Nordic Girls' Studies

Current Themes and Theoretical Approaches

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This special issue of *Girlhood Studies* is the first one to have been devoted to the study of girls living in a specific geographical region. Here we focus on girls in the Nordic countries. What makes this set of essays particularly fascinating is that they address issues concerning girls who are located in countries whose advanced social services and democratic beliefs and practices are admired around the world. The rest of the world believes that the Nordic countries, Sweden, Iceland, Norway, Finland and Denmark, have achieved much of what girls in other countries in both the Global North and Global South are still working and fighting for. Interestingly, in their call for papers the guest editors Bodil Formark and Annelie Bränström Öhman, both located at Umeå University in Sweden, cite Finish sociologist Elina Oinas (2011) who queries whether Nordic girls do in fact belong to that exclusive group of “girls who won the lottery.” In the articles in this issue, the contributors interrogate some of the assumptions the rest of the world makes about the lives of girls living in Nordic countries, and the different notions of freedom that have an impact on them.

As the guest editors noted in their call for papers, these scholarly and research efforts about Nordic girls are intertwined with the academic and activist activities of various girl-centered initiatives such as *Tyttötutkimusverkosto*, Finnish Network for Girls' Studies, and *FlickForsk!* Nordic Network for Girlhood Studies (an abbreviated fusion of the Swedish words *flicka* [girl], and *forskning* [research]). Such groups are committed to exchanging ideas and collaborating with researchers both in the Nordic region and globally. Indeed, the starting point for this themed issue was a question posed at a conference on girlhood studies held at Mid-Sweden University in 2011: “Before there was girlhood studies, it was ‘just girls’” or “Where did girlhood studies come from?” (Mitchell 2011). The essays in this special

issue contribute to answering this question from the point of view of scholars working in Finland, Norway and Sweden, in particular, but within the broader international community of Girlhood Studies in general.

References

- Mitchell, Claudia. 2011. "Mapping Girlhood Studies over Two Decades: Keynote Address." Paper presented at the Gender and Normalization Conference. Mid-Sweden University, Sundsvall, Sweden.
- Oinas, Elina. 2011. "The Girls Who Won the Lottery?" Paper presented at the Conference on Contemporary Girls, Embodiment and Social Change. Helsinki.