

# Physical Sexual Harassment as Experienced by Children at School

In Northern Finland and Northwest Russia

Vappu Sunnari

**PHYSICAL SEXUAL HARASSMENT AS  
EXPERIENCED BY CHILDREN AT SCHOOL  
In Northern Finland and Northwest Russia**

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**Cover design**

Annakaisa Paukkeri

**Poem in the back cover**

Vuokko Isaksson: Sandri, a Little Red Haired Girl (2006)

**Publication series**

Oulun yliopiston kasvatustieteiden tiedekunnan elektronisia julkaisuja 9

Oulun yliopiston kasvatustieteiden tiedekunnan elektronisia julkaisuja 9

ISSN 1455-8025

ISBN 978-951-42-9073-2 Electronic publication

## Abstract

The research focused on physical sexual harassment as a mistreatment that threatens the realisation of full citizenship, safety, dignity and equality of girls and boys at school. There were 1738 children aged 11 to 12 years from **36** northern Finnish and **22** northwest Russian school classes who answered a group of questions concerning their experiences on physical sexual harassment at school or on the way to school. While analysing the data, critical qualitative content analysis, and critical and reflective reading, and contextualisation were used.

On the basis of the children's answers to the question whether they had been groped, and on the basis of the analysis of the case-descriptions the children wrote, it was considered that at least every fifth of the Finnish and every fourth of the Russian girls had experienced physical sexual harassment at school or on the way to school. More than every tenth of the Russian boys and a little less than every twentieth of the Finnish boys had partly corresponding experiences.

Typically groping occurred in hallways, in front of the restrooms, in the gym, on the school-bus and bus stop, or on the road to school or from school. But it also occurred in classrooms. Girls constituted the vast majority of the victims of physical sexual harassment and boys constituted the vast majority of perpetrators. A girl was groped in nine cases out of ten by a male classmate in both the Russian and Finnish data. But, the boys' harassers were not very commonly girls. The harasser of the Finnish boy was more often another boy than a girl. In the Russian data, the perpetrator was in six cases out of ten a girl alone or with somebody else.

In the cases where a girl was perpetrated by a boy classmate, it was often possible to infer messages of heterosexism – the exercise of, or an attempt to exercise masculinist power over girls. Heterosexist messages could also be seen from some of the cases where a boy or a girl had experienced groping by a classmate of the same gender. In boys' mutual relationships and in girls' indeed, the heterosexist norm not to be different in sexual terms was strong in some school classes.

The type of groping that surprised the most was groping perpetrated by an adult towards a pupil; a boy or a girl. This is not to say that sexual violence perpetrated by adults against children is a new issue. What surprised was that it became visible in the context of researching 11 to 12 years old children's experiences of groping in school.

Pupils' texts about what stopped harassment are not promising. Although the children were not asked whether the harassment had stopped and what had stopped it, some children wrote about the matter. Almost one half of them wrote that the harassment was still going on. Some children had successfully managed to stop harassment by using violence as a defence against the harassment, and only one child informed to have stopped harassment through conversion. Furthermore, the pupils told the teacher about the harassment very rarely.

*Keywords:* Physical sexual harassment, School children, Heterosexism, Northwest Russia, Northern Finland

## Abstrakt

Denna undersökning fokuserar på fysiskt sexuellt trakasseri som hindrar förverkligandet av flickors och pojkars fulla medborgarskap, säkerhet, människovärde och jämställdhet i skolan. I undersökningen deltog 1738 skolelever i åldern 11–12 år från 36 skolklasser i norra Finland och 22 skolklasser i nordvästra Ryssland. Eleverna svarade på en mängd frågor som gällde deras erfarenheter om fysiskt sexuellt trakasseri i skolan och på skolvägen. Vid analyseringen av materialet användes metoden kvalitativ innehållsanalys samt kritisk-reflexiv textläsning. Dessutom fördjupades analysen av texternas innehåll genom korsläsning och genom att jämföra enskilda skolelevers texter med alla elevers texter i de egna skolklasserna.

Undersökningen visar att fysiskt sexuellt trakasseri är allmänt till och med i skolorna på Europas nordliga periferiområden. Elevernas svar på frågan om de har blivit tafsade på – och fallbeskrivningar som de har avfattat – visar att en femtedel av de finländska och en fjärdedel av de ryska flickorna som deltagit i undersökningen hade blivit utsatta för fysiskt sexuellt trakasseri i skolan eller på skolvägen. Delvis liknande erfarenheter hade var tionde rysk och var tjugonde finsk pojke som deltog i undersökningen. En mycket klar skillnad mellan de ryska och finska barnens beskrivningar gällande sexuellt trakasseri var att de ryska barnen hade det tydligt svårare att skriva om det trakasseri som de hade blivit utsatta för.

Det var typiskt att tafsandet hade skett i skolans aula, i närheten av sanitetsutrymmena, i gymnastiksalen, i skolbussen och på busshållplatserna eller på skolvägen. Men det hade också förekommit i klassrummen. Flickorna utgjorde en mycket klar majoritet av dem som hade blivit föremål för fysiskt sexuellt trakasseri och pojkarna utgjorde en mycket klar majoritet av antastarna. Både i det ryska och i det finländska materialet hade flickan – i nio fall av tio – blivit tafsad på av en pojke i samma klass. De som antastade pojkar var inte särskilt ofta flickor. Den finländska pojken blev oftare antastad av en pojke än en flicka. I det material som samlats in i Ryssland var antastaren i sex fall av tio en flicka, ensam eller tillsammans med någon annan.

Sådana fall där en flicka blev antastad av en pojkelev karakteriserades ofta av antastarens heterosexistiska försök att utöva maskulin makt över flickor och/eller att stötta macho-maskulin kultur inom en viss grupp pojkar och/eller inom en hel skolklass. Heterosexistiska värderingar tycktes också ingå i några sådana fall där pojken eller flickan hade blivit tafsad på av en klasskamrat av samma kön. I några skolklasser föreföll det att det fanns två faktorer som var starka i både pojkarnas och flickornas inbördes relationer: en heterosexistisk norm som förbjuder olikhet på sexuellt område samt en rädsla att bli tolkad som annorlunda.

Det som överraskade mest i det undersökta materialet var elevernas omnämnanden om erfarenheter där tafsandet kommit från vuxenhåll. Att en vuxen utsätter ett barn för sexuella övergrepp är ingenting nytt. Det överraskande var att stöta på sådana fall i ett material där det är fråga om 11–12-åringars erfarenheter om tafsande i skolan. Sex finländska och sju ryska skolelever berättade att en vuxen hade tafsats på dem i skolan eller på skolvägen. Forskningen bekräftar tidigare forskningsresultat enligt vilka undervisningspersonalens tolerans mot sexuellt trakasseri och ofredande har en mycket stor betydelse för det, hur stort problemet med sexuellt trakasseri och ofredande kommer att bli i en skolklass.

Skolelevernas texter om det vad det var som gjorde slut på trakasseriet var inte lovande. Fast eleverna inte blev tillfrågade om trakasseriet tagit slut och vad som hade gjort slut på det, skrev några barn dock om saken. Nästan hälften av dem skrev att trakasseriet fortfarande pågår. Några elever hade lyckats göra slut på trakasseriet genom att använda våld som försvarsmiddel mot ofredandet. Bara en elev berättade sig ha kunnat göra slut på trakasseriet genom att diskutera med antastaren. För läraren berättade de mycket sällan om det ofredande som de hade blivit utsatta för.

*Nyckelord:* Fysiskt sexuellt trakasseri och ofredande, skolelev, heterosexism, nordvästra Ryssland, norra Finland

## Резюме

Эта работа посвящена исследованию проявлений физического сексуального преследования, определяемое как плохое обращение, которое угрожает реализации полной безопасности, достоинства и равенства девочек и мальчиков в школе. В опросе принимали участие 1738 детей, в возрасте с 11 до 12 лет из 36 классов школ Северной Финляндии и 22 классов школ Северо-запада России. Вопросы касались фактов физического сексуального негативного опыта в школе или по пути в школу. Для обработки данных использовались - качественный контент-анализ, критическое рефлексивное чтение с учётом контекста.

Исследование показывает, что физическое сексуальное преследование довольно обычное явление в школах даже на северных перифериях Европы. На основе детских ответов и описаний случаев выяснилось, что, по крайней мере, каждая пятая финская девочка, и четверть российских школьниц, испытала физическое сексуальное преследование в школе или на пути к школе, которое проявлялось в негативном прикосновении («тискали, лапали, шупали»). Подобный опыт испытали более десятой части российских мальчиков, и немного меньше двадцатой части финских мальчиков. Прослеживается заметное различие между российскими и финскими детьми в описаниями физического сексуального преследования: российским детям было гораздо труднее написать о проблеме.

Как правило, шупание происходило в коридорах, возле туалетов, в раздевалках и на уроках физкультуры, в школьных автобусах и на автобусных остановках, по дороге к школе, но это также происходило и в классных комнатах. Девочки составили огромное большинство жертв физического сексуального преследования, преследователями, в подавляющем большинстве оказались мальчики. В девяти случаях из десяти девочек осаждали мальчики-одноклассники и в российских и в финских школах. Более того, гораздо чаще финские мальчики также становились жертвами другого мальчика. В российских данных, в шести случаях из десяти мальчики становились жертвами девочки, действующей в одиночку, либо с кем-то еще.

Случаи, где девочку обижал одноклассник, можно отнести к проявлениям гетеросексизма, или к попыткам маскулинного доминирования. Проявления гетеросексизма наблюдаются также и в случаях, когда обидчик был того же пола, что и жертва. В некоторых классах сформировалась жесткая модель взаимоотношений, когда одной из причин гетеросексистского поведения стало желание не выделяться из группы, т.е. превратилось в «норму».

В ходе исследования выяснилось, что часть школьников, как девочки, так и мальчики, стали жертвами сексуального преследования со стороны взрослых. Нельзя сказать, что сексуальное насилие, совершаемое взрослыми против детей, является новой проблемой. Поразителен тот факт, что это проявляется и в контексте исследования опыта неприятных прикосновений в школе у 11–12 летних. Шесть финских и семь российских учеников описали свой опыт, где обидчиком был взрослый. Предыдущие исследования показывают, что терпимость к сексуальному преследованию является решающим фактором, влияющим на саму возможность возникновения сексуального преследования, особенно в образовательном контексте.

Письменные мнения учеников о том, как остановить подобное явление, к сожалению, малообещающие. Хотя детей не спрашивали, прекратилось ли преследование и что его остановило, некоторые дети высказались по этому вопросу. Почти одна половина из них написала, что преследование все еще продолжается. Некоторые дети успешно сумели остановить преследование, используя насилие как защиту против преследования. Только один ребенок сумел прекратить преследование через беседу с обидчиком. Кроме того, ученики очень редко сообщали о преследовании преподавателю.

*Ключевые слова:* Физическое сексуальное преследование, Школьники, Гетеросексизм, Северо-запад России, Северная Финляндия.

## Abstrakti

Tutkimuksen fokuksena on tyttöjen ja poikien täyden kansalaisuuden, turvallisuuden, ihmisarvon ja tasa-arvon toteutumista koulussa ehkäisevä fyysinen seksuaalinen ahdistelu. Tutkimukseen osallistui 1738 iältään 11–12-vuotiaita koululaista 36 pohjoissuomalaisesta ja 22 luoteisvenäläisestä koululuokasta. Oppilaat vastasivat joukkoon kysymyksiä, jotka koskivat heidän kokemuksiaan fyysisestä seksuaalisesta häirinnästä koulussa tai koulumatkalla. Aineiston analysoinnissa käytettiin kvalitatiivista sisällönanalyysimenetelmää sekä kriittis-reflektiivistä tekstiluentaa. Lisäksi tekstisisältöjen analysointia syvennettiin ristiin luennalla ja vertailemalla yksittäisten koululaisten tekstejä heidän koululuokkiensa kaikkien muiden oppilaiden teksteihin.

Tutkimus osoittaa, että fyysinen seksuaalinen ahdistelu on yleistä jopa Euroopan pohjoisten reuna-alueiden kouluissa. Oppilaiden vastauksista kysymykseen, onko heitä kypälöity – ja heidän kirjoittamista tapauskuvauksista – kävi ilmi, että vähintäänkin joka viides suomalaisista ja joka neljäs venäläisestä tutkimukseen osallistuneista koulutyöistä oli kokenut fyysistä seksuaalista ahdistelua koulussa tai koulumatkalla. Osittain vastaavanlaisia kokemuksia oli noin joka kymmenennellä tutkimukseen osallistuneella venäläispojalla ja joka kahdennellakymmenennellä suomalaispojalla. Erittäin selvä ero venäläisten ja suomalaisten lasten välillä fyysisen seksuaalisen häirinnän kuvauksissa oli se, että venäläisten lasten oli selkeästi vaikeampi kirjoittaa kokemastaan ahdistelusta.

Tyypillisesti kypälöintiä oli tapahtunut koulun aulassa, saniteettitilojen lähistöllä, voimistelusalissa, koulu-bussissa ja bussipysäkeillä tai koulutiellä. Mutta sitä oli tapahtunut myös luokkahuoneissa. Tytöt muodostivat hyvin selvän enemmistön fyysisen seksuaalisen ahdistelun kohteista ja pojat hyvin selvän enemmistön ahdistelijoista. Sekä venäläisessä, että suomalaisessa aineistossa yhdeksässä tapauksessa kymmenestä tyttöä oli kypälöinyt oman luokan poikaoppilas. Poikien ahdistelijat eivät olleet kovinkaan usein tyttöjä. Suomalaisen pojan ahdistelija oli useammin toinen poika, kuin tyttö. Venäjältä kerätyssä aineistossa ahdistelija oli kuudessa tapauksessa kymmenestä tyttö yksin tai jonkun toisen kanssa.

Tapauksia, joissa tyttö joutui poikaoppilaan ahdistelemaksi, luonnehti monissa tapauksissa ahdistelijan heteroseksistinen yritys käyttää maskuliinista valtaa tyttöihin ja/tai pönkittää macho-maskuliinista kulttuuria tietyn poikajoukon keskuudessa ja/tai koko koululuokassa. Heteroseksistisiä arvoituksia nähti sisältyvän myös joihinkin sellaisiin tapauksiin, joissa poika tai tyttö ilmoitti kokeneensa kypälöintiä samaa sukupuolta olevan luokkakaverin taholta. Joissakin koululuokissa näyttivät heteroseksistinen seksuaalisuuden alueella erilaisuuden kieltävä normi, sekä erilaiseksi tulkituksi tuleminen pelko, olevan vahvoja sekä poikien että tyttöjen keskinäisissä suhteissa.

Yllättävintä tutkimusaineistossa olivat oppilaiden maininnat kokemastaan kypälöinnistä aikuisten taholta. Aikuisen lapsen kohdistama seksuaalinen väkivalta ei sinänsä ole uusi asia. Yllättävää oli kohdata tällaisia tapauksia aineistossa, jossa on kyse 11–12-vuotiaiden lasten kypälöintikokemuksista koulussa. Kuusi suomalaista ja seitsemän venäläistä koululaista kertoi aikuisen kypälöineen heitä koulussa tai koulumatkalla. Tutkimus vahvistaa aikaisempia tutkimustuloksia, joiden mukaan seksuaalisen häirinnän ja ahdistelun sietäminen opetushenkilökunnan taholta on erittäin merkityksellistä sen suhteen, kuinka isoksi seksuaalisen häirinnän ja ahdistelun ongelma koululuokassa muodostuu.

Koululaisten tekstit siitä, mikä lopetti häirinnän, eivät ole lupaavia, vaikka oppilailta ei kysytty, oliko häirintä/ahdistelu loppunut ja mikä sen oli lopettanut, jotkut lapset kirjoittivat asiasta. Melkein puolet heistä kirjoitti, että häirintä jatkui edelleen. Jotkut oppilaista olivat onnistuneet lopettamaan ahdistelut käyttämällä väkivaltaa puolustuskeinona häirintää vastaan. Vain yksi oppilas kertoi saaneensa häirinnän loppumaan keskustelemalla ahdistelijan kanssa. Opettajalle koululaiset kertoivat kokemastaan häirinnästä vain hyvin harvoin.

*Avainsanat:* Fyysinen seksuaalinen ahdistelu ja häirintä, koululainen, heteroseksismi, Luoteis-Venäjä, Pohjois-Suomi

## Acknowledgments

This book is an effort to make visible the vulnerability children experience at school because of being targeted at physical sexual harassment, and because of educators are insensitive towards the harassment. Responsible of the texts written in the book and the author of the book is Vappu Sunnari, but because there was a research network and a research project that supported in the process the book has been written in the WE -form. Thank you very much Tatiana Dyachenko, Alexandra Anissimova, Olga Tillman, Irina Drembach, Olga Ilgunova, Irina Grunicheva, Marina Repina, Tuija Huuki, Anu Tallavaara, Auli Suorsa, Anu Kangas, Sari Nyman, and Niina Kuorikoski.

Thank you Samantha Sutawnee Eidenbach for proof-reading the manuscript and Annakaisa Paukkeri for designing the cover.

I would like to thank our financiers, too: The Academy of Finland, NordForsk, THULE -Institute, and the universities of Oulu and Luleå. Funding from the Academy of Finland was used to construct and to test the questionnaire, to collect the Finnish data and to put the numerical data to the SPSS-programme. Funding from NorFA (later NordForsk) / *Gender and Violence programme* was used for collecting the data in Northwest Russia, for organising collective working periods to put the Russian numerical data to SPSS-programme, for doing the transcriptions of all the textual data, for discussing the textual data, and the categories that were constructed. Lectureship at the University of Oulu, and professorship at the Luleå Technical University made it possible for me to write the report. Funding from THULE-Institute, *Health and Wellbeing -programme* was used for finalising and publishing this research report.

December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008

Vappu Sunnari



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## 1 Introduction

The official curricular objectives of compulsory education include educating capable citizens. This shall be done in a way that promotes equality, human dignity, and safety. All of these tasks are defined, for example, in the UN documents (Sunnari 1994, Sunnari 2000). The ideas are largely accepted in theory, but not so strictly on a practical level – like in schools (e.g. Terry & Hoare 2007, Dunne *et al.* 2006, Leach & Mitchell 2006, Education for All 2003, Yuval-Davis & Werbner 1999). One of the reasons for this might be that people consider that the ideas of a capable citizen, equality, dignity and safety will be realised by accepting them in principle. Principal level agreements are important, but not enough. Policy cannot and does not change anything by itself, as Debby Epstein *et al.* (2003) argue. Structures and practices that maintain inequality, vulnerability and fear do not disappear without actions based on the principles and policies. For example one's socio-economic status (Willis 1977, Willis 2004, Eliasson 2007, Ålund 1999), age (Eder *et al.* 1995, Duncan 1999) and ethnicity (Mac an Ghail 1995, McGuffley & Rich 1999) continue influencing one's position, as do nationality (Collins 1999), geographical location in the nation-state or state-coalition (Yuval-Davis & Werbner 1999), gender (Education for All 2003) and sexual identity (Epstein *et al.* 2003, Bedford 2008).

This research report will be focused on one such issue that hinders children at school from experiencing the realisation of human dignity, equality and safety. The issue is physical sexual harassment. The data has been gathered from northern Finnish and northwest Russian schools as part of a research project and research network. The research project was titled “Gendered power relations and violence in schools and teacher education in the northern Finland”, and it was financially supported by the Academy of Finland. The research network was titled “Gendered violence in schools and teacher education in the Barents Region”, funded by the Nordic “Gender and Violence” research programme.

There were two particular issues that influenced as ground work for starting the project. The first of them was sexual violence targeted especially at women, but also at some men. The problem is acute, although

since the 1990s much has been done to make the problem visible, and to eliminate it (WHO 2005, UNIFEM 1999, Heise 1997: 416–417, Maynard & Winn 1997, Bachman & Saltzman 1995, Khodyreva 1996, Heiskanen & Piispa 1998). Sexual violence among adults, especially in intimate relations, and the difficulties to eliminate it, challenged us to reflect what schools should do to support the development of safety, justice, and equality in pupils' cross gender orientations and relationships. It also challenged us to look at pupils' mutual relationships from the point of view of sexual violence.

The second background reason for starting the project was neo-liberal globalisation that touches all spheres of life (Bauman 1998, Pearson 2000, Evans 2001, Robertson *et al.* 2002, Walkerdine 2003, Sunnari 2005a, Sunnari 2004, Lenz *et al.* 2007). One of the consequences of the neo-liberal globalisation is the international sex business and, in conjunction to it, the trafficking of women has increased. Today's sex business and prostitution as a part of it differs fundamentally from earlier prostitution. The fundamental difference, as Canadian feminist researcher R. Poulin (2003) states, is that it is industrialised, global and, in terms of advertising, very visible. It has international structures, both a global and local division of labour and supply that penetrates the everyday lives of not only adult people but also children and youth.

Sex business that exploits the bodies of women and girls, and the other forms of business that are connected to it, crush people and the value of a human being the most. In regards to human trafficking, it has been estimated that it is even overtaking drug smuggling as one of the world's fastest growing illegal activities (Johnson *et al.* 2008: 2). Northwest Russia is one geographic region from where women and children have been transported to Western Europe, the most northern parts of Nordic countries included (Poulin 2003, Penttinen 2004, 2007, Gurvich *et al.* 2003, Nurmi 2003).

The two issues discussed above challenged us to start researching children's everyday life at school. This book will focus on pupils' experiences of physical sexual harassment as a form of sexual violence. Our definition of violence is broad: we defined violence as any action or

structure that diminishes another human being, and as a brutal means through which people seek control over others (cf. Kappeler 1995: 8, Ramazanoglu 1987). On the basis of its special characteristics, and on the basis of research conducted on the topic area, we presuppose that violence in intimate relations – or at least male violence against woman in intimate relations – manifests itself, to a great extent, as boundary maintenance, control and discipline. By the special characteristics of violence, we refer to three things. The first of these is that “male” violence against women is largely carried out by men who are or have been in an intimate relationship with the victim (Kivivuori 1999, Terry & Hoare 2007). Second, assaults often occur within the home or within contexts connected with homes (Terry & Hoare 2007). Third, male violence against women is to be found in every ideology, class, race, socio-economic and ethnic grouping, although its extent and quality vary culturally and historically (Heise 1997, WHO 2005).

Violence in schools has been a much discussed, and much researched topic during the recent decades. It has focused on the amount and forms of violence; and scholars have also tried to answer the question of why a person is violent. The acquired results inform us that school violence is usual, although it varies in degrees between schools and school classes. The forms of violence are seen to vary according to the gender of the perpetrator. Typical reasons named for violence have been socio-economic, marital – like divorces and misuse of alcohol in the family – and particular individuals’ special aggressiveness. Traditionally, violence has more often been linked to boys than to girls presupposing that aggressiveness is a special component that characterises boys’ fundamental nature and an issue that distinguishes them from girls. (e.g. Smith & Sharp 1995, Björkqvist & Österman 1999, Smith *et al.* 1999.) Through dichotomy based presuppositions, traditional school violence research has included a tendency towards essentialising violence. The ways in which schools produce or maintain – maybe even foster – violent behaviour have hardly been researched at all in these settings. Also the questions on whether issues connected to *doing gender* and *producing* and *reproducing sexual*

*identities* are influential in school violence have been mainly out of the traditional school violence research and discussions.

In the Nordic countries, Peter-Paul Heinemann and Dan Olweus brought the discussion of violence to school research forum. Heinemann used the term *mobbing* while discussing school violence. He defined *mobbing* as a collective group attack by one group of animals on an animal of another species, or on an individual who is in some way deviant from the rest of the group (Heinemann 1973: 9–11).

Dan Olweus continued the discussion by questioning the presupposition that school violence would be typically characterised by a group attack against one individual person. Furthermore he criticised the normal - abnormal division in Heinemann's theory, and wanted to pay a special attention to the type of violence that is not occasional but targeted towards one individual person over a longer period of time repeatedly/systematically and in the context of an imbalance of power. Olweus named the type of school-violence as *bullying*. He first researched bullying among boys in accordance with the presupposition discussed above that aggression was a special characteristic of boys and men. (Olweus 1973.) Later on he included girls and indirect bullying in the research agenda. He defined direct bullying as a relatively open attack against the victim. Indirect bullying allows the perpetrator to stay unidentified, like in the cases of social isolation and intentional exclusion from a group. (Olweus 1999.)

Olweus proposes that *the imbalance of power* – that is a central component in Olweus' conceptualisation of bullying – will be caused by differences in physical size and strength of the children or by their psychological characteristics. In addition, impulsivity and the strong need to dominate others are characteristics that Olweus combines with bullies; whereas uncertainty, difficulties in defending oneself and helplessness are characteristics that he combines with victims. (Olweus 1999: 11.) The origin of dominance is thus, according to Olweus, first and foremost socio-biological and psychological. In such situations of conflict or aggressive interactions between two persons, where the persons are of approximately the same physical or mental strength, Olweus (1999: 16) thinks the

question is not about bullying. Furthermore, all forms of bullying do not represent violence in this conceptualisation: only such aggressive behaviour where the actor or perpetrator uses his or her own body or an object to inflict injury or discomfort upon another individual is violence. (Olweus 1999: 15–16.)

The term bullying turned the discussion and research of school violence towards the individual level. It is, then, this term that is the most used term to refer to school violence in mainstream discussions about school violence around Europe even today (Smith *et al.* 1999, Leach & Mitchell 2006).

In Finland, Kirsti Lagerspetz and her research group started to research bullying in schools in the 1970's. In its initial stages, the group's research focused on boys. (Björkqvist & Österman 1999.) From the point of view of gender, two important additions were made later in line with Olweus' progressing comprehensions on bullying. The first of them was the discussion of female aggression, and in conjunction with this, the division between *direct* and *indirect bullying* was made. Direct bullying was combined with aggressive male behaviour, and indirect bullying with aggressive female behaviour. Indirect bullying was regarded as noxious behaviour, in which the target person is attacked in such a roundabout way that the perpetrator remains unidentified as a violent offender. The division between the supposed female aggression and the male aggression and the hypothesis connected with it also led to the question of whether female aggression was even a worse problem than that of males, because of its "two-facedness".

The second issue Lagerspetz' research group discussed concerning children's involvement in school-violence was the participant roles. Christina Salmivalli (1998) focused on the roles of *the bully*, *the victim*, *the assistant of the bully*, *the defender of the victim*, and *the outsider*. The participant roles were connected with siding with either the bully or the victim. Siding with the bully, assisting or reinforcing him/her was quite typical for boys, while siding with the victim was much more common among girls. While more boys than girls thus took the roles of a bully, assistant and reinforcer, the proportion of victims was the same for both

genders. In addition to this, among both genders, children in similar or complementary participant roles formed peer networks with each other. The victims were very much alone, and only the girls who were the strongest and most independent in the classes tended to defend the bullied victims.

The question of whether one's sexuality was a component in school violence was not included in Salmivalli's research agenda, nor the question whether particular gender relations and presentations of masculinities and femininities were connected with bullying. Furthermore, her research excluded whether the contents of violence were different if the perpetrator was bullying a girl or a boy. The ways in which schools produce and maintain – and maybe even foster – violent behaviour were also outside the topic areas.

To answer the challenges and to fill the gaps discussed above, we thus started a research project at the University of Oulu, Finland, Women's Studies, at the beginning of this decade. The research project as a whole was focused on the constructions of gender identities, power relations, and violence in schools (Huuki 2003, Huuki 2004, Tallavaara 2003, Heikkinen & Huuki 2004, Sunnari *et al.* 2005a, Manninen 2006). Data for the study was gathered in northern Finland. In addition to the research project, a research network was organised at the same time in regards to the issues in northwest Russia. This network made it possible to also collect research data from northwest Russia. The research project included several sub-studies.

One of the sub-studies in the project was entitled "Mutual relations of boys and girls in our class." The data for this sub-study was gathered by means of a questionnaire with almost totally open-ended questions from northern Finland and northwest Russia. There were 656 Finnish children and 1082 Russian children who responded to the questionnaire at school. The children were all from the fifth or sixth grade, and most of them aged 11–12 years old.

The two main questions from the questionnaire dealt with popularity and violence.<sup>1</sup> In addition we separately asked about children's experiences of physical sexual harassment at school. The children's answers to the questions of physical sexual harassment are focused upon in this research report. The research is gender-sensitive, and it includes numerical and qualitative components.

In Chapter 2, we will first deal with characteristics of sexual violence in intimate relationships and continue with a theoretical discussion on sexual violence in these relationships. We chose three theorists, Susanne Kappeler, Morwenna Griffiths and Myra Hird whose theoretical reflections we will deal with. They all share the comprehension that social and cultural characteristics are to be bound together with human agency in theorising violent behaviour. In Chapter 3, the focus is on the concept *sexual harassment*. In this chapter, we also deal with previous research on sexual

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1. The research results indicated that the central topics of the northwest Russian and the north-Finnish schoolchildren did vary while discussing one's popularity in the school class. Appearance was a topic that was shared by both of the response-groups, but for example school work was in this context mentioned considerably more often by the Russian than by the Finnish children. Also matters of behaviour were discussed, but especially in the Finnish data good, constructive behaviour was connected to a girl's popularity essentially more often than to a boy's. For some of the boys, popularity was based on foolhardiness, toughness, or violent behaviour. (Sunnari *et al.* 2005a.) Success in schoolwork was not among the main themes in the children's writings in the Finnish data, which was not surprising because corresponding results have also been revealed elsewhere (E.g. Francis & Skelton 2001, Swain 2005, Meyer 2006).

It would be possible to think that the most popular students were the best liked. But our research did not confirm this, though. According to the Russian data the most popular students at school seemed to be the most successful pupils in school subjects, whereas the most popular students according to the Finnish data were the bodily most visible ones in terms of their clothes, outlook, body-forms, voices, stories, performances.

Children's experiences of violence at school were asked with a group of questions in the questionnaire. The first of the questions was the following: "What do the pupils of your own school class do to each other that the target does not like?" In response to the question, over half of the children wrote about physical or verbal violence or about bullying. Most often violence was included in the relationships of the boys. But more than half of the girls and the boys wrote about boys' physical or verbal violence towards girls. Especially brutal verbal and physical behaviour was very commonly connected with boys. Some girls were discussed to use brutal verbal or physical violence, but especially the Finnish girls and boys quite often mentioned separately that girls did not behave as badly as the boys. One special feature that quite often characterised the violence perpetrated by boys towards girls was that it included a sexuality-component: girls' bodies were violated through a heterosexist means either verbally, visually or physically. Girls as offenders of violence were discussed too, but more rarely.



harassment at school. Chapter 4 concentrates on methodological questions; on the concept *gender*; gender theories in education and the approaches of gender-sensitivity in educational research. The theoretical location of this research is a sub-topic of this chapter as well. In Chapter 5, we will discuss the respondents of this research, research participants, and the methods we used in collecting and analysing the data in this research.

The next four chapters concentrate on the analyses and results of our research. We start with the construction of the categories and go then to the numerical results. In Chapter 8, the focus is on individual level qualitative analyses of children's experiences of physical sexual harassment at school. The research material we use in this chapter consists of the case-descriptions of groping and of the '*Don't want*' -cases written by the children. In the '*Don't want*' -case the child informs that she or he does not want to describe the groping she/he has experienced. We sought answers to the following questions from the case descriptions: What parts of the body had been groped? Where did the groping happen, and in what kind(s) of situation(s)? Was the act a one time occasion or recurring? What were victim's reactions to the perpetration? What were the victim's emotional experiences of being groped? How did the children explain groping and its consequences? Additionally, we sought answers to the question regarding what stopped sexual harassment. In Chapter 8, we additionally have some descriptions on certain school classes based on the analyses of all the questionnaire answers of all the children of these school classes. We did that to contextualise such descriptions of sexual harassment that we considered to be somehow exceptionally special cases.

In Chapter 9, we turn our attention from the individual to the classroom, in general. We chose a Finnish school class for the purpose with the following reasons: the atmosphere in the class seemed to be more cruel than average, a boy in the class reported experiencing groping from a female teacher, the label "homo" was strongly focused on an individual boy in the class, the label "whore" was strongly focused on an individual girl, and four children reported that they were afraid of somebody at school. Through the case-class analyses, we contextualised the case-descriptions in question and build a picture of the social atmospheres of the

class based on all the texts the pupils of the class had written in the questionnaire. In the last chapter we will have the conclusion of the results and we will reflect the results from a pedagogical point of view.

## 2 Sexual violence in intimate relations as boundary maintenance and control over the other

### *Characteristics of sexual violence in intimate relations*

Studies have confirmed that violence affects vast numbers of women around the globe. Women suffer intimate partner violence, marital rape, rape by other men known to them and by strangers, incest, sexual harassment, trafficking for the purposes of forced labour or prostitution, dowry-related violence, honour killing, other forms of femicide, acid attacks, and female genital mutilation. (Johnson *et al.* 2008, Terry & Hoare 2007, WHO 2005, UNIFEM 1999, Heise 1997, Heiskanen & Piispa 1998, Levinson 1989.) In Finland, Markku Heiskanen and Minna Piispa conducted a state level survey in the 1990s focusing on women's experiences on gender and sexual violence. According to the results, 52 percent of Finnish women had been targeted in sexual or gender harassment almost once in their life in adolescence and in adulthood<sup>2</sup>, and 20 percent of them had experienced sexual or gender harassment during the last year. (Heiskanen & Piispa 1998.)

Mary Maynard and Jan Winn (1997) define sexual violence in the following way.

Sexual violence includes any physical, visual or sexual act that is experienced by the woman or girl, at the time or later, as a threat, invasion or assault, that has the effect of hurting her or degrading her and/or takes away her ability to control intimate contact. This definition includes rape, sexual assault, wife-beating, sexual harassment, incest, child sexual abuse and pornography. These acts are overwhelmingly, though not exclusively, male acts of aggression against women and girls. (Maynard & Winn 1997: 179.)

Some researchers prefer to use the term *eroticization of women's oppression* instead of the term *sexual violence* in the aim of making a clear

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2. After the age of 14.

distinction between varied constructive components of one's sexual life and the components which serve opposite tendencies (e.g. Jackson 1987: 74–75, Enzenhofer 1998: 13).

Although progress has been made in tackling violence against women and providing support to victims in many countries since the 1990s, it is difficult to say that violence against women in global sense had decreased, especially because of the rapidly increasing trafficking-based business (Johnson *et al.* 2008). This is not to say that women do not abuse other human beings, or that men do not suffer violence. Men are actually more often victims of violence than women (Heiskanen & Piispa 1998, Kivivuori 1999, Kauffman 1999). However, both qualitative and quantitative research repeatedly indicates that the vast majority of violence experienced by men and women is caused by men. In regards to violence against women, men are mainly responsible. Usually the perpetrator of the woman is – or has been – in an intimate relationship with the victim, and the assault occurs at home<sup>3</sup> (Maynard & Winn 1997, Heise 1997, Bachman & Saltzman 1995, Heiskanen & Piispa 1998, Kivivuori 1999, Johnson *et al.* 2008).

Abused women suffer from health and psychological problems in addition to the physical injuries ranging from bruising to death. They have significantly higher levels of anxiety, depression and somatic complaints than women who have not suffered such abuse. They may often be paralysed by terror and under constant stress from the ever-present threat of an attack. Moreover, research indicates that women who kill their husbands do so more often than not in response to an immediate attack or threat of attack. (Davies 1997.) The abuser himself may suffer the consequences of his behaviour (Ibid.).

Some research results indicate that violence against women increases in intensity where gender relations are being transformed and male privileges are challenged (E.g. Rowlands 1997, Timmerman & Bajema 1999). These results are in line, for example, with the statistics that

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3. In Finland, the majority of women who are killed knew their assailant, and in most cases it is the ex-male partner (Kivivuori 1999). In cases where men are the victims, the offender is most often a man, too, but typically the victim did not know him, or did not know him well.

violence against women had increased in working life in Finland during last decades. The percentage of violence in working life of all violence against women was 13 percent in 1980. In 1998, it had risen to 32 percent. (Koskinen 1998.) Obviously transitions other than gender relations can also have an influence on this escalation. For example, Tatyana Lipovskaya from Russia has estimated that violence against women became more widespread and started to affect a greater number of women during and after the years of political transition in Russia in 1990s (Lipovskaya 1998).

### *Theorising violence in intimate relations*

In public discussions violence against women in intimate relations will sometimes be interpreted to be caused by women being socially inept or provoking. The conventional psychological view of violence portrays violent offenders easily as mentally ill. These kinds of explanations may be useful in understanding a few specific cases, but they do not hold true when more general evidence is taken into account. (Khodyreva 1996, Maynard & Winn 1997, Heise 1997, Heiskanen & Piispa 1998, Johnson *et al.* 2008.) Feminist and other gender sensitive researchers seek explanations for male violence from socio-cultural and political spheres of life: from societal structures, cultural values, symbols and ideologies, and from human identities and agencies (Kappeler 1995, Griffiths 1998, Maynard & Winn 1997, Hird 2002). We share this perspective. Gender and sexual violence are characteristically socio-cultural and political because both the violent reality and the threat of violence act as forms of social control. The social control happens by compelling and constraining the victims to behave or not to behave in certain ways. (Maynard & Winn 1997, Kappeler 1995, Griffiths 1998, Hird 2002.)

Three internationally well-known feminist researchers who have developed the understanding of sexual and gender violence on a theoretical level are Susanne Kappeler, Morwenna Griffiths and Myra Hird. They all emphasize that social and cultural characteristics should be bound together with issues of human agency in theorising violent behaviour.

Susanne Kappeler has worked as a researcher in the University of East Anglia in the UK. For Kappeler, violence is the behaviour of people, human action and decision-making in relation to other people (Kappeler 1995: 2). Kappeler argues that attention in theorising violence must be paid in addition to violent power structures to the actions of individuals in specific situations and to the politics of personal behaviour. Kappeler emphasises that approaches that ignore human agency and decision-making while theorising violence lead to a collective irresponsibility. (Kappeler 1995: 5, 8, 10, 13.)

On the level of agency, Kappeler (1995: 24) combines violence with one of the two types of political attitudes of self. The attitudes are *self-interest* and *responsibility for the whole*. She proposes that these two attitudes are fundamental and mutually exclusive. To be mutually exclusive means, for Kappeler, that both of the attitudes cannot be held simultaneously, although people can carry both of the attitudes. *Self-interest* and *responsibility for the whole* are based on incompatible concepts of people and reality – the self in relation to the ‘whole’. The self-interest -based political attitude considers the self as the subject, as ‘I’ which also can become the plural ‘we’, but for which the world, everything else, becomes ‘it’, the object. (Kappeler 1995: 24.) The attitude that Kappeler calls *the responsibility of us for each other* is not constituted through the entities of self and other but through relation. The basis of this orientation is not in differentiation but how we relate to each other as a whole: a ‘we’ which knows no ‘us and them’. It also presupposes that the self is permanently in relation instead of being first a singular entity that will have to enter into a relationship with others. (Kappeler 1995: 25.)

For Kappeler, violence as a structure of action is a continuum, meaning that violence either exists or does not. A central aspect in preventing violence is, then, to develop non-violent structures for actions and non-violent agencies instead of allowing certain forms of violence and trying to prevent some others. (Kappeler 1995: 8.)

Morwenna Griffiths (1998), a professor in educational research at Nottingham Trent University in the UK, has researched the agency through the concepts of *self* and *self-determination* while constructing her

conceptualisation of violence. As a researcher in philosophy, she argues that the self-conceptions in the traditions of Western philosophy are inadequate. The reason is that the philosophers ground their conceptualisations of the self to a limited, rational being that acts on its beliefs and desires. In addition, philosophers have paid attention only to a particular set of emotions in their self conceptions. Griffiths writes that the emotions the Western philosophers have paid a special attention are cruelty, humiliation and domination. (Griffiths 1998: 218.)

Griffiths argues that the postulation of cruelty is needed in the Western conceptions of self because the self-concepts are constituted by beliefs and desires constructed by autonomous human beings. Griffiths uses Rorty and Hegel, two particularly influential Western mainstream philosophers, as examples in illustrating the problem. In both Hegel's and Rorty's accounts, cruel domination is central to the processes of self-determination. Hegel argues that even a period of slavery might be a necessary moment in the education of human beings. That would be needed because the emergence of self-consciousness arises from a particular struggle. In that struggle, the self resolves the difficulty that the emergence of self both requires another consciousness in which its own being will be acknowledged or recognized, and it also requires the possibility to negate the other to show that it is not fettered to any determinate existence. An outcome that allows both parties to survive and that leaves each with recognition, leaves one in the state of subjection to the other: one has the self-consciousness of the master, the other of the slave. The postulation results in two double binds for women, Griffiths continues. The first is that they are asked to choose between self-creation and the pursuit of justice because self-determination implies a tendency towards cruelty and steers away from justice. Secondly, women are asked to behave like stereotypical men if they want to achieve self-creation. (Griffiths 1998: 221–222.)

In her conception of the self, Griffiths (1998: 218, 224) places *human relationships* at the centre through (1) the personal relations of love, antipathy, acceptance, and rejection; and through (2) agency. She thus gives the possibility for domination, humiliation and cruelty in her

conception of the self, but also for care, sympathy and affiliation, which are needed for the relations of love and belonging.

Professor Myra Hird from Queen's University at Belfast, Northern Ireland, goes further in the social-constructivist orientation while seeking explanations for human behaviour like violence and agency. She argues that human beings, as bodily entities, are configured through *social, political* and *cultural discourses* and *practices* (Hird 2002: 3). Individuals 'practice' gender through a large number of mechanisms throughout their lifetime. As for the mechanisms, Hird mentions comportment, *artefacts*, *spaces* and *objects*. *Comportments* provide knowledge on, for example, how to walk, how to sit down, and how to bend over. *Gender artefacts* can include makeup, soccer uniforms, and high heels. In different *spaces*, like in bedrooms, doctor's waiting rooms, toilets, restaurants, etc., people practice gender through activities, styles etc. that they consider to be available for them. And with corresponding reasons they learn to use certain objects and avoid others. (Hird 2002: 22.)

Furthermore, in Western cultures, human identities will be constructed through the politics of *binary oppositions*, argues Hird. The term *binary oppositions* represent a kind of an extension to the self-discussions of Kappeler and Griffiths. In the cultures of binary-oppositions, meanings will be constructed through oppositions. For example, the female is considered to be everything that is absent from the male and vice versa, as Hird (2002: 3) illustrates the issue. Binary opposition – based conceptualisations construct and maintain marginalisation and other types of oppression. The reason for this is that once we begin to think of certain groups of individuals as our opposites, as strangers, we lay the foundational grid necessary for the justification of violence. As a relevant continuation to this argument, Hird proposes that violence represents a breakdown in the orders of gender and interpersonal relationships where interpersonal violence is configured and inscribed within a set of discourses, particularly those concerned with gender, identity and relationships – and with gendered identity. (Hird 2002: 5, 85, 119.)

Hird continues her argument by pointing out that masculinity, in particular, has been historically associated with the maintenance of identity



stasis through the use of violent action. Especially hegemonic heterosexual masculinities have been constructed and crucially defined in terms of a historical subordination of women. This subordination has included an obligatory service from women: sexual, practical – including for example cooking, shopping, and cleaning – maternal, emotional, financial and/or subservient. However, to say that masculinities are positioned above femininities is not to say that all men have power over women, emphasises Hird. Rather it is to say that the construction of masculinity is predicated on assumed superiority of men over women. (Hird 2002: 119.)

Hird has explored the discourses which create and maintain gender differences in childhood. She also has explored how children learn to identify gender as a major symbolic marker, which is used to differentiate individuals and order the social environment. She argues that children are required to devote a great deal of time and energy to figuring out what the differences are between the gender she/he has been assigned and the ‘opposite’ gender. Children also learn to accent differences between genders at the same time as they minimize differences inside genders. In these processes, children are taught – and learn – to perform the particular gender roles they have been assigned, proposes Hird. Therefore, if aggressiveness is a key marker of masculinity, male children, in particular, learn to use aggression and violence to signify their gender. (Hird 2002: 10, 28.)

Violent behaviour in interpersonal relationships is, thus according to Hird (2002: 85, 121), about gendered identity. But it is also about the investment in identity, and it can represent a breakdown in the orders of gender and the relationships. When individuals act violently, they often ‘justify’ their actions in terms of a reaction to an unfulfilled need. “My wife didn't have my dinner ready on time so I hit her” is the example that Hird (2002: 64) uses here. This man's violence is based on a particular conceptualisation of individuals, relationships and social interaction. The man does not want his wife to make his dinner on time because he is forcing her to; she is to make his dinner willingly. In getting his dinner served on time, what this man achieves is the capturing of his wife's will, Hird (2002: 64) argues.

### **3 The term sexual harassment in scientific discussions and as the focus of this research**

#### *The term sexual harassment*

Sexual harassment is something that makes you feel uncomfortable about who you are because of the sex you are. (Larkin 1994)

A young woman gave the above definition of sexual harassment to June Larkin while she conducted research focused on young British women's experiences of sexual harassment. The definition points out three features that are prevalent in the most individual level conceptualisations of sexual harassment: (1) the act creates at least an embarrassed, uncomfortable feeling in a person who has been harassed, (2) the experience of uneasiness is extensive because the act often touches, at the same time, various dimensions of one's existence – like the body, identity, social relations, the right of self-regulation, (3) one's gender and sexuality will be used as a special means in producing the experience of unpleasantness. The definition does not explicitly point out two other pertinent features existing on the individual level of sexual harassment; namely the harasser's carelessness of the other and his/her violent use of power, and culturally maintained images of sexuality and gender.

In recent research literature, the term sexual harassment is usually defined on an individual level. It is used to refer to one-sided, unwanted and unwelcome behaviour where sexuality and/or varied cultural constructions of sexuality are used as a means to oppress and to produce or maintain vulnerability among other individual persons or groups (Sandler & Shoop 1997, Timmerman & Bajema 1999, Thomas & Kitzinger 1997). But it also has been asked: (1) What really is the essence of sexual harassment? (2) Is sexuality obligatorily a component in sexual harassment? (3) Is the question in sexual harassment properly about a sexual act or about the misuse of power? Or what it is really about? (4) What is the special nature that distinguishes sexual harassment from other forms of mistreatment?

In the 1970s, when the term *sexual harassment* was introduced, it was first discussed in the context of working- and study-lives (Baker 2004). The type of sexual harassment that was conceptualised first was named *quid pro quo harassment*. A little later the term *hostile environment harassment* was introduced. The difference between these two types of harassment is in the aims of the acts. In *quid pro quo harassment*, sex is provided in exchange for things such as employment or educational benefit – like job promotion or good grades – or the avoidance of some detriment. It is supposed that the harasser uses a position of institutional power or authority to secure sexual access of some sort to a subordinate. *Hostile environment harassment* means that sexual harassment will be used to construct and/or maintain an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment generally for a whole group of people, such as women, young women, some ethnic group of women or some groups of men. (Crouch 2001, Thomas & Kitzinger 1997.)

Lin Farley from Australia and Catherine MacKinnon from the US were among the first feminists to name the phenomenon and theorise it. They did it in the context of working life. Lin Farley considered sexual harassment to be male behaviour that asserts women's sexual role over their function as workers. She writes:

It can be any or all of the following: staring at, commenting upon, or touching a woman's body; request for acquiescence in sexual behaviour; repeated nonreciprocated propositions for dates; demands for sexual intercourse; and rape. These forms of male behaviour frequently rely on superior male status in the culture, sheer numbers, or the threat of higher rank at work to exact compliance or levy penalties for refusal. (Farley 1978: 14–15.)

Farley puts sexual harassment into the frame of patriarchy proposing that through sexual harassment, male employers use organisational patriarchal power *to coerce* female employers. (Ibid.)

Catharine MacKinnon added *discrimination* into the picture. In addition to coercion she emphasised that the issue is also about discrimination in sexual harassment. According to her, sexual harassment, most broadly defined, refers to the unwanted imposition of sexual requirements in the

context of a relationship of unequal power that is derived from one social sphere to lever benefits or imposes deprivation in another social sphere. McKinnon argued that sexual harassment is discrimination against women for the simple fact that they are women. And to focus more clearly, she proposed that it is the social meaning of female sexuality covered by culturally and historically maintained oppressive assumptions and norms that make the discrimination possible. The norms and assumptions are reproduced effectively through socialisation processes by both men and women. (McKinnon 1979: 1–2.)

One of the central means of discrimination is what researchers call *control over*. Carrie Herbert (1989) divides the *control over* practices into *female-controlling-practices* and *societal-controlling-practices*. In her book, “*Talking of Silence. The Sexual harassment of Schoolgirls*”, Herbert (1989: 147) suggests that sexual harassment as a female-controlling practice serves to keep women in a particular position, *vis-à-vis* men especially through two mechanisms that are the *potential* for being violated sexually, and the *experience* of being sexually violated. Herbert names three issues associated with the potential for being violated sexually that makes just the threat of sexual violence a controlling factor in and of itself: (1) the fear of being violated sexually, (2) the beliefs about women’s vulnerability, (3) the belief that women are complicit in their attack. Furthermore, Herbert (1989: 155) thinks that societal-controlling mechanisms hide the female-controlling practice of sexual violence and that *silence* and *suppression* are fundamental phenomena that make it possible for sexual harassment to continue although the awareness of its existence has increased.

Herbert discussed sexual harassment as a male practice against women as did Catharine MacKinnon and Lin Farley. Jan Crosthwaite and Graham Priest (2001: 62) from the US continue with the same line. They define sexual harassment as any form of sexual behaviour by members of a dominant gender group towards members of a subordinate gender group, where a typical effect is to cause members of the subordinate group to experience their powerlessness as a member of that group. And because it is men who are the dominant gender group, only men can carry out the act

of sexual harassment. Crosthwaite and Priest agree, for example, that male employees may feel powerless when they are abruptly fired by their female employers or be annoyed or embarrassed at a female employer's attempt to coerce them into sex. But free men who live in a patriarchal society will not be reminded of their own powerlessness as men by such actions and so will not be truly harassed by them. (Crosthwaite & Priest 2001: 66.) Jan Crosthwaite and Graham Priest thus position sexual harassment in the realms of gender power of a group, and specifically, the procedures that men use (collectively) for disempowering women. They propose that *disempowering women* shows the specific characteristics of the use of sexual harassment.

Furthermore, Crosthwaite and Priest emphasise that the significant point in classifying behaviour as sexual harassment is not the subjective intentions of the harasser, but its objective effect on the harassed:

Notice that even though the harasser typically intends to have some effect to the harassee, this needs not be, and usually is not, that of making her feel powerless. The feeling of powerlessness comes from the recognition that men have, and feel they have, the power to publicly express uninvited sexual appraisals of women. (Crosthwaite & Priest 2001: 72.)

Being subject to sexual harassment makes women aware of their less powerful position in society in general, and in sexual interaction with men particularly, but also in various other contexts, such as the workplace. Women are aware that they are subject to sexual harassment as women in a way in which men are not. The reason for this is that in societies where males are the dominant gender, women cannot commit sexual harassment, nor can men be victims because a masculine sexual role casts one as dominant, and a feminine sexual role casts one as subordinate. (Crosthwaite & Priest 2001: 67–68.) Crosthwaite and Priest think that an advantage of their definition of sexual harassment is that it shifts the focus on sexual harassment from individual wrongdoing or unacceptable sexual interaction to the social patterns within which individual actions occur (Crosthwaite & Priest 2001: 68).

Several studies conducted on sexual harassment confirm that actions that are conceptualised as sexual harassment are mainly male behaviour against women although not totally (e.g. Timmerman & Bajema 1999, Duncan 1999, Renold 2000, Dunne 2000). Crosthwaite and Priest are aware of this phenomenon. They write:

It might still be asked why the same behaviour should count as sexual harassment when done by one sex but not the other? What lurks behind this question is a simple empiricist assumption to the effect that phenomena must be defined in terms of their empirical manifestations. (Crosthwaite & Priest 2001: 68.)

Larry May and John Hughes (1992) from the US have a different solution to the question on whether men can experience sexual harassment. In line with Catherine MacKinnon and others, they consider that sexual harassment causes two types of harm, discrimination and coercion. Sexual harassment is coercive because it worsens the objective condition that, for example, the sexually harassed employee finds herself in. Sexual harassment is discriminatory because it causes the victim to no longer be viewed in the same terms as those who have not been harassed. And when the question is about women, the discrimination is always social – meaning the discrimination of women more generally – in addition to being individual. But when the question is about men, the social discrimination of men as a group does not occur.

In regards to the question of whether sexuality is always a component in sexual harassment, researchers have varying answers. Typically the answers include new conceptualisations, especially recently. Lynn Fitzgerald (1996) uses the term *sexual harassment* and *gender harassment*. She uses the term sexual harassment in cases where the essence of harassment lies in the areas of sexuality and sex. Gender harassment she defines as being such verbal conduct which includes stereotypical and discriminatory attitudes like epithets, slurs, taunts, display or distribution of obscene materials; or gender-based hazing and threatening, intimidating and hostile acts. (Fitzgerald 1996: 51.)

Carrie Herbert (1989) and Debbie Epstein (1996, 1997) have made a distinction between *sexual* and *sexist* harassment. Epstein (1996) writes:

Definitions of 'sexual harassment' in policy documents often refer to a range of activities that extend well beyond the obviously 'sexual'. Despite these wide-ranging definitions of what constitutes 'sexual harassment' this term is usually used in more limited ways that appeal to certain common sense notions of what it is to be 'sexual'. This limiting of the term may indeed, be a key factor that hinders women from taking formed action against their harassers. (Epstein 1996: 203.)

Like Fitzgerald, Epstein suggests that the term sexual harassment should be reserved to harassment explicitly sexual in form while sexist harassment should be used to refer to other harassment and discrimination based on sex and sexual orientation, and maintained by the hetero-normative culture (Epstein 1996: 203). In terms of hetero/sexist harassment, Epstein argues that there is not any univocal form of it, but rather the forms of harassment experienced shape and are shaped by the particular social locations of those who are harassed (Epstein 1996: 209).

One of the central components in the definitions of sexual harassment is that it is characterised by the misuse of power. It has been argued that when the question is about sexual harassment, the question always is also about an imbalance of power. Focusing on power has brought forth a discussion about whether the harasser always has power over the harassed. For example, Linda LeMoncheck (2001: 266–267) argues that much of men's sexual harassment of female peers is motivated not by women having less power than the men and being vulnerable, but by their apparent power to threaten men by their presence, as intellectual or workplace competitors. Kathleen M. Rospenda and her co-researchers (1998) have introduced the term *contra power sexual harassment* to define sexual harassment perpetrated by a person of a lower position towards a person of a higher position in order to exercise a counter power.

The forms of sexual harassment are usually divided into three different types: (1) verbal, for example remarks about figure/looks, sexual and sexist jokes, verbal sexual advances; (2) non-verbal and/or visual like staring at someone and whistling; and (3) physical, including acts from unsolicited physical contact to assaults. (Eyre 2000, Thomas & Kitzinger 1997, Larkin 1994, Sandler & Shoop 1997, Vangen & Eder 1998.) The forms of harassment that do not involve physical assault are often trivialised. A

comment like 'It was just a joke' is typical for such normalization, and a victim that is not silent about his/her experience with sexual harassment is often labelled. (Lott & Reilly 1996, Cairns 1997, Bacchi 1998, Sunnari *et al.* 2002b, Heikkinen 2002.)

On a personal level, sexual harassment can reinforce beliefs about personal vulnerability and contribute to self-doubt, anxiety, bodily dissatisfaction, and other mental and/or physical injury (Larkin & Rice 2006, Sunnari *et al.* 2002b, DeBruin 1998, Cairns 1997, Sandler & Shoop 1997, Varsa 1996, Fitzgerald 1996, Lott & Reilly 1996). Concerning daily schedules, often the harassed are forced to make special arrangements including the use of space and selection of routes (Korhonen & Kuusi 2003, Mankkinen 1995, Brant & Too 1994). On the organizational level, the presence of sexual harassment can negatively influence entire groups of people to become members of the sexist community; and because of that, it can cause marginalization and exclusion (Heikkinen 2002, Husu 2001, Varsa 1996, Mankkinen 1995). It also maintains and reinforces stereotypes of women as sexual objects and influences the morale climate. (Timmerman & Bajema 1999, Sandler & Shoop 1997, Herbert 1997, Cairns 1997, Brant & Too 1994.)

Sexual harassment remains, in many ways, invisible; although as LeMoncheck and Sterba (2001) argue, allegations of sexual harassment have become more public, more widespread, and more controversial than ever before as we have entered the twenty-first century. The main difficulties involved with the invisibility of sexual harassment are connected to cultural and political issues. Forms of harassment that do not involve physical assault are often minimised, trivialised and normalised in the eyes of the public (Sunnari *et al.* 2002b, Eyre 2000, Kelly 1987). Victims of harassment are often labelled as over-sensitive, trouble-makers or lacking sense of humour, labels that can be stigmatising and long lasting and which can influence the way the victims keep silent concerning their harassing experiences. (Aaltonen & Sunnari 2001.) Additionally, reflections of experienced harassment and coercion often include embarrassment and doubt as to whether the harasser misunderstood the



whole situation and the behaviour of the harassed (Eyre 2000, Vangen & Eder 1998, Lee 1998).

### *Previous research on sexual harassment in school*

Several ethnographic and other types of recent field studies performed in Great-Britain (Duncan 1999, McGuffey & Rich 1999, Renold 2000) and other countries (e.g. Eder *et al.* 1995, Mandel & Shakeshaft 2000) indicate that schools are places of gender-specific positioning and identification of people, and for the production and reproduction of sexual and gendered identities, divisions and hierarchies. These processes often include heterosexism and violence in the form of sexual harassment, as for example the studies of Neil Duncan (1999), Laurie Mandel and Carol Shakeshaft (2000) and Emma Renold (2000) indicate.

Laurie Mandel and Carol Shakeshaft studied middle school cultures in Long Island, USA. Their study drew on data from a total of 200 interviews and observations from 75 field visits with seventh-, eight-, and ninth-grade adolescents in two schools. The study indicated that the relationships between boys and girls were at best disrespectful and at worst abusive, and that they included e.g. physical and verbal sexual harassment and homophobic attitudes. The relationships between boys and girls were also more generally sexually intensive. For the most part, the harassment on average was verbal with sexual overtones, and widespread and therefore accepted as normal. The boys defined and demonstrated their masculinity through using abusive or humiliating language towards girls including words such as bitch, slut, and whore, as well as through using homophobic language towards other boys including words such as faggot and homo. Girls, on the other hand, both exploited and played down their female characteristics to attract boys' attention. (Mandel & Shakeshaft 2000.)

Emma Renold came to similar conclusions when researching the culture of primary schools in a small semi-rural town in Great Britain. Renold focused her research especially on the question of whether sexuality is part of the everyday experiences and identity of primary school children. Drawing on data derived from an ethnographic exploration into

children's gender and sexual identities during their final year of primary school, Renold argues, in line with Mandel and Shakeshaft, that the dominant notions of heterosexuality underscored much of the children's identity work and peer relationships. Renold used the term *heterosexualisation of female bodies* and found out that it included a demand for attractiveness with the purpose of being heterosexually desirable or having a heterosexual relationship. Misogynist and homophobic discourses and heterosexual fantasies were tools used in heterosexual male identification. Boys' behaviour in particular consisted of misogynist behaviour and a sexual objectification of women and girls. (Renold 2000.)

Shawn McGuffey and Lindsay Rich (1999) studied parallel phenomena among younger children in Great Britain. They used an ethnographic method and studied how children from 5 to 12 years of age negotiated gender boundaries in play. The research indicated that the boys organised themselves in a definite hierarchical structure in which the high-status boys decided what was acceptable and valued and what was not. The hegemonic model of masculinity was characterised by emotional detachment, competitiveness and the ability to draw attention to oneself. It also included sexual objectification of women and girls, where masculinity was considered different and better than femininity.

In Finland there has been relatively little research on sexual harassment in schools, and the research data collected has been based mainly on recounted memories (e.g. Saarikoski 2001, Korhonen & Kuusi 2003, Lehtonen 2003, Aaltonen 2006). Helena Saarikoski (2001) studied "whore" labelling through narratives written by adolescent girls. There were 51 respondents, and 30 of them had personally experienced this type of labelling. Only a few of the respondents mentioned harassment that they had experienced in schools. Päivi Korhonen and Meri Kuusi (2003) have also studied young people's experiences of sexual harassment through narratives. The informants were adults when they wrote the narratives, but they wrote about experiences that had happened to them at school. The physical harassment the informants had experienced included groping

various parts of the body: chest, backside, legs, and between their legs. It also included verbal remarks about their appearance and labelling.

In addition to narratives, some survey type data has been gathered (Honkatukia 2000) and sexual harassment has been encountered in some school ethnographies that were not properly focused on the topic (Tolonen 2001, Gordon *et al.* 2000). Päivi Honkatukia (2000) surveyed adolescent girls' experiences of sexual harassment without concentrating on schools. The data for the survey was collected throughout the Finland. The survey indicates that sexual harassment towards adolescent girls is common, but most often the places of harassment the informants mentioned were not at school but rather other public places such as bars or streets. In two percent of the cases in which the place was named, the place was at a school. Some informants, however, had mentioned that sexual harassment at school had been common. Additionally Honkatukia's results indicate that sexual harassment against adolescent girls was more common in northern Finland than it was in other parts of the country.

## 4 Gender as a concept and in educational research

In this chapter, we will discuss the concept *gender*, *gender theories in education* and the approaches of *gender-sensitivity in educational research*. The discussion will be historically based because of methodological reasons: to understand the essence of a recent phenomenon, we should become familiar with it in its emergence (Ilyenkov 1977, Vygotsky 1987, Wertsch 1991).

### *The travelling concept of gender*

The history of gender-sensitivity in educational research is relatively short, dating back to the 1970s. However, the history of gender segregations in education might be as long as the existence of institutional education at least in all of the Western countries (Sunnari 1997, Landes 1988, Hammersley 2001). In Finland, upper secondary education started in the 17<sup>th</sup> century for boys of the upper classes but not before the late 19<sup>th</sup> century for girls. Moreover, when both genders received the right to education, girls and boys were educated separately for a long time, and even when they were not, differentiation because of gender was used formally and informally in schools for both curricular and disciplinary purposes. The differentiation was closely related to the idea that there are two genders, male and female. Furthermore, the two genders were viewed to possess different inherent characteristics, psychologically, religiously, and/or on the basis of other reasons. Thus, a contrasting education was devised to prepare them for very separate futures. (Purvis 1985, Sunnari 1997, Hammersley 2001.)

It was Kate Millett that offered a challenge for other type of explanations of gender differences by introducing the term *sexual politics* in 1969. The term *sexual politics* confronted the comprehension that gender differences were natural or biological or a part of the God-given order of things. Instead the idea behind sexual politics stressed that gender

differences were results of activities and relations that involve domination and subordination.

The proper term *gender* was introduced to social sciences in the 1970s. Ann Oakley introduced the term in 1972 in her book “*Sex, gender, and society*”. *Gender* from then on referred to the social organisation of the relationship between the genders, and to the fundamentally social imaginaries based on gender (Oakley 1972). Later on, there have been debates, for example, as to whether the term *gender* properly should refer to an individual, to interpersonal relations, to institutional matters or to all of them (e.g. Scott 1986, Scott 1999, Scott 2004, Hirdman 1990, Hirdman 2004, Hirdman 2007, Lorber 1999). The debate continued by questioning whether it really is possible and meaningful to make the division between what would be fundamentally material and social in human embodiment (e.g. Hird 2002, Butler 1990, Butler 1993), and whether gender was (e.g. Scott 1986, Scott 1996, Scott 2004, Hirdman 1990, Hirdman 2004) or was not obligatorily (e.g. Carlsson Wetterberg 2004) a primary vehicle while positioning people in social relationships.

In the Nordic countries, Yvonne Hirdman is considered to be the pioneer in working with the concept *gender*, starting her work in the 1980s (Hirdman 1990). In line with her previous conceptualisations, Hirdman writes in 2007: “Att göra genus, brukar jag säga, är att göra skillnad där skillnad inte finns<sup>4</sup>” (Hirdman 2007: 13). She thinks that gender, as a socially and culturally constructed system and as a structure, orders genders and includes two components that she calls logics. One of the logics is the maintenance of dichotomy that divides and keeps matters that will be kept as feminine and what will be kept as masculine separate. The logic is present in physical and psychological orders everywhere by structuring activities, places, and identities. The second of the logics is the hierarchy that will be rooted from the presupposition that the man is the norm. (Hirdman 1990, Hirdman 2004: 214, 217.) Hirdman believes that the ways to maintain the dichotomy differ culturally and historically, and that the expansion in differentiation in the society heightens the complexity of

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4. “I use to say that to do gender is to do a difference, where it does not exist.” Tapanani on sanoa, että sukupuolen tekemisellä tarkoitetaan eron tekemistä sinne, missä sitä ei ole.”

differentiation based on gender as well. In addition to cultural and historical matters, she focuses on individual and institutional matters and on interaction while conceptualising gender. (Hirdman 2007: 13.)

Joan Scott's definition of gender corresponds greatly with Hirdman's definition, but it is internationally more known. For Scott, who is from the US, the use of the term *gender*, however, refers more to structural and ideological issues involving relations between the genders. Like Hirdman, Scott's definition of gender also has two parts. The first part rests on the proposition that gender is a *constitutive* element of social relationships based on the perceived differences between the genders.<sup>5</sup> The second proposition – integral to the first one – is that gender is a *primary way of signifying power relationships*, or a primary field within which or by means of which power is articulated (Scott 1996: 156, 167–169).

Since the 1980s, the discussion among gender-sensitive researchers has increased about that many other issues – like ethnicity, social-economic matters, and geographical location can influence one's position in addition to gender. Furthermore, discussion has arisen about the role of varied constructions of sexuality in positioning people, especially in *othering* women and girls, and more generally those who do not fit – or do not want to fit – into the mainstream models of being a “real” man and woman (e.g. Epstein *et al.* 2003, Jackson 1987, Braidotti 2000).

Some researchers argue that sexuality has even come to occupy such a central position in positioning people and in people's identity-work in contemporary Western societies that the concept of sexuality should replace the gender-concept as a central analytical mean in gender-sensitive studies (e.g. Braidotti 2000). But the way to understand *sexuality* is, too, culture- and history-dependent. Traditionally sexuality has been discussed as if it were a case of ‘just doing what comes naturally’. This type of thinking seems to be common in every day, both in the past and present. Feminist approaches challenge the naturalisation of sexuality, stressing its social boundaries. This is not necessarily to say that biology has no influence on sexuality, however the body and its anatomical structure and physiology do not directly determine what people do or the meaning it may

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5. These issues may be, but are not directly, determined by sexuality, says Scott (1996: 156).

have. The idea that sexuality were socially constructed is based on the presupposition that, for example, sexual feelings and activities, the ways in which people think about sexuality and sexual identities are bound to social and historical constructions on the issue. To illustrate the approach, Pat Caplan, a feminist researcher of sexuality, argues that although emotions are emotions of individuals, they incorporate the rules, definitions, symbols and meanings of the worlds in which they are constructed (Caplan 1987: 25, also Lancaster & Leonardo 1997, Richardson 1997, Ross & Rapp 1997, Holland *et al.* 1998, Jackson 1999). Furthermore, power and domination are seen to characterise the images and activities around sexuality; and for many feminists sexuality is at the heart of male domination (Richardson 1997: 152, Maynard & Winn 1997).

The types of discussions described above have challenged researchers to construct new concepts, like *heterogender* and *heterosexism*. The term *heterogender* represents an attempt to overcome the problems between the concepts of sexuality and gender. The term informs us about the close connection between the constructions of sexuality and gender. Chrys Ingraham (1997) who uses the term, points out that the use of the term *gender* has, in practice, even renaturalised and depoliticised sexuality. By reframing *gender* as *heterogender*, the relations between heterosexuality and gender will be kept visible. Furthermore, Ingraham wanted to point out that it is wrong to equate heterosexuality with the natural, and gender with the cultural because both are socially constructed, open to other configurations and open to change. (Ingraham 1997: 276.)

Rosi Braidotti (1994, 1998, 2000) considers the position of sexuality even more central in the formation of female and male identity and gender-based divisions and hierarchies than Chrys Ingraham does – arguing that it is not meaningful to use the term *gender* at all: Braidotti writes:

I want to keep clearly in view the enfolded sexed and contradictory nature of the human subject, where fantasies, desires and the pursuit of pleasure play as important and constructive a role as rational judgement and standard political action (Braidotti 2000: VI).

Like Ingraham, Braidotti thinks that sexual difference is important in the formation of female and male identities and divisions, but emphasises that sexuality is even more prioritised. Furthermore, she places a new kind of emphasis on the idea that subjects are embodied, aiming at to the refusal of reducing the body to either raw nature or to a mere social construction. Braidotti wants to situate human beings within the interaction between nature and culture and, at the same time, in a “zone of high turbulence of power.” (Braidotti 2000: VII.)

The concepts of *femininities* and *masculinities* are widely used while researching the formation of female and male identities and gender-based divisions and hierarchies during the last two decades. The focus has mostly been on issues of masculinities, and the conceptualisation has been taken from Raewyn Connell (1987, 1995, 1999, 2006). Connell argues that masculinity and femininity are broad categories that only can exist in a contrasting relationship to each other. The gender structures of a society define particular patterns of conduct as “masculine” and the other as “feminine.” These patterns construct the core of what will be seen as femininity and masculinity although there are – or can be – many models of masculinity and of femininity in each setting, society and internationally. Different cultures and different historical periods construct masculinity differently. Some cultures make heroes of soldiers and consider violence as the ultimate test of masculinity, while others regard violence as contemptible. The meaning of masculinity in working-class life is different from the meaning in middle-class life, and a corresponding difference is seen between the very rich and the very poor. (Connell 2006: 20.)

The main division of masculinities in Connell’s conceptualisation is hegemonic and subordinated. *Hegemonic masculinity* is the form of masculinity that refers to those dominant and dominating modes of masculinity which claim the highest status and exercise the highest influence and authority in the society. Hegemonic masculinity is not fixed, but it is in a constant state of flux and continually needs to be achieved by dominating, not obliterating, alternative patterns and groups. At one level, these patterns characterise individuals. But these patterns also exist at the collective level. The position of hegemonic masculinity will be achieved as



a result of collective cultural and institutional practices, and it asserts its authority through these practices, particularly through the media and the state. The term *subordinated forms of masculinity* refers to subordination of the hegemonic masculinity. (Connell 1987, 1995, 1999, 2006.)

Connell argues that the categories of masculinity are useful as descriptors of male performances as their “*body-reflexive practices*” rather than as denoting the qualities of particular men or boys. The term body-reflexive practice reflects, too, that the question is not only about constructions but also about people’s actions and about people’s embodiment:

Human bodies are active players in social life. They are neither biological machines producing social effects mechanically, nor blank pages on which cultural messages are written. Bodies are parties in social life, sharing in social agency, in generating and shaping courses of social conduct. Their circuits involve social relations and symbolism; markets. Particular versions of femininity and masculinity are constituted in their circuits as meaningful bodies and embodied meanings. Through body-reflexive practices, more than individual lives are formed: A social world is formed. (Connell 1999: 463–464.)

Masculinist power over the other is conceptualised as *heterosexism*. It can be defined as a type of ideology that legitimises masculine power over the other. The term was introduced to focus on the type of ideology and oppression that underlies the dual ways of thinking about and categorisation of masculinity and femininity on the basis of cultural heterosexist roots dictating both compulsory heterosexuality and certain types of masculinities as the ideal forms. Heterosexism situates other types of masculinities – and more commonly femininities – in less valued positions, and forces individuals to conform to binary gender roles, positions, and to adopt traits associated with heterosexuality. (Mandel & Shakeshaft 2000.)

### *Gender in educational research*

The main gender-sensitive approaches in education can roughly be divided into two groups: gender socialisation theories and social constructivist theories (MacNaughton 2006: 126–138). The theories of the first group focus on the gendered societal structures presupposing that on an individual level those structures will be learned through processes of socialisation. The theories of the second group emphasise the importance of agency.

Jo-Anne Dillabough (2001: 11, 2006) has constructed a more nuanced conceptualisation of the history of gender in educational research. She argues that gender research in education initially focused on gender socialisation patterns. Later on, the focus moved towards the reproduction of gender inequality in schools and gender equity reforms. This research also became engaged with social and cultural theories and its analysis of the contested nature of gender identities in schools and of the ways in which educational discourses shape the modern individual.

Jo-Anne Dillabough divides the recent major gender theoretical approaches in education into the following five orientations focused on (1) “Sexed identity” in the frames of post-structuralisms; (2) Gender, ethnicity and social exclusion influenced by the transformative power of black, post-colonial and standpoint feminisms; (3) Gender, markets and educational processes; (4) New gender identifications and theories of social change; and (5) Gender-sensitive analysis of the “marketization” of education including class-issues. (Dillabough 2001: 15–21, 2006.)

The socialisation theory started gender-sensitivity in educational research. The theory rejects arguments that violence is innate, and instead argues that differences in the ways in which girls and boys are treated have a significant effect on behaviour. But as both Dillabough and Myra Hird argue that the socialisation theory does not lend itself very readily to theorising the individual agency; hence simply playing with certain toys does not produce violent children. Nor is it true that children raised in gender stereotyped ways necessarily grow up to display traditionally “feminine” or “masculine” characteristics. (Dillabough 2001: 12, Hird 2002: 37.) Furthermore, because socialisation-based approaches very

easily remain on the individual level in their observations, they neither help in understanding the meaning of structures in human life nor their changes or the complex questions of power (Dillabough 2006: 49).

Post-structural and post-modern gender theories have offered a specific challenge to the discussion on gender-sensitivity in education through the concepts of differences, diversities and new visions of power (Dillabough 2006: 54). Post structural and post-modern gender theories, like previous gender theories in education call into question the notion of a pre-social (sexed) body. These theories, however, argue more strongly than the socialisation theorists that bodies are configured through social, political and cultural practices, and discourses especially; and they imagine a historical and changeable body on which configurations of power and signification are inscribed. Furthermore, post structural and post-modern gender theories are concerned, more likely, with theorizing how gender is understood instead of using gender as a self-evident analysis category. (Hird 2002: 3–4.)

There is quite a general acceptance on certain issues that distinguish post-structural feminist and other theories from modernist ones. One of the central issues is the turn from more direct societal questions to texts and discourses and to different questions of identities. Concerning gender identity, post-structural feminists emphasise that there is no coherent or stable narrative to be known in any ultimate sense. Furthermore, they typically have a stance of incredulity towards meta-narratives, meaning the all-embracing explanatory concepts favoured by the Enlightenment and associated with the perception of power as located in particular structures, groups or individuals. The meta-narratives tell very explanatory stories about the world as a whole, but post-structuralism focuses more closely on small local stories about specific discourses and power relations. (Dillabough 2001, Peachter 2001: 41, 44.)

Post-structural approaches have been used effectively to deconstruct stereotypical assumptions, but a problem in post-structural approaches is that the deconstruction can be too total, and it can lead to hyper-individualistic presuppositions of human existence with its consequences. As Shari Dworkin and Michael Messner write:

Although it is certainly true that every woman is somewhat uniquely situated, a radical deconstruction of the concept “woman” could lead to an individualism that denies similarity of experience, thus leading to depoliticized subjects. Radical deconstruction therefore is very much in the interests of the most powerful institutions in our world, as it leaves us feeling (at best) individually “empowered” so long as we are able to continue to consume the right products. (Dworkin & Messner 1999: 356.)

Furthermore, a total deconstruction orientation can destroy more general assumptions on right and wrong, justice and injustice. And if moral arguments are deconstructed or positioned as invalid, like relativist post-modern theories can do, it can cause political paralysis and a narcissistic turn at the expense of challenging the inequalities which continue to persist in the world. (Francis 2001: 65.)

Becky Francis (2001: 69) also criticises the typical power-concept used in poststructuralist approaches that has been taken from Foucault. She writes:

Foucault’s vision of power as exercised through a ‘net-like organisation’ and constituted via discourses has been invaluable for explaining our multiple power positions. It has helped us to see that power does not simply ‘belong’ to oppressors at the expense of the oppressed. Rather, one may be positioned as powerful via gender discourse in one interactive moment and as powerless via social class discourse in the next. Although power relations are multiple and specific to local interactive environments, inequalities according to ethnicity, gender, social class and so on continue to exist at least at a macro level. (Francis 2001: 69.)

The feminist analysis of “marketization” including class-issues is concerned with the role of market forces in regulating education (Dillabough 2001: 21, 2006).

### *The theoretical location of this research*

We locate this research between modern and post-modern frames. We presuppose that the social world consists of material and discursive-

ideological spheres that are inseparably bound together<sup>6</sup>. We live throughout our lives in the social world without having any possibility of really looking at our lives from a truly neutral position – from a position that would be totally outside the limitations of human subjects. We furthermore presuppose that in our everyday lives, we encounter the material through the symbolic and discursive-ideological spheres, and through emotional spheres. Our emotions are more closely related to our inner selves and values than, for example, the meanings of the matters<sup>7</sup> (cf. Vygotsky 1987, Wertch 1991). That is why, meanings too, include ideological; and contradictory components and biases. A setting of biases is grounded in our stereotypical practices, presuppositions, attitudes, ideologies, and discourses.

While trying to understand the world, to administrate it, to cope with it we use discursive – ideological spheres of life. We also use these spheres of life while exercising power. In maintaining gender stereotypes on institutional, individual and interaction levels, the constructing of differences, the differences in valuing them, and the practices based on the previous matters are central. But the gendered practices can lay so deep in our mind that they can be difficult to recognize. (cf. Scott 1986, Scott 1996, Scott 2004, Hirdman 1990, Hirdman 2007.) From the point of doing research, important is that we, as human beings, however, are able to develop our ability to reflect the issues we are dealing with and to develop different perspectives to take steps to overcome the very limited subjective one-sidedness. (Ramazanoglu & Holland 2002, Harding 1992, Reinharz 1992, Haraway 1988.)

Like postmodernists, we also presuppose that human bodies are configured through social, political and cultural practices, with discourses centrally included. And we focus more on small local cases than on big meta-narratives that try to tell explanatory stories about the world as a whole: we try to draw pictures on individual level experiences of sexual harassment and on atmospheres of certain school classes. But additionally,

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6. That is not to say, however, that it is not possible to focus on one of them, for example, in research.

7. Compare the difference between the sense and meaning in Vygotskian tradition (Vygotsky 1987, Leontyev 1978, Leontyev 1981).

we try to find out certain estimations of the extent of the problem in northern Finnish and northwest Russian schools more generally.

Furthermore, as a critical reflection concerning post-modern constructionism, we emphasise the embodiment of human beings and refuse to reduce the body to a mere social construction. As for the concepts of gender and sexuality, we consider both of them to be important. We agree with Braidotti that recently in Western countries *sexual difference* is very central in the formation of female and male identities and divisions, but not purely. We propose that also in Western countries in different contexts and situations central means for ordering the genders do vary.

## **5 The research task, research participants, and methods used**

We focused our research on the experienced physical sexual harassment among middle childhood age children at school, and on the characteristics involved in this type of sexual harassment. To gather information about such complex topics like physical sexual harassment is challenging at least for terminological and ethical reasons. The particular challenges concerning the terminological features are the weak awareness of the terms and of the contents of the terms in publicity, and the terminological diversity in conceptualising the issues. The special ethical demands come from vulnerability sexual harassment can cause to people who experience it. We tried to take the aforementioned challenges seriously and also meet the challenge of doing systematic, feminist research.

We collected the data with a questionnaire, but we did not use the term “sexual harassment” in it. Our decision to exclude sexual harassment as a term was based on our awareness of the difficulties connected with this term. Specifically, when the question is about children that probably have not personally read or reflected on the matter, it is reason to presume that the term and term-content are unclear. Furthermore, previous studies demonstrate that verbal sexual harassment, especially, can be so naturalised among school children and youth that they do not recognise it as harassment (Eder *et al.* 1995, Duncan 1999, Aaltonen 2002, Lehtonen 2003). Because of this, we tried to use terms we heard children use and asked about their experiences of verbal sexual harassment and physical sexual harassment separately. The term we used in relation to physical sexual harassment was groping. We asked the children to write down answers to the question: “Have you been groped or touched in a way you do not like at school or on the way to school? If yes, by whom?” The students were also requested to give details of the event and of its consequences for themselves and the perpetrator. The exact formulations of the further questions were: “If you answered YES to the previous question,

please tell us, a) whether the perpetrator was a girl, a woman, a boy or a man. b) Please tell us what happened.”<sup>8</sup>

We followed the following six key principles identified by the World Health Organisation (WHO) to ensure ethical demands while researching such an intimate topic as sexual harassment.

- the safety of respondents
- prevalence studies need to be methodologically sound and build upon current research experience about how to minimize the under-reporting of violence
- protecting confidentiality to ensure both children’s safety and data quality
- carefully selected, trained, and supported research team members
- actions aimed at reducing distress caused to the participants by the research
- ethical obligation to ensure that the findings are properly interpreted and used to advance policy and intervention development (Johnson *et al.* 2008: 21).

The research data was gathered from comprehensive schools in northern Finland and northwest Russia. The Finnish research participants<sup>9</sup> were from nine urban school classes and twenty-seven rural school classes from four municipalities. In the urban schools, where there were several parallel classes, the data was gathered from one or two classes. The city schools were chosen so that they represented middle class environments, ownership-based living environments and more indigent tenement environments. Data collected in regards to countryside schools was gathered in all or almost all<sup>10</sup> of the comprehensive schools of the

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8. See Appendix 1, questions 13–17 in the Finnish questionnaire, and Appendix 2, questions 12–17 in the Russian questionnaire.

9. When using the term *participant*, we refer to the school children, the respondents of the study. The term *co-researchers* will be used while referring to the participants who participated in the research as researchers.

10. For ethical reasons – to protect the intimacy of the students in classes of a very few amount of students – we had to leave some school classes out of the research.



municipalities chosen for the study. In each school we concentrated on the sixth graders; girls and boys between 11 and 12 years of age<sup>11</sup>. The Russian research participants were from twenty-two comprehensive city schools from four cities. The guidelines for choosing the schools and school classes were the same as the Finnish criteria. The data in both countries was collected between November 2001 and May 2002.

There is not a specific method or a combination of methods that make research feminist, although some principles are central in feminist approaches. Two such issues that have been greatly discussed, especially in the beginning of the feminist research, are the challenge to base the research on women's experiences and the need to be critical and reflective in epistemic issues (Harding 1987a, 1987b, 1992, Saarinen 1992). Researchers involved in feminist research have also voiced the need to include the emotions and actions from the perspective of those who have been researched by using their own voices (Fonow & Cook 1991). As a consequence, feminist researchers have valued and developed qualitative approaches (Roberts 1981, Reinharz 1992, Harding 1986, Harding 1991, Ramazanogly & Holland 2002).

Much of the criticism against quantitative research involves the claim that these research techniques involving the translations of individual experiences into categories predefined by researchers distort the experience of the research informants and result in silencing the informants' voices. The issue is serious, and from the very beginning of the feminist research, there has been a demand to start listening to women's own experiences and voices. But does a quantitative approach obligatorily silences women's own voices?

Paul Connolly, Professor of Education, Queen's University Belfast, was first known as a researcher of qualitative approaches (Connolly 1998,

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11. In the few cases when a school class consisted of children from the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade, we took children of both grades into the study. To do so was based on the principle to collect data from all children of the school classes that were taken into the research. All these school classes are from Finland. On the basis of the same principle, data was also collected from all the children who were less than or more than 11 to 12 years but were members of the chosen school classes.

2001, 2004) and has later started to use quantitative approaches as well (Connolly 2007). He writes:

I argued strongly that the only way we can fully understand the impact of race in young children's lives is through qualitative research that is able to capture the complexity of children's attitudes and identities and place these within their specific contexts. ... Over time, however, I have progressively come to question this position. In ignoring quantitative methods altogether ... I realized that my dismissal of all things quantitative meant that there were many research questions that I simply could not ask ... Indeed some of these were important questions of direct relevance to my own research interest. (Connolly 2007: 1.)

Connolly was researching children's racial and ethnic awareness and differences in educational opportunities and attainment between boys and girls from different racial, ethnic and social class backgrounds. As he writes, the problems emerged while he tried to identify broader patterns of the issues in which he encountered problems:

While my qualitative ethnographic methods proved to be extremely effective in identifying particular social processes and practices of exclusion and discrimination, without quantitative methods I had no way of even beginning to understand how common or generalizable these patterns were ... (Connolly 2007: 1-2).

Through pure qualitative approaches, it is possible to study nuances and complexities of the issues studied and their contextual and cultural-historical boundaries. But it is difficult – and often not possible – to listen to the voices of people in a large scale with qualitative methods. From that point of view, it is reasonable to ask whose voices can be heard while doing purely qualitative research, and whose cannot. A key to overcome these types of dual challenges is to choose a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods, as Connolly (2007), too, argues (See also Hoare 2007, Beetham & Demetriades 2007, Ramazanogly *et al.* 2002, Epstein & Stewart 1995, Lather 1995). In addition to what already was mentioned, qualitative methods can be used, for example, while researching ways to discuss issues studied, power relations and the ways to use power.

Quantitative indicators would then be available for measuring trends or making an issue like sexual harassment visible for the people who are not aware of the issues studied but should be.

Margaret Crouch, who has conducted an evaluation on research focused on sexual harassment, also argues that in research on sexual harassment, quantitative research has been relevant while studying how widespread sexual harassment is, who it targets, what its consequences have been (Crouch 2001: 101). Qualitative methods, have been used while researching the descriptions and narratives of experienced harassment (Mankkinen 1995, Saarikoski 2001), borderlines between harassing and not harassing experiences (Aaltonen 2006), silenced experiences of harassment (Herbert 1989) and the consequences of harassment in process (Sunnari *et al.* 2002b).

In this research, we used a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods. The research data was gathered in the form of a questionnaire. The research group constructed and tested the questionnaire form in 2001. Permission for collecting the data was obtained from the municipality offices and from the school offices. The parents were informed about the research.

When asking the children to tell whether they had experienced physical sexual harassment we used ready made yes/no answer categories. When asking whether the harassment had caused consequences, and to whom the child had told about the mistreatment, we used ready made answer categories with multiple choices. However, we also asked the children to describe a case of physical harassment they had experienced and its consequences. Here the children were encouraged to tell, in their own words, what they had experienced (cf. Kelly *et al.* 1995).

Because of epistemological reasons (Alldred 1998, Fricker 2007) in addition to ethical reasons, we did not try to remain anonymous to the children. We went to the school classes, informed the children about the research and about its aims, emphasised the children's importance and independence in the research and supported their empowered orientation towards the questionnaire. In the frame of the children's independence, we told the children that everybody's own voice is important, and that the

research will be conducted with the aim of developing a means to decrease mistreatment in children's mutual relationships in school. As a whole we tried to base the gathering of data on mutual respect and justice between the researchers and the school children, and we continued that orientation also when analysing the data. (Johnson *et al.* 2008, Edwards & Ribbens 1998, Fricker 2007.)

The questions were answered during a school hour. The time for answering the questions varied from half an hour to an hour<sup>12</sup>. In an aim to strengthen the intention that the children would report their own, personal experiences of the issues researched, we gave each child an envelope to put the questionnaire in when they had completed it. We considered that important also from the point of children's privacy. The children returned the envelopes with the completed questionnaires to the researcher. The answer papers and the envelopes were anonymous.

While analysing the data, we used a system that is close to *critical qualitative content analysis* (Mayring 2000), and we also used of case study techniques and critical and reflective reading, cross reading, rereading and contextualising of individual texts and texts (Rojola 2004, Liljeström 2004) of whole school classes. In addition to the answers concerning physical sexual harassment, in case studies, we used the method of cross reading, rereading and contextualising all the answers the children of the case classes had written in the questionnaires. As for the epistemological commitments, we considered that the answers of the school children were their expressions of what they had experienced, and that the experiences were to be taken seriously (Ramazanogly & Holland 2002).

Critical qualitative content analysis can be defined as an approach of critical empirical, analysis of texts within their context of communication, following content analytical rules and step by step models, without rash quantification (Mayring 2000). Philipp Mayring, who has been developing the approach (e.g. Mayring 1994, 1996, 2000), argues that the point in qualitative content analysis is that it aims at preserving the advantages of

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12. That is the time the children used for the whole questionnaire which included both questions of physical sexual harassment and also other questions (See Appendixes 1 and 2).

quantitative content analysis for a more qualitative text interpretation. One of the advantages he emphasises is that the method fits the material into a model of communication including the questions of what part of the communication inferences shall be made, what the communication situation has been, and what the socio-cultural boundaries of the communicators are. An advantage, too, is that the material should be analysed step by step, following the rules of procedure although devising the material into content analytical units. Furthermore, the procedure has the pretension to be inter-subjectively comprehensible because the category development is text based and inductive. The categories that will be constructed should be as near as possible to the material and formulated in terms of the material, although the criteria of the definitions will be derived from the theoretical background and research questions. (Mayring 2000.)

Our analysis of the data was conducted in five steps. The first step was to code the answers the children gave into the ready-made categories, including "Have you experienced groping?" into the SPSS programme (the latest version was SPSS 15.0) and to check the amounts and percentages of varied answers. The next step was to identify the categories of groping from the descriptions the children had written. While doing that, previous research and theories of sexual and sexist harassment were used. For the purpose of optimising the quality of the interpretations and the whole research, we organised seminars and working days to interpret the data together. The categories were first tentative, and we developed them then in a structured process. The case descriptions which had conflicting content-interpretations were discussed several times.

The third step was to analyse the content of the groping descriptions and to put the descriptions into the constructed categories. We also used the SPSS programme here. The children's descriptions of groping were coded to the answer categories constructed, and the amounts and percentages of the descriptions in each category and between the countries were calculated. The second and third steps were done in the direction of qualitative content analysis.

As the fourth step, we studied the contents of the case-descriptions of the category that we researchers considered to be characterised by physical sexual/sexist harassment and the contents of the answers in category that were characterised by silenced voices. The method we used here was critical and reflective reading, cross reading, and rereading of individual texts. Where necessary, we also used word searches, etc. from the uploaded written data and returned to the original data many times. The fifth step was to concentrate on the exceptionally problematic harassment cases in their contexts, on the level of school classes. That was only done from the Finnish material because the Russian material was not divided on the basis of the school classes but on the basis of the schools.

## 6 Groping as a physical sexual harassment, and other categories of groping

Almost all of the Finnish and the Russian participants of the study responded to the basic question of groping. All the participants who reported having experienced groping, however, did not describe the experience. Furthermore, some of the descriptions did not allow us, as researchers, to make the interpretation that the experience described illustrated groping in the form of physical sexual harassment. In the processes of careful reading, negotiating and rereading the texts, we constructed seven answer-categories for the responses. The categories are the following:

1. Mention of having not been groped;
2. Mention of having been groped without any description on details;
3. Description of groping as physical sexual harassment;
4. Descriptions of groping that explicitly do not include a sexual character;
5. I do not want to tell the details ('Don't want') -cases;
6. Description of positive touching;
7. Other.

I was standing with my back turned and a boy came by and grabbed my butt<sup>13</sup> (Finnish Girl, 451<sup>14</sup>).

I was at the library and she grabbed my bottom...<sup>15</sup> (Russian Boy, 1876).

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13. We will write the original texts of the children that we cite in the footnotes. The Finnish Girl in the answer-paper 451 writes: "Seisoin selittäin ja ohikulkeva poika puristi takapuolesta."

14. The number in the reference refers to the number of the response-paper. The Finnish responses have been numbered from 1 to 652, and the Russian responses from 1001 to 2082.

15. "Я стоял в библиотеке, и она цапнула меня за ягодицу..."

I usually wear a skirt with trousers underneath that has figures that I have embroidered. So, one boy kept touching those figures in such places. The same boy also grabbed my ass.<sup>16</sup> (Finnish Girl, 181.)

The above texts describe groping that we conceptualised as explicit physical sexual harassment. In the text 451, the Finnish Girl<sup>17</sup> explains that a boy had grabbed her buttocks. That is a very typical form of physical sexual harassment (Herbert 1989, Sadker & Sadker 2001, Korhonen & Kuusi 2003). The writer of the text 451 describes an isolated case of harassment. Some researchers, however, are of the opinion that in order for the act to be considered harassment, it must be repeated. We did not use that criterion in this research. We even did not ask for specification of whether the act happened repeatedly. Many pupils, however, dealt with the issue in their texts.

In the second citation above, the perpetrating act was very similar with the act in the first citation. The two central differences were that the second description was written by a Russian participant of the research and the writer was a boy. We did not use the presupposition that only women and girls can be harassed sexually while constructing the categories.

In the two first examples, the child explicitly describes groping in the form that we interpreted to present physical sexual harassment. But it is not possible to say the same of the third citation. The third text was written by a Finnish girl and the perpetrator was a boy. The Girl writes that the boy touched her “also from such parts”. We interpreted that the Girl wanted to inform that the boy touched her on sexually intimate parts of the body, but because of the experienced intimacy she did not want to name the places.<sup>18</sup>

The three texts above represent cases that we put in the category that we named ‘*Description of groping as physical sexual harassment*’. The

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16.”Pidän hametta housujen päällä jossa olen kirjonut kuvioita. Niin yx poika lärppäs niitä, sellaisistakin paikoista. Se sama myös lääppii peffalle.”

17. While referring to the child who has written the citation that we use in our text after the citation, we capitalize the terms girl and boy as Girl and Boy.

18. There were, among the research participants, also some such children who were not very capable in writing, and children who might not were very capable in expressing oneself through writing. We checked from the questionnaires of the children who gave a partial explanation that the reason not to have a partial explanation was not based on the type of problems.



category thus consists of cases where the child first answered *yes* to the question of whether she/he has experienced groping at school or on the way to school. Additionally the child describes the experience in a way that we interpreted to illustrate groping as a form of physical sexual harassment explicitly, or with a partial explanation. The cases in the category '*Description on physical sexual harassment*', construct the main group of the cases that we will later analyse in more depth.

In addition to the category '*Description on physical sexual harassment*', we thus constructed six other categories for the answers of the participants. The first two of the other categories are clear. The first, '*Mention of having not been groped*', is for the cases where the child only informs that she/he has not experienced groping. The second category, '*Mention of having been groped without any description on details*', is for the cases where the child answers *yes* to the question of whether she/he has experienced groping, but does not describe the case. The category, '*Description of groping that explicitly does not include a sexual character*', we constructed from the varied cases where the child, according to our interpretations, describes violence that does not explicitly include a reference to physical sexual harassment. For example, the following citations illustrate violence that we placed to this category:

I was quarrelling with a boy and then we started to fight; he hit me in the face<sup>19</sup> (Russian Girl, 1030).

For example, beat me<sup>20</sup> (Finnish Girl, 608).

A group of cases that we put into this category was characterised by the use of the term *hit* to illustrate the experienced violence. In both of the above citations, the question is about violence in the form of hitting. On the basis of the texts, it is not possible to interpret that the experiences had been characterised by physical sexual harassment. The Russian Girl writes that she was quarrelling with a boy; and he started to hit her. The boy hit her in the face. It is possible that the acts of groping occurred before hitting the

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19. "Мы с мальчиком поссорились и начали драться. Он ударил меня по лицу."

20. "Esimerkiksi hakannut."

girl in the face; and it also is possible that by hitting the girl on the face, it signified physical sexual harassment. The text, however, does not include enough details to put the case into the category of physical sexual harassment. Nevertheless, it includes enough information to put it into the category of experienced violence.

A similar situation occurs when looking at the text 608. The Finnish Girl answers in the questionnaire that a boy hit her. She had added to the text, “for example”. These words can mean, on the one hand, that the writer had experienced also different types of harassment. On the other hand, it is possible that the girl wants to describe that it happens a lot. But thinking of the categories in the research study, the information does not include messages needed for the categorisation of physical sexual harassment.

The following descriptions represent the third type of the cases in our categorisation, *‘Description of groping that explicitly does not include sexual character’*:

Pushed me a lot, poked with a pen. One time at the ice-rink they pushed me so that I fell and hurt my arm.<sup>21</sup> (Russian Girl, 1008.)

During recess, I was caught and yanked hard to the snow<sup>22</sup> (A Finnish Girl, 640).

I sat with him at the same desk, and he always hurt me, pushed ...<sup>23</sup> (Russian Girl, 1080).

The Girls in the texts 1008 and 1080 describe violence that can be characterised by physical sexual harassment or abuse that is strongly hurting them. On the other hand, the descriptions fit very well also with the type of violence that is conceptualised as gender-based harassment. But the categorisation in this study is the same as in the previous cases and the reasons for the categorisation are also the same.

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21.”Очень много толкают меня, тыкают ручкой. А один раз, на катке меня толкали, я упала и сломала руку.”

22.”Välitunnilla otti kiinni ja riuhtas minut kovaan lumipenikkaan.”

23.”Мы с ним сидели за одной партой, и он часто меня обижал, толкал, обзывался.”

The fourth type of description that was categorised, '*Description of groping that explicitly does not include sexual character*', can be seen from the next extract:

A boy yelled all kinds of annoying things about me and a boy I like. When he walked behind me, I stuck out my leg and he lost his balance. When I turned around he punched me in the eye. The same boy hit me a couple of years earlier.<sup>24</sup> (Finnish Girl, 33.)

Courtship was the reason for name-calling as experienced by the Girl. Harassment was sexual but not physical. As for hitting, it is not possible to say whether or not it was sexual harassment in its character.

Some children who responded the questionnaire answered the question: "Tell about what happened" in the following way:

I cannot speak about it (ashamed)<sup>25</sup> (Russian Girl, 1370).

No can do<sup>26</sup> (Finnish Girl, 646).

For these cases, we constructed the category, '*I do not want to tell the details – (Don't want)*'. The cases in this category construct the second group of the texts that we will analyse in more depth.

Furthermore, a few children wrote about sexually oriented touching where they indicated it had been pleasant for them. An act that is a pleasant experience is not an act of harassment according to our conceptualisation, nor according to generally accepted conceptualisations of sexual harassment. The category '*Description of positive touching*' is for these cases. Additionally, we constructed a category '*Other*'. There were only very few cases that we put into this category, and in all of these cases, the writers wrote about groping they themselves had practiced.

There were a few papers that contained contradictory information, as if the same writer had experienced and had not experienced groping. In the

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24."Poika huuteli minusta ja tykkäämästäni pojasta kaikkea ärsyttävää ja kun hän meni takaani laitoin jalan hänen eteensä ja hän horjahti. Kun käännyin hän löi minua silmään. Sama poika oli lyönyt minua pari vuotta sitten."

25."Не хочу писать об этом (стыдно)."

26."Emmä voi."

cases the respondent had included a explanation of her or his answer, it was possible to decide on the basis of it what it was about; but in the cases where there was no description included, we put them into the category of non-groping.

## 7 Numerical results of students' experiences of groping at school and on their way to school

As mentioned already, almost all of the Finnish and the Russian participants of the research project responded to the basic question of groping. Only 18 (1,7 %) Russian and 15 (2,3 %) Finnish participants did not respond to the question. Table 1 shows the amount and percentages of the girls and boys in each of the answer-category. The percentages have been calculated from the total amount of the girls and the boys in each country who responded to the question. As for the case-descriptions, each of the children who wrote a description is presented only once in the table regardless of whether she/he had written one or two descriptions.<sup>27</sup>

**Table 1. The amounts and the percentages of experienced groping in the different categories constructed on groping.**

Category	Russian				Finnish			
	girls N	girls %	boys N	boys %	girls N	girls %	boys N	boys %
Pure No	300	56	327	68	234	76	311	93
Pure Yes	85	16	67	14	5	2	2	1
Explicitly PSH*	51	10	18	4	54	18	9	3
Not explicitly PSH	48	9	45	9	9	3	8	3
Don't want	48	9	17	4	4	1	-	-
Positive touch	-	-	4	1	1	-	4	1
Other	-	-	3	1	3	1	-	-
Total**	532		481		307		334	

\* PHS = physical sexual harassment

\*\* Total = Total amount of children who responded the question.

It is possible to see from Table 1 that only 56 percent of the Russian girls and 68 percent of the Russian boys answered that they had not been groped at school or on the way to school. The corresponding percentage of the Finnish girls was 76 and of the Finnish boys 93. It was thus clearly more common for the Finnish girls and boys to report not to having been targeted

27. Almost all of the children who wrote a case-description wrote one.

in groping than it was for the Russian participants. It was also more common for the boys than for the girls in both countries. But both in the Finnish and Russian data, there is a significant group of girls and boys who reported having been subjected to groping in the form that we, as researchers, interpreted explicitly to mean physical sexual harassment. The number of the Finnish girls was 54, which accounted for 18 percent of the Finnish girls who responded to the questionnaire. The corresponding number of the Finnish boys was nine (3%). Four Finnish girls informed that they did not want to reveal the details.

Fifty one Russian girls who answered the question – ten percent – described groping in the form of explicit physical sexual harassment; and almost as many girls, nine percent, wrote that they had experienced it, but that they did not want to share the details<sup>28</sup> of the experience(s). The corresponding numbers of the Russian boys were 18 and 17, four percent of the Russian boys in both of the two categories.

The percentage of the children who reported being groped was thus considerably higher among the Russian children than the Finnish ones. But it is not meaningful, nor correct to look at these numbers only without looking at the numbers in the other answer categories at the same time. The Russian participants clearly, more often than the Finnish participants, drew a veil over the case-description; and while describing an experience, they quite often either did not explain the details of the experience(s), or they described groping that explicitly was not sexual. We categorised 48 case-descriptions written by the Russian girls and 45 case-descriptions written by the Russian boys, nine percent in both cases, as '*Descriptions on groping that explicitly do not include a sexual character*'. In contrast, we put only three percent of the case-descriptions written by the Finnish research participants into this category.

The way in which the children answered the question thus differed considerably between the Finnish and Russian participants. For the Finnish children, it was typical not only to mention having experienced groping,

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28. We will use the name '*Don't want*' for this category in the following sections, and we can use the term Don't want -case to refer to the response that includes information that the respondent did not want or could not tell the details of the experience.

but also to describe its content. In the Russian data, there were more than two times as many answers in which groping was only mentioned than answers where the experience was also described in more details. More detailed descriptions of violence were particularly uncommon in the answers of Russian boys. Furthermore, it was common for the Russian girls who mentioned having experienced groping to say that they could not tell the details; and it was common for the Russian boys as well. But for the Finnish participants of the research, these types of answers were uncommon.

Almost in ninety percent of the cases where a Finnish or Russian girl described an experience of physical harassment, the perpetrator was a boy; and even in eighteen percent of the cases where a Russian girl wrote about physical sexual harassment, she told that one of the perpetrators, or the perpetrator, had been an adult man or woman. A couple of Finnish girls also reported having an experience of physical sexual harassment perpetrated by an adult person. In all these three cases, the perpetrator had been a man. In four cases of experienced physical sexual harassment by Finnish girls, the perpetrator had been a girl. The same was the case for two of the Russian girls. Additionally, in five cases, a Russian girl had been a perpetrator along side a boy or a man – or in a group.

In the cases when a boy had been harassed, the picture of the harasser was more diverse regardless of whether the boy was Russian or Finnish. A boy's perpetrator was in some cases a girl, but another possibility was that the perpetrator was a boy. In some cases, the harasser of a Russian boy was a group of boys and girls. The picture is very similar when the question is about *'Don't want'*-cases: most often the perpetrator of a girl was a boy, either individually or together with some other person(s). The perpetrators of the explicit cases of physical sexual harassment, and of the *'Don't want'*-cases can be seen from Table 2 and Table 3.

**Table 2. The perpetrators of the explicit cases of physical sexual harassment.**

Respondent	Boy	%	Girl	%	Man	%	Woman	%	Not clear	Total	
RU girl	42+4	90	2+5	14	+5	10	+4	8	1	2	51*
RU boy	5+2	39	8+2	56	1	6	2	11	-	-	18*
FI girl	48	87	4	7	3	5	-	-	-	-	55
FI boy	4	44	3	33	-	-	3	33	-	-	9*

\*Some respondents told that they were harassed by more than one person.

**Table 3. The perpetrators of the 'Don't want' -cases.**

Respondent	Boy	%	Girl	%	Man	%	Woman	%	Total
RU girl	37+6*	90	2+6*	17	2+1	6	1	2	48
RU boy	3+4*	41	8+3*	64	1	6	1+1	12	17
FI girl	1	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
FI boy	1	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	1

\* Boy/girl was with someone else.

There was also a separate question in the questionnaire which dealt with the possible consequences of the act for both the person who was harassed and the perpetrator. The division of the answers can be seen in Table 4 and Table 5.

**Table 4. Consequences of harassment.**

Respondent	Oneself	%	Harasser	%	No consequences	%	No answer	%	Total
RU girl	8	16	15	29	1	2	37	73	51
RU boy	2	11	3	17	-	-	14	78	18
FI girl	6	11	10	18	45	82	1	2	55
FI boy	-	-	3	33	7	78	-	-	9

\*In some cases, consequences for both oneself and the perpetrator were reported.



**Table 5. Consequences of ‘Don’t want’ -cases.**

Respondent	Oneself	%	Harasser	%	No con-sequenc es	%	No answer	%	Total
RU girl	15	31	13	27	16	33	8	17	48
RU boy	5	29	5	29	6	35	6	35	17
FI girl	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
FI boy	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	100	1

Most Finnish children said that the mistreatment did not have consequences<sup>29</sup> for themselves, whereas for the Russian participants, it was typical not to answer the question. For the Russian and the Finnish children it was more common to explain that the mistreatment produced consequences for the perpetrator than to say that it did for oneself, the victim. In regards to the ‘*Don’t want*’ -responses, it was clearly more common to mention that the mistreatment caused consequences for oneself than it was in the responses that included a case-description.

Typically the Finnish and the Russian participants told their best friends or a couple of friends about the experience. Very few children wrote about telling their experience to the teacher, as can be seen from Table 6 and 7.

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29. An important point to reflect on is how the children understood the question of consequences. According to the texts they wrote here, the consequences for them referred more to physical consequences than, for example, emotional or other mental consequences. We will return to these questions in Chapter 9.

**Table 6. To whom the ‘Harassment’ cases were told.**

Respon- dent	A friend	More than one	Every- one	Every-o ne saw	Mother/ relative	Teach- er	Other	No one	No answer	Total*
RU girl	9	19	-	2	15	5	3	9	-	51
%	19	35	-	4	27	10	6	18	-	
RU boy	4	4	2	1	1	-	3	5	1	18
%	22	22	11	6	6	-	17	28	6	
FI girl	15	18	-	2	7	1	1	11	1	55
%	27	32	-	4	13	2	2	20	2	
FI boy	2	3	-	-	1	-	1	3	-	9
%	22	33	-	-	11	-	11	33	-	

\* Total of respondents; some told more than one person.

**Table 7. To whom the ‘Don’t want’ -cases were told.**

Respon-d ent	A friend	More than one	Every- one	Every-o ne saw	Mother / relative	Teacher	No one	No answer	Total*
RU girl	20	8	-	1	1	1	14	2	48
%	42	17	-	2	2	2	29	4	
RU boy	4	1	1	1	3	-	9	-	17
%	24	6	6	6	18	-	53	-	

Pupils who never told anyone of being groped amounted to around 20 percent of the Russian and Finnish girls and nearly one-third of the boys. A clear difference between the Finnish and the Russian girls was that Finnish girls seemed to be much slower in their response than the Russian girls in relaying the matter to adults. Of the Russian girls who experienced groping, 37 percent told of the matter to adults, compared with only 15 percent out of the Finnish girls.

Almost thirty percent of the female informants of the ‘Don’t want’ -group had not told anyone about the experience and more than forty percent of them had told only one friend about the case. Only one of these girls told relatives or teacher about the issue. In line with the explicit cases of physical sexual harassment, the silence was present more commonly among boys.

## 8 Individual level qualitative analyses on children's experiences of physical sexual harassment at school

The number of Finnish schoolgirls and boys who wrote about some details of their experiences regarding physical sexual harassment was 63; 54 girls, and nine boys. The corresponding number of Russian children was 69; 51 girls and 18 boys. The number of Russian children who wrote that they did not disclose any details was 65; 48 girls and 17 boys. Four Finnish girls responded in the same way. The texts dealing with the children's experiences of groping construct the research material that we will deal with next. We will first deal with the children's groping-descriptions, and after that the *'Don't want'* -cases. The texts of the girls and the boys will be studied separately; and the texts will also be divided on the basis of who the perpetrator was in the descriptions. We will analyse what the characteristics of experienced groping were when the victim was a girl and when he was a boy. We will analyse the descriptions through the following themes: the places and situations of groping, emotional experiences of and reactions to groping, explanations and consequences of groping, and what stopped it. Additionally we will check whether the act was a separate act, or if it continued. Finally we will analyse what stopped the harassment on the basis of the texts.

### *Physical sexual harassment experienced by girls and perpetrated by boys*

They put their hands where they should not

Almost all of the Finnish girls named a body part that had been groped. Most often it had been the buttocks.<sup>30</sup> Some girls were groped on the breast. A Finnish girl wrote that even a groping competition had been organised on the school-bus where the girls had been objectified as the entertainers of the boys' trip:

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30. Twenty-nine Finnish girls wrote about this type of groping.

During a class excursion the boys had a ‘competition of collecting points’. The points were given by: 1 point for grabbing ass, 2 points for grabbing boobs. It is not that nasty but it wasn’t that fun either.<sup>31</sup> (Finnish Girl, 371.)

The Girl did not say whether the teachers or other adults<sup>32</sup> saw what happened, nor what their commitment to the situation was. But on the basis of the text, it is clear that the adult(s) did not prevent the competition from happening.

Some Finnish girls were groped “between the legs”. And few Finnish girls explained that they had experienced unpleasant advances and hugging.

The groping descriptions from the Russian girls are partly in line with the writings of the Finnish girls. Like the Finnish girls, the Russian girls experienced hurting, touching or pinching:

Boys often trip girls, touch ...<sup>33 34</sup> (Russian Girl, 1026).

... They put their hand where they should not<sup>35</sup> (Russian Girl, 1410).

In the case where a Russian girl described in more detail which part of the body had been groped, she mentioned her bottom like the Finnish girls did. But it was clearly more typical for the Russian girls – in contrary to the Finnish girls – not to mention the matter, as seen in the citations 1026 and 1410 above.

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31.“Luokkaretkellä pojilla oli ‘pisteiden keruukilpailu’, pisteitä sai: 1p. perseen puristamisesta 2p. rintojen puristamisesta. Ei tuo mitenkään inhottavaa ollut, muttei hauskaakaan.”

32. When the question is about a school-excursion, teachers or other adult persons are obligated to participate and take care that the trip is safe for the children according to the in Finnish school-legislation.

33.”Часто мальчики ставят подножки девочкам, задевают их ...”

34. The three full stops signify text that has been left out. This text that was considered not to be relevant to the issues discussed in this chapter.

35.”... Они могут положить свои руки не туда, куда надо.”

## The places, situations and continuations of groping

Groping of the Finnish girls happened in the classroom, during recess, in the corridor or on the way to or from school including bus stops. It often happened unexpectedly and from behind, as was mentioned in one of the previous citations. When groped from behind, it was possible that the girl did not know who the perpetrator was because there might have been many potential gropers. In all the cases where a girl had been groped on the way to school or from school, the person who was harassed did not personally know the groper and it happened from behind. Furthermore, although it was possible that the girl did not know who the perpetrator was, groping that happened at school usually did not happen outside the gazes of the other pupils. In many cases, groping had occurred in the atmosphere constructed by the harassing boys to create entertainment for themselves.

The places where the Russian girls experienced groping were similar to where many of the Finnish girls reported being groped: in the school class, the corridor, and the way to school or from the school. Additionally, some Russian girls mentioned having experienced groping at a school club. Furthermore, some Russian girls wrote some details of the places that the Finnish girls did not explicitly describe: the perpetrator or a group of perpetrators had pushed the girl against a wall that added to the girl's impossibility to resist and/or to move away.

Grabbed my behind, pushed against a wall, and touched my breast<sup>36</sup>  
(Russian Girl, 1518).

Among the texts in the category "*Other types of violence*", there are many references by Russian and the Finnish girls where a boy tripped the girl and pushed her towards a snow-drift. Practically it is possible that in these cases, too, the question was about groping in the form of physical sexual harassment, or that a part of them were cases of that type. In other interview-based material collected in Finland, many girls reported being groped in similar ways during breaks in the wintertime.

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36."Хлопал по попе, прижимал к стене, трогал за грудь."

Groping occurred mostly during breaks or just after or before the lessons. However, groping also occurred during lessons:

I was sitting during the lesson when one of the boys started to touch me<sup>37</sup> (A Russian Girl, 1337).

Gym was mentioned separately as a place where harassment had occurred:

At the physical education lesson boys thrust where they have no right to<sup>38</sup> (Russian Girl, 1452).

During physical education I wanted to take the ball from a boy when another boy grabbed me and started to grope me<sup>39</sup> (Russian Girl, 1453).

In light of prior research, the message that gym class is a space of fights of domination is not surprising. For example, Martin Mills (2001), Jon Swain (2005) and Donna Eder *et al.* (1995), who have researched relationships of children/youth at school, think that a football play is an example of an arena where the demonstration of the extreme forms of masculine behaviour – such as aggressiveness, strength, speed, competitiveness and domination of the opposite group – are required. In this kind of a cultural atmosphere, the position of the girls can be characterised by a double binary opposition: a binary opposition based on the team and a binary opposition based on gender. The treatment that the girls describe above seems to be based on a type of oppressive atmosphere.

The citation 1453 is also an example of difference that quite often existed between the Finnish and the Russian girls' case-description: there were more such descriptions of groping in the Russian material that, at the same time, were descriptions of other type of physical violence. As seen in citation 1453 above, the Girl writes that the boy first grabbed her and then started to grope her.

Groping described by the schoolgirls and perpetrated by their male classmates typically did not happen just once. Although this was not

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37."Я сидела на уроке русского языка, и один мальчик стал меня трогать."

38."На уроке физкультуры мальчики держат и лезут туда, куда не надо."

39."Это было на уроке физкультуры. Я хотела отобрать мяч у мальчика, а другой мальчик меня схватил и начал лапать."

specifically asked in the questionnaire, many of the Finnish and Russian girls mentioned separately that groping had happened continuously<sup>40</sup>. However, there were also some very exceptional and separate cases in both the Russian and the Finnish material. An example of such cases is a description written by a Russian girl. She wrote that a group of boys on the way from school had dragged her and her friend to the forest. The older sister of the Girl had seen what happened and started to scream, which in turn made the boys let the girls go.

#### Girls' reactions and resistance

The girls' possibilities for resistance in the situations of groping differed between cases, school classes, and the countries although they also included similarities. It was usual for both Finnish and Russian girls that the girl did not have the possibility to resist in the groping situation. It happened quickly and unexpectedly. After the groping, the reactions of the groped girls differed. Some of the girls were not in a position to react even afterwards. They merely remained quiet about the issue. Most of the Finnish girls, however, resisted the act afterwards and informed someone about the experience. Typically, the Russian girls who wrote a case-description answered correspondingly. In terms of physical reactions to the situations, some Russian girls had walked away, but clearly more typically the harassed girl hit the perpetrator.

None of the Russian girls informed about settling the groping through mutual conversation with the perpetrator, and only one Finnish girl mentioned a successful outcome from a mutual conversation. The case was exceptional also for other reasons. Firstly, the girl informed that she was groped by a person who was a trusted friend. The groping happened only once; and furthermore, the girl interpreted that the boy did it unconsciously. Usually, however a discussion did not help. On the contrary, many girls informed that none of information about the unpleasantness of the harassment had stopped the perpetrator; neither through conversation nor by shouting:

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40. In the Finnish data, there were twenty girls who answered in such a way.

When I came from school, he grabbed my butt many times. I yelled “stop it”, but he just laughed. At school he sings: “It is time to fuck ... my name,” etc.<sup>41</sup> (Finnish Girl, 561.)

The Girl also told the teacher about the case, and the perpetrator had been punished with detention. This, however, did not stop the harassment.

Emotional, and other consequences being groped

Emotionally, groping had been a negative experience for the girls; even to describe the case seemed to be difficult for many of them<sup>42</sup>. Experiences of unpleasantness, shame, hate, fear and vulnerability were present in the descriptions, but there were quite big differences between the Finnish and Russian girls in what negative emotions were mentioned and how the negative experiences were described. The biggest difference was in how the girls wrote about unpleasantness.

Some boys are pinching butts and sometimes boobs and even though you say that it’s not funny, they keep doing it<sup>43</sup> (Finnish Girl, 652).

The Girl describes the unpleasantness of being groped with the words “not funny”. It can be interpreted that a discourse of pleasure was somehow present in the groping situation. The utterance “not funny” was not only used by that girl. Quite many Finnish girls wrote correspondingly. The following citations describe in more details the funny – not funny – contradiction of the groping situations:

... They think it is hilarious!! (but we don’t)<sup>44</sup> (Finnish Girl, 532.)

Boys grab butts for fun, but it is nasty<sup>45</sup> (Finnish Girl, 439).

41. “Kun tulin koulusta hän puristi takamuksesta monta kertaa. Huusin lopeta mutta hän vain nauroi. Koulussa hän laulaa: ’on aika panna ... mun nimi’, ym.”

42. We made our interpretation based on the fact that many girls used more cruel language while describing the case of groping than they used while answering the other questions of the questionnaire.

43. Pojat puristelee takapuolesta ja joskus rinnoista ja vaikka sanoo että se ei ole hauskaa niin ne vain jatkaa.

44. “... se on niiden mielestä tosi kivaa!! (mut ei meistä)”

45. “Pojat puristelee takapuolesta ihan leikkimielisesti mutta se on inhottavaa.”



Both of the Girls inform us that to grope girls was considered to be funny by the perpetrating boys, although the experience was the opposite for the girls. In some cases “*the fun*”-discourse was so strongly present in the text that it was not easy to find out what the message really was:

It’s not very nice ... but it doesn’t bother much ...<sup>46</sup> (Finnish Girl, 490).

The message in the first part of the sentence can be interpreted that the groping experience had been a mildly pleasant, although not a very pleasant experience. From the second part of the sentence however, one can assume that the experience had been irritating. Other responses from the same Girl reveal that the boy’s actions had been repetitive and vexatious in nature, and that there were also other girls in her class who had to evade the boy because he kept on groping them.

In fact, the above texts portray, on one hand a fun-discourse which is used as a means to normalize groping. An action that is called funny is socially more acceptable than an action that is conceptualised as being scornful and overwhelming in nature. On the other hand, these texts also portray the boys’ performances of making fun connected with constructing and maintaining certain masculine identities. To have fun through sexual harassment aimed at girls not only maintains a cruel masculine climate, but develops the acceptance of a male identity that is characterised by making girls feeling vulnerable and by underestimating them. Furthermore, through these types of actions some boys also reproduce and maintain gender hierarchies in their mutual relations. (Ohlsson 1999, Kehily & Nayak 1997.)

Many studies show that it has been common also for adult perpetrators to explain sexual harassment with fun-discourse, or as a joke (Ramazanogly 1987, Thomas & Kitzinger 1997, Sandler & Shoop 1997, Timmerman & Bajema 1999, Eyre 2000) and portray the victims of harassment as over-sensitive and lacking a sense of humour when they have protested the harassment.

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46.“Ei kovin kivaa ... mutta ei siitä ole paljoa haittaa ...”

Russian girls did not use this *“fun”-discourse* in describing the experiences of groping. However, a Russian girl wrote that boys’ touching can be experienced as nice, although she personally did not like it.

Well I play with boys and they can touch places where they should not. Some think it is nice but I don’t.<sup>47</sup> (Russian Girl, 1774.)

On the basis of this text, it is not possible to say, whether the Girl wants to inform that to experience groping was nice for some persons, or whether she is trying to make a difference between pleasant and unpleasant touching. Some Finnish girls, however, described the difference between pleasant and unpleasant touching by saying that to touch her might not be wrong depending on her relationship with the person touching her:

Boys in our class/school, who grab, or well better to say, squeeze our asses and who we don’t fancy unless it is some boy who is an acquaintance<sup>48</sup> (Finnish Girl, 655).

The writer draws a clear distinction between the two situations, when touching is pleasant and when it is not. That information is important because pleasant experience is not physical sexual harassment.

Many previous studies have suggested that sexual harassment may cause a feeling of shame for those who have been harassed (Herbert 1989, Larkin 1994, Korhonen & Kuusi 2003). Messages of shame are also included in this data, especially in its Russian cases.

... I was just ashamed<sup>49</sup> (Russian Girl, 1358).

I am ashamed to write about that<sup>50</sup> (Russian Girl, 1370).

The first Girl described being ashamed of what had happened, and the second Girl was ashamed to speak about her experience.

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47. “Ну допустим, я играю с пацанами, и они могут за все, что не нужно трогать. Некоторым это приятно, но мне нет.”

48. “Meidän luokan/koulun poikia jotka kápälöi tai no paremmin sanottuna puristelee perseestä, joka ei miellytä ellei kyseessä oo joku läheinen poika.”

49. “... Мне было просто стыдно.”

50. “Не хочу писать об этом (стыдно)”.

Hate also arose among the girls who experienced groping; but the descriptions of hate and of “not-funny” experiences came from different writers. Many of the girls who reported that groping had made them feel hate also described a physical counter-act:

... I turned and hit him in the face with a fist<sup>51</sup> (Finnish Girl, 185).

... He got a real bruise<sup>52</sup> (Russian Girl, 1410).

... slapped my bottom. I hit him in the same way but not in the same place<sup>53</sup> (Russian Girl, 1565).

I took his hand and twisted it until it nastily, cracked<sup>54</sup> (Finnish Girl, 469).

One and quite many others have grabbed my ass and rubbed my leg. I beat him (not drawing blood, but hard)<sup>55</sup> (Finnish Girl, 199).

In some girls’ minds groping caused vulnerability and fear to arise. This affected the girls’ everyday experience at school:

After that I became jumpy<sup>56</sup> (Finnish Girl, 646).

Staying away from somebody and being on the alert means making special arrangements in daily schedules, usage of space and choosing which way to go, as one of the girls mentioned. There is further evidence of this in previous research of, for example, Päivi Korhonen and Meri Kuusi (2003).

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51.“... Käännyn ja löin nyrkillä naamaan.”

52.“... Он получил хороший синяк.”

53.“... За заднее место в школе шлепнул. Я его так же стукнула, только не по тому месту.”

54.“... Otin kädestä kiinni ja väänsin kunnes rusahti ilkeästi.”

55.“Eräs ja aika monta muutaki on puristanut perseestä ja hieronut jalasta. Mä hakkasin sen (en silleen verille, mut kovaa).”

56.“Minusta on tullut säikympi.”

## Consequences and explanations of groping

The emotional experiences of unpleasantness, shame, hate, fear and vulnerability that were discussed in the previous chapter were consequences of groping. Other consequences the children mentioned in their texts varied from self-doubt and silencing to counter-acts.

... Anytime a boy takes something close from me or comes near me I put my hands to cover my crotch. Only with certain guys.<sup>57</sup> (Finnish Girl, 103.)

Since then, I have stayed away from that boy (Finnish Girl, 127).

But as discussed in Chapter 7 where numerical results were reported, for both the Russian and the Finnish participants it was more common to report that the mistreatment caused consequences for the perpetrator than to say that it did that for oneself. It seemed that the children emphasised physical level consequences or punishment in their descriptions.

From the girls' individual texts, it is difficult to determine the consequences of groping on the level of a whole school class. We will deal with this question later in the Chapter 9, and it will be based on all the texts of a certain school class. Previous research results, however, indicate that on the social and organisational levels, sexual harassment maintains and reinforces a hostile atmosphere and stereotypes of females as sexual objects. It also influences general morale and it can destroy students' study abilities and possibilities. (Eyre 2000, Timmerman & Bajema 1999, Mankkinen 1999a, Mankkinen 1999b, Cairns 1997, Thomas & Kitzinger 1997, Sandler & Shoop 1997, Lott & Reilly 1996.)

Some girls gave explanations for the boys' groping. In the texts of the Finnish girls, one can find quite a few explanations like "just for fun", "puberty", and "over-activity" in single accounts. But it was more common for the Finnish girls not to explain the boys' acts of harassment but, rather, express anger because of their experience. For the Russian girls, it was more typical than for the Finnish girls not to write about the matter. The

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57. "Aina ku joku poika ottaa mun vierestä jotain tai tulee lähelle pistän kädet haarojen suojaksi. Vain tiettyjen poikien kohdalla."

following explanations can be found in the texts of the Russian girls: “an average student,” “he acts like I was his property,” “boys can sometimes forget” (apparently good manners, VS), “a boy is worrying.”

Groping where the harassed girl interpreted the boy’s behaviour as an advance formed a small portion of explanations in the Finnish and Russian data; although, for example, many teachers make the assumption that boys sexually harass girls because they lack the skills in expressing their positive feelings towards girls.

The explanations the girls made of groping are interesting to compare with the explanations that Korhonen and Kuusi found while researching retrospective memories of the experiences of sexual harassment by Finnish women. Korhonen and Kuusi (2003: 60–73) named the following models of explanation: naturalising, pathologising, hierarchy-based, puberty emphasising, critical towards the comprehensive education, and oversexualisation emphasising. All the other explanations are present here, but one – critic towards the comprehensive education – is missing. This difference is easy to understand because the informants in Korhonen’s and Kuusi’s case were adults looking back at their school times.

### Summary

Based on the case-descriptions, the physical sexual harassment that the girls experienced was characteristically unpleasant for them. In addition to unpleasantness, physical sexual harassment produced and maintained vulnerability, shame, fear, and hate among the girls. Harassment happened repeatedly even during a long period of time in hallways, stairwells, the cafeteria, the gym, on the school-bus, and even in classrooms just like some other research results also indicate (e.g. Sadker & Sadker 2001, Korhonen & Kuusi 2003).

The girls’ body parts that had been groped were usually buttocks or breast and are typical body parts of physical sexual harassment perpetrated against girls (Herbert 1989, Korhonen & Kuusi 2003, Larkin & Rice 2006, Sadker & Sadker 2001), as also against women (Sunnari *et al.* 2005b, Heikkinen 2003, Timmerman & Bajema 1999, Vangen & Eder 1998, Sandler & Shoop 1997). The perpetrator was usually an individual boy

from one's own school class if harassment happened at school. But if it happened on the way to school, the girl did not know the groper. Typically groping had not been accidental and can be viewed as intentional acts to hurt the girls. Finnish boys' behaviour was partly framed with a fun-discourse, where it was used to normalise the harassment.

Groping in Finnish schools often happened in public. The Russian case-descriptions reflect the same occurrence. As discussed in Chapter 3, the forms, meanings, and contexts of sexual harassment are historically, culturally, contextually changing. Carrie Herbert writes in her book, "Talking of Silence" (1989), that sexual harassment experienced by her schoolgirl informants in the UK in 1980s was usually not a public affair, whereas another study from the US in the 1990s indicates that school harassment was generally experienced in public. (Sadker & Sadker 2001: 122.)

#### *A girl as a perpetrator of groping experienced by a girl*

Four Finnish and two Russian girls described experienced groping as perpetrated by a girl or girls. None of the descriptions were of the type that was typical for the experienced groping written by girls and perpetrated by boys – to grope the buttocks or to amuse other children. In five of the cases, however, the question was about touching and in three cases, touching the body had been a problem:

We were walking home with a girl from the fourth grade and she touched my butt lightly. Disgusting.<sup>58</sup> (Finnish Girl, 121.)

When she passes by she kind of touches<sup>59</sup> (Russian Girl, 1109).

The Girls write that they had experienced groping perpetrated by individual girls who had touched them. In all of the three cases the touching had been light, and none of the texts allow the researchers to make a direct interpretation that the acts had been intentional mistreatment,

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58. "Käveltiin kotiin nelosluokkalaisen tytön kaa ja se hipas mun takapuolta. Ällötti."

59. "Она проходит мимо и, как бы задевая, трогает."

where the aim had been to produce vulnerability and/or to make fun at the expense of the touched girl. Nor is it possible to say that the acts had included an element of showing one's superiority. However, all the three cases include similarities with the harassment typically perpetrated by boys toward girls: the girl touched the other girl and the touched girl had an unpleasant experience. The acts thus fill the criteria of physical harassment. But were the acts gendered or sexual of their nature? From the point of view of cross-gender relations, the acts could not have been gendered because the harassers and the harassed were all girls. But from the point of view of the same gender relations, it would have been possible.

Some research results indicate that girls consider it as positive being close to each other and touching each other (Eder *et al.* 1995, Hey 1997, Duncan 1999, Ambjörnsson 2004, Eliasson 2007, Öqvist 2008). That is considered to be a part of gendered female identity work in childhood (e.g. Eliasson 2007). But if the cases were actually gendered female identity work, the experiences would have been positive for the touched girls, and they were not. On the other hand, a general level interpretation of girls' closeness is gendered and biased, too (Hey 1997, Ambjörnsson 2004, Eliasson 2007, Tallavaara 2003).

One possibility is that the touching stirred up a feeling connected to one's bodily integrity or sexual identity. Another possibility is that the unpleasantness was caused by sexual vulnerability in the culture of heteronormative and/or homophobic norms of sexuality and sexual behaviour. In one of these three cases, it also is possible that the feeling of unpleasantness was connected to the harassed girl's homophobic and/or heterosexist doubt of the other girl's sexual orientation. As the Girl mentions in the citation 121, a girl's touching the Girl's bottom *lightly* caused a *feeling of sickness* in the Girl.

There were two girls who wrote about a girl's other type of touching as an unpleasant experience. In one of the two cases, a girl had touched another girl's ear lobes and it was an unpleasant experience. In the other case, a girl would hug and hold hands with the Girl, which again was an unpleasant experience. These two cases were borderline cases when we decided whether to categorise them as physical sexual harassment. The

question was whether sexuality was a component in the cases or not. As an alternative, we discussed the possibility that the unpleasantness was caused by age difference (e.g. Duncan 1999, 2002) or social class difference (e.g. Hey 1997, Eliasson 2007). A possibility, too, is that the unpleasantness was caused by more general level individual boundaries of bodily intimacy.

In the sixth case, where a girl reported having experienced groping perpetrated by girl(s), the question was not only about a light touching. Mistreatment in this case was clearly intentional.

They tore down my pants when I was leaving home<sup>60</sup> (Finnish Girl, 565).

A group of girls had humiliated the Girl by tearing down her pants just when she was leaving school to go home. The mistreatment was very clearly sexualised, in addition to being intentional.<sup>61</sup> Whatever the reason was for the perpetration in this case, and even though the case is an isolated case, it reveals an important fact that some girls use sexualised violence toward other girls and happened in a very humiliating and also sexual intimacy hurting manner.

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60. "He vetivät housut alas kun olin lähdössä kotiin."

61. Because of the exceptional character of the case, we checked whether the other texts of the Girl and of the other children of the class can reveal some additional information to the case. Some research results indicate that girls mistreat each other because of boy(friend)s (Duncan 1999, Eliasson 2007). In text 565, in which the girl describes her groping experiences, there is no sign of her having dated or gone out with boys. There is also no sign of this in any of her questionnaire answers. Based on information obtainable in her entire answer sheet, we can form a picture of a rather quiet girl who prefers to observe things at a distance. She is a 5th grader on a combined 5th & 6th grade class in a school in the countryside. One could, of course, make guesses based on the examples presented by e.g. Neil Duncan (1999, 2002) that she is a victim of abuse from older girls in her class, explicitly due to her being younger than the others. However, there is no sign of any such thing in her answers or in the answers of her classmates. But, what becomes apparent in her and her classmates' replies is that the atmosphere in their class is rather restless, and that there are several pupils in the class that are being bullied or abused. As grounds for being bullied, the replies pinpoint being "overweight," "better at school than others," and/or "being pretty." One of the pupils states in her/his questionnaire answers that some pupils are envious of others, that they do not tolerate pupils that are different, and that these are the reasons as to why there are so many problems related with sexism. As an example of sexism, she/he states that girls cannot go to the girl's room in groups unless they want to be labelled as lesbians. Intolerance of differences between pupils manifests itself even as intolerance of special diets, e.g. the use of hydrolyzed lactose milk (HYLA-milk).



## Summary

Each of the cases of groping experienced by girls and perpetrated by girls were separate cases and the acts were non-intentional rather than intentional mistreatment. In one case, however, the mistreatment was clearly intentional and cruel, and vulnerability and insecurity producing.

### *Physical sexual harassment as experienced by boys, perpetrated by girls*

There were three cases in the Finnish data and ten cases in the Russian data that we interpreted to represent the type of groping that would represent physical sexual/sexist harassment experienced by a boy and perpetrated by girl(s). All three cases in the Finnish data were separate cases; none of the boys reported that the mistreatment had happened at school, on the way to school or from school; and none of the boys mentioned that the harasser had been a girl from his own school class.<sup>62</sup> A 5<sup>th</sup>-grade boy writes:

X<sup>63</sup> kicked a little someway and it felt nasty<sup>64</sup> (Finnish Boy, 111).

The Boy explains that he was somewhat touched by a girl just as some of the girls explained their experience of groping perpetrated by a girl. But what is different from the girls' texts is that the Boy informs that the touching was a "special" kind of kicking and that he felt *nasty*. This seems to be more in line with the texts of the girls perpetrated by boys who did not dare to illustrate in detail what happened. The two remaining Finnish boys also wrote that they were kicked. However, in these instances, they described being kicked in the crotch. In one of the two cases, the act had seen a counter-act: the boy writes that before the girl kicked him in the crotch, he had tried to persuade the girl to have sex. Violence as a counter-measure against bullying was in fact quite common in replies provided by girls. However, punching or hitting the genital area was not common.<sup>65</sup> In

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62. Of course, it is possible that this was the case.

63. We omitted the name of the girl that was mentioned in the quote (VS).

64. "X potki vähän jotenkin ja se tuntui inhottavalta."

the third case, the boy had been harassed by more than one girl. The girls had stolen money from the boy and before doing so, one of the girls had tripped the boy. In this case, sexual harassment was thus used for other, criminal purposes. This also happened in the northern countryside in Finland.

As for the Russian boys' experiences of groping perpetrated by girls, the picture is different than that of the Finnish boys'. The texts of the Russian boys portray cases of groping that seemed to be intentional physical sexual harassment that happened repeatedly, and four of the boys explicitly explained that the groping happened at school. One case was during physical education and another took place in the school library.

During the physical education lesson, I was pushed down on the mat, after that groped and my T-shirt was tore off<sup>66</sup> (Russian Boy, 1344).

This Boy's experience has similarities with the harassment cases perpetrated by Russian boys and experienced by girls in physical education. The second Boy describes his experiences of groping and sexism which occurred often. There was more than one perpetrator:

I was at the library and she grabbed my buttocks. And one figuratively licked me with her tongue. And many other things.<sup>67</sup> (Russian Boy, 1876.)

In some cases, harassment was characterised by a girl's attempt to try to get the boy's attention although the boy had told her that he did not like the girl's company. In one such case, the boy had hurt the girl only because she

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65. This boy was in the sixth grade in a countryside school, and the texts in his answer sheet strongly emphasise sex and were sexist in nature. In addition, the atmosphere in the boy's whole school class seemed to be very sexist. There were 17 children in that class, 11 boys and six girls. Many of the girls wrote about verbal harassment and groping. The teacher and some boys were also victims of verbal sexual harassment. Pubertal changes were a particular target of harassment. Girls were particularly hurt for these reasons, but also some boys were subjected to them. The girls, who formed the minority of the pupils in that class, wrote that they had formed a firm group to protect each other.

66. "Это было на физкультуре. Меня затолкали на матах, а потом облапали и порвали на мне майку."

67. "Я стоял, и она цапнула меня за ягодицу. А одна образно облизывала меня языком. Еще много других случаев."

came over to him when he did not want her to. On the basis of the text, there is reason to believe that it happened because of “the inherited power bequeathed the male gender,” to use the words of Carrie Herbert (Herbert 1989: 20). The same topic has been discussed by Jan Crosthwaite and Graham Priest (2001) in the context of sexual harassment among adult people.

Three of the boys told that the harassment had caused consequences for him but they did not tell what kinds of consequences. Instead five of the boys told what kind of consequences he caused to the perpetrator.

A girl from my yard came to me, groped me and then ran away ... I punched her in the face.<sup>68</sup> (Russian Boy, 1928.)

### Summary

The characteristics of the cases of groping experienced by the Finnish and the Russian boys and perpetrated by girls were different. All of the Finnish case descriptions were discussed as separate cases without a continuation and without any common picture. It was even not possible to see, on the basis of the descriptions, whether the harassment had happened at school in more than in one case; and none of the boys mentioned that the perpetrator had been from one's own school class.

The form of physical harassment that the boys informed to have experienced was being kicked in the crotch, which was unpleasant. In one of the three kicking cases, the harassment was a counter-act.

The picture of the physical harassment that the Russian boys had experienced as perpetrated by girls is partly different. Some of the Russian boys wrote about a separate act, but some of the boys had experienced groping as perpetrated by girls repeatedly and some of the perpetrators had been from one's own school class. Furthermore, in some cases, groping had been an intentional act to hurt the boy and maybe also to make fun at the expense of the boy's feelings. In these types of cases, groping had produced vulnerability. In some cases, the boy's immediate counter-

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68. “Девочка с моего двора подошла ко мне и облапала меня, а потом убежала ... Я ей морду набил.”

reaction was strong. The remarkable feature here is that on the basis of the boys' texts, the counter-reaction was stronger in the cases where the boy's dominating identity was threatened than in the cases when the boy had experienced a more general personal vulnerability.

### *A boy as a perpetrator of physical harassment experienced by a boy*

Four Finnish and ten Russian boys wrote that they had experienced groping perpetrated by a boy or boys. The cases are of three different types on the basis of the quality of the experience: cases that are quite neutral descriptions on embarrassment and reflections on a boy touching him, cases that are more in line with unpleasantness caused by sexual harassment, and cases that are characterised by a homophobic and sexist culture. Descriptions below are examples of the two first types of the cases:

I became friends with one boy and we played hide and seek with the others. We hid in the same place and he hugged me, thereby hid me from the gaze of a person who was looking at.<sup>69</sup> (Russian Boy, 1685.)

At school. He is playing but I do not feel like it is a game.<sup>70</sup> (Finnish Boy, 280.)

Touched everything<sup>71</sup> (Russian Boy, 1865).

The texts from both a Finnish and a Russian boy give messages of a strongly homophobic culture:

... started to rub chest during recess... Others started calling me a fagot ...<sup>72</sup> (Finnish Boy, 324.)

The Boy describes how a boy from his school class rubbed him on the chest during recess and how, as a result, the others had started to label him

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69. "Мы дружили с одним мальчиком, и как-то мы с ним и друзьями играли в прятки. Мы спрятались в одном и том же месте. Он обнял меня и укрыл от взгляда вады."

70. "Koulussa. Hän itse leikkii, mutta minusta se ei tunnu leikiltä."

71. "Трогал все, что не попадя."

72. "... alkoi välitunnilla hieromaan rinnasta... Muut on alkanut haukkumaan homoksi."

as “a homo”. Several classmates of the Boy mention both the case and the labelling, but with different interpretations of what had caused the labelling. We will return to the case in Chapter 9. The Russian case seems to be characterised by a homophobic culture and took place during recess:

When I fell on my stomach ... X fell on me and it was unpleasant. I beat him up.<sup>73</sup> (Russian Boy, 1616.)

What the Boy experienced was unpleasant, and as a result, he beat the other boy up and started to call him names. In addition to exhibiting homophobic traits, the attitude of the Boy was thus strongly macho-masculine as well.

Debby Epstein (1996) maintains that homophobia plays a fundamental role in regulating and constructing heterosexual masculinities in schools because masculinity and heterosexuality are entwined, and thus to be a “real” boy or girl is to be heterosexual. That is a gender-question instead of a sexuality-question. From that point of view, the acts experienced through groping because of homophobic attitudes were gender harassment instead of sexual harassment.

#### *An adult as a perpetrator of groping experienced by girls and boys*

One type of groping which seems to be even more silenced than groping typically is groping that is perpetrated by adults towards children. During the past decade, these kinds of cases have also started to increasingly surface, but they are often not tackled in the manner that their seriousness calls for. Rather, a deaf ear is often turned to the cases even in educational environments. Six Finnish and seven Russian pupils in this research material wrote that they have experienced groping perpetrated by adults. The adult gropers of the Russian pupils were all unrelated to school, and it was so also in one of the cases in the Finnish material. However in five Finnish cases, the perpetrator was a member of the perpetrated child’s teaching staff.

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73. “Когда я упал на живот, и на меня упал X мне было неприятно. Я набил его.”

### Characteristics of the Russian cases

Three Russian boys and five girls had been subjected to harassment from a female or male adult. A woman had groped the children at the railway station and at a party.

It happened last year. On Young People's Day. It may be she had drunk too much?<sup>74</sup> She pressed me against the border that separates the stage and the audience.<sup>75</sup> (Russian Boy, 1841.)

A man in his thirties came to me (there was around 50 of us) and touched my willy. We beat him up.<sup>76</sup> (Russian Boy, 1857.)

The Boy continues to explain that the harasser had been taken to a first-aid station as a result of the assault.

Two Russian girls wrote that they had been victims of an attempted rape. One of the two perpetrators was wanted for other crimes and was later put in jail.

### Characteristics of the Finnish cases

The Finnish cases were from four schools. In three cases, the child being harassed was a girl and the harasser was a male teacher; in two cases a boy had experienced groping from a female teacher; and in one case the groper had been an outsider. The outsider was a woman who had harassed a boy and had tried to take the boy's trousers off while making erotic comments. The boy did not know the perpetrator, but he saw her later on the street. The boy had not told anyone about the event until this study. The groping had taken place on his way to school.

In the two cases where a teacher had sexually harassed a Finnish boy, the teacher had been a woman. Both of the two female teachers had

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74. This holiday's official name is Youth Day, and in Russia it is celebrated on the 1<sup>st</sup> of June.

75. "Это было в прошлом году. На День Молодежи... А, может, она немного перебрала? ... Она прижала меня к бордюру, отделяющему сцену от зрителей ..."

76. "Ко мне подошел человек лет тридцати (нас было пятьдесят человек) и потрогал меня за пиписку. Мы его избили."

touched the boys' buttocks. In addition, one of them had snickered and laughed, and the other had brushed the boy's whole back. The acts were interpreted as harassment from the boys' perspective, but they had not reported the incident. We will return to one of these cases in Chapter 9.

A Finnish girl who had been harassed by a teacher did not talk about the case or its consequences in detail. She only mentioned that the perpetrator was her mathematics teacher.

The two remaining girls were on the same class and obviously the harasser was the same teacher.<sup>77</sup> One of the girls described an incident that had happened two or three years earlier. The teacher had run his fingers above the Girl's knee when she was sitting in her seat in the classroom. The Girl had told her parents about the case. As a result, the harasser was reprimanded:

That issue that he has done has been brought up and those others and they have been dealt with<sup>78</sup> (Finnish Girl, 196).

The Girl did not mention whether the issues were settled at the school or outside of it. The other girl who experienced groping as perpetrated by an adult in the same school class told that she experienced it from a member of the teaching staff. She reported her experiences of being harassed to the principal, but the principal said that he did not want to get involved in the matter.

Previous research results indicate that tolerance of sexual harassment is critical in determining whether harassment will occur (Timmerman & Bajema 1999, Sandler & Shoop 1997). This research confirms the result. The class of the Girl who wrote the case-description 196 (above) consisted of twenty two children; ten girls and twelve boys. After a brief observation, the girls and boys in the class seemed to form two opposite groups. According to both the boys' and girls' texts, the girls' group regarded school success an important factor, and in the boys' group the school failure was prominent. Girls were characterised by calmness and kindness and boys by restlessness and violence.

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77. One of the girls mentioned the name of the teacher and the other mentioned his position.

78. "Se asia on otettu esille mitä hän on tehnyt ja muutkin asiat ja ne ovat jo selvitetty."

There was a strongly heterosexist atmosphere in the school class. It was the school class with the highest percentage value of children who reported having experienced groping in all the Finnish data. Seven of the ten girls wrote that they had experienced physical sexual harassment at school and the same amount of the boys wrote about the same topic. The girls wrote:

One boy grabbed ass<sup>79</sup> (Finnish Girl, 188).

One and quite many others have grabbed my ass and rubbed my leg. I beat him (not drawing blood, but hard).<sup>80</sup> (Finnish Girl, 199.)

One moron grabbed my butt. I turned and punched him in the face.<sup>81</sup> (Finnish Girl, 185.)

It was not all the boys who groped the girls, but several of the boys were clearly perpetrators. The name-calling was also heavy and heterosexist, as were the boys' mutual relations. Boys wrote about beating each other up and name-calling. They also wrote about heterosexist harassment in their mutual relations which can be seen for example in the following:

A boy was called a flabby penis<sup>82</sup> (Finnish Boy, 194).

Four girls wrote about the teacher who had grouped them and described him as being a pervert and a paedophile.

### *Characteristics of 'Don't want'-cases*

As Sheila Riddell and her co-researchers (2001: 93) argue, it is often possible to learn a great deal about the research field by looking not at the well-trodden ground, but at the gaps, the absence and the silences. But how can researchers study the experienced harassment if the harassed explains that she or he does not want to go into detail about the case?

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79. "Yksi poika puristeli perseestä."

80. "Eräs ja aika monta muutaki on puristanut perseestä ja hieronut jalasta. Mä hakkasin sen (en silleen verille, mut kovaa)."

81. "Eräs ääliö puristi takamuksesta. Käännyin ja löin nyrkillä naamaan."

82. "Pukuhuoneessa yhtä haukuttiin lörppämunaksi."



As discussed in Chapter 6 ‘*Don’t want*’-texts were a type of answer to the question “Can you tell about what happened?” This question was directed at those pupils who had mentioned having been groped at school or on the way to school. In the Finnish data, there are four texts written by girls which include the ‘*Don’t want*’-message. As many as 48 Russian girls and 17 Russian boys wrote in this way<sup>83</sup>. There is not much information that can be deduced from their answers. Some children had added something to the text “Don’t want”. Some children had said something about the consequences of the groping, and some children mentioned something additional while answering the question to whom the case was told about.

If something additional to “Don’t want” was mentioned about the content of the case, the message was that the experience was very problematic for the writer.

No way ... I have become more jumpy<sup>84</sup> (Finnish Girl, 646).

Furthermore, the writer’s descriptions of the consequences of the harassment both to oneself and the perpetrator depict the particular characteristic of the cases:

After this incident my back was sore<sup>85</sup> (Russian Girl, 1148).

He was called to go to the director and I called him a pervert<sup>86</sup> (Russian Girl, 1149).

He was taken to see a specialist and they had a discussion with his mother<sup>87</sup> (Russian Girl, 1932).

Expelled from school (the perpetrator, VS)<sup>88</sup> (Russian Girl, 1036).

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83. Of all the answers from the Russian girls that were placed in this category, 34 are proper “I don’t want to” -answers, three are “I can’t” -answers, and in nine of the answers the girls state “I won’t” or “I won’t tell.” Approximately half of the Russian boys’ answers are “I don’t want” or “I can’t” -answers and the rest are “I won’t tell” -answers.

84. “Emmä voi. ... Minusta on tullut säikympi.”

85. “У меня после этого события болела спина.”

86. “Его вызвали к директору, и я назвала его извращенцем.”

87. “Его водили к социальному педагогу и разговаривали с его мамой.”

88. “Его исключили из школы.”

I cried<sup>89</sup> (Russian Girl, 1478).

After this incident I had bruises on my arms as well as my offender<sup>90</sup> (Russian Girl, 1128).

Three Russian girls who did not want to talk about the case had been groped by a man. One of the girls added that there had not been any consequences for the perpetrator. The other girl writes:

I became very reserved<sup>91</sup> (Russian Girl 1211).

She had told her grandmother about the case. Also the third girl, who belonged in the *'Don't want'*-group and had been groped by a man, said that there had been consequences for her although not revealing what the consequences were. She answered "No" to the question of whether there had been consequences for the perpetrator. Furthermore, she has put four exclamation marks after the "No". By doing this, she seems to be sending out the message that there should have been consequences for the perpetrator.

There is even less information in the boys' *'Don't want'* -writings than corresponding texts from the girls. There is some kind of extra information about the case in two answers. In one of them, the perpetrator was a woman and the boy notes:

I don't want to (tell about what happened, VS), it is an anal question<sup>92</sup> (Russian Boy, 1712).

In the other paper that includes extra information, the groper had been both a boy and a girl and the writer notes that he does not want to talk about "stupid people".

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89. "Я плакала."

90. "У меня после этого были синяки на руках и у обидчика тоже. Ему тоже досталось."

91. "Я стала очень замкнутой."

92. "Не хочу! Это анальный вопрос!"

### *What stopped the harassment?*

The pupils were not asked whether the harassment had stopped and what had stopped it. Fifteen Finnish and a few Russian girls however wrote about the matter. Five Finnish girls and a Russian girl wrote that the harassment was still going on. Three Finnish and three Russian girls mentioned that the harassment had stopped by using violence as a defence against the harassment. The victim's older sister came in between and stopped the harassment in a Finnish case by threatening the harasser with consequences from an older boy. And a Finnish girl had solved the matter with the harasser successfully, as was discussed already. One Russian girl explained that the harassment had stopped so that the Girl started to stay away "from that particular person".

In some cases, the harassment had been stopped momentarily. That happened, for example, in a Finnish case when a classmate came and asked the perpetrator to stop. However, later this harassment continued until the perpetrator changed schools. Five Russian girls and a Finnish girl explained that their teacher's actions stopped the harassment, momentarily, or permanently.

The pupils, however, told the teacher about the harassment very rarely. Only in one Finnish case and in five Russian cases when a boy had groped a girl, the girl had informed the teacher about the harassment. The consequence in the Finnish case had been that the teacher had given the boy detention, which did not, however, stop the harassment. Soon after the punishment, the boy started to behave in an even more threatening way. The case involving a girl who informed the staff that a teacher had groped her was discussed in Chapter 8.5. There are only two additional cases in the Finnish physical sexual harassment data where a teacher somehow was present in the text. In one case, the harassed girl had threatened to tell the teacher about the harassment if the boy would not stop. In this case, the threat had a positive effect. In another case, the teacher had punished both the harasser and the person being harassed. In this particular case, a boy had groped a girl, and the girl had hit him in the face causing his nose to bleed. The teacher had scolded the girl for behaving aggressively, and

additionally the teacher had informed the boy that it is not allowed to grope someone.

In seven instances of a Russian girl being sexually groped, the teacher became aware of the matter, either so that the victim told of the matter directly to the teacher (5 cases), or through other means. These incidents seemed to bring about immediate consequences; the perpetrators were subjected to punitive measures, the parents of the perpetrator were called in to discuss the matter, and/or the perpetrator was sent on to a school councillor. It does not become apparent from the answers whether the consequences produced any long-term effects.

In the 'Don't want' -cases described by Russian girls, the teacher became aware of the matter in two cases. In each of these two cases the teacher acted on the matter briskly. In one case, the boy was taken to the school's principal, and in the other case the boy was taken to a school councillor and the matter was discussed with the boy's mother. Concerning the other Russian 'Don't want' -cases in which the victim was a girl, all the 'Don't want'-cases, in which the victim was a Russian boy, and the 'Don't want'-cases when the victims were Finnish girls, there is no mention at all that the teacher was aware of the matter.

There is reason to enquire why so few victims told the teacher about the harassment. Did they fear that the teacher would attempt to normalize, trivialize or even question the experience? For example, the case involving the teacher as the harasser where the principal did not want to commit himself in regards to the matter gives evidence to these kinds of fears. Furthermore, there is reason to believe that some of the pupils did not tell their teacher about the harassment because of a cool-status orientation that seemed to be quite strong in Finnish and also in Russian school classes. Recently, however, if the victim of sexual harassment informs the teacher in Finland of sexual harassment, she/he is not allowed to remain neutral. Her/his responsibility is to take a stand and act to take measures when such things happen in school because the teacher has a responsibility in creating a positive atmosphere in the teaching environment.

## **9 From the individual towards an institutional perspective in the classroom**

We chose to observe a Finnish school class in order to widen the perspective of groping and sexism to more of an institutional level. The reason for choosing only a Finnish school was because the Russian research material was not divided on the basis of the school class but on the basis of the school.<sup>93</sup> The school class came from a suburban school. A countryside school class was not chosen because the intimacy of the children would have been threatened.

We had the following reasons for choosing the school class for observation:

1. According to the texts of the children, the atmosphere in the class seemed to be more cruel than average.
2. A boy in the class reported experiencing groping from a female teacher.
3. The label “homo” was strongly focused on an individual boy in the class.
4. The label “whore” was strongly focused on an individual girl.
5. Four children informed they were afraid of somebody at school.

The aim of the observations was to contextualise the cases and to build a picture of the social atmospheres of the class based on all the texts the pupils had written in the questionnaire.

### *Characteristics of the school class*

There were 10 girls and 16 boys in the class, meaning that the size of the class was a little bigger than an average class in the Finnish research material. The boys were dominating both the social relations and the atmosphere of the class. The atmosphere was physically, socially and psychologically threatening; and peace and safety for ordinary school

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93. Russian school-administrators and teachers wanted that.

activities were disturbed. Many of the boys and girls mentioned it, adding, however, that some of the boys did not have much, if anything at all, to do with the unpleasant atmosphere.

Violence was discussed by the pupils who had experienced violence themselves and by those who had not. All the pupils wrote about unpleasant name-calling and bad-mouthing, and most of them also about physical violence occurring in the class. In the mildest form, the unpleasant act that a child reported was gossiping behind each other's backs and was not considered serious by the child.<sup>94</sup> But even gossiping had, in some cases, meant something more serious and degrading in this class. However, usually the children did not report gossiping. They had been beaten, tripped, pushed against other pupils, and called names and bad-mouthed on various grounds. The girls' bodies were being judged commonly, and also boys who were physically or sexually less mature than others or who were for some other reasons not in line with the dominating norms were being bullied. Children who did their schoolwork and children who dared to talk to their teacher about the problems were also bullied. Sixty-five percent of the pupils reported that they themselves had been targets of varied unpleasant acts. However, there were three girls and six boys who mentioned that they had not been targets of unpleasant acts.

According to the pupils' texts, one could be mistreated by being "too intelligent" or "stupid", too small or too tall, or too mature or too immature in terms of physical sexuality or dating/not dating. But the most often mentioned reason why pupils were mistreated dealt with domination – some boys' determination to dominate. These boys' competition for a position in the hierarchy of masculinity seemed to be extremely intimidating and frightening for some individual boys and girls in the class. There were even four pupils in this class, who made up 15 percent of the class that reported that they were frightened to come to school. Three of the pupils were girls and one of them was a boy. The percentage of students

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94. Gossiping does not always mean popular girls' talking with like-minded and with equal status. Talking behind the back can also be the victim's effort to handle unpleasant experiences at least with someone. There seems to be girls in the class who represent this kind of talking-behind-the-back.

who felt this way was clearly more than average (10 percent) in the Finnish research material.

There seemed to be six boys in the observed class who influenced the violent atmosphere the most. The boys maintained domination in a macho-masculine realm. Furthermore; the pupils mentioned that “Neo-Nazi” was used as a term in the name-calling. This word was very rarely seen in the whole data. The use of this term combined with the data showing that it was very common for a group of boys in this class beat each other up gives a reason to believe that the violent atmosphere in the class was in addition to being heterosexist, also racist and fascist.

The class-teacher seemed to be aware of the brutality that many boys exercised. And she herself seemed to have problems with teaching and up-bringing tasks in this class.

In regards to the question of whether the pupils personally mistreated others, nine boys out of sixteen informed that they had acted in such a manner. Three girls also admitted to this type of behaviour. Five boys and six girls wrote that they avoided using mistreatment in their class. Pupils’ information about their personal misbehaviour and mistreatment was in line with their more general level information about the misbehaviour in the class.

### *The group of dominating boys*

There were ten boys in the school class who admitted to mistreating their classmates. Six of them seemed to make up the group of boys who dominated and maintained the cruelty in the class.<sup>95</sup> But only a couple of them seemed to form the group that maintained the “tough guy” -culture. One of them was a boy who was characterised by many of the classmates as dominating and using violence:

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95. Four of the boys did not belong to the bullies’ group and also seemed to be outside of the actual macho culture. According to their texts, they mainly exercised verbal violence when something especially made them upset.

“...one of the guys in our class is obsessed with acting like a tough guy”<sup>96</sup> (Finnish Boy, 315).

Some other boys of the group sooner seemed to do what they considered was needed to do in the group. Two out of the six boys considered that bullying was a game, to have fun, and most of them mentioned that they themselves experienced bullying at school. For some of these boys the everyday school life was strongly characterised by the cruel demand to bully and to be bullied.

The scales of bullying, making a fool of somebody and marginalization seemed to be wide-spread and common among the boys, and some of the texts written by them were characterised by a strong macho-masculine culture. In cross-gender relationships it meant that there was a kind of heterosexist framework that placed girls as objects of a sexist gaze and challenged these boys to question issues that were regarded as feminine. It included judging, labelling, groping, sexual harassment and abuse. Some of these boys separately informed that they grope girls. According to the macho-masculine norms, obtaining the ideal image of a girl presupposed, besides remaining silent about domination, that the girl was sexy, which in the texts entailed “having big titties” and “being well-assed.” In addition to possessing such attributes, a popular girl was also supposed to be affable and cheerful (Finnish Boys, 320, 317, 331, 324), which refers to a highly gendered moral order (Hird 2002). Also questioning or defying school norms was definitely amongst the attributes qualifying a boy as macho. The interrelationships of the girls were of no interest to these boys, albeit with one exception. One boy (Finnish Boy, 317) wrote about the girls in a manner different than the style described above. The most diverging difference was that he did not write of the girls as objects.

This Boy seemed to be popular at least in the group of the dominating and dominated boys and he had physical characteristics in line with the ideal norms of popularity in the group. He was tall, and he was a successful bully. In regards to the question of why unpleasant acts happened, he answered: “It is fun, and many times it doesn’t even make them cry”.<sup>97</sup> In

96.“... eräällä meidän luokkalisella on pakkomielle kovistella.”

97.“Se on hauskaa, eikä monesti edes itketä.”



addition to being a bully, he seemed to be free enough not only to be cruel. The Boy mentioned that he protected some boys and was bullying other boys. He even named a couple of boys who he considered to be kind and with whom he did not fight. In regards to the girls, he wrote that girls usually did not want to cause harm and that he did not bully them. This was the same boy who wrote that he had not been mistreated.

To tease others and to be irritated seemed to be central topics for most of the boys in the group. Through irritating others, a pecking order and fight culture were upheld amongst the boys (cf. Tallavaara 2003). To become repeatedly irritated characterised strongly every day school life of some of the boys in the group.

*"I have called a boy a fagot when others have also done so"*

The word "homo" was used in this class, according to the examples the children gave, as a general name-calling word to hurt someone when the name-caller was for some reason suffering, mad, annoyed or being picked on. The term was also used as an individually targeted name-calling word of one particular boy daily.

The pupils in the class were fully aware of how one particular boy was continuously being teased and called a homosexual. The teacher knew of the matter as well. One pupil also indicated this in their response and said that the teacher had "resolved the problem." However, the name-calling did not stop. As another pupil in the class wrote:

Someone is called a fagot nearly every day<sup>98</sup> (Finnish Boy, 320).

As for concerns of how the name-calling had started, the pupils had differing opinions:

In our class a boy has been called a fagot cause he accidentally touched another boy's back<sup>99</sup> (Finnish Boy, 318).

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98. "Lähes joka päivä jotakin haukutaan homoksi."

99. "Luokallamme poikaa haukutaan homoksi kun vahingossa koski toista poikaa selästä."

When we were playing football, so someone from our class touched another one by accident, and he was instantly called a fagot<sup>100</sup> (Finnish Boy, 322).

One boy is called a fagot, I don't know why<sup>101</sup> (Finnish Boy, 317).

... One of my classmates began to seem a little gay ...<sup>102</sup> (Finnish Boy, 323).

I have called a boy a fagot when others have also done so. Anyway, so that the boy doesn't hear it. I know it is ugly.<sup>103</sup> (Finnish Girl, 314.)

Also the Boy who was labelled as a homo considered that the name-calling began by touching, but his image of what had happened to start the name-calling in the first place was different from the responses 318 and 322. The Boy wrote that another boy had rubbed him on the chest during a break, and therefore that had signalled to some other boys that he was homosexual. From then on, he was bullied.

A classmate of the bullied boy considered that this boy began to “seem like a homo” and that is why he was labelled. The explanation is in line with the cruel atmosphere of the class. Some other children from other schools reported that they did not use the term *homo* for boys they knew to be truly homosexuals. To be cruel towards people of non-mainstream sexuality might, however, be more typical than to be sensitive. Homophobic and heterosexist attitudes at schools influence in that people with non-heterosexual orientations will be bullied a lot as research results indicate (e.g. Lehtonen 2003, Bedford 2008). If the school culture is macho-masculine – or fascist, the norm system can be even more exclusive with harsher consequences for those outside the norm.

No matter what the sexual orientation of the Boy really was, a problem was produced relating to his possibilities to grow up with a positive self

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100. “Kun me pelattiin jalkapalloa niin meidän luokkalainen vahingossa koski toista ja häntä alettiin heti sanomaan homoksi.”

101. “Erästä nimitetään homoksi, en tiedä miksi.”

102. “Yks mun luokkakaveri alko vaikuttaa vähän homolta ...”

103. “Olen saattanut sanoa jotain poikaa homoksi kun muutkin ovat niin tehneet. Kuitenkin ettei se poika sitä kuule. Tiedän, että se on rumaa.”

image. This was visible, for example, in the Boy's answer to the question of whether he experienced fear at school, on the way to school or at home<sup>104</sup>. The Boy answered that he was afraid of some of his classmates at school because "some guys keep hitting you, calling you names, and tease you most of the time"<sup>105</sup> (Finnish Boy, 324).

The same boy reported having experienced groping by a female teacher. The entire class had visited the public swimming hall, and the teacher had been talking to a fellow teacher by the pool. As the boy had walked by, she had slapped the boy's buttocks. The boy's experience was that the teacher had snickered and laughed at him while doing it. The Boy had experienced the acts as harassing. Maybe the question was not about an intentional harassment, as was discussed already, but for the boy, as he experienced it, the act was harassment.

### *Non-bullying boys*

There were six boys in the school class who wanted to stay outside the bullying culture and five of them had a possibility to do so. They did not take part in bullying, nor were they bullied. The commonality for the boys was that they all reported having fewer friends than other boys in the class on average, and one of the boys said he had none. Although the boys shared these characteristics, they did not share a special group membership of non-bullies: three of the boys explained they stayed away from bullying because they were not strong enough, whereas two of them said that they did not value fighting or violence.

The boys wrote about violence in their class. They associated bullying with some boys in the class. In addition, they wrote that one boy was or that some boys were especially troublesome because of his/their violent behaviour. Two of the boys separately mentioned that girls did not cause problems. A boy in this group, however, explained that girls occasionally called their classmates names, and hence misbehaved to some extent. What is noteworthy is that although some of the boys in the class wrote about

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104. This question preceded the questions of mistreatment in the questionnaire.

105. "Koulussa jotkut hakkaa melkein aina. Tai haukkuu ja kiusaa."

*either* verbal or physical violence as problem in their class, all the boys in this group wrote about *both* physical and verbal violence.

These boys did not write about girls as objects as most of the dominating boys did. Furthermore, three of them seemed to have very little – or nothing – to write about girls, as if giving a message that they were staying out of the girl classmates' world entirely, as they seemed to stay out of the boys' world as well. Furthermore, some of these boys had been born a year earlier than the others, had trouble with their studies, had just moved to the school class, were small in size, or had pubertal changes in their face.

### *Non-bullying girls*

There were six girls in the class who did not take part in bullying. Like the corresponding group of boys, these girls did not form any special group. Three of the girls were not bullied, and they wrote that they wanted to stay out of all the girls' and boys' disagreements and violence. One of them had just moved to the school. In contrast to the boys who ignored the events related to trouble and conflict, these girls seemed to follow the events in class actively. It meant that in the questionnaire, they described what happened in the class in detail and they expressed their opinion of why they thought the events occurred. The three remaining girls who stayed out of the disagreements and violence were, however, targets of unpleasant acts, and two of them also reported that they experienced groping. Additionally the third girl was groped, although she did not discuss it when she was asked about it. One of the groped girls was also bullied because of physical changes caused by puberty. The groped girls were two of the few Finnish girls who did not go into detail about what happened. These girls were groped and threatened by boys, and two of the groped girls were afraid of coming to school.

In reference to the violence in cross-gender relationships, these girls also emphasised that the boys were the main culprits who used and caused the most of violence in the classroom. The boys' violence and bad behaviour towards the girls could not be explained by the girls doing something wrong to the boys first. On the other hand, one of the non-

bullying girls did not feel completely confident concerning girl classmates either because of not being able to trust some of them. Partially it seemed to have to do with the mutual heteronormative control that challenged girls to participate in the heterosexual hassle and then punished each other for it (see Duncan 2002). In relation to this, the special topic in the girls' discussions seems to be the several boyfriends that one girl in that class had dated.

### *Girls as offenders*

There were three girls who answered yes to the question of whether you yourself use violence in mutual relationships in regards to their classmates. Two of them admitted that they misbehaved sometimes in the mutual relationships with girls adding that the issue was frequently about boyfriends – in line with what some of the non-bullying girls wrote and other research studies also indicate (e.g. Eder *et al.* 1995, Hey 1997, Duncan 1999, Duncan 2002).

Additionally there was a girl who did not answer the question asked but in another context stated that she used certain forms of violence and that it was obligatory in her school class to “give back when needed.” She explained that she was bullied because she was different and that her violence was her defence against mistreatment in her class. She was called names and when that happened, she explained how she fought back. Furthermore, she did not answer any questions concerning the issues connected with boys' mutual relationship and commented that boys and their activities did not interest her. She considered all the girls to be her friends, although she did not like that some girls talked behind her back and called her names, like boys more generally did. She emphasised that it was worthwhile to defend herself in the classroom although it meant she would get into trouble. Those pupils in the class who stayed out of violent activities did so because they were afraid of trouble, the Girl thought. (Finnish Girl, 311.)

### *A girl “getting along” with every pupil*

One girl announced that she was everybody’s friend and was “getting along” with everybody, although sometimes she gossiped about her classmates and was a topic of gossip. In her opinion, gossiping meant talking with like-minded people about someone who was not liked “behind his/her back”. This kind of gossiping is used to strengthen and to test the like-mindedness of fellow classmates. But as the Canadian researcher, Donna Eder, and her co-researchers (1995) point out, this kind of gossiping can also be used to test and to listen friends’ opinions on issues that one way or another concern oneself, where the person is afraid to ask directly.

The girl, who “got along” with everybody was popular in the whole class, which apparently affected her possibility to get along with everybody. Her popularity was not only a question of social qualification. As one of her classmate’s wrote:

The most popular girl is popular because

- she is nice and friendly
- she looks better than others
- she is good at school
- she dresses better<sup>106</sup> (Finnish Girl, 314).

### *“Whore, what a whore”*

The word “whore” was used in this class like the word “homo” as a general name-calling term to hurt someone’s feelings. Almost all the pupils mentioned that the word was in use in their class. One girl was extensively labelled as a whore, bullied, and afraid of someone at school. She stated that she did not have any friends in her class. Both boys and girls gossiped about her, and as she herself pointed out, she thought all the girls hated her. She also described details of her sexual relationship and pupils’ mutual

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106. “Meidän luokan suosituin tyttö on suosittu koska:

- Hän on mukava ja ystävällinen
- Paremman näköinen kuin muut
- Hän on hyvä koulussa
- Hän pukeutuu paremmin.”

sexual experiments. This is the girl who did not answer the question concerning sexist name calling or the question concerning grouping. In some parts, the sexual experiments, in which the Girl informed to be involved in, seemed to catch her attention. Her partners did not stay within the limits she would have liked in their sexual experiments, and they abused her in their various experiments.

Boys were the most frequent name-callers in the class, and their labelling could be harsh, as it becomes clear from the following quote:

...<sup>107</sup> is a whore. Whore, what a whore.<sup>108</sup> (Finnish Boy, 331.)

The respondent was a boy who belonged to the group of the dominating boys.

Sexist grounds of labelling and being labelled as a whore can be seen also in girls' texts:

The boys call (girl's name, VS) a whore (which is true). She has been with every boy.<sup>109</sup> (Finnish Girl, 310.)

Neither this writer nor the other pupils mention anything negative concerning those boys who "have been" with the girl labelled as a whore and possibly with many other girls as well. Furthermore, nobody mentioned anything about the teacher trying to settle the case.

### *Summary*

The case-study indicates that the relationships between boys and girls in the school class were disrespectful and abusive, including physical and verbal sexual harassment, heterosexism and homophobic attitudes. A group of boys defined and demonstrated their masculinity through beating each other and other boys up, using abusive and humiliating language, and through using homophobic and heterosexist language and groping the girls. The heterosexualisation of a girl's body (Renold 2000) was strong by most of the dominating boys. The heterosexualisation of the bodies included a

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107. The name of a girl has been taken away.

108. "... on huora, huora mikä huora."

109. "Pojat haukkuvat ... huoraksi (se on kyllä totta). Se on ollut kaikkien poikien kanssa."

demand for attractiveness with the purpose of being heterosexually desirable.

The atmosphere in the school class was largely threatening, although it was not so for all of the children. A girl and a boy who were very popular in the school class did not experience mistreatment. The conditions of popularity differed according to the gender of these two children. Furthermore, some boys and girls who consciously stayed outside the mutual relations managed to avoid experiencing violence. Not to experience violence was more difficult for the girls than it was for the boys.

Only one child maintained that she actively resisted the violent culture, although many of them mentioned that it was very harmful. The pupil who resisted the violent culture was a girl and was mistreated. By resisting the norms in the classroom, she encountered trouble. Also some of the non-violent children had a negative rather than a supportive view towards the girl. According to them, it would have been better not to resist the dominating boys. This kind of orientation seems to be common also among women who experience violence. Sad here is that if the harassed person is not able – or if other persons of the community are not able – to counter the behaviour that one finds humiliating effectively, the person is further humiliated because the problem does not go away without active actions. As Kathleen Lynch and Ann Lodge, who have conducted research on equality problems in school-classes in Ireland, argue, the lack of debate within schools about the dominating practices of relatively small numbers of boys in relation to other boys as well as girls suggest that dominance-driven definitions of masculinity have a non-questioned hegemonic status. (Lynch & Lodge 2002: 130.)

The class teacher seemed to be very well aware of the brutality that many boys exercised, and furthermore, the mistreatment was perpetrated also against her. She, however, did not manage to change the atmosphere. She tried to settle a case of calling a boy homo without managing to stop the name-calling. In terms of groping and labelling the girls, there was no mention of actions where she had tried to stop it. That is very much in line with what has earlier been written about the normalization of sexist behaviour towards girls. For the most part, it seems to go undocumented,



viewed as normal, natural and undeserving of attention (Hird 2002). On the other hand, for example David and Myra Sadker (2001) have made the interpretation that teachers rarely intervene in macho-masculine brutality because they are afraid of confronting the perpetrators, and it is possible that it was the case here too.

Obviously the teacher did not know that a boy had perceived that she had groped him. The boy had not mentioned the matter to anybody before writing about it in the questionnaire. For the boy, the female teacher slapping his buttocks seemed to deepen vulnerability concerning his sexual identity and intimacy. A big issue for him was that he was labelled as a “homo.”

However, it is important to think whether it also is so that in our culture, when a female professional – like a female teacher or a nurse – slaps a child’s or a patient’s buttocks, it is not as easily identified as sexual harassment as in the cases when the act is conducted by a man – irrespective of how the act will be experienced.

## 10 Conclusion and reflections on the results

In this research, we focused on physical sexual harassment as a mistreatment that threatens the realisation of full citizenship, safety, dignity and equality of girls and boys at school. There were 1738 children aged 11 to 12 years from **36** northern Finnish and **22** northwest Russian school classes who answered a group of questions concerning their experiences on physical sexual harassment at school or on the way to school. The research indicates that physical sexual harassment is common in schools even in the northern peripheries of Europe. Furthermore, it was common for the Russian children to say that they did not want to describe the details of the experienced physical harassment (*'Don't want'* -cases). The silence of the details gave a message that the experience had hurt their intimacy deeply. In addition to groping explicitly in the form of physical sexual harassment, especially Russian children wrote about other types of violence.

On the basis of the children's answers to the question whether they had been groped at school or on the way to school, and on the basis of our analysis of the case-descriptions the children wrote, we consider that at least every fifth of the Finnish and every fourth of the Russian girls experienced physical sexual harassment at school or on the way to school. More than every tenth of the Russian boys and a little less than every twentieth of the Finnish boys had partly corresponding experiences<sup>110</sup>.

A very clear difference between the Russian and Finnish children's descriptions of physical sexual harassment was that for the Russian children it was clearly more difficult to write about the issue. We will return to this question later in this chapter.

Girls constituted the vast majority of the victims of physical sexual harassment at school and boys constituted the vast majority of perpetrators. A girl was groped in nine cases out of ten by a male classmate in both the Russian and Finnish data. If the perpetrated child mentioned more than one

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110. We came to the estimation by adding to the percentages of *pure mentions of groping*, the percentages of *'I don't want'*-cases and of the descriptions of physical sexual harassment. But as for the pure "Yes"-responses and *'Don't want'*-responses we estimated that maybe, in line with the groping descriptions, one half of them represented corporal punishment or other type of physical violence, and the second half represented physical sexual harassment.

perpetrator, which was quite common for the Russian children, at least one of the harassers had been a boy. But, the boys' harassers were not very commonly girls. The harasser of the Finnish boy was more often another boy than a girl. In the Russian data, the perpetrator was in six cases out of ten a girl alone or with somebody else. The picture of perpetrators in the cases when the child wrote that she or he did not want to tell the details of what had happened (*'Don't want'* -cases) was in line with the picture of the perpetrators in the cases that included a more detailed case-description.

In the cases where a girl was perpetrated by a boy classmate, it was often possible to infer messages of heterosexism – the exercise of, or an attempt to exercise masculinist power over girls. Heterosexist messages could also be seen from some of the cases where a boy or a girl had experienced groping by a classmate of the same gender. In boys' mutual relationships and in girls' indeed, the heterosexist norm not to be different in sexual terms was exceptionally strong in some school classes. Children who did not, or could not, conform to the social demands of rigid definitions of masculinity and femininity were socially terrorized, ostracized, and very clearly isolated. Furthermore, typically, in the school classes that were characterised by a strong heterosexist culture, the reasons for mistreatment were plentiful. In addition to gender, one could be mistreated also by being “too intelligent” or “stupid”, too small or too tall, too mature or too immature in terms of physical sexuality or by dating/not dating.

Homophobic messages could also be seen from some of the cases where a boy or a girl had groped a classmate of the same gender. It is important to notice here that it was not exclusively boys that gave homophobic messages, although these characteristics were more common in boys' texts<sup>111</sup>. Homophobia is a consequence of heteronormative cultural contexts that demand people to struggle against, or for, being identified by

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111. Homophobia and violence connected with it have been researched very little in educational environments, as also Fiona Leach with her co-researchers (2006) argue. On the other hand, heterosexism and homophobia will in some theoretical and practice-based discussions be dealt with as synonymous. In our conceptualisation, homophobia is a fear of not having a mainstream sexuality orientation or of not being seen to have a mainstream orientation in the eyes of the others.

others as different (Willis 1977, Ambjörnsson 2004, Eliasson 2007, Davison & Frank 2006). But as Kevin Davison and Blye Frank (2006) argue, difference, as such, is not a problem, and on contrary, it can add richness to human relationships. Difference can become problematic when defined by those within the dominant social group.

Typically groping as physical sexual harassment occurred in hallways, in front of the restrooms, in the gym, on the school-bus and bus stop, or on the road to school or from school. But it also occurred in classrooms.

The questions involving what the children's reactions to experienced harassment were, and what the consequences of harassment were, are challenging. Alison Thomas and Celia Kitzinger (1997) have found out that actual victims behave quite differently from how hypothetical victims say they would behave if experiencing groping. While facing hypothetical scenarios, people talk of confronting the harasser and/or making formal complaints. But according to Thomas and Kitzinger, actual victims are often internally focused in their responses. The victim can pretend that the situation did not happen or that it had no effects. She or he can ignore the harassment without doing anything, or she can blame herself for the behaviour of the harasser. If the victim focuses externally, the most common behaviour is avoidance, meaning that the victim simply attempts to avoid situations where she may be the subject of harassing behaviour. Another externally focused response that Thomas and Kitzinger have found out is appeasement, which means an attempt to put off the harasser without direct confrontation. "By far the most infrequent response to sexual harassment is to seek institutional or organizational relief," they continue. (Thomas & Kitzinger 1997: 10.)

In line with Alison Thomas' and Celia Kitzinger's statements, it was typical for the children of this research who described their experience to mention that groping had not caused consequences for them if they answered the question about consequences. If these children gave an account of the consequences, they more often mentioned that the perpetrators were faced with consequences. There, however, were contradictions between these answers and the messages that were possible to read from other parts of the texts of the children. On the basis of the

children's answers to the question of consequences of groping, their case-descriptions, and the case-class analyses, physical sexual harassment that the children had experienced caused personal vulnerability, shame, hate, fear, and self-doubt. It also could contribute to anxiety and other mental and physical harm. Some of children who had experienced groping wrote also about marginalization and fear to come to the school.

The children who wrote the *'Don't want'* -descriptions of their experiences involving groping clearly more commonly told that the mistreatment caused consequences. Typically they wrote that harassment caused consequences for oneself and for the perpetrator. Shame was more often mentioned in these papers than in other ones.

Cathleen Cairns, a Canadian researcher who has focused on sexual harassment, wrote in 1997:

What we did find surprising was the fact that we still found a very high frequency and intensity of confusion, self-blame, guilt and shame being expressed by female victims of harassment and coercion in response to these experiences (Cairns 1997: 91).

The fact that it was Russian children – especially girls – who wrote much more often than the Finnish children of feelings of shame might indicate that sexual harassment is less discussed in northwest Russia than in northern Finland. From that point of view, to feel shame connected with experiences of sexual harassment would not be a question of “still” for them but a question of an issue that is yet too little discussed. But the feeling of shame is not only a matter of “feeling”. Eve Sedgwick, a pioneer in the queer theory in the US, argues that shame and identity remain in dynamic relation to one another. For her, shame is the affect that strongly defines the space wherein a sense of self will develop, because shame attaches to and sharpens the sense of what one is. Furthermore, because shame both derives from and aims towards sociability, shame-humiliation throughout life can be thought of as an inability to effectively arouse the other person's positive reactions to one's interaction. (Sedgwick 2003: 37.) The feeling of shame thus indicates processes that can deeply affect the person who feels shame.

Instead of the feeling of shame, many Finnish girls used the expression “not fun” fairly often. The Russian children did not use this expression. The ways how the “fun” -discourse and the “not fun” statement were used sheds light on the socio-cultural specialities of the political use of sexual harassment among the Finnish children. Sexual harassment was typically carried out by Finnish boys in the context of having fun. It clearly was “fun” for oneself and other boys at the costs of the girls’ psycho-social well being. A discourse means such a way of speaking, thinking or writing that presents particular issues as self-evidently true. As also Myra Hird (2002: 119) argues, such ‘truths’ are presented as unchallengeable, which means that, within a particular discourse, only certain things can be said or thought. To challenge the truth presupposes stepping out of the discourse that some of the girls very clearly also tried to do.

A few schoolgirls in the Finnish data explained groping as a kind of “normal” teasing or showing one’s interest. But even in the cases where that might have been the case, the problem still remains that positive emotions are expressed in a sexist way.

In line with previous research (Lott & Reilly 1996, Cairns 1997, Thomas & Kitzinger 1997, Eyre 2000, Larkin & Rice 2006, Chege 2006, George 2006), sexual harassment was the most typically, on the level of the school class, a component in disempowering girls, maintaining and reinforcing a hostile atmosphere, and stereotyping girls as sexual objects. The case analyses showed that sexual harassment can strongly influence the general morale-climate of the school classes and destroy or limit children’s learning possibilities. But it is important to emphasise that all boys were not perpetrators of sexual harassment. Nor can one assume on the basis of this research that relationships between boys and girls were, in all the schools and school classes, marked by strong boundaries with the form of physical sexual harassment. The relationships between the genders seemed sooner to be characterised by positive co-operation in some of the school classes (Cf. Thorne 2003, Lynch & Lodge 2002).

The type of groping that surprised us the most was groping perpetrated by an adult towards a pupil; a boy or a girl. This is not to say that sexual violence perpetrated by adults against children is a new issue. What

surprised us was that it became visible in the context of researching 11 to 12 years old children's experiences of groping in school contexts. Six Finnish and seven Russian pupils in this research material described their experiences of groping perpetrated by adults. In five Finnish cases the perpetrator was even a member of the perpetrated schoolchild's teaching staff. The adult gropers of the Russian pupils were all unrelated to school. Most of the cases where the perpetrator had been an adult were more silenced than groping typically. During the past decade, these kinds of cases have also started to increasingly surface, but they are often not tackled in the manner that their seriousness calls for. Rather, a deaf ear is often turned to the cases even in educational environments. This research material witnessed one such case. A member of teaching staff had harassed a girl and the girl had informed her principal about it. However, the principal had no interest in getting involved in the matter.

As some previous research results indicate, tolerance of sexual harassment is critical in determining whether harassment will occur, especially in educational settings involving children. Children should be protected against all types of discrimination and mistreatment at school, and the teaching staff has a special obligation to take care of that. Huge problems of not wanting to get involved are visible in the atmosphere of the school class. The social climate of the whole school class was very sexist and had been so for a long time. It was a group of boys who defined what was acceptable and what was not, and especially many girls but also some boys had difficulties in school because of the atmosphere of the classroom. Furthermore, although the principal might have wanted to forget the case by not responding, the children did not. It was, in fact, reflected in language used by the pupils, where the man who had harassed the girl was described as a paedophile.

A reason for the principal's negligence might be that the principal wanted to be loyal towards the staff member and/or to protect the image of the school. This type of an organizational commitment<sup>112</sup> is, from the point

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112. James Kushman (1992) distinguishes between two different types of teachers' workplace commitment: organizational commitment and commitment to student learning. Organizational commitment means, according to Kushman, a sense of teacher loyalty to the school as a workplace and identification with its values, goals and images in public.

of view of children's learning and wellbeing, unmoral and particularly alarming.

The ways in which girls acted in heavily sexist classrooms varied on both the individual and classroom level. In one case-class, the girls reported that they had teamed up in defending one another. In another classroom with a sexist social atmosphere, some of the girls tried to obtain observer-status and were careful not to say or do anything that they considered might cause problems for them personally or to the atmosphere in the school class.

A case where a boy had experienced groping by a female teacher in the form of a slap on the buttocks at a swimming hall challenges us to demand women, too, to be more sensitive in their touching of another human being.

Quite many Russian girls and some boys reported that there had been more than one perpetrator. In the cases when more than one person had groped a girl, it was usual that one of the perpetrators was an adult, either a man or a woman. Solely on the basis of the information that these Russian girls gave, it is not possible to know in exactly what happened in these cases.

Researchers have discussed the reason why people keep silent about their experiences of sexual harassment repeatedly during the last decades (Gardner 1980, Herbert 1989, Cairns 1997, Hird 2002). As was discussed in Chapter 3, the main reasons involved in keeping sexual harassment invisible are connected to cultural and political issues.

Kathleen Cairns, a professor of counselling psychology at the University of Calgary in Canada, discusses different types of cultural and political mechanisms that work to perpetuate women's silence of sexual harassment. Two of the mechanisms she names are *the fragmentation of the sense of self* and *the internalised effects of more general level gendered socialisation*, including the embodiment of femininity and the development of a circumscribed sense of personal agency. She also discusses women's *practice of silence as a form of resistance to patriarchy*. (Cairns 1997: 94.)

Normalization of sexual harassment is a mechanism that produces and maintains the fragmentation of the sense of self. From the point of view of the harassed person, this means, for example, that she/he can start thinking



whether she/he should have experienced – or should experience – the harassment as normal (Eyre 2000, Cairns 1997, Sandler & Shoop 1997, Vangen & Eder 1998, Lee 1998, Sunnari *et al.* 2002b). It is difficult to discuss phenomena people register to be an obligatory although unpleasant part of one's normal everyday life.

The effects of gendered socialisation can influence in that it will be considered that girls should be flattered by male attention and keep the unpleasantness of the experiences to themselves. As Margaret Crouch (2001: 30) argues, before a particular set of behaviours could be conceptualised as sexual harassment, those behaviours have to be transformed from a private trouble into a public issue.

Influential in the invisibility of sexual harassment, of course, is also whether the harassed person has the vocabulary to conceptualise the experiences (Holland *et al.* 1995, Holland *et al.* 1998), and whether issues like sexual harassment are forbidden and punished or not. As also Myra Hird argues much of the behaviour that constitutes sexual harassment is not defined as such by the students or the teacher at school. (Hird 2002: 33.) Carrie Herbert believes that the question also involves a feeling of fault. As long as sexual harassment is considered sexually motivated, women and girls find it hard to understand it in the same way as they would, for example, a mugging. The reason for this is, according to Herbert, that mugging is regarded as something which is outside of their control, but sexual harassment can imply erroneously that women were involved in its occurrence. (Herbert 1989: 25, 34.)

It is possible that all the above issues were topical for the children of this study who did not want to discuss the details of their experiences. It is important to notice that the silence of the respondents of this research was, however, not total towards the researchers. Even the children behind the '*Don't want*'-texts informed they had experienced harassment, but they did not want to go into the detail. The silence especially of the writers of the '*Don't want*'-texts had been more total towards other people. Furthermore, in addition to girls, there were many boys among the Russian respondents who did not want to tell the details of what had happened.

As discussed in Chapter 3.1, some researchers of sexual harassment argue that only females can experience sexual harassment in societies of male domination. The results of this study do not seem to support the statement. To reflect the question in more details we wrote the summaries of the characteristics of sexual harassment that the boys and the girls had experienced.

On the basis of the numerical results, the analyses of the individual case-descriptions, and the situated cases, the following features characterized the physical sexual harassment that the girls had experienced:

1. It happened a lot.
2. It often happened repeatedly; in the school class, the corridor, at a school club, on the way to school or from the school.
3. Typically harassment had meant groping one's buttocks.
4. The perpetrator was very often an individual boy from one's own school class, or alternatively a group of boys from one's own class in the cases of groping at school. The girl did not know the groper in the cases where groping happened on the way to/from school.
5. Typically physical sexual harassment had been an intentional act to hurt the girl or to have fun at the costs of the girl.
6. Typically the girls reported separately that harassment was unpleasant.
7. In addition to unpleasantness, physical sexual harassment produced and maintained vulnerability, shame, fear, and hate, and in separate cases other negative consequences, too.
8. Many of the Finnish girls interpreted harassment as being partly a game for the boys; although it was unpleasant for the girls. The Russian girls considered the problem to be in a personal characteristic of the perpetrating boys.
9. Sexual harassment perpetrated by boys towards girls was typically heterosexist in character. If the terminology of Susan Kappeler is used, the political attitude of the harassing boys was that of *self-interest* in the form of *us boys* excluding girls and certain boys. Girls typically

encountered harassment and suffered it individually. Some girls, however, gathered together to protect each other. It is not, however, possible to say that it represented Kappeler's other political attitude, the attitude she calls *responsibility for the whole*.

10. Some girls tried to stay outside all the social affairs of their school class to avoid personal harm and/or the social climate to become even more problematic.
11. Exceptionally the harasser of the girl was another girl.
12. In some cases the experiences of sexual harassment seemed to be characterised by homophobia.
13. The harasser of a girl was in some cases an adult man.
14. Silence and difficulties to deal with details characterised often the Russian girls that had experienced physical sexual harassment.
15. The means to stop harassment were sparse and non-effective.

The above characteristics are in line in what has been written about sexual harassment that is targeted towards women and girls. The characteristics are also in line with the type of conceptualisations of sexual harassment that do not limit it to female experiences. Jan Crosthwaite and Graham Priest, who point out that only women and girls can experience sexual harassment in male dominated societies, emphasise that the question is about the essence and objective effects on the harassment. As was discussed in Chapter 3.1, for them the essence in sexual harassment is, and the objective effects are, to cause members of the subordinate group to experience their powerlessness as a member of that group. The characteristics of the sexual harassment that the girls experienced fit well with the essence and effects of sexual harassment that Crosthwaite and Priest offer. But the comprehension does not fit with the fact that there were also boys in the research material that informed of having experienced sexual harassment as perpetrated by girls.

The following issues characterise the groping experienced by the Finnish and the Russian boys:

1. All the Finnish boys who had experienced groping in the form of physical sexual harassment wrote about separate cases without a continuation, in line with what Myra and David Sadker (2001) have written. Their research results from US-schools indicate that while boys experience unwanted sexual behaviour, girls are far more likely to have been harassed repeatedly (cf. George 2006). Some of the Russian boys, too, wrote about separate acts, but some of them described physical sexual harassment that had happened repeatedly.
2. The cases of groping did not construct any common picture.
3. Only some of the case descriptions were located at school, more typically they were not.
4. None of the Finnish boys mentioned that the perpetrator was from one's own school class. The female perpetrators of the Russian boys were in some cases from one's own school class.
5. There were three Finnish girls who had sexually harassed a Finnish boy and they all had kicked the boy in the crotch. In one of the cases, the harassment was very clearly a counter-act. Russian boys did not mention having experienced that type of harassment as perpetrated by girls. In some of the Russian cases, however, groping had been an intentional act to hurt the boy and to make fun at the expense of the boy's feelings.
6. On the basis of the Finnish texts, it is possible to say that one of the cases produced insecurity, but in some of the Russian cases, the boys separately described that their experience was unpleasant and/or produced vulnerability.
7. In some Russian cases, the boy's immediate counter-reaction was strong, and it seemed to be stronger in the cases where the boy's dominating identity was threatened than in the cases when the boy had experienced a more general personal vulnerability.
8. The harasser of a Finnish boy was more often another boy than a girl, whereas the harasser of the Russian boy was more often a girl than another boy.

9. In some cases the harasser of the Finnish and the Russian boy was an adult woman. As for the Russian boys, the harasser was also an adult man.
10. In some such cases when the perpetrator was a boy, the experienced sexual harassment seemed to be characterised by homophobia and/or heterosexism.
11. Silence and difficulties to deal with details often characterised the Russian boys who had experienced physical sexual harassment.

The characteristics of the boys' experiences of sexual harassment are not as clearly in line with conceptualisations of sexual harassment as the characteristics of the girls' harassment experiences. Differences are very clear from the part of the groping-experiences of the Finnish boys. For example, all the Finnish boys who mentioned having experienced physical sexual harassment perpetrated by a girl or girls wrote about separate cases without any common picture. In one of the cases the girl's harassment had clearly been a counter-act and in one case the sexually harassing act had been a tool to steal the boy's money. In neither of these two cases was the question about physical sexual harassment if presupposing that the essence and essential effect of sexual harassment is to produce powerlessness among the harassed as members of their gender group. But there was a Finnish boy and a couple of Russian boys, perpetrated by a girl or girls, whose descriptions on harassment were more in line with what girls typically wrote about their experiences of physical sexual harassment.

Another possibility would be to take a similar viewpoint to Larry May and John Hughes (1992) who state that although sexual harassment causes two types of harm – discrimination and coercion for females – coercion is the harm it typically causes for males. The third possibility is to think that purely dichotomy-based divisions are not relevant anymore – nor such general level contextualisation, like society, while naming who can and who cannot suffer sexual harassment as discrimination. However, to notice that sexual harassment causes harm on individual level, group level and organisational level is important. Important to notice is also that the consequences of harassment are different for different groups of people on

the basis of the social position of the group. Sexual harassment is strongly bound with cultural and historical issues and in our western societies for example for homosexual people sexual harassment might mean discrimination regardless of their gender.

Furthermore, the research results strengthen the comprehension that although masculinities are socially constructed and although historically masculinity has been kept as the preferred “superior” subject positioning, the question of positions is recently more complex. As Connell (2006) argues different cultures construct masculinity differently. Some cultures make heroes of soldiers and consider violence as an ultimate test of masculinity. Others regard violence with more contempt. Additionally, more than one kind of masculinity can be found within a given cultural setting, as the school class of the case study also revealed. The case school class also strengthened Connell’s comprehension that hegemonic masculinity is hegemonic not just in relation to other masculinities, but in relation to the gender order in general.

In line with Donna Eder and her co-researchers (1995), Neil Duncan (1999), and Laurie Mandel and Carol Shakeshaft (2000) and many other researchers, there is reason to emphasise that sexual harassment in schools is seriously harmful. It teaches limited conceptions of, and orientation in cross-gender and same gender relationships, and socialises girls and boys into having a narrow, simplistic understanding of gender, and of sexuality. And they reproduce social and sexual inequality and marginalization. Furthermore, sexual harassment in schools leads to disrespectful relations and limits especially girls’ but also boys’ self-expression, gender identity, and patterns of children’s mutual relating.

There are differences in the research material based on the country and the region, as well as between classrooms, concerning whether there were perpetrators in a classroom who were allowed to exert physical sexual harassment. On the basis of the type of the environment only, it is not possible to say whether sexual harassment exists there or not. Explanations to the question of why a lot of sexual harassment existed in certain classrooms should be sought – amongst many other issues – in what kinds of value systems are constructed and maintained in the classroom; what children are encouraged and

not encouraged to do and how they are encouraged; which unofficial implications are constructed when putting a particular class together; with which criteria are pupils chosen for a particular class formation; by which criteria teachers are chosen and choose a particular class; what type of support teachers receive in constructing circumstances for solid schoolwork, and in what other aspects do teachers receive support.

Pupils' texts about what stopped harassment are not promising. Although the children were not asked whether the harassment had stopped and what had stopped it, fifteen Finnish and a few Russian girls wrote about the matter. Almost one half of them wrote that the harassment was still going on. Some children had successfully managed to stop harassment by using violence as a defence against the harassment, and only one child informed to have stopped harassment through conversation. Only five Russian girls and a Finnish girl explained that their teacher's acts stopped the harassment, but in some of these cases it was only momentarily halted. The pupils even told the teacher about the harassment very rarely which is very much in line with the silence that characterises sexual violence at home: and as discussed in the introduction, sexual violence also in intimate relations has proved difficult to eliminate. Fiona Leach (2006: 27) even argues that violence in schools cannot be divorced from violence in the home. Both of them are characterised by the gendered hierarchy and the socially accepted specialities of what constitutes masculine and feminine behaviour.

Ceri Hayes (2007) a senior programmer and policy manager at WOMANKIND Worldwide<sup>113</sup>, UK, argues that the prevalence of violence against women can only be reduced through a combination of sustained, strategic and comprehensive measures to address both the short-term requirements of individual survivors, and bringing the perpetrators to justice, and the longer-term cultural and attitudinal changes required to challenge the acceptance of violence against women. The teachers' attempts to prevent sexual harassment that were present in the research

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113. WOMANKIND Worldwide is an international women's human rights and development organisation, established in 1989. It works with partner organisations around the world to promote women's rights and tackle gender inequality.

material of this study suffered a lack of long term cultural, structural, and agency-oriented actions. Some of the teachers used short-term actions that are important but not enough.

But in order to organise successfully a relevant anti-sexism programme aimed at promoting equity, human dignity, and safety, schools need to develop their own policies, particular to their own needs. Christine Skelton (2001: 175) thinks that the politics could be ascertained by exploring four key questions. The first of the questions is, what images of masculinity and femininity are children bringing with them into school and what types are they acting out in the classroom and playground. The second question involves what the dominant images of masculinity and femininity are that the school itself reflects to the children. Additionally Skelton challenges the schools to explore, what kinds of role model the school wants and expects from its teachers, and what kinds of initiatives / strategies / projects should teachers be undertaking with children to question sexist gender categories.

Elisabeth Meyer from the US argues that at the school leadership level, changes are needed in three areas to create a positive and supportive school environment: in policy, in education, and in resources and support. She points out that without institutional support, the isolated efforts of overworked teachers, frustrated parents and targeted young people will have only a small, short-term impact on the experiences of the students. (Mayer 2006: 48.) By policy she means a whole school policy that outlines clear, definite guidelines on actions against violence and bullying including response protocols and implementation strategies. Specific protection against harassment, violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender expression must be stated. Education is needed because a policy cannot be effective unless those expected to enforce it know their obligations and understand what the essence of the phenomena is against what the policy is needed. In terms of resources, Mayer refers to time, money and materials to ensure that the school atmosphere changes.

Different pedagogical tools have also been developed for constructing non-violent and non-sexist learning environments. For example *memory work* and *writing of narratives* have been used (Chege 2006). Chila Mitch-



ell, Susan Walsh and Renate Moletsane have used visual arts-based methodologies like photography, performance, video documentary and drawing as stand-alone tools, or along with memory work, diary writing, focus group discussions etc. They have used them especially in cases where the victim of sexual violence is not able to communicate the experience verbally or through writing. They point out that not only do images have the power to disrupt and ‘excavate’ silence; they also create imaginative spaces for change. (Mitchell *et al.* 2006: 103–104.) They have recognised that when drawings, photo-voice, collaborative video, video screenings, drama and other communicative arts are central to the process of addressing gender violence in and around schools, the loud silences about gender violence are shattered and in the absence of language, participants begin to engage the issues. Art forms can offer participants the opportunity to become cultural producers in relation to matters that affect them. (Mitchell *et al.* 2006: 110.)

As Judith Butler (2004: XIII) argues, human life is characterised by *fundamental inevitable interdependency*. We need to understand how easily human life is annulled, and we need to acknowledge *fundamental inevitable interdependency* as the basis in organising any educational environment.

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## **Appendix 1. Kysely 6. luokkalaisille**

### **KAVERISUHTEET MEIDÄN LUOKASSA**

#### **ARVOISA 6. LUOKKALAINEN !**

Tämän tutkimuksen tarkoituksena on kartoittaa oman luokkasi kaverisuhteita. Tutkimukseen osallistuu oppilaita kolmelta Pohjois-Suomalaiselta paikkakunnalta. Kaikki vastaukset käsitellään täysin luottamuksellisesti ja nimettöminä. Opettajat, vanhemmat, koulukaverit tai muut ulkopuoliset henkilöt eivät siis tule tietämään mitä vastaat. Vain tutkija käsittelee vastaukset.

Kun olet vastannut kysymyksiin, taita lomake ja laita se kirjekuoreen, jonka jälkeen voit sulkea sen. Paperiin ei tarvitse laittaa nimeä.

Tämä kartoitus on osa Suomen Akatemian rahoittamaa kouluväkivaltatutkimusta.

Oulussa 8.11.2001

Vappu Sunnari  
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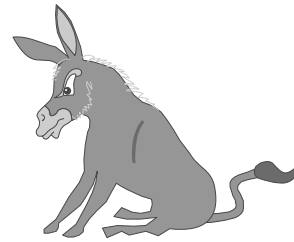


Vastaa tämän lomakkeen kysymyksiin joko rastittamalla sopiva vaihtoehto tai kirjoittamalla vastaus annetuille riveille.

1. Olen  Tyttö  Poika
2. Olen syntynyt vuonna \_\_\_\_\_
3. Olen  5. luokalla  6. luokalla
4. Kouluni nimi on \_\_\_\_\_
5. Ovatko jotkin seuraavista asioista tapahtuneet sinulle viimeisen vuoden aikana?  
Rastita sopivat vaihtoehdot.

- Olen saanut ainakin yhden uuden kaverin
- Olen menettänyt ainakin yhden kaverin
- Minulle läheinen ihminen on kuollut
- Olen muuttanut
- Olen vaihtanut koulua
- Isäni/äitini/muu huoltajani on muuttanut pois kotoa
- Olen innostunut harrastuksistani enemmän kuin ennen
- Olen vähemmän innostunut harrastuksistani kuin ennen
- Olen ollut väsyneempi kuin ennen

6. Kuinka monta kaveria sinulla on
  - a) luokallasi ? \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) tässä koulussa ? \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) koulun ulkopuolella ? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Onko lähipiirissäsi henkilöitä, joita pelkää ?
  - a) kotona  Ei  Kyllä
  - b) koulussa  Ei  Kyllä
  - c) muualla  Ei  Kyllä, missä ? \_\_\_\_\_



8. Jos vastasit **kyllä** voit halutessasi kertoa asiasta enemmän seuraaville riveille.

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Vastaa kysymyksiin 9, 10, 11 ja 12 miettimällä mm. seuraavia asioita:

- koulutyöskentely, - koulumenestys, - käytös, - vapaa-ajanvietto,
- pukeutuminen, - ulkonäkö, - harrastukset.

9. Mitkä asiat tekevät **tytöstä** suositun **tässä luokassa**

a) **poikien keskuudessa ?**

b) **tyttöjen keskuudessa?**

c) **molempien sukupuolten keskuudessa?**



10. Mitkä asiat tekevät **pojasta** suositun **tässä luokassa**

a) **Poikien keskuudessa?**

b) **Tyttöjen keskuudessa ?**

c) **molempien sukupuolten keskuudessa?**

11. Millaisesta pojasta **oman luokkasi opettaja** mielestäsi pitää ?

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12. Millaisesta tytöstä **oman luokkasi opettaja** mielestäsi pitää ?

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13. Onko luokkasi oppilas tai joku muu henkilö käpälöinyt sinua (eli kosketellut tavalla, josta et ole pitänyt) koulussa tai koulumatkalla?

- Ei  
 Kyllä

14. Jos vastasit edelliseen kysymykseen **kyllä** kerro oliko käpälöijä

- Tyttö/nainen  
 Poika/mies

15. Kerro tapahtuneesta.

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16. Oletko kertonut tapahtuneesta jollekin henkilölle?

- En  Kyllä, kenelle ? \_\_\_\_\_

17. Onko tapahtuneesta seurannut jotakin

- a) sinulle  Ei  Kyllä  
b) tekijälle  Ei  Kyllä

18. Jos vastasit edelliseen kysymykseen **kyllä**, kerro mitä seuraamukset ovat olleet?

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1

9. Kirjoita seuraaviin ruutuihin mitä sellaista **luokkasi** oppilaat tekevät toisille oppilaille mistä kohteena oleva oppilas **ei pidä**?

a) Poikien tytöille tekemät asiat

b) Poikien pojille tekemät asiat

c) Tyttöjen pojille tekemät asiat

d) Tyttöjen tytöille tekemät asiat

20. Onko **sinuun itseesi** kohdistunut edellä mainitsemiasi asioita?

- Ei  Kyllä

21. Oletko **itse ollut tekemässä** edellä mainitsemiasi asioita ?

- En  Kyllä

22. Kerro mielipiteesi siitä **mistä syystä** edellä mainitsemiasi asioita tapahtuu.

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23. Onko **sinua** kiusattu murrosikään liittyvien muutosten vuoksi ?

- Ei  Kyllä

24. Jos vastasit edelliseen kysymykseen **kyllä**, kerro millaisista asioista oli kyse, miten ja missä kiusaaminen tapahtui.

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25. Onko jotakin toista oppilasta **luokallasi** kiusattu murrosikään liittyvien muutosten takia?

Ei  Kyllä

26. Jos vastasit edelliseen kysymykseen **kyllä**, kerro millaisista asioista oli kyse, miten ja missä kiusaaminen tapahtui.

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27. Millä ilkeillä sanoilla olet kuullut luokkasi oppilaiden nimittelevän toisia oppilaita tai koulun henkilökuntaa?

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28. Kerro yhdestä tällaisesta nimittelytilanteesta tarkemmin.

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29. Oletko kuullut **luokkasi** oppilaiden nimittelevän toisiaan tai koulun henkilökuntaan kuuluvia seuraavilla sanoilla?

*homo*  En  Kyllä

*huora*  En  Kyllä

*lesbo*  En  Kyllä

30. Oletko itse käyttänyt edellä mainittuja nimittelysanoja?

En  Kyllä. Mitä ja missä tilanteessa? \_\_\_\_\_

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31. Onko luokallasi oppilaita, jotka **eivät kiusaa** toisia eivätkä muutenkaan halua aiheuttaa harmia toisille?

Ei  Kyllä. Halutessasi voit nimetä henkilöitä.

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32. Mitkä asiat mielestäsi vaikuttavat siihen, että he eivät kiusaa toisia oppilaita ?

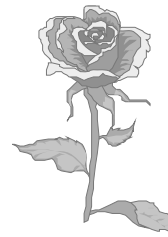
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KIITOS VASTAUKSESTASI



## **Appendix 2 Опросник учникам 6 класса**

### **ДРУЖЕСКИЕ ОТНОШЕНИЯ В НАШЕМ КЛАССЕ**

#### **УВАЖАЕМЫЙ ШЕСТИКЛАССНИК!**

Целью этого исследования является изучение дружеских отношений в вашем классе. В исследовании принимают участие ученики Карелии и Финляндии.

Ответы на опросник обрабатываются таким путем и полученные данные описываются таким образом, что можешь быть уверен, что ни учителя, ни родители, ни одноклассники, ни кто-нибудь другой не будут знать, что ты ответил. Только человек, проводящий это исследование будет работать с ответами на опросник.

Когда ты ответишь на вопросы, согни листки вдвое и, не подписывая, положи в конверт, а потом закрой его.

Оулу 20.03.2002

Ваппу Суннари  
Руководитель проекта

Ответь на вопросы, поставив крестик в нужном месте или вписывая ответ на отведенное для этого место.

1. Я  Девочка  Мальчик
2. Я родилась (родился) в \_\_\_\_\_ году
3. Номер моей школы \_\_\_\_\_
4. Случалось ли с тобой **в течение этого или прошлого года** следующее (поставь крестик, если отвечаешь "да"):
  - У меня появилась/появился новая подруга/новый друг или друзья
  - Я перестала (перестал) дружить с одним своим другом/подругой или с несколькими ребятами
  - Кто-то из моих близких умер
  - Я переехала (переехал) жить в другое место
  - Я перешла (перешел) учиться в другую школу
  - Мой отец/мать/кто-то другой из тех, с кем я жила (жил), ушли из семьи
  - Я увлеклась (увлекся) каким-нибудь хобби больше, чем прежде
  - Я потеряла (потерял) интерес к какому-нибудь своему хобби
  - Я чувствую себя более усталой (усталым), чем раньше
5. Сколько у тебя друзей?
  - а) в твоём классе: девочек \_\_\_\_\_, мальчиков \_\_\_\_\_
  - б) в этой школе (кто не учится с тобой в одном классе):
    - девочек: твоего возраста \_\_\_\_\_, младше тебя \_\_\_\_\_, старше тебя \_\_\_\_\_
    - мальчиков: твоего возраста \_\_\_\_\_, младше тебя \_\_\_\_\_, старше тебя \_\_\_\_\_
  - в) помимо школы:
    - девочек: твоего возраста \_\_\_\_\_, младше тебя \_\_\_\_\_, старше тебя \_\_\_\_\_
    - мальчиков: твоего возраста \_\_\_\_\_, младше тебя \_\_\_\_\_, старше тебя \_\_\_\_\_
6. Боишься ли ты кого-нибудь из тех, кого знаешь?
  - а) Дома  Нет  Да
  - б) В школе  Нет  Да
  - в) В другом месте  Нет  Да, где? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Если ты хоть раз ответила (ответил) на предыдущий вопрос "да", то можешь, если хочешь, написать об этом поподробнее на следующих строчках:



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Когда будешь отвечать на вопросы 8, 9, 10 и 11, подумай, к примеру, о следующем: -школьная работа, -успеваемость, -поведение, -одежда, -внешний вид, -увлечения

8) Какие факторы влияют на популярность девочки в вашем классе

а) среди мальчиков?

б) среди девочек?

в) среди всех одноклассников?



9) Какие факторы влияют на популярность мальчика в вашем классе

а) среди мальчиков ?

б) среди девочек ?

в) среди всех одноклассников?

10. Каких **мальчиков** по-твоему любит ваша учительница (как учеников)?

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11. Каких **девочек** по-твоему любит ваша учительница?

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12. Случалось ли когда-нибудь, чтобы тебя "облапала"/"облапал" (трогал таким образом, что тебе это было неприятно) кто-нибудь из одноклассников?

- Нет                       Да

13. Если ты ответила (ответил) "**да**" на предыдущий вопрос, ответь, пожалуйста, был ли тот человек

- Девочка                       Женщина  
 Мальчик                       Мужчина

14. Расскажи об этом событии.

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15. Рассказывала (рассказывал) ли ты кому-нибудь об этом?

- Нет                       Да, кому? \_\_\_\_\_

16. Были ли какие-нибудь последствия у этого события?

- а) для тебя                       Нет                       Да  
б) для обидчика                       Нет                       Да

17. Если ты ответила (ответил) "**да**" на предыдущий вопрос, опиши, какие были последствия

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18. Опиши, что делают ученики **твоего** класса другим ученикам, что тем другим **не нравится** ?

а) Что мальчики делают девочкам

б) Что мальчики делают мальчикам

в) Что девочки делают мальчикам

г) Что девочки делают девочкам

19. Делали ли **тебе** когда-нибудь так, как ты описала (описал) выше?

Нет                       Да

20. Делала (делал) ли ты так другим?

Нет                       Да



21. Расскажи, **почему** с твоей точки зрения иногда так происходит

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22. Обижали ли **тебя** в связи с теми изменениями твоей фигуры во время переходного возраста?

Нет     Да

23. Если ты ответила (ответил) на предыдущий вопрос "да", расскажи, об том, почему, где и как тебя обидели.

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24. Обижали ли кого-нибудь из твоих **одноклассников** из за изменений фигуры, происшедших в переходном возрасте?

Нет     Да

25. Если ты ответила (ответил) "да" на предыдущий вопрос, то расскажи, почему, где и как это произошло.

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26. Какими ругательными словами обзывают ученики  
а) других учеников?

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б) учителей и других школьных работников?

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27. Расскажи о каком-нибудь случае подробнее.

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28. Слышала (слышал) ли ты, чтобы кого-нибудь из учеников **твоего класса** обзывал других учеников или сотрудников школы такими словами

*голубой/гомик/(другое слово, какое? \_\_\_\_\_)*     Нет     Да

*проститутка/сука/(другое слово, какое? \_\_\_\_\_)*     Нет     Да

*лесбиянка/(другое слово, какое? \_\_\_\_\_)*     Нет     Да

29. Обзывала (обзывал) ли ты кого-нибудь такими словами?

Нет     Да.    Какими именно и в какой ситуации?

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30. Есть ли в вашем классе ученики, которые не издеваются над другими и вообще стремятся не причинять вреда другим?

Нет     Да

31. Если ты ответила (ответил) "**да**", расскажи о них. Назови их.

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32. Почему, по-твоему, они не издеваются над другими и не хотят навредить другим?

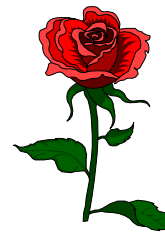
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СПАСИБО ЗА ОТВЕТЫ!





Sandri, a Little Red Haired Girl

When we thought about a good day to be born,  
we had a feeling that the best day would be the first of June  
The Day of Children's Rights (as we remembered it).

To us it was so important that all the children in the world  
could have a good and safe life, also you:

safety, happiness, possibilities,  
respect, the possibility to be heard.

But we forgot to tell you  
that the world is not good.

And we didn't want to show it to you.

So we went to bed and read:

Moomin Valley, Winnie the Pooh, Little My.

Perhaps we should have told you  
that the world of grownups isn't Moomin Valley.

You have had to learn it yourself.

We wanted you to be the child of spring and light  
and that you could grow up to be a person who knows spring and light.

That is what we still wish for you.

Vuokko Isaksson  
Sandri, a Little Red Haired Girl, 2006

ISSN 1455-8025  
ISBN 978-951-9073-2