo-social group of men formed the depicted community. This concept of homo-sociality refers to how masculinity is defined in men's relations with other men.³⁰ As the texts were stressing patterns of men's homo-social interaction, understandings of masculinity, I argue, were formed in these texts.

According to Väinö Voionmaa, in the book published in 1915, the tribe or kinship did not form the basis of the society; according to his understanding, society was formed by individual and equal men who had decided to cooperate and who were united by fraternal bonds. Thus, the men freely chose to act together and the society was formed from below. This interpretation was stressed anew, and it also structures the descriptions of agrarian society in SKH.

The Cultural History series did not emphasise questions of national politics and state affairs. The fact that the peasantry formed the fourth estate

in Parliament for a long period was not stressed. This was a key theme in the book *Suomen talonpojan historia* [The History of the Finnish Peasant], written by Eino Jutikkala and published in 1942. This synthesis depicts the peasantry, and especially its landowning members, as a class that had played an active role in creating its own history. This book has been regarded as a major work in Finnish historiography. In Jutikkala's book, several themes are repeatedly touched upon, for example, the history of individual landownership and the relationship between the peasantry and the state.

Several articles in the main historical journals focused on the political status of rural people. The peasant uprisings was a theme which was considered quite often: in these articles the peasantry, depicted as a homogenous mass, was regarded as incapable of proper political and collective action. In short, in these texts written during the same period the peasants were not ascribed the ability to act within the political system of the kingdom. In some articles there were even depicted in a farcical ways. Earlier, one historian had raised the question as to why there had been so few rebellions in the history of Finland, that is, why had the Finnish peasant seemed to have been so passive.³¹

In the SKS this passivity was regarded as a sign of maturity. Väinö Voionmaa stressed the fact that the common people did not just act as rebels and they were not just refractory; they choose to act according to laws and rules.³²

Thus, the peasantry was ascribed political agency through depictions of, or visions of, a local and homogeneous community. The local community is said to take responsibility for the common good, and a vision of community labelled by solidarity is formed; for example, it is stated that the communities took care of their poor. Aspects of class were discussed more thoroughly in the book by Voionmaa, published before the Finnish Civil War. He problematised the increase in the proportion of landless population, when swidden cultivation became transformed into agriculture proper. The SKS was built up on a distinction between social groups: different chapters dealt with the clergy, the peasantry, the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy. When publishing the first scholarly written comprehensive work on the history of the peasantry, *Suomen talonpojan historia*, Eino Jutikkala labelled his work as 'yhteiskuntahistoriallinen', as societal history. According to the author Jutikkala, this way of writing history focused on differences between different social groups. Issues of social distinctions within the peasantry or the rural group were seldom dealt with, although, for example, Jutikkala depicted the growth of landless groups in Finnish Cultural History. In the chapter on prehistory, it is stated that class differences developed earlier in Sweden.³³ Thus, a vision of old Finnish society as more homogeneous and more egalitarian than Sweden took shape.

Individual settlement

The chapter on the prehistoric period, written by the sociologists A. M. Tallgren and Professor of Uralic Languages Yrjö Henrik Toivonen, pointed at specific aspects of Scandinavian culture: the point of departure was the

same as in Finland, a society formed by free men.³⁴ In addition, Jutikkala stressed that the new Swedish settlers did not have any rights regarding the use of the wilderness and the forest, and that therefore they were forced to cultivate the land in the traditional way. Thus, the early Swedish-speakers were restricted to agriculture proper.³⁵ However, it must be emphasised that there were some possibilities for ‘free colonisation of the land’ in the eastern parts of the country, even if the crown had made this more difficult.³⁶ Depending mostly on the initiative of private settlers or hunters, the settlement was said to be individual rather than collective. The question of individual landownership is central in the history of Finnish rural historiography and was debated explicitly in the 1950s.³⁷

The SKH also dealt with the question of land ownership in areas of swidden cultivation and in this respect, settlement according to an unwritten law is stressed: the land was said to be free to conquer, even if it was owned by someone else and had been left uncultivated.³⁸ Following earlier interpretations made by Väinö Voionmaa, several texts suggest early forms of individual ownership. When describing the organised village in the western parts of the country, Voionmaa wanted to show that collective ownership, which meant that all the masters of houses in a village owned the land they used (in one way or another) together, was not the oldest type of landownership. In a major text on the settlement Eino Jutikkala compared two different types of settlement structure. Settlement in villages was not common throughout Finland. In the eastern part of the country, where slash-and-burn cultivation was important, settlements were sparser. Villages were most often found in the western parts, where there was more arable land. Further, in describing the villages and the uses of common land, the authors stressed that the peasants owned some marked units of land individually.³⁹

In the SKH it was stressed that swidden cultivation favoured individual ownership. Agriculture proper was seen as more developed than ‘swidden cultivation’. In areas of slash-and-burn cultivation, it was stated in the texts, there were fields owned by individuals before the period of enclosure. Furthermore, the tradition in eastern Finland of fields being given personal names, is stressed. Thus, the fields are linked to their settlers, to individual men.⁴⁰ In short, the form of agriculture often characterised as primitive is related to individualism. According to the evolutionary concept of history, collectivism is regarded as undeveloped and uncivilised. This debate on settlement and individualism can, however, also be related to conceptions of Finnish identity; collective ownership had earlier been regarded as uncivilised or Slavic.⁴¹ Finland was depicted as a part of the so-called ‘Fenno-Scandia’, and was portrayed as the fourth Nordic (cf. Scandinavian) country.⁴²

The traditions of *Volksgeschichte* have often been related to interpretations of a homogenous collective group, folk (*Volk*) or *kansa*.⁴³ The Swedish-speaking areas are also stressed and depicted in several chapters in the SKH: the Swedish-speakers and the Saami are depicted as a part of the Finnish people. Even if this work was criticised in a review for underplaying the Swedish traits of Finnish culture,⁴⁴ the picture of the people is still not totally homogenous. Voionmaa explicitly stated that national and economic unity

is formed on the basis of geography regardless of 'language, race and other obstacles'.⁴⁵

Furthermore, traditions of *Volksgeschichte* have been regarded as anti-western.⁴⁶ This book clearly attempts a connection between the Finnish peasant and the Western political sphere: in many of these texts, 'Finnish culture' is often depicted in relation to western values. In a review article published in the main Finnish historical journal it is stated that too much emphasis was put on traditions connected to western Finland. Both of the main editors, Suolahti and Voionmaa, are said to have stressed the dignity of the individual.⁴⁷ In this respect, these texts written by historians did not produce nostalgic ideas about a collective *Gemeinschaft*.

Individualism was also a sign of manhood. Different notions concerning and practices of agrarian history can be related to the formation of gender relations. The peasantry was represented and categorised according to certain gendered norms. The values attached to agrarian masculinity, independence, individualism, responsibility, can be seen as key elements in the construction of the ideal manhood. From a gender perspective it will be observed that the emphasis on individualism in the depictions of the settlement rendered women and the household invisible. Describing the settlement in this manner, a picture of men's agency was formed. The villages of Western Finland, Eino Jutikkala writes in the first part of his book, might have been formed by groups of households which cultivated the land together: but, and this is stressed, 'the men were freed from the chains of patriarchy'. This description can be explicitly related to an understanding of masculinity and men's status.

'Colonisation'

In one of the main chapters Jutikkala stressed that colonisation of the interior is the most significant aspect of Finnish history.⁴⁸ Stressing the fact that colonisation was important, he ascribed the peasantry agency. In earlier historiography, the peasantry had often been depicted as victims of the social structures and political systems determined at the national level.⁴⁹ Following Voionmaa, Gabriel Nikander, a Swedish-speaking ethnologist, portrayed cultural history 'as a static description of slowly changing conditions in the common community' ['en statisk skildring av folkgemenskapens långsamt föränderliga tillstånd'].⁵⁰ Criticising the impression of slow change, one of the reviews in SKH emphasised that history was, and should be, more dynamic than ethnography. This can be exemplified by another text. In a passage published in Swedish in 1925, the historian Bruno Lesch wrote about agriculture in the 18th century.⁵¹ In the introduction, he emphasised that he did not want to write a narrative of misery; on the contrary, he wished to focus on 'the dynamic elements of the picture'. He starts out by explaining the environmental conditions and geographical circumstances, illustrating among other things the marshlands and threats of floods and submersions. Comparing the more cultivated parts of the coastal areas with the interior, he discusses the relationship between the settled country and the wilderness.

His text is based on a success story of how vast parts of the interior were cultivated. Words like ‘fight’ and ‘duel’ are used, as does Lesch, a Swedish-speaking historian, in talking about the plough, on the one hand, and the marshland and forest, on the other. When it came to conquering the nature and land, the peasants were ascribed agency, seen as dynamic.

It will be noted that the first chapter of this series starts with a discussion on the link between the land and the people. Here Voionmaa depicts the difference between the coast and the interior as opposites in Finland.⁵² Furthermore, in a typical manner, he describes Finland as a principle ‘contact and struggle area’ between east and west.⁵³ This synthesis, the Finnish Cultural History, can be related to various German *Volksgeschichte* traditions. Linking the land and the collective identity of the people, some of these German studies served expansionist aims. In the aftermaths of the defeat in 1918, they mapped out a German territory – a nation which was to extend beyond its political borders.⁵⁴

A similar connection between land and people cannot be established in this case, but in the SKH the territory and the conquest of the territory plays a major role. One other aspect can be mentioned; settlement is often described in a west-east direction. This rhetorical figure is often used. The young Eino Jutikkala emphasised that colonisation was neither military nor martial. Furthermore, it has been stated that Finnish expansion was aimed at the wilderness; not at neighbouring countries. One part of the introductory chapter discusses ‘Fenno-Skandia and Greater Finland (Suur-Suomi)’. The latter term was also used during the Second World War by scholars investigating the historical and geographical basis for Finnish expansion.⁵⁵

Presented in terms of culture and civilisation, settlement is said to have spread from the coastal areas.⁵⁶ The text on colonisation was published in 1933. The same author, Eino Jutikkala, who later became a very distinguished scholar, published the book *Finlands Lebensraum* in Berlin in 1941. This work has been said to be something of an exception, the result of Jutikkala’s tasks as a propaganda officer during the war. But some perspectives and interpretations stressed in the book published at the beginning of the Continuation War when Finland attacked the Soviet Union alongside the Germans can be traced back to earlier writings; this is true of, for example, the depictions and narratives of intertwined settlement and cultivation spreading civilisation from west to east. This metaphorical interpretation was also used in some of the reviews.⁵⁷

Moreover, it has been stressed that the settlement was mainly driven from below, and not initiated by the crown.⁵⁸ This way of writing can clearly be connected to the conceptions of the ‘frontier’ that characterised US historiography. The neglect of the state and its role in the interpretation of the settlement was criticised harshly when the first volume was reviewed in the Swedish journal *Historisk Tidskrift för Finland*. Those historians who wrote in Swedish have been said to have been more inclined to individualism and methodological positivism, stressing the role of single individuals and focusing on politics and more traditional themes. According to SKH, swidden cultivation had advantages over other forms of cultivation and agriculture;

enabling colonisation and the spreading of the settlements, it enlarged the state ownership of land and increased the size of the population.

Settlement and local communities

In the general work summarising the writing of cultural history, great importance was attached to the history of the peasantry. Those scholars contributing to the SKH were influenced by several collectivistic and/or holistic approaches. Whereas the first editor-in-chief, Gunnar Suolahti, had been influenced by lamprechtian ideas, others, such as Voionmaa and Jutikkala, can be related to the early traditions of writing social and economic history. In addition, ethnology focused on a collective folk culture. While earlier traditions laid greater emphasis on individual actors, an approach interpreting history according to these traditions made larger groups the focus of research.

The collective focus ascribed common people agency. By not focusing on the state and the crown, the structures and functions of local communities were made visible. As a consequence, a picture of a society built from below was formed. In the texts on the local communities – one could talk of portrayals of a rural, public sphere – gender had a pivotal role. A gender differentiated rural society was depicted. Women's activities were described and presented according to the ideas of separate spheres; in these texts women were confined to domestic places, to the home and the household. Farm women were not regarded as actors of the local communities and they were not related to working for the common good. To summarise, they were not seen as actors in the local public spaces. In the series on cultural history, peasant men were depicted as actors in local, and homo-social, public arenas. This idea was stressed more thoroughly than in earlier historiographical texts.

Furthermore, men were depicted as settlers and colonisers of vast areas of land. Because they were related to, among other things, conceptions concerning Finland's position between east and west, questions about how the land was conquered, settled and owned were emphasised. Through the descriptions of the peasant as a settler and as a member of the local community, *Suomen kulttuurihistoria* empowered peasant men. Invoking homo-social ideals of egalitarianism, notions of individualism and understandings of expansionism and place, these depictions ascribed peasant men agency.

NOTES

- 1 Kulha 2006, 157.
- 2 Ahtiainen & Tervonen 2000, 57–58.
- 3 Suomen historian seura (Finnish Historical Society), Pöytäkirjojen liitteitä 1925–26. National Archives. See Tuominen 1975, 59–60.
- 4 Ahtiainen & Tervonen 2000, 57.
- 5 Cf. Kulha 2006, 155–165.
- 6 Cf. Tommila 1989, 155–156, 164; Ahtiainen & Tervonen 1996, 150.

- 7 Hettling 2003, 25–34; Berger 2006, 6–7.
- 8 Oberkrome 2003, 71–75; Raphael 2003, 156–159.
- 9 Cf. Stråth 2003.
- 10 Kulha 2006, 151
- 11 Anthoni 1934, 38–42.
- 12 Sääskilahti 1997, 67–69; Storå 1992, 96–97.
- 13 The Norwegian historian Ulrike Spring (2000) categorised the peasant as ‘the internal other’. For Finland, for instance, Sten Högnäs (1995, 10–14) presented similar interpretations. See Ahlbäck & Östman 2008.
- 14 Cf. Ahtiainen & Tervonen 1992.
- 15 Lehtonen 1992, 132–134.
- 16 SKS II, 308.
- 17 SKS IV, 45, 56, 61.
- 18 Sääskilahti 1997, 58, 72.
- 19 See Scott 1988, 2, 68–90. Besides Joan Scott, who has discussed the gendered aspects in the book ‘The Making of the English Working Class’, also Bonnie Smith (1998) has, among others, discussed the history of historiography from a gendered perspective.
- 20 For an example see Stefan Dudink (2004) who discusses the relationship between masculinity and the history of Dutch historiography. See Sinha 1999.
- 21 See Östman 2007.
- 22 SKH I, 51.
- 23 ‘Maan ja kansan vuorovaikutus ei esiinny missään ilmeikkäämmiin kuin asutuksessa, joka sisältää niin suuren osan kansamme koko historiallisen elämän ja työn tuloksia.’ (SKS I, 19).
- 24 SKS I, 13–15.
- 25 Cf. Östman 2006. In the 1930s several comprehensive books about the history of agriculture and the peasantry were published in Finland. During the interwar period the peasant began to appear more frequently on the pages of historical journals. Furthermore, agricultural history and the history of the peasantry were popularised in this period. In 1930 a historical society (Historiain Ystävien Liitto – Friends of History Society) broadcasted a series of lectures on the history of the peasant society. These lectures were delivered by, among others, distinguished historians, and they were published in 1936 under the title ‘The history of the Finnish peasant class and agriculture’ (Suomen talonpojan ja maatalouden historiaa).
- 26 ‘Paikallishallinto perustui ennen kaikkea asukkaiden tasa-arvoisuuteen ja yhteistyöhön, omatoimisuuteen sekä itsevalvontaan, ja se edellytti suuressa määrin yksimielisyyttä. Paikallishallinnon yhtenä tärkeänä tehtävänä olikin sellaisen sovun ja rauhan ylläpitäminen pitäjän asukkaiden kesken, mitä yhteiset tehtävät ja rasitukset edellyttivät.’ (SKH II, 229–230.)
- 27 SKS II, 237–238.
- 28 Lehtonen 1972, 184.
- 29 ‘Voionmaa on sattuvasti huomauttanut, että myllyn rakentaminen ja kaskan kaataminen olivat samanluontoista puuhaa: kummassakin tarvittiin miestä ja kirvestä ja kummassakin oli oikeuksien ja velvollisuuksien peruste sama, nimittäin mieskohmainen.’ (SKH III, 66.)
- 30 Cf. Kimmel, 6–8.
- 31 Östman 2006.
- 32 Cf. SKH I, 408–410.
- 33 SKH I, 48–49.
- 34 SKS I, 48–49.
- 35 SKH I, 76, 85.
- 36 SKS I, 89–90.
- 37 Cf. Rikkinen 1976, 14–19.
- 38 ‘Kirjoittamattoman suomalaisen kansanlain mukaan oli kaskimaan valtaus määrätyin ehdoin luvallinen yhteisillä takamailla ja toisten omistamilla erämaillakin, milloin

- ei toinen ollut paikalla aikaisemmin kaskimaata vallannut.' (SKH I, 400.)
- 39 SKS I, 404, see also Voionmaa's introductory text SKS I, 20–21.
- 40 SKH II, 427.
- 41 Cf. Östman 2008.
- 42 SKS I, 17.
- 43 Hettling 2003, 9–10.
- 44 Anthoni 1934.
- 45 SKS I, 17.
- 46 Cf. Oberkrome 2003, 76–82.
- 47 Ahtiainen & Tervonen 2000, 57.
- 48 SKS I, 51.
- 49 Östman 2006.
- 50 Nikander 1935.
- 51 Lesch 1926, 21–38.
- 52 SKS I, 18.
- 53 SKS I, 16.
- 54 Hettling 2003; Oberkrome 2003.
- 55 Cf. Ahtiainen & Tervonen 2000, 62.
- 56 See also Lesch 1926.
- 57 Anthoni 1934; Nikander 1935.
- 58 SKS I, 52–53.

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PIA OLSSON

The domesticated woman as an ideal – women's place in rural Finland

A woman who was liked (young) and who was a desired farm wife of the house and daughter-in-law had to be a handsome, robust woman (= not dainty) with a wide 'stern', a baker of good bread and skillful in handicraft, economical (–), domesticated = not a village gadabout.¹

This quotation describing the ideal rural woman was written by one of the few male informants who answered the questionnaire *The Status of a Woman*, arranged by the Finnish National Board of Antiquities in 1985. Among the many other features considered necessary for a woman to be acceptable, the informant mentions the way she managed her mobility, i.e. her relationship to her physical environment, to her 'place'. The ideal of the domesticated woman, however, is not based on a single observation in the questionnaire material but is quite common among the descriptions that picture the qualities considered positive for women in general.

My question dealing with rural women's use of place is part of my research, which analyses the possible long-term effects the Second World War might have had on women's lives during the post-war years 1945–1960. In many respects, the Second World War has been considered as a turning point in Finnish history. The War has been seen as an interesting period for women in international research as well. In the 1950s the War was considered to have initiated a social revolution for gender roles,² but later the long term effects of the War have been questioned. The sweep of women's activities expanded during the War, as they increasingly took part in paid work and social activities. Women's paid work became acceptable in Finnish society also after the War, and women's and mothers' participation in working life became more common than ever before. In 1950, 46% of married Finnish women were part of the workforce. The mothers in 21% of all families with children in Finland worked outside the home. However, at the same time a family centred ideology – 'a home cult' – became stronger as well.³

My purpose has been to study the effects of the War from the viewpoint of individual women. By this I mean how the actual lives of Finnish women changed after the War – which is not the same as the changes that happened on the political, social and ideological levels. This article deals with women's

place relationships and is based on the reminiscences women have written about in response to the questionnaire *The Status of a Woman*.

My discussion deals with the concrete differences women have experienced in their use of space in relation to men. The focus of both the research material and the article is on the everyday lives of women living in rural areas, i.e. on women who usually did not have a chance to take part in paid work. Soon after starting to read the collection of material on reminiscences in the National Board of Antiquities I realized that to understand the life histories of these women and the decisions they made, the time period in focus would sometimes have to be expanded to the pre-war years. The expectations put on women in the post-war years are only one layer of the multi-layered role that was considered suitable for women. Childhood years also seem to have played a very important part in both women's and men's evaluations of gender roles after the War.

According to Judith Butler the images connected to gender are changeable and being continuously re-produced. This means that also the post-war ideal of a woman has included multiple layers of ideals from different periods of time – with their specific demands and expectations for women – and in that sense has been only a momentary phase of an ongoing negotiation about gender roles.⁴ The reminiscences show how this negotiation process is performed, not only on the level of societal discourse, but also on the level of individuals. As I started to read the reminiscences I soon realized that the status of women – as described by the informants – was mainly connected to their personal lives: to their upbringing, their families and to their marital life. This means that women's lives become understandable only through the unravelling of the layers of expectations they have met in the different periods of their lives.

In addition, as the memories connected to the status of women were written many decades after the actual events took place, they not only reflect the layers of the time period they describe, but also the expectations and ideals of the time in which they were written. This all has influenced the way women have wanted to picture their lives, i.e. what they have wanted to make visible, and the positive and negative aspects they have emphasized. The 1980s created a baseline for the way women evaluated their possibilities for using space. Both personal opportunities and the prevalent social situation of the 1980s, as well as the interaction between them, affected the tone of the reminiscences. Also, the way the questions were formulated in the questionnaire may have influenced the way women remembered the different periods of their lives; the questionnaire defined those aspects of women's lives that were considered worth remembering. This means that the questionnaire also played a part in producing gender, and especially womanhood.

Questions of gender

At the same time as questions of gender equality were becoming more and more topical in Finnish society during the 1960s and 1970s, there was also a

visible emphasis on emancipation in ethnological research. The emancipation was not, however, directed towards the questions of gender equality but referred to the new 'ethnological' groups of townspeople and workers. The first signs of interest in gender questions in Finnish ethnology appeared in the 1980s when the National Board of Antiquities devised two questionnaires dealing with the life of women: the first one in 1985 was called *The Status of a Woman*, and the second in 1988 was on women's status and work during the Second World War.

The questionnaire *The Status of a Woman* received responses in the form of over 1,000 reminiscences of over 20,000 pages.⁵ I find its popularity to be evidence of the perceived importance of the themes covered in it. The informants varied in background – both women and men representing a great variety of professions – but they mainly comprised women picturing the rural way of life. Most of them were born at the beginning of the 20th century, so at the time the questionnaire was circulated they were mainly retired. The possibly volatile times were in the past and their contemporary life was pictured as tranquil in comparison.

The Status of a Woman is a wide questionnaire dealing with women's status in different periods of life and in different roles, which include those of daughters, wives, single mothers, daughters-in-law and grandmothers. The questions dealing with the post-war years and the War's effects on women's lives were only a small part of the whole theme, and in the reminiscences these years are merged with other periods of life. As a whole, the questions are quite neutral in their tone, but they are based on the presumed difference between women and men in both work and social relations. This presumed difference is obvious from the first question in the questionnaire, which deals with the birth of boys and girls and the possible differences in attitudes towards them. It reads as follows: 'Were girls and boys considered equal at birth and were they equally hoped for? If there were presumed differences in value, what do you think were the reasons for this?''⁶

This juxtaposition is also visible in the tone of the descriptions written by the informants: in comparisons between boys and girls, brothers and sisters, and husbands and wives it is the female party that is described as the unfortunate one. This is not say that this was not the case in reality, but we might wonder if the descriptions would have been different had the questions been formulated differently. However, the long-standing myth of the strong and independent Finnish women, which has lived on in both the public discourses as well as in research is contradicted by these images of subordinated and oppressed women.⁷

Not many questions in the questionnaire deal directly with the question of women's space. Those dealing with the use of space are questions such as: where did young people meet in their spare time, or did an unmarried woman have her own room in her childhood home. Also, the status of a daughter-in-law in her new home is dealt with from the viewpoint of her concrete place in the household; for example, her place at the table or her and her husband's sleeping arrangements. The space outside the home area is dealt with in a question that covers women's social activities. The issues of space, however,

are not only apparent in these questions, but are also implied in those starting from the different upbringing of boys and girls and ending with the last question asking for anecdotes picturing the status of women.

The reminiscences are written in a rich personal language, with some of the informants choosing to use local dialects instead of the standard language. Sometimes the sentences carry laconic or sarcastic nuances that are difficult to translate into English. This is why the original quotations in Finnish are included in the endnotes. Another observation concerning the language used in the reminiscences is that the women have often chosen to write in the third person: sometimes their own experiences are considered as common to other women, and sometimes they write about the prevalent conceptions concerning women's status. I suspect, however, that the traditional way of answering questionnaires has also influenced the way women have written their reminiscences. Sometimes it has simply been easier to observe the position of women as an outsider than as a subject of analysis, and one response can contain many levels of narration which interact with one another.

The boys of the world, the girls of the home

I, at least, envied boys because they had the chance to run away to the seas and to many other adventures that could be read about in books.⁸

The differences between men and women in their opportunities to use their environment already become apparent in descriptions of childhood. The women informants describe their childhood years as restricted in terms of mobility: '*Girls were not allowed to go to the neighbours to play as often as boys were.*'⁹ They also felt they did not have as much free time as their brothers. '*These liberties I remember I missed*', wrote one of the informants. She felt she had been tied to domestic work already as a young girl.¹⁰ The roles of men and women were taught early to children and domestic work kept girls at home; they had to be ready to help their mothers at any time. Even though boys also had their duties in outdoor work, the mobility of these chores made girls experience their part as heavier and more confining: '*Boys were allowed to go to their own activities in the evenings after the outdoor work was done, fishing for example. Girls had to do the dishes and clean out the cottage after dinner.*'¹¹

The turf was expanded for girls, too, after confirmation, but the regulations were still considered stricter for girls than for boys. On the other hand, the time of youth is often pictured as a period when strolling and the use of space were freer than during other – earlier or later – periods of life under the strict control of either parents or a husband. Summer dances and get-togethers are represented in reminiscences as welcomed breaks that also offered an occasional chance to break away from the home environment. The choirs, study circles and sports clubs made it possible to meet other young people.¹² Mobility and social contacts are emphasized in the descriptions of 'salad days', even though the turf of girls and young women would not have been

very extensive: *'The youth of the neighborhood spent the evenings visiting each other. Some houses were more fun to meet in. We talked, danced, sang and wrote lyrics. Walked and swam.'*¹³

The freer mobility of boys, however, is highlighted. Dances and evening parties with dancing are often pictured as examples of events which boys were allowed *'to visit almost without permission while girls were kept at home'*.¹⁴

The desire to stay close to the home environment and obedience towards parents were considered worthy qualities for girls... (– –) The mobility of girls outside the home was restricted fairly efficiently – especially at 'twilight time' – in the evenings. Boys instead were allowed to move more freely. (– –) After confirmation girls were allowed to move more freely outside in the evenings. However, at ten o'clock a female family member was to be at home. Going to dances was not desirable, but after confirmation it was somehow allowable.¹⁵

One important reason for limiting the mobility of girls was to control their sexual behaviour. *'The moral demands were much stricter for girls than for boys. Boys were allowed to stay out later, girls were not.'*¹⁶ Also, the division of work that kept girls and young women close to home has been seen as a means to closely watch their activities.¹⁷ This is understandable considering the agrarian ideal, according to which the biggest symbolic threat for a woman was the questioning of her purity, as this often led to the endangerment of her reputation and well-being.¹⁸ When a woman – or a girl – broke the conventional codes of moral behaviour, the community reacted rapidly. This makes it understandable that questions of moral behaviour were an important part of the upbringing of girls. What makes the descriptions surprising is the way moral upbringing was sometimes conducted. According to one respondent: *'Girls are easily perishable goods. Even if you went to see a neighbour you had to ask permission. Once I visited a neighbour 200 m from home without permission; when I got home I was spanked. I will remember it all my life.'*¹⁹

The Finnish ethnologist and oral historian Pirjo Korhonen has stated that themes connected to sexuality are usually remembered as not being talked about. She calls the strategies that focus children's attention on anything except sexual questions collective amnesia.²⁰ The descriptions in *The Status of a woman* material also show that girls were not given informative sexual education. This does not mean, however, that sexuality was not part of their upbringing. The world outside the home was considered dangerous to the well-being of girls. One of the informants describes the following situation:

Liisa went to school with her brothers but after finishing school she had to leave and start to work as a maid. – When her mother saw her off at the gate, she had tears in her eyes and she gave her only one piece of advice: *'Don't have too much fun.'*²¹

This description reflect the way women who left their homes were regarded in the 19th century: the femininity of these women was easily questioned at the same time as they could be suspected of sexually questionable behaviour.²² Even though some changes towards greater sexual liberalism did occur after the Second World War, these changes are not visible in the reminiscences picturing rural communities. The puritan family model still dominated in rural families. This meant a clearly gendered hierarchy in the family, where ‘the husband was above the wife, the parents above the children and the farmer above the servants’.²³ Also, in the reminiscences of women who lived their childhood and youth in the 1920s and 1930s, the atmosphere of the home reflected gendered puritan moral principles:

Almost every home had a rule that particularly girls were not allowed to go to dances as early as boys (– –) there was a rule that before confirmation you were not allowed to go to dances and other forms of entertainment, and they said that those who went had a bad upbringing.²⁴

Even as grownups girls were not allowed, at least in farmhouses, to go to parties in the evening or to a midsummer bonfire in another locality. Assuming they owned bicycles. Boys, instead, were allowed to go as far as they wanted, even to other parishes; nothing was said at home.²⁵

In the home surroundings the girls were under strict supervision. It is contradictory, however, that while some girls were restricted to the immediate surroundings of the home, many girls had to leave their homes to work at a very young age. In this respect, too, women noted gender differences. According to these women informants, the home farm offered more possibilities to young men than to young women. One of the informants also saw other reasons for why boys stayed at home longer: ‘– – *probably because mothers served them food, did their laundries, etc.*’²⁶ The reason for the early breakaway from home was often economic. Sometimes the strict discipline of home changed very early to an independent and autonomous life:

I myself had to set my own restrictions and also keep them, sometimes with better and other times with less success. As the oldest child of a poor family one started to feel early on that one had to be able to support oneself. I left for the ‘world’ of my own accord at the early age of 16.²⁷

The mental atmosphere also affected the decision to leave home, and sometimes marriage offered the only opportunity to leave: ‘*The only thing that girls could do at that time was to get married or go off to the world; opinions or inheritances were insignificant.*’²⁸ Thus even though the home environment may have been experienced as repressive and restrictive, the possibilities for change were considered limited.

I felt very subordinate and enslaved at home. I planned to leave for the city to work as a maid for the gentlefolk, but I didn’t have the courage and there was the idea that one was obliged to work for one’s parents for

they had brought you into this world and supported you. Marriage was the only possibility of escape.²⁹

However, getting married did not always change the situation much.

The men of the world, the women of the home

When the wife is nothing but a carthorse this is hard; you shouldn't go anywhere except to work (—).³⁰

Married women's use of space was affected by the family structure and the traditional division of work. The use of time also seems to be different for men and women, and this again affected the possibilities of releasing oneself from the home environment.³¹ This idea was made evident, for example, in an enquiry made in 1941 during the truce, which asked for views concerning extra income earned outside the farm. According to this enquiry women who crossed the boundary of the home farm to work for pay came from small farms. This means that working outside the home was identified with the indigent part of the rural population. In 1950 this gender-based polarization of extra income in the rural context was even more pronounced.³²

However, places acquire their meanings also through their use and the experiences people – in this case women – have or have not (had) in them.³³ Places outside the home are connected with freedom and longing – they are places of escape from home surroundings that are considered too small and restrictive. The way women were allowed to use a place and to break away from the domestic space also influenced their opportunities to choose a career. But most importantly, it reflected the inner hierarchies of the family. The challenges women met in their home sphere when trying to take part in public activities are pictured in a reminiscence told as a true story in all its absurdity:

The celebration of Mother's Day broadened the significance of mothers to some extent. But it (—) could happen that the first to arrive to the school on Mother's Day were the bachelors, then the fathers and in the end the mothers. There was a farm where the father had said to his wife: 'We can't leave the house deserted. You, mother, stay at home. I'll go to the Mother's Day celebration.' This is also what happened. What would mother do in the party.³⁴

Women's mobility and use of space were partly restricted by attitudes that seemed to follow the fostering principles of childhood. Mobility and social dealings seem to have included work for their justification: 'Yes, you could drop in at the neighbour's for coffee, but you always had to have needlework with you so that you would not be (—) called an idle "willage gadabout".'³⁵ Women met each other, for example, at 'kuntturit' when they spun and separated linen, cut weft for rags or wove fabric on the shared warp.³⁶ During summers women picked berries and swam together. Sometimes the shared

work turned into pleasure: *'The summertime laundry trips to the beach were like outings. We took some packed lunch and a coffee pot with us as well as the kids to enjoy the summer day.'*³⁷ Seldom did women describe situations in which social contacts would have consisted solely of socializing. The physical place of women was most often defined by their work.

Women dropped in with their knitting for coffee and to chat. Trips to the shop were also welcome chances to meet. *'Kökkiä'* or sewing bees were arranged to cut weft for rags, to card and spin the wool. (– –) Complimentary calls were paid when a child was born in a family, then we went to see the newborn baby and took cheese and something for the child, cap, socks or old clothes to put under its bottom. These calls were only for women.³⁸

In addition to attitudes, practical circumstances explain the shrinking of the women's area of activities to mainly the spheres of the home. In rural areas both the long distances and the poor means of communication are mentioned as reasons for a home-centred life. One of the informants describes a big change in her life in 1956 when a road was built as close as four kilometres from her home: *'Before you could get to the shop 10 km away and the town 20 km away by horse. During the summertime all cattle products had to be carried 5 km to the ship that ran two times a week or more seldom.'*³⁹

Essential factors for women's use of space have been the structure of the family and the traditional gender-based division of work, which usually meant, for example, that childcare was totally the women's responsibility. The years after the War were not only the years of the baby boomers but also the years of the child bearers. The women who lived their adult years right after the War are classified as the generation of 'wars and dearth' and 'war and scant consumption'.⁴⁰ The life of women and their use of place were influenced not only the immediate effects of the War but also by other typical generational factors. As one informant wrote:

I felt that the burdensome part of marriage was that I was so tied to home. I had 7 children and was never able to go anywhere. It was 15 kilometres to the church, there was no car. Only sometimes during the summer was I able to cycle to church. The children would not stay at home with their father.⁴¹

The division of work was also linked to the way men and women were able to use their time. Men could have breaks between different chores while women describe their life as one ongoing working process. One of the reasons was – again – responsibility for the children.⁴² According to the reminiscences it seems that not even the developing infrastructure of the society offered the women a chance to expand their field of activities. At worst the picture given of the home surroundings is reminiscent of a prison where there is hardly any chance of escape:

There was never time of your own. If you happened to pop in at the neighbour's, it was always rush! rush! rush!; you had to be back to your chores in time. (— —) Once a year I got to visit my childhood home (— —) with the children; sometimes two years would pass without going.⁴³

One of the informants describes as the most oppressive part of the marriage being tied down to the repetitive chores day after day.⁴⁴ Other informants shared the negative feeling of being bound to the home sphere.

When home becomes an obstacle

Home was traditionally considered the principal area for women's activities and women were expected to create the home environment. Even though the informants do not write negatively about the home itself, they are sometimes very critical. Home is pictured in terms of tightly scheduled work; the only possible way to free oneself, even for a short while, was to leave home. The world outside the home meant freedom from hard work and the responsibility of upholding family life.

Feminist researchers have critically analysed the culturally constructed linkage between home and a woman. In feminist research too, however, the relation between home, gender and sexuality has sometimes been seen mainly in a positive light: home as a cover, as the heart, as a place for privacy and roots, and as a symbol of motherhood.⁴⁵

It is surprising that the women picturing their lives in the questionnaire rarely describe their home in such positive terms. On the contrary the home often appears as an obstacle for women: it is a place that is connected to hard work and hierarchical family relationships; a place where there is no way out. To feel the nostalgic sense of home one has to be able to have the spatial mobility to leave home.⁴⁶

It has been said that to feel at home means that one has to have formed special meanings connected to a place. A place becomes a home through the feelings connected to it, which means that, more than an actual place, 'home' is a certain relationship. The sense of home can also change, depending on age, the phase of life and gender. Also, surrounding objects and memories connected to them, as well as the feeling of emotional cover connected to the physical milieu, are combined with the idea of home. One important factor producing the feeling of home is also the autonomy to actively maintain and shape the surrounding milieu.⁴⁷

The chores and the building of the home are seldom pictured in the reminiscences as having positive connotations. One reason maybe that in the rural context women often moved to their husband's home. This seems to have limited the possibilities of actively interacting with the environment and adopting the place as a home. Many of the informants describe both their concrete and symbolic place as newlywed wives in their husband's home as restricted, even if the social relations were otherwise experienced as positive:

The year was 1935 and I got married and moved to my husband's home on the 8th of November 1935. This house was 13 kilometres from my home, but in the same parish. The escorts were fed a meal and the reception was good. My mother-in-law and husband advised me in matters. I, my husband and our two-week-old baby boy had two small rooms upstairs, a built-in range in one of the rooms to give warmth, nothing in the other. At the table I sat at the maid's place. I kept my things in room above the granary.⁴⁸

In the descriptions dealing with the life of the daughter-in-laws, the importance of the surrounding people and the close link between social relations and space become obvious.⁴⁹ The family hierarchy functioned not only in the relationship between men and women but also in the relationship between women from different age groups. The way the relationship with the new home was formed was strongly connected to the rights the daughter-in-law had or had not been given:

I lived as a daughter-in-law for 23 years until my mother-in-law died. After that the circumstances changed completely, because there was no longer one who ordered and forbade. I could do everything to my own liking, go where I wanted, invite guests, whatever I wanted. Freedom.⁵⁰

According to this informant, activities connected to maintaining the home milieu began to produce the feeling of home only when they were connected to functional freedom.⁵¹ Sometimes this meant that the feeling of home developed only when the physical place became one's own. Folklorist Satu Apo has argued that an owner-occupied house has been a mythical idea and key symbol in the Finnish world view since the end of the 19th century. To own one's house symbolises the capability to master one's life. One has gained 'independence' and 'freedom' from the 'master', neighbours and relatives.⁵² The informants in *The Status of a Woman* also describe the positive feelings of having a home of their own. The word often used in this context is freedom:

The War [the Winter War] was not a totally bad thing that would not have brought any good. I think it would have taken 100 years of talk to make so many changes happen in our lives as now were gained in 102 days of war. What freedom came to us daughter-in-laws; we broke free from the main house and from the mother-in-law and we are still allowed to live our own lives. Think about it – if I was still a daughter-in-law (–), it would be horrible and the War freed me from my mother-in-law, and now life tastes like life.⁵³

As social scientist Anni Vilkkö has stated, the feeling of home is an expression connected to positive connotations and these positive connotations also bring forth the negative experiences connected to experiences of insecurity and alienation.⁵⁴ The negative reminiscences in *The Status of a Woman* are more extensive than the more positive experiences connected to home experienced

later in life. However, also these negative descriptions of home reveal the many layers that influence the way a place can be experienced.

Reminiscences of place

From the symbolic meaning of spaces/places and the clearly gendered messages which they transmit, to straightforward exclusion by violence, spaces and places are not only themselves gendered but, in their being so, they both reflect and affect the ways in which gender is constructed and understood. The limitation of women's mobility, in terms of both identity and space, has been in some cultural contexts a crucial means of subordination.⁵⁵

This subordination pictured by Doreen Massey is the same as that described by the women in *The Status of a Woman*. The lack of total control over their use of space not only affected women's mobility but also their social life and identity. It also seems that in the Finnish rural context women's mobility after the War followed the same patriarchal customs women had become used to as girls before the War. Local and economic-based differences are difficult to find in the material.⁵⁶ The unchangeability of the women's place relationships can be seen as one example of the persistent asymmetrical division of power between women and men in Finnish agricultural life.⁵⁷

I have interpreted the reminiscences as oral history material even if they are written rather than spoken, and even though the interaction that goes on between the oral historian and the informant during the process of remembering is lacking. Furthermore, the initiative to concentrate on certain themes came from an official source, and the themes that were considered important were pre-determined. However, I find that the most important methodological questions concerning the questionnaire material are very much the same as in oral history material. By this I mean the remoulding of the narration by the context, and the challenges of interpreting the reminiscences.

In *The Status of a Woman* the questionnaire leaflet includes 54 sets of questions, which are further divided into almost 200 more detailed questions. One can ask how much room this kind of detailed questionnaire leaves for the informants themselves to analyse their lives from the perspective of their own set of values. In other words, would the story have been told differently with less guidance or none at all? One can also ask who has the right to define women's place relationships when the question is put forward retrospectively.

Place and place relationships are concepts that are subsequently used as tools to analyse the material. The question of women's place relations is not in the questionnaire as such. The place relationship is remembered in different contexts, such as when describing the different jobs women had in the rural context or when remembering the most difficult and best aspects of married life. This means that the women's place relationship is a phenomenon that a

researcher has to create from small details, which may lead to only a partial picture. In the material, reminiscences that deal with place often seem to be connected to situations with negative connotations. The questions encouraged the women to analyse their lives critically, which is also the case when they write about their use of space. Other kinds of questions could have elicited more positive responses in regard to the same places. This indicates that the material offers a perspective on women's use of space from the viewpoint of limited possibilities.

The fact that the questionnaire does not directly ask the women about their place relationship also suggests that the way this relationship occurs in the reminiscences can be heterogeneous; sometimes it is only possible to read between the lines. The relationship usually appears in the context of the concrete use of space – not in descriptions of feelings towards certain places. The emotions are pictured only when the use of space has been experienced strongly, either positively or negatively. All in all the material offers an opportunity to analyse the places women have been able to use and the way they have used them. The levels of meanings must be understood through these levels of actions. In this respect the Finnish women wrote about their place relationship very similarly to the way Yi-Fu Tuan has defined the terms place and space. For Tuan, place means security, while space represents freedom. We are attached to place and long for space, for freedom.⁵⁸

It is clear that remembering is never neutral. This is even more obvious when the focus of remembering is on one's own personal life and on the emotions connected to it. Women write about their lives for many reasons: it can be a way to control one's life, a means to construct one's own or a group's identity, therapeutic activity or a way to transmit knowledge to younger generations.⁵⁹ To write about one's own life is egocentric, and the viewpoint is naturally that of the narrator, who can seek psychological, social or moral justification for her/his decisions.⁶⁰ It is also common in life history writing that the focus is on difficulties and the dynamics of the story is based on complications and solutions.⁶¹ In the vast material *The Status of a Woman* all of these features can be found. The name of the questionnaire seems to have led the women to analyse their lives from the viewpoint of social change; the narration became a way to speak up for oneself as well as for women as a group.

Ethnologist Christina Westergren has raised the question of the kind of influence the research in hand may have on the persons in focus. The publishing of a questionnaire and the request to write about certain things can create an awareness that otherwise might not have arisen. As she points out, a questionnaire – from the gender perspective – can also be a reflection of power relations: it can either strengthen or unravel the traditions connected to gender.⁶² The way the questions were formulated in this questionnaire may also have affected the way the women wrote about their past and about their relations to men, as well as the way women wrote about their use of space.

The Status of a Woman is the first of two questionnaires circulated by the National Board of Antiquities which are exceptions to the norm. These questionnaires take a comprehensive look at women's lives, where as at

least on a superficial level, the previous and later questionnaires arranged by the National Board of Antiquities tend towards gender neutrality or gender blindness, where culture is studied without taking gender into account.⁶³ Oral historian Joan Sangster has written that to contextualise women's oral histories we have to understand the ideologies that are reflected in their lives. Listening to women's oral histories helps us to understand the ways they have interpreted and challenged these ideologies.⁶⁴ This process is also important when analysing Finnish women's reminiscences. The ideologies have not only affected women's lives but also the way women have written about them; i.e. what is, for example, when writing about the family hierarchies that affected women's use of place.⁶⁵

I have chosen to analyse these reminiscences as feminist documents as they reveal the differences between the opportunities offered to men and women in the rural context (see Olsson 2007). The question of oral histories' feminist nature was dealt with also by the Swedish ethnologist Agneta Lilja when she analysed a questionnaire arranged in 1955 on women's status in the old rural society [*Kvinnans ställning i det gamla bondesamfundet*]. The questionnaire was constructed to cover certain predetermined areas considered valuable by the researchers and it did not leave much space for informants' own subjective and creative interpretations. She found, however, that at least some of the responses to this questionnaire actually contained a gender perspective, even though it only became an analytic category in ethnology twenty years later.⁶⁶

The Status of a Woman was arranged thirty years after the questionnaire Agneta Lilja read at least partly as a feminist document. One can assume that the women answering the questionnaire in 1985 were more aware of feministic discourse and gender questions than women thirty years earlier. The reminiscences at least show the women's aim to create self-understanding as they analysed their periods of life in the context of possibilities and restrictions in the family hierarchy.

A Finnish folklorist Pauliina Latvala has also argued, on the grounds of her material collected in the late 1990s, that when writing about their family narratives Finnish women have often chosen as their genre a criticism of the gender system. This criticism has included both the inequality of the sexes and gender-based family models. Men, on the contrary, have written more favourably about their families, wives and children.⁶⁷

Also, in the answers to the questionnaire *The Status of a Woman* the confrontation of women and men is clear. The informants do not say their lives have been unfair or that they themselves have been mistreated. They do not need to do that: the facts, i.e. the life histories, speak for themselves. If these life histories are a criticism of the gender system, the criticism is not open nor a manifesto. They leave the conclusions for the readers to make. My conclusion is that these life histories do carry a feministic meaning by making the inequality between men and women visible, even though they do not demand a change or even express personal ambitions for a more just relationship between genders. In the reminiscences, the use of place is one theme that reflects this more or less conscious objective.

NOTES

- 1 'Naisesta josta pidettiin (nuori) ja josta toivottiin emäntää ja miniää piti olla näyttävä, rotevatekoinen (= ei hiplu), perä leveä, hyvän leivän paistaja ja osata tehdä käsityötä, tarkka taloudessa ei huusaava (?), kotona pysyvä = ei kylänluuta' (MV: K34/466).
- 2 Summerfield 1998, 5–6.
- 3 Ansiotyö ja perheenemäntä 1956, 5; Jallinoja 1984, 60; Satka 1993, 68.
- 4 See Butler 1990.
- 5 In this paper I have used only part of the material as the research process is still in progress and I have read only about half of the answers. It seems, however, that the main phenomena concerning the way women have used their space are already visible in this material.
- 6 Museoviraston kyselylehti 1985, 8.
- 7 On the myth of the strong Finnish woman, see Markkola 2002.
- 8 'Minä ainakin kadehdin poikia, koska heillä oli mahdollisuus karata merille ja omiin muihinkin seikkailuihin, joista kirjoitettiin kirjoja' (MV: K32/935).
- 9 Museovirasto (MV) [National Board of Antiquities]: Kysely (K) [Questionnaire] 32/995.
- 10 MV: K32/194.
- 11 'Pojat sai lähteä illalla ulkotöitten jälkeen omille teilleen, vaikkapa ongelle. Tyttöjen piti tiskata ja siistiä tupa illallisen jälkeen.' (MV: K32/257.)
- 12 MV: K32/995, 155.
- 13 'Naapurien nuoret istui aina iltaa toistensa luona. Joissakin taloissa oli hausempi kokoontua. Juteltiin, tanssittiin, laulettiin ja laulunsanoja kirjoiteltiin. Käveltiin ja uitiin.' (MV: K32/155.)
- 14 MV: K32/956.
- 15 'Tytön arvokkaampana ominaisuutena pidettiin kotonaviihtyvyyttä ja kuuliaisuutta vanhempia kohtaan. (– –) Tyttöjen liikkumista kodin ulkopuolella rajoitettiin varsin tehokkaasti – varsinkin 'hämy aikaan' – iltaisin. Pojat sen sijaan saivat liikkua vapaammin. (– –) Rippikoulun käytyään tytöt saivat vapaammin liikkua ulkona iltaisin. Kello kaksikymmentä kaksi oli kuitenkin oltava naispuolisen perheenjäsenen kotona. Tansseissa käyminen ei ollut toivottavaa, mutta rippikoulun jälkeen se oli kuitenkin jotenkin sallittua.' (MV: K32/946.)
- 16 'Tytöjen moraalivaatimukset olivat tiukemmat kuin poikien. Pojat saivat olla myöhään poissa kotoa, tytöt eivät.' (MV: K32/135.)
- 17 Helsti 2000, 101; Peltonen 1999, 46–47; see also Lövkrona 1999, 30.
- 18 Löfström 1999, 155.
- 19 'Tytöt on helposti pillantuvaa tavaraa. Jos meni vaikka naapuriin piti kysyä lupa. Lienenkö kerran mennyt luvatta 200 m päässä olevaan naapuriin kun tulini pois, oli selkäsauna valmiina. Muistan koko ikäni.' (MV: K:32/338.)
- 20 Korkiakangas 1996, 268–269.
- 21 'Liisa kävi koulua yhdessä veljiensä kera, mutta koulun jälkeen joutui piiaksi. – Kun äiti saatteli häntä portille, niin vedet oli silmissä ja hän antoi vain yhden ainoan neuvon: – Elä liiakse iloihe.' (MV: K32/864.)
- 22 Ollila 1998, 62–63; Vehkalahti 2000, 145.
- 23 Jallinoja 1984, 40, 60.
- 24 'Esimerkiksi melkein joka kodissa oli sellainen sääntö että varsinkaan tytöt ei saanut lähteä hyppylle niin aikaisin kun pojat (– –) oli sellainen sääntö että ei ennen rippikoulua saanut mennä tanssiin eikä muihin huvitilaisuuksiin sanottiin että niillä on huono kasvatus kun hypäävät nuorena (– –)' (MV: K32/423).
- 25 'Vielä aikuisina ollessaan tytöt eivät saaneet maalaistaloissa ainakaan, mennä esimerkiksi iltamiin tai vaikkapa Juhannuskokolle toiselle paikkakunnalle. Jos nimittäin omistivat polkupyörän. Pojat sen sijaan saivat kierrellä kuinka kaukana, toisissa pitäjissä vaikka, ei siitä mitään sanottu kotona.' (MV: K32/278.)
- 26 MV: K32/429.

- 27 'Olen itse joutunut asettamaan omat rajoitukseni ja myös pitämään ne milloin paremmalla, milloin huonommalla menestyksellä. Köyhän perheen vanhimpana lapsena alkoi jo varhain tuntua että täytyy kyetä elättämään itse itsensä. Omasta tahdostani olen lähtenyt jo 16-vuotiaana "maailmalle".' (MV: K32/830.)
- 28 'Tytöillä ei siihen aikaan kuulunut kuin mennä naimisiin tai lähteä maailmalle, sanan valta ja perinnöt olivat mitättömät' (MV: K32/262).
- 29 'Perheessä koki itsensä kovin alistetuksi ja orjuutetuksi. Sitä suunnitteli lähteäkseen kaupunkiin herrasväelle piiiaksi, mutta rohkeus petti ja oli sellainen käsitys vallalla että vanhemmilleen on velvollinen tekemään työtä siitä hyvästä kun he ovat maailmaan saattaneet ja elättäneet. Avioliitto olisi ainoa poispääsyn mahdollisuus.' (MV: K32/1014.)
- 30 'Kun ei aviovaimoa pidetä muuta kuin työjuhtana tämä on raskasta, ei saisi mennä muualle kun työhön (—) (MV: K32/746).
- 31 Friberg 1993, 27, 79.
- 32 Peltonen 1999, 43.
- 33 De Certeau 1988.
- 34 'Äitienpäivät avarsi jonkin verran äitien merkitystä. Mutta oli — niinkin, että Äitienpäivänä tuli koululle ensin vanhatpojat, sitten isät ja lopuksi äidit. Oli talo siellä, jossa isä oli sanonut vaimolleen: Ei taloa voi jättää autioksi. Jäähän sinä äiti kotiin. Minä menen äitienpäiville. Näin tapahtuikin se asia. Mitäpä se äiti juhille.' (MV: K32/753.)
- 35 'Kyllä naapurissa pistäydettiin kahvilla, mutta käsityö piti olla aina mukana, että ei vaan olisi 'ruvettu' alettu sanomaan että on laiska "kylänluuta"' (MV: K32/834).
- 36 MV: K32/404.
- 37 'Kesäiset rantapyykki-matkat olivat kuin huviretkiä. Otettiin evästä ja kahvipannu mukaan samoin lapset nauttimaan kesäisestä päivästä.' (MV: K32/995.)
- 38 'Naiset pistäytyivät kudin mukana naapuriin kahville ja keskustelemaan asioista. Kauppamatkat olivat myös tervetulleita tapaamiskohteita. Kökkiä eli talkoita oli matonkuteen leikkauksessa, villojen karstauksessa ja kehräämisessä. (—) Tervehdyskäyntejä tehtiin kun perheeseen syntyi lapsi, niin mentiin pirttiin eli varpahaasiin ja viätiin juusto ja lapselle jotain, myssy, sukat tai trasuja pyllyn alle. Nämät huomion osoitukset kuuluivat vain naisille.' (MV: K32/154.)
- 39 'Sitä ennen talvella hevosella pääsi 10 km päähän kauppaan ja kaupunkiin 20 km. Kesällä piti kaikki kantaa karjatuotteet 5 km kävellä laivalle joka kulki kaksi kertaa viikossa tai harvemmin.' (MV: K32/737.)
- 40 Martelin, Pitkänen & Koskinen 2001, 38.
- 41 'Avioliiton raskaana puolena pidin sitä, kun oli niin kotiin sidottu. Minullakin kun oli 7 lasta ei koskaan päässyt mihinkään. Kirkollekin kun oli 15 kilometriä, ei ollut autoa. Polkupyörällä ei päässyt, kuin kesällä joskus kirkkoon. Lapset ei jääneet kotiin isän kanssa.' (MV: K32/488.)
- 42 Friberg 1993, 79.
- 43 'Omaa aikaa ei ollut koskaan. Jos sattui naapurissa piipahtamaan, oli kuin tuli taka-puolen alla, että töihin pitää joutua ajallaan.(—) Kerran vuoteen pääsin käymään lapsineni kotona Heinävedellä ja joskus meni 2 vuotta käymättä.' (MV: K32/299.)
- 44 MV: K32/995.
- 45 Saarikangas [2006], 224.
- 46 Massey 1998, 180.
- 47 Vilkkonen 2001, 53–54.
- 48 'Oli vuosi 1935 menin naimisiin ja muutin mieheni kotiin 8.11.1935. Tämä talo oli 13 kilometrin päässä kotoani, mutta samassa pitäjässä (—). Tuomamiehetkin ruokittiin ja vastaanotto oli hyvä. Anoppi ja mieheni opasti ja neuvoi. Minulla, miehelleni ja kaksi viikkoisella poikavauvalla oli yläkerroksessa kaksi pientä huonetta, vain toisessa lämpöä antamassa muurattu hella, mutta toisessa ei mitään lämmön antajaa. Ruokapöydässä istuin palvelijan paikalla pöydän sivulla. Tavaroitani säilytin jyvääntien päällä olevassa luttihuoneessa.' (MV: K32/154.)
- 49 See Vilkkonen 2001, 54, 58.

- 50 ‘Asuin miniänä 23 vuotta eli anopin kuolemaan saakka. Sen jälkeen olot muuttuivat täysin. Olimme hämmentyneitä, kun ei enää ollut käskijää ja kieltäjää. Sain tehdä kaiken oman mieleni mukaan, mennä minne halusin, käskeä vieraita, mitä tahansa voin tehdä. Vapaus.’ (MV: K32/909.)
- 51 See Vilko 2001, 54.
- 52 Apo 1995, 222–223.
- 53 ‘Ei se sota läpikotaisin ollut vain paha asia, josta ei irronnut mitään hyvää. Puhumalla varmaan olisi tarvittu 100 vuotta, että olisi aikaan saatu nämät monet muutokset elämässä, mitä on aikaan saatu nyt 102 päivän sodalla. Mikä vapaus koitti meille miniöille, me päästiin irti Päätalosta ja anopista ja saadaan yhä elää omaa elämää. Ajatella – jos olisin yhä (–) miniänä, se olisi kauheaa ja sota vapautti minua anopistaan irti ja vapaaksi, ja elämä maistaa elämälle.’ (MV: K32/149.)
- 54 Vilko 2001, 55.
- 55 Massey 1998, 179.
- 56 See Massey 1998, 191–211.
- 57 Niskanen 2001, 132.
- 58 Tuan 1979, 3.
- 59 Helsti 2000, 21; Apo 1993, 126–127; Vilko 1997, 52.
- 60 Korkiakangas 2006, 133.
- 61 Hatakka 2007, 27.
- 62 Westergren 2003, 18–19.
- 63 See Lilja 2005, 134.
- 64 Sangster 1998 [1994], 91.
- 65 See Korkiakangas 1996, 329.
- 66 Lilja 2005, 133, 145–147.
- 67 Latvala 2005, 235.

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National Board of Antiquities (MV)

Questionnaire *The Status of a Woman* formulated by Pirkko Sallinen-Gimpl (K32).

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KATARIINA HEIKKILÄ

Farm space as an arena for female entrepreneurship

According to Doreen Massey, space is a social dimension and we constantly create space through our actions and relationships.¹ How do female entrepreneurs on present day farms in South-West Finland make use of and reshape the rural space around them is the focus of this article.

This article is based on my ongoing licentiate research. Women who establish a business of their own on a farm or manage some subsidiary industry on a farm are the target group of my research. About 6 % of female farmers in South-West Finland consider themselves entrepreneurs.² In my research I shall ask: what role does entrepreneurship have in the life cycle of the female farmers and how do they develop as entrepreneurs over the years? I also consider how entrepreneurship and everyday life match and in what ways different networks influence the entrepreneurial process. My primary research material consists of theme interviews with 18 women in South-West Finland.³ The interviewed women belong to different age groups and represent various branches of business, such as farm tourism, handicrafts, food processing, catering, importing and selling. In this article I introduce five entrepreneurial processes in more detail and describe how female entrepreneurship and rural space intertwine. The case entrepreneurs were chosen so as to represent different business branches and patterns of life. With the help of these case examples, some general features related to gendered rural spaces will be considered in the final chapter.

There are many definitions for entrepreneurship and the entrepreneur. According to the Norwegian anthropologist Fredrik Barth, entrepreneurs are people who start to make use of certain resources in order to achieve economic growth in their activities. However, Barth emphasises that entrepreneurial activity is just one role in the life of an individual.⁴ I consider entrepreneurship from a constructionist point of view, as a constantly altering social process.⁵ In order to be an activity meaningful to an individual, entrepreneurship is not necessarily handed down from one generation to another. Being an entrepreneur can be a suitable alternative at a certain phase of life, which new strategies and decisions may follow later on.⁶ One example of this view is that nowadays we talk of portfolio and serial entrepreneurs. Serial entrepreneurs establish an enterprise, and later on sell it and found a new enterprise. Portfolio entrepreneurs, for their part, can run several enterprises at the same time.⁷

Gender is seen in this article as a socially constructed category which is in itself heterogeneous. An individual is not just a woman or a man, but also represents a specific generation, depending on her age, her education has influenced her choices in work life and social status in society, etc.⁸ The entrepreneurial process can be studied as a part of female farmer's life cycle. From the macro level point of view the life cycle can be considered in terms of culturally regulated norms regarding how an individual's life that is perceived as normal should progress and what it should include. At the micro level we can approach the life cycle either as an individual's changing experiences of that person's own life or as observations of the various incidents and changes that may occur in the life of the individual. The life cycle is composed of the interaction between cultural models of action, the social structure of society and the individual.⁹ Gender as a socially constructed category is part of this network of interactions and norms.

The rural life of Finnish women interested researchers at the beginning of the 1980s and again at the beginning of the 2000s.¹⁰ Finnish research on rural women has been gathered into a bibliography and Brandth's review-article provides an overview of European feminist research dealing with rural women.¹¹ On this occasion it is worth mentioning that researchers of various disciplines in Norway and Sweden have also been interested in the life of present day female farmers.¹²

Finnish farms in figures

Agricultural and other rural areas have encountered considerable structural change in recent years in Finland, and this process is still going on. The number of Finnish farms has fallen by 28% since EU membership (1995–2006), and in 2006 there were about 68,700 farms. As the number of farms dwindles, the size of existing farms is expanding and productivity growing. In 2006, the average size of a farm was about 32.6 hectares.¹³ The average size of a farm is greater in southern Finland, almost 36 hectares, this area being referred to as 'Grain Finland' on account of the favourable conditions for cultivation.

More and more often Finnish farmers carry on other businesses besides agriculture and these farms are called diversified farms.¹⁴ The number of these diversified farms grew 11% between 2000 and 2005. In 2005, there were about 24,300 diversified farms in Finland, about 35% of the total number of Finnish farms. In addition to agriculture, the most common branch of business on diversified farms is machine contracting, which is practised on 41% of the diversified farms. Other sectors are, for example, tourism and other activities such as wood and food processing.¹⁵

The rural area population is increasingly diversified in character. People commute to work in the nearby towns, they engage in distance work, while only 3.9% of the Finnish rural population obtain their livelihood directly from agriculture.¹⁶ The female farmers comprise only a minority of all female members of the rural population today, and it is becoming even more common

among farming women to have some other type of employment also.¹⁷ Despite the structural changes in agriculture, Finland is still a rural country. In 2002, about 42% of Finns lived in the rural areas.¹⁸ These changes in the rural areas have recently been of interest to many ethnologists in northern Europe.¹⁹

Sharing private farm space with visitors

As mentioned above, tourism is among the subsidiary industries practiced on farms today. It is a branch of business that requires considerable human resources, and often both the female farmer and her spouse share the responsibilities.²⁰ Eeva and her husband Henrik have cultivated their holding over 30 years and they have four children. When the youngest child was an infant, Eeva started to plan some new activities on the farm. She was in her forties and felt she would like to use the space and opportunities that a farming environment affords, and not to try to find supplementary work outside the farm or seek a new vocation. The children of relatives and friends of the family had spent their holidays on Eeva's and Henrik's farm and Eeva was attracted by the idea of offering holidays on the farm to unfamiliar children also. When an entrepreneurship course was advertised in the local newspaper Eeva decided to participate and in this way she began to put her idea into practice. After her training she started in the tourist business on the farm which she has since developed and today it includes providing catering and accommodation services for different customer groups.

Eeva and Henrik can be described as copreneurs.²¹ They do the farm work together and, additionally, share in the tasks that farm tourism demands. However, there is a clear distribution of labour. Henrik is in charge of the agriculture production and Eeva for the tourism aspect. Eeva is extremely satisfied with her position in charge of the tourism activities and says she is eager to continue developing her work.

I decide myself what I shall do and how I shall do it, I take the responsibility for these tasks (–) I regard it as a challenge, that is, I wish to constantly improve my capabilities, learn new things and work better. Somehow I have ambitions respecting this work.

As Eeva and Henrik accommodate about 20 children at a time as summer guests it means that Eeva works very long hours during the high season. According to Eeva, even the sleep she gets at night is light when one is responsible for so many children and their wellbeing. This is a concrete example of how farm tourism business cannot be restricted to the public space but it extends from the public sphere to the private sphere in the life of an entrepreneur and her family. Another example is the use of the kitchen. Sometimes Eeva likes to be left alone in her kitchen to do her busy routines. However, she cannot tell the visitors not to come into the kitchen because it is part of the general idea of a farm tourism enterprise to allow visitors to acquaint themselves with the everyday life on a farm like Eeva's. Eeva is

busy, but visitors have time to relax and lead a calmer life, since they are on holiday. This discrepancy was evident, for example, when Eeva and Henrik began to take in Japanese visitors. These guests were eager to participate in the domestic tasks in the kitchen, and it took some time before Eeva became proficient at inviting her guests along explaining everything in English, even when she was busy.

They [the Japanese] are very active and wanted to do everything. They wanted to bake and do this and that (– –) to be honest sometimes I feel a bit stressed when someone looks all the time at every pot and pan in the kitchen, but of course you get used to it so it doesn't bother me anymore, but in the beginning I thought, oh dear, what are you doing now.

The public and private spheres are mixed in Eeva's everyday life. During the high season she cannot always leave the farm when she would like, and whether there is any free time for her during the day or not depends on her organisational skills.

I try to do the work as well as possible and also as efficiently and economically as possible, and all the time I reflect on how I could better organise the tasks in order to arrange some time for myself, so that I would have time at least to read the newspaper during the daytime, for example.

When a child has spent one week on a farm it is no longer just a space somewhere in the countryside. All the little things that have happened during the week with other children: picking berries, caring for animals, riding a horse, going for a swim, drinking juice in the garden during the day etc., make the farm a special place that the child will be able to recall during the long winter hours. It can also be the case that the impressions formed on this particular farm begin to represent the image of rural space in general for the child.²² According to Massey, we actively produce places not only in our visions but also in our material practices.²³ It will be observed that Eeva and Henrik take part in this place creation as they open their farm and home to the children. They have certain principles according to which they organise activities for the children on the farm. For example, they would like to give the children feeling of what it means to lead a placid life. The centuries old main building and traditional farm yard build up a frame that supports such an endeavour. Even though Eeva's and Henrik's farm is a modern diversified farm they wish to offer their guests a place in which there is no need to rush. At the same time when the present-day existence gets even more international and mobile, there is yearning for intimate and cosy places, where one could experience something permanent and safe even though it would be an illusory experience.²⁴

Eeva and Henrik would like to share the social space with the children and transfer to them the knowledge of nature. The same motive has been noticed in other research dealing with farm tourism entrepreneurs.²⁵ Once again the

farm kitchen is the heart of activity, and a location in which discussions take place as Eeva relates:

They were boys from Helsinki of about nine years of age who lived in a block of flats (– –) they came one evening and said they need a pot for worms and, I told them to take a one from the kitchen table... I was drinking tea with Henrik (– –) they came back noisily and put the pot on the table and told me to look at what a nice worm they had, oh dear, I saw immediately it was a snake, but I did not have my glasses on, I told them to wait a moment and put my glasses on and I sighed with relief that it was only a young grass snake, just beside my tea (– –) they didn't know that there are snakes in Finland, they only talked of pythons and rattlesnakes and Indian cobras, they had seen them in a snake exhibition (– –) they thought it was just a nice little worm!

The quotation reveals that Eeva is somewhat amazed at the lack of knowledge of Finnish nature of these town dweller boys. At the same time it makes her think there is a need for her type of farm tourist enterprise to mediate practical knowledge concerning the natural environment to young children.

Eeva's enterprise has influenced the whole family and elder children have been guaranteed summer employment in the tourist business to the extent that they have been interested. For Eeva farm tourism has repeatedly extended her social space beyond the physical farm space as new visitors, with their own personalities have come to enjoy spending time together for a day or two on the farm.

Back to the childhood farm

It is more common in Finland for a female agricultural producer to live on a farm that is her husband's childhood farm than vice versa because it has been a cultural norm for the son to inherit the holding even though a daughter may also inherit a farm.²⁶ This tradition is slowly changing as agriculture as a whole is now encountering substantial threats and the future of the farming continuity is no longer self evident.²⁷ I shall next consider some aspects of the entrepreneurial process and its relation to rural space from the viewpoint of those women who return to their childhood farm.

Entrepreneurship offers both work and leisure

Katja is an unmarried woman who lives on her childhood farm. She was born in the 1950s and she has studied economics. Katja worked several years in a bank in a town. Over the course of time, she began to yearn for a change in her life. At the same time her parents started to think of retirement, and Katja's brother was not interested in buying the farm. Katja acquired an education in agriculture and bought the farm in the late 1980s. At the time of the interview she had been managing the farm for about 15 years.

Katja grows sugar beet and cereals, and she soon realised that during the winter she has time for other activities as well. Katja did not want to get alternative employment rather she started to think what kinds of subsidiary industries would be possible on her farm. The farm offers resources such as a lot of space both in the form of outbuildings and the surrounding natural environment. The old cowshed turned out to be a good place to grow Christmas flowers. The bulbs arrive in September and it is quite easy to arrange a suitable temperature for them in the cowshed. At the beginning of December the heating system and the lights are switched on. Since flowers take about two weeks to grow, she can sell them to customers straight from the cowshed. The direct selling of Christmas flowers means a short and busy season but, it has found its own place among local consumers. Katja grows summer flowers and greeneries as well and picks suitable plants from the natural environment, arranging all kinds of bouquets out of them.

For several years Katja has engaged a part-time assistant, who was about to retire at the time of the interview. Katja supposed that it will not be easy to find a skilful new employee as willing to work part-time. Beside this employee's work contribution Katja's parents are still eager to help their daughter. Katja's father has always been interested in subsidiary industries and has been earning extra income by digging land-drains with other local farmers and selling pesticides. Katja has been impressed with how interested her father has been concerning her entrepreneurial activities and how her father has taken on those tasks that have not traditionally been men's tasks in rural society.

Think that my old father, who is already seventy-five years of age and who has, of course, been such a traditional farmer, being a farmer for such a long time, and yet this flower business he will do all kinds of things, I would have never believed that he would go out and gather yarrows for me somewhere in trenches, cut all the spruce twigs for me during the Christmas time and everything, and he has already developed a consciousness of quality as well, that is, what kind of stuff it should be.

Katja has been an entrepreneur ever since she took over the farm. She enjoys running the farm and also enjoys the social networks she has built as a result of those years during which she has engaged in subsidiary industries on the farm. As a matter of fact, Katja's case would suggest that entrepreneurship can mean more for a woman than economic profit alone; it is also a social activity.

It is a special thing of female entrepreneurship that it has quite a big social significance for women as well, I have not noticed the same feature related to men's entrepreneurship, and women are also supporting one another. The network which I have related to my subsidiary industries is very important to me personally, they are also my friends. In my everyday life farmwork and domestic work are mixed, and it is a bit same with my business network: the work and leisure get mixed.

Katja's work and entrepreneurship are physically anchored to the farm, which provides her prerequisites. Mentally, her living world extends much further. During busy times she keeps in contact with her network by e-mail and text messages. Now and then network members get together to market products at a trade fair. According to Katja, networks of this kind that extend beyond the local district can also be included in a strategy for maintaining a positive atmosphere in local rural community. While behaving multi-locationally, one can be very attached to one's own surroundings.²⁸

Creating a job for oneself and the family

In my research material, Jutta is an exception in the sense that she does not run a farm of her own. However, I have included her case in my research material because she has returned to her childhood farm and opened a catering service together with her mother, and she makes use of the farming environment in her enterprise.

In entrepreneurship research one talks about opportunity and necessity entrepreneurship and researchers distinguish different ways how entrepreneurs notice possible business opportunities.²⁹ Ulla Hytti points out that one cannot distinguish straight sequence of choices but the process proceeds simultaneously in many levels in the mind of an individual: she may have a wish to become an entrepreneur and that makes her to unconsciously look around and seek business possibilities and to interpret things as possibilities.³⁰ In the life cycle of Jutta the wish to live in rural surroundings has influenced Jutta to see business possibilities there and so the rural environment has had a significant role towards the entrepreneurship.

She and her husband Ismo established a family and she gave birth to three sons while living in the Helsinki metropolis. During weekends and holidays they quite often travelled to Jutta's parent's farm where they would spend their spare time. The boys enjoyed their stays in the countryside. Even during that period, Jutta engaged in some entrepreneurial activities delivering by order foodstuffs, such as eggs and flour, from her parent's farm to her neighbours in the town. The next step was for Jutta and her mother to start baking different kinds of confectionery and bread and sell them in the market places during the summer holidays. Sales grew gradually and then one summer Jutta wondered whether it would be possible to move back to her childhood farm and make a livelihood out of the enterprise.

Then one summer evening we were sitting beside the grill having been with boys here on the farm for already half the summer, and it came into my mind that suppose we were to stay here permanently, would the bakery business be sufficient to support us, and well, here we are still selling our goods.

Before the summer turned into autumn Jutta and her family had moved into the cottage owned by her parents and situated next to the farm, having left

the permanent jobs in the town. Even during the first autumn Jutta and her mother opened a retail shop on the farm. They also started the catering service and opened the main building on the farm for all kinds of celebrations. They continued developing and marketing new products in order to sell these wholesale in the bigger shops.

Even though Jutta and her mother manage the business together it has always been Jutta who is the spokesman for the enterprise. Her name is in the brochures and she is the one who normally answers the telephone and takes care of the marketing. According to Jutta the new enterprise has brought with it some changes in the distribution of labour between the different generations on the farm, as everybody's contribution is important. For example, earlier Jutta's father thought shopping was not a man's task but today it is quite normal for him to go shopping in a wholesale firm when necessary.

Well, we don't have women's and men's work, everybody has to do it, even my dad has to do it. If somebody had told me, say ten years ago, that my father would go shopping, to buy groceries (– –) I would have laughed at the idea, our father has always believed in men for man's tasks, but it be said that such differences of opinion have disappeared considerably over the years.

Ismo works in Jutta's and her mother's enterprise delivering orders in neighbouring towns. Jutta and Ismo have also started a special branch of food processing and they are developing it alongside the catering business. Ismo spends quite a lot of time with the boys as Jutta's working hours can be very long sometimes. Ismo's behaviour is one example of how working roles can be arranged in new and more flexible ways in the present day in rural areas. Because his wife's enterprise seems to be showing how the family can earn their living in the local farm space, Ismo is prepared to change his behaviour to conform to this situation.

When in her thirties Jutta returned with her family to the surroundings of her childhood farm, she knew where she was moving to. The countryside offered the space that they had longed for when living in the block of flats. Jutta has taken her place in the social space without hesitation, as well. She knew the local district and the people that lived there, and she was known to others as a daughter of local farmer. There are differences in how people who move to rural areas adapt to their new living place.³¹ According to ethnologist Kjell Hansen in the Swedish countryside it is easier for those who return to the place of their childhood origin to gain acceptance as a local resident.³² Even though Jutta enjoys living in the rural areas again, she says that the time she spent in the urban areas was important too, because it helped her understand that there are many ways of living. Jutta thinks that the atmosphere for novel ideas and solutions might be more conducive for success in the rural areas, if more people were to remain for some years in the urban areas, as well. Jutta feels that she is not dependent on the local residents' acceptance of her enterprise, and she has felt free to experiment with new business ideas in the food processing branch with Ismo.

Sometimes I feel that this is quite a parochial place, I think it would do people good to see something of the world somewhere else too, one twirls in so small circles here (– –) it would open many people’s eyes if they were to see life somewhere else too, so it has its good and bad sides [to have lived in a town], as an experience it is good, one thinks of many things differently.

Farm space as a starting point for marketing new products

Kaisa was born in the 1960s and manages her childhood farm together with her husband Jarmo. She has had an education in both commerce and agriculture, and as her brother did not want to continue farming the family estate, Kaisa was able to fulfil her childhood dreams and become a farmer.

Doing business was not a new thing for her. When she was small, the family had rented out one part of the farmhouse to summer guests, often foreign tourists. This had been very restricting, and they later gave it up. In the 1980s Kaisa’s father opened up a shop that sold fishing tackle in the nearby town and ran it besides the farming. Today this shop is managed by Kaisa’s brother. Later on, Kaisa’s mother started managing a catering business on the farm, organising different kinds of celebrations in the main farm building according to order and Kaisa helped her when she started to work on the farm. Then Kaisa married, took over the farm with Jarmo, and their first son was born. At that stage it became evident that running a catering service and taking care of a small child in the same rooms was not convenient, nor did the catering service fit in well with the farming activities, as the high season and long hours in both sectors coincided during the summer and the winter was a much quieter time. It has been observed elsewhere that a subsidiary industry has to adapt to the rhythm of agriculture in order to succeed in a farming environment.³³ Kaisa therefore gave up the catering service and concentrated on farming with her husband. Soon they had another son, and the distribution of labour on the farm changed further because of the children. She and her husband still made the cropping plans together, but the physical farm work was mostly done by him. Kaisa took care of the children, the domestic work and the farm’s bookkeeping.

This new situation in Kaisa’s life was a starting point for a new business idea. She had a certain hobby that she liked very much, namely dog breeding and dog shows. Her husband had sometimes told her to do something useful instead of travelling to dog shows, and she thought that she should try to find a business which she could incorporate with this hobby, as she did not want to give it up. Her new business idea was simple. She started to import outdoor garments and sell them at dog shows. Quite soon this business idea turned out to be profitable and both Kaisa and Jarmo were satisfied.

Shirley Ardener points out that people define space.³⁴ The research material shows that present-day female farmers are actively defining the space around them and thus even changing it. Interestingly, this can be seen when we consider how Kaisa has widened the use of the farm space as an entrepreneur. One concrete example involves the use of an old cowshed. It



The former cowshed has become part of a modern outdoor clothing import enterprise.

is typical for old farm outbuildings to be adapted for new purposes when their primary purpose has been served. Kaisa and Jarmo do not have cattle and so the cowshed was empty space available to be used for new purposes. Initially, Jarmo decided to renovate the cowshed and use it as a shelter for farm machinery. Quite soon, however, Kaisa noticed how practical a space the cowshed could be for storing her products. Kaisa could drive her van inside the building through the large entrance and very easily offload it. Kaisa suggested that the machinery would be relocated to another place on the farm. According to Kaisa, it took three years to get her own way. First, Kaisa got half of the amount of space she needed for her products, while the other end of the building was full of machinery. Only when they changed their farm's line of production from sugar beet to hay and the machinery was sold, did Kaisa get the whole cowshed for her use. She arranged all her product range in the cowshed instead of in the confines of the main building and started to keep the cowshed open once a week as a summer shop. The shop turned out to be quite popular. Passers-by dropped in attracted by Kaisa's placard by the main road, a couple of kilometres from the farm, and cyclists found Kaisa's shop an agreeable place to have a cup of coffee during their cycling trips.

Kaisa's example shows how rural and farm space are not stable, and can be re-interpreted and used in new ways. During that process one can question previous ways of organising the use of rural space. Kaisa changed the way

the cowshed is used and her summer shop also added value to the location of the building. The road divides the farm, and some of the outbuildings such as the cowshed are situated on the other side of the road opposite the main building. Now the location of the road, just in the middle of the farm yard, gets a new positive meaning because it makes it easy for visitors to pop into the shop.

According to Erving Goffman, objects are thought to structure the environment immediately around them.³⁵ Shirley Ardener adds that 'objects are affected by the place in space of other objects; not only their presence, and their position, but even their absence, or 'negative presence', may be important.'³⁶ The use of the cowshed as shelter for agricultural machinery prevented Kaisa from using it as a storage place for her products. During the negotiation process Kaisa won back space little by little from the machinery in order to put it to new use. Finally, the cowshed was all hers, and the departure of the agricultural machinery marked a shift in purpose and, henceforth, mastery of the building.

Seeking harmony in life

Handicrafts have traditionally been a common way for rural women to supplement their income. Even today manual skills provide many farm women with an opportunity to establish a business of their own in the field of handicrafts. According to historian Kirsi Vainio-Korhonen, the Finnish women's fields of business have remained the same for hundreds of years: even today women employ themselves in the fields of food, care services and textiles as did their sisters already in the 1800th century.³⁷

Sinikka is a farmer and an artisan by profession. She and her husband Timo have been farmers over thirty years and they cultivate sugar beet and cereals. They have two adult sons. At the time of the interview, the family of one of the sons were expecting their third child and the grandchildren were often mentioned in the course of the interview. Sinikka started the handicraft business of her own when her boys were older and had left home to study. The family situation influences women differently as they consider starting a business of their own. Some women think that it is more practical to start a business when the children are small, whereas others think, like Sinikka, that the situation is more favourable for business when the children have grown older.³⁸ Sinikka relates how the business started:

It is a real old joke, you know, for a hobby to become a job, that's how it happened.

Her enterprise has functioned over eight years and Sinikka is satisfied with it. She manufactures a range of textile products by knitting, weaving and using other forms of handicraft, with the raw material that she obtains in the surrounding environment. The enterprise is physically situated in the main building. An enterprise based at home creates different spaces in one

building. As one enters Sinikka's and Timo's cosy farmhouse, is a room on the immediate left furnished to function all year round as a little handicrafts shop. If one continues from the hall onward one will find one's way to the room in which Sinikka's equipment is situated. There are several looms and knitting machines and different raw materials. The rooms used in the activities of the enterprise form a public sphere in the middle of the private sphere, as customers can pop in to shop and leave orders. It is interesting that at the same time these rooms are Sinikka's private space, separated from the family space, in which she can concentrate on her handicraft work uninterrupted by domestic duties.³⁹

The physical environment is very important to Sinikka. The surrounding nature feeds her creativity and she gets her best ideas for the textiles and other handicrafts while spending her time in nature. The rural spaces, as well the fields that are cultivated, just as the more untouched nature like the seashore, the woods and the marsh beside the farm, are an essential part of Sinikka's entrepreneurship. She even argues that without the surrounding environment she would not be able to invent anything and that would threaten the whole idea of her entrepreneurship.

It is an absolute prerequisite for my work. The corn grows and maybe especially when the corn is ripe and before it is harvested, that is a special time. I can there sit for hours beside the fields just thinking about things and making sheaths of wheat and oat and everything, and so I gather strength somehow. And it is the same with the woods, I do not have to go far into the woods. There is a little marsh there nearby and I sit beside it (– –) and also the seashore is a place where I go (– –) as a matter of fact this environment is compulsory. I wouldn't invent anything if I just sat inside.

In addition, the grandchildren are also very important to Sinikka and she wants to organise her schedule so that she has time to look after them often. The children are the ones who time after time tempt Sinikka from the entrepreneurship space into the domestic sphere of the house and the role of a granny. It is only a short walk from the grandchildren's home to Sinikka's house and they see one another almost daily. So far, Sinikka has valued this short distance between these two worlds as more important than investing more in her own business. She wishes to carry out her entrepreneurship in harmony with her social and emotional environment. The family's significant role in the female entrepreneur's life has been mentioned in research as an obstacle to the economic progress of female-owned enterprises.⁴⁰ On the other hand, social relations can also operate as a resource and it has been argued that entrepreneurship can also be one strategy for carrying out what one considers to be 'a good life'. This kind of strategy was discovered, for example, in Norwegian rural areas in joint research conducted in northern Norway and England.⁴¹

The social character of space is made evident in Sinikka's entrepreneurship during the summer time. Namely, with the summer coming it will mean several hundred summer residents in the local district. That signifies a high

season for Sinikka's enterprise. Sinikka has established a little summer shop in an old outbuilding near the seashore and it is easier for summer residents to pop into that shop than travel to the farm's main building. Sinikka employs one girl to work as a shop assistant during the summer. Quite often, however, the local summer residents want to talk with Sinikka personally and place orders for special interior textiles, etc. The summer shop not only functions as a place for buying and selling, but also as a place for interaction between the rural and urban worlds.

The rural environment is important to Sinikka, but it also raises questions and worries. At the time of the interview Sinikka felt that the position of agriculture in society was difficult and the question of passing the farm on to the next generation gave cause for contemplation. Since the unsure future of agriculture stressed Sinikka, she felt that working in her handicraft enterprise helped her forget the miserable things.

Almost all the time I have a little troublesome feeling in the background nowadays, my work helps me a lot to overcome that feeling, because I can totally lose myself in it, quite totally (– –) I get rid of those worried thoughts [about the future of agriculture and the rural areas].

Even though the enterprise is situated in the main farm building the private working space is enough to carry oneself off into another world. According to Sinikka, the enterprise's significance for maintaining mental wellbeing has been important. This example shows that there are several layers of meanings that can be related to one place based on the different uses of that space.

New uses for the farm space

Female entrepreneurship on farms creates new social spaces in the rural areas. Through the entrepreneurship process women place themselves in new positions on the farm and in the rural surroundings. Their entrepreneurship also challenges other family members' customary habits to some extent. The traditional gender-related distribution of work comes under re-examination and new forms of action develop. As those introduced cases show, family members may in the context of running the business adopt new tasks that earlier would have been labelled gender-related tasks that do not belong to oneself. Both Jutta and Katja mentioned with appreciation how their fathers had been ready to learn new things and change their attitudes in order to promote their daughter's entrepreneurship. It has been noted elsewhere that the father's support is important for the daughter's entrepreneurship.⁴² New livelihood combinations are needed more and more on many present day farms and they challenge people to become more flexible in their working roles. Jutta's husband Ismo shows this flexibility, because during the week he may as well have to deliver orders by car as take care of the children while Jutta is baking or catering for her clients' celebrations. In the wider interview material there is also an example where a farm woman's handicraft

enterprise has with the years grown financially considerably more than the agricultural side of the farm and during this phase the husband's various tasks in the handicraft business have increased.

The farming environment forms a special frame of action in the female farmers' life cycle. Katila distinguishes a moral order according to which Finnish farming families arrange their livelihood strategies. This moral order includes the continuity of the farm, taking care of the former generation, doing work free of charge, being self-sufficient and appreciating work and a modest life. According to Katila, the choices and decisions dealing with livelihood strategies are not only made on an economic basis, but also taking into consideration the moral order and its values.⁴³ If we look at the case entrepreneurs in this article and their entrepreneurial processes we notice that the continuity of the farm has had an important role during the process. Kaisa's and Katja's brothers had already careers in town and continuing farming was not their choice. Both Kaisa and Katja in their turn have enjoyed life in the rural space and doing farm work and carrying on entrepreneurial tasks have grown step by step alongside farming. In the wider licentiate research interview material there are three other women who have taken over their childhood farm and started a subsidiary industry there, as well. It seems that while continuity on the farm is still an important thing, the way in which it is implemented is becoming more flexible.⁴⁴

Doreen Massey talks of stretching social relations as one way of understanding space and place today.⁴⁵ She refers to John Allen and Chris Hamnett according to whom social space consists of complex networks and connections based on social interaction, whether they are global or small scale.⁴⁶ The idea of the stretching social relations of the female entrepreneur on the farm helps us see how the rural space is not an isolated entity but is full of interaction in many different directions. A farming woman's enterprise may physically be situated in rooms in the main building, but its actual range of activity goes far beyond the farm through marketing and interaction with customers. Ties extend to the towns and even abroad. Things that may have started by accident gradually develop ties that interconnect far away places with each other in the minds of people: Eeva tells about postcards she gets from their Japanese visitors and Jutta has in her turn for several years sent rural products from her childhood farm to her neighbours in a block of flats on the other side of Finland.

In Pia Olsson's article elsewhere in this book we can read how the mobility of farming women in the rural areas after the Second World War was in many regions quite limited. The female entrepreneurs interviewed on farms reveal changes in that respect. Even though long distances and poor public transport can be a reality also in present day rural areas, the farming women have acquired many new resources to surpass these obstacles. The level of education has risen and the possession of a driving license has become a part of everyday life. Computer skills are needed and used more and more both in agriculture and in other businesses. Increased mobility concerns not only women: the women interviewed told how they take their children to different hobbies by car in the local surroundings. Good roads and access to

vehicles are a prerequisite for a successful enterprise in rural areas – either the road carries visitors to the shop or a farm tourism attraction, or the orders customers have placed by phone or internet are then delivered by car.

Like the examples in this article show, female entrepreneurs on farms do not just live in rural areas, but they also actively create the rural space and images and representations related to it. They are active participants and not passive bystanders in their rural environment and they have been able to convert rural space into new uses through their entrepreneurial activities. For example, Kaisa has changed the cowshed into a shop and Katja uses the cowshed for growing Christmas flowers. Geographer Edward Relph studied people's relation to places in the 1970s and distinguished seven modes of insideness and outsideness grounded in various levels of experiential involvement in the place.⁴⁷ When interviewed farming women put into practice their entrepreneurial ideas and dreams, they seem to feel an insideness regarding the place they are working in. One can say that they are very present in a particular place. The physical farm environment forms the frame for action and the physical place has an important role in the entrepreneurship of these women. The stretching of social relations takes place on the basis of a place, the farm. This place has not lost its meaning, but new uses for farm space are being created in order to be able to live in the rural areas, even in the future.

NOTES

- 1 Massey 2008, 14–15.
- 2 Karppinen 2005.
- 3 Transcribed interviews are in the possession of the writer.
- 4 Barth 1963, 5.
- 5 Hytti 2003; Bill & Johannisson 2004.
- 6 E.g. Lähtenmäki 1997.
- 7 On these concepts see, e.g. Torkko 2006.
- 8 Wiborg 1998, 108–109; Nerdrum 1998, 72.
- 9 Vakimo 2001, 72.
- 10 E.g. Köppä et al. 1984; Siiskonen 1990; Härkki-Santala 2002; Högbacka 2003; Sireni 2002; Ikonen 2008.
- 11 Hanhela 2004; Brandth 2002.
- 12 Flygare 1999; Götebo Johannesson 1996; Ljunggren 2002; Wiborg 1998.
- 13 Kujala 2007, 20–21.
- 14 Rantamäki-Lahtinen 2002; Peltola 2000.
- 15 Rantamäki-Lahtinen 2007, 16.
- 16 Niemi & Ahlstedt 2005, 86.
- 17 Högbacka 1995.
- 18 Tapio-Biström & Vihinen 2005, 81.
- 19 E.g. Götebo Johannesson 1996; Hansen 1998; Stucki 1998; Salomonsson 1999; Ruotsala 2002; Hangasmaa 2003; Rolshoven 2003.
- 20 Lassila 2005.
- 21 E.g. Peltomäki & Peltomäki 1998.
- 22 About countryside images see, for example, Lüthje 2005.
- 23 Massey 2003, 54.
- 24 Massey 2003, 53.

- 25 E.g. Lassila 2005, 153.
- 26 Sireni 2002, 121; Silvasti 2001.
- 27 Silvasti 2004, 84.
- 28 On multi-locationality see Blehr 2000.
- 29 E.g. Kaikkonen 2005.
- 30 Hytti 2003, 101.
- 31 Högbacka 2003; Pehkonen 2005; Turunen 2000.
- 32 Hansen 1998.
- 33 Eikeland 1999.
- 34 Ardener 1993, 3.
- 35 Goffman 1979, 1.
- 36 Ardener 1993, 3.
- 37 Vainio-Korhonen 2002.
- 38 E.g. Kamppi 1992, 35; Kivimäki 1996, 113.
- 39 Cf. Puwar 2004, 25.
- 40 E.g. Kovalainen 1993.
- 41 Baines et al. 2003, 105–106.
- 42 Näsman 2000.
- 43 Katila 2000, 201–202.
- 44 Silvasti 2001. On continuity see also Hangasmaa 2003.
- 45 Massey 2003, 60.
- 46 Allen and Hamnett 1995, 3.
- 47 Relph 1976.

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Is there room for women in the reindeer forest?

Introduction

It can be said that reindeer herding is part of the northern representation of the world, because it has such an important meaning in the lives of inhabitants of the Nordic Arctic region. With the exception of hunting and fishing it is the oldest form of livelihood in Lapland. Reindeer herding has enabled these people to earn a living and to be mobile in the sub-arctic regions, and it continues to have significant meaning in ensuring livelihood in the scarcely populated areas of the North. Either as a principal means of income or as a significant additional form of livelihood, even today reindeer herding makes it possible to remain in the small villages of northern Finland. Looked at from the inside, reindeer herding is not just an occupation or a means of procuring income; rather, in the north it means much more. Through it people are able to locate themselves, and it gives roots to many of those who do not otherwise procure their income from reindeer herding. Reindeer herding is also an important and visible symbol of Saami identity, even though only a minority of the Saamis have ever herded reindeer.¹ It is hardly likely that Lapland tourism would ever have been as dynamic as it is today without reindeer herding, because the reindeer, the nature in Lapland and the local culture provide the attraction for tourism. Reindeer herding is still today an important means of livelihood in northern Finland, though the number of those who make a living from it are statistically small and the total number of reindeer owners has dwindled since Finland joined the European Union. It is estimated that at present there are 500 families who acquire their main income from reindeer herding, although it has economic importance for 7–8,000 households. The number of reindeer owners is larger, because it has been a custom in reindeer herding for children of the family to get their own reindeer mark and be given reindeer. In this way it was hoped to encourage the children from a tender age to engage in the occupation.

In the north, reindeer herding is a way of life related to many, often romantic, conceptions. The nature of the north is considered severe and hostile, where survival demands sacrifices and exertion, where only a 'real man' will live to tell the tale. The myth about the Wild North has had an

important place even in national identity – at least it has been exploited in both art and in business life, as through tourism. The Canadian Bob Shields has written about the power of the north and the myth concerning freedom. Power and freedom are connected to sources of income and, according to Shields, the myth of the northern region in which the North and masculinity are united, is shaped. The imaginary myth of a border between the north and the south is at the same time the border between endurance and existence. In the Canadian example those engaged in these free occupations are timber jacks, gold-diggers, hunters and trappers.² The reindeer herder seems to fit well into this outdoor-occupation crowd of ‘real men’.

Earlier generations of ethnologists have remarked in their writings about how the women in Lapland participated in many physical activities that were considered further south to be normally those of men, such as the sowing of seed.³ The composition of gender hierarchy relationships could be resolved by interpreting the division of labour, because in the cultural meaning system of the agricultural community, male labour could be viewed hierarchically as more valuable than that of women. It was not always suitable for women to be seen doing the more important ‘men’s work’. Often researchers have not been able to observe that women in the countryside have generally been flexible as far as the division of labour is concerned taking the circumstances into consideration, because getting the work done was more important than who did it. For practical reasons women often concentrated on the domestic chores and those of the surroundings. The tasks women performed constituted a considerable contribution to domestic self-sufficiency. Nevertheless, even later there does not always seem to have been a correspondence between the social status of women and the significance of their domestic input.⁴ Reindeer herding has been stamped as a men’s occupation where women are not seen working, even if they do own reindeer and participate in work related to reindeer herding.

In this article I examine the reindeer forest as a gendered space and enquire whether there is space in it for women. My departure point will be that I comprehend space as both physical and social. According to Henri Lefebvre, space is social and socially produced. Its meanings gain form in and through social relationships, because space reflects social organisation. Space is not only an instrument of societal development, it also produces: it is producer and product. In Lefebvre’s view, space is produced on three different temporal and locative levels, which all interact. According to him, the perceived belongs to spatial practices, the conceived to representations of space and the lived to representational spaces. The perceived level is connected to how space is delineated as an entirety. The conceptualised space, again, is combined with the distanced spatial relationship of the planners, they who identify what is lived and what is perceived with what is conceived. The lived spaces are combined to representational spaces. The lived space is the collective experience of space, including, among other things, the symbolic differentiation of space and collective images, the opposition of prevailing practices, and the subsequent split between private and collective understanding of space. These levels – about which the term dimension is

also used – are, according to Lefebvre, comprehensible only in relation to physicality. A subject performing in space, in other words a member of a community, is that subject's own body is in a relationship to space.⁵

Michel de Certeau's research takes as its starting point the performer. He views space as a network of the regulation of social relationships and control, but he also draws attention to the practices of everyday life.⁶ The ecological and social environment set certain limits according to which a person makes cultural choices; for example, how to sustain a livelihood in different ecological environments and how that form of livelihood can be continued in the family circle. In other words, will the daughter in a reindeer herding family choose the career of reindeer herding and follow the example of her father. The use of power and ethnic relationships are also clearly to be seen in the use of reindeer forest space.⁷

Gendered space

Space, particularly the division of space between women and men could be said to belong 'traditionally' to ethnological research related to spaces. A classical example of this would be, let us say, Gustav Ränk's (1949 & 1951) studies of the spatial use of Finno-Ugrian nationalities. The point of departure has often been, even from the beginning, the suggestion that the home and near surroundings are the space of women, for which women are responsible and which they dominate; men's territory is seen as more extensive and farther away. The reason for this is seen as the reproductive tasks of women. Space, often just in the home or indoors, is both physically and conceptually divided into two parts, women's and men's space. For example, space in the Saami tent, *kota*, was a carefully specified system, in which not only different genders but also different age and social groups were separated from one another. The elders, women, men, children, servants, visitors and even the dogs had their own carefully specified places. Different activities had their own places in the *kota*'s various 'spaces'. The fireplace, *arran* was in the middle of the *kota* in the centre place. The back of this, the *boassu*, was previously a place prohibited to women in which, for example, ritual objects and hunting utensils were stored; such jobs women were not allowed to perform. Women's own space was the door entrance, near the *uksa*. Later the rear part became a women's place in which foodstuffs and household goods were kept. The fireplace also demarcated the different generations; the place for the elders was a different side to that of the children and servants, where visitors knew they should sit as well.⁸

Particularly in earlier research on the gendered division of space, studies concentrated on homes and the private spaces in them. There has been less research into public space from a gendered point of view.⁹ Nevertheless, it must be remembered that gender differences still exist, and close to us, part of our everyday existence – not only far from us in time and place. In examining the unequal division of power and authority, gender researchers have used the space concept as an aid to analysing the differences between



Reindeer herding families are working together in the different tasks involved in reindeer herding, here in marking reindeer calves. Photo: Helena Ruotsala.

women and men, as for instance men's superior power, authority, higher value and position in society. For example, Shirley Ardener and other writers in the work *Women and Space* (1993) have shown that the use of organisation, meaning and space denote the social structure and hierarchy of relationships as well as the ideologies they embrace. According to Ardener, spaces can be distinguished as purely men's or women's and they can be either separated or united, but their effect is part of a wider ideological system, used either to draw the limits for or restrict women's behaviour. Even though women cannot directly control or decide concerning their own space, this does not mean that they do not have the power or the possibilities for influencing, in relation to men. The attempt to limit women to the space of home can be viewed as both a specific spatial control and also as a social control of identity.¹⁰

My interest in viewing spaces as gendered started with the research for my doctoral thesis, which concerned reindeer herding in two different communities, in different countries and in different societal systems.¹¹ There, I, in a manner of speaking, bumped into women's status in the reindeer herding community. I studied the changing nature of reindeer herding and those strategies that reindeer herders have used and still have in their possession at a time when reindeer herding has changed from a hunting economy and self-supporting natural livelihood to an occupation fulfilling the demands of the market economy, and what this transformation has meant, in particular, from the point of view of the reindeer herding family.

Since I was myself brought up in a reindeer herding community, it was perfectly clear to me that reindeer herding was not explicitly the affair of the reindeer owner (usually a male);¹² rather it affected the whole family and reindeer herding must be studied from the viewpoint of the family as a

whole. On my 'home grounds' in western Lapland the other members of the family – spouses, children, grandparents – have, in accordance with their possibilities, participated in work related to herding, particularly seasonal tasks and jobs that demand remaining at home. This additional work carried out by other members of the family has received little attention in earlier studies with the exception of Outi Jääskö's report on Saami female reindeer herders. I wondered about this as I read the many studies and reports on reindeer herding, in which the role of the family was almost completely missing. An easy explanation for the invisibility of women would be, of course, that most of the writers were men. As a result, there was a lack of ability to view matters from different angles or ask questions, and the reindeer herders were unable to inform outside researchers concerning matters about which they had not been asked. Is it still the case in reindeer herding research that male and masculinity are the acceptable standard, and the female and femininity represent deviation from the standard? This was the situation in which the early research in gender studies got underway.¹³

Women and the reindeer forest

By reindeer forest I mean here the reindeer herding working environment. The tasks related to reindeer, such as *gathering*, *herding*, *reading* (=counting) and *marking* are carried out in the reindeer forest, even though they do not necessarily take place literally in a forest, perhaps on the fells. In the same area one could also go into the berry forest or the elk forest. Tim Ingold names this kind of environment *taskscape*.¹⁴

There is little information on the earlier active participation of women in herding tasks in the reindeer forest in Finland. There have been differences in the tasks of the women in Finnish reindeer herding families in the villages and those of Saami female reindeer herders. While herding the roaming reindeer women have had to participate in many of those sorts of tasks that the spouses of male reindeer herders who permanently reside in the villages have not had to do, because until the 1960s the families of Saami reindeer herders were nomads following their animals. According to T. I. Itkonen, women without children in Enontekiö (Enodat) participated in herding, at least until the 1940s.¹⁵ Also, in Utsjoki (Ohcejohka) it is recalled that women looked after herds of reindeer.¹⁶ But if there were sufficient workers in the family – either family members or paid workers – women needed not participate.¹⁷ Herding was arduous labour, because it necessitated being with the herd out of doors for long periods of time.

The Nordic Sámi Institute in Kautokeino (Guovdageaidnu) had a report made in the 1970s about the state of female labour among the reindeer herding Saami in Norway. According to this, in many cases there was no difference between the tasks of men and women, although generally speaking the woman did the housework and the man those tasks immediately concerned with the herding. The women participated actively in reindeer herding work especially in connection with moving, slaughtering and marking.¹⁸

Earlier in Finland the division of labour between spouses was a precondition, in order for the housekeeping arrangement, which consisted of the many sorts of occupation of which reindeer herding is traditionally composed, to succeed. With the men being preoccupied for weeks on end in the reindeer forest with the gathering and grazing, the partner has to remain at home, because she looked after the domestic duties, cattle and children. The children participate, as far as possible, in the herding tasks and often in the busy season their contribution is essential. As mentioned at the beginning, a more important matter than the division of labour was that the work got done, rather than who did it. Although in the agricultural and natural economy there was apparent in the division of labour a visible split and hierarchical men's and women's world, in practice it was often impossible to tell these apart. Both took responsibility for their own tasks, but help was given flexibly when needed, according to the situation. The most important jobs were always given priority, whereby in reindeer herding families tasks related to the reindeer were put first. Both – men and women – also had their own special skills which they were able to concentrate on at other times. For example, handicraft work could be done both to meet home need and as goods to be sold.

During the 1995–1996 reindeer herding year 23% of reindeer owners were women and they owned 14% of counted reindeer.¹⁹ At that time women only accounted for three per cent of recorded cooperative workdays and now – more than ten years later – the share of work performed by women has risen to 10%. The proportion of female reindeer owners has also risen slightly; it is now 27%. In the area I researched, the Kyrö Reindeer Herding Cooperative, nowadays about one third of reindeer owners are women, and they own approximately ten per cent of the read reindeer.

According to Outi Jääskö's report, women participate particularly in seasonal tasks, such as reading, separating, marking and fodder production as well as being responsible for work that demands being at home regularly, such as feeding the reindeer, repairing equipment and housework.²⁰ The situation was the same in the mid-1990s in my own fieldwork area in western Lapland. In the 1980s and 1990s, even though women did not engage in the work in the reindeer forest their work input was important for other reasons than from the standpoint of the direct product gained from reindeer herding. The partners of the younger reindeer herder generation born after the 1950s earned a living outside of their homes, mostly in tourist centres or the public sector, such as teaching. Their earnings outside the home provide the reindeer herding families with security and stability, since after the end of the 1980s reindeer herding by itself has not been self-sustaining. Reindeer herding families are dependent on income from outside of the farm. I have myself defined these reindeer herding families in my research as dependent on tourism, because spouses had moved to Lapland into the service of the travel industry, at first as seasonal workers or for the summer and later stayed in the north. At the beginning they took part in both the separating and marking, but their participation in these tasks was only occasional, to the extent permitted by their regular jobs. A few of these partners helped their husbands with the



Also girls plan to become reindeer herders or they are helping their families in reindeer herding work. Here Tuija-Noora Autto is catching the calves to be marked. Photo: Helena Ruotsala.



earmarking of those fawns belonging to the family or close relatives,²¹ and in dragging the deer into the enclosure. Sometimes they would go with their husbands to follow the grazing of the spring herd, but according to those interviewed, this was only done in the fine whether as permitted by

the other chores. At the beginning of the 2000s individual female reindeer owners in different parts of the reindeer herding area have participated in the herding tasks in both the reindeer forest and in the enclosures (*separating, earmarking*).²² Even though they may not have participated in the reindeer herding tasks themselves, they nevertheless consider it important that the children share in the marking in the summertime and, if the weather and school curriculum permit, also in the winter round-up. In this way they wish to accustom their children to their father's occupation and possibly secure someone who will pursue the occupation.

Although it would seem that, the women have not been very active in reindeer herding, the impression does not present the whole truth. In reviewing the position of women in reindeer herding there is reason to look behind the statistics.²³ That women should be said not to be involved in reindeer herding, reinforces male dominance in reindeer herding research and administration. In this way power, economic power, particularly, remains in the hands of men. The situation is also affected by what kind of work is meant by reindeer herding, what kind is not. The contribution of women statistically and publicly has been invisible, but from the standpoint of the individual reindeer herding family it has not been negligible. As has already been mentioned, women have never, for example in Kyrö, actively participated in herding or in other types of reindeer forest work, but instead have taken part in season-related tasks and work performed in the vicinity of home invisible to those on the outside, to an increasing extent. These tasks are not counted as reindeer herding, even though from the point of view of herding they are essential. In earlier times they may have been, for instance, occupied with the preparation of food for round-ups that lasted many days. Helping with the slaughtering has been just as much a part of women's tasks as making and repairing the clothes, such as fur-coats, reindeer fur shoes and bindings.²⁴

In Kyrö, as elsewhere, modernisation and the changing state of reindeer herding – feeding reindeer in enclosures and direct sale of production to consumers – has increased women's role in the different tasks of reindeer management. The winter feeding of reindeer in enclosures near home became general in the 1990s and this job became the responsibility of the wife and children of the reindeer owner. The wives helped to prepare and gather the winter fodder – horsetail, lichen, hay and bunches of leafy twigs. Since the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s, when reindeer owners have sold their produce directly to consumers, the job of marketing has been on the shoulders of the women. This is especially so when wives are at home during the day and husbands in the reindeer forest. Those partners working in the travel industry find buyers for their reindeer meat:

Helena: Is Seija²⁵ [wife] in the habit of helping you with those jobs?

Asko: Of course, she has to, no point otherwise. Answers the phone and writes it down. There's a lot of selling in the spring, when she's with the tourists.²⁶

Often the women even tend to the paper work necessary in reindeer herding. The use of computers has also increased the tasks and responsibilities of women.²⁷

*'Why didn't you become a reindeer herder?'*²⁸

It has been a custom in reindeer owning families for the children to be taken along to the different tasks involved in reindeer herding, particularly the gathering and marking. School children get a holiday in the winter for the time of the round-up. In this way the work became familiar from the tenderest age and the children were brought up in the environment and became interested in pursuing it as their own lifelong career. After hearing the experiences of fairly young women about the reindeer forest and their contemplations regarding career choice or why they did not choose reindeer herding even if they dreamt about it as children, it becomes clear on the basis of these examples that the economic and social use of power are not the only forms of exercising power. The use of power is especially relevant in choice of career, and in reindeer herding this is viewed in relation to the physical gender and sexuality. For example, farms are clearly seen as arranged by gender, particularly according to heterosexual standards. Tiina Silvasti, who has studied farms, uses the form outlined by Lia Bryant of the politics of three bodies: the spatial, verbal and physical. Considered from the framework of the politics of the body, power and conflict are open to the influence of the individual's body, its size, form and strength. The politics of the body are practiced, for example, by physical juxtaposition or also by the separation of men and women from each other.²⁹

In a book concerned with the present day state of reindeer herding, the physical properties demanded of reindeer herding are emphasised: 'This means of earning a living demands physical strength, knowledge of the landscape and nature, and long periods spent far away in the wilderness.'³⁰ Those women who would carve for themselves a career out of reindeer herding relate work in the reindeer forest to masculine strength and understand – and hear this from others – the insufficiency of their own body. In this way they also define their own place in this form of livelihood, as with those women in agricultural occupations studied by Bryant.³¹ Women experience the feeling that in the performance of different types of work their physical strength and ability to accomplish tasks is undervalued. Not all tasks connected with reindeer herding are dependent on physical strength; rather on many kinds of knowledge, abilities and skills. For example, some people are very adept at recognising the earmarks of reindeer by sight or from memory, others are best at moving around the terrain, and again, others are good at tasks demanding physical strength.³²

The insufficiency of a woman's body is implicitly present also during debate on the future of the occupation and the prerequisites for this, as for instance shown by the expression 'only one son' while discussing the recruitment of young reindeer herders – the interviewee was referring to

another reindeer herder who had two daughters and one son – or as a female interviewee replied to my question concerning how she came to be involved with reindeer:

I didn't have anything to do with them at all when I was smaller. I am, as the reindeer men always said to me, that of course I will [stay with the reindeer], of course I'm frightened, but, well at least it seemed horrible that when I was smaller when they would always say dear oh dear poor Heikka, that you've one kid and that's just a girl. And that was terribly upsetting for me and that I really wasn't.³³

One woman, 30 years old at the time of the interview, told me outright that because all men are of the opinion that women are not equal to men this was one reason she did not find the courage to become a reindeer herder like her father and brother. Another reason was that no woman had yet ventured into becoming a reindeer herder in this cooperative. A citation from the interview:

Ritva: I would have become a reindeer herder actually, but when you're a girl.

Helena: Why not?

Ritva: Because there are no other women working here. I always said when I was small that I would be a reindeer herder, to which Pekka [the father] don't talk nonsense, it's not worth it. (—) Should have started working when Pekka [father] was alive, so I'd have learned. Even in secondary school I wanted to be a herder, father said that it's a really good occupation, but no doubt you'll want to continue at school.

Helena: Why is reindeer herding not a suitable occupation for women?

Ritva: It's certainly heavier physically than for men, in the winter when you have to drag the [motor] sleigh loose, for instance. The way men think about the world, they don't regard women as their equals, well not all. Perhaps or perhaps not it would all become repulsive. But a woman is more worthless [physically weaker] than a man, especially when it's winter. (—) When there are no women reindeer herders in these pastures.³⁴

In the opinion of her partner Ritva should have been, although physically weaker than the men, a reindeer herder, but perhaps Ritva knew the realities of life better. She is at present a government worker. She has not divested herself of the reindeer and she also participates in reindeer herding during the busy season. At other times her reindeer herder brother tends her animals. Also in the neighbouring cooperative in Muonio a reindeer herder's daughter I interviewed said that when she tried to go along and help her father with the autumn gathering of the herd, he was of the opinion that it would be exhausting for her and not appropriate for women: (—) 'it seems he tried so hard to sort of protect me, he didn't.'³⁵

In the internal conflict in the debate on the insufficiency of the body, it nevertheless should be remembered that in different exceptional circumstances, such as war time when the men are away at the front or a spouse suddenly takes ill or dies, women have also taken care of the reindeer herding tasks.

Furthermore, in studies of the agrarian society there are examples of how women have accomplished many of the heavy tasks³⁶.

Also, in other reindeer herding districts men have had a suspicious attitude towards the efforts of women to work in the reindeer forest. The experiences of women in Saami reindeer herding families in Sweden that became evident in Andrea Amft's study affirm the misgivings of Ritva. There was one female novice reindeer herder the men were not prepared to accept and made it clear in many ways that she would be incapable of accomplishing the tasks. The men did help, but all the time they let her see that in practice she was entirely dependent on their help. This woman discontinued her career as a reindeer herder and married a male herder. Then again, another young woman, who started to assist her father in the reindeer forest while her brother was in the army, was constantly told by her father that the work is too arduous for a woman and that a woman will always require the help of a man. According to Amft, the reindeer forest is such a male-dominated environment that there is no room for female participation in the everyday tasks. It is not enough for a woman to have a reindeer herding right, but she also needs the support of both her family and the male members of the Lapp Village.³⁷ Without such assistance, symbolic authorisation, she does not have a chance of becoming a reindeer herder, even though she possesses a legally binding reindeer herding right.³⁸

According to Phebe Fjellström, what is worth noting about the Swedish reindeer herding community is that as early as in the 1980s young Saami women chose reindeer herding as their occupation. Even then women, according to her, did for practical reasons participate in pasturing in the fells, because who would look after the home and children?³⁹ It also became apparent from Robert Wheelensburg's study that women share actively in reindeer herding activities in Sweden. According to him, women participated in the summer marking and pasturing from the air, that is, the observation of the movements and pasturing of the reindeer from an aeroplane. On the other hand, the women did not take part in winter pasturing activities with a motor sleigh. Tim Ingold has emphasised how the snowmobile has affected economic power based on gender differences, in light of the fact that women do not drive motor sleighs. The increasing use of technology has often been viewed as the reason the successful practising of reindeer herding favours men.⁴⁰

As far as the young women I interviewed were concerned technical progress, that is, the use of the motor sleigh and all-terrain vehicles in herding reindeer was not the reason they did not choose reindeer herding. The reasons were elsewhere. Is it more a question, as far as technology is concerned, of driving a motor sleigh through, in particular, deep snow and sinking conditions demanding more physical strength? Women certainly drive motor sleighs. Perhaps they are afraid of a breakdown. Actually, only a few men know how to mend their vehicles, most of them use repair shop services. The changes that have taken place in society, and the development of technology and increasing motorisation have for another reason diminished the status of women and their visibility in reindeer herding, since many

seasonal activities related to reindeer herding such as the reindeer round-ups are now of shorter duration. Then again, with women working outside the home they, with all the societal responsibilities and limitations related to their secular work, can no longer participate in seasonal tasks to the extent that they did earlier.

Northern women's space

Even since the 1980s there has been an evident desire to see the reindeer forest as only the space of men, since in the Nordic countries, such as Finland and Norway, men largely determine the public and political image and what is meant by reindeer herding and with it also Saami identity, because reindeer herding has traditionally been regarded as an essential part of the Saami identity. This change has been associated with the modernisation of northern communities. Reports have been made in Norway concerning the status of women in the reindeer herding communities, and according to these accounts the status of women deteriorated with the arrival of the 1990s. Because women no longer participated in reindeer herding work, they did not hold the power to decide, and so the economic power of men and their status in society has become emphasised. Thus, according to Jorun Eikjoki, men have through a status of public legality been able to determine what the legitimate Saami identity is and what it is not. Those tasks that formally belonged to women in the local community have been transferred to public sector in modern society. Specialised occupations and various institutions, related to, for example, care of the aged, kindergartens and educational establishments, have been given an even more significant role and the need is no longer felt for the assistance of neighbours or other social contacts.⁴¹

According to a recent report, the status of women, their role and participation in reindeer herding have all diminished in Norway also, since women own only 17% of reindeer herding units. Formally, the reindeer herding right is related to the ownership of the unit. The reindeer women very often belong to a reindeer herding unit owned and managed by a man. So that women, who share in the work, lose social benefits that accrue according to earnings. Although some may regard Norwegian reindeer herding legislation as neutral, it is being debated in Norway how the status of women might be improved and their contribution as official owners in reindeer herding units better recognised, since the official reindeer herding policy emphasises reindeer herding units and work with the herd and in the forest.⁴²

In northern Sweden, for example, the effect of local government policy on the everyday life of women and different choices have been studied, such as why it is that women leave the countryside either for the towns or to go south. According to research, the patriarchy of the countryside, that men's activity and status is more valued and visible than that of women, is an important reason. Further, the control, mostly by men, of regional and local political affairs ignores women. This has been observed to intensify women's feeling that they are outsiders and they have left the north, especially when their

work is neither acceptable nor appreciated.⁴³ The same type of outsidersness was evident also in Seija Keskitalo-Foyle's (2004) study of the life stories of women in Lapland. According to her, the masculine cultural tradition of the north and, along with this, the priority of those things belonging to the world of men create conflict as women strive to fulfil their own aspirations⁴⁴. This masculinity is, as I mentioned at the beginning of the article, the Lapland of the Myth, the Wild North and the masculine occupations related to the wilderness, of which reindeer herding is of course one. The northern nature offers working places and earning possibilities, not to speak about free-time activities, which are regarded suitable for men. It is, for their part, expected obvious for women to leave their rural living places to study in towns or in South-Finland.⁴⁵

In one of my earlier studies it was clearly shown how reindeer herding is regarded as a masculine occupation and the reindeer forest is a masculine space regardless of the fact that about one quarter of reindeer owners in Finland are women and women perform many tasks that are necessary in reindeer herding. Nevertheless, reindeer herding is considered a man's work and on that account responsibility and power are in the hands of men. In the same way power is wielded by the men publicly and within the confines of the industry itself. A public economy and social use of power in reindeer herding wherein the other half of the community, women, had no say, became clearly evident.⁴⁶ Against the historical background to this is contradictory, since particularly in the Saami communities women used to be equal, for example, in matters of inheritance and property⁴⁷. In the Saami community the *ahku*, the elder of the family, was the one who kept the family together, who bound the members into one. In northern Finnish communities, too, the status of a woman was traditionally strong. The women in the north also had domestic power and responsibility when their husbands were away from home travelling in connection with the work for weeks on end.

Nowadays the woman is in a different way in a decisive position, because in many reindeer herding families the outside employment within a woman's space is essential, if the family is to continue raising reindeer. As it has already become clear, often the economy of a reindeer owner's family is dependent on the earnings of the partner (wife), whereby her responsibility for the domestic economy increases. This form of development is also apparent in Norway⁴⁸. One of my interviewees spoke somewhat jokingly about reindeer herding as a pastime for men and was of the opinion that

I wouldn't worry if we were to finish with reindeer herding, it's more a loss, if income and expenditure are counted. (– –) But I know it's a way of life. It's so much in their blood that they're not able to stop even though it doesn't pay. If Keijo were to sell all his reindeer and reading time came around, he would go raving mad.⁴⁹

All the same, she understood that reindeer herding will continue, because it is a way of life and without it a man would not be able to live.⁵⁰

It is an entirely different question how long the reindeer forest will be able

to continue as such masculine space, because in some area there are already signs that the winds of change are beginning to blow. For example, in Inari (Anár) there are young women who have even been working in the reindeer forest for several years. Since the years have accrued they have become accepted as authorities by the younger male reindeer herders, and they are asked advice and for an opinion on, for example, starting certain seasonal work and how to execute particular tasks.

There are also strong and noticeable women at the moment involved in northern politics and administration, although, for instance, the management and administrative tasks are almost without exception in the hands of men. The exceptions are a woman chosen as reindeer manager at Utsjoki and two women working at the Reindeer Herders' Association as councillors on the reindeer economy. These examples in no way match the important role of women in reindeer herding. The women look after many matters hidden from the public eye or that are less visible tasks that, from the point of view of the reindeer herding family are nevertheless absolutely imperative. These are especially those jobs with a seasonal character, such as the round-ups and marking, slaughtering and direct marketing of the venison, winter feeding of the reindeer and keeping the accounts. Because women have not participated in the work that has to be done in the reindeer forest that is statistically counted as working days, they do not officially have any power to make decisions on economic matters in this industry. At home their domestic power has increased, because they are wage earners. The danger is that the official use of power will drive women away from reindeer herding, just as in local government politics a 'practice of female exclusion' has driven women out of the north, according to Ester Cullblom.⁵¹

What is important in reindeer herding families and communities is who produce space and what space they give to others, in other words, will the other party in the community, in Finland for example, women, have the power to determine their own space. The conception of decision makers and planners concerning reindeer herding conceptualized space – for instance, in the form of legislation and support – differs from the lived space of the members of the community. Space is used as a network for regulating and controlling social relationships, in other words, who gets to do what work and, as a result, power. Efforts to limit women's access to reindeer herding are to be seen as a spatial control over women – women are not welcome in the reindeer forest – and also as a control over social identity, since the significance of reindeer herding as an identity symbol is strong today.

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Translation: Dennis Estill.

NOTES

- 1 Ruotsala 2002, 81, 406–411.
- 2 Shields 1993, 52–55.
- 3 E.g. Paulaharju 1922, 199; Talve 1990, 199.
- 4 Löfström 1999, 180–181; Östman 2000, 219–220; Heikkinen 2006, 24. See also Östman in this publication.
- 5 Lefebvre 1991, 38–39.
- 6 de Certeau 1988, xxxix–xl.
- 7 Lefebvre 1991, 103.
- 8 On the structural meaning of space see Bourdieu 1977, 218.
- 9 Massey 1994, 2–5.
- 10 Ardener 1993, 9–10; Massey 1994, 178–180.
- 11 Ruotsala 2002.
- 12 The original Finnish word (*poromies*), while using a masculine form, is the name of an occupation and has no relation to gender. The *poromies* is a person who herds reindeer in order to earn a livelihood. Female *poromies* have been called reindeer ‘hostesses’ in the media. The reindeer ‘host’ is the head of the cooperative.
- 13 Koivunen & Liljeström 1996, 13–16; Heikkinen 2006, 29.
- 14 Ingold 2000, 177, 199.
- 15 Itkonen 1984, 160.
- 16 Personal e-mail communication to the writer August 2006. Sender was from Utsjoki.
- 17 See also Amft 2001, 127, note 1.
- 18 Boazosámi ámidiid bargododilásvuodat 1979, 37, 47.
- 19 Kempainen 1997, 51–52.
- 20 Jääskö 1998, 25–26, 63.
- 21 In the reading, first a number tag is attached to the fawn’s neck after which the reindeer herders mark on their lists whose read doe the numbered fawn follows. When these lists are cross checked, the fawns are marked.
- 22 TYKL Research Archive 1.6.27/3, 5, 12, 13, 14; see also Jääskö 1998, 25–26.
- 23 See also Amft 2001, 144, note 7.
- 24 TYKL Research Archive 1.6.27/12, 13.
- 25 All interviewees’ and their family members’ names have been changed in the text.
- 26 In Finnish: Helena: ‘Ruukaako Seija [puoliso] auttaa sinua noissa lihommissa syksylä?’ Ask: ‘On tietenkä, täytyy ja myyntihommissa. Täytyy tietenkä olla, eihän se muuten. Vastaa puhelimhen ja ottaa ylös. Paljonhan se on kevhälä myynykki, ku se on ollu tuola turistien kans.’ TYKL Research Archive 1.6.27.5b.
- 27 TYKL Research Archive 1.6.27/3, 4, 5a, 10, 12, 14.
- 28 The heading is a citation from an interview in which was discussed, for example, the significance of reindeer herding to the family and choice of occupation. (TYKL Research Archive 1.6.27/13).
- 29 Bryant 1999, see Silvasti 2001, 199–200; Butler 1991, 15–18.
- 30 Kempainen 1997, 51.
- 31 Silvasti 2001, 200.
- 32 Ruotsala 2002, 323–333; Paine, 1994, 22–24.
- 33 In Finnish: ‘Enhän mie ole pienempänä ollu ollenkhan tekemisissä. Michän olen, niinku poromiehet aina sano mulle, että mie sitten tietenkä [jatkan porojen kanssa], totta kai mua hirvittää, mut että mie ainakin koin sen kauhean ilkenä silloin pienempänä kun ne aina sano, että voi voi Heikka-riepu, ku sull on yks lapsi ja sekin on vain tyvär. Ja se niin ku oli kauhea loukkaus minua kohthaan ja että mie en tosiaan ollut.’ TYKL Research Archive 1.6.27/25.
- 34 In Finnish: Ritva: ‘Olisin alkanu poromieheksi kyllä mutta ku on tyttö.’ Helena: ‘Miksei?’ Ritva: ‘Koska täälä ei ole ythän naista töissä. Olen sanonu aina pienehä, että minusta tullee poromies, johon Pekka [isä] että älä höperä, ei kannata. (–) Olis pitänyt alkaa Pekan elässä töihin, jotta olis oppinu. Vielä ylästhela halusin poro-

- mieheksi, isä sano, että totta se on hyvä ammatti, mutta haet kai johonki koulhun.’ Helena: ‘Miksei poronhoito ole naisille sopiva ammatti?’
- Ritva: ‘Naisille tietty fyysisesti raskaampaa, talvela ku kelkkaa pitää vettä irti esimerkiksi. Miesten ajatusmaailman käsityksiä, eivät pidä naisia samanarvoisina, ainakhan kaikki. Muuttuis se ehkä ja ei ehkä kaikiilla niin vastenmielistä. Mutta nainen on kelvottomampi [fyysisesti heikompi] kuin mies, varsinki talvimaailmassa. (—) Ko naisia ei ole poromiehinä tässä palkisessa.’ TYKL Research Archive 1.6.27/13.
- 35 TYKL 1.6.27/25.
- 36 E.g. Löfström 1999, 183.
- 37 The Lapp Village is a reindeer herding unit in Sweden. Only a Lapp Village shareholder has the right to practice reindeer herding.
- 38 Amft 20001, 152.
- 39 Fjellström 1985, 538–540.
- 40 Wheelensburg 1989, 115; Ingold 1976, 157–158.
- 41 Eikjok 1990, 15–20; Joks 2006, 16–18.
- 42 Ulvsted 2004, 119–120. See also Joks 2006, 13–15.
- 43 Cullblom 1996, passim.
- 44 Keskitalo-Foyle 2004.
- 45 Ruotsala 2002, passim.
- 46 Ruotsala 2002.
- 47 E.g. Pehrson 1964.
- 48 Ulvsted 2004, 120.
- 49 In Finnish: ‘En välittäis jos meillä poronhoito loppuis, se on melkein enemmän tappiolla jos laskee tuloja ja menoja. (—) Mutta tiedän, että se on elämäntapa. Se on niillä niin verissä, ettei ne pysty lopettamaan vaikei ole kannattavaa. Jos Keijo myis kaikki poronsa ja mekritysaika lähenis niin sehän kävelis aivan hulluksi.’ TYKL Research Archive 1.6.27/12.
- 50 TYKL Research Archive 1.6.27/12.
- 51 Cullblom 1996.

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TKU/TYKL-archive, University of Turku, School of Cultural Research, Turku

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When equal-part inheritance is not equivalent: gender and the value of land in a Spanish village¹

Introduction

This article will study gender-linked uses of land throughout the 20th century in a Spanish village and their effects on men's and women's positioning in the village's social space today. Two aspects of Bourdieu's theoretical framework, the social field and how people position themselves in it and the reproduction of the *habitus*, will be put into play to interpret the resulting situation.² This study also follows more recent theoretical and practical uses and developments of value theory along the lines traced by Bourdieu.³ The analysis of an empirical example will show how changes that affect the positioning of the social entities in the social field affect the reproduction of the *habitus* and that, as a result, this reproduction is neither exact nor automatic and can be diverse.

The fieldwork on which this analysis is based was carried out between 1988 and 2001, with greatest intensity in the period from 1996 to 2000, to produce material for my doctoral thesis.⁴ The field site is a small village near the city of Leon in northwestern Spain, a small village that currently has fewer than 200 inhabitants. Work was also done in other nearby villages, for the purpose of comparison.

The fieldwork was of the commuting type, as personal circumstances made it impossible for me to live on a constant basis in the village. However, the long-term nature of the study enabled me to be present in the village in all periods of the year, both festive and non-festive, several times over the years. In fact, the length of the fieldwork made it possible for me to observe processes that would have been impossible to appreciate in a more traditional, one-year or two-year ethnographic study.

All of the classic ethnographic techniques were employed: observation, participant observation, discussion groups, interviews, innumerable informal conversations. In addition, work with documents such as municipal residency lists and church records was indispensable for producing information about the first half of the century, which then was used to elicit information about households, their members, and the changes they underwent. This dialogue between the people of the village and their past situations and decisions

allowed me to follow the processes of household formation and dissolution and the destinies of individual members, resulting in a household-by-household file of the village's inhabitants throughout a large part of the 20th century.

Problem to be analyzed

The origin of this research was my surprise at the situation I encountered in this small village, which I shall call "San Julián" (a fictitious name) in the 1980s. Whereas many young men had decided to terminate their educations as early as possible and remain in the village, combining dairy farming and agriculture focused on the needs of the cows, young women tended to remain in school somewhat longer and later leave to live, work and marry in large towns or cities. The explanation for this phenomenon that was popularly repeated in the village was that men "liked" living and working in the village but women "did not like" it. An explanation which did not, in fact, explain. On one hand, it was not really true, as many young women expressed the desire to live in their small village. On the other hand, it raised a very important question: Why did men and women, at this point in time, have such apparently contrasting preferences?⁵

In order to answer this question and determine the extent to which the situation at that moment was new and different with regard to previous moments, it was necessary to analyze the decisions of men and women in the past, their "values" or the positions they occupied in the social field, as well as the configuration of that social field and the changes that it had undergone.⁶ In the ensuing research, a picture emerged in which the development of certain main axes of organization, such as the *casa* as a social entity, gender differences as they are culturally defined in this context, and land inheritance as the main means of production and reproduction combined with a broad context of changing circumstances, such as emigration, mechanization, and economic prosperity and economic crisis, to cause men and women to situate themselves in non-compatible and non-coinciding positions in the social field, positions which point them in very different directions, when it comes to making decisions about the future.

Although this is not a "story" with a beginning, development and complications, and resolution, we must start somewhere, and that somewhere will be the general situation of the organization of people, property, and work in households or *casas*, the organization of work according to gender, and the inheritance and use of property. We will then see how the changing conditions interacted with these main axes of organization to produce new positionings of men and women.⁷

The casa as a social entity and framework of decision

The word *casa* in this area is a multi-layered term with meanings that range from the actual building people inhabit, through the house-corral area and the feminine work that takes place there, to the entire complex of property – land, buildings, animals, tools – and people who live on it, work it, and have rights and obligations regarding the property and one another. In this article, I will mainly use it in this last sense: the *casa* is a social entity of production, consumption, and reproduction, which comprehends property and people who live together and work this property in order to make a living.

During the first half of the century, the *casa* was a unit which joined the work of the members of the family of orientation⁸ on property owned by the parents to provide for the needs of these same members.⁹ Although the *casa* was not completely self-sufficient, in that there were many products that were acquired from outside, it was a self-contained unit in the sense that all the members worked for the benefit of the *casa* as a whole, and the production of the *casa* provided for the needs of these members.

The *casa* and its resources, both human and non-human, were thus the main framework within which the members made decisions. The relationship between the amount of property available to the *casa* and the number of members (and their age and gender distribution) defined the position of the *casa* in relation to the other *casas* in the village, and the positioning of its members with reference to other people from other *casas*.

As we shall see, young people, during the first half of the century and beyond, married and formed their own *casas* on the basis of property received from the *casa* they grew up in, starting out with a small amount of property and adding to it as they were able. Each *casa* reproduced itself in each of its children, who, together with a spouse, formed a new family farm, uniting both husband's and wife's property and labor. Thus, a *casa* with, for example, four children, eventually gave rise to four new *casas*. It should, of course, be noted that this multiplication of *casas* was possible for two reasons. The first reason is that, because a new *casa* united both spouses and property from different *casas* of the previous generation – and there was a notable tendency to marry within the village or within a group of three or four villages –, the growth was not as exponential as it might seem. The second reason is that there was, in fact, room for population growth during the first half of the century: the very small size of the population (203 inhabitants in 1900¹⁰) and the limitation of the land that a family could work to what its members could farm by hand made for a relative abundance of land.

A gendered division of work leads to a gendered use of land

The work carried out in the *casa* was shared out according to the culturally defined capacities for age and gender.¹¹ Gender is the axis that is most pertinent to my analysis here. The villagers' explanations of the tasks considered most appropriate to each gender reveal that men were consistently

adjudicated the work considered to have priority for the production necessary for the survival of the *casa*. During the first part of the 20th century, these tasks included all of the main agricultural tasks (plowing, planting, harvesting), especially those requiring the use of animal traction, as well as the care of these animals. Women, on the other hand, were assigned an auxiliary position in agriculture, helping with any of the tasks men do and carrying out the least skilled jobs (removing stones from the fields, weeding, helping to harvest), as well as all of the tasks related to the home and personal care of the family. When necessary, women could perform typically male tasks (plowing), but always under exceptional circumstances. Men could do the auxiliary agricultural tasks normally assigned to women, but almost never, and only in quite exceptional circumstances, did they substitute women in the tasks related to home and family.

Why do I say that this leads to a gendered use of land? Because young unmarried adult men, already accustomed to doing the main agricultural tasks, were often allowed to use a piece of land – often a piece of land that they would eventually inherit – to begin to work on their own, keeping their earnings on this piece of land and thus beginning to form the basis of their own future farm. Women were able to earn some money in other ways – selling chickens, eggs, home produce, sewing, etc.– but their auxiliary position with regard to agriculture effectively prevented them from starting to work a piece of land on their own and for their own benefit. In other words, men had a direct relationship with the land, which they could work on their own, while a woman's relationship with the land, *even when it was her own property*, was necessarily through a man – father, brother, husband – who was the main organizer and who carried out the principal tasks, defined as men's work, and who she helped with her auxiliary feminine labor. Even though a man, responsible for the main agricultural tasks, did in fact need a woman's auxiliary work in the fields and at home, a woman's auxiliary work could only be put into action through her relationship to a farmer: this use of land is clearly asymmetrical and this asymmetry is based on culturally defined gender roles.

There was a definite tendency toward virilocal post-marital residence: in 1957, 62.9% of the married couples were composed of local men with local (32.3%) or non-local (30.6%) wives, while only 11.3% were composed of local women with non-local husbands and 25.8% of two non-local spouses.¹² This data clearly supports this interpretation of the gendered use of land; women tended to be more mobile, taking their auxiliary work, along with their property, to their husband's incipient farm, while men tended to be more stationary, investing their work where they grew up and planned to form their own family farm. In the first half of the century, men and women in the village tended to marry one another, so this virilocal tendency in residence was only visible in the marriages where one of the spouses was from another nearby village. However, people in the village clearly stated that the newly married couple tended to live wherever the majority of their property was, and on the few occasions when the husband went to live where his wife lived, they felt the need to explain this non-typical situation to the ethnographer.

Equal part inheritance that is not equivalent

The inheritance system in this area has been, as far as people's memory reaches, equal part inheritance for both male and female children.¹³ Additionally, both male and female children inherited all types of property – land, tools, animals, buildings, furniture, money, and anything else inheritable. This does not mean that every kind of property was divided among all the children; houses were not divided, tools and animals could not necessarily be divided, and some things like pigeon lofts for raising edible young pigeons were given as a whole to one child.

The main concern was to create equivalent lots. If there was a sufficient diversity of property, parents tried to leave each child what would be most useful to him or her: a piece of land that bordered land held by a son's or daughter's spouse, the house for a child who was in need of a place to live.

The gendered division of work previously discussed and its effects on men's and women's relationship with the land and with one another meant that inherited land did not signify exactly the same thing for men, who could exploit it directly, and for women, who could only exploit it through a man. The fact that agriculture (and to a much lesser extent, raising sheep) was really the only option for making a living, made this difference in the meaning of land for men and for women non-significant with regard to the formation of households.¹⁴ There was one main life trajectory, which included marrying someone from a farming family and forming one's own family farm. Men's property and women's property, men's work and women's work, were complementary and mutually necessary. The slight difference in the actual use of the land and the difference in tasks assigned to one gender and the other in fact ensured the reproduction of the *casa* through marriage and inheritance: men and women needed one another's property and work in order to survive. We shall see how this situation changes later and this "slight" difference in men's and women's relationship with the land becomes a gap that separates them.

Use rights and property rights

Rights over land were not of one single kind. Property rights and use rights can be distinguished from one another. The clearest case was when an owner retained property rights but rented out use rights to another person; another case would be that of parents who retained property rights but allowed a son to use a piece of land for himself. The strongest situation, as far as land rights goes, was when a person owned and worked the land. In the scenario we are discussing for the first half of the 20th century, when agriculture was basically the only option and the desired position to which everyone aspired, property and use rights went together in a general sense. Although in fact the couple by whose marriage the *casa* was formed held the property rights while both parents and children in the *casa* had use rights, the *casa* configuration emphasized the community of property and use rights, underlining parents'

and children's common interests as present and future property holders and users and de-emphasizing divisive conflicts that could exist. We shall see that, when emigration begins to remove people from the village, the difference between use rights and property rights comes to the fore, creating a potential for conflict among farmer and non-farmer descendants, a conflict which, because of the gendered use of property, may in the future shape up into a conflict between brothers who are farmers and sisters who are not.

*Changing conditions and changing reproduction:
emigration from the late 1950s to the 1970s*

Many changes were occurring in Spain in general as well as locally in San Julián at the end of the 1950s and throughout the decades of the sixties and the seventies. Industrialization offered new jobs outside of farming, while the mechanization of agriculture allowed one person to work more land. These two processes combined to reshape the social field and the positions people took on it.

The new options available allowed people to position themselves both inside and outside of the village, remaining in agriculture or moving away to urban industrial jobs. The decisions on whether to stay or to emigrate could be, and were, made at different points in people's lives: young single people, couples when they married, families already established in farming.¹⁵ The category of "preference" appears here, as a partial explanation for these decisions to emigrate or to stay, although the people also explained that it depended on a person's situation and expectations in the village.

A relatively "well-to-do" family was defined, according to the villagers, as a family that had enough land to provide sufficient food, new clothing and shoes occasionally, and the capacity to hire day laborers when necessary instead of hiring themselves out as day laborers. In one of these "well-to-do" families, which can serve as an example, six out of eight children who were making their decisions between approximately 1945 and 1965 remained in the village definitively working as farmers. A "poor" family was defined as having little land, barely sufficient food, and a need to work outside of the family farm, often as day laborers, to make ends meet. In one rather extreme case of a poor family, only one daughter out of the total of twelve children who were making their decisions between approximately 1950 and 1970 remained in the village, managing to concentrate all the property and, through marriage to a farmer, form a new *casa*. It is clear that the amount of land and the number of children it would be shared among was an important factor – perhaps the most important factor – in people's decisions, once again underlining the importance of the *casa* as the framework for people's life decisions. However, the category of "preference" is often used, at least in retrospect, to explain which siblings left and which stayed.

How did this new configuration of the social field interact with the processes we have discussed of the reproduction of the *casa*, the gendered division of work and gendered use of land, inheritance and rights over property? For the

moment, the *casa* as an entity of production, reproduction, and consumption continued to reproduce itself, albeit only in some of its children, the ones who remained in the village in farming. The emigrants, of course, formed their own homes and family units at their destination, but these homes, supported by salaried work, were no longer *casas* in the same sense.

The gendered division of work varied somewhat. Men continued to organize and carry out the main farming jobs, making the area of jobs done with farm machinery exclusively theirs. However, the use of mechanization in farm work, along with chemical weed control, eliminated certain tasks that had previously been done by hand and defined as women's auxiliary work. Women still helped in certain tasks, for example, cutting off the tops of the sugar beets once the machinery had dug them out, but there were fewer and fewer of these. The genders' different relationships with the land continued in vigor, with women's exclusion from the use of machinery reinforcing their need for a man who could work the land in order to establish themselves in farming.

Inheritance continued to be equal parts for all children, both men and women. Emigration, though, meant that there were a number of men and women who removed themselves from the social field of the village and did not require the early use of parental land to begin their own family farms. This redounded to the benefit of those who stayed and who, with their new machinery, were able to farm much larger amounts of land.

This did not mean that those who left were excluded from inheritance.¹⁶ The emigrants eventually inherited their equal shares, just like the non-emigrants. Increasing life expectancies contributed to pushing back the moment at which people did in fact inherit, and most emigrants were well-established by the time they inherited, making it less likely that they would require the use of the land.

The difference between property rights and use rights becomes very clear at this moment. The property belonging to the *casa*, or more properly to the married couple who originally formed the *casa*, is property to be used jointly by the members of the *casa*. Emigrants, when they left, renounced their use rights, at least until they returned to the village, something which seldom happened. Not so, as we have seen, with their property rights. In the interim between the emigrants' exit from village life and the moment of inheritance, the parents retain their property rights and the members of the *casa* have the use rights to the property. The emigrants' brothers and sisters are investing their work in, and receiving the production from, land to which they have use rights but some of which will eventually be inherited by the emigrants.

The potential conflict which could occur if the emigrants simply demanded their land inheritance or its monetary equivalent at the moment of their parents' deaths, pulling out a large portion – in many cases more than half – of the farmers' production base, was avoided by two tendencies which benefited the farmers. The first was the tendency to keep land in the family, which led to the emigrated heirs' usually being willing to sell or rent the land cheaply to their farmer siblings. In some cases, the farmers simply continued using the land after their parents passed away, with the final settlement coming ten

or twenty years later. The second was the tendency to consider the validity of use rights. The emigrants, by leaving, had given up their use rights and the farmers, by dint of using the land, had a certain claim to continue using it. In other words, when property and use rights did not coincide, it was understood that whoever had the use rights really ought to end up with the property rights, too. As the saying in this village, and in many others, goes, “The land belongs to whoever works it.”

Changing conditions and changing reproduction: economic crisis in the 1980s. Men use the land, women do not; men have a place in the village, women do not

The economic crisis of the 1980s slowed the flow of emigration to a mere trickle. Parents once again had to accumulate enough property to give their children a future in farming. We shall see, though, that this future in farming no longer involves the reproduction of the *casa* as a unit of production, reproduction, and consumption; the gender-differentiated relationship with the land results in men and women positioning themselves in such different positions in the social field that they are unlikely to find one another when it comes time to marry.

In the late seventies and early eighties, farmers began to switch their production to dairy farming and focus their agricultural production on products to feed the cows. At first, people had only a small number of cows and they were kept in the stable in the patio of the house, milked by hand or with a small portable type of milking machine. This work, carried out close to home and defined as “caring” work considered easier than farming, in contrast to the men’s agricultural work done with machinery, was done to a great extent by women at first, by the same women who no longer had a place in agriculture due to the mechanization. As the economic crisis made successful emigration a very uncertain enterprise, many families made the dairy cows the main focus of their production, building up the family business to provide work for their sons. With this investment, the number of cows increased and new stables were built for them with milking rooms and new machinery for milking the cows. This work became, little by little, defined as men’s work, although women, as always, helped.

Important changes were also occurring in formal education at this time. In 1970, a law was passed that made school attendance mandatory until the age of 14 and in 1990 this age was raised to 16. Whereas previously people had simply finished school when they were old enough to start to work on the family farm, and later made their decisions about whether to stay or to emigrate, now there was a specific institutionally-determined age at which young people had to make decisions.

It is at this point that the *habitus*, and the different relations it had shaped between men and property use and women and property use, resulted in men and women, from their different positions on the social field, making

quite different decisions. The options and choices were technically the same for young men and young women: to continue studying or to leave school and begin to work. However, these options appeared very different to the adolescents, depending upon whether they were boys or girls, from their different positions in the social field.

Young men, at the age of 14, and later 16, could try to find an unskilled job; however, with the economic crisis this was not too promising. They could continue studying and try to find a job outside of the village – an enterprise considered doubly uncertain, first, because of the uncertainty of success in higher education, and second, because of the high rates of unemployment. Or they could begin to work on the family farm, with their parents, as we have seen, investing in improving the family's dairy farming enterprise; these young men would begin to earn money right from the start and be investing their work in a business that would eventually be their own. It is not surprising that many of them chose to quit school and start to work with their families.

Young women could look for an unskilled job in the same unpromising conditions as young men, although the service sector provided them, perhaps, with more opportunities. They could continue studying, in order to eventually work outside of the village, with the same uncertainties regarding success as the young men. They could, conceivably, stay at home and help their mothers around the house, waiting to marry, but this was not a plan that many 14 or 16-year-olds considered, in a world where young people were marrying later and later. What young women could not, under any circumstances, do was begin to work *at the main agricultural tasks for a salary* on the family farm, even though they were candidates for inheritance just like their brothers. They could, in the best of cases, help their parents and brothers and, eventually, move their help to a husband's farming enterprise. But the decision to stay on the farm, in these conditions, would depend on a woman's being certain of marrying a farmer, something difficult to know at this age. So, at the age of 14 or 16, young women by default, really, tended to continue studying for at least a few more years.

The reconfiguration of the family farming enterprise also contributed to eliminate women from farming work. Whereas during the first half of the century and the early second half, the *casa* reproduced itself by dividing the property among the heirs who formed their own *casas* in the same conditions, as units of production, reproduction, and consumption, in the last part of the century, young men made a specific decision at an early age to join the family enterprise, leading to investment in improving and modernizing the enterprise and a new figure, the *sociedad*, which consolidates long-term collaboration between a father and his son. This occurs long before the young men consider marriage and requires a joint exploitation of the property among the men of the family of orientation that precludes the reproduction of the *casa*.

Let us take a closer look, first, at how the *sociedad* works and then, at its consequences. When a family decides to form a *sociedad*, the parents "sell" part of the property to the children, often for a nominal amount, and then parents and children reunite the property they each own as property to be

exploited jointly by the *sociedad*. The father and the sons unite their labor to work this jointly used property and, as members of the *sociedad*, they assign salaries to themselves and reserve a certain amount of the benefits to reinvest in the enterprise. When the parents pass away, the part of the property that continued in their possession will be divided equally among all the heirs.

One of the main differences between the *sociedad* and the earlier *casa* is this joint use of the separately-owned property of the members of the family of orientation, rather than its division and separation among the sons' new families of procreation. This obviates the need for the sons to seek a wife who can contribute property to create a property basis for the new *casa*. The other main difference is the joint work of the men of the family of orientation. The number of men whose work is united in this fashion – usually the father and two or more sons – provides a labor base that is more than sufficient to take care of all the agricultural and dairy work. Apart from house and family care, women's work is no longer necessary for the production that provides for all the families involved. Thus, instead of separate *casas* for parents and each child's family, several households remain united, pooling their property and male-labor resources but forming separate units of consumption and reproduction. The *casa* as such has ceased to exist, and is replaced by households joined in a *sociedad*.

Conclusions

As we can see, several changes, all occurring on the basis of a gendered use of land, have come together to tie men to the farm and to push women away from it. Mechanization excluded women first from agricultural work and later from dairy work. The early decision moment of continuing to study or not provides young men with a relatively attractive option of joining the family farm enterprise, while pushing women, who cannot do this because their future in agro-dairy farming depends on a future agro-dairy farmer husband, to continue to study and later to work outside of the village, where they are not likely to encounter and marry a farmer. And the new organization of the *sociedad*, by pooling the property of the members of the family of orientation and pooling the work of the men in the family, ties men to the farm while excluding women from participation in farm work.

As a result, the *casa* as a unit of production, reproduction and consumption, no longer reproduces itself. Rather, these aspects become divided: the *sociedad* is the production unit, but the different nuclear families that form the *sociedad* are each a unit of consumption. The physical reproduction of persons takes place in the nuclear families, but the reproduction of the *sociedad* will be a matter for the future, if and when its members' children decide to stay and work with their families.

However, while the gendered use of land has prevented women from making a direct use of their property, the young men who have decided to remain in the village have faced another problem resulting from this gendered use of land which keeps them in the village and encourages women to continue

studying and to seek work outside of the village. When these young men reach the age of considering marriage and family formation, the young women of their village and the villages around them are long gone; most of them are actually physically gone, and the others are looking to a future outside of the village that does not contemplate marriage to a farmer. Thus, the very cultural definition of man and woman, what each does and their relationship to the land, the definition which for a long time made the men and women of the village need each other in terms of property and labor, now situates them on different sides of a growing gap, pointing them in different directions and preventing them from finding one another to marry and form families.

And so we see, in a longitudinal case study, how broad changes on the national level affect the way that men and women, within the framework of the *casa*, position themselves on the social field, which in turn affects the reproduction of the *casa*, resulting in a reproduction that is not only not exact, but truly different.

NOTES

- 1 I would like to express my gratitude to the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology of the UNED for providing funding for attending the 9th SIEF Congress, 16–20 June 2008, at the Magee Campus, University of Ulster, in Derry, Northern Ireland, at which a shorter version of this paper was presented. I would also like to thank Dr. Helena Ruotsala, organizer of the ‘Gendered Rural Spaces’ panel, as well as the other panel participants, for providing a space for discussing the contents of this article.
- 2 Bourdieu (1977, 1988 [1979], 1988, 2004 [2002]).
- 3 Díaz de Rada 2007.
- 4 Defended at the UNED on June 13, 2008. The title is ‘La transmisión de los valores en un pueblo leonés: agentes, procesos y resultados.’
- 5 This analysis of preferences based on positions in the social field builds on analyses by Bourdieu (1988[1979] and 2004 [2002]).
- 6 For a lucid discussion of ‘value’ as a differential relation and the resulting understanding of ‘value’ as a positioning on the social field (considering actions and declarations together as ways of positioning oneself), see Díaz de Rada (2007).
- 7 The processes described here can be fruitfully compared and contrasted with those described for Ireland by Guinnane (1989, 1992, 1997). Although in the conditions described by Guinnane in Ireland the sheer distance involved prevented the emigrants to America from making any claim to the inheritance, in both the Irish case and the Spanish case, the people who remained behind and actually used the land were able to concentrate the property in their own hands.
- 8 The family of orientation is the family in which a person grows up, that is, Ego, parents and siblings; as opposed to the family of procreation, which is the family a person forms in adulthood, that is Ego, spouse and children.
- 9 The material for this description comes from from villagers’ memories and their explanations of archival material from municipal and church records. The main family configuration was, and continues to be at present, the nuclear family. Although additional members who are unable to form their own *casa* are added to this nuclear family when necessary, this is always considered somewhat exceptional and requiring explanation, so that I prefer to consider these families not as another ‘type’ of family (extended, multiple, etc.) but rather as a temporary opening up to needy relations of the long-term nuclear family configuration.

- 10 Instituto Nacional de Estadística, INE Base, Cifras de población. Series históricas de población. www.ine.es.
- 11 Although I concentrate here on the gendered division of work, it should be remembered that the definition of capacities according to age – except perhaps for infants and the very elderly who are physically incapable of carrying out any work – is also a cultural construct.
- 12 *Status Animarum*, 1957. Parish records.
- 13 It should also be mentioned that, in the Spanish inheritance and property system, men and women retain separately the property each inherits; whereas property they acquire on their own after marriage may be jointly owned by the spouses, the property each inherits remains Under separate ownership. As a result, in a situation in which both the mother and father have property, the children will inherit, on one hand, their mother's property, which will be divided among them, and on the other, their father's property, which will also be divided among them. This brief, basic description does not, of course, do justice to the complexities, both in law and in practice, of the inheritance system.
- 14 In 1957, 84% of the adult male population (and it must be noted that at this moment in time, anyone over the age of 12 was classified as an adult) were either farmers or agricultural laborers. Women were sometimes listed with the same occupation as their husbands or as devoted to *their work (sus labores)*, a classification more or less equivalent to *housewife*. However, the criteria for attaching one label or another to a woman in the *Status Animarum* is unclear.
- 15 This last decision moment, families that were already established in farming, was more frequent at the beginning of the period, when less land was available due to the population growth which peaked in 1960, becoming less frequent as the emigration of family members left more land for those who stayed behind.
- 16 One of the differences noted with respect to the Irish situation (Guinnane 1989, 1992, 1997).

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MARI IMMONEN

There's no future for us here!

Mari youth on living in Shorunzha

The title of my article is something I heard while doing fieldwork in the Mari El (Mari Republic) in Russia. It is a phrase not at all unheard of among the 20-year-olds there, who see their future as lying somewhere else than in a backwoods village without an internet connection or even mobile-phone coverage. The impression one first gets when listening to them is, who in the world would want to stay *here*?

In this article I consider interconnecting social issues related to the space and place¹ of youth, especially young women, in the Mari El village of Shorunzha during the first years of 2000. How do youth act in the home domain? Where do they spend their free time? What kinds of thoughts do they have in relation to the future? One can struggle to get out of the small village, but connections have already formed to it on multiple levels. It is the place where one grew up and where one's parents and relatives live. The Mari identity lives on strong in the village: people speak Mari there and practice their old folk religion. But the village doesn't have a future... or does it?

The field

My fieldwork in Shorunzha² began in 2002 when I participated in a fieldtrip for the Mari Women and Modernisation project, led by Ildikó Lehtinen and Helena Ruotsala. A goal of the project was to raise students' interest in Finno-Ugric speaking peoples. The academic aim was to collect research material on selected topics using ethnological methods.³ This first trip included a dozen students from the Universities of Helsinki and Turku, the project leaders, and Tamara Molotova and Sonja Tsesnokova of the Mari Research Institute, who provided expert support. My own research subject, Mari weddings⁴, came into focus during that trip, and I collected materials on the theme during the following fieldwork trips in 2003 and 2004. On the trip before last, my observations and interviews focused also on the time before marriage. I concentrated on how Shorunzha youth⁵ participate in house work and chores, on their leisure time and their plans for the future, and on their thoughts about getting married and starting a family.

Mari El is a long distance from Finland geographically.⁶ After two nights on trains, the journey continued from Yoshkar-Ola, the Mari capital, towards the Tatarstan border. At the destination in Shorunzha, the view opened into an expanse of fields stretching as far as the eye could see, slightly rolling and broken here and there by small patches of forest or solitary trees – a departure from my accustomed landscape. Geographer Tim Cresswell distinguishes ‘landscape’, which is seen outwardly, from ‘place’, which comes from personal experience living somewhere.⁷ Over the time of our fieldwork, we also learned to perceive certain things in the Meadow Mari⁸ landscape that were not immediately apparent. The solitary patches of wood revealed themselves to be sacrificial groves, while a barrenness in the scenery brought to mind Soviet times and efficient production seeking ever more land to clear for grain. Cutting the forests had for its part led to increased wind, erosion and the drying up of rivers. Dark clouds moved over the idyllic fields, reminding one of the vacillating living conditions experienced by the Mari over the past 100 years.

Helena Ruotsala has discussed Shorunzha from a field worker’s perspective. Becoming acquainted with the village, with its streets, its houses and borders, has made the strange more familiar, more like the place of personal experiences and memories.⁹ Getting about by foot helps one to perceive and piece together the details to form an overall sense of the village. The grey log houses, their ornamental window frames with richly coloured flower beds beneath, a few modern brick houses – these are impressions left by the approximately 500 houses of Shorunzha. High gates keep the yards away from curious eyes, posing a challenge for field workers and other outsiders. What lies behind the gates? Is the barking dog tied up? How do the gates open in the first place? Is it ok to simply go up to the house and enter?

The way in was through an unheated porch. The visitor was led to the living-room, where the first thing to catch the eye was the Sacred Corner in the corner opposite. Another striking feature of Mari houses in general were the whitewashed ovens. The interior of the living-rooms would include a sofa set with its easy chairs along the walls, a large bookshelf, houseplants, lace or floral-pattern curtains, and clocks, posters, calendars and photographs on the walls. On the floor there would be a thick large-patterned rug. Sometimes such a rug was also on the wall.¹⁰ Every object has a story of its own, conveying messages to the receiver who is able to interpret their signs.¹¹ Perhaps understanding the objects opens up by degrees. Someone may know the history of the house and the people who live there, and thereby also know who embroidered the cloth in the sacred corner or whether it was bought in the market square. Was there perhaps a young daughter-in-law in the house, whose bridal costume the cloth belonged to? To someone else, the cloth and devotional niche might represent the indigenous religion and hold no connotations of feelings or personal attachments. The white oven with its enduring warmth and glow was the heart of the house, the place where the hallmarks of Mari cuisine are baked: bliny, pies and breads. Through the long, cold winters, the ovens were the only source of heat. There was a gas pipeline just a few kilometres away, but the households in the village

could not afford access to it, though it would help mitigate the cold and their daily chores. The ovens were wood burning, which became evident during an August fieldtrip by the huge piles of firewood seen stacked in front of the houses.

Mari hospitality reached a high point after the interviews, when seated around the tea table. This was also the place where the interviewer ultimately became the interviewee. Shorunzha villagers were interested in Finland generally, but above all, they wanted to hear about personal family relationships and life situations. Weddings were a natural topic for me, in part as I had just married a few weeks before the first fieldtrip. Weddings were therefore not only topical and sufficiently personal; they were also something of which I had experience. I was able to share something of my experiences and show photographs. The wedding topic proved a good choice in terms of collecting material. I strove to collect a diverse range of material (and sometimes just ended up doing so due to limited language skills). Interviews were one method of collection, but I have also observed Mari weddings through wedding pictures, videos and also through participation. Many of the smaller details and events connected with Mari weddings opened up to me in their fuller dimensions through these observations rather than through the interviews alone. Mari weddings was also a topic that could be supplemented by the Finno-Ugrian Society's unpublished archival material recorded by Mari folklore collector Timofej Jevsevjev, under the guidance of U. T. Sirelius, in the Morki district and other areas in the early 1900s.

A distinguishing feature of our fieldwork in Shorunzha was that the interviews were conducted in small groups of two to three individuals. This was in large part of necessity since nearly every member of our group needed the help of interpreters, to some extent, for the interviews. Clearly, the sensitivity of the interactions suffers a bit when several people are involved in an interview. On the other hand, our topics did not raise particularly sensitive issues, and in general, it seemed easy for the participants to speak on the themes. An advantage of interviewing in groups was that one could hear other interviews also and thus gain even more knowledge about the culture. Additionally, during the first two fieldtrips when the group size was at its maximum, we were treated to many outings and festivities, which also played a role in helping us to understand Mari identity and the local way of life.

The two to three weeks of our fieldwork was enough time to develop quite warm relationships with some of the villagers as we saw them daily on the street, in the Monday marketplace, in shops and during festivals. We were often invited to people's homes for tea. Every field worker kept a journal for recording all kinds of observations and reflections, both related and unrelated to the interviews. Ethnologist Hanna Snellman reports having observation-related problems if the people who are the research subjects do not know that their activities are being followed (though in her study, of Finnish immigrants in Sweden, she restricted the use of observations made outside the formal interview setting; they were used only to help the researcher achieve a background understanding).¹² I do not feel that we had similar problems about not being recognised since, wherever we went, we

were readily spotted as ‘those Finns’. There was no possibility of acting incognito. The villagers had been informed of our arrival and told of our plans in advance by the management of the collective. In our interviews and in other meetings, villagers were also told about our research topics and that every student-participant in the fieldwork would write a thesis or dissertation on their topic.

How to process fieldwork material in research papers and how to archive it form a problem of research ethics with far-reaching implications?¹³ Every researcher is responsible for how his or her material is processed, what part of it is published and how it will be archived. Sociologist Laura Assmuth reports, in her dissertation on the life of Sardinian women, that the publication of the fieldwork results always surprises the participants. Texts written by researchers never completely correspond to how the research subjects would themselves describe their lives. Assmuth’s own research was motivated by a desire to honour the women whom she interviewed for her book.¹⁴ A similar intent was behind the Mari Women and Modernisation project. The purpose was to study the life of Mari women in the midst of the radical changes underway in Russian society and to do this in a manner honouring the women as well as the Mari identity.

Water

Water makes life possible. It is an element that is hardly noticed unless it is missing. In Shorunzha, water is intimately connected with people’s daily lives, particularly women’s, both in terms of physical chores as well as at a mental level. Keeping house, clothes and body clean is an important manifestation of Mari identity. Cleanliness and tidiness can be used as a means to help control and understand a changing world. They are also believed to protect against evil spirits.¹⁵

Many situations and aspects of life in Shorunzha – meetings, places, traversable routes – were determined by water. The village contains three long streets, of which only Skolnaja Street had houses with running water. In Apakejev and in Tihon Jefremov, the main street, water was brought in by bucket and carrying-pole. The streets had drilled wells at regular intervals, and some yards had their own wells. Well water was used for domestic chores and tending cattle, while spring water was directly potable and used for making tea.¹⁶

There were two springs in the village. The smaller was used only by the few homes that surrounded it. The larger spring was housed under a wooden canopy at the low area where Tihon Jefremov and Apakajev cross. There were no houses in its immediate vicinity, only a park lawn with an outdoor performance stage, a swing and the tree-lined Untsho River. Water marks the site of various daily interactions between people. At some of the canopied wells of the village, women would be seen talking in the evenings.¹⁷ Some of the youths also reported spending evenings by the spring and the swing nearby.¹⁸ The Shora, a river wider than the Untsho and located near the village,

was also a popular meeting place. The young people spoke of having picnics there and grilling *shashlik*. A few boys also would fish at the river.¹⁹

It is no coincidence that Shorunzha is surrounded by rivers. The Mari, as other peoples of Central Russia, has chosen to live beside water.²⁰ Veneration of water is part of Mari religious tradition. Water must be protected against sullyng, and therefore it is forbidden to curse, talk loudly or otherwise behave offensively in the vicinity of springs. A consequence of inappropriate behaviour may be that the guardian spirit of the well or spring, the 'Mother of the Water', will take offence and the water will withdraw.²¹ Water, along with fire, is counted as an element that has the power to destroy magical forces, and water's purifying influence is used in weddings, in funerals and in connection with illness and childbirth.²²

Water is present in ceremonies, but it is also needed in almost every kind of job done at home. In interviews, Shorunzha youth often reported that rural life involves a great or excessive amount of work to be done around the house, particularly in the summertime²³ – washing the floors, preparing meals, doing the laundry and the dishes, tending the fields and cattle, and many maintenance chores like painting fences and buildings.²⁴ According to Tim Cresswell, the home, while it is seen as a place of refuge by researchers in many fields, can also be the exact opposite: a centre of violence, neglect and abuse as well as of strenuous work and drudgery.²⁵

Ethnological studies concerning migration have pictured youth trying to escape the never ending work and hard everyday life.²⁶ Similar aspirations are expressed by Shorunzha youth about jobs and about dwellings that include running water (unlike most houses in the village) as well as baths, flush toilets and the other hallmarks of the modern dwelling.²⁷ In a sociological study conducted in Mari El among rural youth, two-third of the respondents (70.6%) were dissatisfied with their present form of dwelling. They were most likely living with their parents or relatives or in substandard housing.²⁸

In Shorunzha, the dream of getting a place of one's own and the hope of having running water are made possible on Skolnaja Street. Sergei²⁹, who had built a house there, reported that Skolnaja was a popular place to live because there one could get connected to the water main. There would be even more residents, but all the lots were taken. The street could be extended no further since the last houses were already up against the border of the collective. The residents were mainly young families, i.e. with 30- to 40-year-old parents.³⁰ The people who moved there wanted housing arrangements different than what one usually had in the village, where several generations ended up living under a single roof. Valentina spoke of how, during the early years of marriage, it was difficult to fit into the role of a young wife as her mother-in-law was always blaming her for everything. Valentina and her husband moved into a brick house that they built themselves in Skolnaja in the early 1990s.³¹

The houses in Skolnaja stood out from other houses in the village, which had log or brick veneers. Some of the Skolnaja houses were modular 'monolith houses'³² which, as other homes, were constructed and furnished gradually over several years. Rimma and her family moved to Skolnaja eight

Young girl is rinsing laundry in the spring. Photo: Mari Immonen, National Board of Antiquities, 2003.



years ago, and have been renovating and fixing up their home ever since. Work was done by organising work brigades. As compensation, Rimma prepared meals several times a day for the volunteers and also gave them homebrewed alcohol.³³ One of the positive things mentioned by some of the youth about rural life is how people come to each other's aid,³⁴ as is seen in these building projects, which can last many years.

Helena Ruotsala's fieldwork in Shorunzha has concentrated on reciprocity as a strategy for managing the tasks of daily life.³⁵ My study of Mari wedding customs focused on bonds of kinship, which often came up during the interviews. Kinship was clearly significant, and the help of relatives could be counted on in circumstances outside the everyday, such as at potato planting time or when needing catering for a wedding. Ethnologist Hilikka Helsti has examined the stages of her own kinship network using the familial strategy concept. She reports that kinship ties were utilised across different parts of the world in moving to cities, when emigrating and in forging new social networks.³⁶ Shorunzha youth were helped by kinship bonds when, for instance, they could go on holiday to visit relatives in Yoshkar-Ola or Kazan. Relatives who live in the cities may also help their young relatives who are beginning studies.

Extended kinship rarely had an effect, however, on the division of labour within the nuclear family.³⁷ Work within the home was, above all, determined by the hierarchical family structure. Gender was also a significant factor in

the delegation of work.³⁸ Though men may occasionally help with domestic chores, such as making meals or carrying water, these were still mostly the domain of women.³⁹ Already at the wedding stages, a young Mari woman will be acquainting herself with the man's house and main places for the various chores she will perform, such as fetching water from the well or spring, making tea with it and preparing bliny. It is generally accepted that place, in Cresswell's sense involving personal experience, takes shape during routines that are repeated daily.⁴⁰ There may be positive aspects such to this, e.g., when one thinks of issues related to return, repatriation, and bonding or becoming rooted to a place. However, domestic work may also be a restrictive bind that people cannot get free of should they want to. For example, the elderly whose children were living elsewhere could not get away for even a day because of their cows and sheep. In contrast, young people generally seemed to have opportunities for going to the city on holiday or for studies. They were not as tied down to the work of the house; others could always be found to do their work.

On the street and at the disco

Shorunzha is a strip village. Of its three streets, only the main street, Tihon Jefremov, is paved. It is the location of the village's three shops, the Shorunzha administrative office, an office for the collective (or *kolkhoz*), a library and a dressmaking workshop. Monday was market day, when the street filled up with vendors peddling textiles, garments, foodstuffs and all kinds of general goods. On other days, the street was rather quiet until around 7.00 p.m., when the sheep and cows returned from pasture led through the street by their herdsman. The animals identified their own gates in an instant and vanished from sight, and the street became once again quiet. Dusk crept into the village as day turned to night. Then the scent of heated filled saunas filled the air. Young women appeared in the street, walking in pairs or in small groups. It was time to *guljat*.⁴¹

The best time to go out to meet other youth and attract the attention of the opposite sex in Shorunzha was on the disco nights. Discos were held at the Shorunzha Cultural Centre (or 'the club'⁴²) a few nights a week during the summer, less often in the winter. The club was centrally located on the main street. Its entrance faced the square, which was also fronted by the administrative office, the library and two shops. Sociologist Tarja Tolonen, in her dissertation *Nuorten kulttuurit koulussa. Ääni, tila ja sukupuolten arkiset järjestykset (Youth cultures at school: Sound, space and the everyday organisation of gender)*, examined youth activities in school culture and tension between the sexes. 'Space' is a key term and is understood as part of social identity, a representation of the relations between people and phenomena. The spatial and temporal organisation of school is based on social attraction that induces one to be in the right place at the right time. In Tolonen's study, youth take over the hallways during break time and reign over the space, even though it is not actually theirs.⁴³ So was it in Shorunzha,



It's time to guljat. The main street, Tihon Jefremov, in the evening. Photo: Mari Immonen 2004.

too, at nights when the young people ‘took over’ the Cultural Centre and the main street.

Before going to the disco, the custom was to *guljat*, or spend time walking around the streets and in the vicinity of the club. The disco was entered only when it became dark outside. As in Tolonen’s school hallways, so in the Shorunzha streets and disco: appraising looks, revealing and mirroring back bodily identity in various kinds of performance. The objects being evaluated were different aspects of the physical: outward looks, style, and people’s dress and behaviour. Through these aspects, girls define their emerging womanhood, which also involves, however, separating oneself from others and keeping a distance.⁴⁴ One gathered from the young women’s speech that distinctions were drawn at the disco not only between the village’s own groups of youth, but also between the different villages of the area. Youth who came from other villages and from the city formed a completely separate group. According to Marina, some made contact with them and others did not, depending on the individual.⁴⁵

A girl’s reputation – how it is evaluated and thereby possibly damaged – are seen in girl studies in Finland as basic tools of social control. When people talk about a girl’s reputation, they are usually referring moralistically to her sexual behaviour. A girl’s reputation is constantly under threat: girls should not go out with too many boys, they should not appear too willing, but they should not appear too disinterested, either.⁴⁶ My focus of attention in Shorunzha, however, was not on how the reputations of young unmarried women are defined, but rather on the mobility of young women, i.e. how they, whether married or single, move outside the home.

In her dissertation on a small city in Southern Italy, *Kansan kodit ja kaupungin kadut* (*People’s homes and city streets*), anthropologist Anna-

Maria Tapaninen writes of how spatial dimensions are, from a women's perspective, readily interpretable in terms of sexual tensions. When a woman is outside of the home and its vicinity, she is both unprotected and uncontrolled.⁴⁷ I received indications of a similar mindset in Shorunzha, not only through information but through personal experience. Playing *guljat* on the street or at the disco usually ends when one gets married or reaches a certain age, at least in the case of women (in contrast, men still frequently visit the disco when in their 30s).⁴⁸ By a certain age, women switch from spending their evenings on the street and at the disco to staying at home. Twenty-six-year-old Zoya, who married a few years ago, told of going to the disco often when she was younger, but that it didn't interest her anymore. She seldom went anywhere without her husband. In the evenings, she stayed indoors and watched TV.⁴⁹ Larissa was not going steady with anyone and was not in the habit of going to the disco, either, except on rare occasions when there was a bigger festive event. At age 27, she felt herself already too old for that crowd. In her free time she read or watched TV.⁵⁰

Studies that have looked into the movements of men and of women outside the home often highlight the fact that, in peasant communities, men have a more extensive range of travel than women, who tend to stay at home with the responsibility for work such as childcare and tending to cattle.⁵¹ This is already seen in young boys, whose forays go further away from home than those of young girls.⁵² In Shorunzha, there is a marked difference between how young unmarried women and men get around from place to place in terms of both their means of travel and the distances involved. Vera reported that discos are also held in the cultural centres of the nearby villages of Jambator and Surga; to get to these, one goes by foot (not by bicycle, for example).⁵³ According to Alexei, to *guljat* with the young women on the street can be accomplished by walking around, but to really get around from one place to another, you need a car or a moped. He received his first moped at age 13. Alexei and his friends sometimes go to bigger villages such as Shinzha, which is over 10 km away, or to the district capital Mork, which is some 40 km away. Alexei had the use of his father's car. He did not have a driving licence yet, but that didn't prevent him from driving.⁵⁴ In contrast, his older sister, who wanted to learn to drive, had not received permission from their father.⁵⁵

Car ownership was rather uncommon in Shorunzha. The car was a status symbol used, for example, to drive a bridal pair to their wedding, however short the distance. Helena Ruotsala has looked into related areas involving Shorunzha men. She found that many left the village tempted by the high wages of the oil and gas fields of northern Russia. Money makes the acquisition of a car possible, and this is an impetus for leaving to do seasonal work.⁵⁶ The men would work for a few weeks, maybe a month, and then be home on holiday for a similar length of time. The abundant leisure time drove many to go cruising around the streets in their cars. Alcohol was also involved when these northern workers had periods of time off.⁵⁷ Car ownership among Shorunzha men is consistent with the view of youth-researcher Vesa Puuronen regarding how young people respond to consumer

goods, which he sees as regulating the lives of today's youth more than in previous times. Commodities are no longer acquired purely for ownership or for their use value, but for their display value. Commodities have become a significant means of self-expression, a way to stand out and to experience one's self.⁵⁸

The future is out there somewhere?

The future in which the young people would like to find themselves, based on their speech, is in 'the city', which usually meant Yoshkar-Ola, the capital of Mari El, or Kazan,⁵⁹ the capital of Tatarstan. 'Siberia' was also mentioned, meaning northern Russia and the seasonal work it offered. Shorunzha youth had some experience of city life as most of my interviewees reported having visited at least one or the other of the cities on holiday. They spent their time there visiting the cafés, practising guljat, spending time in the company of other youth – in other words, doing the same kinds of things as during their free time at home.

Getting a higher education was a subject that came up repeatedly in interviews with unmarried youth who had finished or were about to finish secondary schooling. For them the challenge of the near future was to get accepted for post-secondary studies in the city and receive training for a particular occupation. The plan after that was to stay in the city and work there for a few years, living just for oneself before settling down and starting a family. Researcher Natalya Glukhova has noted the determination and independence of young women from the Mari El countryside when they leave to pursue studies and start a career.⁶⁰ There were noticeably more men than women among the unmarried 30-somethings who were living in Shorunzha. It would seem that young women tend to stay in the cities after graduation, whereas a large number of young men return to the village for good once they have completed their military service. In the village, the men are unemployed, or they work on Shorunzha's collective farm and dream of going 'North'. In Finland, as well, young women have been observed to have a higher tendency to move from the countryside to the city.⁶¹ In girl studies and youth studies, young women's get-ahead attitudes have been explained as resulting from the women possibly having a better capacity for dealing with the challenges of late modern life.⁶² The reasons for this, as seen by researchers, include girls' more successful performance at school, their social and communicative skills, and their more open world view.⁶³

Studies on the position of women in Russian society generally include references to Soviet-era legislation on sexual equality, which also applied to the workplace. Women were then wanted for productive work outside the home.⁶⁴ The change had many ramifications. Women's workload doubled when, in addition to wage work, they were supposed to continue taking care of the children and the home. On the other hand, the change has over the long term given young rural women the freedom to make independent decisions on matters affecting their own lives. Women can now pursue a

higher education (provided that they have their parents' financial support), and they can make their own decisions regarding marriage, starting a family or getting a divorce.⁶⁵

The problems related to young men aimlessly groping about and trying to find their place may partly be explained by the entrenched patriarchal values affecting Russian society.⁶⁶ These values are reinforced by norms, laws, regulations, religion and other deeply rooted structures in society.⁶⁷ The assumption that man is the head of the family is challenged by the woman whose income makes her an equal provider for the family, in addition to which the woman may have a control over almost everything that happens inside the home.⁶⁸ The active engagement of women in multiple spheres of life breaks with historical mindsets and puts men into situations of ambiguity and conflict regarding, for example, the exercise of power in the household. In an interview study of university students in Saint Petersburg, the attitudes expressed towards starting a family were similar to those that I encountered in Shorunzha. Young men do not tend to think seriously about getting married when they are studying at university. It is felt that a family would tie them down too much, and it is also felt that the man, as head of the family, must provide for the family financially. The man must therefore acquire a respectable, well paying job before settling down.⁶⁹

Settling down and raising a family were not very easy economically in a village like Shorunzha, where limited employment was the primary reason many wished to leave. The largest employer in the community was the collective farm co-op, *Peredovik*, which people still referred to colloquially as the *kolkhoz*. Its operations were concentrated on cattle farming and on growing vegetables and root crops, such as potatoes, cabbage and beets. The collective also had woodwork and dressmaking workshops.⁷⁰ Based on the interviews, youth did not relish the thought of the collective as a potential employer. The hard physical work was unattractive and the payment of wages was spotty. Lida, who worked in the barn as a milker, missed the job she had had with the postal service, and Vera, who had studied informatics in Kazan, wanted computer-related employment.⁷¹ Alexei dreamed of a career as a police officer and did not want to continue living in the countryside. Life in the country meant unending work and drudgery, whereas city life at least offered a clean separation between work and leisure time.⁷² In Shorunzha, as elsewhere, youth wanted a nine-to-five job that would offer the freedom to do what one felt like after work.⁷³

Researcher Natalia Glukhova finds Mari women to be in unequal positions depending on where they live. There was still a significant difference at the beginning of the decade 2000 between living in the country and living in the city. For example, finding employment and particularly work to match one's training was much more difficult in the rural villages.⁷⁴ The most popular occupations among young Shorunzha women, according to my observations, were teacher and cook. These could also be thought of as occupations that could provide work in the village. The school in Shorunzha was relatively large, offering the eleven levels of education that are compulsory to students before they can seek to enter institutions of higher education. Teachers are



Hay making. Young people can earn some money by working in the fields of kolkhoz. Photo: Mari Immonen, National Board of Antiquities, 2003.

also employed by the preschool, as are kitchen staff. The latter are needed at the collective's canteen as well.

The challenge of retaining young people in the village is different from when, for example, the parents and grandparents of Shorunzha were the younger generation. Important manifestations of Mari identity in the village include the actively spoken Mari language, the Mari's nature-based folk religion, which survived the Soviet years, and the traditional Mari folk dress and other embroidered textiles. Young people reported reading Mari-language journals and watching Mari-language programmes, both of which were in weakened states due to the policies targeted at the Mari EI Republic in the early years of 2000. Quite many young women reported owning a Mari folk costume. One woman said that a folk dress ordered by her grandmother was still unused in a storage trunk⁷⁵; another said that she had a folk dress but wore it only for folklore performances.⁷⁶ Folk costumes can therefore not be described as being in active use. Attitudes towards the folk religion seemed to verge on the indifferent.⁷⁷ Young people described visiting the sacrificial groves as 'something for grannies',⁷⁸ as they reported last having visited one as children with their grandmothers. The following fieldwork-diary extract tells of one family's observance of *semyk*⁷⁹ and the reaction of the youth to the religious goings-on:

The memorial feast for the deceased was underway. The father was sitting on a small bench beside the table. Before him on the bench there was a dish containing a meal for the deceased. Torches were set on the rim of the dish and beside it were drinks in glass jars. The father, speaking in Mari, gave reminiscences on the departed. The mother encouraged us to come sit at

the table, but the daughters went to watch TV. The mother bustled about, speaking the whole time. She was apologetic about not being dressed in Mari costume. She had to leave for the barn of the kolkhoz, where she was working the nightshift. The father was quite drunk. They had gotten married in 1977. The father and the daughters now went together to bring the food outside for the deceased. The girls returned quickly, however, and continued watching TV.⁸⁰

According to a sociological study of 14- to 17-year-olds conducted in the Mari El Republic, the most popular past times among school youth, by an overwhelming margin, were spending time with friends (79%) and watching TV and videos (72.6%).⁸¹ The majority of Shorunzha youth reported watching TV in their free time. At the time of the fieldwork in spring 2004, the most popular TV show among the young women was the Brazilian telenovela, *O Clone* [Клон]. Anthony Giddens writes that soap operas, and the media in general, offer viewers images of alternative ways of life and something to identify with.⁸² Clearly the TV shows and commercials convey messages about a life that is quite different than life in the village. But would life somewhere else be easier? Perhaps. Happier? If the philosophers of antiquity are to be believed, happiness is worth striving for as an end in itself. Researchers, for their part, have reported that human beings tend to be the happiest when they feel a sense of belonging to a community.⁸³

The spirit of the times, however, is about something other than seeking community. In a time that stresses individuality, the inner world of the individual is gaining more and more importance. Youth studies speak of a postmodern culture of an extended period of youth that is characterised by individualistic self-fulfilment and a greater freedom to make independent choices.⁸⁴ Based on the material, the youth of Shorunzha may, if they wish, leave the village and build a future somewhere else. But what about the young women who move or return to the village to get married⁸⁵: Are they still as free to leave and fulfil themselves as the unmarried youth seem to be? Clearly marriage brings with it responsibilities towards family and home, but some degree of self-realisation would also seem possible after tying the knot. At least this was true in the case of Natalia. After marrying and having a child, she continued her studies in Yoshkar-Ola, returning on weekends and on holidays with their child to Shorunzha, where her husband worked. When at home in Shorunzha in the role of daughter-in-law, she was responsible for tending the cattle while her mother-in-law prepared the meals and baked the bread.⁸⁶

The young people who leave the village leave behind them their childhood homes, places tied to a host of feelings, dreams and memories. Kirsi Saarikangas, a researcher in women's studies, writes of how people are continually in the process of building a home in their minds. The childhood home also carries meanings that change over time.⁸⁷ Youth carry with them the marks of the homes and environments they grew up in. For Shorunzha youth, these marks include the Mari language, the teachings of their parents and grandparents about the indigenous religion, and Mari customs and belief systems. Such marks are not fetters, but fixed points to hold onto – lifetime

attachments to a place that is full of memories and that can lay the foundation for what is to come. Shorunzha youth, like youth elsewhere, are facing an uncharted future full of alternatives. Carrying forward a glimmer of her past, a young Mari woman spoke of a certain safety pin that she always wears on her breast everytime she goes to a new place.⁸⁸

NOTES

- 1 I am using these terms according to the widely accepted view of ‘space’ as an abstract concept and ‘place’ as involving personal experience (Cresswell 2005, 8).
- 2 The village community comprises the main village, Shorunzha, and six smaller villages around it. The population in the community is about 2,200, of which 1,000 live in Shorunzha.
- 3 Information from the *Marilainen nainen ja modernisaatio (Mari Women and Modernisation)* project, e.g. *Informaatio 2/2002*. Three Master’s theses were completed on the fieldwork as of 2008: Tiina Ynnilä, MA, on drawing as an ethnological fieldwork method, Elina Vesanen, MA, on the Mari flower festival and Tellervo Saukonieni, MA, on the family photoalbums of the Maris. In addition, a number of articles have appeared by various writers, and numerous seminar presentations have been read based on the fieldwork.
- 4 ‘Mari weddings’ refers to traditional, two-day Mari weddings as distinct from the shorter evening-ceremonies called modern (or youth) weddings.
- 5 I refer to unmarried, under 25–30 year olds as ‘youth’ or ‘young people’ and consider the period of youth as entailing the freedom to spend time with other young people on the streets, at the disco and in general away from home.
- 6 The Mari El Republic is located approximately 800 km east of Moscow.
- 7 Cresswell 2005, 10.
- 8 The Mari comprise three ethnic groups: the Mountain Mari, from the eastern parts of the republic; the Meadow Mari, who live elsewhere in the republic; and the East Mari, who live outside the republic.
- 9 Ruotsala 2003a.
- 10 The description is based on Mari Immonen and Jenni Sourama’s object inventory. Research Archive of School Cultural Research, Ethnology, University of Turku TYKL/spa/521–522.
- 11 Lehtinen 2005b, 196–198.
- 12 Snellman 2003, 27.
- 13 Gordon 2006, 249–251.
- 14 Assmuth 1997, 60.
- 15 Lehtinen 2005a, 499, 509; Lehtinen 2006, 33, 38.
- 16 Lehtinen 2005a, 503.
- 17 Also Четкарев 1999, 31.
- 18 Shorunzha 31.5.2004; 13 or 14.8.2003.
- 19 Shorunzha 24.5.2004, 26.5.2004, 31.5.2004, 4.6.2004.
- 20 *Marit, mordvalaiset ja udmurtit. Perinteisen kulttuurin tietosanakirja* 2005, 31.
- 21 Четкарев 1999, 31.
- 22 Hämäläinen 1913, 274–278.
- 23 Shorunzha 24.5.2004, 26.5.2004, 4.6.2004.
- 24 There are a host of other chores as well; I am including only the ones I saw during the fieldwork.
- 25 Cresswell 2005, 24–25.
- 26 For example Hanna Snellman has examined the migration between Finnish Lapland and Sweden of the 1960s and 1970s in her work *Göteborg – Sallan suurin kylä (Gothenburg – Salla’s biggest village)*. The emigrants were often youth whose home

- areas could no longer offer a means of living. A woman named Alma in Snellman's study has reached her limit of the never-ending work of carrying water and rubbish and heating the house. Alma hopes to find a home in Sweden that is warm and has all the amenities of a furnished flat. (Snellman 2003, 103–107.)
- 27 Saarikangas 2002, 9; Shorunzha 3.6.2004.
- 28 Орлова и Никитин 2003, 84.
- 29 The names of the persons appearing in the article have been changed.
- 30 Shorunzha 12.8.2003.
- 31 Shorunzha 27.5.2004.
- 32 A *korpus*, or the shell of the house, is transported to a lot and gradually built up.
- 33 Shorunzha 9.8.2003.
- 34 Shorunzha 25.5.2004.
- 35 Ruotsala 2005, 21–22.
- 36 Helsti 2006, 110.
- 37 There were exceptions. Marina, a young woman whose mother was deceased and father alcoholic, was alone responsible for keeping the household going economically, but her cousin of the same age came as often as possible to help out with chores. Shorunzha 24.5.2004.
- 38 See also Glukhova 2005, 488.
- 39 For more on the gender-specific division of labour in Shorunzha households, see Ruotsala 2003a, 137–138; Ruotsala 2005, 18–20.
- 40 Cresswell 2005, 82.
- 41 *To guljat* means *hanging out* on the street, ambling around and spending time with other young people without a specific destination in mind. I would view it as a form of social intercourse where one monitors the environment while being at the same time an object in it.
- 42 The Shorunzha Cultural Centre, 'the club', had previously been a church for Christians living in the village. Its function changed in the 1930s. Discos, marriage registration ceremonies and other events are held there. The club employs a person to coordinate the various events.
- 43 Tolonen 2001, 16, 21, 85, 86.
- 44 Tolonen 2001, 163–164.
- 45 Shorunzha 24.5.2004, 3.6.2004.
- 46 Näre 1992, 30.
- 47 Tapaninen 1996, 104–105.
- 48 Immonen 2006, 166–167.
- 49 Shorunzha 26.5.2004.
- 50 Shrouznha 4.6.2004.
- 51 Ruotsala 2002, 289; Ruotsala 2003b, 135; Löfgren 1977, 148–151.
- 52 Olsson 2004, 89, 92, 98.
- 53 Shorunzha 13.8.2003. Both villages belong to the Shorunzha village community and are about two kilometres away.
- 54 Shorunzha 24.5.2004.
- 55 Shorunzha 23.5.2004.
- 56 Ruotsala 2003a, 140; Shorunzha 2.6.2004, 4.6.2004.
- 57 The Finnish men (interviewed by Hanna Snellman) who moved to work in Göteborg in the 1960s told of using their first pay checks to buy a car. For them, however, buying a car was a neutral experience. They said it was mainly to make the work commute easier. (Snellman 2003, 136–137.)
- 58 Puuronen 2006, 156–157.
- 59 Kazan and Yoshkar-Ola are both 150 kilometres away, but the road to Kazan is new and in good repair, while the Yoshkar-Ola road is full of potholes. The population of Yoshkar-Ola is a bit under 300,000. The population of Kazan is approximately one million.
- 60 Glukhova 2005, 493.
- 61 Högbacka 2003, 87.

- 62 Puuronen 2006, 43–44; Näre & Lähteenmaa 1992, 333.
- 63 Näre & Lähteenmaa 1992, 329, 333.
- 64 Women received voting rights in the 1918 constitution. Legislation in 1935 contained provisions on equality in working life. (Lehtinen 2005a, 511.)
- 65 Glukhova 2005, 493.
- 66 Vituhnovskaja 2006, 128.
- 67 Karonen 2002, 259.
- 68 E.g., Lehtinen 2005a, 511–512.
- 69 Baraulina and Khanzin 1996, 115.
- 70 Lehtinen 2002, 6; Ruotsala 2002, 4–5.
- 71 Shorunzha 13.8.2003.
- 72 Shorunzha 24.5.2004.
- 73 The *Helsingin Sanomat* reported (18.2.2007) on a study by Kairos Future, an international research institute, to determine what makes young people happy and what they want from the future (<http://www.kairosfuture.com/en/node/1012>). The participants in the study numbered 17,000 and represented 17- to 29-year-olds from 17 countries.
- 74 Glukhova 2005, 493.
- 75 Shorunzha 23.5.2004.
- 76 Shorunzha 3.6.2004.
- 77 The lack of interest in folk religion is consistent with Mika Parkkonen's article on Shorunzha (*Helsingin Sanomat* 13.10.2005), which reported that conversion to Orthodox Christianity was popular among youth in rural areas of Mari El. Missionaries hold various city events in which youth are being baptised.
- 78 Shorunzha 23.5.2004. On youth participation in religious activities, see Lehtinen 2006, 32 and Ruotsala 2005, 21.
- 79 *Semyk* is a two-day ceremony for the deceased. The eve of *semyk* is spent at home. On the second day, families go to the cemeteries and remember their dead.
- 80 Shorunzha 26.5.2004.
- 81 Молодежь Республики Марий Эл 2003, 150–151.
- 82 Giddens 1991, 84, 199.
- 83 Pulkkinen and Rossi 2007, E1–E2.
- 84 Aapola and Ketokivi 2005, 20–21; Puuronen 2006, 161.
- 85 According to the marriage registry at the village's administrative office, about 10 couples have been married annually in the beginning half of the decade 2000. The number has been in continual decline; in the 1980s, it fluctuated between 16 and 29.
- 86 Shorunzha 15.8.2003.
- 87 Saarikangas 2006, 237.
- 88 Shorunzha 31.5.2004. The safety pins are believed to ward off the 'evil eye', or the influence of evil forces.

SOURCES

Fieldwork material collected in 2002, 2003 and 2004 on Shorunzha village. In the author's possession.

TKU/TYKL-archive, University of Turku, School of Cultural Research, Turku.

TYKL-Research Archive: Object inventory performed in Shorunzha 2002.

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TIINA SUOPAJÄRVI

Forestry professionals in childhood forest

There are a few places, where I used to play as a little boy, big trees or big rocks or cliffs, which were appreciated already by my father and my grandfather, which I considered some kind of – is it too strong a word to use – cult places, but anyhow, what I mean is, that I still want to protect them.¹

Forest is a source of livelihood for forestry professionals: by felling down and processing trees they provide themselves. However, while working in an oral history project called *Forestry Professions in Changing Society*² a more complex picture of their relationship with forest was depicted before my eyes. Besides meanings of work, working environment and economical well-being, forest was considered in the interviews a place of refreshment, relaxation and tranquillity. In forest the narrators pick up berries and mushrooms, sometimes plainly wander around or spend time alone or with a companion. The temporal continuance of the Finns' relationship with forest is valued, since in their narrations forestry professionals consider forestry as one base of Finnish welfare state built after the Second World War.³ On the other hand, they talk of the Finns as a people of forest, who almost 'naturally' know how to behave respectfully and correctly in forest areas.

In the oral history project the interviews were constructed biographically; the interviewed forestry professionals reminisced about their own lives reflecting their narrations on forestry as a profession, but also as a wider societal phenomenon. An individually experienced event as a starting point for the more general conceptions of life is typical for the autobiographical memory. In a process of remembering, individual and general levels of life overlap, they blend into each other. A person remembers especially well dangerous situations, when s/he has been frightened or felt being threatened by something or someone, though the experiences of positive achievements can also be well remembered. In an autobiographical interview childhood is recalled from the adult's point of view; the actions taken and the events occurred in one's childhood explain the choices made later in life.⁴ I am viewing the interviews of forestry professionals as products of biographical remembering: since the project dealt with their professions, they consider every part of their life story a step towards

forestry. In the beginning of the interview the interviewer may have asked the narrator to talk about her/his life, and already in the first sentence the interviewee states how being born a daughter or a son of a farm-household has led her/him to forestry:

The interviewer: Well tell me about your childhood home and parents.
The interviewee: Well, I am from countryside, from a family of farmers. (–) and there I spent my youth by doing farm work and a little bit forest work as well. Then we had to, in 4H youth club, we grew saplings at very young age; that was the first touch with forestry.⁵

The narrators of the interviews I am analyzing in this article were born in the 1960s and 1970s; 18 of them are female, 13 male. The material is part of my anthropological dissertation called *Gendered Forest*, which also includes interviews of women and men born in the 1950s. These forestry professionals have been trained forestry engineers or technicians; they work in quite heterogeneous tasks, for example in managerial positions of wood harvesting and trade, or making forest management plans for private forest owners, or as teachers in forestry institutes. The interviews usually start with questions about childhood: like tell me about your childhood; what was your home like; what did your parents do; how many sisters did you have; and what kind of career choices have they made. In the project there were many interviewees, thus I myself have carried out only a fragment of the interviews I am analyzing. This also means that the questions asked were not totally similar. Even so, most of the interviewees asked about the plays and hobbies forestry professionals had engaged themselves as children and teenagers; most of which were somehow connected to their career choices. As a consequence, in this article I have included the teenage years, the time before entering forestry institutes, in the concept of childhood.

Gendered spaces of actions

An important starting point of my article is the studies anthropologist Robert B. Edgerton made in pastoral and peasant societies in Eastern Africa in the 1960s. Edgerton compared the adaptations of these groups to their environment. By analyzing the psychological tests, collected life stories and interviews of both herders and farmers Edgerton concluded that while talking of their environment and their adjustments to it, people were in fact talking of their past environments. This means that the changes in physical environments are faster than people's conceptions of the change; values and attitudes learned during childhood's socialisation are strongly reflected on the present perceptions of individual's environment.⁶ I have been fascinated by Edgerton's conclusions, and therefore it is interesting to compare them with my own interview material: what kind of perceptions of forest can I interpret in forestry professionals' narrations, when they talk of, firstly their childhood's forest relationship and secondly their present forest relationship?

Do these conceptions differ from each other and if so, why? Are the forest narrations similar in women's and men's narrations?

Contemporaneously with Edgerton's studies anthropologists began noticing how all narrators in anthropological studies had almost entirely been men. While gathering material from different societies, researchers had basically interviewed only men, but in the results these men were talking on behalf of the entire community. Thus, their conceptions were discussed as if they represented women's conceptions as well. Accordingly, women's voices were not noticed, they were not heard. This male bias included the assumption that gendered spaces and actions in researcher's own culture were similarly valid in the studied cultures. For example, men's role as hunters in hunter-gatherer societies' adaptation to their environment was highlighted as a basis of the entire culture, until Sally Slocum raised the issue of women's roles as gatherers equally important. She stated that communication between mother and child while learning of the dangers in the environment and of the societal patterns was one basis of the adaptation.⁷ Feminist anthropologists stated in the 1970s that gendered spaces are one starting point for the hierarchical system of women's subordinate position. Michelle Rosaldo and Sherry Ortner claimed that women's lower status in society was due to the reproductive capabilities of their bodies which tied them to their homes and out of public spaces, where society's economical and other societal decisions were made.⁸

For this article, the most essential part of Robert Edgerton's perception is seeing environment as a complex and multilayered space: thus, environment is not solely a physical, concrete place, but foremost a mental and social space. Environment is seen as having an effect on the construction of culture and social interrelationships between individuals and groups.⁹ The basis of my conception of space is that it needs actors to become significant. Physical spaces are loaded with gendered meanings, because actions taken there are gender-specific. A kitchen is culturally considered as a feminine space, if activities occurring there are regarded as belonging mainly to women. A garage on the contrary is a space where masculine activities occur, simply speaking. How we experience and interpret space depends on our gender and our spatial position. This position means space which is formed in social interrelationships, argues geographer Doreen Massey, and these spatial systems affect again social relations.¹⁰ One essential feature of the socially conceptualised space is the study of actions: according to sociologist Henri Lefebvre a space without actors is merely a physical place.¹¹ Additionally, spaces exist in which people can intentionally produce gender-related hierarchical relations.¹² In forestry professionals' narrations, these kinds of spaces are men's saunas (steam rooms), from which women are physically denied. Women are, nevertheless, welcome to the recreational sauna-evenings, but mostly to prepare coffee and food for men.¹³ Spending homosocial time in saunas can create inequality if men make decisions there concerning women as well, like in questions of distributing work positions and tasks.

Studying forest as a gendered space means that I am discussing primarily what kind of actions forestry professionals have taken in the forest: what have

they done there as children, as teenagers and what do they tell they are doing there now, as adults. It is essential for me to ask the following questions: are these actions gendered, and if so, in what ways and why? Do my analyses reveal the gender-roles learned in childhood's socialisation behind these narrations? Forestry has been, and still is, a very male dominated branch: in the 2000s, the amount of female forestry officials is still under 15 percent.¹⁴ However, during the childhoods of forestry professionals studied in this article, women had been able to educate themselves in the university and work as degree foresters over sixty years. Forestry institutes opened up for women after the change in legislation in 1965. Man was at those days still a norm in forestry, but what kind of changes started to occur in the 1970s and 80s?

Rural area as childhood's environment

The interviewed forestry professionals come mainly from rural areas, places surrounded by cultivated fields and forests; or as they put themselves, they were brought up on the fringe of small towns where forests were just around the corner. A couple of women were from bigger cities, but only one of them told that her own childhood environment lacked forests almost completely. Every one of the men had lived his childhood years in rural areas, meaning that forests have been part of their everyday life or at least a resort for weekends. The forest landscapes of interviewees' childhood varied from coastal areas to hillsides, though most of them have spent their early days in rural areas with forests surrounding fields and pastures.

Interviewer: Yes. Would you tell me then about your childhood and your home?

Interviewee: Well I was born in that kind of Ostrobothnian farmhouse. And when I was born our livelihood was based on cattle-economy; but later father and mother made changes in production, and the pig-economy became the main production. But the forest was also a source of income and that way I got to be in touch with the forest from early on. (--) Like taking care of animals and work on the field and in forests and all kinds of things children could do in the countryside.¹⁵

While studying gendered working models in Finnish farms, political scientist Tiina Silvasti has noticed how studies on gender and agriculture are based on the assumption that gender hierarchies depend on the traditionalism of rural societies. Consequently, the modernisation in rural societies would automatically lead to better gender equality in the society. The subjects of these theories are mainly urban. In Silvasti's study, the rural context is important regarding the gender issue as well: the agricultural models affect the models of gendered division of labour and through this also the personal gendered models of individuals. But rural subjects are heterogeneous and the rural contexts regionally, culturally and historically different.¹⁶ In rural Finnish societies there have been strict gendered spaces as a consequence of



Brothers in their family's Ostrobothnian farm in the beginning of the 1980s. Photo: Maire and Unto Suopajärvi's home archives.

gendered labour: men have worked in fields and forests harvesting, hunting and fishing; women have worked in their homes and barns taking care of the children and cattle and doing household works. In exceptional situations, like when men were on their hunting trips, women could engage themselves into so called men's work and be admired and respected for it, but not the other way round. Instead a man doing women's work was often ridiculed and mocked. This has been interpreted by historian Jan Löfström as a sign of hierarchy of gendered division of labour: a woman doing men's work has arisen in hierarchy, while vice versa a man has come down. Löfström argues that the gendered division of labour was flexible, but nonetheless asymmetrical, since solely women bent to doing men's work, but not the other way round.¹⁷

In his study, Löfström discusses the situation in agrarian areas from the end of the 19th century to the 1950s, but the similar models of gendered labour divisions are evident in Pirjo Siiskonen's political science study all the way to the 1980s. Therefore, these models have also effected forestry professionals' childhood I am discussing in this article, in other words the models have been prevailing in the 1970s and 1980s. This, however, does not mean that models have remained unchanged during a whole century; for example in the 1960s the barn-work changed since the milking of cows moved from hands to machines. This lured men inside the barns, though milking cows with machines, nevertheless, remained the only one of women's work that men could attend to. According to Siiskonen, this was due to general attitudes toward the gendered division of labour, since other tasks were not considered possible for men because of the contemporary attitudes towards masculinities and femininities. The cattle and children and other household work remained women's responsibilities; and the field and forest work

as men's. The industrialisation had started in Finland during its time of autonomy under Russian regime at the end of the 19th century; but after the Second World War it was really speeded up together with the intense and rapid urbanisation. These structural changes in Finnish rural areas in the 1970s were followed by the mechanisation of production and specialisation of farms, during which women started to let go of their work with cattle and shift increasingly to work outside their farms. Sometimes a man could also abandon agricultural labour, at least in his own farm, but mostly men stayed and concentrated on cultivating specific crops.¹⁸

Almost half of the interviewed forestry professionals had lived their childhoods in farms, where forestry has been part of their families' livelihood. This means that their fathers have done forest work, but some other fathers have worked also solely in forestry as technicians or forest workers. Almost all of the men's fathers and two thirds of the women's fathers were working in forestry either full- or part-time. No-one's mother worked directly in forestry, though women as other farm-owners could occasionally chop or gather and transport firewood. The normative situation was, according to the interviews, that mother took care of the household and cattle, father the fields and forests. In addition, mothers worked as nurses, cleaners or office-clerks in a bank. The descriptions of parents' occupations portray agreeably the gender segregation of Finnish working life in this era when mothers were increasingly starting to work outside their homes in a paid labour.¹⁹ Nevertheless, women continued to work in jobs related to nurture, like forestry professionals' interviews reveal.

When I was born my father was working in forestry as a forestry technician, but he was soon retired. (– –) My mother has been a housewife during my childhood, but before that she worked in the same firm as my father as a telephonist. The office was, at least in the beginning, at our home. Earlier she had worked also in different kinds of service occupations, as a saleswoman and a dressmaker. She had provided herself until the age of forty.²⁰

In agricultural societies children were generally socialised with gendered division of labour, but on the other hand, in practice they could do both women's and men's work.²¹ Ethnologist Pirjo Korhonen shows in her study how children have, nonetheless, followed the gendered work model practised in their families. Growing up meant, that girls increasingly did household tasks and boys tasks outside the house, like wood chopping and work done with horses. This clear gender dichotomy started approximately at the age of ten, since children under the school-age were totally in mother's responsibility, spending their days at home helping mother anyway they could. However, dichotomies depended on the family in question: if there were no sons in the household, daughters were socialised with men's work and vice versa. The economical and social situation of the family was another meaningful factor, since in the poorest families children regardless of their gender worked in everyway they could.²² An individual starts to adopt roles during the childhood's socialisation. Life as a whole can be seen as

outgrowing old roles and adopting new ones, though some of the roles are more permanent than others. Role is formed by the internalized expectations others have for us, but also the ones we have for ourselves; they help us define what is appropriate and what is inappropriate for a certain individual and group.²³ I see gender as part of our role selection; by Judith Butler's words it is 'a performance that is repeated'. Hence, fixed gender identities do not exist, though the performance reflects the social strategy of maintaining the binary opposition of sexes.²⁴ Consequently, the gendered division of labour can be discussed from the perspective of role or performance: which tasks are acceptable for a person playing the gender role of a female, and which ones for the one playing the role of a male. The role-expectations are more or less negotiable, they are both dynamic and flexible, but as historian Jan Löffström's study shows, some roles bend more than others.

Forest as a childhood's working place

Most forestry professionals were socialised with forest by working there; first with their fathers in brushwood and firewood gatherings, later in planting saplings and in vaster clearings. This was the case especially among male interviewees; women's narratives are different, since only few of them had done forest work as a child. Families of a couple of these women had no sons, so the daughters could do the jobs that 'boys in farms usually do'²⁵; or one daughter stayed home and helped mother, while the other one went to the forest with her father. When father was working for the association of forest owners, the daughter was allowed to assist him in piled measuring of wood. In her interview the same woman is remembering how she was involved in both felling down big trees and in gathering smaller wood in their family forests.²⁶ Another woman remembers being bitter to her brother who was allowed to be in the forest; later she got engaged with planting tasks herself, but never was she allowed to engage in wood felling in wintertime with her father.²⁷ Silvasti argues that in farms a daughter may have been allowed to participate in men's work as the oldest child – at least until her younger brother was old enough to take over her jobs. If there were no boys in a family, parents could socialise one of the girls with men's work depending on the internal dynamics of the family.²⁸ Even though a daughter may have wanted sometimes to go and do forest work, women do not always look back at these tasks as pleasant ones. A woman who got to do both planting and clearing as a teenager describes:

[T]here was some kind of clear felling area and I remember that we had to plant and I thought that this is the last thing a human being should do. There were no forest roads, we had to walk there a long way with all our gear and then it was this terribly rocky ground, where we had to plant in those, it was a horrible experience.²⁹

Most of the interviewed men look back to their childhood through the forest work they have done with their fathers. They have started to help at an early age, ‘as soon as you were able to’³⁰, and the tasks changed as time went by. Like girls, boys have first been involved in brush- and firewood jobs, later in planting and ‘when you could hold the saw’³¹ in clearings and cuttings. In the beginning, forest work areas have been situated close to their homes, mostly in their own family forests; during teenage years further away and increasingly in forests owned by other people. None of the men remembers these jobs having been compulsory or repulsive; nor do they talk of having longed for inside the house or the barn to do women’s work. Historian Saara Tuomaala has argued that gender is one tool in the remembering process; and in this process person also constructs her/his conceptions of femininities and masculinities.³² Thus, men not complaining about their participation on men’s work can be interpreted as constructing their masculinities based on prevailing cultural gender dichotomies. Using Judith Butler’s idea of gender as a performance, men – and women – perform their gender by repetition in the action of narrating their childhood memories. Butler’s theory includes the possibility of challenging gender dichotomy by not repeating or repeating differently.³³ In forestry professionals’ life stories it would mean, for example, men’s questioning their career choices. A son of a forestry technician uttering the effects of his own background on his choice of career both repeats and fails to repeat the gendered division of labour:

[A]nd maybe you could say, the downside of this history of mine, that you knew fairly well this side [forestry] and then other occupations you didn’t know. That there were not that many ingredients to, like, to evaluate what could be my profession. I have not regretted this profession, but I have often thought, that I didn’t discuss thoroughly with myself about all the options there was.³⁴

In her study on the Finns’ experiences on peatland, Kirsi Laurén shows how the work done on the swamps was guided by both fathers and mothers, and this work was done by both daughters and sons. Nevertheless, the working tasks were gender specific: boys learned with their fathers how to drain the swamps and plant the saplings, how to winch up peat; girls were allowed to attain the nature-excursions led by fathers. Men have overall played the role of a nature-guide for children: they have taught their children things about nature, consequently acting as experts on nature and role-models for how to survive in it. Laurén writes: ‘Children have been aware of the fact that while wandering together around in nature they were in the field of the expertise of their father.’ Mothers on the contrary have played a supporting role in this field, even though women did also visit peatlands. They were, however, too busy to spend time just observing nature, so their tasks on the swamps, like picking up berries was done in haste, after which women hurried back home to other jobs waiting for them. This doesn’t mean that the time spent on the swamps with mothers was not considered important; and in families with no father the role-models in socialising with nature have been women,



Resting in forest. Children with their parents berry-picking in northern Finland, in 1970s. Photo: Maire and Unto Suopajärvi's home archives.

either mothers or grandmothers, sometimes also elderly sisters. According to Laurén, the aspect of men being the primary experts on nature has gone through changes: in the 2000s, both urban mothers and women working as nature-professionals play the role of a nature-expert for their children.³⁵ But in the 1970s and 80s, when the male forestry professionals discussed in this article have spent their childhood, the person socialising boys with forest work has mainly been their own father; sometimes a male relative, like brother or uncle. In their narratives men discuss this practical learning of forest work as a main reason for applying for the forestry institute and forestry in general. Like a man narrating in the next quotation, most of the interviewed men do not talk of considering in detail the occupation they have chosen:

I was raised in a farm family, and as the oldest child, the work became familiar both in the fields and in the forests from early on, so through this, this career has certainly started.³⁶

In their narratives forestry professionals tell how, in addition to actual forest work, in other words clearing, felling and planting, they have picked berries and mushrooms as quite young children. Some men have also hunted as youngsters, first with their fathers, and later alone. Berry and mushroom picking have been meaningful especially for those forestry professionals who do not come from farms. A woman who lived her childhood in a large city says that her interest in the forest and nature was awakened in the 'environmental excursions' arranged by her father³⁷. Another woman who didn't have any connection with forestry in her early years, describes the first times she got in touch with the forest in a similar way, though for her the person socialising her with the forest was her mother:

And we were the kind of family we were so much always...like always on weekends we did the kind of trips with tents and spent time in nature. Mother was eager to pick berries and... yes I didn't, I could barely walk the first time I went to pick berries. So surely this love of nature started already at home (—).³⁸

Forest as a childhood's playground

Forest has not been merely a working environment in forestry professionals' childhood; it has been a significant environment for their plays and hobbies. In rural areas, there were a number of good playgrounds for the young ones, in the countryside there has been room for both the works of adults and the plays of children. According to Pirjo Korkiakangas, for children one of the most important features in choosing a playground has been the functionality of the place: the most suitable environment for playing was the one that the plays fitted best. On the other hand, the games children have come up with have strongly been affected by the environment.³⁹ For forestry professionals, regardless of their year of birth, of their rural or small town childhood environment, of their homes in farms or in suburbs, and even of their gender, forest has been a meaningful and pleasant playground. For some of them forest has been the only option as an environment of their plays:

[A]nd there is the sea and the forest, and nothing else, so I have gotten used to moving around in forest, and then in the sea, on the sea (—) Maybe it was just because of that, because we lived there that you learned to move around in the forest and weren't afraid of anything, on the contrary it was the most natural thing that could be.⁴⁰

Even though there were other possibilities, forest was chosen as a playground because of its own characteristics. In the forest children were out of adults' control, they could do what they wanted: all kinds of interesting plants and animals existed there, that they could observe; there was enough space to build up huts that did not have to be torn down immediately after the play. Korkiakangas writes that by their imagination children crossed the borders of physical time and place and moved into what is called momentary worlds.⁴¹ Forest was children's own space:

And the place where we always went, so it was almost the nicest place that you could think of, it was the forest, we didn't play in the field [laughing], it was not so rewarding a place and it wasn't an allowed place. In the forest you could play hidden from adults' gaze and do all those nice things. There, there is my first contact with forest.⁴²

For teenagers the forest offered a different kind of environment of action. The majority of the forestry professionals had practised orienteering or other sports, like skiing and running there. Moreover, many of them had

participated in the actions of a local 4H youth club, in their field trips to forests and education of nature. Forest in itself and as an environment of plays and hobbies was for many interviewees so self-evident that they did not discuss it in their narratives, if the interviewer did not happen to ask about it. A man who had grown up in the countryside and in a farm says it very appropriately: ‘Well, everything I have always practiced has been related to the forest that I have never had anything else on my mind.’⁴³ Like activities of work, did activities of play start in the forests of farmyards, and as children grew older, the spaces got wider. For a small child forest could have been a scary and uncontrollable space, and for some of the forestry professionals forest had not become a safe place until the years in a forestry institute. These kinds of narratives are however exceptional, and most describe their relationship to forest as close and sometimes even calming:

[W]hen I got really angry I took, I went to the forest. I had like my own forest where I went and I had this one pine tree, by which I sat and there the mood went of. That it is, for me it has always been a place, where I must have access to.⁴⁴

The quotation above suggests that a person can have a direct relationship with nature, so that s/he does not constantly reflect her/his social relations to this relationship. Anthropologist Kay Milton came to similar conclusions while studying the relationships British environmental activists had with nature. She sees that the knowledge people have of the world surrounding them is constructed not only in social relations, but also in individual’s relation to her/his physical environment. According to her, a person can pick up information directly from nature, hence this knowledge is not solely cultural interpretation. I am intrigued by Milton’s theories, except for the part where she argues that a person can have assumptions on the nature without social interrelations. As the clearest validation for this argument, she considers human beings’ capability to pick up information from each other, but also human children who have lived their childhood without contacts with other people, in other words in animal societies.⁴⁵ This argument means that only human beings could actually practice social interrelationships, which to me seems too anthropocentric. My interview material does not unfortunately allow me to discuss Milton’s theories further; instead it is obvious in forestry professionals’ narratives that social relations are a significant part of their relationship with nature. They talk of the ways they have played in the forest with their friends or made trips and worked in it with their parents; thus the social environment is more visible in their interviews than the physical one. At the same time, forest is pictured as some kind of an independent actor: it has affected children by defining the games they could play; by calming down an angry child; or by acting as a frightening place. Consequently, forestry professionals’ narratives of their childhood’s forest reflect both the pictures of humans themselves, and the forest as an autonomous subject.

Forestry professionals' perceptions of forest

Guided by Robert B. Edgerton's studies I am discussing relationship forestry professionals have with forest during the time the interviews were made, and especially whether it has transformed due to their education and work in forestry. Historian Heikki Roiko-Jokela writes about the image of forest, meaning the perceptions people have of nature and forest, and how these images are formed in a combination of individual's own life history, living environments, thoughts, emotions, values, attitudes and beliefs. These images are simplifications of reality, but they are also quite stable. The most essential part of the formation of forest image is values, foremost aesthetic and ethical values. Aesthetic values are based on individual sensations and experiences, the experiences and socialisation in childhood being crucial; but also the experiences on both leisure and labour later in life structure individual's images of forest. These values are not merely individual, but they are tightly tied to collective cultural and historical as well as recreational values based on scenic experiences.⁴⁶ In the interviews forestry professionals were asked what forest means to them. Depending on the interviewer this question was not always asked; or it was asked differently, like, what does your own forest mean to you. Sometimes the interviewee could associate forestry with forest-nature, for example in some answers the forestry professional highlighted the meanings forestry has had and still has for the entire Finnish economy; or how the expectations a person had before entering forestry institutes and forestry had changed during the working years. In most narratives the interviewee did however describe the human-nature relationship, and how forest offers not only the bread, but also mental refreshment for people.

For forestry professionals forest is a working place, but it offers an environment for other activities as well. They refresh themselves in the forest by hunting, picking berries or mushrooms or just by moving around in there. Nowadays most forestry professionals work mainly in an office, out of forest, so in their free time they urge to get there. Forest calms down because it is quiet and even dark in there, and you literally can breathe better air in a forest than in a city. Experiencing forest is comprehensive; its indescribable scents and atmosphere must be 'smelled and tasted with every sense'⁴⁷. According to anthropologist Tim Ingold, human beings are part of the landscape, not merely outsiders observing it. This *taskscape*, as he calls it, is formed by human beings' sensory and bodily experiences of it. Nature is not just a passive surface that people write their life histories on; instead their histories are entwined with constructions of nature, with animals and plants, with the whole cycle of life. Being in nature doesn't, nevertheless, mean forgetting our social interactions; other people are present even when we are alone in a forest.⁴⁸ The forestry professionals talk of the ways forest affects them and their behaviour. Some feel that in a forest they can be completely themselves; but it also has an impact on groups visiting a forest, like work meetings held in there, where people are more relaxed and direct. The relation forestry professionals have to forest is complex, they

live with it everyday and it can be described as ‘a way of life’ or as ‘a living environment balancing the whole life’⁴⁹.

In majority of the interviews forestry professionals were asked whether they think their perceptions of forest and forestry have changed during their career. Some told that minor changes had occurred; for example in hunting, since the animals of the forest had become the narrator’s friends and therefore hunting them did not feel suitable anymore. Forest had also become a familiar and safe place, even though as a child a person had experienced it as strange and intimidating. The psychological factors affect the formation of a forest image unconsciously, because it is not only humans who change the environment, but the environment changes humans simultaneously.⁵⁰ After spending her childhood in an urban environment, an interviewed woman tells how she has herself become – metaphorically speaking – ‘forested’ after her education and working experiences in forestry; in other words working in forest has changed her relationship to it. For some the conservational values meant more today than before, and they talk of the contradiction between making felling plans and saving nature:

Nowadays maybe if you have to make a felling plan for that kind of very visible area, so even if you take into consideration all scenery aspects, but sometimes, sometimes I would like to let go of the whole felling plan so that the forest could stay as it is.⁵¹

Narratives of the changes in forest perceptions are nevertheless a minority in the whole research material. Forestry has been an important income especially for those forestry professionals who had lived their own childhood in the countryside and farms; its economical importance has not changed. The issue is considered both personally and from the perspective of Finnish countryside: in farms depending partly on incomes from forest, forestry had played a growing economical role after the country’s membership in European Union.⁵² Being socialised as a child with the perception of forest as an economical resource affects forestry professionals’ perceptions, because ‘you have grown up and worked always’⁵³ in a forest. Above all forest is a working environment and people have all rights to utilise it.

But more it is that forestry is the utilisation, however. That it is the basis there. That I think, that even not having this forest education, that it would regardless be the basis. And already then, from the childhood on. (– –) That forest is kind of, what you rationally utilise.⁵⁴

The mental value of forest has remained important as well. The childhood’s forests have maintained a special place in forestry professionals’ mental landscape: the emotional ties to the forests of their childhood may be stronger than the ties to forests purchased by themselves as adults. In her interpretations on the Finns’ peatland experiences Kirsi Laurén argues that the meanings of home-swamps continue to affect these experiences throughout the whole life. In people’s descriptions of their relationship with peatland, they look back

to and long for their childhood's swamp-nature, though living far away from past childhood homes.⁵⁵ In addition to their childhood forests, owning forest is important for forestry professionals; and if the narrator does not already own forest, s/he is at least considering to buy some.⁵⁶ It is significant not only for the narrators themselves, but also for the future generations: forest is seen as a legacy the narrators can give to their own children, both as a physical place and as a mental space. The knowledge of nature and the respect for it are highly valued. For some 'trees are just trees'⁵⁷, but for others, very special, almost religious places and spiritual spaces exist in their childhood's forests that can be called 'cult-places'⁵⁸.

Nature and human-nature relationship are temporally and spatially contextualised, and therefore in a constant transformation. A person's relationship with nature is formed by numerous different kinds of meanings; like meanings related to values, to economical and social relations; in addition, it is constructed in interactions between diverse actors. And nature itself can be considered one of these actors: it restrains people's actions and livelihood at the same time as it enables them. On the whole, the human-nature relationship is built both on the relation between an individual and nature and in the social relationships between individuals.⁵⁹ The childhood's socialisation with forest nature is affecting forestry professionals' image of forest, at least partially. The familiar forest sceneries are still the most important ones; they carry a great deal of the aesthetic value the narrators associate with in their own relationship with forest. Those sceneries have an influence also on the ethical values of forest, but first and foremost people consider conserving both the flora and fauna in forests as the most meaningful ethical issue. At the same time these professionals discuss protecting people, their possibilities to earn livelihood from forests, as one of the most important meanings of forest. A good forest offers bread for the forest-owners, as well as for the forestry professionals themselves.

Forest as a gendered space

It is interesting that there does not seem to be gendered differences in narratives of forestry professional's perceptions of forest. Both women and men talk of forest as an economically important resource, refreshing environment and spiritual space. Ecofeminist Karen Warren argues that the principles of orthodox forestry are based merely on economical values of forest: according to these principles, an outsider, meaning a trained ('western') professional, knows what is best for local forests; and the commercial large-scale production in forestry is considered the most important one.⁶⁰ Though ecofeminists have discussed human-nature-relations mainly in the developing countries, these principles prevail in Finnish forestry as well. Thus, the economical value of forest is significant in forestry professionals' narratives. Even if their relationship to forest is multilayered and complex, the predominant perception is that the basic meaning of forest is an economical one, and the other values are subordinated to it. Also the way nature is

considered either as a passive object, a plain resource, or an active subject, is an ecofeminist question.⁶¹ In addition to human being's impact on nature, forestry professionals reminisced a lot about the impacts nature has had on them. This refers to considering forest as an actor affecting people, as well as people affecting forest. Like anthropologist Anja Nygren has noted, there are no black-and-white nature relations that are either good or bad. A person's relation to nature must instead be regarded as forming itself in different interactions and being internally heterogeneous.⁶²

In remembering their early childhood, forestry professionals describe their actions in forest similarly regardless of their gender. Both boys and girls have played and later practiced different sports in forest, which has contemporaneously socialised them with their friends and with nature. Gender becomes relevant in tasks related to working in forest. Almost every man looks back into his childhood and sees himself as taking part in the forest work done with his father. They have been involved in all sorts of tasks they have been capable of doing; younger in brush- and firewood jobs, older in cutting down the trees. For women, the forest work has been more differentiated: they have also taken care of firewood, but very seldom have they been engaged in cutting or clearing tasks. Daughters of farms with no brothers make an exception: they have either all done the field and forest work with their father, or some of them have helped mother, while others have helped father. The norm has, nonetheless, been that sons go to the woods with their fathers; daughters stay home with their mothers. During working hours forest has been a gender-specific space.

In Finland, the gendered norms were prevailing still in the 1970s and 80s, when the forestry professionals I have studied for this article, have spent their childhood. For example forestry institutes were not practically allowed for women until 1965, since one of the requirements for the admission was military service.⁶³ And women have not been able to volunteer for the army until 1995. Though women have been marginalised in forestry during the time of forestry professionals' childhood, some cracking up has taken place in the traditional Finnish sex/gender-system, due to mechanisations in agriculture and society's need for women's work contribution in industry. Nevertheless, the gender dichotomies were still significant. But in spite of them, there are women, like the ones interviewed here, who have chosen to educate themselves and work in forestry, regardless of their childhoods' gender specific socialisation. These women have crossed not only the prevailing gender roles, but a very thick line of gendered agricultural model of labour. They have chosen to repeat their gender in a new way, at least in this aspect of their lives; thus, they have moved from the old gendered space to a new one, and at the same time transformed this new space. The important factor has been the encouragement of fathers⁶⁴, who have taken their daughters to the fields and forests. But also some mothers may have played an important role in their daughters' career choices:

My mother had an influence on everything of course, girls to get themselves good occupations, preferably manly occupations of course. (– –) Like men get, of course, good salaries. But it didn't feel strange to start to work in the branch, since in my hometown forestry is quite a natural part of everyone's life.⁶⁵

One way of looking space and gender is defining space as gendered if the actions occurring there are considered gender specific. Therefore, forest in forestry professionals' childhood has been a gendered space: the actions the narrators have experienced there have had partly gendered meanings. The present perceptions of nature, of forest, are also influenced by forestry professionals' childhood experiences, both economical and spiritual perceptions. This supports Edgerton's notions, but at the same time the interviewed forestry professionals talk of their present occupational and free time forests as well. Like Roiko-Jokela suggests, their image of forest is based on both the childhood's experiences depending on the socialisation with forest and work, and on their later experiences in educational and working life. The impacts forestry professionals' childhood's forest images have had on their present relationships with forest relate to aesthetical and ethical values, as well as values associated with economy and gender.

Finally, the interviews, but also this article, can be seen as a gendered space. I am not only a gendered researcher, but also a feminist researcher, which means that the gender is the first location I look from and for. Reading through the narratives of forestry professionals has made me feel for the women, their bitterness of not getting to do what they wanted and their joys while playing and working in the woods. But also men's interviews have touched my heart, when they talk of not being allowed to really consider what they wanted to do with their lives or how they have become friends with animals of the forest. In the reading and analyzing processes, the gendered worlds of the forestry professionals' childhood, and also adulthood, have been in a dialogue with both my and other researchers' gendered views. As anthropologist Margaret C. Rodman has argued, a place is for the narrator specific, physical and delimited, while at the same time, it is for the researcher part of a larger spatial network and conceptualization of place.⁶⁶ While forestry professionals are reminiscing about their childhood, they do it from the present moment, looking back to the past and even discussing the future. As all these temporal dimensions are entwined in the interviews, so are different social and physical spaces: the places and spaces remembered are different than the present ones. According to feminist theorist Adrienne Rich, our first geographical location is always our own body. A very concrete, physical place on a map has not only several spatial dimensions, but many temporal levels as well: past, present and future.⁶⁷

NOTES

- 1 Lusto A02001:555/M1965. M=Male, 1965=year of birth. I have translated the quotations from Finnish to English so that the basic meanings would be as clear as possible.
- 2 The project was carried out in 1999–2002. See The Finnish Forest History Society's internet pages: <http://www.lusto.fi/resources/File/mmm-hanke/english/index.html>.
- 3 Finland had to pay 300 million dollars as war indemnity to Russia, one third of which was paid by processed wood products (see e.g. Lindroos 1993). Thus, the independence and nationalism intertwined strongly with forestry. Forestry has also been a major employer and source of export incomes.
- 4 Korkiakangas 1996, 26–28.
- 5 Lusto A02001:594/M1956.
- 6 Edgerton 1971.
- 7 Slocum 1970, 36–50. According to Helen E. Longino, as man-the-hunter-theory is androcentric, woman-the-gatherer-theory is gynecentric. Both these theories are structured by western stereotypes including separate roles for men and women. In addition, the concept of hunting is based on the assumption that human beings have always been heterosexual carnivores. (Longino 1990, 106–108, 129–130.)
- 8 Rosaldo 1974, 23–25; Ortner 1974, 364–365.
- 9 Edgerton 1971; see e.g. Levebvre 1991.
- 10 Massey 1994, 2–6, 10.
- 11 Lefebvre 1991, 57. See also Massey (1994), who argues that a place is also formed in social relations, but these are more specific than the ones formed in spaces.
- 12 Low & Lawrence-Zúñiga 2005, 7–8.
- 13 E.g. Lusto A02001:463/F1972. (F=female) In Finland there is a custom of getting together with colleagues to discuss business unofficially in saunas. Later these discussions can affect the official decision making. There is even sauna in our house of parliament.
- 14 The exact number 13,86% is based on e-mail notification of secretary of Meto, Finnish Forestry Experts' Association, which I received 27th of March 2008. The number includes both student and working members.
- 15 Lusto A02001:508/M1967. Ostrobothnia is a region in Finland, where agriculture has been a main livelihood and where the scenery is dominated by fields and pastures.
- 16 Silvasti 2001, 37–42.
- 17 Löfström 1999, 180–183.
- 18 Siiskonen 1990, 66–76.
- 19 Rantalaiho 1994, 21–22, 25.
- 20 Lusto A02001:579/F1962.
- 21 Löfström 1999, 182.
- 22 Korkiakangas 1996, 127–129.
- 23 Goffman 1971 (1959); Eriksen 2004, 75–79; cf. Ehn & Löfgren 2001.
- 24 Butler 1999, 178–180.
- 25 Lusto A02001:463/F1972.
- 26 Lusto A02001:498/F1966.
- 27 Lusto A02001:435/F1960.
- 28 Silvasti 2001, 39–40.
- 29 Lusto A02001:490/F1967.
- 30 Lusto A02001:470/M1963.
- 31 Lusto A02001:470/M1963.
- 32 Tuomaala 2006, 288.
- 33 Butler 1999, 178–179.
- 34 Lusto A02001:242/M1961.
- 35 Laurén 2006, 128–136.
- 36 Lusto A02001:346/M1961.
- 37 Lusto A02001:334/F1966.

- 38 Lusto A02001:453/F1960.
- 39 Korkiakangas 1996, 284, 289.
- 40 Lusto A02001:554/F1962.
- 41 Korkiakangas 1996, 284.
- 42 Lusto A02001:531/F1961.
- 43 Lusto A02001:245/M1972.
- 44 Lusto A02001:453/F1960.
- 45 Milton 2002, 2, 41–43.
- 46 Roiko-Jokela 2000, 26–29.
- 47 Lusto A02001:531/F1961.
- 48 Ingold 2000, 198–200.
- 49 Lusto A02001:498/F1966.
- 50 Roiko-Jokela 2000, 26–29.
- 51 Lusto A02001:565/M1967.
- 52 Lusto A02001:463/N1972.
- 53 Lusto A02001:565/M1967.
- 54 Lusto A02001:435/F1960.
- 55 Laurén 2006, 93.
- 56 In Finland over half of all forests are owned by private people, and forest-lands are continually for sale. See Facts from Finnish Forests' internet pages: <http://www.forest.fi/>.
- 57 Lusto A02001:471/M1973.
- 58 Lusto A02001:555/M1965.
- 59 Nygren 2000, 180; Haila & Lähde 2003, 10–11, 26.
- 60 Warren 1997, 5–7.
- 61 Wilson 2005.
- 62 Nygren 2000, 180–190.
- 63 Cf. *Evolla ensimmäisenä* 2002, 147.
- 64 See Silvasti 2001.
- 65 Lusto A2001:501/F1963.
- 66 Rodman 2003 (1992), 212.
- 67 Rich 1984, 212.

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KATRI KAUNISTO

Men at work – forestry work and masculinities

Forestry work, the work of logging and transporting timber, has in the Finnish countryside traditionally been a job for men. Although forestry has had an important position in the Finnish economy, forestry work has had a low status as an occupation. It is physically hard work as well as an uncertain, seasonal and low paid job, but it has offered a potential trade for uneducated working class men.¹ However, soon after the Second World War, forestry and the forest industry developed rapidly. The mechanization of forestry work and new demands from nature conservation made it necessary to develop vocational education and increase personnel training. New computer systems and forestry machines have changed the distribution of work, and forestry workers are now even assigned some of the former tasks of foremen.

The changes in forestry work have reflected the general development of work from physical work to office work. In this development, the importance of the physical capacity of workers has decreased, and simultaneously, intellectual skills and knowledge have received more emphasis at work.² The strategies of working class men have adapted to these changes. They have become aware that the traditional masculine strategy, which depended on physical capacity, offered only short-term benefits at work, while education could offer an opportunity for a better social position.³ Social scientist Jari Kuosmanen, who has studied Finnish workers who have migrated to Sweden, has criticized the general view that identifies traditional, non-modern masculinity with the working class.⁴ He has shown in his study how modern elements, such as a future orientation and educational interests, can also be found among working class men. In any case, the image of working class masculinity has changed slowly; physical capacity, hard work and freedom are still highly respected traditional masculine values among workers.⁵

Moreover, not all men or groups of men are alike. Instead of one single form of masculinity, there are various masculinities. These masculinities are constructed and defined socially and changed over generations.⁶ According to sociologist Robert W. Connell, there are relations of hierarchy between different masculinities; ‘some masculinities are dominant while others are subordinated or marginalized.’ Individuals may accept and reproduce or contest and confront the hegemonic masculinity that dominates and controls males with low status.⁷ In Finland the institutions of forestry have been

male dominated and organized according to a strict hierarchy. Forestry workers have done physically hard manual work, and their work has been controlled and subordinated by educated officials and foremen. Additionally, workers' groups have also had their own internal hierarchies, which have usually been based on workers' ages, personal characteristics and skills.⁸ The mechanization of forestry work, the vocational education of workers and changes in work distribution have gradually changed work communities and their hierarchies. These changes have also challenged the values of traditional working class masculinity. My aim is to study how the occupational changes in the male-dominated profession of forestry have changed the values and the image of the ideal forestry worker. How do they contest or reproduce the discourse of hegemonic masculinity in their own profession? In this article, the forest is seen as a space of action. It is the workplace of forestry workers, their own territory, where they also have to respond to the demands of employers and society.

My study concerns the forestry workers' experiences of the changes in forestry in Finland after the 1960s. This study is based on interviews of Finnish forestry workers. These interviews were carried out as part of a joint project with the Finnish Forest History Society, Lusto – the Finnish Forest Museum and the Department of Ethnology, the University of Helsinki, called *Forestry Professions in the Changing Society – Oral History Project 1999–2002*.⁹ In these interviews, forestry workers evaluated their profession and work and how it has changed. This study is also a part of my current doctoral dissertation project concerning how forestry workers and forestry entrepreneurs have experienced the changes in Finnish forestry.

The real forestry worker

Although forestry work has been a hard, low paid, uncertain and temporary job, until the 1970s it was an important source of income for rural workers and small farmers. Forestry workers often used to seek forestry work far away from home. During times of economic depression they were also forced to travel from workplace to another, hunting for a job. Those workers who were known to employers and had the reputation of being a good worker were also the most likely to get a job.¹⁰

Forestry workers' tasks usually included cutting, clearing and planting trees. They would follow the orders and plans of the foremen, but gradually vocational education has improved workers' skills so that it has been possible to delegate many of the former foremen's tasks to the forestry workers. Nowadays, for example, they draw up the work plans for the logging sites and measure the logs themselves. Previously, foremen and supervisors checked on the finished job on site, but nowadays forestry workers usually only meet their foremen in weekly meetings in an office.¹¹ They work often in teams, where the team members, forestry workers, forest machine contractors and foremen are together responsible for the timber procurement in their working area. These changes have not only increased workers' autonomy, but also

their responsibilities. Their work has become varied but also demanding.¹²

In the interviews, forestry workers described the ideal picture of a forestry worker as someone who is honest, a hardworking professional and in good condition. Competitiveness and good physical strength were the basic characteristics of forestry workers. They admired work which makes a man sweat; work should be felt in the body before it can be called real work. Moreover, tiredness was a part of the job.

Interviewer: What are the characteristics of a good forestry worker?

Interviewee: Well, forestry workers have to have good self-esteem, sort of a competitive temperament, like a sportsman. (– –) If you had some troubles at home or somewhere else, it was not good for work either. Even though I couldn't sing, I always sang there. Everything should be all right. And I thought that I should be very tired. If I wasn't tired in the evening or at the weekend, I did not feel well. Nowadays they talk about stress at work, but forestry workers do not understand that at all. You don't burn out from forestry work. I don't understand how you could be stressed out from work?¹³

Forestry professionals said that in their youth, at the beginning of their career, they were full of spirit and motivation. Young workers often worked competitively because they wanted to show off their strength and professional skills; by working hard they were able to raise their status in the work community. The older professionals remembered how they used to work hard and how they perceived other workers as competitors.¹⁴ They were competing for better incomes, and piecework pay was one spur to competition.¹⁵

There has not happened any such accident to me, except when I was small boy. My back has been injured only twice. Actually, in both cases, the reason was the piecework. It was so that we ran all the time at work, as much as we could. We didn't eat during the daytime and our hands shook in the evening. But nowadays there are no such old forests to cut as it was then. There are not many who would do the work like before, I wouldn't either.¹⁶

However, this competitive way of working endangered the workers' health and caused injuries and work-related illnesses. In the interviews the forestry workers admitted that hard work at a fast pace was short-sighted. They often suffered backaches or other articular injuries, which were partially the result of poor working positions.¹⁷ The forestry workers admitted that they were workaholics and ambitious, and therefore they did not think about their health.

Interviewer: So, what kind of worker is a good forestry worker?

Interviewee: Well, (laughing). Well somehow a crazy, limitless workaholic and somehow stupid, because they'll go to the forest on a wet snow day, in the rain and frost. They are devilishly stubborn, so that they won't give up right away. They must be quite diligent too, and like I said, somehow crazy.¹⁸



Official vocational education for forestry workers and forest machine drivers started in secondary-level forestry colleges in the 1960s. Lusto/Enson kokoelma.

Interviewer: What kind of person is the typical forestry worker? What kind of characteristics are needed?

Interviewee: It is like a bull, it will even go against the wall (laughing). It is some sort of life form. What I know, they are such stubborn persons that they will go through the wall if they decide to. One should be some sort of lunatic, who could be there for about thirty or forty years in any weather. They have guts and, even when they are ill but still are able to walk, they do not stay away. They'll go to the doctor only when they can't fight it anymore, when someone is carrying them there (laughing).¹⁹

Forestry workers sometimes compared themselves to animals; they used animal metaphors to convey the sense of short-sighted behaviour or unintelligence. According to the interviewees, forestry work has had the reputation of an occupation where anyone can succeed, even when that person could not manage anywhere else. Therefore, the elder forestry workers were humble about their occupation.²⁰

The idea held by forestry workers that their occupations is a low status job harkens back to the early history of forestry work, which is full of stories about a harsh life in austere conditions, violence, alcoholism and gambling, and an indecent lifestyle.²¹ Although the lumberjacks' lives were burdened by poverty, unemployment and financial worries, the work was associated with the positive images of independence, mobility and freedom.²² The interviewed forestry workers said that they enjoyed the freedom at work even though their opportunities to make decisions independently were limited. The forestry workers were proud of their work and their own professional skills, and they enjoyed working in nature and feeling that they were free.²³ One interviewed forestry worker has even voluntarily chosen seasonal unemployment. He did not want to change his trade because he enjoyed his

work. He suffered from backaches, and harvesting work during the winter was too hard for him; therefore, he worked only in the summertime doing easier cleaning and clearing work.

Yes, I wanted to work there, and still, I'm not going to change my job. I like to work in nature. This is still quite a good profession.²⁴

Despite the low status of forestry work, the job was somehow heroic. Men battled with nature in forestry work, and it required manual skills and physical toughness. It was a hard and dangerous job for real, masculine men who were even ready to endanger their health. Young forestry workers especially often took unnecessary risks in their work and did not take care of themselves. They risked their health because of the competition for better earnings. It is quite easy to link this kind of behaviour with traditional working class masculinity and troubled masculinities. According to sociologist Jeff Hearn, there are political and policy discourses of masculinities, where masculinities are seen as problematic and troubled. These discourses have especially concerned young men and boys and their troubles with education and work. However, the debate on troubled masculinities in relation to work, employment and unemployment has been far less developed.²⁵ Although policymakers for forestry have been concerned about the problems of forestry workers, they have not seen any connection to the problems of masculinities.

From timber logger to forestry professional

The low status of forestry work has every now and then concerned policymakers. In 1962 the president of Finland expressed his concern about the wage trend for forestry workers.²⁶ Their wages had been left far behind the wage level of other workers even though forestry was an important sector of the Finnish economy. Until the 1970s forestry workers seldom had the opportunity to have permanent work; forestry work was temporal piecework, and workers might have several employers during the year. Unemployment in rural areas hastened migration to urban areas, and forestry workers as well found their way to other trades.²⁷ Simultaneously, forestry employers were concerned about the forestry workers' professional skills and how to hold on to skilled personnel, so employers started to create permanent posts for forestry workers. Forestry work still remained piecework, but workers no longer needed to compete for workplaces.

Even with this improvement, Finnish forestry organizations were worried about the lack of skilled professionals, and education was assumed to increase interest in and respect for forestry work as an occupation. Official vocational education for forestry workers and forest machine drivers started in secondary-level forestry colleges in the 1960s.²⁸ However, vocational education spread gradually, and learning professional skills at work was still a strong tradition. Consequently, several of the interviewees were born in the 1960s, but had not received any vocational education or professional



Forestry work is still physically hard work and good working technique is an important way to prevent injuries and other work-related illnesses. Lusto/Finnish Forest and Park Service collection.

exam before their working career. In fact, forestry employers were forced to hire personnel who had no vocational education because there were not enough vocationally educated people available in the 1970s and 1980s. Vocational education became common among interviewees who were born in the 1960s,²⁹ and agriculture,³⁰ electronics³¹ or metalwork³² were the most common vocational education options for them. Only a few interviewees received an education in forestry colleges.³³

Young boys had traditionally learned techniques and professional skills at work with older professionals, their father or other relatives and were not always encouraged to study. In fact, the young men who were interested in forestry work were not keen on education in the first place. Generally, they just wanted to find a well-paid job.³⁴ According to forestry workers, the salary

for their occupation in the 1970s and 1980s was quite competitive compared to other occupations for uneducated workers because of the piecework.³⁵ Education was also an economic challenge for poor families. Schools were far away from home districts, and families needed all their members to help with the farm work. Small farms received some extra income from forestry work, and farmers' sons helped their parents in this work too.³⁶ However, in the 1970s the opportunities to get an education increased, and almost everyone, at least in theory, was able to get a vocational education.³⁷

Young working class men's lack of interest in education has concerned policymakers because there is a statistical link between low education, unemployment and other social problems of men.³⁸ According to sociologist Paul Willis, working class men are usually suspicious of formal institutions; additionally, they dismiss the need for school and refuse to recognize teachers' authority.³⁹ They also scorn school work itself, see paperwork as effeminate compared to physical work and admire practical work more than theory.⁴⁰ Similarly, some of the forestry workers had chosen their occupation because forestry work was familiar from their childhood, and they knew the work. The same reason was given for why they had not changed trades despite the difficulties of finding employment.⁴¹

Forestry workers explained that their passiveness towards educating themselves was due to the nature of forestry work, which requires a tacit knowledge that increases only with working experience; they needed skills that they could not learn at school.⁴² Additionally, those who had negative experiences of school did not always believe that they had the ability to study further.⁴³ Forestry workers also put more emphasis on experience than theoretical knowledge, and accordingly, the vocational education that was offered was more concentrated on improving practical skills.

Forestry employers have always provided education for forest workers to increase their effectiveness; education has often been seen to be tied to economic growth and competitiveness. Finnish forestry companies have arranged short courses for employees on working methods and techniques since the 1940s to improve professional skills. At first, the personnel training was focused on practical skills, labour protection, ergonomics and technique.⁴⁴ Good working technique was an important way to prevent injuries and other work-related illnesses. In the 1980s a number of theoretical subjects were added to vocational education to increase students' opportunities for further education. At the same time, education policy valued education more than work experience. Gradually, work experience was also accepted as a part of the lifelong learning process, and in the 1990s an opportunity for uneducated professionals to get documentation of their qualifications through an exam was introduced.⁴⁵

Although the mechanization and rationalization of forestry work lightened workers' workload, forestry work was still physically hard work. Therefore, forestry workers still wanted to emphasize the importance of their physical capacity at work. However, the interviewed forestry workers criticized the old view that forestry work is an occupation for every man for which special talents were not needed.⁴⁶ Changes in work practice have made it possible to

emphasize different masculinities, where education as well as practical skills are respected. The forestry workers wanted to emphasize the importance of professional skills and experience as well, and admitted that good working methods increased effectiveness and gave more opportunities to better their earnings.

Interviewer: Is there any difference between the quality of forestry workers' work? Do they have different 'handwriting' or were the results of their work different?

Interviewee: Well, yes there is. Almost every forestry worker has a different way of working. One person can work more quickly than a bigger man. Someone may use more time for one tree than another, someone else is technically better and has planned his work better. We have one top forestry worker who can do the work of two or three men. He has a superior technique, he is in good condition, and his finished product is fairly good; thus far the foremen have not found fault with him. But there are also those who do their work too carefully, even in piecework. Their incomes are lower. Earnings can vary a lot as well as the finished product.⁴⁷

The rationalization and mechanization of forestry work and vocational education have not taken away the threat of unemployment. Nowadays, forestry workers often receive temporary dismissals in winter time. Additionally, recent notices of layoffs in the forestry trade have decreased the trust and respect for forestry work as an occupation; young men no longer seek out forestry work, and forestry workers do not recommend it to their children. However, those forestry workers who were eager to learn new methods and ready to develop their working methods by themselves said that education could offer them more options at work.

Interviewer: How do you see the future for forestry workers?

Interviewee: If you look from the point of view of the basic forestry worker, who does nothing else but cut trees, he has one half of the year at work and other half unemployed. But if he has multifaceted professional skills and education, he has fair but insecure chances. Nowadays nothing is certain because there can be a notice tomorrow waiting for you. Then it is finished, kaput.⁴⁸

Education gave the forest workers a better opportunity to take on or even choose different tasks. They have learned how to learn new things, and they are able to apply their knowledge to the present situation. Education was also seen as a way of avoiding unemployment. A permanent job can no longer offer security in the future as it has before. A vocational education seems to have helped forest workers to adjust to the changes in the industry. Additionally, former positive education experiences were a good base for further education. It was evident how education has benefited those forest workers who had an earlier educational history.⁴⁹ They have learned how to take advantage of the knowledge in their work. They are ready to educate and to develop themselves voluntarily because their education has offered

an opportunity to take control of their future. For them, education has been an individual process and a project of their own.

The forest as a worker's own space

According to the forestry workers, the best thing in their work is the freedom: they enjoy working outside, in nature, far from watchful eyes; they are able to control their own work space and work independently. Flexible working hours and working at their own pace were also part of the freedom of forestry work. Freedom and the mastery of one's own work space and working time has been important for other workers too.⁵⁰ In general, jobs at which a skilled worker can work independently are more desirable than jobs where a worker needs or is dependent on others.⁵¹

According to sociologist Matti Kortteinen, a skilful worker in a steel factory or in a bank office could develop such effective working methods so as to be able to regulate his or her own working tempo. They are able to control their work and workplace; thereby they can enjoy freedom and independence at work within certain boundaries.⁵² However, according to the forestry workers, working in factories, for example, is oppressive and strictly regulated compared to forestry work. Those who had worked in factories did not like the clock cards and strict working hours and timetables. In forestry work they could choose when their work day begins and ends and how many breaks they take.⁵³

The control forestry workers have over their own work, space and use of time has been affected by the changes in forestry work. The aim of changes such as the mechanization of forestry work was to lighten the workers' load and make the work more efficient. In the beginning, forestry workers were suspicious of the new techniques. For example, the first power saws were expensive, heavy and often broke down.⁵⁴ Eventually, the power saws improved and became dependable tools. Young forestry workers quickly realized the advantages of the new machines and were eager to take the new techniques into use. Similarly, other forestry machines became common in Finland. However, mechanization and rationalization also led to other kinds of changes which limited the freedom of forestry workers to control their time use. Timetables were not regulated only by the foremen, but also by co-workers and weather and seasonal conditions. Additionally, collective transport to work and home limited the workers' opportunities to choose their own working hours; they needed to adjust their schedule to others' plans.⁵⁵

Additionally, changes in forestry work practices also undermined workers' autonomy. New working systems forced them to change their routines at work. Employers searched for and developed effective and cheaper working methods. However, according to the forestry workers, these changes were rarely of benefit to the workers.⁵⁶ The forestry workers criticized, for example, changes in how timber was measured and cut because it affected their wages. Also, even while the workload of forestry workers increased, their wages did not rise at the same rate. It was sometimes difficult for the forestry workers

to estimate their incomes in advance, and there were often disagreements about the pricing.

Yes, then these methods, when those changed, it was bad thing. There was a feeling that there is no income anymore. Always, when we got some kind of price, actually when we used to get a certain price per unit it was reasonable. But then they changed the method and the wages went down; multiple workloads with the same sum of money. They always changed everything as soon as we started to adapt.⁵⁷

Piecework had given the forestry workers an opportunity to regulate their own time use and working tempo. Young and healthy forestry workers were content with the piecework wage because they could increase their incomes with hard work. The older workers and those whose working ability had decreased could not work as hard as they had earlier, and their wages gradually fell. Employers and the labour union of forestry workers tried to solve the problem of forestry workers' wage development. The payroll system was updated so that older workers would receive a seniority increment to raise their wages. At the end of the 1970s workers and employers began to discuss changing over from a piecework wage to an hourly wage. Several forestry tasks such as planting had already been paid with an hourly wage. However, forestry workers resisted time-based wage plans because they were afraid that their incomes would drop and that it would detract from their freedom to control their own working time.⁵⁸ Gradually, time-based wages became common in the 1990s.⁵⁹

Interviewer: Do you remember when this piecework ended [and changed to a monthly salary]?

Interviewee: Well, it ended about two years ago [1998]. Nowadays it is much easier. I am not as greedy anymore; I know beforehand what I earn. Of course you could get more money with piecework, but in that kind of work there is the danger of hurting yourself, especially if your character is such that you don't like to give up, and want to do and get more than others.⁶⁰

Changes engender a need to educate workers, and therefore, new techniques and working methods were often learned in short personnel courses. Additionally, employers trained advisors, who visited the workplaces and guided forestry workers in the use of the new techniques and work safety. These advisors were usually seasoned forestry workers, who were trusted workers assumed to have other workers' approval and respect. However, the advisors stated in the interviews how difficult it was to intrude into others' work and tell them how they should work. Forestry workers did not always want to listen to them and follow their instructions.

The forestry worker is so unbending, at least most of them, so that if you go and present them with something new, they do not accept it at once. He will say, 'Keep on talking, I do not care.' But still, something

about it will remain with him so that he can later try it alone. Then he will notice that it was not such a bad thing at all, he'll start to use it like it was shown.⁶¹

The forestry workers were critical of foremen and supervisors. They felt that sometimes the education provided was an unnecessary repetition of subjects that they already knew. For example, the forestry workers stressed that they have always been conscious of the demands of sustainable forestry and nature conservation. The forestry workers, who have logged and managed forests for decades, believed in their own experience and ability to take care of nature and its diversity. According to the forestry workers, forests have multiple values. The forestry workers wanted to show that they were genuine nature enthusiasts. They stressed the fact that the forest or nature was not only a source of income, it was also important in terms of recreation. They enjoyed observing natural phenomena during the working day and experiencing nature in their leisure time. They would go hunting and fishing, and pick berries or mushrooms. They appreciated well-managed forests, but they also enjoyed the smells of nature, the peace and the sense of timelessness.⁶² The workers were used to living in and with nature as it has been an important part of their lifestyle. Therefore, their attitude towards nature conservationists, who came from outside of the local community and forestry trade, was hostile. According to the forestry workers, nature conservationists are often educated city dwellers who do not understand anything about forestry and the local economy. They saw nature conservationists and their demands as threatening the forestry trade and therefore also their occupation.⁶³

Forestry expertise

Criticism of the forest industry increased in the 1980s and 1990s; thereafter the forest industry needed to convince nature conservationists and customers of their willingness and ability to fulfil the standards of sustainable forestry. The demands of nature conservation also changed working methods and work experience requirements, and a basic education alone was no longer sufficient in forest work. As a consequence, forest institutions and officials developed a certificate to show that the forest industry was operating according to the recommendations for sustainable forestry. According to the certificate of sustainable forestry, 'employees' adequate professional competence and ability to work in the designated tasks shall be ensured'. However, 'adequate professional competence can be achieved by either professional education or by work experience'.⁶⁴ One criterion for getting this kind of certificate is to provide employees with personnel training. Training in nature management has become more or less obligatory for forestry workers, who must be aware of the demands of nature conservation and the protection of vulnerable species and environments. Educated employees have been seen as experts who can guarantee the quality of products.



Forestry companies have had strict hierarchies and foremen and managers have been clear authorities. However, forestry workers have enjoyed their relatively independent work where they felt that they are trusted workers. Lusto/Enson collection.

Education and personnel training have increased the forestry workers' opportunities to work independently. However, they have noticed that increased autonomy at work has also increased their responsibilities and work tasks, which they were not as pleased about.

Well, this job description has lightened in many ways, but on the other hand, there have come some changes that I should think more and do more work at home too. Previously, my workday used to end when I left the forest and threw my work togs away. But now I might have some office work to do at home as well, so you might work at home then afterwards.⁶⁵

The forestry workers were usually satisfied with their autonomy and opportunities to make independent decisions at work. Historian Juha Siltala has also noticed that when Finnish workers have more responsibilities, they begin to work like independent entrepreneurs; they will voluntarily work unpaid overtime to finish their tasks on time.⁶⁶

Some forestry companies' timber procurement is organized in teams

in which forestry workers work together with foremen, forestry machine contractors and other forestry workers. Each team member has his own tasks and responsibilities, and forestry workers are also partly responsible for how their team achieves their goals effectively.⁶⁷ The purpose for organizing these teams is to diminish hierarchy in the workplaces and increase workers' loyalty and commitment to the company. However, sociologist Richard Sennet has noticed regarding team work that even if the hierarchy has disappeared, the power still exists: 'power is present in the superficial scenes of teamwork, but authority is absent.'⁶⁸ In team work foremen are not solely responsible for the results; all the team members manage the work, timetables and the quality of work together. Additionally, team members compete with other teams and other team members. They need to constantly prove to the other team members that they are trustworthy.⁶⁹

Even though forestry companies have had strict hierarchies, and foremen and managers have been clear authorities, the workers felt that they have been an important part of the company and have been working for the same goal. Therefore, the forestry workers were loyal to their employers. Although the forestry workers have suffered from unemployment and low incomes, they believed in the future success of the forest industry. They wanted to believe that their services will still be needed and that there will be a need for skilled forestry workers in the future. However, the workers have usually had only limited opportunities to contribute to the decisions which have touched their occupation.

Forestry workers as well as other Finnish workers respect employers who have taken care of their employees.⁷⁰ The forestry workers appreciated the events the employers used to organize for the personnel to maintain a certain 'family spirit', especially Christmas parties and other seasonal celebrations. Nowadays, managers and foremen seldom remember or understand the importance of thanking their personnel in that way.⁷¹ The forestry workers have noticed that their employer is nowadays a distant organization that does not seem to understand what is happening on the 'shop floor level'.

The forestry workers were concerned about the forestry companies' low interest in hiring new forestry workers. Nowadays, the companies want to make contracts with entrepreneurs rather than hire more personnel. The forestry workers who have decided to be entrepreneurs took an economic risk, but they also got the opportunity to be their own boss and to have more freedom to decide where and how to work. However, entrepreneurship was not a realistic option for every forestry worker. Older forestry workers especially need job security in their work. Entrepreneurship was for some the only opportunity to stay in their profession, keep working in the countryside and avoid migrating to seek work. However, some of the forestry workers were very suspicious of this option; they believed that there will be unreasonable competition between contractors and that employers will take advantage of it and not pay the contractors enough. Simultaneously, contractors also threaten the position of permanent workers. It seems as if this development could lead back to the situation where forestry work is an uncertain and low paid job.

Conclusions

The interviews gave an ambiguous picture of forestry workers. They not only reflected the changes in forestry work and the requirements for professional skills, but also changes in working class masculinities and hierarchies. Although forestry work has changed rapidly, the image of forestry workers has changed slowly. Forestry work has been a working class occupation, and the workers have been admired for their physical capacity and freedom and for being hard-working heroes, which have also been highly respected values of traditional masculinity. However, mechanization and rationalization have given forestry workers new and demanding tasks. Forestry work has gradually changed from physically hard manual work to a job where theoretical knowledge has also become important. Despite the mechanization of forestry work, it is still physically hard. Therefore, forestry workers have not been forced to totally give up traditional masculine values; it has been easy to maintain the ideal picture of a forestry worker who is skilful, hardworking and in good condition.

Vocational education and personnel training at first focused on improving technical skills, and then gradually the role of theoretical education also increased. However, work-oriented forestry workers wanted to place more emphasis on work experience than theoretical education. Forestry workers as well as other workers have not always been interested in education, not even in vocational education. Professional skills have traditionally been learned at work. Only later was more stress placed on effective working methods and technique than physical strength. Older forestry workers were especially critical of young forestry workers, who have less experience but try to compensate for it with physical strength. They are at risk for work-related illnesses and injuries, similarly to other young working class men with the same types of risk behaviour.

The forestry workers admitted that they were lazy or felt inadequate to educate themselves. What is more, they seemed to be partly ashamed that they were not educated. These thoughts are a reminder of the old days of forestry work, when almost anyone could choose this occupation. However, the forestry workers wanted to portray themselves as skilled workers even without a vocational education degree. They enjoyed sharing their long work history, how they had learned the job in their childhood and about their lifestyle. They wanted to remember their early working history when they did their job without machines with simple tools as previous generations had done. In this way they wanted to be part of the heroic past of hard-working forestry workers. They both shared the values and reproduced the images of working class masculinity.

Forestry employers have benefited from the forestry workers' low education; they were cheaper employees. However, employers needed skilled, effective and work-committed workers to gain an economic advantage. Forestry workers were usually very loyal to their employers even though their position has not always been secure; they have endured seasonal unemployment and low incomes. Forestry workers have, however, enjoyed

their relatively independent work where they felt that they are trusted workers.

In time, offering a vocational education to their workers was found to be in the employers' best interests. However, forestry workers were often very suspicious if someone tried to give them advice or teach new working methods. They wanted to control their workplace and space, but the changes and new demands threatened the workers' autonomy and independence. Vocational education did not fit the image of the free forestry worker who was a self-made professional.

Gradually, education and personnel training also changed forestry workers' attitudes, and they saw the benefits of vocational education in their work and for employment opportunities. Forestry workers enjoy their autonomy although new tasks and increased responsibilities have added to their stress. Due to economic fluctuation and the mechanization and rationalization of forestry work, permanent jobs have again become less secure. Forestry workers often face temporal and seasonal unemployment. Therefore, some forestry workers have seen entrepreneurship as one opportunity to employ themselves.

By accepting education as a way to improve their professional skills, forestry workers took a step away from traditional masculinity, where practical skills were more respected than theoretical knowledge. These former heroic self-taught workers are slowly being replaced with educated workers. However, the educated workers share some of the same values important to generations of former forestry workers. There has not been a strict line between traditional and modern masculinity among forestry workers. Nonetheless, the educated modern worker is a growing challenge to workers who represent traditional masculinity, which took the form of hegemonic masculinity among forestry workers.

NOTES

- 1 Juutilainen 1988, 9–12, 24–25.
- 2 Kuosmanen 2001, 83.
- 3 Kuosmanen 2001, 192–193; Sennet & Cobb 1977, 186–188.
- 4 Kuosmanen 2001, 197.
- 5 Karjalainen 2007, 176–177; Kuosmanen 2001, 192–193; See also Willis 1979, 150–151; Sennet & Cobb 1977, 235–240.
- 6 Hern 1998, 39; Cockburn 1991, 191–199.
- 7 Connell 2000, 10.
- 8 Snellman 1996, 111–133.
- 9 Snellman, Kaunisto & Paaskoski 2002. Docent Hanna Snellman was the leader of the project, and my role as project coordinator was to organize the interviews. Over one thousand forestry professionals, of whom 216 were forestry workers, from around Finland were interviewed in order to find out how changes in forestry have changed their work and lifestyles.
- 10 Snellman 2005, 33–37; Pöysä 1997, 299.
- 11 Lusto A02001:812/64. In the reference number, the number '64' is the year of birth (1964).
- 12 Huusko 2003, 72; Lusto A02001:700/68, 816/60, 647/61.

- 13 Lusto A02001:774/48.
- 14 Lusto A02001:662/46.
- 15 Lusto A02001:669/63.
- 16 Lusto A02001:669/63.
- 17 Lusto A02001:669/63, 757/62.
- 18 Lusto A02001:808/49.
- 19 Lusto A02001:780/51.
- 20 Lusto A02001: 636/57.
- 21 Snellman 2005, 33; Pöysä 1997, 68, 140–146.
- 22 Johansson 1994, 163; see also Snellman 2005, 36–37; Pöysä 1997, 121, 175.
- 23 Kaunisto 2001, 9–13.
- 24 Lusto A02001:757/62.
- 25 Kuosmanen 2001, 205; Hearn 1998, 11, 39–40, 49.
- 26 Kekkonen 1967, 235, 268.
- 27 Kaunisto 2008, 74.
- 28 Raatikainen 1992, 99. Nowadays vocational upper secondary education and training is provided in vocational schools, <http://www.oph.fi/english> (27.5.2008).
- 29 Lusto A02001: 735/55, 710/58, 712/58, 720/56, 853/66.
- 30 Lusto A02001:816/60.
- 31 Lusto A02001:720/56, 802/51.
- 32 Lusto A02001:720/56, 802/51.
- 33 Lusto A02001:700/68.
- 34 Kenway & Kraack 2004, 99–100.
- 35 Lusto A02001: 720/56, 662/46, 802/51, 853/66, 905/46.
- 36 Snellman 2005, 150.
- 37 Häkkinen et al. 2005, 79–81.
- 38 Connell 2000, 186–188.
- 39 Willis 1979, 72–73.
- 40 Willis 1979, 56; Kenway & Kraack 2004, 101–102.
- 41 Lusto A02001:689/64, 667/40.
- 42 Lusto A02001: 757/62.
- 43 Lusto A02001:757/62.
- 44 Klemelä 1999, 251, Persson 1993, 70, 77, 145.
- 45 Nyssölä & Hämäläinen 2001, 15; Laki ammatillisesta aikuiskoulutuksesta (Law of occupational adult education) 21.8.1998/631.
- 46 Lusto A02001:837/49, 824/47.
- 47 Lusto A02001:670/49.
- 48 Lusto A02001:780/51.
- 49 Lusto A02001:647:61, 829/47, 665/49, 780/51.
- 50 Kaunisto 2001, 9; Karjalainen 2007, 25, 140–141.
- 51 Sennet & Cobb 1977, 236–237.
- 52 Kortteinen 1992, 312–315.
- 53 Lusto A02001:816/60, 647/61.
- 54 Hjelm 1991, 95–97.
- 55 Lusto A02001:692/51, 816/60, 827/50.
- 56 Lusto A02001: 668/41, 669/63, 712/58, 812/64, 827/50.
- 57 Lusto A02001:845/48.
- 58 Heinonen 2001, 250–251, 262.
- 59 Lusto A02001: 691/46, 693/51, 700/68, 812/64.
- 60 Lusto A02001:669/63.
- 61 Lusto A02001:665/49.
- 62 Lusto A02001:712/58, 805/50.
- 63 Lusto A02001:684/44, 735/55.
- 64 <http://www.ffcs-finland.org/pages/english/ffcs-system/standards.ph> (9.5.2005).
- 65 Lusto A02001:757/62.
- 66 Siltala 2004, 172–173, 185.

- 67 Huusko 2003, 83, 85.
 68 Sennet 1999, 114.
 69 Sennet 1999, 110–113.
 70 The Great Employer project, <http://www.manpower.fi/mpnet3/Content.asp?NodeID=37677&ref=FINLAND>, 14.10.2005
 71 Lusto A02001:665/49.

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