hitherto undocumented peoples’ struggle for income signals the structural inequalities of the wider society confining women, particularly minority women to precarious agricultural jobs, without legally defined responsibility of employers, secure contracts, fringe benefits, retirement rights, safety precautions for work and transportation.

RN14 | Session 03a | Parents

Managers’ views on parental leave and work/family balance - problems and solutions within different institutional logics.
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This paper contributes to recent years’ debate on effects of family policies such as the right to parental leave. Whereas some researchers have highlighted the positive effects for gender equality, others have pointed at utilising such policies having negative consequences for women’s careers. This debate contains implicit assumptions about how managers perceive of employees’ use of parental leave, but few studies have examined managers’ views directly. This paper examines how managers within the Norwegian police and legal profession view employees’ use of parental leave. Data comprises qualitative interviews with 34 managers. The paper adopts an institutional logics approach. The managers’ problematisations of employees’ parental leave, as well as proposed solutions, are analysed as signalling cues of the logics the managers’ views are grounded in. The paper also discusses the relevance of assumptions about managers’ perspectives that are implicit in two central explanations for women’s lack of career progression following childbirth: the theory of human capital depreciation and parental leave’s signalling effect. What does this look like within different institutional logics?

The paper finds that whereas the managers in private law firms and in the police problematise parental leave, the managers in public sector legal offices view parental leave as unproblematic. Importantly, profession and sector cannot solely explain the differences in the managers’ views. The paper locates these different views in the different institutional logics the managers draw on. The role the employees have in the organisation, the nature of the work tasks and the employee’s gender are central for whether the managers view parental leave as problematic or not.

The impact of flexibilization of work on caring masculinities
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Slovenia has dual-earner model from the Second World War on with full time employment of women and men supported by the family policy of gender neutral parental leave and accessible, subsidized public child care services for more. The state upgraded the parental leave scheme with paternity leave in 2003 aiming to foster caring role of fathers. However, the precarisation, the intensification and flexibilisation of work in Slovenia result in that almost three thirds of first jobs for young people are atypical, precarious forms of employment. The neoliberal market based on the concept of ‘ideal worker’ unburdened with care and family obligations, deriving from traditional gender role division represent one of the key factors affecting the involvement of fathers in care for children. Based on qualitative empirical evidence we analyze how work arrangements and working positions influence fatherhood and the possibilities of work – family reconciliation. In particularly the focus is on the impact of paid work on two groups of fathers: in precarious forms of employment and in leading and managerial positions. The analysis shows the greater shifts toward caring fatherhood and variations of relations between paid work and fathering can be observed in the group of fathers in precarious employments. Fathers in leading and managerial positions with full power to development of work – family reconciliation mechanisms, express prevailing hegemonic masculinity with limited participation in care for children fulfilled in ‘weekend fatherhood’.

How do fathers adapt their work to become involved in childcare? Gender differences for Work-life balance in workplaces in Spain
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Based on three discussion groups conducted in Barcelona, Madrid and Seville in 2016 and on recent statistical data, this paper explores the barriers and possibilities that involved fathers encounter at their workplaces when they enter parenthood. Involved fathers are defined as those who adapt their working time, work schedule or workplace to parenting, or those who have a job that allows for work-life balance. In addition, they form dual-earner couples with a full-time working partner and spend at least two hours at weekdays caring for their children. Fathers from public sector enterprises, medium to large private companies and small businesses participated in one discussion group respectively.

This qualitative and quantitative analysis shows that working in tight shifts (mornings mainly), as well as schedule flexibility, telework and paid paternity leaves are the measures mostly used by the interviewed fathers, and by Spanish fathers in general. In addition, the use of schedule flexibility and telework display
very low gender gaps in contrast to opting for unpaid and transferable leaves or the use of statutory entitlement to reduced workhours. Under certain circumstances supervisors and coworkers attitudes are described as hostile to the adoption of support measures. Some clear policy recommendations arise from this study, should the aim be to foster work-life balance for fathers and mothers but without having unintended consequences on gender inequality.

The impact of parental leave policy on the labour-market engagement of mothers. Do the number of children and pre-birth work engagement matter?
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In this paper, we examine the impact of the introduction of parental leave policy in 1999 on the labour-market engagement of mothers with one and two children in Luxembourg. Labour-market engagement is measured by the number of hours worked monthly, one, two and three years following the birth of the last child. Analyses are conducted using longitudinal social security records data from 1995 to 2002. The difference-in-differences (DID) method is used to establish a causal relationship between the introduction of the policy and its outcomes. The results of the analyses reveal that among mothers with one child, the introduction of the policy had a significant and positive impact on the working hours during the first three years after childbirth. Among mothers of two children, the impact of the policy was significant for one year after childbirth. Heterogeneity effect analysis shows that single-child mothers who worked part time before childbirth were substantially more responsive to the policy than their full-time working counterparts.

RN14 | Session 03b  Mainstreaming and EU Policy

Gender Equality and Political Change in Northern Ireland
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Most examples of political change in recent times have had negative connotations for equality. By comparison equality has been at the centre of positive political change in Northern Ireland (NI). Stemming from the Belfast Agreement in 1998, non-discrimination in public service employment and the delivery of public services are key planks in promoting equality of opportunity and good relations in NI. The mechanism for achieving these aims is contained in s.75 of the Northern Ireland Act, considered a particularly successful aspect of the legislation. The legislation requires public authorities to produce an equality scheme and report annually on the progress made towards the objectives laid out in the scheme. The legislation was heavily influenced by European Union policy, particularly the concept of gender equality mainstreaming. Women’s groups in NI played an important role in brokering the agreement and shaping the legislation, but there is some doubt as to how far women in NI have benefited from the legislation. This paper examines how gender equality and mainstreaming is reflected in equality schemes and documentation in 18 case study public authorities in NI, including the setting of gender equality goals and clear timetables and plans to achieve the goals. The case studies involved documentary analysis of equality schemes, action plans and annual progress reports coupled with semi-structured interviews with the key equality officer in each authority. The results so far indicate mixed results, with some schemes developing effective measures for gender equality but to a much lesser extent in others.

Gender mainstreaming done behind closed doors – an unintentional catalyst for anti-gender mobilization?
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Gender mainstreaming (GM) is regarded as a feminist strategy aiming at influencing public policies and thus improving women’s lives. In current battles against neoliberalism and state dismantling, successful GM, understood as the stronger presence of feminists within state structures, is considered a significant challenge to contemporary feminism. The strategy is risky and its ultimate positive impact remains highly problematic. The picture is even more complex in the case of local manifestations of GM. In Poland’s case, GM became a part of local administrative practices as a result of Europeanization, i.e. the process of subjecting domestic policies to European law. Thus, the strategy eluded parliamentary control and public debate.

The aim of the presentation is twofold. Firstly, it will contribute to existing scholarship on effectiveness of GM in shaping social policies. I will show that the strategy brings positive results but that they are limited to the state administration’s internal organizational gender regimes. Secondly, I will show that GM, if implemented in a non-democratic, expert/bureaucratic manner, may produce new tensions around gender policies and constitute an unintentional catalyst for conservative backlash. I will argue that the local specifics of GM implementation in Poland have fuelled popular fears of a state slipping away from people’s control and being overtaken by the external forces of international feminism.

The presentation is data-driven and based on two qualitative analyses: 1) 29 in-depth interviews with feminists and state administrators, both involved in GM implementation; 2) critical discourse analysis of the narratives of opponents of “gender ideology”.

Rethinking New Economic Governance from Feminist Political Economy approaches