

Abstracts

Categorizing a Family, Categorizing the Self – The Experience of Class in the Life Story of a Female Worker

By Eerika Koskinen-Koivisto

In this paper, the author discusses the relationship between individual, family and class during the process of modernization which changed the social order of the Finnish society. The data consists of life story interviews from a female worker born in 1927, who is the grandmother of the author. The informant was born into a working-class family and became a worker herself at an early age. Later, she married a worker and stayed at home with the children. Her husband, however, climbed the social ladder through education. The informant identifies herself as a worker and neglects the middle-class house wife identity. The article seeks to explain this by analyzing the dialogue between the past and present that the informant sets up in her life story. The informant's representations of class, her identification and distinctions, her career choice and experiences from working life are compared to the ideological concepts inherent in modernization such as climbing the social hierarchy and individualization. In telling her life story, the informant finally represents herself as the modern agent of her life.

Klosterstræde nr 8, 4300 Holbæk – etnologi og familiehistorie i en museologisk kontekst

By Gudrun Lund & Lene Floris

The article presents an example of a museological practise where for several generations one specific family and its dwelling places are the pivotal point of an analysis of the family's history.

In 1939 a working class family with eleven children moved into the ground floor of a

house at Klostersræde 8 in the town of Holbæk. The parents were country-bred, but in 1918 they broke with their family tradition as farm labourers and moved with their three young daughters to the nearest town Holbæk. They looked for a better life as a working class family. Other family members tried their luck by immigrating to other countries. Everyday life and history of this family has been examined by means of archive records, family history research as well as interviews with 6 living children, many relatives and other descendants. Genealogically the family is accounted for 10 generations.

Since 1972 the house at Klosterstræde 8 belongs to Holbæk Museum. It is one of the museum's 12 listed houses of which 11 buildings are standing in situ. After a thorough refurbishment the ground floor at Klosterstræde 8 reopened in 2006 furnished as it was when the working class family moved into the house in 1939. The exhibition aims to tell the story of this specific building and its inhabitants. The museum has expanded its traditional core museum audience. Thus social inclusion has created a dialogue with new users.

All families have a story which consists of a small close tale as well as a major social story. The article shows how these stories can be revealed by combining ethnological interviews giving the close stories with various genealogical examinations giving the long profound perspective.

Family history: Family Memories from the 1918 Finnish Civil War

By Kukka Hammarström

Family history offers a way to discuss people's own experiences and interpretations of historical events. These experiences can often contradict general writing of history. In the spring of 1918, Finland experienced a short, but bloody, civil war. A total of 38 000 people died as a result of the war, of which 29 000 belonged to the defeated side. After the war the winning side, the "Whites", constructed a certain image about the events during the war. They buried their dead as heroes and founded many monuments to commemorate their victory and their own sacrifices. But the defeated side, the "Reds", were denied the right to mourn their dead and to discuss their experiences in public. By the 1960s, the general public atmosphere had changed. The defeated side was now given the opportunity to tell its own version of the civil war. Because having been prohibited from expressing their own experiences and suffering, they developed their own narrative tradition in this regard. That gave them a chance to handle those difficult events. Even today, the Finnish civil war is a difficult subject. In many Finnish families, stories have been told about the fates of family members in 1918. Some families have a rich narrative tradition of their own, but in others many memories of the civil war were silenced. This reflects how difficult the memories of the civil war are even today. In my article I have examined my own family's memories of the Finnish Civil War. My grandmother's father belonged to the defeated side and died in 1918 under unclear circumstances. His fate has led to various speculations within the family about what really happened to him. These clearly surface in my family's oral tradition. This article is based on my Master of Arts thesis ("Suku

antaa juuret ja siivet". Perhehistorian rakentuminen erilaisten suvussa säilyneiden lähteiden kautta. University of Turku, 2006).

Trying to Have a Family of One's Own. Women's Interpretations of the Doctors' Roles in Infertility Treatments

By Heli Niskanen

Since assisted reproduction techniques (ART) have become a part of our methods to start a family, this article focuses on the question of the interpretations of the doctors' roles in online diaries written by women who either undergo or are going to undergo treatments in fertility clinics. The data consists of online diaries in which the authors concentrate on telling about their experiences of wanting to have a baby and suffering from childlessness. Online diaries have been seen as a tool which individuals can employ to create presentations of self. These self-presentations may relate to either reproducing or resisting the cultural order. In this data, the self is constructed in ways that accept the cultural order and medical system while also taking advantage of it. Even though in Finland women are allowed to use ART regardless of the ability of the body to conceive, in these online diaries ART is closely connected to the idea of bodily defects and thus to an inability to start a family and have a baby. Being defined as childless therefore means that a woman cannot start a family and that a doctor has to do it on her behalf. In order to avoid the presentation of self as childless and unable to start a family, which is offered by the system, in the online diaries women interpret the doctors' role in a way that enables them to ask for the doctors' help without being defined as childless. Furthermore, interpreting the doctors' role thus makes it possible to define the future baby and family as one's own instead of made by doctors.

Balance mellem arbejdsliv og familieliv – også et spørgsmål om køn

By Sine Grumløse

This article concerns the work/life balance in Denmark and the political achievements in this particular area. This subject has been one of the main points in the Danish family politics for the last thirty years but the discourse has changed markedly. From talking about men and women in working life and in family life the politics nowadays has moved towards a discussion about the balance between the two sides of peoples lives. The focus on sexes and their relations is gone. At the same time we know that men and women behaves very differently from one another both in family life and in working life. Men and women are most likely to behave like persons with the same sex than like just humans. While the politics think of people

as humans in a general sense, people rather correspond to their sex and act like generations before them. This is a problem and perhaps one of the most important issues for the coming family politics. We need a new frame in which we can recognise each other as humans more than sexes. This might be a way of dealing with the usual pattern of family life such as the absence of male intervention and the very often stressful female domain.

Just a Family among others - The changing role of single-mother families in Finland

By Ulla Kontio

In the past centuries religion and certain concepts of morality of double standards, which decreed the role of women in detail but left men behave pretty much as they pleased, made the single mothers' life hard, indeed. Not until the social legislation, primarily designed to protect the Finnish children, be they illegitimate or legitimate, improved the lot of the unwed mothers as a by-product starting from the 1960's. In the 1970's a wave of co-habiting and having children out of wedlock, but with both parents present, brought the single mothers to a more or less an equal footing with the married mothers.

The displacement of the traditional three-generational family by the nuclear family as a consequence of the flight to the cities of the surplus workforce of the young adults brought about the still prevailing norm of the nuclear family as the accepted kind of family. Even though it is officially recognized that there exist all different kinds of families, and always have existed, the normalcy of the nuclear family remains strong.

Even though single mothers of today are considered even heroic by some people, still some of the old shame peeps through occasionally. However, the Finnish single mother families, even though faced with some particular problems, are well accepted and more to the point, they consider themselves as just families among others.