The Finnish Youth Research Society

The aim of the Finnish Youth Research Society is to promote and conduct multidisciplinary youth research at both national and international levels, as well as to provide information and research-based expertise on matters relating to young people. The society is a non-profit organization founded in 1988 and its activities are funded by the Ministry of Culture and Education and by other funding sources such as the Academy of Finland.

The Society’s publication series has been in circulation since 1993. It aims to make youth research and information widely available and to publish titles that are socially relevant, scientifically sound, and which present fresh perspectives. Approximately 10–15 titles are published each year.

There are two publication series: printed books and online publications. The series comprise monographs such as doctoral dissertations related to contemporary youth issues, article collections and research reports. The majority of the publications are in Finnish but the list also includes titles in English and Swedish. Almost all of the Finnish publications have English summaries.

The Finnish Youth Research Society also publishes the Finnish language peer-reviewed journal *Nuorisotutkimus* [The Finnish Journal of Youth Research] quarterly. In addition to scholarly articles, the journal contains editorials, book reviews and discussions related to youth research, as well as announcements about upcoming seminars and events. The articles are accompanied by English summaries, which can also be found on the *Nuorisotutkimus* web page.

English abstracts of selected publications are available via the Society’s website: http://www.nuorisotutkimusseura.fi/en/abstracts
A selection of abstracts also appears below.

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FINNLAND. COOL. FRANKFURT BOOK FAIR. GUEST OF HONOUR 2014.
A multidisciplinary article collection that focuses on the phenomenon of youth in Finland from the 20th to the 21st centuries. The source materials used are autobiographical writings that were gathered through a nationwide writing competition. This article collection provides a remarkable insight into the transformation of Finnish society, from the agrarian poverty of the early 20th century to the wealthy information society of the 21st.

The article collection is located at the intersection of three research traditions: multidisciplinary youth and generation research, the history of youth, and the Finnish tradition of life story and oral history research. The multidisciplinary nature of the collection is also evident from the associated researchers; they range from veterans and established experts in the field to fresh post-graduate students.

What has youth meant for young people who have lived at different times and in different social environments in Finland? How do people born in the early 20th century, whose childhood and youth were marked by depression and war, remember and write about their youth? And what about the post-war baby-boom generation, which in Finland is often regarded as the first real youth generation – or the young people whose youth falls within the economic uncertainty of the 2010s? Is there also something permanent in the experiences of youth, something common to each passing generation?

Generations of Youth combines the perspectives of contemporary youth research in the social sciences and history research to create a dialogue that yields a rich picture of the changes that have taken place in the definition of youth, youth experiences, and in the social and cultural conditions of youth. The multidisciplinary team of scientists contributing to the publication opens up the past and present of Finnish youth by means of common oral history material. This collection is based on a writing competition arranged in 2010 by the Finnish Youth Research Society, the association Nuoren Voiman Liitto, and the Finnish Literature Society to collect autobiographical writings about the childhood and youth of Finns of all ages. Organized under the title Oi nuoruus (Oh, youth), the competition attracted the writings of 376 respondents, born between the years 1917 and 1998.

The long time span of the autobiographical texts makes it possible both to outline the major trends of Finnish youth and to devise structures for historical comparison. Oral history narration provides a nuanced perspective on how Finnish society evolved within a few generations from a poor agrarian society to a wealthy industrial and information society. At the same time, it opens up perspectives at variance with history’s main trends.

The position of this collection of articles in the field of research can best be described with the word ‘crossroads’. This book project is located at the intersection of at least three research traditions: firstly, multidisciplinary youth and generation research; secondly, research into the history of youth; and thirdly, the Finnish tradition of life story and oral history research. The collection focuses on youth as a biographical structure and narrative, as a concept defining one’s personal course of life and memory – but also as a historical and cultural phenomenon, as a key to history. Youth is examined both in the environment of daily practices and human relations and against the backdrop of social circumstances and institutional frameworks. Scientific discussions on youth culture blend naturally with institutional analyses. Also when writing about youth, writers of varying ages can comfortably cross the border between institutions and youth culture perspectives. For instance, the autobiographies include many narratives about schools, and the writers of different ages comment in an interesting manner on how various institutions, such as confirmation classes, eligibility to vote, the army, or getting married, have defined the youth of their generation. At the same time, institutional definitions are challenged by emerging interpretations and points of contestation. In the timeline of personal life, youth is not always positioned where it should be according to cultural expectations. The various stages and contents of youth are often – but not inevitably – written in ways other than from the viewpoint of the writers’ personal lives and identity building or from the perspective of youth groups and cultures.

In the spirit of the material submitted to the writing competition, the multidisciplinary team of authors for this publication also represents various age brackets and researcher generations: from postgraduate and doctoral students to established experts in their fields.
The Youth Guarantee was one of the spearhead schemes of Jyrki Katainen’s government. The aim of the youth guarantee is to secure jobs, education and rehabilitation for young people and to prevent social exclusion. The guarantee has been in force since the beginning of 2013. It is a significant social project that has inspired hope and a great deal of expectation.

Now is the time for deliberation and debate: The Everyday Life and Policy of the Youth Guarantee pamphlet in Finnish published by the Finnish Youth Research Network seizes and shakes the youth guarantee with the power of 46 pieces of writing. The writings examine the youth guarantee from the perspective of young people, decision-makers, municipalities, entrepreneurs, civil servants and youth workers. The authors include a large group of frontline specialists in youth policy, research and work with young people.

This colourful, varied and contradictory collection expresses opinions within the debate surrounding the youth guarantee. The authors analyse youth guarantee discussion, reflect upon its position in society in Finland and in international arenas, study the ideologies and values behind it and consider alternatives to the guarantee.

The youth guarantee also provides a natural frame for political debate in addition to public discussion, whether the topics are youth in education and job markets, or wider questions concerning the youth-society relationship, citizenship intergenerational solidarity, or social inclusion and exclusion.

The pamphlet places the youth guarantee in its wider social context. The youth guarantee is a window through which many important themes linked to the youth of today are illuminated: social exclusion, homelessness, unemployment, young immigrants, child protection, sports and exercise pursuits, encountered and fractured generations and the life of young people in sparsely populated, isolated areas.

The Everyday Life and Policy of the Youth Guarantee is divided into four parts: The first part considers the image of youth reflected by the youth guarantee and the solutions implemented in the preparation of the action programme. The second and third parts examine the youth guarantee as a political-administrative programme in social policy. The fourth part scrutinises in detail the institutional procedures and intergenerational power relationships of the youth guarantee.

The pamphlet highlights how the youth guarantee has thrust the precarious conditions of the life of young people into the limelight: nobody can easily escape social responsibility for this diminishing age group. This is underlined not only by the public attention the guarantee has attracted but also by its significant financial contribution to young people. Nevertheless, the texts simultaneously exude anxiety that the youth guarantee dominates the discussion so strongly as to threaten other youth issues with being side-lined or that guarantee thinking will blur a more detailed perception of such issues.

The pamphlet calls for sensitivity towards the multi-interpretational everyday life of young people, in which it is not possible to draw a clearly defined guarantee life-cycle. The pamphlet challenges one-sided assumptions about young people. Not everyone has the support of Finnish citizenship, multilingual skills, a sense of initiative, their family, a school-leaving certificate, nor is it possible for everyone to use the services of even a middle-sized town, nor is everyone willing to comply with normal citizenship in a society based on paid employment. The guarantee offers young people paths and services occasionally even under the threat of sanctions, but there is no absolute guarantee of service quality or individual suitability to the wealth of experiences and life-situations of young people towards whom these same services are geared. Nor do school certificates guarantee anything any longer unless they directly meet the needs of working life. The pamphlet offers a variety of alternative perspectives for understanding different youth groups and the differences between them and for political guidance that identifies generational inequality.
How are Young LGBTIQ People Doing in Finland?

Katarina Alanko

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This book is a study on the wellbeing of LGBTIQ people in Finland. The study is based on a survey which had 1,623 participants aged between 15 and 25 years.

The results of the survey were diverse, but some general aspects were evident. A majority of the respondents had, for example, experienced difficulties stemming from society’s normative concepts of gender and sexual orientation.

In spring 2013, the wellbeing of young LGBTIQ people in Finland was charted through an extensive online survey (LGBTIQ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer). The study is part of a joint project by the Seta organization and the Finnish Youth Research Network, entitled Hyvinvoiva sateenkaarinuori (Wellbeing of LGBTIQ Youth). The project is executed with funding awarded by the Ministry of Education and Culture for implementation of the Government’s Child and Youth Policy Programme.

The participants came from all parts of the country, but most lived in a large or medium-sized city or town in southern Finland. The majority of the participants (1,449) entered their sexual orientation as falling in the sexual minority and defined themselves using terms such as homosexual, lesbian, bisexual, pansexual or queer. In the analysis, this group was compared to respondents who had entered themselves as heterosexuals. 369 respondents said that they had a trans identity (transperson, transsexual/transgender, trans-man, trans-woman, genderqueer, transvestite/crossdresser). Seven participants said that they were intersex. Those who classified themselves as genderqueer, transsexual/transgender, trans-men or trans-women form the group ‘trans’ in the analyses.

The present study has gauged wellbeing on a number of levels in terms of young people’s physical and mental health, social relationships and their sense of security and belonging, experiences of violence, harassment and discrimination. The picture of what it is like to grow up as an LGBTIQ person in Finland in 2013 is not unequivocally negative or positive, but characterised by diversity and variability at all levels: this applies both to the way in which young persons in general perceive and define (or do not define) their gender and sexual orientation, and their experiences of social settings and close relationships, as well as health and illness.

The results of the study show that young people belonging to sexual and gender minorities in Finland are subjected to various forms of discrimination, which has an impact on their wellbeing. Of the survey respondents, young LGBTIQ people do worse on average than heterosexual and cisgender youth. Although some problems are more common among LGBTIQ youth than others, it does not mean that all young people with LGBTIQ identities are faring worse than their peers. All experiences, both positive and negative, are personal, also when they are reported by many. Most young LGBTIQ people are doing well, despite the majority of them also having experiences of difficulties and challenges resulting from normative societal concepts of gender and sexual orientation.

Many of the young LGBTIQ persons who responded to this survey are open about their sexual orientation or gender identity at least to some family members, among friends, and at school. However, many want to keep the matter secret. Young people do not want to bring the issue into the open, for example because they are afraid they will be thrown out of their home or excluded from their circle of friends at school or in their leisure activities. Openness increases with age – 20- to 25-year-old respondents were more open as regards their sexual orientation or gender identity than young people aged 15–19.

Experiences of the attitudes of others towards LGBTIQ people are evident in such areas as young people’s choices concerning studies and leisure activities. Compared to previous studies of LGBTIQ youth, the participants of the present study reported having experienced considerably more harassment and discrimination (about 70% in this study compared to 36% found by Huotari et al. in 2010). Experiences of violence were also much more common among the participants of the present study than among Finnish young people in general.

Social relationships are important to all young people. However, this study shows that the subjective assessment of trans-youth in particular is that their friendships are both quantitatively and qualitatively inferior to those of other young people. Homosexual and bisexual respondents are generally more satisfied with their friendships; most have friends with whom they can be open about their sexual orientation and from whom they receive support and encouragement. In our society, sexual minorities are substantially more numerous, visible and familiar to the population at large than gender minorities. The results may be partially due to this visibility and partially to the fact that there are more meeting places for sexual minorities than there are for gender minorities.
It is vitally important for young LGBTIQ persons to find environments where they can be open and find other young people with whom they can talk. For many young LGBTIQ people, the internet has become the forum where they can find information and like-minded people, although on the other hand the net brings its own problems. Virtual and physical environments frequented by young people are not always positively disposed towards gender and sexual minorities.

Young people spend a large part of their time at school, which in the light of both the present study and earlier ones is not a safe environment for LGBTIQ persons, although their experiences over the years become more positive. It is a matter of some concern that a majority of the young LGBTIQ persons who have reported bullying to teachers have not received help, or found that they themselves have been blamed for the situation. An ever-greater proportion of these young people reply that they have not reported the bullying because they have felt that it would not have led to any resolution, or that they would have been forced to disclose their LGBTIQ identity because of it. This puts young LGBTIQ people, harassed or bullied because of their gender expression or sexual orientation, in a particularly difficult situation – especially if they also keep their identity under wraps at home.

As well as school, sporting activities, national service and the workplace are environments in which almost all young LGBTIQ people feel that they cannot safely be themselves. It may be a case of taking part in everyday discussions under the same terms as everyone else, so that their sexual orientation or true gender identity is exposed, or it being possible for them to express their gender, for example through clothes, in a way that feels right to them.

Previous studies have shown that impaired health and unhealthier habits are more common than average among LGBTIQ youth. Similar results are also in evidence in the present study. Subjective assessments of the state of health of young people with trans identities are considerably more negative than those of other respondents. This is particularly clear in the case of young trans people who are unable to express their gender in a way that feels right to them. Nevertheless, trans youth report healthier consumption of tobacco and alcohol than the cisgender respondents do.

Based on this study, homo- and bisexual women appear to have unhealthier alcohol use habits than heterosexual women, whereas homo- and bisexual men considered their smoking habits to be very unhealthy twice as often as heterosexual men.

Young LGBTIQ people also reported significantly more problems related to mental health than did heterosexual young people and youth without gender incongruence. Compared to others of the same age, young LGBTIQ people have more symptoms of depression and anxiety, more suicidal thoughts and self-destructive behaviour.

Incidence of so-called minority stress is not due purely to young people themselves having experienced discrimination, but also to their own internalised normative concepts, which affect their perception of themselves and their own possibilities. Our study shows that many of those who today are open about their LGBTIQ identity find support in their immediate circle and friendships, although they previously hesitated to come out. Thus, their confidence in the environment would seem to have been lower in many cases than was justified in reality. It is of the utmost importance for adults to communicate that it is possible to discuss the diversity of sexual orientation and gender – and that such discussion is taken seriously. This demands knowledge of diversity and support for those working with young people in their professional capacity – and also for parents.

1 Due to cultural differences, trans terminology commonly used in Finnish is different from the English, and a direct translation of certain terms is not possible. The Finnish terms used in the survey were transihminen, transsukupuo- linen, transmies, transnainen, transgender and transvestiitti.
The Youth Barometer is an annual research series that measures the values and attitudes of 15- to 29-year-olds living in Finland. The 2013 edition is based on 1,903 telephone interviews, focusing on the themes of participation and influence.

The results of the survey were diverse and revealed that young people in Finland cannot be considered a homogenous group. For example, there were differences between participants of different ages and socio-economic positions.

The Youth Barometer is an annual research series which, since 1994, has measured the values and attitudes of 15- to 29-year-olds living in Finland. The Youth Barometer 2013 is based on 1,903 telephone interviews, focusing on the themes of participation and influence. Of the young people interviewed, slightly more women (33%) than men (28%) feel that they have attempted to exert influence in society during the past year. The corresponding figure for those under 20 years of age was only about one in five. Participation in politics is even more infrequent; only 7% of the respondents reported having participated in political activities during the past year.

The possibility of influencing an issue experienced as important to oneself and the possibility of promoting the common good were the most important incentives for exerting influence on society. Socializing and having fun are also important motives, whereas causes, convictions and ideology are less important. The main obstacles to exerting influence are lack of time and being unable to find meaningful ways of exerting influence. Non-participation is also justified on the grounds that one has not been encouraged or invited to take part. As many as one in five of all young people considered the lack of any issue on which they would want to exert an influence to be significant grounds for non-participation.

Young people consider voting and active participation in youth councils or organizations to be the most effective ways of exerting influence. Voting, however, is uncommon in young people's age groups, as is active participation in organizations. In the entire respondent group, the means of exerting influence experienced as effective are not necessarily the same as those in which the young people participate in practice. An example of the opposite, a low-threshold means of exerting influence, is the signing of initiatives, appeals or petitions, which is common although belief in its impact is not very strong. By contrast, young people consider various participatory and deliberative mechanisms of democracy, along with their debates, as being relatively influential. On the other hand, more clearly counter-democratic mechanisms, whether legal or illegal, do not generate much enthusiasm. Young people's most common means of exerting influence are giving feedback about certain services, signing initiatives, and influencing through purchase decisions. The forms of young people's exertion of influence indicate the individual nature of this. Different forms of collective influence, based either on a group with a formal position, such as a youth council, or on the looser activities of a group of friends, are significantly less common than individual means. Young people who vote are also more active with regard to means other than representative democracy. In other words, passivity and activity accumulate – also in the different modes of activity in a democracy.

A high level of education and good school performance predict a better voter turnout. Passivity, in turn, is predicted by a poor income level in the childhood home, vocational education and the respondent's unemployment, especially if it is prolonged. When asked about the reasons for not voting, the vast majority mention the difficulty of finding a suitable candidate (an important reason for 65%) or political party (an important reason for 49%). Only a small percentage of the non-voters protests against politics and an even smaller
A clear majority considers their possibility of exerting influence in matters concerning their own life to be good. On a five-step scale, the majority of young people gave a rating of four or five for their possibility of exerting influence on their economic well-being and housing situation, and more than two out of three gave that rating for their education choices, career choice and for their life overall. By contrast, the ratings for matters pertaining to actual exertion of democratic influence or civic competence such as decision-making at school or in the workplace, national decision-making and EU decision-making, brought up the rear. This illustrates not only the individual frame but also what types of channels for exerting influence young people can use. The fact that only one in ten experiences their possibilities of exerting influence on decision-making in their own municipality of residence as being even somewhat great supports the viewpoint that the Finnish political system has not in all respects convinced young people of the quality of activities.

Nine out of ten 15- to 29-year-olds say that they use some type of social media, girls a little more than boys. Participation in social media decreases markedly with age. Almost all social media users say they regularly follow the updates and content of others. Commenting on or sharing the content produced by other users is clearly less common, and only a small minority actively disseminate content that they have produced themselves. Moreover, in young people’s age groups, the bi-directionality of the social media is thus asymmetric: being a recipient is much more common than the production of one’s own content and active communications.

Young people feel that each person should primarily be responsible for his or her own welfare. Two out of three think that their own responsibility is substantial, and almost all think it is at least fairly heavy. Young people want to see the state, municipalities, schools and educational institutes, families and relatives, as well as friends and their circle of acquaintances play a significant role in the well-being of Finns. There is the wish that friends and acquaintances would bear the same amount of responsibility for Finns’ well-being as families and relatives, and that the state and municipalities would bear even more responsibility. It is hoped that significantly less responsibility would be borne by enterprises and even less by civil society organisations and various religious communities.

Of the young people interviewed, 40% reported participating in a group or community during their free time. A high level of education and good school performance are strongly associated with belonging to groups, while the unemployed belong to groups less than others (31%). As unemployment becomes prolonged, the level of participation effectively collapses.

The majority of young people say that they would be willing to take even temporary work rather than live on unemployment benefit, if the net income was equivalent. The work ethic does not seem to be under threat, at least not by young people. Working life, on the other hand, raises concerns. As many as three out of four think that the proportion of those permanently outside the labour market will increase. Equal-ly many believe that working life is so demanding that many workers burn out prematurely. More than a third are concerned about their own ability to cope in working life in the future. The importance of work is also indicated by the fact that clearly more are concerned about whether there will be work at all for them in the future.
Respectable Families
– Immigration, Generations
and Social Position

Marja Peltola

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Respectable Families focuses on two generations of immigrants and their views on their families. The scope goes beyond the family, however, as the study draws its approach from a wide spectrum of research fields, such as youth research and research on social class.

The research is based on interviews of families, where the parents were born outside of Finland and the children in Finland. In the empirical chapters of the study, the focus is on the ways in which the interviewees speak about the family.

The objective of the study is to determine how two generations of people with an immigrant background talk about their families and how they see their families positioned as a community. I ask, on the one hand, what position the families have in the intersecting hierarchical orders of ethnicity and social class and, on the other hand, how the hierarchical differences defined by generation and gender within the family are interpreted and negotiated.

Theoretically, the study falls within various fields of research: ethnic and migration research; Bourdieuan research on social class and research on the intersectionality of social distinctions; sociological family research; and youth research. Through a frame of reference composed of these fields, I examine the lives of families with an immigrant background from an angle that challenges problem-centred interpretations that stress issues pertaining to “culture” and “integration”.

The core of the research data consists of 45 interviews of an ethnographic nature, which I have conducted with the parents and children of 16 families. The parents interviewed had moved to Finland from outside Western affluent societies as adults. The representatives of the young generation are their children, young people and young adults who were born in Finland or had moved to Finland as children. Observations made in the interviewees’ homes serve as background material for the interviews.

In the empirical chapters of the study, I take up the following themes: socio-economic status; ways of speaking about the family; relations between generations; gender equality; and the future of the young generation. The supporting overarching theme is the idea that presenting one’s own way of life and family as respectable and good is an important element of the social positioning carried out by the interviewees. Interpretations concerning the interviewees’ social status were not constructed only in relation to Finnish society – where their socio-economic and discursively produced status was rather weak – but were also based on their middle-class background in their former home countries.

The organization of relations between generations and genders takes place through negotiation and in ways moulded by situation-specific requirements. They are also organized in relation to the (class) structures and hierarchies of the former home country and Finnish society. Although the generations differed from each other in terms of their relations with Finnish society and the former home country, there was also significant inter-generational continuity. This was visible, for instance, in efforts to convert the existing social and cultural resources into legitimate capital in Finnish society, and in the discursive techniques whereby interviewees presented their own family as respectable and distanced themselves from the problem-centred “immigrant” category.
Unusual Life Courses
Elite Athletes and Artists in the Finland of the 2000s

Mikko Piispa & Helena Huhta (eds.)

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Unusual Life Courses is a collection of four articles which observe the life courses of Finnish professional athletes and artists. The focus is on the frameworks that lead to success in life, and their relation to contemporary social conditions. The successful individuals that are being observed do not exist in a vacuum outside of the rest of society, but are a part of the society they grow up in.

The articles focus on the background of successful individuals, the role of success in contemporary culture, and the special features of athletes with a multicultural background.

The purpose of the study is to trace how life courses are built and what kind of framework gives rise to success. These are explored in relation to contemporary social conditions. Shedding light on the backgrounds of unusual life courses helps us to see how the achievement of success is complex and the sum of many interconnected factors.

In this work Mikko Piispa reports observations based on interviews of elite athletes and artists. Among the athletes, the versatility of physical activity in childhood, economic and, above all, emotional support from parents, the pleasure derived from sport, self-development and competitiveness rise to the fore as important themes. A different perspective of the elite athlete’s life course is obtained through interviews with elite athletes whose sports career has ended. A review of the funding of and conditions for world-class sport in Finland indicates that the most important support for world-class sport is often not direct support but the creation of equal and multifaceted opportunities for physical activity.

Family support is emphasized in the artists’ life courses as well, especially support for various cultural activities and encouragement to take part in them. Artists’ careers are long and intricate and characterized by constant development of their work and honesty towards their working methods; for many, being an artist is even a calling. Self-defined indicators of success take precedence over recognition, money or fame.

Mikko Salasuo and Tommi Hoikkala provide an overview of the supportive frameworks for today’s young people, within which the life courses of elite athletes – like those of other people – are realized. Salasuo and Hoikkala raise Piispa’s observations to a more general social context and consider them as an aspect of modernity and contemporary youth.

Helena Huhta explores the life courses of multicultural elite athletes and their special features. The article discusses the support pillars and challenges of the interviewees’ career as athletes. Special attention is paid to the qualities and meanings brought about by multiculturalism. The family’s economic prioritization and diverse support for competitive sport prove to be important. Also important is the safety net which, depending on the athlete, includes coaches, relatives and other individuals. There was great variation in the athletes’ experiences of racism. The results of this study support the idea that physical activity and sport have a mostly positive and even integrating effect on the life of multicultural children and young people, even though sport may also be a sector of humiliation and exclusion.
The majority consider that they have an appropriate amount of leisure time. The amount of leisure, however, diminishes from about the age of 15 onwards. Young people who work or families with children feel that their leisure is particularly scarce. Young people who have less leisure have fewer hobbies, and they also exercise less in sport clubs and meet up with their friends less frequently. A scarcity of leisure limits social life and hobbies.

Throughout the 7- to 29-year-old age group, 85 per cent have a hobby. The proportion of young people with hobbies is at its lowest between the ages of 15 and 19 years, but it begins to increase again after the age of 20 or thereabouts. 53 per cent of the young people take part in the activities of, or belong to, organisations. Little change in this regard has occurred since 1998.

86 per cent of the respondents go in for some sort of physical exercise. A physical exercise hobby is the most common in the 10- to 14-year-old age group. About one-third engage in physical activity, lasting for at least half an hour and leading to shortness of breath and sweating, at least five times a week. The regularity of physical activity drops markedly among teenagers, especially boys. 71 per cent of the respondents are of the opinion that they are physically active enough. Physical exercise performed about four times per week is considered to be enough. The most popular forms of physical exercise include jogging, training at the gym, cycling, walking, floorball, football, running, swimming and skiing. The popularity of independent physical activity increases with age.

Independent physical exercise accounts for the majority of all physical exercise. 41 per cent of the respondents exercise alone and independently on a daily basis, and three out of four exercise at least once a week. 22 per cent exercise independently with friends on a daily basis, and clearly more than half exercise at least once a week. About one-third exercise at municipal or commercial sports facilities. The reasons for having a leisure sports activity emphasise the wish to stay healthy, the wish to be physically fit, and the joy of exercising. Other important motives for physical exercise are self-development and the thrill of succeeding, the social aspects, the opportunity to spend time with friends while exercising, as well as the chance for privacy and being alone. The most common obstacles to physical exercise, in turn, are lack of time, a dislike of physical exercise, the lack of suitable sports activi-
ties or sports facilities, and the high cost of physical activities. One-third of the respondents have stopped physical activity at a sports club. The main reasons for stopping were that other things started to be more interesting or that the hobby took up too much time, as well as the excessive competitiveness of the activity.

One-third of the respondents would like to start physical exercise at a sports club as a hobby. Examined by age, the wish to begin occurred especially among those under 15 years old. The wish to go to a sports club is relatively low if the respondent has no previous experience of this. Both girls and boys would like to engage especially in football, floorball, martial arts, swimming, volleyball, athletics and ice hockey at a sports club.

One-quarter of the parents of the children and young people are involved in volunteering associated with organised sports activities. The parents of 10- to 14-year-olds, in particular, are active in this regard. Of those parents whose child engages in organised sports activities at a sports club almost every day, as many as 65 per cent do volunteering associated with these activities in one way or another. The most common forms of volunteering are voluntary work and acting as an official. In particular, the parents who do voluntary work and act as an official are primarily parents from wealthier families. Also, the mother’s high level of education increases the likelihood of volunteering associated with organised sports activities. 18 per cent of the 10- to 29-year-olds had themselves been involved in volunteering associated with organised sports activities, for instance as a coach or doing voluntary work.
People belong simultaneously to a biological and a social generation. While they constitute a part of the continuum extending from their ancestors to posterity, they are also members of their own age cohort. Family is a key factor for the biological generation: a place where the members of the generation and their diverse experiences meet.

This study explores the dinner tables of families in Päijät-Häme, Finland. The family table is a metaphor. It describes the wide range of life situations to which grandparents, parents and children bring their values and attitudes, teachings and ideas about life. The table is a place for negotiations and debates. It is where identities and world views are built. Interaction at the tables of families is reflected in the surrounding society through individuals. This is an age-old process, a mechanism used by families to secure the preservation of skills, knowledge and traditions within the family, but where they also refute, defy and change the world.

The stories are not only direct reflections of what has happened in reality; they are also moving images of a life lived. The issue is not only what is told to researchers, but also how and why something is told and what the telling means to the storyteller. The way of describing one’s life is always culture-bound. The images of the stories are also images of a certain sphere of culture and a geographical region. Society is present in the images of people’s social reality. When the images of the various members of the same family are placed side by side, the result is a set of images describing different experiences and lives lived. The image sets of families constitute a social album, a collection of variedly interlocked social realities, lives lived, traditions, inherited mentalities and society. At the dinner tables in Päijät-Häme, the researchers collected stories from 67 persons, who represented three generations in a total of 20 families. The specific themes of the discussions were people’s lifestyles, work, health, food and physical exercise. The material has been expanded with other biography interviews and archive material, which extends the timeline from the early 18th century to the present day.

However, the various perspectives of the study intersect at the tables in Päijät-Häme.

Cultures and societies change but the transfer of tangible and intangible capital, property, occupations and skills, as well as language, religions and customs, from one generation to the next is a central and important feature of a community. Effort is made to control the future by force, by example, through communications and by reviewing the past in relation to the present. Older generations pass on their knowledge and traditional concepts. This strengthens the traditions and helps create cultural continuums.

This is a process moving in two directions, where cultural insights battle against each other in various arenas, within families and in the public domain. The end result is an intergenerational continuum or a break in the transfer of intangible capital from one generation to the next. Despite the challenges posed by other social institutions, the importance of the family for socialisation has prevailed because its impact is long-lived (in principle for life), close (physically and emotionally), strong (supported by law) and varied (mental and financial capital). The family can also be seen as a social institution where the life courses of the various family members, grandparents, parents and children, intersect.

Thus, the family is a space and a place where both biological and social generations encounter one another. In this respect, the situation prevailing in the family at any given time is characterised by the concept of social configuration. In this context, social configuration can be understood as a dynamic structure created by the family members together, where everyone’s actions and expectations towards each other constitute the configuration.
Street Culture
Young People in Finland in the 21st Century

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Street Culture takes an expansive look at various sub- and youth cultures, focusing on the older and more established cultures (such as goths, skateboarders etc.), as well as cultures that have emerged more recently (competitive video gaming etc.).

Street culture – Young people in Finland in the 21st century is a multifaceted, interdisciplinary potpourri of depictions of young people’s and young adults’ (and sometimes slightly older people’s) social groups, membership of such groups, and experiences, perspectives and interpretations of such membership.

There is a massive amount of different kinds of youth culture in contemporary Finland. Although the topic’s status within mainstream research has varied, numerous studies have been made since the 1950s. A significant change happened in the mid-1980s when research into subcultures made a breakthrough in Finland and became one of youth sociology’s most important approaches. For various reasons, sub-culture research and its applications moved into the margins of both youth research and sociology in the first years of the new millennium.

The motivation behind this book is to offer fresh perspectives on subcultures and has led to this timely collection of articles on 21st-century Finnish youth culture phenomena, written by young researchers. This is the first anthology focusing on subcultures to be published in Finland.

Thematically, the book is divided into 4 parts. It contains a broad introduction and 11 individual articles. The introduction explores the history of Finnish youth culture research from the 1950s to the present day, providing a thorough examination of essential studies and paradigms, and outlining youth culture’s place in contemporary social scientific research.

The first collection of articles analyses Japanese pop culture in Finland, young people’s competitive games and ladette culture (“pissismi”) — newer cultural phenomena — while the second part of the book concerns itself with hip-hop culture, beginning with an examination of rap lyrics as political commentary and language politics. The second article takes the reader into northern Finnish rap culture. The second part contains two articles that deal with the graffiti phenomenon from different perspectives and the third and final part examines dark, metallic and tough youth culture. The reader is led into goth culture’s dark embrace and follows an ethnologist on a field trip into heavy metal culture, while the two last articles describe two extremes of youth drug culture: the Straight Edge movement and the life of drug addicts in Helsinki.

The work does not seek methodical or theoretical coherence — on the contrary. The articles study subcultures from the various points of view of journalism, ethnology, art pedagogy, linguistics, criminology, music pedagogy, sociology, social history and social pedagogy. An interdisciplinary approach produces perspectives that differ from and complement each other. At the same time, the reader is introduced to the broad spectrum of methodical and theoretical approaches that are used to study subcultures today. Some of the articles have been spiced up with perspectives, photographs and other contributions from members of the subcultures.

Some of the subcultures that have been studied for the book are new, and some are older. Their modern forms have adapted and renewed themselves over the years. Almost all contemporary subcultures, both new and old, are linked by the strong presence of information technology which, with the globalization of youth culture, has made cultural products more available and easier to access. Different forms of social media have also had a significant influence on the exchange of subcultures between different countries.

The study on subcultures produces information that is still interesting and relevant. The work is, on the one hand, a demonstration of the difficulties involved in applying the same conceptual framework to young people’s social group activities and, on the other hand, proof of the possibilities that are opened up by the concept of subculture. The point is to make use of earlier theoretical ideas and make them apply to contemporary social reality.
A Lesson in Democracy examines the extent of the participation of children and young adults in municipal decision-making processes, as consumers of local services and as civic activists. Additionally, the book explores the subject of the position of children’s and young adults’ participation on a more general level. The book presents the scope of the ways in which participation can manifest itself in a variety of different forms; the work consists of the joint reflection of experts from 24 different fields of science. The majority of the data used in the book is collected from children and young adults themselves, using both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Promoting the participation of children and young adults has been one of the central themes of Finnish youth politics since the mid-1990s. The foundations of children’s and young adults’ participation in civic process are secured under Finnish law, however the book presents a number of ways in which municipal, education and early-learning laws could be developed even further. A number of permanent positions have been founded in order to support and foster continued participation. Nonetheless it would appear that the full potential of children’s and young adults’ participation remains unrealised despite the existence of sound legal structures. The strengthening of children’s and young adults’ position will require a shift in attitudes, the close scrutinising of young people’s operating culture in the local political sphere, further examination of groups and individuals as separate entities, and the deconstruction of certain power structures. Indeed, the book demonstrates that the participation of children and young adults is a matter beyond legal and political structures: it is about action and interaction between people.

The promotion and fostering of further participation is portrayed in the book as being inherently different on different levels. In political decision-making, increased participation can be advanced by strengthening the various forms of political action. For those using a service, participation is about the receipt of information, participating in a plan, in decision-making, assessment, and in putting plans into practice. Because of the inherent difficulties of shared power and responsibility, the slim possibilities for action, and the flow of information, the realisation of participation in different service situations often presents a number of challenges. In addition to municipal activities, there is still much to be improved with regard to the participation of organisations in civic society. In a broad sense, the central question is that of the boundaries and extent of young people’s agency. The goal of giving children and young people an equal and accepted position as members of the local community can be achieved by giving them some measure of power and responsibility. We must also work actively to remove any factors that may impinge upon or stand in the way of such agency. In this respect, participation inhabits both the political and the social realm.

The book provides a cross-section of the state of Finnish municipalities at the beginning of the 21st century; it explores the models already in place for involving children and young adults in decision-making processes and asks what could be done to improve the situation. The book examines from a variety of perspectives the ways in which children’s and young adults’ participation is made possible. In comparison with the current debate on participation, the book highlights a number of fresh points of view. The involvement of children and young adults in local decision-making processes should take place on individual, group and collective levels, in relation both to our social and physical environments and in all democratic arenas (representative, direct, participatory, deliberative and counter-democracy). Participation is a very broad phenomenon, and the fostering of this phenomenon in Finnish society still requires input on a whole host of levels.
Young Actors in Transnational Agoras examines young people’s political participation in transnational meetings. Methodologically, the study aims to shed light on multi-sited global ethnography. Young people are viewed here as a social age group sensitive to critical, alternative and even radical political participation. The diversity of the young actors and their actions is captured by using several different methods. What is more, the study spurs those of us who come from the Global North to develop social science research towards methodological cosmopolitanism and to consider our research practices from a moral cosmopolitan perspective.

The research sites are the EU Presidency Youth Event (2006 Hyvinkää, Finland), the Global Young Greens Founding Conference (2007 Nairobi, Kenya), the European Social Forum (2008 Malmö, Sweden) and three World Social Forums (2006 Bamako, Mali; 2007 Nairobi, Kenya; and 2009 Belém, Brazil). The data consist of participant observation, documents and media articles of the meetings, interviews, photos, video, and internet data. This multidisciplinary study combines youth research, development studies, performative social science and political sociology.

In this research, the diverse field of youth political participation in transnational agoras is studied by using a cross-table of cosmopolitan resources (or the lack of them) and the Everyday Maker–Expert Citizen dichotomy. First, the young participants of the EU Presidency youth event are studied as an example of Expert Citizens with cosmopolitan resources (these resources include, for example, language skills, higher education and international social network). Second, the study analyses those Everyday Makers who use performative politics to demonstrate their political missions here and now. But in order to make the social movement global they need cosmopolitan resources to be able to use the social media tools and work globally. Third, the study reflects upon the difficulties of reaching those actors who lack cosmopolitan resources, either Everyday Makers or Expert Citizens. The go-along method and the use of the interpreters are shown as ways to reach these young people’s political missions. Fourth, the research underlines the importance of ‘contact zones’ (i.e. spaces or situations where the aforementioned orientations and their differences temporarily disappear or weaken) for deeper democracy and for enhanced dialogue between different kinds of participants.
Selected online publications

Youth Participation in Finland and in Germany: Status Analysis and Data-based Recommendations (2010)
By Eva Feldmann-Wojtachnia, Anu Gretschel, Vappu Helmisaari, Tomi Kiilakoski, Aila-Leena Matthies, Sigrid Meinhold-Henschel, Roland Roth & Pia Tasanko

Youth Participation Good Practices in Different Forms of Regional and Local Democracy (2014)
http://www.nuorisotutkimusseura.fi/julkaisuja/youthparticipation_goodpractices.pdf
By Anu Gretschel, Tiina-Maria Levamo, Tomi Kiilakoski, Sofia Laine, Niina Mäntylä, Geoffrey Pleyers & Harri Raisio

Forthcoming book in English