

HELSINKI Quarterly

CITY OF HELSINKI ► URBAN RESEARCH AND STATISTICS

03
2021

Equality and non-discrimination

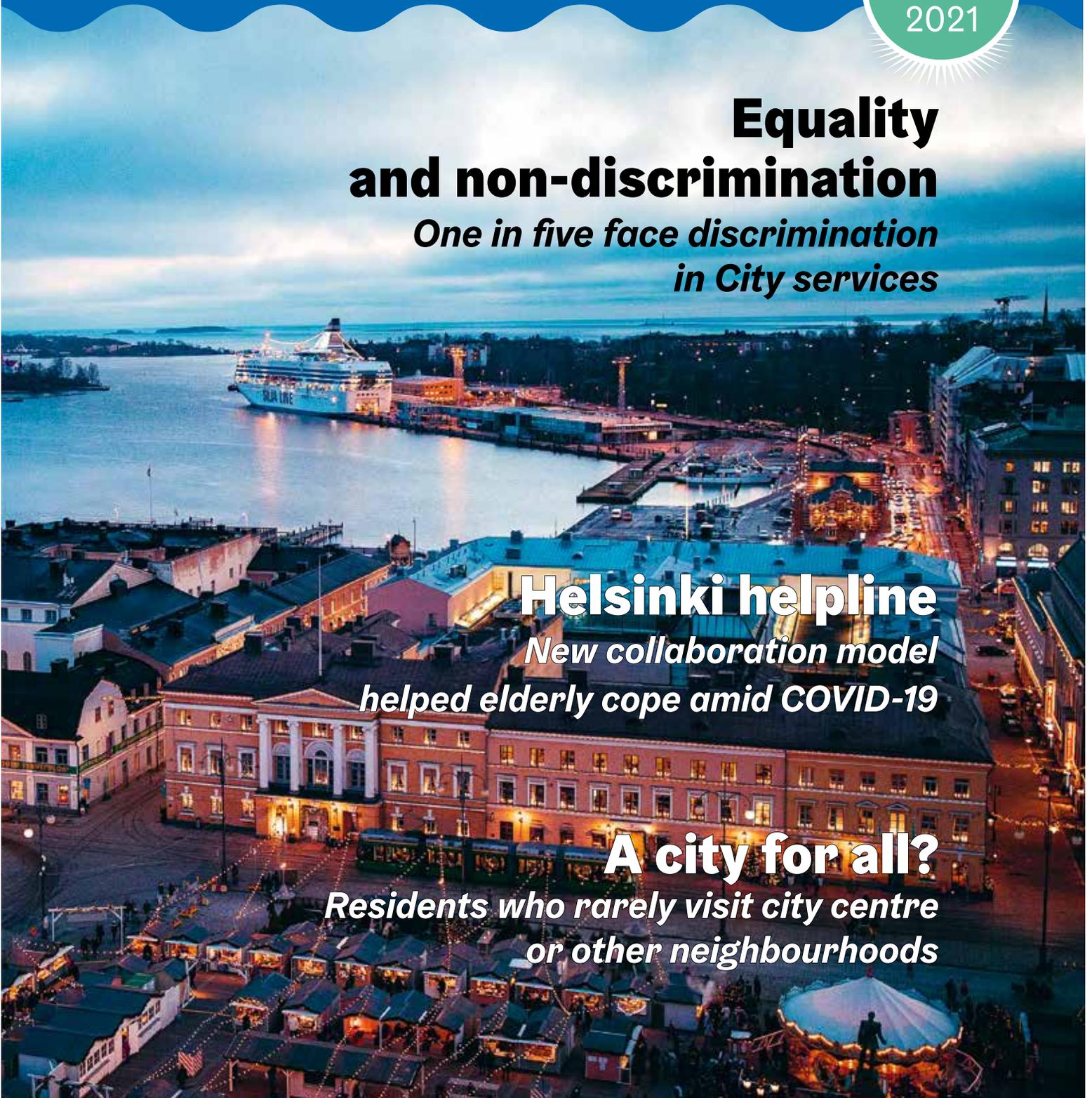
*One in five face discrimination
in City services*

Helsinki helpline

*New collaboration model
helped elderly cope amid COVID-19*

A city for all?

*Residents who rarely visit city centre
or other neighbourhoods*



Helsinki

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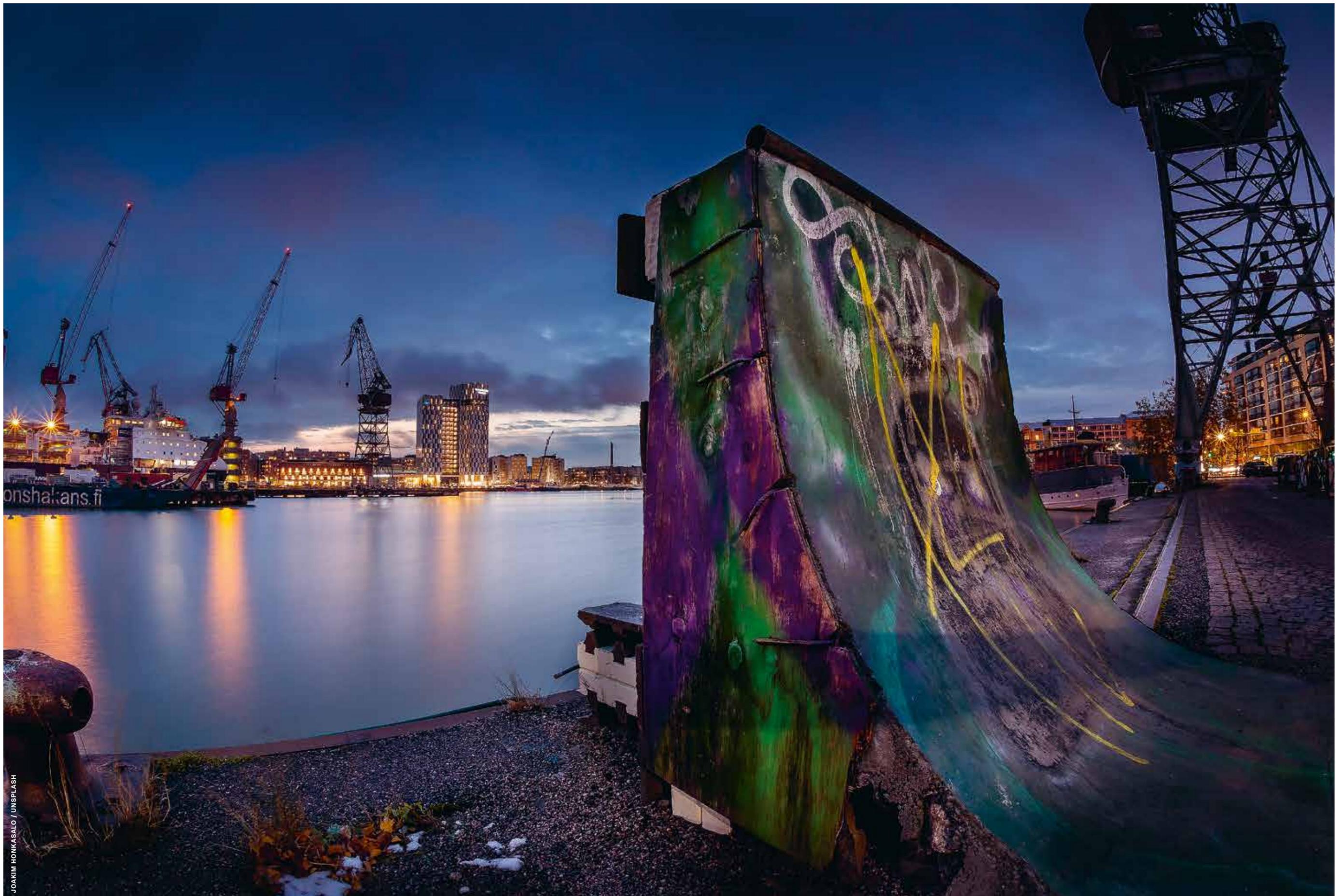
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JOAKIM HONKASALO / UNSPLASH

Heading towards a post-corona future

The past year and a half has been an unusual period for Helsinki as for other cities. The coronavirus pandemic has had an impact on the entire society, placed considerable stress on our healthcare system and forced other public service providers to adapt their activities to the crisis. The COVID-19 lockdowns and other restrictions have had an adverse effect on many economic sectors. Although the numbers of COVID cases, hospitalisations and deaths have remained lower than in most peer cities, the road towards a brighter post-coronavirus future may be fraught with difficulties.

THIS YEAR Helsinki has elected a new City Council. The Council has adopted a new City Strategy which focusses on returning Helsinki to a growth track but ensuring that this is achieved in a socially and environmentally sustainable way. The recipe for Helsinki's success includes ingredients such as a diversified economy, an international outlook, a youthful age structure, and various pull factors for migration. Our future growth must be for the overall benefit of the whole urban community, and policies must tackle major challenges such as climate change and population ageing.

THE CITY of Helsinki continues to monitor and analyse its own performance and development as well as its progress towards the goals of the new strategy. Statistics, research, prognoses and other urban data help us form the insights needed for fact-based policies. The present issue of Helsinki Quarterly gives an overview of recent urban research related to Helsinki, dealing with questions such as equality and non-discrimination, the job market success of immigrants, and the geographic marginalisation of youth. One of the articles in this issue recounts a success story from COVID-era Helsinki: how City officials, the Church and the local civic society and enterprises came together to ease the situation of the aged during the pandemic lockdown. ■

Timo Cantell

RESIDENT SURVEY:

Still some way to go on gender equality and non-discrimination in City services



● TAPIO RISSANEN

Helsinki is a city where you can have a good life and be yourself. This is what the residents said in a survey on gender equality and non-discrimination, focussing on their experiences of public services provided by the City of Helsinki. 47 per cent of respondents felt that gender equality and non-discrimination was put into practice for all service users. Discrimination had been encountered by 19 per cent of respondents, against 17 per cent for inappropriate treatment.





In late 2020, the City of Helsinki carried out a survey among local residents to learn about their views of how well the principle of gender equality and non-discrimination had been embraced and whether they had encountered discrimination and inappropriate treatment while using the City's public services. No similar sample-based survey on gender equality and non-discrimination in the services provided by a city is known to have been conducted in Finland.

THE DATA were collected through a postal and web survey at year-end 2020. The questionnaire was sent to 3,500 random-sampled Helsinki residents from the City's population data system, aged 16 or over. The response rate was 29 per cent, or 1,001 respondents.

THE PURPOSE of the survey was especially to find out to what extent discrimination or inappropriate treatment forbidden by Finnish law (Non-discrimination Act; Act on Equality between Women and Men) occur within City services. The Act on Equality between Women and Men prohibits discrimination on account of gender, gender identity or gender expression, and the Non-discrimination Act says "No one may be discriminated against on the basis of age, origin, nationality, language, religion, belief, opinion, ... state of health, disability, sexual orientation or other personal characteristics."

THE FINDINGS of the survey were analysed by gender, age and mother tongue, as well as whether the respondent had reported belonging to a minority group. The largest minority group in the research material were members of ethnic or national minorities such as Sami, Finnish Tatars, Romani, immigrants and people with an immigrant background (8%). Six per cent of respondents were disabled or chronically ill, whilst five per cent belonged to a sexual minority and three per cent to a religious or ideological minority. Two per cent belonged to a gender minority.

AMONG RESPONDENTS, women and older age groups were better represented than men and younger age groups. Similarly, the proportion of respondents whose mother tongue was Finnish was slightly larger than their proportion in the local population; those with a foreign mother tongue were correspondingly under-represented. It would seem likely that the questionnaire was answered more actively by those who had had negative experiences of City services or other public services. Particularly the youngest respondent group – who were shown by the survey to have experienced more discrimination and inappropriate treatment than other age groups – had a significantly larger proportion of minority citizens.

In Helsinki, you can be yourself and have a good life

Based on the responses to ten statements, the study surveyed Helsinki residents' views of how well gender equality and non-discrimination had been put into practice in Helsinki and the services of the City overall. Judging by the results, almost nine in ten Helsinki residents feel they can have a good life the way they are. There was also a positive attitude towards diversity: 87 per cent of respondents felt it was a good thing that Helsinki has residents with diverse backgrounds and personal characteristics. Nonetheless, only about half of respondents considered that Helsinki is a safe city for all those who belong to minorities.

RESPONDENTS WERE more critical of the public services provided by the City. While slightly less than half of respondents felt that the principle of gender equality and non-discrimination was put into practice within the City's services, one-fifth felt this was not the case. Every tenth chose one of the middle options on the scale, and every fifth felt unable to assess the situation. Most sceptical about the adherence to gender equality and non-discrimination were the disabled or chronically ill respondents and those belonging to gender minorities.

Language and ethnicity seen as main reasons for discrimination and inappropriate treatment

Since the concepts of discrimination and inappropriate treatment may not be familiar to all residents, the terms were defined in the survey. Discrimination refers to situations where a City employee – without an acceptable reason – places a client in a less favourable position than others on account of their age, origin, nationality, sexual orientation, disability or other personal characteristic. In practice, discrimination can come in the form of complicating or preventing

someone's accessibility to or reception of a service, or providing worse service. Inappropriate treatment was defined as any other offensive, humiliating, violent or otherwise untoward behaviour towards a person. It was also emphasised that the person behaving inappropriately may be the service provider but it may also be another client.

IN CITY services, discrimination on grounds of any of the characteristics given in the definition was felt to be very common or fairly common by 40 per cent. Inappropriate treatment was considered very common or fairly common by 30 per cent of respondents. The most often cited reasons for both discrimination and inappropriate treatment were language (22%), ethnic origin (21%), nationality (18%) and age (17%), and the least common were gender (7%) and sexual orientation (9%). Those respondents belonging to a minority group were more often of the opinion that discrimination and inappropriate treatment occurred in City services.

Less than one in five had experienced discrimination and inappropriate treatment

Nineteen per cent of respondents reported that they had been subjected to discrimination. Inappropriate treatment had been encountered by 17 per cent.

AMONG WOMEN, the proportion of respondents having experienced discrimination in City services was 21 per cent, thus larger than among men (14%). There were notable differences due to language: of those respondents who had a foreign mother tongue 38 per cent reported that they had been discriminated against, as compared to 29 per cent of Swedish-speaking and 15 per cent of Finnish-speaking respondents. In the open responses, several respondents mentioned that they had not been given service in Swedish (in the case of Swedish-speaking respondents) or English (those with a foreign mother tongue).

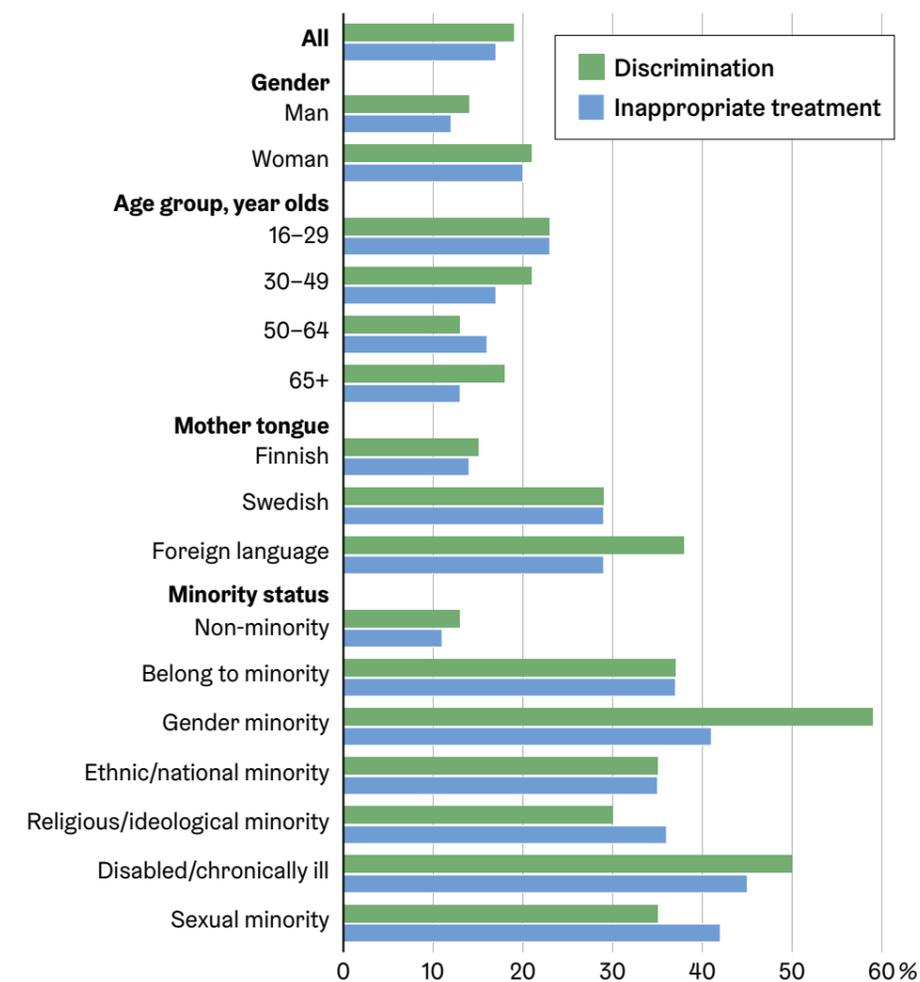


FIGURE 1. Respondents who had experienced discrimination or inappropriate treatment in City services, by gender, age, mother tongue and minority status, proportion (%).

OF THOSE belonging to minority groups over one-third (37%) responded they had faced discrimination in City services. Experiences of discrimination were clearly most common among those belonging to gender minorities (59%) and the disabled or chronically ill (50%).

AMONG THOSE reporting inappropriate treatment in City services, 84 per cent had been treated that way by City employees and 39 per cent by other clients. The most common forms of inappropriate treatment were humiliating or offensive behaviour and jeering, invectives or threats.

LIKE DISCRIMINATION, inappropriate treatment was something that women (20%) had been exposed to more than men (12%). Experiences of inappropriate treatment were most common among the younger age groups. Among Swedish-speakers and those with a foreign mother tongue, experiences of inappropriate treatment were over twice as common as among Finnish-speaking respondents. Of minorities, the disabled and chronically ill were most often subjected to inappropriate treatment (45%), followed by those belonging to a sexual minority (42%) or a gender minority (41%).

Perceived discrimination and inappropriate treatment most common in health services

The central administration of the City of Helsinki and its four administrative divisions and public utilities offer direct customer service to local residents. The study surveyed respondents' experiences of discrimination and inappropriate treatment at ten of these service entities (Figure 2).

JUDGING FROM the free responses, some respondents may have had difficulties in determining which services were provided by the City and which by other organisations (for instance, the state-run Social Insurance Institution KELA or the TE employment and economic development offices). Similarly, public transport – which is in fact designed at regional level – may have been perceived as entirely City-provided.

PERCEIVED DISCRIMINATION and inappropriate treatment was most common in health services. Of all those who had experienced discrimination in City services, 58 per cent had done so in health services. Of all who had encountered inappropriate treatment, for 53 per cent it had occurred in health services.

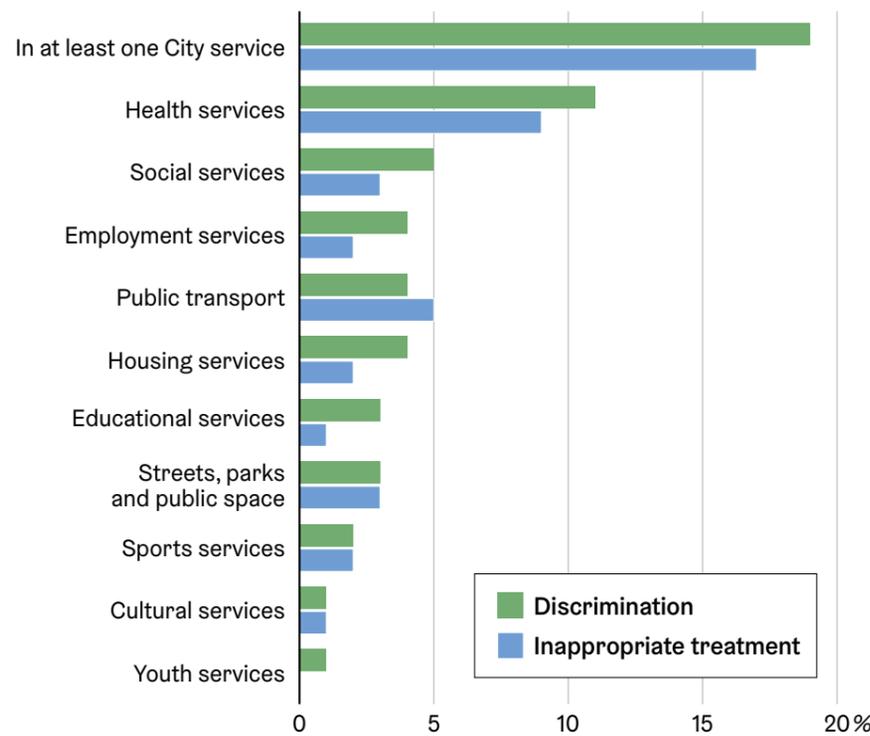


FIGURE 2. Proportions of respondents who have felt discriminated or inappropriately treated at various service entities within the City's services.



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”

37 per cent of those belonging to minority groups had experienced discrimination in City services.

AN ASPECT to remember when analysing the responses is that the questionnaire did not ask which City services the respondents had used. Thus the frequency of perceived discrimination and inappropriate treatment may be influenced by experiences of using the various forms of service in general. Health services are probably one of the service forms with which residents are best familiar. In addition, health services are inherently to do with very personal matters, where the experience of being treated with empathy and receiving help is crucial. The free responses also indicated considerable dissatisfaction with the accessibility and quality of health services.

EXPERIENCES CLEARLY linked with the grounds for discrimination were described in the free responses as follows:

During the first post-partum maternity check-up the doctor treated the child's other parent (woman, non-birth mother) like air. The doctor paid no attention to what the other parent said, and did not answer her questions until the parent who had given birth asked them again. In the medical record, the doctor had also noted only one parent to be present, although we were there the both of us. — Woman, 32.

No, haven't received any dental care – too old, I suppose – so I had to see a private dentist. — Man, 59.

Seen it time and time again, no service in Swedish in health services. I've been misunderstood, too, because of staff's poor knowledge of Swedish, when I've tried to communicate in Swedish, so the wrong notes have been taken. — Woman, 27.

As far as I can see what the doctor wanted to say was that it isn't worth the while to send an old patient to specialised medical care, for instance. — Woman, 79.

EXAMPLES OF inappropriate treatment described in the free responses included:

My first childbirth went totally wrong due to inappropriate behaviour by the midwife. Before the next time I got an appointment with the fear counselling service, just to sort out what I'd been through, and they said I hadn't done anything wrong and that I'd been inappropriately treated. — Woman, 40.

I'm young, and I don't always know how health care works, so I've asked the personnel. Sometimes their answers have been downright unfriendly, and customer service has not been to the point. I got the feeling my questions were not important and that I should have known about all that. — Woman, 22.

APART FROM health care, the service entities where discrimination was found to be more common than in the others were the social welfare services, employment services, public transport and housing services. It was noted, for example, that fathers with joint custody do not always feel treated equally with mothers in social services.

INAPPROPRIATE TREATMENT, in turn, was most common (apart from health services) in public transport and public places (streets, parks etc.). In these situations – more than in the other service entities – the persons considered guilty of inappropriate treatment were other service users rather than the service providers. The respondents who had most often encountered inappropriate treatment in these services were members of gender or sexual minorities as well as the 16- to 29-year-olds. Those free responses that concerned inappropriate treatment focussed strongly on women's experiences of sexual harassment on public transport and in outdoor spaces.

In public transport, you often get sexually harassed by men, and when this happens, neither the driver nor the other passengers do a thing about it. — Woman, 18.

Bad experiences may make it more difficult to use a service

For roughly one-quarter of respondents, a fear of discrimination or inappropriate treatment had, at least occasionally, kept them from using City services. Three per cent of respondents had repeatedly refrained from using these services for fear of discrimination, and similarly four per cent for fear of inappropriate treatment. Among those belonging to minority groups, the proportion reporting that fear of discrimination or inappropriate treatment had kept them from using services was clearly larger than with other respondents. Similarly, the younger age groups had more often considered the fear of inappropriate treatment as an obstacle to using services than the older respondents had.

THOSE RESPONDENTS who had already experienced discrimination and inappropriate treatment also stated more often than others that a fear of such experiences had kept them from using services. For 38 per cent of those who had experienced discrimination and 35 per cent of those who had faced inappropriate treatment, it had happened constantly or at least often. Among those who had not had such bad experiences earlier, the corresponding proportions were five and four per cent. Unpleasant experiences make it less likely for individuals to seek the same services again. Not using public services due to fear of discrimination or inappropriate treatment may have further negative consequences for people's ability to lead independent lives.

Promoting non-discrimination and gender equality in City services demands better attention to problems

It can be concluded from the present study that there are still many situations within City of Helsinki services where residents may be discriminated or inappropriately treated on grounds of a personal characteristic. Belonging to a minority raises the risk of discrimination and inappropriate treatment, which suggests that there are still shortcomings in the acknowledgement of diversity.

NONETHELESS, THE findings of our survey – now carried out for the first time – give good grounds for setting out to promote non-discrimination and gender equality in the City's services. We may intervene with the problems by developing the working practices and sensitivity to clients' needs in various service forms. From an overall point of view, it is also important both to influence the public attitude climate and to have staff determinedly intervene with inappropriate behaviour from other clients.

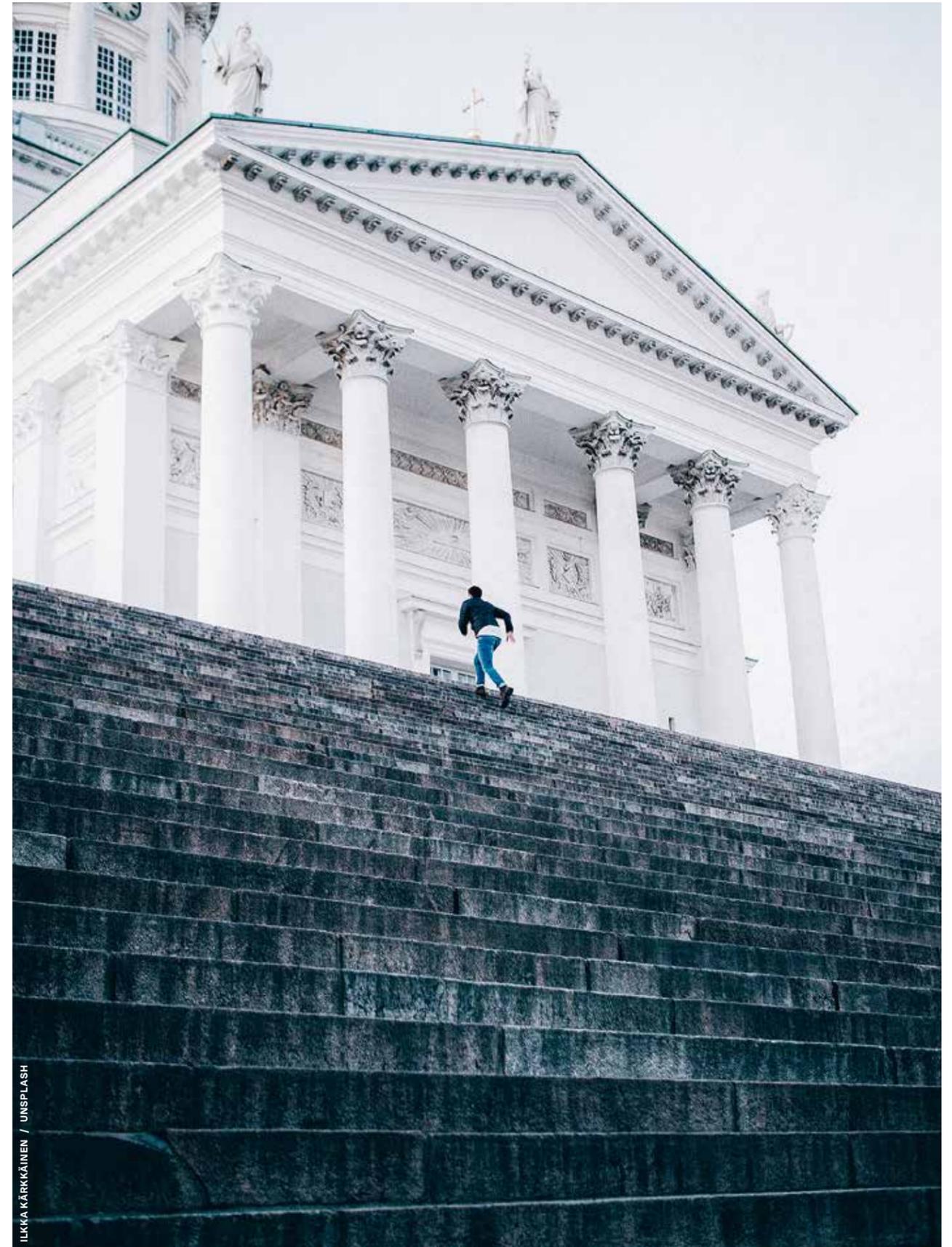
PROMOTING NON-DISCRIMINATION is closely linked to promoting gender equality, since gender is always entwined with other personal characteristics. On the whole, female respondents had a more negative view than men about the state of gender equality and non-discrimination in City services. In their view, discrimination and inappropriate treatment occur more often than according to men, and a larger proportion of women than men reported they had personally encountered these issues when using City services. In addition, the proportion of

respondents who had been reluctant to use City services for fear of discrimination or inappropriate treatment was larger among women than men. From a gender-equality point of view, it is important to bring attention to this overall picture and its possible causes.

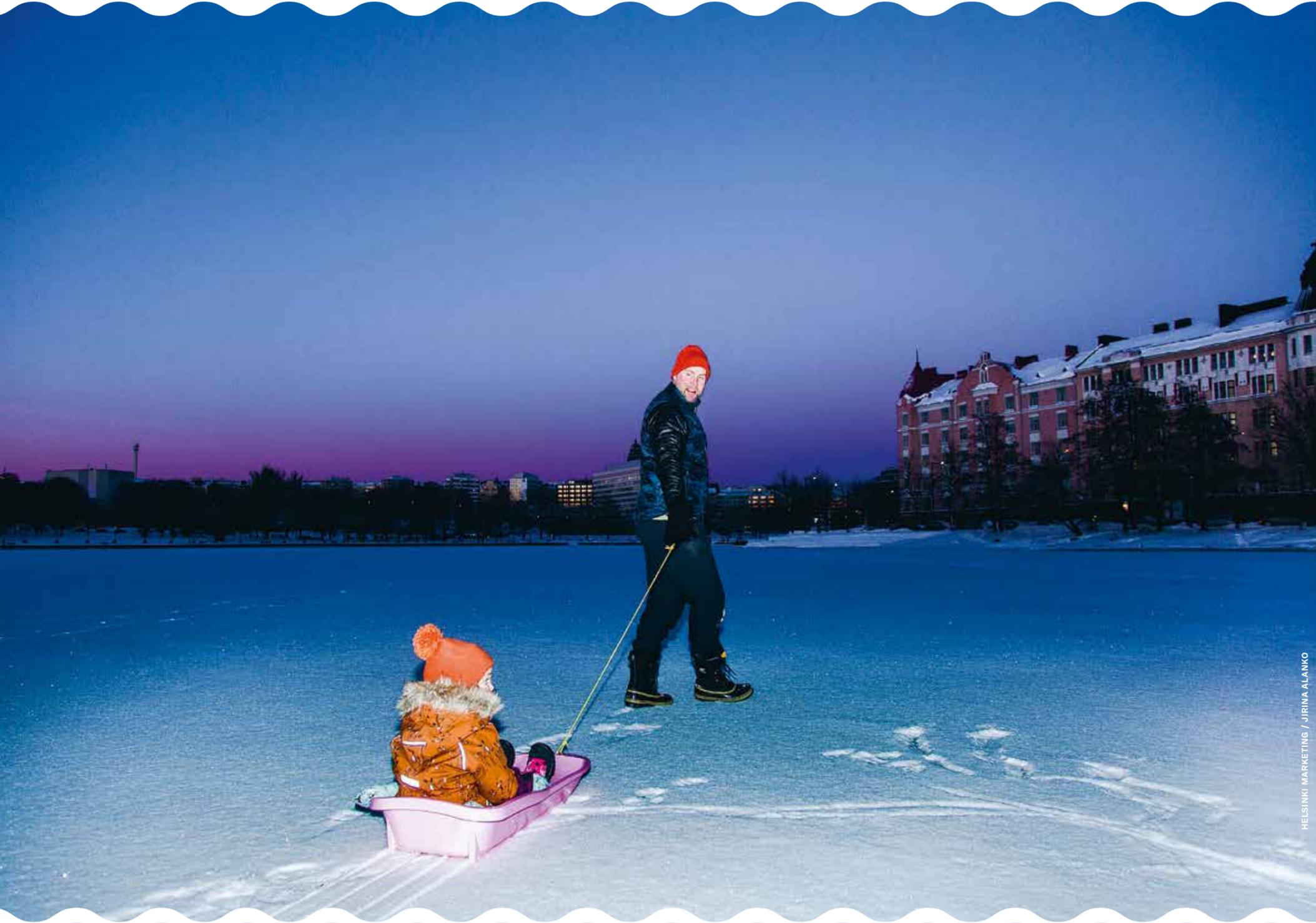
MOREOVER, IT should be noted that the views of gender minority respondents were rather systematically more negative than those of other respondents – and even the average for minorities. The number of respondents belonging to gender minorities was rather small, and statistically significant findings were not always possible to obtain. Yet the results provide strong evidence that there are challenges in the achievement of equality and non-discrimination for this group. It would be important to obtain more comprehensive knowledge about the situation of gender-minority residents.

THE PRESENT survey on the state of non-discrimination and gender equality in City services gives an overall picture of the situation, but it is necessary to refine the picture by repeating the survey after some time. Only through regular repetition of the surveys can we detect the issues that rise to the fore systematically. ■

Tapio Rissanen, MSc (political sciences), was commissioned by the City of Helsinki to carry out the analysis of the resident survey on gender equality and non-discrimination.



ILKKA KÄRKÄINEN / UNSPLASH



HELSINKI MARKETING / JIRINA ALANKO

Stay in the city or move out?

*Relocation plans
in two recent surveys
in Helsinki and
the metropolitan area*

● **VESA KESKINEN & NINA AHOLA**

This article examines factors behind residential mobility – particularly plans to move house and reasons why people move – based on two surveys conducted in Helsinki and the metropolitan area. The findings suggest people are more willing than earlier to move out of Helsinki. Nonetheless, many Helsinki residents want to move house within the city, although less often than earlier within the current neighbourhood. The countryside and neighbouring municipalities have become more popular as potential relocation destinations, with affordable housing and natural environments attracting many to leave the city. Those who seek a new home within Helsinki are often looking for more comfortable housing.





Statistics show that in 2020 and 2021, more people than usual have moved away from Helsinki, while fewer than usual have moved in (Statistics Finland 2021). It has been suggested in the public debate that the coronavirus pandemic encourages people move from cities to the countryside (cf. Kuparinen 2020, Kluukeri 2020). The City of Helsinki has estimated that young people, for example, did not move to Helsinki as much as usual – owing to increasing distance education and reduced job supply (cf. Cantell 2021). In 2020, older age groups, too, were found to have moved away from Helsinki more than earlier.

THE PRESENT article analyses Helsinki residents' views on their own intentions to move house and the factors that influence these intentions. The research materials are the latest KAPA (Kaupunki- ja kuntapalvelut) survey on municipal services, carried out in autumn 2020, and the Helsinki Barometer survey rounds of autumn 2020 and spring 2021.

IN THE KAPA survey, intentions to move home were explored through the question of whether respondents had planned or were about to move home, and if so, in what area they were primarily looking for a new home. The questionnaire did not contain the option 'not planning to move home', for which reason the proportion of respondents having answered the question about moving was computed out of all respondents. Every third respondent in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area, thus calculated, was about to move home or planning to do so. In 2016, this proportion had been just over one-quarter (27%).

TABLE 1.

Proportions of respondents planning to move (% by city), 2012, 2016 and 2020, KAPA survey

Have considered moving house, %	2012	2016	2020
Helsinki	40	28	36
Espoo	36	27	31
Vantaa	–	25	32

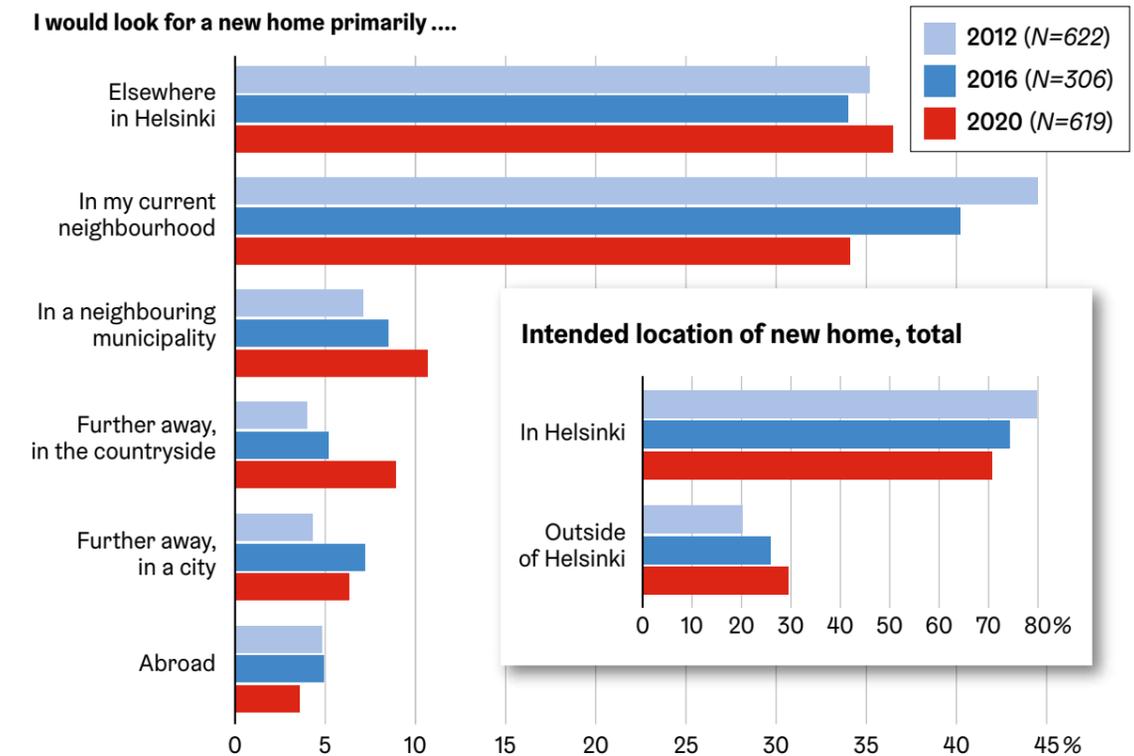
FAMILIES WITH children are the ones most commonly wanting to move home. In Helsinki, 55 per cent of one-parent families and 42 per cent of two-parent families had such hopes.

More and more residents look for a new home outside Helsinki

According to the KAPA survey, residents in Helsinki still commonly look for their new home within the city borders, but less so within their current neighbourhood. At the same time, respondents show increasing interest towards the countryside and nearby municipalities (Figure 1). In Helsinki, however, families with children pronouncedly look for new homes within their current neighbourhoods.

FIGURE 1.

Intended location of new home, 2012, 2016 and 2020, Helsinki respondents, KAPA survey



AT THE most recent round of the KAPA survey, 29 per cent of those intending to move to a new home planned to move away from Helsinki. The corresponding figure in 2016 was 26 per cent, and in 2012 twenty per cent.

AS SHOWN in Table 2, of respondents living in Espoo and looking for a new home, 60 per cent hope to remain in Espoo – either their current neighbourhood or elsewhere. In Vantaa, the corresponding percentage is 41%. In both Espoo and Vantaa, the situation has been similar at earlier survey rounds.

TABLE 2.

Intended location of new home, among Helsinki Metropolitan Area residents in autumn 2020, KAPA survey

	Helsinki	Espoo	Vantaa
In my current neighbourhood	34.1	34.3	24.7
In my current city	36.5	29.9	16.7
In a neighbouring municipality	10.7	24.2	38.6
Further away, in the countryside	6.3	6.4	8.7
Further away, in a city	8.9	7.1	10.1
Abroad	3.6	2.1	1.2
%	100	100	100
N	619	422	425



JOAKIM HONKASALO / UNSPLASH

AMONG OWNER-OCCUPIERS intending to move, 90 per cent are seeking another owner-occupied home. Of those living in City rental housing, 52 per cent are about to change to another City-owned dwelling. More than one-quarter (27%) of those living in City rental housing are aiming for owner-occupancy. Of those living in private rental housing, 43 per cent have plans to buy a home of their own.

HOUSING SATISFACTION is related to relocation wishes in that a high degree of satisfaction corresponds to fewer moving plans. There was strong correlation between plans to move and such reasons for dissatisfaction as the size and fittings of the dwelling, housing costs, noise and disorder in the neighbourhood, as well as commuting costs.

Reasons for moving

Those moving within Helsinki seek better comfort

At the KAPA survey round of autumn 2020, open responses to the question about the reasons for moving were given by 372 respondents intending to move within Helsinki. Our analysis of the open responses is based on the frequency of various reasons mentioned. Respondents typically mentioned one or two reasons for moving home.

IN THE responses given by those who were planning or about to move home within Helsinki, three main groups of reasons stood out, related to the 1) dwelling, 2) life situation and 3) neighbourhood or location. In this sense, the findings closely resembled those from earlier similar survey studies (e.g. Vilkkama et al. 2016). Mentions that could not be directly interpreted as linked to these main reasons were included in only five responses – for instance, a desire for variation and investing money.

TABLE 3.

Reasons for moving, respondents with relocation plans within Helsinki (N=372), KAPA survey, 2020.

REASONS TO MOVE	Number of mentions	Proportion of all mentions, %
Reasons related to the dwelling (77% of respondents)	301	67.3
Dwelling size	141	31.5
High housing costs / dwelling prices	53	11.9
Quality of housing (fittings, functionality, accessibility, wear-and-tear, renovations)	52	11.6
Change of tenure type (move to ownership)	29	6.5
Change of dwelling type	11	2.5
Termination of tenancy	8	1.8
Change of housing arrangement (to single/shared/supported/student housing)	7	1.6
Reasons related to the neighbourhood or location (19% of respondents)	77	17.2
Better connections or closer to city centre	22	4.9
Neighbourhood disorder/unsafety	20	4.5
Greener and more pleasant living environment (nature, green areas, shoreline, open space)	18	4.0
Other reasons concerning change of neighbourhood (public services, noise, zoning)	17	1.1
Reasons related to life situation (17% of respondents)	64	14.3
Change in family situation	37	8.3
Retirement, old age	15	3.4
Starting/completing studies, moving out for first time	10	2.2
Remote (distance) work	2	0.4
Other reasons	5	1.1
Reasons cited, total (open-ended responses)	447	100.0



MOST TYPICALLY, respondents mentioned reasons relating to their current or new dwelling and its characteristics. Three-quarters (77%, 285 respondents) of all those giving free responses to this question mentioned at least one such reason.

ALMOST ONE-THIRD of all the reasons for moving analysed here concerned the size of the dwelling (thus half of all dwelling-related reasons were to do with housing space). Overwhelmingly the most common reason was a need for a larger home. This was three times as common as seeking a smaller home than the current one.

REASONS RELATING to the quality and comfort of housing included, for example, the wish for a balcony, a private yard, a building with a lift, or simply a more comfortable home in a better state and better suited for the respondent's needs. Some respondents also wanted to avoid forthcoming large plumbing or other repairs. These other reasons for moving (other than size-related) made up roughly one-tenth of all reasons mentioned and one-fifth of all dwelling-related reasons.

HIGH HOUSING costs and dwelling prices as a reason to relocate was mentioned as often as the quality of housing. Indeed, owner-occupancy was one of the future wishes or moving reasons for part of the respondents – every tenth mention was related to this. Other less frequently mentioned reasons concerned the tenure status, dwelling type or the expiry of lease in the current dwelling.

A NEIGHBOURHOOD- or location-related reason was given by every fifth (19%, 71 respondents) of all who had answered the open question. Twenty-two responses were to do with finding a location with better connections or closer to the city centre. Almost as many mentions concerned a hope to find a neighbourhood that is safer and more peaceful neighbourhood, or closer to nature and generally more pleasant. Finding green areas, shorelines and open spaces close to the new home was important for these respondents. Other reasons related to the neighbourhood but less frequently cited included the level of noise and poor services in the current area.

ONE IN six (17%, 64 respondents) mentioned a change in their life situation. For many, this was linked to a change in the housing needs. About half of those mentioning a change in their life situation also gave a dwelling-related reason. It may be assumed that a change in the family situation – such as moving together, having children, separating, or grown-up children leaving home – can be an underlying factor linked to the desired characteristics of the dwelling, although not specifically mentioned. Retirement, ageing, and starting or completing studies were also mentioned as reasons for moving to a new home.

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Expensive housing and living seem to remain the most important reasons for considering a move out of Helsinki.

Affordable housing and natural environments still attract people to leave Helsinki

In the case of those respondents planning to move away from Helsinki, the reasons for relocation were more diverse compared to those moving within the city. The open question was answered by a total of 162 respondents. As with the reasons given for moving within Helsinki, responses were short, mostly containing just one or two reasons. The reasons for moving cited by the respondents were grouped into seven main categories.

THE MOST common of these was expensive housing and living in Helsinki (24% of all individual reasons cited by the respondents). Quantitatively, respondents giving this reason for moving accounted for just over one-third of all responses to this open question. The difficulty of buying a home was often mentioned together with housing expenses.

THE SECOND most common reason was a desire for green environments closer to home as well as lower density with the accompanying peace and calm (18%). Scarcity of green areas in the current neighbourhood and an unpleasant urban environment – and correspondingly, attractive natural surroundings seen elsewhere – contributed to the desire to move. Noise, however, was mentioned only occasionally. Almost as many (16%) cited the desire for a larger home, a private yard or owner-occupancy.

THE CLUSTER of reasons categorised under ‘overall dissatisfaction with Helsinki’ (16%) were more of a mixed bag. Respondents expressed annoyance with politics, taxes and the general attitudinal climate in Helsinki. A second group within the dissatisfaction-related reasons included general mentions of not enjoying life in Helsinki, ranging from too much bustle and hurry to undesired changes in the city. A third group consisted of responses dealing with unsafe and disorderly neighbourhoods.

FAMILY AND roots (8%) and work or studies (7%) were also factors that made some respondents consider moving away from the city. Retirement and old age in general were also among the individual reasons cited (6%). It was not specified whether moving when retiring, for example, was linked with a return to earlier places of residence or with economic considerations. Sometimes more vague attributes such as the pursuit of dreams and happiness were attached to the desired place of residence.

EXPENSIVE HOUSING and living and the need for a larger home were mentioned in the open responses of the 2020 survey twice more often than in 2012 (Keskinen 2013, 41). Expensive housing as a reason for moving had increased from 13 to 24 per cent, and the need for a larger home from 7 to 16 per cent.

TABLE 4.

Reasons for moving, respondents with plans to relocate outside of Helsinki (N=162), KAPA survey, 2020.

REASONS TO MOVE	Number of mentions	Proportion of all mentions, %
Expensive housing and living in Helsinki	52	24.0
Nature and environment	40	18.4
Larger home, backyard, single-family house	35	16.1
Dissatisfaction with Helsinki	35	16.1
Family, relatives and roots	17	7.8
Work or studies	14	6.5
Retirement, old age	13	6.0
Other reasons (dreams, happiness, variation, neighbours, pandemic, winter)	11	5.1
Reasons cited, total (open-ended responses)	217	100.0

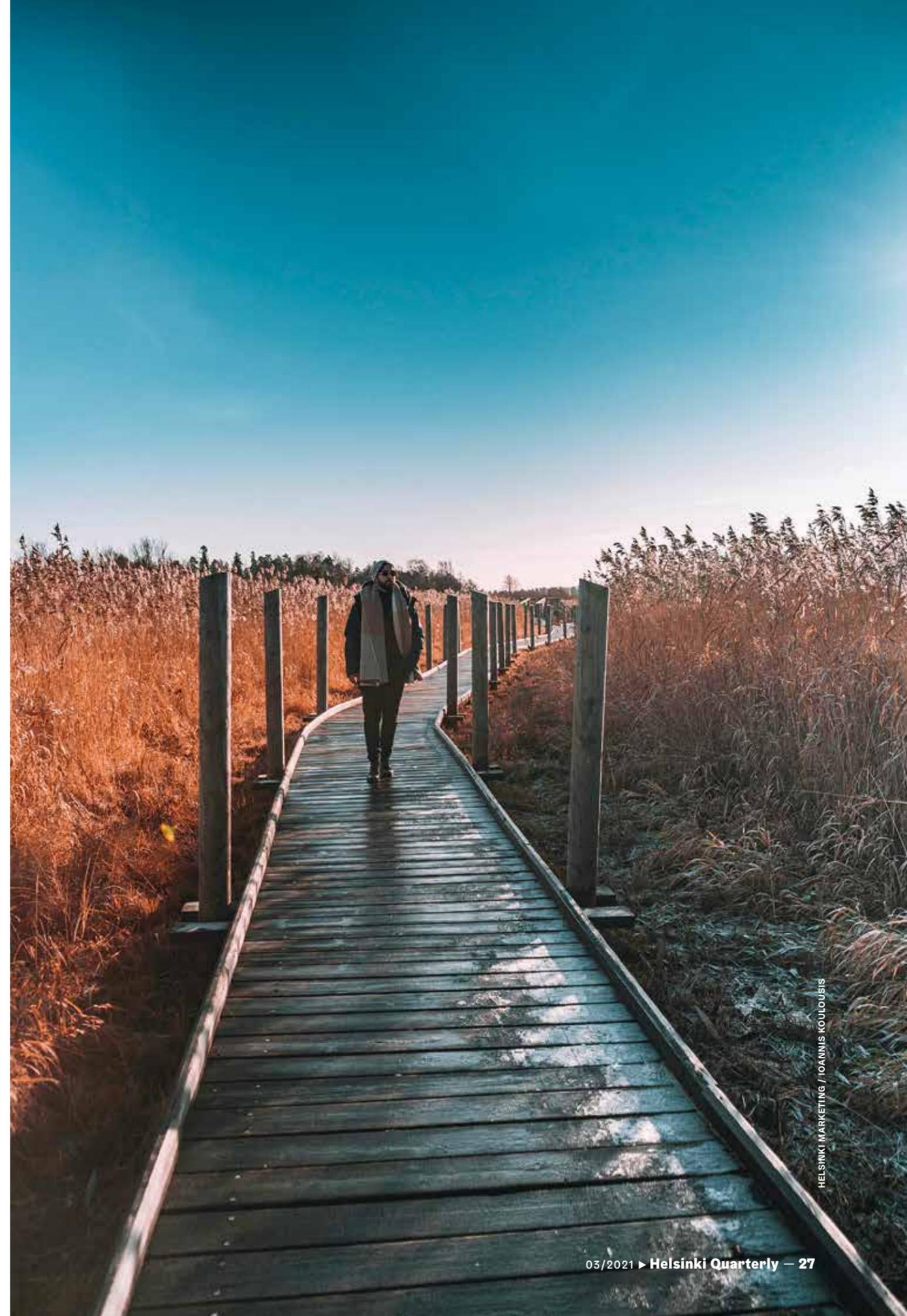


TABLE 5.

Plans to move away from Helsinki among Helsinki Barometer respondents in autumn 2020 and spring 2021.

Plans to move	Helsinki	Espoo	Vantaa
In my current neighbourhood	34.1	34.3	24.7
In my current city	36.5	29.9	16.7
In a neighbouring municipality	10.7	24.2	38.6
Further away, in the countryside	6.3	6.4	8.7

COVID-19 pandemic – a significant reason for moving?

For the present article, we analysed the materials of two different surveys. In the open responses to the KAPA survey of 2020 (see above), the coronavirus pandemic was not often mentioned by either those planning to leave Helsinki or those planning to move within the city. Only a few responses contained a mention of distance working or the pandemic.

IN THE Helsinki Barometer survey, however, respondents were asked whether they had plans to move out of Helsinki and, if so, whether or not this was on grounds of the coronavirus pandemic. This question was included for the first time in the Helsinki Barometer questionnaire of autumn 2020 and repeatedly in spring 2021.

IN SPRING 2021, one in four Helsinki Barometer (N=1002) respondents were planning to move out of Helsinki, six per cent due to the corona pandemic. Six months earlier, the corresponding percentages had been 18 and four. The strongest increase in moving plans was seen among students and unemployed people (Keskinen & Hirvonen 2021). It should perhaps be noted that the total proportion of Helsinki Barometer respondents planning to move out of Helsinki was slightly lower than the corresponding group in the 2020 KAPA survey.

POPULATION STATISTICS do not yet allow us to draw any far-reaching conclusions about the COVID-19 pandemic's long-term effects on migration in Helsinki. One topic of discussion has been whether the rise of distance work in future may encourage increasing numbers of Helsinki residents to move permanent residence elsewhere. But to what extent? Judging from the Barometer results it seems clear the pandemic has not become one of the most important reasons for planning to move outside Helsinki.

INSTEAD, EXPENSIVE housing and living seem to remain the most important reason for considering leaving Helsinki. Other reasons at the top of the list included

the desire to find a home close to nature in a peaceful and calm neighbourhood, or to move to owner-occupancy, possibly a larger home with a yard. In addition, some respondents expressed a degree of dissatisfaction with life in Helsinki overall. Some of these reasons for moving may, of course, be connected to the motives that also make the corona pandemic, for some, a reason for considering a move. ■

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CITY OF HELSINKI / PAULA VIRTÄ

Multipartner collaboration helped Helsinki's elderly to cope amid COVID-19

*Helpline project united
Church and City
with associations,
businesses and locals*

● PASI MÄENPÄÄ & HENRIETTA GRÖNLUND

In spring 2020, the coronavirus pandemic forced elderly people to remain confined in their homes and created new needs for help. The City administration acknowledged its own limitations and embraced the opportunity to cooperate. Emergency helped the project consortium to form a set of common goals and lower the organisational boundaries. This article examines how the Helsinki Helpline project, consisting of phone service and a network of emergency assistance, took shape in these exceptional circumstances and what its achievements and challenges were.





Initiative: American model and Facebook

In March 2020, during an increasingly difficult phase of the pandemic, Juha Rintamäki, Vicar of Lauttasaari Church and Director of the Lutheran Parish Union in Helsinki, took an initiative to help those in distress. He had heard how North American religious communities mobilised against the corona pandemic and wondered whether the parish union in Helsinki could be used as a platform for more extensive assistance. The philosophy was that the Church was not only ‘for’ people but also something created by people. In times of crisis, the Church’s task is to strengthen people’s hope and confidence and to support their mental and spiritual wellbeing. Preparations were started for organising crisis help.

MEANWHILE NOT far away, Jonna Katarina (Jonna Slavasevits) had posted in Lauttasaari’s neighbourhood Facebook group a message where she suggested making up a list of voluntary helpers for food and medicine deliveries to at-risk groups in the district. She felt the initiative had sprung from her own values and her hope that people would be less self-centred and, where possible, do small things to help others. Eventually, her proposal in the group got 543 ‘likes’ and 175 comments, 74 of which were sign-ups on the list that Slavasevits collected and forwarded to the Church. The discussion moved up a gear when Rintamäki joined it saying his parish was preparing to set to work and suggesting shared coordination and organisation.

Request for help: City cannot make it alone

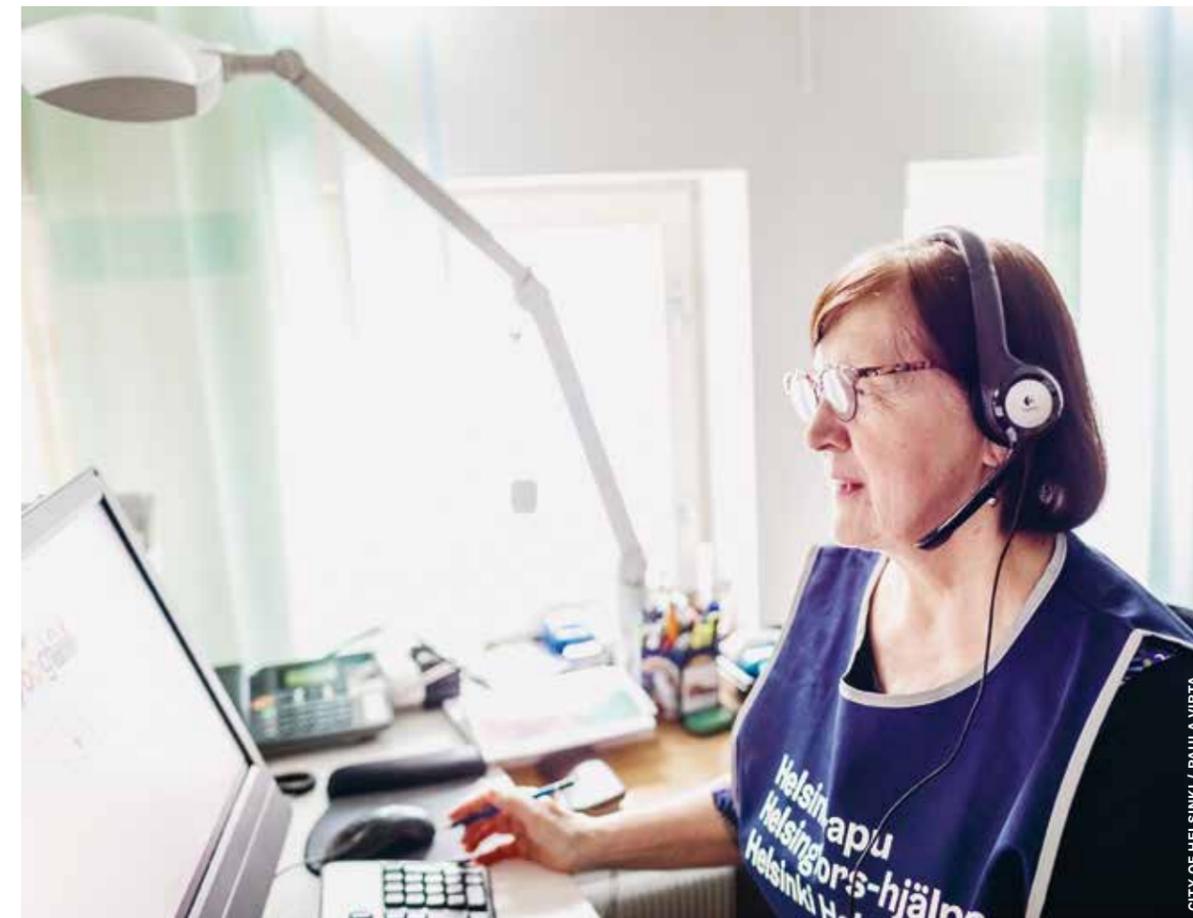
On the same afternoon, an article by journalist Veera Paananen on the rapid mobilisation in the Facebook group and the parish was published in Helsingin Sanomat daily. Tommi Laitio, Executive Director of

the City of Helsinki Culture and Leisure Division, read the article and immediately offered cooperation to Rintamäki. To the City, the situation looked ominous. There were fears the epidemic would become so severe the City’s social and health care services could not cope.

THE CITY had no ready-made action model but it had a reserve of personnel resources and readiness, since many City employees were prevented from carrying out their normal tasks due to the lockdown. The emergency law made it possible for their superiors in the City administration to transfer them to other tasks, as was the case with the parish union employees. The City did not have the number of staff or volunteers required to manage the assistance work on the field. Fortunately, parishes and organisations could provide plenty of both for this purpose.

WHEN THE matter became public, offers for cooperation started flooding in from associations and businesses. No one needed to be specifically invited to join, and no one asked for any reciprocity. At the end of the day, a dozen businesses and as many associations had signed up. Establishing co-operation and communicating between the main partners and the other partners was the task of both the City and the Church. Some partners played special parts in the project. The Finnish Red Cross was involved especially in the pharmacy deliveries, through an agreement with the City. HelsinkiMissio was an organisation familiar to the parish union from earlier cooperation and it offered volunteers and the use of its assistance channels, as did the association MIELI Mental Health Finland. Some of the partners had no specific task, but they put their own volunteers at the project’s disposal. Cooperation with organisations was extensive, albeit looser than between the main partners. Organisations had no paid staff nor similar resources, for which reason no stronger cooperation was sought.

THAT PRIVATE companies volunteered co-operation on their own initiative and with no expectation of reciprocity was something new and surprising to the City. So was the number of volunteers in general, although it is known that people are likely to show more solidarity and willingness to help during crises.



CITY OF HELSINKI / PAULA VIRTA

A TOTAL of 600 volunteers signed up, which turned out to be something of a challenge for the organisers. The cause received much support on the social media, too. To those managing the project, all this seems to have made them confident it would work. Confidence was indeed needed in crafting a new kind of cooperation, at a large scale and a very tight schedule, with new ways to organise the process. The activity envisioned by the partners had to be big but systematic, have an impact and meet all senior residents in the city based on their needs, ensuring safety in the help efforts.

Cooperation and organisation: communication difficulties and apologies

The organisation process was efficient. In just a week, a steering team was set up, the necessary contracts were made, a system for food orders put in place, and 18 coordination points established. The entire organisation of Helsinki Helpline, ranging from the steering group to the fieldworkers, felt that the way the cooperation was forged had been a success and their own work had been motivating. The most critical task was to was to



Half of the comments on Slavasevits’ Facebook post were sign-ups for volunteer work.

build up a system for contacting those needing help – in just a couple of days. The first telephone calls could be made even before the instructions were ready.

DRAWING UP the contracts with partners was the City's most important contribution to the cooperation process. One of the aims was to keep the process as transparent as possible, to guarantee that all parties could make sure everything complied with laws and regulations. Although the project was set up under emergency circumstances and at a rapid pace, the legal basis of the work could be ensured from the start and lawyers were consulted throughout. Several enquiries related to the legal side of things were received and answered. Stefan Forsén, director of inter-parish collaboration at the Union of Parishes, calls this the dimension of 'moral security'.

TOMMI LAITIO is proud that a good level of security and a systematic way of working could be guaranteed throughout the project. It was up to the City to ensure that the responsibilities were clear to everyone involved, since the activity was subject to the Social Welfare Act.

THE CITY is a more hierarchical organisation than the parishes, and from its point of view, the Helsinki Helpline work was managed 'a bit like in a war', by reacting to issues as they arose. However, the City was also able to authorise its staff members to create new solutions at sudden occasions. The Church, in turn, held on to its practice of consulting the parishes first – especially the vicars – before making decisions. According to Laitio, some tensions occurred due to differences

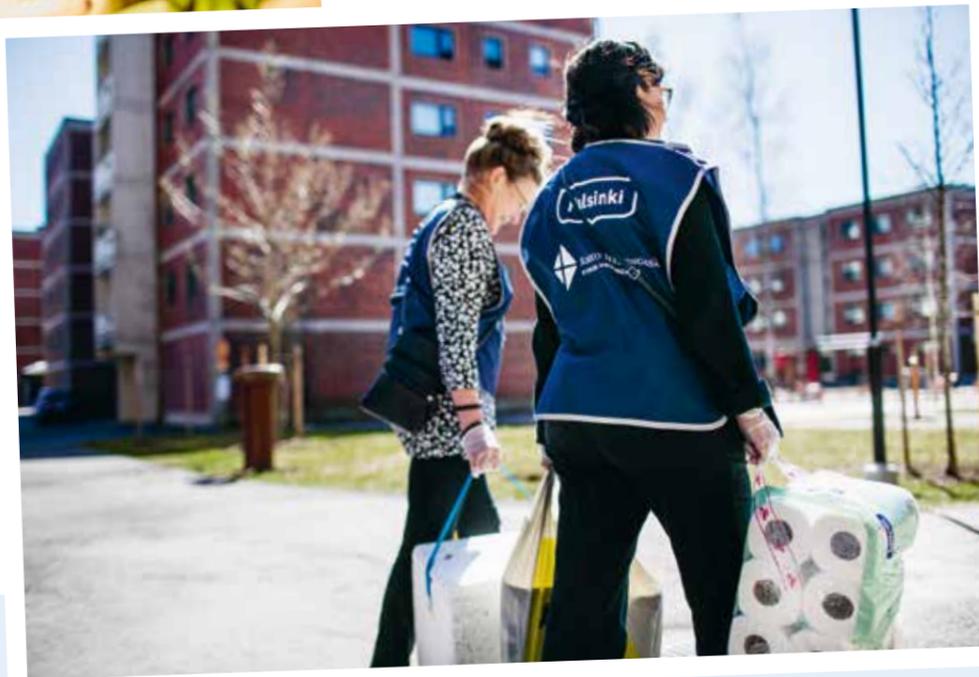
in working cultures and because the City is a larger actor than the Church. The atmosphere of the cooperation was generally good, although sometimes the City was felt to 'run over' the others. To be able to quickly react to possible causes of friction, the steering group met every day at first. According to Laitio, the City was quicker to make decisions but the Church was more flexible in allocating volunteers and operating in the field.

THE STEERING group frequently discussed the 'ownership' of project communications. Although the communications efforts were carried out coordinatedly, some in the Church team occasionally felt the City communicated about it as if it were its own exclusive project. The project communications was led from the Mayor's Office, yet the sending of the media releases was not always perfectly synchronised. At the operative level, too, problems arose from the dual structure of the organisation and the communications. According to Sami Komppula, who was in charge of the coordination points, project staff were members of the same work community but sometimes members of a working pair, for instance, might receive different instructions from their background organisations. It was not always evident what people from one partner organisation could tell colleagues from another, if, for example, a policy change had already been announced in one organisation but not in the other.

OCCASIONALLY, SOME offense was taken, and apologies were made. Sami Komppula feels it was crucial for smooth processes that everyone was acting for a good cause and could be forgiving, to both themselves and others. Problems were tackled through extensive internal communications and holding frequent meetings between the parties. This did not always prevent breaks in communication; one example was Tommi Laitio's

rapid decision to delegate management to Tiina Hörkkö, a City youth work manager with suitable experience of volunteering. According to her, whatever tensions there were occurred mainly at the level of governance and decision-making and typically concerned situations where the Church felt the City was taking too large a role in making decisions.

ACCORDING TO the open responses to a questionnaire targeted to those on the field (N=102), cooperation was mostly praised although it was rated only moderately in the quantitative results. One single respondent felt there had been smouldering discontent in the parish union. As concerns the initial difficulties and communication problems, the questionnaire responses were in line with the findings of the interviews. Overall marks were clearly lower for the top management than for the lower tiers, which may also be linked to the challenges in communications. One of the ideas for improving communications in the project came from Mare Kinanen, an expert in Church social work: holding a virtual coffee break every day at 11 AM. This idea was lauded by many questionnaire respondents as it provided a forum to talk about difficulties, including differences in work practices and efforts to reconcile these. The coffee breaks were open to everyone and were often joined by dozens of people, as they were the best channel to hear the most recent information.



PHOTOS: CITY OF HELSINKI / PAULA VIRTA



Finding volunteers was not a problem.

The real challenge was how to reach all those in need of help.

Operative role of the parishes: from virtual meetings to the field

The assistance given by Helsinki Helpline was coordinated locally according to the parish divisions. Vicars played a key role in the operative management within their parishes. Requests for help were received by the coordination points set up in parishes, and they organised the response – for instance, agreeing with the local supermarket to carry out food deliveries. Finding voluntary staff was not a problem, although many of the more experienced volunteers were senior citizens or belonged to another at-risk group. The real challenge was how to reach those in need of help. This is an observation that was made in many places apart from Helsinki in spring 2020: volunteers signed up in large numbers, but requests for help were less numerous.

THE CITY reassigned around 300 staff to new tasks including the telephone helpline. This transition was not without pains, especially as a giant digital leap was taken simultaneously to organise meetings and other work online. Instructions could be altered, personal chemistries did not always work, and much overtime work was required, particularly at the start. Among parish staff, annual holidays were postponed, and new tasks were added on top of old ones. Mare Kinanen remembers this as a tough time, and the view is shared by many field workers who answered the questionnaire. Support from colleagues and immediate superiors was praised by the respondents, while the top management was criticised for being absent and not listening. Some expressed concern about potential ‘collateral damage’. “Helsinki Helpline took all my time, and I’m afraid many parishioners were quite neglected.”

WITHIN THE Church, there were also worries that the mental and spiritual side of the help may have been overshadowed by food bags and short phone calls. The Church was in charge of providing this counselling, and invited other faiths – such as Muslim communities who could be reached through the imams – and religiously unaffiliated providers of counselling to join in.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN geographical areas were acknowledged, as well as the fact that there are lonely people in need of help all over the city. The local zones, which were based on parish borders, covered the entire area of Helsinki, and logistical operations worked everywhere. Despite the area differences, Stefan Forsén recalls that the general impression was that of equal treatment, since everyone was contacted by phone. While people in all areas were touched by feelings of fear and loneliness, the need for help varied individually. According to Sami Komppula, not only the needs but also the responses were different area by area. In some neighbourhoods, dozens of bags were

Helsinki Helpline partners: facts and figures

- **Helsinki Missio** (NGO for social services): customer information system
- **Genesys** (telecoms company): telephone services system
- **Finnish Red Cross**: medicine distribution
- **Yliopiston Apteekki** (pharmacy chain): phone order and billing service for pharmacy clients
- **HOK-Elanto** (regional cooperative store): billing service for food deliveries
- **Posti** (Finnish postal service): scooters
- **Helkama Auto/Skoda&Stara**: cars
- **Dometic** (consumer products): cool bags
- **The Guides and Scouts of Finland**, and other organisations: volunteer networks

342

medicine deliveries



3,662

home deliveries of food bags



700

counselling calls with spiritual or mental health experts

2,535

emergency deliveries to those in financial distress

67,902

telephone calls to elderly citizens



delivered, in others only a few. However, there are no indications that the Helsinki Helpline activities reached their targets less efficiently in socioeconomically weaker neighbourhoods compared to others.

Ingredients of success: emergency helps pull down boundaries – but not all

Juha Rintamäki says the rapid mobilisation of the Helsinki Helpline project was important, as everyone shared the same threat scenarios and common will to act on the ‘crest of the first wave’ of COVID-19. Inter-organisational relations, mutual confidence and personal relationships had to work. Above all, it was crucial for the organisations to not look inwards but be open and transparent – needs-based rather than organisation-based – even though no ready-made models were available. They had to be able to identify all existing resources and draw upon these, and build towards a common good, not each for themselves.

THE CITY and the Church complement each other’s competences and ways of working. The Church’s starting point was the parish social work (*diakoniatyö*),

which aims for comprehensive help including in mental or spiritual distress. The aim of the City was to support people socially and economically. According to Tommi Laitio, the keys of success included ensuring that the legal basis and contract templates were in order; the service description was kept simple; tasks assigned to match everyone’s skills; and people having the courage to ask for help. The interfaces of cooperation were kept open throughout the process, and the roles of all actors were clear. Similar activities had been tried out earlier as well, but at a smaller scale. Nonetheless, Tiina Hörkkö concludes that ‘lessons were left unlearned’ regarding the ability of two large organisations to collaborate, and that there are always ‘things that cannot be done together’.

ACCORDING TO Rintamäki, the City’s administrative divisions did not communicate all that well with each other at the early stages of the project when the question of supporting children and young people was on the table. The union of parishes had similar challenges in internal communications. Other things went more smoothly, such as the transfer to remote work, which – judging by the field worker questionnaire

– caused surprisingly little friction. According to the open responses of the questionnaire, the project eventually found success in how the practical work and cooperation was handled and the initial difficulties were overcome. Many give local actors the credit for managing to make a rapidly assembled ad hoc structure work so well.

RINTAMÄKI EMPHASISES the importance of contacts and networks within both the City administration and the other organisations, in the top management and at the employee level. Cooperation with businesses was a new dimension, and part of it was also created through personal contacts. Rintamäki is of the opinion that the Lauttasaari Facebook group played a major part at first, when his invitation to cooperation received ‘tremendous interest’. He finds it important that people take initiatives and enable something small to grow into something big. Eventually, members of the Facebook group were there to volunteer in many places, and the group was also a channel for some later offers for help. Moreover, Lauttasaari was the district where the first helpline calls in Helsinki were made.

JONNA SLAVASEVITS says she was surprised to see later media headlines where her grassroots initiative was portrayed as a joint project of the City and the Church. “Somehow it feels unfair that the work of voluntary helpers is used to improve the reputation of the Church and the parishes, for example. The citizens who joined the initiative out of their free will deserve to be thanked.” She is afraid that people’s motivation to help will suffer if fears people’s will to help will suffer if they are left with a feeling of unfairness. In future, she plans to help more on her own accord. In a world governed by organisations, private and

informal actors may never get the thanks they deserve (cf. Mäenpää & Faehnle 2021, 217–218). The responses of the fieldworker questionnaire also contained some criticism about the Church and the City polishing their public image.

Lessons from the crisis: for all, or for those most in need?

The field work was led by the ‘A-team of parish social work’, to ensure efficiency. Volunteers were taken on in fewer numbers than normally and, in order to protect vulnerable individuals, City officials and Church staff carried out a major part of the work under professional responsibility. The scale of the activities was something new, as was, for example, the commitment to guarantee commercial food deliveries to citizens who had lost their creditworthiness. The role of the volunteers varied, but their tasks included collecting and distributing food, thus basically the same as for the City-employed field workers. They received training in food hygiene, for instance, and worked on a contract basis. The practical arrangements related to delivering the food bags were agreed on between the employees and volunteers in the project.

FOR STEFAN Forsén, an important lesson from the point of view of the parish social work was finding the means to reach such an extensive number of people in need of help. At the same time, Mare Kinanen argues that the original aim of the Helsinki Helpline project was not so much to do with social work, since it addressed everyone in the designated age group, not only those really needing help. Similar criticism was voiced by many respondents to the fieldworker questionnaire: “Somehow the needs assessment at some point turned into a marketing effort of the whole project – why?” They felt the City’s insistence on the principle to ‘treat everyone equally’ distorted the original idea, as most of those in the target group would have been able to organise food deliveries for themselves independently. Although the demonstration of care and concern was widely appreciated by the elderly, there was also talk about misuse of the help and people falling between the cracks. Some reports spoke about individuals in a vulnerable position whom the help never reached.

THOSE WITH little means were able to receive food on credit but could not pay for it. At first, in March 2020, residents had to join food queues at distribution points in order to receive food aid. After some critical voices were raised, by Mare Kinanen among others, employees started delivering food bags to home addresses. They thus received money to acquire more durable canned and packaged goods that could be distributed along with the perishable food rescue products. The need for help among those in financial distress as measured

against the scale of Helsinki Helpline is demonstrated by the fact that the customary food aid of parishes and smaller actors delivered 152,000 food bags in five months, compared with 2,535 by the Helpline project.

THE INTERVIEWEES felt that front-loaded communication on work-in-progress turned out to be a risk worth taking, although it received some criticism in the fieldworker questionnaire. This openness probably served as a booster for project partners but, above all, it brought new help offers and participants. This relates to what Laitio has called the primary lesson learnt from the crisis: the City does well to admit its own limitations and to enable or even invite others to join in. This kind of thinking is perhaps not characteristic of Finland’s strong public authorities, which are based on the aim of the welfare state to be a virtually sovereign actor in the spirit of universalism. According to Laitio, the Helpline project showed where the real strengths of the City organisation lie; which matters clearly must fall within the public authorities’ responsibility; and which tasks are handled much better by someone else (Rossi 2020).

TIINA HÖRKKÖ, in turn, finds that the lesson for the future is that it pays to have more trust in employees and to assign them responsibility and mandate. The success of the cooperation required close interaction, as the process advanced simultaneously on several fronts and new practices developed through the actual work. She feels genuine and sustainable cooperation depends on knowing the people in the partner organisations, and acting and thinking together. Tommi Laitio is known to be an executive who listens to employees and is highly empathic. This may have been a reason why cooperation with the parish social work – professionals in help and empathy – was so successful.

ON THE whole, the experiences of cooperation have thus been positive, and the actors strive to maintain this spirit. There have been preliminary discussions about a possible ‘Helsinki Helpline 2.0’, based on the experiences gained last year, and if similar staff resources were available this new project could be kicked off in 3–5 days, should need arise. Psychological help would be provided through a broader network than last time. The emergency food bags would be improved nutritionally, and the project would also include actions for related to physical exercise and cultural services. Partnerships with private actors could be formed through competitive tendering, apart from the distribution of pharmaceuticals, where the one-partner model would be repeated despite some criticism from the Association of Finnish Pharmacies. Volunteers would have a strong role and their participation would be made easy and flexible (‘pop-up volunteering’) including digital sign-up platforms (Hörkkö et al. 2020).





CITY OF HELSINKI / VIRPI PELTOLA

IT IS also important to be aware of the fact that each crisis is different and full of surprising situations, so the response must also be creative and innovative. For Sami Komppula, the Helsinki Helpline project demonstrates that public administration can be flexible, too. What is required is willpower – and sufficiently strong and decisive actions at the executive level.

New preparedness: networks and structures

The contact and customer management systems constructed for the Helsinki Helpline project were not preserved for later use, because their lifespan had to be temporary for data protection reasons and because no other need to keep them was identified. Instead, the social capital, skills and ready action models needed for rapid organisation of aid will probably be retained by several actors. This is what Juha Rintamäki says. Those interviewees who worked closer to the field stress the importance of the personal contacts created in the project. Sami Komppula, for example, says most of the partners formed good contacts and networks both within and outside the City, and these will facilitate future cooperation.

THAT THE City of Helsinki – an actor committed to religious neutrality – collaborated in the project with important Christian channels of action received very little criticism. It should perhaps be noted that the Social Services and Health Care Division of the City did not participate in the actual project work but instead concentrated its own efforts on taking care of those residents who also need help in normal circumstances. The City's social and health services nevertheless received alarm notifications from Helsinki Helpline. The plan is to increase the role of social services and health care in future cooperation. This might entail a discussion on the division of responsibilities between the Church and the City social and health care services, as well as the role of religious communities and religion in crisis response.

FOLLOW-UP MEETINGS have been scheduled to take place twice a year between the Church and the Culture and Leisure Division and Social Services and Health Care Division of the City. There had, of course, been cooperation between these actors before the pandemic, but the Helpline project has given everyone a boost of confidence in its continued success. For Stefan Forsén, the lesson to take for possible future crises is to have the courage to start something, invite people to join in, and have a light organisational structure that adapts according to who the participant organisations are.

MOST OF the volunteers participating in Helsinki Helpline were people who have often engaged in similar activities before. Not many first-timers have continued in regular volunteer work. The need for 'pop-up volunteers' has been acknowledged within the Church, and models for this kind of participation should be developed, including series of brief stints. Tommi Laitio has been keeping an eye on the debate on civic participation in North American cities, where various organisations constantly receive requests to join in and help. The whole nature of the participation debate is different compared to Finland because of the lack of a welfare state capable of taking care of 'everything'. Instead, organisations must be – and are – capable of mobilising themselves independently. For Laitio, studying the best practices of the American system does not mean that we should replace the welfare state with a charity model, but simply that we could learn to identify and benefit from other kinds of resources apart from those of the public sector. This has also been a guiding principle in drafting the new definition of 'participation' in the administrative statutes of the City of Helsinki: to focus on identifying skills and talent outside of the City organisation. Helsinki Helpline – a major project that was set up rapidly and became a success – seems to have been a step in precisely that direction.

FOR THE Church's parishes, the experiences gained from Helsinki Helpline have accelerated the creation of new structures for anticipating and preparing for emergency conditions – now part of Mare Kinanen's responsibilities. New kinds of coordination centres for parish social work ('Varustamo') have been established in three locations in Helsinki, and these are being developed to be able to open quickly in case of acute crises. The City has joined in as a partner. It should be noted that – for parish social work and public social services alike – crisis conditions require not only installing new channels for help but also adapting the existing systems that offer constant support to those in need.

THE PROJECT organisation was not able to accept all offers for partnership, since the urgency of the kick-off phase forced the management to delimit the scope of the project. This may have caused disappointment. Here the question might be asked of whether some useful resources were lost at the expense of speed and efficiency. Equal treatment was something that the project organisation began to discuss gradually more and more. In future, it might be wise to have some kind of readiness to issue open calls for participation and be prepared to take on the most suitable candidates, while seeking ways to engage the rest in some other way. Social media could also be utilised for this purpose, particularly when looking for local resources. These methods for preparedness were an issue that was also raised in the responses to the fieldworker questionnaire.

ACCORDING TO Jonna Slavasevits it would be positive if organisations had ready-made action plans and their people already engaged in the necessary networks. As regards preparedness for engaging volunteers or social media communities, Slavasevits does not see the need for any special arrangements as she argues that messages travel quickly in crises in any case. In the opinion of Juha Rintamäki, the basic foundations are in place in our city. Of course, neighbourly love and communal care cannot be completely outsourced. With Helsinki Helpline as a model, Rintamäki envisages a kind of "conflict map" for an increasingly polarised city. In this vision, different actors would report observations of small signals in neighbourhoods and local communities, and they would cooperate to weed out the root causes for social problems.

*Experiences gained from
Helsinki Helpline have accelerated
the creation of new structures
for anticipating and preparing
for emergency conditions.*



”

What if the situation at the start were even more urgent – so that there is no time for consulting the law, let alone for honing the contracts?

Which of the lessons learned would be helpful in an even worse crisis?





On the crisis resilience of urban society

It is an interesting detail that this part of the City's engagement during the initial coronavirus crisis was organised along parish lines. This is a modern reminder of historical times when secular power was organised within the structures of ecclesiastical power. It was not just a matter of the geography of administration but also how the different actors organised their joint mobilisation in a crisis. As Tommi Laitio put it: public services were produced through parishes. A critical factor for the corona response in Helsinki during spring 2020 was the national Emergency Powers Act, which allowed superiors in the City organisation to reassign staff for tasks related to crisis relief. Therefore it is perhaps worthwhile to study in more detail what kind of powers the City and the Church might have in cases where the Government should not, for one reason or another, declare the state of emergency.

ACCORDING TO Laitio, the crisis created a feeling of respect for people, of openness and trust, of values and togetherness. Public services are widely appreciated by citizens. As regards the City's cooperation with parishes, Laitio feels that there has been a culture of prudence and polite discussions, although the City and the Church are the two biggest actors engaged in youth work in Helsinki, for instance. With a view to maintaining crisis preparedness, it might help to give some thought to how the interfaces of cooperation can stay open – or how to be prepared to open them in need. In a situation where many organisations struggle with resources, the City and the Church appear, in Laitio's view, as a strong duo with large resources.

IN FINNISH society, the Evangelical Lutheran Church has a unique role by virtue of its long history, its size and its status under public law. Via the majority church, the City could create better contacts with representatives of other denominations as well, and the Lutheran Church's central role does not seem to have been a major issue either for these contacts or for the non-religious. Despite the positive attitude, it is necessary to openly discuss this set-up with all the partners in future cooperation. For the Church and other faith-based actors, the role of helper in smaller everyday crises is a natural part of their work, including food assistance, which is largely handled by them (cf. Ohisalo et al. 2013). The Church's important role in society and its social work is something that many have come to appreciate and expect from the Church, both in and outside its own organisation. In earlier crises, such as the 1990s economic depression, the Church made a major contribution in complementing public welfare services (cf. Grönlund & Pessi, 2017).

THE CITY administration may well overestimate the extent to which the residents expect public welfare services to remain neutral vis-à-vis religious or ideological communities and partnerships with such actors. By and large, many actors in the third sector fall within this scope. Stefan Forsén finds it interesting that the public sector in general has an image as a neutral actor, with the social services as a bearer of responsibility, while the people at large are not neutral – they have opinions and beliefs to which they adhere. According to Jonna Slavasevits, the people also want to hold on to their independent actorship instead of only appearing under the banners of organisations.

In introducing this kind of sensitivity to the process, religious organisations may have something to offer but also something to learn, as the crisis activates moral and existential thoughts in people's minds.

THE WAY the City of Helsinki positioned itself, through large-scale actions, as a primary provider of wellbeing in the spirit of the welfare state ideology seems to match the criticism against Helsinki Helpline voiced by the staff of parish social work. The City aimed for systematic and universal measures, based on social and geographical equality, and was able to achieve this goal through cooperation. All senior citizens were thus offered a similar level of public service. Yet those with the lowest income seem to have received least attention and had to rely on food rescue, and in this sense, one might even argue the equal treatment principle led to wasted resources. A large-scale emergency help project may even have undermined the regular everyday support for the disadvantaged. The question might be asked whether a more efficient and better targeted approach for managing upcoming crises could rely on the Church's ideological principles rather than the City's.

WHAT WAS the role of Tommi Laitio's leadership, often considered as a new kind of approach in the City administration? Was it perhaps even a key enabler for the creation of the Helpline project? What about Juha Rintamäki's courage to launch the initiative both within the Church and in the civic society – or Tiina Hörkkö's readiness to take over the operative leadership at short notice – or indeed Stefan Forsén's ability to engage the parishes? Our research material does not allow us to make far-reaching conclusions, but it seems likely that the right persons happened to be in the right places in the Helsinki Helpline project. That, however, is not a sustainable foundation for crisis resilience.

WHAT IF the situation at the start were even more urgent – so that there is no time for consulting the law, let alone for honing the contracts? Then it would no longer be (from a legal and perhaps also moral point of view) a case of producing public services through partnerships, but instead the operations would take place in a more undefined and ad-hoc type of contract environment. What if the necessary staff and other resources were not available, and engaging volunteers were the only option to proceed – along with offers of help from businesses and private organisations – and with the City perhaps merely as another partner in processes launched by private actors? What if the timeframe for securing the contractual basis and launching a project in the field were less than a week? How to find a quick way to coordinate self-organising 'rapid response forces' that might emerge locally in a sudden crisis (cf. Mäenpää & Faehnle 2021, 201–207)?

THESE QUESTIONS show that the corona crisis in spring 2020 was essentially not a real 'acid test' for crisis preparedness for cities in Scandinavian welfare states. It was certainly an ordeal, and since the response was organised successfully, many of the lessons learned are worth applying both to daily work in normal conditions and to preparing for even more sudden and serious eventualities. Which of these lessons would be helpful in an even worse situation? What kind of actions could be designed to replace those that might not be possible in a sudden crisis? What resources would be unavailable? How would such changes impact the whole system of emergency aid? What if requests for urgent help came from neighbouring municipalities? Now is the time to play 'crisis games' like this, with the corona crisis still in fresh memory, so that we will be better prepared next time around. ■

This article was produced in the research project "Lähiöiden yhteisöllinen resilienssi" on community resilience in suburbs, coordinated by the Faculty of Theology of the University of Helsinki. The project is part of the Suburb Programme 2020–2022 of the Ministry of the Environment. We interviewed seven key actors of Helsinki Helpline in autumn and winter 2020–2021. We also analysed the results of a questionnaire carried out in summer 2020 among Helsinki Helpline fieldworkers.

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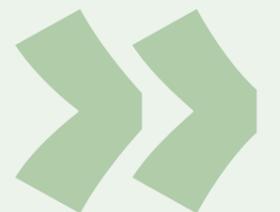
Youth in Helsinki face sexual harassment in public places and online



*Risk of harassment
and sexual violence
associated with variation
in family background*

● HANNA AHTIAINEN

Young people in Helsinki have personally experienced sexual harassment or inappropriate sexual proposals in public places more often than in Finland as a whole. At school, harassment takes place more infrequently. Experiences of sexual harassment have increased somewhat among girls. The extent to which young people encounter harassment and sexual violence varies, to some extent, according to their family background. These experiences are more common among those who consider their family's economic status to be weak. Moreover, 8th–9th-graders whose parents have a low education level encounter harassment and violence more often than those with highly-educated parents.





Sexual harassment and sexual violence are no new phenomenon. In recent years, however, exposure to them has received more attention than ever in the public debate. An important reason for this is the #metoo campaign against sexual harassment and abuse that started in 2017 and made visible various forms of harassment of women, in particular.

BY SEXUAL harassment Finnish legislation means “verbal, non-verbal or physical unwanted conduct of a sexual nature by which a person’s psychological or physical integrity is violated intentionally or factually, in particular by creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive atmosphere.” (Act on Equality between Women and Men, 1986/609, Section 7). The concept of sexual violence includes a large array of actions that violate or try to violate the integrity of their target. Sexual crimes are enumerated in the Criminal Code of Finland. In the case of minors, sexual violence can come in the form of coercing, forcing or enticing children to participate in or watch sexual acts; touching; or exposing them to age-inappropriate sexual imagery or activity. (THL, 2021a)

AN ESSENTIAL risk factor for exposure to sexual harassment and sexual violence is gender. Although men and boys also encounter sexual harassment and violence, women and girls much more commonly become targets of such acts. Intersectional inequality also seems to be a factor in experiences of sexual harassment. This means that the risk is influenced not only by gender but the social status and other personal characteristics of the individual – such as age, membership of a minority, or socio-economic position (Ollus et al. 2019)

YOUNG WOMEN are especially at risk of being victim of sexual harassment – even more so than women in total (Attila et al. 2018). Among young people overall, those belonging to sexual or gender minorities have been observed to be more exposed to sexual harassment and

violence than heterosexual or cisgender¹ youth (Jokela et al. 2020). Other groups of youth at higher risk are those placed in foster care, the functionally impaired, and foreign-born immigrant youth (Ikonen & Halme 2018). In Helsinki, immigrant boys have been found to be more prone than others to experience sexual harassment or sexual violence at lower-secondary age (8th and 9th graders in comprehensive school). For girls, these experiences were more common among those with a Finnish background than among immigrants, but foreign-born immigrant boys were more at risk than other boys. Among upper secondary-level students, there were no such differences by origin between boys, whilst girls with a Finnish background had experienced harassment more often than girls with a foreign background (Ahtiainen et al. 2020.)

THE PRESENT article focusses on sexual harassment and sexual violence encountered by young people in Helsinki. It starts out by describing how common these phenomena are and where harassment occurs. The next section presents a comparison of how the occurrence of experienced harassment and violence varies according to the respondents’ family background, in other words the education level of the parents and the family’s economic situation as perceived by the young.

THE FINDINGS presented are based on data from the School Health Promotion Study 2019 conducted by the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare THL. The analysis includes 8th and 9th graders in comprehensive school (roughly 13– to 15-year-olds) as well as students in the first and second years of secondary education (under 21-year-olds only). The questions asked in the School Health Promotion Study 2019 are presented in the adjacent frame. In this article, the word harassment refers to sexual harassment or inappropriate sexual proposals, not other types of harassment.

1) Cisgender refers to persons who feel their gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth and who usually express their gender accordingly.

How the questions were asked

Experiences of sexual harassment were surveyed in the School Health Promotion Study by asking whether respondents had experienced sexual harassment or inappropriate sexual proposals during the past 12 months. Specifications: 1) on the phone or online, 2) at school/educational institution, 3) at a workplace during a work placement period [occupational education], 4) in hobbies, 5) in the street, at a shopping centre or in another public space, 6) at home or someone else’s home or in another private place.

Response alternatives: 1) yes, 2) no. The analysis includes those respondents who gave a ‘yes’ answer to at least one specification, and they are compared to all who gave a response to at least one specification.

Experiences of sexual violence were surveyed by asking whether during the last 12 months, respondents had experienced any of the following : 1) being forced to undress, 2) unwanted touching of intimate parts of the body, 3) being pressured or coerced into sexual intercourse or other sexual acts, 4) being offered money, goods or intoxicants in exchange for sex.

Response alternatives: 1) yes, 2) no. The analysis includes those respondents who gave a ‘yes’ answer to at least one specification, and they are compared to all who gave a response to at least one specification.

Harassment of young people in public places more common in Helsinki than elsewhere

In Helsinki, just over one fifth of 8th–9th-graders and roughly one quarter of secondary-level students had faced inappropriate sexual proposals or harassment during the past 12 months. Experiences of sexual violence are considerably less common: seven per cent of the younger respondent group had them, and roughly ten per cent of the older group. Sexual harassment and sexual violence are strongly gender-related. Among girls, one in three 8th–9th-graders and over 40 per cent of secondary-level students reported having been harassed during the last 12 months, while the proportion among boys was less than ten per cent. The analysed material did not contain responses from young people defining themselves as other than girls or boys, but the experiences of these youth in future studies would add valuable new aspects to the analysis.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT rarely occurs at school. The most typical locations where young people encounter harassment are the internet and public places (Figure 1). Harassment at school or online are, on average, equally common in Helsinki and Finland as a whole. In Helsinki, however, young people’s experiences of sexual harassment in public places are significantly more common than elsewhere. Among secondary-level students in Helsinki, sexual harassment is as common in public places as on the phone or online. Compared with the rest of Finland’s six largest cities, harassment in public places is more common in Helsinki. Among secondary-level students, in particular, exposure to harassment in public seems strikingly more common in Helsinki.

FIGURE 1.

Young people who have experienced sexual harassment at school, on the phone or online or in public places, proportion (%), Helsinki and Finland, 2019.

Have experienced sexual harassment during the past 12 months...

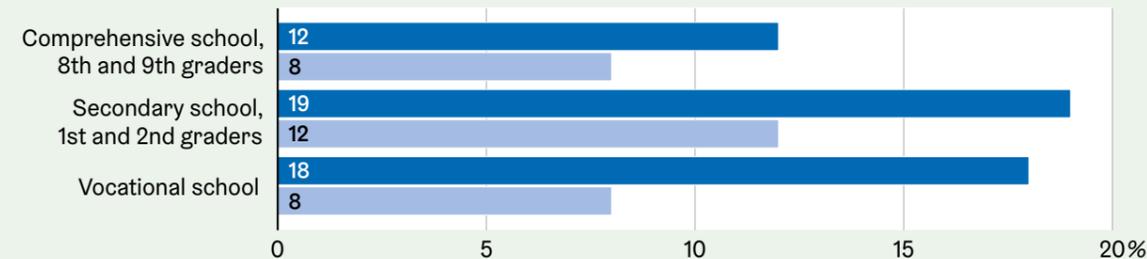
at school



on the phone or online



in public spaces



Source: Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare / School Health Promotion Study 2019.

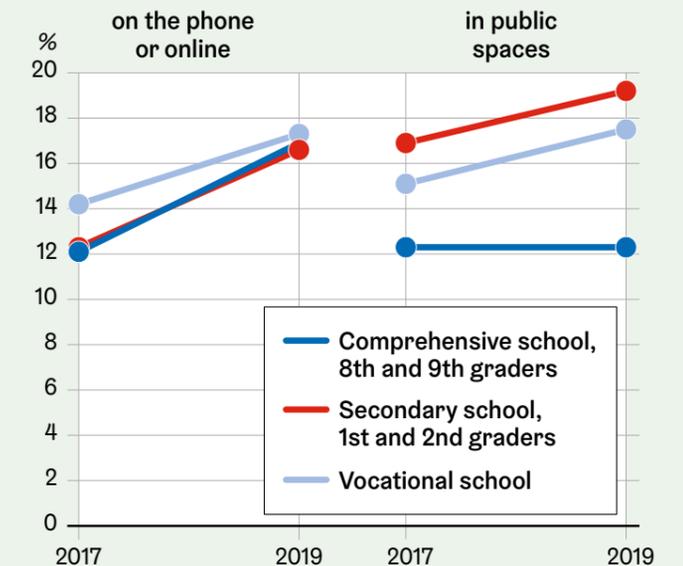
EXPERIENCES OF sexual harassment in general have become more common; compared with the situation two years earlier, it also increasingly occurs online (Figure 2). To a great extent, the general increase is due to the growing number of harassment experiences reported by girls. Among boys, experiences of harassment do not seem to have increased. As regards harassment in the school environment, there seems to be no significant change compared with two years earlier.

YOUNG PEOPLE rather rarely tell adults about sexual harassment or sexual violence. In Helsinki, just over one-quarter of those who had been exposed to sexual harassment or violence had told an adult they trusted about it. For boys, it was even less common than for girls to talk about it. Those youth who had told an adult

FIGURE 2.

Young people who have experienced sexual harassment on the phone or online or in public places during the past 12 months, by school type, proportion (%), Helsinki, 2017 and 2019.

Have experienced sexual harassment during the past 12 months...



Source: Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare / School Health Promotion Study 2019.

about harassment or violence were also asked whether they had received any support to process what had happened. Of girls, more than half felt that although they would have needed such support from an adult at school, they had not received any. Compared to girls, a higher percentage of boys felt they had received support. Altogether, nine in ten young people reported they had been supported by someone close to them, such as their parents or friends.

Experiences of sexual harassment and violence vary by family background

Among 8th–9th-graders, there was a statistically significant association between parents' educational background and the sexual harassment or sexual violence experienced by these youth. Experiences of sexual harassment and inappropriate sexual proposals, as well as sexual violence, were more common among those 8th–9th-graders coming from families with a low education level. A clear difference can be observed between youth from families with the highest education level and the rest of the respondents; meanwhile, there were no significant differences between respondents from medium- and low-educated families. Of children of mothers who had basic education only, 28 per cent had experienced sexual harassment or inappropriate sexual proposals during the last 12 months. This proportion was 20 per cent among children of mothers with high

education (Figure 3). As regards experienced sexual violence, the difference between education levels was significant only between the family backgrounds with the highest and the lowest education. Sexual violence had been experienced by 14 per cent of respondents whose mothers had only basic education, while this proportion was just six per cent – less than half – among children of high-educated mothers. A similar correlation could be seen when examining experienced harassment and violence according to the father's education level.

WHEN ASKED where sexual harassment had occurred, some differences were found between respondents with low- and high-educated mothers – particularly in the case of harassment in public places. Of those whose mothers had basic education only, 19 per cent had experienced harassment in public. For respondents with high-educated mothers, this percentage was 11. The proportion of young people who stated they had been harassed on the phone or online was 22 per cent among children of low-educated mothers, 15 among those with high-educated mothers.

AT SECONDARY-EDUCATION level there were no statistically significant differences between students whose parents had different education levels – in other words, the experiences of sexual harassment or sexual violence in this age group were equally common regardless of family's educational background.

”

Sexual harassment and sexual violence are strongly gender-related. Among girls, one in three 8th–9th-graders and over 40 per cent of secondary-level students reported having been harassed over the past 12 months, while the proportion among boys was less than ten per cent.

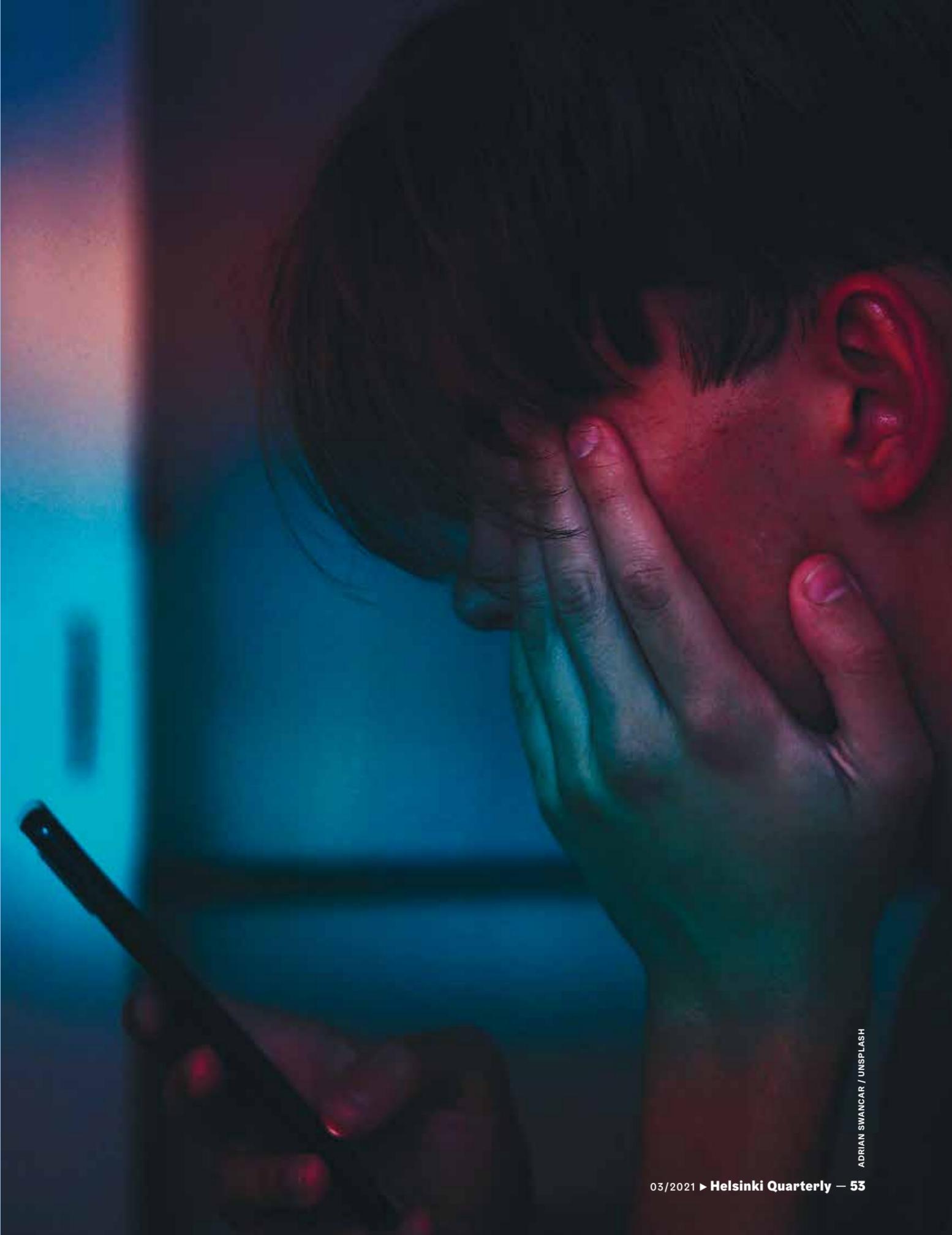
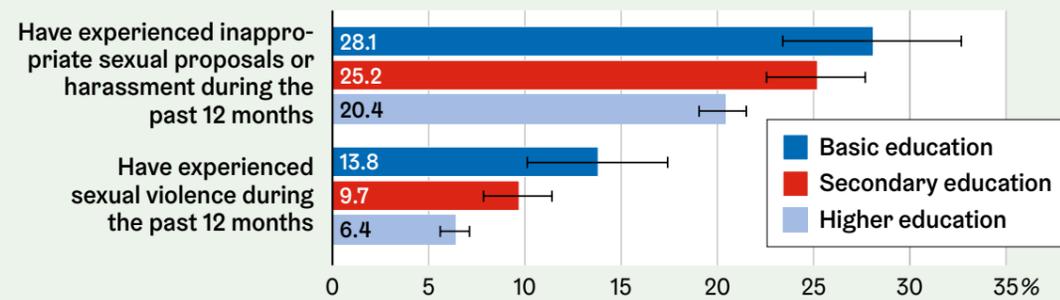


FIGURE 3.

Eight- and ninth-graders who have experienced sexual harassment or sexual violence during the past 12 months, by education level of the mother, proportion (%), Helsinki, 2019 (statistically significant difference = $p < 0,001$).



Source: Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare / School Health Promotion Study 2019, results for Helsinki.

THE ECONOMIC situation of the family is another background factor related to the differences in reported experiences of sexual harassment and violence. Among young people who rated their family's economic situation as moderate or worse, experiences of harassment or sexual violence were significantly more common than among those who considered the family economy fairly good or very good (Figures 4a and 4b). In secondary education, there was a statistically significant difference also between those who perceived the family economy as fairly good and those who rated it very good – among the latter, the proportion of respondents who had been harassed was smaller. Among the 8th–9th-graders there was no corresponding difference between the two groups.

THE LINK between harassment experiences and the family's economic situation as perceived by the respondents was particularly evident among girls. For example, nearly half of those girls who considered their family economy as moderate or poor (44 per cent of 8th–9th-graders and 46 per cent of secondary-level girls) reported that they had encountered sexual harassment. The corresponding proportion among those judging that their family's economy was very good was 32 per cent.

Young people should be encouraged to report experiences of harassment and sexual violence

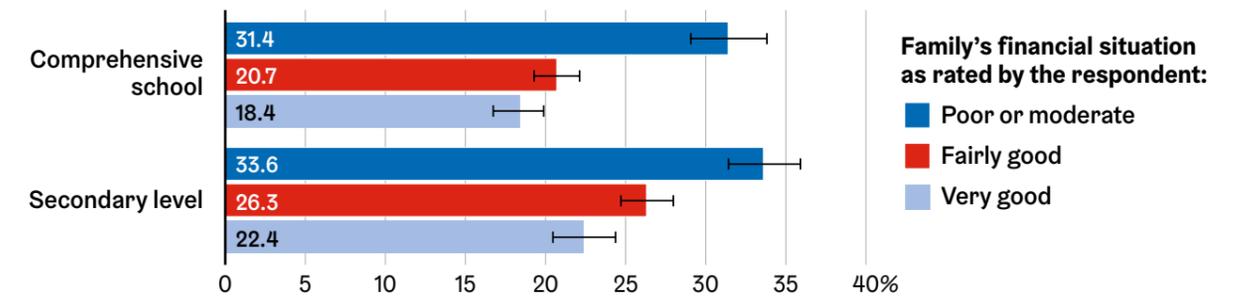
Experiencing sexual violence is regrettably common especially among young girls, and these experiences have increased considerably in just a short time. The increase in reported experiences does not

unambiguously show whether the number of harassment cases has increased. As a phenomenon, sexual harassment is old and common but was, for a long time, rather invisible. The #metoo campaign, which brought public visibility to the topic and prompted many to share their experiences, has made the phenomenon easier to identify. We may assume that young people are more aware today of various forms of sexual harassment and sexual violence and that they can better pin a name to these situations and report on them. Determining how common these situations are – even by means of research – is complicated, because respondents may find it hard to talk about the matter even in an anonymous questionnaire. Particularly some of the sexual harassment and violence that boys encounter may never be discovered, because boys may feel this is something that happens mainly to girls (Ikonen & Halme 2018).

AT SCHOOL, young people face sexual harassment only seldom. The risk is greatest online and in public places. The harassment encountered by young people in public places, in particular, is more common in Helsinki than in the rest of Finland. This result is probably explained by the tendency of young people moving about in a big city to meet more people and spend time in public places, which creates more situations and encounters where harassment may occur. During the coronavirus pandemic, people have spent less time in public places and, in return, more time online. The upcoming analyses of the next School Health Promotion Study (2021) will reveal whether the pandemic situation has had an impact on the frequency of harassment experiences among youth in Helsinki.

FIGURE 4A.

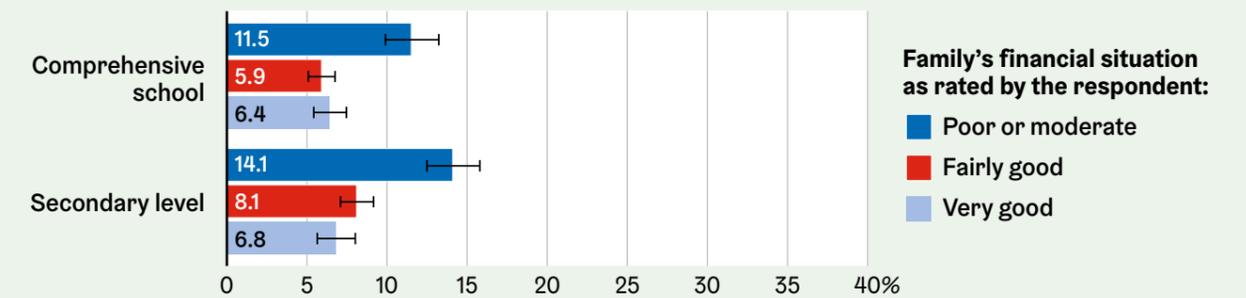
Young people who have experienced sexual harassment during the past 12 months, by school type and perceived economic situation of family, Helsinki, 2019 (statistically significant difference = $p < 0,001$).



Source: Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare / School Health Promotion Study 2019, results for Helsinki.

FIGURE 4B.

Young people who have experienced sexual violence during the past 12 months, by school type and perceived economic situation of family, Helsinki, 2019 (statistically significant difference = $p < 0,001$)



Source: Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare / School Health Promotion Study 2019, results for Helsinki.

AS STATED above, we know from earlier research that other characteristics related to the background or status of individuals – apart from gender – are also linked to more frequent experiences of harassment and violence. The analysis presented in this article showed that family background, too, is related to how commonly young people encounter harassment or sexual violence. Both types of experiences are more common among those – especially girls – who consider the economic situation of their family to be weak. Furthermore, among 8th–9th-graders, those with high-educated parents experience harassment and violence to a smaller extent than children of low-educated parents. Among young people who belong to minorities,

or whose family situation is strained, such experiences may remain undiscovered more than on average. Therefore it is important to identify the groups that are most vulnerable to harassment and violence.

YOUNG PEOPLE are often reluctant to talk to adults about the harassment or sexual violence that they may have experienced. Fear or shame may stop them from discussing what has happened. Another factor reducing their willingness to talk is the belief or experience that nothing can be done about it. A relatively large proportion of those who have talked about their experiences had not received from school the support they needed for processing their thoughts. Young



Young people are often reluctant to talk to adults about the harassment or sexual violence they have experienced.

people's experiences of weak support partly conflict with the fact that schools – at least at secondary-education level – consider themselves to have good readiness and practices for intervening in sexual harassment or violence (cf. THL 2021b; THL 2021c). In upper-secondary (lukio) schools in Helsinki, identifying and intervening in sexual harassment or violence works very well (THL 2021d). Thus, there seems to be some discrepancy between the reported experiences and the existing practices.

YOUTH IS an important stage in the formation of an individual's identity, and therefore experiences of sexual harassment or sexual violence in youth can be particularly traumatic. Young people themselves cannot influence whether they become targets of sexual harassment or violence. That adults are proactive in trying to prevent these acts and situations and take initiative in addressing the matters and processing the consequences is crucially important. ■

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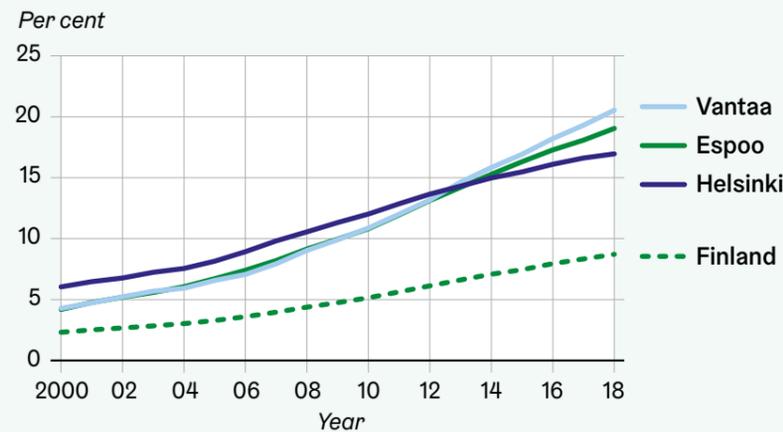
HELSINKI MARKETING / JUSSI HELLSTEN

People with immigrant background to play an increasing role in Helsinki labour market

● PASI SAUKKONEN

Helsinki's labour and housing market can now hardly be imagined without all those who have immigrated with their families to Finland from elsewhere. Despite positive developments in the past two decades, the employment opportunities of immigrants remain strongly dependent on economic fluctuations. It is thus likely that the coronavirus pandemic has weakened the job market success of immigrants, at least temporarily. This article is based on a recent study on the employment, taxable income and housing conditions of people with foreign background, offering new information on immigrants and their children in Helsinki and the metropolitan area.





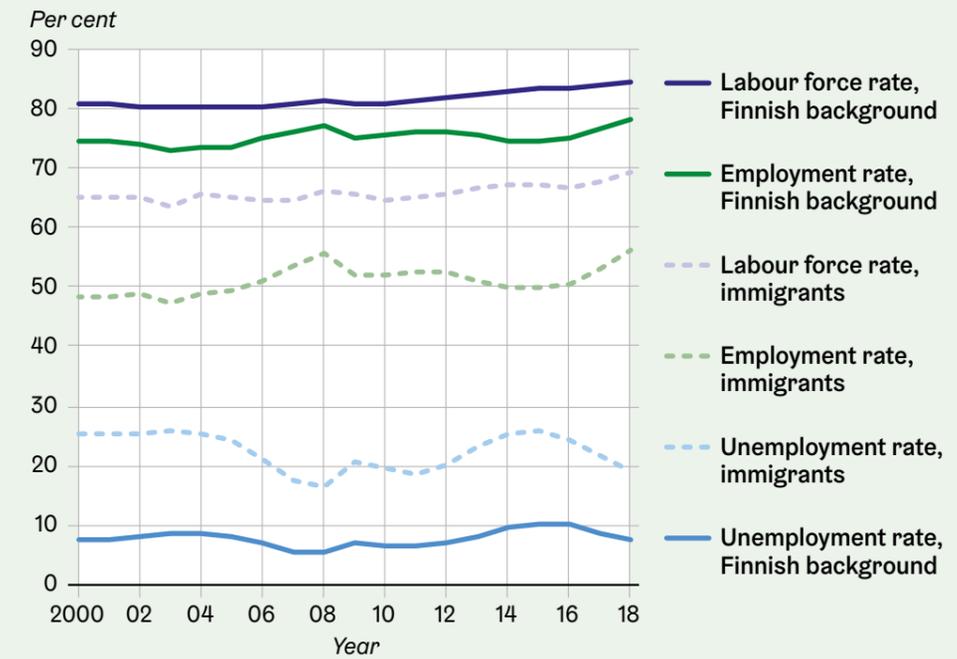
Source: Statistics Finland.

FIGURE 1. Foreign-born persons with a foreign background, proportion (%) of 20–64-year-old population, Espoo, Helsinki, Vantaa and Finland, 2000–2018.

In just roughly 20 years, foreign-born residents have become an important part of the working-age population of Helsinki. At year-end 2000, the number of 20–64-year-old foreigners born abroad¹ was only 22,400 in Helsinki, but by 2018, it had risen to 70,800. Data available at the time of writing show their proportion of the city’s entire working-age population has reached 17 per cent. The Helsinki Metropolitan Area as a whole differs more and more from the rest of Finland. In Espoo and Vantaa, immigrants make up an even larger proportion of the working-age population than in Helsinki (Figure 1).

COMPARED TO residents with Finnish background, immigrants have a lower labour force rate and employment rate, and a higher unemployment rate. Statistics Finland’s employment statistics show that 69 per cent of foreign-born persons with a foreign background belonged to the labour force at year-end 2018, against 85 per cent of those with a Finnish background. The foreign-born persons with a foreign background had an employment rate of 56 per cent and an unemployment rate of 19 per cent (compared with 78% and 7% for those with a Finnish background). (Figure 2).

1) This article uses Statistics Finland’s classification of the population according to origin and background country. These are determined by the data on a person’s parents in the Population Information System. Persons whose both parents or the only known parent have been born abroad are considered to be persons with foreign background. All persons who have at least one parent who was born in Finland are considered to be persons with Finnish background. Read more at: https://www.tilastokeskus.fi/til/tyokay/kas_en.html



Source: Statistics Finland.

FIGURE 2. Labour force rate, employment rate and unemployment rate (%), 20–64-year-olds, immigrants and persons with Finnish background, Helsinki, 2000–2018.

DESPITE THESE differences, favourable trends have been observed over the years. This is partly due to increasing work-based immigration, but there has also been some positive change for many formerly hard-to-employ population groups. In particular, the situation has improved in several ways for first-generation immigrant women, although their employment rates remain far behind the high rates for women with a Finnish background. For instance, two thirds of women of Somali origin in the labour force in Helsinki were unemployed in the year 2000, but by 2018 this rate was down to slightly less than half (49%). Their employment rate had risen from 9 per cent to 24 per cent.

Cyclical variation in employment and unemployment

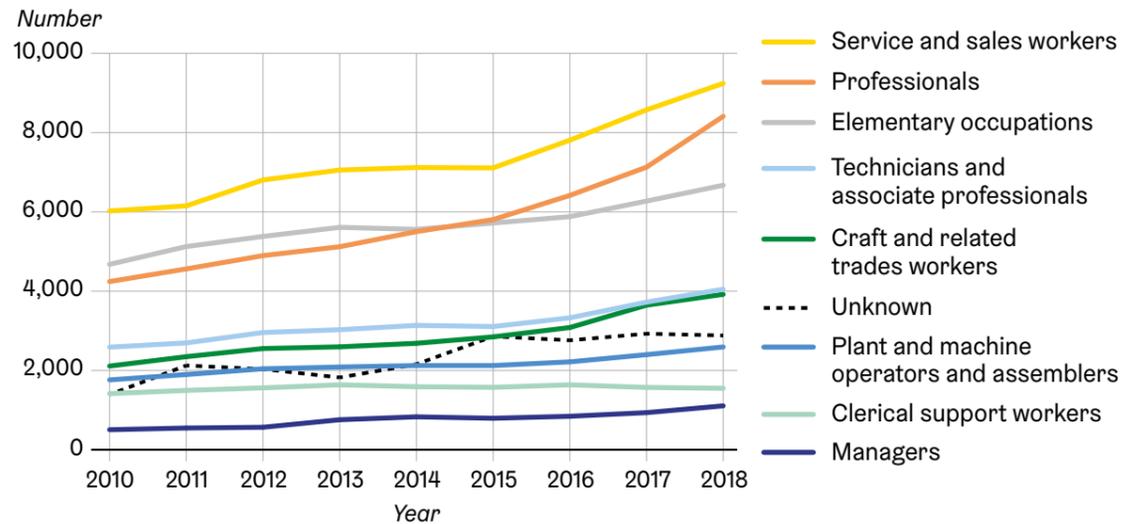
Economic fluctuations influence employment and unemployment at large, but their impacts are strongest on migrants. Many migrants work in industries sensitive to economic ups and downs such as construction and logistics. Furthermore, a large proportion of immigrants have fixed-term or part-time work contracts, a fact which increases their vulnerability during economic downturns.

THE 2008 international finance crisis and its consequences was a major blow for immigrants’ chances of finding a job and holding on to it. A few years ago, the trend became positive again for a while, only to be broken by the coronavirus pandemic in spring 2020. Comparable data on the employment situation among immigrants during the corona crisis are not yet at hand. Data available at the time of writing suggested that the hardships faced by the hospitality industry, for example, are likely to contribute to increased unemployment among immigrants.

A LARGE proportion of immigrants work in hotels and restaurants, administrative and support services, construction, or health and social welfare services. At year-end 2018, almost every fifth employed immigrant worked within the category *administrative and support services*, which includes cleaning services. In fact, more than half of those employed in the occupational category *cleaners and helpers* were first-generation immigrants. However, it is worth noting that the number of the foreign-born in the *professionals* category has grown considerably since the year 2000 (Figure 3).

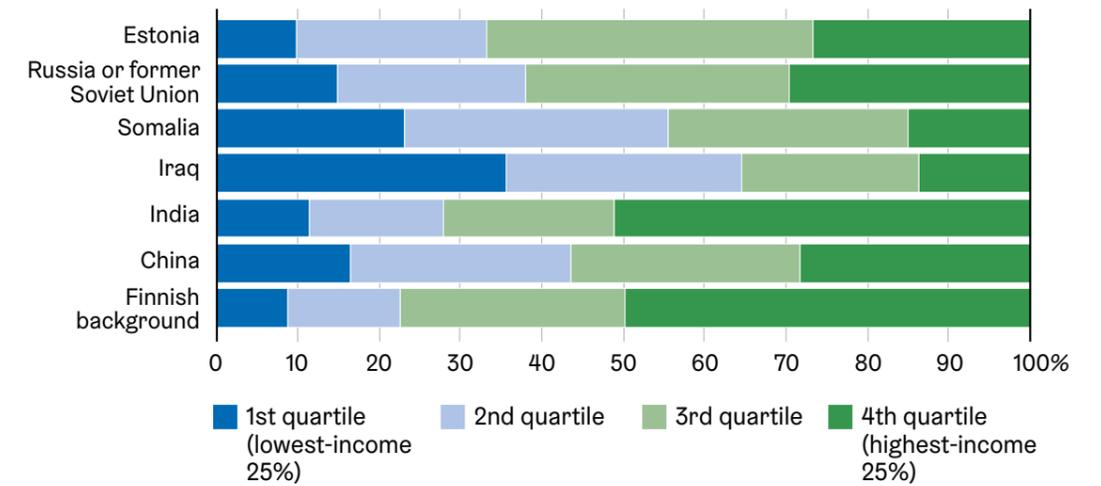
FIGURE 3.

Distribution across the main categories of the Finnish classification of occupations, 15–64-year-old immigrants, Helsinki, 2010–2018.



*The categories 'Armed forces' and 'Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers' are not included in the graph.

Source: Statistics Finland.



Source: Statistics Finland.

FIGURE 4.

Income distribution, 20–64-year-olds with Finnish and foreign background, by country of origin (%), Helsinki, 2018.

IMMIGRANTS' INCOME levels (income subject to state taxation) reflect their difficulties in finding employment as well as the concentration of their jobs in low-pay sectors and low-qualification tasks. The average income is lower and the proportion belonging to low income classes is higher among immigrants compared with the rest of the population. However, there are also great differences between immigrant groups in Helsinki. Employed persons of Indian origin – especially men – often have fairly high incomes, while those with an Iraqi, Somali or Afghan background commonly have livelihood challenges (Figure 4).

ECONOMIC RESOURCES influence an individual's freedom of choice on the housing market. Although the rate of owner-occupancy increases among most country-of-origin groups with the length of residence in Finland, owner-occupied housing is still less common among immigrants than among the native population in Helsinki. Living in socially supported housing is very common in some country-of-origin groups, which is partly due to factors such as the large family sizes among Somali-background immigrants, for example. Over-crowded housing is also common in Helsinki particularly among large immigrant-origin families.

Second-generation immigrants to have widespread impact on city development

The number of second-generation immigrants (persons with foreign background, born in Finland) has grown fast in Helsinki and the rest of the Helsinki Metropolitan Area. However, the majority of them are still children or adolescents, and rather few belong to the working-age population. International experiences and research suggests it is useful to follow closely how the second generation of immigrants cope and find their own place. Possible exclusion from education and work on a large scale, for instance, would have major negative effects on the entire city.

FROM WHAT is known today, the children of first-generation immigrants do well at school and acquire degrees more often than foreign-born immigrants of the same age. This is in line with experiences from other countries. However, a clear difference also persists between second-generation immigrants and children or adolescents of Finnish origin, and it can be seen at many stages of the educational path. It would also seem that Finnish-born women of immigrant background often do better in life than men with the same background (Figure 5).



It is likely that the coronavirus pandemic has weakened the job market success of immigrants.

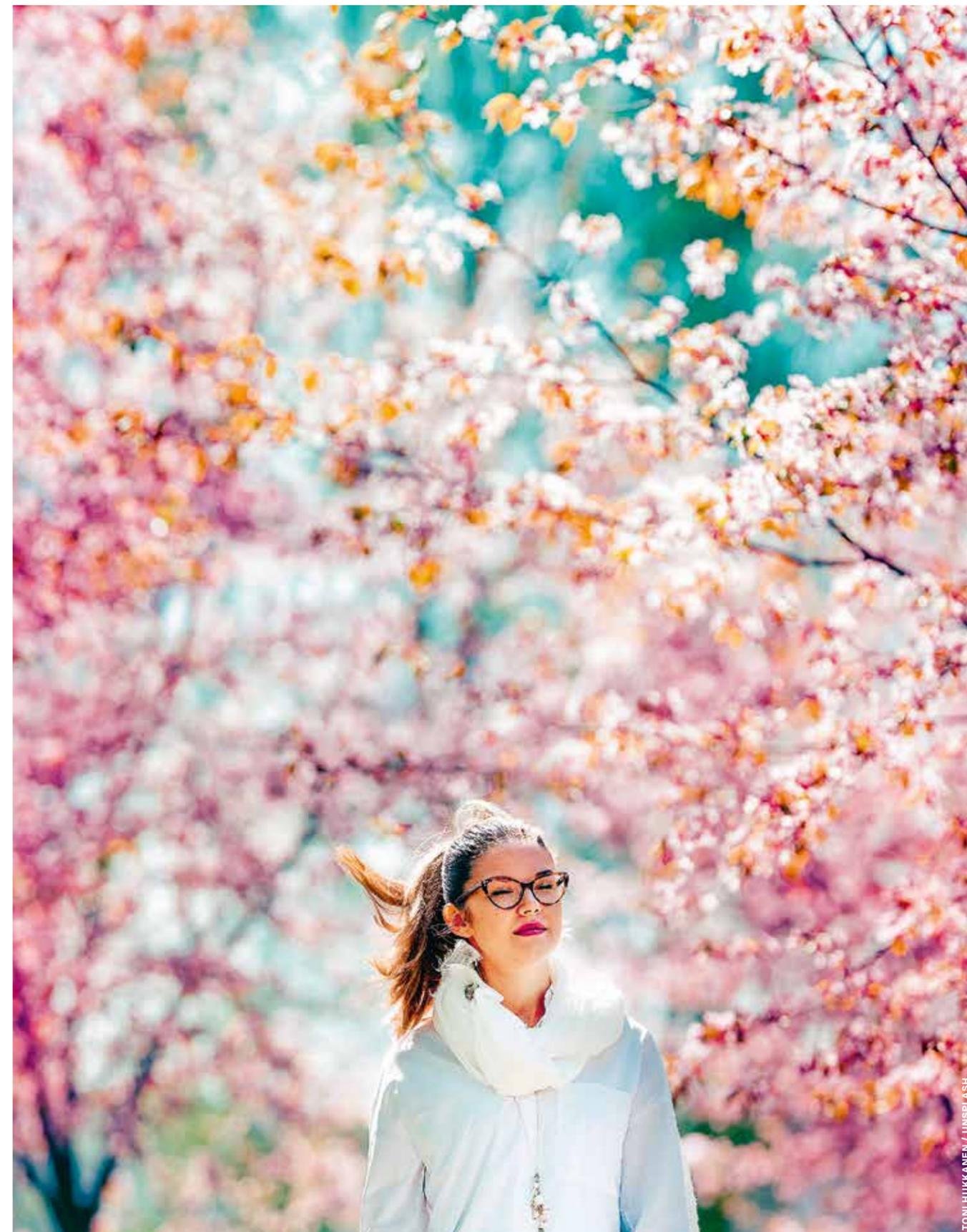
Great differences within the immigrant population

The immigrant population of Finland is heterogeneous in many respects, which becomes evident when examining, for instance, their main activity status. In fact, it is hardly relevant to discuss them as a collective group except as an introduction to a situational picture or an analysis of recent development. Considerable differences within the immigrant population can be observed, among other things, based on gender, country of origin or time since migration. It is understandable that the work-based immigrants have a different position on the labour market than most of those who have received their residence permit in Finland on humanitarian grounds.

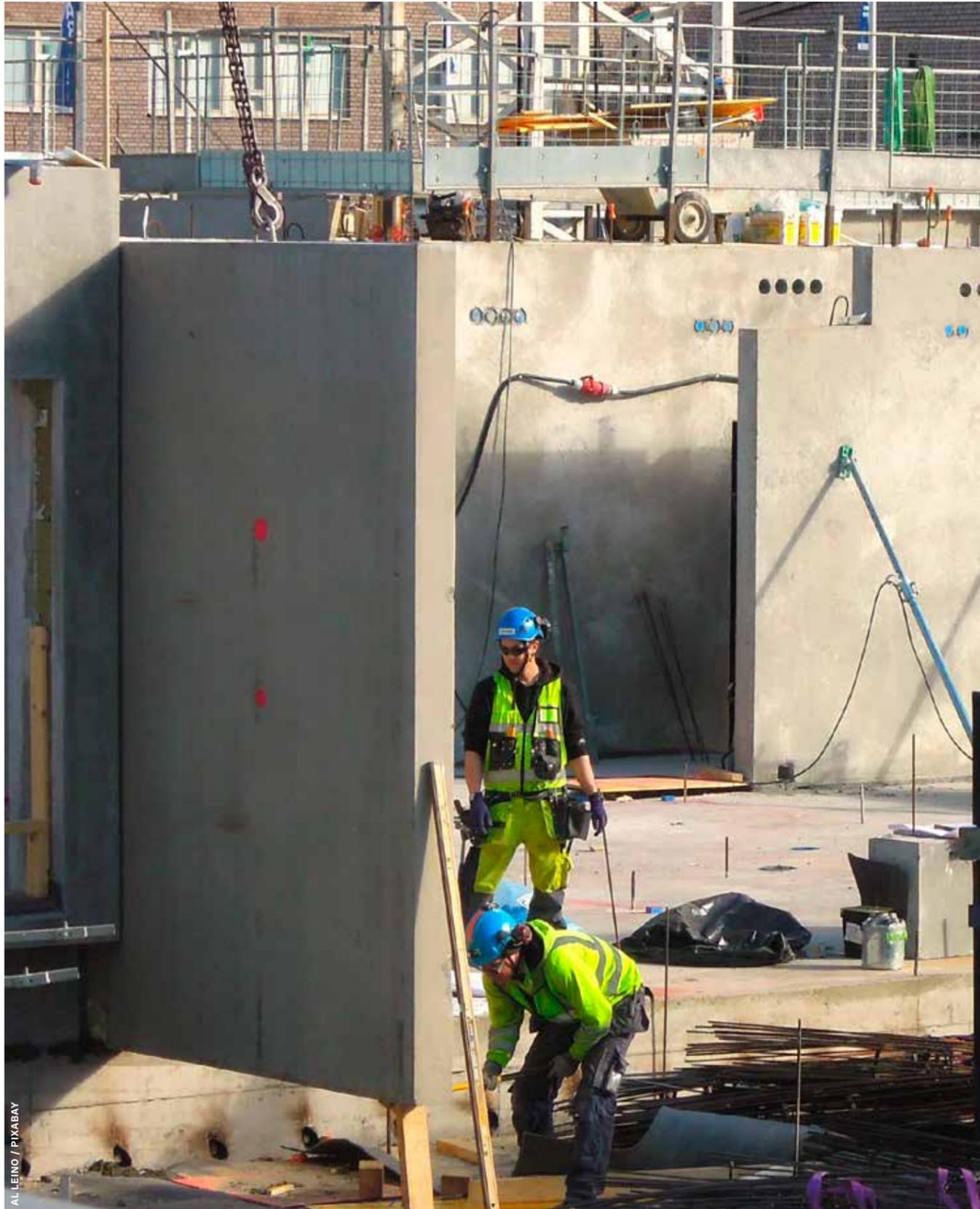
THERE ARE also certain differences between the foreign-background populations of Espoo, Helsinki and Vantaa – the major cities in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area. The differences in labour market status are probably largely due to structural differences of the foreign-background population itself from one city to another, as well as the industrial structure of each city. In Vantaa, almost half of immigrants originate from Estonia, Russia or the rest of the former Soviet Union. In Espoo, the proportion of immigrants from India or China is larger than in the other two cities. Helsinki has larger proportions of residents with Somali or other African background.

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***It is now
necessary
to create the
conditions that
enable every
resident to get
forward in life
and give their
contribution
to the positive
development of
the city.***



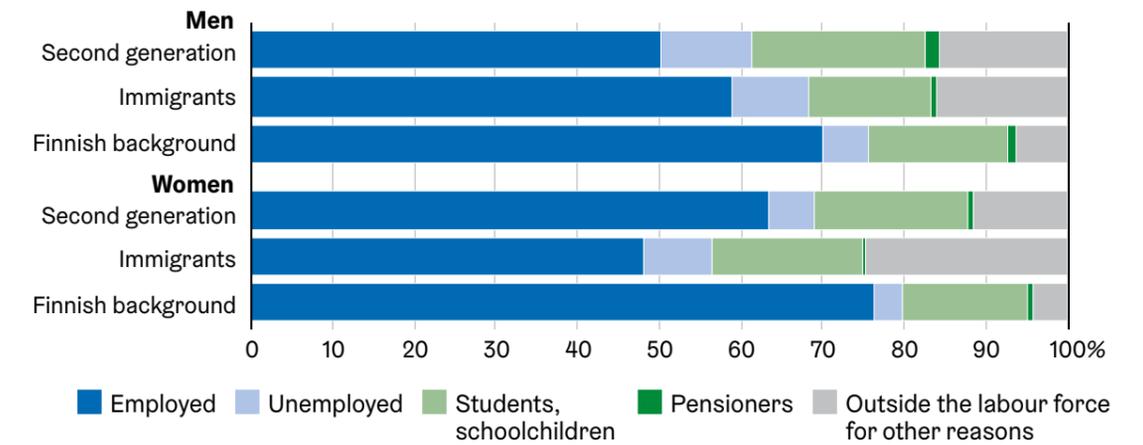
TONI HUKKANEN / UNSPLASH



ALLEINO / PIXABAY

FIGURE 5.

Main type of activity (%), first- and second-generation immigrants and persons with Finnish background aged 20 to 29, by gender, Helsinki, 2018.



Source: Statistics Finland.

Sources:

City of Helsinki & City of Espoo & City of Vantaa (2019). Helsingin seudun vieraskielisen väestön ennuste. Statistics 2019:3. Helsinki: City Executive Office.
 Saukkonen, Pasi (2021). Ulkomaalaistaustaiset pääkaupunkiseudulla. Asuminen, työllisyys ja tulot. Helsinki: City Executive Office.

THE POPULATION with foreign background will increase in Helsinki also in future. The growth is sustained by international migration to Finland, but also by the domestic migration of immigrants and their children to the Helsinki Metropolitan Area, as well as natural increase of population (growth of the second generation). Owing to the scarcity of other population growth in Helsinki, the proportion of residents with a foreign background is set to grow fast. By 2035, the proportion of this group in the entire Helsinki population is expected to have increased from one-fifth today to over one-quarter (City of Helsinki & City of Espoo & City of Vantaa, 2019).

THIS MEANS that those migrating to Finland, and their children, will play a growing role as participants in the Helsinki labour and housing markets and as users and consumers of services. It is now necessary to create the conditions enabling every resident to get forward in life and give their contribution to the positive development of the city. This calls for determined and targeted actions to strengthen inclusion, increase citizen participation and fight discrimination and racism. ■

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By 2035, one-quarter of the population of Helsinki is projected to have a foreign background.



TAPIO HAAJA / UNSPLASH

A city for everybody – but too far away?

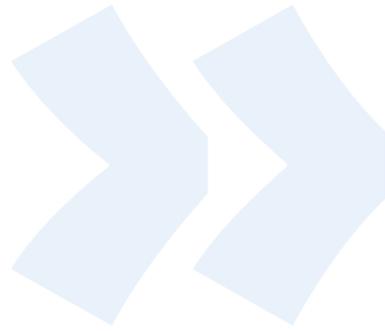
Residents' social background and diverging use of public space in Helsinki

● OSKAR RÖNNBERG & VENLA BERNELIUS

The city of day-to-day life is not the same for all its residents.

There are differences in how much they move about outside their own neighbourhood, in different parts of the city. In fact it would seem the use of urban space begins to differentiate already at a young age and to vary according to educational background. This may play a part in strengthening the negative effects of urban segregation and weaken the experience of sharing a city with others. In this article, we present differences in the use of urban space by Helsinki residents and reflect on the effects of divergent patterns of spatial mobility in the city, particularly on equal opportunities for children.





In Helsinki and many Finnish cities, concerns have been raised in the 2000s about deepening socioeconomic and ethnic differentiation between neighbourhoods (Vilkama 2011; Kortteinen & Vaattovaara 2015; Saikkonen et al. 2018) and schools (Bernelius 2013). A particular cause of concern has been the concentration of social deprivation in certain neighbourhoods and the effect this may have on people's opportunities in life and their sense of belonging. As people of different backgrounds increasingly live in separate areas, the number of natural encounters between social groups is lower than in cities with smaller differences between neighbourhoods (OECD 2018). A potential risk raised in the international debate is that the differentiation of neighbourhoods can create divergent realities which reduce social cohesion and social mobility.

In recent years, segregation researchers have increasingly looked not only at residential segregation but also separation in other spheres of life. Segregation occurs simultaneously in many different life contexts, such as schools, workplaces, public services, hobbies and transport (van Ham & Tammaru 2016). Growing differentiation of life contexts may lead to people

encountering increasingly only people like themselves, while their everyday contacts with those from other backgrounds decrease.

MOVING ABOUT in the city may reduce the risk of the homogenisation of social circles. In Estonia, for example, researchers have found a lower degree of segregation – and more social mix between people – when the daily mobility and the spaces people frequent are taken into account (Silm & Ahas 2014; Silm et al. 2018). Encountering diversity is important particularly for children and adolescents, for whom strong exposure to a markedly segregated environment may lead to more one-sided social contacts and role models, and to a narrowing of future horizons (cf. Bernelius 2013; Bernelius & Huilla 2021).

YET RESEARCH around the world shows that socially and economically deprived people move less in other parts of the city compared to the advantaged (Wang et al. 2012; Krivo et al. 2013; Shareck et al. 2014; Järv et al. 2015). Also children and youth living in socioeconomically disadvantaged areas, as well as those with an immigrant background, tend to have less experiences of other parts of the city (Karsten 1998; den Besten 2010). This phenomenon is especially concerning considering that both ethnic and socioeconomic segregation between areas is strongest among children, also in Finland. In other words, children live most apart from their peers from other backgrounds (Bernelius & Vilkama 2019; Vilkama & Bernelius 2019; Kauppinen et al. 2021). This means that those in the most vulnerable position, particularly children coming from the most fragile backgrounds, are the ones most exposed to deprived social environments and to the possible negative effects of segregation.

THERE ARE indications also in the Helsinki Region that part of the young people in more deprived suburbs avoid moving about outside of their own neighbourhood. Youth work officers have reported, for example, about young people telling them they never visit central Helsinki. Researchers assume that this tendency to remain in one's own neighbourhood is linked with the sense of exclusion: young people who do not feel they are part of a wider society may prefer staying in a familiar environment (Tuominen 2020; Huynh et al. 2018: 157).

Survey on urban mobility in the present and in earlier phases of life

In this article, we study the differences in the use of public space among Helsinki residents, drawing on a survey carried out as a part of a master's thesis (Rönnberg 2020). Are these differences associated with the respondents' different backgrounds and neighbourhoods, and what kinds of differences can be perceived? We also seek to find out to what extent the respondents' family background and childhood environment influence their use of the urban space in adulthood.

RESPONDENTS WERE sampled through self-selection within fifteen Facebook neighbourhood groups, and thus results are not representative of the whole population. The larger number of responses, however, allows us to treat the results as indicative for the groups included in the questionnaire. A total of 1,266 Helsinki residents aged 15 or older answered the online questionnaire in spring 2020. Since daily spatial mobility at that time was limited because of the coronavirus pandemic, respondents were encouraged to answer according to their pre-pandemic behaviour.

THE RESPONDENTS' use of the public space was analysed using four indicators: 1) in which major districts they regularly moved about, 2) how often they visited the city centre, 3) where their everyday and leisure activities took place, and 4) how many of 25 specified key locations they had visited over the last 12 months. In this article, we focus on respondents' spatial mobility outside of their own neighbourhood and in the city centre. We aim to describe, on one hand, how locally centred the respondents' life is, which can lead to an increasingly homogeneous exposure to a segregated social environment and, on the other hand, how frequently they visit key locations in the city.

THE BACKGROUND information on respondents consisted of their education level, age and neighbourhood, as well as information on their teenage use of public space (ages 12 to 16) and their cultural and social capital at that age.

Higher-educated people more commonly frequent central Helsinki

People with a high education level move about in the city more than the low-educated. Differences are most notable between those who have a vocational secondary education or no post-compulsory degree, on one hand, and those with a general secondary (*lukio*) or tertiary-level education, on the other. Of those who have a vocational secondary education less than one-third visit the centre of Helsinki at least once a week, and two-fifths do so less than once a month. Of those with a general secondary or a tertiary-level education, around half visit the centre of Helsinki at least once a week, and one-tenth less than once a month (Figure 1).



Youth work officers have reported about young people telling them they never visit the centre of Helsinki.

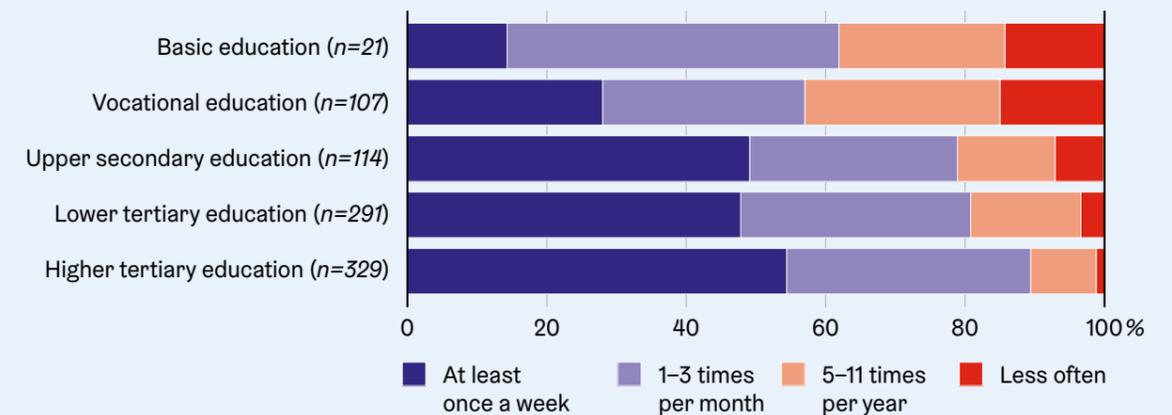


FIGURE 1. Visits to central Helsinki, by level of education (students not included).

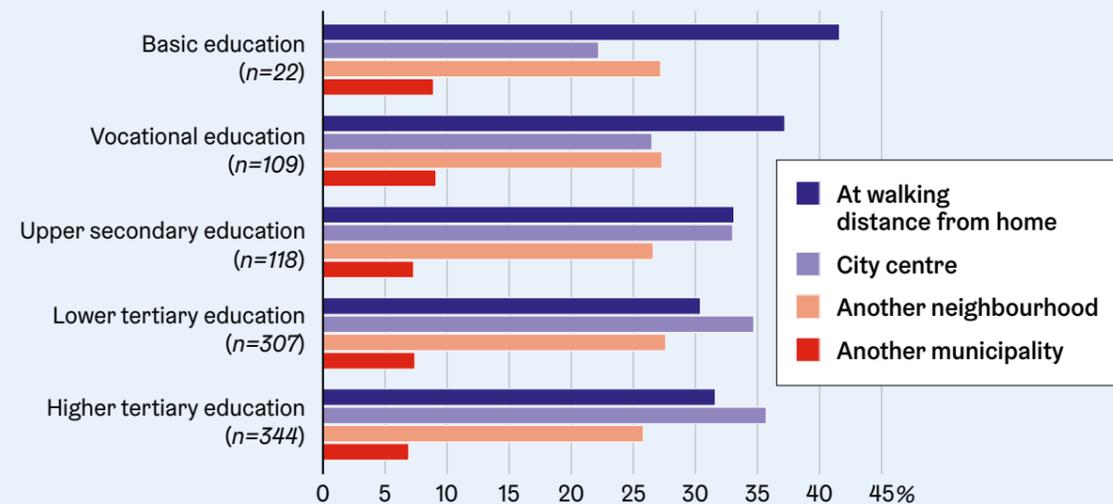


FIGURE 2. Location of everyday and leisure activities, by educational background (% of locations, students not included).

THOSE WITH a lower education level visited different parts of the city less often than others. Respondents on average moved about regularly in three major districts, but those with a vocational secondary education at most did so only in 2.5 major districts. There are no great differences in the research material between low- and high-educated as to which areas they regularly go to – with southern Helsinki as the sole exception. Of those who had a tertiary education, 82 per cent regularly visited southern Helsinki, against only 64 per cent of the low-educated.

THE QUESTIONNAIRE also asked where some of the respondents' routine and leisure activities take place (school, work, groceries and other shopping, meeting friends, visiting libraries, cinemas, museums/theatres and restaurants/cafés, sports and other hobbies). The response options were: at walking distance from home; in the centre of Helsinki; in a different district; in a different municipality; and 'not applicable to me'. For the analysis, the proportion of each location was calculated out of all locations reported by a respondent, and this indicates the extent to which the respondents, for different reasons, moved about outside of their own neighbourhood or in the centre of Helsinki.

EDUCATION CORRELATED statistically significantly with the proportions of activities the respondents reported as taking place either near their homes or in the city centre. For those with a vocational secondary education or no post-compulsory degree, approximately 40 per cent of all activities were located within walking distance from home. For those

with a tertiary education, this proportion was 31 per cent (Figure 2). The difference between high- or low-educated respondents is even greater for activities taking place in the city centre. Among those with a compulsory education only, 22 per cent of all activities take place in the city centre, compared to 35 per cent among those with a tertiary education. Statistically significant differences can be observed between those with a compulsory education or vocational secondary education and those with a general secondary or tertiary education.

Signs of diverging use of public spaces at young age

Is there a link between how public spaces are used at young age and their use in adulthood? In the questionnaire, respondents were asked to pick between alternative statements regarding their teenage years. Five sum variables describing their family background and living environment at that age were then constructed using factor analysis. Two of these variables describe cultural capital: one is to do with their interest towards school work and reading, another one with the childhood family's social activity (outings with parents, visits to museums or theatre, parents helping children with homework). The sum variable for economic capital includes travelling abroad, participation in guided hobbies and family car ownership. A fourth sum variable describes domestic travel and fifth one another about how locally centred the respondents' lives were during childhood (to what extent everyday activities and friends were located close to home).

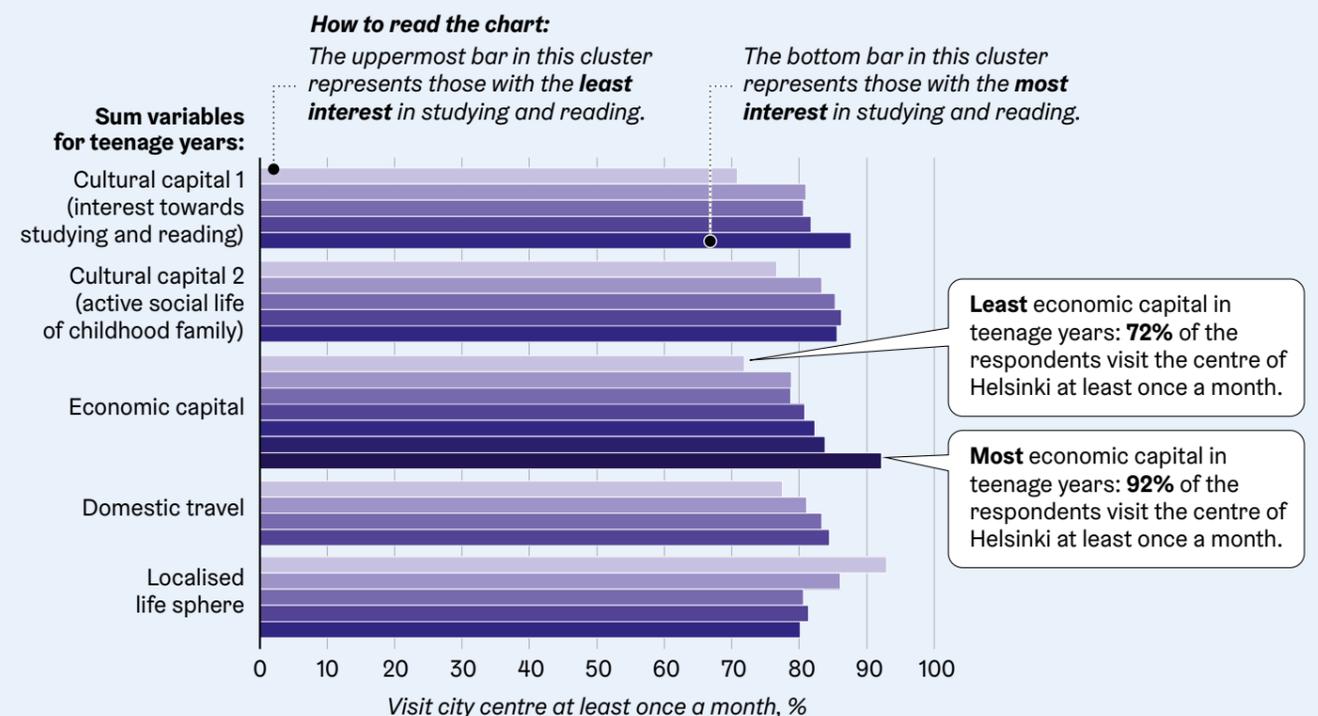
AS MIGHT be expected, education correlated strongly with the variables for cultural and economic capital in youth, which indicates that educational level and social status are to some extent socially inherited. To put it simply, those respondents whose parents encouraged them to read and to take outings – and had economic resources – were on average higher educated in their adulthood than those who had grown up in families with less cultural and economic capital.

THE SUM variables describing childhood are also linked with respondents' use of public space and their spatial mobility. There is a considerable difference in the frequency of visiting the city centre, for example, between those who had the lowest values for the sum variables and those with the highest. (Figure 3). However, the only variables for which this difference is statistically significant are those describing cultural capital and economic capital during childhood. These two also correlated with how often respondents visited key locations, museums and outdoor activity areas around city. The explanatory power of these variables is strongest for under-30-year-olds, but it virtually disappears if the respondents' educational background of respondents is taken into account.

IN THE following, factors affecting the use of public space are examined by way of a mobility index composed of the variables used in this research. The mobility index, the value of which may vary between 0 and 10, consists of the four variables describing spatial mobility in this research: how often the respondent visits Helsinki city centre; how many major districts they regularly move about in; how many key locations they have visited; and what proportion of their activities are not located at walking distance from home.

ALL OF the five sum variables of teenage life described above, such as cultural and economic capital, correlate statistically significantly or very significantly with the mobility index. For those respondents who had lived in Helsinki in their youth, the strongest correlation is in the number of major districts they regularly frequented (correlation coefficient 0.26).

FIGURE 3. Proportions of respondents who have visited central Helsinki at least once a month, values of the sum variables describing respondents' teenage experiences (*statistically significant variable).





REGRESSION ANALYSIS allows us to discover which of the variables best explain the variation in the respondents' use of public space. This analysis confirms our observation that mobility in public space is strongly associated with high education. By contrast, the explanatory power of the variables for cultural and economic capital remains very weak, and the association of these variables with the respondents' education level is highlighted in the analysis. For those respondents who had lived in Helsinki as teenagers, spatial mobility during youth is strongly associated with mobility in adulthood: differences in mobility between those who visited the city centre monthly or less often are significant, as are the differences according to how many major districts they frequently went to as teenagers. For those who had lived in Helsinki as teenagers, the regression model explains over one-quarter of their spatial mobility in the city today. For those who had not lived in Helsinki, spatial mobility in Helsinki during youth cannot be taken into account – in their case, education and cultural and economic capital explain slightly over 10 per cent of the differences in spatial mobility.

A matter of equal opportunities for children

Although the results cannot be considered representative of the entire Helsinki population because of the self-selection sampling method, they clearly suggest that the use of public space has diverged according to educational backgrounds and that these differences are associated to people's spatial mobility in teenage years.

TO SOME extent, southern Helsinki and the city centre appear as the territory of the high-educated.

Apart from the fact that the educational and income levels of those living in southern Helsinki are higher than elsewhere, higher-educated residents also move about in central Helsinki significantly more often than the lower-educated. Since the lower education groups were under-represented in our material – and the more disadvantaged groups were not reached at all through a questionnaire distributed via Facebook neighbourhood groups – it would seem likely that social mobility among many resident groups is perhaps even more strongly confined to their own neighbourhoods than our findings would suggest.

WHILE SPATIAL mobility is affected by many other factors apart from those we describe in this article, these findings confirm that family background and childhood experiences bear a relation to how the public space is used in adulthood; that earlier experiences affect later choices. Since the participants of our study are already adults and they have grown up in a less segregated Helsinki than today's children, it is also quite possible that differences in children's spatial mobility today are greater than before.

THE RESULTS of this study are in line with international findings on how residents' spatial mobility in their own city is associated with their socioeconomic status. With increasing urban segregation, it can also be expected that the use of urban space and the related cultures and norms will be characterised by more salient area-to-area differences (cf. Karvonen & Rahkonen 2002 on for area differences in school resistance). According to a recent Swedish study, the childhood environment is associated with the adulthood living environment regardless of

family background, which means that children – particularly those who grow up in disadvantaged families and neighbourhoods – have especial difficulties in raising their social status (Manley, van Ham & Hedman 2020). Thus, in addition to family background, the childhood environment has an increasing effect on the educational paths of young people in a segregating city.

A VERY locally centred life, where children do not have regular first-hand experiences of other parts of the city and cannot think of the public space as their own, is associated with poorer awareness of the offer of leisure activities and other opportunities. Not only can a lack of regular leisure activities cause a sense of exclusion, but it is also another factor affecting children's and teenagers' use of public space and their spatial mobility, as leisure pursuits may require or encourage regular mobility in other parts of the city. In this context, they can acquire an experience of spatial mobility and information about other places in the city and further afield, also outside of the sphere of leisure activities and hobbies (Tolonen et al. 2018).

MOREOVER, PARTICIPATION in social activities and leisure communities gives children and youth larger social networks compared to those without a hobby or leisure pursuit. Since young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods have less "city experience" and possess less urban capital (idem), segregation in the city may appear, from the perspective of some young people, as a territorial division between social groups – territories where not everybody is welcome – thereby delimiting the place of some individuals in society (cf. Harvey 1989: 214).



THE OBSERVATIONS made in this research sketch out a picture of a socially selective risk of becoming trapped in one's neighbourhood – a worrying scenario, to some extent, especially from the perspective of children and youth. Since teenage mobility in the city seems to be associated to the use of public space as adults – and since lower-educated people move about in the centre of Helsinki and public spaces in general less than the high-educated – the question arises what possible risks may come from the increasing local differentiation of recent decades. Can this process of spatial immobility that is organised around social differentiation and urban segregation jeopardise the availability of equal opportunities for all children? Could it affect the choice of future education and employment options that young people envisage for themselves, or the courage they need for spotting and grabbing opportunities available in other parts of Helsinki or elsewhere in Finland?

THESE OBSERVATIONS urge us to pay attention to the differentiation of children's and young people's experiences of the city – also in schools. By supporting young people in acquiring experiences of key locations in the city and informing them about the availability and accessibility of leisure activities, adults can aim to support the equality of future opportunities for young people. In addition to awareness about locations and opportunities in the city, it is essential that young people can feel at home in these places and activities – that they feel welcome in different parts of the city and find important meanings there. Interesting topics for further

research might be to examine to what extent children and youth are isolated in their own neighbourhoods, in "social vacuums"; or how isolated youth experience the city and view themselves as part of its communities; and how this potential social isolation could be prevented. The question about the use of public space by children and youth is also related to residential segregation and thereby to preventing differentiation of the pupil base between school catchment areas, as all of these are important contexts for the formation of children's social networks and worldviews. ■

Oskar Rönnberg is a PhD Student of Urban Geography at the University of Helsinki. **Venla Bernelius** is Chief Specialist at City of Helsinki Executive Office and Adjunct Professor of Urban Geography at the University of Helsinki. The article is based on Rönnberg's master's thesis, "Differentieras den rumsliga mobiliteten redan i barndomen? En enkätstudie om Helsingforsbornas användning av stadsrummet", completed at the University of Helsinki in spring 2020.

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