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The Impact of the #MeToo Phenomenon on Working Conditions for Women in Finland

Can Social Media Pressure Bring Change in Gender Politics?

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<p>The #MeToo phenomenon sparked in October 2017 by allegations against a movie director Harvey Weinstein sexually harassing several Hollywood actresses. The movement went viral as well-known actresses joined the campaign in social media, using the hashtag MeToo.</p> <p>Sexual harassment is a large scale issue that originates from an unequal status of women in societies and the harassment is often faced at work. Therefore, this thesis reviews literature of gender equality and feminist theories, social media and the #MeToo movement internationally and in Scandinavia but reflecting and focusing in Finland.</p> <p>Finland has been statistically one of the leading countries in gender equality and has been pioneering in advancing women's status in the society, and the country is often praised for the living conditions of females. Despite the statistics, Finland cannot be stated to be an equal country, as there is a major issue of violence against women that results from an unprivileged status of females.</p> <p>The #MeToo woke the Finnish society to address these issues of sexual harassment and domestic violence. Unlike in Sweden and Norway, major changes have not been implemented in Finland, but the movie industry has gone through changes and a Finnish MP is currently facing a court case of sexually harassing a co MP.</p> <p>These conversations and the court case indicates, that change has happened in Finland as well. A change to the sexual harassment laws has been proposed, to also prohibit verbal harassment. As political decision making often follows the societal conversation, it can be stated that the #MeToo did indeed empower the women at work in Finland.</p>	
Keywords	Gender equality, feminism, #MeToo, gender politics, glass ceiling, women at work, Finland

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Preface

This thesis discusses the current #MeToo phenomenon and its impact on working women in Finland. The #MeToo campaign raised questions on feminism and gender equality, internationally and in Finland. Feminism and gender equality has been studied for decades, whereas the #MeToo campaign is relatively new phenomenon, sparking in October 2017.

This thesis is based on secondary data on the topics of feminism both globally and focused in Finland, gender politics in Finland, the #MeToo phenomenon and how sexual harassment has been bypassed for years, despite having been an issue at work places and especially for women for many years.

The research revealed that despite Finland being one of the leading countries in gender equality, there is still a long way to achieve an equal society, and the issues in Finland can be seen especially in domestic violence and the power positions in politics and business life.

In addition to sexual harassment that #MeToo especially points out, women face the glass ceiling when pursuing a career. A study conducted in Sweden showed that despite a general argument that women are less dominating in the working environment, and therefore fall behind men in career development, chauvinist attitudes towards women and having children are the two major factors that keep working women from achieving an equal status career wise.

The #MeToo movement burst open the conversations of gender equality and glass ceilings as well, especially in the countries where gender equality is better achieved. The campaign has given tools to face the harassment and discrimination they face in work and to object these actions and discuss them in public.

1 Introduction: The research topic and the chosen methodology

This thesis is based on qualitative research trying to answer the research question: Is the #MeToo is impacting gender politics in such a way as to empower working women in Finland?

As feminist theories, gender politics and equality issues are widely studied, the research is based on secondary literature on these subjects. The literature review of this thesis covers the topics related to the research question and covers feminist theories, the development of feminism, gender politics and equality issues in Finland and the Nordic countries, social media's impact on modern societies and the #MeToo phenomenon in Finland and Nordic countries.

The comparison between Finland and the Nordic countries is added into the research of this thesis to gain a deeper perspective of the phenomenon, and also to compare how the Nordic societies have developed in equality issues, as they all have rather similar legislation and history in gender politics, and to analyse the results of similar gender politics in order to get a more reliable understanding of causal connections.

The secondary data is collected from several books, academic journal articles, academic research and online sources, in order to give a thorough overview of the subjects related to the thesis topic.

As the research is based on secondary data, there are some limitations. Primary data would provide answers to a very specific issue studied in this thesis and there is a risk of overreliance on the quality of the research of others. However, as feminism and gender politics have been studied widely and by several institutions from universities, to societies and non-governmental organisations, the secondary data was decided to be enough for this thesis.

As the #MeToo phenomenon is still so new, the existing research and causal effects are merely assumptions and long term studies do not exist yet. Nonetheless, the #MeToo phenomenon can be compared with the theories of social change and other women's movements in history to gain an understanding of how the #MeToo campaign is likely to develop.

2 Literature Review

The literature review of this thesis covers the necessary themes related to the topic of the impact of #MeToo for working women in Finland and whether the #MeToo phenomenon is changing the gender politics in Finland to empower the status of working women.

The Literature review consist of research of feminist theories, gender politics, social media and the #MeToo phenomenon, and compares how the subjects reflect in Finland, the Nordic countries and in Europe to gain a deep understanding of how different factors impact on the development of gender equality and working women in western societies and more precisely in Finland.

2.1 Feminist theories

The Oxford dictionary defines feminism as “The advocacy of women's rights on the ground of the equality of the sexes” (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2018). The political movement in gender politics has developed over time in order to answer to the current challenges of each time period. When feminism is discussed, there is often referencing to the three waves of feminism that give a larger timeframe to the development of the movement. (Dorey-Stein, 2015)

The first wave of feminism is timed from mid-1800s to mid-1900s and it is often described to have focused on employment, marital laws and suffrage for women. The same time period is an era of political changes in larger scale, especially in Europe. It includes forming the modern democracies in Europe, both of the World Wars and balancing between fascism and communism. (Cook & Stevenson, 2005) During this time, many unprivileged formed unions and wanted change to the society and rights from the Elite. (French & Atwood, 2008)

The second wave of feminism is from 1960 to the mid-1980's, varying a bit depending on the theorist. The second wave of feminism focused on equality issues and legislation to develop societies in these issues. The second wave is studied academically and especially the 70's brought a massive change in to gender equality and women's position in the society. (French & Atwood, 2008)

The third and current wave of feminism is dated from early 1990's all the way to the current time. If the first wave of feminism is not always recognized by modern feminists, the third wave feminism is still debated, as the political behaviour of young women varies a lot from earlier generations and the purpose of the third wave is questioned. (Burgeon, 2011)

2.1.1 The history of feminism

The roots of feminism can be tracked all the way to individual examples already in the middle ages. Extraordinary women of that time, such as Joan of Arc, a French war hero and Christine de Pisan a French author, both lived during early 15th century and broke the glass ceilings of their time. (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2018)

However, the rise of feminism as we know it today is often timed to have started to develop in the 19th century. During late 19th century and early 20th century Europe especially was shaping to a new form of society, after the French revolution in 1789 when the French kingdom was replaced by democracy after the revolution in 1799. (Cook & Stevenson, 2005) Industrialization was reforming societies at the same time and the two phenomena improved the position of those with lower status in society, back then the poor and women. (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2018) This time period in the development of feminism is often described as the first wave of feminism.

The improvements made during the first wave of feminism were not achieved by granted. Many exemplary women challenged the patriarchies, and several women made contributions and started women's movements, such as Mary Wollstonecraft, Rosa Luxemburg and the Pankhurst Family.

In Finland one of these women was Minna Canth. She was a writer and a political influencer of her time. After her husband's death, she took over the family business and pioneered as a successful business woman in the Finnish culture, who waded for the unprivileged in the Finnish society. (Kallio, 2018)

Feminist theories were formed and feminism was researched more academically after the 60's (Osborne, 2001). After both of the world wars, feminism sparked in the 1960s as women were gaining more in education and working life and had once again

reached a higher status in society. These advancements were due to the World Wars where women took over traditionally male jobs and stayed in those positions after war. However, they were often considered as secondary employees and feminists started to demand equal status for working women, for example through labour unions. (Striking women, N/A)

We are currently living the third wave of feminism. This is defined to start from mid-1990s as both a generational and ideological change can be defined into that time frame, when compared with the feminists before, their age and their actions in gender politics. (Gillis, et al., 2007)

Ideologically the third wave feminism differs from the previous waves by acknowledging all forms of gender and all minorities, wanting equality for all, not just women. Another characteristic for third wave feminism is that it is often expressed online. (Budgeon, 2011)

Social media is a popular platform for younger women to engage in politics. Therefore, the #MeToo campaign and its vast spread in social media is a great example of how third wave feminism is implemented by young women. (Keller, 2012)

2.2 Gender politics in Finland

Finland has been a pioneer in gender politics, being the first country in the world to grant full political rights to women, even before declaring independence, in 1906. (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health , 2018)The development of gender equality in Finland during the past one hundred years can be described rapid to some extent. However, the pay gap as one example has been discussed for centuries without having achieved equality in the matter. (Hyvärinen, 2017) New legislation was made already in the mid-19th century to develop the status of women in society and the general conversation was developed compared to its time. (Juntti, 2007)

As already discussed, the end of 1800 and the beginning of 1900 was an era of large scale changes in ideologies and politics in Europe and during this time, also the women's right movement was developed in Finland. (Juntti, 2007)

In mid 19th century the world was reading the activist John Stuart Mill and his ideas in “The subjection of Women” got societies to discuss the importance of girls’ education. (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health , 2018) Educating women started to become more common rapidly in the end of the 19th century and the first woman to graduate as a baccalaureate in Finland was Maria Tschetschulin in 1870. The second female baccalaureate in Finland Emma Aström was the first woman in Finland with a master’s degree from a university, she graduated from university in 1882. In addition to these ground breaking women in Finland, the first woman to attend medical studies in university was Rosina Heikel, who has also the first medical student in all of the Nordic countries. (University of Helsinki , 2018)

Education often plays as a key role in gaining a better position in society. In addition to girls and women attending higher education, new legislation advanced women’s status in Finnish society and 25 years old unmarried women gained independent status legally. (National Institute of Health and Welfare, 2018)

The largest impact towards a more equal society was made in the early 1900s, when women gained full political rights in 1906 in Finland as the first country in Europe. This enabled gender equality to take a big leap onwards and the time after that is called the 100 years of equality in Finland. The first parliament elections after the law was implemented were in 1907, and 19 women were elected into the parliament. The first female minister of Finland was Miina Sillanpää, who acted as the social minister form 1926. (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health , 2018)

2.2.1 Post Second World War gender politics in Finland

During the Second World War Finnish women carried an important role of keeping different industries running and after the war many of them stayed in working life and did not return to traditional home-making roles.

This was supported by legislation to support families and ease them to plan and take care of their children. Maternity clinics and child health centres were established to ensure children’s and mothers’ healthy development. This was started in the 1940s and by the 1960s all women attended the maternity clinics. (National Institute of Health and Welfare, 2018) Schools were obligated to offer free school meals for all pupils in 1943.

Finland was the first country in the world to implement free school meals in education. (Edu.fi, 2016)

The 1960s are an era of big changes in Finland as the society started to change from agriculture towards cities and industrialization. This change required more work force and also the women of Finland participated more in working life. This laid the ground for gender-equality changes during the next decade. The Finnish education started to develop at the same time, also laying groundwork for better equality. (Itsenäisyys 100, 2017)

The sixties also introduced birth control in Finland and that let women decide more freely of their bodies and family planning set many free from staying at home. The status of women became a specific focus of study in Finland (National Institute of Health and Welfare, 2018)

The 1970s is a decade of changes in gender-equality in Finland. During this decade more than 20% of the members of parliament were women for the first time. Sexual equality began to be recognised and homosexuality was decriminalized and the association of Sexual equality SETA Ry was founded to enhance and inform sexual diversity in Finland. (SETA ry, N/A)

New legislation in regards of women in working life was set in order to ensure equal pay for the same work, discrimination at work became illegal and family politics were recognized to be one means to achieve gender equality. This was implemented for example through laws to define fatherhood more precisely. As an example paternity leave is written in law and parental leave can be shared between parents. (National Institute of Health and Welfare, 2018)

During the 1980s the Finnish government created the first programme to tackle equality issues and the amount of female members of Parliament exceeded 30% for the first time in history. Joint custody and name laws are introduced and after a big dispute. The Name law meant that women were able to keep their own surname when marrying and children were able to have the surname of either one of their parents. This was a major step towards equality as it acknowledged deeper the independence of a married woman. (Vasantola, 2018)

Equality issues demanded more attention and an Ombudsman for Equality and the The National Non-Discrimination and Equality Tribunal were required by law. The tribunal and the ombudsman both regulate that businesses obey the equality laws and especially discrimination laws. They are a part of the Ministry of Justice in Finland. Additionally, the two provide information about equality laws and how these are implemented. The institute also follows how equality is actualised in different fields of Finnish society. (Ombudsman for Equality, N/A)

Nytkis, the Coalition of Finnish Women's Associations, was founded in 1988 and it has been a strong influencer for equality issues in Finland ever since. It acts as a co-operation forum for the Finnish women's associations. (Nytkis, N/A)

The 1990s were an age for women to gain more political power. Women were chosen to head important political positions in Finnish society. The first woman to head the Bank of Finland as the governor was Sirkka Hämäläinen, who was chosen in 1992. Also that year, Aino Sallinen was chosen to be the Rector of the University of Jyväskylä. Riitta Uosukainen was leading the Finnish politics as the speaker of the parliament in 1994 and Tarja Halonen was chosen for the first female foreign minister in Finland in 1995. (National Institute of Health and Welfare, 2018)

The increasing amount of women in the government guaranteed improvements for families, equality and sexual harassment as more new legislation was created.

In 1995 Finland approved a voluntary military service for females. After a disputed discussion of women's status in the Finnish community, the voluntary military service was seen as an act to stabilize women's position in the labour market in addition to the equality status. (Suomen Naisyhdistys Ry, 2011)

In 2000 the first female president in Finland was elected and Tarja Halonen became head of state for the following 12 years. In 2003 also the first female prime minister of Finland, Anneli Jäättenmäki was elected and Finland had the two top leaders of the government as women, albeit briefly. (National Institute of Health and Welfare, 2018)

In addition to the female leaders in Finland, women reached new milestones in the government during the 2000s and 40% of the members of parliament were women and

60% of the ministers of the Finnish government were women after the elections in 2007. (National Institute of Health and Welfare, 2018)

2.2.2 Past decade in Finland

The general trend of the 2010s appears to be that gender equality and feminist values have been taking a step back, both in Finland and worldwide. The World Economic Forum released a gender equality study that states the widening of the gap as a general trend in the countries that the report covers.

On current trends, the overall global gender gap can be closed in exactly 100 years across the 106 countries covered since the inception of the Report, compared to 83 years last year. The most challenging gender gaps remain in the economic and health spheres. Given the continued widening of the economic gender gap, it will now not be closed for another 217 years. (World Economic Forum, 2017)

The Commission of the European Union released a report on International Women's Day 8th of March 2018. The report stated the same issues as the report of the World Economic forum, that the pay gap is stuck at 16 % and every third woman in the European Union is still a victim of violence, and over 50% of EU women have faced sexual harassment. (European Commission, 2018)

The 2017 gender gap report of the EU stated that the development of gender equality has stopped in the European Union area and has started to regress (European Commission, 2018).

The current Government of Finland has a majority of right wing parties and that has been studied to have an effect on the development of gender equality in Finland. (Saari, 2016) Especially the Finns Party in the government were having an impact on gender equality as their politics belittle the equality issues (Hyvärinen, 2017). Finnish society faces challenges with postfeminist thoughts, which suggest that equality is already achieved in Finland. (Hyvärinen, 2017)

Finland's current Strategic Programme of Prime Minister Sipilä's Government states that "Finland is also a land of gender equality". (The Government of Finland, 2015) This supports the statement, that postfeminist thoughts are general in Finland, and the

government belittling different forms of discrimination and the male dominance in Finland is endangering the much needed discussion and improvement.

There is still an issue of glass ceilings for women in business, especially in senior management. Our society is facing challenges, as without a larger discussion over the development of gender politics, inequality in business life is bypassed.

Another comparison that highlights the recession of gender politics can be made with the development of gay rights. As sexual equality has been discussed in our society, homosexuality has been decriminalized and understood at a fairly fast pace, as gaining an equal status in our society in family and marital laws, while gender equality advocacy is still tackling the same questions as they have for decades.

The issues of pay gap, respect for women, joining work and family life, and patriarchies in business have been written down already in 19th century Finland (Hyvärinen, 2017)

The labour unions have had a status in the Finnish society that has advanced the progress of socialist politics in business life and this has been taking women's status in business life further. In spite of that, as unions are losing their power in our modern society, it is feared that gender equality is taking a step back also due to the lack of support from the labour unions. (Hyvärinen, 2017)

The third wave feminism takes a wider stand in equality issues and tries to defend the rights of a variety of unprivileged in modern societies. This can be seen in for example the discussion of the definition of a gender. Gender is seen in variety of forms in addition to women and men, and this is being acknowledged. (Hyvärinen, 2017)

In addition to the equality issues in "classic themes" pay gap being an example, the European Union has several times notified Finland for the lack of protecting women from violence. Finland is the second most dangerous country for a woman to live in and that is due to violence against women and families. 47% of women in Finland have experienced sexual or physical violence, the European Union Average being 33%. (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2016)

Violence against women is rooted in women's unequal status in society and that status rejects the unbalanced distribution of social, political and economic power among women

and men in society. It is one of the most pervasive human rights violations of our time and a form of discrimination that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women. Violence against women undermines women's dignity and integrity and imposes serious harm on families, communities and societies. In the EU, estimates suggest that 1 in 3 women (or 61 million out of 185 million) have experienced physical or sexual violence, or both, since the age of 15. (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2016)

Legislation to prohibit sexual harassment and marital rape are fairly new in Finland, and the juridical consequences rather minor when compared to financial crimes for example. There is still protection towards those breaking the laws of sexual impunity, and victims face belittling, blaming and shaming. This is another way to oppress those who have faced sexual assault and a non-violent way to use male power, as a demeaned, blamed and shamed person is easily controlled, even manipulated due to the powerful sensation that shame causes in us emotionally. (Harley, 2012)

The history of gender politics in Finland has established a solid foundation for a progressive society, where women have distinct opportunities in all fields of life. This can be seen in the gender equality statistics, where Finland has been keeping the top positions for years, being the third most gender equal country in the world in 2017, the second most equal country in the European Union for Participation of genders in working life, having the fourth best gender equality in working life in the world, having power divided between genders the third most equally in the EU and the third most female MPs in European countries in addition to having the fifth lowest income differences in OECD countries. (Statistics Finland, 2018)

Still, as discovered in the literature review, there is still a long way to gender equality, even in one of the most equal countries in the world. The statistics can be perceived as misleading as they create an illusion of equality, as women still face discrimination in the working life and the domestic violence, that evolves from females' unequal position, is still so strong in Finland as well in the other Nordic countries, also being the most progressive countries in gender equality in the world.

As previously mentioned in this thesis (See page 30) the Finnish government bypasses the gender equality issues, by stating that equality is achieved in Finland. Perhaps there is a need for a mass movement as #MeToo to enforce equality politics in the government to stimulate the gender politics from regression and advance women's rights in Finland.

2.3 The glass ceiling, why female managers are still a minority in Finland

In the Standard & Poor's 500 companies, which are the 500 largest stock companies' world-wide, listed by Standard & Poor's a major financial service company in the USA (Standard & Poor's Financial Services, 2018), women make up of 45 percent of the work force. However, the amount of female leaders drops, the higher the position gets. On an executive level 27 percent of the leaders are females and when gotten to the CEO-level the amount of female leaders is only 5 percent. (Keloharju, et al., 2018) On the highest paying executives, female leaders earn 45% less than their colleagues. (Bertrand & Hallock, 2010)

There are a few general arguments on why the glass ceiling and pay gap still exist so strong. One of these arguments suggest that women are shy than men in the working life, and do not aim so high or demand their rights as convincing as men. Other arguments suggest that taking care of their families create disadvantage for women in business as they lose time to improve in their profession and opportunities by staying home. However, the answer is not so simple and requires to take a closer look on the structures of the labour market. (Keloharju, et al., 2018)

The Economist's Glass Ceiling Index, that measures gender equality in the labour market, sheds the same light on gender equality development for women in working life as other studies. The progress remains static and labour market structures stand in the way of women achieving higher positions in business. (The Economist, 2017)

The overall picture painted by the data is that the long trend of improving conditions for working women has flat lined within the OECD, a club of mostly rich countries. In 2005, 60% of women were in the labour force; ten years later, this ratio had edged up only slightly to 63% (it was 80% for men in both years). With relatively few women climbing the ranks, and strong old-boys' networks helping men reach the top, female representation in well-paid and high-status jobs is closer to a third than half. And the gender wage gap—male minus female wages, divided by male wages—is still around 15%, meaning women as a group earn 85% of what men do. (The Economist, 2017)

Improvement of gender equality, however, is not the only problem females face in working life. In the European Union area supervisors are in all likelihood men, even in predominately female work communities and fields. In the European Union area nearly 70% of female workers are in a profession where at least 60% of workers are women. (The Economist, 2017)

According to one of the latest studies on gay pay and female leaders in executive positions, women are still a significant minority in the top positions and earn much less than their male colleagues. (Keloharju, et al., 2018)

The study by Matti Keloharju, Samuli Knüpfer and Joacim Tåg observed female executives in Sweden and their qualifications, career progression and family matters to explain their success. As both Swedish firms and Sweden have a similar culture in gender equality in business life, the study applies well to the situation in Finland and therefore in this thesis as well.

As often discussed on the subject of women in business, the study handled the topic of suitable personality traits between males and females and whether the impact of women being less dominant is causing them to fall behind in the gender gap. The literature suggested quite the opposite, and female discrimination is more likely to be a consequence of negative stereotyping than of gender-related performance differences. (Keloharju, et al., 2018)

The findings of their study was that the major factor to keep women from reaching the top managerial positions is having a family. The study displayed that the gender gaps and female career development start to fall during the first five years after the birth of the first child. Even after returning to work, women are still more absent from their jobs due to family responsibilities. The outcome of the study suggests that the glass ceiling between them and an executive position is a family, and to reach their career goals, women might have to compromise their family aspirations. (Keloharju, et al., 2018) Therefore, to find the most efficient solution to reach gender equality, there must be taken a closer look at family politics.

2.3.1 Family politics making a difference

The Scandinavian countries have been forerunners also in family politics and have allowed parental leave to be shared between the parents in some form already from the 1970s, more precisely in Finland in 1978. (National Institute of Health and Welfare, 2018) However, women use the majority of the nursing leave in Finland. In 2016 mothers received 90,5% and fathers 9,5% of the parental allowance that can be

divided between the spouses. (Kansaneläkelaitos - The Social Insurance Institution of Finland, 2016)

All reforms that have been made specifically to increase the time fathers take for parental leave have increased the use of the leave among Finnish fathers. In spite of the reforms a quarter of the fathers in Finland do not use their parental leave at all. Out of child home care allowance, a grant of which can be also divided by the parents, fathers receive only 1,7%. (Kansaneläkelaitos - The Social Insurance Institution of Finland, 2016)

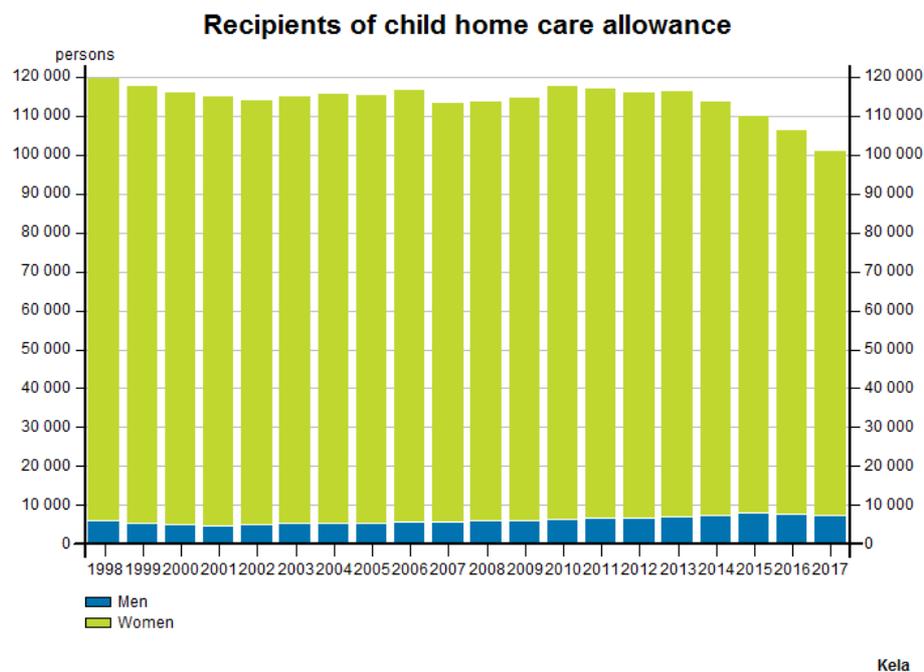


Figure 1. Recipients of child home care allowance (Kansaneläkelaitos - The Social Insurance Institution of Finland, 2018)

A majority of Finns agrees that a child should be 1.5 – 2 years old when starting day care outside the family, depending on the work- and financial status of the family and the personal beliefs they have. The popularity of home care in Finland can be compared with the other Nordic countries. In Finland children attend early childhood education distinctly less than in neighbouring countries. (Kansaneläkelaitos - The Social Insurance Institution of Finland, 2016) This has also been criticised to set a trap for women. (Nordic Labour Journal, 2018)

The long nursing leaves with the home care aid weaken women's employment, pay- and career development and eventually also their future pensions. The pensions of women in Finland are on average 66% of the pensions of Finnish men. (Kansaneläkelaitos - The Social Insurance Institution of Finland, 2016)

The figure below showcases the relation between mothers and fathers staying at home to take care of their children.

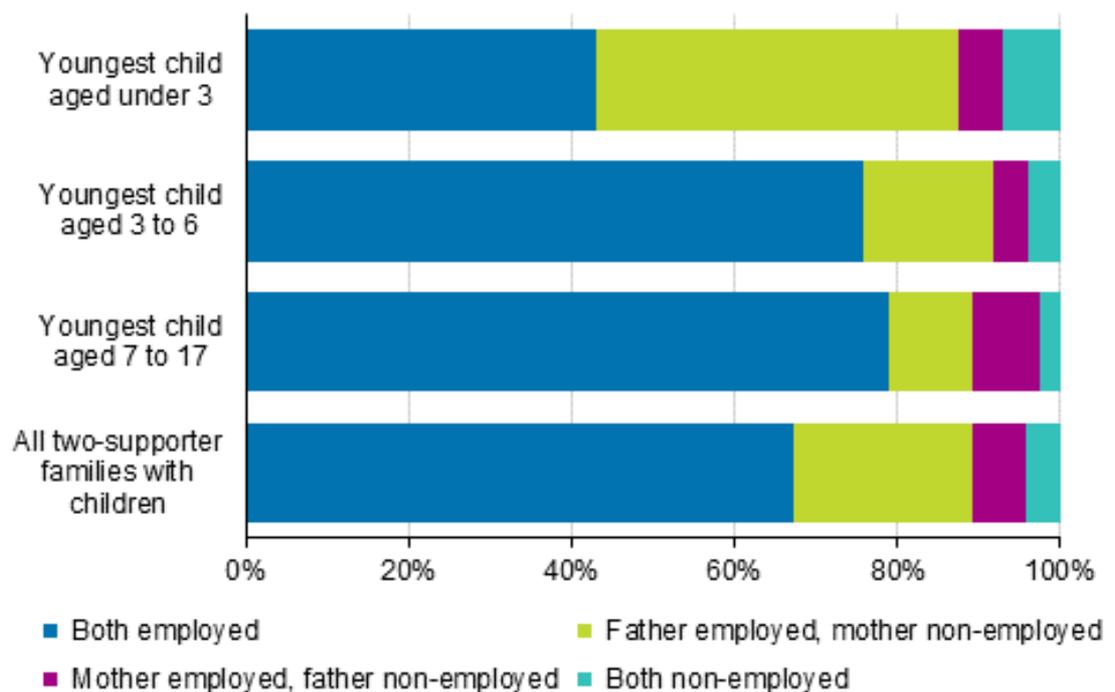


Figure 2 Labour market position of parents in families with children, aged 20 to 59 in 2016 (Official Statistics of Finland (OSF), 2016)

As the figure shows even in cases of unemployment in a family, the trend is that mothers are the ones who are unemployed and also due to the unemployment, at home. (Official Statistics of Finland (OSF), 2016)

Sweden increased the amount of parental leave that is specifically earmarked for fathers from 8 weeks to 12 weeks in 2016. A study made after the change estimated that every month that a father takes, increases their partner's pay by 7% four years later. (The Economist, 2017) Women staying longer at home than men, also makes

them the priority parent, meaning that they will sacrifice their careers more also in the future, after returning to working life.

2.3.2 Comparison to Sweden and other Nordic countries

All of the Nordic countries, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, are in the top 10 Western European countries for gender equality according to the World Economic Forum's annual Global Gender Gap Report. (Marinosdottir & Erlingsdottir, 2017)



Source: Global Gender Gap Report 2017, World Economic Forum
 Note: *2017 rank out of 144 countries

Figure 3 Global Gender Gap 2017 by the World Economic Forum

The Nordic countries have developed in gender equality steadily and reached desirable results without a doubt. For several years the Nordic countries have been ranking on the top lists of different equality measures, and the general development towards achieving equality goals are very similar. Women attend politics the most, participation of genders in working life is the most equal in the European Union area, power

distributes the most equally out of the EU countries in the North and much more. (Statistics Finland, 2018)

The glass-ceiling index

Environment for working women, 2016 or latest, 100=best

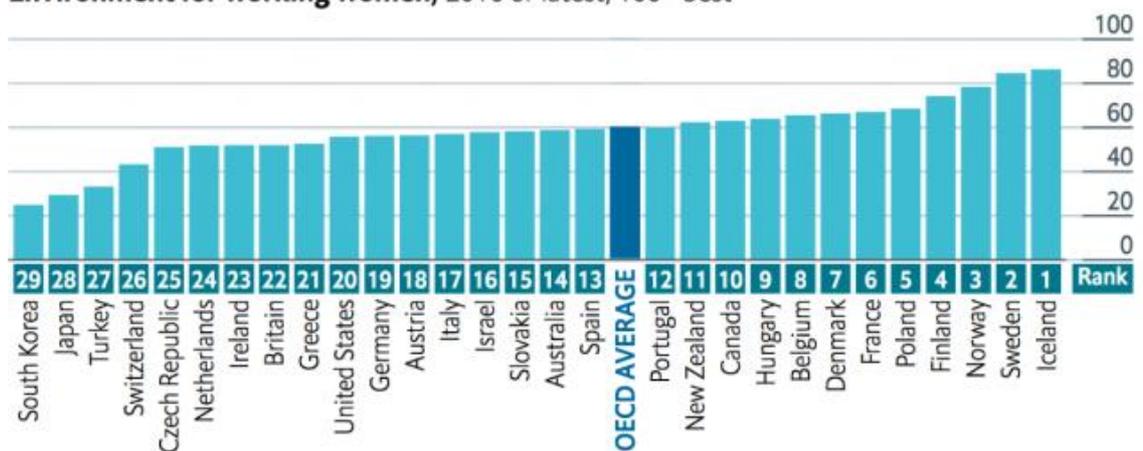


Figure 4 The glass ceiling index - the best and worst places to be a working woman (The Economist, 2017)

The Economist's glass ceiling index showcases Iceland, Sweden, Norway and Finland to be the best countries for a woman to attend work, Denmark following very closely on the 7th place.

Women in the Nordic countries have been making history by breaking glass ceilings as the first females in different positions of society in the world. "In October (2017), women won a record 48% of the seats in Iceland's lower house. At around two-fifths, Scandinavian women's share of parliamentary seats ranks in the top 10% globally." (The Economist, 2017)

Still, as in Finland, also in all of other Nordic countries, attempts to end the domestic violence against women have not been a success. Nordic countries are on a severely higher level than the average of intimate partner violence in the European Union, the average of the Nordic countries index being 30 when the entire EU average is 22. The phenomenon is interesting, as the Nordics put effort into developing gender equality and are pioneers in other means of gender equality. (Ibe, 2017) The issues are not just with domestic violence. The Nordics face challenges trying to control rapes. Some reasoning for this can be found in the legislation, as laws against sexual abuse in a

relationship have been implemented only during the past decades. A culture of normalizing and belittling rape also exists in all of the countries (Ibe, 2017)

Some academics in the Nordics argue that the high rates of spousal violence arise from the high rate of awareness of what is sexual abuse. However, many are sceptical of this as there are also data backed studies that point out that there is a low rate of reporting assault crimes due to the shame culture that the Nordics share.

The Nordic countries also bear a sexist culture; as an example this can be seen as an opposition against proof that women face discrimination in Scandinavia. (Ibe, 2017) Conservative gender roles still take place in the Nordics, and for example parental leave falls mainly on women. Compared to other western countries, leadership positions for Northern women are few, the percentage of female entrepreneurs is low and the pay gap has been existing for decades.

The conflict between high performance in gender equality and domestic violence has a strong contrast. When taking a closer look at the gender equality achievements of the Nordic countries, it can be seen that many of the positive outcomes and indexes are rather misleading, as there are still major problems in achieving equality. (Ibe, 2017)

As reported by the European Commission, female entrepreneurs' account for only 29% of the entrepreneurs in Europe. Stubborn gender roles are an example explaining why women are not pursuing entrepreneurship as much as men, as entrepreneurship is a profession that is traditionally seen as male dominated work. Women also still bear the burden of their families and have to either juggle between a career and a family or choose between the two. (Wall, 2015)

Based on the literature and statistics, Finland does not get defeated by its neighbouring countries, but is more on the same degree in gender equality when examined at the general level. However, all of the Nordic countries, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, should focus on their parental legislation and family politics, to advance and strengthen the status of a Nordic working woman. A more urgent matter to put focus into is to solve the problem of domestic violence, by setting stricter legislation towards spousal violence and advance the discussion for the victims.

Only Finland and Iceland exceed the EU average of female entrepreneurs and the difference to the average is not high.

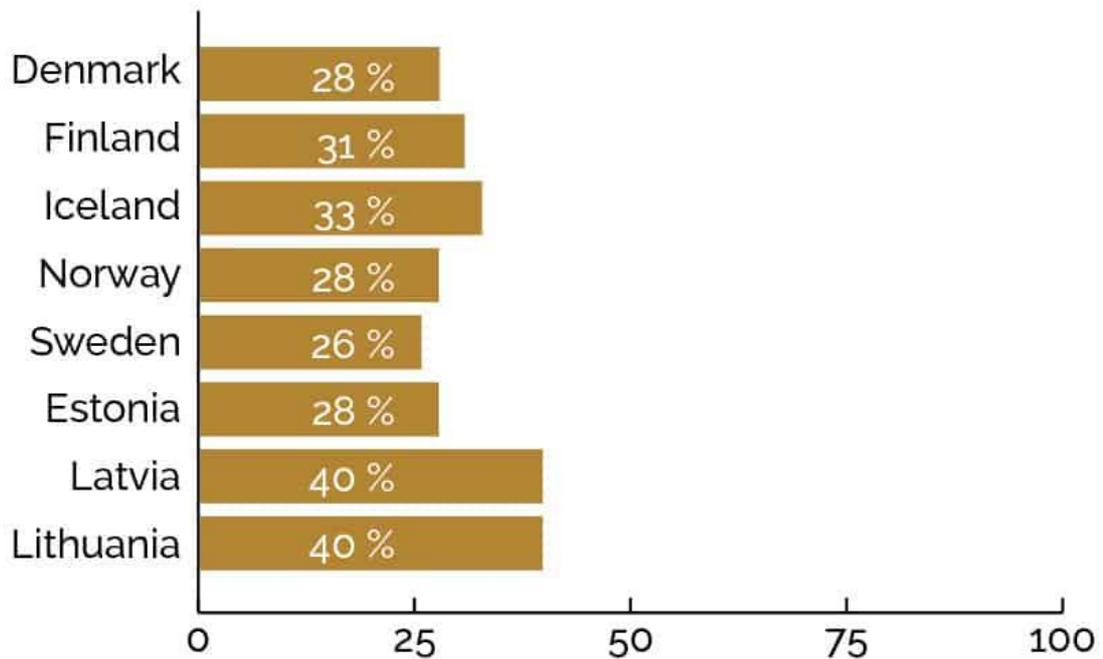


Figure 5 The Female Entrepreneurs in Nordic and Baltic countries in 2012 (Wall, 2015)

The figure establishes well, that Nordic countries still have a lot to do in gender equality issues. Latvia and Lithuania surpassing the Nordics by far in entrepreneurship, is a reminder that all areas of gender equality need to be covered before can a country can be stated to be an equal society. Both of the two Baltic countries performing highly in the female entrepreneurship index, rank rather well in the Global Gender Gap Report, Latvia ranking on 20th, Lithuania 28th. (World Economic Forum, 2017)

2.4 Social media

Over half of world's population has internet access today as there are over 4 billion internet users. (Internet World Stats, 2018) Facebook alone has 2 billion users (Statista, 2017) and the rapid growth of Instagram has been the hot topic in digital marketing for a while. Despite these networks being among the most popular ones, they are just the tip of the ice berg when it comes to social media as a phenomenon.

Social media is implemented in almost every aspect of our lives, from hobbies to working life. Social media can be traced back to 1997 and they are defined to be a website or a mobile app that allows users to create content and communicate in the platform. (Van Dijck, 2013)

Previous social media campaigns like the ALS ice bucket challenge and Movember, show how knowledge can spread in social media and have an impact on our societies. It is often argued that the Arab spring was influenced by social media as well and despite not being the cause for the movement, is still relevant evidence that social media can indeed change societies. (Shearlaw, 2016)

2.5 Sexual harassment among working places and how #MeToo answers to it

The #MeToo movement broke news after the *New York Times* released an article that accused the famous Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein of sexual harassment. Soon after the article, new allegations were soon pressed against him. The #MeToo movement was widely spread in the news around the globe, when celebrities joined the movement by posting a social media update with the hashtag metoo and encourage everyone who have experience sexual harassment to do so too. (BBC News, 2018).

The victims of sexual harassment got low threshold platform to reveal how common sexual harassment is among both working environment and everyday life. (Jane Kelly , 2017) Already in October, less than one month after the Harvey Weinstein Scandal, there were over 1,7 million Tweets from 85 different countries. (Park, 2017)

After Harvey Weinstein was accused, many high profile actresses joined and shared their experiences with Weinstein. The impact started to spread to the whole movie-industry and to other segments of business as well, and many politicians worldwide were laid off, from the United States Congress to the parliament of Sweden (Hallamaa, 2018)

#MeToo might be the world changing movement that revealed how the world is lagging behind in gender equality, but this kind of women's movement could have been expected for a while, as change is often set in motion by an unprivileged social group

gaining both knowledge and a higher status in the society. (National Institute of Health and Welfare, 2018)

In addition to the better status of women, the easy access of social media and celebrities leading as an example, the media also advanced the #MeToo movement. (Jane Kelly , 2017) Still, the reason why the #MeToo movement gained such a powerful penetration into the politics of gender equality and sexual harassment issues, is evolving from the equality issues – that women have for decades been oppressed, discriminated and faced misbehaviour and sexual harassment.

When it is discussed that majority of women have been facing sexual harassment, must be defined what sexual harassment is. The Parliament of the European Union defines sexual harassment in EU law as when “any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature occurs, with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, in particular when creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment”. (European Parliament, 2017)

When sexual harassment in workplaces began to be studied in the 1970s, a hypothesis was that every other woman has experienced harassment at their job. However, the studies found that 50-70 percent of working women face sexual harassment at work. (Boland, 2005) Sexual harassment is not only directed to women, but men face sexual harassment as well. However, as this thesis focuses on the female standpoint, the research will also be targeted to the sexual harassment that women face.

The European Union ruled on the first legally binding agreement to prevent and lessen violence against women and domestic violence in the Istanbul Convention and it came into force on 1.8.2014. (European Parliament, 2017) Taking a stand on the violence issues is vital, as domestic violence springs from an unequal status of women and men. (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2016)

#MeToo started a social change from the basis of severe issues in sexual harassment, and inequality. The campaign offered actions and results in how women can demand their rights and examples for businesses on how to act on sexual harassment cases. We have seen men in power being laid off because of inappropriate behaviour in work places. The campaign revealed an equality issue of such a large scale, that our

societies cannot just ignore it and social media gave a platform for everyone to engage in politics.

The hashtag #MeToo itself is much older than the current movement. It is work of Tarana Burke, an African American civil rights activist. She founded the me too movement in 2006 to reach and help the victims of sexual assault and to give voice to those, who were oppressed, particularly targeting young women. (Me too, N/A) (Brockes, 2018)

The idea of #MeToo is to empower through empathy and after getting attention of the whole world. My idea is to study and find out whether the campaign has given women more knowledge on how to act in situations where they face sexual harassment and violence against them and if women feel more powerful in the situation due to the gained information.

Sparked by the #MeToo another social media campaign was launched to spread women's' right, the Time's Up campaign. Time's Up is not solely concentrating on sexual harassment, but to gain women equal status in societies.

Powered by women, Time's Up addresses the systemic inequality and injustice in the workplace that have kept underrepresented groups from reaching their full potential. We partner with leading advocates for equality and safety to improve laws, employment agreements, and corporate policies; help change the face of corporate boardrooms and the C-suite; and enable more women and men to access our legal system to hold wrongdoers accountable. (Time's Up, 2018)

As the first feminists can be traced to the French revolution, we can also compare some characteristics of the changes that the French revolution and #MeToo have in common. The thought of general human rights had been opposed long, but after the revolutionaries had declared the demand of their rights, it was too late.

The same phenomenon is valid also in the #MeToo campaign. Women as the revolutionaries demanded rights and to be freed from sexual harassment and violence and despite the ongoing controversial conversation, it is too late to ignore the massive amounts of sexual harassment and to return back to the unfair treatment.

Signs for a new rise of feminism can be traced to an American writer Rebecca Solnit's essay *Men Explaining Things to Me*. The essay tackled the phenomenon of mansplaining – how men act as know-it-alls and silence women. The essay was published in 2008 and gained immense attention. (Erkko, et al., 2018)

In the United States the #MeToo movement has been compared with the golden age of feminism, the 1960s. The year of 2017 is not just a reflection of a new free movement of women, but a deeper change in societal values and the pioneers leading the change are millennials, tired of gender roles, racism and hierarchies. (Erkko, et al., 2018)

2.5.1 #MeToo in the Nordic countries

In countries like Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, where gender equality is performing the highest in business life globally, the use of social media is high, and there is a high awareness towards equal rights and sexual harassment and abuse, but severe issues with domestic violence, spousal assault and a culture of silence (Ibe, 2017). The #MeToo phenomenon had been expected to take a leap forward for gender equality. The conversation has been heated in all countries, but the topics also differed between them. (Måwe, 2018)

Sweden has led the conversation, partially as the conversation in sexual harassment in Swedish society has been more open than in the rest of the Nordics, but it is also due to the fact that it is the biggest of all the Nordic countries, being almost twice as big as Finland, Norway or Denmark and far bigger than Iceland.

In Iceland the conversation woken by #MeToo campaign has had an enormous impact on the small society. Over 400 women politicians listed violations that they had faced during their careers in politics. This output was followed by other fields as well. (Måwe, 2018)

In addition to severe conversation of sexual harassment, #MeToo has cultivated conversation of discrimination by raising the topic of the societal status of migrant women in Iceland. (Måwe, 2018) "MeToo has changed everything. Because of the campaign, sexual harassment is now taken seriously in Iceland." says Friða Rós Valdimarsdóttir (Måwe, 2018)

Denmark has been more moderate with #MeToo than the rest of the Nordic countries. Conversation has aroused also in Denmark, but the campaign has not been rattling the country unlike in Iceland as an example. Compared to the #MeToo campaign globally, the phenomenon shook also the Danish culture community. 132 Danish female singers appealed to end the patriarchal structures in Denmark and a Danish movie director Peter Aalback Jensen faced accusations of sexual harassment. (Floman, 2017)

“The #MeToo campaign has received an enormous amount of media attention in Denmark, although there have been relatively few concrete calls for action” expressed Christian Groes from Roskilde University’s Centre for Gender. (Måwe, 2018)

As in many of the Nordic countries, also in Denmark the #MeToo movement has divided men into two groups, those who support the societal change and those who belittle and even ridicule the need for such powerful campaign. As a response for the #MeToo campaign a #HeToo hashtag aroused some support. (Måwe, 2018)

Norway’s politics was completely woken by the #MeToo campaign, as the movement revealed considerably many sexual harassment cases in all of the Norwegian political parties. The Norwegian Labour Party has been shaken especially much, as the most serious problems were exposed in the party. But the Labour Party is not the only one to blame. Violations and harassment have been also reported in the Conservative Party and the Progress Party. (Gurzu, 2018) The education sector of Norway filed also over 100 cases of sexual harassment in different higher education institutes. (Anon., ei pvm)

The society of Norway has been shaken by the scandals as the country prides itself as being a pioneer in gender equality, being for example the first country in the world to implement a 40 percent quota of female company board members. Norwegian women have also been prominent in politics for decades. Norway had its first female prime minister already in 1981 and female ministers have very powerful positions in the government presently. (Norwegian, 2016)

The whole country of Sweden has been shaken by the #MeToo phenomenon thoroughly. It has been portrayed by the biggest women’s’ movement after females gained the right to vote in Sweden in 1919, by Maria Schottenius in *Dagens Nyheter*. (Schottenius, 2017) The #MeToo has been stirring a variety of business fields in

Sweden to end sexual harassment and abuse and to implement zero tolerance policies in businesses. (Schottenius, 2017)

In almost every sector of business women have been signing petitions against sexual harassment as the movement has been growing. If #MeToo is still finding its purpose in Finland, in Sweden the phenomenon is already on a second level of development. (Uosukainen, 2018)

The second level of #MeToo means, that it the campaign still carries a reforming and empowering influence, but the public conversation in the Swedish society is now focusing on whether the media has a responsibility to guide the tone of the conversation, and how those who became exposed have been treated, as one of those accused of sexual harassment, Benny Fredriksson, committed suicide. (Uosukainen, 2018)

Even the Academy that decides on the Nobel literature prize winners has been shaken by #MeToo, as very recently, on the 12th of April 2018, it faced accusations of sexual harassment and misuse of power. (Wiman, 2018) Out of the 18 members of the academy, only 11 remain after the scandal. This incident is shaking Sweden, as the Academy carries a certain dignity, being founded in 1786 by King Gustav the third. (Wiman, 2018)

The Swedish Academy has been honoured and even referred to as “the 18 best and brightest” in the world of culture and literature. The Nobel Prize itself is a highly valued recognition of a career in literature, admired even as one of the highest achievement of a writer. (Wiman, 2018)

The recognition the scandal has gained is important for social change and carries importance just like the prime scandal of Harvey Weinstein that started the whole #MeToo movement. These scandals have woken public conversation of the gender equality issues in cultural institutions and thanks for the #MeToo phenomenon, they are reforming to more safe working environments for females. (Wiman, 2018)

2.5.2 #MeToo in Finland

In Finland, one of the leading countries in gender equality globally, the route to achieve those standards in equality currently enjoyed in Finland have been built for decades, and are a result of the long tradition of gender politics. (see from page 5 onwards) Despite this, sexual harassment has been added to the criminal legislation of Finland only in 2014 and so the conversation started by #MeToo has been needed in Finland.

The #MeToo movement has been both calmly received and renewing in Finland. As in the other Nordic countries, also in Finland, stating equality issues and that women have an unprivileged role in our society, has raised opposition.

When #MeToo arrived in Finland, the public broadcasting company of Finland, YLE ordered a study from Taloustutkimus (an institute of economic research) on how wide a phenomenon sexual harassment is in Finland. The study was conducted with an open-ended question where sexual harassment was not defined, to examine what is the defined line for sexual harassment according to those taking part. The definitions of sexual harassment varied between neglecting a turn down, to inappropriate touching and inappropriate innuendo and jokes. (Taloustutkimus, 2018)

The study found out that 79% of women and 38% of men in Finland have faced sexual harassment at some point in their lives. During the past 12 months 46% of young women (aged between 18-25) reported having faced sexual harassment. (Taloustutkimus, 2018)

The same outburst of female equality has been expected as in Finland also in the rest of the world. (see page 22) The statistics show the rise of education and wealth among Finnish women, and more independent and educated women start to ultimately proclaim their rights. The phenomenon of a rising social class demanding their rights is a repetitive pattern in history. (National Institute of Health and Welfare, 2018)

The Finnish parliament has been arguing on what kind of changes needs to be implemented at the governmental level to prevent sexual harassment. In addition to the societal conversation of the gender equality issues, Finland has also gone through an emotional discussion, and the #MeToo campaign raised statements of sexual

harassment and the status of women in the Finnish society by the current members of parliament. However, a few concrete change proposals were made and the conversation sided also with the anonymity of the accused. (Yle News A, 2017)

A case from the parliament appeared in the international news as a Finns Party Member of Parliament Teuvo Hakkarainen forcedly kissed another MP Veera Ruoho. The incident happened in the Christmas party of the Parliament, while Teuvo Hakkarainen being drunk. (Kempas & Sutinen, 2017)

The scandal gained a lot of attention for a few reasons. First, the #MeToo campaign was relatively new topic in Finland and the acts of Hakkarainen were a glaring violation of human rights. Second, the sexual harassment happened in the Parliament while an MP being intoxicated by alcohol and this kind of behaviour from a person who is representing the society, should set a horrible example of appreciation towards female colleagues. Third, the case was controversial also because Veera Ruoho, the victim of the harassment had proposed that sexual harassment would be stricter in legislation in 2016 and Teuvo Hakkarainen had signed the proposition (Kempas & Sutinen, 2017).

YLE studied also whether sexual harassment is faced in the current parliament of Finland and the study revealed that one in every ten of the current staff of the Finnish parliament has faced sexual harassment in their work. (Yle News B, 2017) The movement has impacted on a legislative proposal regarding a consent law and it also moved forward in the parliament. (Yle News A, 2017)

As the #MeToo sparked from Hollywood, also the Finnish movie and culture industry have gone through some upheaval. Lauri Törhönen, a Finnish film director, has been accused of several cases of sexual harassment from the 1980's until the 2010's. (Yle News C, 2018) After the allegations Törhönen resigned from his position as chair of the Cable Factory and Suvilahti arts and cultural centres and released a statement where he apologized for his actions. (Yle News C, 2018) The culture industry in Finland has roiled in general and a thousand women from the industry took a stand and signed a petition against sexual harassment and demanded to end the culture of silence in Finland. (Kantola, 2017)

After the incident, Hakkarainen resigned as a VP from the Finns Party and he has been on a sick leave from December. Veera Ruoho prosecuted against Teuvo Hakkarainen, and the case is being handled in the court currently, in April 2018. However, the prosecution does not prevent Teuvo Hakkarainen from acting as a MP. (Sutinen, 2018)

Another #MeToo case in Finland rouse a roiling conversation about the working conditions in the movie industry. A famous and awarded director Aku Louhimies has been heavily criticised by his actions as a movie director. He's behaviour has been accused being inhumane, lowering and sadistic even. (Rigatelli, 2018) Matleena Kuusniemi, an actress who has been working closely with him, stated in a Finnish talk show A-studio "thanks to the #MeToo campaign we are being heard now. The actions of [Aku] Louhiniemi are known in the industry, but they have only been wondered". (Virtanen, 2018)

When the #MeToo phenomenon had just reached Finland, a survey by Yle discovered that over half of Finns think that harassment can be just a misunderstanding. (Mäntymaa, 2017) Depending on the gender and age of the attendees, the definition of harassment varied. Young women, facing the most sexual harassment defined harassment more broadly than men. 90 percent of young women who completed the survey answered that sexual innuendo and jokes constituted harassment, when only 67 percent of all men thought the same. (Mäntymaa, 2017)

3 Findings and conversation

The hypothesis for the research question the Impact of the #MeToo Phenomenon on Working Conditions for Women in Finland - Can Social Media Pressure Bring Change in Gender Politics? was simply a yes. The hypothesis was based on the large scale impacts of the #MeToo phenomenon, especially in Sweden and the amount of discussion, layoffs, and political conversation the movement had woken globally.

Finland has been one of the leading countries in gender equality for years, already in 1906 by granting women political rights. Therefore, the hypothesis that #MeToo could pressure the political decision making to focus more in gender equality was plausible.

The historical achievements have led Finland into some very positive results, but it has been a slow process as well. Women's rights have never just been taken for granted: they have been demanded, argued and discussed in Finland already before full political rights were granted until today, as some legislation to secure women's status in Finland has only been implemented in the past decades.

Despite being a gender equality leader the statistics give a partially false image of the current status of gender equality in Finland, as the country is still struggling with high statistics in domestic violence which indicates an unequal status of the genders. (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2016) Studies show that right wing politics slows the development of female status, and even the current Programme of Prime Minister Sipilä's Government states that equality would be already achieved. (The Government of Finland, 2015)

Nearly 235 million women worldwide lack legal protections from sexual harassment at work (UCLA's WORLD Policy Analysis Center, 2017) and the legislation to criminalize sexual harassment came into force in Finland in 2014, after the EU's Istanbul Convention. This was the first common legislation against sexual harassment implemented in the European Union and it concerned the whole EU area. (European Parliament, 2017)

Despite Finland having the legislation against sexual harassment and discrimination, the statistics of working women claim that equality isn't achieved. One of the most common locations for sexual harassment is at work and the majority of victims are women. (Assulin & Malmberg, 2017) The law against sexual harassment is also criticized for only criminalizing inappropriate touching while verbal abuse is still legal. This might create an illusion of approval for sexual innuendo or jokes in the society. (Assulin & Malmberg, 2017)

A study of Swedish female executives and their career development, mentioned earlier in the literature review, can be well applied in Finland, as the countries share similar backgrounds in gender politics and its development. Also the societies are similar from culture, despite Sweden being older and bigger, as well as a monarchy.

The study finds evidence why women lag behind men in executive and managerial levels and rejects the old theory of females lacking managerial skills. There is discrimination based on these assumptions, but the study revealed that the discrimination is based on prejudice against an image of a female leader lacking the skills, not the actual lack of the leadership skills. (Keloharju, et al., 2018)

The major factor however, keeping females from careers, is family. In Finland as in the other Nordic countries, the society is old fashioned in family matters, and the patriarchal structures can be seen in the statistics of parental leave. Over 90% of the family aid in Finland is still received by women. (Kansaneläkelaitos - The Social Insurance Institution of Finland, 2018) The study of the Swedish female executives pointed out the same factor and females career development starts to recess five years after the first child is born when compared to men. (Landers & Schmidt, 2016)

The family politics in Finland varies from the Scandinavian countries as families take care of children much longer than in the other Nordic countries; the comprehensive families support system has its negative aspects in the Finnish working women. (Kansaneläkelaitos - The Social Insurance Institution of Finland, 2016)

The status of women in Finnish society has been rising steadily and 54% of the higher education students are women currently. (Statistics Finland C, 2014) Despite the high level of education and income has developed and women are independent in Finnish society, Finland cannot be described an equal country due to the violence against women and unequal amount of women in the high positions in politics & business life. (Ibe, 2017)

The #MeToo phenomenon did not just happen out of nowhere, but set a spark to a change that has been developing as our societies and the status of females have developed. The #MeToo phenomenon just revealed the massive scale of sexual harassment women face in working life and drew attention to the already existing problem, that had been bypassed earlier. (Vasantola, 2018)

#MeToo gave women tools to face and speak about the harassment, without being ashamed of it. The phenomenon freed the victims of sexual harassment from shame, which often leads to keeping the victims silent. Now the societies are discussing the

issue and the ones causing the harassment are announced as the ones who need to be ashamed. The changing force of #MeToo was and keeps being strong. However, this kind of women's movement could have been expected, as women's status in our societies has been getting stronger through education work and independent financial status. (Vasantola, 2018)

Based on these factors and the literature studied for this thesis, we can argue that the #MeToo phenomenon did in fact impact on working women in Finland. Women have tools to face the harassment and object to the oppression they encounter. Despite having a low amount of concrete changes in Finland, the Swedish revolution set an example of where #MeToo could lead, and the conversation has been and continues to be heated in Finland as well, and the court case of the MP Teuvo Hakkarainen in Finland shows, that men in power positions can and will be challenged.

4 Conclusion

The gender equality issues have been discussed in societies for generations. Brave women of their time have made advancements in the gender equality of their time, by demanding, protesting and awaking societies.

The #MeToo campaign became an iconic women's movement of 2010's, but the viral phenomenon did not just come out of nowhere. Women are attending education and the labour markets just as men, however, they still face discrimination in their careers despite legislation set over time, to prevent this.

Women have been protesting against the same discrimination already on the sixties, when after the World Wars female employees had become a standard, but were still paid less than males as an example. As these issues are still present in our current societies, the #MeToo only gave a platform and a timing to express the oppression females face.

Even if #MeToo tackles the issue of sexual harassment, it pointed out that harassment often happens at work. Sexual harassment and violence stems from disrespect and unequal status of the one who is harassed and studies show that the victims are mainly (young) women.

The large scale of the issues that #MeToo pointed out could not be bypassed by modern societies and the movement has reformed some industries, like the culture industry.

Finland is often seen as one of the most advanced countries in gender equality. However, the statistics lay a simplified image of the current equality – Finland is also the second dangerous country for women in Europe and women are not able to bypass the glass ceilings in the Finnish society.

#MeToo gave a courage for women in Finland to speak out and legislation is being rethought by the government. A well-known actress Matleena Kuusniemi has thanked #MeToo for the ability to address the inequality issues in the Finnish movie industry and a Finnish writer and feminist Kaari Utrio has waited for a campaign like #MeToo for long.

Despite the lack of concrete changes in the Finnish society, #MeToo has started a conversation and movement of change in the society that cannot be defined. Political decision-making often follows the general discussion and therefore, the societal conversation carries value for the working women in Finland, who deserve safe working environments.

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