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CHAPTER

5

Päivi Kivelä

Between work and family – habitus, gender and change over the individual life course

Introduction

This chapter focuses on exploring how women around 50 years of age have experienced and accommodated themselves to changing conditions in society during their lifetimes. A significant rise in the standard of living and in educational level, entwined with rapid changes in occupational structures, has been amongst the most important societal changes during last 50 years. This is linked to women's increased and pro-active participation in the labour market. More recent trends are characterised by an increased instability in working life. This has demanded ever greater flexibility, mobility, lifelong learning and a continuous updating of skills, which have further made complicated the link between work and family.

More precisely the chapter explores how daughters of agrarian working class families, who now are middle-aged mothers with different

labour market positions, have orientated themselves between two field-like spheres – paid work and family – with different prevailing dynamics and rules (see e.g. Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992). These two fields require and legitimate partly dissimilar resources and value dispositions which women have developed in divergent ways. To some extent it is nonetheless possible to facilitate mobility between these fields with cultural or social capital acquired being transferred from one field to the other. The chapter argues that this specific conversion potential of capital is essentially linked to the local symbolic categorizations and respectability required as a member of the local community. In the cases dealt with in this study, this is especially acquired by fulfilling expectations laid on what might be called the 'good wife and mother' (for a discussion on 'normal family', see Alanen's chapter elsewhere in this book).

Drawing on the relational sociology of Pierre Bourdieu, this chapter conceptualises the above mentioned societal processes as changes in field conditions. A Bourdieusian argument suggests that societal change may generate a mismatch, or a lack of fit between habitus (the feel for the game) and field (the game itself) which were previously adequately coordinated – in other words a discord occurs between the previously routine adjustment of subjective and objective structures. This may furthermore generate awareness of, and increased capacity for, critical reflexivity over formerly taken-for-granted social conditions. These changes do not however necessarily lead to a transformation of practices due to the inertia (or hysteresis) of habitus (See Adkins 2004, 196–197; Hardy, 2008; Bourdieu 2008). Adkins (ibid.) links these ideas to the feminisation of the labour market, critical awareness over gender relations and to an assumed detraditionalisation of gender identity in late modernity (Beck 1994). Adkins (2004) emphasizes that the possibilities for detraditionalisation of gender norms should not be overestimated, and neither should critical reflexivity over identity as an everyday practice be confused with freedom to construct individualised rules or models of gender relations. She claims that in late modernity reflexivity over social conditions is perhaps better conceived of as a habit of gender. This chapter argues however that Bourdieu's concept of the 'causalité du probable' is useful in understanding why women stick to traditional gendered distributions of

work and familial values (see Bourdieu 1974; Siisiäinen 2010). It can be interpreted as an actor's common sense tendency to avoid a conjectural waste of economic, cultural and social capital through practices which aim for alternatives and goals that are too ambitious, for example in relation to social or spatial mobility.

Overall this chapter will aim at portraying how women's future anticipation, decision making and practices "make sense" (Siisiäinen 2010), do have coherence although they may be considered either as altruistic, absurd or foolish according the principles of rational action theory emphasizing economic calculation and success in working life; or perhaps as submissive, old-fashioned and backward in relation to the ideals of the women's movement and emancipation. It is argued here that women's agency is generally related to the salience of local attachment and family ties (for a discussion on 'belonging', see Alanen's chapter elsewhere in this book). Their action and practices make sense under those rules prevailing not only in the field of family, but also when considering their relational position and the societal conjuncture in the (local) labour market. Related to this, a further aim of the chapter is to consider how the dynamics of awareness, critical reflexivity and the transformation of gender relations and practices between work and family occur in the lives of this group of women, and how it is intertwined with both the development of their economic, cultural and social capital and how they experience correspondence between their dispositions and the prevailing dynamics of working life.

This chapter begins by briefly introducing the data and methods exploited in the study, and goes on to clarify more exactly how Bourdieusian sociology orientates their analysis and interpretation. The first, empirical section will provide an analysis of the local labour market game and the prevailing social categorizations and symbolic capital inherent in it. Following this, three case studies are introduced, demonstrating the transformation and conversion of cultural (especially incorporated) capital and local social capital making women's mobility between work and family possible. The chapter concludes by arguing that middle aged 'family women' coming from rural working class backgrounds have in many ways ideal dispositions for most serv-

ice sector jobs requiring characteristics which are incorporated in their feminine, motherly habitus. In addition to this, the irregularity and insecurity linked to their occupational trajectories makes them rather flexible and profitable employees.

Data and methods

The study informing this chapter draws mainly on empirical material, including in-depth life course interviews with 15 women in the age range 44–56 years. All but one were met and interviewed at least twice between 2008 and 2010. Four first round thematic life course interviews conducted already in 2003 for a separate research project (Operation Work 2002–2005, funded by the European Social Fund) were also utilized, and three of the women were re-interviewed in 2008–2009.

In 2003, the author interviewed unemployed women participating in labour market training organized by the adult education institute in Lievestuore. Research findings and design of this previous project served as a preliminary study and stimulated interest towards an investigation of the development of habitus and dispositions across individual life courses in times of rapid societal change.

Most of the new interviewees were recruited through recommendations from key informants. In addition to this a couple of women were met coincidentally during the fieldwork phase. Although data collection was mainly realized in the form of informal, conversational interviews, some of the interviewees expected the interview to be more researcher-led, and thus in some cases the interview technique was closer to an in-depth thematic interview. In 2008–2010 most of the interviews took place at the home or workplace of the interviewee. Interviews varied in duration from 1.5 to 3.5 hours and they were all recorded and transcripted.

With each interviewee the aim was to attain a confidential, open atmosphere and an interaction made as free as possible from symbolic violence. This goal was realized on some occasions better than others, but a sense of understanding the essential dynamics in the lives of each interviewed woman was attained (Cf. Bourdieu et al. 1999.) Reflexivity

over the author's own experiences and effects before, during and after encounters was also an essential part of data collection and analysis. Several rounds of interviews and conversations with this relatively small group of interviewees, as well as the prolonged period of time taken in data collection are also important factors speaking for the validity of the data and its interpretations.

The goal of both data collection and analysis was based on two main aspects: (1) To get as comprehensive a picture as possible of the interviewee's life course, from childhood to the present, and to understand how her practices in different life phases, transitions and turning points were entwined with changes in society, locality, family and social networks in general. (2) To understand the formation and transformation of dispositions, and how their dynamics are linked with the development of the various forms of capital. From the results of the data analysis, trajectories were constructed for representing the development of economic, cultural and social capital. Habitus itself is not directly empirically perceivable, instead the effects of habitus can be perceived in the practices, beliefs, choices and decisions which the habitus gives rise to. Practice is linked with capital and field through the working of the habitus, and therefore the researcher's task was to analyse not only what and how interviewees disclosed data concerning their everyday practices, values, and attitudes but also to take account of interviewees' interaction, body language and physical appearance, so that the underlying structuring principles of the habitus would be revealed (Reay 2004, 432). This way it was also possible to uncover the normalized or taken-for-granted models of gender relations and distribution of work.

The concept of habitus, related to other elements of the Bourdieusian 'conceptual toolkit' and field analysis, should be understood as a method; a way of asking questions in empirical research. The focus of research is therefore always broader than the specific research subject under study (Reay 2004, 437–439). The toolkit provides a method for simultaneously analysing subjective experience and objective structures which make this subjective experience possible (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992). This means viewing a structure as occurring within small-scale interactions and activities which in turn take place in large-scale settings. The next section of

this chapter clarifies more exactly how Bourdieusian sociology has orientated this study's analysis.

Habitus, gendered dispositions and the affective sphere in the anticipation of future alternatives

Everyday practices are rooted in an individual's life history and social experiences which are influenced, but not caused, by structural factors. Pierre Bourdieu establishes an indirect causal link between positions in social space, and practices, by means of the concept of habitus (Weininger 2005, 90). He defines habitus as "a system of *dispositions*, that is of permanent manners of being, seeing, acting and thinking, or a system of *long-lasting* (rather than permanent) schemes or schemata or structures of perception, conception and action" (Bourdieu 2005, 43–44). Habitus is a bundle of historical relations internalised as mental and physical schemes. To emphasize the meaning of cultural models and values, habitus could also be described as an individually internalised culture consisting of dispositions, which forms the foundation of an individual's behaviour (Bourdieu 1977; Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992; Siisiäinen 2005a).

Habitus contributes to an individual's capability and competence in categorizing and valuing things in the world around them (Bourdieu & Passeron 1977, 78). The foundation of habitus is moulded during early childhood in one's family. Later in life this 'primary habitus' is a base on which all attempts to include new features are placed. Every new element of content is built on this early established subjective reality (Bourdieu & Passeron 1977, 22–45). Primary habitus is also the framework for self-categorization and for perceiving one's possibilities and place in the world. As an earlier adopted category, primary habitus dominates an individual's social orientation towards education and the various experiences of life, and thus towards the formation of a 'secondary habitus' (Bourdieu & Passeron 1977, 42). An individual's sense of limits, internalised into the habitus, guides choices between different alternatives in the field. Individuals tend to make such choices in a certain conjuncture which

they deem to be realistic and attainable, and which according to their anticipation will most probably lead to positive consequences as compared to their previous choices and their consequences without the risk of losing economic, cultural or social capital – the "causalité du probable" principle in Bourdieu (1974; Siisiäinen 2010, 30–31).

Growing up to be a woman in certain social spaces, such as the one dominated by agrarian working-class culture, mediates the adaptation of a certain kind of habitus which is harmonized with values and norms predominant in that culture (Alanen, elsewhere in this book, sheds light on the construction and reproduction of social order, social categorizations and family). Primary habitus, generally confirmed with later experiences in secondary pedagogy equips boys and girls with different dispositions, making some future alternatives more attractive or probable than other ones. Gendered distribution of work generates what could be considered separate worlds for men and women, and youngsters have to find their place in this reality (Liljeström 1986). The distribution of work in their domestic environment teaches youngsters the 'content' of their gender. When they carry out tasks and responsibilities side by side with their fathers and mothers, sons and daughters learn how to be a man or a woman (Markkola 2003, 132). Gendered dispositions are not however a matter of conscious learning, although they are acquired through practice, and this practical sense enables habitus to be effective within a given social field (Lovell 2000, 12; McNay 1999, 101). To conclude, growing up is guided by gendered taken-for-granted models, ideals and expectations, which however are not the same for all girls – adjustment to them differs according to their social origin, position and the distribution of economic, cultural and social capital. Transformations within gender identity or dispositions later in life are also unevenly possible or probable for individuals with different life course trajectories (McNay 1999).

By definition, practices which question gendered dispositions are also possible. Bourdieu (2005, 45) emphasizes that although dispositions are very long-lasting and any dimension of habitus is difficult to change, it is possible to modify it through gradual awareness and pedagogic effort. In effect, habitus is not a destiny. It contains elements of variability and potential creativity, and an actor always has alternatives in their practices,

although within certain limits. Bourdieu (2005, 47) points out that "in rapidly changing societies, habitus changes constantly, continuously, but within the limits inherent in its originary structure, that is within certain bounds of continuity". Where dispositions encounter conditions (or fields) different from those in which they were constructed, this causes a dialectical confrontation. In these confrontations every agent (group or individual) acts according to his or her position (based on the possession of the various forms of capital) and his/her habitus, which is related to one's personal history. Actions stem from a confrontation between dispositions and positions "which are more often than not mutually adjusted, but may be at odds, discrepant, divergent, even in some sense contradictory" (Bourdieu 2005, 46).

Although the definition of habitus and field incorporates change as a necessary consequence of its condition, and change in one necessitates a change in the other (e.g. Bourdieu 2005, 45), Bourdieu highlights the gap between the new opportunities in the field that occur as a result of field change. All field participants do not have equal resources or adequate dispositions that are needed to rapidly recognize, grasp and occupy these novel field positions. Inertia of habitus favours dominant groups, which are able to acquire such dispositions that allow them to gain from the occupation of novel field positions. The "players" from dominated groups on the other hand do not always recognize the time dependency of their practices, and they start to move "in the direction of the dominant positions at the time when the profits they provide tend to be diminishing" (Bourdieu 1996b, 262; Hardy 2008, 135.)

Another important advantage connected to the concept of habitus, and Bourdieu's theory in general, is that it is possible to avoid the tendency to study human behaviour in 'slices' or by 'sectors'. The concept of habitus underlies a kind of practical affinity of style, in the sense that all elements of an actor's behaviour in different arenas or fields have something in common. (Bourdieu 2005, 45.) With the concept of habitus, Bourdieu also emphasizes the confrontation with the philosophical tradition of homo oeconomicus as a rational actor, who chooses the best strategies by a conscious calculation oriented towards the maximisation of profits. It can be argued that the interest or 'sense' of action based on

economic calculation is an exception, and also that it can be ascribed to the sphere of the affect, as a reasoned response arising from ongoing reflection (Siisiäinen 2010; Hughes & Blaxter 2007, 117). Emirbayer and Goldberg (2005) also remark that emotions encompass not only perception but intellectual judgement as well.

The researcher therefore explores her interviewees' practices knowing that they reflect the scope of action and orientation in certain locally defined emotional, social and material conditions – and in relation to other people. Women make their choices aware of the intricate consequences they may have for the balance of the totality of their lives, and for other people they are connected to. They are also aware of other people judging and categorizing them on the grounds of what kind of values, norms, personal characteristics, capacity or skills their practices are interpreted to be expressions of. Related to this, emotions and the anticipation of other actors' intentions are deeply involved in their decision making.

Many theorists have criticized Bourdieu's lack of attention to the affective sphere (see for example Hughes & Blaxter 2007; Sayer 2005; Skeggs 2004), which means neglecting and removing an important aspect of sense making. However, in *The logic of practice* (1990b) Bourdieu himself actually stresses that emotions are essential in the anticipation of the future; he states that emotions are a "hallucinatory 'presenting' of the impending future, which, as bodily reactions identical to those of the real situation bear witness, leads a person to live a still suspended future as already present, or even already past, and therefore necessary and inevitable" (Bourdieu 1990b, 64, 292: footnote 12). In other words, emotions project our habitual tendency to form and adjust our knowledge of probable and possible futures. Referring further to Bourdieu's ideas, continuing psychological discomfort or ambivalence may also function as a trigger of becoming conscious of attitudes and values, and furthermore as a generator of subjectively experienced motivation to change dispositions and practices so that they fit better with the dynamic conjuncture in the social field (Bourdieu Ibid).

Emirbayer and Goldberg (2005, 492) furthermore emphasize that some actors have emotional power over others. Symbolic violence is facilitated by the dominated, by their internalised modes of emotional

engagement which leave them complicit in the domination. Bourdieu (2001) does not consider submissiveness as irrational, but recalls that the dispositions of the dominated incline them toward the complicity they display. Dispositions for their part are the embodied effect of their history as the dominated. For example masculine domination perpetuates itself through the cultivation of feminine submissiveness, which often "takes the form of bodily emotions" (Bourdieu 2001, 38–39). Emotions orientate an actor to engage with objectives and relationships in life, as well as to reject or perceive others as 'disinteresting' or put them under the label 'not for people like me'. In this way emotions are understood as an outcome of habitus – as internalised social. Emotions are also a matter of positive or negative energy which drives individuals to enact or to restrict practices and future alternatives.

Ambivalent and/or burdening emotional ties (such as loyalty towards family or "classed" encounters at school or work), may restrict mobilization and accumulation of resources. In the same way, they may affect psychical, spatial and social mobility such as manifested by a willingness or passion orientated toward either academic achievement or an occupational career. (Emirbayer & Goldberg 2005, 493.) Moreover, a researcher may analyse the unpaid work of women in the activities of everyday life as expressive of habitus (Hughes & Blaxter 2007, 118) as well as women's tendency to end up in low-paid occupations such as private and public services.

Mobility between work and family in the trajectories of women around 50 years of age

15 interviewees were chosen in order to best represent the overall profile of local women around 50 years of age according to survey data collected in 2006 (see Appendix: Data). This took into account their occupations, educational level, social origin and their social status as 'family women'. One third of the 2006 survey respondents are shown to be without any vocational diploma, and academic degrees are very rare. Women respondents are less educated than men, both in basic educa-

tion and vocational education, which differs from the general picture in Finland[1]. Women around 50 years of age are mainly employed in low-paid jobs in lines of work where the majority of the staff are also women[2]. Typical occupations are in the public and private service sector, especially sales, cleaning, social care, health care, office and nursing. The number employed as industrial workers is low. In summary, the 2006 survey shows that the less educated women are, the less they earn and the more commonly they experience unemployment. It is very seldom that women respondents in this age category live alone. The overwhelming majority are either married or cohabit – and have children. By contrast every fifth man in his 50's lives alone and is childless (Kivelä 2009; Kivelä & Salminen 2009.).

Interviewees covered by this chapter's research are either native or longstanding inhabitants or workers in the locality of Lievestuore. They share similar rural and economically scarce social origins and have grown up in uneducated working class or small-scale farming families. Some interviewees have upper secondary school and university level qualifications, but in contrast with the majority of their peers with higher and further education qualifications they have stayed in their birth place. About one third of the interviewees have not progressed from basic education to upper secondary or vocational education. Some of these have later taken up new options within adult education, others have not. A few have pursued alternative routes and means (such as entrepreneurship) to compensate for gaps in formal qualifications or to overcome obstacles following extensive breaks in their working careers.

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[1] However it is reasonable to assume that survey data may be biased by the higher response rate of women (70 % vs. 52 %), and since non-response rate generally appears to be higher among uneducated men.

[2] International comparison shows that a sharper than average horizontal segregation into female and male dominated branches is characteristic of Finnish working life compared to other Western countries. This is supported by gender segregated educational choices: girls choose service and care occupations. In Finland women's occupations are mainly in health- and social care, teaching, clerical work, housekeeping and institutional catering services, private services, and textile, clothing and food industries. While six out of ten employees in the private sector are men, gender division is even more marked in the public sector, where three-quarters of employees are women. When it comes to vertical gender segregation male dominated branches are generally ranked higher in occupational hierarchies and better paid. (Kolehmainen 1999, 11–12, 87, 141.)

(See Appendix on page 161 for more detailed background information on the interviewees.)

Three different trajectories

All 15 interviewees are or have been married, and are mothers of grown-up or teenage children. Another important aspect of commitment which has guided their lives is attachment to the locality, linked strongly to social relations and family ties. Altogether this means that cultural gender models, intra-family gender (as well as generational) relations, emotional ties and responsibilities are essential for understanding their dispositions, anticipation of the future and their working life practices.

At the beginning of the 20th century, state-organised professions and education became the primary means of achieving social mobility. The primary habitus is essential in the process of adaptation or nonconformity to the culture of school life and education (Bourdieu & Passeron 1977). Primary pedagogy provides different dispositions and unequal starting points for children coming from various social origins and family backgrounds. The scarcity of economic capital was common in the group of women interviewed, and therefore inequality is first and foremost linked to other forms of "initial capital" inherited from the agrarian working class home (Bourdieu 1984). Their initial capital is composed of – among other things – firstly, cultural capital, incorporated in dispositions towards gender roles and academic achievements and secondly, social capital which is attainable via family relations. Those who have gained from a positive emotional environment, spurring them towards an academic education and access to inter-class relationships have been especially able to attain more favourable social positions and greater stability of working career.

Women have been an integral part of the Finnish labour market for the last 50 years, forming half the labour force. An advanced and extensive welfare system has supported women's participation in paid work, since the promotion, facilitation and normalization of working mothers with small children has been a central principle of the Finnish

welfare state project since the 1960's. The establishment of new social services, such as universal public day care, became a cornerstone of the so called "women friendliness" of Finnish social policy. Linked to this, the number of occupations and employees in the field of social and health care services multiplied; the social sector was professionalised and it became important employer. (Anttonen & Sipilä 2000, 64–65, 72, 81–83; Julkunen 2005, 368.) In practice, the public sector became the most important employer in rural areas – especially essential for the employment of women – including in Lievestuore (Piirainen & Saari 2002, 17; Kivelä 2009). Thus due to societal development in relation to the labour market, the interviewed women have had, at least "on paper", two alternatives whilst their children were small – to either participate or not.

Interviewees were divided roughly into three different categories according to the general analysis made of their individual educational and occupational trajectories and the development of their cultural and economic capital (see Appendix). The first group (1A–1E) comprises relatively highly educated women who have been able to stabilize their career in one occupational field based on institutionalised cultural capital and academic achievements (university or college-level qualifications) attained in early adulthood. Their work history (mainly in the primary labour market) differs clearly from the other two groups of interviewees, since their trajectories include only a few breaks and experiences of unemployment are exceptions. The other two groups have more overlapping characteristics since they all have less cultural capital with exchange value in the labour market than do women in the first group. It is however easy to split them into two groups by their general orientation towards paid work while their children were small. The second category of women (2A–2E) have either experienced long-term periods of unemployment or have been able to avoid a vicious circle of unemployment with frequent job changes and active job seeking. Their dispositions are however more or less harmonized with the norm of a working mother. They differ from the third group of women (3A–3E), who are characterised by a long-term commitment to homemaking, which they experience as 'natural' and 'ideal' – as a self-evident decision linked to a naturalized distribution of work agreed by marriage partners. In addition to this, none of these

women have occupational degrees attained in youth transition; however all except one have achieved qualifications in subsequent occupational adult education.

Figure 5.1 illustrates three trajectories representing the three different groups of women. In spite of their differences these women have in common the fact that they all have sooner or later succeeded in attaining a primary labour market position – which can also be interpreted as an increased or stable volume in their economic and symbolic capital.

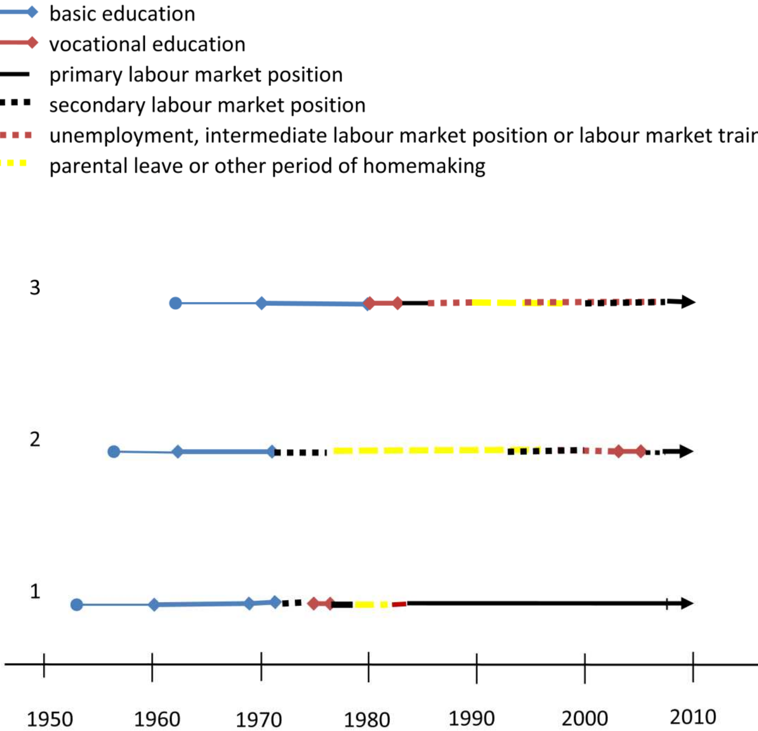

Figure 5.1 *Three trajectories marked by: (1) education plus one occupational field, (2) long-term homemaking, (3) unemployment and/or frequent job changes. See Appendix for individual cases and grouping*

The Finnish welfare state reached its peak during the 1980's while the unemployment rate was as low as 5 percent. In the 1990's however, Finland was struck by an unusually deep recession in the European context, and Finnish society came face to face with the spectre of mass unemployment.[3] Unemployment was clearly gendered during the 1990's, and when the first wave of recession hit the private sector badly, unemployment rose quicker amongst men. The impact of the recession on the women-dominated public service sector was apparent later and continued through the mid-1990's, when the Finnish export-driven industrial sector rapidly recovered and began to grow. In this economic context and with political factors including integration into the EU, new requirements concerning the Finnish welfare state were introduced, such as 'efficiency' in administration and reforms in social policy and pension systems. (Julkunen 2001, 64, 288–290.) Large-scale, long-term unemployment however has been a permanent phenomenon ever since.[4]

Data analysis for this chapter's study shows that welfare state interventions in the form of employment subsidies and benefits and / or labour market training have touched 11 out of 15 of the interviewees at some point in their working lives. Three further interviewees have experienced short-term unemployment and / or serial temporary employment, but have been able to secure re-employment / permanent employment without interventions. During the 1990's it was common to be employed with the support of a subsidy granted for the salary costs to an employer

[3] In 1992 the unemployment rate rose for the first time ever to over 10 percent, reaching 17 percent in 1993 and 19.5 percent in 1994.

[4] Locals described how Lievestuore had already lived through its own "great recession" in the 1980's when the local pulp factory was finally closed (interviews with local authorities and organisational activists in 2005). With significant investment from the state and the municipality, supported by national regional policy measures, Lievestuore managed to get back on its feet as a locality. No doubt the timing of the local crisis was a blessing in disguise, since the golden age of the Finnish welfare state dated back to the 1980's, before the economic crisis and cuts in public spending of the 1990's. Equally, today Lievestuore is among those localities which have escaped the worst impacts of widening regional inequality and the ageing population, which have hit harder elsewhere (Kauppinen & Karvonen 2009). However, Lievestuore is peripheral to the major centres of capital (especially the metropolitan area of Helsinki) and further loses out in symbolic value in comparison to surrounding population areas with more positive migration figures. Lately it has suffered from a negative image as a declining area with diminishing public services. (See Wolff, 2009.)

recruiting an unemployed job seeker. A fall in the numbers of these quick-fix subsidies occurred during the 2000's, due not only to the improvement of the employment situation but also to the hardening of employment policy and regulations preventing employers taking advantage of salary subsidies in the long-term. (Piirainen & Saari 2002, 17.) [5]

In the 1980's, long-term unemployment was not yet a large-scale, continuous problem. There is no exception in the interview data to a commonly understood rule that if one's career was not established before the crisis in the 1990s, it was not about to happen until the next decade. In many of these cases the sequence of long-term unemployment, intermediate labour market positions, casual jobs and labour market training begins when children grow older and the mother signs on as a job seeker after the period of homemaking. Another common story is that of the long-term, regular substitute or temporary worker who was disregarded in favour of the lower-priced work force employed with the salary subsidy. Interviewees particularly reported the use and abuse of the subsidy system in the public sector until the new regulations came into force in the 2000's.

Informants to this study can be roughly divided into two factions according to their primary or secondary labour market position. However the factions are not clear-cut and mobility between them occurs across an individual life course. Generally a secondary labour market position offers casual employment and dead-end jobs (without prospects of economic, cultural or social advancement). It is further characterized by the employer's low investment in employee training, by poor working conditions, job insecurity and low wages. A position on the secondary labour market is generally associated with great horizontal mobility from one low skill-level job to another, as well as with high levels of unemployment. In addition to this, many individual trajectories are blurred with long-lasting and repeated periods of unemployment intertwined

[5] For example in 1994 approximately 66,000 people in Finland were employed in this way, and even in the year 2000, during a period of steady economic growth, the number was 43,000. In 1997 the number of labour market training participants was at its highest (47,000) compared with 31,000 in 2000. (Piirainen & Saari 2002, 17.)

with periods of homemaking, which are only temporarily interrupted by short-term employment, labour market training or a position in the intermediate labour market. By contrast, the primary labour market is largely organized around internal labour markets (continuous career in subordination to a single employer), providing better working conditions and greater job security. (Cf. Uhlman 2006, 5–8.)

In addition to the overall limits of the local labour market, the data (interviews and survey) show that the situation has been unambiguously worse for women with low educational attainments and / or with periods of long-term homemaking (Groups 2 and 3). Other research data including discussions with local authorities as well as earlier research[6] indicate that even this vulnerable group is divided into winners and losers in the local women's employment game. At the local scale, from the point of view of their own experience, interviewees are mainly winners of the game[7] – although in the two different hierarchical divisions. To a great extent this is linked to the social categorizations of the participants in (or 'customers of') labour market services.

Being a good mother and worker – local social categorizations and symbolic capital

A substantial number of interviewees reported having undertaken long periods of homemaking, i.e. from 10 to 20 years. This is in line with other recent studies which suggest certain class-like differences and divisions between women and their working life practices. For example Lammi-Taskula's (2004) statistical research on families with small children and women's labour market participation refers to the fact that choices between home care and kindergarten are bound up with economic trends and junctures in the labour market. She claims that women make maximal use of the child home care allowance due to their short-term

[6] Research project Operation Work funded by European Social Fund 2002–2005 (Siisiäinen 2005a).

[7] There persists, however, a huge social distance and opposition to the real powerful elite in general.

employment before the child was born, along with poor re-employment prospects. Lammi-Taskula (ibid.) suggests that "freedom of choice" may be a factor bringing highly educated, permanently employed women to the primary labour market, but these women nevertheless less frequently choose the option available in Finland for parental leave with children under three years old, whilst women with fewer qualifications in less favourable employment situations often choose it as an alternative to unemployment.

This could also inform a general interpretation of the interviewees' life course trajectories. All trajectories (1, 2 and 3) in Figure 1 illustrate the intertwining and alternation of unemployment, homemaking and intermediate labour market and casual jobs connected to the difficulties of re-employment after homemaking. Interviewees certainly articulated how they have valued a family-centred lifestyle, and predominantly they also took traditional gender roles as a naturalized, taken-for-granted state of affairs, expressed as being for the benefit of their children. This can be interpreted as a desire to question the superiority of the middle-class ideal of education and career as a means of finding the real self and meaning of life (cf. Reay 2001). Skeggs (1997) argues in her ethnographic study that the passionate attachment of working-class women to a certain notion of femininity is a kind of emotional compensation for their marginal social standing. Later, Skeggs (2004) pays attention to the self-authorization of dominated working-class women at the local level, and suggests that the authorisation of self can be produced by taking a different perspective and revaluing positions in opposition to symbolically dominant ones (Skeggs 2004, 21).

But what actually lies behind discursive practices articulating for the nobility of family-centred life and a willingness to prioritise children's needs over the self-fulfilment and values of a "career woman"? The reality behind this general picture is a more complicated mixture of anticipation of alternatives in a particular conjuncture.

Social capital is based on mutual cognition and recognition, when it acquires a symbolic character and is transformed into symbolic capital. Social differences between groups become effective and meaningful when they are mediated by symbolic capital. (Siisiäinen 2008.) Widely

shared categorizations such as rough / respectable or unreliable / reliable influence our self-identification and have material consequences (Rogaly & Taylor 2009). Lawler (2004, 111) writes that habitus is Bourdieu's way of theorising how the social is literally incorporated and a self is socially produced, and goes on to say that habitus is Bourdieu's way of analysing "how social relations become constituted within the self, but also how self is constitutive of social relations". Class divisions, distinctions or inequalities have not lost their significance as a category of analysis, although class distinctions have been displaced and individualized. It now takes place in the approval / disapproval of individual persons or families. From this perspective, the interviewees have constituted themselves as either approved or disapproved members of the local community and furthermore as labour market citizens.

Self-evidently those interviewees in the primary labour market position would categorize themselves as 'approved'. Weak or insecure positions, such as unemployment, do not however mean that one automatically categorizes oneself as 'disapproved', where one's future potential is anticipated in relation to the challenging conjuncture in the local labour market and especially to the feedback which one has from previous employers and colleagues: *They said that they would keep me if only they could afford it.*

Relationality of social capital means that it can be used to overcome a lack of economic and cultural capital. For example a lack of education can be compensated for by the possession of social capital. In Finland, investment in education has been seen as a major factor for both national competitiveness, individual social mobility and labour market opportunities in general. Furthermore, competence in paid work, being part of the working community and the ability to provide maintenance for the family are socially and subjectively recognized as symbols of the "good citizen" regardless of gender (Apo 1999, 23). In a small community like Lievestuore, which is far from centres of cultural or economic capital, social capital has special significance. When the 'capital elite' is very thin, social connections generating symbolic capital may be essential whilst making the most of scarce economic and cultural capital. (Bourdieu 1984, 337.) Group memberships creating social capital can have a "multiplica-

tion effect" on the influence of other forms of capital, and differences in the control of social capital may explain why the same amount of economic and cultural capital can yield different degrees of power (Bourdieu 1986; Siisiäinen 2003, 192).

Although women's networks are often characterised as burdensome, hindering them from being active in achieving other capital (see e.g. Marin 2001, 157–158), locally however these general categorizations become particular, more nuanced. It is perhaps easier for women to compensate for a job loss and absence of paid work by gaining social recognition and symbolic value through their social networks.

No doubt, for example becoming a full-time and / or long-term homemaker is orientated by women's (primary) habitus, dispositions and sense of privilege in being able to take care of one's own children. It is not purely determined by a marginal labour market position, and neither is it solely an unselfish sacrifice for the benefit of the children. On the contrary, it is possible to argue that although women's practices on the face of it can be labelled as submissiveness to traditional gender roles and symbolic violence, they are also carried out as results of the reflexive anticipation of the future and of the alternatives available. Their action 'makes sense' by enabling women to make the most of their limited economic and cultural capital without a conjectural risk of losing resources that could have been deployed in more ambitious strategies for acquiring spatial or social mobility. Being a good mother, having a normal family, and being able to bring up children to be 'good citizens' provides them with recognition as a respectable member of the local community. In the long run it also provides them with symbolic capital, which they are within certain conditions able to mobilize in other local fields – including the labour market game.

To conclude with, middle-aged 'family women' in the focus of this study build their social position in the locality of Lievestuore – as well as their social categorization as an approved and legitimated member of the local labour market game – either on: (1) institutionalised cultural capital, formal education, qualifications and professional positions, and / or (2) informal learning, practical skills and dispositions incorporated in informal social networks. In the individual's total composition of

capital, one of these dimensions is usually more emphasized, and in general the more significant the share of institutionalised cultural capital an actor has, the higher their relational position in the local social space becomes. However, the meaning of (3) social capital based on membership of different informal social networks is essential when analysing relational positions in the local social space. Three case stories introduced in the next section will pay especial attention to the mobilization and transformation of feminine, practical dispositions, 'family capital' and other kinds of informal social capital across an individual life course and working career.

Habitus, change and forms of capital across an individual life course

This section seeks to shed more light on the trajectories illustrated in Figure 5.1 (page 138). Three case stories below examine in particular the transformation and conversion of interviewees' forms of capital and how local social capital makes women's mobility between work and family possible, and contributes to the maintenance and improvement of their opportunities in the labour market.

In addition, the case stories also exemplify how primary habitus holds fast, even after critical awareness awakens due to the lack of fit between habitus and field. The stories told consider women's longing for transformation, but also their awareness of the risks of losing scarce economic or social resources by engaging in unrealistic goals. Women often very patiently wait for the right timing to make their careful and considered strategic moves. Although women's actions in the eyes of some commentators may be labelled as passive, 'waiting' or 'doing nothing', these same women may nevertheless be highly critical and reflexive about their situation. Critical reflection however only rarely leads to sudden, rapid or radical change of practices. The case stories also highlight the significance of the emotions, and anticipation of other people's orientation and practices. Clearly, women's choices and anticipation of future alternatives also demonstrate the power of social categorizations, show how these

influence women's self-categorization and their sense of limits, and equip them to define who they are and to fit in a social position which is "right" or applicable for them (see Rogaly and Taylor 2009).

Eeva[8]

Eeva has lived in Lievestuore all her life. Her mother died soon after she was born, and she and her older siblings were raised by their father and grandparents. Her father used to work in the local pulp factory, but he also earned money by helping people as a blacksmith. Eeva used to follow her father to his works; consequently even as a small child she got to know 'everybody'.

Eeva's family lived in company housing in the middle of the village. Her social background was different compared to that of her neighbouring playmates, who also became her classmates in middle school and upper secondary school. Eeva told me about classed encounters with her friends:

> – It was kind of peculiar that I used to play with kids who came from different kinds of families, who were something else than working-class families. There was a shopkeeper's daughter who was my best friend, a bank manager's daughter, a stationmaster's daughter and a factory manager's daughter, Eeva says, and gives me her pregnant smile when she speaks about her friends […]
> – I didn't take it in a bad way, they didn't leave me out or anything, but maybe I was… maybe I was a bit different than the others. […]
> – And then there's the piano episode. I had taken piano lessons for three years, I guess, and I played notes pretty well already – so I considered myself to be quite good – and I used to practice in three different places, they were the stationmaster, bank manager and factory manager, they all had pianos, and I used to play them. But after a while I started to feel embarrassed when I went there […] and I asked my father to buy me a piano. And I *knew* that my father could have afforded it, but afterwards I realised that it simply was inappropriate to buy a piano for a working class home; it just would have been too much. […]

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8 Pseudonyms are used in all three case stories. Some personal details have been changed in order to protect individual informants and hinder their identification.

> PK: At what phase of your life did you actually realize, or roughly at what age it became clear to you that your background, being a working class family was what had these effects?

> – Well it didn't, it didn't actually bother me then, but just now when I have grown older, I have come to think about it, maybe during the last 15 years, and I guess that this job has made me think about it too. […] But it didn't bother me then, since our father had very good relations with everybody and they valued us; they knew our father as good worker, and honest; they knew that our family was honest and they gave us duties.

Although Eeva's family was by no means wealthy and she had suffered the loss of her mother, compared to many other interviewees her story however illustrates a picture of a stable, happy and easeful childhood regarding both material and emotional circumstances. This is common to all relatively highly educated interviewees with a stable work history (Group 1), while members of the other two groups share experiences of emotional and / or material poverty of a different order. Eeva had both material and social resources for acquiring successful academic achievements. Her father encouraged her to study in order to have a better life than he. Eeva does not consider she was talented, but with hard work attained "middle-of-the-road" results in school.

> – I burned the midnight oil because I knew that was what my father wanted, she said.

Family ties are introduced as a central source of social and symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1986). Eeva's story also expresses the ambivalence related to her family and the inherited cultural and symbolic capital rooted in her family origin. On the one hand she was spurred on to academic achievements, to move upward socially and to attain a comfortable life as a professional woman. She also firmly felt that she had economic opportunities to concentrate on educating herself; all she needed to worry about was her studies. Her father used to cover the cost of Eeva's piano lessons by doing some extra jobs, and when she needed extra training in language skills in order to pass upper secondary school and matriculation properly her father did not hesitate to hire a private tutor.

On the one hand the good reputation of her family as proper, respectable working-class people has been her heritage; the kind of symbolic capital in the eyes of local people coming from different social strata that Eeva has been able to mobilize and transform into cultural and economic capital through her networks of friendship and acquaintances. During school years she was always warmly welcomed into the homes of her middle-class peers, where academic success and culture were highly appreciated. Eeva spent a lot of time studying together with these friends.

On the other hand keeping up a reputation as decent working class people was based on a sense of limits; a more or less unconscious understanding of how you should behave and what kinds of choices you are expected to make. It brought about her experience of not being the same as her friends, of settling for the fact that she does not have same opportunities in life as they do. Being a good working class girl was about being decent and hardworking rather than talented; not 'pretentious' but a 'genuine person', who remembers where she comes from and is not aspiring to too ambitious goals – exemplified by the piano episode. As Eeva repeated many times, it did not bother her when she was young – it was a taken-for-granted situation made possible by dispositions embodied in her primary habitus. Along with her social position in her community, Eeva's critical awareness however rose, and she began to see the power of social structures and categorizations behind her anticipation of alternatives. Eeva is a 'class defector', a category who in general experiences a plurality of dispositions and undergo psychological conflicts or a disintegration of their identities (e.g. Lahire 2003; Rogaly & Taylor 2009).

After matriculation, Eeva was eager to pursue her university studies, and her dream was to become a teacher in the state school system. She applied twice but without success and so she settled for a commercial college instead. Eeva thought that as a child she had a sort of special place in local people's minds and hearts because she had lost her mother early in life. This brought about a sort of indebtedness on her part, and a forceful sense of belonging to the local community. She sometimes even felt an over-emphasised sense of duty to help and work hard for the local population, especially elderly people. For decades she had followed a persistent and even unselfish career as a devoted "spokeswoman" for

the people and community. However, in so doing she was able to widen her social networks spatially to the regional and national level, and gain many opportunities to develop her expertise in a range of fields. This in turn also offered her opportunities to mobilize her resources outside the locality in order to reach new career opportunities. This way her rather spatially immobile story turned out to produce a stable, recently even upward-moving and rewarding occupational trajectory.

In her early 20's, Eeva married a man from same kind of social background as hers. With the birth of their children she gave up working 'willingly and happily' according to the ideal model of home care provided by the devoted mother (Nätkin 2003). This gendered division of work based on the male breadwinner model was ended when her husband lost his job. Eeva's story expresses how different models of gender relations coexist, and actors may be very conscious and reflective on them (Adkins 2004). In a sense, different models are available for mobilization in changing field conditions. Eeva represented her original decision to stay at home as her own will, which was entitled by doxic gender roles in family as well as emotional ties to husband and children. Although she did not consider that the absence of her mother would have harmed her, she emphasizes that she wanted to offer her own children the "normal family" which she never had. Her husband's unemployment caused her to replace the original norm with another cultural model of the 'good mother' as working mother and of marriage as a partnership including the mutual responsibility of both partners to work for the subsistence of the family[9] (cf. Silius 1996, 142–143). In this way Eeva was also able to deal with contradictory emotions aroused by taking her children to day care.

Her husband soon found new employment, but Eeva continued working and after a little while she managed to find a job which was, as it were, 'tailored' to her. It was also challenging, motivating and varied. Her old

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[9] In rural Finland, a so-called partnership contract meant that men and women performed different tasks complementing each other. Women took over masculine tasks if men for some reason were absent and vice versa. In this contract a 'good mother' was first and foremost a good worker and good housekeeper, only secondly a good mother. There was no full-time motherhood either as discourse or praxis. Under these circumstances gendered work, home and leisure locations did not occur until the post-WW II period. (Silius, 1996, 142–143.)

sparkle for university studies was still there and her job with new connections roused her professional enthusiasm once again. Her ambition was not however supported by her partner, and she retreated from this position in order to maintain family peace. In subsequent years, however, she maintained how she "perhaps" should have been more "determined". Altogether her career and recognized social position in the local space affected power relations within the marriage, and it was ended when the children reached maturity and moved away – following years of ambivalent emotion and anticipation of what would be best for the children. The end of the marriage was emotionally relieving and her career broke new ground.

Eeva's struggle through the hard times of marriage may seem to have been a waste in the course of time, when every second marriage ends up in divorce anyway. Her decision to stay in an unhappy relationship speaks firstly about her values – 'marriage is a life time commitment' – but secondly it has a lot to do with local social categorizations and the fear of stigma which is still very easily laid on divorced women. Perhaps it is even more typical in a small locality like Lievestuore where everyone knows everybody, and people take sides and start rejecting people who for one reason or another are somehow 'suspicious'. Two interviewees had personally experienced how divorce whittled away their social recognition; in one case the interviewee even saw it as a disadvantage for the business. Divorced women had to be very careful with their social life and actively rebuild their position as 'approved' members of the community. Three interviewees actually found it easier to move away from Lievestuore during the period of data collection – one of the main reasons being that it was easier to start with a clean sheet somewhere else.

Leena

Leena's only patrimony was an agrarian drive for hard working. Although all family members had to work hard at their small farm, it was not enough for breadwinning although both father and children did odd jobs here and there. Leena's parents divorced when she was a teenager and the emo-

tional atmosphere at home was far from loving and supportive. When she was 15 and had not even finished her last year of compulsory education in elementary school, she was asked to start work as a shop assistant. The shopkeeper and Leena's teacher made an agreement that she had to attend school just to pass the exams. Her parents did not consider education important – hard working was the only coping strategy they had. Leena understood and felt that she knew nothing about vocational education. She was afraid of applying, and there was no one who would have 'pushed' or encouraged her forward. When she got a job offer, her fate was clear. During two separate interviews it became very clear that it was however first of all the voice in her head saying 'you aren't worth anything, you won't do it anyway', which she blames for her decision.

The school authority insisted on the formal completion of compulsory education, but it is easy to say that school system implicitly confirmed the expectations which the family had placed on their daughter. Her parents did not consider Leena's future potential adequate enough to be worth deploying resources into her vocational education, and consequently the best she could do was to begin fully providing her own maintenance as soon as possible. Her parents attributed little value to formal schooling, considering it rather as something that had to be completed before the real work of earning one's own wage could begin. (See also Rogaly & Taylor 2009, 148.)

After leaving school at age of 15, Leena worked for the intervening years before she married and gave birth to her first child at the age of 20. Following maternity leave Leena took her baby to day care for a couple of days, but she "just couldn't take it any longer". She wanted to take care of the children herself and put a stop to any 'working career' for 20 years. During that time she and her husband raised five children and build three detached houses.

Leena's husband has had a stable career in a single company. Despite her time of 'housewifery' resembling more or less the life of slogging away familiar to her mother and other ancestresses, the burden of domestic work was blurred with intermittent paid work, casual jobs and voluntary work. At home she sewed and barbered, worked as a private childminder, picked berries and cones and so on. As a result she generated a wide

network of local friends and acquaintances who depended on her and trusted her with their tasks. In addition, she was active in parish work and hobby clubs.

Her youngest child was five years old when Leena considered herself ready to re-enter 'real' working life. She signed on as a job seeker and was very active in her job seeking. She reported humorously how she kept on bombarding staff members in the personnel department of the municipality with her calls, before her persistence was rewarded and she was given a job in cleaning and maintenance.

After decades of bringing paid work to the family field she took her family to the work place. For some months her daughter was with her and she had time to reflect on the idea of day care. During this period of temporary employment the personnel administration of the municipality offered an opportunity of apprenticeship, as a consequence of which Leena completed her first vocational qualification one year later at the age of 40. But more importantly her short period in nursing practice during the apprenticeship became epoch-making in her life. Her mentor, an experienced, registered general nurse, stressed to Leena that she should "unquestionably" train for a caring profession since she self-evidently had competence for that.

The mentor's encouragement and successful apprenticeship studies started to "play a new record" in her mind, which became the first impetus on her way towards a more stable position in the primary labour market based on formal qualifications. In general, Leena's outgoing, active and socially talented characteristics together with her wide social connections in the locality made it easy for her to undertake job seeking informally, off the record, whilst other interviewees exclusively placed their reliance on publicly open job opportunities. Through her wide local network and social capital she acquired a series of temporary job roles – she gave plenty of examples of how she had called here and there after she got a hint of a job opening. Her casual jobs directed her more and more towards working with the elderly and in home help services. In a sense she was able to mobilize her practical skills and dispositions incorporated during a life course in family relations and homemaking. Various kinds of voluntary work and informal hostessing tasks had also accumu-

lated her 'caring capital', and this tacit knowledge was there waiting to be transformed into legitimated professional skills (Cf. Veijola & Jokinen 2008). During one particular period of unemployment, she managed to carry out a labour market training course in working with the elderly.

Since her expertise was growing all the time, she became more conscious of the inferiority of her position compared to permanent – and more educated – personnel. Her husband, who had also acquired his formal qualification in the adult education system, was pushing her. In autumn 2002 she was once again attending a consulting labour market training course. During this four-month-period she was massively and limitlessly spurred on by the project counsellors and co-participants in career planning, and bombarded with information on options available for mature students. A couple of months after the course she managed to get into further labour market training, aiming towards a degree-level certificate in nursing.

By the time of the first interview with Leena in 2003, she was experiencing mixed emotions. On the one hand she was looking forward to a possibility that she would be able to participate in adult education aiming towards a vocational degree. On the other hand she was aware of the fact that she would have to give up some of her hobbies, voluntary work and some other social commitments which were important to her, in order to manage studies and permanent employment, and it made her sad. When we met again at the beginning of 2009 she had been able to cut out some tasks but her acquaintances and friends still turned to Leena with their many requests and assignments – and she found it impossible to refuse. She still felt herself obligated to maintain and cherish her assets of informal social capital, as well as her symbolic value as a flexible and reliable member of the "volunteer fire-brigade" to be called on at short notice. In these turbulent times it is indeed very sensible not to get lulled into believing that a permanent job is a final job.

Elina

Elina's school years in the upper level of comprehensive school were shaken up by bullying at school and the divorce of her parents. Instead

of putting her energies fully into accumulating academic skills, she had to concentrate on coping with these problems. She figured out that by choosing lower level groups in language classes she was able to avoid her teasers during some lessons. She considered herself poor in language skills although her teachers recommended her transferring to a more demanding teaching group, which she refused to do.

– I have maybe lost some options that way, but I don't regret it, Elina states.

Vocational education was however a matter of course to her. During the two interviews she was very reflexive over gender models. It was clear that educating herself was also partly a means of avoiding her mother's destiny as a wife who is socially and economically dependent on her husband. But life did not go exactly the way she had imagined. Afterwards she regrets the choice of vocational education she made, and points out that it was based on too strict a sense of limits and false information. Remarkably, many interviewees emphasized how little they actually knew about vocational education as well as about new occupations and professions which came along with extremely rapid structural change. Their parents and grandparents were uneducated and unskilled workers or farmers. Although most of them had nothing against education and academic achievements – actually on the contrary – they were not able to help their children in their own future anticipations. For example Elina's teacher recommended that she should apply to technical school. Technology had always attracted her, but she had a fixed idea that this educational field would have been academically too demanding for her. She knew no one who could have convinced her that it would have been conceivable for someone like her. The whole academic and educational world was too strange, the teacher was socially too distant and his / her persuasion was just not credible enough.

Elina graduated and found temporary employment. She fell in love and got engaged right at the same time as when she was offered a permanent job. She refused to take the job because she had just agreed to move away with her fiancé, who had a tempting job offer elsewhere. After that she was not able to find job opportunities other than posts in the

intermediate labour market. In their new remote location job openings in the open labour market were non-existing for women; a salary subsidy available for the long-term unemployed was basically the only way to find work in the public sector. When Elina was pregnant with her first baby she demanded her husband apply for reposting in another unit run by his employer. He managed this and they moved to Lievestuore at the end of the 1980's.

Elina's labour market position did not improve after the move, since she gave birth to two children at the turn of the decade, and Finland was struck hard by recession at the beginning of 1990's. Job opportunities in the local office branch were dramatically reduced due to a rationalisation in both the private and public sectors along with a mushrooming of information technology. In addition, both of Elina's children received a diagnosis of chronic disability, which further reduced her potential as a flexible labour market citizen. The family was economically absolutely dependent on her husband's stable career and monthly income. Under these circumstances Elina felt that she had no other sustainable option than to deploy her time and resources into the wellbeing and upbringing of their children.

Elina was however an active job seeker and went through the struggle for places at the day nursery and with personal helpers each time she managed to get a temporary job. She also kept her computer skills up to date. On the one hand she was satisfied with the impermanence of her 'stints', since the double burden was extremely hard to carry on a full-time basis. On the other hand she has always highly valued paid work as a source of self-esteem and as an important guarantee of autonomy, which has motivated her to keep her curriculum vitae updated with new recommendations and evidences of her competence. Instead of an 'anything goes attitude', Elina used to apply for jobs that corresponded to her interests, and usually managed to find assignments which made it possible to deepen her expertise in certain fields of public administration. In this way she made a good impression to the appropriate persons.

Elina's devotion to her children turned out to be rewarding in many ways. First of all they became competent youngsters, capable of leading independent lives despite earlier more pessimistic prognoses. The par-

ents' work in this regard was recognized by professional, medical experts. Finally, Elina was able to find a permanent job in a workplace where for years she had undertaken temporary posts. Elina described how she gained from deploying her incorporated knowledge of human nature developed in emotionally demanding and burdening relationships experienced in her childhood and family life into her present work. However, this permanent post did not come easily, since the other applicants had had higher formal qualifications.

> – In the job interviews I always had a well organised portfolio with dozens of letters of references with me. I knew that I was excellent for the job but I had to convince everyone else too, and I basically talked the recruiters into employing me.

Her work experience, excellent performance, mastery of computer skills and practical social skills in interfacing problematic, even aggressive customers she displayed during her years as a temporary or deputizing employee were convincing, but not in themselves sufficient enough for recruitment; to be successful, she also had to make the most of her self-marketing skills accumulated during her career in numerous temporary jobs in the flexible labour market.

Elina's story illustrates how she dislikes economic dependence on her husband's income and unemployment benefits, no matter how proud she is of her children's progress and how much other people value her performance as a mother. Prospects of achieving respect through educational achievements or occupational success have been minimal for most of the women in this study. When they have lacked opportunities for paid work they have often invested in the wellbeing of their offspring and supported the careers of their husbands. (Cf. Skeggs 1997; McNay 2004.) Their spatial immobility and strategy of focusing on family-centred life and occupying traditional gender models instead of more modern alternatives has hardly in the first place been a part of reflexive gender identity building processes guided by values. Their agency has more or less been based on a sense of individual limits and realistic anticipation of opportunities available. It makes sense that partners specialize themselves in roles which complement each

other, and to co-operate in such a way that they are able to protect the accumulation and total volume of economic, cultural and social capital possessed by the family members.

No matter how reflexively partners negotiate on intra-family gender roles, they are however always subordinate to inequality structures at the societal level. Occupational segregation and the fact that female dominated branches are low-paid compared to male dominated ones, inevitably reproduce gender differences related to positions in the labour market or intra-family gender relations. Although the Finnish welfare state model has increased women's possibilities to achieve family-work balance, as Lewis (see Julkunen 2005) points out, in recent international comparisons Finland is slipping away from the Nordic unity of family and gender policies, and moving towards neo-familism. Finland actually represents (together with France) the model of temporary homemaking. Julkunen (2005, 377) suggests that this may be an effect of concomitant economic recession and child home care allowances. The universal adult worker model was most prevalent in the 1980's, but employment among mothers began to decrease by the turn of the 1980's and 1990's.

Concluding remarks

In a rapidly changing society, any kind of adjustment to change – no matter how relatively minor it may seem – necessitates a conversion of the various forms of capital and a transformation of the dispositions internalised as the primary habitus that originated in the childhood home. It is shaped during a life history according to the ups and downs of the individual's trajectory. Societal change has for example meant the normalization of the concept of working mothers during the last 50 years. "The good mother" became one who hands over the care of her children to another (woman) for part of the day (McDowell 2008, 156).

Not all women have equally seized upon or benefited from social progress and novel opportunities in the fields of education and the labour market. Recent developments in the Finnish economy are characterized by a growing polarization between well-paid, professional occu-

pations and an increasing number of low-paid – also often low-status – service jobs in both the private and public sectors. Opportunities for satisfying work or inter-generational social mobility have also been in decline since the 1990's. This polarization has opened up new divisions between women (see for example Erola et al. 2010; Asplund & Lilja 2010; McDowell 2008). Regardless of the fact that the women in the focus of this study are positioned in opposition to 'successful career women' and power elites, their family-centred life style and dispositions embodied in their feminine habitus have no doubt also been a resource in overcoming this contradiction during an era of rapid change. Ironically this advantage has been related to the rapidly growing number of jobs that demand few highly-valued skills but more often require close and empathetic connection to customers, as well as being precarious and poorly paid (see also McDowell, ibid.).

Both skilled and unskilled women perform place-based forms of work; tasks that keep the economy and / or society running. They do the health care, social services, caring, retail, and clerical work, customer service, catering and cleaning jobs. These are all tasks where agrarian working class femininity is reproduced in contemporary society and in the locally differentiated labour market. In many ways paid work resembles traditional domestic work, and it especially requires skills that are considered either "female virtues or feminine vices", characteristics that are incorporated in the feminine habitus (Lovell 2000; Veijola & Jokinen 2008, 168; Virkki 2008). Women with families have, it could be said, required a 'feel for the game' in the flexible labour market. Equipped with well-developed social skills, deferential, motherly and submissive dispositions they are ideal service sector employees. They are dutiful and good at managing emotions, both their own and those of their customers (cf. Hochschild 1983), which offers an advantage in tasks which take typically place in face-to-face situations, in the delivery of services and in experiences concerning communication and corporeality (Veijola & Jokinen 2008, 167–168). Work performance is more and more done with the entire social and emotional 'wardrobe' of an individual, or with the whole personhood (Vähämäki 2003, 17–19). Since the working careers of these 'family women' are often characterised by irregularity, insecurity

and low personal income, they are also flexible workers prepared to stand for lower wages and modest terms and conditions of employment (cf. McDowell 2008, 153).

Generally women in the focus of this study may from a distance seem to be a rather immobile group both spatially and socially. A cold eye may categorize them as passively adaptive actors or even losers in the competition of grasping new opportunities generated by large-scale changes in social conditions. On the other hand the case stories represented above shed light on this group of women as skilful, capable, active, flexible and competent actors in the local labour market. The analysis of individual trajectories and stories as a whole illustrates that although their positions may appear dominated or insignificant, the subjective experience of the agent may manifest dignity, peace of mind and successful survival in harsh material and emotional conditions.

This subjective experience becomes very understandable when women's positions are explored by following the principles of Bourdieusian field analysis, which reveals nuanced and small-scaled social categorizations, inequalities and distinctions between social groups in the locality. The meaning of social capital based on membership in different informal social networks is essential when analysing relational positions in the local social space. 'Family capital' – e.g. being a good mother and having a normal family – is one essential asset which can provide them with recognition as a respectable member of the local community. It is also symbolic capital, which they are to some extent able to mobilize in the local labour market game.

All three case histories illustrated in this chapter help us to understand how an individual, in changing conditions, may embody contradictory dispositions – and how they live through this contradiction. Although women's practices on the face of it can be labelled as submissiveness to traditional gender roles, they are also carried out as results of the reflexive anticipation of future alternatives available. No matter how reflexively partners negotiate on intra-family gender roles, they are also always subordinate to the inequality structures at the societal level. It very often makes sense that husband and wife specialize themselves toward roles which complement each other although it reproduces traditional models

of intra-family gender relations. By not choosing future alternatives that are too risky or goals that are too ambitious, family women also aim at avoiding wastage of their locally embedded symbolic capital. Following rather familiar paths both occupationally and spatially, as well as time spent 'on the bench of the local labour market game', is in the long run seen to be a more secure pathway to a satisfying life.

Appendix: The background information on the interviewees (N=15) by the time of the most recent interview

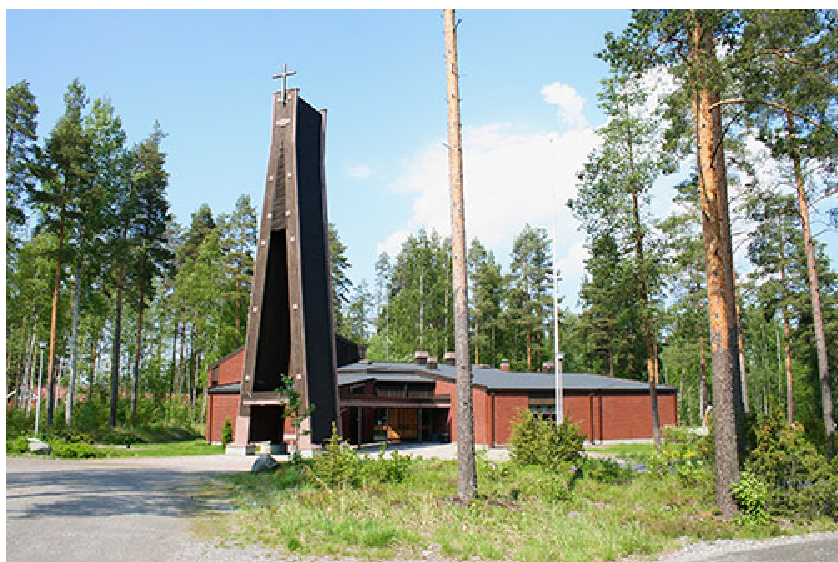
The interviewees were born 1953–1965. Thus they were 45–56 years old at the time of the interviews
Group 1: trajectories marked by education and one occupational field (n=5)
Group 2: trajectories marked by unemployment and/or job swapping (n=5)
Group 3: trajectories marked by long-term homemaking (n=5)

	Place of birth (Lievestuore or other)	**Basic education**	**Highest occupational education or degree**	**Main line of work**	**Employer sector**	**Amount of children**
1A	other	Middle school	Nursing college	Health services	Municipality	2
1B	Lievestuore	Upper secondary school	University	Teaching	Municipality	2
1C	Lievestuore	Upper secondary school	University	Teaching	Municipality	1
1D	Lievestuore	Upper secondary school	Commercial college	Welfare services, administration	Municipality	3
1E	Lievestuore	Middle school	Vocational education institution (on the side of work)	Administration and office work	Municipality	2
2A	Lievestuore	Primary school	-	Sales	Private	1
2B	other	Primary school	Vocational school	Self-employed	Own business	3
2C	Lievestuore	Comprehensive school	Commercial school	Welfare services	State	2
2D	other	Primary school	Vocational school	Customer service	Unemployed	3
2E	Lievestuore	Primary school	Vocational school	Sales	Private	3
3A	Lievestuore	Middle school	-	Home help services	Private	4
3B	other	Primary school	Vocational education institution (adult education)	Welfare services	Municipality	2
3C	other	Comprehensive school	Ongoing apprenticeship contract	Welfare services	Municipality	4
3D	Lievestuore	Primary school	Vocational education institution (adult)	Welfare services	Foundation	5
3E	other	Primary school	Vocational education institution (adult)	Welfare services	Foundation	5

Noticeboard at the centre of Lievestuore informs on future events

Announcement on the next match of *pesäpallo* (Finnish baseball) on the noticeboard

The building of the Settlement Association (adult education centre)



Lievestuore church