

# **International lives and Finnish rhythms: Expatriate children and time**

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**Career  
expatriates**

**Temporary  
migrants**

**Transnational  
corporate elites**

**Highly skilled  
experts**



- Highly skilled professionals move abroad for career reasons
  - Voluntary mobility
  - Relatively well-off
  - Often temporary stays
  - North-north or south-north

# Expatriate childhood: Children's experiences of temporary migration (2019-2024, Academy of Finland)



## 8-15-year-old expatriate children in Finland

- position in Finland and on the global arena
- everyday lives in Finland
- belonging & identities & distinctions

# Research Methods

## Ethnography

participant observation

children's interviews

photo projects with children

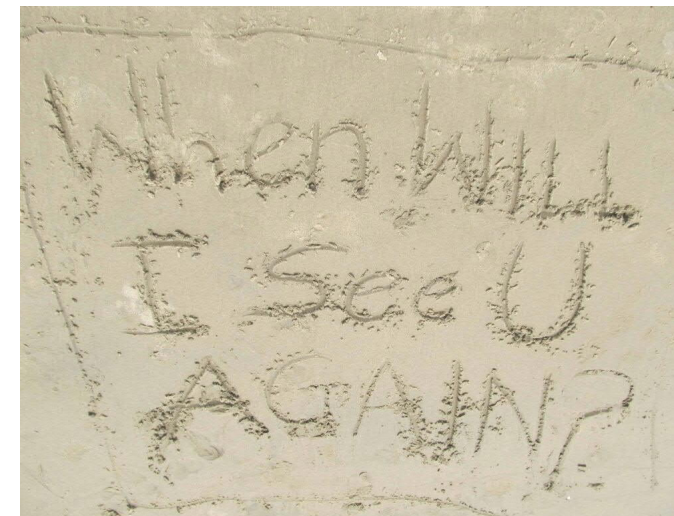




# Time

- navigating different timescapes (Barbara Adam)
  - time becomes visible in actions and is connected with space
- geographical mobility affects one's use and understanding of time and one's position within various timescapes

Children: future-oriented “**becoming**”  
& the present “**being**”



# Schools

## Most international schools in Finland

- are free municipal schools
- follow the Finnish curriculums

## Ruptures to timescapes

- Continuity vs arriving mid-term
- Social integration and reorganisation
- Start school at a different age

School timescape: the future-oriented "**becoming**"  
Children feel and act in the present, "**being**"



M: When you came to this school, was it easy to start studying?

S: Yeah. Because the things that are here I've already learned.

.....

M: How does that feel?

S: Like I'm revising things more and more times.

M: Is it boring?

S: Nah.

M: Ok. So if you went to India now, what would happen?

S: I would be sad... I would be behind all my friends in India. So I would need to continue fifth grade then. And I don't want to go to India.  
(Sonu, 9 years)

The school is much better in Finland. One can just relax and enjoy.  
(Ajey, 9 years)



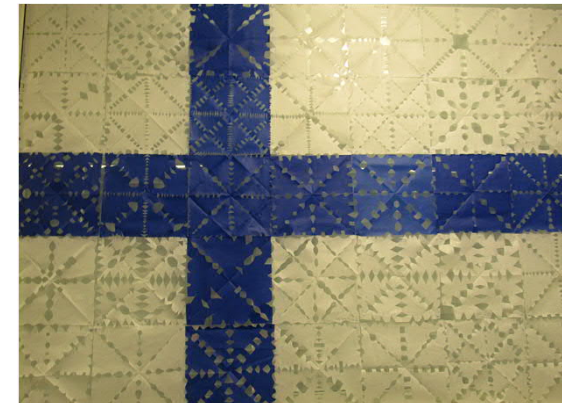


# School and time

*Go for a walk near your home and write a list of signs of spring that you see.  
(an assignment for science)*

- Seasons are related to locations
- National and cultural celebrations;  
a repeating routine or a new timescape?
- Class memories

Relatively short school days and  
daily changing schedules





# Freetime

This schedule has all of my clubs, all of my things. Friday is the only normal day, cause like it doesn't have any clubs. But this is swimming club, then there is piano. And then there is taekwondo, swimming and hip hop. (Noel, 9)



- Hobby-time
  - Space-related

Coming to Finland has meant more agency in terms of independent mobility, and consequently, the use of time



- Family time

L: Friday is one of the best days of the week.

M: Because the school ends?

L: Yeah, and then on Fridays, we make pizza. (Luna, 9)



# Transnational life and ruptures

M: Do you know how long you will stay?

A: No, not yet. The company gives how much time we should [stay], but they have not really told us.  
(Ajay, 9)

- Uncertainty and unpredictability of the future
- Employers appear as the ultimate decision-makers
- Awareness of temporary sojourn affects practices (e.g. the motivation to study Finnish)





- Navigating various timescapes (Barbara Adam)
- One is a child only once:  
children's perspectives on time are profoundly different from adults' perspectives
- Paying attention to the simultaneity of  
being (the present) and  
becoming (the future)
- Paying attention to space & agency

