Mixed Methods in Youth Research

Helena Helve (ed.)

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Orders:
Finnish Youth Research Network
Asemapäällikönkatu 1
FIN - 00520 Helsinki
FINLAND
tel. +358 20 755 2653
fax. +358 20 755 2627
e-mail: verkosto@alli.fi

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I am grateful to Vesa Puuronen who gave much help with the editing of some of the papers for this book. However, responsibility for the final editing and the design of the book as a whole is mine. I hope that it matches both authors' expectations and the interest of our readers.

PREFACE

Mixed Methods in Youth Research is based on the seminars and meetings which took place under the auspices of the *Nordic-Baltic Youth Research Doctoral School Network,* and on the regular co-operation between the Universities and research institutions included in this programme. The Network has included the Nordic countries, the Baltic States and Russia. Network participants have mostly been post-graduate students who have been completing their doctoral studies in the interdisciplinary field of youth research. Some of them have completed their doctorates during the course of this project; others are still collecting material for their dissertations, as can be seen from the chapters themselves.

The Nordic-Baltic Youth Research Doctoral School Network programme is an interdisciplinary network of youth researchers with backgrounds in the fields of sociology, psychology, education and cultural studies. The basic expenses of running such a programme have been covered by *NorFa*, the Nordic Academy for Advanced Study Network. I have had the pleasure of directing this doctoral school programme, in which senior and junior researchers have discussed fundamental questions of youth research.

This book is intended to enhance awareness of the Nordic youth research community, and thereby to foster and further the exchange of knowledge and ideas related to youth research. Intensive pre-planning for the chapters in this volume began at a seminar held in Tartu, Estonia in January of 2004. At this seminar we once again raised the issue of the lack of books relating specifically to youth research methodologies. Theories and methodologies in this field have thus far been indistinguishable from those of its core disciplines of social psychology, developmental psychology,

sociology, ethnology, medicine, criminology, political science, demography and history. In the process of complaining about this situation we had the brilliant idea of producing a collection of high quality papers in relation to this subject, which would garner interest and attention for youth research as a specific field of research with its own methodological concerns.

The common starting point and structural consideration for all of the articles in this volume is the question, "Can my research be defined as *youth research*; and if so, on what basis?" Some chapters include not only a presentation of the author's own research project and a description of the methods employed, as well as a meta-discussion of methodology, but they move on to discuss the impact of the author's personal and academic background on the study and the methods used. Some authors go on further to consider the potential impact of their studies on youth research in general; asking what good their research has actually done in the field.

These chapters give a broad picture of the various purposes of the authors' studies; their research questions, theoretical approaches, academic starting points and ideological frameworks; their ethical questions and roles as youth researchers in their studies; the association between their methods and the theoretical frameworks behind them; and their means of analysing the rich material of youth research. The name of this book, *Mixed Methods,* is based on this variety.

The focus here is on how to study young people. The individual chapters here provide examples of different methods, picking up those themes which are relevant to the author's own method(s). The aim is to offer a broad spectrum of approaches to youth research methodology. We are not even trying to give a coherent picture of the methods of youth research, but rather to offer reflections on different kinds of studies of young people.

This book – written by authors from Denmark, Estonia, the Faroe Islands, Finland, Sweden and Russia – contributes to the evolution of distinctive forms of youth research. The chapters here are intended to promote inter-cultural understanding and cross-fertilisation among the different theoretical, substantive and

methodological perspectives of youth research. Together, they are intended as a resource, in a non-traditional sense, for students and faculty in the field. Those who are new to youth studies will gain a solid grounding in the field, as well as some historical perspective regarding its methodology, through these explorations of what youth research means. We furthermore hope that this collection gives seasoned youth researchers new ideas as to how to address methodological problems – how to approach and attempt to build an understanding of young people.

Helena Helve
Helsinki
September, 2005

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Airi-Alina Allaste is currently completing her Ph.D research at Helsinki University. She has conducted researches about young people and illicit drug use since 1997 and has been project leader of international survey on alcohol and drugs among students (ESPAD) since 1999. This article is methodological reflection of her Ph.D. research on drug-user subcultures in Estonia. Relevant recent publications include Allaste, A-A. & Lagerspetz, (2005) "Drugs and doublethink in a marginalized community", *Critical Criminology,* 13, 3; Allaste, A-A. (2004) "Changing Circles: How Recreational Drug Users become Problem Users", in T. Decorte & D. J. Korf (eds.), *European studies on drugs and drug policy*. Brussels: VUB Press and Allaste, A-A. (2005) "Drug related knowledge among drug users in Estonia", in P. Hakkarainen & T. Hoikkala (eds.), *Beyond Health Literacy*: *Youth cultures, Prevention and Policy.* Helsinki: Finnish Youth research network.

Önver Cetrez has written a doctoral dissertation ("Meaning-Making Variations in Acculturation and Ritualization: A multi-generational study of Suroyo migrants in Sweden") in psychology of religion and cultural psychology at Uppsala University where he has had a doctoral fellowship. He is currently teaching and co-ordinating different courses at Uppsala University. Cetrez has earlier received a doctoral research stipend for advanced studies in migration psychology at the University of Hawaii, as well as stipends for studies at the Bossey Ecumenical Institute, WCC, and the Swedish Institute in Istanbul.

Firouz Gaini studied history, human geography and social anthropology at the universities of Oslo and Copenhagen before undertaking a PhD project in anthropology at the University of the Faroe Islands in 2001. His PhD work, in progress, is based on an extensive fieldwork among youngsters from Torshavn. He has written articles and essays in Faroese newspapers and journals for years, and published his first book, a collection of short essays, in 2004. He is a youth researcher interested in the processes of cultural identity and globalisation in Northern European peripheries.

Helena Helve has been the Nordic Youth Research Co-ordinator and leader of the Nordic-Baltic Youth Research Doctoral School Network. She is a Research Professor at the University of Kuopio and Docent (Associate Professor) at the University of Helsinki. She has been as Senior Visiting Research Fellow at the University of Sheffield, Educational Research Centre; and at City University of London, Social Statistics Research Unit; and an Honorary Senior Research Fellow at the University of London, Institute of Education, Centre for Longitudinal Studies. She has directed the "Youth Research 2000" – programme and has been co-ordinator and leader of many EU- and Nordic youth research projects. She has been elected President of the International Sociological Association, RC34 (Sociology of Youth) for 2002–2006. Currently she is directing the project "Behind the Scenes of Society: Young People, Identity and Social Capital. (BeSS)", funded by the Academy of Finland. She has written, co-authored and edited numerous books and published over 100 articles on youth research and youth policy in several languages.

Veronika Honkasalo is a researcher and doctoral student at the University of Helsinki, Department of Comparative Religion. She is currently working as a researcher in the project "Behind the Scenes of Society: Young People, Identity and Social Capital. (BeSS)," funded by the Academy of Finland.

Timo M. Kauppinen is a lecturer at the University of Helsinki, Department of Sociology. His doctoral dissertation, completed in 2004, was about neighbourhood and family background effects on the secondary education of young people in Helsinki. His other research interests have included ethnic residential differentiation and neighbourhood effects on mortality and labour income.

Arniika Kuusisto is a researcher working in the project "Behind the Scenes of Society: Young People, Identity and Social Capital. (BeSS)" at the University of Helsinki. Before starting her PhD research on young people's religious minority identity and social capital, she completed an MA in Education and taught for a couple of years at the primary school level. During 2003–2005 she was a Visiting Research Fellow at King's College, University of London. Her research interests lie in value education, especially in the intergenerational transmission of values, as well as socialisation within minorities, and religious identity among youth.

Leena Louhivuori is a doctoral student at the University of Helsinki, Department of Ethnology, Institute for Cultural Research. Currently she is a guest researcher at the University of Stockholm, Department of Ethnology and a researcher in the project "Behind the Scenes of Society: Young People, Identity and Social Capital. (BeSS)" at the University of Helsinki. Her research interests have included youth groups, youth cultures, suburbs, generations, families, poverty, networks, language and culture.

Sven Mørch has been working since 1971 as a social psychologist at the University of Copenhagen, Department of Psychology. He earned an additional doctorate in youth research in 1985. He has been as a senior member in the Nordic-Baltic Youth Research Doctoral School Network. His main research fields are youth social integration, youth educational theory and practice, and youth development and competencies. He has been engaged in action research and "practice-research" among young people. In particular, he has been writing about the planning and evaluation of youth projects. He is a

youth research representative in the Danish Ministry of Education, a national research correspondent in the Council of Europe and a member of the EGRIS social research group.

Vesa Puuronen is currently working as a special researcher at University of Joensuu, Karelian Institute, department of Social Sciences. He also has been as a senior member in the Nordic-Baltic Youth Research PhD school programme network. His research interest has been on marginalized youth groups, skinheads and youth cultures, and also methodological issues of youth research. He has directed many youth research projects funded by the Academy of Finland. He has written and edited books and published several articles on youth research and policy.

Andu Rämmer is a researcher at the University of Tartu, Department of Sociology and Social Politics. Before undertaking his current PhD project in sociology, he studied social psychology at the University of Tartu, Department of Psychology. His PhD project is based on a longitudinal study of youth. He has researched and published works on social cognition and job attitudes, focusing particularly on factors that predict the formation of work orientations. He has written articles in Estonian newspapers and contributed to relevant books. He is particularly interested in widespread beliefs and processes of the formation and maintenance of value orientations.

Lotta Svensson worked for nearly fifteen years as a youth social worker before undertaking postgraduate studies in Sociology at the University of Linköping, Sweden in 2001. While conducting research for her dissertation she has been associated with the Centre for Research and Development in the small town of Söderhamn, Sweden. The "FoU-Centrum" is a multi-disciplinary centre which aims to build links between scientific theory and practice, with a focus on developmental processes. Ms. Svensson has written articles in *Ungdomsforskning* (Denmark), the *Scottish Youth Issues Journal* and local newspapers, as well as a "work in progress-report". Her main interest, for the moment, is how different groups of young

people in the periphery handle the tension between modernity and tradition, and how it affects their thoughts about staying where they are or moving to a bigger town.

Dennis Zuev studied linguistics and intercultural communication at Krasnoyarsk State University before undertaking a PhD project in the sociology of culture. He is currently lecturing in culture studies, social semiotics and the sociology of travel. His current research interests are in the sociology of space and sociology of youth, with a focus on young people in Russia and Northern Europe.

METHODOLOGICAL STARTING POINTS AND PROBLEMS OF YOUTH RESEARCH

by Vesa Puuronen

Methodological approach

Methodology is a somewhat problematic concept, since it has quite different meanings in various social sciences and paradigms. Methodology also seems to have different connotations depending on the language used in the scientific community. English is a lingua franca in most social sciences and dominates also international youth research. From the point of view of methodological reflection, the dominance of English language is an unfortunate fact, since the meaning of methodology as a concept is often narrowly understood in Anglophone literature. Methodology most often simply means the application of a method or a set of methods. For example qualitative methodology refers to the use of qualitative methods and quantitative methodology refers correspondingly to the use of quantitative methods (Silverman 1985; Øyen 1990). A chapter about methodology in an individual study describes the methods which are used in that particular research. In the classical sense, and in some recent studies, however, methodology has been defined more broadly (see Tuchman 1994; Alvesson & Sköldberg 2000). Gaye Tuchman (1994, 306) points out that the classical sense of methodology

is: "(...) a study of the epistemological assumptions implicit in specific methods." Alvesson and Sköldberg (2000, 7–8) argue that a methodological study should address at least four topics: 1) systems and techniques of research procedures, 2) the status of interpretation, 3) the political-ideological character of the research, and 4) problems of representation and authority. Nor are the notions of methodology proposed by Tuchman, Alvesson and Sköldberg comprehensive yet. In order to utilise the whole potential of concept methodology in the reflexive study of science, in this case youth research, the definition of the concept should be elaborated further.

In principle, the concept of methodology brings about a comprehensive approach to the research in question. Methodology studies not only the use of methods and epistemological assumptions of methods, but it also can address more general ontological and epistemological assumptions of the research. Methodology studies both theories and methods. In fact methodological research states that methods are in fact theories. They can be regarded as such because when a researcher chooses a method s/he also chooses the objects of the study, which means that s/he selects a certain version of the reality. The choice of reality happens at the very moment when the method is chosen. This decision includes certain objects or issues in the study and excludes some other issues and objects from the study. In addition to the objects which exist in the reality, the choice of a certain method also affects the relations which can be found and established between the objects of the study. If a researcher uses quantitative methods in a study, s/he is inclined to think that objects of the study may have causal relations with each other. If a researcher selects qualitative methods, s/he quite often seems to think that the relations between the objects of the reality are somehow connected to the meanings given to these objects or interpretation of given meanings by human beings.

A choice of objects of reality and the type of relations which objects can have in reality implies an ontological decision, which definitely has theoretical implications. Most often these decisions are made without reflection. Scientific tradition, researcher training or some other authority or socialisation mechanism makes certain

choices preferable. The importance of methodology derives from its potential to bring about reflection. If researchers reflect on their decisions concerning methods – if they are aware of the ontological and epistemological implications of the decisions – they may be able to develop more adequate research designs. The next graph (Figure 1) illustrates a comprehensive methodological approach, which addresses all relevant dimensions of research.

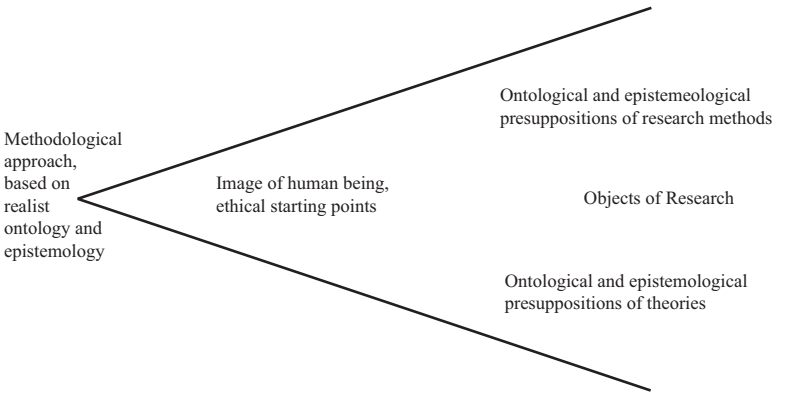

Figure 1. Methodological approach.

Paradigms of youth research

Before youth research can be consider according to the methodological approach introduced above, the approach needs to be supplemented with a more operational concept, which translates this abstract approach into a tool for "empirical" methodological research. This operational concept is the *paradigm*, which was introduced by Thomas Kuhn in his pioneering study, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1970/1962). Even though Kuhn gives "paradigm" at least in twenty different meanings, he defines two main meanings: "On one hand, it stands for the entire constellation of beliefs, values,

techniques and so on shared by the members of a give community. On the other, it denotes one sort of element in that constellation, the concrete puzzle solutions, which employed as models or examples, can replace explicit rules as a basis for the solution of remaining puzzles of normal science" (Kuhn 1970/1962, 175). Puzzle solutions can be books or articles, which have had remarkable influence on the development of a specific field of research, for instance youth research. Egon Guba and Yvonna Lincoln (1994 & 2003) have applied the concept of paradigm in studies of the social sciences. They defined "paradigm" in a way which resembles the definition given to "methodological approach" above. According to Guba and Lincoln (1994, 105), paradigm means "(...) the basic belief system or world view that guides the investigator, not only in choices of method, but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways." Guba and Lincoln's main invention (even though they maybe not have invented this alone) is to divide the social science up into paradigms. Guba and Lincoln have systematically examined the ontological and epistemological assumptions and methodical choices, as well as underlying values, aims of inquiry, nature of knowledge and so forth, of social sciences. The paradigm approach developed by Guba and Lincoln has virtually the same aims and starting points as the methodological approach introduced above. In addition, their approach has been used in an empirical study of science and proved to be useful and illustrative (see Guba & Lincoln 1994, Figures 6.1. and 6.2). In what follows, the paradigm approach will be applied to the examination of youth research, but because it has some weaknesses and limitations, it has been developed further (see table 1 below).

On the first row of the table 1 (below) alternative paradigms are named. The names of the paradigms are in plural because it is obvious that there is more than just one positivism, one realism and one constructionism. In Guba and Lincoln's version the names are in singular. Guba and Lincoln differentiate between positivism and postpositivism, probably because they would like to emphasise the development and internal differences between old and new positivisms. I have combined these two types of positivism in one

category. Positivisms are in quotation marks, because some features that have been attached to positivism by its critics are actually not features of positivism. These features can neither be found in classical positivism introduced by Comte or Mills, nor in the logical positivism of Vienna Circle. The positivism which social scientists frequently criticize is a socially constructed "enemy image," or "man of straw," which is easier to conquer than real positivism. For example Guba and Lincoln claim that the ontological presupposition of positivism is naively realistic. Anyhow, Comte's starting point, for instance, was that observation which is not guided by theory is blind. In social sciences based on logical positivism, however, it was assumed that pure observation is possible.

Table 1. Paradigms of Youth Research.

1) Paradigms	**"Positivisms"**	**Realisms**	**Constructionisms**
2) Timeframe	**1900–**	**1970–**	**1980–**
3) Ontological presuppositions (about reality)	a) naive realism, "real" reality, observable b) "real" reality, only imperfectly and probabilistically observable	critical and historical realism, reality shaped by political, social, cultural, ethical and gendered values, crystallized historically	weak or strong relativism; local, (socially) constructed realities
4 a) Epistemological presuppositions (about knowledge) **b) relations between researcher and objects of research**	a) objectivist, findings true if confirmed by critical tradition and research community or results probably true b) dualist	a) subjectivist, results value-mediated b) interactive	a) subjectivist, results constructed, b) sometimes interactive, sometimes dualist
5 a) Methodical ideals **b) ideal data**	a) experimental, manipulative b) quantitative data matrix	a) dialogical, b) qualitative data (interviews, observation, audio and video recordings, texts, biographies)	a) dialogical, experimental, interpretivist b) "texts"
6 a) Data collection methods **b) analysis methods**	a) standardized questionnaire, observation, interviews b) quantitative analysis	a) ethnographic methods, interviews b) qualitative analysis	a) interviews, texts b) discourse and conversation analysis, narrative analysis, rhetorical analysis
7) Aim of research	Explanation, prediction, control	understanding, critique, transformation, emancipation	Understanding, deconstruction, reconstruction

8) Theory, explanations	Biological and eco-logical explanations, evolutionism, functionalism, socialisation theory	(neo)Marxism, structuralism, subculture theory, feminism, psychoanalysis	Postmodernist theories, post-structuralism, "local explanations"
9) Subjects of the research	Individuals, attitudes, values, opinions, hobbies, socialisation, youth work, youth associations	youth groups, sub-cultures, youth groups, individuals	texts about youth, conversations of young people, representations of youth, youth discourses, images of youth in TV, newspapers etc.
10) Role of the researcher	Disinterested scientist, academic role, the servant of policy makers or administration	transformative intellectual and social activist, advocate of the research objects (subjects)	Passionate participant who facilitates reconstruction, or indifferent observer
11) Images of Youth	Object, determined by external: social; or internal: biological or psychological Factors	young people are considered as active, knowledgeable and creative agents	Young people are considered as agents and/or social Constructs

(Lincoln and Guba 1994 & 2003, modified by V. Puuronen)

Realisms also vary. All realisms seem to share the belief that reality exists regardless of human beings and that we cannot directly observe the most basic driving forces of reality. Instead we must try to find something that is hidden behind the surface of mere observations. But realists have different opinions of how the real essence of existence can be apprehended. Interpretivist realists assume that the key to research is the fact that human beings live in a meaningful world. Thus people's action depends on the meanings they attach to objects, processes, actions of other people, etc. Thus social research can only be successful if it aims at understanding these meanings. On the other hand, explaining realists assume that reality is governed by laws, the outcome of which is dependent on the internal qualities of the objects under scrutiny, and on the processes in which the objects participate.

Guba and Lincoln do not have a paradigm labelled constructionism; but rather a constructivist paradigm. I have combined constructivist and social constructionist paradigms under the heading of constructionisms. The constructivist paradigm is an extreme form of constructionism. According to Thomas Schwandt, "Constructivists

are deeply committed to the (...) view that what we take to be objective knowledge and truth is the result of perspective. Knowledge and truth are created, not discovered by mind" (Schwandt 1994, 125). Schwandt continues by noting that constructivists are anti-essentialists, who assume that reality and different objects are the products of complicated discursive practices. Social constructionism, which derives from phenomenological sociology of Alfred Schutz, and especially from the seminal work of Berger and Luckmann, has a different vision of reality. Social constructionists maintain that reality is independent of the human mind, but knowledge about this reality can only be based on the social artefacts produced, for instance, in discourses. The labels "positivisms", realisms and constructionisms are abstract and general. Consequently table 1 is a compromise, which hopefully illustrates the paradigms of youth research and their basic features and differences.

The second row of the table roughly illustrates the development of youth research. Youth research began in the beginning of 20th century. At that time the mainstream paradigm in social sciences, including psychology, was positivism. The realist paradigm, in particular critical realism, made a breakthrough in youth research in 1970s with the work of British social scientists Hall, Willis and others working in the Birmingham School. Constructionisms came to youth research at approximately the same time as they came to other fields of social research, during the 1980s. Constructionisms were logical steps forward from the criticisms of positivism and internal deficits of realisms. One of the main criticisms of positivism raised by realism was regarding the so-called translation thesis. The translation thesis of logical positivism states that the language of observations can be totally translated into theoretical concepts in a specific observational language. Realists argued that all languages and concepts, including observational languages, have been historically developed. Thus we cannot have pure observations; all the observations are theoretically mediated or theory laden. The logical step forward from this criticism was the invention of constructionism, which states that facts are not observed and thus known, but they are created by human mind.

Row three presents the ontological presuppositions of these

paradigms. Ontological issues of research include, for instance, the notions of reality. Paradigms differ from each other fundamentally in terms of their conception of reality. According to most commonly accepted view, "positivisms" have a naive conception of reality being readily observable by scientific methods. Science can totally reveal reality. The progress of science means the accumulation of knowledge about reality. Postpositivism states that reality is real, but that it can be observed and known only partially or probabilistically. Realisms agree that reality exists outside of the human mind, but they argue that the knowledge about reality is historically, socially or culturally shaped. Values also influence our knowledge of reality. Constructionisms have more or less relativistic view of reality. The most radical constructivists have a solipsist understanding of reality: it exists only in human mind. Most constructionists, however, agree that reality exists outside of the human mind, but they argue that knowledge about reality is always socially constructed. Constructionisms are connected to linguistic or cultural forms of social sciences, which means that language, both as action and as text, has become the most important object of their research.

Row four considers the epistemological presuppositions of research. Epistemology is closely connected to ontology, because the relation between a researcher, who knows, and reality, which is known, is of course dependent on the nature of the reality. As the paradigms' notions of reality are fundamentally different, consequently their epistemologies are also different. "Positivisms" position the researcher and reality apart from each other. The researcher observes reality from outside, objectively. The knowledge that she or he obtains can be true (at least probably) if research methods are scientific and used properly. Realists think that researchers can not be positioned outside of the reality, but rather that they are necessarily a part of it. Consequently, the knowledge gained through research is partial, affected by the position of the researcher within the reality. Values are also part of the reality and they have a clear influence on knowledge. Thus value freedom – the self-evident staring point of "positivisms" – is regarded by realisms as self-deception. Constructionisms assume that knowledge is created

by researchers. Thus it cannot escape values and subjectivism.

Row five deals with the paradigms' methodical ideals. These ideals are based on their ontological and epistemological assumptions, since methods have been developed assuming a certain reality and assuming that the knowledge about the objects of research can be obtained in the certain manners. The development of methods has nevertheless not always been guided by ontological or epistemological considerations, but rather by practical requirements, mistakes and trial and error, or examples taken from other fields of science. In the beginning of 20th century (and even earlier) "positivist" social sciences adopted the methods developed in the most advanced science of the day, physics. The method was based on observation and experiment. During the first half of previous century these basic methodical starting points were complemented by application of statistics and sample theory. Realists strive for both explanation and understanding of the society. In both cases their reasoning relies on historically relevant empirical data, which is anyhow regarded as value laden. The facts are not pure for realists, but they are historically and culturally shaped. The researcher cannot stay outside of the world she or he studies, but is intrinsically part of the reality. Knowledge can be acquired by observation, but observational data is not pure but rather connected to theory. Ideal data for many interpretive realists is obtained by dialogue with research objects – human beings, who were interviewed for instance, or whose biographies were collected. The interaction between researcher and researched is seen as the key to authentic knowledge.

Constructionisms regard language as the main subject of the study. World is constructed by the use of language either in everyday life situations or in discourses. Conversation analysts are constructionists who think that language, the way it is used in conversation, is the basis of the ontology of the social world. Conversation is a fundamental institution, the structure of which should be recovered by skilful and systematic analysis of rules of turn-taking, questioning, answering, inviting and so forth. Other constructionists think that reality is constructed by discourses, which can be revealed by studying different texts, produced either

by individuals or institutions. Conversation analysts are interested in how people talk; discourse analysts, in discourses and the manner in which discourses shape the world. People themselves are not interesting from the point of view of discourse analysis.

Row six shows how these paradigms use different methods to collect and analyse data. Row seven points out that also the essential aims of the research belonging to different paradigms are different. "Positivisms" and some types of realisms aim at explanation by recovering and establishing causal or law-like relations between phenomena. The reasoning applied in positivisms originally derives from classical physics. A researcher committed to traditional positivism is inclined to ask questions such as: "What factors cause some young people to be more religious than others?" A researcher committed to realist paradigms may ask, e.g., "What are the processes that lead to young people dropping out of school?" A constructionist may ask, "What kind of discourses are there regarding youth religiousness or school dropouts, and what kind of reality is constructed in these discourses?"

In row eight an attempt is made to list some theories which are applied mainly in research relying on certain paradigmatic starting points. It is obvious that the lists of theories placed in certain columns are far from perfect. None of these lists is final, but meant to illustrate the fact that paradigmatic development also concerns the theoretical dimension of research. The problem of some specific youth studies has been that the study represents e.g. an interpretative realist paradigm in terms of method, but applies strictly positivist type of reasoning in terms of theoretical reasoning. The internal conflict is often left unnoticed, and sometimes it has resulted in fruitful analysis, but more often theoretical and methodical parts of the research seem not to be compatible. This is the case for instance in Paul Willis's study *Learning to Labour.* Willis aims at revealing the creative power of the counter school subculture of lads by using ethnographic methods, but when he interprets his findings theoretically by applying structuralist neo-Marxism he constructs a theoretical iron cage from which the lads can find no escape.

Row nine hopefully reveals that the turn to constructionism

in youth research has been accompanied by a turn from studying "real youth" and their problems to studying the discourses of youth or discourses concerning youth problems. Constructionisms have stimulated youth research, as well as social scientific research in general. Alongside the breakthrough of constructionisms' language, discourses of youth have become the main focus of youth research. This is problematic, because even though youth is a concept, an idea and a social construction, it also includes living human beings and their action, lives and problems, which can not be reduced to language or discourse. Youth is an idea, but beyond that it is also an empirical fact (see Hacking 1999). Youth as an idea can be studied by using constructionist approaches, but it must also be studied by using other methods and approaches. Youth unemployment, for instance, is an idea and a social construction, and in society there exists a discourse about youth unemployment. But youth unemployment also influences the lives of young people in very real ways, not only discursively. Unemployment closes some possibilities; it reduces economic and social possibilities; it brings about marginalization, social exclusion and poverty. These are not only discursive constructions but real constrains that young people confront and are forced to overcome in their lives. These real constrains, facts of life, are not easy to study by means of discourse analysis. Youth unemployment is nevertheless also a social construction created by discourse or embodied in a discourse. Discourses of unemployed young people can themselves exclude young people, e.g. by creating an image of unemployed young people which restricts their potential in education or in the labour market.

In row ten ethical issues connected to youth research are illustrated by considering the different roles that a researcher can adopt. To some extend surprisingly, the researchers can adopt different roles regardless of their paradigmatic dispositions. "Positivists" can be social reformists or even radicals like Comte, or members of Vienna Circle, or they can be disinterested observers who assume that policymakers make social and political conclusions on the basis of their research. Realists, especially critical realists, most

often aim at contributing to the emancipation of young people or the transformation of societal structures which may constrain the free agency of youth. Realists often regard themselves as spokespersons for young people and they try to give a "voice" to those whom they regard oppressed or silenced. Constructionists as well can have emancipatory goals. They may assume that the deconstruction and reconstruction of discourses may create free space for the negotiation of wider identities, for instance. But on the other hand, constructionism in its extreme form can lead to solipsism, which totally destroys respect for human beings (young people) as reasonable agents by excluding all but texts from the reality being considered. Radical constructivists can fall into the fallacy of assuming that they are objective observers.

Row 11 represents those images of young people, which the paradigms explicitly or implicitly produce. "Positivims" treat young people as objects, which are determined by external social or internal psychological or biological forces. From this point of view young people can hardly be regarded as subjects of social change. Realists have a contrary image of young people. They assume that young people are active, creative and knowledgeable agents, who can decide how they act relatively independently from adults, other authorities, social circumstances and social forces. The actions of young people are conditioned, however, by social constraints. Constructionists' images of youth vary a lot. On the one hand, young people can be regarded as constructors of their worlds, which may imply that they are agents who can freely choose the course of their actions. Thus for instance the unemployed young person has freely chosen her/his course of life and also can freely choose differently. On the other extreme young people – as all human beings – are of no importance. If only discourses or texts are regarded as real, then human beings can be left outside, or their existence need not to be considered.

Conclusions

The main intent of the approach introduced above is to offer youth researchers means to position themselves within a paradigmatic framework. It may be difficult to find an exact place for oneself in the table, but I have learnt by my own experience that the process of seeking such a position has helped me to clarify many central methodological issues. When systematically considering different dimensions of research, illustrated by the far left-hand column in Table 1, it was possible to note one's own inclinations, beliefs, biases and so forth. This table briefly facilitates methodological reflection, which I regard as the most important prerequisite for critique and thus also for the development of youth research. This book contains articles which represent different paradigmatic dispositions. Most articles also contain methodological reflection. I hope that this introductory chapter provides some starting points for further methodological discussion.

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RESEARCHING YOUTH LIFE

by Sven Mørch

Youth life and its research

The youth question is undergoing extensive changes in contemporary Europe. The changing societal structures and the de-institutionalisation of life courses are creating new challenges for the integration of the younger generation into society. Both traditional indicators such as class, gender, and ethnicity; and changes in inter-generational relationships influence the process of becoming actors in late modernity. The youth situation therefore creates youth problems in a double sense: societal problems with individual young people and youth groups, and problems for the individual young people who are trying to become part of society.

Youth development has thus become an issue in public planning, calling for a fresh awareness of youth and thus for youth research. Knowledge and research are needed not only for taking care of youth problems, of which there is a growing awareness, but also because young people today play a more important role in social development then ever before. In the late modern "educational society"young people have become a human resource for the future. As young people they are in the process of "becoming individualized in their biography" (Mørch 2003), and the biography especially is constructed in education. Therefore young people are confronted by educational success or failure in the individualisation process.

The late modern development is described from many different

perspectives, especially by Giddens, Bauman and Beck, who have pointed to the risks of individualisation in a fluid and consumer oriented society. Also Esping-Anderson (1998), from a more economical perspective, has pointed to the challenges to the further development of the late modern welfare state.

Young people have, for better or for worse, become central agents of this "late modernity". The "disappearance of adulthood" (Còté 2000) has not only made young people equal to adults, but has perhaps made them the central actors in late modern society. Youth in itself has become a quality which all are searching for. Therefore youth development constitutes one of the most important issues in a Europe where most countries are at the forefront of, or at least on the road to, "late modernity".

In spite of many contradictions in European development and in its policies on individual agency and social responsibility, it seems as if, on a more general level, there exists a changing relation between society and the individual. On the one hand, the engagement in the development of competence expresses a growing interest in including young people in the overall development of social integration. On the other hand, societal institutions and traditional structures are in a state of change which complicates the social integration process. The traditional grip on young people, which existed in social and educational institutions is changing and giving way to more democratic, but also more private developments. In youth research this change is described as de-structuration, which calls for the individual young person to become an agent him- or herself, able to structure everyday life. In Giddens' terms we could say that structuration has become the central process of being young (Giddens 1984; Mørch & Stalder 2003).

Youth and social responsibility

Young people have become agents in the late modern world and at the same time important players in the process of structuration.

Becoming agents however is not just a leaning or socialisation process where social norms are taken on. Today young people themselves have become responsible for the development of agency. As is acknowledged in most EU politics, this new situation calls for the development of "citizenship": Young people should be given opportunities for becoming agents but also they should develop into *responsible* agents of late modern democratic society (White Paper 2001).

This development of social responsibility, however, is not without problems. A growing political liberalism and individualisation all over Europe seem to have challenged the traditional picture of a social responsible society – of "folkhemmet" as it is called in Sweden. And this situation is not the best background for making the young individual a social responsible person. Modern capitalism with its anonymous or "pension funds' capital" and the strong new liberalism in EU politics have on a structural level changed the meaning of social responsibility. Social responsibility seems to be something to be put in corporate agenda items such as "ethical investment policies" or "supporting catastrophic flood victims" in that it is not part of everyday social practice in business life.

At the societal level social responsibility appears to have become a new challenge which makes individual responsibility and especially the development of responsibility among youth quite unclear. So the overall changes in institutional structures of individualisation have brought about the dynamics and difficulties of becoming an actor in society. The relation between organised institutional individualisation on the structural level and the personal challenge of individual individualisation as an actor (Krange 2004), or of individualised actor biography, becomes sensitive in a society which challenges young people in their different positions.

Also the changing maps of Europe and the world create difficulties. Many newcomers to Europe have cultural, social and religious backgrounds different from the majority, and therefore experience problems in becoming part of the challenge of late modern European individualisation. This makes it understandable that "ethnic" youth has become the focus of different social integration policies.

For many reasons youth development may not look like the sort of issue it always used to. It has become a most urgent concern and at the same times a changing issue. Youth social integration is not only about becoming an adult in a stable adult world; it is about the development of an individual who is him- or herself able to choose to become part or partner in a changing society. Late modern youth life could be seen as the development of youth as a new generation in Karl Mannheim's (1952) sense of the term: Societal changes create a new ground for young people's development. Europe is in the midst of a generation change. The changing Europe – caused by the integration of Eastern Europe and liberalised immigration policies – constructs young people as a new generation: Societal changes create a new basis for a youth generation. They are confronted with new challenges in growing up and becoming an integrated part and partner in the new Europe. As such we are studying not only young people in Europe, but a generational shift in youth development.

Youth research development

The engagement in solving practical and social youth problems has made it necessary to widen the scope of youth research to catch the perspective of the changing generations. It is not enough to know what young people are doing and how this could be explained in terms of socialisation patterns. Youth culture has become important. Youth culture guides young people in making sense of changing everyday life. Also young people's own understandings and engagements in their own life become important. Knowledge is not only about young people but also about the knowledgeableness of young people and the development of new "generational" forms of youth life. Youth research has become a political necessity.

Youth research has been engaged in finding out what is new for the youth in question – how young people change their engagement and self-understanding. The scheme in next page visualizes some general changes in youth research in the last 50 years.

Youth Research	1950s/60s	1970s/80s	1990s	2000s
Focus	Problem youth	Resourceful youth	Faltering youth	Innovative youth
Purpose	Integration	Resista nce	Transition	Participation
Perspective	Valued	Rebellious	Vulnerable	Competent
Approach	Authoritarian	Solidarity	Guardian	Supporting
Educational perspective	Formal education	Informal learning	Informal learning	Case and Contextual learning
Discipline	Psychology/ Criminology	Cultural studies/ Social psychology	Education/ sociology	Education/ social psychology
Political re-commendations	Re-socialisation	Cultural diversification	Counselling	Individual diversification ?

(Developed from Mørch 2003.)

As this overview illustrates, youth research has been focused on understanding the youth question from an indirectly or directly socially integrative perspective. In this overall understanding of youth's integrative place in society, focus has moved from understanding youth as a problem to looking at youth as a resource, to seeing youth as faltering, and – maybe – to acknowledging youth as an innovative force in and for society. Research sees and acknowledges how youth has taken over a central place in society, and especially it seems as if the focus has more and more been on youth as actors in the social structuration process. Research clearly demonstrates that youth are seen as both the products and the producers of society (Giddens 1984).

If we take a special look at the methodological practice of youth research we find that basically youth research has had four different approaches on the youth issue, which maybe are inspired by the changing understanding of youth (Mørch 2003):

1. Youth research as descriptive and correlational. Its focus is on quantitative aspects of what young people – often defined by age – are doing: Education, criminality, drug use, political participation, health, etc.; and how these different youth indicators are correlated.

2. Youth cultural research which developed in the 60s and 70s, looking at new youth cultures and cultural lifestyles. In contrast with descriptive and quantitative youth research, this cultural youth perspective was mainly qualitative – looking for innovative aspects in youth life.
3. Youth research focused on understanding youth individualisation in biography. This research especially followed interests in understanding young people as a resourceful category in late modern society, but also to understand how young people have used or misused these resources in managing or coping with youth development and in developing a social identity. Methodologically this research was both quantitative and qualitative, but with attention given to the historical and contextual processes of different forms of individualisation in youth. It looked at aspects of young people's way of participating in social integration processes in a modern and late modern individualised society.
4. One specific line of youth research, which supplements these lines and also learns from all of them is praxis or evaluation research. Praxis and evaluation research especially follows the development of political youth initiatives and youth projects. Also young people themselves develop their own practice, so, youth practice as young people's ways of coping with challenges of individualisation becomes important to understand and learn from. The reason for this seems obvious: Youth development and practical and social problems should not only be understood theoretically; they should be supported, taken care of and changed, and praxis and evaluation research is engaged in understanding youth practices and evaluating intervention and social change while looking for the "best practices".

It seems, however, that the development of practice and evaluation research could be seen as more than an attempt to engage in actual youth challenges. It has also influenced thinking concerning the theoretical paradigms in youth research. Methods and theory are closely interwoven. The study of changing youth practice has pointed to new problems involved in youth research: Often descriptive or

quasi-experimental designs are seen as too restricted. They tell about the quantities, distributions and causation, but they do not "catch" the life of the phenomena. They are not seen as appropriate for researching youth practice as a human praxis. Therefore both qualitative research and praxis and evaluation research as a whole have become popular because they try to understand what is going on and engage in finding perspectives and solutions for practical problems and in evaluating the quality of the changes going on.

The development of new scientific paradigms

The changing youth situation and the development of "praxis" youth research calls for a more general methodological reflection regarding the role of scientific practice. The choice of research methods in the social sciences and therefore in youth research follows institutionalised practices, theoretical convictions and the interests we have in the subject of study. If research is understood as a social practice, it of course relates to the different interests researchers may have, and in this way it develops knowledge according to these interests (Scarr 1986).

This way of looking at scientific research as one social practice among others has not always been accepted. Instead, scientific research often has seen itself as "scientific" and in this way freed from any interests besides those of developing objective knowledge: Scientific research is scientific, because it follows scientific rules. The inductive/deductive research model constructs knowledge as general knowledge and gives explanations according to general laws (Nagel 1961). Therefore it especially focuses on quantitative knowledge, which could *explain* or tell something about the distribution of phenomena or the existence of causation, or label the observed phenomenon as a special case of a more general human phenomenon. This "positivist" relation to phenomena of the real world was from a critical point of view often described as guided by an interest in

controlling the world (Habermas 1973).

In Habermas' critique of positivism he especially saw the use of a controlling scientific paradigm as a problem in the social and human sciences. So in his first "positivism critique," in the 1960s, which was inspired by hermeneutics and phenomenology, a new and more qualitative perspective was developed (Ratniski 1970). It became important to use scientific research in a broader perspective. Science should not only explain, it should develop an *understanding* of what is going on and how people understand their world; it should help *emancipate* people from oppressing social conditions. Today, in social constructionist scientific approaches as well, a critique of a positivist engagement in psychological disciplines has developed (Gergen 1999). Especially the focus on *explaining* developments in terms of "individual properties" has been criticized, and focus instead has been on individual self-construction (Potter & Wetherell 1987). Hereby not only qualitative aspects of the phenomenon or its qualities in themselves have come in focus; a specific theoretical perspective has also been introduced. The interest is in understanding how people construct themselves and their world in their discursive and language activities (Burr 1995).

Central to the development of new paradigms of youth research is the changing understanding of youth practices. Youth practices do not come from inside young people, but are answers to social and individual developmental opportunities and often contradictory challenges. Also we both witness that more and more parts of social and youth life have become the objects of planned change and changing social practices, and that changes are not only planned for others but are made by people who are themselves part of the social practices. For this reason, a much broader range of research activities has developed in recent years. Research is no longer the monopoly of universities, laboratories and research-institutions; it has become a part of everyday praxis (Schön 1983). New problems have created needs for new solutions and new knowledge – and for research practices as ways to obtain knowledge. Also the development of co-researchers' practices points to this new challenges (Whyte 1991). Research is not only about finding knowledge about

young people; it is also about developing knowledgeability with and among youth.

Relations between subject, theory and methods

Most scientific textbooks agree with the idea that in doing research, methods should be in accordance with the phenomenon in question, and the theoretical perspective which is used to explain the phenomenon or subject of study. This understanding can be – and often is – illustrated as a "research triangle" combining theory, methods and the researched phenomenon (Figure 1):

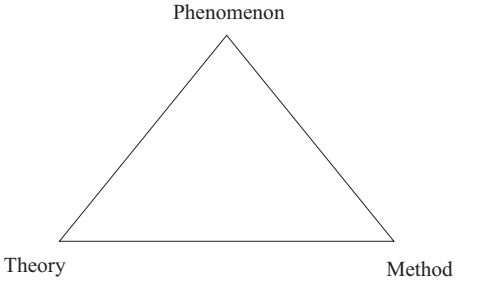

Figure 1

The point of this triangle is to call for a correspondence between the three angels. There should be a correspondence between theory, method and phenomenon. If this correspondence does not exist, the relation between theory, method and subject of study may become arbitrary. But while this triangle underlines the necessity of correspondence, it still overlooks other important research perspectives. The problem with this triangle is that it ignores the fact that very often theoretical or methodological perspectives define the phenomenon instead of the phenomenon determining the theory and methods. If we want to explain growing youth unemployment, for example, we might count

and measure and work with quantitative data and use quantitative methods. This research activity makes us understand unemployment as some sort of event, which could be measured and explained in relation to other events in young people's lives or in society. If, however, we want to reconsider the phenomenon of unemployment and maybe understand youth unemployment as a choice of the individual, we might want to find out why the individual young person makes this sort of choice. Here we "widen" our triangle (Figure 2) and start reflecting on what is really the phenomenon, which theory should be involved and how should research be done.

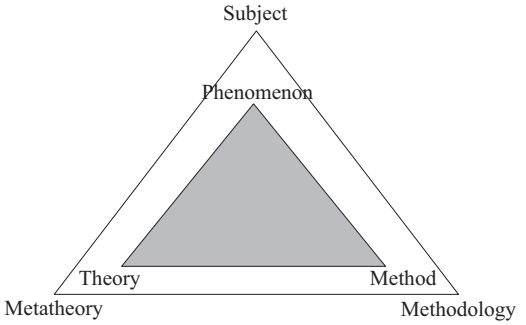

Figure 2

In this case we would maybe in the end engage in qualitative research, trying to find the meaning or sense in the individual choice. Also we could be interested in the consequences of being unemployed for the individual young person. Here too, maybe we will chose a qualitative research design. If, however, we would like to find out how individuals manage or cope with unemployment we could be interested in knowing if some individuals are doing it in specially good or bad ways. We want to find out if some strategies are expedient in the situation. We may want to find out what sorts of best practices are created or constructed among young people. In this case we are not especially interested in explaining the distributions of unemployment or in understanding the experiences of being unemployed. Here we want to know something about

coping strategies. Therefore the phenomenon is now unemployment strategies, and the theory looks for the development and individual activities or practices.

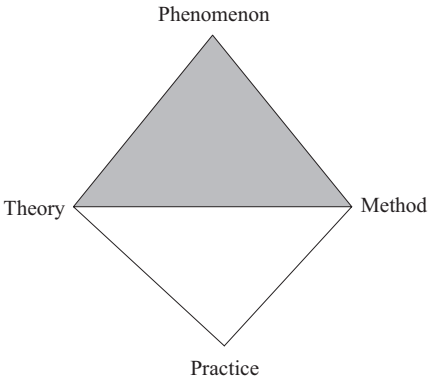

Figure 3

The basic research triangle is therefore only the starting figure. In each angle discussion takes place to qualify the approaches and to develop the relation between theory, methods and phenomena. We might say that as soon as the existence of more perspectives becomes an option, a meta-reflection develops (Figure 2). On the other hand, this ability to "meta-reflect" makes it obvious that knowledge does not exist only inside a scientific world. Knowledge, as it is developed in the scientific triangle, is basic for activity and choices of intervention. Knowledge leads to practice. (Figure 3).

These two extensions of the basic research triangle (Figures 2 and 3) clearly show how politics becomes a meta-reflection of practice or intervention according to youth understanding, theory and methods. (Figure 4).

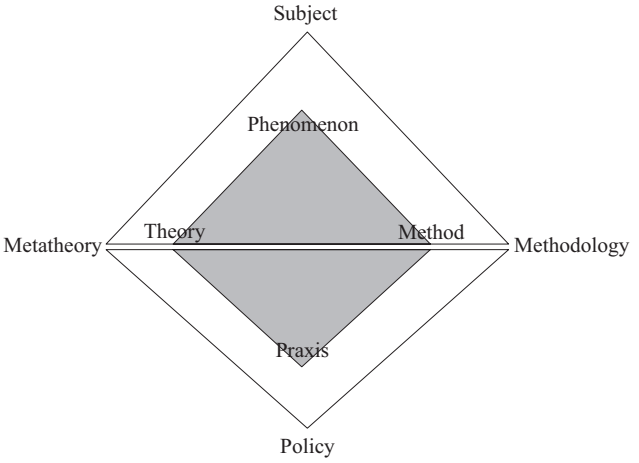

Figure 4

Science and politics are closely combined; not in the sense that science is politics or that science is political – more than everything else in this world – but because intervention is (ideally) based on knowledge and therefore knowledge becomes important and in this way science becomes important in politics. So perhaps both positivists and their critics were wrong. The positivists had the idea that science was unpolitical. Politics was about how it was used. And the critics underlined that all knowledge was part of policy – and only for the use of the rich and powerful. Maybe the answer is simpler and much less dramatic: Science is a practice in the real world, and as such it is constructed and part of the construction of everyday life. It is not just political or non-political; it is a social practice.

The arbitrariness of scientific understanding

Though it is possible to gain general acceptance for the multiplicity of scientific research methods, one problem seems to follow the

different developments. This problem exists in both traditional and also modern critical theories and methods, and could basically be described as the problem of arbitrary relations between the subject of study and its theory and methods. So the arbitrariness of youth research refers to a situation where the theories and methods are not developed or chosen in accordance with the youth issue, but rather chosen because researchers following given scientific paradigms prefer them, and thus they tend to organize their knowledge, developed in the research process, accordingly. So, instead of throwing light on a subject, scientific approaches often define the phenomenon of study through the choice of theory or method (Mørch 1990).

Therefore we have to develop our reflection of the challenges of the broadened triangle and find out how the arbitrariness problem in researching the phenomenon should be overcome. The problem of scientific arbitrariness can be illustrated in the following examples: Empirical youth-research as a specific field of social research-praxis is engaged in developing knowledge of youth-life as a social phenomenon. If we think of the phenomenon of youth, it becomes obvious that a social phenomenon consists of social and human praxis. To study youth does not mean to study some metaphysical phenomenon, but to study youth activities in a broad sense: what they do, why they do it, and how they think about their activities. In social research practice empirical knowledge about a phenomenon is developed or extracted from the phenomenon. Empirical knowledge is not the phenomenon itself, but it is knowledge about it. It is, so to speak, knowledge at another, empirical, level. Like a map or a photo of the world it describes a part of the world. It focuses on a part or an aspect of the phenomenon. Statistical information or descriptive examples might draw a picture – which could be quantitative or qualitative – but it is only a picture of the world. This process of research praxis creating empirical knowledge, is illustrated in Figure 5:

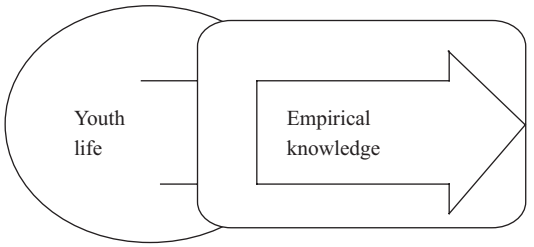

Figure 5. Empirical knowledge as limited and selected knowledge about the phenomenon.

Empirical knowledge is in principle *limited* compared to the real phenomenon, the life of young people or youth groups. Empirical knowledge is *selected* or focused knowledge, and the problems of this selection have been a standing issue in social research: The question is about what the important focus should be or what the *essential knowledge* about the phenomenon should be. What should we look for and what should we tell? Only extreme positivists or phenomenologists would argue that this problem is simply methodological. The choice of empirical knowledge must come from some specific interest in the phenomenon or some assumptions about the phenomenon. In mainstream research these assumptions often take the form of "theory" or theoretically developed hypotheses and a pre-understanding of the phenomenon. For this reason, a general model of scientific praxis could be elaborated as in Figure 6.

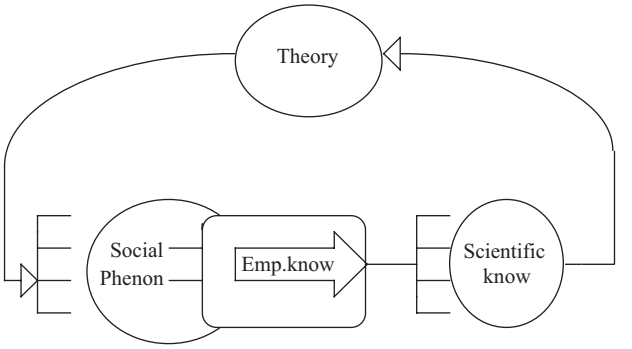

Figure 6. A model showing the role of theory in focusing the phenomenon, and thus in developing empirical knowledge and scientific results.

The theory tells what we are looking for, and the meta-scientific paradigm defines the rules of validity in generating empirical knowledge. In scientific praxis the meta-theoretical reference and the rules of validity are the basis for creating scientific knowledge. Scientific knowledge should be seen as a systematic organisation of empirical knowledge in the form of descriptive distributions, correlational or causal facts, laws or analytical generalisations and "generalised understanding". The model shows that in empirical research knowledge concerning youth follows theoretical presuppositions. Research supports or falsifies theoretical assumptions, and its central method in generating new insights is the organisation of empirical knowledge into scientific knowledge, which becomes the basis for revising theories or making new ones. This superior role of theory or pre-understanding in doing research has generated much discussion. Most well known is Karl Popper's critique of Marxism as an ideological theory and therefore his demand for falsification instead of verification of theories. If, however, we develop the model a little further and expand its theoretical possibilities, we immediately recognize the problem of empirical youth-research (Figure 7).

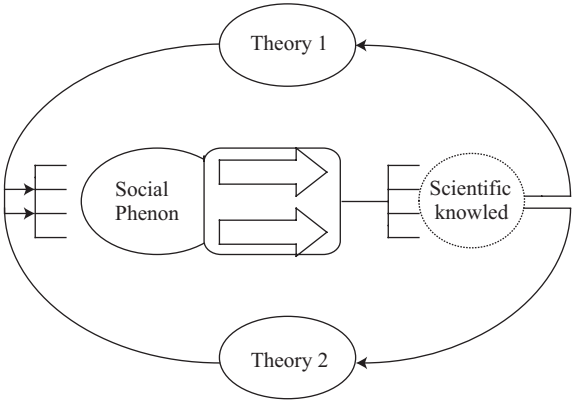

Figure 7. Competitive theoretical understandings.

As the model shows, we are able to generate quite different knowledge concerning youth depending on our theoretical perspective or interest in the phenomenon. The difference becomes clear if we think of theory 1 as a theory of social marginalization of youth and theory 2 as a theory of narcissism. The theories show themselves as competitive and arbitrary according to the youth phenomenon (Mørch 1990). That the theories are arbitrary does not mean that they are inappropriate to youth research, but no criteria exist for deciding which aspects of youth each theory is the most appropriate or "best" for addressing. The end result seems to be that each researcher him-/herself has to choose. Understanding of youth follows personal choices based on political and economic factors. Each research perspective may generate important knowledge about aspects of youth, and in a discussion of the phenomenon of youth scientists might stress their own knowledge as central, and even demonstrate its empirical foundation. We might conclude that scientific praxis develops knowledge about youth and that knowledge is based on theories or understandings which may come from political interests in youth, from some theoretical interests in social harmony, from interests in child-psychology, from the researcher's private engagement, etc. They have a basis, but not necessarily in understanding fundamental or essential challenges in youth life.

Mainstream youth research develops knowledge about the phenomenon. Basically it is not a political activity. It is based on scientific theories, and in creating knowledge about youth it becomes more or less useful for practical – and political – interests. If, however, theories of social science are seen as ideological aspects of historical and social real life problems, and scientists as engaged in social and political problems, science as well becomes a "political" activity. The conclusion might be that scientific research "creates" its understanding of youth according to its pre-understanding, and it upholds its knowledge in competition for both scientific recognition and funding. The political challenge of scientific research does not, however, make it non-scientific. As scientific activity it is subject to scientific debate, and obliged by rules and standards of its basic paradigms to be open to such.

The reason for this perhaps provocative discussion of the challenges for social scientific research as scientific practice is not to criticize youth research, but to point to some basic conclusions:

- Scientific social research is useful research in society. The theoretical interests are themselves part of and developed in society, which makes scientific knowledge useful in terms of the theories or hypotheses it verifies or falsifies. However verification and falsification are too strong words. Social science qualifies some perspectives on social issues.
- Scientific research develops scientific knowledge, and as scientific knowledge it is evaluated for its validity and reliability, and it is openly discussed in scientific debates.
- Scientific research seen as scientific practice, however, may sometimes become quite arbitrary according to the phenomenon it is studying. It is reflected "scientifically" and the question, of whether or not it develops essential or fundamental knowledge may at times be forgotten.

Validity as valid knowledge

Though scientific youth research as a social practice is important in a broad sense, it seems interesting to overcome or minimise the arbitrariness in the research practice. And the overcoming of the arbitrariness could be seen as the problem of validity. However, if no knowledge exists about the phenomenon per se, the validity discourse will only be about methodological validity: Do we measure what we intend to measure? The question rather seems to be if we find out what is important to find out (Kvale 1996).

Another way of approaching the problem of arbitrariness is to look at the development of the phenomenon itself, and here to look for "essentials" which can be researched in youth life. To do this we have to operate on a much broader theoretical level of social or societal development. In youth research it seems obvious that the challenge of understanding specific youth issues and youth practices could be qualified by looking into youth history to see how youth and youth life have developed and created challenges for young people in a developing society. A historical based youth understanding could provide an alternative to the empirical challenge of arbitrariness (Mørch 1985).

The construction of youth and youth life

The analysis of the construction of youth life has become a more or less accepted narrative in youth research (Gillis 1981, Mørch 1985, Stafseng 1996). Youth was created in the end of the 18th century as a bourgeois construct inside educational systems (Mørch 1985). If we should briefly point to the general results of this research, it tells that youth is a social construction stemming from the individualisation challenge of early modernity. Thus it develops and changes with societal changes in terms of demands for individualisation. Therefore it is possible to draw a general picture of how youth development should be seen (Mørch 2003).

The illustration below (Figure 8) tells that the "essential" challenge in youth development has two dimensions: The relation between individual and society and biographical development. Youth is about the development of individualisation in biography. It also seems as if young people are the active agents in youth development. They are subjects of their own lives. On the basis of this perspective it becomes possible to ask more questions about how young people think and behave.

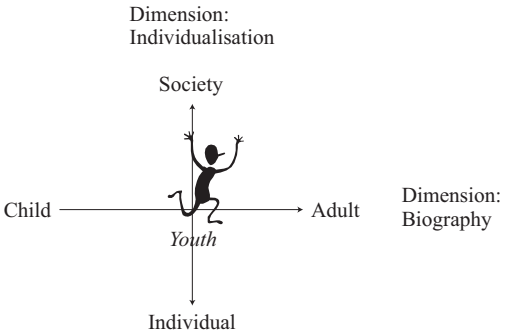

Figure 8

But the model gives some further information: Youth is seen as challenged on two constantly changing dimensions: the demands of individualisation and the organisation of biography. Young people have to combine these dimensions in their own lives. The demands of individualisation and changing biography are of course very extensive challenges. Without going into very specific theoretical discussions here though, it seems obvious that the modern challenges of youth development often are combined with the modern challenges of individual function or the challenges of late modernity individualisation, and that this challenge creates differentiation in-between young people (Mørch 2003).

It is possible to paint a general picture of the discussion of contemporary life as it is most often formulated in writings about late modernity (Giddens 1991; Beck 1997; Bauman 1998): There has

been a change from early modern to late modern individualisation. In early modernisation (from the end of the 20th century to the middle of the twenty century) the process of developing and creating a political and job-qualified individual was seen as the challenge of education and socialisation. The result of this early modern societal development was the creation of the individual subjects or actors of modern society. In late modern society the process seems to have changed: Individuality seems to be a personal quality and therefore development and social responsibility should come from the individual him-/herself (Figure 9). Individuals are not socialized by others; they develop themselves. The challenge for society is therefore to support the individual in forming some sort of social responsibility. The late modern challenge is that the central perspective of youth development is that young people "develop themselves" within modern youth life.

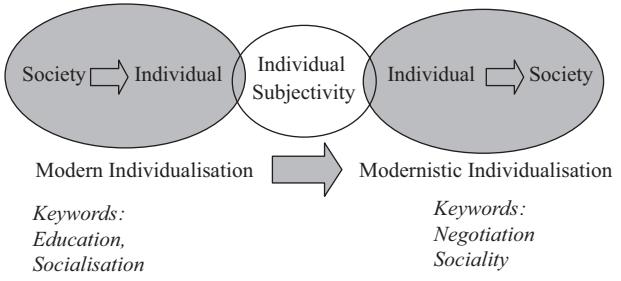

Figure 9

Demands on methodology

If we go back to the challenges of arbitrariness and the picture of the research triangle, it now seems obvious that youth research has more options. The traditional picture of looking at causes and results does not relate to a situation where people are not caused, but instead have chosen their own way of behaving. The general

picture of causation should be broadened. Development is not only about what causes some results to happen; it is also about which conditions exist for young people and how are they are used by young people themselves. In a traditional scientific logic we often look for causes as events happening before the result (Scar 1985). The broad picture may look like this (Figure 10):

Figure 10. The causal explanation.

This idea of explanation was especially criticized in the critique of positivism or in the "counterview" development (Figure 11) (Argyris, Putnam & Smith 1985). The idea of understanding peoples choices as human being able to do whatever became popular. The new logic can be drawn like this:

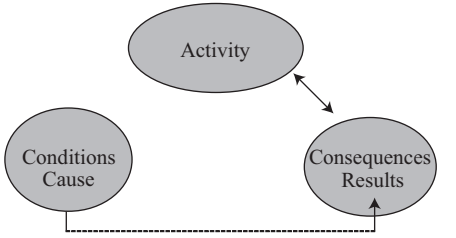

Figure 11. The counterview explanation.

Instead of trying to explain results and looking for causes, focus was on individual activity and individual choices, with the ambition to understand how people made thing happen. What sort of motivation did they have and why did they do what they did?

This scientific logic has been challenged in practical research. Here activities are understood as important in creating consequences, but they are not seen as "free". Activities are seen as societal

phenomena. This means that they are made possible and they are restricted inside the social world. We can draw this logical model like so (Figure 12):

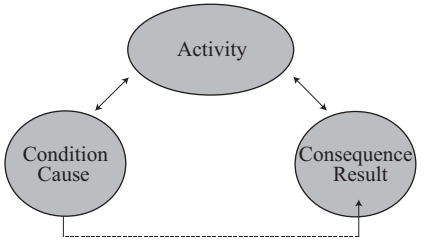

Figure 12. The activity relation.

Here individual activity is understood as individual practice dependant on which "conditions", which experiences, and which events have existed before. Activities "draw on" pre-activities (Sève 1978). Therefore this model also illustrates how influence in youth life is about qualifying activities, both providing new "pre-conditions" and widening the existing activity structure.

As these models show, more possibilities exist. It is possible to analyse young people's behaviour as 1) being caused by social background, as 2) the result of their own choosing or as 3) constructed by individual activities. In this simple perspective it becomes apparent that the choice of the "relational" model already points to political consequences of one's own analysis. Also the model tells that modern individualisation as a challenge points to the importance of seeing young people as agents in their lives. They draw on their conditions in meeting their challenges (figure 13).

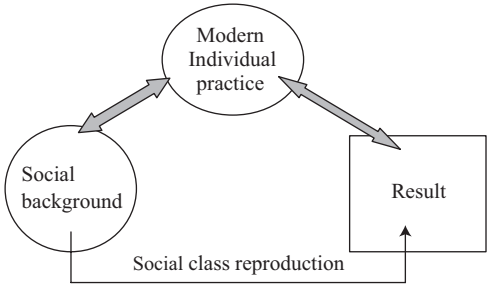

Figure 13. The active individual.

The theory

If we accept the perspective of individualisation in biography as the essential challenge facing young people, it seems practical to draw a frame of youth activities (Figure 14):

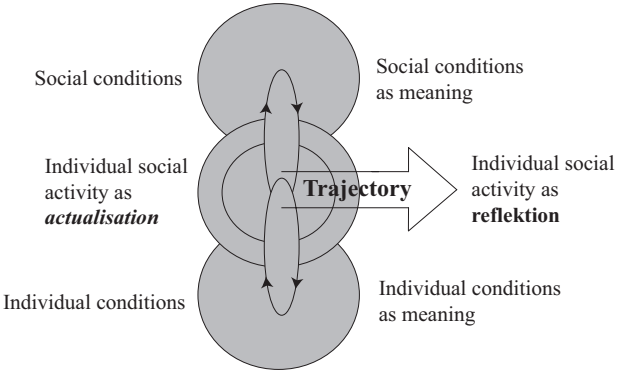

Figure 14. Youth activity model.

The point of this illustration is to provide some sort of visual reference which shows how youth research becomes possible.

The first point of the model is to create a focal point. We are focusing on youth activities as ways in which young people actualize

both societal demands and opportunities, and individual skills and pre-conditions. The middle circles also point to the relations between individual and social behaviour. Individuals are always part of social groups or networks, and in this way individual young persons interact and learn from their peers. In actualizing societal and individual conditions, young persons are part of a youth culture.

The second point of the illustration is to draw attention to the active process or the subjective aspect of action. The young person is not only acting according to societal conditions and obligations. He/she is at the same time trying to understand and reflect societal conditions. He/she is making sense of the conditions according to his/her own situation. We may therefore speak of the young person acting in relation to societal conditions as "structuration" in Giddens' sense of the term. On the other hand he/she is also acting and managing demands according to individual prerequisites. Therefor the young person is making sense of his/her individual situation. In Antonowski's terms he/she is coping or developing a Sense of Coherence – SOC (Antonovsky 1993a, 1993b).Thus we have two different types of analysis: The analysis of the structuration process and the analysis of the coping process. So storytelling and narrative analysis become popular methods in researching individual activities.

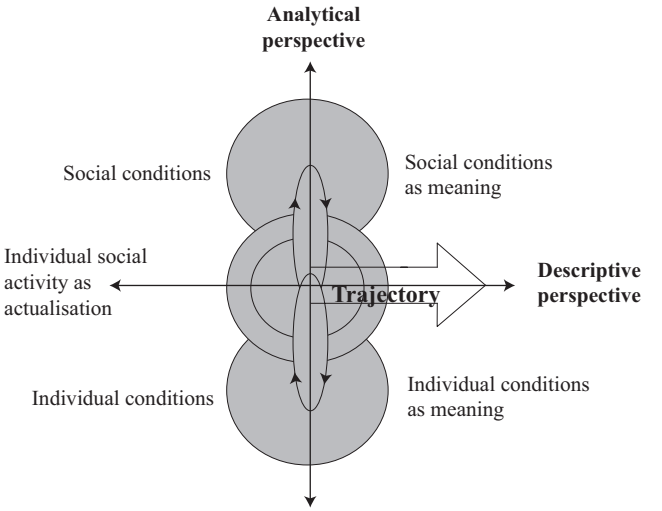

Figure 15. Research perspectives.

Though the model points to young persons as actors in their own lives, it is still possible to research young people from other perspectives. If we choose to stand on the horizontal descriptive line of the model (Figure 15) we may observe young people behaving in different ways in different contexts or situations and we may ask for descriptive scientific methods. Both quantitative and qualitative methods are useful on this level. And when we have seen or described the different youth phenomena we may choose a theoretical reference to "explain" what is going on. We may observe correlation between their behaviour and some social indicators or we may see young people looking very unusual with "Mohawks" and declare them to be narcissists. These understandings may be very meaningful, but it underlines the arbitrariness of scientific explanations. We might have looked at other things and come up with other theories. If, however, we want to develop an analytical perspective, to analyse the development in accordance with the challenge of individualisation in biography, or if we want to understand phenomena in accordance with the subject of general youth, we are looking for strategies either as structuration or as coping activities. In this way it becomes

apparent that the question is not if we should use quantitative or qualitative data and methods; the question is which perspectives and aspects of youth activities we want to understand.

Conclusion

Summing up the logic of research in the youth field, it is possible to point to three general research designs. First we have the quantitative research design. Here we analyse youth behaviour and look for correlation or causation and possibilities for making general laws (figure 16).

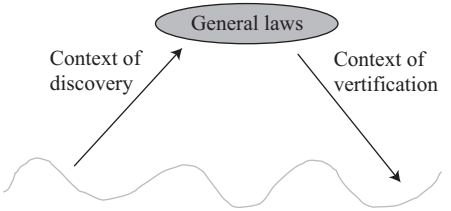

Figure 16. General law explanation.

The next model is the qualitative design. Here we look at the phenomenon of youth life in all its aspects and come up with some more general and often theoretical "stories" about youth and youth life (figure 17).

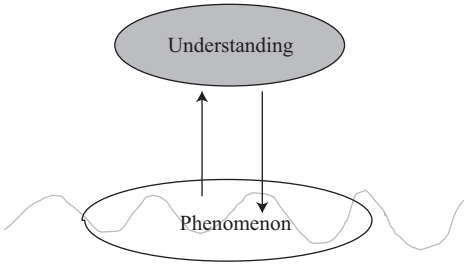

Figure 17. The model of scientific understanding.

In the third model we turn the understanding around. What we are looking for is youth activities as answers to the challenges of youth. We are looking at how young people develop coping strategies and structuration in their lives to solve the challenge of individualisation in biography (figure 18).

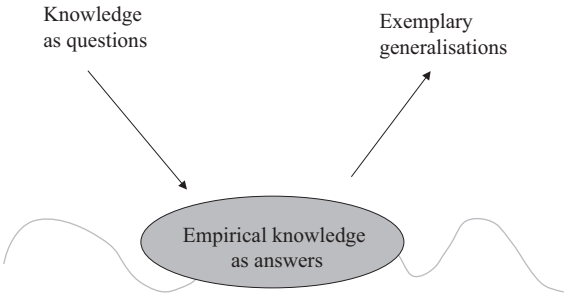

Figure 18. Youth activity understanding.

In this situation we will never find a final answer. Challenges to our knowledge of youth are in a state of ongoing development and all new answers may be seen as bases for new questions. But the point of the scientific design is to develop methods to find new and emerging examples of what might be seen as youth practices – maybe even as best practices. But to qualify answers as best practices not only demands confidence in young people; it also calls for reflection on the quality of "best practices" or some sort of validity in the answers. This is a question of expedience, and answering this question seems to be the new theoretical, methodological and empirical challenge, making youth research a never ending story.

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BORDERS AND POSSIBILITIES IN YOUTH RESEARCH – A LONGITUDINAL STUDY OF THE WORLD VIEWS OF YOUNG PEOPLE

by Helena Helve

Case: Study of the world views of young people

My longitudinal study (Helve 1993) focused on world views and their structures which are difficult to measure. Before testing any hypothesis about world views, it is necessary to have a clear conception of a world view. The study has tried to look closely at the conceptions of different types of world views (Niiniluoto 1981, 518–526 and 1984, 79–83). It also tried to look closely at the techniques that have been developed to measure, for example, young people's religious development (e.g. Tamminen 1991) and thinking (e.g. Goldman 1968), their questions about life (e.g. Tamminen 1975) and their views of the world (Rauste-von Wright 1975). This study has tried to relate the different ways different types of world views construct their models (see Helve 1993, 19) suggesting that these types of a world view may be associated with cognitive development, social learning and young people's socialisation (Helve 1993, 28–34).

In developing empirical measurements of the structures of a scientific, religious and metaphysic world view (see Niiniluoto 1981 and 1984) questionnaire scales were developed. Questions were combined to measure dimensions of young people's world views (the conative dimension e.g. leisure time, friends and special interests; the cognitive dimension e.g. beliefs about the world; the social dimension e.g. relationships to other people; the cultural dimension e.g. youth cultures, and the affective dimension e.g. attitudes towards life and the future; see Helve 1993).

The biggest difficulty in this longitudinal study was being tied to theories and methods used in the first phase which were no longer favoured after a period of 20 years. The general principles of the research design did not change much. However, the cognitive development of children and young people at different ages had to be taken into consideration in data collection; questions that were appropriate for an eight year-old would no longer necessarily be appropriate for a 14 year-old, and might need to change radically for a 24 year-old (see Piaget 1929 and 1932; Elkind 1974, 34–7; Ginsburg & Opper 1979, 198–205; Piaget & Inhelder 1947, 126–45).

Methods

The theoretical framework of my study is provided by the dimensions of a world view. These are used as the basis for examining the world view of young people. The beliefs about the world which appear in young people's world view are examined alongside the cognitive dimension. World view and its formation constitute such a difficult task that it cannot be studied using only one method. I used mutually complementary quantitative and qualitative methods, thus allowing for more varied research data. Data for the study has been obtained using questionnaires, word association and sentence completion tasks, and projective picture tests, as well as by conducting individual and group interviews, with pictures used as an aid. The questionnaires were also sent to the respondents' parents (see Table 1).

Table 1. The phases and methods of the longitudinal research.

1975	**Pre-research at the ages 7** Methods	17 girls, 15 boys (n = 32) • Interviews • Questionnaires to the parents
1976	**Phase 1. The base data** 8-year-olds 11-year-olds Together Methods	 34 girls, 29 boys (n = 63) 32 girls, 30 boys (n = 62) 66 girls, 59 boys (n = 125) • Questionnaires to the parents • Projective picture tests • Questionnaires • Interviews
1982–3	**Phase 2. Follow-up study 1** 14-year-olds 17-year-olds Together Methods	 27 girls, 19 boys (n = 46) 20 girls, 17 boys (n = 37) 47 girls, 36 boys (n = 83) • Questionnaires • Word association and sentence completion tests • Individual and group focused interviews (theme pictures)
1984–5	**Phase 3. Follow-up study 2** 17-year-olds 20-year-olds Together Methods	 23 girls, 18 boys (n = 41) 18 girls, 13 boys (n = 31) 41 girls, 31 boys (n = 72) • Questionnaires • Word association and sentence completion tests • Individual and group focused interviews (theme pictures)
1991–2	**Phase 4.** 23-year-olds 26-year-olds Together Methods	 21 female, 20 male (n = 41) 19 female, 16 male (n = 35) 40 female, 36 male (n = 76) • Questionnaires • Word association and sentence completion tests • Individual and group focused interviews theme pictures (future) • Attitude scales • Life line test

1996–7	**Phase 5.** 28-year-olds 31-year-olds Together Methods	28 female, 23 male (n =51) • Questionnaires • Word association and sentence completion tests • Individual and group focused interviews • Attitude scales • Life line test

Qualitative and quantitative approaches

The quantitative and qualitative approaches have many differences but also many similarities. The differences between the two approaches are seen in the style of their data and in the methods of collecting and analysing the data. Quantitative research is more concerned with deductive testing of hypotheses and theories, whereas qualitative research is more concerned with exploring the topic and inductively generating hypotheses and theories (for more see Punch 2005, 235). Both approaches are connected to paradigm considerations, but questions of approach and method can be dealt with separately, and decisions about methods can be determined by the research context, purposes and practicalities as well as paradigms (cf. Puuronen's article in this book; see also Punch 2005, 236). When we have a clear view of the questions of the research, then we can ask what data are necessary to answer them, and how such data will be collected and analysed.

In my study I wanted to test Niiniluoto's theories of the three types of world views and explore the context of the subjects' world views in different stages of their lives (see Table 1). I used quantitative methods for testing the theory, but also for exploring the content of a world view and for generating hypotheses and theories. Similarly the qualitative part of my research also tested hypotheses and theories.

My study showed that there is a correlation between the qualitative and quantitative approaches. Stereotyped distinctions between the two approaches are often overdrawn. Neither approach is always superior to the other (Hammersley 1992; Punch 2005, 235). Both

approaches have strengths and weaknesses, and both methods are needed. The important thing is that the research questions and the method are matched to each other.

In my world view study, the quantitative data conceptualizes the world view types in terms of variables and relationships between them. The qualitative approach deals more with individual cases. In interviews I have tried to get closer to the world views of my subjects at different ages. In this longitudinal study the aim of the interviews has been to gain in-depth and holistic understanding.

In this article I focus on quantitative data because it enables standardized, objective comparisons in different stages of the study when the same subjects have been children, adolescents and adults. The quantitative research permits the descriptions of their world views in a systematic and comparative way. Qualitative methods (e.g. interviews) are more flexible and easier to modify in the longitudinal study to account for the advancing age of the subjects. The qualitative data provide an insider's perspective on world views. Quantitative research has helped me to compare the world views of young people systematically and qualitative research has helped to finalise the details of the world views in childhood, youth and adulthood (see also Bryman 1988).

In my studies I have combined the two approaches; the qualitative and quantitative data has been brought together during the analysis contributing to the findings (mixed method, cf. Punch 2005, 141–142). When selecting the research methods consideration was given to the young people's cognitive development. For this reason the questionnaires were always piloted on young people of the same age as those studied. The young people interviewed checked the answers they had given in the questionnaire, thus increasing the reliability and validity of the study.

In this article the quantitative approach is dominant but in my book *The World View of Young People* (1993) I have a mixed methodology design, where both approaches are mixed at all stages of the longitudinal study.

On the basis of the structured questions contained in the questionnaire it was possible to present the data in tables. These

tables present the research results in more compact form than would be possible in writing. In order to give an overall impression, numerical results are presented in tables and an attempt is made to remain within the boundaries outlined in the text. Individual differences between the answers are also described in the text. Since precise numbers in the text often reduce its readability, some of them are rounded off. It is generally agreed that tables make the results clearer, thus allowing both the researcher and the reader to understand the information being presented more clearly.

The importance of trusting relationships

With the permission of the school principal and the municipal Finnish-language elementary school board, as a sample frame I selected classes where I had taught for varying periods of time as a substitute teacher. This was the most important criterion in the selection of respondents. Right from the very beginning this resulted in the groups of males as opposed to females being of different sizes. In the first phase of the study females constituted 53 % of those studied (n = 125) and in the next phase they accounted for 57 % (n = 72). It appears in promising to participate in the longitudinal study the females took it as a more binding obligation than the males did. It also appeared that male participation in particular was influenced by a trusting relationship between the researcher and the informants. An effort was made to rectify the quantitative difference between the two sexes by presenting interview data for males and females equally.

It is very important that the researcher has a trusting relationship with his or her informants and the subjects of the study. It also influences how carefully and honestly the young people respond to the questions. My longitudinal research gave evidence that motivation to answer the questions increases when the researcher has a personal relationship with the people being studied. On the other hand, interviewing acquaintances has been regarded as problematic (Hirsjärvi-Hurme 1982, 70). Nevertheless it worked in my case.

The scope of the data

One problem is presented by the small size of the groups to be compared. This was particularly evident in the longitudinal world view study in the case of the males who were born in 1965. From the standpoint of a comparison this is evidently the greatest problem facing the interpretation of the results and the one which must be regarded also as serious weakness. The group of males born in 1968 contained more subjects from religious homes than did any other group. This has to be taken into account when interpreted the results.

The small size of the data sample may result in systematic errors between the groups being compared (those born in 1965 and 1968, males and females). This was probably the most serious problem from the standpoint of the reliability of the study. For this reason age and sex groups were combined in the factor analysis so that the formation of the world view of young people could be examined from the standpoint of the childhood stage for the subjects investigated (the first phase of the study when the informants were eight and eleven years old) at puberty (the second phase of the study), and in late adolescence (the third phase of the study) and in adulthood (the fourth phase of the study).

The data for the longitudinal study was of smaller scale than the original data, since some of the young people had moved away during the twenty years over which the data was collected. The small size of the group studied precluded the drawing of statistically significant conclusions from a cross tabulation of sex and age. The results obtained in this study of young people were compared with the results of research conducted among other young people of the same age. This makes it possible to determine whether the young people studied differ generally from other young people of the same age. This was also done as an attempt to increase the reliability of the study. Thus, other studies of young people which have dealt with the topics connected to world view have been used as material for comparison.

Why mixed methods?

When gathering the data some use was made of the projective picture test developed for this study, as well as the predictive test developed by Maijaliisa Rauste-von Wright, the reliability of which must be regarded critically. Rauste-von Wright (1983, 39) pointed out that the test at least appealed to the young people's ability to make careful observations. This was also the case in my study. The predictive test primarily completed and verified both the manner in which the young people related to their future and the other methods used to measure their expectations.

One limiting factor in the study was a condition which the school board placed on the collection of the data: gathering data pertaining to the students' success at school was not permitted because it was stated that knowing about school success was not an absolute prerequisite for the study, since no significant correlation could be expected between a world view and success in school. Nevertheless, Tamminen (1981a, 128; 1983, 49) has demonstrated that success at school can be seen to be connected with factors such as religious thinking and activity.

When selecting the research method consideration was given to the young people's cognitive development. For this reason the questionnaires were always piloted on young people of the same age as those studied. During the first and second phases of the follow-up three young people acquainted themselves with the study and expressed their own opinions about it. One of them even brought written comments to a group interview. The essence of it (the interview) is as follows:

> (…) I leafed through it [the 1984 research report on the formation of the world view of suburban young people HH], read the questions, and the answers which we have given, and they're like all right as to how things were then (…) (Group interview Oct. 28, 1984, a male born in 1965.)

> (…) ugly use of language, do people really speak like that, it sounds ugly on paper (…) the thought might change [if the colloquial language were put into standard Finnish HH]. (Group interview Oct. 28, 1984, a female born in 1965.)

Responding to a questionnaire might be even more difficult than participating in an interview:

> (…) a terribly lot more difficult answering those [than in the interview HH] (…) somehow so much stuff that there just isn't enough [paper HH], lots of times you could think about something so that I saw myself from a different angle. (Group interview Oct. 28, 1984, a female born in 1965.)

The young people interviewed checked the answers they had given in the questionnaire, thus increasing the reliability and validity of the study (Storå 1982, 203). In addition, the results were compared with those obtained in other research devoted to young people. This does not mean that the studies should yield the same type of results in order to be valid.

Taking the young people's development into consideration meant that, to some extent, the research methods were changed as the study proceeded. Projective picture tests were replaced by word association and sentence completion tests as well as by questions about such matters as the manner in which the young people related to the future (a fortune-telling exercise) and to politics. On the basis of their answers, it seems as though the females were more interested in the exercises than the males were. The questions measuring the degree of religiosity evidently were a factor leading to the result that one of the males who had agreed to join the longitudinal study failed to attend the interview.

> Juha said that the reason was that he had spoken [on the telephone HH] with you, that this was something that had to do with religion, that he's not interested, but he was absent from the school today, there was the maths test, or why didn't he come and I told Juha that it doesn't necessarily have to be like religious, because it's world view and religion is strongly connected with it (…) quite a lot of prejudices concerning religion. (Group interview Nov. 11, 1982, a female born in 1965.)

One problem connected with studies of this type is that the researcher examines the world view of the subjects from his or her own frame of reference and personal world view, for which reason one could justifiably ask whether what is being studied is the researcher's or the respondents' world view (See also, Suppe 1979, 207–208). In order to ensure that the young people's world view would be presented as genuinely as possible, direct quotes from their interviews were used in the text. They also constituted the primary data used in the study. In this way an effort was made to present the respondents as real people with opinions and individual thoughts and not just as subjects of research. An effort was made in reporting the group interview to distinguish the individuals interviewed by their first names. (In order to ensure anonymity the names have been changed.) The personal information which appears in the study was discussed with the young people (Oct. 28, 1984). In conjunction with the interviews, the individual concerned is identified by age (or year of birth), sex, and some other information describing his or her situation in life (e.g. secondary school student, unemployed, etc.).

The questionnaire

For clarifying sensitive matters a self-completion questionnaire is appropriate for young people, since responding to sensitive questions produces more tension in an interview than in such a questionnaire (Jyrinki 1977, 125). Nevertheless, it is impossible to research some of the essential aspects of young people's world view if only questionnaires are used.

The advantage of a structured questionnaire is that comparison of the answers given by different groups is statistically possible, as is also comparison with other studies conducted using the same method. In my longitudinal research some of the questions in the questionnaire have, for purposes of comparison, been the same from the very beginning. On the basis of these answers, such things can be seen as indicators of the degree to which certain beliefs and

attitudes are permanent for specific individuals, or how these change at different periods in their development. A questionnaire also helps reduce the influence of the researcher.

An effort was also made to retain the order of the questions as far as possible. The questions were numbered so that they could be transferred to a computer. The answers given at different stages of the study were encoded in the same way, thus ensuring the commensurability of the results obtained at different periods.

The questionnaires were piloted before being used in their final form on young people of the same age, since the questionnaire awakens either a desire or an aversion to responding to the study. The questions included in the questionnaire were fully considered, since lack of a response can usually be traced to the content of the question, its wording, or its location on the form (Jyrinki 1977, 123). At the beginning of the questionnaire there were questions pertaining to religiosity which twenty-year-old Kari criticized as follows:

> Kari: Some were really ridiculous.
> HH: Do you remember some example?
> Kari: Just those that, 'do you believe in some supernatural beings,' I don't remember a single one which I ticked… I got so sick of it [the questionnaire HH], when I had [filled in HH] twelve pages on both sides… sure I tried to be oh so consistent and honest and the like…it was the army. (He was doing his military service at the time when he filled the questionnaire. HH) (Interview July 11, 1985.)

The questionnaire was accompanied by a letter which explained the purpose for which the research data was being gathered and the use to which it would be put. The letter emphasized the importance of giving a careful, independent and honest answer. One of the twenty-year-old males wrote next to the question in the questionnaire dealing with the future: "All of them can't be answered honestly since we are not yet that old!"

This answer indicated that the respondent had difficulty knowing which stage of life would accord with the different adjectives given as alternatives. Comparison of the answers given in the questionnaires

and in the interviews seems to indicate that the young people were honest in their responses.

For the longitudinal study, the questionnaires were sent to the respondents' homes. The students presumably answered the questions more carefully and more naturally at home than they would have at school, where their friends could have influenced their responses. The subjects being taught during the lesson when the questions were answered has also been shown to influence the answers (Tamminen 1983a, 64, 75). The school as the place where the answers are being given can also tempt respondents to answer in the manner they are expected to (to give normative answers). The time needed to fill in the form was estimated to be approximately from half an hour to an hour. Many of those who received a telephone call reminding them that they had not responded in full said that this was partially because they had not had enough time. It seems as though they had given considerably thought to their answers, and that much time went to filling out the form.

Some of the questions in the questionnaire were structured (the questions were closed with respect to their form and content, and the alternative responses had been pre-selected), while others were open, unstructured questions. The open-ended questions were better in the opinion of young people since they did not compel them to select from among the limited choices given and were thus not so suggestive.

> This is the way the study can clarify differences in both character and opinions. (A male born in 1965 in his feedback on Oct. 28, 1984.)

The space reserved for the questions was not sufficient for the respondents, since their answers often continued onto the margins. These questions also provided the researcher with more information than the closed ones did. The open-ended questions allowed the respondents' personal style of answering to assume prominence. The classification of these answers did, however, give rise to problems.

Problems of the longitudinal study

Longitudinal studies are rare due to the long time they require for data gathering and the laboriousness they involve (Johnsson-Smaragdi 1983, 7; Pulkkinen 1984, 30). Such studies demand time and money (Livson & Peskin 1980, 54).

Longitudinal studies are also fraught with methodological problems. Data collection is made more difficult by having to have the subjects studied participate in the follow-up. It might prove difficult to establish a confidential relationship of trust with them again as the study continues. Maintaining their desire to continue to co-operate during the repeated times they are the subjects of research can be difficult. There is also the danger of exhausting the subjects during the repeated periods of research so that they might even refuse for this reason to participate in the longitudinal study (Johnson-Smaragdi 1983, 8–9; see also Menard 1991).

What might be considered to be a general problem is the degree to which a study is straight-jacketed by the theoretical and methodological decisions which were made at an early stage of the study. If any changes were made in this regard, the problem will arise of the commensurability of the results obtained during different stages of the study (Johnsson-Smaragdi 1983,7–14; Livson & Peskin 1980,47–98).

Despite the difficulties, a longitudinal study has significant advantages compared to a comparative study, within the framework of which people of different ages are studied at the same time. A comparative study could, of course, be used to study the differences between different age groups, but with this method it is more difficult (than with a longitudinal study) to clarify how and why a specific individual changes or develops. It thus has both descriptive and explanatory objectives. A longitudinal study allows for an understanding of the change or development undergone by a phenomenon.

Understanding the formation of a world view presupposed a longitudinal study within the framework of which information about several people's world view is obtained over a long period. In the

following an account will be given of a longitudinal study which has lasted for ten years and the results of which describe how the world view of young people is formed and what factors influence this process.

The subjects of the longitudinal study

The longitudinal study comprised of young people born in the years 1968 and 1965, lasted for over 20 years, and was conducted in five different phases: 1976, 1982–83, 1984–85, 1991–2 and 1996–7. It was therefore possible to study the world views of the individuals in the two cohorts at the ages of 8, 14, 17, 23 and 28, and at 11, 17, 20 and 26 and 31. The subjects of the study came from a suburb of metropolitan Helsinki. The students of two first year and two fourth year classes of the school were selected (n = 125). Fifty-one of them participated all four phases of the study. (See Table 1.)

Research procedure

The data were collected for the first time when the subjects were young children; their perception of the world then was quite different from their perception later on when they were young adults. Changes in the external world were also noticeable e.g. changes that have occurred in society that might affect their world view. The contents of the questions had to change in different age groups. But at every age there were standardised questions producing answers which could be compared across time. The questions were numbered so that data would be computerised. The answers given at different stages of the study were encoded in the same way, thus ensuring the commensurably of the results obtained at different periods.

The questionnaire was accompanied by a letter which explained the purpose for which the data were being gathered and the use

to which the data would put. The questionnaires were sent to the respondents' homes, because it was assumed they would answer the questions more carefully and more naturally at home than they would at school, where their friends could have influenced their responses. (The questionnaires used in the follow-up study are given in Helve 1993, 282–315.)

At each phase of the research, world view items were found from open interviews with the subjects about their beliefs. Questionnaires were then completed and pre-tested with new subjects before using them in the postal survey.

Factor analysis

In my study, factor analysis was used to investigate the structure of beliefs, and at the same time to test Niiniluoto's classification of world views. The primary reason for using the (exploratory) factor analysis was to clarify the connections between the variables and to create a descriptive system which would be as simple as possible. Factor analysis is often used at the primary stage of analysis. Having many variables makes it difficult to understand the data. Factor analysis is a technique to reduce the number of variables based on the correlations between variables. When two or more variables are correlated we can propose the existence of a common factor, which both variables share to some extent. Thus the factor analysis is of the set of correlations between the original variables. The relationship of each factor to the original variables is shown through factor loadings (usually after rotation). (For more on this, see Punch 2005, 125–127.)

In my factor analysis I began with observed variables and I ended with three extracted (unobserved) factors. In the factor analysis concerns with level of abstraction will come up also in the analysis of qualitative data. There is a very similar process of raising the level of abstraction in qualitative and quantitative approaches (see Punch 2005, 128).

Factor analysis was carried out in the three first phases using the BMDP programme, and from 1992 on using the SPSS-X programme. In the final factor analysis of the three first phases of the study, the same 46 variables, which were common to the entire set of 452 variables, were used. When determining the number of factors the three, four and five factor solutions were tried, using principal components and Varimax rotation (Kaiser normalisation). The solution of three factors seemed to be most suitable on the basis of both an examination of the intrinsic values and a reasonable interpretation of the factors in question. The additional empirical data collected from the young people supported a reasonable interpretation if a resolution in terms of three factors was utilized. Also this solution had strong theoretical foundations conforming with Niiniluoto's theory of religious, metaphysical and scientific world views. (Helve 1993, 319–321.) In the factor analysis of the fourth phase (1992) 33 of the 46 variables used earlier were used; and in the fifth phase (in 1997), 14. The variables which contain incomplete information or which are weakest from the standpoint of their communality were deleted from the matrix. The problem with using factor analysis in this longitudinal study was the relatively small number of cases, especially in the later stages, and consequent instability in the factor loadings that this may produce. However the remarkable aspect of my results was the relative stability of the factor solution across different ages, which gives confidence in the validity of the three factors identified.

This factor analysis by no means explains all or even most of the variance. It does, however, produce some interesting and even unexpected relationships. Factor scores were also computed for each subject on the three factors. The factor loadings indicate how the observed attitude variables relate to the factors. The higher the factor loading, the greater the variable's weight as a component of the factor. The loadings of the factors were rather high. The minimum of factor loadings used in the three first phases of the study was 0.40, and in the fourth phase 0.38.

Results: World views according to factor analysis

On the basis of the factor analysis, three different types of world views of young people were found. The young people perceived the world in ways classifiable as: 1) religious (F1), 2) magic-metaphysical (F2) and 3) scientific–quasi-scientific (F3) – the world view disseminated by science and created by the mass media. Good evidence was found for two of Niiniluoto's proposed world view types: "religious" and "metaphysical". The existence of the "scientific" world view was more difficult to establish, especially for the children at the earliest ages. The analysis reported in this chapter focuses on the factors identified with religious (F1) and magic-metaphysical (F2) world views.

Religious world view

A religious belief system and world view is based upon religious authority (for example, the Bible, the Quran, the book of the Veda or the Tripitaka). The scientific and religious views of the world are extremely different. A picture of the world justified in accordance with the results of science is not a unified one. A scientific world view is open and self correcting in accordance with scientific developments. Non-scientific thought is still rather widespread. It can be supposed that even today people tend to conceptualise the world in the manner they were taught as children. Many young people attempted to think scientifically in some areas and "non-scientifically" in others, for example, with respect to religious issues, in which the worlds of knowledge and belief are differentiated.

In the first phase of the study the formation of the religious belief system was influenced by the religious atmosphere of the home, that is to say, by socialisation. For the 8- and 11-year-olds there was an emphasis on the conative (ritual) aspect of religion (Table 2). Their

religious beliefs were largely a reflection of those of their parents. They did not have a coherent religious belief system or world view. In reality they were affected by such factors as whether their parents read the Bible and religious magazines to them, whether they listened to or watched church services at home on the radio or television, and whether their parents regularly attended religious events with them.

In adolescence the content of the religious belief system of 14- and 17-year-olds emphasises the cognitive aspect, that is to say, belief in God, Jesus, and The Holy Spirit (Table 2). Only with respect to the 17- and 20-year-olds was it possible to discern the existence of a religious world view (Table 2) on the cognitive, conative and affective levels. It could be seen in the young people's individual prayers, which contained a cognitive belief in the existence of God as well as a religious interpretation of the origin of the world, of life and of humanity, in addition to an interpretation of life after death which accorded with Christian doctrines.

The factor loadings were highest in the third phase of the study. In the first phase 13 variables loaded .40 or higher for this factor, whereas there were 16 in the second and third phase. We can interpret this as showing that the religious world view developed during the transition from childhood to adolescence.

In the fourth phase of the study, when the subjects were already young adults, the factor loadings were not so high as in the third phase, and fewer items had high loadings (Table 2). The conative dimension emphasises the religious world view of these young adults. They read religious magazines and the Bible regularly, listened to religious programmes on the radio and also often thought about God. Behind the conative dimension of religion there is a religious cognitive structure that filters their approach to the world and to daily life.

Table 2. Factor loadings for religious world view (Factor 1): Phase 1. 1976, ages 8 and 11; Phase 2, 1982, ages 14 and 17; Phase 3, 1985, ages 17 and 20; Phase 4, 1992, ages 23 and 26; and Phase 5, 1996, ages 28 and 31.

F1	1976	1982	1985	1992	1996
Reading religious children's magazines	**.71**	.63	-	-	-
Listening to religious programmes on the radio	**.67**	.48	.61	**.70**	.68
Reading the Bible regularly	**.62**	.62	.63	.67	**.84**
Watching religious programmes on TV	.59	.46	.54	-	.53
Watching news on TV	.56	-	-	-	-
Believing in The Holy Spirit	.55	.77	**.77**	-	.75
Praying regularly every day	.53	**.70**	**.85**	.68	**.78**
Often thinking about God	.52	.64	.76	**.70**	-
Believing in guardian angels	.50	.56	.62	.56	.74
Believing in Jesus	.48	.59	.72	-	.62
Believing in God	.48	.75	.74	-	-
Enjoys going to church or other religious events	.47	.57	.73	.61	-
Going regularly to church or to other religious events	.41	.58	**.78**	-	-
Believing in Satan	-	.58	.73	.38	-
Interpreting the origin of mankind based on the Bible	-	.47	.64	.39	-
Reading non-fiction	-	.43	-	-	-
Reading books for young people	-	.42	-	-	-
Reading regularly religious magazines	-	-	.73	**.71**	.74
Interpreting the evolution of the world as based on the Bible	-	-	.65	-	-
Interpreting death according to Christianity	-	-	.54	-	-
Thinking often about religious matters	-	-	-	-	.73

All the young people had some beliefs conforming to Christianity, which has a strong tradition in Finnish culture, but only a few of them had formed a full Christian belief system. In the fifth phase of the study, many of the factor loadings were higher compared to the previous phase in 1992 when the informants were already adolescent. In the last phase, the conative dimensions of reading the Bible and praying regularly were strongly emphasised. The cognitive aspect emphasises a believe in The Holy Spirit and in guardian angels. The conative dimension emphasises the religious world view of the subjects.

Magic-metaphysical world view

Children think in a manner which has certain features that can be characterised as magical (Allport 1979, 34; Piaget 1932, 152). A way of relating to things from the standpoint of magic often traces its origins to traditions which are handed down from adults to children (Klingberg 1971, 162–165). Magical deeds express a belief in their effect. The belief is, like superstition, true to the person concerned. Thus, if his or her thinking contains elements of magic, and superstition determines the manner in which he or she will relate to his or her environment and his or her actions, it forms a part of his or her world view. In this study elements of belief in magic could be seen in young people's belief systems.

Table 3. Factor loadings for magical beliefs (Factor 2): Phase 1, 1976, ages 8 and 11; Phase 2, 1982, ages 14 and 17; Phase 3, 1985, ages 17 and 20; Phase 4, 1992, ages 23 and 26; and Phase 5, 1996, ages 28 and 31.

F2	1976	1982	1985	1992	1996
Believing in Super-Goofy	**.82**	-	-	-	-
Believing in bogeymen	**.81**	-	-	-	-
Believing in witches	**.76**	**.81**	.48	-	-
Believing in ghosts	.75	.63	.40	-	-
Believing in fairies	.69	-	.53	**.85**	**.84**
Believing in elves	.50	**.73**	.4 5	**.72**	-
Believing in home-hobgoblin	-	-	-	-	.55
Believing in guardian angels	-	-	-	.56	.42
Believing in Santa Claus	.50	-	-	-	-
Believing in Satan	-	-	-	.38	-
Believing in UFOs	.46	-	-	.43	.44
Believing in apparitions	-	**.84**	.58	-	-
Believing in magic	-	.56	**.62**	-	-
Wishing when finding a four-leafed clover	-	.53	**.59**	.44	-
Believing in crossing the fingers to help succeed in exams	-	.50	-	-	-
Believing that a wish made when seeing a shooting star will come true	-	.45	**.59**	.62	-
Believing in spirits of nature	-	.40	**.70**	**.73**	**.72**
Spitting three times when seeing a black cat	-	-	.57	.59	-
Believing in supernatural beings	-	-	.56	.61	.65
Reading horoscopes	-	-	.51	.52	-

For the 8- and 11-year-olds this factor comprised beliefs in such beings as Super-Goofy, the bogeyman ghosts, witches, bogeymen, fairies, elves and Santa Claus (Table 3). They are from the period of life when much thinking is done in terms of fairy tales. Children think in a manner which has certain magical features.

Later, with 14- and 17-year-olds the magic belief system of young people contained elements characterised by magic and superstition,

although this kind of world view weakened as the young people approached adulthood (Table 3). The world view of 17- and 20-year-olds differed again, but this time more in the direction of superstitions e.g. beliefs in "good luck" actions.

An interesting phenomenon was that in the fourth phase of the study the factor loadings of the magic factor were stronger than in the third phase (Table 3). The cognitive dimension of this belief system was emphasised. The young adults believed in fairies, nature spirits and elves. But also the cognitive structure of their belief system was seen in their everyday life. They made a wish when seeing a shooting star and also believed that it would come true. Similarly they spat three times when seeing a black cat because they believed that it otherwise would bring bad luck. It was also interesting to find that believing in guardian angels and Satan loaded in this factor when they were 23 and 26 olds but not anymore when they were at the age of 28 and 31.

Beliefs of this kind were more common for girls than boys. In addition to having a magic-metaphysical world view, the conscious dimension of which contained beliefs in magic, they concretely experienced the world in a magical manner and they had what could be called magical practices; for example, they read horoscopes and acted in accordance with the advice they gave.

The content of this belief system originates partially in the traditions of Finnish folk religion and folklore and partially has been created by the mass media.

It is suggested here that the analysis and research of beliefs, values and world views maybe traced by the "scientific method" to the analysis of gender ideology. It is difficult to use only one method to focus the questions of gender ideology, which is not a coherent and internally consistent social or cultural structure (with myths, legends, proverbs, etc.). There is more than one gender ideology in modern society but one of them is evidently dominant. It is clear that gender-ideologies are associated with social groups with common values.

Ethical issues and conclusions

All youth research involves ethical issues, but they are more pronounced in a qualitative approach, which is more likely than a quantitative approach to include sensitive and intimate questions concerning young people's lives (see e.g. Allast, Honkasalo and Kuusisto in this volume). Every youth researcher has to ask why is this research worth while? Who benefits from this research?

In my longitudinal study various ethical issues have arisen during the different stages: when the subjects were children, teenagers/adolescents and adults.

When following the same people from childhood to adulthood there are many different kinds of ethical questions:

1. Will the study contribute in the same way to the life of the subjects of the study, or has it only been significant to the academic career of the researcher?
2. Does the researcher have the expertise to carry out a high quality study?
3. How hierarchical is the study – the academic researcher versus children and young people? (Cf. Honkasalo's article.)
4. How should the researcher behave if she/he learns about illegal behaviour among some subjects in the study?
5. Does the researcher have an obligation to help the findings to be used appropriately? (See also Punch 2005, 277–278.)

It is difficult to use only one method to focus all of the questions of youth research, which does not have a coherent and internally consistent methodological and theoretical framework. There is far more than one type of youth, and there is not necessarily even a dominant type of world view among young people in modern society. The idea that research could find a whole, seamless structure of world views which somehow could hold the social world of young people together is impossible (cf. Durkheimian sociology). People have conflicting beliefs and values. The technical and methodological problem is how to research and analyse these interwoven beliefs and values which are revealed culturally and which produce more

than one world view. Among the challenges for youth research are how to avoid misunderstandings due to language, differences in (youth) culture, problems of the data comparability, classification problems and missing information.

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APPLICATION OF MULTI-LEVEL ANALYSIS IN A STUDY OF NEIGHBOURHOOD EFFECTS ON YOUNG PEOPLE'S EDUCATIONAL CAREERS

by Timo M. Kauppinen

Purpose of the study

The background for my study of neighbourhood effects on young people's educational careers was in studies of residential differentiation of cities. Although the metropolitan area of Helsinki, Finland, is considered relatively balanced in spatial terms as compared to cities in other Western countries (Vaattovaara & Kortteinen 2003), this topic has received scholarly and political attention here also. Nevertheless, there has been very little scientific evidence of the possible consequences of residential differentiation on people's lives in this urban area. The aim of my doctoral thesis was to fill part of this gap in research.

As I wanted to study a phenomenon which would be especially sensitive to the effect of neighbourhood, young people – adolescents in particular – became the focus of the study. Adolescents' everyday life is generally considered to be related to a wider neighbourhood than that of children, who are more restricted to the immediate

surroundings of their homes, but not to such broad areas as that of working adults (Rankin & Quane 2002; Furlong 1996; Karvinen 1998, 100; Elliott et al. 1996; Duncan & Raudenbush 1999; Halpern-Felsher et al. 1997). They may also be more susceptible to contextual influences than adults, because their socialisation process is more incomplete (Furlong 1996, Karvinen 1998, 100). When they finish comprehensive school, usually at the age of fifteen or sixteen, they have to make perhaps the most important decision of their life thus far: the choice of an educational career. This situation provides a well-defined and researchable topic of study.

The research questions of the study that are considered here are:

1. Do neighbourhoods have an effect on young people's completion of secondary education or on the type of education young people continue on to in Helsinki?
2. If so, which neighbourhood-level factors contribute to these matters?

A "by-product" of the analysis of neighbourhood effects was an analysis of family background effects on the educational careers. Also the effects of school grades and some school characteristics were analysed in the thesis, and the spatial structure of educational careers was inspected, but these questions are not given attention here. The thesis was finished and published in 2004 in Finnish, with an English abstract (Kauppinen 2004).

This article assesses the methods of the study. First, the scientific field and the general methodological framework are gone through; then the data and the specific methods used are explained. Next, a brief description of the results is given and an example of analysis is portrayed, illustrating the use of the methods. The article ends by reflecting on the methodological problems that remain in the study and on the researcher's role and ethical questions.

Scientific field

This study was not "pure" youth research. The foundation of the study lay in urban research, more specifically in studies addressing the possible social inequalities caused by residential differentiation of urban areas. That is also where the theories of neighbourhood effects mainly came from. The study was not, however, only about young people and neighbourhoods; educational attainment and social mobility were essential themes in the study as well. Therefore, if the study is to be called youth research, it is mainly because young people are under analysis. I see the study more as being at the intersection of these multiple branches of research. This explains why the study setting is not typical to youth research. In "pure" youth research, as I see it, the typical way of conducting analysis is to try to see things "through the young people's own eyes" in a constructivist manner. As Puuronen (1997, 217) notes, regarding the Finnish situation, youth research has moved from quantitative survey-based methodology to qualitative methods often based on immediate interaction between the researcher and the young people. My position as a researcher was one of an outsider. On the other hand, as Puuronen (1997) acknowledges, some phenomena may not necessarily be consciously perceived by the young people themselves, so an outsider's stance may be necessary.

General methodological framework

The research questions presented above are causal. I asked whether neighbourhoods have *effects* on young people's educational routes, and what kind of effects they are. Causal questions typically belong to the domain of quantitative studies (Bryman 1988), and quantitative methods were used also in this case. The research setting was constructed so as to allow generalisation of the results to the whole population of 15-year-olds in Helsinki during the study period. Statistical data were used, represented by a data matrix of observations

and values of a number of variables for these observations. Following the deductive model of research, the analysis was based on a set of testable hypotheses that were derived from several neighbourhood-effect theories presented in the literature. These theories were mostly related to possible effects of characteristics of the neighbourhood population. The associations between independent (explanatory) and dependent variables were modelled statistically in the analysis.

If there is a paradigm of "youth research", the setting described above clearly does not fit into it. Even the word "effect" may be outside the paradigm. However, it may not be fruitful to base the choice of methods on a choice of a paradigm. Instead, the *research issue* should determine the proper methodology (or methodologies) (see Bryman 1988, 106). The primary requirement for methodology should be that it is in concordance with the research questions. This way methodological criticism can be separated from the issue of "proper" research questions, which belongs to the domains of paradigms and the politics of science. In this article, I assess the methodology of my study primarily from the viewpoint of how well the research questions could be answered with the methods applied.

The basic methodological principle in research on contextual effects is that in order to see the *causal* effects of contexts, the researcher must control for the *selection* of people into them. People do not usually end up living in neighbourhoods through a random process, and that is why a simple comparison of people living in different neighbourhoods does not in itself tell anything about the neighbourhoods' effects. In this kind of a comparison, outcomes in different neighbourhoods may differ simply because different kinds of people have moved into them. This would be a *compositional* effect rather than a causal effect. The standard way of taking the non-random selection of people in neighbourhoods into account is to statistically control for those factors that can be expected to be related both to the selection into neighbourhoods and to the outcome of the study when comparing the different neighbourhoods. For example, parental education can be expected to be strongly associated both with where the family ends up living

and with the educational careers of the offspring, and therefore the between-neighbourhood differences in the educational careers might be caused just by the fact that young people in different neighbourhoods have parents with different levels of education. When the parental education is controlled for, one is able to see whether there are between-neighbourhood differences that are not caused by this compositional effect. Of course, it is not enough to only control for the parental education. Many other factors may also be relevant. Failing to take into account factors related both to the neighbourhood selection and to the outcome of the study may lead to the "sociologistic fallacy" (Riley 1963; Diez-Roux 1998) of incorrectly attributing causality to neighbourhoods.

Data

In order to analyse neighbourhood effects on young people's educational careers, data are needed pertaining to the young people themselves, their family backgrounds, their educational careers and the neighbourhoods they live in. In addition, there must be many observations per neighbourhood, if the researcher is interested in results concerning specific neighbourhoods. These requirements can be fulfilled by using register-based data, that originate from administrative registers and are maintained in Finland by the Population Registry Centre, Statistics Finland and several other state institutions. Large register-based data sets have been available for researchers mainly in Nordic countries, and they have some important advantages over survey data. They contain a large variety of information on individual people, they do not suffer from non-response, and it is possible to have very high numbers of observations. Also longitudinal register-based data sets are available. All these are important qualities in a study of contextual effects. The main limitation of register-based data in research use is that they do not have information on issues that are not in the interest of authorities, such as values, lifestyles, social contacts and family processes. Also the operationalisation of

the variables is made by the authorities to suit their own purposes, which limits the freedom of the researcher to use his or her own definitions. The data do not depend on the ability of the people to verbalise their situation, which may be seen either as a limitation or an advantage, depending on the researcher's interests.

The individual-level data set for the study was constructed by Statistics Finland (permission TK-53-80-02). The main data set is a 50 % sample of non-institutionalised 15-year-olds living in Helsinki in the years 1990–94 (n = 10906). The data came from register-based data, primarily from the data set *Työssäkäyntitilaston pitkittäistiedosto* (longitudinal data set of register-based employment statistics).

Two dichotomous dependent variables were used in the analysis. The first measured whether an adolescent had completed his or her secondary education by the end of the year during which he/she reached the age of 20. The second dependent variable indicated for those who had completed some secondary education, whether it was in the upper secondary school. There are two main tracks in secondary education: upper secondary school, which is academically oriented and more popular, and vocational school, which is practically oriented.

Several individual-level variables measured family background. Variables that are predictors of both the selection of families into neighbourhoods and educational careers were included. They were measured before the end of comprehensive school, mostly at the end of the year of turning 15. Three variables measuring socio-economic status were used: parental education, parental occupation-based socio-economic status, and net income in the household. Other family background variables were mother tongue, family type, number of under 18-year-old children in the household, housing density, and housing tenure.

The city of Helsinki was divided into 117 neighbourhoods, using the administrative geographical subdivision. The neighbourhood-level data mainly reflect characteristics of the neighbourhood populations during the years 1990–94, such as the socio-economic composition of the population. The selection of variables was based

on dimensions of neighbourhoods that are considered relevant in the neighbourhood-effect theories, and also on the availability of statistical data. The data came from official statistics, mostly from the public statistical database Helsinki Region Statistics. Some unpublished statistics were also received from the Urban Facts Office of the City of Helsinki.

Multi-level analysis

The specific statistical method used in the study was *multi-level logistic regression*. SAS Proc Nlmixed, which fits non-linear mixed models, was used as the statistical procedure (see Wolfinger 1999).

Multi-level analysis (see e.g. Jones & Duncan 1998, Teachman & Crowder 2002) has lately become common in studies of contextual effects. The method is suitable for situations in which the usual assumption of regression analysis, independence of error terms, does not hold. This kind of a situation arises if there are multiple observations in the data set sharing same contexts. In the case of educational careers of young people, if there is a neighbourhood effect on the careers, these careers may be alike among the young people living in a particular neighbourhood – violating the assumption of independence of error terms – even when the individual backgrounds of the young people are controlled for. This leads to overestimation of the statistical confidence of the parameter estimates of the explanatory variables (Goldstein 1995, 25–26). Multi-level analysis fixes this by separating the total variation of the dependent variable into individual- and neighbourhood-level components.

Multi-level analysis has other advantages besides the correction of the statistical significance of parameter estimates. It can be applied to estimate the amount of the total variation of the dependent variable that is at each level. This enables us to see how significant neighbourhood-level explanatory factsors are in explaining the educational careers on the one hand, and how significant individual-level factors are on

the other. This can be seen when the relevant individual-level factors are controlled for: the remaining neighbourhood-level variation is supposed to indicate the magnitude of the total neighbourhood effect. This can be compared with the original neighbourhood-level variation in order to see, how large part of the original variation was attributable simply to differing family backgrounds of the young people living in different neighbourhoods. The share of the neighbourhood-level variation of the total remaining variation can also be calculated and its statistical significance can be tested in order to see whether any neighbourhood effect can be said to exist.[1]

An important advantage of multi-level analysis – in comparison with older methods – is that the models can simultaneously incorporate 1) both individual- and neighbourhood-level explanatory variables and their interactions, and 2) variance components at each level. The former is possible in ordinary regression analysis (often called *contextual analysis* in that case) and the latter is possible in covariance analysis, but only in multi-level analysis both are possible simultaneously. Given this possibility, effects of each neighbourhood can be inspected in addition to analysing the effects of neighbourhood-level explanatory variables. Multi-level analysis produces so-called empirical Bayes residuals at the neighbourhood level (see Snijders & Bosker 1999, 59–61; Greenland 2000), which show, for example, how much the educational careers of young people in each neighbourhood deviate from the average. These residuals can be inspected both before and after controlling for individual-level explanatory variables. In the latter case they indicate unexplained variability between neighbourhoods and may be interpreted as *effects* of the neighbourhoods on young people's careers.[2]

One possible way of using multi-level analysis is to point out neighbourhoods or other contexts that seem to have effects, especially those that have unexpected effects that the researcher cannot explain. In this way, the gap between quantitative and qualitative methods could be bridged, in that a deeper analysis of a specific neighbourhood would most likely include qualitative research. The problem in this is that in order to get results on

specific neighbourhoods that are robust enough, there must be a large number of observations on these areas, and therefore not all studies of contextual effects may be useful in this sense.

Dichotomous dependent variables can be modelled with logistic regression (see e.g. Peng & So 2002; Tabachnick & Fidell 2001, 517–581), which was selected as the model type for the analyses. Multi-level logistic regression is more complicated to apply than multi-level linear regression, but its complexities are not addressed here. Readers wanting to find out more may refer to Snijders & Bosker (1999).

In logistic regression, the effects of the explanatory variables are shown as odds ratios. Odds are expressed by the formula p / (1 - p), the ratio of the probability of "success" (p) to the probability of "non-success" (1 – p). The ratio of odds in each category of an explanatory variable (e.g. categories of parental education) to the odds in the reference category of the variable is calculated. Therefore, the value of the odds ratio in the reference category is 1, and higher values than that refer to a higher probability of "success" and lower values to a lower probability. For example, the probability of completing secondary education is higher for those young people whose parents have higher educational level, and this can be seen in the higher odds ratio value than that of the young people with less educated parents.

Statistical models and measures used in this study

All analyses were done separately for boys and girls, because it was expected that some effects of explanatory variables might differ by sex. Another reason for this was that the spatial patterns of educational careers might be different for boys and girls and also the explanatory power of family background might differ.

In the analysis of neighbourhood effects, the starting point was an "empty" model. In multi-level analyses this kind of model – without

any explanatory variables – is used to see how much variation there is between neighbourhoods and between individuals in the outcome variable.[3] The variation is measured by the neighbourhood- and individual-level variance components. Other models are compared to this one when the explained neighbourhood-level variance is assessed.

In the second model, all the family background variables were put in the model simultaneously. This model shows each family background variable's association with the educational outcomes when the other variables are controlled for. It also shows how much variance remains between neighbourhoods after controlling for the family background variables, and whether this variance is statistically significant. The remaining proportion of the original between-neighborhood variance is the proportion of the original between-neighborhood variance that can be explained by neighborhood effects. The actual neighbourhood effect may be weaker than that, though, if the family background variables do not adequately control for the factors that are related both to neighbourhood selection and to educational attainment.

In the third model, a neighbourhood-level explanatory variable was added to the model. Controlling for family backgrounds supposedly took the non-random selection of individuals into neighbourhoods into account, so the statistical effects of neighbourhood-level variables were interpreted as causal effects. Several models of this kind were run to find out which neighbourhood characteristics had the strongest effects. Effect strength was assessed in terms of the results of deviance tests that measure the statistical significance of variables (see Clayton & Hills 1993, 242–244; Peng & So 2002, 43), and by the reduction of neighbourhood-level variance. Odds ratios were inspected in order to show the form of the effects.

The fourth model type was an interaction model, in which the effect of a neighbourhood-level variable was allowed to vary by the categories of a family background variable. This type of a model is not addressed here.

The explained proportion of the total variance in the outcome (R^2) was estimated for the models, and intra-class correlation coefficients

(ICCs) were calculated to measure what proportion of unexplained variance was at the neighbourhood level. An ICC can be interpreted as the theoretically maximal amount of the unexplained variance in the outcome that is explainable by neighbourhood-level factors (Raudenbush & Bryk 2002). With dichotomous outcomes the calculation of R^2 and ICC is not straightforward, but approximate estimates can be calculated (Snijders & Bosker 1999, 224–226; see also Goldstein et al. 2002).

Results

Before going on to the more detailed example of analysis, I will briefly summarise the results of the study. This study shows, in accordance with earlier studies, that educational outcomes are associated with family background, most strongly with parental education. This confirmation of a strong effect of family background is perhaps the most important finding of the study from the viewpoint of youth research, although the main question was the existence of neighbourhood effects. The family background effect on the secondary education is for a large part mediated by the educational achievement during the comprehensive school. The study also showed, that the neighbourhood, especially the educational structure of the neighbourhood population, and the pupil composition of the school have some significance regarding the post-comprehensive school career.

To illustrate research methods regarding the neighbourhood effects, an analysis related to one of the hypotheses of the study is shown here. In order to keep the illustration simple, only results concerning boys' type of completed secondary education are shown. The hypothesis is related to the collective socialisation theory (Jencks & Mayer 1990), which suggests, that high-status adults exercise social control in the neighbourhood and act as role models for young people, enforcing mainstream values and norms. In the case of the type of completed secondary education, this social control is supposed to

lead to an increased proportion of young people completing their secondary education in the upper secondary school, because that is the norm or the mainstream choice in the higher-status families. Social control could not be measured directly, so concentration of affluence in the neighbourhood, which is seen in the theory as a background factor, was measured instead, and the hypothesis is related to it. The hypothesis expects the proportion of the upper secondary school careers to be higher, the higher is the proportion of high-status residents in the neighbourhood (when the family backgrounds of the young people are controlled for).

Concentration of affluence was measured as a summary variable having three components: the proportion of over-15-year-olds with higher (tertiary) education, the proportion of upper-white-collar employees in the employed workforce, and the proportion of over-15-year-olds with a gross income of at least FIM 200 000. The summary variable was divided into five categories: the quintiles of the variable, each pertaining to a group of neighbourhoods having roughly 20 % of the city population. Categorical variables, instead of numerical, were used because one of the neighbourhood-effect theories expected the neighbourhood effect to be non-linear, and the possibility of non-linearity was consequently decided to be allowed in all models.

Table 1 shows what happens to the original neighbourhood-level variance, when the family backgrounds of the boys are controlled for. The variance parameters themselves are not easily interpretable in multi-level logistic regression, but the table shows that 70 % of the variation between neighbourhoods in the type of completed secondary education can be explained by the different kinds of family backgrounds of boys living in different neighbourhoods. This means that most of the between-neighbourhood variation is not related to neighbourhood effects. Still, 30 % remains, which is more than in the other models of the study, and this variance parameter is statistically highly significant. This means that either some factor related both to the selection into neighbourhoods and to the type of education is not controlled for, or there is a neighbourhood effect on the boys' career type. If the latter interpretation is correct, this

effect does not explain a large part of the *total* variation (variation between individuals plus variation between neighbourhoods) in the career types, however. When the family backgrounds are controlled for, the explained proportion (R^2) of the total variance in the type of education is 37 % (not shown in the table), which leaves 63 % unexplained, and 3 % of that unexplained proportion may be explained by neighbourhood effects, as shown by the ICC value.

Table 1. Neighbourhood-level variance in boys' finishing of upper secondary school – before adding explanatory variables (empty model), and after adding family background variables.

Model	Neighbourhood level variance	p	Change, %	Proportion of total variance, (ICC), %
Empty model	0.3380	<.001		9.3
Family background controlled for	0.1012	<.001	-70.1	3.0

When the summary variable measuring concentration of affluence was added to the model, the neighbourhood-level variance was further reduced by a third, and altogether 80 % of the original variation between neighbourhoods was explained statistically. The variable was also statistically significant as measured by a deviance test. These results imply that the amount of affluence in a neighbourhood affects the type of education completed by boys. This variable was not the most statistically significant of all of the neighbourhood-level variables, and neither did it reduce the most neighbourhood-level variance, but its effect is similar to that of the variable with the strongest effects (the proportion of over-15-year-old people in the neighbourhood population having only primary education).

Table 2 shows what kind of an effect the concentration of affluence had. The effect is shown as odds ratios (OR), and 95-per-cent confidence intervals (C.I.) for the odds ratios are included. The "empty model" column shows the unadjusted association between the concentration of affluence and the career type, and the "family background controlled for" column is supposed to show the causal

effect of the concentration of affluence. The association is clear: the more there is affluence, the higher is the probability of finishing the upper secondary school. When the differences in the family background compositions of neighbourhood affluence categories are controlled for, the association is attenuated, but the most affluent neighbourhoods still deviate from the rest with a higher probability. The effect is non-linear: the least affluent neighbourhoods do not deviate from the intermediate neighbourhoods.[4]

Table 2. Effect of concentration of affluence on boys' probability of finishing upper secondary school rather than vocational school.

	Empty model		Family backgound controlled for	
Concentration of affluence	OR	95 % C.I.	OR	95 % C.I.
Lowest quintile	0.62	(0.46–0.84)	0.96	(0.70–1.33)
2nd quintile	0.83	(0.61–1.12)	1.04	(0.75–1.43)
3rd quintile	1.00		1.00	
4th quintile	1.77	(1.28–2.43)	1.42	(1.00–2.01)
Highest quintile	2.71	(1.97–3.73)	1.55	(1.10–2.20)

The results lead to the conclusion that the hypothesis supposing an increased proportion of upper-secondary school careers according to increased neighbourhood affluence cannot be rejected. Of all the hypotheses tested in the study, the results were most consistent with this hypothesis. It was derived from the collective socialisation model, but this theory was not directly tested, however, so other mechanisms not mentioned in the theory might also explain the effect. The "black box" of neighbourhood effects (Jencks & Mayer 1990) thus remains unopened in this analysis. Nor did the theory expect a non-linear effect, so it may need adjustment, at least in the context of the city of Helsinki.

Irrespective of the theoretical issues, the results of the study are of political and practical interest, providing new material for the ongoing local discussion on the municipal housing policy, for example. Findings from the analysis of school effects that were not

presented here also provided material for political and scientific discussions related to educational policies.

Methodological problems

The main methodological problem in the study described here is that neighbourhood selection might not have been properly controlled for. Several family background characteristics – supposedly related both to neighbourhood selection and to educational careers – were controlled for in the analysis, but it is possible that something relevant might have been missed. This is a general problem not only in neighbourhood effect studies but in all studies aiming to observe causal effects with non-experimental data (see Lieberson 1985). If some relevant factor has been missed, this may have caused upward bias in the observed neighbourhood effects – although situations in which this would cause downward bias could also be imagined (Buck 2001). Ways of controlling for unobserved household characteristics have been suggested (Dietz 2002) but these are very difficult to apply, and so far they have produced inconclusive results (Crowder & South 2003; South et al. 2003). On the other hand, over-controlling – controlling for factors that are actually part of the neighbourhood effect mechanism – should be avoided as well (Sampson et al. 2002; Oakes 2004; Subramanian 2004). Therefore, there is no perfect solution available for the problem of selectivity.

Other limitations of the study include possible disparity between administrative definitions of neighbourhoods and residents' own definitions, and a lack of longitudinal data on exposure to neighbourhoods. Poor neighbourhood definition would cause a downward bias of observed effects by increasing measurement error. Cross-sectional measurement of neighbourhoods may also cause a downward bias, because some adolescents will have had only short exposure to the current neighbourhood, having lived in different types of neighbourhoods previously, and these may have had different effects

than the current one.

The chosen data and methods did not allow for analysis of the processes or mechanisms of the neighbourhood effects. Only some indications of possible mechanisms could be given, but these could not be ascertained. Observation and interviews – either quantitative or qualitative – would be needed to point out the processes. In the absence of such data, conclusions regarding the causal links between neighbourhood characteristics and the educational careers of the young people remain heavily bound to theories of neighbourhood effects and on the researcher's own subjective interpretation. Causality could not be proven.

The researcher's role

The methodology of the study presented above was characterised by outsideness (or otherness) and by a search for regularities instead of unique and personal life histories and interpretations. What mattered was whether there are general and generalisable effects of contextual factors on young people's lives. This kind of information is important, if the practical or political importance of the results is to be assessed. The search for regularities does not imply determinism, however. The regularities that were found are seen as stochastic processes, which cause certain probabilities to occur. Therefore, individual variation and unique explanations are acknowledged and much remains to be explained in the educational careers of young people.

Because there is nothing in the results which discloses information on individual (and possibly recognisable) young people, and since the data set was constructed so as to not make personal identification possible, many ethical concerns are avoided. However, the applied methodology may be faulted on ethical grounds for not allowing the young people have their say on the subject. It is clear that this study could not discover all there is to neighbourhood effects on young people's educational careers, partly because of this limitation. On

the other hand, given the possibility of an epistemological fallacy – failure to realise the effects of structural factors when there are such effects (Karvonen & Rahkonen 2000) – research into the importance of contextual factors cannot be limited to analysing the young people's own views and interpretations.

The main ethical concern in the study was the possible stigmatisation of certain neighbourhoods. Because spatial patterns were presented as maps and some specific neighbourhoods were mentioned in the text, this could affect the neighbourhoods' image. However, I avoided putting too much emphasis on individual neighbourhoods and concentrated instead on the more general results. Additionally, since I did not find neighbourhoods at the lowest socio-economical level to have any detrimental effect on educational careers the results should not, in my opinion, stigmatise these neighbourhoods. They will more likely point out affluent neighbourhoods, which were shown to have positive effects. This may be considered a lesser ethical concern.

Notes

1 It must be emphasised that these conclusions regarding the existence of neighbourhood effects are made on the supposition that the individual-level background variables adequately control for selection into neighbourhoods.

2 Empirical-Bayes residuals may be seen as predictions rather than observations. Information across all neighbourhoods is "lent" when calculating the estimate for each neighbourhood, and in this calculation, especially the estimates for neighbourhoods with only few observations are "shrunk" towards zero (no deviation from the average). This improves the overall precision of the estimation but also makes it "conservative".

3 The "empty" model actually included one explanatory variable in this case: a cohort variable, which indicated the year of turning 16, was included in all models order to control for temporal differences in educational, employment and welfare policies and employment opportunities.

4 The exact meaning of the odds ratios may be difficult to grasp, and therefore in my thesis I illustrated the most important effects by transforming the odds ratios back into probabilities. The problem with that approach is that in a model with several categorical control variables it is difficult to present probabilities that would refer to an "average" boy or girl. Instead, the probabilities that I presented referred to a "relatively average" group, whose values for all the explanatory variables were the reference categories (which were "relatively average" in their effects).

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TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING OF VALUE ORIENTATIONS: THE CASE OF ESTONIAN YOUTH

by Andu Rämmer

Introduction

The issue of beliefs has attracted philosophers and theologians since the formation of primitive societies. Besides theoretical speculations, an increasing number of empirical studies have been carried out in modern societies. At the beginning of the next chapter, I will give a brief overview of how researchers' focus of interest shifted from opinions to values. Special attention will be paid to the interpretation of value orientations through different factor analysis techniques. The advancement of data analysis techniques made it possible to study various value patterns, namely value orientations that consist of aggregated value notions.

Opinions

Empirical studies of social issues and public opinion imprinted the development of social psychology in the first half of the past century.

For a long time, psychology was seen as the science of attitudes (Moscovici 1963). In the first half of the twentieth century quite many researchers were convinced that opinions and attitudes could be measured effectively with a single question in a questionnaire. Attitudes were measured through their verbal expressions, opinions. Subjects' attitudes were measured through their acceptance or rejection of the opinions presented to them. Different measurement instruments were developed for that purpose. These were not only analysing techniques that emerged during the twentieth century however. The concept of attitude itself was also transformed. Thomas and Znaniecki introduced attitudes as an explanatory concept in social sciences, explaining attitudes as links between individuals and groups to which they belong. Augoustinos and Walker (1995, 30) note that mainstream social psychology has increasingly individualised the attitude construct. Already in the thirties, Gordon Allport defined attitude as a global stimulus-response disposition for the explanation of behavioural differences in similar situations. In that vein, attitudes and their verbal expressions – opinions – ceased to be used for the measurement of social phenomena.

Values

During the second half of the past century, values became the major focus of research. There are several reasons for that. As attitudes are highly context-dependent, there arose a need for a new concept that would be more comprehensive in the explanation of social issues. Although there is little coherence in the nature of value research (Hitilin & Piliavin 2004), there are some aspects of conceptualisation on which researchers agree. Values are about modes, means or ends with reference to the desired goals. According to Smith and Schwartz (1997, 80), researchers agree that values refer to major life goals and general modes of conduct that promote these goals; values transcend specific actions and situations (but this does not mean that they are context-independent). Values guide cognition,

evaluation, and behaviour.

An important step in the belief studies was the introduction of ordinal scales. Rosenberg (1957) was one of the first to use ordinal scales in a large empirical value study. Many researchers maintain that beliefs are complex phenomena that cannot be captured through single values. For example, Babbie (1998, 167) noted that complex concepts like orientations require the researcher to use several questionnaire items to measure them adequately. A single variable might not provide the desired range of variation, whereas aggregate variables would give a more comprehensive and more accurate indication. The development of data analysing techniques made it possible not only to reduce the observed ratings to a smaller number of categories, but also to detect meaningful patterns of values. I will call these patterns value orientations, as they are based on different values and refer simultaneously to certain complex societal aims that can be achieved through work. One of the popular data reduction techniques is known as factor analysis.

In the following text I will compare possibilities of different data reduction techniques using the example of post-Soviet youth values. Previous empirical studies of work values revealed similar work orientations both in Estonia (Titma 1979; Saarniit 1995; Titma & Helemäe 1996; Titma & Rämmer 2002) and in USA (Johnson 2001). Most researchers agree that work orientations form on the basis of desired outcomes, which could be achieved through the working process. For example, Titma and Rämmer (2002) revealed that three substantial orientations emerged among the school-leavers in the 1980s: self-expression, social recognition and career, which all remained remarkably stable throughout one's working life. It has been of interest to see to what extent these orientations re-emerge in the wake of the new millennium.

Research hypotheses

This study is in the field of social psychology, aiming to analyse the structure of school-leavers' work orientations. As mentioned, longitudinal studies of Estonian age cohorts revealed certain patterns among their work values. On this basis we were interested in seeing how Estonian young people's individual values of converge to form value orientations. Different data reduction techniques can outline relations between values in a somewhat distinctive manner. I will describe the aggregation of single values to value orientations in the same epistemological way as Saarniit (1995, 43). As this article is not so much a contribution to the advancement of certain theory as a discussion of methodological issues, technical terms instead of theoretical speculations will be applied in order to ensure a better understanding and scrutinizing of observable phenomena. Instead of values, I will speak about measured or initial variables; and principal components or (latent) factors should correspond with orientations.

Factor analysis is used to discover patterns among the variations in the values of several variables. This is essentially done through the generation of artificial dimensions or factors that correlate highly with several of the real variables and are, as a rule, independent of one another (Babbie 1998, 418). Although Principal Component Analysis (PCA) is the default setting in SPSS, it differs in some aspects from factor analysis techniques. The main difference between PCA and factor analysis is that while PCA accounts for all the variation in the initial variables, factor analysis accounts only for shared common variance. It is an explanatory technique that can reduce a large number of variables to a small number of key dimensions of variations: principal components (Dunbar 1998, 86). PCA is a fruitful way of getting a clearer picture of the relationship among the items in the questionnaire. However, as my aim is to detect structure of data or identify latent orientations, factor analysis is better suited to my task than PCA.

Both factor and component matrixes can technically be subjected to a process termed rotation. Rotation involves realigning of the

components or factors extracted in relation to the observed variables. As a result, this can make it easier to see a coherent relationship between the observed variables and the components or factors, and therefore make the components more interpretable (Dunbar 1998, 87–88). However, as PCA uses all variability in a variable, factor analysis relies on variability that is in common with other variables. On that basis I suggest my first research hypothesis: Rotated factor matrix is better interpretable for the analysis of latent structures than Principal Component Analysis.

Ever since the Jöreskog and Sörbom's book (1979), confirmatory methods have become increasingly popular. A crucial difference in confirmatory techniques is the possibility to specify, on the basis of a pre-established theory or a vision, a pattern of (non)correlated factors with supposed variables that represent certain values that should belong to and determine these factors. The advantage over explorative techniques is their ability to test whether the expected relations between variables confirm the supposed factor structure. It is possible to analyse the model of correlated value orientations that consist of values that reflect common or adjacent aspirations. In other words, relevant variables will be structured on the basis of the prior vision of the factors. The aim of confirmatory factor analysis is to see whether the observed indicator variables load as predicted into the expected factors. On that basis I formulate my second research hypothesis: Confirmatory factor analysis is a more fruitful technique for the analysis of value orientations than explanatory factor analysis.

Data and respondents

All analyses here are based on a study of Estonian school-leavers. Data collection was carried out in all counties and cities by interviewers in the period from 1996 to 1998. A stratified random sampling method was used in study-groups (school classes). In total, 8,133 respondents completed the self-administered questionnaire. 78 %

of the respondents were ethnic Estonians, 22 %, Russian-speakers. 48 % were male, 52 % female. The mean age was 16.3 years, SD 1.6. The prime objective of this study was to describe school-leavers' living conditions and leisure time, but also their future plans, value orientations and attitudes. A shorter version of Titma's (Titma & Helemäe 1996) four-step work values scale, adapted from Rosenberg (1957) was included in the questionnaire. Correlations between the nine values measured are presented in Appendix 1.

Value orientations

Next, three different methodological approaches that study value orientations in somewhat different ways will be described. Principal component analysis and principal axis factoring are both explorative data reduction techniques that are used to reduce the number of variables and detect the structure of the relationships between variables. PCA reduces the information from measured variables to a set of combinations of those variables. But PCA does not differentiate between common and unique variance that is detected in these variables. Factor analysis excludes unique variance from the analysis and identifies, on the basis of common variance, latent factors. Confirmatory factor analysis is designed to test the presumed relations between variables.

Example 1: Principal Component Analysis

The basic idea of principal components analysis is the same as in explorative factor analysis – to reduce a large set of observed variables to a smaller number of artificial units. These artificial units are called principal components in PCA and factors in factor analysis. The matrix of principal component analysis is presented in Table 1.

One of the first questions in both PCA and factor analysis is how many factors is it reasonable to extract? There are some rules that

help the researcher to solve that problem on the basis of component variability. Kaiser's criterion is one of the commonly used guidelines, and it serves as a good basis for distinction in my example. The core idea is that components that on average extract less variance than the equivalent of one initial variable should be rejected.

Table 1. Component Loadings (Unrotated) Principal Components.

Variable	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3
Work should enable one to improve oneself steadily	0.40	-0.31	**0.66**
Work should ensure a good salary	0.38	**0.53**	0.07
Work should ensure a peaceful and secure life	**0.42**	**0.41**	-0.28
Work should provide one with a high social position	**0.63**	0.30	0.00
Work should be useful to society	**0.63**	**-0.52**	-0.37
Work should allow one to advance in one's field	**0.64**	0.32	0.25
Work should be clean and not physically demanding	**0.47**	0.38	-0.14
Work should be useful to other people	**0.61**	**-0.56**	-0.35
Work should fully utilise one's abilities	**0.47**	-0.33	0.38
Explained Variance (%)	27.49	17.29	11.26

Principal components are interpreted on the basis of the content of their component matrixes. The coefficients in the columns behind variables are correlations between the variables and components; they are called component loadings. The higher the correlations between initial variables and components are, the more they shape the meaning or content of the component. The first component is described as advancement in occupation (.64), obtaining position in society (.63), being useful to society (.63) and being useful for other people (.61) but also doing clean and physically easy work (.47) and ensuring peaceful and secure life (.42). The first principal component

also accounts for the largest amount of the total variance in the nine variables – 28 %. Other loadings in the first component are also remarkably high and exceed .35. The second principal component is described as ensuring good salary (.53) and peaceful and secure life (.41) but also the rejection of social values. The second component that is uncorrelated with the first one explains 17 percent of the total variance. The third component can be described as self-improvement (.66) and it explains 11 percent of the variance. It is important to note that successive components explain progressively smaller portions of the total variance and they all are uncorrelated with each other. In other words, the first component is generally more highly correlated with the variables than the second factor and the second more than the third one.

There is a problem in PCA: how do we interpret the first component, which contains high correlations with all variables? In other words, as most of higher loadings converge to the first component, variables and components do not appear correlated in any interpretable pattern. Thus the first component can be described as a pattern that converges – a large scale of aspirations toward intrinsic and extrinsic but also social and altruistic rewards. The second component gives us remarkably less information; it grasps the items that stress the importance of income and job security but which are strongly opposed to altruistic and social ends. The content of the third component can be described mainly by self-improvement. Although PCA is a fruitful method in the reduction of initial variables, this type of analysis gives limited information for the detection of interpretable patterns.

Already in the 1970s, PCA was supplemented with Varimax rotation, which transforms the initial matrix into one that is easier to interpret. The rotated component matrix in Table 2 indicates that the variances in component loadings are distributed more equally in all three components. The basic idea of rotation is to build contrast: to increase the correlation of variables that correlate highly with factors and decrease the correlation of variables that show little correlation with factors. As we can see, the strongest component is now structured much more precisely via advancement in one's

occupation (.65), obtaining high social position (.65), ensuring good salary (.63), having physically easy work (.61) and ensuring a secure life (.61). The first rotated component explains 22 % of the total variance. The second rotated component is interpreted via usefulness to other people (.88) and usefulness to society (.87). That component explains 19 % of the total variance. The third component is described via self-improvement (.83) and using one's abilities (.63). It explains 15 % of the total variance. As we can see, these three rotated components already appear to be more interpretable.

Table 2. Component loadings (Varimax normalised) extraction: Principal Components.

Variable	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3
Work should enable one to improve oneself steadily	0.01	0.05	**0.83**
Work should ensure a good salary	**0.63**	-0.16	0.05
Work should ensure a peaceful and secure life	**0.61**	0.14	-0.19
Work should provide one with a high social position	**0.65**	0.17	0.17
Work should be useful to society	0.10	**0.87**	0.14
Work should allow one to advance in one's field	**0.65**	0.03	0.38
Work should be clean and not physically demanding	**0.61**	0.11	-0.04
Work should be useful to other people	0.06	**0.88**	0.17
Work should fully utilise one's abilities	0.06	0.26	**0.63**
Explained Variance (%)	22.26	18.73	15.05

However, initial qualities of un-rotated components disappear as the variety of initial characteristics that converged in the first powerful components diffuses in rotation phase and the results can be misleading for the detection of meaningful patterns. Thus it seems to be fruitful to use factor analysis instead of PCA.

Example 2: Principal Axis Factoring

There are several factoring techniques; the most frequently used of which is principal axis factoring. Like PCA, principal axis factoring extracts observed variables to a smaller number of artificial units. The aim of factor analysis is to determine the structure between variables. We can see from Table 3 that loadings in the factor matrix are lower than in the component matrix in the first example.

Table 3. Factor loadings (unrotated) Principal Axis Factoring.

Variable	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Work should enable one to improve oneself steadily	0.35	-0.11	**0.50**
Work should ensure a good salary	0.26	**0.38**	-0.06
Work should ensure a peaceful and secure life	0.29	0.28	-0.16
Work should provide one with a high social position	**0.50**	0.33	-0.03
Work should be useful to society	**0.64**	**-0.39**	-0.15
Work should allow one to advance in one's field	**0.53**	**0.39**	0.13
Work should be clean and not physically demanding	0.34	0.30	-0.10
Work should be useful to other people	**0.67**	**-0.48**	-0.16
Work should fully utilise one's abilities	**0.37**	-0.12	0.22
Explained Variance (%)	21.31	10.91	4.48

For purposes of interpretation, however, we could also observe slightly lower coefficients, as this decision is arbitrary. Many researchers, for example Helve (1993, 57), recommend .35 as a convenient level for the observation of factor loadings. Correlations higher than .35 enable us to describe the first factor on the basis of usefulness to other people (.67), usefulness to society (.64), advancement in occupation (.53), position in society (.50) and using one's abilities (.37). The second factor is defined by good

salary (.38) and advancement in occupation (.39), but is correlated negatively with usefulness to other people (-.48) and usefulness to society (-.39). The third factor is correlated remarkably only with self-improvement (.49). However, two items – peaceful life and easy work – relate with factors in an unclear way. Another difficulty in the interpretation of factors arises from the fact that different factors explain remarkably unequal shares of the variance. The first factor explains 21 % of the variance, the second factor 11 % and the third one explains 5 % of the variance. In total, the three factors explain 37 % of the variance described by factors.

However, although factor matrix in Table 3 is slightly more meaningful than in the un-rotated PCA solution, it is still not easily interpretable. As rotation does not affect the goodness of fit of a factor solution, it could be reasonable to rotate observable factor matrix in order to get a more easily interpretable solution. Rotation does not affect the goodness of fit of a factor solution. It means that although the matrix structure changes, the percentage of total variance remains the same. As we can see from Table 4, the percentage of variance accounted for by each factor changes as the rotation redistributes the explained variance for the individual factors.

Table 4. Factor loadings (varimax normalised) extraction: Principal Axis Factoring.

Variable	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Work should enable one to improve oneself steadily	0.11	0.03	0.61
Work should ensure a good salary	-0.05	0.46	0.02
Work should ensure a peaceful and secure life	0.08	0.43	-0.05
Work should provide one with a high social position	0.14	0.57	0.15
Work should be useful to society	0.74	0.12	0.17
Work should allow one to advance in one's field	0.06	0.60	0.30
Work should be clean and not physically demanding	0.08	0.46	0.02
Work should be useful to other people	0.82	0.07	0.18
Work should fully utilise one's abilities	0.24	0.09	0.36
Explained Variance (%)	14.66	14.52	7.52

Indeed, the rotated factor matrix is much easier to interpret. The first factor is described now as usefulness to other people (.82) and by usefulness to society (.74). The second factor is described as advancement in occupation (.60), high position (.57) and easy work (.49), but also by good salary (.46) and job security (.43). The third factor is correlated with self-improvement (.60) and using one's abilities (.36). Variability of factors is also redistributed: the first two factors each explain 15 % of variability, whereas the third explains 8 %. Rotated matrix is much more easily interpretable than an un-rotated solution. The first factor refers to social and altruistic issues and can be interpreted as an orientation towards social recognition. The second factor can be distinguished in terms of possible extrinsic rewards that motivate people to work, which can be interpreted as orientation towards a career. The third factor refers to intrinsic rewards that can be achieved through the work itself, and this is interpreted as an orientation towards self-expression.

But still, if the researcher has certain expectations about the composition of factor structure, it can be fruitful to use confirmatory factor analysis.

Example 3: Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) seeks to determine whether the number of factors and the loadings of measured (indicator) variables on them conform to the pre-established vision. Commonly displayed factor models are graphically displayed as path diagrams. Causal models can involve both manifest and latent variables (Cramer 2003, 28; Garson 2004). Such path diagrams can be created with computer programs like LISREL, which is an abbreviation for Linear Structural RELationships; or AMOS, which is an abbreviation for Analysis Of Moment Structures.

Manifest variables in Figure 1 are drawn as rectangles, while the latent factors are portrayed as ellipses. Lines with arrows that connect factors with rectangles are pathways. An arrow from the ellipse to the rectangle indicates a relationship between a variable

and a factor. For example, in Figure 1, there are arrows from the self-expression factor to self-improvement and employing abilities variables, showing that these variables load on or are related to that factor. There are no arrows from self-improvement and using abilities variables to the social recognition and social recognition factors, because these variables are not assumed to load on these factors. The arrows point from the factor to the variables, rather than from variables to the factor, to indicate that the factor is expressed in terms of the variables. Factors are often described as latent variables, as they cannot be measured directly, while initial variables may be referred to as manifest variables. The values next to these arrows may be loosely thought of as the correlations or loadings between the variables and the factor in that they generally vary between –1 and +1. So in Figure 1, the loading between self-improvement and self-expression factor is .51; and between employing abilities and self-expression factor: .69.

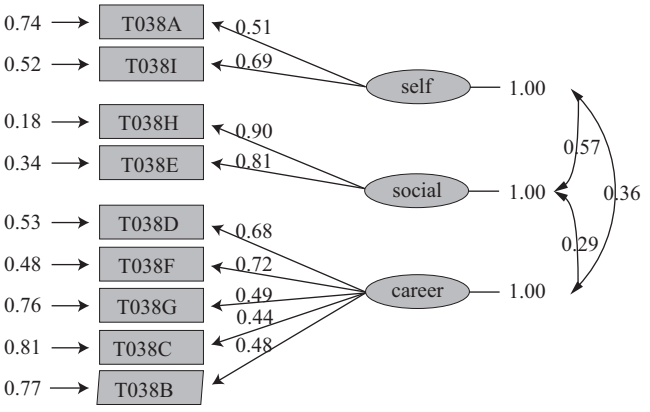
Confirmatory factor analysis has certain advantages over exploratory techniques, as it enables us not only to analyse factor loadings but also to estimate possible variance error in every variable. The arrows on the left of each variable and pointing to that variable indicate that each variable is not a perfect measure of the factor it is assumed to reflect. For example, the proportion of variance in the scores of the self-improvement variable that is thought to represent error is .74 and the error of the using abilities variable is expected to be .52. These errors may comprise both random errors and unique variance components.

We can observe the structure of the remaining two factors in a similar vein. Usefulness to other people (.90) and usefulness to society (.81) with the highest loadings confirming that social recognition is the clearest factor in the observed model. Low errors, .18 and .34 respectively, confirm that assumption. The third factor, namely career, is built on the basis of five variables and presents loadings of these variables. High position (.68) and advancement (.72) are the highest loadings with respectively moderate errors (.53 and .48). Although other loadings in that factor are somewhat lower and errors respectively bigger, they characterise career factors in

addition to advancement values. Thus the loadings of easy work (.49), good salary (.48) and job security (.44) confirm that those school-leavers who are oriented on advancement are to a smaller extent interested in earning good salary at physically easy work in order to ensure peaceful and secure life.

It is not surprising to see that the factors in the Figure 1 are related to each other, as there were remarkable correlations between the initial variables (see Appendix 1) that shape these factors. The curved lines with an arrowhead at both ends between factors signify these correlations between factors. Although it can be assumed that they should be related, the causal direction of this relationship cannot be specified. The line and value on the right of each factor is often not shown in path diagrams and this indicates that the variance of these factors has been standardised as 1.00 (Cramer 2003, 31).

There are some indices that test statistical significance or goodness of fit of the suggested model. One of the most widely used indices is the chi-square test, that refers to the differences between the initial and the model correlation matrixes. A large chi-square value of 2227.33 indicates a level of difference that says this is not a good fit. There are some factors that affect chi-square. For example, the more observed variables and relations between them the estimated model contains, the bigger the result of chi-square test will be. The value of chi-square is a complex coefficient that takes into account all observed variables and relations between them through the degrees of freedom. The probability of chi-square being significant is less than the .001, which suggests that correlations in the presented model should differ remarkably from correlations between initial variables. However, the chi-square test for confirmatory analysis tends to be statistically more significant in case of larger samples. Because of this problem, other measures of fit that depend less on sample size have been developed.



Chi-Square=2227.23, df=24, P-value=0.00000, RMSEA=0.106

Manifest variables: T038A - Self-improvement; T038B - Income; T038C - Job security; T038D - Position in society; T038E - Useful for society; T038F - Opportunity for advancement; T038G - Clean and physically easy work; T038H - Useful for people; T038I - Using one's abilities
Latent variables: *self* – self-realisation; *social* – social recognition; *career* – career

Figure 1. Path diagram for the three-factor model.

One of these is the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). Cramer (2003, 34) suggests that the values below .100 are indicators of good fit. As the value of this statistic is .106, and thus slightly above that level, we can assume that our model does not offer a very good fit to the data. As neither chi-square nor the root mean square error of approximation shows that this model provides a perfect fit, it can be assumed that our model contains correlations not only with common factors, but also with unmeasured variables. However, after removing the job security item, RMSEA reported good fit with the data. Relevant literature (Tomarken & Waller 2005) suggests that when model does not fit perfectly, there is no need to change theoretical expectations. The problem that some items remain unmeasured by the questionnaire is very common in the study of beliefs, values and orientations.

Conclusion

The three different techniques discussed here study value orientations from somewhat different angles. None of them is thoroughly superior; they all have certain advantages and limitations. The choice of suitable method depends on the researcher's intentions. If the aim is to reduce the information of many measured variables into smaller set of components, principal components analysis should be used. If the aim is to obtain parameters' reflecting latent orientations or factors, (explorative) factor analysis should be preferred. Rotation of the axes causes the factor loadings of every variable to be more clearly differentiated by factor, in order to make the solution more easily interpretable. The advantage of the rotation is that it does not affect the goodness of fit of a factor solution. As the study of youth values is concerned with the detection of latent structures, factor analysis must be preferred to principal component analysis. Whereas it was difficult to identify meaningful factors in the un-rotated matrix, the rotated solution proved to be much more easily interpretable. Explorative factor analysis is a fruitful method for the study of new types of data, as it is the extraction of latent structures that can be interpreted as orientations.

However, researchers frequently have a particular *ad hoc* vision of the relations between variables. This is especially true in the case of analysis of value orientations that were done in Estonia for nearly 30 years. As it was possible to outline a vision of the structure of values on the basis of previous studies, it became possible to create a relevant model that suggests, besides initial values, also latent orientations. Initial variables had different impact on these orientations that are manifested through factor loadings and errors in every single variable. Path analysis drew a detailed picture of school-leavers' work orientations that reflects their understanding of future challenges, which is in a large sense idealistic, because they do not have any real working experience before graduation. The clearest orientation is towards social recognition, which reflects social and altruistic rewards that can be achieved through work. Self-expression that converges with intrinsic rewards did not emerge as

powerfully as in the previous studies of school-leavers during Soviet times. That discrepancy can be assumed to be related to the shift in the dominant ideology – away from the instrumental aspects of work stressed by the Soviet ideology, towards more personal ambitions, central to a more liberal ideology. Career orientation on may seem questionable here, but we should not forget that adolescents do not have any working experience which would affect their world view, including value orientations. It consists not only of advancement values but also of aspirations toward good salary, easy work and job security.

A common problem in the study of values is the capturing and analysis of these latent and vague constructs. Different researchers have used different methods on different samples at different times, but some aspects still remain unclear. These aspects in the presented study were described by errors and goodness of fit indices on the basis of the presented confirmatory factor analysis model.

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Appendix 1. Correlation matrix of values items.

	T038A	T038B	T038C	T038D	T038E	T038F	T038G	T038H	T038I
T038A									
T038B	.04**								
T038C	.00	.29**							
T038D	.12**	.23**	.21**						
T038E	.19**	.01	.11**	.26**					
T038F	.19**	.24**	.17**	.45**	.17**				
T038G	.03**	.17**	.23**	.26**	.07**	.31**			
T038H	.20**	-.00	.09**	.15**	.64**	.15**	.14**		
T038I	.27**	.07**	.08**	.09**	.23**	.16**	.07**	.29**	

T038A - Self-improvement; T038B - Income; T038C - Job security; T038D - Position in society; T038E - Useful for society; T038F - Opportunity for advancement; T038G - Clean and physically easy work; T038H - Useful for people; T038I - Using one's abilities

RECONSTRUCTING THE CONTENT OF POLITICAL SYMBOLS: USING SYMBOLIC PERSPECTIVE IN YOUTH RESEARCH

by Dennis Zuev

Introduction

The purpose of this article is to reflect on some theoretical and practical methodological issues that arose during the study of the content of political symbols in the minds of the young people. In this article I cover all the methodological steps leading up to the presentation of the results of my study. These steps can be outlined as follows:

1. The statement of the research problem is followed by a theoretical overview in order to choose a relevant theory and adapt it to the needs of the research.
2. The theoretical model is chosen, providing grounds for the choice of adequate data collecting techniques.
3. The techniques are chosen, followed by consideration of technical issues relating to A) choosing research subjects, and B) actually collecting the data.
4. Data is collected, after which it must be grouped, classified.

5. Data is classified, after which an adequate logic of interpretation for analysis of the data must be developed.
6. Reflecting on the challenges, limitations of the method, techniques and interpretation strategy chosen.

The focus in this article is not on political symbols, but on the meanings of political symbols to young people. In the beginning, it is vital to explain what is so interesting about political symbols and what valuable sorts of data a youth researcher can acquire from the study of political symbols.

Political symbols are ubiquitous and at the same time unseen because some of them have been routinized. Political symbols have been one of the major factors in power relations and political communication. They are consciously employed during political election campaigns, in the construction of new ideologies and in manipulative practices. Symbols are essential elements during periods of ideological transition in society. Since they are carriers of condensed information, they are often included in ideology programs. The power of symbols is that they are multivalent. They are the key carriers of particular, hidden meanings which are activated during different political actions. Symbols are meaningful for the power institutions which encode their political messages. And they are also meaningful for the audience who decode them. For power institutions symbols serve as a means of imposing their ideas and will. For the social groups symbols are condensed packages of information. This information is about the unconscious predispositions of the social group, which may often be in opposition with the verbalized ones.

What makes symbols such an effective tool in communication is their semantic richness or communicative structure. It is a code; a number of meanings that have to be decoded. The communicative structure of symbols may be like a series of archaeological strata that can be empirically tested and analysed. These levels may be reconstructed or remain hidden. We can study only what we dig up – verbalized, rationalized meanings – and we tend to ignore the hidden unconscious meanings. If this is not attended to, we are at

risk of having a shallow understanding of people's motivations. If it is carefully researched, we may be able to see what meanings really drive people to act in a certain way, to make certain democratic decisions, or to go to war.

Analysis of political symbols: Its value in youth research

What makes symbols so interesting from the point of view of youth research is another consideration: Youth is the most dynamic social group, and therefore the complex study of its dynamics is inadequate if we consider transformations in values without taking into account changes in the unconscious – changes that occur in the meaning of political ideology and meanings of political symbols which constitute it. These symbols are quite familiar to us: "democracy," "reform," "power," "human rights," "president", etc.

According to Karl Mannheim (1994), youth is a resource which should be tapped during a period of reforms, or when the state is in a state of crisis. But how can this resource be tapped – how can youth be mobilized and integrated? The power authorities and new Russian "consolidation ideology" makers resort to certain symbols for mobilizing and integrating young people, but these symbols may hold different meanings and/or may not be shared by the young people. For example, modern Russian ideologists insist on the value of such symbols as "patriotism" or "patriotic education" which many young men take as a euphemism for military service – something to be avoided at all costs. The lack of common meanings may lead to the conflict between the power institution and youth, especially its most politically active segment – students.

On the other hand, the search for common meanings which can be carried out through the study of political symbols shared by different groups of young people (students) could help to decrease the chances of conflict between students and authorities. The value of a certain symbol, such as "patriotism" or "patriotic education"

may be rationally recognized and agreed upon by a great number of young people. But deep within their mind, do they share the meaning of that particular symbol?

Young people are an indicator of the ongoing social processes in a society. The content of symbols in the minds of young people represents orientations and aspirations of this social group. If we know what meanings dominate, we can then understand where we are going and what course of development we should undertake. One of the dominant currents in the youth research has focused on cultural consumption, consumer life styles and the consumerism of youth T. Johannson, F. Miegel, B. Reimer, M. Sobel, etc. (in Miles 2000). Consumption of political culture and political symbols by young people, however, is an aspect of youth research which has somehow escaped researchers' attention.[1] It may be that young people are not interested in politics, but that does not mean that power institutions are not interested in maintaining their ascendancy over the young members of society.

One may say I am being dominated by the spell of symbols and I attribute too much of the potential to them. I defend myself here first of all with a trivial observation: We all use symbols in communicating certain meanings, inadvertently becoming symbol-users. Given the fact that young people have limited resources in expressing themselves, they have become society's heaviest users and consumers of symbols. The extent to which power institutions take advantage of this high level of symbol use is rarely taken into account. This results in a manipulation of meanings by those power institutions that have a monopoly in creating the symbols. The study of political symbols therefore may be a fruitful ground for considering whether power authorities and students are using the same language of communication, and whether there is any communication at all between them. Political symbol analysis may be applied in understanding such phenomena of Russian political reality as young people's extremely low participation in elections, while at the same time participating in radical political movements.

Another fruitful application for the symbolic perspective might be

in studying attitudes towards the future in one's home country. The future is not *seen* by a young person, it is *imagined*. These images are symbolic in nature – goals, projects and material objects that mark life stages. Abstract concepts that lie behind symbols may hold concrete images and ways of realizing the future life projects. The analysis of these concrete images of the future that young people have can give valuable insights to the youth researcher.

Theoretical overview and choice of method

The initial stage of research included a systematic study of the symbol as such. I had to construct an overview of theories devoted to political symbols. What I was looking for was definitions for "symbol" in sociology, social anthropology, psychoanalysis, linguistics and culture studies. Considering various viewpoints on the definition of symbol, the systemic study of the object was undertaken. On the basis of these findings I was hoping to adopt or adapt some model for the needs of my empirical research – a tool with which to operationalize and analyse my data. This model building process came to resemble assembling a jigsaw puzzle from bits of different theories. Many theorists have tried to give comprehensive, all-encompassing definitions of what a symbol is, but they lack explicit explications of what traits of symbols might be empirically measured.

My initial hypothesis was that a symbol should have a structure. Being under influence of structuralist ideas (F. de Saussure, C. Lévi-Strauss, V. Propp), the theory of minimal universum (V. Nemirovsky) and the theory of the levels of signification (R. Barthes), I assumed there should be a structure of meanings for a symbol as there is for a myth. It should be a viable structure which communicates symbol's meanings. Therefore, what I was searching for was the communicative structure of symbol – the empirical tool for measuring political symbols. In the initial stage I had to find to a more concrete definition for the political symbol. The major

research in the field of political symbolism has been undertaken from the viewpoints of political science (H. Lasswell, M. Edelman) and political anthropology (S. Mach) as well as a number of studies concerning the study of symbols used in the totalitarian ideologies (P. Diem). Lasswell (1977), in his theory of political psychoanalysis, distinguishes two major features that should be regarded during the study of political symbolism. These are the role of the emotional factor in the human relations in politics and the role of ulterior motives, determining the political behaviour.

For the purposes of our research "political symbols" can be defined as *significant expressions of different aspects of the political reality*. There is no simple system of classifications for political symbols. One system, constructed by Misyurov (1999), distinguishes up to 17 types of political symbols. He lays particular stress on "conceptual political symbols", defined as *the key concepts at the centres of political mythology and rituals*.

In my research I considered four types of political symbols: *official symbols* (flag, anthem and emblem of the state) *symbolic personalities*, *symbolic events*, and *conceptual symbols*. Analysis of all the four groups of political symbols, however, is beyond the scope of this article, so I will focus here on conceptual political symbols**.**

Conceptual political symbols are an essential part of political discourse. Ilyin states that political discourse is only possible with a common system of actions and meanings shared by all actors. One side of this system is communicative. It is represented by 1) a set of symbols and their meanings, 2) a code, or the method of linking concepts and symbols with each other, and 3) a logic of interaction between the actors (pragmatics). This communicative system is the basis of political consciousness.

The relationship between language and social realities is reflected in the content of political discourse and its semantic units – symbols. The persuasive effectiveness of the symbol depends on the agent it is identified with – its *dominant meaning*. Dominant meanings can be traced by dissecting political symbols at the semantic level. Dissecting the symbol is in turn a question of choosing techniques which will eventually provide you with a sample of meanings and images.

The *communicative structure* of a symbol is a necessary methodological tool in the symbol analysis. Developing and elaborating this structure can help operationalize the symbol. The communicative structure is not a rigid set of everlasting hierarchical levels; it is a multi-layered semantic code. which helps to encode and decode the symbol. In my study I planned to develop some universal "crowbar" for all the 4 groups of political symbols I intended to explore. That turned out to be an all too ambitious task – to open all the political symbols with just one crudely made model.

My search for the communicative structure of symbols had to be started from the basics. After my review of the definitions of symbols in philosophy, my first methodological step was based largely on the theories of Mamardashvili and Pyatigorskiy. These authors distinguish between primary (ontological) and secondary symbols. Secondary symbols can devaluate into signs, and often become signs, loosing their ontological load and sacral nature. The major characteristic of the secondary symbol is its psychological component, which in social terms can be equated with the ideological component. So my first step was to determine that I would only deal with secondary symbols.

Charles Peirce assumes that a symbol is a type of sign. There is one common feature of signs and symbols – the rational component. This is the *cognitive level* of a symbol. At this level the symbol contains temporary meaning. The content of the symbol at this level is the subject to change in different cultural and historical contexts. The concept stands behind the symbol and it represents its visible portion. The cognitive level of symbol is the meaning of symbol that users are conscious of. Here the symbol seems to be understood by the user both a) abstractly (e.g. democracy being "the power of the people" or "freedom") and b) in practical terms (democracy being "when I do what I want and say what I want," or "not having to queue up for everything"). The cognitive level is the most dynamic in the structure of symbol, since concepts are constantly changing according to their cultural context.

Cohen, in defining symbol, mentions its emotional and intentional load. The symbol's potential for persuasion lies in its ability to affect the individual on an *emotional level*. Ideas and concepts

may be hard to understand until they are packed into a simpler, emotionally loaded image-form. The stronger the emotional bond with the symbol, the stronger behavioural reaction they produce. Many symbols are planned for short-term influence. For a concept to live for a longer period, fresh images to arouse the emotions are needed. At this level the symbol embraces connotations, additional meanings, which are negatively or positively valued. Connotation furthermore gives the symbol more expressiveness and reinforces the cognitive level of symbol. The emotive level is basically images and connotations a symbol holds for the group of symbol-users.

In his theory of archetypes, C.G. Jung (1969) notes that the collective unconscious contains certain pre-existing forms which shape the content of the psyche. The archetype, present in the collective unconscious – the historical memory of the people – is the nucleus of the symbol. The archetype is also the starting point for the creation of a symbol. Identifying an archetype can be done by analysis of the images involved. These images are emotionally loaded, originating at the subconscious level and penetrating to the cognitive level. The *archetypical level* could be a tricky one to identify. Jung points out that the number of archetypes is unlimited and they exist for various situations. However, Strauss and Howe, in their work on generational archetypes (1998), demonstrate that the generational archetype is a subject to cyclical change between four basic variations. The generational archetype determines the dominant life path for young people. Despite its limitations to a certain geographical and ideological context, this theory may provide us with a means of forecasting what values will dominate in a particular period of time. The theory of generational archetypes was one of the theoretical considerations which I used in analysing the symbolic personalities and heroes of the younger generation in Russia.

The symbol also has a level where instincts come into play. This *irrational level* is activated in critical situations, when the mind fails to find a rational explanation and seeks for a magical one. This is the level of charisma in symbols, where the irrational component dominates over the cognitive. In the course of analysis it is vital neither to overestimate this irrational level of meanings, nor to ignore

it completely. I really didn't succeed in finding empirical indicators for the irrationality of political symbols, but I took its possible effect on the former three into account in my analysis.

Thus the communicative structure of political symbols can be seen as comprised of four levels: 1) cognitive, 2) emotive, 3) archetypical, 4) irrational. This is the theoretical model, which I adopted and was planning to test in the analysis of conceptual political symbols. I was aware that it was not, and could not be, a complete explanation for the structure of any given political symbol, but rather a basic structure of meanings that any given conceptual political symbol should possess.

According to this structure the following operations and variables would help in measuring symbol.

At the cognitive level it calls for identifying concept, or dominant meaning of the symbol. At the emotive level it requires identifying images and words, having negative or positive connotations associated with the symbol; at the archetypical level, identifying archetype, which is behind the dominant meaning or meanings attributed to symbol. Comparative analysis of the archetypes is also necessary.

Choosing adequate techniques for collecting data

Now having the measurable properties of a conceptual political symbol, the question was to find a procedure which could help to fix these properties. In order to reconstruct the content of a conceptual political symbol, I had to find a technique which would help to see meanings of symbol at the aforementioned levels. I had to dissect a symbol into as many meanings as possible. I was interested in getting beyond the conscious or cognitive side of the political symbols. Therefore some tool for extracting the hidden meanings in the subconscious was essential.

Choosing the technique, I had to be sure that I would get the data I needed and that it would help to test the theoretical model. I

combined traditional sociological methods (secondary analysis of the data and questionnaire survey) with the method of linguistic experiment, which asked for context analysis of the data. Such an inter-disciplinary approach in studying symbols seems to be the most productive.

At the first stage I was planning to resort to the method of unfinished sentences. But given the vocational context of the subjects studied – a university – I realised that students might think of this as an academic test and provide me with official definitions for those symbols rather than their personal understanding of them. As my goal was not to check the knowledge of the respondents regarding the suggested conceptual political symbols, this technique was abandoned. Instead I chose the free-association technique as a logical consequence of my theoretical guideline. The method of free associations is based on the principle of the "symbolic coping" (Wagner et al. 1999) which in the theory of the social representation is described as the process where a group has to deal with an unfamiliar or new phenomenon. Since the phenomenon is unfamiliar to the group, to get a basic understanding of it, group members try to give characteristics in words and names to this phenomenon. The process of coping is carried out on the discursive level. The result of this collective symbolic coping is a class of responses that contain both unconscious and conscious meanings from the group members.

In order to get to the unconscious, one has to let the subject of study to cope with the unfamiliar or familiar object on the discursive level. The researcher attempts to see the individual's representation of it, and reconstruct the collective representation. This is done by means of communicating the meaning of a certain word-symbol by using other words. So the major technique of collecting data in the survey was the free-association technique. It was the basis for two parts of the questionnaire form: the questionnaire and the list of the conceptual political symbols for the free-association (the linguistic experiment).

The questionnaire was comprised of open questions and multiple-choice questions. Open questions basically asked for spontaneous one-word answers; for example, "What does the word 'Russia' call to your mind?" Answers to the multiple-choice question, "What kind of thought do you first associate with Russia", were designed for cross checking or comparison with the answers from an open type-question. The open questions in the questionnaire enabled respondents to independently construct a field of meanings concerning the given question. In some sense these open questions were also based on the free-association technique. The ability of respondents to verbalize the answers independently had to be considered in order to minimize the "collective" factor in answering the questions – that is copying each other's answers.

The second part of the survey was the linguistic experiment based on the free-association technique. Such linguistic experiments have been used in sociology (Z. Sikevich), social psychology (W. Wagner) linguistics and intercultural communication (T. Ter-Minasova). Thus I had a technique which was designed for conceptual symbols but I had no list of symbols for free associations to propose to the respondents. The research done by Malanchuk on the analysis of political world views in Russia provided me with such a list. In her research, Malanchuk (1997) used linguistic methods which included identifying the word frequency, and paradigmatic and syntactic analyses to identify the key-words of political discourse in Russia – the most highly used, actual words in Russian political discourse. The list was as follows: constitution, democracy, president, reforms, law, people, labour, present, future, power, government, market and business. I took these keywords as the basic conceptual political symbols for the linguistic experiment, adding just one more: *Russia*.

Some technical issues in choosing the objects of study

Why I chose students as my sample frame? There were some practical considerations: compact placement, a practiced ability to verbalize the thoughts and active contact with the researcher.

For the empirical study 830 students in the 6 universities in one of the major Siberian cities, Krasnoyarsk, were chosen. There are three principal parameters which had to be considered when attempting to draw a true picture of the symbols' content, localized in time and space: 1) age and gender ratios, 2) representation of the subject basis (humanities, sciences), 3) representation of universities. The ratio was estimated on the basis of the statistical data concerning the number of students at the universities in the city. At first sight a survey conducted in just one city has some territorial limitations on the selection of research objects. However that has its positive side. The task of the survey was not to receive data representative for the whole region of Siberia or let alone all of Russia. It aimed to distinguish some particularities of symbols' content in a given locality and to analyse the peculiarities of the meanings attributed to political symbols by students.

One of the limitations in sampling was set by the age of the students. A more or less integrated system of values is formed by the age of 18–20, therefore the study of symbols and unconsciously declared values would be most adequate when addressing the young people born in the end of 70s-beginning of 80s (generation x).

We selected young people of a wide age spectrum: 17–24. Those are young people whose world-view has predominantly been formed in post-Soviet Russia. The two age groups which are of primary importance are 17-year-olds – the time of hope – and 24-year-olds – the time of establishing oneself. To fulfil the aim of the research, we also focused on the group of third and fourth year students (19–20 years old). Firstly, this is the time when most of the students are through with their adaptation at the university. Secondly, the relics of influence factors from their pre-university days are less pronounced. Finally, it is the period when the professional and future life prospects are actualised.

The distribution of the respondents on the basis of age was as follows: 17–18 years: 24 %, 19–20: 59 %, 21–24: 17 %. On the whole, such stratification is satisfactory for the needs of our research. The male/female ratio was 47.4 % / 52.6 %. This is a normal ratio for students in Russian universities. It is characteristic that male

students dominate in the sciences and technical studies, while female students dominate in the humanities. In our case, students of the humanities comprised 51.4 %, while the students of the technical and natural sciences comprised 48.6 %.

The Nuremberg method was used for selecting our objects. Shlyapentoch (1976) describes this method as sampling those units of the general aggregate which happened to be "close at hand", and which share some uniting feature in a rather diffuse totality (students).

Some reflections on the procedure of collecting data

The challenge was that I had put both the questionnaire with open questions and the list of words for the linguistic experiment into one set. However, I realised that those two parts were unequal in terms of time needed for their completion. The former part required some brainwork and more time, while the value of the data from the latter part was essentially in the instantaneous and spontaneous nature of the answers given.

I had to collect a lot of data in a short period of time, and do it alone. I also had a limited amount of questionnaire forms that could be wasted. Therefore the only workable plan was to hand out the questionnaires at the universities during lectures – the time when students are usually prepared for some brainwork. I estimated that at some "joint" lectures I could get up to 70 students at a time. I discussed this in advance with the lecturers, and in most cases I received permission to conduct the survey in this manner. I tried to pick out lectures on social sciences which were not on major themes as the relevant context for filling out the questionnaire.

Getting students to fill out the questionnaires at lectures was quite efficient. It decreased the number of wasted or unreturned questionnaires, my presence helped when there were procedural questions, and the lecturer (if present) served "an authority." Perhaps,

this presence of an authority figure and the researcher created an element of pressure upon the respondents, but the students did have the option of not co-operating, and some exercised that option. On the other hand, filling out the forms at the lecture did little to restrict their free time.

The only technical question that arose was when to hand out the questionnaires: at the beginning or at the end of the lecture? It was an important point of timing: time in my possession and in the possession of the respondents. I decided to balance both. I also had to consider the permission of the lecturer as to when I could come and how much time I could have.

Completing the questionnaire forms at the beginning didn't put much pressure on the respondents and gave time to think, as they had a full lecture ahead of them. That was good for the questions, but allowed too much thinking on the associations. Giving it at the end created some time limit, because many students would have to leave the class as soon the lecture was over, since the lunch break which followed was rather short. Partly, that was good for the second part. Respondents didn't have much time to think what kind of free association they should give and they would write what comes first to their mind. Being the easier part – free associations part was in the majority of cases complete, while the first part was sometimes skipped. Such half-completed sets were not considered.

Classifying the data

The respondents were asked to give 3 associations to the 15 symbols which I mentioned earlier. The responses to this experiment created significant mass of data (2490 associations with each symbol), which had to be classified. The first procedure in classification was identifying the high-frequency associations – the words that were named most often.

High-frequency associations resemble the dominant meanings of the conceptual political symbol. There were two groups of high-

frequency associations (HFA): 1) with abstract meanings and 2) with concrete or figurative meanings (personal pronouns, personifications, metaphors). The number of high-frequency associations with the concrete meanings given to a symbol varied, but the former group tended to outnumber the latter. In the research by Wagner et al., each word came with "an index to indicate the weight of the word in the construction of the dimension. Only words with a substantial value on this index were considered for interpreting the dimension" (Wagner et al. 1999, 114). I measured the frequency of the word by the number of students who mentioned it percentage wise. In some cases, one particular high frequency association would account for 25 % of a certain symbol. For example, the top three high-frequency associations with the symbol "democracy" were as follows: "freedom" – 25 %, "freedom of speech" – 16 %, "power of the people" – 15 %. Surprisingly, the individual associations were quite homogenous. Since one of the major objectives was to identify the dominant meanings, words mentioned only once were not considered. But there was still the challenge of classifying the highly heterogeneous answers when the high-frequency associations were elusive. Before the statistical analysis in such cases the responses were simplified. For example, adjectives were classified in groups of positively valued and negatively valued adjectives. Highly emotional pronouns were classified in one group and pejorative lexis was classified in another one. The second procedure was the grouping of the images – the "figurative nucleus", which includes the metaphors, slogans, expressions and words with figurative meanings. For example, one of the HFA groups to the word "market" was a group of words, which contained the pejorative nicknames for the traders from the Caucuses, Central Asia and China – "blacks", etc. I should mention that during the grouping of images, personifications occupied a prominent position. Some of the conceptual symbols were often related to a certain personality.

Thus measuring each symbol is done along two dimensions – through grouping the high-frequency associations and images. Identifying the whole field of meanings is a complex task and it was not set in my study.

The study of symbols used in free associations may require two steps. Some of the high-frequency associations received at the first stage themselves resemble multivalent symbols and need secondary measuring of the dominant meaning – the dominant high-frequency association. This may help to get closer to the irrational side of the symbol's persuasive potential. For example, after the first stage of the linguistic experiment the dominant meaning of the symbol "democracy" was identified as "freedom". At the secondary stage, in order to see what democracy is, one must take the word "freedom" and break it down into high-frequency associations by means of a new free association test. One can say this breaking down symbols into smaller parts can be done ad infinitum. I would do it only until I get a concrete image and not an abstract word (like "freedom") beyond one particular symbol. However, you might get a concrete image of a symbol already at the first stage.

Reconstructing the content of a conceptual political symbol is basically reconstructing the two levels which are empirically measured – the cognitive and emotive levels.

The logic of the analysis of conceptual political symbols

Three groups of symbols – symbolic events, symbolic personalities and official symbols – were studied largely through open and multiple-choice questions. This allowed me to study the respondents' attitudes towards certain symbols. The objective was to identify the dominant attitudes and patterns of perception of symbolic events, official symbols and symbolic personalities of modern Russia by the students. The findings here were also significant. But I didn't get too deep in the content of these symbols. My theoretical model was not designed specifically for the analysis of attitudes towards symbols, but rather for a multi-layered analysis of conceptual political symbols.

The major thesis preceding the analysis was that the image of

power (power authorities) is formed under influence of such long-term factors as cultural traditions and archetypes, which are present in the mass consciousness of the social group.

After classification of high-frequency associations and images, two main lines of analysis were drawn: *analysis of association rows* and *image context analysis*. An association row is made up of high-frequency words identified with each symbol. This analysis of the associations takes place on the cognitive level. Very often associations involve abstract meanings, requiring that we go beyond the cognitive level to the archetypical level. Semantic analysis enables us to follow the changes that occur in the cognitive content of the symbols (in our case – conceptual political symbols).

Image context analysis studies the emotive level in the structure of the symbol. The linguistic experiment showed that the image context may contain very vivid pictures at the emotive level. For example the content of the symbol "labour" included the words milkmaid, blisters, hump, free of charge, axe, sweat, blood, hammer. It can also be very poor, however.

Revealing the cognitive and emotive content of political symbol helps to reconstruct a symbol, which may be significant in the integration of the social group.

The great number of emotionally loaded words which were suggested by respondents provides evidence that a transformation is taking place in the cognitive content of symbols. The process of the transformation of the cognitive content in symbols is one of the peculiar features of the developing political discourse in Russia.

The final stage was the cross analysis of the high-frequency associations. It turned out that for some symbols certain opposition pairs appeared. For example, the top high-frequency association for the symbols "business" and "market" was "money." At the same time it was the bottom high-frequency word for the word "labour". Another example of cross-analysis is that one of the high-frequency associations with democracy was the word "people". The next step is to take a look what kind of associations the symbol "people" is comprised of.[2]

Cross analysis helps us to find interrelationships between

the different political symbols' meanings. It enables us to better understand the mechanism of manipulation and subconscious attitudes of the individuals towards the given phenomena of political reality. Attitudes towards these phenomena are expressed in the meanings which are attributed to the symbols by young people. Analysis of these meanings is targeted at revealing the most stable and significant ones.

The data revealed in the experiment demonstrates the various degrees of reception of political symbols; at the same time providing us with a context for figurative images which are built around the dominant meaning.

Conclusion: Challenges and limitations of the method chosen

There are several critical considerations regarding using the symbolic perspective in youth research. I had no illusions that exploring symbols would be an easy matter. From the beginning my strategy involved combining different methods of collecting and analysing data. That included both traditional sociological survey methods and linguistic analysis methods. Such an interdisciplinary approach is necessary when dealing with entities like "symbol" which cross the borders of different social sciences. Focus-interviews and the analysis of visual data could be a good addition to the techniques of collecting data I used in my study.

The criteria used to select symbols for reconstruction and analysis is an important issue. Picking the symbols at random may be interesting but makes little sense for a systematic study which could be used for further comparison. Comparison of political symbols, as seen in research by I. Pool (1970), can be an effective approach to interpreting political symbols as social indicators of historic trends in dominant political ideologies.

The theoretical model developed during the study worked for the conceptual political symbols. It was important to counter balance

the rigidity of content-analysis, which basically provided a sample of images for free association, with a more flexible interpretive paradigm. The interpretive potential of semiotic analysis (R. Barthes) was considered, but in addition to that Jung's theory of archetypes (further developed by Strauss and Howe) was adopted. Since the symbol is an element used in communication, I tried to balance two methods. (Leiss et al. (1986) proved that combining semiotic analysis with content-analysis can be quite effective in the study of communication processes.)

The communicative structure of symbol has its limitations. It is evident that some of the political symbols cannot be analysed strictly in terms of this model. For example, a political slogan is a type of political symbol, but a slogan also has a strong phono-semantic emotional level. Sometimes it is enough for a political symbol to be effective and stimulate direct action at just a very strong emotional level.

Notes

1 The exceptions here are that great deal of research has been conducted on the use of symbols in Nazi Germany, USSR and China during the Cultural Revolution.

2 Two symbols – "narod" and "trud" have particularly strong ideological connotations. Without them, the word "trud" is relatively close to the English concept of "labour". The closest equivalent for the word "narod" would be "people", "folk", or "populace".

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METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS ON DOING ETHNOGRAPHIC FIELDWORK IN MULTICULTURAL SURROUNDINGS[1]

by Veronika Honkasalo

Introduction

> We moved with the principal to the corridor, where the students were going into the classrooms. I ran in a hurry after the principal and suddenly he said: "Look, there you have them! Go and ask them if they would like to be your interviewees." I was totally perplexed and lisped something for an answer. I said: "I wouldn't like to do it this way!" Next the principal asked the teachers to tell their immigrant students to come in front of the school library. Then he turned towards me and said in a relieved manner: "I think you'll have enough of them now!" At that moment I was almost bursting into tears. I went to sit on a bench in front of the library. Seven students arrived and I was more than embarrassed. We went into the library and I introduced myself to them in as friendly manner as I possibly could and told them about my research. I also apologised deeply for the awkward behaviour of the principal, at the same time I felt strongly that there were no words that would reverse his behaviour. (Field diary, 15.2.2000.)

Mistakes and failures in the research field are episodes that can teach a researcher a lot about crucial things in their research themes that they would not see without having the perspective of the majority. The above example of a field experience is from the time when I first met my interviewees, during the spring of 2000. I was then researching my master's thesis, which dealt with questions of how the notions of ethnicity and racism were understood by young immigrants[2] in Finland (Honkasalo 2001).[3] I had met the school principal several times and he had promised that he would arrange a group of students whom I could ask if they would like to participate in my research. Things did not go the way I had wished and the experience shows what it means in practice to be singled out based on ones visual appearance on daily basis. This is something that many of my informants later talked about in the interviews and which they felt strongly about.

When I started my PhD research I wanted to widen my possibilities for gathering data and decided to use more ethnographic fieldwork methods. I wanted to continue with the same research themes I had been dealing with since my master's thesis[4] but now limiting them to the specific viewpoint of immigrant girls. It seemed to me that immigrant boys were usually focused upon in research and by the media when discussing marginalization and immigrant youth. My choice of topic does not mean that my intention is to undermine the studies focused on immigrant boys or polarise immigrant research according to gender. Rather I want to underline the importance of gender sensitive approach and focus on the silent exclusion regarding immigrant girls in research and public discussion (see Andersson 2003a, 84).

This article discusses some key issues in doing ethnographic fieldwork amongst young people with an immigrant background. It is based on my own fieldwork which I am currently conducting for my PhD thesis, but I am also drawing from my earlier experiences of fieldwork amongst young immigrants while conducting research for my master's dissertation. Issues linked to youth, ethnicity and gender in relation to fieldwork will be specifically discussed in this article.

An ethnographer dealing with issues related to young people,

minorities, ethnic relations, etc. should be aware of power relations both in the field and "at home", as well as being aware of his/her own tendency as an academic researcher to further develop the existing power relations. Weight should also be put on giving the informants' some possibility to participate in analysing the data in order to make the research more valid and reliable. In studying minorities, a researcher who belongs to the "privileged" majority often has to justify his/her role as a researcher. Researchers representing the majority can be accused of being colour-blind (e.g. Rastas 2004) and not being able to fully mediate the experience. At the same time the minority/majority position should not be seen as the only fundamental variable – gender, age, education, class, occupation and life histories are also characteristics that the researcher either shares with informants or which distinguish the researcher from the informants (see Abu-Lughod 1991).

After having finished my master's thesis I was thinking about how I could study this same phenomena from a wider perspective without limiting myself only to interview material. Already while conducting the interviews for my master's I found that my methods gave me only partial information about my informants' experiences of racism. First of all, when a study is based only on individual interviews, the relationship between the researcher and the research subject can easily remain cold and impersonal, which may prevent the researcher from getting "rich information" or from getting close to learning "how informants interpret the world through which they move" (Agar 1980, 90). In my case I noticed already while conducting the interviews that the interviews also limited my possibilities to get closer to the interviewees' experiences and self-understanding. In fact the interviews revealed questions I had not been thinking of before carrying them out. Even most of my interviewees had come to Finland when they were quite young and had worked their way through the Finnish school system to an upper secondary level, it still would have been easier for them to express themselves if the interviews had been conducted in their own native language. Enlarging the methods to also consist of participant observation, etc. will enable me to grasp the phenomena in a more

multidimensional way, and to avoid a straight binary position and the bias which interviews may create. The interview situation in my previous research also seemed unnatural to me in many ways, and when asking for the permission for the interviews I felt that I put the young people in an unequal position from the beginning.

When dealing with sensitive issues, such as racism and xenophobia, the questions should be extra carefully prepared and the researcher very aware that they can unintentionally have an offending effect on the interviewees. In my study, for example, young people tended to downplay their experiences which they defined as being racist or discriminatory. Marja Tiilikainen points out that she discovered while doing her own research, which deals with Somali women in Finland, that the researcher should always remember that interviewees from ethnic minorities may have negative and traumatic experiences from previous interviews conducted, for example, by civil servants, teachers and police. Besides this, talking about sensitive issues such as racism and discrimination may give a picture that the interviewees are actually themselves the target of racist attitudes and stereotypes and therefore they limit their answers to the minimum (Tiilikainen 2000, 96). Afterwards I realised that one way of overcoming the problems I had when conducting my interviews would have been to conduct focused group interviews in order to create a more confidential, trusting and relaxed atmosphere (see e.g. Bredstöm 2003, 10–11; also Helve 1993, 52–54). On the other hand, group interviews can easily create a feeling of social pressure. The informants may feel that the answers have to be given in a socially and morally accepted way and they may be afraid of giving "wrong answers" (see e.g. Suurpää 2002, 33–34).

In the ongoing research, my intention is to familiarise myself with the field as much as possible and then step by step to conduct interviews in the field surroundings. I will also try to expand the definition of a research interview in a way which enables it to be like a free discussion in the field (see also Vaaranen 2002, 23) and not a one-way question and answer interrogation.

From ethnography to feminist ethnography

> A challenge for research on immigrant youth is to combine macro-perspectives on inequality in ethnic and racial terms with a sensitive approach to how marginalization processes unfold, are contested or re-produced in different arenas of everyday life (Andersson 2003a, 79).

In social sciences and cultural studies, ethnographic methods are often defined as being the direct opposite of quantitative methods. Ethnographic methods are thus seen as methods which aim to get the researcher closer to the experience of the ones researched and via this close relationship attempt to describe social and cultural phenomena. At the same time, ethnographic methods cannot be neatly defined, as they refer to a certain perspective or way of doing, understanding and approaching research (Sakaranaho, Sjöblom & Utriainen 2002, 4–5) rather than strict rules of how to conduct research. In a traditional definition of anthropology, ethnographic methods are understood as methods that can be defined as direct observation of a particular group and unveiling personal experiences (Burgess 1984, 2; see also Agar 1980) as well as living together and sharing everyday life of the informants. At its most extreme, this means getting socialised into a certain group of interest. Clifford Geertz points out that what actually defines ethnography more than its techniques is that it is an intellectual effort, "an elaborate venture in, to borrow a notion from Gilbert Ryle, 'thick description'" (Geertz 1973, 6).

In Finland the trend towards ethnographic fieldwork among young immigrants is growing constantly. Previously the emphasis tended to be on survey-, interview- and statistical studies. Young immigrants are considered to be a group whose views, interpretations and expressions of everyday life are seen to be best recorded with qualitative methods which are sensitive to power relations between the researcher and the ones researched and the research setting in itself. Researchers also want to stress the importance of "bottom-up

knowledge" and to give a voice to a group of people that they define as being voiceless in the society. At the same time the researcher's own position when conducting ethnographic fieldwork, for example among young immigrants, is seldom critically questioned. It is assumed that fieldwork in itself already includes a high level of ethical sensitivity and responsiveness (e.g. Bloustien & Baker 2003, 71). Even if the researcher using ethnographic methods is sensitive to power relations, the choices and means of overcoming these problems in the field are rarely explained in the final research text (e.g. Rastas 2004) as well as the ways in which fieldwork affects us as researchers (Coffey 1999, 1). It seems that being sensitive regarding power related issues in fieldwork is thus something that every ethnographer has to learn on his or her own, and possible mistakes and failures should not be confessed when analysing the research process.

The actual variety of methods used in ethnography is wide. Ethnographic methods can include, for example, individual, group and e-mail interviews; participant and non-participant observation; textual analysis of documents, photographs and films recorded, etc. The common characteristics of all these methods are that they all strive to describe, understand and analyse social interaction of "other" people (Utrianen 2002, 176) and thus ethnography could best be described as being a theory of a research process (Skeggs 1995, 192). The "other" does not in this context only refer to the ethnically or culturally different, as the "other" can also be found within our own social understanding and "anthropology can be trained on the culture of which it itself a part" (Geertz 1973, 14). The considerations of this article arise from fieldwork which was/is done mainly by participant observation and interviews. However, it should be mentioned that Bloustien and Baker (2003, 71), for example, stress that ethnographers should use more advantageous methods such as visual auto-ethnography when studying young people, especially as it is rare for an adult researcher to get invited to certain social spaces.

Studies dealing with minorities tend to rely on justifications of empowerment that stress "giving a voice" to marginalized groups.

"Giving a voice," however, is not enough, as it is equally important to consider from which standpoints and positions the voice is given, and mediated and by whom (e.g. Ahmed 2000; see also Abu-Lughod 1991, 140–141). Judith Stacey argues in her classic article "Can There be a Feminist Ethnography?" that ethnographic fieldwork is always a web of human relations exposing the ones researched to the possibility of exploitation, for example after the researcher leaves the field. Stacey therefore calls for heightened sensitivity, respect and equality, as the research subjects are more easily affected by the research setting than the researcher, and the researcher is always more easily able to leave the relationship (Stacey 1988).

The premises for ethnographic methods are seen to be a constant process, as ethnography is no longer something which is done far away from "home" (e.g. Tiilikainen 2003, 22–23). The meaning of feminist ethnography though is much more complex, not relying on simple definitions of ethnography. As an expression of feminism it holds to an understanding of ethnography as being political and the idea of objectivity becomes questionable and a matter of concern (Abu-Lughod 1990, 8–9).

My understanding of ethnographic methods is affected by feminist and anti-racist agendas which both stress the importance of power relations (see e.g. Skeggs 1995, 200). Being a youth researcher studying minorities, immigrants and multicultural negotiations, my definition of ethnography is as a process which is not restricted to the actual data gathering phase but which rather continues on after data has been gathered and even precedes the data gathering through its role in the planning of the research. It then continues in talking and writing about it. Ethnography does not end where the observation ends but consists also of the product itself (Agar 1980, 1). For me feminist ethnography means above all to be aware of unveiling, deconstructing power relations in order to question these matters from a gender sensitive perspective. Feminist ethnography differs from the traditional ethnography in that it has tended to make sure that the women's lives and interpretations are not neglected in descriptions of societies, and that gender has been theorised into accounts of how society works. Moreover Abu-Lughod writes that

its role is also to "shake up the paradigm of anthropology itself by showing us that we are always part of what we study and we always stand in definite relations to it" (Abu-Lughod 1990, 16). Feminist ethnography can thus also be regarded as a political project, the purpose of which is to problematise the objectivity taken for granted in anthropological epistemology and to highlight that the "self" and "other" are always constructed concepts, that these positions always ignore other forms of difference and that gender as a system is in continuing interaction with other systems of difference, such as class and ethnicity (Abu-Lughod 1991, 140).

In my research this means underlining the expressions by girls with immigrant backgrounds who are expected to behave and to be in a certain way by the majority of society both in formal and informal surroundings. This situation calls for a deeper understanding of power relations which are simultaneously both fixed and unstable. Power is not only linked with such social categories as class, ethnicity, gender and age, but also with historical features such as whiteness, Europeanness, colonial history etc. which cannot be abolished. Thus sameness is not something that is possible to be achieved or it does not automatically mean objective knowledge without an analysis of the historical power relations and encounters between the researcher and the ones researched (Ahmed 2000).

In this article my understanding of ethnography arises from the geertzian definition which underlines the notion of "thick description". For me ethnography is thus a method which concentrates on interpreting small and accurate events and ethnographic description. Geertz defines the role of the researcher as being the one who catches these events and reproduces their cultural meaning in writing. Knowledge is thus produced in a writing process, which draws on the reflectivity of the researcher. (Geertz 1973.)

In the following paragraphs I will briefly outline some aspects that I consider important in fieldwork which focuses on young immigrants, especially from the point of view of age, ethnicity and gender. When doing this, I am aware that these concepts cannot be defined separately as they are often heavily interlinked.

Becoming young in fieldwork

Youth is a concept, which is hard to define, blurring between childhood and adulthood, and which is socially constructed as holding different cultural meanings. Youth is also considered to be prolonged at both ends in the western context: children grow up faster because of better nutrition than before, but then their studies are prolonged and moving to adulthood is not linear (Leccardi 2005). Youth is also described by striving for different possibilities and rights, passing different limits and balancing demands with obligations (Aapola 1999, 351). Young people are also often in an unequal position in regard to adults and dependent on their acceptance (Aapola 1999). In my own research I understand youth as a wide concept which includes biological age but is also connected to speech, memories, representations, images and attitudes about youth as well as performed youth. Päivi Harinen argues that the importance of age in youth research lies in what the interviewees themselves want to say. For example the interview speech is affected by whom the young people are used to talking with, in what sense and what sort of manners of speaking young people have adopted (Harinen 2000, 50).

The notion of youth also takes on new dimensions in the multicultural context – young people with experiences of transnational movements, networks and survival strategies possess different kinds of expressions of youth than, for example, their Finnish peers. Growing up in a new society also shifts the traditional relations and social duties between generations. Compared to their parents, young people with immigrant backgrounds often have wider social knowledge about the society in which they live (e.g. Tiilikainen 2003, 178–185). Gender differences also affect the notion of youth, as boys and girls face different role expectations while growing up (e.g. Aaltonen & Honkatukia 2002).

The concept of youth becomes even more multidimensional while conducting fieldwork when regarded from the perspective of those researched. Petri Hautaniemi (2003) poses the question of whether there is in fact any point in doing ethnographic fieldwork in youth research, as the data gathering takes so much time and the

research subjects reach adulthood and are not young anymore when the researcher presents his/her final data analyses and writes the research report. When defining what ethnography means in youth research Hautaniemi divides it into two categories: on the other hand ethnography is the result of a research, a text that aims at describing social life as detailed as possible; on the other hand ethnography refers to the method itself, to the research process as a whole. According to Hautaniemi, ethnography thus gives a description of a very specific time period, of a certain youth at a certain point in time (Hautaniemi 2003, 55–57). Terhi Utriainen points out that ethnographic understanding is different than common sense reasoning as it is always framed by theoretical context and concepts and the researcher always derives from and represents a certain scientific tradition (Utriainen 2002, 177). In my case this means that my ethnographic understanding is shaped by the information and academic tradition which I have been taught regarding youth, as well as more general theories on, for example, globalisation, trans-nationalism and multiculturalism.

In my own research I have tried to understand the concept of age in two different ways: as performed age and factual age. This means for example that I am aware of my habitus referring to a much younger age that I actually present, and for me the ethnographic surrounding also causes a symbolic transformation of becoming younger. By this I mean that I try unintentionally to get closer to those I am studying, which is partly due to a strong identification with those I am observing. An example of this kind of reaction is from the basketball training which I have been participating in during spring, 2004. Even though I have introduced myself to the girls, told them about my intentions and asked them for a permission to do fieldwork amongst them, they easily forget what my role in the team actually is. It is not exceptional for them to ask me questions like: "How was your school day today?" or "What is your favourite subject at school?" The first time this happened I got perplexed and did not know what to answer because by emphasising my role as a researcher I would have estranged myself further from the girls. Finally I decided to answer that my school is the university and

my day went fine. It seemed that this question, which contained a notion that I would be younger than I am, disturbed me more than the girl who posed the question.

Getting closer to those I am researching and identifying myself with them causes, however, further problems in the institutions where I have to introduce myself to authorities and co-operate with them. It seems to me that my credibility as a researcher is often at stake because of my performed age. In front of "adults" or "other adults" I have to intentionally underline my factual age to strengthen my authority. It is not rare that an ethnographer faces suspicious gazes and remarks even after getting research permission in institutions such as schools and youth centres. Five years ago, when I conducted my fieldwork in a cultural centre and participated in organising discos for young people, the staff were very interested in my research motivations. I felt very controversial as I did not know what to tell about my research because I did not want my own description of my research to affect the research setting and their attitudes towards me as a researcher. Telling them explicitly that I was on the field observing ethnic relations in the everyday life of young people, with a focus on experiences of racism, drew immediate responses among the youth workers of: "I think that the concept of racism is needless. People talk too much about it, and it gets a negative connotation. There must be more fruitful ways of researching immigrant young people." (Field diary, 14.11.1999.)

Ethnicity and gender in fieldwork

What do I actually mean by the concept immigrant girls when defining my research topic as an ethnographic study of immigrant girls in Helsinki? The concept of "immigrant" is criticised both in research communities and by those defined as immigrants, but rarely in public discourses. According to critical standpoints there is no such given category as "immigrant young people", but it is rather a socially constructed or even invented category (e.g. Andersson

2003b; Fock 1999; Bredstöm 2002; Ålund 1997, etc.). At the same time researchers doing ethnic studies are warned against reproducing social inequalities, power relations and hierarchies (see e.g. Rastas 2004). In my master's thesis I solved this labelling problem by letting my informants themselves define the term "immigrant", what it meant according to them, and by trying to be sensitive to the different meanings the concept was given. At the same time I don't want to claim that my own research is focused on "immigrants" per se, but rather on the ethnic or multicultural relations and negotiations between different youth groups in different social and cultural spaces and surroundings. In my research ethnicity, gender and age are understood as tightly bound together but as concepts they are also in a constant negotiation process and flux, especially when observed in action on the field. Ethnicity means different things depending on the context and surrounding, and the girls also tend to consciously underline different aspect in different contexts according to the expectations coming from these "others".

The girls I am studying also constantly face different role expectations regarding gender relations and their reflections about gender are affected by the cultural meanings coming from outside and from home. Also my own gender implies that I am constantly reproducing a certain perception of gender in the field, which includes notions of equality, rights and emancipation. My assumptions may not, however, always coexist with the girls' notions, and the femininity I am representing may have controversial meanings to those I am studying. My notions and experiences of femininity may also steer my observation to certain things in the field and later to paths that I want to find in my data when analysing it, which means that my interpretations are loaded with a motivation to find certain kinds of femininity. I find feminist ethnography relevant for my study for this very reason: I am looking for different kinds of femininities and constructions of being a girl, interpreted both by the girls themselves and by others, as educators. Feminist ethnography is after all a tool by means of which I try to bring to life what it means to be a girl with an immigrant background in today's Finland, to find differences and commonalities with their Finnish peers, and finally to see how these

differences and commonalities are enacted in everyday life.

Intersectionality is used in feminist studies to highlight conceptual interconnectedness between notions such as "race", ethnicity, class, gender and sexuality. In my own research intersectionality also refers to a certain kind of position towards action research: I do not follow how things are in "reality", but rather I participate, taking an ethnographic standpoint, as a researcher, in the production of knowledge (see Lykke 2003, 50) and in attempting to change policies. This, together with the sensitivity of my research topic, requires a deconstruction of my position as a researcher, and this is why I am interested in the power relations I am constantly producing on the field. Intersectionality is thus also connected to the role-expectations of the researcher and it seems important that the researcher in his/her analysis reflects upon the choices, selections and de-selections he/she is making while conducting the research. In research this also means an inclusion/exclusion of power relations.

Action research is very seldom done when conducting feminist studies and many Finnish gender researchers are now calling for more action research as it is seen as a way to emancipate girls and put the researcher and the researched on the same level. I define my research as being only loosely action research, as my aim in my research is to emphasise collaboration and active participation both by the participants and staff members, and by me as a researcher. This kind of attitude towards research to me means bringing the researcher closer to those researched. At the same time questions regarding hierarchy and power relations become more actual, and the responsibility of the researcher grows.

Conclusion

The way one tells about ones own research while conducting it impacts both the research process and the setting. Whether one is describing the research to the academic community, the ones researched or any other instances interested in the research, this process of describing

always reflects back to the research itself (Essed 2004, 123). Age, ethnicity and gender all raise questions, but studying girls with immigrant backgrounds is a research topic which is loaded with sensitive issues and issues that everyone has something to say about. By this I mean that people easily comment on, for example, Finnish immigration policy or immigrants in general, even if I haven't asked their specific opinion about these matters.

Immigrant girls can be seen to be in many exclusive positions at the same time, because of gender, age and ethnicity. Conducting research among these girls raises many questions of power relations as they may not have possibilities to affect their own life situation and being an immigrant is the result of their parents solutions, not their own (Honkasalo 2001). I have tried above to describe how such social constructions as gender, age and ethnicity put me as a researcher in both outsider and insider positions while conducting fieldwork. The inequalities and power relations these constructions hold are not abolished only by "giving the voice" or by "speaking for" the girls I am studying. Abu-Lughod calls for an "ethnography of the particular" by which she means that instead of generalisations, ethnographers should seek for particularities in cultures which "disturbs" the essentialist cultural concept and makes it possible to find similarities and familiarities in all our lives (Abu-Lughod 1991, 157–158).

In my own study it is thus important to understand when differences are of a social character and when they are because of the ethnic background. This is to say that the girls I am studying should not be studied through "ethnic glasses" which prevent us from realising that in many cases the conflicts or easiness my informants face in their everyday life may be the result of shared characteristics of "Finnish youth" and not because of the ethnic or cultural background. The demand of ethnographic fieldwork in a multicultural setting and youth studies is therefore to be sensitive to different kinds of "otherness", due to for example age, gender and ethnicity. Ethnography is ultimately a question of power relations: power to do research; to interpret the field, the ones researched, their stories and their realities. In this article I have tried to point

out how important it is to tell also about mistakes, failures and frustrations in fieldwork as well, since surely there does not exist an ethnographic research which would have been a success from the beginning to the end. The conflicts the researcher is experiencing in the field make the research interesting and relevant. And human interaction is above all about conflicts and resolving them. And by conflicts I do not only mean visible and noisy ones but also those happening in silence at the margins.

Notes

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2 When using the concept immigrant in this article I refer to young people who are born outside Finland, or one or both of whose parents are foreign. I am aware of this having sensitive and labelling connotations, and I discuss this later in the article.

3 I interviewed 12 young students in an upper secondary school situated in Helsinki during the spring of 2000. My informants were 16-18 years old and all born outside of Finland (e.g. Vietnam, Former Soviet Union, Somalia and Iraq). In the interviews I was interested in how the young people defined ethnicity and racism, and how they talked about their experiences of being Finnish or not and experiencing racism. We also talked about immigrants and immigration more generally. My aim was to study how the concept "immigrants" was used by young people with immigrant background and if they defined themselves as being immigrants or not. My study (also Honkasalo 2003, 2004) showed that my interviewees saw themselves as being in a rather contradictory position in relation to the Finnish society as a whole. Their experiences of racism and xenophobia further underlined the perceived impossibility of ever becoming a "true Finn." It also seemed clear that my informants' notions of racism were heavily affected by the general societal atmosphere in Finland and by the common shared values linked to immigrant policies and immigrants in general.

4 In my PhD research I explore different forms of participation by immigrant girls (13–20 years old) from various cultural backgrounds in the everyday life

of Finnish society. The focus is on their own experiences of themselves as parts of the society. I am examining the girls' experiences of growing up into being members of their own ethnic community as forms of social membership that are constantly negotiated. These negotiations are then further interpreted as generational exchanges of world views and values. The wider frame of the study is provided by the discourses created and mediated by the Finnish general administration and media. Applying viewpoints of Comparative Religion, my study focuses on the fact that in secularised Western societies religion is often projected on the immigrants, who are regarded as a more religious collective than the host society (Baumann 1999). As religion is shifting from private spaces into public arenas and becoming 'political' (e.g. Sakaranaho 2004), immigrant girls are often faced with stereotypical presumptions concerning religion. These presumptions are further affected by media discourses, where religion is often compressed to mean Islam (Baumann 1999). My assumption is thus that girls with immigrant backgrounds have to respond collectively to attitudes towards religion, even if they themselves do not share or declare any religious world view.

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WRITING PERSONALLY AND SPEAKING ETHNOGRAPHICALLY ABOUT METHODOLOGY

by Leena Louhivuori

Methodology

This article describes the application of the traditional ethnological fieldwork method to youth culture studies and the development of the research method so that youth culture and adolescence as a stage of life are understood as a part of one's own culture, history and traditions. In this research childhood, adolescence and youth cultures are tied to societal, cultural and historical events and changes from one generation to another. We follow the stigmatisation of boy gangs, families and the formation of identity capital through three generations. This research has been carried out in two stages: The fieldwork portions have taken place during the years 1984–1986, and then eighteen years later, 2001–2003. The time-span studied is altogether 40 years, from 1962 to 2002.

The research method of the first stage was ethnological fieldwork: interviews, observation, photography, photography teaching and recording accounts of photographs. With photography as a method of observation I could follow the boys almost anywhere. The interview situations varied; I interviewed them together as well as separately.

The boys also wanted to interview each other, parodying my research. Our common goal for the first stage was a photography exhibition. The second stage was born eighteen years later as a consequence of the first stage. The boys' fathers wanted to tell what "really had happened". The boys had also become fathers themselves. Thus, the fathers met their sons and the sons met their fathers. The fieldwork stage was once again comprised of interviews, observation and photography. The common goal was to organize a party for the 40th anniversary of the housing development at Kunnalliskodintie 6 in Koskela in 2002.

In ethnology method traditionally comes before theory. In other words, ethnology is based on field work, methodology and methods. The depicting of a people, i.e. description, constitutes part of the history of ethnology. Researchers have gone to "the field," to the people, and collected information on folk customs since the beginning of the 19th century. The aim was to gather data into archives as a memory of disappearing or already dead traditions. New directions took hold in Finland in the 1950s when Professor Ilmar Talve began compiling the ethnological workers' tradition. Thus time, place and social connections became keywords in ethnology when studying culture and traditions (Talve 1980, 252–273). The everyday life and biographies of one's own people started to interest ethnologists in the 1970s. This was the beginning of the study of the culture of our own period, which is nowadays a part of ethnological research. But the foundational dilemma of ethnology seems to persist: usually the material gathered dictates theoretical the content.

This article concerns methodology attached to my own research. As a whole, my material can be classified as autobiographical. Collective memory is one of the main concepts in this ethnological generation research. I have affixed it to, and developed it together with the concepts of research theory and the models of cultural analysis used in my study, "Like Father, Like Son!" At the same time I examine how through the different phases of youth I can study our own time, cultural and societal phenomena and transformations – how social networks and identity capital are born in youth groups and how they are transferred to the next generations in the suburbs of the metropolis.

A city district, a suburb or a native region

In Finland, the period after the Second World War was a time of rebuilding. Available workplaces increased. The moving from the countryside to the city was continuous. The migrants from Karelia had to be relocated quickly. During the years 1946–1950, 24,000 new inhabitants per year moved to Helsinki, and after that, on an average 10,000 new inhabitants per year. These were vast amounts of new-comers in proportion to the previous population, which just after the Second World War was only about 300,000. The struggle for housing was fierce. Housing speculation flourished. Almost any attic, garden shed, sauna, tunnel or cellar was good enough for housing. Many lived illegally. The traditional structure of the city began to crumble. Dwelling, workplaces and traffic dictated a city structure in accordance with working life. The bourgeoisie, the middle-classes and the workers settled within their own respective areas. Urbanisation had begun. The final touches on the urban image of Helsinki came with the construction needed for the Olympic Games of 1952 (Schulman 2003, 62–63; Schulman 2003, 74–78; Pulma 2003, 123–131).

Of the peripheral areas of the Western Europe of that period, Spain, Greece and Finland experienced the largest change in the structure of livelihood after the Second World War. In other Western countries industrialisation had already taken place at the beginning of the 20th century. Sweden, for example, became industrialized as early as the 1910s. Finland has only been a properly industrialised society since the 1960s or 1970s. (Schulman 2003, 97–98; Alestalo 1980, 102–104, 107). Simultaneously the collaboration between the Nordic countries and the pressures from Europe to form a welfare society demanded clear-cut measures. It is good to remember that due to rapid industrialisation Finland also experienced a cultural change of the same speed and magnitude.

Having acquired recognition as a welfare state, Finland lived happily in a period of continuous economic growth in the 1980s. Both Finland and its people lived grossly beyond their means. The depression at the beginning of the 1990s was the most severe in the

history of Finland. From almost full employment and shortage of labour we shifted to mass unemployment. A banking crisis also hit the indebted Finland and its indebted people. After the depression, there followed a period of poverty, which still holds sway in the beginning of the 21st century (Pulma 2003, 329–336; Puuronen 2004, 14–18, 21–22). According to Professor Puuronen, Finnish society is nowadays more unsafe, more unequal and more unjust than it was at the end of the 1980s – only the framework of welfare society remains. One went from post-war poverty to the poverty following the depression. The payment of the war indemnities and the rescuing of the banks cost equally hurt Finland and its citizens. Next Finland had to be tidied up in the 1990s in order to qualify for EU membership. Finland became a member of the European Union in the 1995. At the same time, people in Koskela lived their own lives amidst these societal and economic changes.

The "lähiö" (suburb) – a new Finnish word and experience

Homelessness was stated as the biggest social problem in Helsinki in the 1960s. The City of Helsinki built emergency housing, so-called "barrack-villages" in Maunula, Käpylä, Toukola and Koskela. They were intended as temporary housing. The last barrack-houses were demolished in Koskela in the 1970s. In the 1950s there were annually still over 20,000 housing seekers, the majority of whom were with families. This queuing lasted all the way to the 1970s (Pulma 2003, 125–126). When in 1962 the first rental apartments of the City of Helsinki appeared in the areas outside the centre of the city, in Maunula, Herttoniemi and Koskela one can only imagine what the struggle had been like to gain access to one.

The first council houses of the City of Helsinki were built in Koskela at Kunnalliskodintie 6 in 1962. Three big council houses immediately received their residents. On the 15th of December, 1962 over 2000 people, of whom over 1000 were children, moved on

the same day into these three City of Helsinki council houses. In the yard there was a table at which sat a council worker who gave the keys in exchange for one's signature. People had to queue up for the keys, and there was fighting in the queue. The elevators did not work that day. The apartments were intended for families with many children. Previously, these families had lived in small places – often without internal plumbing or domestic lavatories. After all that struggling it was a real treat to receive a new modern apartment which had all amenities. The inhabitants came from Helsinki and the countryside, mainly from eastern and northern Finland (Louhivuori 1986, 13–16; 2002 interviews).

Koskela

The houses were named according to their colour as the Yellow (or Brown), Blue and Red buildings. Collectively they were known as the "Kuntsit". Three big high-rise buildings, each of which had nine entrances and seven stories, were an impressive sight in the Helsinki of the early 1960s. Getting an apartment entailed a struggle as did being able to access one. In those days children were put out to play in the yard, and surviving out there was a struggle if anything. This is how being from Koskela, i.e. "the spirit of Koskela", was born. Because of this spirit, Koskela has always had its very own special reputation as a district of Helsinki (Louhivuori 1986, 13, 40–42, 51–54; 2002 interviews).

In 1982 I started work as a cultural instructor in the Cultural Office of the City of Helsinki, in a so-called regional work experiment. The regional work experiment meant the civil servant working groups were formed for problem areas. My areas were Maunula and Jakomäki. In the civil servant working group, which encompassed schools, nurseries, social workers and social service administration; and the general working group, composed of youth workers and cultural workers, attempts were made to make the suburbs safer and more homely and functional, with some help from the

inhabitants. The model came from Sweden. The first equivalent suburban experiments were conducted in 1973 in Hammarkullen in Gothenburg: the so-called FRISKO-project (Zintchenko 2000, 69–71). I began my work with enthusiasm. I had read Swedish ethnologist Åke Daunin's PhD-thesis *Förortsliv* ("Suburb life"), which was published already in 1974. I embraced my areas with the grasp of an urban ethnologist. I went to interview families about how they perceived their own neighbourhood area and what good and bad sides they wanted to mention in particular. There was great suspicion on part of the inhabitants. They thought of me as an informer for the Social Services Centre. I eventually managed to convince them that I was from the Cultural Office and that it was now a case of enhancing the homeliness of one's own area. I was always asked about my background and the most pleasant part was always explaining what ethnology is.

In the data I gathered during the autumn of 1982, the good and the bad sides became very apparent. The good sides were the affordability of the apartment, nature and friends. Then again, there were plenty of bad sides, the biggest of which, in all such suburbs, seemed to be the youth problem. Next came quarrelling neighbours, unrest in the yard, insecurity, stealing, apartments in bad condition, the fact that there were not any services in the area and several families experienced financial hardship (Louhivuori 1986). The same problems also became apparent in the Swedish work on the suburbs (Daun 1974, 41–51, 288–290; Daun 1979; Ristilammi 1994; Arnstberg 2000; 39–53; Zintchenko 2000, 67–69, etc.).

So, the biggest problem was youth. I started from that. For the youngsters in Jakomäki, I established a civil servant working group of its own. It consisted of the youth in the area and the "overactive" members of the civil servant working group. In this working group we went through the views with the youngsters concerning the area, the environment, school, youth work, services, adults and what they would have want to do to improve their own area. We always returned to what they would have wanted to do and what interested them in life in general. My workroom was in Maunula in the premises of the youth centre. There were no youth clubs

in Koskela and the youngsters from Koskela came to the one in Maunula. They made a lot of noise above my workroom. When I asked if there wasn't any other way of expressing oneself than shouting outside my door, they in turn asked what I would suggest. I suggested a photography exhibition about their own lives. And so started the everyday enquiring: "When will we start with that photography?" And thus we then started with the photographing. After many phases of investigation work and applications for funding, it became a reality with the help of the Ministry of Education, categorized as "Research relating to the study of experimental youth culture". The civil servant group stayed and the research began.

Youth culture, photographs and research theoretical adaptation

The starting-point for my coming research was the classical study within visual anthropology or anthro-sociology conducted by Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson. They did an exemplary study in 1942 whilst studying the character of Bali (Mead 1995, 3–9; De Brigard 1995, 26–27; Hockings 1995, 507–510). We started photographing in 1984. It began with me showing them how to use the single-lens-reflex cameras that were so trendy in those days. To start with we had three professional cameras. The leading duo within the gang of that time slowly emerged the group photographers, and of course I also took pictures myself. The pace of shooting was astonishing. Upon receiving the film rolls I immediately developed the negatives and made contact sheets. How nice it would have been to have had digital cameras and computers back then! The work was time-consuming but rewarding. It was particularly nice to hear their first comments about what they themselves and their friends looked like in the pictures. Over the years 1984–1985 5,400 pictures were accrued. At the time I accepted 2,972 pictures into the research about their lives. Now, afterwards, after having gone through all the contact sheets, I noticed that I myself was also a part of their lives. They photographed me

and my family quite extensively: There were over 1,000 pictures of this type. I had edited them out from the first study.

For the research method of the first stage I adapted the intra-cultural theory of science created by American anthropologist Kenneth Pike in the 1950s (Pelto & Pelto 1980, 67–70; Suojanen & Saressalo 1982, 24–25, 59–60, 310), combining it with the so-called ethno-science method. This emistic approach works best when concentrating on one culture and language. I understood youth culture as one culture in its cultural context of that period. I had got to know 15–16-year-old heavy punk rockers from Koskela. By photographing their own life they also told about it through pictures. The photographs functioned as an illustrated story. At the same time their fully mastered code language opened itself to me. The code language consisted of city slang, mutual experiences, reversed and hidden meanings and different sounds, hand signs and facial gestures; not to mention different forms of laughter and coded jokes about situations in which many saw little humour.

After the great initial zeal my objectivity as a researcher began to falter. How could I handle material which is full of the type of information that one could not in fact write; ethically, morally and judicially? We carried on photographing. Other phenomena that could be observed in the research result and the research material was that the boys also parodied the research – through their own vocabulary and reversed meanings for our mutual project. And in that context I noticed and was also frightened by the fact that I was perhaps studying a boy gang from a woman's perspective.

I tried to gain a theoretical distance from the model of cultural analysis developed by Swedish ethnologists. In my opinion, it was necessary in cultural analysis to properly tie the ethnology of the period to societal and cultural changes. I made myself a key vocabulary as I edited together photographs and the transliterations of the interviews. I combined the threefold concept of time, place and social connection to the model of cultural analysis. On the one hand there were the concepts and definitions of the context in which the youngsters lived, and on the other hand their own definitions about their lives.

The absent fathers meet the fathers of today

Through the research of the Koskela gang I became interested in how to study narrated life and viewed film, and how the youngsters familiar with these issues combine these in self-made videos. I tried to find a theoretical framework for comparing everyday life with narration, films and the narrative/plot structure of "self-mades". I researched the libraries of the Finnish Literature Society, Folklivsforskningen in Stockholm, the British Library in London and the libraries of San Diego University. Eventually I gave up and moved on to organizing film events and exhibitions.

In 2001 a man called me and introduced himself on the phone as the absent father of one of the Koskela-boys featured in our photography book, *Koskelan jengi* ("The Koskela gang") (Hämäri, Nieminen & Louhivuori 1987). He said that they had founded a "society" and that they meet once a year. The society was meant for the "original" people of Koskela and they had talked amongst themselves and agreed that they would like to tell me what really had happened in Koskela. In June 2001 they would have a meeting in Lammassaari in Helsinki and they wanted to invite me to their summer party. I accepted. I went to observe, listen, photograph and to familiarize myself with the situation. I met over a hundred men in various stages of partying, and a few women. Many were already familiar from the Koskela gang of 1984–1985. In Lammassaari it became clear that they wanted to tell – and there was plenty to tell. The content of the stories was already partly familiar. I started to become hooked on the subject: These fathers, their sons and the new generations. Finnish men told me about their own childhood, youth and about being a father; what the move to the big high-rise buildings of Koskela was like, and how life started to take shape over there; how little by little the spirit of Koskela came into existence. But here it would be a question of male studies studied by a woman – it was a tough thing to handle.

I made a quick perusal of my archive material from the 1980s;

the study, photography book, transliterated interviews, diaries, the donated music cassettes (heavy music) and photo prints. Besides these I had the home-made video adhering to this theme, *Stadilainen gangsteritarina* ("An Urban Gangster Story") from the year 1986, which I was producing jointly with Doc.Soc.Sci. Tommi Hoikkala. How might I start a new stage of fieldwork, How might I tie this previous material into a new fieldwork method? Is there an urban ethnology on the subject and a generational ethnology which might offer something to grasp? I started with a Finnish study relating to the subject done from the perspective of the ethnology of the period. In the field of urban ethnology I found Professor J. E. Lehtonen's and Professor Matti Räsänen's dense basic package *Kaupunkikansatieteen ongelmia* ("Problems of Urban Ethnology") (Lehtonen & Räsänen 1977). The subject was also considered in Professor Ilmar Talve's *Suomen kansankulttuuri* ("Finnish Folk Culture") (Talve 1980). Finnish generational studies, in turn, were found in the field of sociology: Roos & Hoikkala *Elämänpolitiikka* "("Life Politics") 1998, Roos & Peltonen *Miehen elämää* ("A Man's Life") 1994. Kortteinen *Lähiö* ("The Suburb") 1982. A word search for "Swedish ethnology" also turned up plenty of results, so I travelled to the ethnological department of the University of Stockholm. There I found several studies in generational ethnology: Ristilammi: *Rosengård och den svarta poesin* ("Rosengård and the black poetry") 1994, Äström: *Fäder och söner, bland svenska män i tre generationer* ("Fathers and Sons – Three Generations of Swedish Men") 1990, *Pappa och jag, fjorton män berättar* ("Dad and I – fourteen men tell") 1991, Nilsson: *Maskulinitet* ("Masculinity") 1999, Hagström: *Man blir pappa* ("The Man Becomes a Daddy") 1999, Ambjörnsson: *Mansmyter* ("Myths of Manhood") 1990, Knutsson (ed.): *Mäns livssammanhang* ("Men's Biographical Similarities") 1993, etc.

The research methods and the posing of the research question started to become clearer again. During the peak years of urbanisation and industrialisation, in December 1962, the first suburban development built in Helsinki, Koskela, was completed. In 2002 the first rental houses in Koskela would celebrate their 40th anniversary.

We would organise the 40th birthday party for the high-rise buildings at Kunnalliskodintie, the organising of which would function as a research method. Together with the Pro-Koskela society, in autumn 2001 we started planning a common village party. At the same time I started gathering old photographs and conducting new interviews. The material for my research would be the joint collective memory gathered from that period. The men wanted to tell what childhood and adolescence were like in Koskela. What does being from Koskela or the spirit of Koskela mean?

The American historian Georg Lipsitz has developed an interesting research theory in his work, *Collective Memory and American Popular Culture. Time Passages* (Lipsitz 1991, vii–xvii, 39–45). His premise seemed to fit in well with my own collective memory and youth. Big societal and historical changes occurred and stunning new innovations and technology arose between 1962 and 2002. Tying the collective memory to popular cultural events endows them with time, place and social connection; for example "it" happened when we were at the Hollies concert. The concert was in 1967 in Helsinki. Who liked the music of the Hollies and why? Or the Hurriganes? How did music divide and enchant those in Koskela in the 1970s? What was the effect of heavy music in the 1980s? Or how did the first television sets come to Kunnalliskodintie? Who were the first to get them; what did they watch on them; with who and what else was there to watch? How did rock music and record-players arrive? How did rock music divide youth? How did clothing styles divide and unite young people? Certain phenomena of popular culture function here as the pillars of collective memory. More than anything, popular culture has always had an effect especially on children and youngsters, who have always been its biggest consumer group. How did this become apparent in poverty-ridden, working class Koskela?

Reconciling the interview content from different periods

I formulated the interviews for the second stage loosely around the life-content that emerged from the interviews and the boys' own definitions in the 1980s. About 60 youngsters were part of the gang of that period, of which 20 youngsters formed its core. They were 14–18-year-olds. Their youth cultural life reflected the life of the prevailing culture. The most important things that were repeated and talked of openly, using alternative expressions or by fully coding, were friends, school, work, leisure time, mopeds, motorcycles, cars, body building, fishing, home, family, father, one's own residential area, the city centre, girls, heavy music, concerts and films. Behind this categorisation is found the everyday life in which they lived at the time.

How did the boys talk about these things? The most important thing was their friends. They had the greatest significance, especially the trustworthiness of your friends, whom to trust and whom not to. The traits of a good friend were constantly reiterated. At the same time they named all those who belonged to whatever category they had created. School was something to be avoided. Some of them had been in the special supervision classes, taken into the custody of a children's home or were hiding in the forests and in the city until they were 15 years old. Work was something to get into as soon as possible. One's age was lied about in order to get work. In those days anyone could immediately get work at construction sites without schooling. Leisure time was when all sorts of things were done together: drinking, gambling, drugs and driving. There was stealing in order to finance these leisure activities. Cars and motorcycles meant everything. These were also stolen. There was thoroughgoing bodybuilding. People went fishing. Home and family were the same thing, or separate, depending on the situation in life. Family usually meant mother and siblings. Home was the place to sleep if one's keys had not been confiscated as a form of punishment, in which case nights were spent outside or in the. Only for a few did

this also included a father. Dad was a person who did great deeds and who had survived through everything in life. He was strongest and wisest. It was only a shame that he had often left and then did not return at all. The relation to one's own residential area was a state of mind reminiscent of the love of your native region. Every rock and stumps was known by heart. Places were named – renamed – according to what had happened there. The centre, "stadi", was a place where one went during the weekends to meet other youngsters. Other youngsters were classified on these occasions. Girls were sought after and there was fighting with other gangs. The girls were classified with thoroughness and devotion. They were talked about, and at times dreaded and despised. Films were constantly watched on video; seldom in cinemas. They were watched together. The same films were watched repeatedly, many times. Heavy music filled the hifi-systems. Concerts were well prepared for. Cloths were designed and reconstructed for the occasion. There was a constant classifying of how to recognize good heavy. Who were real heavies? What type of world view and fantasy world did heavy music with its lyrics bring across? Heavy concerts were the sole places they did not take a camera with them. It would spoil the musical enjoyment. Those times I photographed them myself. (Louhivuori 1988, 40–90.)

So were the years 1984–1985. I then interviewed them again in 2002, after they had had some time to build on that basic foundation in life. Now these youngsters were fathers; married or already divorced. I interviewed their fathers. They formed the so-called old gang, which was formed immediately in the beginning of the 1960s; those that had brought it to life. During the years 2002–2003 I conducted 80 interviews altogether. The main emphasis in the study is on the key persons of the first gang, as well as the gang of the 1980s and their leading figures. The third group is the children of the boys/men who had been in both gangs, focusing on fathers and sons. The fourth important group of interviewees are the other members of the family: mothers and sisters.

I did adaptive classifications of content with the following studies, in which all the research is based on the research subjects' own definition of their life. In addition, I felt that these studies are close to

my own research: Åke Daunin *Förortsliv* ("Suburb life") 1974, Paul Willis *Learning to Labour* 1977, Helena Helve *Nuorten maailmankuva* ("The World View of Young People") 1987, Hanna Snellman *Sallan suurin kylä – Göteborg* ("Salla's Largest Village: Gothenburg") 2003. I compared the content of my own research material to these. I found common content paths among the studies. In all these studies the most important things in peoples (the research subjects') lives were childhood, adolescence and childhood friends, family, work, leisure time, home and social networks and survival through life and everyday chores. From that something like a person's life cycle is created. At the same time European social research shows that the development since the Second World War has been such that the importance of kin, family, neighbours and social networks has diminished and individualism has increased (Hoikkala 1998, 153–154, 160–163); yet the social network made up of family, relatives, neighbours and friends is nevertheless what is most important to the research subjects, regardless of individualism. What has changed is how it is narrated and also how it works nowadays.

The content of a life span in Koskela also sets itself in its own special way. In Koskela the family has always had an especially great importance. The pride of the poor and the hiding of poverty from the superior wealth around them has entailed a special type of creativity. Social contacts and mutual networks have had great significance, especially during rapid processes of societal change where in principal no-one can be trusted except oneself. Family was family even if the father was missing. Generation is both an intra-familial and age-related definition. *Nuoret ja nuoruus Koskelassa kolmen sukupolven kautta* ("Young People and Youth: Through Three Generations in Koskela") will tell how the change of generations happens in a city, tied to time, place and social connections. From the interviews of this second stage, in addition to a collective memory, a collective amnesia began to emerge. It was as if there was a general agreement on what was to be talked about and what was to be kept silent about. The subdued things did not relate to illegalities but rather to poverty: the mutual working-class solidarity about there constantly being too little money, with

even that little often being imbibed straight away (Louhivuori 2002–2004, interviews).

The village party in Koskela was a success beyond everyone's expectations. The inhabitants of Kunnalliskodintie 6 had the 40th anniversary of the houses in their own yard. The spirit of Koskela and the tight social networks relating to it, and the deep sense of common belonging among these families also helped. The organizing of the village party worked well both in terms of the event itself being a success and in terms of providing a context for participant observation as a field research method. This was made possible with the help and aid of the Urban Culture Unit of City of Helsinki's Cultural Office. The content of the party was planned together with the Pro-Koskela society, which included enthusiastic and professional electricians, cooks, barters, construction men, plumbers and photographers; people from all of the areas needed to make a successful village party. The society changed its name to the K6-society, following the address Kunnalliskodintie 6. The work was rewarding but also very demanding; I functioned both as producer and researcher in the year 2002.

Research material and theory in an eternal ethnological dialogue

Youth culture and adolescence are reflected in different ways in the research material as a whole. The material collected in 2002–2003 and the earlier material from the years 1984–1985 are almost quantitative in terms of sheer bulk of data. Still, I will handle it according to qualitative research methods. The intra-cultural theory of science, which I also adapted to the Swedish model of cultural analysis (Ehn & Löfgren 1982; Ehn & Löfgren 2001, 7–14, 150–158), had been my original point of departure, and it has maintained its purpose well. The older material worked as a good basis for the fieldwork material gathered anew. The gathering of the collective memory thus became enjoyable and purposeful,

reflecting the interviews in the old material. The premises of the new material are however different from the old. Additionally, the meaning of pictures in research has changed. Now I collected old photographs and together we photographed the village party. My role as a researcher had changed. In my gang research I was dealing with youngsters as an adult. Now that age gap had faded and I was a contemporary. I was still, however, doing male studies as a female researcher. The moral, ethical and judicial questions have remained. Writing about poverty in itself demands a lot from a researcher. Further, the ethical juxtaposition in writing this study is that the life of the gangs included a lot of things that were illegal and criminal but that were a part of the praxis of youth culture. How I myself have changed as a researcher over the course of twenty years then is a chapter of its own.

Chronologically the photographs form totalities on three different levels. The first and oldest totality is made up of old personal photographs from the 1960s. In those days one did not photograph like today. There are few photographs. They are in bad condition but full of memories. Another totality is formed by the pictures by the Koskela gang from the 1980s. There are around 4000 pictures. They are both photographed from the perspective of youngsters and my own. The third totality is made up of the pictures taken since 2000. They are often taken with a digital camera and there are plenty of them. One's own children and events surrounding the family and leisure time are photographed in them. In addition, the village party and its preparation were recorded on video in their entirety. The pictures however transmit youth cultural signs and customs with their environments from separate periods. What happens in the pictures is only intelligible to those who were there. At times the pictures and speech fit together only through the use of imagination. Conceptions about one's own life can come to have filmic qualities. Especially when telling what is happening in the pictures.

The theoretical enquiry has changed since the first research stage. The questioning has also altered from when I started the new research in 2002. Working with the material – interviews, diaries, transliterations and photographs – has introduced new perspectives

into my research. Also the concept of cultural analysis has changed during these twenty years. The Swedish ethnologists Ehn and Löfgren acknowledge how the model of cultural analysis varies in different studies. Especially in the field of inter-disciplinary research (Cultural Studies) the model of cultural analysis has developed and acquired new concepts. In particular the collaboration between ethnologists, sociologists and anthropologists has produced a new model of cultural analysis in which the concept of culture is questioned so far even as to ask if it is at all meaningful to study culture as a separate empirical phenomenon (Ehn & Löfgren 2001, 160–168). A need has arisen to understand, analyse and describe societal, historical and contemporary phenomena in everyday life together.

I have mapped the development in the formation of ethnological theory, how the model of cultural analysis varies in different studies and how research methods from anthropology have been used in the study of cultures. When the analytical model was developing in the 1970s, there was an attempt to look at contemporary everyday life according to anthropological arguments. The working methods of cultural analysis were then to examine tensions between culture and the structure of society, the experiences of the individual in relation to the general models, the difference between the private and the collective as well as what is said and done (Ehn & Löfgren 2001, 160–162; Frykman & Gilje 2003, 16–22). Ethnological research also lives concomitantly with time, place and social connections; and these concepts can be worked on in many ways, tying them to cultural analysis. In my own research I have also developed a model of cultural analysis suitable for the research material: the superimposing of the older and the newer research material in such a way that cultural analysis as a process engenders knowledge that projects youth from the perspective of generational ethnology as the pillars of memory and amnesia. The intra-cultural theory of science used in the first stage, with its emistic approaches, supports these models of cultural analysis that are in turn in this process developing towards a phenomenological type of research.

Some special remarks on the material

The interviews, their transliterations, the photographs and observational diaries are already in themselves as a totality a written document or description of sorts. The analysis of the texts and tying them to the collective memory, as well as to the collective amnesia, produces temporal pillars of communal and individual experiences and events. The speech of the interviews is the same code language that I now was able to break down right in the interview stage – by asking more. It became apparent with the texts and photographs how collective memory and amnesia belong together and how they are different among the people interviewed in groups or separately and in speech.

Both interview stages have been intense and profound. Before anything else I had to produce a method for both stages of fieldwork that created trust. I had to meet and acquaint myself with every person/interviewee separately – meet them as strangers, yet as equals in "my research abode." As a researcher I wanted to leave something concrete with the research subject himself from both stages in addition to the research itself and memories. This was extremely important also because through doing something communal I met them in a group. I could make observations and group interviews as well as photograph common doings. Thus I saw the functioning of their social connections that were based on childhood and adolescence. During both research stages I had to do a balancing act with moral, ethical and judicial issues. I also had to balance out not to embellish things, nor to stress the nature of social voyeurism (www.aaanet.org/committees/ethics/ethcode.htm). There is obviously so much in question that is hidden and unspoken, that will inevitably emerge from the research material as practices of everyday life, when the subject is youth gangs, youth cultures, poverty, suburbs and survival.

The largest critique of the ethnological research method has come from the fact that there does not exist any absolute truth, and that the collaboration between theory and description does not work among ethnologists. Another, in my opinion outdated, criticism is

the opposition between the quantitative and qualitative research methods in questions of relevance. These two types of research are both useful, especially when one tries to find answers to the same questions through approaching the subject both qualitatively and quantitatively. Personally, I find the greatest danger in the ethnological approach to be that the collected material in a manner of speaking forms and dictates the content of the research. I believe that a good base for all the aforementioned points is that there does not exist one single correct answer and especially not one single truth (Hammersley 2001, 12–28). One cannot forget that the interpretation of and perhaps the toughest criticism towards ethnographic research point towards the glasses through which the researcher examines his/her research material (Ehn & Löfgren 1982; Ehn & Löfgren 2001, 8; Hammersley 2001, 4–6; Frykman & Gilde 2003, 16–20).

If I now try to examine my research to the best of my abilities as an external researcher, the hardest and most laborious phase of my study has been to realise how I, as a researcher, always thought that I knew, or at least was familiar with, my material. I noticed, to my continuous surprise, that when in the interview situations and especially when making transliterations of the text, I would emotionally step back and listen to myself and the interviewees as if these were being done by someone else, my limitations became quite obvious. The worst enemies of the ethnological method are too much comprehension or non-comprehension of what interviewees are saying. I imagined that my first stage of research in the 1980s had given me an understanding for this second stage as well, and especially that photographs do not lie. This, however, was not the case. I developed the research method of the second stage for a long time and still I noticed in the field that my knowledge, experience, plans and methods failed me. Following the situations, I had to time and time again conjure the ability to follow and comprehend the events in the field. A lot went past as well. (Louhivuori 1986, 9–13, 27–30; Louhivuori 2001–2004 manuscript).

And then comes my problem of being a female researcher. I tried to focus on the fact that even if I am a female researcher, I do not

have to start worrying about my research subjects. At times it has been very difficult. Nevertheless some people from Koskela have become long-term friends. As a female researcher I definitely have a different grasp of my research subject than would a corresponding male researcher. I have gone through my whole research material collection, sorting out what would possibly be a female and what a male posture. The stage of investigating what male researchers' comprehensions are of the culture of growing from boyhood to manhood in comparison with female researchers' is more a play with imagination and stereotypical images. I believe that when I as a female researcher study the male community, it endows my research with additional value. There did not used to be any problems in the past when almost all the ethnologists were men and they were studying traditional customs of women.

The study of youth culture has traditionally and predominantly been research on boys' adolescence. The surplus value of this research for youth studies probably consists of the generational ethnological research model. The youth culture created by the boys would not exist without the family, home, fathers, mothers, sisters, girls and networks of friends, and that identity capital that a conscious belonging to one's own culture and traditions brings.

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INVESTIGATING YOUTH AND DRUGS: METHODS, PROBLEMS AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

by Airi-Alina Allaste

Introduction

The matters discussed in this article have arisen from my own experiences over a long period of qualitative research on youth cultures and illicit drug use among young people in Estonia. Since youth itself is often defined as a social problem (Epstein 1998), youth research itself can be perceived as a rather delicate issue. Since illicit drug use is mostly approached from the viewpoints of public health, epidemiology or criminology, and the subject is surrounded by "moral panic" and a "war on drugs", the investigation of illicit drug use as a part of youth culture is an even more sensitive topic.

Although ample research concerning the connections between youth culture and illicit drugs has been conducted during the last decade (e.g. Hammersley et al. 2002, Calafat et al. 2001), the subject of ethical reservations associated with youth cultures and drug-related research is covered only in few articles (e.g. Decorte 2000).

Ethical questions in social research in Estonia are somehow different from their equivalent in the Western world.[1] Whereas Canadian and American researchers, for example, complain that

conducting research is becoming more and more complicated because of the over-regulation (e.g. Hoonard 2004), in Estonia, the case is quite the opposite. As social research is young itself, there are no specific ethical guidelines as to how to do research; strict rules and requirements as to how to protect research participants are missing entirely.

While ethical issues in youth research have not received much attention in research literature and the absence of documented ethical guidelines in Estonia makes the delicate issue even more complicated, the topic still deserves greater attention. This article provides an overview of this research and explores the issues associated with the ethics involved. It discusses the researcher's choices in research problem and methods; strategies in gathering and analysing data, and obligations towards participants, colleagues and society at large.

Becoming youth and drug researcher

One question related to ethics is how researchers decide what to study? In many cases there is a not rational choice behind this question, but the decision is influenced by recourses, opportunities and chances. The topic of the research and choice of methods in my case is influenced by the fact that I used to be rather wild teen-ager and remained at some extent an outgoing "party-person" during my adulthood. My entering into field of drug and youth culture research was partly accidental and partly influenced my personality; when I was looking for the topic of graduate research I ended up doing a study about club-culture. In 1998 in Estonia there were not so many sociological or anthropological studies being done, nor was research literature available. The choice of my topic was perceived as rather experimental and received significant attention; it was also one of the first studies about youth cultures and illicit drug use among young people in Estonia. After graduating I was offered researcher position, since at that time illicit drug use came to be defined as growing social

problem and funds for research were available. Secondly, qualitative research regarding problematic behaviour among Russian-speaking young people in north-eastern Estonia also included investigating drug use. Witnessing very different type of drug use and settings where it took place – drug use in clubs seemed very dissimilar to drug use in this marginalized community – gave me idea for the Ph.D. research: different drug-using cultures. I felt it necessary to explain the impact of social context and cultural reasons for drug use among youth. The perspective is rather new in drug research history and innovative in Estonia, where drug use as a phenomenon is new and explanations of phenomenon are often rather naïve.

Research questions and design

My aim was to reach hidden youth cultures, to investigate young people and to learn about their lives. The study this article refers to starts with the assumption that drug use is determined by the social settings – sanctions and rituals of the drug-user culture (Zinberg 1984). The central problem of the study was the possible transition from drug experimentation to problem drug use. To find answers for this question I have investigated different groups of drug users. The main research questions include the following issues:

- The meanings applied to drugs by different groups.
- The context of drug use.
- How drug use is related to drug users' other activities.
- The possible transition from recreational drug use to problem use.
- The process of becoming a drug addict.

As research methods should be determined by research problems (e.g. Denzin 1978) and as I have researched the behavioural norms associated with drug use and meanings young people give to their behaviour, I have used mostly qualitative methods in collecting material – participant observation and open-ended interviews using

snowball sampling technique. Qualitative methods are well suited to conducting studies among hidden populations at risk, as well as being a means of exploring risk behaviours associated with drug use (Rhodes 2000). I started my empirical research without a specific theoretical framework (Strauss & Corbin 1998), though I realise that there is no truly non-theoretical way to "see" an "object" which is always understood and mediated by conceptual constructs, and ethnographic accounts are as much about the observer as they are about those observed (Willis 1977). I have been as open as possible and in Willis' words "being surprised by reaching knowledge not prefigured in one's starting paradigm (Willis 1977)".

Topics covered in following paragraphs are based on participant observation and open-ended interviews which I have conducted since 1997. In 1997–1998 I participated numerous club events and interviewed 21 clubbers in Tallinn. In 2000 I conducted focus group interviews with 43 adolescents and 23 interviews with the adults working with the youth in Narva. Interviews and observations conducted from 2002 onwards focus on social and cultural reasons for illicit drug use at the micro-level. I have conducted interviews with 7 (mainly) cannabis-users in Tallinn, 12 stimulant users in Tartu and 8 opiate users in Narva. The analysis of the data relies mostly on open-ended interviews with young people which were recorded and transcribed. By participant observation I mean participation in club-events and small parties with the informants and conversations there with them and other people, which were not recorded.

Access to the field

When I first started to research club culture in 1997, I just went to the clubs and started to contact relevant actors on the scene (e.g. DJ's and party organisers). As the scope of the study was not only on illicit drug use, but on club culture in general (including analyses of DJ institutions and music taste of clubbers etc.), young people were open, ready to talk and introduced me to others. It was also

helpful that I enjoyed clubbing and the music that was played there for myself. Young people felt more comfortable with me after they had seen me several times at the parties and it was easier to find common language. After changing the scope of the study specifically to drug use, I met drug users through my previous contacts and with the help of local people (in Narva and Tartu) and these lead me to other informants – the snowball method. Most of the time someone whom the informant trusted introduced me to new informants. In addition to that I approached young people in different settings, mostly in clubs, but sometimes also in parks where young people gathered. It was relatively easy to make contacts with young people whose initiation to drug use had happened in club scene. They were interested in contributing to this research. Some of them had read and the others had heard about my previous research on club culture. We had sincere conversations, since they considered me a reliable person who understood their subculture.

For marginalized heroin users in Narva it was difficult in the beginning to explain who I was and what I was doing. After being convinced that I was not from police and I was not going to harm them in any way, they still could not understand why I was interested in the "dirty life" they lived. As explanation of the purpose of academic research was too complicated for them, I simply said that to achieve my aim of becoming a professor, I had to write a book and I had chosen to write about them. The idea that they could work *with* me on this, and that they could be genuinely useful, made them somehow proud and some informants volunteered to help me, for example in looking for new informants. They valued their opportunity to be useful to someone, as the possibility to feel important probably did not happen to them very often – marginalized heroin users are mostly in position to need help, not help somebody themselves. The approach was totally different in Tartu, which is a university town. There my explanation was much shorter – everybody knew what doctoral thesis meant and everybody had respect for this sort of work.

Whereas in club-culture I was more than just a researcher, in the case of heroin users the environment was not so "natural"

for me, but I was not afraid of them or critical of them (neither explicitly nor in my attitude), which made the contacts easier. While communicating with informants and even been told about things I could not appreciate, there was always the small doubt in my mind: "if I was 17 growing up in this environment, maybe I would be the one to be interviewed."

Fieldwork in different settings

Although I have always been aware of the principle of informed consent for an ethically informed approach (Noaks & Wincup 2004), as a beginner researcher I did not have specific guidelines as to how to act in various situations. As mentioned in introduction, in Estonia ethical rules are not detailed in these questions, neither are forms of consent required. While I conducted research in Narva, in spring 2000, one method to access young people was just visiting parties and making contacts there. Mostly I did not introduce myself as a researcher at once, but told it a bit later. Among the other people I met was one 15-year-old girl, with whom I did not talk much at the party, but took her phone number and called her next day. We had been together maybe couple of minutes, when she asked if me and my female assistant who was with us, "Are you working in Tallinn?" With her next sentences I understood, that "working in Tallinn" for her had only one meaning: prostitution. She visited from time to time to "work" the capital herself and was curious if we were involved in the same activities. I did not feel that it was then appropriate to explain what our work was and thought that I will wait for more suitable moment. She kept on talking about her "work," relations, drug use etc., and I felt more and more that I can not really explain to her about the research. We spent a couple of hours together and I did not dare to tell her about it. Regarding the principle of informed consent this was big failure which I felt badly about.

After that I have been more careful in obtaining the informed

consent of participating subjects and followed the rules of overt research (Shaffir et al. 1980, 25) in cases of longer conversations and interviews when people are open about themselves. Yet while I was in clubs and sometimes in private parties, I still did not always introduce myself immediately as a researcher. This raises one ethical issue – where is the ethical border between acceptable and unacceptable levels of covert participant observation? I never intentionally hid my research and profession, but I did not feel that it was appropriate to focus on it all the time. In clubs it was impossible to walk around with a sign saying "I am a sociologist." I was there just as a regular customer and held superficial 'small-talk' without telling it, but always mentioned my research in the case of longer conversations. In some cases I felt a bit guilty when some people with whom I had had a discussion seemed to be disappointed because, "the only reason you were talking to me was your plan to interview me?" When I attended private parties and all people did not know about my profession, there was always somebody, normally the inviter, who knew about it and I left the decision as to when and how to introduce me as his/her responsibility. They did it mostly during the party, except for one case, when the informant wanted to hide the fact that I had interviewed him, and then I asked volunteers for interviews on another day. Nevertheless, as mentioned, I have used results of participant observations rather as background information, and the material collected in covert situations has not been described or explicitly analysed in my papers; this has remained as personal background knowledge that hopefully helped me better to understand and analyse the culture I was investigating.

Conducing interviews

While conducting interviews I have first explained the purpose of my research and then tried to have a normal, open conversation. Academically this approach belongs to interactionist school – meaning that two people meet with the aim to focus on communication

(Silverman 1994). Interviews were conducted in less noisy cafes, at my home, at the homes of the informants (in Tallinn) or in my hotel room (in Tartu and Narva). During the interviews I offered them beer and cigarettes. Sharing of cigarettes and light drinks helped to bring down the barriers and open the conversation. As soon as the informants overcame their initial reluctance to speak, they were open to talk and did not want to stop the conversation. As one of the informants put it, "I won't tell my mother the stuff that I'm telling you. Here I will get everything off of my chest just to feel better" (male 23).

Informants did not mind having conversations taped and after the first minutes of tension seemed to forget about recorder. In some cases there were couple of sentences or topics, they were reluctant to be recorded talking about, though they did speak of them with the recorder turned off. For example one heroin user told me that he has the HI-virus and how he thought he got it, but did not want this information to be recorded. Only one informant, a heroin user, refused to talk on tape and we had to conduct the interview without it, but after a conversation lasting a couple of hours he started to trust me and proposed himself to give a taped interview next day, which we did.

Especially heroin users were happy that they were offered the opportunity to talk about the topic that was important and often painful for them. As Paul Downes (2003) pointed out when he did research in Estonia, there is no cultural hostility between academic interviewers and marginalized interviewees in Estonia, since social class divisions have not yet been firmly established within the society. The interviews were more similar to conversations than to situations where one of the parties (the interviewer) has the dominant position. I also answered to questions about myself, whenever the informants had some. As stated by previous researchers (e.g. Skelton 2001), it is important that participants have the sense of being listened to, they feel that they have been "given voice" and they help someone who wants to talk to them. I can not forget my role I take while spending time with young people who trust me the secrets they mostly don't reveal to other people. In these cases I take "the dual role of an interviewer and a so-called therapist" (Stoebe et al. 2003).

One ethical issue that is raised in relations with informants is the proximity. Although I never pretended that I would be more of a friend to anybody than I actually could be, in some cases long open conversations created strong emotional closeness. Still, informants never called me in cases of emergency or asked for help in critical situations, making me feel that I have participated too much in their lives, as some other researchers have mentioned (e.g. Decorte 2000). Heroin users asked me to let them know if I knew about any jobs, but I made it clear that I couldn't make any promises. Young people from the club scene almost never asked anything from me. Only once a young boy who felt that the police treated him unfairly – taking him and his friends to police station for hooliganism on street – asked me if I could write about it to newspaper. As I had a different opinion about the case, I did not do so.

Analyzing data

Ethical questions relating to data analysis are for me primarily related to the choice of material: what the researcher (me) considers most important and present as results. The interviews were recorded and typed. Transcribed interviews have been analysed and systematised with the help of qualitative data analysis methods and the computer program Atlas-Ti. The data was coded in accordance with the themes that appeared from the material and the level of abstraction was raised until the definition of central categories was achieved (Strauss & Corbin 1998). First I coded themes for each participant and then identified common relevant themes across the spectrum of participants. After identifying relevant topics, I looked for the connections between them with the aim of building an interpretation.

While my goal was to investigate the cultural norms prevailing in each group; the focus was not the individual behaviour of every informant, but rather what was considered to be "normal behaviour" in the group. For example, I considered the restricted and strictly controlled drug use of the group I call 'new bohemians'[2] to be a

distinctive sign of their culture, although the possibility that some individuals in the group go further with drugs is not excluded.

I categorised the social reality close to data using a theoretical language of concepts. Combining the generalisations of my empirical data with existing models and concepts enabled me to develop theoretical framework for the study. As stated by Willis, "analytic points flow only from bringing concepts into the relationship with the messiness of ordinary life" (Willis 2000, xi). Conducting this research has meant for me empirical data gathering (doing fieldwork) and doing theoretical research (literature review) at the same time. Relevant topics arose from data and I combined them with suitable concepts I had discovered in reading about theory. In some cases I invented my own concepts, although they were comparable or similar to existing ones. For example "new bohemians" are similar to "bobos" – bohemian bourgeoisie, people who value successful career on the one hand, and creative spirit and new experiences on the other hand (Brooks, 2000: 200), but I prefer "new bohemians" because it emphasises the development or change of traditional bohemians. Some concepts which have too many and too broad definitions I have specified and redefined for my research. For example, for defining "recreational drug user" and "problem drug user" I have combined existing definitions with the ideas raised by my empirical material.

Results of research are based on the analyses of all interviews and some quotations are used only to illustrate the arguments. The complicated task in data analysis was to protect the participants' feelings. As stated by some ethnographers, it is almost impossible to do ethnography without putting someone's integrity at risk (Wolcott 1995). In some cases a conversation lasting a couple of hours might yield only a couple of sentences usable as direct quotations; and from the informants' point of view these quotes might be irrelevant compared to the other things he or she expressed. With the primary goal being to produce new knowledge, I did not write from the standpoint of the participants only, and some participant probably would not like my results. I have tried to diminish these cases by raising the level of abstraction so, that at least nobody would be personally offended.

Interpreting findings and presenting them to society at large

My data interpretation process started already during the fieldwork and continued during the analyses. My goal has been to highlight concepts using in-depth data and to produce new knowledge in that way. To give voice to young people and present the views of participants as authentically as possible, I have used many quotations in my articles. In most of the cases I use simple language to make presentations easily understandable and to match it with the language in quotations. My writings are mostly understandable to people I am writing about – my first research about club-culture has been on the Internet for years (Allaste 1998) and has become rather popular reading among young people.

I have preserved the privacy and confidentiality of my informants. I destroyed the tapes after transcribing texts and I have never used the real names of the informants – neither in publications nor in private files. Fortunately I have not had problems with the police, but in a case where police would require information from me, I would prioritise the interests of the participants. This is easy for me since in majority of cases I do not know much about the informants besides their first name and I have always asked them not to use any names during the interviews.

Although it has been relatively easy to protect informants from law enforcement and the wider public, the issue of anonymity becomes more problematic among the participants of drug user cultures themselves. As a feedback of my research on club-culture, which was read by clubbers, I have heard that majority of informants were recognisable, even though their names were changed. I can not be sure that in my book, which is to be published in the very near future, informants would not be recognised by their friends. None of the participants in my research about club-culture have complained so far and I hope they will not feel offended this time either, and that loss of anonymity among subculture members will not harm them in any way.

Another difficulty that arises with the presentation of findings is related to the delicate topic of my research. Illicit drug use is an illegal activity, considered to be highly harmful by health authorities, and the media tends to cover only the disastrous results of drug use; thus any other perspective tends to be denied. Discussion about drug using cultures, and lifestyles where drug use is integrated, can easily give rise to hysterical reactions. The concepts that are common in drug research literature, such as "normalisation" of drug use and "recreational drug use", are perceived by social workers and health educators as justification and advertising of dangerous activity. Since my aim is to understand young people and produce up-to-date information about their lives, contributing at the same time to academic discussion of this topic, the consideration of possible misunderstandings by health authorities and public opinion is not the most important side of my research. On the other hand, I acknowledge my responsibility in introducing the findings and concepts to the wider public. This is especially important in Estonia, which is a small country with few experts on these issues. Sometimes my "voice" is not just one of hundreds of researchers' voices, but one among a handful, or the only one, which makes me very responsible for everything I claim. Although there is no clear solution to this issue, what I have been able to do is to use different language for distinct audiences – when writing to professional journals I can be more concrete and when communicating with the mass media in Estonia I have to be more diplomatic. As stated by one famous ethnographer on drug research, "the presentation of the same chunk of ethnographic material takes different forms depending on whether I write for clinicians, drug policymakers, survey sociologists or cognitive anthropologist" (Agar 1986, 15).

Conclusions

As a social scientist I have "a great extent of ethical obligation to my colleagues, study population and larger society" (Berg 2001,

39). As my work is connected with delving into the social lives of other human beings, I am responsible for my activities and announcements. It has not been easy to counterbalance various responsibilities as an academic, citizen and human being. Neither a detailed methodological strategy nor a specific ethical code of how research youth culture and deviance was available, and my work is based on principles which are the mix of the general code of ethics for sociologists and my subjective beliefs.

I have tried to be an interpreter, gathering in-depth information to develop relevant new knowledge (Törrönen & Sulkunen 1997) and it is in doing so that I believe I can best fulfil my ethical obligations. There are still many questions which remain. My principle, based on the ISA code of ethics, was always to prioritize the interests of informants to whom I have promised confidentiality. This made it impossible to be at all times a law-obeying citizen: although I have heard about illegal activities I have never informed the police about them. Fortunately I did not run into conflict with my own beliefs – some of the more serious crimes I was told about were the ones that had already received the punishment.

Investigation of drug-using youth cultures can be interpreted as an ethical commitment to "giving voice" to people with a deviant position in the society. At the same time it can be perceived as justification of illegal activity. I am aware that there is not one single right way to interpret data and explain existing phenomena. In my writings my voice is even stronger than the voice of the young people or authors of previous theories. Although I have used different data, which open the windows to the hidden phenomena from different perspective to validate my findings, I am aware that to some extent subjectivity is included there. Nevertheless, during my analyses and interpretations I have continuously reminded myself of this, and I have tried to remain as objective as possible.

While reporting the results and interpretations I have considered different audiences. Among professional colleagues the goal has been to contribute to academic discussion and highlight new topics and concepts in the light of the in-depth data I have gathered. Introducing my findings to wider society, I have tried to explain the standpoints

of young people without emphasizing interpretations which might further tempt young people to experiment with drugs.

Notes

1 Estonia, as a new member of the European Union, can be considered to be a recent inductee into the Western world, but from the perspective of sociological research it is still struggling with the transition out of its recent Soviet past in terms of national identity.

2 Being bohemian has traditionally meant living in an alternative space. (…) New bohemians are young adults whose main sphere of activity is art or music, but they are not opposed to society in general as the old bohemians were. (…) They are oriented to careers within the framework of society and prefer to keep their bohemian lifestyle as a private part of their leisure time (Allaste 2005).

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METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES AND CHALLENGES IN STUDYING YOUNG PEOPLE'S RELIGIOUS IDENTITY

by Arniika Kuusisto

Introduction

This article introduces my research process exploring young people's religious identity and social capital within the religious minority context of Seventh-day Adventism[1] in Finland. The viewpoint is multidisciplinary; my background and starting point stem from education, but as the multifaceted topic demands a wider basis for examination, I am also drawing largely from other fields such as social psychology and youth research. I will first present the outline of this study, leading to the research questions and followed by an introduction to the means used for answering them starting from the methodological framework. I will then describe my location in the research field, and finally discuss the contribution to and possible future applications of this research in the field of youth research.

The original starting point for my research in the late nineties was the notion that many young Adventists from seemingly rather similar homes have significantly different attitudes towards the religion and the denomination that they grew up with. The religious world view (Helve 1993, 19) of the home seemed to be abandoned

by many young people after what they felt had been a strict and somehow constrained religious education. Others, on the contrary, seemed to accept and maintain the religious socialisation of their childhood home without any notable questioning process. As an educator, my special interest was in the factors supporting value transmission and, on the contrary, the issues that might trigger rebellion towards the religious socialisation; that is, in the impact of educational practices in whether the youth maintain some of the parental values and practices later in life or not. My interest was essentially in studying young people's experiences on the religious home education of their childhood, possibly questioning some of the present practices as well as examining the importance of value education in growing up.

On account of the relatively small size of the Finnish Adventist community, its specific values and practices, and rather tight social ties (Kuusisto 2003, 292), membership in this religious minority could be supposed to have an influence on Adventist young people's identity. My intention is to find out whether there are grounds for this presupposition, and to further examine the phenomenon.

More precisely, the research intends to examine how, if at all, does religious minority membership affect Finnish Adventist young people's identity and the social capital they hold. This is examined by exploring, e.g., the following sub-questions:

1. How does social context affect religious minority identity?
2. Is there a relationship between religious identity and self-esteem?
3. How are Adventist values, religious identity and social capital transmitted in the home?

As my thesis is based on articles, it is feasible to tackle the research questions in several parts, thus approaching the phenomena from different perspectives. In this research, 'social capital' is understood through the relationships, networks and trust, as well as the values shared within the religious minority context. The concept 'religious identity' is understood as religious minority self-image and affiliation, in terms of agency (Côté & Schwartz 2002, 571)

and, in line with social identity theory, essentially founded in an individual's "knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (Tajfel 1981, 255), in this research as associated to this particular religious community.

Given that a) social capital is a concept rather difficult to operationalise, b) the social identity theory is, to my knowledge, not generally used for conceptualising religious identity, and c) the religious minority context has here been explicitly selected; no previously used measure was applicable as such to this study. Therefore, even though parts of my survey questionnaire for teenagers were similar to those used in some previous research, the complete measures have not been formerly utilised as such, which explains the partly exploratory nature of this research.

Methodological Framework

My methodological approach emerges from an ethnographic pursuit aiming to describe the values, beliefs and practices of a religious minority, combined with a phenomenographical search for the nature of the experience and the personal meaning that the religious membership offers to the young people studied (Metsämuuronen 2001, 47). My epistemological viewpoints will be discussed further in connection to subjectivity and objectivity. The standpoint of my research switches throughout the process between proximity and distance, i.e. drawing from my personal knowledge of the research context and taking distance to it. Rather than claiming that research is a completely value-free process, the existence of my own values and subjectivity as a researcher are acknowledged in different stages of the research, particularly in analysing and interpreting the data (see e.g. Tashakkori & Teddlie 1998, 23). The logic of my study is both deductive and inductive, as some former theories are tested whilst being open to the possible models rising from the new data.

Mixed Methodology

As I regard the research questions as a more important starting point than the usage of any particular paradigm or method, the aim here is to address the research questions with any methodological tools available, "using the pragmatist credo of 'what works'" (Tashakkori & Teddlie 1998, 21). Within social and behavioural sciences, the researchers representing the quantitative movement (QUANs) tend to emphasize numerical analysis and draw their research paradigm from post-positivist tradition, whereas qualitatively oriented researchers (QUALs) often represent the constructivist tradition and gather narrative data. The third methodological movement, mixed methodology, combines interest in both quantitative and qualitative data, generally setting off from pragmatism or a transformative-emancipatory paradigm. (Tashakkori & Teddlie 2003.)

Owing to the nature of my research questions, I considered mixed methodology as the most appropriate framework for my research. A multi-method approach with different types of data complementing each other is here believed to be more likely to provide a more holistic view of the phenomena than a mono-method design would be able to. Thus, the tools and methods of data gathering include both closed-ended items with numerical responses and open-ended items in the same survey, and usage of survey and ethnographic interviewing in an integrated manner. This employs the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative approaches, and triangulation *within methods* (multiple quantitative or multiple qualitative data sets) as well as *across methods* (both quantitative and qualitative approaches). (Tashakkori & Teddlie 1998, 42, 152). This way, I try to ensure that research questions are tackled in several ways; as Brewer and Hunter (1989, 17) put it, with "non-overlapping weaknesses in addition to their complementary strengths." According to these authors, triangulation of different methods also provides better opportunities for causal inference.

When it comes to classification of the mixed method data analysis strategies, those used in my research are as follows (see Table 1). In the first two data sets, young adults (n = 10) were first interviewed,

and then, based on the interview data, a survey questionnaire was developed for gathering quantitative data (n = 106). Thus, the data analysis strategy could be classified as sequential QUAL-QUAN analysis, but since the analysis of the qualitative data was also still in process and the two were largely combined, the analysis was also of a parallel mixed analysis (triangulation) type. The same applies to the two other data gathering stages, although in those the sequential strategy is of the QUAN-QUAL type, as the retrospective semi-structured interviews were partly based on the questionnaire data. Furthermore, these two stages are not only drawing from the first data analysis stage, but also largely feeding each other, as the data are gathered from the teenagers and their parents to some extent concurrently. (Tashakkori & Teddlie 1998, 127.)

Table 1. Mixed Method data analysis strategies as used in different stages of this study.

Population	Methods	Mixed Method data analysis strategies (Tashakkori & Teddlie 1998, 127)
Young Adults	Interviews (1998) → Survey (1999)	*Parallel mixed analysis*, *sequential QUAL-QUAN*
Teenagers	Survey (2004) → Interviews (2004–2005)	*Parallel mixed analysis*, *sequential QUAN-QUAL*
Parents	Survey (2004–2005) → Interviews (2004–2005)	Parallel mixed analysis, sequential QUAN-QUAL

Methods and Tools

The first sets of interview and questionnaire data focused on Adventist young people's experiences of their religious home education, exploring particularly religious practices concerning the Sabbath. The interviews were first rather exploratory, each adding to the outline of those which followed as interviewees brought up new issues and topics. As mentioned previously, the first questionnaire was formulated on the basis of this interview data.

For the second data collection stage, in addition to some of the

topics deriving from the former data sets, there was a further focus on Adventist identity, social capital, and self-esteem. Some of the other constituents in the teenagers' questionnaire were Phinney's (1992; 2004) Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM), translated into Finnish and rather extensively modified for the context; and Rosenberg's (1979/2004) Self-Esteem Scale, only slightly modified linguistically from an existing Finnish translation previously used by Jaari (2004).[2] Both of these measures are in a 4-point Likert scale format. Some questions, especially concerning the teenagers' future plans and understanding of a few central concepts, were reformulated from questionnaires used in longitudinal research on world view of Finnish young people by Helve (1993).

The parental questionnaire was again more exploratory in nature, as my previous questionnaires had been primarily answered by youth and young adults. The parental survey was aiming to chart the teenagers' home background and the possible connections between the values of teenagers and their parents. The questionnaire was send to families with at least one Adventist parent. The interviews with teenagers and parents cover generally the same topics as the surveys, exploring further some of the issues arising from the questionnaire data.

Gathering the Data

Conducting research on the religious identity of youth entails several methodological considerations that are not present when studying adults, or when studying non-religious issues among youth. On the one hand, young people may generally be more vulnerable to influence than adults, and therefore special considerations have to be made on the research design. Also, as majority of the participants in the second data gathering stage are minors, a parental approval was requested from their guardians. On the other hand, researching religious issues involves demands for sensitivity regarding both the measures and the categorisation of religion in the lives of youth. (Denton & Smith 2001, 2). Besides these, special considerations regarding privacy

and confidentiality were also necessary. The possible effects of the researcher's age, gender and group memberships in regard to my on-going research process will be discussed later.

One of the main challenges in planning the research design regarded the time and venue for data gathering. As the aim was to get rich data by using both questionnaires and ethnographical methods, the options were rather few; as a small minority scattered around the country, the only regular venues with in excess of a hundred Finnish Adventist youth together for long enough time period for gathering at least some complementing fieldwork data are denominational schools and camps. Since the Adventist schools may be rather selective in their intake, vastly dependent on both geographical locations and family views on choice of school type, gathering data from those would consequently have created a more or less partial sample of the Adventist youth in the country. Also, as one of the goals was to find out how the religious minority identity of the Adventist youth varies according to the school social context, choosing a camp rather than a school for data gathering venue seemed rather obvious; in so doing both the students of Adventist schools and those attending mainstream education would be represented.

Besides being a practical and efficient venue for both gathering survey data and conducting fieldwork, a summer camp was also regarded as a more informal context than a school. The attendance of teachers may otherwise have orientated the teenagers' responses in the fear of the exposure of, e.g., their smoking or alcohol usage. It also seemed appropriate because, being one of the main annual social events directed to the age group, the camp is very popular among the Adventist teenagers in Finland.

Summer camp context is naturally not an unproblematic data gathering venue, either, and it may have affected the teenagers' answers, too. For example the atmosphere in the camp may to some extent have created a stronger sense of togetherness than what the teenagers experience in their everyday lives (which, of course, would probably be equally true in the denominational schools, especially among those teenagers who live in the dormitories). However, for

the reasons explained above, it was considered the best option of the choices available. At least it provided a setting in which the given instructions and the possible situational influence were more or less the same for all participants.

There were approximately 120–125 young people attending in the camp in 2004,[3] and the collected sample of 115 questionnaires included 95 young people from families with at least one Adventist parent, covering roughly a third of the age group in Finland.[4] [5] As the focus of the research is on the youth that do participate in the denominational functions and actually consider themselves Adventists, the possible selectiveness of the venue also seems rather sensible.

The survey data gathering was completed in an effectively similar manner in both 1999 and 2004. In 1999, questionnaires were handed to young people as they entered the main hall for an assembly, and collected after the programme ended. In 2004, questionnaires were distributed towards the end of a session, and gathered as each of the adolescents had completed it and was leaving for a break. Thus, as a mutual activity and a part of the camp program, the youth did not miss any other camp activities and were able to concentrate to the questionnaire for the time given.

The young people's willingness to participate in the subsequent interviews was enquired about at the end of the questionnaire. They were asked to tick if they would be available for an interview, or if they wished to be interviewed together with a friend (of their own choosing).[6] However, as I acted both as a camp counsellor and a participant observer, there was only time for carrying out two interviews during the hectic week. The rest of the interviews were conducted on the same camp the following summer.

At the end of the day, having tried both individual and pair interview the first summer, I found individual interviews more sensible to conduct. Then the focus was on one individual at the time, and the interviewee did not need to pause and wait for someone else to answer, or to balance their answer with that of their friend. Also, maybe it was because of the personal nature of the topic that it seemed easier for the teenagers to explain more personal faith and/or family matters when there were no peers around. Besides the

surveys and interviews, some complementing fieldwork data were gathered on the summer camps, e.g., by taking part in programmes and leisure activities, discussions with the young people and camp counsellors, and taping some group discussion sessions.

Ethical Considerations

Participants in research – and when studying minors, also their parents or guardians on their behalf – naturally have a right to refuse to take part at any phase of the research process (Homan 1991; British Sociological Association 2002). In this case a parental consent request was sent to the teenagers' parents or guardians before the camp.[7] Furthermore, even though the parents would have given their consent, the youth themselves were naturally free to choose not to take part in the study. Only four families (guardians of five teenagers) had an objection to their teenagers' participation.

In acquiring data on young people's religiousness, there are several important considerations to make. Essentially, the measures have to be carefully designed in order not to bias the young people's thinking. Although advancing the teenagers' thinking for example in interview situations could also be considered of positive influence, the aim of this research was rather to record the thoughts and experiences that the young people presently hold, rather than to actively aim for somehow developing their thinking. Still, there is always a risk of the researcher biasing the thinking of the teenagers by providing them with certain values, or with some way of categorisation of religion in the lives of the youth. It could happen, for example, by the researcher unthinkingly nodding or smiling in an accepting manner to some views or practices that are principally not in line with the church teachings. This was acknowledged when phrasing the questions for questionnaires and interview outlines, as well as in interview and discussion situations.

The data were gathered and processed with strictest confidentiality. However, in order to compare the values of the teenagers with those

of their parents, the identity of the participants had to be known to the researcher, which would also be the case if a follow-up data was desired later on. Therefore, both parents and teenagers were asked to write their names on the questionnaires, even though the instructions also mentioned the option of returning it anonymously –which a few participants also chose to do.

The Researcher as an Insider/Outsider

My background as a researcher of religious minority youth derives from my personal experience of growing up somewhat affiliated with the Adventist church, however living in a completely mainstream neighbourhood, and of attending both mainstream schools and a denominational boarding school. Adventists do not essentially differ from the mainstream population in ethnicity or appearance, and are in no apparent way excluded or separated from the Finnish mainstream society. Thus, the church members generally are, besides their religious minority membership, also full members of the majority. This dual membership provides access to both groups, but it also causes negotiations for the individuals having "one foot in a boat and another on the shore" – when it comes to matters in which the values and practices of minority and majority collide. This, in my experience, creates a position with constant switch between proximity and distance, something that is also essential in conducting research. It includes roles both as a critical outsider making observations through the eyes of the majority, and as a "knowing" insider familiar with the culture and language of the religious minority.

Hence, when my research interests drew my focus into educational practices in the home and young people's identity development, it felt natural to choose the Adventist community as a context for my research. My background would, thereby, serve as a dual standpoint, with both the view of an insider, gaining access to and trust within the community, and the one of an outsider, enabling me to take

some distance from the context. Also my current membership in the denomination combined with a physical distance from the Finnish research context, as I presently live in England, would continue to serve the same purpose.

Throughout the research process, I have also been aware of the challenges regarding my insider position in the research field, principally of the difficulties in balancing between the proximity and distance. Also the possible effects on the data caused by my insider position were acknowledged. Especially in requesting the participants' names in the questionnaires, the fact that an insider will read the responses may have affected the way of answering. Also, especially some of the participants representing the parental generation in my research context may have hesitated to give personal information on their religious practices to a "young inside researcher". Though acknowledging this, I wanted to ask the names openly and explain why they are needed, rather than to code the questionnaires and ask people to return them "anonymously".

Despite my concerns, the returned parental questionnaires seem to have a confidential and honest undertone. Many participants have also disclosed more personal experiences and considerations – rather than some self-evident declarations of unspoken denominational ideals. Most of the really personal answers seem to be from either the people that know me rather well, or those who don't have any personal relationship with me. This was somehow along the lines that I had expected, since I thought that these groups of people could probably be most honest with their answers; either because they do know me and trust me, or because they don't know me personally and therefore don't think that what they write might later affect them in any way. Some of the parents, however, may even have failed to return the questionnaire because they felt uneasy about the fact that someone that they don't know very well, but from within the denomination, could have had a chance to get some personal information about them. This may especially be the case when it comes to issues like the usage of alcohol or contributing to the ingathering and paying of tithes (10 % of income) to the church, as these people do not necessarily know my personal stance (and

may thus fear that I would disapprove of their views) when it comes to those matters.

For my part, I deliberately chose an open stance about my position as both a camp staff member and a researcher, with regard to other staff members, parents and teenagers all alike. My name and contact details were provided in the letter sent to homes, I personally collected the parental consent papers, presented the research questionnaire, gathered the survey data and so on. Also, when I wanted to tape a conversation or an interview, I made sure that everyone present agreed to the recorder being on, told briefly that the recordings are only used for research purposes, and emphasised the confidentiality of all material gathered.

Having studied Adventist young people for several years, and naturally through my personal experiences and familiarity of the Adventist beliefs and culture, I have gradually gained more knowledge on some of the topics and issues that seem to be significant, difficult, troubling, etc. in the lives of the Adventist youth. This includes some of the practical issues that become relevant during one's teenage years when growing up in an Adventist family. However, being 10–15 years older than the teenagers in my study, I do not claim to have any idea of the feelings and experiences of the present generation of youngsters. I only have some idea of the sort of questions to pose and, to some extent, how to pose them (or often, rather, how *not* to pose them), being also familiar with the specific language; all of these being factors that make the research process slightly easier. On the other end of the spectrum, having at this point approximately the same age-gap in the other direction, between myself and the parental generation, is likely to affect the participants' attitudes towards me as a researcher, and thereby their answers, too. Also my gender may naturally have an impact on what is said and what is left out, especially in interview situations.

In establishing trust with the young people as well as their parents and the camp staff, being a somewhat familiar face in the camps and a member of the denomination was generally an advantage, both in gaining access to the camp and in becoming a natural group member. In the camp the relationships between teenagers and staff

are generally very good. After all, the staff is mainly young adults who share a similar background with the youth; however they are generally not their parents or teachers. It is, therefore, rather common that youth want to discuss personal matters with them.

Conclusions

When it comes to objectivity, coming from the 'outside' does not necessarily mean any more neutral stance than when coming from the 'inside' (Grönfors 1982, 64). All researchers have their own values and preconceptions, and an outsider may well be more biased in reference to the group under study than an insider.

A similar pattern applies to the other memberships and characteristics of the researcher; in this case my age, gender, personality, positions and networks within the community, and so on. They certainly may have an impact on what is said and what is left out in the data, who returns the questionnaire and who doesn't, who agrees to be interviewed and who is opposed, and so on. If I was younger/older, non-Adventist, or male, researching a similar phenomena, I might get some answers that have now been left out, but then another spectrum of data would be absent. Also the analysis might differ from mine, as each researcher views the data through a particular set of values.

Thus, each study has its particular limitations to struggle with. In this research, an effort was made to diminish those, e.g., with methodological choices – that is, by using different data sets gathered with complementing approaches. Also, in order to help the reader arbitrate the significance of the research findings, I have tried to shed some light on my perspective and my particular location in the research field.

When it comes to its contribution in the field of youth research, this study offers a viewpoint of educational research to the rather limited scientific literature on young people's religious minority identity in Finland. As well as supplying information on young

people, the data includes their parents; it also looks at both genders, and includes both quantitative and qualitative perspectives. The research design, together with the measures developed in the research process, can also serve as a starting point for future applications exploring religious minority identity and social capital among the young people affiliated with other denominational contexts.

Notes

1 The context of the research, the Seventh-day Adventist denomination (for practical reasons simply referred to as "Adventism/-t" in the article), is an international Protestant movement originating in the United States in 1844. It has presently some 13 million members worldwide (Adventist News Network 2004, 8). In Finland, which is an increasingly secular Western society with a strong history of Evangelical Lutheranism, it is a rather small minority religion with approximately 5,300 members (Adventist Online Yearbook 2005), the whole population being 5.2 million. Some of the main features of Adventism include the observance of Sabbath on Saturday and baptism through immersion. Within the movement, emphasis is laid on healthy lifestyle and education, and thus the denomination runs a network of hospitals, schools, colleges and universities around the world.

2 Phinney's MEIM and Rosenberg's Self Esteem Scale have been used together previously at least by Umaña-Taylor (2004).

3 This figure is approximate, since a few teenagers were only attending the daily programme, not staying at the campsite but at home or a family summer cottage, and had thus not registered at the camp office.

4 According to the membership register (which may not be accurate as the youth who have not been baptized are not official members), the number of Adventist adolescents of the ages 14–18 in Finland is currently slightly over three hundred (Vesterinen 2004). In addition to Adventist youth, there were some 20–30 teenagers in the camp who were not from Adventist families.

5 The original questionnaire data of 95 teenagers from Adventist families was later supplemented, for practical reasons, with 5 more participants, in order to have enough cases for some further statistical analyses and to match the frequencies with percents.

6 As a show of appreciation for their time (interview duration approximated as 45 minutes) they were promised a small token (€ 5) to the camp canteen. Even though rewarding interview participants may be regarded as an issue of ethical consideration itself, the monetary value here was considered rather nominal bearing in mind the time and effort required from the interviewees. Also, when conducting the interviews a year later, the participants didn't generally even remember the promised 'reward' when they promised to participate in the interview, and all agreed, so at least it hardly was a reason for them to take part. Some of the interviewees even chose not to use their token, or only bought an ice cream or a soft drink with it afterwards.

7 However, out of the approximately 120 campers, only 33 had remembered to return the required paper slip to the camp office as they signed in at their arrival. Many youth had either come straight from a family summer cottage or some trip, and were therefore not home when the letter had arrived – or had just forgotten the returnable paper slip at home or in their luggage. Therefore, it took a lot of time and energy to first ask everyone in the first morning meeting to bring them in if they had the paper slips in their rooms, and afterwards call or text the rest of the homes to get their parents' opinions.

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THE STRANGER IN THE CLASS: ETHNOGRAPHIC FIELDWORK EXPERIENCES FROM A LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOL

by Firouz Gaini

Finding informants

In my fieldwork preparations I had to ask: where do I find my informants? I wanted to get hold of a group of young people in reciprocal social interaction in everyday life, albeit not of the same subculture or lifestyle affiliation, with the point of time of decisions concerning the course of their lives approaching. I wanted to capture the specific group before it dissolves, individuals choosing their destination in the myriad of higher education and working career options offered, and therefore suitably selected young people attending compulsory lower secondary school. Girls and boys at lower secondary school are engaged in various leisure activities structuring large parts of their free time, they also have different social and family networks, but school attendance is obligatory for all of them, making the answer to my initial question clear: my informants are to be found in the classroom.

Classes in Faroese public secondary schools are usually composed of pupils living in the neighbourhood surrounding the school, even if there are exceptions, and classmates are therefore often living

in the same streets, making many of them close friends outside school. There are no significant social differences between Torshavn neighbourhoods, even if the socio-economic living conditions of individuals from different families can vary quite a lot (Gaini 2003). Primary and lower secondary schools (usually integrated institutions) of the capital are therefore relatively similar in average in terms of pupils' socio-economic background. No education institution at this level is explicitly associated to neither a slum nor a bourgeois residential area.

The municipality of Torshavn (18,000 inhabitants) has absorbed several small neighbouring village municipalities over the last few years, causing a pronounced distinction between the big schools in central Torshavn and small village schools at the capital's outskirts, even if the villages in question in most of the cases only have primary schools (1st to 7th grade), forcing the local youth to continue its compulsory schooling outside its home village. I had four options when choosing a lower secondary school, one of them, however, being a big village school, for the fieldwork related to my anthropological project on Torshavn youth cultures. The three remaining Torshavn schools with 1673 pupils in total (2002) are located in the eastern, central and western parts of the capital. Venjingarskúlin in West Torshavn with 488 pupils divided into 23 classes from 1st to 10th grade (2002), my own childhood school, became my choice of fieldwork context. My personal background from Venjingarskúlin indeed affected my final decision, as I favoured investigating in a familiar setting. In co-operation with the school authorities and relevant teachers I was introduced to one of the two 8th grade classes at Venjingarskúlin.

My project – aims and purposes

Having found the informants, now what is their contribution to my work? Why do I need a group of pupils aged 14–15 to my scientific pursuits? My intensive research in a school-class was conducted with the general aim of representing aspects of the cultural identity

formation process and everyday life of young people from Torshavn in mind. Focusing on three key concepts - lifestyle, leisure, and future plans – I intended, in regular anthropological fieldwork fashion, to record the understandings gained and then communicate them. As in literature, says Peacock (1986, 83), "so in good ethnography the message comes not through explicit statement of generalities but as concrete portrayal. The readers must decode the description in order to grasp for themselves the underlying values". The reason for choosing young people aged 14–15 was, as mentioned, to meet them short before departure from sheltered compulsory school to unforeseeable self-elected career paths. My intension was to capture the integrated group before it splits into different spheres of society. I wanted to start in the school arena, then follow my informants in their spare time, map their networks, visit their homes, and interpret and try to define their subcultural affiliation. The intension was not to isolate a single subculture or style, a specific social context or lifestyle, but to get a broad cultural overview of contemporary Torshavn youth through 24 core informants each beholding complex social networks to be investigated. The weight of external (foreign) cultural influences, primarily through modern electronic media, on Faroese young people's cultural identities and lifestyles is growing substantially these years. My project examines the sociological hypotheses of latemodern society and reflexive identity, in Giddens' definitions of the phenomena (Giddens 1991). The reflexivity in individual identity formation is in the very core of my project.

The school class as research context is characterised by a quite formal and rigid division of labour and pattern of interaction, narrowing the pupils' range of free personal expression. Pupils' role and status vis-à-vis their teachers' is not the subject of any cultural interplay with contested identities. While physically situated in the school area the researcher and informants are separated by an invisible filter, complicating the data gathering task, because the informants wear the "pupil" mask, other roles and statuses being kept backstage. This is why my project could not have been realised without the inclusion of leisure time contexts, as integral part of the qualitative data gathering process.

Preparing fieldwork

Doing fieldwork always requires extensive preparations by the researcher, who has to map the field at issue by collecting and analysing information at hand before entering and exploring the field from, preferably, a new angle. Anthropologists normally write a detailed report, a synopsis with all their expectations on the data gathering process, in advance, including theoretical and practical considerations, ethical and methodological reflections, hypotheses and research questions, timetables and budgets. However, the final report made after finishing the fieldwork always differs from the hypotheses of the early preparatory phase of the project. It is naturally impossible to predict the results in anthropological research, as in all other social sciences, and that makes fieldwork indispensable.

Personal fieldwork experiences have until quite recently been neglected in anthropological literature, Lévi-Strauss' *Tristes Tropiques* (1955) being the main exception, as the subjective role and feelings of the researcher were suppressed in most ethnographic accounts (Ellen 1984, 87). The intimate interaction between investigator and object of study, especially in ethnographic research, has made the reflection on methodology and reflexive ethnography very important (Powdermaker 1966; Ellen 1984; Davies 1999). There are still only a few studies explicitly describing and discussing the role and status of the ethnographer in specific fieldwork contexts, most methodical debate operating on a theoretical level, distanced from data gathering work in practice. Basic regular problems that researchers in the field face, misunderstandings and misinterpretations, stress and annoyance, social isolation and communication barriers are far too seldom presented to students and young researchers with limited fieldwork experiences. Lévi-Strauss' famous autobiographical work, "the greatest anthropological travelogue" (Peacock 1986, 52), *Tristes Tropiques*, is definitely not romanticising the fieldwork as a gentle eye-opener with fun and pleasure. Anthropology is, says Lévi-Strauss (1955) on the contrary, "a profession in which adventure plays no part (…) it represents no more than a dead weight of weeks or months wasted en route."

When I entered the classroom at Venjingarskúlin for the first time during the fieldwork, meeting my 24 main informants and their teacher, the pupils did neither know me, except for the short introduction that their teacher had already given them, nor did I know them. But after a few weeks we knew each other quite well. We cannot, says Davies (1999, 3), "research something with which we have no contact, from which we are completely isolated. All researchers are to some degree connected to, a part of, the object of their research." I had a strange feeling in the beginning being back at my own childhood school and involving my old teacher in this project by making use of his 8th grade class as main source of data. The teacher was personally interested in my anthropological project, and had read many of my popular articles in Faroese newspapers prior to the fieldwork; he was happy to support me in my scientific pursuits. He even told me once that he now felt that he should have studied anthropology rather than taking a teacher education in his younger years. His commitment and enthusiasm rubbed off on his pupils making them co-operative and helpful, even if I seriously tried to avoid getting any mighty label as authoritative teacher. The teacher's intentions were good and honest; he wanted me to obtain "good results" with "good pupils". Nevertheless I preferred him staying in the background, not directly implicated in the project, because he might have a damaging effect on my relation to the pupils, who were the target.

Observations

The Norwegian movie *Salmer fra kjøkkenet* (Hymns from the kitchen) instructed by Bent Hamer from 2003 presents the (participant) observation method from a very ironic and comic perspective. A team of Swedish scientists, experts on kitchen labour and design, are going to the Norwegian rural periphery to investigate the kitchen use patterns of lonely farmers shortly after the Second World War. Each scientist has a car and a caravan (mobile home) which is parked just

beside his farmer's house. During daytime the scientist is sitting on a very high chair in a corner under the kitchen roof observing and taking notes while the "unsuspecting" farmer makes coffee or dinner as usual in the same room. The scientist is drawing all the farmer's movements in a complex scheme for the purpose of calculating his aggregated walking activity in meters and kilometres. In the evening the scientist leaves the house in order to eat and rest in his caravan. Very strict rules are imposed on the scientist, the essential being that he under no circumstances shall communicate with his "object" of study; his task is to sit on the chair taking notes – nothing else. After a while some of the scientists start to communicate with their farmers, even if it is a violation of the "scientific" rule defined by their world-famous project manager. The researchers and informants, both feeling ridiculous trying to ignore each other in the holy name of science, are of course influencing each other in the daily data collecting. One of the poor farmers is eating dinner in a small room in the attic to avoid constantly being observed by the silent Swedish scientist in the kitchen. The whole project collapses when an alcoholic scientist starts to drink with his Norwegian farmer in the evenings, while another farmer writes the notes about himself on behalf of his sleeping scientist.

This movie illustrates some basic methodological problems, often associated with the positivist traditions in science, occurring when social scientists copy the research techniques and procedures of classical natural science. The pure "objective" observation without any contact with the object of study is an unrealistic aim, even in modern physics and biology studies, because nobody can avoid, at least to some degree, influencing the investigated subjects in the process of scientific data gathering. The communication between informant and researcher is an important premise for the researcher's ability to interpret and reinterpret the actions and attitudes of the informant, as well as his ability to reflect his own influence on the interaction with the informant in the field. The Swedish scientists in Norway were all white men aged approximately 40–50, but they had different personalities and behaviours, thereby making different impressions on the local farmers, who in turn also had different

backgrounds and values influencing their not very reflexive kitchen scientists. The "objective" behaviouristic research in the Norwegian kitchens was based on keeping an extreme distance, being invisible like a fly on the wall, while modern ethnographic research in general is dependent on a very close involvement in the society and culture of those being studied (Davies 1999: 4). Underlying tensions are of course always present; they are inevitable "for a field worker who spends most of his waking hours with the people he studies and who is continuously stepping in and out of their society" (Powdermaker 1966, 291).

Home and away

I guess that the pupils in the class at Venjingarskúlin were a bit confused in the beginning, even if their teacher eagerly tried to explain who the stranger entering the class was, because I was neither a pupil nor a teacher. I had no clear unambiguous role in the school class context and therefore I was not only a stranger but also somehow a strange person. Still I was at home, in my own town and country, a situation not very common to the older generation of anthropologists, who almost exclusively made tough fieldworks in remote non-western societies (Eriksen 1993). We were speaking the same language, familiar with the same sports and pop celebrities, even from the same school in Torshavn, and therefore I definitely had to reflect on the specific problems related to anthropology at home ventures. The small size of the Faroe Islands makes it impossible to be completely anonymous in any social gathering. This characteristic deserves thorough discussion, weighting advantages and disadvantages of investigations in relatively homogeneous small scale island societies.

Anthropologists say that fieldwork in non-western traditional societies may give the researcher a new understanding of his own culture, a fresh distanced view of home, which makes familiar phenomena exotic and vice versa, but which also scotches ethnocentric

representations of western cultural supremacy over "primitive" archaic tribes. In participant observation "the communication varies from spontaneous to planned, from superficial to deep, from subjective to objective areas of interest, from purely verbal to more subtle and emotional expression" (Powdermaker 1966, 287). What is "natural" and unspoken in our own culture, taken for granted as the "real thing", may from an external point of view be regarded as an incomprehensible meaningless cultural trait. Radcliffe-Brown (in Wadel 1991, 16) says that anthropology is a 'comparative sociology' and that "by trying to describe the variation still to be found in the cultures and societies of our world, anthropologists have also put our own cultural sphere in relief." The researcher out in the field far from home, equipped with a set of scientific concepts and methodological tools, is in his work adding to the waste accumulation of comparative studies of cultures, but he has to invest a lot of time and resources in order to get a balanced elaborated understanding of even the simplest and most trivial everyday life customs, an annoying task, unnecessary for the anthropologist at home, who as an insider understands what means what. But anthropologist at home might on the other hand sometimes be too confident in their interpretations and judgements. Forges argues, with a smile, that the fieldworker far from sweet home misses "Beethoven, beer and bread", and the places where people recognize him (Arnstberg 1997, 29–30).

The advantage of doing research at home can easily turn out to be a hidden problem, a pitfall, because the anthropologist as observer becomes blind, not managing to separate the essence from the rest, not being sufficiently focused, and not catching interesting cultural manifestations that deserve sensitive attention and comparative analysing. Being an insider he forgets to keep a scientific distance to the "normal" daily life norms and actions around. It takes an unusual mind, says Whitehead (Wadel 1991, 19), to discover the obvious. The advantages of being at home are, anyway, strong, making many difficult fieldwork projects easier to carry out, because the researcher and the informants have much, in Giddens' (1976) terminology, "mutual knowledge" that keeps their social communication running and minimises the most common

cultural misunderstandings (Wadel 1991, 18–19). At home the anthropologist has, hopefully, considerable background knowledge of social, cultural, political and economic conditions, as well as an overview of the history and geography of the region, knowledge of great value, which anthropologists working in geographically remote settings definitely are not prohibited from, but which for them may be hard to get access to because of linguistic and cultural barriers, poor statistics and libraries, or simply lack of time. Anthropologists at home, in Western countries, meet people who know something about science and scientific writing, say Ehn and Klein (Arnstberg 1997, 27), "and that think with the same concepts as anthropologists: 'society,' 'culture,' 'role,' etc."

The anthropologist, no matter where he is placed on the globe, at home or away, always needs to be conscious of his position and role in the field, not taking the obvious and 'natural' for granted, as exotic and scientifically sensational findings may be just around the corner. "It was a great mistake", says Jackson (1987, 8), "to think that the distant 'savage' had more to give to anthropologists than one's local 'compatriot': they simply have different types of information to impart."

Small-scale society

It was inevitable that some of the pupils in the 8th grade class knew somebody who knew me; or had heard of me, that is the condition of living and working in a society of 47,000 and 18,000 inhabitants in the country and capital respectively, even if Torshavn seems like a cosmopolitan urban region compared to the small villages of 50–200 inhabitants. Social scientists in the Faroe Islands have to be creative and use all their imagination to secure the anonymity of their informants in published books and articles, a problem not often discussed as only few fieldworks and surveys are carried out each year. People who really want to disclose the identity of my informants do not have to make any strenuous efforts to unveil the

secret, because many people already know when and where my fieldwork took place. Fortunately, my project is not focusing on particularly sensitive personal issues, and it mostly refers to the whole group rather than specifically to some of the 24 individuals in the class. Anyway I emphasised immediately to the pupils that no names were going to be published and that my project was completely independent of any school authorities, making it very clear that they were not going to get marks or criticism for their statements in interviews and discussions. I told them that my aim was to get their point of view on several issues and that I naturally didn't expect or hope for any specific opinion but merely their personal one. This made them understand that my intention was not to teach them anything, but on the contrary let them tell me something.

"Why are you doing this project? What do you expect to find?" These are questions that I got, again and again, during my fieldwork, not from young people, but from teachers, journalists and other people interested in my project. The general transparency and the laid back atmosphere of Faroese society makes it impossible to hide in your study as a researcher, as the broad public discourse captures every movement in society, including ongoing projects at the national university. In small scale societies like the Faroes, ordinary people are engaged in all kinds of debates, everybody having comments to give in even narrow academic debates, a situation often frustrating and hampering research institution staff. Local and family interests can in some cases threaten the validity and reliability of projects, if the researcher is not managing to keep a satisfactorily scientific independency in his work, a pitfall that may be easier to fall into in small scale societies, even if this, indeed, is a universal problem.

The school as an arena

My plan was never to investigate the school-class or school system per se but to use this formal arena as framework and starting point for my fieldwork, a decision based on, as mentioned earlier, my

search for a delimited group of young people soon to disperse into different education institutions and labour market sectors. The physical class-room at Venjingarskúlin was, together with another room in the school where I made individual interviews, the location of the first part of my fieldwork before meeting informants in their free time as well. During the first days, their teacher was in the room together with the pupils while the floor was mine, but later on in the fieldwork, he went out, letting me be in control for one or sometimes two successive school hours, free to engage the pupils in activities and discussions on my agenda. My informants, 24 pupils aged 14–15, were relatively quiet and polite, and this was one of the reasons for the geography teacher to be so happy and proud to present his class to me. After a while I found that some of my pupils were also temperamental and noisy, not particularly eager to participate in discussions, yet never revolting directly against the project. These incidences did not affect my results in noteworthy negative ways. There is no perfect school-class with ideal pupils; every informant is valuable and contributing to empirical records. The informants had to be present as my fieldwork as mentioned was conducted during compulsory lessons, while most anthropological research on leisure and lifestyle is needless to say conducted in strictly leisure time contexts. I went to the school instead of the church, sports club or youth club, to avoid limiting my field to a relatively narrow group of youths only representing a segment of existing styles and values. I was interested in the individuals and their social life, not in the educational system and school-class structure.

The 8th grade class pupils in question were obviously not used to be at the centre of scientific attraction, even if many teacher training students regularly distribute questionnaires in the classes, especially at Venjingarskúlin (which is integrated with the Faroese teachers' school), as a part of their education. My informants were happy to meet a person listening to them (I was sometimes greeted with applause when entering the room), rather than the usual situation, to just let them listen in concentration and learn. In ethnographic ventures there are often a couple of informants communicating and sharing more relevant knowledge than others,

and ethnographers "virtually always develop key informants, individuals who for various reasons are either very effective at relating cultural practices or simply more willing than most to take the time to do so" (Davies 1999, 71). Some of my informants were, in interviews and questionnaires, repeatedly answering "I don't know" or "maybe" while others were very articulate with their own reflexive interpretations regarding most subjects and questions, but this difference should in no way be regarded as a parallel to the schools' formal quantitative pupil ranking system based on marks. All answers are equally important and valid, at least during the initial phase of data collection, and treating the elaborated articulated responses as superior would most likely cause severe and unacceptable bias in research, which is definitely not my intention.

My data from the 8th grade class were mainly collected by participant observation, semi-structured interviews and other qualitative methods, even if I enriched the material with some extensive nationwide surveys, making the data gathering process a mix of several techniques, all contributing to the answer to the initial research questions. Making fieldwork at home normally implies focusing on a narrow limited field, because it is, needless to say, impossible and meaningless to try to describe and comprehend all cultural and social categories of society (Powdermaker 1966).

Unexpected problems

Some of my fieldwork plans for the class had unfortunately no success, something happening in most fieldworks but seldom mentioned at all in method chapters of books presenting project results (Eriksen 1993). I gave the pupils homework in the form of questionnaires, photo tasks and other problems, to do in their spare time having already lots of homework from teachers giving marks. I distributed notebooks to the pupils, in which I asked them to write texts or make drawings about their everyday life outside

school, and let me collect them two-three months later right before the summer holidays, but this was an unsuccessful project, because most notebooks had not even been opened when I, in excitement, gathered them to read blank pages. I made at least three mistakes: first, the task was too unspecific and vague for them to comprehend the point of it; a few creative and spirited souls had filled their notebooks with personal accounts, the rest hadn't touched them; second, they were supposed to write in the books in the evening, maybe in bed before sleeping, but, as mentioned, pupils don't give such project work any priority in their leisure time, which is already filled up with different structured and unstructured activities. Third, it would probably have helped for the results if the notebooks had been distributed personally during calm individual interviewing, rather than being placed in a pile on a table in front of the whole group during a lesson. I should have known better, but, enthusiastic about my idea, I forgot these typical problems related to fieldwork among teenagers. The photo project would also have been more successful than was the case, if my practical preparations had included what in beforehand looked like peripheral details without implications on the results. Cameras (disposable) with films were distributed in same fashion as the notebooks and two weeks later collected and sent to a local photo shop for development. The pupils loved the idea and opportunity to take their own pictures for free, but many of them just shot the film without cogitating on the motives and 'story' told in pictures. The problem was basically the same as with the notebooks, even if the 24 films were not delivered blank, but of very uneven quality and public interest. I am indeed responsible for my own data gathering and fieldwork results, and I should blame on my naïve impulsive project ideas lacking practical methodological attention, but at the same time I know that many colleagues of mine have experienced similar problems in the field, because failures in fieldwork are usually neglected in methodological introductory books in anthropology. My point is that unsuccessful projects are an important part of life and work in the field. They are, if mentioned at all, hidden in implicit statements between the bright stories of fieldwork triumphs. Many descriptions of the research

process, says Eriksen (1993, 28), and especially of the fieldwork, are probably strongly idealised. Failures are also telling a story, not always of incompetence, but of unexpected intriguing situations that may give new insight in some methodological problems, as Lévi-Strauss' personal accounts from the Amazon tell in *Tristes Tropiques* (1955).

Communication and knowledge

So far I have discussed peculiar problems and challenges related to my project in Torshavn, without touching directly on the nature of my data collected and the time-consuming lonely work of taking notes and writing down what I hear, see and learn. Also, most project of this kind change form and content through the successive phases of the work. The first impressions, the initial contact with the informants, does not resist several months of extensive social interaction in different social contexts with different rules and practices at work. I unveiled, slowly, elaborated categories of pupils (based on leisure interests, religious and social background, etc.) after weeks of fieldwork; these identities didn't play any explicit role in the school context, but were operating in other everyday life contexts in Torshavn. Interviewing with cassette recorders in school was, fortunately for me, relatively unproblematic, even if recording individual discussions makes some people look down at the table and carefully minimize their verbal statements. I usually skip the recorder if it hampers the conversation; memorizing and writing down notes afterwards is a satisfactory procedure, but it should be done as soon as possible, because essential details may have disappeared from memory the next day already.

Video recording is quite often used as a supplement to participant observation and interviewing in school-class projects; nevertheless, I didn't use film in my project. Video recording is a big step to take, a decision involving strict responsibility, because some people will always oppose the idea and maybe even contest the researcher's

copyright of the recorded material. Also, video recording projects need elaborated ethnographic film theories that may change the original theoretical composition of the project. Researchers have to reflect on the questions: What kind of data do I need? What do I intend to describe? During my fieldwork I tried to mobilize and stimulate the informants giving them several "curious" projects to solve. I wanted them to do more than simply answering questions, letting me be the observer, and letting me "participate" in their everyday life. My intension was to force them to be consciously engaged and creative in relation to my research project, by taking photos and making drawings, by reflecting on their situation is society, by making kinship-diagrams, by critically evaluating (the reliability and credibility of) my collected data, and so on.

The writing process following a fieldwork is a selective process, because a part of the material will naturally be excluded from the results; too much data is a danger, tempting inexperienced researchers to drown the whole work in superfluous disruptive details, instead of sorting out and (as journalists do) "killing your darlings". The social "reality" presented by the researcher is heavily influenced by the process selection and evaluation of data, as well as by scientific rules of anthropological method in general. Regularly writing articles on youth issues in Faroese papers and magazines, I definitely have authority regarding topics discussed, theories presented, and hypotheses defended in the public discourse on the "reality" of young people in the Faroe Islands.

Ethics

The stranger in the class was only strange in the start, unknown without any role to play. Then the researcher became a real person, loyally at place every week, studied by his informants thinking about their role in the project; this transformation improved the fieldwork, albeit also making the researcher more vulnerable to the methodological fallacy of losing the analytical distance in his work

among the informants (the extreme example being the one "going native"), a common dilemma in ethnographic research. The specific meaning of the concept of stranger depends indeed on context, as well as scientific tradition, in discussion. In social psychology the stranger can be defined in the following delicate manner:

> The cultural pattern of the approached group is to the Stranger not a shelter but a field of adventure, not a matter of course but a questionable topic of investigation, not an instrument for disentangling problematic situations but a problematic situation itself and one hard to master (Schutz 1964, 104).

The ethical considerations related to research among underage youth are very important, because the project involves children, from a legal point of view, without powers to take essential decisions without parental authorisation. Not only from a legal perspective are the informants the weak part; young people are indeed in a vulnerable position in interaction with a researcher, an adult with potential powers to influence them in unacceptable and unethical directions; therefore, it is necessary for the researcher constantly to be critically conscious of the uneven power relation at play and to avoid any objectionable abuse of power that may undermine the project's credibility (Lalander & Johansson 2002). The researcher should always, no matter which societal group is investigated, tell his informants what kind of project he is engaged in and why he needs them as informants. There is no excuse for keeping the fieldwork's true purpose secret, even if the potential informants may dislike the project when the agenda is revealed. Anthropologists work with a set of strict ethical and scientific prescriptions, not accepting short cuts to impressive results at the expense of the informants' human liberties. Social scientists using all thinkable means to reach their goal are not recognized if they violate basic scientific and ethical rules, which are supposed, in the spirit of Kantian ethics, to hinder the objectification of human beings. Violations of such principles may damage the reputation of scientific work seriously, giving, at a local level, the next generation of researchers serious difficulties in their fieldwork project pursuits (Lalander & Johansson 2002, 198).

School class projects involve individuals, school classes and schools, and the researcher needs to take all parts into consideration in his ethical and practical considerations in the planning of the project. The principal of the school, not wanting his institution to get a bad reputation or bringing discrediting on the whole Faroese school system, will read the results very carefully, maybe even checking the data and methods for scientific logical weaknesses. The teacher of geography at Venjingarskúlin will maybe do the same. A pitfall to avoid is making use of the accumulated data in possession in emotional political discussions, because this may naturally give outsiders the, right or wrong, impression that the project was never independent scientific work, especially for the sceptics disliking the conclusions. The knowledge of the school class should not, in my point of view, be used in the media without the same level of ethical standards as in other contexts, to avoid any tempting exploitation of the informants involved in the project.

Final notes

My project followed what is said to be the three steps in classic fieldwork, "experience, establishing an identity in the new setting, and interpretation, [that] hint at the peculiar combination of subjectivity and objectivity, adventure and work, romanticism and pragmatism that constitute so-called participant observation" (Peacock 1996, 54). In his work the anthropologist "starts with particulars, and then analyses, generalises, and compares", says Powdermaker (1966, 296), and the "gifted ones may also illuminate the human condition".

I have in this text tried to point out some of the weaknesses and strengths of using the class as context in anthropological fieldwork, with my own experiences from an Torshavn 8th grade class as case. The researcher´s position and relation to the informants has been in focus. In my case it was very important for the working process that I was an insider both in the school and society studied, as well as

the fact that the Faroe Islands is a small scale society where neither researchers nor informants can be completely anonymous persons. Problems and unexpected situation that occur in all fieldworks, even if they are not mentioned in the books' methodology chapters, have in my text been treated as an essential part of the whole processes, deserving much more attention and discussion in academic circles. The school-class is a sensitive context – involving underaged people and under strict school authority control – that makes elaborated ethical considerations unavoidable for researchers planning fieldworks within school. The researcher is the stranger in the class, that has no clear role to play, but who observes and thinks, discovers and writes, in the peculiar way of the anthropologist.

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AN INSIDER AT THE MARGINS: MY POSITION WHEN RESEARCHING WITHIN A COMMUNITY I BELONG TO

by Önver Cetrez

PART I: SUROYE PEOPLE IN SWEDEN

Introduction

When I was working on my doctoral thesis, which analysed the community I ethnically belong to, I was often asked if this wasn't problematic. Still, I would be asked many questions about this community. Somehow, I was identified both as a subject and an object in relation to my research.

My starting point is the postmodern perspective on knowledge, which refers to a set of perspectives and philosophies, holding in common that "there are no metaphysical absolutes or no fundamental and abstract truths, laws, or principles that determine what the world is like and what happens in it" (Slife & Williams 1995, 54; referred to in Richards & Bergin 1997, 37). Knowledge is understood as a product of human perception and interaction. Therefore, instead of seeking neutrality, the researcher is understood as a person affecting the research process and its results, whether through interviews

or questionnaires (Malterud 1996). The researcher also has his or her own personal characteristics, history, gender, class, race and social attributes that enter the research process. Both researcher and participant are positioned, and are being positioned by virtue of history and context. Thus, the position or *location* of the researcher is important to clarify.

The structure of this article is in two parts. In part one, the reader is introduced to the culture and context of the population being studied. A background to the research field, demographics, and acculturation patterns are presented. This is needed in order to approach the context of research and understand the specific challenges that the researcher faces. In part two, I raise some issues related to method within the research that has been conducted. I do this by positioning myself in relation to this context and discuss the insider/outsider positions of the researcher, by presenting specific challenges I've faced throughout the research.

Background

Before continuing, some background to the research and the population is needed. My research has been cross-disciplinary, involving psychology of religion, ritual studies, and acculturation studies, as well as a sequential mixed-model, including a quantitative approach followed by a qualitative one. The character of the research was exploratory and hypothesis-generating, due to the fact that very few scientific studies had been conducted in Sweden related to the ethnic *Suroyo* population. For this reason a broad perspective on culture was used, continuing with a more specific focus on meaning-making and ritualisation. My study concerned three generations, the primary focus being on the youth generation. The research question was as follows: What are the generational variations in meaning-making within the process of acculturation among Suroye immigrants and their children in Sweden?

The Suroye[1] have their background in the Middle East and have

emigrated since the late 19th century, due to economic, religious, political, and labour factors. The larger migration to Sweden started in the 1970s, where the Suroye settled down in the larger industrial cities. Characteristics of Suroyo cultural life today, though there are many variations, include the use of the Syriac language, the Syriac Orthodox faith with its strong emphasis on rituals and symbols, an emphasis on an ancestral link to Assyrian or Aramean origin, extended family bounds and family gatherings, a collectivistic orientation, as well as small businesses within the service sector. There has been until now very limited scientific research on the Suroyo youth population in Sweden (see Parszyk 1999 and 2002 using a qualitative approach). The research that has been conducted has focused on the adult population (Deniz 1999; Freyne-Lindhagen 1994; Knutsson 1982; Björklund 1981, all using a qualitative approach). My thesis has therefore been a contribution to the field of Suroyo youth research, using both quantitative and qualitative approaches.

Demographics

Exact demographics on the Suroye in Sweden are not available, as people are not categorised in the national census by ethnicity and religiosity. Having emigrated from diverse countries complicates this further. The internal ethnic lists are also limited, not offering sufficient information. However, internal sources point to a population of 65–80,000 Suroye in Sweden. For Södertälje, where the highest concentration of Suroye is to be found, the calculations are easier. The total population of Södertälje is 80,049 (this figure and the following are taken from the *Storstadsarbetet, Oktober-rapporten, 2004* by the municipality of Södertälje). The number of those with a foreign background (defined as persons born outside Sweden or having both parents born outside Sweden) in Södertälje in 2003 was 28,457 persons (36 % of the total population). Among these, 14,204 (18 %) are identified as having a Suroyo ethnic background. Among

those approximately 1,095 are between 16 and 19 years old; and 3,321 between 20 and 34. When looking specifically at some of the districts of Södertälje the Suroye constitute a large percentage of the population, e.g. Ronna (66 %), Hovsjö (53 %), Geneta (46 %), and Fornhöjden (26 %). In the larger cities the ethnic segregation in housing areas for the Suroye follows a pattern similar to that for other immigrant groups; i.e., living on the outskirts. One pattern of settlement is to search for a residence close to relatives, the church, and the ethnic association. This causes a form of segregation which affects the children in many ways, such as in school, competency in Swedish language, and isolation within the society (Deniz 1999, 309). However pressure towards increased mobility in order to find work is changing this living structure somewhat. The division within the Suroyo community, between different churches and associations, has also created a segregation within the ethnic community itself, separating people mentally as well as physically. Though there is some interaction on a personal level, the interaction between the churches and associations related to the Aramean and Assyrian ideologies is more limited.

The unemployment rate in Södertälje for 2004 was 4 %, which is an increase from previous year, while the figures for some specific districts were higher, Ronna (8 %), Hovsjö (7 %), Geneta (6 %) and Fornhöjden (6 %). The occupations found among second generation (adult) females are largely in recreation centres, social services, cafeterias, cleaning or as housewives. Among the second generation males the most common professions are as shop managers, hairdressers and kiosk owners. The percentage of persons having completed upper secondary level education level in Södertälje in 2002 was 46.1 % in total. In some districts this was lower, however – between 31 % in Hovsjö and 42 % in Fornhöjden. Among the Suroye the different generations show different patterns. A total lack of education and illiteracy among females and a fifth grade elementary education among males is the most common among first generation (elderly) Suroye. Within the second generation the level of education is somewhat higher, mainly between fifth grade and upper secondary level among the females, and between fifth grade

and university level among the males. Within the third generation, the youth, upper secondary education is very common and university education is increasing strongly. Though the average income per family has increased with time for Södertälje as a whole, looking at the specific districts where Suroye live, the family income is well below the city average. More specific statistics on the Suroye are difficult to find, as such information is not documented, and if documented by the Suroye institutions, it is not easy to get access to. Therefore, I will now present some material on acculturation patterns from my research.

Acculturation Patterns

I will present the results of my research regarding acculturation patterns in terms of four categories: language, social adaptation and commitment, identity, and religion and rituals. Each category includes quantitative material for three generations followed by qualitative material for the third generation (youth) only. For the youth, a developmental perspective concerning their stages of life is also presented. The results are based on questionnaires among three generations (n = 219) and interviews among the youth (n = 12).

Language: Competency in popular Syriac language is strong among the three generations (elderly, adults, and youth), while competency in Swedish (writing as the highest level of proficiency) has increased from the first to the third generation and the competency in Turkish and Arabic languages has decreased from the first to the third generation (see Tables 1 and 2). Through the interviews, the youth describe the Syriac language as most strongly related to church going, identity, home, and community. It is not uncommon that different languages are used at home, depending on the family member in question. The youth may use one language for speaking with parents, such as Syriac, and another with brothers and sisters, such as Swedish. Yet another language may be used with relatives, such as Arabic or Turkish.

Table 1. Crosstabulation for writing Swedish within generation by gender, in percentage.

	Generation 1		**Generation 2**		**Generation 3**			
	Gender							
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	P for Generation	P for Gender
Writing	7 %	35 %	58 %	69 %	96 %	88 %	<.000	NS

Table 2. Crosstabulation for competency in Syriac, Turkish and Arabic within generation by gender, in percentage.

	Generation 1		**Generation 2**		**Generation 3**			
	Gender							
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	P for Generation	P for Gender
Popular Syriac	93 %	100 %	100 %	90 %	99 %	93 %	NS	NS
Turkish	39 %	77 %	31 %	62 %	16 %	24 %	<.000	<.000
Arabic	93 %	85 %	69 %	66 %	46 %	57 %	<.000	NS

Social adaptation and commitment: The importance of friendship along ethnic lines is strong, but decreasing from first generation to third generation, with small differences for gender (see Table 3). Through the interviews young people expressed a change taking place as they grew older, with their childhood friends being mainly Suroye or Swedes, while in adulthood the ethnic background of their peers are more diverse.

Perceived discrimination is very high across the three generations, with the elderly of both genders, together with second generation women, closely followed by third generation males having experienced the most discrimination (see Table 4). During the interviews, young people spoke of discrimination in terms of being called a "svartskalle" (blackhead), being oppressed, not respected, not accepted for who they are in personal and ethnic terms, being insulted as an ethnic group, being shown prejudice as a group, being judged by background, negative

treatment due to sex, being bullied, being treated differently, and ignorance. Discrimination occurred in different places, such as at schools and restaurants, and came from different people such as teachers and other students. Respondents' reactions varied, ranging from repressing the feeling to talking it through or reacting aggressively.

Table 3. Mean values and standard deviations for different items within generation by gender.

Item		Generation 1				Generation 2				Generation 3			
		M	SD	n	P	M	SD	n	P	M	SD	n	P
Feeling Suroyo	Female	3,82	,48	28		3,85	,37	26		3,57	,66	67	
	Male	3,88	,33	26		3,59	,68	29		3,74	,50	42	
	Total	3,85	,41	54	NS	3,71	,57	55	NS	3,63	,60	109	NS
Feeling part of the Swedish society	Female	2,23	,91	26		2,62	,70	26		2,82	,67	67	
	Male	2,72	,98	25		2,59	,95	29		2,93	,72	41	
	Total	2,47	,97	51	<.058	2,60	,83	55	NS	2,86	,69	108	NS
Importance of friends being Suroye	Female	3,29	,90	28		2,96	,96	26		2,34	1,05	68	
	Male	3,31	,88	26		2,59	1,05	29		2,64	,93	42	
	Total	3,30	,88	54	NS	2,76	1,02	55	NS	2,45	1,01	110	NS
Support child if she/ he marries a Swede	Female	2,57	,79	28		2,27	,78	26		3,01	1,07	68	
	Male	2,50	,86	26		2,62	1,01	29		2,59	1,07	41	
	Total	2,54	,82	54	NS	2,45	,92	55	NS	2,85	1,09	109	<.045
Celebrating typical Swedish traditions	Female	2,14	,97	28		2,54	1,03	26		2,37	,97	67	
	Male	2,12	1,03	26		1,93	,96	29		1,79	,90	42	
	Total	2,13	,99	54	NS	2,22	1,03	55	<.022	2,15	,98	109	<.002
Listening to Suroyo radio and TV from Sweden or Europe	Female	2,32	1,12	28		2,46	1,03	26		1,88	,97	68	
	Male	2,65	1,06	26		1,90	,94	29		2,12	1,10	41	
	Total	2,48	1,09	54	NS	2,16	1,01	55	<.029	1,97	1,02	109	NS
Feeling religious/ spiritual	Female	3,68	,55	28		3,24	,78	25		3,00	,69	68	
	Male	3,73	,45	26		2,69	,81	29		2,90	,74	41	
	Total	3,70	,50	54	NS	2,94	,83	54	<.014	2,96	,71	109	NS
Following religious fasting	Female	3,29	1,08	28		2,85	1,05	26		2,75	,98	64	
	Male	3,50	,99	26		2,00	1,00	29		2,21	,90	42	
	Total	3,39	1,04	54	NS	2,40	1,10	55	<.003	2,54	,98	106	<.005

Table 4. Cross tabulation on whether the respondents have experienced any kind of discrimination due to their Suroyo background within generation by gender, in percentage.

	Generation 1		Generation 2		Generation 3	
	Gender					
	Female (n = 28)	Male (n = 26)	Female (n = 26)	Male (n = 29)	Female (n = 68)	Male (n = 42)
Yes	61 %	62 %	62 %	38 %	38 %	54 %
No	39 %	38 %	38 %	62 %	62 %	46 %
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %

Generation: No statistical significance. Gender: No statistical significance.

Some other areas in this category are marriage, traditions, and media (see Table 3). The support for inter-ethnic marriages (Suroyo-Swede) has increased from generation to generation, also being stronger among the females. Participation in typical Swedish traditions has decreased from the first to the third generation; this too being stronger among the females. The use of Suroyo media has decreased with each generation, being stronger among the males. In the interviews, the young people didn't consider alcohol and drugs to be a problem. Gambling, however, was seen as more problematic, as it is a common practice in Suroyo cultural festivals. The environment also has a negative effect on in these matters, especially in gambling.

Identity: The Suroyo affiliation is strong among all three generations, but showing a small decline from the first to the second generation, then stabilising in the third generation (see Table 3). The ethnic Swedish affiliation is weaker, but increasing with generation (see Table 3). In the interviews, young people described their identity or self image with a diverse set of kinship labelling throughout development, such as Suroyo, Aramean, Assyrian, Swedish, immigrant, or naming their country of origin. Sometimes they used more than one label for themselves, being both positively and negatively connoted as well as being tied to a particular period of life. The experience of being different and belonging to an ethnic minority in childhood is associated with weaker self confidence,

feelings of exclusion, and problems with kinship and religion.

Religion: Religious values, beliefs and practices, though strong, decrease with each generation, and females in all three generations show stronger indicators here than males (see Table 3). In these areas the main pattern of difference is between the first generation and the other two generations. In the interviews, the young people describe their religion from childhood as strong and in positive terms. In adulthood though, it is described in inner and individual categories and even critically questioned. The view concerning church follows a similar pattern, also being associated with the schism and problems within the community. Ritual practices in childhood are singing in a boy or girl choir or becoming a deacon, church going, praying, fasting, family gatherings, and festivals and traditions of religion and kinship. Midway through childhood similar rituals are present, with most of them being viewed as positive. During the teenage years church related practices such as sports, arts and playing cards are also common, again viewed mostly positive, except card playing that is expressed with negative feelings as well. In adulthood, practices such as reading and searching for more knowledge about ethnic heritage, dancing, and specific social activities with friends are added, where most are viewed as positive. The practice of singing in a boy or girl choir or being a deacon is given up in adulthood.

Conclusion

In a dissertation study on the Suroye in Sweden, the sociologist Deniz, puts forth some specific conclusions. He writes that the immigration to Sweden and other Western countries among the Suroye has affected religion and the Syriac Orthodox Church (Deniz 1999). Further, religion, as a differentiating and identity-giving mechanism in the pre-migration phase, has lost its function in Sweden (Deniz 1999). As the acculturation process has gone forward, the organisational structure of the Syriac Orthodox Church, its unwillingness to make changes, and its lack of adaptation to the new value structures of its

members have become specific problematic issues in Sweden (Deniz 1999). Deniz points out that within the Swedish context, influenced by democracy, the critics of the churchly institutions called for enlightenment, and they questioned the institutions of the old order such as patriarchal bonds, clan loyalty, and gender segregation in their ethnic culture. It was specifically the priesthood which was criticised, as its representatives would put their own interests before those of the congregation in order to maintain control and power. These churches were also criticised for contributing to the division of the ethnic group between Arameans and Assyrians (Deniz 1999) as well as for taking an active part in the organisation and power struggles between the ethnic associations. Thus, a general conclusion that can be drawn from previous research and from my own findings is that the traditional world view, represented by churches and ethnic associations, has at times and mainly for the older people functioned as an exploratory system. But it is possible to hold that these institutions are being criticised and their ideologies are attracting less people, especially among the younger generations. Living in a multicultural and secular society like Sweden, the younger Suroye relate not only to the traditional explanatory systems of religion and kinship, but also to a postmodern and secularised Swedish world view. With this overview of the Suroyo community it is now possible to approach specific issues that concern the relation between the researcher and the researched.

PART II: POSITIONING MYSELF AS A RESEARCHER

Introduction

As indicated in the beginning of this article, I do not believe there is any such thing as a neutral researcher. It is therefore important

as a researcher to find a good balance between proximity to and distance from the field of study. In my own case, being an insider creates an opportunity for proximity, the critical comments of other researchers serve as good means of maintaining the required distance. Therefore, in the following, first I will position myself as a researcher, and second I will discuss my positions in relation to the researched. In locating myself as a researcher I will identify my starting position, or pre-understanding. I will therefore go through my own experiences in relation to the research field, by doing this in a personal writing and self-revelatory mode, acknowledging the double/multiple consciousness in which I operate. The experience of the process of acculturation will be the main focus in describing my pre-understanding.

Experiences in Relation to the Research Field

A concrete experience of the process of acculturation: Having been born in a very poor and primitive area in south-eastern Turkey, and belonging to an ethnic minority in that same area, in my case Suroyo, I experienced great changes when moving to the large and modern city of Istanbul at the age of seven. Yet another big change and move came at the age of nine, this time to the west coast of Sweden. During our first four years in Sweden my family and I were seeking asylum. Experiencing immigration and the process of acculturation very concretely, I've both seen and gone through some of the problems and difficulties, the discrimination and exclusions, but also the advantages and benefits associated with this process, that of helping me view things from different perspectives. I have seen from very close proximity how immigration can affect the life of a family, both positively and negatively.

Locating myself in the process of acculturation: During the process of acculturation my personal and cultural values, attitudes, beliefs, as well as practices have changed; some more, others less.

My relation to both Suroyo and Swedish cultures is characterised by great changes over time. At first I saw myself as a Suroyo subject in Sweden, then as an immigrant in a Swedish society, almost as an object or the other. Today I see myself as a Suroyo-Swede, again a subject, with specific experiences. In relation to my research topic I'm an insider, as I belong to the same culture as the population under study. However, having been living in a university city for a long time, this has to an extent distanced me from the Suroyo community.

In the earlier period of my acculturation, both Suroyo religious and kinship ties were integrated into my worldview. The Syriac Orthodox church taught me that it was the true church of Christ, and the ethnic Assyrian association that our people were the founders of civilisation. This was at the same time that we, as a minority in Swedish society and in the world in general, were vulnerable and scattered, and this discrepancy of perspectives would confuse me from time to time. I had also been taught the principles of a collective and family-centred way of living. My interests and choices in life had to be put first in relation to those of the family and then in relation to those of the ethnic group. Along the path of acculturation and through education and travelling, these principles were confronted by new ones; some started weakening and giving way to new ones and others remained intact. Today religion, kinship, family and collective orientation are still important to me, but none of them has a privileged point of view or is regarded uncritically. Other aspects, such as spirituality, humanism, multiculturalism, individuality, and independence have also gained some space in my world view. I am being confronted with different world views at the same time as I interact with Suroye from older generations, for example, or with Swedes in general. The attempt is not so much to bridge the gap as to find a way that the different worldviews can both be used and developed. For this purpose I've preserved some of the Suroye values and practices, some I've left out, changed others, brought in some Swedish ones, and somehow combined values and practices from both cultures into something of my own; into one cultural system. Most of all, I've tried to find a space for both to function.

This project of creating, or culture construction, is not finished, but it is rather still going on.

To conclude, in line with Collins' (1990) argument for a concrete experience as a criterion for meaning, with my background I therefore may say that I've personally been going through the process I've been studying as well as having seen others go through it, and thus I recognise the experiences of my informants, caring for their experiences, and finally, I can with confidence say that *I am* one of them.[2] Studying the acculturation process of Suroye in Sweden, I find it both a privilege and a responsibility to tell the stories of and give voice to other Suroye and their experiences. The following phrase points to the very core of the above description of my pre-understanding: "My research is a part of my life and my life is a part of my research" (Ladson-Billings 2000, 268).

Being an Insider/Outsider

I have above pointed out the importance of locating oneself as a researcher and I have described my own background, being of importance in studying "my own people" or those I have a historical, social, and ideological affiliation and experience with. My own multiple identities and my different roles have had different impacts on the research I have conducted and my reasons for doing it. To borrow some thoughts from a feminist writer, Kanuha (2000), I as a researcher have been seeking for more knowledge, more analysis, and more understanding on Suroyo culture, both theoretically and empirically. As a Suroyo I've wanted to make a contribution to the knowledge-building and collecting of memories of my ethnic people, and as a Swede I've wanted to contribute to a society that is more inclusive and diverse. These roles all come together in the content of my research and they are all important to acknowledge.

Some of these roles are related to being an insider/outsider, which describes the relation of the researcher to the researched. However, these positions are not unproblematic. In researching a group of

people's lives, ethnic congruity is not enough to overcome other incongruities within the research process. Other issues that have affected the research in this particular study are my gender, my personal experiences, power issues between me and the participants, my age, and my ethnic labelling. Therefore, being an insider is more complex than it first appears. It is quite possible to say that through the research process I've sometimes been an insider in the margins; i.e., I, as a Suroyo-Swedish researcher, also find myself in some situations outside different contexts, such as:

- Being a male researcher has sometimes put limitations on interview encounters with female participants. For example, when recruiting female participants for interviews, I've most often had to ask for the permission of the parents, and in some cases the interviews have been approved, while in others not. Another culture specific issue is talking about sexuality, indirectly causing both the participants and me to avoid the topic, and if it has been brought up the discussion has been limited. Yet other sensitive topics are the use of drugs, gambling and alcohol, which are sensitive in relation to both genders, but specifically with females. However, by assuring them of confidentiality and stressing my responsibility in this regard as a researcher, I was able to make the participants more comfortable during the course of the interview.
- Having much in common with the participants' culture may at interviews encounters make me as a researcher less keen to taken-for-granted assumptions, not teasing out more information about them. For example, the participants would say, "You know what I mean" concerning some specific celebrations or concerning dating issues, and an approval nodding, sometimes unconsciously on my part, would end the discussion.
- Being a researcher has in interview encounters put me in a privileged position, in terms of power-knowledge. Some participants have in the beginning of an interview been careful as they would find it challenging to meet with an academic person or an expert in a specific field. However, as the interview would proceed they would relax and feel more comfortable.

- Being a young researcher puts limitations on my understanding of the experiences of first and second generation participants in particular. Key persons within the community have therefore been of great value in approaching the older generations.
- Being an insider within a small community, there has been a problem of participant bias. In meeting the participants or key persons within the community, I was already a person with a certain history, ideology and position. This required me to introduce myself thoroughly and assure them of my responsibility as a researcher, and at times even acquaint myself to them by giving my family background and the village I was born in, which is a common cultural practice when meeting a new person.
- My background in growing up within a context of an Assyrian ideology and having had more contact with this group has led to some suspicion and carefulness from the population with an Aramean ideology. I had to make very clear that I as a professional researcher didn't have any community related political interests.
- At times, my role as a critical observer of the community processes has put hindrances in getting access to information, such as name lists of the church members. By making use of key persons within the community, however, alternative solutions were found.
- The specific circumstance that I don't belong to a powerful extended family, institution or political group within the community has both been a problem and an advantage in my research. It has limited my access to certain information and contacts, but at the same time it has given me the opportunity to work outside of some power hegemonies and the possibility to be more critical than I perhaps would have been if I had belonged to any of these.

Thus, being an insider has not been a fixed position; it has rather been imbedded with its own specific problems, while at the same time providing specific solutions in relation to those being researched. There have also been issues relating to the insider position from the perspective of other researchers. In relation to the scholarly world, I was viewed as an ethnic minority researcher

with expertise and somehow I was assumed to "know everything" about the culture and population I was out to study, and I had inadvertently become something of a representative for them. Something noticeable happened here: I was both a professional scholar, a subject; but also part of what I set out to study, the object. It was therefore crucial not to loose my professionalism as a researcher, and this I attempted in several ways:

- By creating a distance between myself and the participants and by being aware of my own pre-understanding, being self-critical and by following scientific guidelines.
- By discussing the research process and results with a research team that had a greater natural distance from the research population. In my case this was within the different doctoral research seminars, with colleagues which had good insight into the disciplinary and theoretical approaches I was using.[3]
- By discussing the research process and results with a research team that had closeness to the research population. In my case it was a seminar of Suroye researchers and key persons, having experience of the issues that I study.[4]

Different seminars like the above, where the participants themselves have been within the insider/outsider continuum, have been of great value, complementing each other well. This also highlights that knowledge is a matter of dialogue, and thus communicative validity a concern (Kvale 1997). Such a dialogue brings the power/knowledge discourse into the hegemony of both the research community and the local community.

A further reflection on my position as an insider highlights more limitations. The insider position I have doesn't necessarily give me an intimate knowledge of all the experiences of the participants and their culture. Neither do I have a true picture of the context; as such a picture doesn't exist. The best I can do as a researcher is to put forth a scholar perspective within the disciplines I work with and based on my experiences and pre-understanding. This is important to point out, since there is the risk of politically marginalizing the ethnic minority researchers as well as research on ethnic minorities,

incorrectly concluding that certain researchers are more suited for or should be limited to certain research. All this fallacy does is to demonstrate positions in the hierarchy of research affecting the research process. To borrow inspiration from a feminist writer, Bhopal (2001), the last thing I want to do as an ethnic minority researcher is to become a fixed object to myself as subject. Instead, the privilege of being an ethnic minority researcher, at least in the context of this specific study, is that I can look back as a subject constituted as an object in this relation and disclose some of the contradictions coming forth in the research.

Conclusion

In rethinking the relation of the researcher to the researched I would like to propose a new framework, by approaching it as a form of practice. For this purpose I will borrow a perspective from ritual theorist C. Bell (1992), who puts forth some specific features of practice. Though Bell discusses ritualization as a form of practice, I find it useful to also approach the insider/outsider positions as purposive activities with the characteristics and features of human practice. Thus, the insider/outsider positions can be understood as practices, and as such they derive their significance from their interplay and contrast with other practices. The insider/outsider positions are not either entirely separate ways of acting, and when analysed they shouldn't be lifted out of their cultural context where there are other ways of acting. These positions are rather the products of a differentiation, differentiating themselves "to various degrees and in various ways from other ways of acting within any particular culture," and also in culturally specific ways (Bell 1992, 90). Bell highlights four features of human activity (Bell 1992, 81f), and these features can also be used to approach the insider/outsider positions. First, practice is *situational*; i.e., it can only be grasped within the specific context in which it occurs. Second, practice is *strategic*, having its own practical and instrumental logic to remain

as implicit and rudimentary as possible. Third, practice is embedded in *misrecognition* of what it is in fact doing; a misrecognition of its limits and constraints, its ends and its means. Fourth, practice is able to reproduce or reconfigure a vision of the order of power in the world, called a *redemptive hegemony*.

In the following I will apply these features to insider/outsider positions in my own research experience. These positions need to be set within the context of academic research, taking place within the framework of a larger experience; i.e., the process of acculturation that both I and the participants are part of, and that takes place within the Swedish societal context. This setting also directs the other features of the researcher positions. The main strategies of insider/outsider positions involve certain basic dynamics (Bell 1992, 101): first, the physical construction of schemes of *binary oppositions*, such as being an insider or an outsider; second, the orchestrated *hierarchisation* of these schemes, where some come to dominate others, at times putting the insider with his/her extended knowledge of the culture in a privileged power-knowledge position and at times putting the outsider with his/her ability to stand at a distance from the culture in a privileged position; third, the generation of a *loosely integrated whole*, such as the slash construction of insider/outsider. Next there is the *misrecognition* inherent to these positions, such as from the inside not really being able to see all the consequences of that position (e.g. the *taken-for-granted assumptions* described earlier) and from the outside not really getting full access to the culture in question. Finally, the *redemptive hegemony* points out that each position reflects a specific vision of power within the scholarly world; each position has its specific techniques and discursive practices. Approaching power as contingent, local, imprecise, relational, and organisational (Bell 1992, 199), the strategies of power in these positions are dependent on each other. For example, as an insider I may use the ethnic language or some body movements (a language in itself) to indicate that I'm not different from the participants, while as an outsider not using these or other languages indicates that I'm different.

Approaching the positions of insider/outsider as forms of practice

with their specific features within research is more dynamic and contextual than seeing them as fixed positions. This approach also highlights that not only do ethnic minority researchers conducting research with other ethnic minorities need to be critical of their own positions and their use of different concepts, but that all researchers need to do this, including mainstream researchers conducting research on mainstream culture.

Notes

1 The labelling *Suroyo* (*Suroye* in plural) is used in this study, though there are other labels that are frequently used as well, such as Aramean, Assyrian, the slash Aramean/Assyrian, Syrian (in Swedish only, not to be confused with the Arabic nation Syria), among others. My choice of labelling is based on the emic term, directly taken from the Syriac language and used by the ethnic population itself. In this way the political associations of the labels are avoided as much as possible, as the purpose of my research is to be neutral in this aspect.

2 However, I want to state my standpoint that not having a concrete experience of the group under study doesn't necessarily mean this research is not relevant. It is just another perspective, and like all perspectives, it has its limitations.

3 The doctoral seminars where the material has been presented have been the following: the seminar within the discipline of psychology of religion at Uppsala University; a seminar of doctoral students within both sociology and psychology of religion, SMURF, at Uppsala University; and the Nordic-Baltic Youth Research Doctoral School Network.

4 This was realised thanks to a seminar group consisting of students from Södertörn Högskola and through a seminar organised by the Edessa Folkhögskoleförening (Folk Highschool Association).

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AN INTERACTIVE APPROACH AND COMBINED METHODS: DEVELOPMENT OF APPLIED YOUTH RESEARCH

by Lotta Svensson

Introduction

> The overall goal of research is to acquire knowledge in order to better understand the world we live in, and if possible, to change it for the better (SOU 1999:4, 5).

How can you accomplish what is referred to in the quotation above? Well, when vision is to be turned into practice there are many choices to make, and they include many decisions where the researcher's conception of reality and view of knowledge are expressed – which means that they are both ontological and epistemological. My own standpoints are of course influenced by my background as a woman who has grown up in a working class environment and worked as a social worker, and who now lives relatively far away from the economic, social and cultural elite. I do not deny that there are conflicts between different ways of experiencing and examining reality, but I claim that many of the existing conflicts are artificial, for example the conflict between theoretical and practical knowledge, or the one between quantitative and qualitative methods. As I see it, this is a

question of seeing particular aspects – the same totality can be seen from different perspectives. In order to create as good a theory of reality as possible, it is important to be open to a great many different perspectives. The aim of my dissertation work has been to study the phenomenon of young people leaving small communities. I have tried to illuminate the problem from different angles and therefore considered it necessary to use several different methods.

The driving forces in my research work have both theoretical and practical foundations. I want to find out more about how the underlying mechanisms[1] influence the decisions young people make about staying or moving away from their home community. I seek to achieve this by discerning what young people in Söderhamn think about staying or moving, and by using various theories to reflect on young people's opinions and how these have been formed. In this issue the question of the "free choice" is central. In this sense I am in the middle of the debates over individualisation/ globalisation (e.g. Giddens 1999; Ziehe 1986) and reproduction/regionalisation (e.g. Furlong & Cartmel 1997) where the issues of social background and gender are central (e.g. Hirdman 1990; Forsberg 2000 & 2002; Trondman 2001; Waara 1996; Willis 1981).

I also want my work to have concrete and practical relevance for the region. By discerning and reflecting on young people's opinions I try to place the issue on the everyday and political agenda in the community/region, from a youth perspective, and I hope that by doing so I will contribute to a more conscious and well-informed decision-making processes.

We would expect to find the answers to the question of what mechanisms influence the decisions made by young people about moving or staying in their home community on individual, group and community levels, as well as in the interaction between these levels. In order to shed light on such a complex issue, I believe that a certain closeness to those concerned is needed, along with investigative methods which make it possible to both understand individuals and explain the underlying mechanisms. I have chosen to work from an interactive[2] research approach and to combine several data gathering methods.

An interactive approach…

In my research project it is the dialogue and the interaction between young people and the adults close to them which has to a great extent decided what is theoretically interesting and what the next practical step in the process will be. The interaction between theory and the empirical material has not only taken place in relation to me and my research questions; my ambition has also been to make the theoretical world and the empirical world interact in practice – by bringing together "theorists" and "practitioners" and by allowing the theoretical and practical knowledge to enrich one another.

My objective is both to *understand* and to *explain*. This means that my knowledge interest is in the young people's own thoughts on their choice of direction, and in what/who they believe influences them in this choice, but it is also about what can be understood beyond their own self-understanding – something which is achieved with the help of theoretical frames of reference. My ambition is to find the deep structures/mechanisms which make the practice comprehensible behind the patterns which can be found in the empirical material (Alvesson & Sköldberg 1994, 44). I have tried to achieve this through a repetitive process of oscillation between theoretically influenced empiricism and empirically influenced theory.

The Research & Development (R&D) Centre in Söderhamn, where I work, was founded in 2000, in the hope that research carried out in the community could contribute to regional development (see Hammar & Svensson 2002). The municipal authorities in Söderhamn were hoping that a local R&D Centre would help reduce the distance from Academia that was felt in the community, and we, as PhD students, were encouraged to use an interactive approach.

Söderhamn is a town on the east coast approximately in the middle of Sweden, about 270 kilometers north of Stockholm, with 27 000 inhabitants. Söderhamn can be described as a rather traditional industrial town, built up around the forestry industry. Due to the industrial structural change, which has taken place since the middle of the 1970s, Söderhamn and similar communities have

had a decreasing population and relatively high unemployment. The problem of young people moving away is something these communities also have in common.

Economic historian Henrik Lindberg, who has studied how Söderhamn met the industrial crisis of 1975–1985, writes:

> Söderhamn as a region is, if not the archetype of, at least rather close to the industrial communities in the countryside, built up around an abundant natural resource, which has characterized so much of Swedish industrialization. It was in places like Söderhamn that industrialization took place during the latter part of the 19th century. Maybe it was even here that Modern Sweden was formed, since also the political culture and the co-operative climate between work and capital were shaped according to the conditions of the industrial communities. There are subsequently, figuratively speaking, hundreds of "Söderhamns" in Sweden which could also be studied from the perspective that big things can be seen in small things. (Lindberg 2002, 37.)

At an early stage it turned out that one of the issues that worried the local authorities was the number of young people moving away from the municipality, and the low numbers moving in. It was regarded as a local/regional problem, and there was great concern for the development of the region. Many adults were worried about the low numbers of young people moving back. There were statistics showing the number of people moving in and moving away, but it was not known how young people thought about moving or staying, and returning or not returning. In contacts with young people it became evident that they regarded these questions as most urgent – they all have to deal with the moving/staying issues in their own lives. They claimed they had not understood that adults were interested in these issues. My own ambition to contribute to the theoretical development of the issue of what drives young people to move away from small communities, and the wish of the municipal authorities to better understand the same issue, as well as the young people's own interest, gave me a good breeding ground for the interactive research that I strived to do.

From my conception of knowledge and background it was obvious to me that much important knowledge of the driving forces behind the moving/staying phenomenon was with those who were most directly concerned; primarily with the young people but also with the adults close to them. I was also convinced that both their knowledge and mine could be enriched by dialogues and discussions about the questions connected to the moving/staying issue, and I thought this could be amplified if we acted together with the issue in focus.

In my dissertation project I have followed neither a particular group nor a focused development process. The processes involved are rather about young people's phase of life that demands a decision on the moving/staying issue. Furthermore there was a wish expressed by the municipal authorities to get a better grip on the problems facing young people in the community and their situation, needs and desires. The process(es) making young people more involved in local development has by now come to be a important part of my interest. The content of the interaction with the practice, for my part, has varied over time, and different people and activities have been in focus at different times. To begin with, the dialogue with the young people and adults was mostly a search for interesting viewpoints and ideas. After that there was a period when different groups of young people reflected on what they and other adolescents thought about moving or staying, and how they believed they would act in the future. During the period after that, groups of both young people and adults reflected on what influenced the decisions made about the moving/staying issue. Later on the discussions have, to a greater extent, been about reflections and analyses of the underlying mechanisms and structures as far as the causes behind the choice of staying or moving are concerned.

The municipality of Söderhamn is not only my workplace, but also the place where I grew up and my present domicile. After working and studying in some other cities I have been involved in Söderhamn with psycho-social and pedagogical work for almost 20 years. I have two sons, now aged 10 and 16, who also take part in the local daily life. This means that during my dissertation project

I have been able to follow and participate in the public discussion about young people in the region, and I have also been able to follow the work that has been done on children's and young people's participation and influence in the municipality. All of this means that my involvement in the municipality has an informal side and in some ways makes me to an "insider", with the problems that are associated with that. I claim, however, that the "insider position" has given me many clues that have helped me to develop new knowledge. I will discuss this a bit more at the end of the article.

...and a combination of different data gathering methods

My wish is "to both understand and explain"; to show how individuals make adjustments and consider making a decision, and to present the mechanisms influencing these decisions. In order to be able to examine the issue from as many angles as possible, my ambition has been among other things to communicate in different ways with young people both individually and in groups. I have been present at different events, where the moving/staying of young people has been addressed in one way or another, by the youths themselves and/or by adults. I have in different ways tried to take part of young people's and adults' everyday thinking and acting, and of their reflections on other people's thinking and acting as well as their own. Analysing and reflecting together with the young people and the adults has led me to examine new aspects and increase my understanding. It has given me clues to where explanations can be found, which show how underlying mechanisms influence the choices of young people.

Due to my participation in local life, I have had no difficulties in gaining access to the life-world of young people in Söderhamn and I think I have had, as far as the young people are concerned, a more-or-less acceptable understanding of their world.

The search for knowledge of young people's experiences and

reflections has been a guiding principle in my choice of methods. I have tried to make my research questions as well developed and well examined as possible and therefore have used a number of different data gathering methods, such as interviews, following a group project, attending a youth conference, essays, collective reflections, a survey, and formal and informal meetings. I present the different methods below, in somewhat chronological order, to show how the various approaches, in turn, have led to new questions which I have followed up with other methods.

Interviews

In order to find out what questions were vital for young people, I started by making eight interviews, with four boys and four girls. I tried, with the help of previous contacts, to choose young people with different backgrounds and different fields of interests, aged 15–20. I made contact with them through their parents. By using interviews and personal contact, my hope was to get more personal and more reflective opinions to extend the research issues. I had some areas that I wanted the interviews to examine, but I also wanted the dialogues to help me widen my perspective as to what questions were relevant.

I started the interviews by telling the young people about myself and my research interest. My first question was intended to be a bit provocative, referring to what I had found out was a common way of addressing this issue in the media and among youngsters. I asked, "Are you a 'loser' if you stay in Söderhamn?" It turned out to be a good starting point for a dialogue. They all had many opinions about that question and most often the dialogue just went on by itself, covering my follow-up questions, which were:

- What do you think makes young people leave Söderhamn?
- What do you think makes young people stay in Söderhamn?
- Can the same reasons be applied to all young people?
- What do you think about your life in the future?

- What would your ideal life look like (moving or staying for example)?
- What is important for you/for other young people when choosing where you want to live in the future?
- What or who do you think influences your thoughts the most about staying or leaving?

The interviews lasted 1–3 hours, depending mostly on how much the young person used the opportunity to make reflections. Afterwards some of the interviewees contacted me again, both through direct contact and via e-mail, with further commentaries on our conversation.

The interviews led me to further questions about differences between different young people/groups. I felt that the young people's thoughts and reflections reflected to a small extent the image of young people presented in the media. Even my own preconception, that "most young people" wanted to get away as soon as possible, was challenged. Was it only the group who were inclined to move who were vocal? How would that influence the context of the moving/staying issue? One unexpected development from the interviews was that these young people felt that their influence in matters going beyond their schools and recreation centres was extremely limited, nor did they feel that they had any connection with decision-makers. So I had a new research question: What role does the experience of participation, influence and being wanted play in their thoughts about moving or staying?

These questions, in turn, made me want to find out how questions about moving or staying were discussed in groups of young people, and what a larger group of young people thought was essential for being young in the municipality of Söderhamn. I also wanted to find out whether it was possible to organise a dialogue on these questions between young people, politicians and civil servants in the municipality, mainly to find out what issues would be brought up and how they would be treated.

Group projects – Co-operating with Schools

In the municipality of Söderhamn there is *one* upper secondary school, containing both vocational and theoretical programs. That means that almost all (878 students, 2003) of the 16 to 19-year-olds in Söderhamn attend that school. In investigating if it would be possible to co-operate with the school I was invited to a meeting with three social science teachers to explore the possibilities. We thought it could be inspiring to work together, and a project where pupils would research young people's experiences of their hometown could fit into the curriculum. But unfortunately it didn't fit into their plans for the moment so I had to postpone that idea. So after a while I started to plan for a project together with the Swedish (native language) teachers, involving student essays, instead.

But then six months later one of the social science teachers phoned and said that they now planned to start "our project", next week – could I be there to take part and inspire them? The project "To be young in Söderhamn" was initiated in two classes in the first year of the social science programme. The students were asked to find out what other young people thought about being young in Söderhamn. Under the guidance of the teachers and based on the students' different interests, a number of interview and survey questions were written. The students contacted altogether about 700 adolescents, aged 13–19. This resulted in a presentation at a youth conference arranged by the municipality of Söderhamn. I met the six students who compiled the data over a period of several weeks when they prepared the presentation of the project for the conference.

During the discussions in the social science classes involved in the project, and during the preparations for the conference, it became clear to me that there were considerable differences between the way in which the moving/staying issue was discussed in individual dialogues with me, and how it was dealt with when groups of students were discussing the matter. In this group of "theoretical"

students it seemed to be self evident that everyone was going to move away. No other opinions were presented, and when I spoke about staying as a choice many of the students were frustrated and told me that "moving is the natural thing to do when you are young." These students were surprised when in their own research they found different opinions on the moving/staying issue. It was at this moment I started to think that perhaps the divisions between different youth groups made them all think that "everybody" thought the same. Was it also possible that only the "movers" were heard in public? This made me want to study the thoughts of individual young people first, and then together in a group reflect on and analyse their own attitudes towards a future in Söderhamn as well those of other people.

Youth conference

When contacting the chairman of the municipal council in order to find out how the issues of youth participation were being dealt with, it appeared that there had been discussions in the council about arranging a youth conference. I was asked to contact the chairman of the democracy committee. This involved me in the planning of the conference and consequently much of the youth conference was devoted to the presentation of the upper secondary school students' group project (see above). The two classes' written presentations were distributed to all the conference participants. The conference gathered around 130 students (two representatives from every secondary and upper secondary school class had been invited) and 40 adults. The conference could be seen as an act of good will from both the politicians and the young people that very diligently made their opinions known, but in the end there were no proposals for follow up activities or discussions of further steps to better involve young people. Despite the good will, there seemed to be obstacles, which led me to conclude that young people and adults seemed to have widely different perceptions as to the meaning of involvement,

influence and participation. Another issue that had started to bother me at this time was the attitude among the politicians and civil servants towards different groups of young people, where only a few of them were regarded as "young people to count on" (see Hammar & Svensson 2003; 2004).

Essays

In the hope that the use of essays would give the young people themselves an opportunity to present a "complete" version of their own reflections on their future in relation to Söderhamn, I asked four Swedish teachers at the upper secondary school for permission to spend one hour each with four different groups of second year students (aged 17–18).

From previous research (e.g. Eriksson & Jonsson 1993; A. Svensson 2001) on the influence of gender and social class on the choice of programme in upper secondary school, I tried to choose school classes with presumably significant differences; two classes with a vocational orientation and two of the academically oriented classes. During the hour that was spent writing the essays I was present in the classroom. A total of 60 essays were handed in. The students' task was to write an essay titled "Do I have a future in Söderhamn?" For the students who had problems finding anything to write about, I asked the following complementary questions: "What will you be doing in five years?" "What will you be doing in ten years?" "What will you be doing in 15 years?" "Does it matter what it's like in Söderhamn?"

Collective reflection with youth groups

There were considerable differences in the essays between the classes, and between boys and girls, in the way that they regarded

their future in Söderhamn. I presented these findings to the classes who had written the essays, and the students discussed in small groups possible explanations. That was followed by a discussion in the whole class, about their choices and explanations. In these group discussions it was obvious that all the groups found their own way of reasoning as "the natural one", and they presented various explanations of the "strange choices" made by "the others". They said that they sometimes discussed these matters *within* the groups, but never across the "border lines". The vocational students said that "when we have classes together with the others we just keep quiet because they are so pushy, they always think they are right." These collective analyses lasted 1–2 hours per class. Three of the four essay-writing classes participated in these discussions. One academic class couldn't find the time to take part, because it was at the end of the term.

I have also presented and discussed my findings in a third year (school leaving, aged 18–19) class in upper secondary school and in an orientation course for young people who had recently graduated. These students were also surprised that there were so many young people thinking in other ways than themselves and their friends.

In asking the young people to help with the analysis my hopes were that they would see connections and find explanations that I did not see myself. This mutual analysis provided new angles of approach, but primarily provided a unique opportunity to see how the analyses by the different groups were to a large extent determined by group pressure and a desire to conform, differently expressed in different groups. The opportunity to see how the different groups spoke about each other was also of great value.

Complete survey in the third year of upper secondary school

Having come this far into my research, my understanding of the moving/staying issue was relatively high. I thought I could see

connections in the underlying structures and I wanted to test these in a quantitative survey.

Based on the knowledge I had acquired so far, I designed a survey, which I discussed with two classes, years 1 and 2 in upper secondary school. After further modifications the survey was conducted among all year 3 students in upper secondary school, and the response rate was 86 % (the total number of students was 248, respondents 213). The survey had 35 questions, about moving/staying issues as well as parental education and occupation status, and took about 25 minutes for each student to complete.

The survey was distributed at the end of the spring term in 2003. The initial intention was to gather all students in the assembly hall at a time when they normally would have met their class teachers. Attendance is usually not particularly high on these occasions, so the alternative strategy was to let the class teachers conduct the survey with the students on some other occasion in school. This meant that I was not always present when the survey was carried out.

Formal meetings/discussions with adults

At the same time as I have been working with young people, many of the adults around them have become interested in my work. I have on several occasions been invited to meetings, both small and large, to present my research. I have met many different groups of adults, such as local politicians, municipal administrative directors, youth employment staff, teachers, principals, representatives from the municipal housing estates, rural development workers as well as other groups/individuals interested in my research. My ambition on these occasions too has been to create a platform for mutual creation of knowledge through mutual reflection. These meetings/talks have, for instance, enabled me to gain an insight into adult attitudes towards young people's decisions on the leaving/staying issue, and it has to a great extent contributed to my understanding of the problem and the importance of the issue for regional development.

Informal meetings/talks with young people and adults

I often find myself in conversations about my research, and get many reactions to the reflections I make since I am, more or less all the time, in my research environment. This happens when I meet young people, but possibly to an even greater extent when I meet the adults around the young people, for examples when contacting the school, at other types of meetings which incidentally have touched upon the leaving/staying issue, at study visits at the R&D Centre, in conversations with adults who study in the same building and during the follow-up discussions after my presentations in various groups. Since children and adolescents are a subject of much interest to many people, I have also received opinions and reactions at private social events. It is on these occasions that I have received the most direct, least conformist, and least politically correct reactions, and this has made me more receptive to such opinions even in more formal situations.

"Wasn't it enough to do a questionnaire?"

> "Hallo!" said Piglet, "what are you doing?"
> "Hunting", said Pooh
> "Hunting what?"
> "Tracking something", said Winnie-the-Pooh very mysteriously
> "Tracking what?"
> "That's just what I ask myself. I ask myself, What?"
> "What do you think you'll answer?"
> "I shall have to wait until I catch up with it," said Winnie-the-Pooh.
>
> (A. A. Milne, 1957, 37)

Were all these methods really necessary? During my work I have on several occasions asked myself why I complicate things in this way, by wanting to continue to investigate the issue in never ending

new ways. Even if the sequence might look logical as I describe it, I have often felt like Winnie-the-Pooh, in this little story above. Perhaps there may have been an easier way, but I couldn't find it; perhaps I did things that weren't really necessary, but I didn't know, and I still don't know because all the different experiences led me further.

Perhaps one can claim that the interviews, essays and the survey, out of the activities mentioned above, could have been carried out without any major degree of interactivity, but it is my firm belief that the exchange of knowledge would not have been as adequate without the interactive approach. To participate in activities together with those who are affected by my research has created closeness and trust. The interactive approach has given me great opportunities to "get behind the stages" (Goffman 1998) and really see how people's opinions are expressed in interaction with others in the practical reality. If I had not participated in activities connected with the research issue, I might, for example, have missed the importance of the adults' attitudes to the moving/staying issue for the way in which they regard young people's participation in local development work.

The mutual reflections, discussions and analyses which have been part of my research have resulted in both new and probing questions. To be able to reflect upon the issue together with those concerned, has made me aware that their attitudes towards the moving/staying issue can change, depending upon the level at which they discuss the matter – that is from the distance from which they regard the phenomenon.

A dilemma in interactive research can be to get out of the closeness – it can be hard to maintain a critical distance when you get very close for a longer period. Whether or not I succeed in maintaining the necessary distance for doing good research is for others to decide, but my own experience is that several factors have kept me from "getting lost" in my empirical material. The difference in generations between myself and the adolescents has helped me distance myself; there is a great difference between my own teenage life in the 1970s and that of young people now at the

beginning of 21st century. Another important factor has been to stay aware of my own preconceptions, where my own moving out, social class travel and moving back have been essential. My active efforts to participate in academic discussion and to present the empirical material and my interpretations in different academic contexts have also been important in maintaining distance in relation to the material. My role as a researcher has made it possible for me to provide feedback to both young people and adults in Söderhamn, which has widened the discussion beyond every-day understanding and that has sometimes been provocative. The opposition that sometimes has arisen to my analyses has also given me information about what frames of interpretation there are within the limits of what is generally acceptable, and what is not. Both Dewey (1999) and Lewin (1948) have claimed that the best way to understand a phenomenon is to try to change it.

To "be behind the stage" can be an ethical dilemma when it comes to reporting findings. The interactive approach of dialogue throughout the whole process, and discussing the findings in direct contact with those who are involved has been a way to avoid some ethical dilemmas. When the most involved are the first one to know about my critical points of view and they have been involved discussing it, then my experience is that they don't feel let down when I speak about it in public.

Qualitative *and* quantitative methods

I claim that the results of my different data gathering methods support and complement each other. The interviews helped me to see what aspects of the leaving/staying issue were important and interesting for adolescents, and they gave me clues as to the nature of the everyday interpretation of different young people's different actions; generally speaking, most adolescents mean that "you chose for yourself". The essays gave me an opportunity to see what they found essential when they reflected upon their future in Söderhamn.

In their writing they had the opportunity to decide for themselves what story to tell. Since several different groups of students wrote the essays, it was possible to compare what aspects the different groups regarded as important. The interviews and the essays gave the participants an opportunity to reflect and give a varied picture of how they have regarded the leaving/staying issue in their own lives and in those of others.

To participate when adolescents and adults discuss moving/staying issues with each other has helped me understand that these issues have a normative connotation, which seems to lead to certain ideas and opinions not being expressed in more official contexts. Most of the middle class adults and their children seem to think that it is "natural" for a young person to move away "since the opportunities for what is modern and youthful are somewhere else." That means that the choice not to move will be seen by them as failure; the young person who stays shows "a passivity and a lack of will." These opinions are very seldom expressed in more official interviews, but I claim that they are important if you want to understand why different groups of young people are treated differently (see Svensson 2003). It is in the nuances; in the differences between what people express individually or in groups, and in the differences between how they describe other people's decisions and their own, that the underlying values can be seen. Those not so correct opinions, I think, are only possible to find in situations more like everyday life or when the social everyday life group pressure is a part of the context.

Limiting the field of interest has been a problem since "everything" seems to matter, but gradually – using different methods – I have, for instance, been able to see that there are differences both in values and in experienced opportunities between different groups of young people, and in the ways those differences matter to the moving/staying issue. The qualitative methods, and the interactive approach, made me aware of the ambivalence that follows the moving/staying issue and got me on the track to see how it was discussed differently on different occasions. If I had not started with the qualitative approach, the survey questions would have been less

insightful, but without the quantitative method, that is the survey, it would have been considerably more difficult to determine the underlying mechanisms. With the help of the survey it has been possible to see that the attitude to the moving/staying issue not only is different in different groups, but also that gender and social background to a great extent form the dividing line between the different groups. With the help of the survey it can be demonstrated that, due to gender and social background, different groups regard themselves as more or less wanted in the community and look upon their possibilities to influence the future, both their own and that of the region, differently. Through the survey questions it can be shown that gender and social background – and with that self-confidence and the horizon of possibilities – explain a great deal of the values and thoughts of young people on the moving/staying issue. In my discussions with the local decision-makers, the results of the survey have been more difficult to dismiss, since it was a complete survey of an entire year group of young people.

Practice *and* theory

From the above, I hope that it is now evident that my knowledge of the moving/staying issue has to a great extent been developed through an interaction between theory and practice. My approach has of course been influenced by a certain theoretical understanding, but it has later been extended and partially shifted as new and probing questions have been generated through practice.

Without this diversity of methods, and thus different ways of approaching the issue, I fear that important aspects would not have been illuminated. The answer to the question of what mechanisms influence the decisions young people make about moving from or staying in their home community, seems to be found at individual, group and societal levels, as well as in the interaction among all three. How these mechanisms are expressed in practice can only be studied in a practical context, while access to solid theory is

required in order to reach beyond the everyday understanding. The combination of qualitative and quantitative methods has provided me with an expanded theoretical understanding. The interaction between closeness and distance has been necessary in order to combine *understanding* (of experiences and interpretations) and *explanation* (of causes and mechanisms).

Will my research add any new knowledge? That is of course a difficult question to answer and a great deal of the analysis remains. In the end I hope I will be able to present most of what I have learned in my dissertation. My findings largely confirm previous research, which has shown how social background and gender to a great extent influence young people's options and horizons of possibilities. What might be new is that my findings show how earlier research and theories are expressed in practice in the local context, among "ordinary" adolescents in a small community. With the help of the interactive approach I have been able to show how different groups of young people are met by different values and expectations, and I claim that this is something which might affect regional development. In the local context it is primarily young people with well-educated parents with middle-class jobs who feel wanted by the politicians. It is also these young people who think they will leave the community, based upon their ideas of available opportunities and according to the image of what "successful young people" do. In much generalised terms, this means that young people who show an interest in the region and express a will to stay there are not regarded as development resources for the local/regional community life, nor do they regard themselves as such. These thoughts have been presented to the local politicians and the public both at seminars and in a published report by myself and my colleague (see Hammar & Svensson 2003, 2004). I have not seen this connection in previous research and my expectations are that this knowledge will gradually be further analysed and may be of practical use.

Notes

1 By using the term underlying mechanisms I mean deeper, hidden, organised principles – which cannot be detected "in the phenomena", but require theoretical reasoning in order to be uncovered.

2 The interactive approach in theory: The interactive research approach emanates from a pragmatic and critically realistic standpoint. The basis of pragmatism is action, which per se implies understanding and reflection, and makes no clear distinction between understanding and action, between the subjective and the objective or between the individual and society (Dewey 1999; James 1981; Peirce 1990).

Pragmatism is a frame of interpretation for experienced-based research, but critical realism is necessary as a complement. Critical realism stresses the importance of going beyond everyday understanding to try to explain fundamental mechanisms in society (Danemark et al. 1997).

The objective in working interactively as a researcher is that new knowledge is to be created in the meeting with the practitioners, knowledge, which is both theoretically developing *and* useful in the practitioners' world. In the ideal interactive research process, knowledge between practitioners and researchers is exchanged and created during the entire research process. The interactive research wants to combine the demands for relevance and scientific reliability, by for instance creating a nearness to practice where new groups are included in the creation of knowledge. The local situation, with its practical needs, is the starting point for the theoretical work. Development is in focus and the connection to the theory takes place through action, dialogue and reflection. This can provide the researcher with an extensive understanding of the practitioners' reality, which is not solely based on his or her own observation and interpretation. The findings that action-oriented researchers contribute are not recognised by already existing theories, but by the fact that the results are based on questions and angles of approach from reality, in co-operation with the practitioners (Svensson et al. 2002).

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SUMMARIES OF THE ARTICLES

Methodological Starting Points and Problems of Youth Research

Vesa Puuronen

Youth research is an interdisciplinary field. It applies methods, concepts and theories of social sciences, psychology and the humanities. One of the major problems of youth research is a lack of methodological reflection. This article aims at introducing a methodological approach, based on an enlarged definition of methodology. This approach is operationalised by applying the concept of *paradigms* to the study of youth research. The three main paradigms of social sciences – "positivisms", realisms and constructionisms – can also be found in youth research. These paradigms have different ontological and epistemological beliefs and starting points. Consequently researchers who have varying paradigmatic inclinations also have varied methodical and theoretical preferences and images of youth. Researchers holding different paradigms also regard their own role as researchers – vis-à-vis the subjects of their research, their views of society and the ethical considerations involved – differently.

Researching Youth Life

Sven Mørch

One central issue in youth research is finding methods which are suitable for investigating the young people in question. Changing

societal structures and the de-institutionalisation of life courses are creating new challenges for the integration of the younger generation into society in contemporary Europe. The youth question of today is particularly concerned with new demands of individualisation and the difficulties of social development. Active participation in youth life has become a must. This in turn requires that we widen the scope of youth research to capture the perspective of changing generations. In this article relations between youth research interests and youth research methods are discussed in the light of these new developments of modernisation and individualisation in youth life; analysing some general changes in youth research during the last 50 years and the development of new scientific paradigms, as well as the relations between subject, theory and demands of methodology.

Borders and Possibilities in Youth Research: A longitudinal Study of the World Views of Young People

Helena Helve

This article considers the empirical research process involved in a study which has spanned over 20 years' worth of a generation's world view formation, from childhood to adulthood. It covers the differences and similarities between quantitative and qualitative research methods, and focusing on the particular problems of longitudinal studies. The stress here is on the methodological logic behind this study rather than its results. The approaches and methods of this study are problematised and discussed with the aim of developing a basic understanding of the issues involved in longitudinal studies in general, and of the ideas behind the main methods used. Ethical issues involved in the longitudinal study of young people are also analysed here.

Application of Multi-Level Analysis in a Study of Neighbourhood Effects on Young People's Educational Careers

Timo M. Kauppinen

This article assesses the methodology of a study of neighbourhood effects on young people's educational careers. The main method that is described is multi-level analysis in the framework of statistical modelling. A description of the methods of the study is given, followed by a brief description of the results and an example of analysis. The methodological problems of the study are reflected on, and the relation between youth research and methodology is considered. In this consideration, the study is portrayed as being at the intersection of several branches of research instead of being "pure" youth research, thus resulting in a methodology atypical for youth research. Also the researcher's role and ethical questions are addressed.

Towards an Understanding of Value Orientations: The Case of Estonian Youth

Andu Rämmer

Empirical analysis of beliefs has undergone both important conceptual and methodological shifts in the past century. In recent decades researchers' focus has been on the concept of values. One of the key questions in empirical studies in this vein concerns the relationship between the measured items. Various data reduction techniques have been applied to the detection of latent structures. This article discusses three different data analysis methods – principal components analysis (PCA), principal axis factoring (PAF) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). PCA is designed to reduce the number of initial variables; the aim of PAF is to detect latent structures and CFA allows us to test the supposed factor structure. All three of the examples presented are used in discussing the structure of Estonian school-leavers' work orientations. Three work orientations that were detected in previous Estonian youth studies – self-expression, social recognition and career – emerged also among post-Soviet youth. In total, data concerning 8,133 individuals were analysed.

Reconstructing the Content of Political Symbols: Using Symbolic Perspective in Youth Research

Dennis Zuev

This article introduces some methodological issues that arose in the study of the content of political symbols among young people. It discusses the role of symbol analysis in youth research, with special attention given to the practical utility of a theoretical model for symbol analysis developed by the author. The article also provides an overview of research problems experienced by the author during the reconstruction of content of conceptual political symbols among young people.

Methodological Considerations on Doing Ethnographic Fieldwork in Multicultural Surroundings

Veronika Honkasalo

This article discusses the implications of doing research fieldwork among young immigrants. Conducting research using ethnographic methods should, in the author's opinion, sensitise the researcher to the existing power relations in his/her research. Age, ethnicity and gender are discussed in this article as aspects of position which influence the power relationship between the researcher and the subject, which thus need to be taken into consideration in the construction of one's methodology.

Writing Personally and Speaking Ethnographically about Methodology

Leena Louhivuori

This article describes the application of the traditional ethnological fieldwork method to youth culture studies, and the development of this research method so that youth culture and adolescence as a stage of life are understood as a part of one's own culture, history and traditions. In this paper childhood, adolescence and youth cultures are tied to societal, cultural and historical events and changes from one generation to another. The stigmatisation of boy gangs, families and the formation of identity capital are followed through three generations. This research has been carried out in two stages: fieldwork which took place during the years 1984–1986, and then a follow-up study conducted eighteen years later, 2001–2003. The time-span studied is altogether 40 years, from 1962 to 2002.

The research method of the first stage was ethnological fieldwork: interviews, observation, photography, photography teaching and recording accounts of photographs. With photography as a method of observation, the boys were followed almost everywhere. The interview situations varied; boys were interviewed together as well as separately. They also wanted to interview each others, parodying the researcher's approach. The second stage was born eighteen years later as a consequence of the first stage. The boys' fathers wanted to tell what "really had happened". The boys had also become fathers themselves. This resulted in an interesting encounter between generations. The fieldwork here was once again comprised of interviews, observation and photography.

Investigating Youth and Drugs: Methods, Problems and Ethical Considerations

Airi-Alina Allaste

The matters discussed in this article have arisen from author's experiences over a long period of qualitative research into youth cultures and illicit drug use among young people in Estonia. The investigation of illicit drug use as a part of youth cultures is a rather sensitive topic and the researcher has major ethical obligations to colleagues, her study population and society at large. This article provides an overview of research methods, fieldwork, analyses and interpretations; and discusses researcher's choices in research problems and methods, strategies in gathering and analysing data, and obligations in interpreting and presenting data.

Methodological Issues and Challenges in Studying Young People's Religious Identity

Arniika Kuusisto

This article introduces some of the methodological considerations of the author's research process exploring young people's religious identity and social capital within the religious minority context of Seventh-day Adventism in Finland. The research in question utilises a mixed methodology; a combination of several complementing research methods and quantitative and qualitative viewpoints are used together in the process of methodological triangulation. In addition to the author's own previous research within the same context (Kuusisto 2003), this research design utilises, e.g., the social identity theory (Tajfel 1981) in defining religious identity through group membership; and parts of Phinney's MEIM (1992, 2004) alongside the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (1979/2004) in examining possible relationships between identity and self-esteem (Umaña-Taylor 2004). The data is comprised of three sets of survey data and three sets of interviews; gathered among young people, teenagers and parents; as well as supplementary fieldwork.

The Stranger in the Class: Ethnographic Fieldwork Experiences from a Lower Secondary School

Firouz Gaini

This article is based on the author's personal experiences as an anthropologist and on a subjective interpretation of his fieldwork experience. His intention in gathering data in a Torshavn lower

secondary school-class was to capture a well-defined group of young people with different social and cultural identities. The aim was not to investigate the school class or school system per se but to use this specific arena as a sampling frame for fieldwork concerning the social anthropological structure of youth cultures in the capital of the Faroe Islands. This text concentrates on some general challenges and obstacles associated with fieldwork ventures at home – especially with fieldwork within formal school contexts. This article focuses on the methodological implications of the fieldwork; pointing out the weaknesses and strengths of using the school class as a context in youth research. It also discusses ethical questions related to the monitoring of the class as well as the general problems of participant-observation as scientific method, and the position and role of the 'observer' in the qualitative data gathering process.

An Insider at the Margins: My position when Researching within a Community I Belong To

Önver Cetrez

This article presents the results of a study on the acculturation process of the ethnic minority Suroye population in Sweden. It further discusses the relation of the researcher to the research field; in particular the insider/outsider role of the researcher, exemplified through the experiences of the author while conducting research for his dissertation. The core element of this discussion is the importance of highlighting the position of the researcher. A new framework is suggested, according to which insider/outsider positions are approached as a form of practice, differentiating themselves from other practices. It is also pointed out that critical reflection is necessary in the relation between the researcher and the researched, not only in ethnic minority research but in all research interactions.

An Interactive Approach and Combined Methods: Development of Applied Youth Research

Lotta Svensson

This article tells about an interactive approach and a combination of data gathering methods, both qualitative and quantitative, used in a research project aiming to understand the mechanisms that make young people move from small towns to big cities. Data regarding this question has been gathered in a small Swedish town through interviews, participant observation in a group project, analysing young people's essays, collective reflections, formal and informal discussions with young people and adults, and a survey among about 250 pupils in upper secondary school.

SUMMARIES