



A SYSTEMATIC MAPPING OF NORDIC YOUTH SURVEYS



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Background

Youth questionnaire surveys are frequently conducted to gain insight into young people's life experiences, health and social relationships. The surveys are conducted by actors from different fields and often focus on current issues concerning youth. They are considered a vital tool for youth participation in society and form the basis for youth interventions and policies.

In recent years, partly due to the surge of digital tools, it has become easier to conduct and use youth surveys. Since many youth surveys are conducted according to the needs and questions of different actors and organizations, there is an increased risk that many similar youth surveys are conducted regionally, nationally and internationally.

The Nordic countries have strong historical, economic and cultural ties and, therefore, lend themselves well to comparative studies. Despite this, it is unclear how much cooperation exists within and between actors that conduct youth surveys in the Nordic countries. This means that there is a need to assess both the number and quality of youth surveys in the Nordic countries on both national and Nordic levels.

Aim

The aim of this study was to map existing Nordic youth surveys. In this research poster we present the results of the following research questions:

- How many youth surveys are conducted in the Nordic countries?
- What major youth surveys are being conducted in all Nordic countries?
- What themes do the existing questionnaires deal with?

Method

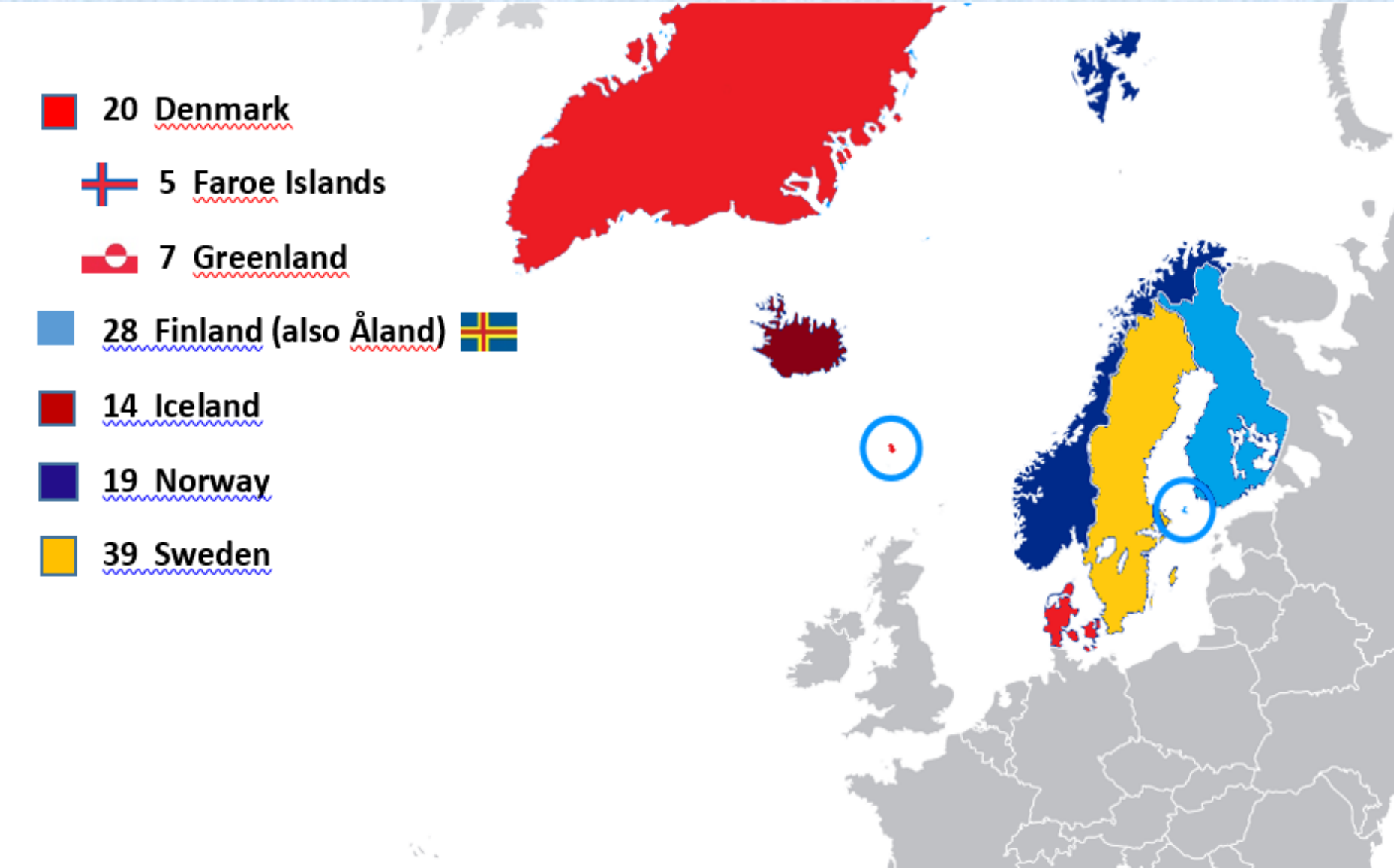
Data was collected from January to April 2018 through a systematic mapping technique and the surveys were analyzed according to quality criteria. Due to the nature of the empirical material it was necessary to search both scientific databases and grey literature (publications and reports that are not scientifically reviewed and that are stored on the organizations' websites). The questionnaire survey had to fulfil at least one of the following selection criteria to be included:

- The questionnaire survey has a sample of at least 500 respondents (exceptions Iceland, Åland Islands, Greenland and the Faroe Islands)
- The questionnaire survey is a total survey or a national/international survey
- The questionnaire survey has been repeated at least three times

Results

Total number of youth surveys

The results showed a total of 143 surveys. These were analyzed according to the quality criteria and after excluding poor survey quality, **82** remained that fit the criteria. The number of youth surveys in each Nordic country is presented in the graph below (some of the surveys are conducted in two or more of the Nordic countries.)



Nordic youth surveys

Youth surveys that are conducted in all or most of the Nordic countries are presented in Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1. Questionnaire surveys and surveyed thematic domains in the Nordic countries including the Faroe Islands, Greenland, and Åland Islands (questionnaire survey number five, however, has not been conducted in the Faroe Islands)

	Title	Subthemes	Thematic domain
1	PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment)	Education, school, knowledge assessment	School
2	ESPAD (European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs)	Tobacco, alcohol, drugs, other drugs, slot machine gambling	Addiction
3	The Nordic Youth Research	Language, culture, education, technology, equality, leisure, alcohol and drugs, mental health	Society, school, addiction, health
4	CIMA (Center for International Media Assistance)	Media use	Society
5	HBSC (Health Behaviour in School-aged Children)	Health, wellbeing, social context	Health, society

Table 2. Questionnaire surveys and surveyed thematic domains in the Nordic countries excluding the Faroe Islands and Greenland (Iceland is excluded from questionnaire survey number six)

	Title	Subthemes	Thematic domain
1	Nordic Young Health	Health, food	Health
2	Mental Health and Social Exclusion	Mental health, unemployment	Health, society
3	Nordic dietary survey	Health	Health
4	Eurobarometer	Society	Society
5	ESLC (European Survey of Language Competences)	Language skills	School
6	ICCS (International Civic and Citizenship Education Study)	Society, school	Society

Themes in the youth surveys

The themes and subthemes of the youth surveys are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Common themes in youth surveys in the Nordic countries.

Thematic domain	Subthemes
Criminality	Violence, crime
Health	Dietary habits, lifestyle, living habits, wellbeing, sleep, sexuality, weight, self-perception, physical health, mental health, happiness, violations
Addiction	Alcohol, tobacco, drugs, gambling addiction
Society	Work, social capital, politics, the EU, democracy, participation, influence, class differences, economy, confirmation, life conditions, security, future, challenges, culture, language, equality, technology, leisure
School	Study environment, social environment in school, study performance, bullying
Family	Relationships with parents and siblings, new families, the home

Discussion

The results of the mapping show that a large number of questionnaire surveys aimed at young people exist. Many of them focus on similar themes (issues related to young people's life and health). The last forty years have also seen an exponential increase in surveys aimed at young people, partly due to new possibilities offered by technology. From an ethical perspective it is problematic to subject young people to many similar youth questionnaires. In the mapping process, several surveys were found that did not fulfill the selection criteria, meaning that young people often are subjected to surveys of poor quality. A larger coordination of these surveys would be beneficial to increase their quality as well as limit the number of surveys that young people are exposed to.

This reveals a need for a coordinated Nordic youth survey. The Nordic countries have strong historical and cultural ties, similar democratic and open societies as well as strong cooperation in many areas. A coordinated effort to survey young people in all the Nordic countries would open the possibility of exploring regional, national and cross-Nordic trends that would greatly enhance the knowledgebase for youth policies in the whole Nordic region.



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