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The Reflection of a Warlike Historical Culture in the Attitudes of Finnish Youths

Two school shootings took place in Finland in 2007–2008, in which 20 people lost their lives. After the shootings, foreign journalists used the violent culture of Finnish men as an explanation for the tragedies.¹ Of the old EU countries, the highest rate of capital crimes is found in Finland. The country has for a long time debated where the violence comes from. One explanation is that the historical culture in Finland glorifies war. The wars that were fought against the Soviet Union (1939–1944) have been elevated in Finland to become key elements of the national psyche, manifested in celebrations, anniversaries and through family narratives. According to this explanation, a Finn already learns as a child to accept violence which is considered to be legitimate and to behave in accordance with warlike ideals. This article examines the warlike historical culture in Finland and clarifies why war has remained a popular theme of Finnish historical culture. Further, it discusses the impact that a warlike historical culture has on the attitudes of young people.

Keywords:

Historical culture, historical consciousness, warlike heritage, reminiscence narratives, Finnish adolescents

1. Wars as Significant Events in History

Although Finland is a country with a low level of crime, the number of violent crimes committed in the country is the equivalent of the European average. Concerning capital crimes, Finland was the leading country in the early 2000s prior to the EU's inclusion of new member states in. For Finnish men, violence is not necessarily unacceptable. Marjut Jyrkinen and Leena Ruusuvoori, who have researched violent behaviour, state that violence has almost always been the way in which a Finnish man has resolved his issues. Physical restraint is not valued in the same way as in other cultures. Late night fights at fast food takeaways are considered to be an integral part of Finnish male culture (Jyrkinen, Ruusuvoori 2002, 408).

It has been suggested that Finnish men cherish the honour of the warrior ideal, in which the legitimacy of the use of violence is connected to the right to defend dearly held values. According to this way of thinking, a Finnish man has always been able to fight fire with fire. To retreat from a challenge is considered to be dishonourable. Some say that Finns grow up with this attitude from childhood and that violent behaviour has been normalised in Finnish culture (Sarkamo 2007; Vuorikuru 2011; see also Kiilakoski 2009, 43). This attitude can be partly attributed to exceptionally strong respect, verging on worship, for warlike traditions, by international standards. Young people also grow up with an acceptance of violence through popular entertainment. War films, books, comics, and, especially in recent years, war games have strengthened the principle of respect for legitimate violence emanating from elsewhere in society.

The positive attitude of Finnish men towards the use of violence has been explained in several ways. So-

me have linked the use of violence to the traumas experienced by Finnish men in World War II and the passing on of this to the following generations. Historian Henrik Meinander attempts to refute this claim by showing that violent crime was actually more common in Finland than in the other Nordic countries from the 1700s onwards. Meinander also blames the high rates of violence on Finns' excessive use of alcohol. (Meinander 2009, 359.) Other historians have also considered the reasons to lie elsewhere than in the historical culture (e.g. Lappalainen 2010).

There is clear evidence of the violent behaviour of Finnish men, but there is no consensus as to its reason. War is, however, strongly visible in Finnish historical culture. American historian Gordon F. Sander told about how on his first visit to Finland, he was amazed how the Finns spoke of the 1939–1940 Winter War between Finland and the Soviet Union as if it had only concluded the day before. Sander regards the Winter War as a myth, similar to Finland's national epic, *The Kalevala*, which needs to be read to be able to understand the Finnish people and the state of being Finnish (Oksanen 2010; Sander 2010).

In the great national narratives the Winter War has been regarded as the young republic's test of manhood (Meinander 2009, 393). Henrik Meinander (2009, 395) has drawn attention to the fact that Finland's Independence Day celebration is linked more to the Second World War than to events connected to Finland's actual independence in 1917. For decades, on every Independence Day TV has broadcasted the *Unknown Soldier* film, which takes place during the Continuation War (1941–1944) against the Soviet Union. In addition, the heroes of this war are traditionally the first to step forward and meet the president at the president's Independence Day reception. Almost half of

1 Suomen ulkoasiainministeriön mediakatsaus 1.10.2008.

2 The Independence Day celebration at the Presidential Palace in Helsinki is the most watched television programme in Finland. During the 2000s, the viewing figures have almost always exceeded two million (Finland has a population of approx. 5.3 million).



the Finnish population follows the event live on TV,² so this enhances the significance of the warriors as the custodians of Finland's independence. On Independence Day, the other television schedules largely consist of programmes which are related to the Winter and Continuation Wars.³

The significance of war also appears strongly in research. The historical consciousness of young Finns was clarified during the 1990s in the *Youth and History Project* and its associated national interview research. Young Finns were found to have a nationally biased view of history, and seemed to have a particularly thorough knowledge of the wars against the Soviet Union (Ahonen 1997, A259–A261; Ahonen 1998). The great national narrative, which is built around war, has not even in the most recent research been found to have deteriorated: data collected during the 2000s indicate that the wars have remained in the minds of young people as some of the most significant events in history.⁴

War seems to interest young people of all ages. Their views of wars constituting the most significant events in history can be explained by the strong focus on war in school teaching and popular culture. However, in Finland, an appreciation of war is developed at an early age through the reminiscing of parents and grandparents. Tragic accounts have been the driving forces for family and ancestral narratives, and thus far these have been built on the basis of war stories (Meinander 2009, 397–398).

2. War as a Core Theme of Reminiscence Narratives

Children in Finland already become engaged with a warlike heritage when they are small, as revealed in recent research. According to Rantala (2011), children aged 7–10 years have not yet read war-related books or watched war-related television programmes, but war has still been mediated to them through the narratives of their parents and grandparents. The power of the stories heard at home is based on their subjectivity – through which the child can be connected to the ancestral heritage experience. The narrative situations are emotionally effective events, as the

child is then able to become part of the world of the adults. Over the years, the child will hear the same story many times, so the power of the story is also based upon its many repetitions.

Why, then, do parents and grandparents talk to their descendants about war? One explanation is that war stories are considered to be more exciting than those concerning everyday life. In researching the historical consciousness of 16–18-year-old Finns, Sirkka Ahonen (1998) found that parents and grandparents avoid such subjects, which they suspect young people will find boring. When young people are told about past events, even briefly, only the most impressive pass through the self-censorship of parents and grandparents. The narrative storytelling of the previous generations is connected to war, as they believe this to be of greatest interest to the young. The question therefore appears to concern the attitudes of the parents and grandparents. It also concerns the connection of the individual's own family to the great national narrative. Wars have also been highly visible in school education, and, as mentioned, in historical culture in general. As previously highlighted, the media reporting surrounding the anniversaries of the Finnish-Soviet wars, along with popular entertainment, have raised the wars to be the key issue in the national history. The act of being Finnish can be determined through the wars. For example, the leading politicians in Finland use war-related concepts in their speeches. They speak of "the spirit of the Winter War" in attempting to motivate the population to pull together to achieve common goals. All Finns are supposed to understand the meaning of the concept.⁵ When the wars are displayed in public as constituting the core of discussions on being Finnish, parents and grandparents also consider it to be important to tell their descendants about their own family's links to them.

Sakari Suutarinen has expressed concern about the transmission, through the teaching of history, of the image of Russia as an enemy of Finland. According to Suutarinen (2000, 118), the state of being Finnish has been constructed along with the image of Russia as a threat or enemy, and history textbooks ha-

3 During Independence Day in 2010, the channels of the national broadcasting company, YLE, broadcast 7 hours and 45 minutes of programmes which were related to the Winter and Continuation Wars.

4 Hakkari 2005, 74; Virta 2009; A warlike history is not only a Finnish phenomenon. Emphases on war have also been found elsewhere. War appears on the list of the most memorable and relevant topics in the teaching of history all over the world; see Barton, Levstik 2008; Yeager et al. 2002; Brophy, VanSledright 1997, 81–82; Lee 2002; Barca et al. 2004, 39, 41.

5 The Winter War spirit means national unity, which is regarded to have made it possible for Finland to preserve its independence. The Finns fought together as one and prevented the conquest of the country by the Soviet Union. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spirit_of_the_Winter_War.

6 Earlier, textbooks were seen as dominant in the teaching. In Finland, the national Board of Education revised textbooks up to the 1990s. However, many recent studies claim that textbooks no longer play as big a role in the development of historical understanding among youth (f. ex. Haydn 2011; Wineburg et al. 2007, 69–70).



ve played a significant role in forming this image.⁶ These attitudes, however, seem to have also been passed on to children, even before entering school. A study concerning Finnish children aged 7–10 years, showed that almost all of the children were already aware of the wars between Finland and the Soviet Union before learning about them at school. Suutari is concerned that the enemy image mediated by historical culture can also be identified today. The historical culture built around the Russian/Soviet threat may be reflected in the negative attitudes of young Finns towards Russia as well as Finland's largest immigrant group, Russians.

In addition to the historical enemy images reflected at the present time, the adverse effect resulting from war stories, is also linked to the children's and young people's expectations for the future. Along with environmental pollution, one of young Finns' greatest fears is an increase in violence (Seppänen 2008; Rubin 1998). In the world of a child, talking about war could also mean an increase in the threat of violence. When children are told a great deal about wars, they may form an understanding of these kinds of events which are beyond peoples' control. Finnish children may also begin to think that the country's independence had to be reclaimed through a war which may need to be repeated in the future.

As young people approach their teenage years, the role of their parents weakens while the importance of their sphere of friends increases. During their teenage years, young people are also able to freely access other topics of historical culture and are no longer tightly bound to the storytelling of their families. Further, their images of history begin to be influenced by the popular entertainment culture, where war also features prominently.

The existence of a culture of violence is not necessarily a reason for violent behaviour. According to researchers who have studied school shootings, 'cultural scripts' are just one of the five necessary conditions for school shootings.⁷ However, Tomi Kiilakoski, who has studied the subject in Finland, pays special attention to the Finnish culture of violence as an explanation of the Finnish shootings. We should do so as well.

What is it about war that attracts young Finns? In part, the answer lies in national great narrative as a major unifying factor and a matter of pride. Finland lost both wars with the Soviet Union. However, accor-

ding to a recent survey, Finns view the wars particularly as 'preventive' victories, whereby Soviet Union was prevented from occupying the whole country (Torsti 2011). Young people are proud of the fact that the Finns managed against a numerically superior enemy. Comparing the attitudes of youth in the United States, for example, you will find the lack of a personal approach to war that Finns have (see Barton & Levestik 2008, 250–251).

Warlike historical culture is a universal phenomenon. To a great extent, the attitude of the Finns dates back to the strong culture of reminiscence which belongs to the 'unofficial' vernacular history (Rantala 2011). Finnish 'official' history also has very unique features, for example the way Finns celebrate their Independence Days, how politicians refer to the attitude of Finns during the Winter War (1939–40), and the popularity of war literature. The presence of a historical collective memory is an important factor in shaping youth's narratives about the past, as Jocelyn Létourneau (2006, 80) has presented.

Although young Finns are especially interested in the Second World War, other wars are also of interest. Wars are dealt with a great deal in the teaching of history, but this does not explain why the young people consider war to be more interesting than other historical topics. Young peoples' interest in war can be explained by the interaction of a great many factors, and commercial historical culture plays an important role.

3. The Forms of Warlike Historical Culture

For many centuries, war has been an enduring subject in Finnish narrative culture. Wars were previously discussed in poems, plays and novels. However, the situation changed during the 1960s and 1970s when comic strips surpassed other cultural products in popularity, so much so that teachers became concerned: they were afraid that intellectually lightweight comics would pull boys away from more serious reading. Such comic strips as *Commando*, *Air Ace*, *War at Sea* and *Action War Picture Library* – translated from English and emphasising bravery and sacrifice – achieved great popularity in Finland, particularly among boys.

During the 1960s and 1970s, comics were collected by those whose fathers had lived during wartime. The war comics perhaps in some cases acted as a kind of compensation for the children whose relatives did not

7 Katherine Newman and her colleagues (2004, 229–230) propose five factors which together explain violent rampages: 1) a shooter's perception of himself as extremely marginal in the social worlds that matter to him; 2) school shooters suffer from psychosocial problems; 3) the failure of surveillance systems that are intended to identify troubled teens before their problems become extreme; 4) gun availability; and 5) 'cultural scripts' that provide models for problem solving and that link

manhood and public respect with violence. Newman et al. (2004, 246, 252–253) profess that school shootings are the consequence of cultural scripts that are visible in popular culture. Violent media is not solely to blame for rampant school shootings. However, books, television, movies, etc. provide school shooters' justification for random attacks.



want to tell them about their own war experiences. Above all, the war comics, were marketed in better conditions in which young people had more money to spend than previously and other forms of entertainment were still limited.

Boys in Finland read war comics, but switched to war novels as they grew older. Nationalist popular entertainment did not suit official Finnish foreign policy during the 1960s and 1970s, which sought to emphasise good relations with the former enemy, the Soviet Union. According to Juhani Niemi (1988, 195), who has researched the status of war literature in Finland, the war books acted as a kind of therapy for the nation. Young people read them as fascinating accounts of war, but the generation who had experienced the war also experienced them as a counterweight to Finland's accommodative foreign policy with respect to the Soviet Union. War books remained on the best-seller lists until the 1980s. Sales of war books were expected to begin falling along with the passing of the generation who had experienced the war. However, the opposite occurred. In Finland, the subject of war became a permanent feature of fictional and non-fictional literature. War books have remained on the best-seller lists from one year to the next.⁸

On average, one in five Finns actively reads war-themed books (Niemi 1988, 202). Contrary to popular belief, the readership of war books does not consist of older readers. War books are mainly read by the young and middle-aged. There is a clear over-representation of men in the readership. To this day, war books have retained their place at the top of boys' reading lists. Girls, however, have always placed war books at the bottom.⁹

During the golden era of war comics, the 1960s and 1970s, a second form of historical culture emerged, which reinforced boys' interest in war – self-assembly model kits. Even nowadays, the brands – Airfix, Revell, Heller, Tamiya, and Monogram – raise fond memories in a great many males aged 40 to 60 years. The interest in assembling miniature models had spread around the world (May 2010, 40; Ward 2009, 7). One of the most popular manufacturers, the British company Airfix, sold 20 million construction kits during their best years. Airfix's target market – as with the makers of other self-assembly model kits – was mainly 7–15 years-old boys (Ward 2009, 135). The factories produced relatively low-cost miniature plastic models, so that young people could buy them with their pocket money.

The kits developed boys' fine motor skills and patience, although they were provided guidance with clear examples. The assembly of the plastic models required an almost total focus on the construction process; it is no wonder that those who built these miniature models in their childhoods can still recognise the examples of their models many years later. In itself, the monotonous assembly work also provided the opportunity to exercise the imagination; while gluing together the parts, the features of the miniatures could be pondered in a historical context. It is precisely this dimension of a historical imagination which separates the building of plastic models from the playing of modern computer games.

Nowadays, miniature model builders are served by a vast number of different web sites and magazines, some of which focus on the technical side of the assembly and some on the history of the models. Young people are no longer so enthusiastic about models – they would rather play computer and console games. Over a number of decades, virtual games have achieved a strong position in the entertainment culture. Although girls nowadays play games in the same way as boys, war games remain the domain of boys (Bryce, Rutter 2006; Siitonen 2007, 23–24; Elkus 2006).

War games have a long history, but along with computers, war simulations have particularly grown in popularity. Simulations can involve the position of an individual soldier in *first person shooter* games. With these, a player is able to assume the role of an individual soldier in historic battles, such as the landing at Normandy, or current wars, such as U.S. troops fighting in Afghanistan. Playing can even be compared to acting in movies (Cowlshaw 2005). In strategy games, the player can take the role of a leader of a combat group or of a government. Such simulations are often based on history, whereupon the appeal of the game is that it is even possible to rewrite the history (Halter 2002, 2).

The impact of war games has been the subject of debate for a long time. According to some researchers, war games increase the tendency of the players to act aggressively (e.g. Gentile et al. 2004; Anderson, Bushman 2001). Other researchers claim that players understand that the violence in the games is just a part of the play, as a means of progressing and advancing in the games (e.g. Kutner, Olson 2008; Olson et al. 2008; Cragg et al. 2007, 59–61). Games have been defended in a number of studies. For example, the speed of the decision making of the players involved in *first person shooter* games has been shown to have increased due to playing these games (Stephen 2010). The psychological effects of playing games are difficult to study, and it is difficult to clarify what effects the historical games have on the players' perceptions of history. Brian Cowlshaw (2005) has referred to players who, in their gaming, replay past wars whilst at the same time determining different results. For

8 Suomen Kustannusyhdistyksen bestseller-tilastot 2000–2009 [The bestseller ratings of the Finnish publication association].

9 E.g. Saarinen 1986; Niemi 1988; Stockmann et al. 2005; The polarized attitudes of boys and girls to war books is not only a Finnish phenomenon. This has also been observed for example in North America; see Fasick 1986.



example, young Americans may even perceive their country's Vietnam War as a victory.

4. The Impact of a Warlike Entertainment Culture on Attitudes

Evidence has been presented, according to which, war has generally lost its allure (Roach 2007, 14). This has not been found to be true in Finland. Unlike in Britain, war comics can still be found on shelves, in both smaller stores and supermarkets. This illustrates the fact that new generations have discovered the reading material. However, nowadays, for children and young people, war is presented primarily through new technological means. Computer and console games involving war are the most popular games in Finland.¹⁰

War games assist in shaping the attitudes of young people. Otherwise, it would have been unlikely that the U.S. Army would have developed its America's Army computer game for the benefit of its recruitment process (Cowlshaw 2005). While young people earlier were inspired by slow-paced plastic model kits, or comic books, the young people of today indulge in the reality of war through more expressive means. However, warlike historical culture products provide only a rather simplistic image of war.

What kinds of impressions have these products left? Some claim that war comics, for example, have not biased their perception of the former enemies, even though by the standards of today many of them were anything but politically correct. The comics portrayed the fight of good against evil and the victory of justice, and even if the allied soldiers in them call the Germans Krauts and Jerries, and the Japanese Japs and Nips, those who read them when they were young generally do not believe that the comics gave rise to negative attitudes towards these nationalities (May 2007, 6; Roach 2007, 9).

Jerome de Groot has a different view. In his opinion, the vocabulary of war comics, together with an aggressive sense of nationality, can be seen from time to time in English tabloid culture, such as when the German's were labelled Fritzes during the 1996 European Football Championships (de Groot 2009, 6). Such comics as *Commando* primarily feature fights against cruel Germans and Japanese. In these, the vast majority of Germans are evil Nazis and the Japanese are cruel war criminals. Occasionally, Germans of integrity may come up against the Allied soldiers, but they are exceptions. To be able to counter the risk of generalisation, the reader should be able to read the comics critically.

Entertainment products which depict war have transmitted an attitudinal image of certain nationalities or categories of people. This, one could imagine, may be reflected in the attitudes of the consumers of these products. A critical citizen would be able to identify attitudinal elements and assign their own values to these. An essential question here is whether a hidden influence in the entertainment-related products would be noticed? Is our historical culture teaching us to glorify war, as has been claimed? Since war has been continually present, especially in the historical culture of boys, the next question then arises: how has it affected their attitudes, for example towards the legitimacy of actions as a tool of international politics? There is also good reason to explore whether attitudes which influence us when we are children still have an impact on us as adults, and whether our nostalgic cultural heritage concerning war is transferred to our children.

The current study is mere tentative attempt to answer these questions; the need exists for a large multidisciplinary study to be carried out in different countries to answer them properly. Yet certain earlier studies have been of interest. Some, for example, have suggested that boys' socialisation through the traditional ideology of masculinity might be a potential risk factor for violence among youths (see Feder et al. 2007, 386–387).

Popular culture has a wide range of effects, of which some are difficult to see. Jeremy de Groot suspects that historical culture has helped to strengthen the anti-Gallic attitudes of the British (de Groot 2009, 197–198). Books and television series set during the Napoleonic wars have for years provided the British with images of the French as their enemies. It is not insignificant how historical culture depicts the past. On the other hand, there is also no reason to underestimate the critical facilities of young people. They seem to be able to recognise latent influences. However, the most vulnerable group of all is young children, whose critical abilities are undeveloped.

5. War as a Permanent Theme of Historical Culture

As has been shown beforehand, a warlike historical culture continues to flourish, especially among boys. The channels mediating history have, of course, partly changed. In place of comics and books, movies and computer games are now the medium. The power of war seemed to already be waning in the 1980s, when war toys encountered resistance, for example from the kindergartens and from department stores

¹⁰ For example, the best-selling games in February 2011 were *Killzone 3* and *Call of Duty Black Ops*. *Counter-Strike* was, in turn, the third best-selling game in Finland in 2010. Finnish Games and Multimedia Association FIGMA.



who refused to stock them. War comics were losing their readership as well. Over the next decade, however, war was again pushed into the world of children and young people through computer and console games. Moreover, in television programmes war has maintained a strong presence for many decades in both Finland and the rest of the world.¹¹

A consensus concerning the impact of a violent culture has not been found among researchers. According to some, the harmful effects of such a culture have been exaggerated. They claim that people consider games and movies to be fiction: in war games, the killing of the enemy is part of the process of clearing a game field (Kutner, Olson 2008; Olson et al. 2008; Cragg et al. 2007, 59–61; Ermi et al. 2004, 17–18). According to them, war films provide viewers with the possibility of handling troubling feelings in a safe context. This may be true with adults. For children, however, the problem is, viewing age recommendations not being followed, meaning that children at too young an age must deal with matters too frightening for them. (Cf. Newman et al. 2004, 70.)

The most harmful are historical culture products which indoctrinate viewers, readers or players. The younger the users are, the more difficult it is for them to notice that the products contain hidden influences. For example, some computer simulations are structured in such a way that the player learns to solve problems between nations through the use of war. Negotiations and the pursuit of peace lead the player, in such simulations, to defeat (Schut 2007, 221–222), which begs the question: does this also teach the players to more easily accept war in real life. Examinations of these cases are difficult, and as a result, the subject has not been researched a great deal.

The studies concerning the perceptions of Finnish children and young people have revealed that they consider wars to be significant events in history. Wars also inspire them. This is reflected in, among other things, findings concerning the content of history teaching, in which young people elevate wars as the most interesting content of the teaching. Older youths, 16 to 18 years old, have adopted their views on war from the entertainment industry and not from school teaching. According to Sirkka Ahonen, in her interview studies young people told her that they thought of Corporal Antti Rokka, the fictional movie hero from the film *Unknown Soldier*, as if he was actually a comrade of their own grandfathers. According to Ahonen (2002, 70), the historical knowledge of young people is a mix of both truth and fiction. Those under 10 years of age and living in a compact family environ-

ment, however, form their perceptions of the past from the narratives of their parents and grandparents rather than from popular entertainment.

What impact will warlike narratives of remembrance have on the children? Remembrance narratives concerning the Winter and Continuation Wars introduce children to the essential building blocks of Finnish identity. In addition to their own family and relatives, the stories connect the children to the great national narratives. In interviews with children aged 7–10 years, the interviewees invariably refer to Russia as having been the enemy of Finland; they do not talk of the Soviet Union. This is despite fact that Russia today does not for them seem to be an enemy. The question arises of whether the anti-Russia sentiment in Finland, which increases with age, is engendered by the entertainment culture. Researchers have warned of an increase in anti-Russian sentiments in a warlike historical culture, although this issue has also been difficult to study.

The strong presence of war in historical culture may also have other side effects. It may negatively affect the future orientation of young people, for example. According to several studies, young Finns have adopted pessimistic attitudes towards the future. They are worried about increases in violence, and the threat of war was particularly evident in the responses of boys (Seppänen 2008, 34; Rubin 1998). The visible presence of war in Finnish historical culture may give young people the impression that, from time to time, nations must ensure their independence through war. Older adolescents are able to relate to wars which are taking place around the world and their potential impact on Finland, but the understanding of younger children to such events is still not very structured (cf. Toivonen 1991; Puhakainen 1992). They may, for example, consider bomb attacks in the Middle East to be a threat. Further, as a result of their undeveloped understanding of time, children have difficulty in relating to the time of what they hear and see. Therefore historical wars, for example Finland's wars against the Soviet Union, may thus seem frightening merely by their close proximity.

In the public treatment of wars there also seem to be positive effects. The survival of Finland in the wars which were fought against the Soviet Union has increased young people's faith in their own and their nation's future survival (Ahonen 1998). The wars against the Soviet Union are intrinsic to the great national narratives, and these are used in building the Finnish identity. The passing of the generation that had experienced war has not reduced the prominence

¹¹ For example, in the UK, almost a third of history programmes since the 1960s have dealt with wars. (Hunt 2006, 847–848). About the significance of movies in the formation of historical consciousness see Wineburg et al. 2007, 67.



of the wars in narratives, on the contrary. The traumatic wartime experiences of the previous generation, which was unable to participate in narratives about the war, are no longer repressed in that way. War is openly talked about within family circles, along with the connection of families to the great national narratives specifically through the Winter and Continua-

tion Wars (Rantala 2011). In addition, recent studies show that war is more strongly present in the world of young people today than in that of their own parents or grandparents during their adolescences. It remains to be seen whether this will have an impact on Finland's statistics concerning violence.

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