Gendering globalization analysis; resistance and compliance in identity construction

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Our paper explores gender in relation to global processes in Icelandic fisheries. From a feminist point of view, we shed light on how gender is constructed in relation to fisheries, a very important part of Icelandic national economy and identity. We explore how various gendered strategies for dealing with change involve changing identities, resistance and compliance in the lives of people in rural fishery based localities.

Recent feminist literature on diversity and agency is an important element in our approach to gender and globalization. In the making of local identity in a globalized world, women play an active role not just in preserving tradition but also in appropriating new ideas. Women and men apply different strategies in coping with challenges; in the process create new gender-based identities.

In our case studies, we bring out gender as it is constructed in daily life in localities affected by global changes, and examine gender aspects of the transformations taking place. We not only bring forth voices that have until now been ignored or silenced, but also show that the places and spaces that women find themselves occupying in these villages are part of a larger social context. People apply the dominant ideologies of gender and power relations in constructing their identity and in describing their agency and how they use it in their daily life. Embedded in our understanding of social and gender relations is awareness that these are relations among people, incorporating both ambiguities and changes. Although we locate our selves among people in the fisheries we believe that our analysis is only to a limited extent about fisheries but is also an attempt to get a better understanding of gender and globalization.
ABSTRACT

THE BORDERS BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE LIFE AS PROBLEMATIC

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In this paper I am arguing that there is a need to distinguish more clearly between public and private life, due to different reasons. However, what is public and what is private is subject to discussion and negotiation. It is important that women belong to those taking active part in such discussions.

In many ways the borderlines between the two spheres have become blurred in today’s society. Such a development may be welcome, and in accordance with the way many people, especially women, think about their own lives. Though, someone has to be the losing part if there is shortage of time and demands from all quarters. Today’s work organisations often demand almost total commitment from their members. This development may be harmful for families and private life. However, people may also find great pleasure in their work, but the pressure they feel, due to the different responsibilities, may be too great.

Mingling private and work relations is quite common in different work organisations. My research shows that this is not unusual among colleagues in female work areas and may not be regarded as problematic when on the same level. If the manager has close friends among her subordinates, the situation is different. Then it becomes clearer that there are different roles, implying different rules and relationships. Although friendship may contribute to a good working climate, mingling private and work relations could also have some negative consequences, especially if there are various groups and friendship constellations with differing kinds of relationship to the manager.

The private/public relationship is also a subject of current interest when it comes to questions of use and misuse of private life in the public sphere.
ABSTRACT

PROPERTY AND BODY:
AGEING IN SOUTHERN AFRICAN CITIES

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The global population is ageing. In Africa the average proportion of elderly persons in the population is still low, but being a rapidly urbanising continent, a growing number of elderly women and men are ageing in town. At the same time the economy is declining and disease is taking its toll in the middle generation. Ageing is connected to bodily decline but instead of receiving care, many elderly become carers of sick and children. Few countries have more than very limited pension and welfare systems. This paper presents a research programme that aims at exploring how urban living conditions among elderly people are gendered. Focus is on domestic space, housing and household arrangements, and on livelihood care systems. Patricia McFadden has identified control over property and the own body as cornerstones in the struggle for women’s agency for full and active citizenship in southern Africa. On basis of experiences from a first fieldwork in Zambia, which was conducted in May this year, the paper will discuss how concepts such as generational contracts, property control, and livelihood strategies may be used in a gender analysis.