Chapter 4
A Perfect Match?

Cultural Clashes and Gendered Work Ideals in Transnational IT Companies

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A "good cultural match," referring to compatibility regarding language, ways of working, cultural norms of social behavior, and attitudes toward authority, has been described as important in determining the success of offshoring information technology (IT) production and services (Krishna et al. 2004; Lacity et al. 2009). Dealing with cross-cultural barriers and avoiding cultural clashes between client and supplier are highly relevant for the Indian software industry, which is built on transnational customer-provider relationships and, to a high degree, conducted by multinational companies with headquarters outside India. Previous studies have documented the existence of cultural clashes in this context when the Indian local organization has resisted Scandinavian corporate values about flexibility (Gertsen and Zølner 2012) or refused to implement American equality policies (Poster 2008). This chapter argues that some cultural clashes between onsite and offshore in a transnational business context can be understood and at least partly explained by the diverging ideas about which qualities characterize ideal employees in software development.

Although highly relevant, gender has mostly been left unexplored in previous research on cross-cultural issues in global IT offshoring. This chapter investigates global software offshoring relationships from a gendered perspective using the theoretical framework about "gendered work ideals" as originally developed by Joan Acker (1990, 2006, 2012) and used and adapted by others (cf., e.g., Peterson 2005,

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2007, 2015; Kelly et al. 2010). Gendered work ideals, prescribing full-time availability, a strong work orientation, mobility, and no responsibilities outside of work, correspond to the assumed characteristics of male workers rather than female workers (Mescher et al. 2010). These work ideals are described as universal and persistent despite shifting gender norms and despite changes in the characteristics of the labor force (Sallee 2012). Previous research, however, shows that the notions of the ideal worker vary both within different models of work organization (Benschop and Doorewaard 2012) and across societal contexts (Tienari et al. 2002). Therefore, if, how, and to what extent the work ideals in a specific profession or organization are gendered is an empirical question to be investigated.

This chapter investigates the work ideals expressed by Swedish and Indian managers involved in offshoring of advanced IT services from Sweden to India. It reports on how managers, both in Sweden and in India, perceived the ideal offshore software developer. Although the work ideals coincided in several aspects, some divergences also existed between how the requirements were defined. As we will show, these divergences contributed to creating cultural clashes between Swedish and Indian managerial strategies to create a "perfect match" between onshore clients and offshore supplier.

The aim of the chapter is twofold: first, to contribute with an empirical analysis of work ideals in a transnational business context, consisting of two companies involved in Swedish/Indian IT offshoring, and second, to explore gendered work ideals in a transnational business context in order to add new dimensions to a concept developed in a purely Western company context.

Introducing the idea of "cultural clash" between Swedish and Indian organizational structures, values, social beliefs, and norms, risks reproducing simplistic constructions of "West" as "modern" and "East" as "traditional." It is therefore important to recognize the work done by postcolonial and transnational feminist scholars. Although the cultural differences are important to articulate, we need to be careful so that these differences do not appear to be fixed or immutable, since they are linked to political, economic, and historical changes (Ganguly-Scrase 2003). Although we do not use postcolonial theory as part of our theoretical framework, we do reflect on our results using this approach. What we are investigating is basically a neocolonial relationship. It is the companies in the West who have the initiative and whose work ideals weigh heavier in the collaboration, since it is they who ultimately provide the jobs. In addition, we are investigating a small and privileged segment of the Indian middle class. It should be noted, however, that in this chapter we gloss over ethnic and caste differences, just as the managers we interviewed did.

The chapter is structured as follows: the next section presents our theoretical framework and the concept "gendered work ideal." We also introduce at this point previous research dealing with gendered work ideals in "the West" before presenting the Indian work context, which has not yet been investigated using the "work ideal" concept. This is followed by a section on method where we present the methodological considerations that guided the collection of empirical data in the project. Subsequently we outline our results and the analysis. This section is divided into two subsections. The first subsection analyzes cultural clashes in relation to how

work ideals vary between different models of work organization. The second subsection analyzes cultural clashes in relation to how work ideals become gendered in relation to the societal contexts. The chapter ends with a concluding discussion section where we discuss the implications of diverging conceptions of the ideal software developer for collaborations in transnational IT companies as well as the more theoretical implications for the conceptual framework used.

4.1 Theoretical Framework and Previous Research

4.1.1 Gendered Work Ideals

The analytical tools used in this chapter were inspired by the theoretical framework developed by Acker (1990, 2006, 2012) to understand how gendered assumptions about women and men, femininity and masculinity, are embedded in organizations and reproduce inequalities. One of the concepts that Acker often uses to refer to supposedly gender-neutral processes in the workplace is "work ideal." The idea of the universal and abstract ideal worker is institutionalized in organizational processes and manifested in managerial practices, such as recruitment, wage setting, promotion, and dismissal of employees (Acker 2006). The ideal is part of the organizational logic that includes certain expectations regarding employees' behavior, the number of hours worked, and a focus on work that is based on the idea of a worker "who exists only for the work" (Acker 1990, 149). This ideal of a disembodied worker prescribes a devoted employee who gives priority to paid work, is mobile and able to travel if needed, and is willing to work long hours.

The closest this universal and abstract ideal comes to a real worker is "the male worker whose life centers on his full-time, life-long job, while his wife or another woman takes care of his personal needs and his children" (Acker 1990, 149). Women workers on the other hand are "assumed to have legitimate obligations other than those required by the job" (Acker 1990, 149). Women have been, and still are, seen as the primary carer of children, and managers have considered them unable to fulfill the demands of the ideal worker as they are "less likely to follow the expected path of continuous, full-time employment" (Kelly et al. 2010, 283). The universal and abstract work ideal thus produces gender inequalities as it presumes a gender-based division of labor and a separation between the public and the private sphere (Acker 2012). It is, therefore, related to what is known as the problem for workers to attain a satisfactory "work-life balance" (cf. Sallee 2012).

In addition to the universal ideal of the unencumbered abstract worker, there are also locally constructed ideals, stipulating the more specific qualities required of the holder of a certain position or job (Kelly et al. 2010). In her later writings Acker expounds:

> The ideal, abstract worker is only part of what employers seek when they are hiring: employers, of course, have specific qualifications in mind, such as education, experience in particular fields, evidence of competence, etc. (Acker 2012, 218)

We call these work ideals "situated work ideals" as they are based on "real life ideal workers" in certain cultural and social work contexts (Acker 2012, 218). Situated work ideals refer to the specific qualities, knowledge, skills, personal conduct, and behavior that characterize an ideal employee in a particular work organization (Tienari et al. 2002). In contrast to the universal, abstract work ideal, the situated work ideals can favor women by emphasizing skills and competence typically associated with femininity:

> The ideal worker for many jobs is a woman, particularly a woman who, employers believe, is compliant, who will accept orders and low wages. This is often a woman of color; immigrant women are sometimes even more desirable. (Acker 2006, 450)

Men are thus not the ideal workers for all jobs.

Yvonne Benschop and Hans Doorewaard (2012, 226) capture the complex logic of the gendered work ideal when they write: "The gendered character of the ideal worker is supported by two factors influencing the gendering of jobs: the gender connotations of care responsibilities and of qualification profiles." We have used the distinction between these two factors to structure the presentation of our results in this chapter. Below we will also rely on this distinction when we continue with presenting some previous studies that have used the concept of "gendered work ideals" to study actual work contexts.

4.1.2 The Gender Connotations of Qualification Profiles

The persistent gender inequalities at work rely on the gendering of jobs and on distinctions between women and men and between the meaning of masculinities and femininities (Benschop and Doorewaard 2012). One of the most fundamental gendered connotations of qualification profiles is based on the gender distinction between males as skilled and rational and females as unskilled and emotional (Bendl 2008). Moreover, masculinities are associated with managing, control, and performance, while femininities connote sensitivities and subordination (Metcalfe and Linstead 2003). Qualification profiles involving technical skills have also typically been associated with masculine connotations. Studies suggest that women are perceived to possess technical skills less often than men, regardless of their actual competence or education (Faulkner 2007; Peterson 2007; Dhar-Bhattacharjee and Takruri-Rizk 2011). According to previous research, the qualification profile for software developers, the occupation this chapter focuses on, typically includes self-confidence, taking initiative, and working independently and therefore seemingly discounts women, at least according to the logic of the gendered work ideal (Peterson 2010). Other studies show that the most important skill IT employers are looking for when hiring both entry-level and mid-level employees has been "communication"

(Luftman and Kempaiah 2007). Women have a chance of becoming a closer fit with the work ideal if qualities associated with “the collaborative and supportive work attitudes that we often label as female” (Metcalfe and Linstead 2003, 97) become desirable in organizations, as suggested in team-based organizations (Kelan 2008).

Benschop and Doorewaard (1998) illustrate how the gendered connotations of qualification profiles can vary due to different models of work organization. They analyze situated gendered work ideals in two different organizational work contexts: Tayloristic organizations and team-based work. Tayloristic organizations are built on principles of fragmentation and separation and are characterized by maximum division of labor, simple jobs, bureaucracy, and lack of flexibility. This is also a type of organization that promotes horizontal and vertical gender segregation with women and men performing different jobs, working in different departments, and having different responsibilities. The Tayloristic ideal worker is full-time available, career oriented, and highly qualified and displays an instrumental reasoning, accepts authorities, and “concentrates obediently on performing specialized, small tasks without thinking” (Benschop and Doorewaard 1998, 9).

In comparison, team-based work organizations are typically more flat where performance and control tasks are integrated and where autonomous work groups have a high level of independence. Because there is less division of labor and less segregation in general in these organizations, they are assumed to produce less gender-based division of labor. The team-based ideal worker is available full time and is career oriented but, in contrast to the Tayloristic ideal worker, also enjoys autonomy in fulfilling the job and displays an entrepreneurial attitude in thinking about improvements to the work.

Benschop and Doorewaard (1998) conclude that although different, the work ideals in both contexts are gendered as masculine. The Tayloristic work ideal is, for example, associated with authoritarianism, paternalism, and careerism, while the team-based work ideal is characterized by careerism and entrepreneurialism (cf. Collinson and Hearn 1994).

4.1.3 The Gender Connotations of Care Responsibilities

The gendered connotation of care responsibilities is the other main aspect that influences the gendering of jobs and supports the gendered character of the ideal worker (Benschop and Doorewaard 2012). The gender order in a specific society permeates work organizations through gendered norms and assumptions about the roles, positions, and “places” of women and men – in the public and private sphere. These so-called societal arrangements impact on and shape “what it means to be qualified (means), available full-time (opportunity) and work-oriented (motive)” (Tienari et al. 2002, 255). Notwithstanding the universal character of the abstract work ideal, the extent to which it excludes women supposedly fluctuates due to generous government-sponsored parental leave as in the Scandinavian countries, for example, or due to organizational policies and programs to provide work-life support (Sallee

2012). Erin Kelly et al. (2010) also illustrate how workplace initiatives to decrease work-family conflict for employees can actually challenge the universal, abstract ideal worker norm that privileges paid work obligations over unpaid family care work.

Janne Tienari, Sigrid Quack, and Hildegard Theobald (2002) present a cross-societal, comparative analysis of the "ideal worker" in middle management positions in one German bank and one Finnish bank. They argue that work ideals vary across societal contexts and that they are "based on different gender orders which penetrate organizational life and become incorporated in different, though predominantly masculine, conceptions" (Tienari et al. 2002, 251). Gender order is defined as a societal structure of distinctions of femininity and masculinity and relations between women and men that is reflected, for example, in the gendered division of labor and is institutionalized in, for example, welfare-state policies concerning family and employment. The gender order also "encompasses perceptions of equality and inequality between men and women in the society in general and the labour market in particular" (Tienari et al. 2002, 254).

Tienari et al.'s (2002) results suggest the existence of differing notions of the ideal worker in their German and Finnish cases. In Germany, women emerged as the second choice for management positions when young male recruits displayed an undesirably high mobility and left for other banks or were attracted to more specialized fields within the bank. In Finland, women emerged as natural choices for management positions due to a lack of qualified and interested male applicants. The authors describe the differing notions of women in relation to the ideal worker in the two different countries with reference to the wider societal contexts of the two different bank organizations. The German organization was permeated by a notion of a gendered division between the public and private spheres of life. The assumption that women have the role of carers and will leave the work organization after the birth of children resulted in strict vertical gender segregation in the bank. This was also a society with high incentives for women to stay at home to care for children. The Finnish organization, on the other hand, was permeated by norms about full-time work and continuous employment careers for both women and men. In Finland, state policies are based on the dual-earner family model. Also in the Finnish context, however, the ideal worker had male connotations, although not in relation to women's exclusion from continuous employment but in relation to women's failure to fit in with specifically managerial positions (cf. also the Chap. 6 by Hearn et al. in this volume about the gender order in the Finnish society).

4.1.4 Gender Connotations in the Transnational Business Context

The theoretical framework outlined above has been developed within a Western work context and thus needs to be complemented with research relevant for the transnational offshoring context that we set out to analyze in this chapter. Previous

research implies that there are several significant differences between the Western and the Indian business contexts that are of importance for the gender connotations of care responsibilities and qualification profiles. Women in India can therefore be expected to face conflicts between norms for ideal femininity and ideal worker norms that differ from those encountered by women in the West.

4.1.4.1 Care Responsibilities in the Transnational Business Context

As we noted above, the extent to which women can fit the universal work ideal depends not only on norms and values within the companies but also on the societal context. The Swedish welfare society is characterized by "women-friendly," dual-earner, and dual-carer policies that support less traditional gender roles and encourage gender-equal parenting (Korpi et al. 2013). The team-based organization, typical for the IT business, has also been associated with high levels of work flexibility that can be used by employees to balance work and family life (Perrons 2003). This might suggest that women are not necessarily excluded as ideal employees due to the long-hour work culture combined with care responsibilities (Roman and Peterson 2011).

This context is drastically different from Indian society, described as permeated by attitudes about women as the primary caregiver (Arun et al. 2006; Gupta 2014). India is a country characterized by societal ideals of men as breadwinners and women as the heart of the family (Rajadhyaksha and Bhatnagar 2000). The long-standing societal norm of arranged marriages and regulation of the relationships between sexes among young people can also be expected to influence the lack of fit between women and work ideals in so far as they restrict women's behavior (Fuller and Narasimhan 2007; Donner 2008). These societal ideals are internalized by the employees, but also by the Indian management of companies, affecting their practices and policies (D'Mello 2006).

Traditional gender ideals have been a cornerstone in creating the Indian middle class (Donner 2008; Vijayakumar 2013). This implies that wives and mothers have the moral obligation to take care of the family, even if some of the practical work can be delegated to servants. The problem for women in combining work and family is thus, above all, a question of living up to social conventions. Research also shows that the expected standards of femininity in the Indian context still entail that women display "submissiveness" and "docility" (Shanker 2008).

Indian working life is largely based on a male-provider model, with an expectation that duties outside work will be taken care of by somebody else (Donner 2008). A male provider can work both long hours and late hours in the office (Fuller and Narasimhan 2007). Flexiwork and working from home are an exception in many companies and normally a privilege for people higher up in their careers (Sahay 2007). These kinds of working hours are not possible for people who have caring

obligations, and in India daily caring obligations fall on women, while men have the obligation for providing for their family, including their parents and siblings (Radhakrishnan 2009). Previous research illustrates how the approach to work-life balance issues also differs between Indian and Western companies (Chandra 2012). The Western approach to work-life balance entails offering employees spatial and temporal flexibility as a key aspect. The Indian companies focus instead on employee welfare issues and socializing after working hours – offering the employees cultural, recreational, health, and educational programs (Chandra 2012; cf. also Radhakrishnan's Chap. 5 in this volume).

4.1.4.2 Qualification Profiles in the Transnational Business Context

Also, when it comes to the gender connotations of qualification profiles, differences seem to exist between how work ideals are gendered in the Western compared to the Indian business context. While requirements for technical competence have been described as disqualifying women as ideal employees in the West, in India, women are not expected to be technically less competent than men (D'Mello 2006; Fuller and Narasimhan 2007; Poster 2013).

In addition, the new and emerging IT industry in India has been depicted as "degendered" and as providing Indian women with an opportunity to develop a "new identity" (Lau 2006). This has resulted in the situation that Roli Varma (cf. her Chap. 3 in this volume) describes that while the academic field of computer science is viewed as masculine in Western countries, women's participation in this field in India is relatively high. As Varma illustrates in her chapter, however, gender is still a relevant factor to investigate in the Indian IT industry.

In order to be able to provide a multifaceted analysis, we also need to take into account differences in the organizational structures and management ideologies between Sweden and India. The Scandinavian corporate values, emphasizing flat hierarchies, participative management, consensus orientation, and individual decision making (cf., e.g., Holmberg and Åkerblom 2006), stand in sharp contrast to the Indian values. According to Martine Cardel, Gertsen, and Mette Zølner (2012), Indian leadership emphasizes clearly visible hierarchies and authoritarian management power but also management involvement in the employees' professional development as well as their personal lives and their families. Ekin Pellegrini, Terri A. Scandura, and Vaidyanathan Jayaraman (2010) describe Indian management ideologies and organizational values in a similar manner, referring to them as "paternalistic." They explain how paternalistic managers "combine benevolence with control of subordinates' decision making" (Pellegrini et al. 2010, 392).

4.2 Method and Methodology

4.2.1 The Case Study Companies

This chapter draws on interviews made in two IT firms, both employing professional IT workers with a higher education background in Sweden and India. The interviews were made within the framework of the research project “Offswing” coordinated at Uppsala University in Sweden, focusing on the so-called “soft” issues in advanced IT offshoring from Sweden to India. The interviews were conducted in the Bangalore and Chennai offices of these companies. In the section below, we present the two organizations, under pseudonyms for reasons of anonymity.

Of the two organizations studied, one is a start-up, and the other is a well-established large multinational corporation. Both are engaged in developing software programs for both Swedish and other European clients. Allsoft is a small start-up IT organization set up by Swedes in India. It has less than 100 employees in India. The company mainly works with Swedish clients and has management and marketing functions in Sweden. Allsoft is managed by a group of Swedes (two with a background in Southeast Asia) in India. One of the sales arguments put forward by the company is that the presence of Swedish staff offshore helps to smooth collaboration and eliminate cultural clashes.

Bellsoft is a multinational IT company with headquarters in the UK. They acquired a previously Swedish-owned company, and by this acquisition, the Swedish employees became part of a global arena, with collaborators in different countries and an order to offshore some development work to the company’s offices in India. The number of employees in the company’s Indian offices is about 5000, and they serve clients in different European countries and the USA. Bellsoft is involved in program development, IT support, and some business process work.

There are considerable differences between the companies. Bellsoft, because of its size, had more structured policies, and processes and the management in the Indian office were practically all Indian. The transnational collaboration in the teams that were studied was between team members and team managers in the Swedish and Indian offices of the company and only rarely directly with the customers, who mostly communicated with the company’s Swedish offices. Allsoft was managed by Swedes in both Sweden and India, and the developers communicated directly with customers.

Women were a minority in both companies, both in Sweden and in India. The managers described that between 10 and 25 % of their employees in India were women, and this was explained by the fact that only 10–20 % of the applicants for positions as software developers were women. More men than women graduate from engineering and computer programs in India, even if the ratio of women on these programs is higher than in most Western countries (NASSCOM 2009).

4.2.2 Data Collection and Analysis

Initially, senior management at Allsoft was contacted so as to secure access. The suggested interview sample consisted of employees at different points in their careers, middle managers, and human resource people. At Allsoft basically all female employees and a corresponding number of male employees in roughly the same positions were interviewed in India, as well as the Swedes engaged in this company, both management and trainees. At Bellsoft, four developer teams were chosen by the company's Swedish offshoring coordinator, and both Swedish and Indian members of these teams were interviewed, as well as leaders of some other teams and Indian human resource personnel. Human resource personnel and team leaders in the different companies collaborated with the research team in identifying suitable interviewees.

Data was collected by face-to-face interviews between January and August 2012 in Sweden and India. The interviews in Sweden were conducted by two Swedish researchers and those in India by both the Indian researcher and one of the Swedish researchers. In all, 107 people were interviewed. Since many of the managers were men, there was a higher proportion of men in the final sample, although 20 % of the interviewees were women. Most of the interviews were conducted in offices and meeting rooms at the respective companies. Each interview lasted between twenty minutes and an hour and a half. Almost all the interviews were recorded. All the interviews in India were in English, while the interviews conducted in Sweden were in Swedish. All interviews were transcribed in the language in which they were recorded. The authors have translated the quotations from the Swedish interviews in this chapter.

The interviews were semi-structured, and different interview guides were used for employees and for senior managers and human resource managers. The interviews with the employees focused on the employees' educational background; position; career aspirations; work tasks and working conditions; work-life balance; relationships with colleagues, managers, and customers; differences in organizational cultures between Sweden and India; and differences in working with clients and customers other than Swedes and Indians. The interviews mainly focused on work issues, and therefore the informants' family background, such as class and caste, or rural vs. urban origins were not elaborated. The employees' educational background was a diploma course, a bachelor, or a masters' degree, mostly, but not always, in disciplines related to information technology. The different levels of education indicate that their mainly middle-class backgrounds also varied between lower and upper middle class.

The interviews with senior managers and human resource managers focused on how the initial cooperation between Sweden and India started and how the managers recruited employees and put together a team to manage and deliver the projects, initial phases of the project, and challenges in setting up communication routines. They were also asked to comment on the cultural differences that affected everyday work, failures and successes in communication and delivery, work-life balance, and differences in organizational cultures between Sweden and India.

The interviews were analyzed by coding and categorizing (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane 2006), assisted by the analysis program Atlas.ti. The analysis involved a combination of inductive and deductive techniques. An existing framework of previous research and theoretical concepts was used, but within this framework, the primary objective was to understand, interpret, and represent the subjective viewpoints of the interviewees in order to capture the qualitative richness of the data.

The method used to collect the data has some limitations. Since the interviews took place within the organization, it is probable that some interviewees were not able to express themselves freely, in particular, because access was provided by managers. A number of the interviews were also conducted in a language, which was not the native language of the interviewer, the interviewee, or both.

4.3 Results and Analysis

4.3.1 Cultural Clashes over Qualification Profiles

In the case study companies, the Swedish perceptions of what constituted an ideal worker clashed with the Indian ones in several aspects that could be related to the organizational context in Sweden and India. Both Indian and Swedish managers expressed frustration over cultural clashes in their collaboration, and some of these cultural clashes had differences in work ideals as their ultimate cause. Diverging situated work ideals affected what policies and practices the Swedish and Indian managers preferred and promoted in order to create a "perfect match" between employees and companies. The most prominent of these policies was related to recruiting and retaining ideal workers.

Not surprisingly, both the Swedish and Indian managers mentioned technical competence as the most basic aspect of the situated work ideal for software professionals. Consequently, technical competence was evaluated in the first stage of the recruitment process. At the next stage in the recruitment process, however, the diverging situated perceptions of the qualities of the ideal workers clashed.

One of the most frequently mentioned qualification requirements for an ideal software professional in the Swedish interviews was being "independent," meaning taking responsibility, showing initiative, and being "proactive." One of the Swedish Allsoft managers described their company philosophy in a way that was characteristic for how the Swedish managers perceived the ideal worker: "Our company culture is based on that if I give you an assignment, then you'll do it and you let me know if you run into problems." At Bellsoft this Swedish emphasis on the ideal worker being "independent" and "proactive" resulted in a cultural clash between Swedish and Indian managers. According to the Swedish team leaders, the Indian Bellsoft human resource offices did not consider this aspect enough in the recruitment process. One of the Swedish Bellsoft managers described how the recruitment of junior software developers in India had resulted in problems when the new recruits failed to match the Swedish expectations on them being independent and

taking the initiative: "That was really a clash, because we had two guys who did nothing for two whole years. We thought they would build a system for us." It worked better when the recruitment was taken over by an Indian team leader with previous experience of the Swedish work ideals. This was an example of an Indian team leader who had adopted recruitment practices based on the Swedish work ideal:

> Right, the first thing was what I felt and then realized in Sweden, even if you don't know the technology much, what they really look out for is someone who can go and get things done. […] So I was mainly looking for people who had the attitude to do things by themselves. And then the technology in terms of what we're supposed to do, and trust me when I say that I took people from different technical backgrounds by just looking at them and the way they're performing in Bellsoft earlier in different projects. And I know they're performing very well in this project so technology is second to me than the person and the attitude. (Bellsoft team leader, India)

The Indian offices in this way often strived to satisfy the needs of their Western clients and coached their staff to correspond to the ideals. An Indian Allsoft team leader, for example, explained how he perceived it to be important for the employees not only to have the technical skills but also to have the "right" attitude to fit into their "family," in order to protect organizational values and the work atmosphere. The Swedish managers expressed frustration, however, over the fact that some work ideals were more difficult than others to transfer to the Indian business context.

The clashes between different work ideals described above meant that the Indian managers and software developers needed to meet requirements and ideals that in some respects were new to them. Despite some of the Indian managers' efforts to accommodate the expectations of the Swedes, in the hierarchical Indian context, the quality of being "independent" was rarely seen as important or highly valued (cf. Pellegrini et al. 2010). Instead, the traditional Indian ideal prescribed that employees should execute their tasks to the satisfaction of their managers and get frequently rated for their ability to do this. This ideal obviously collided with the Swedish ideal where even junior staffs are expected to take responsibility and ownership of their tasks. The Indian managers seemed well aware of this clash and therefore also recommended specific management strategies in order to overcome problems with Indian employees' lack of independence and autonomy:

> It's a cultural issue. […] I mean your team leader will tell me to do a certain thing. If I'm also a Swede, and once my manager tells me, because of my culture, I do it. But in India it's not so. In India you require a couple of reminders for follow-ups, So what happens is the Swede gets surprised when something does not get done. So my suggestion is, when something is told, immediately set up reviews also, you say that okay these things you're supposed to do, let's us take stock after three days, seven days, fifteen days. (Bellsoft manager, India)

This kind of management strategy, involving frequent monitoring and evaluation of the employees, was an important part of the Indian management ideology and something the Indian employees were accustomed to. To be amenable to management evaluations was even part of the Indian work ideal. An ideal worker in India would have a desire for constant improvement and would appreciate structured

feedback to know which characteristics and qualifications to improve. The Indian ideal worker was therefore clearly associated with youth. In the Indian context, youth was seen as having many valuable qualities: young people were seen as career hungry, hardworking, flexible in terms of traveling and work hours, and eager to learn new things. This specific idea of the career-oriented ideal worker also meant that the Indian managers had a higher tolerance for the high rate of turnover among the Indian employees. Their perception of the career-oriented ideal worker reflected the idea of an Indian male worker in a breadwinner role that constantly tries to improve his income and status by changing workplaces often.

The Swedish managers had greater difficulties with accepting the high attrition rate among the Indian employees. Their emphasis on experience, thorough domain knowledge, autonomy, and independence meant that they understood the Indian attrition rate as a major problem. Creating and maintaining independent and autonomous teams is challenging when new employees are constantly introduced in the team and have to be trained. The high attrition rate forced the Swedes to redefine the characteristic of an ideal worker as someone staying at the company at least during the lifetime of a project. On the other hand, the composition of the Swedish workforce with middle-aged professionals was not seen as an ideal by Bellsoft's Indian human resource manager: "I know, I am conscious about it, that with age it is extremely difficult to pick up and be responsive to new ideas immediately." The diverging work ideals were thus differently related to age in the two cultural contexts. They were also closely related to gender.

The divergences between a work ideal, situated in a Swedish work tradition, which emphasizes employee initiative and independence, and a work ideal, situated in the Indian work tradition, which requires an employee who takes orders and obeys, reflect different management ideologies and organizational structures (Salminen-Karlsson 2014). The Swedish managers understood the Indian hierarchical organizational structure as problematic because it prevented the employees from developing into self-sufficient and assertive employees. The two different situated work ideals expressed echo to a great extent the different masculinities identified by Benschop and Doorewaard (1998) as characterizing, respectively, a Tayloristic work context and a team-based work. While the Swedish work ideal reflects masculine constructions based mainly on an entrepreneurial attitude, the Indian work ideal is associated with authoritarianism and paternalism, and although both work ideals to a certain extent exclude women as ideal workers, they also create hierarchies between men and exclude certain enactments of masculinity.

The qualification profile of an ideal team member, which was independent and autonomous, also involved expectations regarding employees' communicative skills. To be able to communicate within the team as well as with customers was an essential part of the Swedish work ideal:

> Because our co-workers need to communicate with Sweden we need people that are a little more social and have the talent for asking and listening at the same time. (Allsoft manager, Sweden)

The qualifications asked for, however, did not resemble “the collaborative and supportive work attitudes that we often label as female” (Metcalfe and Linstead 2003, 97) and which previous studies have linked to teamwork. Instead, the style of communication that was valued involved displaying self-confidence when taking individual initiatives to approach customers and managers, a style that previous studies have analyzed as part of a stereotypical masculine performance at work (cf., e.g., Peterson 2010). In the interviews, the Swedish managers expressed frustration with the Indian software developers who were said to be too reticent in expressing their doubts or problems in front of managers. This was another aspect of the ideal employee, which was sometimes difficult for Indians to live up to, as they were used to a hierarchical organization where they were not expected to initiate communication with clients or managers. One of the Swedish Allsoft managers explained how he perceived the problem with Indian employees not fitting the situated work ideal: “They are a little more timid, careful, and silent. They don’t take the initiative to talk and when they talk, they express themselves with a very limited vocabulary.”

A particular aspect of the ideal employee’s communicative skills was related to the fact that the transnational counterpart was in a non-English-speaking country. The Indian pronunciation of English varies depending on the speaker’s geographical origin, class, caste, and education. Some software companies conduct English language training for the benefit of those employees who had not been privileged with an English-speaking educational background. Thus, English is pronounced in a variety of ways, and some of the accents can be experienced as problematic even by native English speakers. For the Swedes, it was crucial that the Indian employees spoke English in a way that they could understand. For some of the Swedish managers, a recruitment interview was therefore important in order to check that the accent of the candidate was understandable for a Swede. The language issue was often described as a one-way problem. While Swedes were complaining about the Indian English, the Indian employees did not express any dissatisfaction with the Swedes’ knowledge of English.

To sum up, so far we have highlighted a number of different cultural clashes associated with the diverging situated work ideals in this transnational business context. We have also related these work ideals and the cultural clashes to organizational values and structures and to management ideologies. We have demonstrated that the Swedish managers expressed dissatisfaction with the fact that several of the key aspects of their situated work ideal were not easily accepted and transferred from the Swedish organizational culture to the Indian work context. The Indian managers, on the other hand, were critical of the Swedes’ requirement to take part in hiring people for their projects and to find those who had the right kind of attitude to their work according to the Swedish ideals and whose English was understandable for Swedes. The Indian human resource offices perceived this as an intrusion from the Swedes. Some Bellsoft managers in India perceived the Swedes as particularly frustrated, compared to other customer countries, and felt that the Swedes wanted to micromanage the Indian work processes. In a concrete sense, this also concerned different incentives the Swedes wanted to use to retain employees who worked for them, for example, salary increases for men and flexible working condi-

tions for women. According to the Indian Bellsoft managers, giving extra incentives for people working toward Sweden would disrupt the local structure:

> If the quality is suffering it is your right to demand quality and it is our duty to provide quality. But then, you can't say, "I own these resources so if he is going out and he is resigned from the company pay him extra." But we can't do that because we have a certain set of people here, they have a certain salary band. You should leave the decision to the local management to handle it. (Bellsoft manager, India)

Using the concept work ideal as a tool to analyze cultural clashes over qualification profiles therefore reveals more than just how organizational practices, such as recruiting and retaining ideal employees, are linked to management ideologies and organizational structures. Such analyses can also reveal an underlying conflict between two partners in a transnational business relationship caused by diverging perspectives on their respective roles and responsibilities.

4.3.2 Cultural Clashes over Care Responsibilities

We now turn our attention to how society's gender order impacted on notions about the availability and work orientation of the ideal worker. The following analysis will highlight, for example, how ideas about gender equality permeated working hour ideals and the paradoxical consequences of assumptions about Indian women's immobility.

The IT sector is known for its long working hours. In the Swedish offices of Bellsoft, however (the only company with developers in Sweden), employees recounted that they seldom worked longer than their 8-h day. In contrast, long hours and late hours were a norm in India, in particular at Bellsoft, where the ideal software developer was explicitly described as working long hours. Some of the Swedish managers and colleagues had observed the long-hour working culture in the Indian business context and expressed concerns about it: "I've thought about it, when are they free and how much do they actually work? Do they feel that they have to work all the time?" (Bellsoft employee, Sweden). Even if both companies had an official 8-h policy, long hours in the evening or during weekends were not seen as particularly exceptional in cases when deadlines or special requests from a customer needed to be met. They were exceptional enough, however, to sometimes be characterized as "hero stories." One of the Indian team leaders in Bellsoft was asked to describe a particularly successful delivery and replied by describing a "huge team effort":

> In this current project it was a huge team effort, let me say. The entire team was focused and we had a very good project manager on site also, his name is […]. The entire team is very cooperative and worked like twelve, fourteen hours and so people worked on weekends, supported on weekends. So, the entire team and everybody wanted this project to be a success. (Bellsoft team leader, India)

Although the Indian employees said that they occasionally worked overtime if there was a deadline to be met, they also appreciated the official policies of the companies. Both companies prided themselves on providing reasonable working hours, which were expected to be specially valued by women. A Swedish Allsoft manager explained: “We look at it from a gender equality perspective. We prefer an 8-h working day.” This way of associating policies about working hours to issues concerning gender (in)equality was common in our material, although few of the Indian managers took a stance similar to this Swedish manager.

When asked explicit questions about gender and gender (in)equality, most informants framed these as family-related issues that concerned women in the Indian context. Female employees as a group were almost always seen as tied to their families, which was considered problematic in relation to being a software developer. If women actually did continue working after marrying and becoming mothers, their obligations outside of work were expected to put constraints on their work. Although some wives and mothers continued to be employed, their care responsibilities made it difficult for them to work long and late hours and be flexible and mobile. Consequently, when overtime was needed, male employees were sometimes asked in the first instance. That women were not perceived as being as flexible and available as men could also be manifested in the salaries:

> For the same qualification background job you get the same. But when the increments are given sometimes we may say that woman may get a little less. For example, the manager will say that I am giving 2 % more to a man because he is available for me 24/7 on the days but being a lady I can’t disturb you after 7 o’clock, I can’t disturb you before 9 o’clock, I can’t disturb on a Saturday, Sunday. So this man has done, is available all through so I give him 1 % more so that can happen, it can happen anywhere. (Bellsoft manager, India)

Even though almost all female employees denied that there was a gender pay gap in their companies, some of them also explained that their own salaries might be lower because of this lack of availability.

In addition to women’s caring duties, the requirement for the ideal worker to work long and late hours had another gendered aspect in the Indian context, not previously observed in the writings about how the universal work ideal excludes women in the Western work context. This aspect concerned the perception that it is unsafe to be outside late at night and problematic for reasons of decency to work late hours with male colleagues (D’Mello 2006; Donner 2008). In general, both Indian managers and Indian colleagues asserted that women should not work at night:

> 3:30 is when we start shift in the afternoon and we end 11:30 in the night and we don’t put lady staff in this shift unless they’re comfortable. Basically we don’t do any bias, because we don’t want the male staff to come and complain saying that what’s the difference between male and female staff, everyone is same. But to be honest, even Indian men have that feeling okay it’s not safe for them to travel late nights even though there is a cab available and security available. For safety reasons we don’t put them in the last shift and it’s a company policy. (Bellsoft manager, India)

This is an example of how a societal gender order affects management practices and becomes institutionalized in a company policy and creates organizational seg-

regation and inequalities in the labor market (cf. D'Mello 2006). This company policy also reflects inequalities between women and men in the Indian society (cf. Tienari et al. 2002). The ideal Indian femininity involves being a wife and a mother in a way that clashes with the universal, abstract work ideal. The gender connotation here, however, also involves an aspect not visible in the Western context: the Indian ideal femininity, reflected in this company policy, connotes submissiveness and docility (cf. Shanker 2008). This policy, therefore, highlights an ideal femininity in a society where there traditionally has been a separation of the sexes and women have been seen as vulnerable and in need of protection. Perceptions such as these contribute to the lack of fit between women and work ideals since they restrict women's behavior (cf. Fuller and Narasimhan 2007; Donner 2008).

The specific Indian gender order, described above, could be taken as an indication that Indian women would be very far from a fit with both the Western and the Indian universal work ideal. As we will show below, however, our empirical data highlights a paradox when it comes to women's fit with the universal abstract work ideal in India: women could be constructed as both loyal and disloyal employees.

Several of the informants, both Indian and Swedish managers, explained that the lack of technically competent women was a problem since women were considered to be valuable employees due to their loyalty. One essential aspect of the universal, abstract ideal worker is the lifelong commitment to the workplace and company (Acker 1990; Sallee 2012). Finding loyal employees was of great importance in Allsoft, the small company, since it was more vulnerable to employee turnover, but this was also mentioned in Bellsoft. In the Indian transnational business context, characterized by high attrition rates, employee commitment and loyalty were redefined and hardly expected to be lifelong. It was also an aspect of the ideal worker that was clearly gendered, although not in the sense that it excluded women as generally suggested (Acker 2012). Instead, several of the managers expressed their will and desire to employ women for reasons related to commitment:

> Highly educated girls exist, no doubt. And they are more loyal to the company, too. If they feel that it's a good company with good values that gives them a good wage – then they stay. They don't have a great need to move between companies in order to increase their rewards as many guys do. (Allsoft manager, Sweden)

Previous research has also described women as more loyal to companies than men and less disposed to change workplaces in order to pursue a career (D'Mello 2006). An explanation for this could, of course, be a lack of opportunity due to a glass ceiling, instead of women's active choice. But for men, the obligation to be the provider puts them under great pressure to fulfill the requirements of working life and succeed in the competitive environment (D'Mello and Sahay 2007). This is true from the very beginning, since marriage prospects are still influenced by a man's financial potential and career achievements (Prakash and Singh 2014). Vandana Chandra (2012) describes how men's home environment both requires them to excel in their career and supports them in fulfilling their work role. Moreover in India, changing workplaces is considered an important career strategy which the Swedish managers disapproved of, as one of them explained: "We are not interested

in people who are only focused on their paycheck but more in those who have the genuine interest."

Recruiting a woman could thus be seen as a safe investment compared to recruiting a man. Women were therefore described as sought-after employees and difficult to recruit, which called for special recruitment strategies. The Swedish Allsoft manager continued:

> I don't think they come to us. Women are very popular. They are much, much more loyal than men. […] They go to the large companies. It's really, really difficult to employ women software programmers. I even… I even discriminated. I gave the women in our company responsibility to recruit women. Because it would be nicer for the women if women were responsible [for the recruitment process]. But it didn't work out. They go to larger companies. (Allsoft manager, Sweden)

While the Swedish and Indian managers constructed women as loyal ideal workers in this aspect, they also, paradoxically, realized that this loyalty was time limited. Women were therefore also described as disloyal. Exhibiting the ideal characteristic of loyalty most often only lasted, and was expected to last, until the woman got married or became a mother. After that, the female employees were said to leave the company – either to follow their husbands to other locations or to become full-time mothers. However, some of the Swedish managers interpreted women's "disloyal" behavior toward the company as a consequence of the lack of opportunities for mothers to continue to work in the Indian labor market.

The Swedish Bellsoft team leaders were therefore concerned about the lack of flexibility in the Indian offices in terms of handling individual employees' needs and attending to what was seen as women's specific needs. Bellsoft had rules, regulations, and policies for retaining women, including a target figure for the percentage of women in the workforce and meetings between the human resource manager and women employees to discuss issues. A women's network had also recently been started. Nonetheless, Bellsoft was less flexible than the smaller company in this study, and this was where a cultural clash appeared. When Swedish Bellsoft team leaders wanted to find individual solutions for recruiting and retaining women, they met with resistance from the Indian human resource office. A Swedish manager who was affected by Bellsoft's policies expressed his dissatisfaction with the inflexibility of the Indian human resource department:

> In some deliveries we have seen that we would very much like to keep a woman after she has had her child. And she wants to continue working and could work two or three days a week. But it has been turned down. Because they didn't allow distance work. (Bellsoft manager, Sweden)

According to this manager, the Indian human resource department prevented the development of a more flexible work organization that would support and retain mothers in the company.

Also, the general equality policies were not always followed at the middle management level. For example, despite the career development programs officially being open for both women and men, some Bellsoft managers were said to be more reluctant to recommend women to them, because of the perceived risk of them leaving the company:

> The training program announcement offers everyone with skill to come. A man gets a preference, a woman doesn't get a preference. So, because the managers feel the woman, after training she may not come to work, she may resign and go, whereas a man, I think if he completes the training at least he will be useful for the organization. (Bellsoft manager, India)

Any mention of managers who would have made corresponding estimations of the risks of their male employees changing companies was not found in the interviews, in spite of the general impression of men being more prone to change jobs for career reasons.

Allsoft, as a small company, did not have comprehensive programs for support and promotion or for gender equality. Instead, they focused on finding individual solutions. Both companies had difficulties in retaining married women with children and often did not succeed. Bellsoft had the advantage of having offices in several Indian cities, which meant that if the reason for attrition was the husband's location, the company could sometimes arrange a transfer for the woman to an office at that location.

To sum up, using the concept of work ideal as a tool to analyze cultural clashes over care responsibilities can reveal how company gender equality policies, or a lack of such policies, are linked to societal gender orders. It can also reveal paradoxes in how femininities and masculinities are defined and how gender segregation is reproduced in relation to understandings of employee commitment and loyalty to the company.

4.4 Concluding Discussion

4.4.1 Empirical Contribution: Diverging Work Ideals and Cultural Clashes

When Swedish and Indian managers describe the ideal software developer, both similarities and differences appear. Aspects that we have discussed here are technical competence, loyalty to the company and the project, engagement manifested in willingness to work long hours, and being independent, responsible, and proactive. Furthermore, both the similarities and the differences have gendered aspects.

Technical competence is a characteristic that is valued by both Swedish and Indian managers. In India, it is the baseline: it is what you get recruited for. For Swedes, it is extremely important that the Indians have a good technical competence because it justifies them being in the project in the first place. In Sweden, however, compared to India, the focus is less on technical competence. This is because, firstly, in the local Swedish context, there is no need to focus specifically on technical competence: applicants normally have the necessary technical competence they claim to have according to their educational qualifications, and so it needs less attention. Secondly, since Swedish organizational structures are flat and the culture stresses

teamwork, soft skills become more important relative to technical competence only (Salminen-Karlsson 2014).

The appreciation of the employees' technical competence can take on gendered forms. In the Indian context, technical competence is valued and gender neutral, and women are perceived as technically competent and confident and thus to have the potential to be ideal employees. A technically competent woman may enjoy high esteem for her skills in India, while she does not necessarily get that appreciation among the Swedes who do not expect her to be as technically competent as a man and who put somewhat less emphasis on technical skills (cf. Peterson 2007). Technical competence, however, does not make women ideal workers in the Indian IT sector, where long working hours and availability are even more important than in the West, and women are seen as not being able to comply with these, because of their obligations outside work and because of cultural constraints. While women in the West experience problems with achieving the status of ideal IT employees mainly due to their work identity, it is the opposite for women in India.

Loyalty to the company is something that is also valued in both contexts, but to different degrees. The Swedish ideal worker stays with the company and grows into the company culture and acquires domain and client knowledge. In India, the attitude is more ambivalent. Being loyal to the company is an advantage, and companies and managers have incentives to keep their employees. At the same time, young male employees, in particular (who are the absolute majority), are rather expected to change jobs in search of better income and better CVs, and a young male software developer who would be satisfied with staying at the same company or same team would be likely to be regarded negatively as lacking ambition. For women, the situation is different. The fact that women change jobs less often is recognized as advantageous for the company, but it also turns them into secondary employees who do not show ambition and participate in "the race." The expectation that they will leave the company for family reasons contributes to marginalizing them.

A culture of working long and late hours is valued in the Indian setting, while the Swedish managers do not particularly applaud it – even if they do not complain when they reap its benefits. This is the main issue separating genders among the Indian software developers and makes it very difficult for women to be ideal software developers. The long working hour culture effectively divided men and women into two separate groups, one of which was far from the ideal. Both the late-hour culture and the difficulties of women to stay late at the office were presented as something unquestionable in the case study companies, even though both of them officially had an 8-h working day. Here, a prevalent Indian organizational culture and work ideal overrode the expectations of the Swedes. The Swedish managers and colleagues, who did not visit India for longer periods, were only dimly aware of the long-hour culture. Thus, the disadvantages caused by women's restrictions in regard to time and space were maintained, even when that might not have been necessary.

Employees, who are independent and proactive, who take full responsibility for their part of the work, and who communicate about problems when they appear, represent a strong Swedish ideal, which both men and women are expected to fulfill. In India, this is not an ideal when it comes to software developers, but rather a

managerial ideal. The Swedish expectations that the Indian software developers would conform to this ideal effectively separated Swedish and Indian developers into two groups, of which the Indian one was far removed from the Swedish ideal. As there were few women in both settings, this divergence points out a major cultural clash between two local masculine ideals and practices.

4.4.2 Conceptual Contribution: Work Ideals in a Transnational Business Context

Our analysis has highlighted that the different kinds of work ideals produced multiple masculinities and femininities, privileging some over others. Our empirical data, therefore, highlights that it is a simplification to assume that gendered work ideals simply exclude either women or men or include either all women or all men. Instead, the chapter highlights how the transnational business context adds nuances to how the universal, abstract work ideal has been understood to exclude women and include men.

As the analysis has demonstrated, certain Indian femininities were constructed in relation to some of the most essential aspects of the universal work ideal described by Acker (1990): the employees' loyalty to the company and their ability and desire to work long hours and be both temporally and spatially flexible. In both aspects, women's role outside work was seen as constituting an obstacle for them in working life, and thus, in spite of women's loyalty, these aspects constructed men as the more ideal employees. As was also outlined in the analysis, however, even a man, who would be considered as an ideal employee in India, was not always seen as such in the eyes of the Swedish managers due to diverging situated work ideals.

Our results show that the so-called universal, abstract ideal worker that Acker (1990) described is a construction clearly shaped by the Western context it is situated in. The concept of "gendered work ideals" reflects the Western context in that it, to a certain extent, assumes that men's and women's roles in society are much more similar than they are in India. Acker, for example, does not relate the concept of an ideal worker to a situation where women's work roles are so tied to their private roles that all discussions of women's roles in the company are explicitly based on a conception of their private roles. In the Indian IT industry, conditions outside the workplace play a role not apprehended by Acker, in particular for women.

Managers at both companies pointed out that it is common in India for grandparents to take care of their grandchildren. With the salaries available in the IT sector, it is also entirely possible to employ household help. This does not relieve middle-class mothers from the obligation of being responsible for the household, however, and for children's upbringing and education. To be able to work, a woman with children therefore has to have engaged and supporting parents or in-laws that are not in need of care themselves (Rajadhyaksha and Bhatnagar 2000), and even with the help of relatives, it is seldom possible for her to live up to the ideal norm of long and late hours.

The chapter has also illustrated that the concept of "gendered work ideal" can be used to highlight how multifaceted transnational work ideals are and how cultural clashes can be explained with reference to conflicting situated work ideals. Work ideals are not always easily transferred and institutionalized from one work context to another. Who is considered an ideal employee in an IT transnational organization depends on where the company is located, the culture of the country, the size and age of the corporation (multinational or small start-up), and the nature of the business and the clients of the company. Previously, the work ideal concept has been used to analyze the Western work context and to delineate the exclusion and subordination of women employees at work. In cross-cultural studies, this concept can also be used to highlight the construction of different masculinities and hierarchies between men. Investigating transnational work ideals underlines how culture, ethnicity, language, age, and class intersect with gender and create hierarchies, not only between women and men but also between men.

The results highlight how work ideals diverge according to organizational structures and management ideologies, but also how they are linked to the very different national cultural dimensions of Sweden and India (cf. Bredillet et al. 2010). Even if software industries are much more Western than most of the workplaces in India, traditional values still influence the management ideologies that are used, which in our study is reflected in the fact that the Indian work ideals resemble the Tayloristic ideal more than the team-based ideal (Benschop and Doorewaard 1998).

While the large Indian offices of Bellsoft were practically all Indian, employees at Allsoft were working under direct Swedish leadership. This also meant that the understandings of the ideal worker among the managers differed. With the different management structures of the companies, our study gives certain insights in neocolonialism and also its relationship to gender equality policies. Even if Sweden and India do not have a common colonial past, the present-day Western colonialist thinking regards it as a self-evident fact that the Indians should strive to be the ideal workers in the Swedish sense to keep the Swedish customers happy (cf. Blomqvist et al. 2015). An example of the power relationship was the often one-sided issue of language, where the Swedes who found it difficult to express themselves in English were met with patience and helpfulness, while some of the Indians actually tried to learn Swedish. Yet, language was described as a problem more often on the Swedish than on the Indian side.

Allsoft managers, who were directly involved in the day-to-day management in the small start-up company, had developed their understanding of the ideal employee (as well as their perceptions of gender) in the European setting. The Swedish managers in Allsoft had spent considerable time in India, and two of them had a background in South Asia, even if they had grown up in Sweden. Thus, they had an understanding of the Indian culture as well as an understanding of the needs and preferences of the Swedish clients and a will to comply with them. The mission of the founders was to export Swedish management and development models to India. Following the line of reasoning of M. N. Ravishankar, Shan Pan, and Michael Myers (2013), neocolonialism in this case was a reflection of a certain ideological

discourse, of superiority and inferiority of cultures, regardless of the exact national background of the parties involved. During the years of the company's operation, the managers had conceded to a hybrid model of managing, in that while still asserting that the basic values are Swedish, they have also incorporated Indian management techniques.

The differences in the perception of what constitutes an ideal worker caused problems in the collaboration between Swedish and Indian managers at Bellsoft. At Bellsoft, the Indian management, in particular those who had long-standing collaborations with Swedes, had created what Ravishankar et al. (2013) would call hybrid ideals. The Indian offices were managed by Indians, who wanted to promote ideal Indian employees' careers to foster a younger generation of Indians to take over. The management used both Western managerial techniques and a paternalistic Indian approach (Salminen-Karlsson 2015). The ideal employees were expected to exhibit both entrepreneurial and compliant characteristics. The Indian management processes were to a certain extent seen as a nuisance by the Swedish collaborators, while the Indian management thought it would be much easier if the Swedes would accept the Indian organizational practices to the same extent as earlier offshoring collaborators, as those from the UK and the USA had done, for example. The Indian Bellsoft management did not hide the fact that they did not fully share the Swedish ideals. This attitude was probably facilitated by Sweden's position in the global order as a country with a perceived lower position than the USA and the UK.

Gender equality policies, as they are formed in large multinational companies, in themselves can be seen as a part of the neocolonialist discourse. They normally originate from headquarters or are modeled the same way as in the West, with more or less adaptation for the local context (Dhar-Bhattacharjee 2013). Winifred Poster's (2008) reflections on how the headquarters of transnational companies try to impose their gender equality policies in different cultural contexts, and how these efforts are ignored or adapted, also hold true in our study. The policies at Bellsoft were a good example of this, where the Indian office of the international company tried to implement some gender equality measures following general Bellsoft policies, being successful in some and less successful in others. At Allsoft, the Swedish background of the managers had not resulted in particular gender equality policies. When coming into an Indian setting, these Swedish managers left the Swedish gender equality discourse behind but did not investigate those gender equality issues that could be relevant for their employees in the Indian setting.

Possibly, as indicated by both Bellsoft and Allsoft managers, the differences in work ideals are particularly large between India and Sweden, causing more problems than might be found in offshoring collaborations between other countries, making the "perfect match" difficult to achieve. Further investigation is thus needed of these issues, both from a Sweden/India perspective and in respect to other pairs of countries.

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