

Social and human sustainability in work organisations, preliminary results

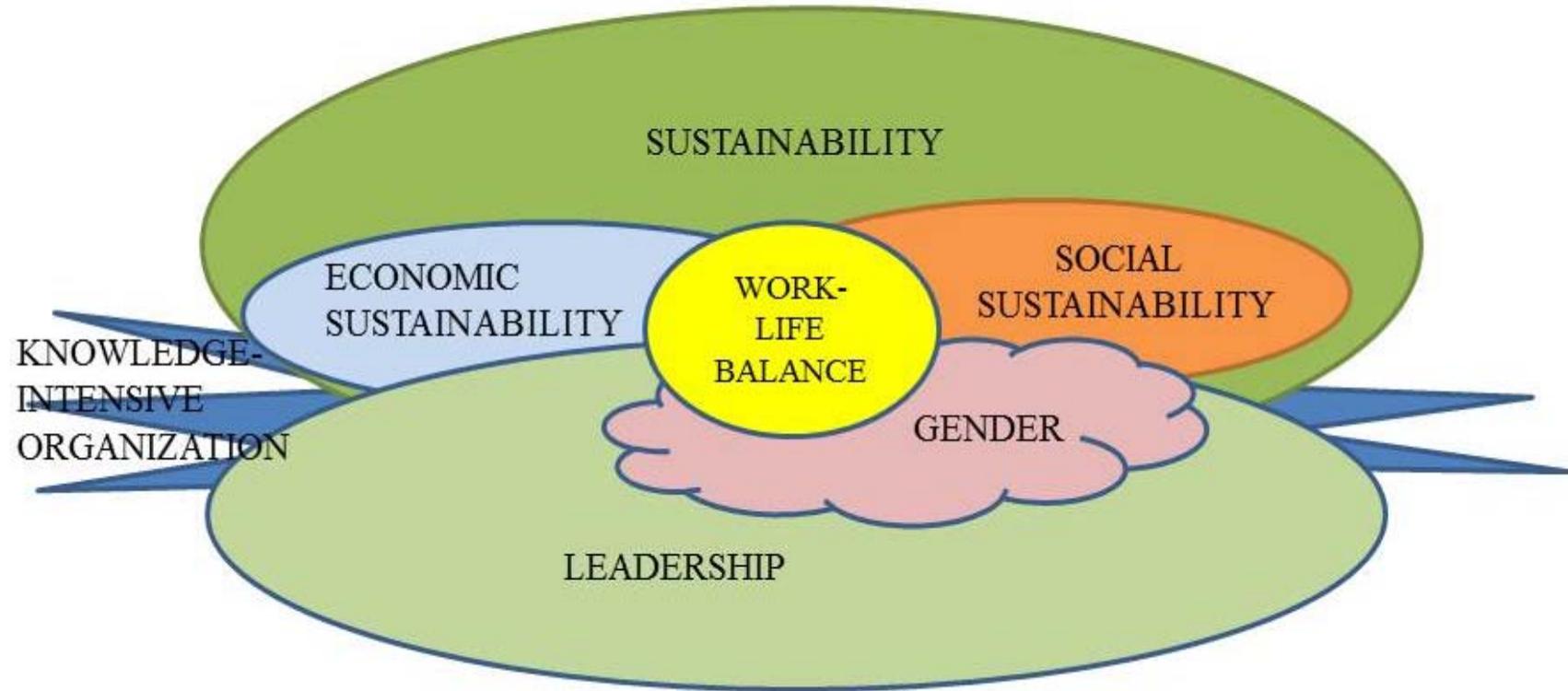
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Social and human sustainability

- Social sustainability consists of: (i) people's health, knowledge, skills and motivation, and (ii) institutions where these are maintained and developed (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 1995; Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998; Woolcock and Narayan, 2000).
- Social sustainability is also defined as a quality of societies, signifying nature-society relationships mediated by work and gendered relationships within the society (Littig and Griessler, 2005).
- Human sustainability is defined as the design of work and its aims in ways that ensure the ability for individual employees to work according to their values and maintaining the ability to work until retirement age (Kasvio, 2008)

Draft framework, Niemistö 2016



Gaps and tensions

- Separating the economic from the social, assuming that the economy could be treated detached from the social context with embedded human activities has been critiqued (Lehtonen 2004).
- The prevailing strong emphasis on work in the new economy requires a gender-sensible re-distribution of work and needs to take into account questions of work-life balance for both men and women (Littig and Griessler 2005).
- Paid and unpaid work is central to sustainable development in terms of production and reproduction (Littig and Griessler 2005).
- Some of the work-life balance discourses seemingly uncritically ignore structural, cultural and gendered constraints at workplaces and in societies more generally (Lewis et al. 2007).

Post-industrial working life

- The post-industrial working life stresses the need for high levels of professionalism, performance and flexibility.
- The 'long hours' working culture is not challenged, dominantly maintaining the images of the 'ideal worker' (c.f. Acker 1990).
- Knowledge intensive work has become increasingly scattered (Roper et al. 2010; Kivimäki 2004; Pringle 2003; Bailyn 2002).
- Boundaries between work and "non-work" are increasingly blurred (Niemi 2017 b)

Our results I

- According to our findings, issues of maintaining a healthy balance between work and non-work are often not proactively dealt with in organisations (Niemistö 2011; Niemistö et al. 2017)
- This can lead to stress, burnout, employee turnover and loss of talent (Niemistö et al. 2017; Niemistö et al. 2017b; Niemistö et al. 2017c)
- Parent employees in knowledge intense fields work a "night shift" from home (Niemistö et al. 2017b)

Our results II

- Even with formal work-family policies in place, demands of the field, organizational culture, lacking managerial/superior support or own career aspirations can lead to non-use of policies (Niemistö et al. 2017c; Heikkinen et al. 2017).
- Considering an employee's life situation depends on individual superiors, managers and organisations (Heikkinen et al. 2017).

Finally

- **Thank you for your attention!**
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