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Beyond the Shadow of Adults—Youth, Adultism, and Human Rights in the Contemporary Faroe Islands

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Abstract: This article discusses young people's human rights situation in the Faroe Islands today by addressing youth participation issues from a cultural adultism perspective. It argues that the local cultural values and intergenerational relations in the family influence the multilayered and shifting nature of 'Faroese adultism'. My purpose is to explore the ways through which young people are challenging adultism in their everyday life practices: what do they intend to change and what do they wish to sustain in their cultural struggle? This article is mainly based on empirical data from focus group discussions with young participants. The findings reveal that young people from the Faroe Islands—located in the Nordic Atlantic—do not consider adultism to have a negative impact on their wellbeing. This article, relying on theoretical scholarship and ideas from youth studies and island studies, contributes to a more nuanced understanding of human rights in the context of a small (family-oriented) island community in cultural and social transformation.

Keywords: Faroe Islands; adultism; participation; family; youth

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1. Introduction

Some years ago, I was invited to share my 'expert' opinion on the political proposal of lowering the electoral age with a parliamentary committee in the Faroe Islands. When I presented my arguments endorsing a reduction in the minimum voting age—from 18 to 16 years—based on insight into the position and role of the youth generation in contemporary society, and with strategic reference to relevant research findings, one of the members of the committee, a man with a long career in politics, showed a smirking face and interrupted with the ironic comment: 'well, why not give younger children these rights too. . .'' The unconvinced committee listened to my curious viewpoint during our short session. The minimum voting age was, as expected, not changed. This incident came to my mind when I worked on this article. It reveals some of the aspects of the Faroese adultism, which is concealed in cultural codes of social communication resonating as ingrained paternalistic attitudes in society. This hearing also displayed a general lack of trust as regards youth participation, resulting in political exclusion (Corney et al. 2022, p. 678). My motivation for engaging in this project was, more broadly, to dig into the intergenerational relationship between youth and adults in a small island society, which normally looks harmonious and socially coherent from the outside perspective. The objective was to fill a gap of knowledge on adultism in family-oriented island societies.

1.1. Adultism and Human Rights

My ethnographic study, exploring adultism and human rights in the Faroe Islands from a youth perspective, aims to further the scholarly discussion on the role of the cultural context in the critical discourse on the human rights and wellbeing of children and young people today. Informed by the current scholarship in the field of interdisciplinary childhood studies, my study is based on the notion that children are "complete entities who are deserving of respect" (Daly 2020, p. 484). The question about children's capacity is

at the core of the discussion about adultism and human rights. According to Alderson and Montgomery, prejudices about children generate the main obstacles to children's capacity (Alderson and Montgomery, cited in Daly 2020, p. 484). This article does not go into detail concerning the human rights of the child per se, as defined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), but reviews the rights of the child through reflexive analysis of adultism as the theme and problem in the everyday life practice of young people: what is the meaning of adultism seen from a youth perspective? The research question has therefore been formulated in this way: how do young people discuss and cope with intergenerational and cultural constructions of the position and rights of youth in an island society in shift? My intention is to introduce new thoughts on the highly dichotomous and atomised image of the child/adult relationship in sociological studies of childhood. Simple representations of the child "as an immature, irresponsible, incompetent human being" (Vranjesevic 2020, p. 46), a 'future adult' in need of protection from itself, are challenged in various studies drawing on adults' (emic) attempts "to understand (and convey) children's own perspectives" (Warming 2019, p. 62) in the quest of solving a democratic predicament: that children are situated in an underprivileged (power) position without an autonomous voice (Warming 2018). It is, obviously, impossible to construct a complete '100 percent' replication of the child's perspective, and the researcher's interpretation of the child's perception will in most cases be strongly influenced by his 'view of humanity' (and, therein, his overarching 'view of childhood') as well as of the concrete context (Johansson 2003). This consideration moves the discussion in the direction of the anthropological gaze—focusing on the role of the social and cultural context, the family and the local community, in a person's sense of wellbeing, participation and agency. Children should, in other words, be studied 'in their own right', independent of the adult's interests (Vranjesevic 2020, p. 49).

1.2. Adultism and Culture

Adultism, sometimes also called youth oppression, can be described as "the subordination of young people", which is linked to adult privileges "not available to young people based on their age" (DeJong 2014, p. 15). The subordination of young people is, hence, sustained by "the actions of individuals, cultural norms, attitudes and values, and the institutional structures and practices of society" (DeJong and Love 2013, p. 532). It is a system of oppression taking the form of "exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, violence and cultural imperialism", says Young (2013). Some scholars also talk about 'hegemonic adultism', inspired by Gramsci's theory on political power, which is obtained, largely, "because no alternate views of how the world could be are available" (DeJong 2014, p. 80). Adultism, says Hall, cultivates young people's feeling of "powerlessness and minimizes autonomy and self-efficacy" (Hall 2019, p. 1). Anti-adultism, which is associated with social work projects among vulnerable children and young people, on the other hand, advocates the (participatory) inclusion of young people. Based on this information, adultism can also be defined as a "belief system based on the idea that the adult human being is in some sense superior to the child [or young person] or of greater worth"; further, these beliefs "find support in a persistent view of the child as an object, and not as a human rights holder" (Shier, cited in Corney et al. 2022, p. 680). Adultism is, from this viewpoint, based on cultural beliefs more than on empirical evidence. What do the cultural norms express that is, specifically, addressing the nature of the youth–adult relationship? What do the young people themselves say about this imagined power (im)balance? Some scholars argue that the discrimination of children and young people and adults' expectations of children "substantially influence the way the children perceive themselves" (Vranjesevic 2020, p. 48). These scholars suggest that children internalise the adults' image of the 'vulnerable' child, a process making them weaker in confrontation with an array of oppressive factors (Smith 2016).

In my study, I talked to people in their late teens and early twenties (17–23 years old), which represent an older group of people than the children normally targeted in scholarly discussions about the problem of adultism. While they could have been defined as 'young adults', the participants in my study do not consider themselves as a part of the

adult generation in the Faroe Islands. My focus was young people, not children, because I wanted to reach a group of people that in some contexts is treated as 'children' and in other contexts as 'young' or 'adult' persons. This liminality, combined with their intellectual capacity to reflect on their own childhood, present-day life, and future, was important for my objective of exploring how young people discuss and cope with intergenerational and cultural constructions of the rights of youth. With this age group, my intention has been to use a group between the children and the adults to comment on the cultural and intergenerational aspects of adultism in an island society.

1.3. Faroese Adultism

My study from the Faroe Islands aims to interrogate these theses about adultism and human rights in pursuance of a discussion placing culture and cultural values in the spotlight. Does adultism necessarily involve such a deep divide between the generations? My article concludes that young people, in their everyday life struggle, challenge adultism in a pragmatic and rather invisible style. The findings of my study suggest that the local cultural values and intergenerational relations in the family influence the multilayered and shifting nature of 'Faroese adultism'. Therefore, the young islanders do not consider adultism to have a generally negative impact on their wellbeing.

2. Materials and Methods

This article is based on qualitative empirical data from project NABO – Social Inclusion of Youth in the Nordic Region (2019–2020) coordinated by the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civic Society (MUCF) in Stockholm on behalf of the Nordic Council of Ministers. The Faroese study included three focus group workshops (Spring 2019) in three locations: the capital, a regional town (Blue Town), and a village (Red Village). The workshops had seventeen participants, aged 17–23 years, in total. In Torshavn, the capital of the Faroe Islands, there were three men and three women in the focus group. In Blue Town, there were three women and two men. In Red Village, there were three women and three men. The workshops lasted between two and four hours and took place in school premises and a cultural centre. Together with my research assistant, Maria Svartá, I planned and organised the Faroese study, the main results of which were published in a report (Gaini 2019). The NABO project, in the Faroe Islands as well as in the other Nordic countries (Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Iceland) and autonomous regions (Greenland and Åland Islands), was based on a standardised methodological design, with a set of questions and activities, for the focus group workshops. The focus group interviews were based on the same interview guide in all countries and regions. The researchers strived to include a variety of participants in the focus groups. The focus group interviews were sessions with discussions around the table, small writing tasks for the youth, and breaks with snacks and drinks. The atmosphere was informal and the discussion was open with general guiding questions leading to the main topics of the study (Gaini 2019).

As is stated in the report NABO—Social Inclusion of Youth in the Nordic Region (Abiri 2021):

> "The definition of the five aspects of social inclusion were also the same in all eight reports. These definitions were mostly copied directly from the Sweden report into the other country reports. They were as follows: (1) young persons' sense of belonging and being part of a larger context at local, regional and national level; (2) young persons' opportunities for influence over the development of society in different parts of society and at different levels; (3) young persons' opportunities for participation in various aspects of society including cultural, leisure and social activities, non-profit involvement and paid work; (4) young persons' access to basic public sector services, including access to education, healthcare and medical services, public transport and housing; and (5) young persons' feeling of social inclusion in society at local, regional and national level as well as their social relationships and opportunities for support from family and social networks. The

fifth aspect also included questions regarding young persons' vulnerability in terms of discrimination, harassment, and bullying".

The report NABO—Social Inclusion of Youth in the Nordic Region (Abiri 2021) also observes the following:

> "The focus group topics dealt with issues of a personal nature, which can be quite sensitive. It can therefore be challenging for persons to open up and talk about powerlessness or exclusion in a group of peers—especially if society expects them to be resourceful and empowered. Consequently, it has been easier to assess the degree of social inclusion from the way the participating youths talk about their everyday lives in general".

The workshops were voice recorded and the discussions thereafter transcribed to text. Participants were recruited through local contacts in the municipalities. Most of the participants were studying or working, thus doing relatively well in their lives. If more young people without work and from vulnerable and underprivileged families had participated in the focus group interviews, the general image of the Faroese youth generation would most likely have included other nuances influencing the understanding of adultism from the youth perspective. The marginalised youth might indeed reflect a stronger sense of adultism, with parents and teachers trying to control their actions, but this is not documented. What is important is to critically reflect on these methodological issues.

As a member of a small island society, it was unavoidable that some of the participants had knowledge about me as a person, even if none of them were my relative or close friend. The NABO project was very interesting, in a Faroese as well as a pan-Nordic point of view, as it represented a rare example of a study exploring young people's inclusion and rights from a youth perspective (Abiri 2021). Participation was completely voluntary, and all participants have been anonymised in the article.

My analysis of the material from the focus group interviews was based on a deductive approach structured by hypotheses prepared for the Faroese project. The analysis was based on the main themes introduced in the interview guide and the categories and codes deriving from the discussions in the focus groups, for instance, belonging, influence, participation, community, social relations, trust, intergenerational relations, and discrimination. The young participants were not involved in the post-focus group analysis.

The Faroe Islands is an island community in the North Atlantic Ocean, midway between Iceland and Norway, with a population of 55,000 inhabitants. It is an autonomous country within the Kingdom of Denmark, which has been self-governing since 1948. The Faroes were colonised by Norse Vikings at the start of the nineth century AD, but people from Ireland and Scotland are believed to have lived in the archipelago for shorter or longer periods of time at least since the seventh century. The Faroes, consisting of eighteen islands and more than one hundred villages and towns, cover an area of 1399 square kilometres. During the Second World War, British troops occupied the Faroes while Denmark was invaded by Nazi Germany. In the fifties and sixties, the Faroes developed to become a modern welfare society with a large export-oriented fishing industry. The severe economic crisis in the Faroes in the early nineties resulted in a large wave of out-migration, very high unemployment rates, and the closure of many private companies in the fisheries sector. The Faroese economy recovered rapidly because of a successful restructuration of the economy and reconstitution of the political institutions. The Faroes are still very dependent on fisheries, as more than 90 percent of the export incomes derive from fishery products. Farmed salmon represents roughly half of the Faroese export value today. The sea continues to play a central role in the lives of the islanders—economically, culturally, and as a part of everyday life.

3. Results

Youth participation and inclusion are topics that rarely find their way to the core of the public societal debate in the Faroe Islands. There is no comprehensive national children and youth policy for the country. There is also a very limited number of scientific studies

exploring the human rights of young people in the Faroe Islands (Amnesty International Faroe Islands 2009). The NABO study therefore represents an important contribution for researchers interested in the everyday lives and identities of present-day young Faroe Islanders. Young people are, according to the material from the NABO project, generally satisfied with their position and influence at home and in the (local) society. Most young people in the Faroe Islands have a very active everyday life with school, work and (self-selected) diversified social activities.

3.1. Influence and Family Life

At home, among their closest relatives, young people feel that they can influence what happens. This is observed in all the Nordic regions, but more so in the Faroe Islands than in the other countries participating in the NABO project (Abiri 2021). "I can do whatever I like, almost. . .except of burning down the house", says James, from Blue Town. Another participant, Diana, from Torshavn, says: "I believe that I decide more than mum" at home. Another young woman from the capital, Lisa, nods and says: ". . .my mum has always been very flexible, I think, I was given free rein. . ." She explains that she is very close to her mother: "My mother is just 19 years older than me, so it is just like almost a friend". Fred, from Red Village, explains that, at home, the arrangements are democratic: "when you become an adult, you decide for yourself. . .it is no problem". While several participants talk about the new freedom that they enjoy when they turn eighteen, become 'adults', most of them have indeed also had strong influence on decisions at home as younger teenagers. Lisa, from Torshavn, says: "Of course, there are things that they [the parents] recommend me not to do, but because I am 18 years old, they are not really allowed to decide anymore, except that I live in their house, so I cannot do all kind of stupid things there. . ." The participants emphasise that the home—with most of them living together with their parents and siblings—is a safe place where they feel supported and respected as autonomous persons with rights and influence. It is, in other words, a 'youth-friendly' and inclusive family home that most participants belong to.

While the Faroese family, largely, is characterised by the values and norms that are reflected in the experiences and practices of the NABO project's participants, there are, obviously, also young islanders from underprivileged families who do not enjoy the same rights and respect in their communication with parents and other close adult relatives. While the Faroese society does not have the deep social class segregation that characterises many other countries in the global North, for example, the USA and the UK, there are differences between families and parental styles influencing young people's perception of adultism.

3.2. Belonging in Small Places

Young people have a strong sense of belonging and being part of a larger context at local and regional levels, but also at national (Faroe Islands) level. Most of them express a strong emotional attachment to the place that they live in, but also to the adult generation in their local community. Their larger family networks are, in most cases, strongly rooted in the community. They express basic trust on their political representatives locally, and on the political system generally. Most of the participants do not feel that the interests of the youth generation are ignored, even if the lives of young people are only occasionally mentioned in the Faroese political discourse. Yet, when we discuss concrete issues, such as a new tunnel or growing pollution at the harbour, the young participants stand up and start chatting eagerly. They demonstrate a much deeper understanding of what is taking place in their local community than the opening silence indicated. Hanna, from Red Village, says that "the person who is elected to the local council is often the person with the largest family". Because of his network, rather than because of his political skills and intelligence, he becomes popular and harvests many votes in his community. Especially in the small villages and towns, people feel closely attached to and dependent on each other. A young woman from Blue Town says: "Well, I actually think this is a sweet little

town, and everyone knows everyone, and you walk around, and all say 'hello' to each other, and one greets each other. . .they don't really do that in Havn [Torshavn], no one greets each other in Havn. . ." The small place is a good place when you fit into the group, and less pleasant when you feel excluded from the group. Rebecca, from Blue Town, told me about her friend, who had been a victim of the small place 'sociality rules'. Her friend had done something 'stupid' in the past, and now she could not get any job in the town, because "people in [town in the North] know who she is. . .and people gossip. . .". Young people explained to us that it is easy to become isolated in a small community, because you continually need to adapt to the 'we' group's norms and attitudes. Petra, from Red Village, says: ". . .if you don't work with the people that you live with, then you can't just talk with the neighbour, or, I don't know, there are not very many people here. . .you are actually forced to work with the people that live here. . ." If they are not accepted and respected in the small village community, the young person will usually consider relocation to a larger town, or even moving out of the country.

3.3. Silent Struggle

Do young people struggle to obtain more power in society? They do struggle, but it is rather a silent endeavour that has the form of a cultural undercurrent in society (Gaini 2022). "I have what I need", a young woman says laconically in the NABO study, at the same time as she enumerates all the (leisure) activity offers not available in her home village. Some of the young people claim that "we can do whatever we want", at the same time as they hint that many of their dreams cannot be realised in their home community. "Islanders are masterful improvisers", says Armstrong (2023, p. 58), and they are also, I believe, pragmatic and down to earth in their attitudes and ways. The silent struggle, or cultural opposition, as it sometimes appears as, is first and foremost a struggle to create a society that takes young people's experiences seriously. Lisa, from Torshavn, says: "I don't think anyone has ever asked for my opinion, when they have planned to do something". However, a male peer from the same city says: "You know, if you really want, you can, of course, make a difference". Another young man, Pete, from the capital, thinks that his generation is expecting a life without much effort: "what is the fact about, yes, us, youngsters today, is that we are spoiled. . ." Fred, from Red Village, says that when young people complain about something, it takes a long time before the problem is solved: "we [youth] grumbled about the fence around the pitch once, it took a year before it was built". The NABO study participants demonstrate that they hold and use opportunities for participation in various aspects of society, albeit often through informal and family-based networks, and that they hold and use opportunities for influence over the development of society, even if their struggle for recognition and influence might seem to be immersed in mundane everyday activities. Some of the participants are so busy participating in various aspects of society that they feel that they need more than 24 h in a day. Kenny from Torshavn says: "Well, you would like to have some more time for yourself, and not just all the time working, training, going to school. . ." The young people seem, generally, to be thriving and healthy, but some of them also express uneasiness based on predicaments related to their age—being neither a child nor an adult.

3.4. Disturbing the Parents

In addition to many of the common challenges facing adult citizens of their society, young people need to deal with ageism and an intergenerational power (im)balance in their everyday struggle. "You don't really belong anywhere. . .you are not an adult, but not a child", says a young Icelander participating in the Nordic NABO project (Abiri 2021, p. 5). The young Icelander adds: "You're not taken seriously. You fall in between somehow". In the focus group in the village in the North, a young woman says: "We do have a say, but we are rarely asked about anything in the [political] discussion". Another participant in the study, Pete, from Torshavn, says that "we, the youth, have strong opinions on many issues, engage among ourselves. . .yet we normally don't raise our voice among others [adults]".

He describes what at first glimpse could look like a 'submissive youth', in relation to adults, but which knows how to sustain its sense of freedom and autonomy. Young people have close bonds to the parents, but they rely on their own friends and acquaintances in many everyday life activities. Fred, from Red Village, says: "If you need a lift [to another village/town] you usually get help from friends, but if it is something really important, like preparing a job application and such, then you go to the parents. . .otherwise, mostly friends, not disturbing the parents. . ."

Young people's struggle is, according to many studies, becoming a tougher fight in the era of neoliberal globalisation (Aitken 2018). Pandemics, wars, and economic crises have, in many parts of the world, also made young people feel increasingly detached from their future dreams and aspirations. For the youth of the Faroe Islands, the future is imagined in a more positive light. "Village life is the best life", says Ralph, from Blue Town, "and I hope to be forced to move far away. . ." In the Faroe Islands, which in many ways is a more conservative and family-oriented society than its Nordic neighbours, the struggle of the youth has a more cultural and value-based character than most structured political movements in larger countries seem to have. Young people, including the young men and women feeling socially 'excluded', try to 'do their best' in their quest for participating in society (Gaini 2022, p. 41).

4. Discussion

4.1. Generation and Family

As the results of the NABO study above indicate, adultism has a special nature in the context of the Faroe Islands. You could even claim that adultism is not the best choice of concept to bet on in the academic aspiration of encapsulating the complex youth–adult relationship in a Nordic Atlantic society in shift. Instead of abandoning the concept of adultism altogether, I have decided to employ a variation of the main concept, Faroese adultism, in this article. Faroese adultism is not a magic cogitation, but rather an invitation to engage in careful contextualisation of the representation of the belief systems supporting a "view of the child as an object" (Corney et al. 2022, p. 680). Adultism, the presumption that adults "are better than young people and are entitled to act upon young people in many ways without their agreement" (Checkoway, cited in Gordon and Taft 2011, p. 1511), is a common component of adult–youth relationships, which is confronted by anti-adultism campaigns among many youth activists challenging age-based inequalities (Gordon and Taft 2011, p. 1511). The opposition between adultism and anti-adultism seems to be less pronounced and polarised in the Faroe Islands than in, for example, Latin and North America, where youth activists do not welcome "adult-led efforts to guide their political organizing", because they do not put their trust in a "top-down, adult-to-youth political socialization model" (Gordon and Taft 2011, p. 1524). Faroese adultism, reflecting the narratives of the NABO project participants, is less generational and categorical, as young people's everyday struggle is influenced by their entanglement with persons—relatives, neighbours, mentors, etc.—representing the adult generation. This does not mean that adultism or gerontocracy is non-existent in the Faroe Islands, as many adults fail to listen to the children that they assume they know and understand, but that young people avoid open confrontation with the adults. Young people invest in indirect cultural and symbolic action against the dominant culture of the adults. The Faroese society is less divided along generational lines than many other European societies. Young people's sense of belonging is, to a high degree, the outcome of intergenerational relations across several generations. Young people need the capacity to imagine a 'different (better) society' in order to grasp the power structure facilitating adultism in society (Johnson et al. 2020).

The concept and idea of adultism is therefore employed in a rather pragmatic and flexible way in my study, and the theoretical aspects of the concept of adultism are not reviewed in a systematic way. Adultism is an analytical concept contributing to a better understanding of the role of culture and attitudes in relation to power imbalances between generations in the society. Young people's views on normative structures of adultism are

not explicitly unveiled in the material from the NABO study, but young people's views on and experiences of opportunities for participation, opportunities for influence, and social exclusion are in focus. Adultism is not taken for granted, but rather used as a tool in the search for information about the rights and intergenerational relationships of young people in an island society.

The struggle of the youth is, in a strict sense, not a fight against the older generations, or against the dominant values of the past, but rather a struggle against cultural dissolution in the age of globalisation, or, in other words, against carelessness about the future. Only by including young people into the debate on the future of the Faroe Islands can there be a real inclusion of the youth generation. There is "no shortcut to children's civil and political rights" (Theis 2010, p. 353). Young people's perspectives "should be heard, taken seriously, and should be discussed in line with other actors' opinions and experiences" (Wulf-Andersen et al. 2016, p. 32). Young people, commonly presented as 'disengaged', and in need of help to 're-engaged', are well aware of the adults' image of young people as persons unable to "do things because of their age" (Corney et al. 2022, p. 680). Participation, as a social inclusion mechanism, is the principal opportunity to redefine power relationships creating the breeding ground for adultism (Vranjesevic 2020, p. 56). Therefore, a generous space for participation will foster dialogue with children, which will further pave the way for a potential "cooperative power model where power is shared" (Vranjesevic 2020, p. 56). Faroese adultism, I suggest, is non-hegemonic adultism where young people's perspectives are often "dismissed or trivialised based on the dominant group's perspective about young people" (DeJong 2014, p. 78), yet not without consideration of the specific youngster's social and cultural status in society. Faroese adultism is a form of cultural adultism tailored for small-scale societies with citizens closely connected to each other. Small islands are places with a close connection to the sea, close social interconnectedness and interdependence, and therefore a high level of 'mutual person-based recognisability' (Johannesen 2012). The small size of an island society, combined with strong norm-based social self-control, influences young people's sense of belonging and societal inclusion/exclusion processes. From this perspective, small island societies are also places with strong internal homogenising dynamics generating a dominant 'we culture' (Poulsen 2023). These dynamics have an impact on Faroese adultism because they reveal the analytical limitations related to a proper generation-based model of the youth–adult relationship.

4.2. Participation and Social Networks

The Faroese adultism, as the pattern of the NABO project findings reveals, is adultism in a landscape without a strong system of ageism. The social separation of old and young is vague because of, among other things, the family traditions in the Faroe Islands. International research shows that non-family networks, in most cases, are age homogenous, but the question that we need to ask is how much time do young people spend with family versus non-family networks? (Hagestad and Uhlenberg 2005). Also, how easy is it to separate the family from non-family groups in a small family-oriented island society? There are mechanisms of—institutional, spatial, and cultural—segregation in the Faroe Islands, as in most other societies, and ageism—through discrimination based on age—does indeed affect young islanders, but they do not feel insulated in a stigmatising youth category. Durable cross-generational family ties, Hagestad and Uhlenberg argue, tend to "mitigate age-cohort segregation and ageism" (Hagestad and Uhlenberg 2005, p. 355). This hypothesis strengthens my understanding of Faroese adultism as an idea curtailing the subordination and oppression of young (or elderly) people based on age, as we know it from 'conventional' theories of adultism. It is not only the adult that is viewed as a 'credible authority' (Bettencourt 2020, p. 154). The 'other' might be within your own age group, while the 'insider' might be from another age group. In pursuance of a better understanding of the youth–adult relationship as regards the idea of adultism, we need to take a closer look at participation in society. There is "a growing awareness that [participation] is most meaningful when it is rooted in children's everyday lives"

(Thomas and Percy-Smith 2010, p. 3). In fact, research has demonstrated that initiatives that are "far removed from children's everyday lives are the least likely to be sustained over long periods of time" (Theis 2010, p. 351). Young people's everyday life practices and the day-to-day symbolic struggle for a 'better future' connect youth cultures to societal futures: what do young people want to change or to sustain in their society? Their struggle, says Threadgold, can be presented as an attempt towards maintaining a coherent existence in a fundamentally fragmented, entropic world (Threadgold 2018, p. 22). How do young people perform participation? And how much of this is self-initiated? Young people participate, says Checkoway, "but their participation is uneven. Some youth participate with fervor in formal politics, others might or might not depending upon the situation, and yet others are uninvolved or minimally involved" (Checkoway 2011, p. 343). In the Faroese study, we meet many young people who seem rather 'uninvolved' in relation to organised political and social activism, but they are, individually, participating in many other age-heterogeneous activities and networks "transcending us/them thinking linked to age" (Hagestad and Uhlenberg 2005, p. 357).

4.3. Interdependency and Continuity

Faroese adultism addresses the question of adult's influence on the youth generation through the everyday life and cultural values of children and young people in the Faroe Islands. It is hard to talk about youth without at the same time also mentioning risk and struggle. This struggle is not necessarily associated with violence and radical movements, because it also refers to young people's symbolic and cultural endeavours in their quest for becoming heard, seen, and included in social communities in society (Fitzgerald et al. 2010, pp. 296–300). Their narratives and viewpoints reflect a way of struggling involving people from different generations, and not a dichotomous youth–adult conflict. Young people do not seek a revolution, but rather a pragmatic and limited opposition in the form of a silent cultural struggle. Their discussion about culture, inclusion and rights is attached to this struggle. While young people in the NABO project point at some challenging age-based obstacles in their dialogue with adults, they do not consider these restrictions to have a noteworthy negative effect on their wellbeing and sense of being autonomous citizens with capacity and human rights. "Honesty, trust and good relationships", says Daly, "are key to improving relations and communication between children and adults, and to the facilitation of children's participation" (Daly et al. 2016, p. 21). Faroese adultism is not forcing young people to abandon dreams and plans, but rather convincing them to take one step before taking the next: to be pragmatic and courteous in your encounter with representatives of the adult generation. Young people are not unfamiliar with social oppression, but they do not associate it, directly, with age segregation. Faroese adultism is embedded in intergenerational family and local social networks. Young people, in other words, do not feel that their opportunities and human rights are jeopardised by the adult generation's imagined antagonism, because they feel connected to each other in a relation of social interdependency and cultural continuity. This article has demonstrated the need to be more attentive to the cultural setting in critical studies of youth rights and adultism. The case of the Faroe Islands unveils how a focus on family identities and age-heterogenous social relations guides us towards a new avenue of knowledge about adultism in contemporary society.

4.4. Conclusions

In this article, based on a study from the Faroe Islands in the Nordic Atlantic region, we have seen how the local community and family network influence young people's understanding of their position, rights, and future. We have seen that young people connect the discussion on human rights and intergenerational relations to questions about cultural identity and belonging. Drawing on the material from the Faroe Islands, we have explored the ambivalent and shifting meaning of adultism in critical childhood and youth studies. We asked the following question: how do young people discuss and cope with

intergenerational and cultural constructions of the position and rights of youth in an island society in shift? The conclusion that we have reached to is that young people avoid talking about their parents' generation as the 'Other' as they sustain strong intergenerational bonds in their everyday struggle for recognition and power.

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Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

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