Time, space and agency in vocational upper secondary education

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Abstract
Time and space is used, regulated and negotiated by the participants in school. The transition from secondary to upper secondary school often means a higher level of responsibility for the student and possibility to influence on time and space spent in school. We in this paper explore how young people deal with the new expectations they meet on their route to adulthood and labour market citizenship, which is considered as proper form of citizenship in the era of educational restructuring and neo-liberal governance. The presentation is based on ethnographic projects in the context of vocational education, two in Sweden and one in Finland. The structure of upper secondary education differs in the two countries. In Finland it is strictly divided into general and vocational upper secondary institutions, and in Sweden it is organizationally united and all programmes have the same core subjects that give merits for higher education. We focus on cultural processes in these different contexts. In that sense our perspective is cross-cultural. The Swedish data are generated in Vehicle and Child and recreation programmes, the Finnish in a sector of social and health care. We analyse how and if young people at those programmes make collective actions, alliances and resistance negotiating their space in school.