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**GENDER RELATIONS AND WORK-LIFE
BALANCE IN A FOODSERVICE KITCHEN**
Understanding Aspects of Gender Equality in Finland

Faculty of Social Sciences
Master's Thesis
April 2025

ABSTRACT

Nea Lepaus: Gender Relations and Work-life Balance in a Foodservice Kitchen
MA thesis
Tampere University
Master's Degree Programme in Social Sciences
April 2025

Current research on women working in professional kitchens has mostly been done outside of Finland, and is mainly focused on fine dining kitchens. Hence, my research will add to the available literature by researching a foodservice kitchen in Tampere, Finland. Something which the available literature is lacking. Researching a foodservice kitchen will add to the ongoing discussion on how women are viewed in professional kitchens. By discussing work-life balance in a foodservice kitchen, I will bring the perspective of a professional kitchen with standard working hours into the literature as well.

As Finland is known for being a pioneer in gender equality, I will discuss how my research adds to the understanding of gender equality in Finland. I argue that gender inequalities cannot be observed on the surface of a Finnish foodservice kitchen, however, the more closely these topics are looked at, the more inequalities can be observed. Therefore, conducting research in a foodservice kitchen in Finland will not only add to the current literature on professional kitchens but will also add to the understanding of gender equality in Finland.

Key words: Gender equality, Work-life balance, work in Finland

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1. Introduction

Working in restaurants for a decade made me notice patterns and behaviors I have not noticed in other workplaces since leaving the industry, like how openly discussing your sex life with your colleagues is the norm and finding a woman in a kitchen is a rarity. I recall several instances from my previous jobs where I was the only woman working in the kitchen and after weekends discussions usually revolving around who got laid. Maybe being openly lesbian made my male coworkers think I would appreciate hearing these stories. In reality, I had to bite my tongue and choose which battles were worth fighting, as I was still the only woman in the kitchen and were treated differently from my peers. I remember the time we were understaffed and kept getting more food orders, so our boss had to come help us out in the kitchen and my male coworker was shouting and cursing due to the stress. When I raised my voice, I was warned by our boss to not do it again unless I want to lose my job. Or the time we got a new Kitchen Manager who would not speak to me, even though I had a supervisory role, and therefore more responsibilities than others He would only speak to our male staff and told them “Nea is trying to be a supervisor; but she’s just a bossy bitch so you don’t have to listen to her”. That is when I handed in my 2 weeks’ notice.

My academic interest and fascination towards researching restaurants comes from my own experiences working in the industry for over a decade; I have worked in numerous restaurants around Finland, Scotland and New Zealand and have worked in several positions ranging from dishwasher to waitress to kitchen manager. In these jobs, it did not matter whether it was a fast-food joint or a fine dining restaurant, I started noticing patterns and similarities on how staff members talk to each other and one another as well as me usually being the only woman working in the kitchen. I found this interesting because according to old-fashioned thinking, women belong to the kitchen, at least in a domestic kitchen, so I wanted to understand why it is the opposite in a professional setting.

This inspired me to do my Bachelor's Dissertation on professional kitchens. What I found, was that I was not the only one interested in these issues, researchers such as Harris and Giuffre (see for example 2010a; 2010b; 2015) and Albors and colleagues (2019) had done extensive research on women's positionality, barriers, behavior and experiences working in male-dominated kitchens in Michelin star restaurants. In their research they discuss how the work culture, gender stereotypes and expectations affect how women are viewed in the context of professional kitchens and how they in return, disadvantage women. Their findings on women's behavior in masculine working environments inspired me to focus on women's behavior in pub kitchens in my Bachelor's Dissertation, to see if the findings hold in those kitchens as well.

For my Master's Thesis I continued researching women in professional kitchens, but this time my focus was on a foodservice kitchen located in Tampere, Finland. As most research on women's experiences in professional kitchens focuses on fine dining and evening restaurants, I wanted to add to the existing literature by researching a different kind of restaurant's kitchen. By researching a restaurant in Finland, I aim to also add to the already existing discussion on how gender equality is viewed in Finland in relation to the Nordic paradox. Therefore, in my Master's Thesis I will research work-life balance in a foodservice kitchen to discuss gender equality in Finland. I will show that while Finland is known for being a pioneer in gender equality, the more gender equality gets looked into, the more contradictory it gets. I will argue that this same pattern can be found in foodservice kitchen as well: on the surface it looks like an equal workplace for people of different genders but the more it gets looked into, the more stereotypical and problematic attitudes and thoughts on women working in the kitchen are revealed.

2. Literature Review

Deborah A. Harris and Patti Giuffre are Professors of Sociology at Texas State University who have conducted both together and individually extensive research on gender inequalities in professional kitchens (see for example Harris & Giuffre, 2010a; 2010b; 2015; 2020). Harris studies how social inequality is manifested and challenged in the food system and Giuffre focuses not only in inequalities in the workplace, but particularly how it relates to sexual harassment and homophobia (Harris & Giuffre, 2020). Even though their research is mostly US based, their research is still important and relevant to my paper, specifically in illustrating the masculine work culture in professional kitchens and discussing factors that hinder women's succession in kitchens careers. Lastly, the research on restaurants in Finland is scarce, therefore relying on research conducted in other countries and drawing parallels to my own research is a must.

In their book *Taking the Heat* (2015) Harris and Giuffre analyze how gender inequality is created, maintained and even challenged and transformed at work, by interviewing 33 women in Central Texas with experience working as professional chefs. As men who cook are doing what is usually considered as women's work (Beagan *et al*, 2008; Bugge & Almas, 2006; DeVault, 1994 in Harris & Giuffre, 2015: 5), Harris and Giuffre argue that in the context of professional kitchens, cooking has been transformed into a high status and masculine career. Thus, their research examines kitchen culture and how the idea of professional cooking as "men's work" (Harris & Giuffre, 2015: 11) is being upheld and the different factors contributing to this belief.

To illustrate why there are so few women working in professional kitchens, one must first understand what it is like to work in a professional kitchen. Due to this, the kitchen as a physical space and workplace will be first introduced and discussed by drawing from the work of Gary Allan Fine. Following will be an examination on the available literature on women's experiences working in kitchens to illustrate the hindrances women have in a career in kitchens due to gender

stereotypes and attached expectations. A discussion of the Nordic paradox, gender equality and how they are viewed in Finland will follow, as well as a short history on gender and work in Finland to illustrate the cultural context in which my research will take place. This chapter will conclude with presenting the available research on restaurants and gender in Finland before concluding the chapter with the research questions this thesis focuses on.

2.1 The Kitchen as a Space and Workplace

“The kitchen is a weird mix of people. We’re not normal. We’re very artistic. We follow our own beats. We work weird shifts. We have weird days off”

From an interview with a culinary instructor Rose in Harris and Giuffre (2015: 88)

Gary Alan Fine (2008) did ethnographic research for a month at a time in four different restaurant kitchens in the state of Minnesota to understand kitchens as organizations and research them from a sociological point of view as he found this to be an under-researched area at the time. He has greatly detailed his experiences and explained the work culture he was a part of in his book *Kitchens: The Culture of Restaurant Work* first published in 1996. He spent a total of around 50-75 hours in each restaurant’s kitchen observing, taking notes, interviewing and helping out with small tasks, thus gaining a great understanding of the everyday worklife of chefs. His practically oriented approach makes his book valuable to my research as it illustrates not only the kitchen as a physical workspace but also gives insights into the everyday life of chefs and the work culture they have.

Cooking is demanding work and hard labor. Comparing them to athletes, Fine (2008: 39) argues that cooks have to “play” in pain and like for example policemen, they rarely have the luxury to call in sick to work. He notes that customers would be horrified to learn that the cooks preparing their food are often hungover, exhausted, bleeding or distracted, arguing that cooks are expected to be “iron men” and working no matter what (Fine, 2008: 49). Additionally, cooks work when

everyone is out having fun: evenings, weekends and holidays are the busiest times for kitchens, which leaves little time for family (Fine, 2008: 40-41), which shows the sacrifices cooks make for being successful in this career. Lastly, cooking is repetitive and can get tedious as cooks must prepare the same dishes day after day, which can get boring (Fine, 2008: 20). Looking at the kitchen as both a physical space as well as a workplace, I will illustrate what working there entails and why there are such tough demands on chefs.

Fine describes restaurant kitchens as small and cramped places where a “wrong move spells disaster” (2008: 81). Because of the tight spaces, workers have to be spatially aware of themselves and others when moving in the kitchen so as not to bump into others and disrupt their work or worse, make them accidentally drop something or cut themselves. He also observed that working in such close quarters to one another tends to also provoke interpersonal tensions and cause friction between workers (Fine, 2008: 81-82). In addition to the cramped spaces, chefs work long physically demanding shifts in an unpleasant environment with heat, smoke, grease, and sharp knives. Several research illustrates the physical toll working in kitchens put on chef’s bodies: it is not uncommon for chefs to work 10-14 hours per day up to six days a week being on their feet throughout their entire workdays preparing food, cooking orders and carrying heavy pots, (see for example Fine, 2008; Harris & Giuffre, 2015; Droz, 2015) which show the physical demands of the job. The heat in kitchens makes for another workspace aspect to take into consideration: heat is part of the kitchen life, only worsening during the summer months (Fine, 2008: 82). Working by the stove, sweating, while trying to cook every order as fast as possible is not only physically draining but affects behavior and emotions too; resulting in emotional outbursts (Fine, 2008: 83) a stereotype well known for chefs (Orwell, 1933 in Fine, 2008: 69). These outbursts are caused by the demands of the job and the working conditions and therefore justified as they are seen as part of getting through the work shift (Fine, 2008: 69).

Understanding a regular workday shows the stress and unpredictability of schedules chefs go through. As Fine (2008) observed, scheduling staff for shifts for restaurants that do table service can be unpredictable. He writes about a Friday where a cook was told to come in later for his shift, as lunch was expected to be slow and the restaurant wanted to save on labor costs. Instead, the lunch rush was busier than expected resulting in them having to get through the lunch rush with minimal crew (Fine, 2008: 18). After lunch, the evening staff came in and started preparation for dinner as there were several large bookings for dinner. However, some of the parties cancelled their bookings for the evening, resulting in the dinner being slower than expected. Due to this, the staff was bored as they did not have much to do and one of the chefs got sent home early due to this. The kitchen staff finished their nightly clean up an hour before the restaurant got closed, but a few minutes before closing time a regular customer walked in without a booking wanting to get dinner. Frustrated and angry, one chef stays to serve the regular customer (Fine, 2008: 19). Fine summarizes the work chefs do very well by saying the following:

"Cooks must ready the kitchen several hours before customers arrive, not knowing precisely how many to expect. Preparation must permit flexibility, depending on the walk-in trade and last-minute reservations. They must then be ready to cook numerous dishes, simultaneously and without warning, with sufficient speed that those with whom they must deal – servers and ultimately diners – do not become frustrated.”
(Fine, 2008: 19)

Professional kitchens must stay prepared and be ready to serve customers at all times even though schedules can be unpredictable, and a customer can walk into the restaurant at any time. Therefore, they aim to balance labor costs by trying to predict when it will be busy and having more people on shift during rush hours and less when it is estimated to be quieter.

The aim of this section has been to introduce the reader to what is expected when working in a kitchen; what a regular workday may look like, the physical demands and limits of the kitchen and of how it all results in anger and emotional outbursts to be tolerated in the kitchen. Therefore, the behavior and work culture in kitchens may seem crude and aggressive to an outsider, however as shown, the kitchen as a physical space causes emotions to run high and the work culture allows emotional outbursts, as they are seen as a way to cope with the stress of the job. To conclude, working in kitchens is very different from for example working a regular office job with a 9-5 work schedule with paid leave and holidays.

2.2 Research on Women in the Kitchen

“The prevailing work culture makes it hard to combine full-time work with being a mother. Especially in service work the “long hours” culture is unfriendly towards mothers” (Bradley, 2007: 114)

As illustrated, working in kitchens requires one to commit to their job and sacrifice weekends and holidays for work, as well as endure stress during long physically demanding shifts. Due to these working conditions, restaurants are hesitant to hire female chefs as they are seen as not being able to commit due to family reasons or not being physically able to do their job or mentally capable of handling the stress of the job. In this following chapter I will discuss the research on women’s experiences working in professional kitchens, to show how women are at a disadvantage before even stepping into the kitchen, due to gendered stereotypes and expectations. Lastly, I will conclude this chapter with a short discussion on some more recent research that shows a slow change in these attitudes as well as discuss female chefs that do not conform to the aforementioned expectations, to show a different side to this conversation.

Many scholars argue that women who enter male-dominated work environments are expected to conform to the culture and change their own behavior accordingly and in some cases even tolerate

sexual harassment if they want to continue working there (see for example Watts, 2009; Droz, 2015). Similarities can be drawn to professional kitchens as well (see for example Droz, 2015; Garrigos *et al*, 2019; Harris & Giuffre, 2015). The phenomenon of keeping women away from professional kitchens and other male-dominated workplaces has been explained by the men protecting the occupation from becoming feminized by keeping the women away (Harris & Giuffre, 2015: 86). Research suggests that women must conform to the kitchen culture and change their behavior closer to men's (see for example Harris & Giuffre, 2015; 2010a) as their presence is seen as a disruption towards the masculine work culture. In their interviews with female chefs, Harris and Giuffre (2010a: 65-66) found that female chefs were the minority in professional kitchens, and therefore, had to play with different rules than the male chefs to prove to that they are fit to do the job.

Gendered expectations hindered hiring and promotion opportunities, as the female chefs were assumed to take responsibility of caregiving at home (Harris & Giuffre, 2010a). Stereotypes about women "just going to get pregnant and leave" made male chefs reluctant to even hire women in the first place as according to them they did not want to waste their time training someone who will leave the job (Harris & Giuffre, 2010a: 66). Beliefs about women not being physically capable of performing their tasks or being able to handle the job, hindered women's hiring possibilities as well. Due to gender stereotypes, female chefs were assumed to be weak and emotional and not "cut out" for a kitchen job (Harris & Giuffre, 2010a: 66). This shows how women are at a disadvantage already before even applying for a kitchen position. If a woman got a job, their supervisors and male colleagues would test them to see if they were capable to handle the pressure of working in a professional kitchen, by for example teasing them or yelling at them to see if they would break down crying. If they did, it was a sign that women do not belong in kitchens, which would further strengthen the gender stereotypes (Harris & Giuffre, 2015: 101). It is important to

note that the new male hirers were not tested on, only the female ones (Harris & Giuffre, 2010b: 33). This illustrates that professional kitchens have strong views on gender stereotypes and expectations, which especially causes barriers for women wanting a career in professional kitchens. Those who got a kitchen job, had to work hard and be mindful of their own actions, in order to be respected and to prove to their male colleagues that they in fact belong to a professional kitchen. Harris and Giuffre's (2015) found that female chefs had to work hard to combat gender stereotypes to prove to their male colleagues that they can do their job. One of the main concerns was that women lacked the physical stamina to work in a kitchen, for example by not being able to carry heavy pots or big bags of flour or lasting long shifts on their feet (Harris & Giuffre, 2015: 94). Participants explained that they proved their physical capabilities by performing all their work tasks without asking for help (Harris & Giuffre, 2015: 103) so as to not leave any room for scrutinization from their male colleagues. They would also prove themselves and their commitment to the job by working long hours in the kitchen as well as taking on extra shifts. According to them, the male chefs would not be questioned or scrutinized for saying no to extra shifts, whereas the women would (Harris & Giuffre, 2015: 104), which shows the double-standard in the industry. In addition to their work duties, female chefs had to prove they can fit into male-dominated workplace as well (Harris & Giuffre, 2015: 104) by showing that they can "hang" with the guys (Harris & Giuffre, 2015: 85-86) and will not disturb the work culture. Here it can be seen how women are at a disadvantage already when applying for kitchen jobs, as gender expectations and gender stereotypes hindered their opportunities. Even after getting a kitchen job, women still had to prove themselves by not only working hard and not asking for help, but by also showing that they will not disturb the masculine work culture.

In addition to the work itself, women working in kitchens also struggled with work-life balance due to the long and odd shifts working in kitchens entail. In their interviews with 33 female chefs,

Harris and Giuffre (2010b) found that female chefs had to negotiate work-life balance by using at least one of the following strategies: delaying or forgoing motherhood, leaving the kitchen to work in a different job within the culinary field or adapting either work or family life to balance the two. Five of their participants explicitly stated that it would be impossible to have a family as a female chef and that eventually you would have to choose one or the other. In fact, seven participants discussed their decision to delay or forgo childbearing to make it in the industry (Harris & Giuffre, 2010b: 35-36). This was explained by the commitment one needs to show when working in a kitchen, as well as the long shifts and odd hours, which make it tough to balance home and life. Moreover, one participant brought up the lack of benefits, as kitchens usually offer very little or no benefits at all. As a result, taking three months off from work unpaid to take care of a newborn, would be a challenge, as the employer would not cover parental pay (Harris & Giuffre, 2010b: 36). Lastly, gendered expectations – that someone stays at home to take care of the home and kids – was discussed in relation to explicitly male chefs having wives at home doing these duties. Due to this the men could devote more of their own time to advancing their chef careers (Harris & Giuffre, 2010b: 37).

Another option for their participants was to leave the kitchen altogether and find a different job within the culinary field to better balance out family and work. 16 out of the 33 participants had done so and gone to jobs with more standard hours, healthcare and vacation days such as culinary school instructors or managers at an upscale grocer, while some had opted to find a job with more control of their own schedules at caterers or bakeries (Harris & Giuffre, 2010b: 38-40). Lastly, Harris and Giuffre (2010b: 40) highlight that their participants did not mention that their respective husbands would take on childcare responsibilities or change their work schedules to enable their wives to pursue a chef career.

Out of the 33 participants, 15 had children and out of them six remained in kitchen work. These six women had managed to continue pursuing their professional goals without harming their home life, due to careful planning (Harris & Giuffre, 2010b: 40). One of the participants, Camille, had a supportive supervisor, a male executive chef who also had kids of his own, who allowed more flexibility in Camille's schedule. As a result, she would come in to work earlier to get everything done earlier and faster and therefore would be allowed to leave work earlier as well (Harris & Giuffre, 2010b: 41). It is important to note that Camille was able to work with a flexible schedule as her supervisor had kids of his own and could sympathize with her. It could be argued that with a different supervisor this might have not been possible. Two other participants had reached supervisory positions themselves and would take the liberty to take their young kids to work with them while others managed by working opposite shifts to their husbands to ensure someone was at home with the kids at all times (Harris & Giuffre, 2010b: 41-42). Harris and Giuffre (2010b: 41) highlight the contradiction this poses to female chefs: having a high-ranking position in a kitchen, gives one more responsibility but also freedom to make arrangements that suits their family life better, however, as has been discussed thus far, it is harder for women to reach these positions.

While the research discussed so far shows a negative and stereotypical view on women's experiences working in kitchens, progress has been made. Harris and Giuffre (2010a) conducted research in female chef's understanding of gender in the kitchen and how they resist aforementioned gender stereotypes and found that some female chefs have actually found empowerment by resisting gender stereotypes and leaning into their feminine traits in the way they cook, manage the kitchen and transform the work culture. Participants discussed the way women are "naturally" better suited for professional cheffing; by emphasizing women's care and attention to detail, that can be seen in the way they would plate the food neatly for the customer, instead of

throwing it in a sloppy way on the plate (Harris & Giuffre, 2010a: 66-67). They also discussed women's way of working being overall neater and more organized than their male colleagues, which made work more efficient (Harris & Giuffre, 2010a: 68). Participants who had reached supervisory roles in the kitchen did not conform to the kitchen culture and lead their staff in a masculine way. Instead, they took the role of a mother or sister for their staff, thus creating a more empathetic and caring work environment for them (Harris & Giuffre, 2010a: 72). Lastly, participants discussed that women can calm the kitchen and change the language use to be more appropriate, resulting in less sexual behavior from staff. This was done by challenging the masculine work culture by relying on feminine qualities, for example instead of being aggressive, participants would be caring and discuss issues with their staff (Harris & Giuffre, 2010a: 76). Harris and Giuffre (2010a: 79) explains that instead of acting "like a man" women in this study have reframed their feminine traits as a source of strength rather than weakness. This is to show that there is room for women and femininity in a male-dominated workplace like professional kitchens.

2.3 Work, the Nordic Paradox and Gender (In)Equality in Finland

Gender equality is a sign of the Nordic model, and in Finland gender equality is thought to be an achieved reality, like the air that we breath (Julkunen, 2010: 66)

The Nordic countries are considered to be among the most equal in the world, however, at the same time they have some of the highest numbers of intimate partner violence against women; this contradiction is known as the "Nordic Paradox" (Gracia & Merlo, 2016: 27) which will be discussed further in detail below.

However, it is important to note, while my research is not about gendered violence in Finland, understanding the Nordic paradox is vital when discussing the paradoxical nature of gender equality in Finland. As Finland among other Nordic countries has long been viewed as a head

runner of gender equality, the Nordic paradox serves as an exemplary critical framework for this thesis. Whilst the contents of this thesis themselves do not entirely line up with the traditional interpretation of the Nordic paradox, the criticism is used to bring more nuance to the argumentation. I will further examine how gender equality is viewed in Finland, by discussing the false idea that gender equality has been achieved as critically argued by Raija Julkunen. Finland's gender equality history from the point of view of memory politics will be discussed to further illustrate the thinking that gender equality has been achieved in Finland. This is to argue that Finland's history is shaped into a narrative of being a pioneer in gender equality by highlighting and remembering only policies that serve this narrative. Following will be an introduction to women's role in the workforce in Finland, and a short discussion on available literature on restaurant work in Finland. While women have been part of the Finnish workforce for a long time, gender inequalities can still be observed in the workplace. This is to show the cultural context within which my thesis has taken place, as well as to draw parallels between the current literature on restaurant work in Finland and previously discussed restaurant literature in the US. The findings of this examination showcase that gender equality in Finland is largely seen as a non-issue.

The Nordic Paradox is used to explain the contradicting notion between the Nordic countries being some of the most gender equal in the world, while simultaneously having some of the highest rates of intimate partner violence against women in EU (Gracia & Merlo, 2016: 27-28). Garcia-Moreno and colleagues (2015: 1685) draw a connection between gender inequality and high rates of violence against women, as more masculine countries with normalized male-authority over women have a culture of justifying violence against women. Drawing from this argument, Gracia and Merlo (2016: 27) argue that in the Nordics both high rates of gender equality and high rates of intimate partner violence are present, contradicting Garcia-Moreno's and colleagues' (2015) findings and thus creating the Nordic Paradox.

In the latest Gender Equality Index (2025) the average score for Gender Equality in the EU was 71 out of 100. The Nordic countries all scored higher than the average: Sweden had the overall highest score in EU with 82 points, Denmark came in second overall with 78 points and Finland came in eighth with a score of 74.5 (Gender Equality Index, 2025). At the same time, women who have experienced physical violence or threats and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner, have been almost double the EU average in these countries. The EU average was 17.7 % and in Denmark it was 25.7 %, 31 % in Sweden and 33.8 % in Finland. The only countries that scored higher than Finland was Romania with 37 % and Hungary with 41.1 % (FRA *et al*, 2024: 21). This data illustrates the contradictions embedded in the Nordic paradox. The Nordic countries' data is littered with numbers that directly contradict with the image the countries strive to hold about themselves. The argument presented forward is that on the surface Finland is gender equal, however the more gender inequalities get looked into, the less gender equal Finland seems. This argument will be next discussed in further detail as argued by Raija Julkunen.

Raija Julkunen is a well-known and respected Finnish researcher in the field of gender inequalities, welfare nation and work. She has a doctorate degree in Sociology and worked at the University of Jyväskylä before retiring. She has done extensive research on welfare nations for three decades as well as broad research on women, feminism and work (Julkunen, 2010; Tanninen, 2018). Therefore, her writings will be utilized in discussing the Nordic Paradox, gender equality and work in Finland.

Julkunen draws from the works of Holli (2008 in Julkunen, 2010: 75) to summarize the five main arguments used in Finland for gender equality as follows:

1. History: In 1906 Finland became the first country in the world to adopt full gender equality by extending the right to vote and stand for elections for all men and women

(International Gender Equality Prize, nd.) which is an argument often used to argue that we have a long history of gender equality

2. International comparisons: In gender equality comparisons in both EU and international level, Finland has been scoring consistently high
3. Nordic identity and geographical location in the Nordics: the mindset that the Nordic countries are known for high gender equality, therefore being part of that automatically makes Finland gender equal
4. Personal experiences: seeing women in one's own workplace or community gets automatically linked to gender equality
5. Personal actions: Julkunen gives the example of people arguing "I have at least raised my daughters and sons the same" which shows that personal actions get generalized easily.

As seen in the aforementioned arguments, most of them have to do with personal experiences that get interpreted as gender equality, which unfortunately does not represent valid data in an examination of gender equality in Finland. While the above arguments are valid and cannot be ignored, I will argue that they are overused and that the mindset in Finland has been blinded by them resulting in the idea that gender equality has already been achieved and therefore, it does not have to be worked for anymore. However, gender inequalities still persist, especially in the Finnish working life, which will be further discussed below.

Raija Julkunen (2009: 3) argues that Finland has exceptionally good conditions for gender equal work life: Finnish women have a long history of being involved in the workforce and have a high education level. Combining work and motherhood is possible due to paid parental leave and public day care centers, and the gender pay gap in Finland is among the lowest in the EU (Julkunen, 2009: 7). However, when women's work and working conditions get looked at more closely, inconsistencies and inequalities get noticed. While the Nordic countries have been successful in

lifting women from the bottom, there is still work to do in getting them to the top of the hierarchy: women's share in the work has been described as a pyramid that narrows at the top, in other words the higher up the hierarchy goes the less women are there (Julkunen, 2009: 70-71). Women also share a bigger share of part time and non-standard work compared to men (Julkunen, 2009: 50)

Julkunen (2009: 71) argues that compared to other EU-countries, Finland is behind in getting women into leadership positions. In 2019, 25 % of entrepreneurs in Finland were women and almost 90 % of the female entrepreneurs worked in the retail and service sector (Elinkeinoelämän keskusliitto, 2019b: 4) which also shows a gender divide as women are expected to work in these sectors. Additionally, Julkunen (2009: 50) discusses for example part time and non-standard work and the challenges these bring to gender equality. She explains that in these types of work social and work security are low and there are more women than men working non-standard and part-time jobs. In 2019 out of part time workers in Finland, 65.8 % were women (Elinkeinoelämän keskusliitto, 2019a: 12). There is also a noticeable trend in the number of educated women aged 25-34 working in temporary jobs: in the beginning of 1980s 15 % of women in paid employment were in temporary jobs whereas in 2008 this number had risen to 27 % (Julkunen, 2009: 51). Julkunen (2009: 51) explains that this age group of women is in childbearing age, and therefore the chance of becoming pregnant and having to parental leave from work, affects their labor market status negatively.

Women are also twice as likely as men to become the victim of threat or violence in the workplace, as well as almost twice as likely to become the victim of sexual harassment and receive inappropriate treatment in the workplace. Partaking in workplace bullying and becoming the victim of one is also twice as more common among women. In fact, workplace bullying is most common in female-dominated healthcare occupations where workplace bullying is reportedly 62 % (Julkunen, 2009: 60). Workplace bullying is explained to be the consequence of busy, poorly

organized and badly communicative workplaces (Lehto & Sutela, 2008: 112 in Julkunen, 2009: 60).

Finland became independent from Russia in 1917 and remained an agrarian society until the early 1950s (Pfau-Effinger, 2004: 151). Anttonen *et al* (1994: 182) argue that Finland has not had a structural change that would treat men as the breadwinners of a household. Another explanation offered by Pfau-Effinger (2004: 153-154) is that since the process of urbanization started so late in Finland, compared to other European countries, the values and norms of an agrarian society where everyone in the family worked, remained. As a result, when industrialization happened, women just moved from farms to paid work (Anttonen *et al*, 1994: 179). Lepistö (1994: 196-197) argues that before industrialization in Finland, men used to come home for lunch during work, but after industrialization, work was further from home. Consequently, men's eating habits worsened and drinking became more common, therefore offering warm meals to the working population became a priority. Eating properly was seen necessary in battling any potential illnesses and slowly schools started offering warm meals to students as well, (Lepistö, 1994: 197) something that is done in Finland up to this day.

As seen above, while the conditions for gender-equal work life in Finland are exceptionally good, there are still gender inequalities in Finnish work life. Finland is behind other EU-countries in lifting women into leadership positions and unfortunately, a majority of female entrepreneurs in Finland work in a stereotypically female field; the service and retail industry. There are also more women than men in part-time work and an unfortunately high number of women aged 25-34 working temporary jobs, which could be argued to be caused by the assumption that women in this age want to start a family. Thus, companies might be reluctant to hire them, as they want to avoid hiring someone who will get pregnant soon into the start of their career and go on parental leave, which shows the stereotypical views that are still persistent in the work life in Finland. I will next

discuss Finland's collective memory of being a pioneer in gender equality to argue that Finland's history further strengthens the thinking of gender equality being achieved in Finland.

In their article, Larsen and colleagues highlight that the “relationship between history and memory is never straightforward and takes different forms in different countries” (Larsen *et al*, 2021: 624). Therefore, it is important to study how a nation remembers its past as it influences how it is perceived in present day. This is also known as collective memory, the way memory is formed in a group of people and how a society remembers it as a collective (Halbwachs, 1992). Therefore, in their article Larsen and colleagues (2021) examined how Finland, Sweden and Norway celebrated their 100 years of women's suffrage and how memory politics were utilized to further these countries' agendas in being perceived as front-runners for gender equality. They argue that one year after granting women equal political rights, a large number of women entered parliament which is seen as not only exceptional but what gave Finland the reputation of being a frontrunner for gender equality (Larsen *et al*, 2021: 630). Here it is seen how memory politics were used to highlight Finland's status of being the first nation to involve women in their political decision making, to upkeep their status as a pioneer in gender equality even in present day.

Drawing from Larsen and colleagues (2021) my argument presented forwards is that Finland has had a reputation of being a pioneer in gender equality, which is strengthened by the collective memory of involving women in parliament as early as 1907. I argue that Finland's collective memory of being a frontrunner in gender equality affects how gender equality is seen in Finland today and therefore, influences people to think gender equality has been achieved and does not need to be worked on anymore. This results in there being a lower threshold for citizens to relate their experiences to gender equality, thus creating a mindset that gender equality has been achieved and does not have to be worked on anymore.

Next, I will shortly discuss Finland's work history to illustrate that despite women being in the workforce for a long time, there are still inequalities that women face, which further adds to the discussion of Finland and gender equality.

To understand restaurant work in Finland, next I will briefly discuss the available literature on it as well as illustrate the gender equality with statistics available. It is important to note that no academic research was available at the time of writing this thesis, therefore I will draw from college-level theses written about Finland and restaurants to add context for my research and discuss the available research done on gender equality and restaurants in Finland.

In her college-level Thesis, Viitaniemi (2022) researched harassment in the tourism-, restaurant- and hospitality industry in Finland. While her aim was to research all three industries, a majority of the respondents were from the restaurant industry, thus proving to be valuable for my research. Out of the 217 respondents, 185 were from the restaurant industry and out of them 144 were women. Out of the 144 women, 99 had faced harassment in their workplace. Out of all 217 respondents, 145 or 66.8 % reported that they had experienced harassment when working in the tourism, restaurant or hospitality industry in Finland (Viitaniemi, 2022: 32-33). Viitaniemi argues that her findings are similar to that of Service Union United (PAM) as in their own study 58% of people working in the tourism, restaurant or hospitality industry in Finland responded that they had experienced harassment (PAM: 2020 in Viitaniemi, 2022: 32). These findings are in line with previously discussed work culture in professional kitchens and how women are perceived there.

Another college-level thesis by Polón (2021) researched women in leadership roles and their experiences working in professional kitchens to understand gender equality from their point of view. This was done by interviewing six women in leadership roles in different restaurants. In her interviews she found that none of the participants felt that gender equality is fulfilled in restaurants

(Polón, 2021: 32), which could be seen for example in salary negotiations and in the difficulties in women rising to leaderships roles due to gender expectations (Polón, 2021: 38). All her participants agreed that it is easier for men to rise in a kitchen hierarchy than for women: men were seen as being friends with one another outside of work, which helped in getting promotions, whereas women's possible children were seen as obstacles for promotions (Polón, 2021: 33). Here it can be seen how gender expectations and stereotypes are re-produced in a professional kitchen environment. However, participants also said that there have been positive steps taken in recent years in making restaurants more gender equal (Polón, 2021: 32), even though Polón does not give examples of these in her thesis. The aim here is to bring a Finnish perspective from the available literature on restaurant work. While no broad generalizations can be drawn, literature here suggests that gender equality has not been achieved in restaurants in Finland.

The aim of this chapter was to introduce the Nordic Paradox, gendered work and their history in Finland to add to the overall understanding of how gender equality is viewed in Finland. By discussing the Nordic paradox, I have shown that while Finland is known for being a pioneer in gender equality, there are still high rates of violence against women present. I have shown that Finland has a reputation of being gender equal that gets re-produced because of memory politics that serve this narrative. Additionally, gender inequalities can be observed in the workforce: women make up a majority of part-time and non-standard work and face barriers to get a permanent work position as there are expectations of women leaving the workforce due to the expectation of pregnancy and parental leave.

2.4 Why to Study a Foodservice Kitchen

As shown earlier in this chapter, professional kitchens are male-dominated workplaces with odd hours and long physical shifts. These working conditions, the working culture, and gendered expectations create barriers for women to enter, and if they get hired, they still must prove to their

male-coworkers that they are fit to do the job. Research on female chefs' work-life balance shows that work-life balance is nonexistent, and if they want to start a family, they are faced with three choices: delaying or forgoing motherhood, leaving the kitchen altogether or adapting either work or home to balance out the two. This shows that current literature focuses on evening restaurants and women's experiences working in them and the barriers the working conditions in these types of restaurants create for women to enter.

As Finland is known for being a pioneer in gender equality, in my research I want to examine a restaurant kitchen in Finland, to research gender equality in a restaurant kitchen in Finland, to add to the overall understanding of gender equality in Finland.

My research took place in Tampere. Finland as a country is known for being a pioneer in gender equality. However, as research illustrates, the more statistics on violence against women, gender and work gets investigated, the more gender inequalities can be observed. Therefore, by researching a professional kitchen in Finland I want to add to the discussion of gender equality in working culture in Finland.

Most of the current literature on the topic is based in the United States of America and focuses specifically in fine dining restaurants, hence in my research I want to add to the current literature by researching a foodservice kitchen based in Finland. As Finland is known for being a pioneer in gender equality, I want to add to the understanding of gender equality by asking the following research questions:

1. *How is a foodservice kitchen different from an evening restaurant?*
2. *How can work-life balance be interpreted in a foodservice kitchen?*
3. *How does this study add to the understanding of gender equality in Finland?*

3. Theorizing Women's Place in the Workplace

Rosabeth Moss Kanter is a Professor at Harvard Business School who specializes in strategy, innovation and leadership for change. While her work is mostly focused on business and leadership, her highly influential monograph *Men and Women of the Corporation* investigates organizational and individual factors that contribute to women's successes and disadvantages in the workplace (Harvard Business School, n.d). While originally written in 1977 and re-published in 1993, the monograph is still relevant today and has been used by for example Harris and Giuffre (2015) to discuss women's position in professional kitchens. Similarly Joan Acker's (1990) paper on organizations and gender was heavily influenced by this monograph. Kanter's and Acker's writings handle women's limited roles in the workplace and have been used by different scholars to discuss women in professional kitchens. These will be discussed in further detail below and how their writings guide the theoretical approach of my thesis.

3.1 Tokenism and Women Working in Professional Kitchens

So tokens are, ironically, both highly visible as people who are different and yet not permitted the individuality of their own unique, non- stereotypical characteristics (Kanter, 1993: 211)

In her monograph, Kanter (1993) writes about her observations in an American corporation given the pseudonym Industrial Supply Corporation (Indsco) where she did ethnographic research in the 1970s. From these observations and interviews emerged her theory on men, women and how power is distributed in a corporation. My thesis will focus on her writings on tokens to illustrate women's limited roles in male-dominated fields.

Tokens, the few in an otherwise homogenous group, are a rarity, and must, therefore, play by different rules than others in the group, as they become seen as representatives of their group (Kanter, 1993: 208-209). In a male-dominated workplace this can be seen for example in how women get treated, expectations put on them and the way it affects their own behavior: everything they do is seen as representing “how women perform” (Kanter, 1993: 214) instead of how they as individuals perform. Examples of tokens include a person of color in an all-white setting or women in male-dominated workplaces.

Harris and Giuffre (2015: 98) draw from Kanter’s tokenism to argue that tokens get stereotyped easier than dominants. They found this to be true in kitchens as well, because one male chef’s actions were not extended to all men. They give the example of a male chef being known for losing his temper in the kitchen, which was not overgeneralized to mean that all male chefs were assumed to act this way. However, one isolated instance of a female chef crying at work gets extended to all female chefs, resulting in the assumption that women lack the strength to work in a kitchen (Harris & Giuffre, 2015: 98).

Kanter (1993: 208-209) identified four main groups in her study consisting of dominants and tokens: uniform groups, skewed groups, tilted groups and balanced groups. Uniform groups only have one type of person or one specific social type within themselves and have therefore a typological ratio of 100:0. The group may have its own variations but is considered homogenous based on external status, such as race, sex or ethnicity (Kanter, 1993: 208). Uniform groups are for example a workplace that consists of only men.

Skewed groups are those who have a majority of one type over another up to a ratio of around 85:15. The majority type is labeled as “dominants” since they control the group and its culture in enough ways (Kanter, 1993: 208). Kanter (1993: 208) calls the few of another type in a skewed

group “tokens”, as they are more than often seen and treated as representatives of their type, as symbols instead of individuals. She explains that even if a skewed group is numerically small and there are two tokens present, it is difficult for them to create an alliance and become powerful in the group (Kanter, 1993: 208-209).

Tilted groups are more balanced with a ratio of about 65:35 dominants and tokens. In tilted groups the differences between dominants and tokens are less exaggerated and their relationship is seen more as between majority and minority instead of between dominants and tokens. In other words, the minority members in the group are seen less as tokens by the majority members if compared to a skewed group. The minority members may also have allies with one another and have a better chance of affecting the dominant culture in the group, than tokens in skewed groups do (Kanter, 1993: 208-209).

Lastly, when the ratio is about 60:40 to 50:50, a group becomes balanced, which is reflected in the culture and interaction between group members. In a balanced group there are no tokens or dominants and members are seen as individuals (Kanter, 1993: 209). In her monograph, Kanter (1993: 209-210) observed the characteristics of the second group type, skewed group, to have dominated the behavior and treatment of women at Indsco. In these male-dominated work contexts, the few women that enter become tokens - Kanter divides their experiences into three perceptual tendencies: visibility, contrast and assimilation, which will be discussed in further detail.

First and foremost, tokens get attention. They stand out more than the rest of the group; in other words, they have higher *visibility* (Kanter, 1993: 210). In male-dominated kitchen environments this means that any woman entering gets noticed immediately as males are seen as the norm. Secondly, tokens can be observed through contrast (Kanter, 1993: 210). In homogenous groups, the common culture and type may never be observed as it is taken for granted. However, the

presence of one or two people with different social characteristics makes this more prominent resulting in “polarization and exaggeration of difference” (Kanter, 1993: 210). In other words, the dominants in the group become more aware of their similarities as well as their differences from the tokens. To preserve their commonality, the group attempts to keep the token slightly outside and exaggerate the differences between them and the token (Kanter, 1993: 210-211). Lastly, tokens can be observed through assimilation, and it involves the use of “stereotypes, or familiar generalizations about a person’s social type” (Kanter, 1993: 211). To fit the generalization, characteristics of a token tend to be distorted, and they are more easily stereotyped than dominants (Kanter, 1993: 211). In professional kitchens these can be seen for example from the stereotypes about women “just going to get pregnant and leave” that make male chefs reluctant to even hire female chefs in the first place (Harris & Giuffre, 2010a: 66). If they got a job, their male colleagues would test them to see if they were capable to fit into a masculine work culture by for example joking about sexual stories in their presence. Some female chefs even described that their male colleagues viewed them as “invaders” (Harris & Giuffre, 2010a: 66). The male colleagues of the female chefs behaved in typical ways that dominants behave around tokens: stereotyping them and attempting to keep them away as to preserve their dominant culture.

Kanter (1993) argues that in addition to representing themselves, the women at Indsco also had to think about how other women at the company might be perceived by others. One of the female managers faced a dilemma when a female assistant wanted to go back to the secretarial ranks, even though she had recently been promoted from those ranks. The manager feared this would jeopardize the claims she had made for mobility, since letting her assistant return to a lower-rank position might result in her having to admit that a woman who was given an opportunity to raise up the ranks had failed (Kanter, 1993: 216). This illustrates how one token’s behavior affects all other tokens’ opportunities. This can also be seen in tokens’ relationships with one another: when

a female manager was passed over for a promotion, she became scrutinized by lower-level women. They felt the manager did not push for the promotion aggressively enough and were worried it would affect their career prospects as well (Kanter, 1993: 215). Evidence here suggests that token's actions do not happen in a vacuum, instead they are interconnected which puts them in a position where they must think about the group they represent at work.

In contrast, some of the female higher ups at Indsco enjoyed their only-woman status since they felt it gave them an advantage: they were a rarity and were therefore easily noticeable which they felt gave them an edge at the company. These women were not worried about representing women as a whole nor felt any pressure for being a token. Quite the opposite, they worked to keep other women away so as to keep their only-woman position by criticizing any potential new hires or by subtly undercutting a prospective female colleague (Kanter, 1993: 220). This goes to show how women's relationships with one another are discouraged in organizations.

Evidence here suggests that male-dominated organizations, especially professional kitchens, are structured in a way that puts women at a disadvantage resulting in them becoming tokens and ending up in a position where "they could not afford to stumble" (Kanter, 1993: 214) having to not only work harder to be recognized but also to counteract the stereotypes and expectations put on them due to their gender. Moreover, as tokens, they are seen to be representing all women, adding extra pressure on them in the workplace.

For my research, I want to understand the relationships between chefs in a foodservice kitchen while bearing in mind tokenism. Since literature suggests professional kitchens to be male-dominated and tokenism happening to the few women working there, understanding tokenism is crucial in appropriately representing the experiences and behavior of my participants. Therefore, great attention will be paid to the ratio of men and women that works in the foodservice kitchen

that I will be doing my ethnography in to see if any groups are formed as suggested by Rosabeth Moss Kanter.

3.2 Ideal Worker and Gendered Organizations

To say that an organization, or any other analytical unit, is gendered means that advantage and disadvantage, exploitation and control, action and emotion, meaning and identity, are patterned through and in terms of a distinction between male and female, masculine and feminine (Acker 1990: 146).

Joan Acker (1924-2016) was the first female Sociology Professor at the University of Oregon where she taught for almost 30 years. During her time there, she transformed the landscape for women's studies by advancing courses that studied gender as well as establishing the university's Center for the Study of Women in Society (Halnon, n.d.).

Acker (1990: 143) drew from Moss Kanter's work on the corporation to illustrate that gender differences in organizational behavior are a result of structure, not the individual's behavior. She argued that in organizational logic, both jobs and hierarchies are abstract and have no occupants, no human bodies nor gender (Acker, 1990: 149). However, the abstract job can become concrete if there is a worker. In this logic, filling the abstract job is done by disembodied workers who only exist for the job. Therefore, the worker cannot have any other obligations that could interrupt or disturb the job, or at the very least, cannot have outside obligations that could affect the job. Acker (1990: 149) highlights that the closest real-life worker that fits the description of a disembodied worker is a man whose life is centered around his full-time job who has a wife or another woman taking care of his personal needs and his children. In other words, a female worker is not even considered in organizational logic as it is assumed she has obligations outside of work and thus, cannot commit to her job. She therefore argues that even the concept of "a job" is a gendered concept, as it showcases the division of labor: women are expected to do unpaid labor by taking

care of the home while men are expected to be in paid employment (Acker: 1990: 149). As a result, women are expected to be responsible of the domestic life, and thus unable to conform to the demands of the job (Acker, 1990: 152).

As was previously seen in the works of Gary Alan Fine (2008) and Harris and Giuffre (2015; 2010b) chefs work long hours in the kitchen at irregular hours, making it hard to combine with childcare. Therefore, an ideal worker for kitchens is someone who can commit to the odd hours and have someone else take care of the home and any potential children. As was discussed in Harris and Giuffre's (2010b) research, female chefs had to negotiate work-life balance by delaying or forgoing motherhood, leaving the kitchen for a different job within the culinary industry or adapting either work or family life to balance the two which illustrates the ideal worker being a man, as the childcare responsibilities fall on the female chefs. In other words, Acker's (1990: 149) arguments on an ideal worker describe not only ideal worker organizations want to hire, but equally a chef in a professional kitchen.

Harris and Giuffre (2015: 169) use Joan Acker's ideal worker concept to explain the dilemma female chefs face: as women are expected to be responsible for childcare, they are already discriminated against during the hiring stage as it is assumed they cannot fully commit to their work. At the same time, if hired, they are expected to fully commit to their job and not have any family responsibilities (Harris & Giuffre, 2015: 169). Here it is seen how the concept of an ideal worker disadvantages female chefs already before being hired as well as after being hired.

Moreover, as an ideal worker and the concept of a job are both inherently gendered as they favor masculine characteristics in the workplace and feminine characteristics at home, Acker (1990: 149-150) argues that organizations are actually gendered, not gender neutral. Since organizations want workers that can commit to their work, ideal workers, and the concept of a job is seen to belong to men, she explains that the assumption of organizations being gender neutral disadvantages women

(Acker, 1990: 150-151). Here it can be seen how organizations upkeep gender roles and gender stereotypes by favoring masculinity and thus disadvantaging women's opportunities for work. It could be argued that as long as professional kitchens remain male-dominated, the masculine work culture will persist, and the male seen as the norm in professional kitchens further hindering women's opportunities to enter.

This section has discussed the critical theories and main concepts that will guide my thesis, tokenism, ideal workers gendered organizations. As I study in my thesis women in male-dominated workplaces, their experiences seen from the lens of a token is important to take into consideration and keep in mind throughout the writing process and analysis of data. Understanding gendered organizations and countering the assumption of them being gender-neutral is also vital in my thesis, as it unravels the gendered processes in organizations.

4. Research Methods, Data Collection and Ethical Considerations

Since I was interested in gender equality in a foodservice kitchen, I wanted to know what happens there during regular workdays. I conducted ethnographic research in a foodservice kitchen in Tampere, Finland by observing the workdays for four hours per day for a full workweek (Monday

through Friday). I felt it was important to understand the dynamics of the kitchen and any gendered differences from the worker's perspectives, therefore, I conducted short 5–10-minute interviews with each of them during my observation there as well. All data was collected during the observation period January 9th to January 13th 2023 resulting in 20 hours of recorded data in total. I use pseudonyms throughout the text for the site and its personnel.

4.1 Ethnography and Participant Observation in a Foodservice Kitchen

Vicki Smith is a professor of Sociology at the University of California specializing in inequality, employment and field methods. Her research focuses on changes in work and employment relationships with a focus on how inequalities are created and perpetuated by these changes (UCDavis, nd). As I am also researching inequalities in the workplace, her writings on ethnography will be utilized to illustrate why it was chosen as a research method. In her study on ethnographic approaches to work, Smith (2001: 221) argues that:

No single approach to the study of work has been more effective than the ethnographic in uncovering the tacit skills, the decision rules, the complexities the discretion and the control in jobs that have been labeled routine, unskilled and deskilled, marginal and even trivial.

She illustrates that researchers have been using the ethnographic method to explore and understand how workers do their jobs; how they react to setbacks, what tools they use for finishing their tasks on time and the relations between workers, supervisors and customers. Smith (2001: 224) also emphasizes ethnographic fieldwork that entails the researcher to work “side-by-side workers in their natural setting” as this gives the opportunity for the researcher to experience the same emotions and any physical pain that the workers endure during their everyday workdays – resulting in valuable and insightful data. Lastly, she concludes that due to its closeness to the participants

and their work environments, ethnographic research has advanced knowledge on work in the social sciences (Smith, 2001: 229).

I chose ethnography as a research method as it allowed me to take part in the participants' workdays and therefore, allowing me to observe how they interact with one another and how their everyday workdays look like. While for example Harris and Giuffre (see for example 2015) conducted interviews to understand women's experiences in professional kitchens, Gary Allan Fine (2008) did ethnographic research to understand professional kitchens from a sociological point of view.

Alan Bryman (1947-2017) was an Emeritus Professor at the Business School in University of Leicester before which he spent 31 years in the Department of Social Sciences at Loughborough University. His main area of research was leadership, issues in organizational sociology and social research methods (Parker, 2017). Thus, his best-selling book *Social Research Methods* will be utilized and discussed in this chapter.

Ethnography and participant observation allows the researcher to involve themselves for an extended time in the social life of those they study (Bryman, 2016: 422) to experience, investigate and represent them (Emerson *et al*, 2001). Bryman (2016: 424) emphasizes that ethnography entails more than just observing: it is both “a research process and the written outcome of the research”. This is done by making written accounts and descriptions of what they have observed both in the form of fieldnotes during the observation period as well as the research paper itself after the observation period is over (Emerson *et al*, 2001). By observing the daily work life of the workers in a foodservice kitchen, I will gain insight into their typical workdays and can therefore write my thesis to represent what I have observed.

It is interesting to point out though, that Ditton (1977 in Bryman, 2016: 426) did his ethnography as a covert observer in a bakery and ran into issues with writing down notes: he would try and

write down everything he remembered after a shift and write supporting rough notes throughout the day. However, he could not do this in front of people, so he went to the bathroom for this. But ended up going there so many times his co-workers got concerned to the point where Ditton had to tell them the real reason he was working at the bakery (Ditton, 1977 in Bryman, 2016: 426). As I wanted to avoid any such issues, I did my ethnography as an overt researcher utilizing a voice recorder.

Bryman's (2016: 437) term "non-participating observer with interaction" with an overt role describes my status during the participant observation the best, as my status as a researcher was known by the participants but I did not participate in the work in the kitchen. As I collected my data by carrying a voice recording device with me in the kitchen and wanted to observe the kitchen instead of participating in its day-to-day functions, I wanted to take an overt role during my observation period. Before the observation, I was prepared to do small tasks, like washing dishes or helping with carrying produce, something that happened to Fine (2008) during his ethnography in professional kitchens. However, as my help was not needed, my role as an overt non-participating observer with interaction remained throughout the entire ethnography period.

I utilized a voice recording device as much as I could during my observation period. This way I could focus on observing the kitchen, its dynamics and how the workers interacted with each other while I was there, and transcribe the voice notes afterwards when I got home. Since foodservice kitchens are big, I could move around and position myself in places where I did not disturb anyone's work. This also allowed me to follow any conversations that were happening in real time and get closer so that the voice recorder would record it. However, as kitchens are noisy and foodservice kitchens big, I could not fully rely on my voice recorder though. There were instances where I was on one side of the kitchen and a conversation between workers happened on the other side that my voice recorder could not catch. I had to keep moving to different spots in the kitchen,

trying to follow conversations while being aware of not disturbing anyone's work by being in their way. Due to the loud machinery, this was not always possible, and I found for myself two possible spots for conducting the observation where the machinery did not interfere with the recording device's ability to record speech. Due to this, I wrote down fieldnotes as well.

Fieldnotes were mainly used for jotting down my own feelings and thoughts as well as some initial analytic thoughts during and immediately after the observation (Bryman, 2016: 440). In its essence, fieldnotes are writings that have been produced either in close proximity to or in "the field" (Emerson *et al*, 2001: 353). Since fieldnotes are written accounts of places, people and events, they become a form of representation of what has happened. Thus, they can be reviewed, studied and read again and again (Emerson *et al*, 2016). Since I was not able to record every single conversation in the kitchen, I wrote down anything interesting I noticed, for example all the differences I noticed with the participatory restaurant and my own experiences working in kitchens, as well as what the current literature suggests and what I should pay attention to during my time in the kitchen. These included examples of discussion topics between the workers, masculine and feminine behavior I noticed, possible interviews questions and any examples of stereotypical chef behavior that was discussed in my chapter on women in the kitchen.

Emerson and colleagues (2001) highlight the selectiveness of field notes: the ethnographer writes down what they find significant and leaves out what they find insignificant and fieldnotes can therefore never show the full picture of events. According to them, fieldnotes' intention is to provide descriptive accounts of what has been observed and the researcher's personal experiences and reactions (Emerson *et al*, 2001). Due to my own substantial work experience in kitchens, I tried to utilize it as much as possible in my fieldnotes by writing down anything out of the ordinary I observed.

Due to my substantial experience working in restaurants, especially kitchens, this will give me an insider status in this research, which will be taken into consideration throughout the whole research. An insider will be defined as a research situation “... where the investigator studies herself, those like her, her family or her community” (Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 2013: 251). Having an insider status makes me knowledgeable about the lingo used in kitchens and probably made the participants more relaxed and trusting of me when conducting the research as well. I paid great attention to remain objective throughout the research by using Wilkinson’s and Kitzinger’s (2013) strategies for managing one’s own experience when conducting insider research: minimizing and utilizing. When conducting face-to-face research with the participants, I sought out to minimize, or “ignore” (Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 2013: 252) my own knowledge about kitchens and give space for the participants to explain things their own way. The insider status, however, was utilized “strategically” (Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 2013: 252) by for example using my own contacts in the industry to find participants. Lastly, I will reflect on my own position as a researcher who is researching others by listening, taking into consideration and not ignoring anything said or only hearing what I want to hear to get the data I am expecting (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002).

I conducted 14 structured interviews (Bryman, 2016: 198) during my participant observation, for which the list of questions can be found in Appendix 1. These were conducted on the last two days of my observation as part of my ethnography. Everyone who worked in the kitchen on those two days participated in the interviews and answered the same nine open-ended questions (Bryman, 2016: 244). I found that incorporating interviews was extremely useful for my data collection, as it gave me the opportunity to get to know the participants better and make sure I had not misunderstood anything during my time I spent observing them. I found that asking them about the differences between their current work to any possible previous restaurants job and if gender has any impact in the restaurant industry to be especially useful for my analysis. This provided me

with a deeper understanding of how they view their current work, and I did not have to rely solely on my own observations. Moreover, they brought up aspects of their job I had not even considered, for example pre-determined schedules and the impact it has on their work-life balance. Asking them about gender in the restaurants industry provoked interesting discussions, as most did not consider it to matter or had not thought of it before. After I told them about my research and what literature argues about women's experiences in restaurant kitchens, some seemed shocked, and everyone assured me they had never encountered harassment or different behavior by peers due to gender.

4.2 Data Collection and Reflexive Thematic Analysis in a Foodservice Kitchen

I step into the kitchen for the first time, the song Levoton Tuhkimo is playing on the radio, and the chefs are preparing food for the lunchline. A new workweek has started and the noises of cutting vegetables, industrial ovens and chefs catching up after the weekend fill the air. The restaurant workers are preparing catering orders and running food from the kitchen to the lunchline. I have not stepped foot into a professional kitchen in years, but I feel right at home here as the familiar smells of cooked meat and grease fill the air. I immediately notice the average age of the workers is over 40 and that this kitchen is completely different to what I am used to: there are no hungover 20-year-old university students bragging about who they had sex with last night or discussing who is the hottest staff member. I cannot notice anyone stressing or the restaurant being understaffed. Instead, the chefs here seem professional; no one is discussing anything vulgar, instead they are catching up with each other after the weekend and focusing on their work rather than goofing off. This is when I knew my findings would be something completely different to what I had expected, and I could not wait to see what my week at Hannan Ruoka would be like.

I found the participatory restaurant Hanna Ruoka in November 2022 by posting on my own social networks on Facebook and Instagram about my research. A family friend saw it and told me I should contact Hannan Ruoka's restaurant manager Kiia. After contacting Kiia via email, we set up a meeting in Hannan Ruoka for Wednesday November 30 at 1pm after the lunch rush. This gave me the chance to see the kitchen and meet the staff to tell them more about my research. This meeting turned out to be crucial for when I started my data collection in January: due to high security everyone needs a badge to enter premises, so I was given a visitor badge to take with me when I started my data collection January 9th.

Reflexive thematic analysis was chosen to be used to analyze my data as it takes my positionality as a researcher into consideration, the themes emerge from the data itself instead of predetermined codes and it is used in diverse ways within qualitative research (Braun & Clarke, 2022). In other words, reflexive thematic analysis is a flexible way of analyzing my data, as I will let my data guide my analysis.

I transcribed all recordings, and I started the process already during the data collection period, so that I had time to make any changes, if necessary, when observing in Hannan Ruoka. This made me notice that some of the speech was inaudible in certain spots in the kitchen due to loud machinery, so I knew to avoid them for the rest of my data collection.

After the transcriptions of the interviews were finished, I read them over several times as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2022) to get to know my data. I started by highlighting anything interesting the participants had said and anything that stood out to me with a process called "immersion" (Braun & Clarke, 2022: 57). I reread my transcripts several times and listened to my voice recordings to familiarize myself with my data as well to start thinking about analytical ideas. Some initial theories included Goffmann's theory on performance, Hochschild's on emotional labor and

social class discourse. Even though these were not final theories, they still guided me towards the theoretical concepts used in my thesis.

After immersion, I started coding my data. This was done by first making a separate document where I gathered everything I had previously highlighted and then starting to name each portion of text (Bryman, 2016; Braun & Clarke, 2022). In my initial codes I had gathered examples of balancing, kitchen stereotypes, emotional labor, Goffmann's theory on performance, how Hannan Ruoka differs from evening restaurants and the female workers mother-like behavior towards me. After I had coded my data, I moved on to elaborating my codes into themes, by looking for common concepts, ideas and elements that they shared (Bryman, 2016; Braun & Clarke, 2022). At this stage I noticed that some of my codes were not needed to answer my research questions, whereas some codes could be combined under one theme. After the initial coding, three major themes emerged: how Hannan Ruoka differs from evening restaurants, emotional labor and the concept of balancing the number of men and women in a professional kitchen. I reviewed and developed my themes as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2022) by reading my data and then making sure my themes appropriately represent my data and answer my research questions. At this stage I also started considering the wider context of my themes by examining how they relate to the existing knowledge in the field as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2022). After the review, I noticed that emotional labor was not relevant to my study, as the research took place in a kitchen away from customers, even though it felt at times that emotional labor was needed to organize the workers and make sure no one's feeling were hurt. However, I had many examples of how Hannan Ruoka differs from evening restaurants, that from those codes I was able to develop a second theme; work-life balance in a foodservice kitchen, as it was discussed by many of the participants and was visible in their everyday workdays. I also developed the idea of balancing to a broader theme of how gender equality is understood in Finland.

4.3 Ethical Considerations

On the first data collection day, all participants were given consent forms to sign and a privacy notice detailing how data is going to be stored (see Appendix 2- 3). This was to ensure everyone was informed about my research; how I will protect everyone's identity with the use of pseudonyms and store all data securely behind passwords. This also gave them a chance to ask me any questions before I started recording with my voice recorder.

The first two days of my observations, I focused on recording as much as possible and staying out of everyone's way while getting to understand the kitchen, its schedules and its workers. This was a conscious decision made by me, as I wanted as little interference with everyone's work as possible and to give them a chance to get used to having me in the kitchen before initiating conversations.

By the third day, everyone had gotten used to me and they started to include me in their conversations and ask me questions. As the participants had initiated this contact with me, I felt more comfortable in engaging in their discussions during the rest of my observations and initiating conversations. This reduced the threshold for conducting the interviews smaller, as they were already familiar and used to me from the previous days.

I only used my voice recorder in the kitchen and turned it off if I had to leave the kitchen to go to an area where there were people who were not part of my study. There were also instances where people who were not part of my study entered the kitchen, for example delivery drivers. In these instances, I turned off my voice recorder to ensure that only people who had given their consent to my study, were recorded.

5. Analysis

After gathering the data it was transcribed, and reflexive thematic analysis was applied suggested by Braun and Clarke (2022) to analyze my data. By allowing the themes to emerge from the data instead of using predetermined code to pace this process along, my data was finalized to three themes. These three themes came to form as follows: “How is ‘Hannan Ruoka’ different from evening restaurants”, “Work-Life Balance in a foodservice kitchen” and “How does my research relate to the understanding of equality in Finland”. These will be discussed in further detail in the following paragraphs.

5.1 Hannan Ruoka in Comparison to evening restaurants

Hannan Ruoka is a foodservice kitchen owned by an IT company (IT-Fierce). The kitchen staff includes one 60-year-old restaurant manager Kiia, one 46-year-old restaurant supervisor Noora, 7 chefs, one 28-year-old dishwasher and seven restaurant workers. The chefs are aged 23-62 and have varying responsibilities in the kitchen: Sanna, Reetta and Kimmo are responsible for preparing the catering orders the kitchen gets, Kerttu for the salads and cold cuts for the lunchline and Alex, Daniel and Gabriel for the breakfast and warm foods for the lunchline. For the restaurant workers, their responsibilities and shifts change each week according to a rotation schedule. These

varying responsibilities shift between being responsible for the tills, lunchline or delivering catering orders. The rotation schedule shows what time they work, which position they are working and what their cleaning responsibilities are for that week. All seven restaurant workers were women aged 48-60 and they were all present during the data collection process.

Kiia and one of the chefs, Gabriel, were not at work the week I was there and another chef, Kerttu, started her holiday on Tuesday, hence she was only there on Monday. I got to meet almost the entire staff during my week at Hannan Ruoka apart from these exceptions. When Kerttu was gone, Sanna, Kimmo and Reetta took turns making salads and other cold cuts for the lunchline whenever they had a chance to move from their respective responsibilities. As Gabriel was gone, Alex and Daniel shared his work between themselves. January is usually a quiet period in Hannan Ruoka, hence the chefs were not bothered by the extra workload from these absences.

Hannan Ruoka is open Monday-Friday 6.30am-3pm and seats 330 people in their dining room. In addition to serving breakfast and lunch, they offer catering services that include coffee and tea for meetings and cakes for events. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, they served over 1000 customers per day, but now, as working from home has become more common, they serve around 700 customers per day. All the chefs start work at 6am and finish around 2pm. The dishwasher will come around 8:30-9am and the restaurant workers start around 7-8:30am depending on which shift they have that week. There is a staff meeting every day at 8:30am where every member of staff is to be present. In these meetings Kiia informs everyone how many customers they had the day before and discusses any issues or news they need to know for the day. As Kiia was not there, Noora ran these meetings. The meetings are held in the kitchen and only last a few minutes, after which most of the staff will go on their breaks to the dining room to have breakfast together. The kitchen is busiest from 11am until 12pm when most customers have their lunch break. That is when the chefs are busy preparing food, and the restaurant workers make sure the lunchline is not

lacking anything. After 12pm, it is again quieter and that is when the workers go on their lunch breaks and start preparation for the next workday.

As Hannan Ruoka is a breakfast and lunch restaurant for the people working in IT-Fierce it differs drastically from evening restaurants (see for example Garrigos *et al*, 2019; Fine, 2008; Harris & Giuffre, 2010b). The most prevailing difference is its opening hours. While IT-Fierce has a wide range of staff members working in different departments, they all work during regular business hours, which is Monday through Friday. Hannan Ruoka follows the same work schedule with its opening hours and therefore the workers at Hannan Ruoka work everyday Monday to Friday, leaving them to have weekends and public holidays off, something quite rare in the kitchen industry. Consequently, the people working at Hannan Ruoka discussed how these predetermined schedules contributed positively to their work-life balance.

5.2 Work-Life Balance in Hannan Ruoka

As Fine (2008) observed, scheduling for restaurants that do table service can be unpredictable as rush hours and slow times are dependent on customers that can come in through the door at any given moment. One of the chefs, Daniel, has worked at Hannan Ruoka for over 10 years and has over 20 years of experience working in various restaurant kitchens. All his previous jobs were in evening restaurants, which meant that he worked until late at night. As he got older and now has a young daughter to take care of, he wanted a job that suited his daughter's needs better and that is why he started working at Hannan Ruoka. When asked about the differences between his previous workplaces and Hannan Ruoka, Daniel said:

Well, of course the quantity of food is bigger cuz this a lunch restaurant ... Of course, it's different. Workdays are different but very much alike. Because of the schedules we have here. We are not dependent on who is walking through the door.

Unlike evening restaurants that serve food to order and dedicate a lot of time to table service, Daniel means that at Hannan Ruoka food is served buffet-style and that customers can take food from the foodline at their own pace. Therefore, chefs do not have to cook everything to order and plate them for the customer, instead they cook large amounts of food that the restaurant workers then set out for customers to take. As their customers are IT-Fierce's workers who have breakfast before they start work and lunch during their lunchbreak, this makes schedules predictable in Hannan Ruoka. In contrast to evening restaurants where customers may come in and spend several hours in the restaurant to enjoy leisure time and sometimes multiple courses, in Hannan Ruoka the customers have limited time on them due to their own work schedules and break times.

The supervisor, Noora, highlights that they know their customers, unlike in evening restaurants where the customer can be anyone. Most of their daily customers are the same people from IT-Fierce that come to Hannan Ruoka for their breakfast and lunch. Noora explains that their familiarity with their customers helps with predictability, as they are aware of any food allergies and preferences of their customers, which in turn helps with estimating how much food should be ordered and prepared. She also explained different trends that affect the number of customers they get, for example people preferring to work from home on Fridays or different holiday seasons which means less customers when people are on their vacations. Their familiarity with their customers helps Hannan Ruoka's workers to prepare for these trends and adjust their order volumes and food preparations accordingly.

The average age of the staff members in Hanna Ruoka at the time of data collection was 48 years and most of them had families of their own. Due to this, work-life balance was brought up in interviews, as combining family life with working late had proven to be difficult for several of the participants. Like Daniel, many said they used to work in restaurants that were open until late at night and due to having children, they wanted to change to a workplace that was open during hours

that allowed them to spend more time with their families and that is how they started working at Hannan Ruoka.

Their experiences are in line with Harris and Giuffre's (2010b) findings on women changing their workplace to better suit the responsibility brought on by having a family. However, in their research they found that women leave the kitchen altogether to a position within the culinary field that has standard hours, whereas my participants continued their work in restaurants but as they found one with standard hours. In other words, Hanna Ruoka's employees did not have to compromise when changing workplaces, or change their career trajectory away from the kitchen industry.

Moreover, Harris and Giuffre's (2010b) research was only focused on female chefs and their choices with work-life balance conflict, whereas in my research I also investigated the male chefs and the restaurant workers of Hannan Ruoka. Therefore, it is of note to highlight that it was not only the female participants who expressed wanting to find a job that better fits their family's needs, since the male participants expressed the same concern. This will be further discussed in the "5.3 Gender Equality in Hannan Ruoka" subchapter.

To conclude this discussion, food service kitchens like Hannan Ruoka are vastly different from evening restaurants and do not experience the same challenges as evening restaurants do. From having predictable schedules and routines to knowing their customers, Hannan Ruoka's employees feel like their work-life balance is better since switching to work there. The work hours at Hannan Ruoka enable the workers to have regular work hours that follow standard office hours, which made their personal and work life more manageable and predictable. The workers in Hannan Ruoka seemed to have found a perfect combination when switching workplaces there: they get to stay working in a restaurant while getting to work during regular office hours.

5.3 Gender Relations and the idea of “Balancing”

When I conducted my interviews, I finished them by asking if they think that gender has an impact in the restaurant industry (see Appendix 1). Based on my own experiences as well as the literature, I was expecting the participants to give affirmative answers and maybe give examples of sexual harassment or explain the physical demands of the job or even how women must prove themselves in this industry. Instead, most answered negatively to this, but then continued by saying that they would much rather work with men or that men are needed to balance the kitchen. The consensus was that men are needed in the kitchen to balance out the atmosphere, as in their experience, too many women lead to yacking [my translation] in the kitchen.

When Noora was starting her career at Hannan Ruoka, there were no men in the kitchen, and that once they got male chefs in the kitchen, it was visible in the work atmosphere:

I think men take it easier, like the job and women are the ones that start to nitpick about things... and now that there are more of them [men] it does such wonders for our community to have them. And then at times they say, “Now ladies, it is enough complaining about this”. It has helped.

During the discussion about men in the kitchen, an example from Thursday’s morning meeting came up: Noora had brought up the issue of morning dishes and highlighted that it is everyone’s responsibility to help clear them in the morning, not only one person. There is a negative reaction from the restaurant workers, and they start talking amongst themselves about how difficult achieving this goal would be. After listening to this for a while, Alex, one of the male chefs says in a loud and joking manner:

Alex: But if at least *someone* goes there [the dishwasher area] damn it to do something so...

This is then met by laughter and agreement after which Alex jokingly says: Yeah, darn it!

This clearly lightens the mood, and it is agreed that naturally everyone is busy but even putting one load of dishes on while walking past is a huge help to the kitchen. This highlights why Noora has noticed that having more men in Hannan Ruoka helps balance the atmosphere and lessens the nitpicking from the women as the men take it less seriously, and do not shy away from saying things as they are.

What was interesting to me, was that both the women and men in Hannan Ruoka discussed the need for men to balance out the kitchen and that having too many women leads to yacking. In other words, women seemed to have agreed that they are known for yacking and needed more men to balance out the workplace, instead of supporting one another. Webber and Giuffre (2019) have researched this phenomenon in greater detail. To add to the already existing literature of inequality in the workplace and to showcase an under researched topic, they researched barriers to women's support for each other at work from a sociological point of view. In their study they found three barriers: negative stereotypes about women at work, lack of recognition of gender inequality at work, and the devaluation of women's working relationships with other women (Webber & Giuffre, 2019).

Webber and Giuffre (2019, 3-4) draw from previously discussed gendered organizations and tokenism to illustrate that work conditions create barriers for women to be supportive of one another and gendered expectations do not promote women to be supportive of one another as masculine traits are more valued in the workplace. A second barrier to women's solidarity in the workplace is the lack of recognition of gender inequality by workers. Studies show that some

workers assume that gender is irrelevant to work success and that gender inequality does not impact women's accomplishments at work (Webber & Giuffre, 2019: 4) and therefore, for example moving up in a workplace is simply "a choice away" (Webber & Giuffre, 2019: 5). They show that the third barrier to women's solidarity is the "devaluation of women's work relationships, affinity groups, and networks" as masculine qualities provide more status and power at work than feminine qualities, resulting in working conditions that discourage women's support for one another (Webber & Giuffre, 2019: 5).

While women supporting other women at work were not explicitly discussed with my participants, similarities between Webber and Giuffre's (2019) and the findings in the data can still be drawn to understand gender relations in Hannan Ruoka. Firstly, negative stereotypes about women yacking were brought up by several of the participants, even women themselves. This shows the harmfulness of gendered stereotypes, as women harm each other as well when making these comments. This in turn makes working with more men seem more appealing, which explains why they wanted more men to balance out the workplace.

Secondly, the lack of recognition of gender equality was not explicitly discussed with the participants, therefore I need to rely on my best interpretations from my observations and interviews with the participants. When asked if gender plays any difference in this line of work, Kimmo takes a moment to think before replying:

Well no... I mean no... I have always gotten along with everyone and... Well let's put it this way, in a previous job I had like a principle that I won't hire women [he laughs] But that is... We all got along with everyone. I mean this [referencing his previous job] was based on efficiency... you couldn't be away from work. Everything had to be efficient,

and you couldn't be away and then at some point we noticed that some are gone more than others.

While Kimmo is referring to his old workplace where he was in a supervisory position and responsible for hiring decisions, it still shows a discriminatory attitude towards women's hiring practices as well as a lack of recognition regarding gender equality. There also seems to be no data to negate that if he oversaw hiring practices at Hannan Ruoka, his principle of not hiring women would not carry on to this workplace as well.

Unfortunately, there are a lot of gendered layers to be unpacked from his answer, firstly he seems to have been describing Joan Acker's ideal worker, since in his old workplace they needed workers that do not miss work for any reason. In his experience women are more likely to have call in to work that they are not able to come in for their shift for various reasons; whether they themselves are sick or have a sick child to attend to. While his old workplace was not discussed in greater detail, tokenism can be noticed from his answer, as one woman's actions have affected his view on all women and then resulted in his principle on not hiring any women. This shows the lack of recognition of gender equality, as one of a few woman's actions affected every woman and were not given a chance for the job.

Lastly, the third barrier to women's solidarity is the "devaluation of women's work relationships, affinity groups, and networks" as masculine qualities provide more status and power at work than feminine qualities, resulting in working conditions that discourage women's support for one another (Webber & Giuffre, 2019: 5). This can be seen in my data in women putting other women down, instead of supporting one another, as there does not seem to be practices put in place to support women's relationships with one another at Hannan Ruoka. In other words, by preferring

to work with men my participants implicitly showed how masculine characteristics are preferred at work, thus disadvantaging women's position.

Through these arguments and sections of data, it can be seen that while no stereotypical gender relations were observed, interviews shed more light into the attitudes and thoughts of Hannan Ruoka's workers, as both men and women preferred working with men and felt that more men are needed in the workplace to balance it out. While I did not observe any token behavior or characteristics during my time at Hannan Ruoka, tokenism came up during my interviews with the workers of Hannan Ruoka. The female-male ratio at Hannan Ruoka at the time of data collection was 12-5 which according to Kanter (1993: 208-209), would make the group a tilted group: tilted groups are more balanced with a ratio of about 65:35 dominants and tokens and in Hannan Ruoka the ratio of women to men was about 70:30. While in tilted groups the differences between dominants and tokens are less exaggerated and their relationships is seen more as between majority and minority instead of dominants and tokens (Kanter, 1993: 208-209). Some token behavior could still be argued to have happened in Hannan Ruoka. As tokens, men were seen as representatives of their group, above all else. They were stereotyped to be more fun to work with as compared to women, they do not yack or take things as seriously at work. While in Kanter's study, most of the token women saw their token position negatively, in Hannan Ruoka it seems to be the exact opposite: men were seen as ideal co-workers and needed to balance out the work community. In other words, they were seen as their gender first and thus assumed to be a great addition to the work community.

When interviewing the supervisor Noora, it came up that Hannan Ruoka used to have less men working there and that having more men has balanced out the work community in a positive way. Here it can be seen that Hannan Ruoka used to be a skewed group, with considerably more women than men working there, that turned into tilted group as more men were hired, and the ratio became

more balanced. When Hannan Ruoka was still a skewed group, men were in a token status, and while Hannan Ruoka has moved to be a tilted group, it could be argued that men's token status has remained since. This can be seen in the way men as ideal co-workers were discussed and stereotyping them as being fun to work with in comparison to women who were described as yacking and being nitpicky. At the same time, these descriptions of women could be argued to be signs of tokenism as well, as women were seen as representatives of their gender as well and were described with stereotypical traits.

The gender relations in Hannan Ruoka follows the theory on gendered organizations and ideal worker, as men were favored as co-workers and masculine characteristics were preferred. While these were not observed by me, these preferences came up when interviewing the participants. Simultaneously, tokenism was not observed but came up in the interviews. While Hannan Ruoka's female-male ratio would indicate that it is a tilted group, the participants thoughts on ideal coworkers and preferences working with men, would indicate that both men and women are seen as tokens, as representatives of their gender. Thus, it can be argued these thoughts are a remainder of when Hannan Ruoka was still a skewed group.

To conclude, the gender relations in Hannan Ruoka can be interpreted to be similar to the state of gender equality in Finland: equal on the surface but discussing them further shows that gender stereotypes and expectations are ever-present in multiple dimensions. These will be discussed in further detail next to add to the understanding of gender equality in Finland.

5.4 Gender Equality and Foodservice Kitchen

I want to begin this part by posing the question, what can a foodservice kitchen tell us about Gender Equality in Finland? As was seen in the previous part, gendered stereotypes, some token behavior

and favoring men in the workplace could be observed. Next, I will discuss how these add to the understanding of Gender Equality in Finland.

Sanna, the 41-year old catering chef, became my right hand in conducting the interviews and getting the best possible data from the chefs. Since she had already approached me during breakfast to get to know more about my research, she was excited to be interviewed. In fact, she was the first person overall that I interviewed. After our interview, I summarized the current literature around my thesis topic to explain why I asked the questions I did. She was taken aback by this, since she had no idea women were treated so differently in the kitchen. She emphasized she had never experienced anything like that in her career as a chef and thanked me for taking the time to explain my research goals to her in more detail. After this, Sanna started taking initiative in organizing the interviews for me. Whenever it was calm in the kitchen and she knew the other chefs were not busy and could spare some time for an interview, she would tell me and point to a chef I should go to interview. This way, I avoided disturbing anyone in the middle of something important. Sanna would also tell the other chefs about her interview and ask them to approach me when they had the chance. The men in the kitchen were not as proactive as the rest with approaching me and getting interviewed, therefore Sanna's help in this was extremely helpful and necessary. Here Sanna's caring and nurturing behavior towards me can be argued to be a consequence of gendered expectations from her as both a mother and woman. However, it is her reactions to my literature review I want to focus on next.

Sanna's reaction to the literature I summarized was not an uncommon one amongst the participants: most of the workers were not aware of any barriers for women to enter a kitchen career, men behaving differently towards female chefs or having to prove themselves in a professional kitchen. This exemplifies the deep-rooted legacy of gender equality in Finland. We

are taught that Finland has solved gender inequality and reached such a point in it, that any evidence to the contrary is simply unfathomable. This is supported by the reactions of the workers, when presented with the research.

As previously argued, Finland has a reputation of being far ahead in gender equality, but the more this is questioned and researched, the less gender equal Finland seems. The same conclusion can be drawn from Hannan Ruoka. When I first started my data collection there, my fieldnotes filled with compliments to the workers, how professional and organized they were and how they did not tease one another or talk about vulgar topics like alcohol or sex. At first, I thought this had to do with me being there and them being more careful in my company, or maybe their age as many of them were married with kids and therefore, made them not interested in discussing such topics with colleagues. However, by my third observation day, on Wednesday, I noticed that the workers were already used to me. They would come up to me talk, make jokes and make sure I had eaten and had enough data for my thesis. During my observation in Hannan Ruoka, I took note of the jokes, banter and the way the staff were talking amongst each other. As current literature suggests, these topics usually include crude topics and sexual jokes. However, none of that was done in my presence.

The closest sexual joke that was done in my company was a running joke that Daniel and Sanna have had for a long time: Sanna has a habit of pulling her pants up several times a day as her work pants do not stay up the whole shift. At some point Daniel started joking that she forgot her underwear at home, and this has since become a running joke between the two. As this is a stereotypical joke towards a woman's body, I was a little taken aback when it happened, since it was the first and only kind, I observed in Hannan Ruoka. However, the joke was done in good humor and Sanna laughed and did not seem offended by it. In fact, the next day this same joke is started by her own initiative, which further proved to me that she does not mind her male coworker

joking about her body and underwear. However, before stepping a foot to Hanna Ruoka, I was expecting every day to be filled with jokes like this, instead it only happened twice. This can be argued to be due to the age of the participants and the expectations that come with those. However, it could in certain instances be seen as an argument for gender equality in Finland.

What positively surprised me about my interviews in Hannan Ruoka, was that it was not only the women, but the men as well who discussed the difficulties in combining restaurant work with raising a family. As previous literature (see for example Harris & Giuffre, 2015; 2010b) focuses on the sacrifices women must make to make it in a kitchen career, or the choices they have to combine family and a kitchen career, my research takes the male chefs into consideration as well. My male participants discussed their decision to leave their previous workplace to work in Hannan Ruoka due to their family and wanting to spend more time with them, as working in evening restaurants made it hard for them to combine family and work life.

It can be argued that in Finland there is not a set and culturally defined expectation of a stay-at-home mother, and that since parental leave is divided between both parents, the father can take time off from work to stay at home with his child(ren) just as well. Thus, Finland's culture on gender equality can be observed in a foodservice kitchen as the male workers at Hannan Ruoka wanting to adjust their work to be able to help out at home. This shows the culture of gender equality in Finland as there are practices in place that allows both parents to stay home at with the child(ren). However, as discussed in the previous part, gender stereotypes in the workplace are still very present in other aspects of the working kitchen, despite the male worker's urge to be present in their children's lives. This is also an aspect that can be docked up to the age of the participants, as wanting to be closer to family could be seen as a wisdom that comes with age.

In conclusion, a food service kitchen allows for a better work-life balance than evening restaurants and seems to be the main reason that Hannan Ruoka's workers changed to work there. As previous research on professional kitchens mostly focus on women's position and their experiences working in a male-dominated kitchen, in my research I have also discussed men's position and their experiences working in a foodservice kitchen. While I did not observe gender inequalities, the interviews brought up gender stereotypes and expectations Hannan Ruoka's workers had of women and men: women were seen as yacking and disruptive to the work because of it, whereas the men were seen as a balancing factor and vital to the kitchen's efficiency. This illustrates the gender relations workers in Hannan Ruoka have with one another. As my thesis also included male chefs, my research adds to the understanding of gender equality in Finland as they discussed the importance of work-life balance as well. Lastly, my thesis adds to the understanding of gender equality in Finland, as on the surface Hannan Ruoka seems very gender equal but the more these are looked into, the more gender stereotypes and inequalities can be observed.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

In my thesis, I have researched a foodservice kitchen in Finland, to add to the literature on professional kitchens and the state of gender equality in Finland. In doing so, first current research

on professional kitchens was discussed to illustrate that there is barely any research done on professional kitchens in Finland. Current research on professional kitchens also focuses on women's experiences and behavior in such a male-dominated workplace and shows the disadvantage gender stereotypes and expectations puts on women. Literature on gender equality illustrated that while Finland is known for being a pioneer in gender equality, the Nordic Paradox applies to Finland and the more statistic on work gets investigated, the more gender inequalities can be observed and is alive and well in professional working life. This discussion was further developed by a discussion of tokenism, the ideal worker and gendered organizations to argue that all are present in professional kitchens, as masculine characteristics are valued and preferred.

By doing ethnography and participants observation for a workweek in a foodservice kitchen Hannan Ruoka, I was able to get to know the workers, their schedules and observe their everyday workdays. Hannan Ruoka illustrates a very different restaurant than what the current research focuses on, since most studies are done on evening restaurants. Where this has been a valuable and fruitful field of study for the research literature, more research into various types of kitchens is vital for the research to be as comprehensive as possible. During my time doing literature research this gap in research stood out to me.

Moreover, I find that doing more varied research on experiences women and men's experiences of working in professional kitchens in Finland to be vital. Throughout the interviews, it became clear that gendered expectations impact not only women, but men as well. Male participants too wish to be closer to family and would like to be home at better times, which is something not necessarily covered in current available research. Hence, broadening the scope of the research in the future would allow for a broader understanding of the multitudes of gender equality in Finland and how working life could be made more equal for all genders.

Whilst there is still a lot to be said and done about research in professional kitchens, I believe that my research can serve as a refreshing change of pace amongst the other academic papers. Where the observations were not as straightforward or overt as in my research literature, a lot was found and discussed. I believe this thesis could serve as a fertile ground for more research into the working culture and women in foodservice kitchens.

By focusing my research on a foodservice kitchen, I have discussed the importance of work-life balance for foodservice kitchen workers. A variety of observations was made about both the male and female workers in the kitchen. The better hours, the opportunity to spend more time with one's family and children and the convenience of having holiday's off were a determining factor for many of the employees to choose this particular kitchen to work in. However, even in these quotes you could read the distain for women imbedded between the lines. Women were yackers and seen as inconsistent with coming into work and even in some instances unlikely to be hired. These notions were not made to the faces of the women working in the kitchen, but were very much revealed in the interviews. The atmosphere in the kitchen was very favorable to men and they were seen as the ideal co-workers. These are glaring examples of the Nordic Paradox. Should someone just focus on the overt aspects of the kitchen and the way it operates, it would be very unlikely that any concern for the women working in the kitchen should be raised. Overall, the culture would seem welcoming and understanding; some might even say equal to all. However, as this thesis and the collected data has highlighted, this is not the case.

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Appendix:

Appendix 1.

Interview Questions:

1. Can you begin by telling me your name, age and job title please?
2. How long have you been working here for?
3. What are your work responsibilities?
4. Have you worked in other restaurants before this?
5. What is it like to work in an industrial kitchen, compared to your previous work experience?

6. Does everyone get along with each other here in the workplace?
7. Do people have any roles here, for example “the comedian of the group”?
8. How would you describe the communication here at the workplace?
9. Do you think gender has an impact in the restaurant industry?

Appendix 2.

Tutkimuksen työnimi

Kielenkäyttö ravintolan keittiössä

Päivämäärä

09.01.2023

Rekisterinpitäjä

Nea Lepaus nea.lepaus@tuni.fi

Ohjaaja tai oppilaitoksen yhteyshenkilö

Marja Peltola marja.peltola@tuni.fi

Henkilötietojen käsittelytarkoitus ja käsittelyperuste

Henkilötietojasi käsitellään ravintolan kielenkäyttöön liittyvässä opinnäytetutkimuksessa.

Tutkimuksessa pyritään selvittämään onko ravintolan keittiössä sukupuoleen liittyviä eroja kielenkäytössä.

Tutkimukseen osallistuminen on vapaaehtoista. Henkilötietojen käsittelyperusteena on:

a) suostumus. Suostumuksen voi peruuttaa milloin tahansa ilmoittamalla tästä rekisterinpitäjälle.

Tutkimuksen ohjaajalla voi olla pääsy kerättyyn aineistoon opinnäytetyön tarkastamista varten.

Siinä tapauksessa Tampereen yliopisto toimii rekisterinpitäjänä.

Henkilötietojen säilytysaika

Aineisto säilytetään Nea Lepauksen pro gradu -tutkimusta varten.

Tutkimuksen arvioitu valmistumisaika on 31.05.2023

Opinnäytteen valmistuttua aineisto ja henkilötiedot tuhoetaan.

Siltä osin kuin ohjaajalla on pääsy aineistoon opinnäytetyön ohjaamista ja tarkastamista varten, ohjaajat ja tarkastajat käsittelevät henkilötietoja ainoastaan niin kauan kuin on tarpeellista työn hyväksymistä varten.

Rekisterin tietosisältö ja tietolähteet

Aineiset kerätään havainnoimalla, nauhoittamalla ääntä, haastettelemalla sekä muistiinpanoja tehden.

- äänitallenteet havainnoinnista
- äänitallenteet haastatteluista
- näitä koskevat litteroinnit
- omat muistiinpanot

Rekisteröidyn oikeudet

Tietosuojalainsäädännön mukaisesti sinulle kuuluu oikeus saada pääsy tietoihin, oikaista tietoja, oikeus tietojen poistamiseen (oikeus tulla unohdetuksi), rajoittaa tietojen käsittelyä ja vastustaa henkilötietojen käsittelyä. Jos haluat käyttää jotain oikeuttasi, ota yhteys rekisterinpitäjään.

Henkilötietojen vastaanottajat

Henkilötietojasi ei luovuteta ulkopuolisille

Oikeus valittaa viranomaiselle

Sinulla on oikeus tehdä valitus henkilötietojen käsittelyä valvovalle viranomaiselle, jos epäilet henkilötietojasi käsiteltävän vastoin tietosuojalainsäädäntöä: tietosuoja.fi / sähköposti:

tietosuoja@om.fi

Rekisterin suojauksen periaattet

Manuaalinen aineisto säilytetään lukitussa tilassa/kaapissa. Digitaalinen aineisto suojataan käyttäjätunnuksella ja salasanalla tai kaksivaiheisella käyttäjän tunnistuksella (MFA). Aineisto litteroidaan ja litteroidusta aineistosta poistetaan suorat tunnistetiedot.

Litterointiin ei tule kenenkään henkilötietoja, vaan tiedot korvataan pseudonyymeillä.

Appendix 3.

Suostumuslomake

Tutkimuksen työnimi: Kielenkäyttö ravintolan keittiössä

Suostumus osallistumiseen tutkimuksessa

Tämä pro gradu tutkielma tehdään osana sukupuolentutkimuksen maisteriohjelmaa Tampereen yliopistossa. Tutkielma tulee tutkimaan kielenkäyttöä ravintolassa sukupuolentutkimuksen näkökulmasta; toisin sanoen sitä, onko kielenkäytössä sukupuolen mukaisia eroja. Tähän asti tehdyt tutkimukset keskittyvät enimmäkseen amerikkalaiseen ympäristöön sekä sukupuolten välisiin eroihin käyttäytymisessä keittiössä. Tämän takia pro gradu tutkielma tulee keskittymään nimenomaan kielenkäyttöön suomalaisessa ympäristössä.

Tutkimukseen kerätään aineistoa havainnoimalla ravintolan keittiössä kielenkäyttöä työntekijöiden välillä. Tämä tapahtuu siten että tutkija on viikon ajan neljä tuntia päivässä keittiössä havainnoimassa. Lisäksi tutkija käyttää ääninauhuria aineiston keräämiseksi sekä kirjoittaa omia muistiinpanoja. Tarvittaessa tutkija myös haastattelee työntekijöitä noin 15 minuuttia aineistonkeruun aikana ilmenneistä kysymyksistä. Mahdollinen haastattelu tapahtuu ravintolassa aineistonkeruun aikana.

Kaikki aineisto käsitellään luottamuksellisesti ja pro gradussa siitä kirjoitetaan vain anonymisti. Minua on pyydetty osallistumaan yllä kuvailtuun tutkimukseen. Olen saanut tietoa tutkimuksesta kirjallisesti sekä saanut tilaisuuden kysyä tutkijalta kysymyksiä tutkimukseen liittyen.

Ymmärrän että tutkimukseen osallistuminen on vapaaehtoista. Tiedän, että minulla on oikeus kieltäytyä osallistumisesta ja oikeus vetäytyä tutkimuksesta pysyvästi tai väliaikaisesti milloin tahansa aineistonkeruun aikana tai heti sen jälkeen. Ymmärrän, että kaikki tutkimuksen aikana kerätyt henkilötiedot pysyvät luottamuksellisina.

Annan vapaaehtoisen suostumukseni osallistua tähän tutkimukseen:

☐

Ääneni nauhoittaminen havainnoinnin aikana

☐

Ääneni nauhoittaminen mahdollisen haastattelun aikana

☐

Tietojen käsittelyyn tietosuojaselosteen mukaisesti

Paikka ja aika:

Allekirjoitus

Nimenselvennys

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