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MEDIA PORTRAYALS OF AGEING BABY BOOMERS IN JAPAN AND FINLAND

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DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

Population ageing is a major challenge in the 21st century, one which has a profound impact on societies, the economy and politics. Of the industrialised countries experiencing ageing of their populations, Japan and Finland are two of the most rapidly ageing societies. In both countries, the baby boomers – large birth cohorts born immediately following the end of the Second World War – have accelerated population ageing.

This study investigates the ways in which the media portray the retirement and advancing age of the baby boomers. By exploring media representations of ageing baby boomers and doing a cross-national comparison, the study seeks to reveal how Japanese and Finnish societies view ageing and old age at both population and individual levels. The research materials have been collected from major national newspapers, and they consist of 1236 articles published between 2004 and 2014 for the Japanese data and between 2000 and 2015 for the Finnish data. Each country's pension system and the retirement process of the baby boomers are grounds for a specific analytic period divided into several phases. The research questions posed in the study are as follows: (1) How do Japanese and Finnish national newspapers portray the baby boomers during the period of their retirement and beginning of old age? (2) How are newspaper portrayals of ageing baby boomers different or similar in Japan and Finland? (3) In what ways is gender involved when Japanese and Finnish newspapers articulate the retirement and ageing of the baby boomers?

Analyses with two steps are essential for exploring a large amount of empirical material consisting of texts in two different languages: first, the manifest content analysis method is used to systematise the content, and second, the data is qualitatively explored using a thematic analysis approach. The manifest content analysis first identifies dominant topics in the individual articles and classifies them into broader categories. To understand relationships between the categorised topics and other features of newspaper reporting, gender representation of the baby boomers and boomers' position in the texts are examined. The thematic analysis qualitatively explores latent and underlying meanings involved in manifest content. It investigates how Japanese and Finnish newspapers articulate the retirement and ageing of the baby boomers, and thereby, how social perceptions of the ageing baby boomers are created.

The study results show that while the Japanese and Finnish newspaper discussions focused on several shared topics, other specific topics characterised media discussions in the respective countries. The shared topics included 'work, retirement and pension', 'ageing, health and care', and 'baby boomers as a generation'. The topics unique to the Japanese data were 'consumption and marketing' and 'activities, associations and relationships',

whereas 'current events in economic and political affairs' was a topic that exclusively appeared in the Finnish data.

Both Japanese and Finnish newspapers portrayed the baby boomers in a varied manner. At times, the baby boomers were depicted as posing critical challenges to the ageing societies due to their mass retirement, ultimately resulting in labour shortages or a prospective increase in old-age care. At other time, social expectations regarding the boomers were obvious in textual articulations that encouraged them to postpone their retirement age, continue working into the post-retirement period or participate in volunteer and community activities. The wide-ranging and sometimes contrasting portrayals of the Japanese and Finnish baby boomers serve as an example of the two-faced cultural representations of old age.

Japanese and Finnish media discussions viewed ageing at the overall population level in similar ways, as a challenge, as a concern and even as a crisis, though an alarming overtone was relatively more pronounced in the Finnish context. Differences between the two countries stood out when newspaper debates focused on individual ageing experiences, such as depicting attitudes and behaviours of the ageing boomers. While the Japanese media constantly praised energetic boomers for engaging in diverse activities and regarded them as a social resource, the Finnish media rather viewed the boomers as obsolete, with negative connotations. The cross-national comparison also uncovered that in the Finnish media, societal perceptions regarding ageing and old age at the level of individuals sometimes fused with gloomy discussions at the overall population level, whereas those two levels of debate mainly operated independently in the Japanese media.

Studying the intersection between gender and ageing in newspaper portrayals of the baby boomers highlighted a distinction between Japan and Finland. In Japanese newspaper articles, the underrepresentation of women compared to their male peers was statistically significant when gender representation was examined in a quantitative manner. However, qualitative analysis uncovered the media's observations on the disadvantageous position of male baby boomers and the emerging advantage of women in later life. Such articulations demonstrated a difference from the traditional understanding of the 'double standard of ageing', referring to discrimination against older women both because of their gender and their age. Gender-conscious portrayals of ageing baby boomers in the Japanese media added a new aspect to generational debates that had previously been viewed as either masculine or non-gendered. Contrastingly, gender did not have any special relevance when articulating views on the retirement and ageing of the baby boomers in Finnish newspaper articles. The Finnish baby boomers were predominantly represented as non-gendered, and the study did not reveal gender differences in public portrayals of the baby boomers.

Key words: baby boomers, Japan, Finland, work, retirement, ageing, gender, old age, media portrayals, social perceptions

TIIVISTELMÄ

Väestön ikääntyminen on merkittävä haaste, jolla on suuri vaikutus yhteiskuntaan, talouteen ja politiikkaan. Japani ja Suomi ovat nopeimmin ikääntyviä yhteiskuntia. Molemmissa maissa toisen maailmansodan jälkeen syntyneet suuret ikäluokat ovat kasvattaneet eläkeikässä olevien määrää.

Tässä tutkimuksessa tarkastellaan, millä tavoin media kuvaa suurten ikäluokkien eläkkeelle siirtymistä ja vanhenemista. Tavoitteena on selvittää, miten Japanissa ja Suomessa suhtaudutaan ikääntymiseen ja vanhuuteen sekä väestö- että yksilötasolla tutkimalla ikääntyvien suurten ikäluokkien mediakuvausta näissä kahdessa maassa. Tutkimusaineisto on hankittu laajalevikkisistä valtakunnallisista sanomalehdistä, ja se koostuu 1236 artikkeleista, jotka julkaistiin vuosien 2004 ja 2014 välisenä aikana Japanissa ja vuosien 2000 ja 2015 välisenä aikana Suomessa. Analysoitava ajanjakso jaettiin vaiheisiin maiden eläkejärjestelmän ja suurten ikäluokkien eläköitymisen perusteella. Tutkimuksessa vastataan kysymyksiin siitä, (1) miten valtakunnalliset sanomalehdet Japanissa ja Suomessa kuvaavat suuria ikäluokkia heidän jäädessään eläkkeelle ja siirtyessään vanhuuteen, (2) miten sanomalehtikuvaukset ikääntyvistä suurista ikäluokista ovat erilaisia tai samanlaisia Japanin ja Suomen välillä, ja (3) millä tavoin sukupuolta käsitellään kun Japanin ja Suomen sanomalehdet kuvaavat suurten ikäluokkien eläkkeelle siirtymistä ja vanhenemista.

Suuri kaksikielinen tekstiaineisto analysoitiin kahdessa vaiheessa: aineisto järjestettiin ensin sisällön mukaan manifestisella sisällönanalyysillä ja tämän jälkeen se analysoitiin laadullisesti käyttämällä temaattista analyysia. Manifestisella sisällönanalyysillä tunnistettiin kustakin artikkelista hallitsevat aiheet ja tämän jälkeen artikkelit kategorisoitiin. Lisäksi selvitettiin luokiteltujen aiheiden yhteyttä sukupuolten kuvaustapoihin ja siihen, miten suuret ikäluokat asemoitiin artikkeleissa. Temaattisella analyysillä tarkasteltiin löydettyihin aiheisiin kätkeytyviä ja niiden taustalla olevia merkityksiä. Näin selvitettiin, miten Japanin ja Suomen sanomalehdet artikuloivat suurten ikäluokkien eläkkeelle siirtymistä ja vanhenemista, millä on vaikutusta siihen kuinka yhteiskunnallinen ymmärrys ikääntyviä suuria ikäluokkia kohtaan syntyy.

Tutkimuksessa ilmeni, että osa sanomalehtikeskustelujen aiheista oli Japanille ja Suomelle yhteisiä ja osa jommallekummalle maalle erityisiä. Yhteisiksi aiheiksi nimettiin 'työ, eläköityminen ja eläke', 'ikäntyminen, terveys ja hoiva', ja 'suuret ikäluokat sukupolvena'. Japanilaiselle aineistolle ominaiset aiheet olivat 'kulutus ja markkinointi' ja 'toiminnot, osallistumiset ja suhteet', kun taas 'talouden ja politiikan asioiden ajankohtaiset tapahtumat' oli aihe, joka esiintyi erityisesti suomalaisessa aineistossa.

Sekä japanilaiset että suomalaiset sanomalehdet kuvasivat suuria ikäluokkia monipuolisella tavalla. Yhtäältä, suurten ikäluokkien ikääntymisen

tunnistettiin muodostavan yhteiskunnallisia haasteita esimerkiksi työvoimapolun ja vanhusten hoivan tarpeen lisääntyessä. Toisaalta, tekstien artikulaatio osoitti selvästi suuriin ikäluokkiin kohdistuvien yhteiskunnallisten odotusten olemassaolon: suuria ikäluokkia kannustettiin lykkäämään eläkkeelle siirtymistä, jatkamaan työntekoa eläköitymisen jälkeen tai osallistumaan vapaaehtoisiin ja yhteisöllisiin toimintoihin. Japanilaisia ja suomalaisia suuria ikäluokkia kuvailevat laaja-alaiset ja ajoittain vastakohtaiset ilmaiset tarjoavat esimerkin siitä, että vanhuuden kulttuurisella kuvauksella on kaksi eri puolta.

Japanilainen ja suomalainen media suhtautuivat ikääntymiseen väestötasolla samankaltaisesti: sitä pidettiin haasteena, huolenaiheena ja jopa uhkana, korostuneemmin suomalaisessa keskustelussa. Eroja oli enemmän artikkeleiden kohdistuessa yksilötason vanhenemisen kokemuksiin, suurten ikäluokkien asenteisiin ja käyttäytymiseen. Japanilainen media kehui jatkuvasti suuriin ikäluokkiin kuuluvia siitä, kuinka aktiivisesti he osallistuvat erilaisiin toimintoihin. Heitä pidettiin yhteiskunnan voimavarana, kun taas suomalainen media suhtautui heihin negatiivisemmin. Maiden välinen vertailu paljasti myös sen, että suomalaisessa mediassa yhteiskunnalliset käsitykset yksilötason ikääntymisestä ja vanhuudesta sulautuivat toisinaan väestön vanhenemista koskevaan pessimistiseen diskurssiin. Japanilaisessa mediassa nämä kahden tason keskustelut olivat erillisempiä.

Japanin ja Suomen välinen erilaisuus korostui selvitettäessä sukupuolen ja ikääntymisen yhteyttä suurten ikäluokkien sanomalehtikuvauksissa. Japanilaisissa sanomalehtiartikkeleissa naiset olivat miehiin verrattuna tilastollisesti merkitsevästi aliedustettuja, kun sukupuolten kuvaustapoja analysoitiin määrällisesti. Laadullinen analyysi kuitenkin paljasti median mielipiteen, että ikääntyminen vie suurten ikäluokkien miehet epäsuotuisaan asemaan, kun taas naisille siitä tulee kasvavaa etua. Tällaiset artikulaatiot eroavat perinteisestä 'vanhenemisen kaksoisstandardista', jolla tarkoitetaan ikääntyneiden naisten syrjintää ikänsä ja sukupuolensa vuoksi. Suurten ikäluokkien sukupuolitietoiset kuvaukset japanilaisessa mediassa toivat uutta näkökulmaa sukupolvikeskusteluihin, joita on ennen pidetty joko maskuliinisina tai sukupuolettomina. Päinvastoin kuin japanilaisessa mediassa, sukupuolella ei ollut juuri merkitystä, kun suomalaiset sanomalehtiartikkelit artikuloivat kantaansa suurten ikäluokkien eläkkeelle siirtymisestä ja vanhenemisesta. Suomalaiset suuret ikäluokat esitettiin lähes sukupuolettomina ja ainakaan tässä tutkimuksessa ei voitu tunnistaa sukupuolten välistä eroa suurten ikäluokkien julkisissa kuvauksissa.

Avainsanat: suuret ikäluokat, Japani, Suomi, työ, eläköityminen, ikääntyminen, sukupuoli, vanhuus, median kuvaukset, yhteiskunnalliset käsitykset

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1 INTRODUCTION

Japan and Finland are rapidly ageing societies. While Japan has been one of the world's most aged countries for some time now, Finland has been one of Europe's fastest ageing countries over the past decade. A common feature characterising these two societies is that the baby boomers have been accelerating the ageing of the population. The present study focuses on ageing baby boomers by investigating how Japanese and Finnish media represent their retirement and advancing age.

My interest in Japan and Finland from the viewpoint of ageing populations originated from personal connections to both countries. I am a Japanese national who has stayed in Finland for over a decade. I first came to Finland as an exchange student, then moved to Finland to take a job, and ultimately began work on a doctoral thesis. Over the course of time, my original curiosity about an unknown foreign country developed into identifying differences and similarities compared to my native country through everyday experiences, which further motivated me to conduct academic research. The reason why I decided on the ageing of the population, with special attention to the baby boomers, as a topic for the study stemmed from my past work experience in the administration of social and health affairs and my educational background in social policy.

When conducting such a comparative study, acquiring a collection of proper research materials turned out to be challenging. In order to comprehensively capture the retirement and ageing of the baby boomers, I initially sought to integrate qualitative data from Japanese and Finnish newspapers and quantitative data sets from surveys conducted in the respective countries, including information on the well-being of ageing people in terms of their socio-economic conditions, health, lifestyle, social networks and so forth. I conducted both media analyses and statistical analyses of the survey data sets for approximately the first half of the whole study process. However, I became aware of a limitation in comparable questions between the two different surveys and few contact points in the secondary data with respect to media representations. Those were the major challenges for my research project, but thanks to the very publicity surrounding the ageing of the baby boomers, various media discussions relating to them proved to be feasible for conducting the study.

One advantage of studying media representations is that media not only report the ageing of the population and subsequent changes in social policy, but also have an influence on setting objectives for decision making in such policy areas by raising issues of population ageing in public discussions and thereby shaping public opinion. The aim of the study was to discover how Japanese and Finnish societies view ageing and old age at both the overall population and individual levels by investigating the ways in which the

retirement and ageing of the baby boomers are socio-culturally constructed in newspaper articles in the respective countries. A gender perspective was also important when implementing the study. The research materials consist of 1,236 articles that were collected and categorised according to the retirement process of the baby boomers in Japan and Finland.

The study regards the baby boomers as being at the vanguard of re-shaping later life, drawing on their demographic and generational significance. The terms *baby boomers* and *baby boom generation* are used interchangeably in the study. The word generation initially had three meanings within academic research (Alwin & McCammon 2007): (1) generation as a location within the kinship structure of families, (2) generation as a birth cohort and (3) generation as historical participation in social movements and/or organisations. The terms *baby boomers* and *baby boom generation* used in this study only incorporate two of the three definitions, namely generation as a distinctive birth cohort and as a group of people with shared historical experiences and a common identity. The study does not interpret the concept of generation according to notions of family generation, although people belonging to a particular generation certainly have relatives who are members of different generations within the structure of families.

The study proceeds as follows. Chapter 2 describes the demographic characteristics of the baby boomers and their influence on the ageing of the population in Japanese and Finnish contexts. Chapter 3 considers diverse discussions about population ageing raised in academic literature, calling attention to both crisis thinking and a seemingly optimistic view. While Chapter 2 deals with demographic aspects of the baby boomers as an outstandingly large birth cohort, Chapter 4 aims to understand the baby boomers as a sociological phenomenon by drawing on their generational features. The same chapter explores the Japanese and Finnish baby boomers from a generational perspective and reveals general similarities between them. Chapter 5 critically explores media representations of ageing baby boomers and older people discussed in previous research. Chapters 2–5 as an entity provide the theoretical framework for the empirical study, whereas Chapter 6 defines the research questions and research objectives.

Chapter 7 then provides a detailed description of how the research materials were collected and the decision and reasoning for how the data was processed and analysed. Results of the manifest content analysis are described in Chapter 8, which captures the newspaper discussions related to the ageing baby boomers in a quantitative manner. Chapters 9 and 10 report the results of the thematic analysis, which explores the data qualitatively. Whereas Chapter 9 discusses analyses of common topics in the Japanese and Finnish data and compares the results, Chapter 10 describes investigations of unique topics that appeared independently in media discussions in the respective countries. Finally, Chapter 11 summarises the research results and discusses their implications for understanding social perceptions of ageing and older

adults in Japan and in Finland, while taking a cross-national and a gender perspective into account.

2 JAPAN AND FINLAND – TWO AGEING SOCIETIES

This chapter addresses the baby boom generation as comprising significantly large birth cohorts on a global scale and discusses their ageing from a demographic perspective. The chapter first describes the impacts of the baby boomers on population ageing in global and historical contexts. The focus of the chapter then moves to Japan and Finland by explaining demographic characteristics of the baby boom in the two countries and their similarities. Implications of advancing age among Japanese and Finnish baby boomers for population ageing are discussed in terms of their prospective social and economic influences.

2.1 POPULATION AGEING AND THE BABY BOOMERS

Population ageing refers to the growth in the relative share and the absolute numbers of older people in the population. Changes in mortality and fertility have brought about an overall ageing of the population. Advancements in medicine and public health as well as improvements in living conditions have raised life expectancy for several decades. This development is referred to as ‘ageing at the top’ of the population pyramid (Eurostat 2019). On the other hand, constantly low levels of fertility over an extended period of time, particularly in high-income countries, have led to a decline in the proportion of young people in the total population (Eurostat 2019; Murphy 2017). This process is referred to as ‘ageing at the bottom’ of the population pyramid (Eurostat 2019). These two determinants of population ageing, increasing longevity and declining fertility rates, are transforming the age structure: the share of children and working-age persons is shrinking, while that of older persons continues to grow (Eurostat 2019; United Nations 2017).

According to a report on world population ageing released by the United Nations (2017), virtually every country in the world is experiencing growth in the number and proportion of older persons in the population. While population ageing is a global phenomenon, the process and magnitude of ageing vary across countries and regions. Furthermore, population ageing may differ from country to country in terms of timing, speed and extent when it is measured by different indicators, such as the median age, the proportion of persons aged 65 and over, the proportion of persons aged 80 and over, or the old-age dependency ratio (Lanzieri 2011).

Over the next few decades, ageing of the population in Western countries and in Japan is going to advance to unprecedented levels. This fact is further demonstrated by past demographic events that have occurred in many countries of the said regions. Fertility first strongly increased and

subsequently declined during the post-World War II period, which was labelled a 'baby boom' (Eurostat 2019; Lanzieri 2011). Thus, population ageing in many developed countries has been accelerated by, and will be profoundly experienced by, the baby boomers (Gale 2012). From a demographic standpoint, the baby boomers refer to the large birth cohorts who were born during a period that witnessed a rise in birth rates across industrialised countries immediately following the end of the Second World War.

Trends of the baby boom varied from country to country. Some countries, such as the United States, Canada and Australia, experienced a higher and more sustained increase in births from the mid-1940s through the mid-1960s (Falkingham 1997; Phillipson et al. 2008). The United Kingdom had a distinctive pattern of two separate peaks, in 1947 and in 1964 (Leach et al. 2013; Phillipson et al. 2008), whereas in Germany there was no evidence of a real baby boom at all (Falkingham 1997; Leach et al. 2013). Finland and Japan, which are the countries covered in this study, had relatively compressed but significant periods of increasing birth rates following demobilisation (Karisto 2005, 2007a; Sakaiya 2005/1976, 2008/2005).

Over the course of history, crucial historical events such as world wars or pandemics have either led to a boom or a decline in the global population. The current trend of a growing number of older persons indeed reveals the powerful influence of these major historical events in shaping the age composition of the population (United Nations 2017: 4). Currently, the impact of the Second World War is particularly evident in population ageing patterns. The peaks in the growth rate shown for the populations aged 60 years or over in 2010–2015, and those projected for persons aged 80 years or over in 2030–2035, mark the periods during which those born during the post-war baby boom will reach old age (United Nations 2017: 4, 40).

Rapid growth in the number of older people due to the advancing age of the baby boomers has been transforming the distribution of the population in developed countries. Population pyramids illustrate changes in the size and age structure of a population over time by showing the share of those of a given sex and age group in the total population. As the baby boomer cohorts grow older, the bulge in the population corresponding to them as a group is moving up the population pyramid, meaning that the smaller numbers of working-age people and children who make up the base of the pyramid are causing it to become ever narrower. The significant increase in the share of older persons in the total population is likely to become a greater burden on the working-age population, which will be expected to provide for the social expenditure required by the ageing population (Eurostat 2019). As the word burden implies, the prospective economic threat caused by the ageing of the population is frequently referred to when interpreting demographic changes. Population ageing therefore emerges as one of the most significant social transformations of the 21st century, with considerable implications for socio-economic systems, such as public pensions programmes, health care and kinship structures (Lanzieri 2011; United Nations 2017).

2.2 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BABY BOOM IN JAPAN AND IN FINLAND

Figure 1 and Figure 2 show changes in the numbers of live births in Japan and Finland between 1930 and 2017. Comparing the two countries reveals surprisingly similar shapes in the figures, particularly around the period just before and after the end of the Second World War. In Japan, the war ended in August 1945, and subsequent demobilisation brought about steep rise in birth rates in 1947. On the other hand, in Finland significant demographic changes occurred a bit earlier. The majority of soldiers had been demobilised by the end of 1944, following the termination of the war against the Soviet Union, and birth rate rapidly increased already in the summer of 1945 (Karisto 2005, 2007a). The birth of the subsequently named baby boomers was in both countries characterised by the end of the war and home-coming of young men from the front.

As the figures indicate, another feature common to the two countries was the temporary nature of the boom in the birth rate. The significantly high number of births continued only until 1949 in Japan, though the annual number of babies born alive still exceeded 2 million in 1952. In the same way, the birth rate in Finland began gradually to drop from the beginning of the 1950s onwards (Karisto 2007a). There is not an absolute consensus about the exact birth years demarcating the baby boom generation in either of the two countries. However, the most commonly and reasonably used definitions for the boomers are those cohorts born between 1947 and 1949 in Japan (Amanuma 2007; Sakaiya 2005/1976, 2008/2005) and between 1945 and 1950 in Finland (Karisto 2005).

Even when taking into account the end of the war and demobilisation, Karisto (2007a) regards the short duration of the Finnish baby boom and the salient number of births as extraordinary and surprising in light of the number of married men lost during the war. On the other hand, the baby boom in Japan might have been an extraordinary demographic phenomenon in response to the mass mortality caused by the world war (Satō 2008). According to Satō (2008), the reason for the brief period of pronounced increase in the birth rate may have to do with a compression of timing in reproductive behaviours that deviated temporarily from the birth control tradition widespread throughout society at the time.

Since the baby boom in the latter half of the 1940s, there have been both similarities and differences in the long-term fluctuation in the birth rate for Japan and Finland. While there was a smaller surge in the number of births in the early 1970s in Japan, those referred to as the second baby boomers or the baby boomer juniors, a similar cohort of new baby boomers does not exist in Finland. Despite the fact that fertility has been declining somewhat more dramatically in Japan, both countries share similar tendencies of a continual decrease in the birth rate through the 2010s. A noteworthy feature in Japan is a steep birth decline in 1966. Deliveries were avoided in that particular year –

the year of the fire horse – due to the superstition that those born then would have a bad personality and bring harm. This is an example showing that not only major historical events, but also culture, matters in the population structure.

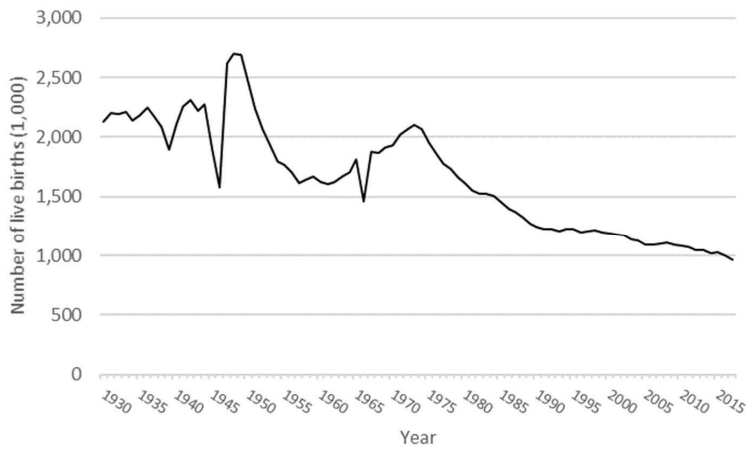


Figure 1. The number of live births in Japan, 1930–2017
(source: Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications 2019).



Figure 2. The number of live births in Finland, 1930–2017
(source: Statistics Finland 2019).

2.3 IMPLICATIONS OF THE ADVANCING AGE OF THE BABY BOOMERS FOR POPULATION AGEING

The so-called population pyramids clarify the position and scale of the baby boomers in relation to the whole population. Figures 3-A and 3-B present the distribution of the population by age and sex in Japan and in Finland based on the actual statistics in 2017 and population projections for 2030. The baby boomers constituted an obvious bulge in the population composition of Japan in 2017, when they entered early old age (68–70 years old). When they reach their early eighties (81–83 years old) in 2030, their significance will still be visible, particularly in the female population. The Finnish baby boomers no longer constituted the largest living birth cohort in 2017, when they were in their late sixties and early seventies (67–72 years old). However, the size of the baby boom generation clearly differed from that of older cohorts, which indicates the long-lasting influence of their magnitude. The baby boomers in Finland will be a part of the large old-age population when they approach 85 years of age in 2030 (80–85 years old).

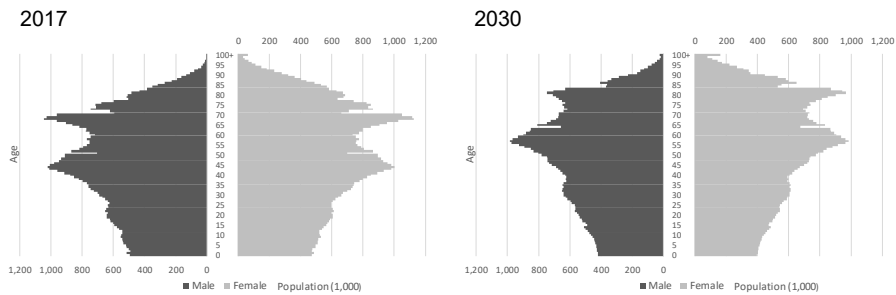


Figure 3-A. Population pyramid in Japan, 2017 and 2030

(sources: Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications 2019; National Institute of Population and Social Security Research 2017).

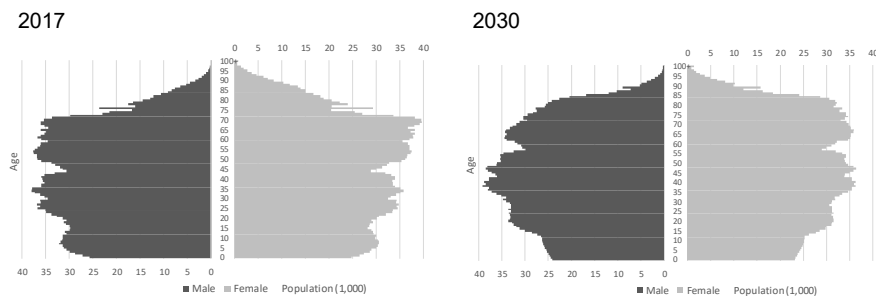


Figure 3-B. Population pyramid in Finland, 2017 and 2030

(source: Statistics Finland 2019).

The proportions of different age groups relative to the total population are depicted in Figure 4 and Figure 5. Calculations are based on statistics compiled by the Statistics Bureau of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications in Japan and Statistics Finland. The percentage of the population aged 65 years and over is expected to progressively increase in both countries. When the baby boomers were still at an active working age in 1990, the share of the old-age population was 12.1% in Japan and 13.5% in Finland. By the year 2015, when most of the boomers had retired, the rates had increased to 26.6% in Japan and 20.5% in Finland. Japan has been the world's most aged society since 2005 (Cabinet Office 2018), whereas the increase in the share of the population aged 65 years and over in Finland within the last decade has been among the most rapid of the 28 member states of the European Union (Eurostat 2019). The share of the old-age population in Japan is projected to exceed 31% by 2030 and be at 38.1% in 2060. The corresponding numbers in Finland are estimated to be 26% by 2030 and 31.1% in 2060.

As the curves in Figures 4 and 5 show, the commonly perceived problem in the two countries is a constant decline in the share of the working age population. The old-age dependency ratio describes the ratio of persons aged 65 and over to those in the traditional working ages, 15 to 64 years old. This metric simply indicates trends in the implied dependency associated with a growing proportion of the population at older ages (United Nations 2017: 34). According to the calculation utilising official statistics of the two countries, the old-age dependency ratio increased from 17.3% to 43.9% in Japan and from 20% to 32.4% in Finland during the period between 1990 and 2015. This means that in 2015, one old person was supported by 2.3 working age persons in Japan, and by 3.1 working age persons in Finland. By 2060, the old-age dependency ratio is projected to rise to 73.9% (1.4 working age persons per one old person) in Japan and to 54.7% (1.8 working age persons per one old person) in Finland. These numbers imply how rapidly the population is ageing in both countries.

The old-age dependency ratio is useful as a simple metric to describe demographic changes. However, its validity is questioned given that chronological age alone is often a poor proxy for the level of dependency experienced in a population; even as older persons are quite diverse in terms of both their economic activity and functional capacity, not all persons in the traditional working ages are active in the labour force (United Nations 2017: 34). For instance, the average effective age of retirement in Japan, which was 70.6 years old for men and 69.3 years old for women in 2017 (OECD 2019), raises the question of whether it is even appropriate to regard all people over 65 years of age as dependent. Similarly, Gee (2002) explains the problems with the dependency ratios according to the following reasons. First, dependency ratios make the arbitrary assumptions that people below and above a certain age are dependents. Second, dependency ratios do not count unwaged labour, including caregiving and volunteer activity. Finally, dependency ratios create

a false dichotomy between those who are dependent and those who are not, one which ignores the relations of interdependence and reciprocity in society.

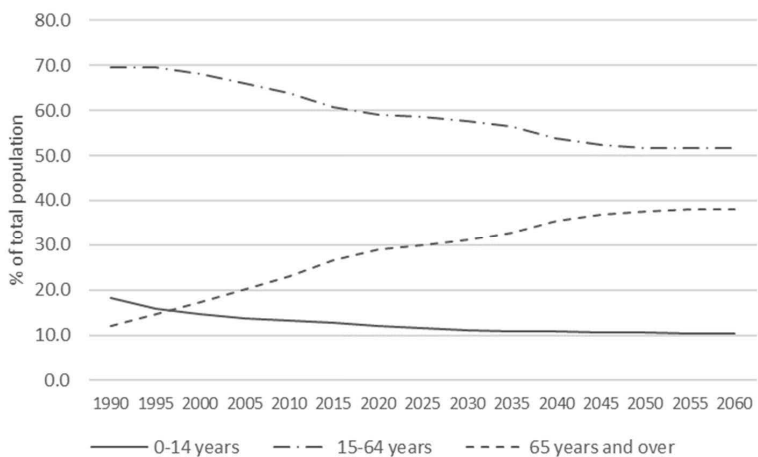


Figure 4. Population by age group in Japan (%), 1990–2060
(source: Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications 2019).

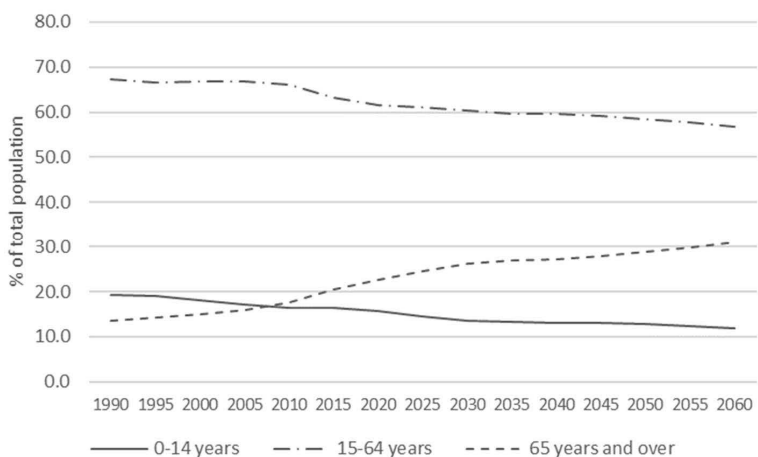


Figure 5. Population by age groups in Finland (%), 1990–2060
(source: Statistics Finland 2019).

Notwithstanding aforementioned criticism, the old-age dependency ratio is still commonly cited in discussions on social expenditure, especially those pertaining to old-age pension programmes and elderly care. The increasing percentages of elderly persons in the old-age dependency ratio and increasing number of older people overall have caused an actual increase in social

expenditure for old age. According to the Financial Statistics of Social Security in Japan for the fiscal year 2016, the share of expenditure for the policy area of old age in relation to total social expenditure grew from 37% in 1990 to 46.6% in 2016 (National Institute of Population and Social Security Research 2018).¹ The report on social protection expenditure by function made by the National Institute for Health and Welfare in Finland notes that the share of expenditure for old age increased from 28.6% in 1990 to 41.7% in 2017 (THL 2019).² The social expenditure for old age in Japan included pension benefits and arrangements for care services both at home and in an institutional setting. The equivalent expenditure in Finland referred to cash benefits or benefits in kind for securing income and providing support, such as old-age pension, institutional care services, home care and support for informal care. In Japan, care for the elderly has expanded due to the establishment of a long-term care insurance system introduced in 2000, whereas in Finland family caregivers are also eligible for care allowance, leaves and support services. The scale of the expenditure and its development can be better understood by referring to the percentage share of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Old-age expenditure in relation to GDP rose from 4.2% (1990) to 10.3% (2016) in Japan and from 6.9% (1990) to 12.9% (2017) in Finland (National Institute of Population and Social Security Research 2018; THL 2019).³ Public provisions for old age are going to further increase along with an expected increase in the needs for health and nursing care for the baby boomers.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the baby boom that occurred during the post-World War II period currently has a powerful influence on global population ageing. Especially in Japan and Finland, the common demographic characteristics of the baby boom are the major contributing factor to the rapid ageing of the population in the respective countries. Both the old-age dependency ratio and social expenditure for old age have increased and are projected to increase progressively with advancing age among Japanese and Finnish baby boomers. This poses a challenge to maintaining social security systems as well as kinship structures. The next chapter explores how population ageing has given rise to diverse discourses on old age.

¹ The National Institute of Population and Social Security Research in Japan compiles financial statistics on social security following the rules laid out in the OECD Social Expenditure Database (SOCX). SOCX includes reliable and internationally comparable statistics on public and (mandatory and voluntary) private social expenditure (cash benefits and benefits in kind) at the programme level (old age, survivors, incapacity related benefits, health, family, active labour market programmes, unemployment, housing and other social policy areas) as well as net social spending indicators.

² The National Institute for Health and Welfare in Finland (THL) compiles statistics on social protection expenditure (cash benefits and benefits in kind) following the methodology laid out by the European System of Integrated Social Protection Statistics (ESSPROS). ESSPROS provides a coherent comparison between European countries for administrative national data on social protection by function (sickness/health care, disability, old age, survivors, family/children, unemployment, housing and social exclusion).

³ The total social expenditure as a percentage of GDP was 22.2% in Japan (2016) and 30.9% in Finland (2017).

3 DIVERSE DISCOURSES ON OLD AGE BASED ON POPULATION AGEING

Ageing of the population, which has been experienced both globally and rapidly, has generated various arguments due to its anticipated serious influences on society, the economy, politics and culture. Chapter 3 examines the discussions raised in academic literature in relation to human ageing and its societal relevance and classifies them into two types of discussions: debates that view population ageing as a crisis, and those that view population ageing as an opportunity. After discussing the features of crisis thinking from a critical standpoint, the chapter provides an overview of the major ageing theories that portray ageing of the population in a positive light. The contradictions and criticisms inherent in the development of these theories in gerontological research are also addressed.

3.1 POPULATION AGEING VIEWED AS A CRISIS

Many developed countries, notably Japan and Finland, are experiencing a rapidly ageing population and that such rapid growth in the proportion of older persons is having profound economic and social impacts. However, this changing reality has given rise to both popular and professional discussions on old age, discussions that tend to demonstrate a specific pattern. Most of the gerontological and social research, and especially popular media reports, depict the rapidly ageing population as a threat and an impending economic crisis with profound consequences for healthcare systems, social security programmes and industrial and intergenerational relations (Katz 1992). The prevailing perception is that an ageing population will be a burden to society (Robertson 1997), and unsustainable costs are expected to result from the needs of an older population (Gee 2002). Such a phenomenon in which the demographic features of ageing populations are characterised by catastrophic projections and by notions of a social crisis or social problem is called alarmist demography (Gee 2002; Katz 1992,) or apocalyptic demography (Gee 2002; Robertson 1997).

In general, alarmist or apocalyptic debates emerge when the ageing of the population is statistically highlighted. Typical examples include making references to population pyramids and dependency ratios. Robertson's (1997) argument clarifies that presenting information on the changing shapes of population pyramids is a suitable tool for appealing to the profound implications of demographic shifts, whereas dependency ratios signify the burden of supporting older age groups assumed by young working people. In the discourse on alarmist/apocalyptic demography, statistical projections are not subject to question because they are viewed as having scientific certainty

(Gee 2002: 750). Furthermore, as Katz (1992: 204) maintains, statistical projections acquire their alarmist hue when inserted into the context of discussions about healthcare, pensions, social security, retirement, taxes and intergenerational relations.

Gee (2002: 751–753) has identified four interrelated components that underlie pervasive thinking on ‘population ageing as crisis’ when it comes to alarmist and apocalyptic demography. First, demographic crisis thinking is dependent on the certainty of demographic projections, regardless of the fact that projections are based on assumptions about fertility, mortality and net migration levels in the future. Second, apocalyptic thinking about population ageing relies on dependency ratios as meaningful measures of the economic and social impact of ageing. Particularly, old-age dependency ratios become the main focus of crisis thinking when their increase over the past decades is substantial and the projections show an even greater increase in the next decades. Third, as a consequence of conceptualising population in terms of dependent and independent sub-groups, demographic alarmism tends to homogenise people on the basis of age, viewing the elderly as sick and frail non-contributors to society. Fourth, common-sense notions about the elderly as a homogenised group fit well with demographic crisis thinking. Such notions make it seemingly self-evident that an ageing population will lead to increased health care costs and put stress on the public pension system because older people are sicker and frailer than other members of society and rely on pensions.

The four elements underpinning the prevalence of alarmist and apocalyptic demography seem to be consonant with the neo-Malthusian anxiety that a growing number of elderly persons will constitute a threat to the economic viability of the welfare state (Katz 1992: 220). The neo-Malthusian theory postulates a fixed amount of resources and warns of a situation where fewer working-age persons will have to support an increasing number of older persons (Rauhut 2010). Demographic alarmism not only splits populations into dependent and independent age groups, but also pits these two groups against one another. This has facilitated the intergenerational equity debate, which has been influential in welfare state reform and according to which proponents argue that older people are receiving more than they deserve from the public purse (Gee 2002: 752). By constructing a potential battleground for intergenerational competition over resources (Minkler & Robertson 1991), apocalyptic and alarmist demography has engendered circumstances in which older people are caught between a social ethic that values independence on the one hand, and, on the other, a service ethic that constructs them as dependent (Robertson 1997: 425).

The pervasiveness of alarmist and apocalyptic demography is further understood by the notion of ageism. Ageism was originally defined as the systematic stereotyping of and discrimination against people because they are old (Butler 1969, 1975). The definition incorporates the perception of older people as a category that is distinct from others in society (Bytheway 2005:

362). Ageism characterises older people as an out-group (Jönson 2012: 199), which leads to discrimination and prejudice. Given the negative features entailed in ageism, it can be argued that ageism underlies the way in which population ageing is viewed as a threat and a crisis. At the same time, the alarmist debates surrounding the ageing of the population also give rise to ageist modes of thinking.

3.2 POPULATION AGEING VIEWED AS AN OPPORTUNITY

While crisis thinking, which views older people as a social burden, continues to hold a steady position in discussions, the ageing of the population is also articulated in a contrasting manner. A United Nations report on world population ageing clearly states that population ageing is a demographic success story, driven by changes in fertility and mortality that are associated with economic and social development (United Nations 2017: 4). According to Foster and Walker (2015: 83), policy responses to population ageing commonly portray older age as a period of inactivity and dependency, while simultaneously older people are viewed as a social and economic resource. Baltes and Carstensen (1996: 398) point out that the plight of old age being associated with decline and loss is only one side of the coin, whereas the other side involves growth, vitality, striving and contentment. The following section provides an overview of some major ageing theories that ostensibly portray human ageing and its societal relevance in a positive light. The theories are termed successful ageing, active ageing, productive ageing and the Third Age theories.

The concept of successful ageing challenges the dominance of the deficit model, which underlines older people's limitations (Boudiny 2013; Foster & Walker 2015). The discourse on successful ageing originated in the United States during the early 1960s as a response to the then-influential disengagement theory, which viewed old age as an inevitable period of mutual withdrawal by ageing persons and general society (Boudiny 2013; Foster & Walker 2015; Walker 2002). The activity perspective, the scientific root of successful ageing, emphasises the maintenance of activity patterns and values typical of middle age to successfully manage the ageing process (Boudiny 2013; Walker 2002). John Rowe and Robert Kahn (1987, 1997) spearheaded the most influential work on developing the concept, making the topic of successful ageing of great interest in the field of gerontology.

Rowe and Kahn (1987) proposed distinguishing 'successful ageing' from 'usual ageing' in order to stimulate research on the criteria and determinants of successful ageing. This created a major transformation in ageing research, shifting it from a focus on notions of loss and decline to one characterised by heterogeneity and the potential for growth (Foster and Walker 2015; Pruchno 2015). The conceptual framework of successful ageing defined by Rowe and

Kahn (1997) includes three main components: low probability of disease and disease-related disability; high cognitive and physical functional capacity; and active engagement with life, which refers to interpersonal relations and productive activity, either paid or volunteer. Rowe and Kahn (1997) contend that successful ageing is more than the absence of disease and the maintenance of functional capacities; rather, the concept is represented most fully in terms of how they are combined with an active engagement with life.

Since Rowe and Kahn first proposed such a definition, a number of researchers have been inspired to engage in the theoretical development of successful ageing. This has given successful ageing a prominent position in social gerontology research (Martinson & Berridge 2015: 59). At the same time, however, the notion of successful ageing has also invited considerable critical responses (Katz & Calasanti 2015: 26). According to Katz and Calasanti (2015), critical responses to the Rowe–Kahn successful ageing paradigm can be categorised into three basic types. First, the responses argue that the empirical and methodological limitations of the successful ageing framework are evident, as studies within this framework show inconsistencies in terms of their conceptualisation and measures. Second, by choosing to emphasise the extent to which successful ageing is dependent on individual choices and behaviours, the successful ageing paradigm neglects social determinants that constrain lifestyles. Third, the successful ageing paradigm tends to demarcate populations as either successful or unsuccessful agers due to inattention to intersecting issues of social inequality, health disparities and age relations. Similarly, Martinson and Berridge's (2015) systematic review of the social gerontology literature criticising successful ageing models revealed four general categories: add and stir, missing voices, hard hitting critiques and new frames and names. They concluded that the vast array of criteria that gerontologists have collectively offered to expand on Rowe and Kahn's original successful model is symptomatic of the problem that a normative model is, by definition, exclusionary (Martinson & Berridge: 58–59). Because of such exclusionary measures, it is problematic to apply successful ageing as a normative concept to a diverse older population.

While Rowe and Kahn's model pinpoints the criteria for successful ageing, Paul Baltes, Margaret Baltes and Laura Carstensen have developed a psychologically based theory focusing on the processes by which people successfully age (Rowe & Kahn: 2015). Baltes and Baltes (1990) and Baltes and Carstensen (1996) have likewise presented a metamodel of selective optimisation with compensation to understand the processes whereby people reach their goals given a reduction in resources and increasing losses in the biological, social and psychological spheres. The model defines success as goal attainment and successful ageing as the minimising of losses and maximising of gains. It also pays attention to the tremendous heterogeneity in the ageing process and takes gains and losses jointly into account. The interplay of three processes identified in the model – namely, selection, compensation and

optimisation – provides a way to conceptualise the strategies older people use to age well in the face of losses and increasing vulnerabilities.

The theory of successful ageing elaborated by Rowe and Kahn, Baltes and Baltes, and Baltes and Carstensen is a vision of good ageing exclusively from the viewpoint of individuals. Discussions on successful ageing take place on a very different level from those of alarmist or apocalyptic demography, which deal with ageing predominantly at the overall population level. It is thus difficult to find an intersection between individual ageing and population ageing when employing the concept of successful ageing, which hence presents another challenge for developing the paradigm. Rowe and Kahn themselves recognise that in the face of population ageing and dramatic demographic shift, the concept of successful ageing at the individual level must be complemented with a body of theoretical inquiry and empirical research at the level of society (Rowe & Kahn 2015).

As an alternative to the successful ageing paradigm that has been prevalent in ageing discourses in the United States, Foster and Walker (2015) note that active ageing has emerged in Europe as the foremost policy response to the challenges of population ageing. The concept of active ageing began to develop in the 1990s under the influence of the World Health Organization (WHO); it emphasises the vital interconnectedness between activity and health (Foster & Walker 2015; Walker 2002). WHO defines active ageing as follows: ‘Active ageing is the process of optimising opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age’ (WHO 2002: 12). The important point in this widely used definition is that the word ‘active’ refers to continuing participation in social, economic, cultural, spiritual and civic affairs, not just the ability to be physically active or to participate in the labour force (WHO 2002: 12). In contrast to viewing ageing in purely economic terms, the concept of active ageing thus embraces a broader range of activities that enhance quality of life, mental and physical well-being, and the social participation of older people (Foster & Walker 2015; Walker 2002). It can be argued that active ageing presents a more holistic, life course-oriented approach than does successful ageing (Foster & Walker 2015).

However, Foster and Walker (2015) acknowledge that, in practice, active ageing policies have been dominated by a narrow economic or productivist perspective that prioritises the extension of working life. Those who are not involved in paid employment tend to be excluded from ageing actively, and their contributions to society are likely to be ignored. Furthermore, the need to promote physical activity has been advocated by political initiatives and has been perceived among older people themselves as the other main constituent of active ageing (Bowling 2008; Dias & Couceiro 2017; ESA on Falls 2015; WHO Regional Office for Europe 2019). This understanding leads to excluding frail older people from active ageing. Notwithstanding these risks in policy implementations, an active ageing approach has, by means of its comprehensive and life course-oriented nature, the potential to enable countries to respond to the challenges of population ageing (Foster & Walker

2015). Furthermore, the baby boomers are expected to become the pivotal active ageing generation because their educational level and health conditions are better than those of previous generations of older adults (Walker 2002).

Longevity expectations have also prompted scholars to advance a theory of productive ageing in which older workers are viewed as smart and productive assets, the extension of working life is encouraged and stereotyping is negated (Gale 2012: 53). The concept of productive ageing emerged in the United States a decade after the successful ageing paradigm and as a precursor to the notion of active ageing (Foster & Walker 2015; Walker 2002,). The productive ageing perspective arose as a response to ageism (Hinterlong, Morrow-Howell & Sherraden 2001), and as a way to counter prevailing concerns about elder dependency and the burden posed to society by an ageing population (Bass & Caro 2001). The idea underlying the concept of productive ageing is to highlight the important contributions of older adults through meaningful action (Hinterlong et al. 2001), and to recognise their economic usefulness (Gale 2012). The narrow and common definition of the term productive ageing refers to any activity by an older individual that contributes to producing goods or services, whether paid for or not, or that develops the capacity to produce such goods or services (Bass & Caro 2001: 39, 41). Following this definition, productive ageing is restricted to activities for which economic value is somehow quantifiable and which have the potential to produce benefits to older adults themselves, others and/or society.

Productive ageing is also conceptualised more broadly as well as diversely. According to a proposition put forward by Butler and Schechter (1995), productive ageing refers to the capacity of an individual or a population to serve in the paid workforce, to participate in volunteer activities, to assist the family and to operate as independently as possible. Kaye, Butler and Webster (2003) argue that in addition to a utilitarian view that accentuates concrete societal contributions to others, productive ageing also includes behaviours that are inner-directed, personally meaningful and satisfying to an older person, whether or not they can be categorised as paid or volunteer service and regardless of whether others benefit directly from them.

The concept of the Third Age is particularly pertinent to the baby boomers, who are supposedly rejecting traditional images of old age being characterised as a period of frailty, loneliness and withdrawal (Carr & Komp 2011; Gale 2012). Peter Laslett (1989), in his seminal book *A Fresh Map of Life: The Emergence of the Third Age*, argues that a combination of demographic change and socio-economic development has produced a growing number of healthy retirees who possess greater capacity and potential agency. The Third Age is understood as the time period between retirement and the onset of major disabilities, during which people can engage in self-fulfilment, meaningful activities, personal achievement and so forth. The early old age representing the Third Age is framed by consumption possibilities, choices and opportunities, second chances and new beginnings (Karisto 2007a).

The idea of a Third Age appears to be promising for countering the interpretation of population ageing as a burden. However, it is again not without criticism. Holstein (2011), for instance, raises three concerns about the Third Age concept. First, the 'Third Age' is a term that promotes the ideals of the privileged. Even though the concept emerged in conjunction with increased national wealth realised by a growing middle class and developments in longevity (Weiss & Bass 2001), many young retirees cannot afford to engage in meaningful activities or enjoy lavish consumption. Second, the implicit messages about the Third Age are creating the foundation for a new kind of ageism. In the emerging discourses about the Third Age, those older adults who contribute to society or are healthy and active in retirement are perceived as valuable, whereas those in the Fourth Age, or more broadly, anyone who fails to meet the expectations of the Third Age tends to be viewed as straining social resources. The third concern refers to a disposition of the Third Age paradigm to have no substantive political agenda and to sideline efforts in the pursuit of social justice.

Successful ageing, active ageing, productive ageing and the Third Age are all theories that approach ageing from a positive perspective. However, such positivity may suffer limitations due to the normative idea embedded in the theories. The flip side of ageing theories is that those who do not age successfully, actively or productively are viewed as having only themselves to blame for the failure, and they are thereby regarded as a burden to society.

The ageing of the population has raised two types of apparently contrasting discourses on old age: one is alarmist or apocalyptic demography, while the other is a positive view on old age represented by theories of successful ageing, active ageing, productive ageing and the Third Age. As examined in this chapter, both discussions entail a risk of splitting populations into two groups, where one group is vulnerable to criticism from another group. While alarmist or apocalyptic demography warns of the impending burden caused by a dependent age group, ageing theories tend to marginalise older adults who fail to age in accordance with those theories. By taking account of these diverse discourses on old age, the next chapter considers the ageing of the baby boom generation in more depth.

4 THE BABY BOOM GENERATION AND AGEING

In contrast with Chapter 2, which approached the baby boomers from a demographic perspective, this chapter discusses the boomers as a sociological and cultural phenomenon by drawing on the Mannheimian theory of the formation of generations. The chapter first provides an overview of the theoretical consideration of generations and examines how baby boom cohorts became known as the baby boom generation. Sociological studies about the baby boomers in Finnish and Japanese contexts are then scrutinised to ascertain how they present themselves as distinctive social groups, which is followed by uncovering common generational features shared by Japanese and Finnish baby boomers. The last part of the chapter summarises previous research on the ageing of the baby boomers and considers the importance of introducing more of a gender perspective into gerontology. This highlights a potential advantage of the present study for investigating the ageing of the baby boom generation in Japan and Finland with a gender viewpoint.

4.1 THE BABY BOOMERS AS A SOCIOLOGICAL PHENOMENON

According to Bonvalet and Ogg (2011), the baby boom was first and foremost a demographic phenomenon, but it was clear from the beginning that it would have an impact on society. Likewise, Alwin, McCammon and Hofer (2006) note that society reflects, at any given time, the sum of its generations; where one set of cohorts is especially large – like the baby boomers – its lifestyle dominates society as it passes through the life course. The baby boomers, especially those born immediately after the Second World War, grew up during a period of economic upturn and the rise of the middle classes, despite the fact that their initial years of life were marked by scarcity. In their adolescence and young adulthood, dated in the 1950s and especially in the 1960s, they witnessed an era of social transformations. On the economic level, it was a period of development for new technologies such as television, refrigerators and records. The production of these consumer goods paved the way for a high degree of social mobility insofar as the new consumer society was open to large segments of the population (Edmunds & Turner 2002: 25). For instance, the formative generational experiences of the British first-wave baby boomers have revolved around consumption as a major force shaping their identities and lifestyles (Leach et al. 2013: 4). The baby boomers are said to be the first generation of the age of affluence, in which they have had a greater access to lifestyle choices compared to their predecessors.

In the sphere of culture in the 1960s, young people had a pivotal role in shaping fashion and music, particularly rock music. The transmission and exchange of pop culture occurred globally through mass communication. The rise of a youth culture among the baby boomers then challenged the older customs in many fields, one of which was the institution of marriage. Bonvalet and Ogg (2011) argue that the percentage of births outside of marriage (or cohabitation outside of marriage) and the divorce rate are the two indicators in determining the disaffection among the boomers with marriage as an institution. Both indicators have increased sharply particularly in western and northern European countries since the mid-1960s, when baby boomers reached adulthood. According to the work by Willetts (2010) on the British baby boomers, a permissive society has since prevailed owing to an increase in abortion and divorce rates initiated by the boomers. The time period gave rise to a general trend toward greater individualism, led by the baby boomers, as well as a large change in social attitudes toward work and domestic life, which has affected everyone else too (Willetts 2010: 112, 114). Falkingham (1997) has further examined changing family relations among the baby boomers from multiple perspectives, such as marriage and partnership, patterns of family formation, divorce, single parenthood, remarriage and reconstituted families, and living alone in later life. The prediction is that more baby boomers will live outside a marital union in old age than in previous generations, and more will live alone as well.

The baby boomers in their youth were also characterised by direct or indirect involvement in political mobilisation. They came of age in a period of international turmoil represented by, among other things, decolonisation and the Vietnam War, which led to the formation of various anti-establishment movements, such as the New Left, the civil rights movement, the anti-war campaign, feminism, the nuclear disarmament peace movement and anti-colonialism (Edmunds & Turner 2002: 25). Using the United States as a point of reference, Willetts (2010: 121–122) claims that while the soldiers of the Second World War had fought on behalf of whole nations and united different generations, the boomers' movements, which divided people by age and attitudes, were more destructive of social capital, aimed at opening up status quo institutions to greater diversity.

The social, cultural and political changes that the baby boomers experienced in their youth played a part in their constituting a distinctive generation. Generation in this context refers to the classic theory posited by Karl Mannheim in his essay 'The Problem of Generations' (1952/1928) – that is, the decisive factor in the formation of a generation is what happens in society during the formative years of the group concerned (Karisto 2007a: 94). Mannheim (1952/1928) described the term generation as a group of people that shares a 'similar location' in social and historical circumstances in such a way that they are in a position to participate as an integrated group in certain common experiences that affect a similarly 'stratified' consciousness. *Participation in the common destiny* of the same historical and cultural region

is, according to Mannheim's argument, what constitutes a generation as an actuality (Mannheim 1952/1928: 303, emphasis in original). The articulation of generational experiences and a shared consciousness involves a number of competing groups that Mannheim called generational units. In further specifying the stratification of experiences and consciousness, he emphasised the importance of early formative influences that go on to form succeeding strata of experiences in later life. To put it plainly, a particular worldview acquired from experiences in youth has powerful lasting influences on the development of human consciousness and tendencies.

The concept of a generation defined by Mannheim obviously transcends that of a cohort. In an article entitled 'Rethinking Generations', Alwin and McCammon address the confusion of meanings and use of the word generation in social and behavioural sciences, highlighting three distinct notions: (1) generation as a location within the kinship structure of families, (2) generation as a birth cohort (or historical location) and (3) generation as historical participation in social movements and/or organisations (Alwin & McCammon 2007). They argue that Mannheim's use of the term generation in his path-breaking essay best fits the third concept, namely, generation as historical participation. Drawing on Mannheim's theory, they define generations as groups of people sharing a distinctive subcultural identity by virtue of having experienced the same historical events in the same ways at approximately the same time in their lives (Alwin & McCammon 2007: 231). Re-examining the notion of generation leads to the following distinction between the terms cohort and generation. While a cohort refers to the effects attributable to having been placed by one's birth in a particular historical period, a generation is a joint interpretive construction that insists upon and is built among tangible cohorts in defining a style recognised from outside and from within (Alwin & McCammon 2007: 231; White 1992: 31). Furthermore, it is possible to distinguish between cohort and generation in relation to social changes. According to Roberts (2012: 480), changes experienced by succeeding cohorts are evolutionary, incremental or developmental, whereas changes involving new generations are transformative.

Consideration of the formulation of generations proposed by Edmunds and Turner (2002, 2005) further helps clarify how a cohort becomes a generation. The mere temporal location of a cohort is not sufficient for the social processes that shape a generation, though a specific time may offer a variety of chances and resources to the members of the cohort. Rather, an age cohort comes to have social significance as a generation by constructing a distinctive cultural identity for itself (Edmunds & Turner 2002: 7; Edmunds & Turner 2005: 561). As the argument by Edmunds and Turner (2002:7) shows, what makes 'generation' an interesting sociological category is the interaction between historical resources, contingent circumstances and social formation. According to them, cultural identity, a decisive factor behind the emergence of a generation, is created to collectively respond to a traumatic event or catastrophe that unites a particular cohort of individuals into a self-conscious

age stratum (Edmunds & Turner 2002: 12). Traumatic events that shape generational consciousness include warfare, depression or radical social movements. A generation becomes a significant social force if the traumatic event is incorporated so as to structure a common habitus shared by its members.

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, the post-war baby boomers, or 1960s generation, grew up in a period of particular historical significance characterised by the social and political upheavals of the 1960s. Experiencing rapid technological advance, the development of a consumer society, the emergence of individualism, the expansion of popular culture and the formation of anti-establishment social movements have all helped to shape a particular cultural identity and habitus that are hostile to formal codes of behaviour (Edmunds & Turner 2002). When sharing this cultural identity and habitus among contemporaries in the 1960s, the baby boom generation emerged: a generation whose life was marked by change, challenge and transformation, and who broke the mould of the modern life course (Gilleard & Higgs 2002: 376).

The foregoing theoretical consideration of generations and its relevance to the baby boomers rests mainly on discussions in western countries, especially those studies conducted in the context of the United Kingdom and the United States. The overlapping use of different terms, the post-war generation (Edmunds & Turner 2002), the baby boomers (Edmunds & Turner 2002; Gilleard & Higgs 2002; Gilleard & Higgs 2007; Roberts 2012), the 1960s generation (Edmunds & Turner 2002; Edmunds & Turner 2005) and the mid-century generation (Gilleard & Higgs 2002), in the literature sometimes causes confusion and compels people to question just what precisely is the baby boom generation. The obscurity of the terminology might derive from the demographic features of the baby boom in the United Kingdom and the United States, in which the rising birth rate spanned almost 20 years. It can be argued, however, that what Edmunds and Turner (2002, 2005) acknowledge as a generation is a group of people comprised of the large boom cohorts who experienced in their youth the social transformation of the 1960s. This group, the so-called the 1960s generation, is further recognised as the first global generation because it had a common experience of and orientation toward traumatic political events, consumerism, global music and communication systems (Edmunds & Turner 2005: 566). According to Edmunds and Turner (2005: 565), traumatic events such as the Vietnam War mobilised protests not only in the United States and Europe, but generational movements likewise formed in Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Nevertheless, the global generation is not homogeneous across nations and regions. Demographic variation among the baby boomers based on individual countries and specific socio-cultural attributes have had different influences on the boomers' sociological meanings in the respective countries. In the next section, I focus on Japanese and Finnish baby boomers from a generational perspective to figure out how they present themselves as distinctive social groups.

4.2 UNDERSTANDING JAPANESE AND FINNISH BABY BOOMERS FROM A GENERATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

4.2.1 SOCIOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF THE BABY BOOMERS IN JAPAN AND FINLAND

As described in section 2 of Chapter 2, both Japan and Finland experienced striking increases in the birth rate during the immediate post-World War II period, but it continued for only a few years. This demographically unique feature – a short-term upsurge in the birth in the latter half of the 1940s – is more likely to make the Japanese and the Finnish baby boomers socially distinguishable as a sociological phenomenon and as a generation.

Sociological studies on the baby boomers grounded in theories of generations have been conducted comprehensively in Finland. Karisto (2005, 2007a) defines four special characteristics of the Finnish baby boomers. The first refers to the brief period of the boom, taking place only in the second half of the 1940s. Secondly, the relative size of the baby boom cohorts is noticeably higher compared to the prior and succeeding age groups. The third special characteristic is the lack of ‘an echo generation’; the post-war boomers did not produce equivalent numbers of offspring as their parents did, which resulted in the absence of new baby boomers. These three characteristics are specific demographics of the Finnish baby boomers, all of which also have social implications. Particularly, the size of the baby boom and its timing and span give explanatory power to the fourth special characteristic, the generational significance of baby boomers. According to Karisto (2007a: 94), the Finnish baby boom was strong enough and long enough, but yet not too long a phenomenon, so that those birth cohorts can be considered a generation of their own.

Drawing on the idea of Mannheim that generational consciousness is produced by key experiences in youth, the 1960s was a decisive period for the Finnish baby boomers. During the decade when they were coming of age, Finland went through significant economic and social changes. Rapid urbanisation, cultural radicalism, the rise of the consumer society and the emergence of youth culture were all changes that had a great impact on the articulation of generational experiences among the baby boomers (Karisto 2007a). At the same time, common habitus and everyday behaviour, such as listening keenly to their ‘own’ music (rock) and wearing their own clothes (e.g. blue jeans), are other aspects shaping a generational consciousness. Karisto (2007a: 95) concludes that the formation of the Finnish boomer generation was based upon both major social changes and minor everyday experiences.

Virtanen (2005) considers the process of generational formation with respect to the Finnish baby boomers as comprising three phases. First and foremost, what differentiates the baby boomers from earlier birth cohorts, especially from the war orphans, is that they are children of the soldiers who survived the war. The majority of the boomers were born and raised in rural

areas as a symbol of reconstruction of the homeland and as a hope for a better future. Then, the radical social transformation of the 1960s not only united the experiences of the boomers, but also separated them; experiencing the same period in different ways divided and clustered the contemporaries in terms of domicile, education and occupation. These divisions in experiences later on led to the different generational units that emerged as radical political mobilisations in the late 1960s and 1970s. Analysing the baby boomers from a generational perspective leads to the assertion that the Finnish baby boomers are the birth cohorts that stand out most clearly from others, but simultaneously they are a Mannheimian generation provoked in various ways through shared experiences (Virtanen 2005: 205).

Division within the Finnish baby boomers has been more precisely analysed by Purhonen (2005), who studied the generational experiences and consciousness of the boomers by critically applying Mannheim's theory. His study of the narratives of 38 baby boomers about their life course reveals that the generational experiences of the boomers are stratified (Purhonen 2005: 253–254, 264). Taking childhood circumstances as a starting point serves as a common base for all baby boomers, and they still comprise the most important experiences for ordinary members. The majority of persons in the age group experienced the general liberation of the early 1960s, but in diverse ways based on where they lived and their education level. This forms the second stratum. The third and the last stratum of generational experiences consists of having been involved in a radical political movement at universities in the late 1960s. Only a minority of contemporaries, however, committed to having directly participated in this event, and later they have constituted a part of the elite in Finnish society. Yet, generational consciousness is also stratified in response to these strata of experiences, which is reflected in the different self-identifications of the baby boomers. While those belonging to the elite identify themselves most often with 'the 1960s generation' (60-luvun sukupolvi), the ordinary members see themselves just as 'the baby boom generation' (suuret ikäluokat).

In spite of these internal divisions, it is obvious that the majority of baby boomers in Finland see themselves subjectively as a generation, and they are precisely aware of belonging to the baby boom generation (Hoikkala, Purhonen & Roos 2002; Karisto 2007a). The shared awareness of being a member of the boomers seems to originate from childhood experiences, and indeed Virtanen (2005) and Purhonen (2005) regard them as a basis for the formation of the generation. Häkkinen, Linnanmäki and Leino-Kaukiainen (2005) state that the childhood circumstances of the Finnish baby boomers were characterised by scarcity, especially poverty in the countryside. Scarcity is a key experience that unites two family generations, the boomers and their parents, and it serves much like a mirror with which to interpret their past life, evaluate changes and plan for the future (Häkkinen, Linnanmäki & Leino-Kaukiainen 2005: 82). Because of the common experience of scarcity, the Finnish baby boomers have inherited the lifestyles and behaviours of their

parents in one way or another, irrespective of their image as a modern and an avant-garde generation (Häkkinen et al. 2005; Karisto 2007a).

Contrastingly, transition and change have also characterised the life course of the baby boomers in Finland. They have actual experiences of structural changes in society, including migration from rural areas to urban areas, social mobility, a shift in gender roles and change in the meaning of family (Hoikkala, Purhonen & Roos 2002). Finnish baby boomers, especially female boomers, were also actively involved in the feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s, which contributed to a range of social policies that promoted gender equal employment and enabled harmonisation of work and family life (Anttonen, Henriksson & Nätkin 1994; Eräsaari, Julkunen & Silius 1995).

Karisto (2007a: 98) calls the Finnish baby boomers a *bridging generation* who have links both to the past and to the present (emphasis in original). Their experiences of living surroundings form a bridge between the countryside of their childhood and the urban environment in which they settled after coming of age. Correspondingly, their lifestyles range from maintaining a traditional habitus to actively acquiring new experiences. The Finnish baby boomers can also be called a *crossroad generation*, which refers to the fact that they experienced structural changes in society at a crossroads in their life (Karisto 2007a: 96). In the course of their lives, they faced the types of crossroads that led to different pathways. They decided at around eleven years of age whether to enter secondary school, which meant for many a promotion to upper white-collar positions, or to pursue a trade that would most likely cause them to remain in working-class occupations or else to continue as small farmers. At a slightly older age, they made a second decision: whether to stay in rural areas, where over three-quarters of them were born, or to move to the city (Karisto 2005, 2007a).

Defining the baby boomers in Finland as a crossroad generation and as a bridging generation seems appropriate. The terms cover almost all the members of the baby boom cohorts without dividing them into those who form the generational elite in a Mannheimian sense and those who form the mass of others. However, the words still incorporate the idea of theories of generations, as both a crossroads and a bridge date back to the period of formative years for the baby boomers.

Unlike extensive Finnish studies that employ sociology of generations as a theoretical framework, discussions of the baby boomers in Japan are somewhat disorganised and less scholarly. The Japanese baby boomers gained publicity in 1976 when Taichi Sakaiya, a writer and a critic, wrote a novel about the birth cohort born in 1947–49. The novel, entitled *Dankai no sedai* (Generation of a mass), consisted of several near-future fiction stories in which male white-collar employees of the boomer generation are making strenuous efforts to succeed in an uncertain business world (Sakaiya 2005/1976). The words ‘dankai no sedai’ or just ‘dankai’ have since become widely used to indicate Japanese baby boomers without sufficient consideration of its definition or implication. In fact, despite the contribution of this work at

conceptualising the baby boomers, it was not until the 1990s that discussion about the boomers started to progress in Japan (Miyamoto 2014).

Thirty years after publishing the path-breaking novel, Sakaiya again addressed the Japanese baby boomers, focusing this time on their approaching retirement (Sakaiya 2008/2005). According to his argument, the baby boomers in Japan have several special characteristics: (1) they are the first Japanese generation to have no direct experience of the war or shortage of essential goods, (2) they have not witnessed the same changes in the values of society that older Japanese had experienced several times since the Meiji Restoration⁴ had taken place in the second half of the 19th century, (3) they are the generation that has enjoyed the benefits of economic growth after the end of the Second World War, (4) they have spent their life in a work-dominated society with a lifetime employment system and seniority-based wage system, and (5) they are an obedient and a collective generation with no outstanding 'star' representing them. Sakaiya summarises his argument by saying that the Japanese baby boom cohort is a generation that moved from rural areas into urban cities to obtain employment and has contributed to rapid growth in Japanese economy. He also emphasises that the life trajectory of the Japanese baby boom generation has been synchronised with the development of the post-war consumer society.

Sakaiya's discussion of Japanese baby boomers shares some consistencies with theorising about generations. However, it lacks thorough sociological consideration, but rather sees the baby boomers mainly from an economic and a male viewpoint. This may stem from the author's former career as a top-level economic official of the government.

Amanuma (2007) has sought to study the Japanese baby boomers sociologically by combining interviews with people of various ages about boomer images and examining the historical background of the life course of the boomers. The result of the interviews shows that the images are changeable depending on the different impacts of the boomer's size on different age groups. This means that people who have benefitted from the large number of boomers, i.e. older cohorts, generally have good impressions of them, whereas younger people tend to regard the boomers as burdensome. Meanwhile, the self-image of boomers appears fragmented, though most of the interviewees hesitated to be lumped together as a 'mass' (*dankai*) generation strongly connected to the era of economic growth. Amanuma (2007) claims that regardless of the post-war birth years, the immediate memory of the war overshadowed the childhood of the baby boomers in Japan. Their formative years were contrastingly characterised by significant structural change in society, reflected in rapid economic growth, industrialisation and an increase in the production of consumer goods, urbanisation and educational progress. While many boomers were excited about the youth culture originally imported

⁴ The Meiji Restoration refers to a series of political revolutions in late 19th-century Japan, which put an end to a 700-year-old feudal system governed by the samurai class. The Meiji Restoration established a constitutional monarchy and brought about modernisation and Westernisation in Japan.

from Western countries, an atmosphere of strained world politics surrounding the Cold War and the Vietnam War was also present. Before becoming independent, some boomers involved themselves in student protests at universities and in radical social movements.

Analyses of interviews and historical review specify the mainstream of ideal type of the Japanese baby boomers as follows (Amanuma 2007:61–62). They are a group of people with high visibility owing to their numbers, who had some kind of commitment to radical student mobilisation, joined a business society after graduation as if nothing had happened, worked hard to get promoted to mid-level management, enjoyed a relatively affluent life despite having somehow mixed feelings when reflecting on their original progressive ideals, became a target of corporate restructuring during the prime of their working age, reached retirement soon after overcoming adversity and are now growing old. As Amanuma himself acknowledges, the definition excludes countless numbers of male and female baby boomers whose educational path ended with junior high-school graduation. However, this description of the ideal type of Japanese boomer appears to fit well with the definition of the so-called Mannheimian generation, an elite embodied in this case as white-collar workers with university degrees.

Contrary to understanding the boomers in terms of Mannheimian sociology of generations, Saeki (2008) points out three characteristics that generally cover the baby boomers in Japan. Firstly, the life cycle of the baby boom generation has coincided with the cycle of changes in post-war Japanese society. Secondly, the baby boomers in Japan have been caught between the traditional authoritarian attitudes of their parents and post-war democratic ideas gained from education. In other words, the Japanese baby boomers are the generation that has combined conservative and progressive opinions and influences (Miura 2005). The third characteristic is that they have enjoyed the benefits of post-war economic growth; they are the only generation that has actually experienced changes in lifestyles as Japan went from being a poor defeated nation to becoming an affluent one.

Keiichiro Hirano (2008), an award-winning author, has considered the generational feature of the Japanese baby boomers by referring to the thoughts of philosopher José Ortega y Gasset – a significant incident creates a generation whose sense of values centres around the incident in question. He presents the idea that the fathers of the boomers, i.e. the people who faced a life crisis in the war, can also be called a generation in the strict sense, whereas the baby boom generation is a kind of product of difference as opposed to their fathers (Hirano 2008: 47–48). As the word ‘fathers’ shows, discussions of generations implicitly assume male characteristics. Men are obviously predominant in the description of the Japanese baby boomers proposed by Sakaiya (2005/1976, 2008/2005), and Amanuma (2007) recognises that his idea about an ideal type of boomer tends to eliminate ordinary citizens, especially many females. Amano (2001) criticises the contexts, patterns and

connotations in which and by which the baby boomers are discussed precisely because they so frequently neglect gender difference or gendered perspectives.

4.2.2 COMMON GENERATIONAL FEATURES SHARED BY JAPANESE AND FINNISH BABY BOOMERS

In this sub-section, I summarise the aforementioned sociological significance of the Japanese and the Finnish baby boomers and clarify general generational features. The aim is to determine several characteristics that concern almost every member of the baby boomers in the respective countries rather than strictly applying the theory of generational units developed by Mannheim (1952/1928). The results of the review are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. General characteristics of the baby boom generation in Japan and Finland

The baby boom generation in Japan	The baby boom generation in Finland
childhood marked by immediate memory of the war and poverty	experience of scarcity in childhood, but raised with the hope of a better future
beneficiaries of post-war economic growth; from poor to affluent citizens	generational consciousness articulated by major social changes of the 1960s and common habitus
experience of work-related migration from rural to urban areas	the majority identify with the baby boom generation
the generation actively involved in consumer society	crossroad generation with experiences of societal structural changes at a crossroads in life
life course coincided with structural changes in Japanese society	bridging generation having links to both the past and the present
having both conservative and progressive characters	

As the table shows, the baby boomers in Japan and Finland have surprisingly similar characteristics in common: a childhood spent in post-war impoverished conditions, coming of age in an era of change and transition, having links both to the past (conservativeness) and the present (progressiveness). Cultural nuance and perspectives on gender differences are certainly not evident in this rather coarse list. The table nevertheless suggests how living in the same historical location constructs similar generational experiences among the contemporaries irrespective of their different geographical locations.

Edmunds and Turner (2002: 3–5, 115) assert that there are four reasons why generation is an important analytical category in sociological research: (1) the critical role of the post-war generation, by virtue of its size and its strategic position with respect to social change; (2) the rise of modern consumerism

boosted by the post-war generation and structured around generational markets; (3) pressing social policy issues and increased potential for intergenerational conflict created by growth of an ageing population, especially via the ageing of the post-war generation; and (4) the post-war generation as the first global generation. Of these categories, (1), (3) and (4) fit well with the baby boomers in Japan and Finland. In both countries, their life courses have moved forward hand in hand with structural changes in society, and population ageing now poses a new challenge to society because of realised as well as expected longevity. The characteristics of the Japanese and Finnish boomers shown in Table 1 imply the universal or global nature of formation for the generation. Explanatory category (2), on the other hand, may be more relevant for the Japanese baby boomers due to their contribution to the development of Japan into a major economic power. The argument by Edmunds and Turner (2002) at any rate supports the generational significance of the Japanese and the Finnish baby boomers and highlights them as a meaningful group for social study.

I have thus far described the concept of generation as a sociological phenomenon, how baby boom cohorts became known as the baby boom generation and the special generational significance of the Japanese and Finnish baby boomers. The next section provides an overview of previous studies on ageing among the baby boomers conducted mainly in Western countries, and it considers a potential suggestion raised in the literature review for studying ageing baby boomers in Japan and Finland.

4.3 AGEING OF THE BABY BOOMERS EXPLORED IN SOCIAL GERONTOLOGICAL RESEARCH

The baby boomers were the main focus in a 2012 special issue of the academic journal *The Gerontologist*. The editorial in the volume pays special attentions to the nearly 79 million baby boomers living in the United States, whose birth years span almost twenty years, and it acknowledges their significance not only because of their sheer size, but also because of their distinct social and demographic characteristics as well as the heterogeneity of this group. The main idea emphasised throughout the text is that the baby boomers are about to change what we know about old age in way similar to how they have redefined each stage of life as they experienced it (Pruchno 2012: 149). The editorial finishes with following concluding remarks:

(...) The size and heterogeneity of this group will influence how Boomers age and will shape our knowledge base. They will make demands on the services and institutions designed to provide health care, transportation, and housing to previous cohort of older people. Everything that we think we know about the ageing process—from the way in which functional disability

develops to the extent to which families will provide support to the decisions that people will make about retirement—has the potential to be altered (Pruchno 2012:152).

Biggs et al. (2007a) have explored whether the first wave of baby boomers born during the immediate post-war period in the United Kingdom might experience growing old in a different way compared to their predecessors. An extensive review of academic and popular literature in the UK and US reveals three approaches that are reciprocally connected in terms of maturation of the baby boom generation: first, baby boomers as a group re-defining old age; second, baby boomers as a distinctive group of consumers; third, baby boomers as workers and producers (Biggs et al. 2007a: 33). Discussions in the literature differentiate the baby boomers from the traditional life course of an older population characterised by state pension age and illustrate them as playing a central role in a perception shift about later life, a shift from disengagement and structural dependency to potential agency and utilising new opportunities. The baby boomers are presented as a significant group of consumers, and their good health and productivity are expected to contribute to resolving some of the problems emerging with population ageing. Finally, the baby boomers are seen as having different attitudes about and views on the ageing process, reflecting both their consumption practices and cultural traits. Biggs et al. (2007a: 35) conclude that these various features identified in the existing literature have led to the creation of baby boomers as a distinct social, economic and cultural group.

The same team of researchers next chose to specifically focus on consumption as a defining feature in the ageing of the baby boomers. In an article titled 'The Mature Imagination and Consumption Strategies: Age and Generation in the Development of a United Kingdom Baby Boomer Identity' (Biggs et al. 2007b), they critically examine the consumption practices and strategies employed by the 'first wave' baby boomers (those born between 1945 and 1954) in the United Kingdom to manage identity as they grow older. They conducted 150 general interviews, followed by 30 in-depth, biographical interviews, in order to investigate the relationship between changing attitudes on ageing and patterns of consumption. They used questions concerning attitudes about 'boomer' cohort labels, personal ageing and other generations to compare the consumption choices made by baby boomers in areas considered to be key to an ageing identity, including appearance, clothing and bodily maintenance (Biggs et al. 2007b: 31).

The results of the above study are as follows. Regarding attitudes about personal ageing, the baby boomers claimed not to be concerned with bodily ageing as such, albeit the respondents admitted attempting to maintain a balance between youthful and mature identities through their consumption practices. They reported feeling younger than their actual age and a tendency to draw on both past experiences and future expectations in evaluating their life course. In their attitudes to younger and older generational groups, the

baby boomers reported identifying more with successive generations than with preceding generations. Such a prioritised strategy is blurring the boundaries between the boomers themselves and younger adult generations, which is called the intergenerational ‘downward blurring’. These analytical results caused the authors to conclude that consumption emerges for the baby boomers as part of a wider strategy to manipulate their age identity and relations with younger generations (Biggs et al. 2007b: 56).

Leach et al. (2013) have further analysed the same research data and suggest that the baby boomers view themselves as a ‘bridging’ generation between their own parents and children. For them, ‘bridging’ refers not only to straddling the cultural values represented by different generations, but also the rapid social changes impacting different generations. The boomers are moving between these two very different societies, functioning as a bridge between eras (Leach et al. 2013: 15). While they demonstrate a significant generational gap in values between themselves and their parents, they also show attachment to continuity with their parental culture of austerity. Correspondingly, the boomers identify with younger generations in the fields of technology, fashion and social life, regardless of being critical of the excessive consumerism of younger generations. The idea of a *bridging generation* is shared also by Finnish baby boomers (Karisto 2007a), as discussed in previous sections of this chapter. However, the word has a different connotation in each country. Somewhat emphasised in the UK context is individual boomers who are a bridge between family generations in terms of habitus, whereas in Finland the baby boomers as a generation have shaped a bridge between two different eras and societies.

As the concept of the ‘Third Age’ suggests, recent approaches in social gerontology have advocated greater potential agency in later life in place of emphasising disengagement from society or structural dependency on social policy (Gilleard & Higgs 2002). Unlike the empirical works implemented by Biggs et al. (2007b) and Leach et al. (2013), Gilleard and Higgs (2002, 2007) have chosen to take into account theoretical considerations to better make sense of this contemporary change in later life and ageing of the baby boomers within the construct of a generational approach. They summarise the classic theory of Karl Mannheim (1952/1928) on the formation of generation as follows. The three elements making up a generation are a shared temporal location (i.e. generational site or birth cohort), a shared historical location (i.e. generation as actuality – exposure to a common period or era) and a shared socio-cultural location (i.e. generational consciousness – or ‘entelechy’) (Gilleard & Higgs 2002: 373). This means that the process whereby a cohort becomes a generation requires members of the cohort to be exposed to common experiences of the era and to embrace a common generational consciousness regarding these experiences. The baby boomers experienced the enormous social and cultural transformations that took place in the post-World War II decades, throughout their youth and subsequent adult lives. The shared experience of having witnessed the same post-war cultural

transformation is the one factor, according to Gilleard and Higgs (2002: 376), which helped alter the baby boom cohort into being the baby boom generation. Core elements of the post-war changes are increases in income, wealth, consumption and leisure. The baby boomers have developed the consciousness of being a generation across their life course through experiencing the shifts in income, wealth and values supported by mass consumption, mass communication and marketing (Gilleard & Higgs 2002: 379; Gilleard & Higgs 2007: 17–19). It can be argued, consequently, that changes in the meaning of old age, or in other words, the emergence of the term the ‘Third Age’ derives from the generational consciousness that evolved during the second half of the 20th century.

The young-old⁵ period of life, characterised by consumption practices and the concept of the Third Age, does not, however, continue perpetually. Growing old inevitably brings about the phase in which one confronts physical and cognitive decline that necessitates care and the support of others. Much of the increase in long-term care needs throughout industrialised countries will be prompted by the ageing of the baby boomers, and many in society will view this as a burden. Knickman and Snell (2002) reviewed the extant literature for arguments about the challenge of future long-term care from the perspective of economic burden in the US context. According to them, there are three accounts that make caring for an ageing society potentially dreadful. The first concern is growing dependency ratios: the large growth in the number of elderly persons accelerated by the ageing boomers over the coming decades is projected to occur simultaneously with a sharp drop in the number of workers per elderly person. The second argument has to do with the economic burden of long-term care, focusing specifically on the rapid inflation in expenditures for Medicare and Medicaid in recent years. The final concern refers to the assumption that children with experiences of parental divorce may be less willing or able to care for their ageing parents. The boom in divorce rates that began with the baby boomers may result in shrinking informal care resources, which will put pressure on formal care systems both in public and private terms.

As Knickman and Snell (2002) state, it is possible to improve dependency ratios by redefining age groups as productive and dependent segments of the population, and an advance in the health status of the elderly is likely to lead to a decline in the disability rate, which may alleviate the macro-economic burden of long-term care. Nevertheless, the estimated weakening family relations with respect to the baby boomers will remain a serious challenge for society. Ryan et al. (2012) sought to model the availability of informal caregivers for American baby boomers in their old age. For this purpose, the researchers first compared the close family resources of the baby boomers (1946–1964) to previous cohorts of older adults at the level of the general

⁵ Older adults between 65 and 74 years of age are termed a young-old population, whereas those who are 75 years old and over are termed an old-old population. Among the old-old population, persons aged 85 and over are referred to as the oldest-old.

population, and then they examined individual-level cohort comparisons of changes in informal care availability from midlife into old age (Ryan et al. 2012: 177, 185). The birth cohorts that they compared with the boomers were Depression and World War II parents (1905-1921) and the parents of baby boomers (1922-1940). The study initially identified similarities with respect to the fertility and marital status of the baby boomers and the cohort of Depression and World War II parents. Meanwhile, longitudinal analyses of the availability of informal caregivers revealed that the availability of family members changes over time and that the cohort of Depression and World War II parents was significantly less likely to be married and to have a child living nearby compared with the cohort of the parents of baby boomers. Assuming Depression and World War II parents as a proxy for the baby boomers, the findings suggest that as the baby boomers enter into later life, they may have a lower likelihood of access to both a spouse and adult children (Ryan et al. 2012: 185). However, the study concludes that using the cohort of Depression and World War II parents as a model for the baby boomers in later life is not ideal, as the respective cohorts have different life courses and experiences of different historical events, which is likely to influence the availability of caregivers in dissimilar ways.

Diminishing kinship ties of the baby boomers is an issue of concern in another study, too. A sociodemographic portrait of the American baby boomers provided by Lin and Brown (2012) finds that one in three baby boomers is unmarried (i.e. divorced, widowed or never married). Unmarried boomers face greater economic, health and social vulnerabilities compared with married boomers. The study further reveals heterogeneity among unmarried boomers and different implication for females and males. Divorced boomers have more economic resources and better health than widowed and never-married boomers. Widows appear to be the most disadvantaged group among women, whereas never marrieds are the least advantaged group among men (Lin & Brown 2012: 153, 163). These findings can be understood as consequences of the complex family life that the baby boomers in the United States have experienced throughout their adult age: delayed marriage, climbing divorce rate, increasing cohabitation rate and out-of-wedlock childbearing, and so forth. As the baby boomers move into older adulthood, they will increasingly be unmarried because of continuing experiences of divorce and widowhood, leaving them vulnerable in economic, health and social aspects. The absence of a spouse especially makes men vulnerable because they are less likely to have access to social support compared to women. Likewise, widowhood has a heavily gendered disposition: the majority of older women are widows, whereas men typically are in a marriage/cohabitation arrangement. Lin and Brown (2012: 163) conclude that health and social support deficits among unmarried boomers could place a heavy burden on society in the near future.

Whereas previous studies explore ageing of the baby boomers from diverse perspectives, including socio-cultural, theoretical, economic and

sociodemographic viewpoints, studies on ageing baby boomers as a social rather than a demographic group are still insufficient. The baby boomers are said to be an age group that paradoxically has been much discussed but not systematically analysed (Achenbaum 2012: 285), and scholarly attention has been more limited thus far (Pruchno 2012: 149). Drawing attention to the British first-wave baby boomers, Leach et al. (2008) identify three reasons for making the boomers an important group justifying further sociological study: first, the social construction of the boomers as both a threat and contributors to society; second, the re-creation of retirement and later life stimulated by active consumerism; third, possible diversity in resources and outlook of the boomers in their later life. These accounts as well as many of earlier studies, however, tend to place the baby boomers in a particular context; most of the discussion has revolved around the British and American baby boomers.

The baby boom also took place in other parts of the world, and there are countries that are confronting the ageing of the population more acutely than the United Kingdom and the United States. As section 2 of this chapter explicated, the sociological significance of the Japanese and Finnish baby boomers is evident by their shared generational experiences. It can be argued that the implications of the baby boomers for ageing societies are more prominent in both countries in social as well as demographic terms. The generational significance of the baby boomers has shaped the boom cohort into a socially distinguishable group in both Japan and in Finland. Studying the ageing of these unique social groups offers advantages for exploring contemporary ageing, its social and cultural meanings, and social perceptions about old age.

4.4 PERSPECTIVE OF GENDER IN GERONTOLOGY

The various studies on ageing of the baby boomers discussed in the previous section view the boomers as a socially and culturally distinct population group, i.e. as a generation. However, while emphasising generational aspects, they tend to neglect issues of gender difference. Purhonen (2007: 97) argues that the concept of generation generally has postulated masculine discourses, or it has been regarded as non-gendered. Likewise, classical theories on later life, such as disengagement theory, activity and continuity theories and structured dependency theory, as well as the recently widespread idea of active ageing, have been largely indifferent to gender (Venn, Davidson & Arber 2011; Foster & Walker 2015). Gender in this sense refers to a social construct that is evoked, created and sustained daily through interaction with others (Arber, Davidson & Ginn 2003). Gender is thus relational in such a way that men and women gain identities and power in relation to one another (Calasanti 2010).

According to Ojala and Pietilä (2010: 336), there are two reasons why ageing and old age are rarely studied from the perspective of gender. First, the majority of studies in gerontology have examined ageing primarily as a

biological process, which has not given important meaning to gender. Such studies include investigations of functional ability and morbidity, and the study results have been discussed mainly at the biological level. Second, old people along with children have represented an asexual and a non-gendered marginal group in researches in the humanities. Old people are commonly described in these studies as an age group without taking account of their gender and other differences.

Although gerontology has been liable to underrate gender issues, gender certainly matters in the reality of ageing. Arber and Ginn (1995: 173–174) explain how gender is inextricably bound up with different meanings of ageing, namely chronological age, physiological ageing and the social meaning of age. Chronological age indicates transitions of social status as well as access to rights and benefits. Therefore, for instance if the age of eligibility for an old-age pension is different for women and men, then chronological age has gendered implications. Later life as pensioners also presents different meanings based on gender. Older women generally receive a smaller pension and so tend to fall into financially unfavourable circumstances due to the female disadvantage in working histories compared to their male peers. In terms of physiological ageing, women are more likely than men to experience chronic illness and mobility problems with advancing age, which restricts their capacity to live independently. To put it the other way around, they live longer than men do, but estimates of their life expectancies are not necessarily equal to estimates of their healthy life expectancies.

Arber and Ginn (1995) further maintain that the ‘double standard of ageing’, which indicates a gendered ageism that discriminates against older women, generates social meaning for ageing in which women but not men are expected to retain a youthful appearance as long as possible. Society has an ambivalent view regarding women’s appearances, requiring them, on the one hand, to engage in beauty work interventions to ward off the signs of ageing, but at the same time to show contempt for doing so (Hurd Clarke 2011). Meanwhile, Calasanti et al. (2018) demonstrate that men are also concerned with their appearances, but in different ways than women. A key for anti-ageing strategies among middle-aged men is shaping bodies to look like they can perform, instead of focusing on beauty.

Social relations of older adults are another aspect of the social meaning of age. Social relations change differently for men and women along with the ageing process, and various gendered implications are associated with such changes (Ojala & Pietilä 2010: 341). A typical example of emerging social relations in later life is grandparenting, which has traditionally been connected strongly with women in Western countries particularly. Ojala and Pietilä (2010, 2019) claim that the gendered dispositions of grandparenting are rooted in conventional family practices in which home represented a place for women as child-bearers and homemakers, whereas men worked outside the home providing for their families. Because of this gendered division of work, grandparenthood offers a stronger role model for women than men in

terms of post-retirement life, while retirement from paid work exposes men to possible loss of identity and social contacts. Furthermore, widowhood is one of the changing forms of social relations that is strongly gendered in nature. The common experience of widowhood for women contrasts with the norm for men, who remain married until their death (Arber et al. 2003).

The aforementioned inquiries into the links between gender and ageing show that women's and men's ageing is different both biologically and socially (Ojala & Pietilä 2010: 341). Furthermore, men and women follow different life-course paths in terms of both family and work roles, leading to variations in economic well-being and family resources throughout later life (McMullin 1995; Arber & Ginn 1995). All these arguments raise the need for bringing a gendered perspective into gerontology. Arber and Ginn (1995: 174–175) contend that the study of ageing must embrace a dynamic perspective in two senses. First, as just mentioned, the gender-dependent influence of individuals' biographies on their resources, roles and relationships in later life is notable. The second perspective is that individuals' attitudes toward gender roles are contingent upon particular generations that have lived through specific changes and experiences at different stages of their life course. The relevance of life course and generation for understanding gendered implications of ageing underscore that it is important to study the ageing of the baby boom generation with a gender viewpoint. As previously demonstrated, Japanese and Finnish baby boomers manifest themselves as a distinct generation who are supposed to be the vanguard of older adults in a new era. Given this assertion, it can be argued that introducing a gender perspective expands and deepens the present study, which explores the socio-cultural constructions of ageing and older people through media representations of ageing baby boomers in Japan and in Finland.

As McMullin (1995) demonstrates, there is a need for reforming sociological theory to take into account both age relations and gender relations precisely because social life is organised around gender and age relations. The latest approach to gender and ageing adopts a 'gender lens', whereby men's and women's experiences of ageing are shaped and seen in relation to one another, rather than separating unique experiences according to each gender (Venn, Davidson & Arber 2011). Thus, utilising a 'gender lens' (Venn et al. 2011) or taking a 'gender relations approach' (Calasanti 2010) enables an understanding of old age that is more all-inclusive and wide-ranging in scope and offers a framework within which to understand varied ageing experiences of men and women (Venn et al. 2011).

The baby boom cohort became the baby boom generation precisely because contemporaries shared a particular cultural identity and habitus that had been shaped by the common experience of the post-war social transformations. Understanding Japanese and Finnish baby boomers from a sociological perspective leads to a discovery of the common generational features that they

likewise share. Studying the advancing age of the baby boomers in terms of generational significance is particularly interesting for exploring the meanings of ageing in contemporary society and social perceptions of old age. The next chapter examines media representations of ageing baby boomers as well as ageing and older people in general.

5 EXPLORING MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS

This chapter first looks at the role of mass media in the social construction of reality. Drawing on the theory of social constructionism, the present study investigates how newspapers represent ageing baby boomers in Japan and Finland. The chapter further considers the possible creation of a generational consciousness through linguistic articulations in the mass media and its implication for ageing baby boomers. Then, a review of previous research is conducted in terms of how print media, especially newspapers, have portrayed ageing of the baby boomers as well as ageing and older people in a broader sense. This reveals a missing perspective on the intersections of gender and ageing in print media.

5.1 MEDIA AND THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY

Mass media is considered one of the most important sources of information (Lundgren & Ljuslinder 2011a, 2011b), one of the most potent informal sources of socialisation (Vasil & Wass 1993) and a powerful source of stereotypes (Lumme-Sandt 2011). It is obvious that the mass media has an enormous impact on society. Communication research has addressed the role of the mass media in the process of the social construction of reality by employing two distinguishable approaches (Adoni & Mane 1984: 323). The first approach focuses on the social construction of reality as an important aspect of the relationship between culture and society. This corresponds to the critical approach associated with European perspectives on the sociology of knowledge. The second approach, on the other hand, concentrates on the social construction of reality as one type of media effect. This type of study is linked to American empirical sociology of mass communication. Adoni and Mane (1984) seek to integrate these two approaches to develop a common theoretical framework for the study of the mass media and the social construction of reality. In developing the framework, they draw on the classic theories of Schutz (1967) and Berger and Luckmann (1967) on the process of reality construction.

According to Adoni and Mane (1984), the process of reality construction is social because it can be carried out only through real or symbolic social interaction. The social construction of reality is a process in which human beings can be both creators and products of their social world. Socially constructed reality can be grouped into three types. The first type is objective social reality that displays itself as facts and is experienced as the objective world outside the individual. The second type of reality is symbolic social reality consisting of any form of symbolic expression of objective reality, such

as art, literature or media content. The third type is subjective reality, in which both the objective and the symbolic realities fuse into individual consciousness to construct one's own subjective reality. When organising one's subjective reality, social reality is perceived along a continuum based on the distances of its elements from the individual's everyday life experiences.

The type of reality (objective, symbolic, subjective) and distance of social elements from direct experiences (close, remote) are two dimensions necessary for the social construction of reality. The role of the mass media in the process of the social construction of reality includes interactions among individuals, society and culture, which is called a communicative process (Couldry & Hepp 2017). With respect to different studies on the role of the media in the process of reality construction, one group focuses on symbolic and one of the other two realities, and either close or remote social elements, whereas another group of studies takes a holistic approach that simultaneously examines the interactions among the three reality types as well as social elements ranging from close to remote. Adoni and Mane (1984) maintain that the holistic approach is the one that can serve as a theoretical framework for the systematic examination of the contribution of the mass media to the social construction of reality.

The holistic approach has great potential for investigating both dominant modes of symbolic representations of objective reality in the mass media and the impact of the entire symbolic environment on individuals' perception of social reality. The present study, in contrast, focuses more on the interaction between objective and symbolic reality, because media take an active part in shaping people's interpretations of objective reality by how they portray phenomena relating to that particular reality. Hence, this study addresses symbolic expressions (newspaper stories) of certain aspects of objective social reality (ageing baby boomers) made by certain societal actors (newspapers) in specific social contexts (Japan and Finland). By this means, it will provide knowledge about media representations of particular demographic and social facts, which further shape the subjective reality of audiences. This notion of sequence between three types of social reality is well described in the following argument by Koskinen, Salminen and Leino-Kilpi (2014), who have studied media portrayals of older people in Finnish newspapers:

In summary, a society's attitude toward older people are illustrated in newspapers, but conversely, media portrayals have also been shown to affect people's attitude. (...) Because older people will be heavy users of health and social services in the future in Finland, it is important to study how they are viewed in society more generally, as this will ultimately influence the care that is provided to them, and thus their well-being. (Koskinen, Salminen & Leino-Kilpi 2014: 2)

This quote implies that a basis for constructing subjective reality about older people has already been prepared at the time symbolic reality is manifested. With respect to the symbolic reality expressed in mass media, media content impacts how people self-identify and approach other persons as well as the way society's resource allocation is legitimated (Lundgren & Ljuslinder 2011b). Symbolic reality and its impact in terms of ageing may be more understandable by employing the term 'images'. Featherstone and Hepworth (2005: 360) suggest that images are increasingly accepted as an integral feature in the process of defining ageing and old age, as images shape and constitute both professional and lay conceptions of what it means to grow older, and therefore, they influence the way older people are treated. They further elaborate on the implication of images on social constructionism, according to which verbal and visual images are regularly deployed and manipulated to produce ageing and old age as a social activity at the level of practical everyday experience.

Symbolic social reality denotes symbolic representations of the objective world. Representation is a way to give meaning to people and things through symbolic signification (Ylänné 2012). As the word 'meaning' indicates, representation does not refer merely to descriptions of the subjects in question. According to the theoretical deliberation by Lundgren and Ljuslinder (2011a), representation refers to specific articulations, which present something that is not present from a particular perspective, making certain selections, using certain words and relating certain contexts to it. As a result of the particular preferences assumed in the process of representation, the described phenomenon is no longer neutral. This holds true especially for representations made by the media due to their wide scope and enormous impact. Thus, media representations are seen as culturally productive; they do not just describe phenomena, but also constitute them by repeating certain perspectives, angles, notions and values (Lundgren & Ljuslinder 2011a: 171), and by illustrating phenomena in a contradictory manner, too. Accordingly, when mass media depict a prominent generation like the baby boomers, they shape public perceptions of the baby boomers through imbuing them with certain cultural values, social norms and role expectations, thereby influencing societal attitude towards them and eventually generating socio-political discussions in terms of their wellbeing and how it should be maintained in old age. This gives plausibility for the importance of exploring boomer issues from the perspective of media analysis.

Besides, representations of the baby boomers in the media demonstrate their importance in a more significant manner when a scholarly work explores how the boomers are represented and how such representations are disseminated. It can be argued that the present study ultimately contributes to the social construction of ageing baby boomers by aggregating media representations that have otherwise been present in a dispersed manner, analysing and interpreting them with researcher's perspectives, angles and values, and expressing processes and results of analyses in understandable

language. One advantage of this study on social gerontology is that it reveals people's attitudes about and perceptions of ageing and old age through investigating representations of ageing boomers in the mass media.

Of the various forms of mass media, newspapers play an important role in shaping public opinion and influencing decision making on social and political matters. Newspapers offer a window into public opinion, culture, politics and social life (Fairclough 1995), and they present a valuable documentary version of real life (Atkinson & Coffey 2004). Newspapers as traditional print media have, however, started to lose their dominance with the increasing popularity of digital media, including the expansion of the Internet and emergence of social media. Yet, given that the present study explores how the media have portrayed ageing baby boomers for more than a decade, and especially given that the investigated topic has a profound implication for social policy, I contend that newspaper articles are a valid choice for this study. As mentioned previously regarding media representations, newspaper language is rarely neutral, but rather reflects the values, perspectives and norms of journalists and other stakeholders. In an era in which the ageing of the population is being experienced as a global phenomenon, newspaper discussions on retirement and ageing of the boomers may involve social and political values that address the challenges facing welfare societies. Conversely, newspapers may visibly deploy another discourse on population ageing, namely ideas related to active ageing or the Third Age may be strongly connected to newspaper representations of the boomers. It is thus interesting to investigate how the leading newspapers of different countries with different cultural and social characteristics portray the ageing of the baby boomers.

5.2 CREATION OF A GENERATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS/IDENTITY THROUGH MEDIA

Chapter 4 discussed the formation of the baby boomers as a generation, drawing on the Mannheimian idea that a generational consciousness is created via key experiences in one's youth (Mannheim 1952/1928). Generational consciousness, a generation as a collective identity, is not born of itself: it has to be produced (Purhonen 2007: 82). Nowadays, however, the traditional type of generational experiences shared by a group of young people in a particular historical time and region are no longer an inevitable prerequisite for the birth of a generation. According to Purhonen (2007: 82, 136), the birth of a generation requires a linguistic articulation of generational experiences, called 'a discursive breakthrough', and only afterwards, when this has occurred in the media, can people fit their own personal experiences and memories into this articulation. Purhonen (2005: 256) asserts that generational discourses appearing in the mass media always shape and colour generational consciousness to a lesser or greater degree, and that consciousness can also intensify when the media renews and reproduces experiences. The formation

of a generation is thus fixed in time and memory from two directions: the present is read from the perspective of the past, but the past is also told from the perspective of the present (Karisto 2007a: 96; Purhonen 2007).

It is, however, not always right to argue that the role of mass media undoubtedly exceeds that of direct and subjective experiences in the formation of a generational consciousness, or that the mass media are nowadays the only actor in creating generational identity. Still, it is also convincing that the linguistic articulation or verbal communication of direct experiences is vital for sharing these experiences among as many contemporaries as possible, which further leads to the construction of a generational consciousness. In that sense, mass media are influential for transmitting generational experiences beyond geographical region and time period.

Edmunds and Turner (2005) likewise maintain that the collective memory of social generations not only stems from direct experience, but the media also mediate it. They emphasise the developments in communication technology that support the media in creating a global generational consciousness. Technological developments, from mechanical forms of communication to electronic forms of it, have caused culture and knowledge to spread across the globe. This is the reason why the 1960s generation became the first global generation (Edmunds and Turner 2005: 566).

Examining the development of literature about the Japanese baby boomers also supports the idea of a verbal articulation of generational identity. According to Karube (2008), decades of discourses have gradually caused the baby boomers, who originally were understood as a diverse and a heterogeneous population group, to form a shared identity as 'dankai no sedai' (generation of a mass). Although the influence of the mass media is not particularly mentioned, it is evident from Karube's argument that the discursive breakthrough has also been critical for the production of a generational consciousness in the case of the baby boomers in Japan.

Creation of a generational consciousness through linguistic articulation, especially in the media, and its nature of transcending time and space raise a question as to whether or not media representations of the ageing baby boomers help them update their generational identity, and thereby add something new to the public image of the baby boomers.

5.3 MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS OF THE AGEING BABY BOOMERS

Previous leading studies on the media representations of the baby boomers were first done in the United Kingdom. Phillipson et al. (2008) studied social and cultural constructions of British first-wave baby boomers born in the period 1945–1954 by examining a mixture of sources, including major UK newspapers and the AARP (American Association of Retired Persons) database. According to the analysis results, 'boomers are depicted, variously,

as bringing new lifestyles and attitudes to ageing and retirement; or heralding economic disaster; or creating long-term pressure for health and social care services' (Phillipson et al. 2008). The authors further suggest that reviewing the range of study data reveals the way in which the baby boomers are being constructed as a 'problem generation' in three areas: demography, consumption and politics. First, boomer demographics refers to the sheer size of the baby boomer cohort, with them viewed as presenting a distinctive problem in relation to stability for the pension and health care system. Secondly, the pivotal role of the boomers in the field of consumption, backed by their individualism and pursuit of leisure activities, raises concerns about how consumerist ambitions structure old age when resources become limited. Third, and finally, boomer politics indicates the potential role of boomers as a social and political force in securing a high level of health and social security (Phillipson et al. 2008).

Following the work of Phillipson et al., Bristow (2016) elaborated on the development of the cultural script of the baby boomers in British newspapers over a 26-year period, between the years 1986 and 2011, and examined how shifts in the discourse about the boomer generation relate to wider social, economic, cultural and political trends (Bristow 2016: 575). One of the observations from the initial analysis is that the boomers have been constructed predominantly as a *problem* in the mainstream press only since about 2006 (Bristow 2016: 578, emphasis in original). Bristow argues that during the period between 2006 and 2011, the representation of the baby boomer generation as a cultural, as a demographic and as an economic problem came together to create a media discourse exclusively hostile to the said generation. 'Boomergeddon', a recurring motif in newspaper reports since 2006, fuses anxieties about the demographic and economic impact on pension and healthcare systems arising from approaching boomer retirement with a cultural critique of hedonistic behaviours associated with the 1960s generation (Bristow 2016: 576, 580). According to Bristow, however, these claims about the baby boomers as a problem generation do not derive from public opinion in the United Kingdom, but rather, they have their roots in the United States, which later came to be adopted to frame the discussion in British newspapers

To the best of the researcher's knowledge, equivalent scholarly work examining the media construction of ageing baby boomers in the context of the United States is not available. Nevertheless, a theoretical exploration of the baby boomers and political construction of old age undertaken by Hudson and Gonyea (2012) helps us to understand Bristow's argument about the roots of perceiving the boomers as a problem generation. Building on the conceptual framework on the social construction of a target population (Schneider & Ingram 1993), Hudson and Gonyea have scrutinised the political journey of the aged over time, from 'Dependent' to 'Advantaged', and ultimately, to 'Contender'. The baby boomers are regarded as playing a central role in the transformation of the elderly from 'Advantaged' to 'Contender', which signifies a loss of political legitimacy. The political legitimacy pertinent to the aged as

'Advantaged' for a long time has been based on an earlier construction founded on notions of vulnerability and sacrifice (Hudson & Gonyea 2012: 279). The authors argue that the alleged characteristics of the baby boomers, such as self-absorption, selfishness and a strong sense of entitlement, reinforce the boomers' 'Contender' status, which is combined with challenging demographic, economic, fiscal and political landscapes to shift the political construction of old age.

Unlike British and American discussions, which tend to place the baby boom generation with a discourse of hostile criticism and somewhat obscure cultural and economic scripts, a Swedish study by Jönson and Jönsson (1995) took a more concrete approach by investigating how the media present the baby boomers as future care users. They analysed 481 newspaper articles from six Swedish newspapers published between 1995 and 2012. The aim of the study was to examine how the Swedish baby boomers, known as the '40s generation' (*fyrtilisterna*) and characterised as being youthful and powerful, are supposed to display themselves as future care users. According to the study results, the '40s generation' are predicted to influence eldercare of the future by their size, affluence and power. An attitude of 'never accepting given conditions', a special characteristic of members of the '40s generation' shaped by their particular past, anticipates that they will never be content with current eldercare. The newspaper articles see the capacity to change society and its future as the very essence of the '40s generation' and expand this notion to their prospective capacity to change old age. The study then observes that the media construction of the Swedish baby boomers as being capable of changing old age will be followed by a change in what it means to be a care user (Jönson & Jönsson 2015: 85). The researchers contend that predictions about a new breed of demanding, self-aware care users, who can plan, direct, take control of and determine the type of help and assistance they need, have been used in the newspaper discussions to make claims about the need to improve care for older people (Jönson & Jönsson 2015: 87).

Ageing of the baby boomers is expected to lead to significant changes in Australian society too, where boomer cohorts were born in the years 1946–1965 (Humpel, O'Loughlin, Wells & Kendig 2009, 2010; Tavener, Byles & Loxton 2014; Quine & Carter 2006). An extensive review of Australian peer-reviewed literature and Internet information published during 1996–2005 focusing on the areas of health, housing, work and income, and responsibility reveals that there is a paucity of research on the expectations, plans and preparations of baby boomers for their retirement and old age (Quine & Carter 2006). Drawing on the observed fact that many of the publications are speculative rather than evidence based, the study calls for the need for more empirical research to obtain information directly from the baby boomers.

The results from these studies offer insights into contemporary issues surrounding the ageing of the baby boomers. However, as explained previously in Chapter 4, the baby boomers in Japan and Finland, born in a shorter span in the years immediately after World War II, have a more

significant generational characteristics and consciousness compared to their British and American counterparts, whose births extend for as long as a twenty-year period. Public discussions in Japan and Finland regarding the retirement and old age of the boomers might not be as antagonistic as those in the United Kingdom or in the United States. The much more protracted ageing process of the various boomer cohorts appears to generate serious threat in Anglo-American societies in terms of the stability of the economy and politics. On the other hand, as Japanese and Finnish baby boomers grow old, their cultural and social characteristics might be revised through media discourse, thereby adding to their generational consciousness, much in the way that Purhonen (2007: 136) has explained how the media produced the generation in the first place. Hence, it is of great importance to examine how public discussions in Japan and Finland articulate the ageing of a particular population group with generational distinctiveness, and to consider how it affects understandings and perceptions in the respective societies about old age, ageing and older adults.

5.4 PORTRAYALS OF AGEING AND OLDER PEOPLE IN THE MEDIA

Despite growing interest in the ageing of the baby boomers, studies on the ways in which the media portray the baby boomers and their ageing process have been largely lacking. As explained in the previous section, the majority of scholarship on constructions of the baby boomers in the media is skewed toward the American or British context, in which the boomers tend to be targets of criticism. These study results make an intriguing contrast with other social gerontological research described in section 3 of Chapter 4, which approach ageing boomers from more varied perspectives. This begs the question as to whether the media are inclined to represent ageing in a critical or negative light. Accordingly, I expand my interest here to inquiring into how print media in general present ageing, ageing identity, older people and population ageing.

Newspaper portrayals of older people and ageing have been little discussed compared to other media forms, such as advertisement (Koskinen, Salminen & Leino-Kilpi 2014; Lumme-Sandt 2011; Lundgren & Ljuslinder 2011a; Rozanova, Northcott & McDaniel 2006). Older people have been under-represented relative to their actual numbers, and the images of them in print media have frequently been negative (Rozanova 2006; Fealy et al. 2012; Koskinen et al. 2014). 'Frail', 'infirm', 'lonely', 'isolated', 'dependent' and 'unhealthy' are examples of the words often used when newspapers discuss the traits of older adults. Population ageing, meanwhile, has mostly been referred to as a social threat that will supposedly lead to political-economic problems (Lundgren & Ljuslinder 2011a).

Taking a closer look at individual studies, Fealy et al. (2012) have examined how narratives in Irish newspaper texts socially position older people and identified distinct constructions of ageing and age identity. They analysed a total of 227 items from newspapers published in a one-month period using a critical discourse analysis approach. The study detected five identity types available in the newspaper texts, which constructed older people as ‘victims’; as ‘frail, infirm and vulnerable’; as ‘radicalised citizens’; as the ‘deserving old’ and as the ‘undeserving old’ (Fealy et al. 2012: 85). The discourses examined in the study exposed subject positions that collectively produced ageing and age identities of implied dependency and otherness. These subject positions include an inherent ageism that places older people outside mainstream Irish society (Fealy et al. 2012: 85, 99).

Public portrayals of older people can be studied from a specific angle. Rozanova explored how health and illness among older adults were portrayed in 60 articles about seniors published in a national Canadian daily newspaper, *The Globe and Mail* (Rozanova 2006). Drawing on the method of thematic analysis, the study uncovered three broad themes in which older adults and their health and illness were portrayed: ‘association between ageing and disease’, ‘individual responsibility for healthy ageing’ and ‘apocalyptic demography and the cost of [un]healthy ageing’. The first theme makes ageing and disease inseparable by linking older age, explicitly or implicitly, with various kinds of physical and cognitive decline and with worsening health. The second theme of healthy/unhealthy ageing emphasises that older individuals themselves are responsible for their health status. Rozanova argues that this theme has a moral dimension because it regards unhealthy lifestyles as sinful, whereas healthy ageing that preserves decent health in later life is virtuous (Rozanova 2006: 127, 131). This serves as a good example of how the normative model involved in the idea of healthy ageing creates blame. The third theme of apocalyptic demography suggests that older adults who failed to age in a healthy manner due to the poor individual choices are a burden on society. The newspaper articles depict the growing proportion of seniors and their health as a problem that may disrupt social security and the health care system.

The concept of apocalyptic demography is somewhat reinforced in the findings of another study. Lundgren and Ljuslinder (2011a, 2011b) investigated Swedish news-press representations of population ageing and the old age identities that they offer. They first analysed a total of 594 articles from three newspapers using quantitative content analysis (Lundgren & Ljuslinder 2011a), followed by a qualitative analysis of how verbal articulations related to the use of illustrations, metaphorical language, headlines and captions using discourse theory (Lundgren & Ljuslinder 2011b). According to the study results, the newspaper representation of population ageing exhibited three main traits. Firstly, by appointing politicians and academics as experts in the articles, the media contributed to constituting population ageing as a field of expertise. Secondly, the studied articles unambiguously portrayed population

ageing as a threat, which resonated with discourse on apocalyptic demography. Thirdly, the concept of population ageing was seldom defined explicitly. These features were constituted via three interrelated discursive patterns: the creation of seriousness, the use of dichotomisation (e.g. young vs. old) and the use of emotion (e.g. addressing anxiety and fear) (Lundgren & Ljuslinder 2011b: 39–40, 47–48, 62). Despite fundamental news-press images of older people as passive and in need of care, the researchers claim that some exceptions existed. One of these few exceptions concerned the large generation born in the 1940s, namely the baby boomers, whose old age was characterised in the newspaper texts by good health, activity and affluence (Lundgren & Ljuslinder 2011a: 177–178).

Unlike the foregoing Swedish studies, as well as the general findings of previous studies that position older adults in a negative light, a Finnish study uncovered more positive and respectable ways in which older people were portrayed in newspapers. Koskinen, Salminen and Leino-Kilpi (2014) explored how newspaper articles focusing on health portrayed older people in Finnish society. Applying an ethnographic approach grounded in textual reality, they conducted an inductive thematic analysis of 101 articles from three main Finnish newspapers, identifying three types of portrayals that describe society's attitudes toward older people: 'being advocated for', 'being looked after' and 'being engaged with' (Koskinen, Salminen & Leino-Kilpi 2014: 5). The portrayal of 'being advocated for' indicates that all older people and their care are regarded as important in society, which harmonises with the cultural attributes of the Nordic countries. The analyses indeed did not find suggestions in the newspaper texts that blamed frailer older people for their condition or that depicted older people as a burden on society. However, the portrayals of 'being advocated for' and 'being looked after', in which older people themselves play only a marginal role, include a paternalistic attitude toward them. Moreover, as the portrayal of 'being engaged with' refers to autonomous older people, viewing different groups of older people differently within society may possibly lead to inequality (Koskinen et al. 2014: 9).

Likewise, other Finnish studies exploring articles in specialised magazines discovered different kinds of constructions of an ageing identity. In order to determine how older people were depicted for older audiences, Lumme-Sandt (2011) analysed 35 articles chosen from a Finnish ET magazine intended for readers over 50 years of age. Dominant discourses around ageing identified from the analyses are freedom and the possibility for new identities, activity both physically and mentally, and maintaining a good appearance. Since the target audience of the magazine was not the general public but older adults, the magazine dealt with old age to build self-confidence among older people and encourage them to re-shape their lives (Lumme-Sandt 2011: 45).

As discussed above, earlier studies on media representations of older people and ageing share general trends. Images of ageing are depicted in a stereotypical way emphasising older people's frailty and dependency. Population ageing is accordingly perceived as a serious threat to and a burden

on society. The features uncovered by analysing print media incorporate both an underlying sense of ageism and apocalyptic demography (Katz 1992; Robertson 1997; Gee 2002; Rauhut 2010). Yet, given the examples of Finnish studies that revealed somewhat favourable constructions of ageing, differed cultural and societal factors influence differently the portrayals of older people and old age. Furthermore, some studies point out that baby boomers can deviate from general images of old age. These studies imply that negative stereotypes and the burden interpretation may not be the only conception constructed through the media. In the absence of research on media representations of ageing baby boomers in Japanese and Finnish contexts, it is an advantage of the present study to explore how national newspapers in Japan and Finland portray the baby boomers who are on the threshold of old age.

5.5 REPRESENTATIONS OF GENDER AND AGE IN THE MEDIA

It is surprising that previous research on socio-cultural constructions of the baby boom generation and the portrayals of older people in print media introduced in the previous sections did not mention anything related to gender in the studied population. The general media viewed baby boomers or older adults as a homogeneous group of people and tended to neglect diversity among them. Comprehending older adults in a non-gendered fashion is problematic, as women and men age differently, and the varied ageing experiences of each gender differ across different societies or cultures. Especially given the fact that women generally live longer than men and that the caregivers of older women are also primarily women, ageing can be regarded as a woman's issue (Cohen 2002: 600). Treating and seeing older people uniformly might lead to reinforcing stereotypical images of them being frail, dependent and a social threat.

However, when casting an eye at electronic media, including television programmes and commercials in which images of older people are more visible, a few studies have addressed the intersection of gender and ageing. For instance, Vasil and Wass (1993) reviewed 28 studies that examined representations of the elderly in both electronic and print media in the United States. According to the results of the literature review, the elderly are widely misrepresented in two forms (Vasil and Wass 1993: 80). First, the elderly, especially older women, are underrepresented, which characterises the failure of media to adequately reflect the actual size of the elderly population. Vasil and Wass argue that underrepresentation implies that the elderly are unimportant and non-contributing members of society, thus they are less worthy of media attention. They further remark that the pronounced absence of elderly women in the media derives from two disadvantages, being old and being female, reflecting the so-called 'double standard of ageing' (England,

Kuhn & Gardner 1981; Sontag 1978). The second misrepresentation of the elderly in the mass media has to do with poor and inadequate depictions of older people that are usually negative and undeveloped, in which older people are typically marginalised.

Even though more than two decades have passed since Vasil and Wass (1993) conducted the aforementioned literature review, gendered ageism is still discernible in the findings of recent studies. Edström (2018) investigated all visible media output in the most circulated media within Sweden in order to capture the patterns of gender representation in 'the media buzz'. Media buzz refers to 'all images that we passively or actively take part in' (Edström 2018:77), including news, feature stories, fiction and advertising. To capture the representation of gender and age in the media buzz, the study examined images of women and men from one day in major Swedish mainstream media from 1994, 2004 and 2014. The study results show that while there is a male/female balance in terms of numbers in the media buzz, the genres, topics or spheres are gendered. Traditional male dominance in the public sphere has persisted regardless of the increasing presence of women over time. Both men and women continue to become invisible as they age. The underrepresentation of older people is more salient for women; when 60-plus-year-old persons are visible in the media buzz, they are more likely to be male. The media buzz does not reflect the actual gender distribution of this age group, in which the number of women exceeds that of men. Indeed, women are more likely to be visible when they are younger, whereas men in their prime, between 30 and 44 years of age, outnumber other age groups. Edström concludes that aggregated visual patterns of gender and age appear to have been quite persistent over time, and structures of visibility in the media buzz not only contribute to ageism but are also still distinctly gendered (Edström 2018: 89).

The stereotyping of age and gender fostered by the media gains support also when assessing the Japanese media. According to a study analysing gender representation of older people (50+) in Japanese television advertisements, both genders are underrepresented in comparison to the demographic reality, but the underrepresentation is much more pronounced with females (Prieler et al. 2011). Older females appear in commercials less than half as often as older males, and the settings of most advertisements are stereotypical, with males portrayed at the workplace and females in the home. Prieler et al. (2011: 412) claim that the remarkable underrepresentation of older women compared to their male counterparts sends the message that women are only valuable when they are young. Furthermore, they are concerned that the deviations made by television advertisements are likely to perpetuate an unfortunate combination of ageism and sexism (Prieler et al. 2011: 411). While the study results resemble previous studies from other countries, such as the United States and the United Kingdom, Prieler et al. point out that Japanese television advertisements portray older people somewhat in a distinctive way. Despite the underrepresentation relative to their actual proportion of the population and depictions of stereotypical

gender roles, when older men and women do appear in ads they are mostly in major roles and both genders are shown as equally important.

Somewhat contrasting findings on gendered ageism can be observed in a study from Finland, the other focus of the present study. Hytti, Lyyra and Lumme-Sandt (2010) sought to clarify what kinds of usages were introduced when *Helsingin Sanomat*, the leading newspaper in the country, wrote about older women, and what understandings the paper constructed about them based on these usages. An investigation of 80 articles in which older women (about 65+ years old) appeared revealed five dominant discourses: (1) as if whoever, (2) independent women, (3) granny, (4) breaking traditional roles and (5) youthful for one's age (Hytti, Lyyra & Lumme-Sandt 2010: 316). Though some degrading expressions like 'granny' exist, images of older women in *Helsingin Sanomat* proved for the most part to be heterogeneous and portray them in a positive light. They are constructed as active female citizens who are independent and enjoying lives on their own terms, and who break with their assigned roles and borders regarding age when they so desire. The researchers contend that the problem discourse dominant in previous studies on older adults was seldom present in their research findings, and they concluded that the difficulties associated with population ageing are discussed in various ways from multiple viewpoints in the paper (Hytti et al. 2010: 321). It can, however, be argued that their conclusion derives from the selected data focusing on articles about older women, articles that might deal with ageing at the individual level differently from ageing at the population level. Furthermore, due to the limitation of the studied materials, it remains unknown whether the positive media construction applies also to older men or whether there are differences in images of older people based on gender.

A different observation about the underrepresentation of older women in the media is also evident in Ojala and Pietilä's study (2010), which included a focus on gendered public discourses and representations of old age. According to their literature review of Finnish media studies, public discourses on and representations of old age mainly have to do with women and are constructed through women in both good and bad ways (Ojala & Pietilä 2010). Publicity about elderly females in the media is largely negative, implying their backwardness and marginality by using degrading expressions. As opposed to the unfavourable articulations regarding older women in the mainstream media, TV programmes and magazines intended for older audience depict older women in a positive manner, emphasising their physical and cultural activeness. Older men, on the other hand, are less visible in the Finnish media; though elderly men are not depicted as negatively in public discourses as their female peers, positive portraits of older men are lacking as well. The conclusion of the study is that in the Finnish context, women represent ageing and old age more obviously than men do through their physical experiences, social interactions and public discourses, including media articulations.

The literature review on the intersection of gender and age in the media shows that while studies done in Western countries share a common trend of

identifying the underrepresentation of older adults, often only with negative connotations especially pronounced for older women, studies conducted in Japanese and Finnish settings uncovered partly different findings. Considering that the baby boomers are regarded as re-shaping old age and later life, it is worth exploring whether media representations of ageing of the boomers differ from other ways in which older adults are traditionally underrepresented and how the media relate the gender of the boomers to discussions of ageing and old age. These questions have pronounced implications for Japanese and Finnish baby boomers, who are a bridge between the former and the next generations of older people. Are there distinguishable differences between Japan and Finland as to societal perceptions of gender and age? How are such differences mirrored in the writing of newspaper articles about ageing baby boomers? These are the questions to be addressed in the present study.

Media representations are cultural products, in which various media articulate a particular point by repeating certain perspectives, notions and values, thereby influencing self-identity, how other persons in society are viewed or approached and societal attitudes in general. Ageing and older people thus far have been represented in the media mainly as frail and dependent, and population ageing as a threat to society. Meanwhile, scholarly works on socio-cultural constructions of ageing baby boomers in the media are largely lacking, as previous studies have been biased towards the American and British context, in which the baby boomers tend to face criticism. The findings from these studies may not be relevant to Japanese and Finnish baby boomers, who have distinct generational characteristics and are on the threshold of old age. The next chapter clarifies the aim of the study and the research questions being addressed when implementing the empirical part of the present study.

6 AIM OF THE STUDY AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

While chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5 constitute the theoretical framework for implementing the empirical part of the study, this chapter integrates the arguments identified in the previous theoretical chapters to specify the aim of the study and to define the research questions.

6.1 AIM OF THE STUDY

Even though there is still much room for systematic sociological analyses on the ageing of the baby boomers, the extensive literature review conducted in the previous chapters shows that the baby boomers have been studied from a variety of viewpoints and in various ways. Those studies uncovered that the ageing baby boomers are constructed as both a threat to and contributors to society; on the one hand, their sheer numbers prompt many to view them as a social burden, but on the other hand they are regarded as a resource with reference to their activeness and capacity. Nevertheless, in exploring media representations of the ageing baby boomers, albeit one which places a disproportionate emphasis on the Anglo American context, a tendency for socio-cultural constructions of the boomers to portray them in a critical, even in hostile, manner emerges. Additionally, underlying ageism and notions of apocalyptic demography are evident in the way the media portray ageing, older people and population ageing. The public discourses in the mass media are inclined to illuminate speculations on the ageing of the overall population constituting an economic and political threat. This appears to obscure the societal attitude toward ageing at the level of individuals and leads to the emergence of alarmist or apocalyptic debates surrounding the ageing of the population. Such demographic crisis thinking, which mixes discussions at the individual level with those at the population level, might arise from the presence of long baby boom cohorts spanning twenty years in the United States and the United Kingdom.

Contrary to the alarmist tone noted in the findings of earlier studies conducted predominantly in the US and the UK, scholars have looked to the generational significance of the Japanese and Finnish baby boomers as reason for treating them as potentially meaningful groups for undertaking social gerontological research. Investigating media discussions of ageing baby boomers in Japan and Finland would thus shed light on how both societies comprehend old age and ageing. Given the role of mass media in infusing public portrayals of ageing with certain cultural values and social norms, comparing Japanese and Finnish baby boomers, i.e. birth cohorts who share similarities in terms of both demographic and generational aspects, could

clarify the ways in which different societies and cultures view ageing differently and/or similarly. Furthermore, possible updates on the generational identity and public image of the baby boomers created through articulations in the media have the potential to re-shape old age and later life.

The present study does not aim to highlight the Japanese and the Finnish baby boomers as special population groups that are incompatible with preceding and succeeding birth cohorts. Rather, it places the boomers at the vanguard of re-shaping later life by drawing on their attributes as a bridge between the past and the present. Thus, the objectives are to explore how both societies view ageing at both the population and the individual levels, to investigate its change over time and to clarify cultural influences on social perceptions of ageing by analysing newspaper depictions of the impending retirement and advancing age of Finnish and Japanese baby boomers, who have a notable social impact through their generational features. Furthermore, the present study incorporates a gender perspective in fulfilling the research objectives. Studying the intersection of gender and ageing in newspaper portrayals of the baby boomers will bring new insights into images of older people in the print media, which have tended to lack a gender perspective. A perspective on gender will also have a great capacity to unveil diversity within the baby boom generation, which has frequently been treated as a homogeneous mass. The important point in connecting gender and ageing is not only to separate men and women when analysing media portrayals of ageing baby boomers, but also to take into account relations between genders by employing a 'gender lens' (Venn et al. 2011). Making use of a 'gender lens' will make it possible to see baby boomer men's and women's experiences of retirement and ageing in relation to one another, which will provide the potential to diversify social understandings of ageing and older people.

6.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study posed the following three research questions to better address the objectives explained in the previous section. Answering each of these research questions will have implications for the fundamental inquiry into how social perceptions of ageing and later life are constructed in Japan and in Finland.

- (1) How do Japanese and Finnish national newspapers portray the baby boomers during the period of their retirement and beginning of old age?
- (2) How are newspaper portrayals of ageing baby boomers different or similar in Japan and Finland?
- (3) In what ways is gender involved when Japanese and Finnish newspapers articulate the retirement and ageing of the baby boomers?

The following chapter provides a detailed explanation of the materials and methods chosen to conduct the empirical analyses used to explore the research questions.

7 MATERIALS AND METHODS FOR NEWSPAPER ANALYSES⁶

This chapter provides a detailed description of the research materials and methods for implementing the empirical study. It elaborates on the characteristics of Japanese and Finnish data and processes of data collection, which is followed by a discussion of the comparability of two data sets. The grounds for dividing the data into specific analytic periods with several phases are explained based on the respective country's own pension system and the retirement processes of the baby boomers. The latter half of the chapter thoroughly explains the decision and reasoning for how the data were processed and analysed and illustrates concretely the procedure for analysing the Japanese and Finnish data.

7.1 MATERIALS

7.1.1 JAPANESE DATA

In the study, two leading Japanese newspapers were selected, *Yomiuri Shimbun* and *Asahi Shimbun*. Both are daily newspapers that include both morning and evening editions, and they are distributed to subscribers throughout the whole country. The circulation of *Yomiuri Shimbun* exceeds 9 million copies, which makes it Japan's largest daily newspaper (*Yomiuri Shimbun* 2017). The huge readership is recognised by the fact that Guinness World Records credits *Yomiuri Shimbun* with having the highest circulation rate in the world (Guinness World Records 2017). *Asahi Shimbun*, on the other hand, has the second largest circulation rate among national daily papers, with approximately 6.8 million copies. Both *Yomiuri Shimbun* and *Asahi Shimbun* were first published in the 19th century targeting the general public as readers. However, the stated position in the editorial pages in *Yomiuri Shimbun* is centre-right and conservative, whereas *Asahi Shimbun* is known for its progressive and liberal statements.

The two newspapers were chosen for analyses because of their considerable circulation and national coverage, suggesting that newspapers have an important role in Japanese society. Articles were collected from the full-text online databases Yomidasu Rekishikan for *Yomiuri Shimbun* and *Asahi*

⁶ Part of the work has been collaborated with other researchers. Regarding newspaper analysis on Japanese baby boomers, Assistant Professor Kathrin Komp from the University of Helsinki helped in the early stages of the study by offering advice and technical support. An academic article co-authored with her about the representation of ageing Japanese baby boomers in newspapers is forthcoming. Concerning the Finnish data, doctoral candidate Hilla Kiuru made part of her research data available to me for this study.

Shinbun Kikuzo II Visual for *Asahi Shimbun*. Due to the unique features of Japanese words, retrieving data required special attention. The Japanese word for the 'baby boomer' is 'dankai'. However, this word originally had an entirely different meaning. The direct English translation of the word is 'nodule', which further indicates that it is a word illustrating a bundle of items, goods or people. The word 'dankai', or combination of words 'dankai no sedai' (generation of dankai), has become prevalent for indicating the baby boomers born in the years 1947–1949, since Taichi Sakaiya wrote a novel in 1976 about the said birth cohorts using the word 'dankai' (Sakaiya 2005/1976). Hence, the word nowadays encompasses both original and newly added meanings. Accordingly, to make the search results correspond to the idea of the baby boom generation, data were retrieved by searching for a combination of the word 'dankai' with several Japanese words related to people's lives, including 'jinsei' (life), 'seikatsu' (living) and 'ikikata' (way of living, lifestyle), and several words relevant to retirement, such as 'taishoku' (retirement) and 'teinen' (retiring age). The English translation for combined key words are 'baby boomer AND (life OR living OR way of living OR lifestyle OR retirement OR retiring age)'.

Table 2 shows the development of the data retrieval process in several steps. With the original term 'dankai', the search revealed that the number of articles published between 2004 and 2014 was 4,363, many of which did not refer to the baby boom generation. Adding the other search terms narrowed the results down to 2,803 articles, with 1,056 of them identified in *Yomiuri Shimbun* and 1,747 in *Asahi Shimbun*, the great majority of which dealt with the baby boomers. In the next step, the retrieved articles were read to determine whether they indeed fell within the scope of the study objectives. The criteria for selecting an article was whether it described the baby boomers per se, did it discuss issues intended for or related to the baby boomers, or did it explain phenomena influenced by or having an influence on the boomers. The selected articles needed to meet one of the three criteria. Articles that did not involve any of these indicators were omitted from further analysis. Of articles introducing newly published books about the baby boomers, only those including book reviews were selected. Duplication of retrieval was removed. This manual scrutiny deleted 1,694 articles, leaving a total of 1,109 newspaper articles discussing the topic of the baby boomers.

Table 2. Number of retrieved articles by search word and newspaper, 2004–2014

	Newspapers		Total
	Yomiuri	Asahi	
Search word: dankai (=baby boomer)	1717	2647	4364
Combined search words: baby boomer and (life or living or way of living or lifestyle or retirement or retiring age)	1056	1747	2803
Relevant articles for the study	474	635	1109

The spread in the range of articles in the two Japanese newspapers is displayed in Table 3. Domestic news, which constituted nearly 62 per cent of the total articles, included political and economic news, societal issues and topics related to daily living. Approximately 18 per cent of the articles have been classified as editorials, comment articles and opinion pieces. While comment articles are articles in which newspaper journalists comment on topical issues in line with the standpoint of that particular paper, opinion pieces express personal views on various topics written by newspaper journalists, external experts and readers.

Table 3. Distribution of articles by type in Japanese newspapers

Type of article	Share in the total articles (%)
Domestic news	61.7
Opinion pieces	10.6
Feature articles	8.4
Comment articles	5.2
Arts and culture news	4.9
Interviews	4.5
Editorials	2.4
Book reviews	1.5
International news	0.7
Total (N (%))	1109 (100.0)

7.1.2 FINNISH DATA

The Finnish data comprise any anonymous editorials and comment articles in the newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat* that made reference to the baby boomers. The data were originally obtained by my research collaborator, doctoral candidate Hilla Kiuru, who is using them in her own study. The articles retrieved by Kiuru were published on a double-page spread intended for editorials and the comments section. The data include proper anonymous editorials and columns written by editor-in-chiefs as well as other journalists, but they exclude reports contributed by external experts or quotations from other newspapers. Anonymous editorials and comment articles written by journalists of the *Helsingin Sanomat* represent the line of the press in question.

Helsingin Sanomat is the largest subscription daily newspaper in Finland. Its circulation was 234,258 printed copies in 2017 (Media Audit Finland 2018). The subscription rate used to be much higher (more than 400,000 copies) before the circulation of printed newspaper copies declined with the expansion of the Internet. Still, *Helsingin Sanomat* has 688,000 readers (print and e-versions), and its monthly magazine has as many as 867,000 readers (Kansallinen Mediatutkimus 2017). These are substantially high numbers in a country with a population of 5.5 million inhabitants. The overwhelming position of *Helsingin Sanomat* is emphasised when comparing the circulation and readership rates of the other daily newspapers. *Aamulehti*, the second largest newspaper, issued 95,971 printed copies for 214,000 readers in 2017, which was followed by *Turun Sanomat*, with 74,395 printed copies for 171,000 readers (Media Audit Finland 2018; Kansallinen Mediatutkimus 2017).

The data provided to me are part of approximately 1,500 collected articles covering the period between 2000 and 2015. Hilla Kiuru searched for these articles from the electronic archive of *Helsingin Sanomat* using several key words related to ageing and retirement. Then, she coded all the material by classifying distinct motifs emerging in each individual article. Each editorial can have multiple codes depending on how many motifs are involved. Coding was implemented in a data-driven manner, while bearing particularly in mind the focus on ageing-related issues. The data given to me include 149 articles that have a code for the baby boomers. Each article in the data collection includes the word 'suuret ikäluokat' (baby boomers) or another term referring to the baby boomers. Examples of words and phrases replacing baby boomer are 'märkä sukupolvi' (wet generation, referring to the high consumption of alcohol among the baby boomers), 'eläkeikää lähestyvät suomalaiset' (Finns who are approaching retirement age) and 'sodan jälkeen syntynyt sukupolvi' (generation born after the war).

The 149 articles were first read through to determine whether they were relevant to answering to the research questions of the present study. The same selection criteria used in analysing Japanese materials were applied to the Finnish data: the article in question should report on the baby boomers themselves, describe issues related to them or portray some specific

phenomenon influenced by or having an influence on the generation of baby boomers. The implementation process was, however, more moderate due to the smaller amount of Finnish materials and the particular features of editorials. Since editorials represent the official stance of the newspaper on topical issues, it was important to take more careful account of the way in which the baby boomers were referred to in individual articles. This selection process helped to remove 22 irrelevant articles from the data, and 127 articles were finally analysed. Of the selected data, 65 per cent referred to anonymous editorials and 35 per cent to comment articles in which the writers of the articles were mentioned.

7.1.3 COMPARABILITY OF TWO DATA SETS

Since both the Japanese and Finnish data used in the present study were publicly available, no ethical permissions needed to be sought and no statements needed to be requested from the research ethics committee of the University of Helsinki.

The three newspapers selected for this study are leading newspapers in the countries concerned, and thus they have a large impact on the respective societies and public awareness of citizens. Combining data from the newspapers *Yomiuri Shimbun* and *Asahi Shimbun* reveals public opinions in Japan from both conservative and liberal perspectives. Meanwhile, the newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat* has by far the largest readership and its editorials are influential in Finland (Tirkkonen-Condit & Liefländer-Koistinen 1989: 179). *Helsingin Sanomat* is not inclined toward a particular political ideology, but rather reflects diverse thoughts and standpoints. Klemola (1981) describes that with its monopolistic position in Finland, and as an unofficial and ‘independent’ institution, *Helsingin Sanomat* can operate more freely and even use power in a subtler manner.

The Finnish material consisting of editorials and comment articles is less extensive than the Japanese data, which cover all articles containing particular key words. However, it is feasible that the present study optimises the feature of editorials and especially that of editorials in *Helsingin Sanomat*. According to Alonso Belmonte, “editorials and comment articles are public, mass communicated types of opinion discourse which play a definitive role in the formation and altering of public opinion, promote social interaction among journalists, readers and the rest of participants in the language event, and influence social debate, decision making and other forms of social and political action” (Alonso Belmonte 2007: 2). Furthermore, newspaper editorials not only shape public opinion (Bonyadi 2010), but also “perhaps more than any other type of writing, reflect national styles regarding modes of persuasion” (Connor 1996: 143). Thus, editorials are regarded as shaping the essence of public opinion constructed through the news articles of a specific newspaper in a specific country.

A cross-cultural study on the argumentative styles of newspaper editorials, which revealed the uniqueness of Finnish editorials, was made by Tirkkonen-Condit and Liefländer-Koistinen (1989). In the study, the researchers compared editorials in prominent English, German and Finnish newspapers, namely, *The Observer*, the *Frankfurter Rundschau* and *Helsingin Sanomat*, to identify the articulation and placement of their main theses. The results of the study uncovered that the editorial columns in *Helsingin Sanomat* were used not only to express opinions, but also to give readers background material on which they could base their own opinion (Tirkkonen-Condit & Liefländer-Koistinen 1989: 179). According to this study, Finnish editorials tended to inform readers rather than argue over opinions, which was the common approach in English and German newspapers.

The informative nature of editorials in *Helsingin Sanomat* may well compensate for the smaller amount of data by providing abundant information within the said data. Besides, while seeking to build consensus rather than making a point of division between different arguments, *Helsingin Sanomat* also has participated in political decision making from time to time, such as Finland's membership in the European Union. These manifold characteristics of the newspaper are likely to make its editorials rich in content. Furthermore, the difference in the number of editorials and comment articles between the Finnish and the Japanese data sets may accentuate the special features of Finnish editorials. While *Helsingin Sanomat* provided 127 editorials and comment articles relevant for analysis, the equivalent numbers in the two Japanese newspapers comprised only 85 articles. Supposing that the editorials in the Japanese newspapers are argumentative rather than informative, i.e. that *Yomiuri Shimbun* adopts a conservative stance whereas *Asahi Shimbun* is inclined towards more progressive thinking, it is then reasonable to include other articles in the Japanese data set to better capture the diverse media discussions. Thus, even though the absolute number of Japanese articles exceeds that of the Finnish articles, it can be said that the two different corpora are comparable for doing analyses.

Thomann and Maggetti (2020) identify a number of different approaches to research design when applying qualitative comparative analysis. One point of difference concerns the approach to cases: some approaches are intensively case oriented, while others are condition oriented. The case-oriented approach to qualitative comparative analysis emphasises the close analysis of particular cases using deep contextual knowledge. Conversely, the condition-oriented application makes it possible to conduct a study with different sample sizes, as it allows researchers to consider cases primarily in terms of a well-defined set of conditions and primarily interpret the results as patterns across cases. In other words, whereas the case-oriented approach emphasises the complementary use of within-case knowledge, the condition-oriented approach predominantly relies on cross-case inference (Thomann & Maggetti 2020: 363). The argument regarding the condition-oriented approach is relevant to the present study considering the fact that the equivalence of

Finnish editorials and all Japanese articles with respect to how the newspapers covered diverse information can be deemed a well-defined set of conditions.

7.2 RATIONALE FOR SETTING SPECIFIC PERIODS FOR ANALYSES

In exploring portrayals of the baby boomers in newspapers, attention is drawn to what kinds of discussions emerge when a certain event or process occurs. Here, the particular process refers to the retirement of the baby boomers. Along with their retirement, discussions regarding the extension of work, post-retirement life, pension schemes, health-care and health problems often arise. These are the main interests of the present study, which will be explored in addition to examining the retirement of the baby boomers itself as a phenomenon. Given the expected increase in newspaper reports, specifying the time frame for analyses is important so as to narrow down the number of articles studied and to highlight prospective media representations. Hence, the time frame was constructed around the impending retirement process of the baby boomers, distinguishing before and during phases of ‘early’ and ‘normal’ retirement.

The Japanese pension scheme has gradually undergone a number of reforms. The system is complicated, and the age at which one is entitled to receive a pension differs according to birth year and gender. The baby boomers (born in 1947–1949) were eligible to receive part of an old age pension at the age of 60 if they were covered under the Employee’s Pension Insurance System (Japan Pension Service 2017). It is defined as ‘early retirement’, which corresponds to the year 2007–2009. Then, entitlement to a full old age pension starts when a person reaches 65 years of age, for baby boomers meaning during the years 2012–2014. This, in turn, is defined as ‘normal retirement’. Consequently, the analysis covers the years between 2004 and 2014 with the following four phases: phase I (before early retirement, 2004–2006); phase II (during early retirement, 2007–2009); phase III (before normal retirement, 2010–2011); and phase IV (during normal retirement, 2012–2014).

The early retirement phase has much to do with the custom regarding proper retirement age for those in Japanese working places, which has long been 60 years of age. However, in conjunction with pension reform the government has implemented statutory measures to enhance employment until a person is 65 years of age or above. According to a report by Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, the proportion of companies where all employees can work until 65 years or more, if they so desire, was 37 per cent in 2007, 39 per cent in 2008 and 44.6 per cent in 2009 (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare 2007, 2008, 2009). These increasing percentages, as well as early and normal retirement practices within the pension scheme, suggest that many baby boomers retired during the years 2007–2014 in a relatively dispersed

manner. This supports the need to formulate four phases for analysing articles in Japanese newspapers. It is expected that newspaper representations of baby boomers have different emphases and tones in different phases.

Over the past decades, the Finnish government has also addressed the need for reforming the pension system. The pension reform of 2005 aimed to maintain the sustainability of the pension scheme and prepare for the ageing of the population by postponing the average age of retirement of citizens (Eläketurvakeskus 2006). It introduced a flexible retirement age between 63 and 68 years old, indicating that for the baby boomers (born in 1945–1950) ‘normal retirement’ occurred between 2008 and 2018. The latest reform, ratified in 2017, attempts to adjust the lowest age for entitlement to an old age pension to meet changing life expectancy rates (Eläketurvakeskus 2016). The reformed pension system has still maintained several paths to retiring before the normal retirement age. For instance, a partial old-age pension (osittainen vanhuuseläke) enables a person to retire at the age of 61. As a remnant of the old system, those who were born in 1946 or before were entitled to receive a part-time pension (osa-aikaeläke) from 56 years of age. This means that the first baby boom cohort born in 1945 had the opportunity to receive a part-time pension already in 2001. The beginning age for entitlement to a part-time pension has risen to 58 years for those born in 1947 and after as a result of the 2005 pension reform. However, it still enabled the youngest baby boomers, namely those born in 1950, to retire part-time in 2008. Such measures that facilitate one in becoming a pensioner before the normal retirement age are regarded as ‘early retirement’. In light of the above explained pension scheme, the present study regarding analysis of Finnish newspapers covers the years between 2000 and 2015 and consists of three phases: phase I (before early retirement, 2000); phase II (during early retirement, 2001–2007); and phase III (during normal retirement, 2008–2018). The data collection process, however, continued only to the year 2015, when the youngest baby boomers turned 65. Conversely, active debate surrounding the boomers’ retirement is expected to have emerged in the year 2000, which preceded the early retirement period.

7.3 METHODS

7.3.1 CONSIDERATION AND DETERMINATION OF THE METHODOLOGY

The large number of acquired and selected newspaper articles entailed thorough consideration about how the data should be approached in order to address the research questions. The initial idea was to conduct content analysis to provide better knowledge and understanding of the phenomena under study (Downe-Wamboldt 1992). Content analysis is a flexible and generally widely used technique for analysing textual data (Downe-Wamboldt

1992; Hsieh & Shannon 2005; White & Marsh 2006; Elo & Kyngäs 2007; Vaismoradi, Turunen & Bondas 2013). According to Downe-Wamboldt (1992), content analysis is a method that provides a systematic and objective means to make valid inferences from verbal, visual or written data in order to describe and quantify specific phenomena. Similarly, Hsieh and Shannon characterise qualitative content analysis as a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of textual data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns (Hsieh & Shannon 2005).

Despite the distinct advantage of content analysis being systematic, the next task was to consider how systematisation takes form so that it can reveal meanings across the data. Due to the abundance of data, it was obvious that the analyses inevitably required multiple processes or steps. In searching for a suitable procedure to handle the data, the rationale for identifying both manifest content and latent content seemed reasonable. Downe-Wamboldt (1992) claims that researchers frequently face a difficult choice between depth of understanding and reliability, and the best solution to this dilemma is to use both *latent* and *manifest* content analysis approaches to data analysis. By this means, the researcher can discern the most empirically meaningful information without too much loss of reliability (Downe-Wamboldt 1992). Manifest content refers to the surface: visible or obvious communication that is presented overtly and is quantifiable. In contrast, coding for latent content requires an interpretive reading of the meanings underlying surface-level data (Downe-Wamboldt 1992; Patterson et al. 2015). The following account by Patterson et al. describes quite well the essential features of the respective approaches:

While latent content analysis is useful for nuanced qualitative analysis of representations of themes, manifest content analysis excels in allowing themes to be observed more broadly throughout a large sample, using quantitative analysis to identify trends and understand relationships between themes and other features of reporting (Patterson et al. 2015).

Based on the aforementioned considerations regarding methodological approaches, I determined that the newspaper analyses on ageing baby boomers look first into the manifest content of the data sets. The identified manifest patterns in the data are then closely scrutinised to uncover their latent and underlying meanings. The aim of manifest content analysis is to systematise a large amount of the material, to give an overview of the content and to quantify the patterns of the content. This part of the study attempts to explore two of the three research questions on the surface level: *How do Japanese and Finnish national newspapers portray the baby boomers during the period of their retirement and beginning of old age?; In what*

ways is gender involved when Japanese and Finnish newspapers articulate the retirement and ageing of the baby boomers? The unit of analysis in the manifest content analysis undertaken for the present study is individual newspaper articles. Each article is read to determine the nature of the discussed topic by looking closely at the texts with a low abstraction level and a low interpretative degree (Graneheim, Lindgren & Lundman 2017). After developing a coding scheme in terms of the article topic through immersion in the data, the codes are then sorted into several broader categories that constitute meaningful clusters (Hsieh & Shannon 2005). Additionally, other features in the individual article are recorded to understand their relationships with the identified categories. The coded materials are analysed using quantitative methods, including cross tables and statistical tests. Thus, manifest content analysis in this study can also be called quantitative content analysis.

To make the staged process of investigating both the manifest and latent content more specific, I present an example that roughly shows how data analysis progresses toward the identifying of overarching themes. Likewise, Figure 6 illustrates the process of analysis. The following is an editorial from *Helsingin Sanomat* dated 8.6.2005, which is titled “*Hoitajapula saattaa kärjistyä*” (*Shortage of nurses may become critical*):

Sairaanhoitopiireistä kuuluu taas ankara valitus, kun hoitajille ei saada riittävästi päteviä sijaisia. Yli puolen vuoden mittaiset jonot leikkauksiin tai muihin hoitoihin täytyy purkaa syyskuuhun mennessä, mutta monet sairaalat eivät voi pitää kesällä niin monia osastoja auki kuin haluaisivat. Erityisesti puutetta on teho-osastojen henkilökunnasta sekä anestesia- ja leikkaussalihoitajista, joita ei voi korvata alan opiskelijoilla. (Severe complaints have again been made by various hospital districts that they are having difficulty getting sufficient replacements for nurses. The more than half-year waiting list for operations or other treatments must be resolved by September, but many of the hospitals are not able to keep open as many units as they would like in the summer. Staff in intensive care units and nurses specialised in anaesthesia and the operating theatre are especially lacking, positions which students in the field cannot replace.)

Lamaa seuranneet runsaan sijaistarjonnan vuodet ovat ohi. Sairaaloiden on täytynyt palata entiseen käytäntöön ja palkata sijaisiksi opiskelijoita. Myös eläkeläisiä on houkuteltu takaisin töihin. Pääkaupunkiseudulla aiotaan torjua elokuussa - opiskelijoiden lähtiessä - uhkaavaa vajausta virolaisella työvoimalla. Keinot ovat samat kuin noin 15 vuotta sitten, jolloin hoitajapula oli nykyistä paljon ankarampi. (The years of an abundant supply of replacements after the recession are now over. It has been necessary for hospitals to return to the

former practice of employing students as substitutes. In addition, retirees have been encouraged to return to their former working places. In the metropolitan area, there is an attempt to prevent a threatening shortfall in August - when students leave - with the help of an Estonian workforce. The measures are similar to those taken about 15 years ago, when the shortage of nurses was much harsher than at present.)

Kesäistä sijaispulaa voi tuskin kokonaan välttää, sillä pelkästään kesällä töitä tekevä ammattitaitoinen varaväki on mahdottomuus. Vastaisuudessakin osastoja joudutaan sulkemaan juhannuksesta heinäkuun loppuun, sillä kaikki potilaatkaan eivät halua sairaalaan sydänkesän ajaksi. (A lack of replacements in the summer can hardly be avoided, because it is impossible to get spare professional staff who work only in the summer. Units will be forced to close from Midsummer to the end of July in the future, too, as not all patients want to be in the hospital in the middle of summer.)

Lisäksi on hyvä, että opiskelijat saavat taas oman alansa töitä ja tuiki tärkeää kokemusta, vaikka työvuorojen suunnittelu vaatiikin lisävaivaa. (Besides, it is good for students to get work again in their own field and to get quite good experience, even though planning the work shifts requires additional effort.)

Jatkuvaa sijaispulaa sen sijaan on mahdollista torjua kehittämällä vakinaisten sijaisten järjestelmää, kuten monissa sairaanhoitopiireissä jo tehdäänkin. Äskettäisessä kyselyssä hoitajat pitivät viihtymisen kannalta tärkeimpänä riittävää työntekijä- ja sijaismäärää. Vastuuta vastaava palkka tuli kolmantena toivelistalla. (It is instead possible to prevent a continuous shortage in replacements by developing a system for arranging permanent substitutes, just like many hospital districts already have done. A recent survey shows that nurses regarded a sufficient number of employees and substitutes as the most important in terms of enjoying one's job. A salary corresponding to responsibility appeared third on the wish list.)

Lähivuosien haasteena on saada vastavalmistuneet viihtymään alalla ja Suomessa sekä pitää suuret ikäluokat työkykyisinä ja töissä muutaman vuoden edeltäjiään pitempään. (The challenge in the coming years will be to get recent graduates enjoy working in the field and stay in Finland, as well as to keep the baby boomers fit for work and in the workforce several years longer than their predecessors).

The dominant topic initially assigned to this article is ‘shortage in the workforce’, which was one of many codes constituting the entire Finnish data set. Reviewing the developed codes by examining mutual relationships and links leads to sorting them into several broader categories. The code ‘shortage in the workforce’ belongs to the broader category ‘work, retirement and pension’. This category turns out to be one of the manifest subjects discussed in *Helsingin Sanomat*.

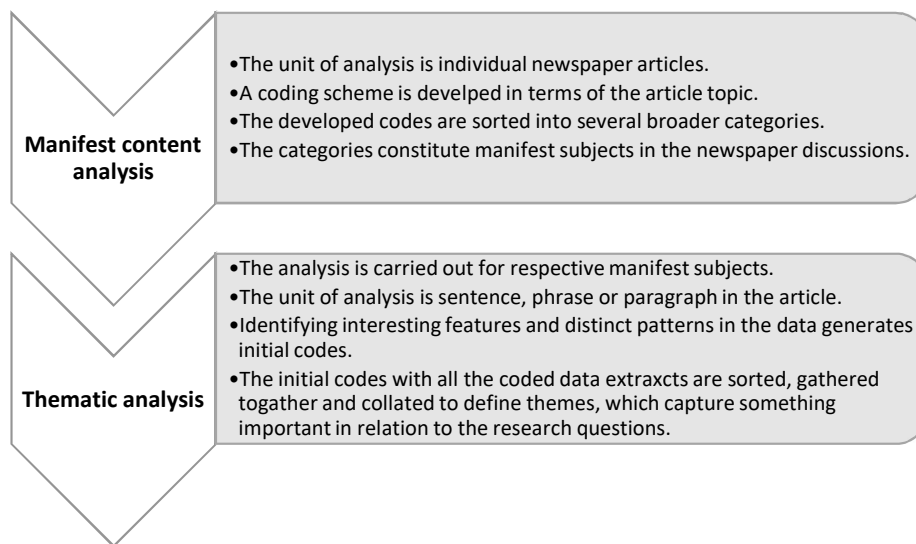


Figure 6. The newspaper analyses implemented in two stages.

The analysis continued by searching for the latent content involved in manifest categories and formulate this as themes. Graneheim, Lindgren and Lundman (2017) describe a theme as a unifying ‘read thread’ running through several categories that brings meaning to a recurrent topic or experiences and its various manifestations. In simpler terms, a theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and it represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set (Braun & Clarke 2006). The next step when analysing the newspapers, namely identifying themes by searching carefully for underlying meanings in the data, indeed corresponds to answering all three research questions⁷ in a qualitative manner. The qualitative study investigates how Japanese and Finnish national

⁷ As described previously, the research questions of the study are as follows:

- (1) How do Japanese and Finnish national newspapers portray the baby boomers during the period of their retirement and beginning of old age?
- (2) How are newspaper portrayals of ageing baby boomers different or similar in Japan and Finland?
- (3) In what ways is gender involved when Japanese and Finnish newspapers articulate the retirement and ageing of the baby boomers?

newspapers articulate the retirement and ageing of the baby boomers, and thereby how social perceptions of the ageing boomers are created in the respective countries. In qualitatively probing the data, themes are found bearing latent content or underlying meanings, and interpretation of such latent content is conducted by keeping both a closeness to and distance from the text (Graneheim et al. 2017).

Qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis are frequently used by researchers when seeking to study their data qualitatively. Both techniques are used to analyse textual data and elucidate themes, and they involve a systematic process of coding, examining meanings and describing social reality through the creation of themes (Vaismoradi et al. 2016). Thus, the challenge encountered in the present study after conducting manifest content analysis was to determine the appropriate approach, whether qualitative content analysis or thematic analysis, when exploring the latent content of the data. This required a review of the existing studies on methods and applications of the respective approaches. The literature review process revealed a surprising lack of methodological studies on the difference between qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis, unclear demarcation between them and some overlap in or even interchangeability of the terminology. Nevertheless, the review finally began to reveal a decisive distinction between the two approaches. Their main difference lies in how to identify a theme, which persuaded me to choose thematic analysis. However, before explaining how a theme is identified in each approach, it is necessary to clarify the meaning of category and theme as well as their mutual relationship.

A category includes things, opinions, attitudes, perceptions and experiences that are explicitly manifested at a descriptive level of text (Graneheim et al. 2017; Vaismoradi et al. 2016). In other words, a category means the 'what' comprising and describing a collection of similar data sorted into the same place (Morse 2008). Researchers develop categories at the beginning of the data analysis process before entering the more abstract process of theme development (Vaismoradi et al. 2016). A theme, in this sense, refers to a specific pattern of interest found in the data (Joffe & Yardley 2004), one which is more implicit and abstract. Perceptions, perspectives or experiences identified as a category can be developed into a theme when researchers raise them to an abstract level of conceptualisation and seek out and interpret the underlying meaning in the data (Vaismoradi et al. 2016). Hence, the theme can be regarded as a meaningful 'essence' of the category, which runs through the data (Morse 2008). It is, however, possible in qualitative content analysis to identify a theme based on the frequency of its occurrence in the text when the study approach is concerned with the surface meaning of the document (Vaismoradi, Turunen & Bondas 2013). In this case, there is a danger of missing context. In contrast, with thematic analysis the keyness of a theme is not necessarily dependent on quantifiable measures, but rather on whether it captures something important in relation to the overall research question (Braun & Clarke 2006). Therefore, even when the manifest

theme is the point of focus, the aim of thematic analysis is to understand the latent meaning of the manifest themes observable within the data, which requires interpretation (Joffe & Yardley 2004).

According to Joffe and Yardley (2004), thematic analysis is able to offer the systematic element characteristic of content analysis, but also permits the researcher to combine analysis of the frequency of codes with analysis of their meaning in context, thus adding the advantages of the subtlety and complexity of a truly qualitative analysis. It is convincing from this statement that thematic analysis has a greater potential to facilitate a search for abstract themes and hidden agendas in the data. In the second phase of newspaper analyses on ageing baby boomers, which explores the text at a deeper level, thematic analysis has now proven to be a suitable method for discovering expressions of latent content and underlying meanings.

To return to the editorial in the *Helsingin Sanomat* mentioned previously as an exemplar for presenting how the next step of thematic analysis progresses. A careful reading of the text generates initial codes that capture interesting features and distinct patterns in the article. The unit of analysis in the thematic analysis was at the level of an individual sentence, phrase or paragraph in the article that was classified as having a particular manifest subject, in this case 'work, retirement and pension'. For instance, the next paragraph, together with other textual articulations, describes in typical fashion the workforce shortage in the nursing care sector:

Sairaanhoitopiireistä kuuluu taas ankara valitus, kun hoitajille ei saada riittävästi päteviä sijaisia. Yli puolen vuoden mittaiset jonot leikkauksiin tai muihin hoitoihin täytyy purkaa syyskuuhun mennessä, mutta monet sairaalat eivät voi pitää kesällä niin monia osastoja auki kuin haluaisivat. Erityisesti puutetta on teho-osastojen henkilökunnasta sekä anestesia- ja leikkaussalihoitajista, joita ei voi korvata alan opiskelijoilla. (Severe complaints have again been made by various hospital districts that they are having difficulty getting sufficient replacements for nurses. The more than half-year waiting list for operations or other treatments must be resolved by September, but many of the hospitals are not able to keep open as many units as they would like in summer. Staff in intensive care units and nurses specialised in anaesthesia and the operating theatre are especially lacking, positions which students in the field cannot replace.)

Then next two phrases suggest that keeping people in working life is a vital means to evade the worsening of shortage of workers in the workforce. The expressions highlighted **in bold** specifically connote that it is inevitable for older workers to extend their working life to help alleviate a possibly serious workforce shortage triggered by the forthcoming boomer retirement. By

mentioning the baby boomers in the last paragraph, the article implies that the current workforce shortage heralds an even more critical challenge for the Finnish labour market.

*Sairaaloiden on täytyntä palata entiseen käytäntöön ja palkata sijaisiksi opiskelijoita. **Myös eläkeläisiä on houkuteltu takaisin töihin.** (It has been necessary for hospitals to return to the former practice of employing students as substitutes. **In addition, retirees have been encouraged to return to their former working places.**)*

*Lähivuosien haasteena on saada vastavalmistuneet viihtymään alalla ja Suomessa sekä **pitää suuret ikäluokat työkykyisinä ja töissä muutaman vuoden edeltäjiään pitempään.** (The challenge in the coming years will be to get recent graduates enjoy working in the field and stay in Finland, as well as to **keep the baby boomers fit for work and in the workforce several years longer than their predecessors.**)*

These initial codes were then collated with other coded data extracts generated from all the newspaper articles involving the manifest subject of 'work, retirement and pension'. This process resulted in the theme 'impact of boomer retirement on the labour market'.

In conducting such a thematic analysis, a method developed by Braun and Clarke (2006) was adopted because it provided good guidance for novice researchers. The following is a summary of their definition of thematic analysis:

Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and describes your data set in (rich) detail. However, frequently it goes further than this, and interprets various aspects of the research topic. One of the benefits of thematic analysis is its flexibility about theoretical or epistemological position. Through its theoretical freedom, thematic analysis provides a flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex, account of data. Thematic analysis can be a method that works both to reflect reality and to unpick and unravel the surface of 'reality' (Braun & Clarke 2006).

Based on Braun and Clarke's advice, the strategy and approach to conducting a thematic analysis of data sets led to the following decisions,

which were made before analysis of the data began and reflexively during the analysis process. The first of the decisions was that the thematic analysis in the present study provides detailed and nuanced accounts of particular issues identified as manifest categories in the previous manifest content analysis. Thus, coding helped identify specific features of the data set corresponding to each manifest content separately. Themes were then discovered in an inductive manner from the data, but while always keeping in mind emerging theoretical or analytic interests in relation to the respective manifest content. Hence, the exercise involved combining inductive and deductive coding (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane 2006; Graneheim et al. 2017). However, even though an inductive (data-driven) approach was here complemented by a deductive (concept-driven) approach, in principle the analysis moved from the concrete and specific to the abstract and general (Graneheim et al. 2017).

Another decision had to do with identifying themes at a latent or interpretative level. In contrast to a semantic approach that looks exclusively at surface meanings, latent thematic analysis goes beyond the apparent content of the data to help the researcher identify or examine the underlying ideas, connotations, assumptions, conceptualisations and ideologies that are theorised as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data (Braun & Clarke 2006). The final deliberation involved the epistemology of the study. Since the latter phase of newspaper analyses aims to reveal what different societies perceive and expect from the ageing of the baby boomers by examining articulations in newspaper texts, the analysis was conducted within a constructionist paradigm. Thematic analysis with a constructionist perspective seeks to theorise the sociocultural contexts and structural conditions that produce meanings, experiences and realities in the data (Braun & Clarke 2006).

7.3.2 ANALYSING THE JAPANESE DATA

As previously mentioned, newspaper analyses on the ageing Japanese baby boomers consisted of two steps. The first phase involved performing manifest content analysis to organise and quantify the whole data set, while the latter thematic analysis probed deeper into the texts of the categorised data to uncover underlying meanings.

The manifest content analysis aimed to systematise a large amount of material, to give an overview of the content and to investigate how Japanese baby boomers facing retirement and old age have been represented in print media between 2004 and 2014. The analysis initially involved counting the number of articles dealing with the baby boomers per year and newspaper. Then, the manifest content of individual articles was identified in order to recognise their dominant topics (Downe-Wamboldt 1992; Patterson et al. 2015). This process of designating topics derives from Phillipson et al. (2008)'s work, which explored a range of themes that appeared to be associated with British baby boomers by examining a variety of sources, including newspapers.

However, the present study also included uncovering issues inductively in a data-driven manner, as media discussions of the baby boomers in Japan were different from the British context. The final number of defined topics was 21: (1) explanations about boomer retirement, (2) decline in workforce, (3) economy and finance, (4) baby boomers as resource for society, (5) work and retirement, (6) post-retirement daily life, (7) income and earnings (including pension and retirement allowance), (8) housing and relocation, (9) population ageing and sustainability of social security system, (10) health and care, (11) attitude toward ageing and ageing experience, (12) consumption, (13) marketing aimed at boomers as consumers, (14) hobbies, study and leisure, (15) volunteer and community activities (including political activity), (16) religious and spiritual matters, (17) family and social relationships, (18) boomer culture, (19) boomer image in society, (20) opinion and self-portrait of boomers, and (21) intergenerational gaps and conflicts. The manifest content of each article was recorded using this coding framework.

In the next phase, the coded data were carefully reviewed in order to refine the analysis and ensure that a qualitative study could be implemented later. Hence, the 21 topics were organised into several categories while taking into account how the different topics were related and linked. Sorting the codes into meaningful clusters resulted in determining three broad subjects: **‘work, retirement and pension’**, **‘ageing, health and care’**, and **‘lifestyles and identities’**. As Table 4 shows, the category ‘work, retirement and pension’ involved eight originally coded topics, while ‘ageing, health and care’ included three topics. The rest of the topics corresponded to the category ‘lifestyles and identities’, which, due to its diverse nature, was further divided into three subcategories: **‘consumption and marketing’**, **‘activities, associations and relationships’**, and **‘baby boomers as a generation’**. The components of these subcategories are shown in the same table. The articles were then recoded based on the three broad subjects as well as subcategories. Since an individual article was likely to discuss multiple subjects, it was coded for both the main subject and any minor subjects. After coding the material, a cross table of the subjects covered by the articles (‘work, retirement and pension’/‘ageing, health and care’/‘lifestyles and identities’) and the four phases of newspaper discussion was devised (Table 6: p.92).

Table 4. Three broad subjects and their components in the Japanese media data

Clustered broad subjects	Corresponding originally defined topics
Work, retirement and pension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ explanations about boomer retirement ▪ decline in workforce ▪ economy and finance ▪ baby boomers as resource for society ▪ work and retirement ▪ post-retirement daily life ▪ income and earnings ▪ housing and relocation
Ageing, health and care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ population ageing and sustainability of social security system ▪ health and care ▪ attitude toward ageing and ageing experience
Lifestyles and identities	
- consumption and marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ consumption ▪ marketing aimed at boomers as consumers
- activities, associations and relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ hobbies, study and leisure ▪ volunteer and community activities ▪ religious and spiritual matters ▪ family and social relationships
- baby boomers as a generation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ boomer culture ▪ boomer image in society ▪ opinion and self-portrait of boomers ▪ intergenerational gaps and conflicts

In the first literary piece on the baby boomers in Japan (Sakaiya 2005/1976), all the main characters of the short stories were male employees. Ever since then, discourses on the baby boomers seem to have been biased. It is interesting to investigate whether that is still the case and how public discussions help shape gender representations of the ageing baby boomers. Therefore, the articles were read again to distinguish between the ways in which the gender of the baby boomers were discussed. An indication of gender was classified into eight categories: explicitly men, mainly men, implicitly men, explicitly women, mainly women, implicitly women, men and women, and non-gendered. The categories implicitly men/women mean that although the particular gender of the baby boomers under discussion is not clearly mentioned, it is inferred from the context that they are men/women. Making a cross table of the article subjects and the gender indications (Table 8: p.96) was followed by conducting a one-sample chi-square goodness of fit test with SPSS 24 to measure the difference between the two observations regarding gender representation.

Additionally, the main character of each individual article was specified to identify the context in which the baby boomers were being referred to in relation to the particular subject. Alternatively, from whose point of view the article was constructed was recorded if the article in question was an interview

or a statement of subjective opinion. By doing this, it was possible to figure out the roles of the baby boomers or how they were placed in the text of each article and within the categorised subjects. The following 16 groups were identified as the main characters or viewpoints: (1) baby boomers/ retirees/ older adults, (2) society/ government/ public policy/ political party, (3) industry/ markets/ entrepreneurs, (4) municipality/ local region, (5) authorities, (6) educational/ medical/ special institution, (7) citizens/ community, (8) expert/ independent intellectual/ third party, (9) disease/ health problem, (10) product / commodity/ service, (11) volunteer organisation/ NPO/ citizen group, (12) married couple/ spouse/ family/ family member, (13) boomer intellectual/ -celebrity/ -artist, (14) entertainment programme (including movie, television drama, radio programme, theatre or concert), (15) newspaper editor and (16) foreign country. The articles were further coded in accordance with this scheme, after which a cross table of the main characters or viewpoints and the article subjects was compiled (Table 10: p.101).

Then, as the second step of this study, qualitative analysis was performed. The qualitative analysis was a thematic analysis of the article contents carried out for each subject ('work, retirement and pension'/'ageing, health and care'/'lifestyle and identity') separately. The process of thematic analysis consisted of several phases. The first phase involved generating initial codes from the groups of newspaper articles categorised according to the three aforementioned subjects. Coding was carried out to identify interesting features and distinct patterns in the data of the respective subjects in a systematic fashion. Since the unit of coding was a sentence, phrase or paragraph in the article texts, all relevant extracts were coded, including any surrounding segments of data, so that the context was not lost.

The next phase involved searching for themes. Different codes were sorted into potential themes, and all the coded data extracts were gathered together and collated within each prospective theme. To facilitate the coherence of this working process, a long list of data extracts of potential themes was assembled into tables by analytic period (before early retirement, during early retirement, before normal retirement and during normal retirement) and by newspaper (*Yomiuri* and *Asahi*). Then, reviewing and refining those candidate themes was the focus of the third phase. During this phase, some candidate themes were split into separate themes, while others were merged together. The important issue was to make sure that the data within the themes were coherent, while still identifying a clear distinction between themes. In order to make sense of the themes in relation to the entire data set, thematic maps were generated according to each subject under analysis.

Finally, the developed themes were defined and refined by identifying the 'essence' of each theme as well as the themes overall and by determining what aspect of the data each theme captured (Braun & Clarke 2006). Conducting a detailed analysis of the themes by highlighting the underlying meanings and implications in a given context helped clarify the 'story' of each theme. Then, the analysis shifted from describing the characteristics of each theme to

capturing the implication of the overall story in the data set in relation to the research questions. Hence, along with defining the themes, the ways in which the Japanese baby boomers confronted retirement and the beginning of old age were articulated, and likewise how social perceptions of them were constituted were examined, while keeping in mind gender-related issues. Possible changes in the newspaper discussions over the studied period were also explored.

7.3.3 ANALYSING THE FINNISH DATA

In principle, Finnish newspaper articles were studied by adopting the same methods as applied when analysing the Japanese data. With the help of manifest content analysis, the general contents and types of representation of the baby boomers were identified, and the latent meanings of the data were assessed by means of thematic analysis approach.

Analysis of the manifest content of the editorials and comment articles in *Helsingin Sanomat* commenced with counting the number of boomer-related articles per year during the period between 2000 and 2015. The next step was assigning dominant topic(s) to each article. Some of the topics were distinguished deductively by drawing on my previous experiences with analysing the Japanese data, whereas others were discovered in an inductive manner directly from the data. This kind of approach was necessary because of the difference between general newspaper articles and editorials in terms of their forms and appearances. It was indeed easier to find patterns for formulating particular topics in Japanese materials, which included both general articles and editorials. In contrast, the editorials in *Helsingin Sanomat* appeared to encompass diverse aspects and discussions, as the editorials often integrated various information and opinion statements by the newspaper. Hence, the initial work of identifying the manifest content of individual articles in the Finnish data produced as many as 70 different topics. This inevitably led to a reformulation of topics by comparing the names of tentative topics, their contents and their relations. The reviewing and refining process resulted in the following 17 topics: (1) shortage in the workforce, (2) prolonging working life, (3) stance on working, (4) post-retirement lifestyles, (5) employment and unemployment, (6) pension reform, (7) population ageing and sustainability of social security system, (8) social and economic impact of population ageing, (9) attitude toward ageing and the ageing experience, (10) ageism in working life, (11) unhealthy behaviour and health promotion, (12) care and service for the elderly, (13) policy measure for public economy, finance and administration, (14) impact of recession, (15) boomer image in society, (16) transition of power between generations and (17) intergenerational gaps and conflicts. A small number of preliminary topics that did not fall within the scope of the above topics was called 'other'. The topics falling into the category of 'other' included popularity of choosing vocational school, lowering age limit for voting right, innovation in media and

family crisis. The manifest content of each article was then recorded in accordance with this coding framework.

However, the number of identified topics was still too large. To facilitate later qualitative analysis, the 17 topics were subsequently organised into meaningful broader categories by examining the links and relations between the topics. Sorting the codes into fewer clusters resulted in four subjects: **‘work, retirement and pension’**, **‘ageing, health and care’**, **‘current events in economic and political affairs’**, and **‘baby boomers as a generation’**. Table 5 shows how the newly defined categories include the original topics. As Table 4 and Table 5 indicate, the names of three of the subjects – ‘work, retirement and pension’, ‘ageing, health and care’, and ‘baby boomers as a generation’ – are same for both the Japanese and Finnish data. However, the components of the subjects are different, and the qualitative analysis implemented later highlights differences in the newspaper discussions between the two data sets.

Table 5. Four broad subjects and their components in the Finnish media data

Clustered broad subjects	Corresponding originally defined topics
Work, retirement and pension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ shortage in the workforce ▪ prolonging working life ▪ stance on working ▪ post-retirement lifestyles ▪ employment and unemployment ▪ pension reform
Ageing, health and care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ population ageing and sustainability of social security system ▪ social and economic impact of population ageing ▪ attitude toward ageing and the ageing experience ▪ ageism in working life ▪ unhealthy behaviour and health promotion ▪ care and service for the elderly
Current events in economic and political affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ policy measure for public economy, finance and administration ▪ impact of recession
Baby boomers as a generation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ boomer image in society ▪ transition of power between generations ▪ intergenerational gaps and conflicts

All the articles were then recoded for both main and minor subjects in accordance with the four broad clusters (‘work, retirement and pension’/ ‘ageing, health and care’/ ‘current events in economic and political affairs’/ ‘baby boomers as a generation’) and the residual category ‘other’. After coding

the material, a cross table of the subjects covered by the articles and the three phases of newspaper discussions could be devised (Table 7: p.93).

The next task was coding the gender of the baby boomers mentioned in each article. The same classification system for identifying gender used when examining the Japanese data was applied to the Finnish newspaper articles. After this, it was possible to study whether the media discussions adopted a gender perspective (of males or females), or whether they instead gave a non-gendered impression. The results were condensed into a cross table form in Table 9 (p.98). There was no need to perform a one-sample chi-square goodness of fit test, as the outcome was so clear: most articles were non-gendered.

Finally, the manifest content analysis made it possible to investigate the role and placement of the baby boomers in relation to a certain subject by identifying the main character or main viewpoint of each article. The following groups were identified as the main characters and viewpoints of the articles: (1) baby boomers/retirees/older adults, (2) society/government/public policy, (3) national economy/labour market/economic policy, (4) municipality/local authority, (5) industry/ company/ working place, (6) profession/ employee/ worker, (7) citizen/family/younger age group, (8) politician, (9) newspaper editor and (10) commodity/goods/service. Coding the articles in line with this categorisation schema was followed by making a cross table of the main characters and subjects of the articles (Table 11: p.104).

Completing the manifest content analysis continued by exploring the data qualitatively. Thematic analysis was then employed as the method for subsequent investigation. In the same manner as when analysing the Japanese data, thematic analysis was carried out separately for each subject identified in the previous content analysis ('ageing, health and care'/'work, retirement and pension'/'current events in economic and political affairs'/'baby boomers as a generation'); it consisted of several steps. The process of analysis included the following five steps (Braun & Clarke 2006: 87): (1) generating initial codes, (2) searching for themes, (3) reviewing themes, (4) defining and naming themes, and (5) producing the report.

8 NEWSPAPER REPRESENTATIONS OF RETIREMENT AND AGEING OF THE BABY BOOMERS ⁸

As the previous chapter on research materials and methods comprehensively demonstrated, newspaper analyses on the ageing baby boomers were implemented in two phases: the first phase involved assessing the manifest content of the data sets, which was followed by qualitatively investigating the latent and underlying meanings of the manifest content. This chapter describes the results of the manifest content analysis. To repeat, the aim of manifest content analysis was to systematise a large amount of the material, to provide an overview of the content and to quantify the patterns of the content. Thus, dominant topics in the individual articles were identified and classified into broader categories. Furthermore, other features of reporting in the newspaper articles were examined to understand their relationships with the categorised topics, including any mention of the gender of the baby boomers and the roles they assumed or how they were placed in the texts of each article. Identifying the manifest topics and clarifying the role and placement of the baby boomers in relation to the particular topic were the means to answer the research questions (1), whereas analysing gender representations served research question (3)⁹. However, all the investigations contributed to exploring the research questions on the surface level.

8.1 NEWSPAPER REPORTS DURING THE STUDIED PERIOD

8.1.1 JAPANESE NEWSPAPER REPORTS RELATED TO THE BABY BOOMERS

The number of newspaper articles dealing with the baby boomers between the years 2004 and 2014 was 1,109, with 474 of them being in *Yomiuri Shimbun* and 635 in *Asahi Shimbun*. Figure 7 displays the number of articles per year in a stacked style by newspaper. The quantitative analysis showed that the number of articles increased dramatically by 149 pieces from 2004 to 2005, followed by two consecutive years with over 250 articles per year, respectively.

⁸ The study of Japanese baby boomers in this chapter is based on the forthcoming academic article 'Representation of Ageing Baby Boomers in Japanese Newspapers', co-authored by Kathrin Komp. Motoko Ishikawa conducted the study from the planning stages to implementing it and reporting on the findings, whereas Komp offered advice and technical support.

⁹ As described in Chapter 6, the research questions of the study are as follows: (1) How do Japanese and Finnish national newspapers portray the baby boomers during the period of their retirement and beginning of old age? (2) How are newspaper portrayals of ageing baby boomers different or similar in Japan and Finland? (3) In what ways is gender involved when Japanese and Finnish newspapers articulate the retirement and ageing of the baby boomers?

These two peak years, 2006 and 2007, marked a transition from the period before early retirement (phase I) to the period during early retirement of the baby boomers (phase II). The sum of articles in 2005, 2006 and 2007 accounted for approximately 70 per cent of all articles published over the studied period. Then, the number of articles decreased sharply in 2008, and the decline continued until 2011. However, when the normal retirement period (phase IV) began, namely in 2012, the number of articles again began to rise. Nevertheless, this upward trend was much weaker than during the previous peak years. Thus, it can be said that the Japanese newspapers stimulated discussions on the baby boomers ahead of their actual retirement. According to a Japanese government panel survey conducted on middle-aged persons, including the baby boomers (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare 2019), 81.3 per cent were still in the workforce in 2005 (respondents age: 50–59), compared to 69.3 per cent in 2010 (respondents age: 55–64) and 55.1 per cent in 2015 (respondents age: 60–69). This implies that the retirement of the boomers has proceeded gradually.

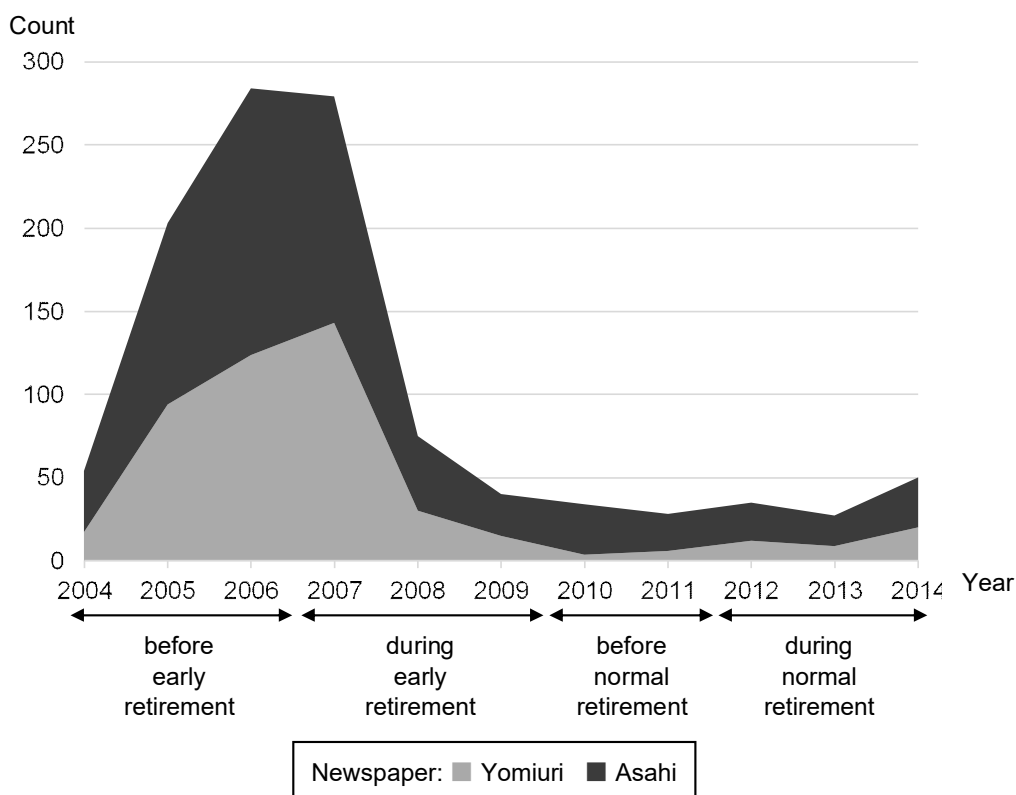


Figure 7. Number of articles about the baby boomers in Japanese newspapers, by newspaper and year.

Though the development over time applies to both newspapers, notable differences do exist between the two. With *Yomiuri Shimbun*, more of the articles were concentrated in the peak three years from 2005 to 2007, accounting for approximately 76 per cent of total articles, while the proportion of articles for the said years in *Asahi Shimbun* was approximately 64 per cent. Another issue to mention is that the number of baby boomer-related articles in *Asahi Shimbun* was greater than in *Yomiuri Shimbun* throughout the studied period, with the exception of 2007. The disparity ranged from nine to 36 per year, which resulted in 161 more articles in *Asahi Shimbun* than in *Yomiuri Shimbun*. The distinction between the two newspapers indicates that *Asahi Shimbun* showed relatively balanced interest in the baby boomers over time. On the other hand, the reports in *Yomiuri Shimbun* tended to pay strong attention to the particular event of the early retirement of the baby boomers, demonstrating that the more conservative *Yomiuri Shimbun* showed concern over the significant societal and economic changes caused by the mass retirement of baby boomers. Additionally, the audiences of the newspapers might also account for the differences in reporting styles: *Asahi Shimbun* is a newspaper addressing middle-class readers in particular, while readers of *Yomiuri Shimbun* have a somewhat lower socio-economic background.

8.1.2 FINNISH NEWSPAPER REPORTS RELATED TO THE BABY BOOMERS

The number of editorial articles in *Helsingin Sanomat* referring to the baby boomers was 127 between the years 2000 and 2015. Figure 8 displays how the number of articles varied by year over the study period. No significant trend was observed in the occurrence of relevant articles. Rather, the number of articles tended to fluctuate over time because of the smaller number of articles. However, after 2009, the year with the greatest number of articles and at the beginning of normal retirement (phase III), the number of articles decreased steadily toward the year 2014.

The temporal distribution of articles was quite even, with 7.9 per cent of the articles being published during one single year (2000) in phase I (before early retirement), 45.7 per cent during phase II (early retirement) and 46.5 per cent during phase III (normal retirement). No significant change in the number of articles occurred between the period during early retirement and the period during normal retirement. This implies that public discussions paid sustained attention to the baby boomers irrespective of their status as young pensioners or normally retired pensioners. However, at the beginning (years 2008–2011) of the normal retirement period (phase III), editorials were published more frequently than during the end of the same period (years 2012–2015).

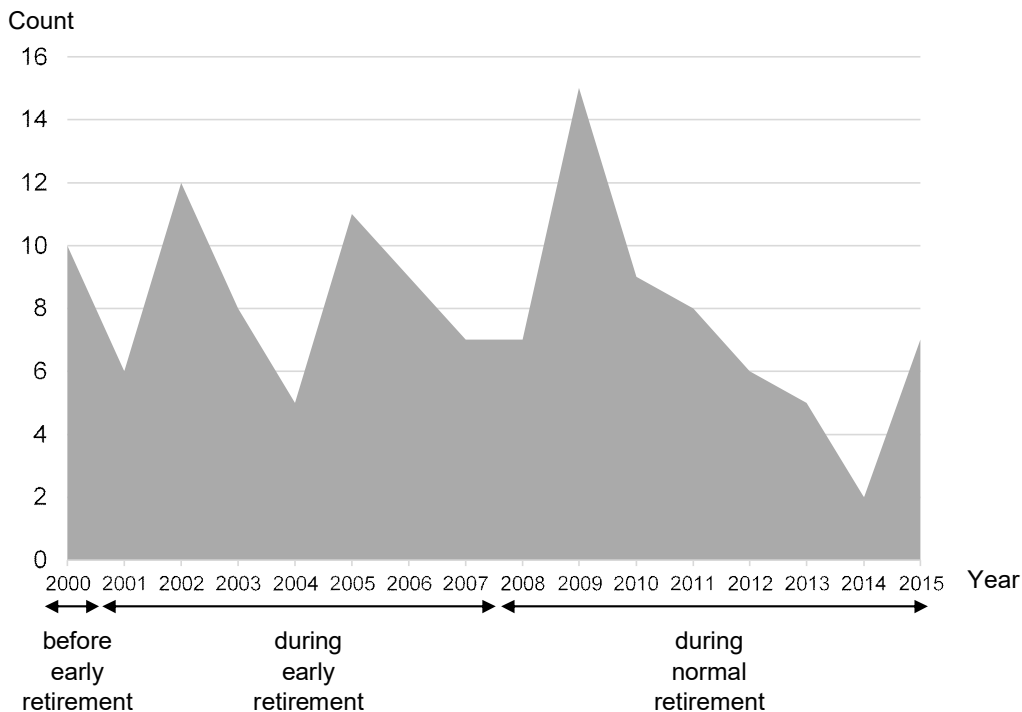


Figure 8. Number of articles about the baby boomers in Finnish newspaper, by year.

8.2 CHANGING TOPICS IN THE DEBATES

8.2.1 SHARE OF AND CHANGE IN DIFFERENT TOPICS IN JAPANESE NEWSPAPER REPORTS

Table 6 provides an initial overview of the content of Japanese newspaper reports. The table shows how many of the articles discussed the topics **‘work, retirement and pension’**, **‘ageing, health and care’** and **‘lifestyles and identities’** during each analytic phase as well as the whole period.¹⁰ The calculations signify that the topic was discussed in the articles either as a main subject or as a minor subject. This means that one article can be categorised under multiple topics. Therefore, the sum of the percentages for each topic do not add up to 100 per cent.

¹⁰ How the topics were categorised is elaborated on in CHAPTER 7: MATERIALS AND METHODS FOR NEWSPAPER ANALYSES, especially in subsection 7.3.2, Analysing the Japanese data, and in Table 4.

Table 6. Proportion of articles by topic and phase in Japanese newspapers

	Phase I before early retirement (2004–06)	Phase II during early retirement (2007–09)	Phase III before normal retirement (2010–11)	Phase IV during normal retirement (2012–14)	Total period
Topic (%)					
Work, retirement and pension	53.4	47.5	45.2	9.8	46.4
Ageing, health and care	8.3	8.6	27.4	43.8	13.1
Lifestyles and identities	49.4	55.6	59.7	52.7	52.5
Total number of articles (N)	541	394	62	112	1109

Note: One article can be categorised under multiple topics.

Looking at the whole period, nearly half of all articles (n=1109) dealt with the topic relating to ‘work, retirement and pension’. Yet, the proportion of articles differed in different phases. In phase I and phase II, the period associated with early retirement, articles discussing work and retirement held a dominant position. The number and percentage of articles belonging to this category decreased in the course of time, leading to a significant loss in share during the normal retirement period. This demonstrates that until phase IV, society had been gaining familiarity with the topic of the impending retirement of the baby boomers, after which the issue was not considered to generate special interest among readers any longer.

The topic ‘ageing, health and care’ accounted for a mere 13 per cent of all articles throughout the study period. Nevertheless, contrary to the importance of the aforementioned topic concerning work and retirement, the proportion of articles assigned to the topic of ageing, health and care increased over time. From a tiny portion, it grew to account for more than 40 per cent of all articles in the last phase, i.e. during the normal retirement of the baby boomers. This is likely to reflect an increasing general concern with health and care issues as the boomers advanced in age.

The topic ‘lifestyles and identities’ comprised approximately half of all articles throughout the studied period. The trend implies that Japanese discussions about the baby boomers had diverse aspects to them. Though not shown in the table, further analyses of the sub-topics included in ‘lifestyles and identities’ revealed that most articles corresponding to **‘consumption and marketing’** appeared during the phases before and during early retirement, while those related to **‘activities, associations and relationships’** and **‘baby boomers as a generation’** remained relatively constant in number

and share over time. Particularly remarkable is the substantial proportion of articles related to the topic **‘activities, associations and relationships’**, which ranged from nearly one-fourth to two-fifths of the total number of articles during the respective phases.

8.2.2 SHARE OF AND CHANGE IN DIFFERENT TOPICS IN FINNISH NEWSPAPER REPORTS

Table 7 provides an overview of the content of Finnish newspaper reports. The table shows how many of the articles discussed the topics **‘work, retirement and pension’**, **‘ageing, health and care’**, **‘current events in economic and political affairs’**, **‘baby boomers as a generation’** and **‘other’** during the respective phases of analysis and entire period.¹¹ The calculations signify that the topic was discussed in the articles either as a main subject or as a minor subject. In other words, one article could be categorised under multiple topics, and the sum of the percentages for each topic shown in the table do not add up to 100 per cent.

Table 7. Proportion of articles by topic and phase in Finnish newspaper

	Phase I before early retirement (2000)	Phase II during early retirement (2001–07)	Phase III during normal retirement (2008–15)	Total period
Topic (%)				
Work, retirement and pension	70.0	67.2	52.5	60.6
Ageing, health and care	50.0	27.6	30.5	30.7
Current events in economic and political affairs	0.0	17.2	20.3	17.3
Baby boomers as a generation	0.0	8.6	22.0	14.2
Other	0.0	1.7	5.1	3.1
Total number of articles (N)	10	58	59	127

Note: One article can be categorised under multiple topics.

Over the study period, approximately 60 per cent of all articles dealt with the topic ‘work, retirement and pension’. The share of articles focusing on this particular topic, however, decreased continually over time, from 70 percent during phase I (before early retirement) to 53 per cent during phase III (during normal retirement). While the decline was not as steep as for the same topic

¹¹ How these topics were categorised is elaborated on in CHAPTER 7: MATERIALS AND METHODS FOR NEWSPAPER ANALYSES, especially in subsection 7.3.3, Analysing the Finnish data, and in Table 5.

in the Japanese data, in both Finland and Japan other topics emerged and gained in prominence as the baby boomers actually began to retire.

The topic 'ageing, health and care' was the second most frequently discussed topic over the total period as well as during the respective analytic phases. When looking at absolute numbers, the articles falling into this category increased over time from five in phase I, to 16 in phase II to 18 in phase III. However, the minor difference in number between the period during early retirement and the period during normal retirement suggests that advancing age of the baby boomers did not seem to have an obvious influence on discussions about ageing and care issues.

The topics that did not exist at all in the first phase but emerged toward the last phase were 'current events in economic and political affairs' and 'baby boomers as a generation'. Changes in the macro-economic trend and the transformed circumstances surrounding the baby boomers might well have contributed to the delayed emergence of the two topics. Particularly, the 2008 financial crisis and the subsequent economic and political hardships, as well as the post-retirement lifestyles gradually established by baby boomers, appeared to affect the emergence of new discussions.

The topic 'other' was an extra group that was not connected to any of the four categories explained previously. There was also no relation between the manifest content of each of the four articles coded as 'other' with respect to the main subject. Of the four articles covering the issues of (1) popularity of choosing vocational school, (2) lowering age limit for voting right, (3) innovation in media and (4) family crisis, two ((2) and (4)) dealt with additional topics as minor subjects; one (2) also discussed the topic 'baby boomers as a generation' and one (4) covered the topic 'work, retirement and pension'. These two articles were included in the later qualitative analysis implemented for each topic separately.

8.3 REPRESENTATION OF GENDER IN NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

8.3.1 VISIBILITY OF GENDER IN JAPANESE NEWSPAPERS

Table 8 shows how each article indicated the gender of the baby boomers by topic and the phase being studied. In the table, 'men' includes the initially coded classifications of explicitly men, mainly men and implicitly men, while 'women' covers explicitly women, mainly women and implicitly women. The table shows that majority of the articles (60–70 per cent) falling under the topics 'work, retirement and pension', 'activities, associations and relationships' and 'baby boomers as a generation' discussed the baby boomers in terms of both genders or in a non-gendered way throughout the studied phases. However, approximately one-third of the articles for the entire period made exclusive reference to men, whereas discussions focusing on females

played only a minor role in these topics. Articles representing both genders or taking a non-gendered approach were dominant in the topic 'ageing, health and care', excluding phase II, during which time the articles exclusively referring to men accounted for 24 per cent. The reason for the prominence of men in that particular period might have had to do with growing social interest in the health condition of male boomer employees facing retirement. Likewise, with the topic 'consumption and marketing' approximately 80 per cent of the articles focused on both genders or took a non-gendered approach over time. Even still, exclusive male discussions appeared in nearly 20 per cent of articles, whereas articles focusing exclusively on women were scarce.

The frequencies at which precise gender categories appeared in all articles (n=1109) throughout the entire period were as follows: 13 per cent making explicit reference to men (n=144), 1.6 per cent mainly to men (n=18), 16.2 per cent implicitly to men (n=180), 1.6 per cent explicitly to women (n=18), 0.5 per cent mainly to women (n=5), none implicitly to women, 17.1 per cent to both men and women (n=190), and 50 per cent with a non-gendered approach (n=554). Particularly remarkable was the difference between those implicitly referring to men and those implicitly referring to women. Supposing that both genders are incorporated in non-gendered discussions, 98 per cent of articles had arguments related to male baby boomers. On the other hand, arguments that included female baby boomers accounted for 69 per cent of the total. The results of the one-sample chi-square goodness of fit test between the two observations showed that the articles made references to men significantly more frequently than to women in Japanese newspaper discussions on the baby boomers ($\chi^2=278.797$, $df=1$, $p<.0001$). The difference in frequency with respect to gender demonstrates that female baby boomers were underrepresented in media discussions during the studied period. This implies that the originally masculine discourses on the Japanese baby boomers (Sakaiya 2005/1976; Amano 2001) continued to have an impact on society during the retirement of the said population.

Table 8. Gender indication of Japanese baby boomers in newspaper articles by phase and topic

	Indication of gender (%)			Total N (%)
	Men	Women	Both/non- gendered	
Phase I (2004–06)				
Work, retirement and pension	39.1	1.0	59.9	289 (100.0)
Ageing, health and care	4.4	0.0	95.6	45 (100.0)
Consumption and marketing	14.6	0.0	85.4	103 (100.0)
Activities, associations and relationships	38.3	4.7	57.0	128 (100.0)
Baby boomers as a generation	32.0	4.0	64.0	50 (100.0)
<i>All articles (N (%))</i>	<i>182 (33.6)</i>	<i>8 (1.5)</i>	<i>351 (64.9)</i>	<i>541 (100.0)</i>
Phase II (2007–09)				
Work, retirement and pension	36.9	2.7	60.4	187 (100.0)
Ageing, health and care	23.5	2.9	73.5	34 (100.0)
Consumption and marketing	20.3	2.7	77.0	74 (100.0)
Activities, associations and relationships	32.1	5.4	62.5	112 (100.0)
Baby boomers as a generation	27.1	6.3	66.7	48 (100.0)
<i>All articles (N (%))</i>	<i>122 (31.0)</i>	<i>13 (3.3)</i>	<i>259 (65.7)</i>	<i>394 (100.0)</i>
Phase III (2010–11)				
Work, retirement and pension	35.7	0.0	64.3	28 (100.0)
Ageing, health and care	5.9	0.0	94.1	17 (100.0)
Consumption and marketing	20.0	0.0	80.0	5 (100.0)
Activities, associations and relationships	28.0	0.0	72.0	25 (100.0)
Baby boomers as a generation	37.5	0.0	62.5	8 (100.0)
<i>All articles (N (%))</i>	<i>16 (25.8)</i>	<i>0 (0.0)</i>	<i>46 (74.2)</i>	<i>62 (100.0)</i>
Phase IV (2012–14)				
Work, retirement and pension	27.3	0.0	72.7	11 (100.0)
Ageing, health and care	2.0	0.0	98.0	49 (100.0)
Consumption and marketing	20.0	6.7	73.3	15 (100.0)
Activities, associations and relationships	40.0	3.3	56.7	30 (100.0)
Baby boomers as a generation	26.3	0.0	73.7	19 (100.0)
<i>All articles (N (%))</i>	<i>22 (19.6)</i>	<i>2 (1.8)</i>	<i>88 (78.6)</i>	<i>112 (100.0)</i>
Entire period				
Work, retirement and pension	37.9	1.6	60.6	515 (100.0)
Ageing, health and care	8.3	0.7	91.0	145 (100.0)
Consumption and marketing	17.3	1.5	81.2	197 (100.0)
Activities, associations and relationships	35.3	4.4	60.3	295 (100.0)
Baby boomers as a generation	29.6	4.0	66.4	125 (100.0)
<i>All articles (N (%))</i>	<i>342 (30.8)</i>	<i>23 (2.1)</i>	<i>744 (67.1)</i>	<i>1109 (100.0)</i>

Note: One article can be categorised under multiple topics.

8.3.2 INVISIBILITY OF GENDER IN FINNISH NEWSPAPER

Though gender representation of the ageing Finnish baby boomers in newspaper articles was examined by classifying several patterns similarly as with the Japanese data,¹² the results were somewhat surprising. Of the total number of articles (n=127), 97.6 per cent took a non-gendered approach (n=124). The categorisation of the rest was as follows: one article focusing on men and women (0.8 per cent), one article mainly on men (0.8 per cent) and one article mainly on women (0.8 per cent).

Table 9 shows the distribution of articles indicating the gender of the baby boomers by topic and studied phase. The dominance of the category 'both genders or non-gendered', in which all except one article adopted a non-gendered approach, reveals that the baby boomers were not discussed in terms of gender in the Finnish newspaper. Most articles instead regarded the baby boomers as a depersonalised mass and did not pay particular attention to the gender of the boomers. The gender of the baby boomers was invisible and disregarded in media discussions in Finland. The invisibility of gender might result from the fact that the majority of the articles discussed the baby boomers as a generation or cohorts rather than as individual baby boomers. However, the results might partly be due to the nature of Finnish data, i.e. a focus on editorial articles while excluding other types of newspaper reports.

¹² The method for investigating how newspaper discussions included a gender perspective is described in subsection 7.3.2, Analysing the Japanese data, and in subsection 7.3.3, Analysing the Finnish data.

Table 9. Gender indication of Finnish baby boomers in newspaper articles by phase and topic

	Indication of gender (%)			Total N (%)
	Men	Women	Both/non- gendered	
Phase I (2000)				
Work, retirement and pension	0.0	0.0	100.0	7 (100.0)
Ageing, health and care	0.0	0.0	100.0	5 (100.0)
Current events in economic and political affairs				
Baby boomers as a generation				
Other				
<i>All articles (N (%))</i>	<i>0 (0.0)</i>	<i>0 (0.0)</i>	<i>10 (100.0)</i>	<i>10 (100.0)</i>
Phase II (2001–07)				
Work, retirement and pension	0.0	0.0	100.0	39 (100.0)
Ageing, health and care	0.0	0.0	100.0	16 (100.0)
Current events in economic and political affairs	0.0	0.0	100.0	10 (100.0)
Baby boomers as a generation	0.0	0.0	100.0	3 (100.0)
Other	0.0	0.0	100.0	1 (100.0)
<i>All articles (N (%))</i>	<i>0 (0.0)</i>	<i>0 (0.0)</i>	<i>58 (100.0)</i>	<i>58 (100.0)</i>
Phase III (2008–15)				
Work, retirement and pension	0.0	0.0	100.0	31 (100.0)
Ageing, health and care	0.0	5.6	94.4	18 (100.0)
Current events in economic and political affairs	0.0	0.0	100.0	12 (100.0)
Baby boomers as a generation	7.7	0.0	92.3	13 (100.0)
Other	0.0	0.0	100.0	3 (100.0)
<i>All articles (N (%))</i>	<i>1 (1.7)</i>	<i>1 (1.7)</i>	<i>57 (96.6)</i>	<i>59 (100.0)</i>
Entire period				
Work, retirement and pension	0.0	0.0	100.0	77 (100.0)
Ageing, health and care	0.0	2.6	97.4	39 (100.0)
Current events in economic and political affairs	0.0	0.0	100.0	22 (100.0)
Baby boomers as a generation	5.6	0.0	94.4	18 (100.0)
Other	0.0	0.0	100.0	4 (100.0)
<i>All articles (N (%))</i>	<i>1 (0.8)</i>	<i>1 (0.8)</i>	<i>125 (98.4)</i>	<i>127 (100.0)</i>

Note: One article can be categorised under multiple topics.

8.4 ROLE AND PLACEMENT OF THE BABY BOOMERS IN NEWSPAPER DISCUSSIONS

8.4.1 JAPANESE BABY BOOMERS AS BOTH MAIN CHARACTERS AND SUPPORTING ROLES IN DEBATES

In the last step of the manifest content analysis, the role and placement of the baby boomers in each article were examined in order to identify the context in which they were referred to in relation to a particular subject. Table 10 shows what actor served as the main character or whose viewpoint was evident in each Japanese article according to the respective topics. For the topic 'work and retirement', the baby boomers or retirees represented by the boomers were the main characters in approximately 30 per cent of the relevant articles. Simultaneously, work and the retirement of the baby boomers were also discussed in terms of large-scale entities such as society, politics, industry and municipality. Altogether, these viewpoints exceeded 80 per cent of accounts seeking to contextualise the baby boomers in the said topic. Approximately half of the articles associated with 'ageing, health and care' discussed social and political perspectives. This observation highlights the societal impact of the topic due to the massive numbers of baby boomers entering old age. However, over 20 per cent of the articles put focus on the baby boomers themselves. The role of experts and independent intellectuals advising the ageing boomers on health promotion was also important in 13 per cent of articles.

With respect to the topic 'consumption and marketing', the baby boomers were frequently approached from business as well as marketing perspectives. The boomers were the target of industries, markets and entrepreneurs in the majority of the articles. One-tenth of the relevant articles described the consumption trends and preferences of the baby boomers. The main characters or viewpoints varied when it came to the topic 'activities, associations and relationships'. Approximately half of the articles focused on the baby boomers or retirees as the main agents. Their behaviours and attitudes were discussed in each of the articles. Experts voiced their opinions on the topic in a considerable proportion of the articles (approx. 10 per cent). In the articles discussing family relationships, which constituted approximately 7 per cent of those focusing on activities and relationships, the arguments were created from the perspective of married boomer couples, either spouse or else family members. Furthermore, approximately 6 per cent of articles referred to the baby boomers by focusing on volunteer organisations and related groups.

With respect to the topic 'baby boomers as a generation', the boomers themselves were the main characters in more than half of the articles. Nearly one-fourth of such articles highlighted celebrities belonging to the baby boom generation who were well known among the general public. As many as 16 per cent of the articles dealt with diverse entertainment programmes in which the baby boomers had crucial roles or which were intended for the boomers.

Overall, of the total 1,109 articles, baby boomers, retirees or older adults were the main focus in approximately 30 per cent of them. The second largest group was industry, market or entrepreneurs, followed by society, government, public policy or political party. The results indicate that newspaper discussions positioned the baby boomers in both subjective and objective manners. When the baby boomer themselves were the principal actors, the article tended to identify with particular baby boomers. This was especially evident in the activity topic and in the articles focusing on generational aspects of the baby boomers. Contrastingly, when the topics were approached from the perspectives of society, politics, industry, market, and so forth, the baby boomers were usually regarded as having some influence on or being influenced by the activities of these social organisations. Hence, examining the context in which the baby boomers were referred to in the respective topic revealed a different level of representation of the baby boomers in media discussions. This implies that the portrayals of ageing baby boomers, which are explored profoundly in subsequent qualitative analysis, vary according to the different roles and categories in which the boomers are discussed in Japanese newspapers.

Table 10. Main character or viewpoint in Japanese newspaper articles by topic

	Topic					All articles N (%)
	Work, retirement & pension	Ageing, health & care	Consumption & marketing	Activities, associations & relationships	Baby boomers as a generation	
Main character or viewpoint (%)						
Baby boomers/retirees/older adults	30.5	22.8	10.7	47.5	42.4	343 (30.9)
Society/government/public policy/political party	19.2	47.6	5.6	5.1	5.6	172 (15.5)
Industry/markets/entrepreneurs	21.2	1.4	72.6	6.8	1.6	247 (22.3)
Municipality/local region	10.5	0.0	1.5	2.4	0.0	60 (5.4)
Authorities	3.7	0.0	0.5	0.3	0.8	21 (1.9)
Educational/medical/special institution	0.6	2.1	1.0	5.8	0.0	23 (2.1)
Citizens/community	1.0	1.4	1.0	3.7	0.8	16 (1.4)
Expert/independent intellectual/third party	7.6	13.1	1.0	9.5	11.2	89 (8.0)
Disease/health problem	0.0	3.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	5 (0.5)
Product/commodity/service	0.0	0.0	2.5	1.0	3.2	10 (0.9)
Volunteer organisation/NPO/citizen group	2.3	0.0	0.0	6.4	0.0	25 (2.3)
Married couple/spouse/family/family member	0.2	3.4	0.0	6.8	0.0	23 (2.1)
Boomer intellectual/-celebrity/-artist	0.6	0.7	0.0	1.4	13.6	20 (1.8)
Entertainment programme	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7	16.0	21 (1.9)
Newspaper editor	2.7	4.1	1.5	2.0	4.8	30 (2.7)
Foreign country	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.7	0.0	4 (0.4)
Total (N (%))	515 (100.0)	145 (100.0)	197 (100.0)	295 (100.0)	125 (100.0)	1109 (100.0)

Notes: One article can be categorised under multiple topics.
The number of topics is given in columns 1–5 and the number of articles in column 6.

8.4.2 FINNISH BABY BOOMERS GENERALLY AS BACKGROUND OR PASSIVE OBJECTS IN DISCUSSIONS

The main character or viewpoint represented in the discussions in each Finnish article is displayed in Table 11 by respective topics. The subject discussing 'work, retirement and pension' was dealt with from social, political and economic perspectives approximately six times, more frequently than a focus on the baby boomers themselves. This signifies that work- and retirement-related articles tended to treat the baby boomers more as passive objects than active players, or to position the boomers in the background of discussions, appealing more to the societal significance of such issues. However, comparing the proportion of articles with other subject groups, namely industry/company/working place and profession/employee/worker, revealed an interesting contrast. In the latter cases, employees had a more important role than employers in constructing arguments about work- and retirement-related matters.

In the topic related to 'ageing, health and care', nearly half of the relevant articles were approached from the standpoint of society, government and public policy. This implies the prominent social impact of an ageing population, one dramatically accelerated by the baby boomers. On the other hand, in a substantial proportion of the articles (about 15 per cent), the baby boomers themselves or retirees and older adults in general had crucial roles in discussing questions on ageing and care. A further notable point is that newspaper editors contemplated the particular topic introspectively in about one tenth of the articles.

The baby boomers had a minor role in the topic 'current events in economic and political affairs'. As the subject title indicates, the viewpoints of large-scale entities, such as society and government or economy and the labour market, were crucial in articulating the contents of the related articles.

Interestingly, approximately 33 per cent of the articles discussed the subject of 'baby boomers as a generation' in terms of citizens, family or the younger age group. Many of the articles took time to explain the gaps and differences between the baby boomers and other population groups. The baby boomers themselves were the main characters in a third of the articles. Those two actors, namely the baby boomers and rest of the people, accounted for 50 per cent of the entire number of articles dealing with the said topic of contextualising the boomers.

Looking at all articles (n=127), nearly half of them focused on society, government and public policy as the main characters or presented their viewpoints, followed by the national economy, labour market and economic policy. Social, political and economic entities played an active role in creating newspaper discourses in more than 60% of cases. This percentage stands in stark contrast to the proportion of articles in which the baby boomers took the main role in the article: 11 per cent. The predominance of social, political and economic perspectives in the media discussions implies that the portrayals of ageing baby boomers in *Helsingin Sanomat* investigated later in the thematic analysis tended to be articulated more in terms of how society positions the baby boomers rather than in terms of the boomers' own opinions. The significance of society, politics and economy in the newspaper discussions might have relevance considering that the data consisted solely of editorials

and comment articles. In newspaper articles other than editorials, it is quite common that topics are dealt on a general level from social and socio-political perspectives, but while taking individual examples into account.

Table 11. Main character or viewpoint in Finnish newspaper articles by topic

Main character or viewpoint (%)	Topic					All articles N (%)
	Work, retirement & pension	Ageing, health & care	Current events in economic & political affairs	Baby boomers as a generation	Other	
Baby boomers/retirees/older adults	10.4	15.4	0.0	16.7	0.0	14 (11.0)
Society/government/public policy	58.4	46.2	54.5	27.8	0.0	62 (48.8)
National economy/labour market/economic policy	6.5	7.7	36.4	5.6	0.0	15 (11.8)
Municipality/local authority	1.3	2.6	0.0	5.6	0.0	3 (2.4)
Industry/company/working place	2.6	2.6	9.1	0.0	0.0	3 (2.4)
Profession/employee/worker	10.4	5.1	0.0	5.6	0.0	9 (7.1)
Citizen/family/younger age group	6.5	0.0	0.0	33.3	75.0	9 (7.1)
Politician	1.3	2.6	0.0	5.6	0.0	2 (1.6)
Newspaper editor	1.3	10.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	5 (3.9)
Commodity/goods/service	1.3	7.7	0.0	0.0	25.0	5 (3.9)
Total (N (%))	77 (100.0)	39 (100.0)	22 (100.0)	18 (100.0)	4 (100.0)	127 (100.0)

Note: One article can be categorised under multiple topics.
The number of topics is given in columns 1–5 and the number of articles in column 6.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, manifest content analysis revealed the ways in which the Japanese and Finnish newspapers represented the retirement and ageing of the baby boomers on a surface level. Discussions about the baby boomers in Japan was much more frequently held in relation to their early retirement, whereas the Finnish newspaper tended to pay constant attention to the baby boomers throughout the study period. In both countries, the topic of 'work, retirement and pension', which predominated in the early phases of discussions, gave way to the emergence of other topics at the point of the actual retirement and advancing age of the baby boomers. Investigations of how the newspapers chose to represent gender revealed the strong visibility of gender in Japan and invisibility of gender in Finland with respect to the ageing baby boomers. While the Japanese baby boomers served as both the main characters and in supporting roles in the debates, their Finnish counterparts generally remained in the background of the discussions.

9 PORTRAYALS OF AGEING BABY BOOMERS IN TOPICS COMMON TO JAPANESE AND FINNISH MEDIA DISCUSSIONS

Thematic analysis was used to qualitatively investigate how Japanese and Finnish national newspapers articulated retirement and ageing of the baby boomers, and thereby how social perceptions of the ageing baby boomers were created in the respective countries. I analysed the data according to each topic identified via the manifest content analysis employed previously. The research material was read, interpreted and analysed in the original languages without the help of professional translators or translation applications, meaning that the researcher had a native fluency in the Japanese language and evaluated the Finnish data as texts in a foreign language. While wary of the potential trap of skimming too quickly through the Japanese texts, the Finnish articles were read carefully while paying close attention to their implications and connotations. Reporting the results of the analyses in English required an extra effort. Since both Japanese and Finnish are linguistically distant from English, the researcher translated the citations freely when literal translation did not make sense.

Over the course of the analyses, the socio-cultural constructions of the ageing baby boomers, in other words, the media portrayals of the ageing baby boomers, became evident. Chapter 9 describes these portrayals in terms of topics common to both the Japanese and Finnish data. The common topics are ‘work, retirement and pension’, ‘ageing, health and care’ and ‘baby boomers as a generation’. In elaborating on the themes uncovered by examining the respective topics, the results of the analyses are first explained separately by country and then summarised by comparing Japan and Finland, while highlighting in particular different and contrasting aspects.

9.1 WORK, RETIREMENT AND PENSION

9.1.1 JAPANESE BABY BOOMERS IN THE CONTEXT OF WORK AND RETIREMENT

After first discovering several patterns in the data and refining them into notable motifs, the overall exploration of 515 Japanese newspaper articles that included the topic ‘**work, retirement and pension**’ revealed four themes: *experiences and reality of retirement, macro influences and responses triggered by the impending retirement of the baby boomers, continuing work into the post-retirement period and seeing the boomers as a resource for*

society. A thematic map generated through doing the analysis is shown in Figure 9, which illustrates the overall structure of the data.

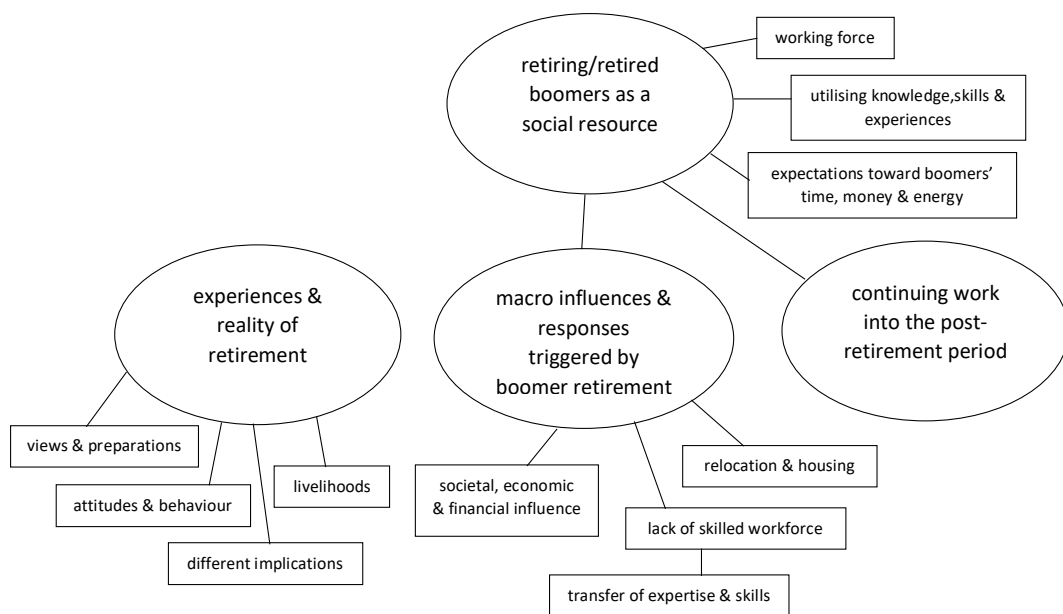


Figure 9. Thematic map of the topic ‘work, retirement and pension’ in the Japanese data.

The theme that captures the *experiences and reality of retirement* focuses mainly on individual experiences of becoming retirees and subjective descriptions of retirement from the viewpoint of the baby boomers. The theme includes boomers’ views and preparations for retirement, different implications of retirement for men and women, attitudes and behaviour during retirement, and changing livelihoods and financial issues as pensioners. In the early phases of the studied period, namely the period before and during early retirement, the newspapers frequently discussed how the baby boomers themselves viewed their approaching retirement. Views on retirement were usually characterised by positive words and phrases, such as ‘looking forward to my retirement years’, ‘living healthy and joyfully’, ‘pursuing hobbies with good health and financial affluence is ideal in retirement life’, and ‘words associated with retirement are a new departure, life re-experienced, freedom and a leisurely lifestyle’. These expressions suggest that for the boomers, retirement indicates the beginning of a new stage of life rather than completion of their working life. The following passage best describes this idea:

Retirement means that one arrives at a transit station. It is not a point to count how many years are left, but rather the addition of years begins from there. Though the railway track for the local line is narrow, you can go anywhere you want in a relaxed fashion. (...) ((J1 Asahi 12.11.2005: (Looking for Sazae-san) Retirement – Addition begins from there, Kanzō Saitō)

It is, however, important to note that quite a few articles distinguished between what men and women anticipated for their impending retirement. The texts of articles referencing survey results and experts' opinions demonstrate that men usually wish to spend time with their wives as much as possible and to move to a rural area with beautiful nature, whereas wives prefer to have some time on their own and to stay in an urban area. These different views are related to different ideas about retirement among men and women. Traditionally, Japanese men have had very long working days and not sufficiently committed themselves to domestic and neighbourhood affairs. Accordingly, they tend to lose their sense of belonging when they retire. The newspapers raised concerns that male boomers might become isolated, being perplexed by what to do with large amounts of free time during retirement. The next extract describes the situation in which men tend to be trapped quite well:

He looks back at the time of retirement: 'I had a relatively high position at the company I worked for, and I could puff up my chest with pride. However, in the local community, people are wondering about me, asking "Who are you?" Because of this huge gap, I was in distress thinking that I cannot be of service anymore'. (J2 Asahi 27.5.2005: Retired seniors engaging in community business – Anti-crime activity, supporting personal computer skills and supplementing public service, Takashi Kiyokawa)

On the other hand, wives were more likely to express feelings of stress about their husbands, as the husbands' frequent presence at home would hinder wives' social activities. One article introduced the comment of a panellist, who said '*A husband's retirement from work is a wife's retirement from social activity*' (J3 Yomiuri 7.2.2004: Yomiuri-Chūkō forum 21: Age of mass retirement – It is high time to revitalise the marital relationship). These different types of anxiety derive from the different spheres occupied by women and men in Japanese society. In fact, Japanese baby boomers represent the generation that established a family model consisting of a male breadwinner and female homemaker (Yamasaki 2001; Okamura 2001).

The other significant element that constitutes the theme *experiences and reality of retirement* is how the baby boomers formulate concrete attitudes

and behaviour in retirement life. Both newspapers introduced narratives of individual boomers as examples of those who have enjoyed doing what they love to do or who have found things for which they feel a passion. The articles then highlighted how these new activities, whether work or hobby or some other engagement, have brought comfort and a sense of fulfilment to boomers' lives in terms of both time as well as psychological well-being. The following story depicts the ideal retired life of a chef who ran a famous fine-dining restaurant for 24 years.

Tsuyoshi Miki (57), a former owner-chef, now spends his life 'in retirement' in the City of Kobe. In the morning, after seeing off his wife, who has a regular job, he immerses himself in reading. He just has a light lunch, like pasta or udon noodles, and visits markets and bookshops. He sometimes makes a little side trip to a museum.

He makes dinner every day at the request of his wife. (...) Cooking for only themselves in a relaxed manner gives him a different kind of joy.

He looks back at his past life, which was devoted to working hard from morning to midnight and say, 'It was a battlefield'. "I was always striving for 100%, a full load".

Retirement was already on his mind from that period onwards. In addition to a 'disruptive urge unique to the (baby boom) generation', he had a strong desire to pursue 'hundreds of dreams' other than working, such as traveling and reading. His two children have also become independent. He determined he had peaked as a chef, and then decided to close his restaurant completely.

There is a desire by others to call him back to work. However, he is not motivated to do so. He is satisfied with his current life: 'I have as much time as I want. I have never been happier.' (J4 Yomiuri 16.1.2004: [How to live in five-eighths] (12) Relaxing 'retired life' – Living at my own pace, Yōko Tsujimoto, Yōji Yamahata, Toshiko Hasegawa & Toshichika Maeda)

The relaxed lifestyle of boomer celebrities such as musicians was also described in the articles, so that readers of the same generation would feel empathy with them and take their story as a model for retirement life. Yet, the majority of stories focused on male baby boomers.

Additionally, the opinions and expectations of intellectuals regarding retiring boomers were visible particularly in the early phase. Articles relevant to this issue tended to repeat statements like the baby boomers should become involved in what they really like to do or what they have never tried before,

which would create satisfaction in their lives and vigour in society. Irrespective of the boomers' own experiences or the expectations of a third party, the background notion is that Japanese baby boomers are different from previous senior citizens: *'They are "a mass" who have generated new social phenomena over their life course. And they will have influence on society even when they retire'* (J5 Yomiuri 1.1.2007: [Searching for happiness — New lives for the baby boomers] (1) I am still 60 years old). Implicitly or explicitly, the new role given to the baby boomers in public discussions, a role which the boomers themselves take for granted, is a quest for a meaningful post-retirement life. Texts in the newspapers suggest that it is not until the time of retirement that the baby boomers finally achieve self-fulfilment. This is very much akin to idea of the Third Age (Laslett 1989), which highlights the potential of healthy and energetic retirees. Self-fulfilment, or self-realization, in retirement years is, however, achievable only when one has financial stability, such as a decent pension income. Though the articles typically regarded the baby boomers as affluent, some also dealt with their anxiety about livelihood and gave tips regarding everyday finance and asset management.

Contrary to the subjective construct of retirement explained previously, the second emerging theme in the work and retirement-related topic is the *macro influences and responses triggered by the impending retirement of the baby boomers*. First of all, this involves descriptions of societal, economic and financial influences, such as an increase in social security expenses, shrinking GDP due to a decrease in the labour force and in consumption, employment promotion among youth, and so forth. All these arguments anticipate what should happen in the near future and most of the discussions occurred only until the year 2007. The aim was to raise readers' awareness of how tremendous the impact will be on Japanese society when the boomers withdraw from the workforce. Despite many words of warning and much concern, there has not been any discussion of the actual results of the boomer retirement in a macro-economic sense.

The specific issue that both newspapers delineated was the imminent lack of a skilled workforce and the transfer of expertise and skills from the baby boomers to younger employees. Here, the boomers were depicted as having played a vital role in the economic development of Japan in every social sector from industry to education and public administration. Their high skills and expertise in manufacturing especially have been greatly appreciated over the decades in Japanese society. Thus, losing boomer engineers, most of whom are male, would mean a crisis for companies as well as for all of Japanese economy, which would then generate a need for handing down knowledge and techniques from the baby boomers to younger colleagues. The articles covered example stories of a particular company or industry that was suffering from the retirement of skilled boomers and striving to transfer expertise to younger workers. Narratives of the boomers themselves who engage in knowledge transfer were also highlighted:

Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, Ltd. has been organising technical courses in all of its factories since 2004.

In the air-conditioner manufacturing factory located in a suburb of Nagoya City, eight selected young employees are engaging exclusively in courses for a half year, being out of the production line. (...) The aim is for them to get a complete picture of operations.

Their teachers are employees from the baby boom generation.

Due to the long-lasting recession, the employment of new graduates has been restrained for years. Of the 400 full-time technical workers, those who are 50 years old and over occupy nearly 40 per cent [of positions].

'We were worried about the future of the factory after our retirement. The request that we have insisted on for many years has finally been realised', says Tetsuo Hirota (58), the plant foreman, who looks proud.

(...)

Skills equipped with rich experiences cannot be easily replaced by machine or instruction manual. (J6 Asahi 6.1.2006: (Editorial) Tomorrow for the baby boomers – It is a waste to get rid of their skills)

Handing down the skills, knowledge and experiences that the baby boomers accumulated throughout their long working careers has drawn the attention of researchers, too:

Takahiro Fujimoto, a professor in theory of technology and product management at the University of Tokyo, proposes that 'there are many baby boomers who know about the good flow of overall manufacturing, from designing to sales. It is an urgent task to educate them as "teachers". Large corporations should establish a teachers' school within the company.' (J7 Yomiuri 10.6.2008: [Persons-Works] Education for manufacturing – Handing down high-level skills to younger employees, Taku Iwasaki)

The newspaper texts, including the previous two extracts, recognise the magnitude of the baby boomers' contribution to the advancement of Japanese industries. This is far from socio-cultural constructions of the boomers as a problem (Phillipson et al. 2008; Bristow 2016) or seeing them as contenders backed by their selfish characteristics and strong sense of entitlement (Hudson

& Gonyea 2012), as identified in British and American studies. The newspapers *Yomiuri* and *Asahi* not only looked at the work done by boomers involved in manufacturing, but also those in the public sector. Despite the majority of the articles indicating the gender of the baby boomers as male, their female counterparts were not completely left out. Women were visible when the question was, for instance, about transferring educational expertise in schools from veteran teachers to younger colleagues.

Another aspect of the macro influence and responses to the impending boomer retirement has to do with relocation and housing. Although the issue includes several stories about individuals, most articles referred to initiatives taken by local municipalities to facilitate the expected move by retired boomers from urban cities to rural areas, including back to their hometowns. Reflecting the anticipation of societal change, the texts were again located mostly in the periods before and during early retirement.

Identifying distinct patterns in the category of ‘work, retirement and pension’ uncovered the third theme – *continuing work into the post-retirement period*. Surprisingly, the proportion of work-related passages exceeded that of retirement-related texts throughout the study period, though male baby boomers again predominated in the overall media discussions. The articles approached the theme from different angles. The most remarkable angle was, however, the extension of working life, or in other words, postponement of retirement. This ranged from the introduction of new legislation regarding raising the retirement age to either practices of postponing retirement at specific companies so as to ensure a continued labour force or to the decisions of individual boomers to continue working. The prolongation of work does not necessarily apply to the present working place where one has spent long years. Rather, a notable number of articles mentioned examples of boomers who had changed careers after retiring earlier from previous jobs or who had started their own business or a new activity following official retirement. New work could take many forms. It is usually related somewhat to the previous career, utilising accumulated experiences, expertise and networks, which is typically practiced among engineers. Yet, some people have moved into very different fields, such as engaging in agriculture, fishery work or establishing a restaurant. The central idea underlying the actions of these people is that working has been an integral part of their identity and continuing to work helps them maintain a high sense of value and purpose. For instance, a man who works part-time at a new workplace after a 40-year career elsewhere at a famous company noted the following:

‘This is a kind of “lifetime employment”. It is a learning to continue working until one’s end of life, and it will become a purpose in life.’ (J8 Yomiuri 11.6.2006: [Non-reserved seat] Utilising alumni human resources – Cherishing experiences and motivation, Takashi Hatano)

According to a survey conducted by the newspaper *Yomiuri* on baby boomers, three-fourths of working people responded, 'I want to work regardless of whether I am 60-plus years old' (**J9** *Yomiuri* 28.11.2006: [Note for today] Baby boomer teachers wanted, Akiya Taguchi). Extending working life is not often experienced in terms of economic need, but rather as leading to increased pleasure in life. The following paragraph from an article featuring the story about a retiree who works as an amateur tour conductor depicts quite well this idea:

'I could not imagine that now I have such wonderful new encounters and have expanded my own world, even though I am over 60 years old'. The daily wage is not high, but the possibility of new encounters extending endlessly in front of him is much more attractive. (**J10** *Asahi* 1.1.2007: [Navigation-Enjoying] Life experiences are not for nothing)

The strong attachment to work highlighted in the articles has an association with the 'quest for a meaningful post-retirement life' mentioned earlier under the theme *experiences and reality of retirement*. Given the stories featured in the newspapers, some baby boomers seem to have found meaningfulness by engaging in work during the post-retirement period. Their high level of motivation to work is not only driven by personal preferences or interests, but also satisfies a desire to contribute to society. Social contribution even includes working in developing countries, committing themselves to the industrial and economic advancement of the countries concerned.

The fourth and the last theme is *retiring/retired boomers as a resource for society*. This is a bridging theme that encompasses the previous themes. It is especially related closely to two themes, *macro influences and responses triggered by boomer retirement* and *continuation of work*. However, it still constitutes a discrete theme in its own right. The notion of the boomers as a social resource has several aspects. First, the baby boomers would become an inexpensive but high-quality labour force when they continue working as part-time workers after retirement. This is the economic viewpoint of industries facing the challenge of a declining workforce. Second, continuing work is appreciated in national fiscal terms, too, since the baby boomers remain as active taxpayers. The newspapers then drew attention to boomers' expertise and experiences that could be harnessed in various fields, from industries to activities on the community level. This discussion entails the idea that if the boomers' competence is fully utilised, it will help maintain and enhance social and economic vitality of Japan. Municipalities in rural areas also look forward to massive retirement and the economic possibilities it may bring. They expect that the relocation of wealthy, healthy and energetic boomers will contribute to revitalising the regions.

It is noteworthy that the implication of the baby boomers as a social resource has transformed over the course of time during the study period. The articles evaluated in the early phase of the study period tended to regard boomer retirement as an economic crisis, and they considered how to retain a workforce so that the skills and expertise of the baby boomers could be transferred to the younger generation. The essential point had to do with exploiting the rich careers of the boomers for economic purposes even during their retirement years. Here, the focus was mainly on male baby boomers who had a long working history with abundant experiences and knowledge. In contrast, later articles tended to be more optimistic regarding the prospects of boomers retiring but still actively engaging in certain activities, whether as paid or voluntary labour. Community activities and care and service works were especially highlighted in the texts. This indicates a social expectation for baby boomers to undertake a new role in society to help tackle such diverse problems as a low birth rate and ageing population. The idea of 'the boomers with a new role' applies to both genders, however, with women becoming more vocal and visible in articulating such changing contexts:

A woman (62) from Saitama prefecture started part-time work two years ago at a company that offers housekeeping services. Now she works three hours a day, four days a week. Her work includes visiting the homes of dual-earner households with duplicate keys and doing cleaning or supporting housewives who suffer from menopause and complaining that 'I feel depressed'.

(...)

She had an increasing desire to connect with society through working after her children had become independent. She jumped into the work of housekeeping services, to which her abilities seemed to be useful. 'My retired husband cheers me on, and I am happy to have a feeling of self-worth in life. I would like to continue working in a professional capacity as long as my body continues to function.' (J11 Asahi 20.3.2010: (Designing one's life) How to continue 'active working': 11 Working – Serving the same company until 65 years old, Misako Takahashi)

The passage is a good example of discovering the latent competency of women to be useful and available for addressing the emerging challenges in the society. Socialisation and the commodification of household work have taken on the role of positive traits and competences for women. However, an overtone of latent capability remains in such discussions, as housekeeping in Japan has long been kept within the domestic sphere with a lack of societal value. Furthermore, the following excerpt epitomises the gendered

significance of viewing the baby boomers as a social resource, focusing on the new roles being assumed by women:

The 'generation of those around their sixties' who are approximately 'the baby boomers' are willing to work. While about 650,000 men aged 60–64 years old are looking for employment, female account for as many as 590,000 potential workers.

Even though female baby boomers, with an approximately 10 per cent college enrolment rate, had gotten employment, the majority of them became housewives after getting married or engaging in childbirth. This is the reason why they were called 'mole women'.

However, when they finished child-rearing duties, a sea of them emerged from 'underground' and started working part-time. They are dreaming of gender equality and equal opportunity due to the liberal democratic education they received. Their motivation to work does not diminish, and the companies are attempting to utilise this desire. (J12 Asahi 10.1.2009: (be report) Baby boom women shine by working – The reason why those 'around their sixties' are wanted, Tatsurō Hoshina)

Whether or not the texts of the newspaper articles shed light on men or women in developing discussions, the themes of *continuing work into the post-retirement period* and *retiring/retired boomers as a social resource* in particular embrace the concept of productive ageing (Butler & Schechter 1995; Bass & Caro 2001; Hinterlong, Morrow-Howell & Sherraden 2001; Gale 2012). The newspapers view working baby boomers as smart and productive assets, while recognising their economic usefulness (Gale 2012). Throughout the years of media debate surrounding the work and impending retirement of the baby boomers, a strong image of the boomers has been constructed: they are the older adults who contribute to society and the well-being of others and themselves through engaging in meaningful actions (Hinterlong et al. 2001).

9.1.2 FINNISH BABY BOOMERS IN THE CONTEXT OF WORK AND RETIREMENT

Exploring specific patterns of 77 editorials in the *Helsingin Sanomat* that covered the topic '**work, retirement and pension**' revealed three motifs: *impact of boomer retirement on the labour market*, *attitudes toward work among older workers* and *different characteristics of retirees and their lifestyles*. Every theme had its own essential components. Figure 10 exhibits a thematic map created through analysing the data.

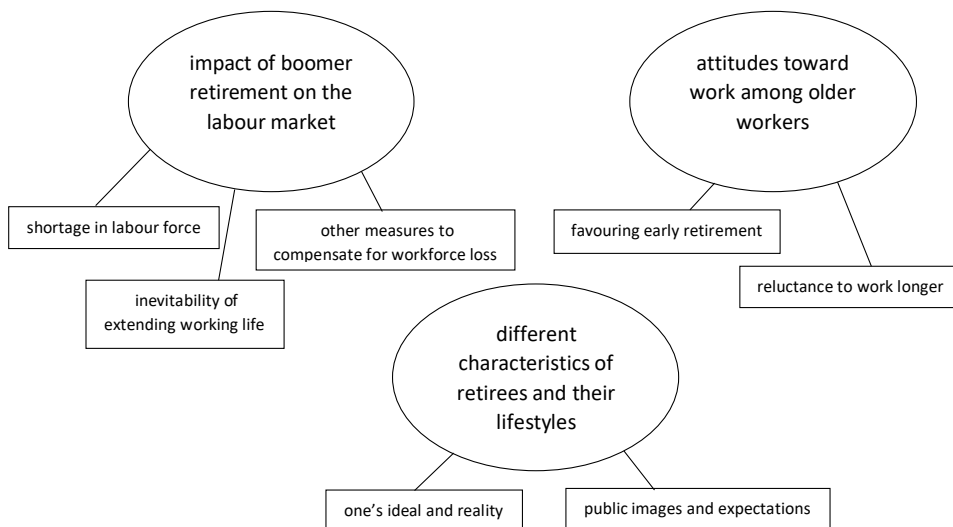


Figure 10. Thematic map of the topic ‘work, retirement and pension’ in the Finnish data.

The majority of the data related to the topic ‘work, retirement and pension’ included the first theme, *impact of boomer retirement on the labour market*. The theme has multiple aspects due to the wide range of newspaper discussions. The predominantly pronounced and oft-repeated statement in the articles is that Finland will experience a serious shortage in the labour force in the near future. Two distinct patterns can be observed in the text formulation about shortage in the labour force. The first pattern, just as next passage shows, clearly addresses the fact that the retirement of the baby boomers will bring about a workforce shortage:

The expected escalating labour force shortage is related to the beginning retirement of the baby boomers. (F1 14.4.2003: Threat and need of a foreign labour force)

Another type of text style emphasises the fact that workforce deficiency is not only caused by the retirement of the baby boomers, but is also prompted by less people entering the labour market. The editorials described in different ways the imbalance between pensioners and working-age people resulting from the boomer retirement and its problem for the labour market. For instance, the next extract from one article appeals to readers to prepared for radical social change by presenting concrete numbers:

During the period between 2010 and 2020, the population structure will transform more profoundly than ever before. It originates from the fact that the baby boomers born in the late 1940s and 1950s are now leaving working life and the following age groups are smaller in number. Simultaneously, as the numbers of working-age people diminishes, the number of pensioners continues to grow powerfully. By the year 2020, the number of those who turn 75 years old will increase by nearly 40 per cent: from the current 350,000 to fully 500,000 persons. (F2 4.11.2006: Expansion of EU creates challenges)

In a similar way, the following passage emphasises that the difference in size between retiring baby boomers and younger age groups is the main factor for a shortage in the labour force:

The gloomy prediction for Finland is grounded in the distortion of the population structure. The baby boomers will retire in the next few years, whether the retirement age is 63 or 65 years old. The following age groups are much smaller, and there are not nearly enough people to fill all the current working places. (F3 7.3.2009: A Finn works diligently, Marjut Lindberg)

Then, the texts continue in the following manner, even taking the tone of accusing the baby boomers for their past reproductive behaviour, or lack thereof, which can be regarded as the main reason for a smaller labour force.

The distortion is partly what has been caused by the baby boomers themselves. When those born in the late 1940s grew to reproductive age, they did not want their kids to have large numbers of siblings, like the families in which they themselves had grown up. The fertility rate was the smallest so far in the year 1975: only every second woman gave birth to two children. (F4 7.3.2009: A Finn works diligently, Marjut Lindberg)

Associating the retirement of the baby boomers with the impending shortage in the labour force is most noteworthy in the texts of articles published during early retirement (phase II). In the earliest stage, the newspaper articles tended to express a vague sense of anxiety regarding the future workforce shortage. The tone of the articles changed in phase II to describing an obvious concern over the negative impact on the labour market and public finance. The approaching as well as ongoing retirement of the boomers can be a rationale for the change in wording, in which the discussions showed more of an awareness of the possible consequences of drastic demographic change. Correspondingly, in the last phase of the studied period, characterised by the normal retirement of the baby boomers (phase III),

statements in the articles started to take new forms. Significantly, they began to mention the advantage of youth in the recruitment process when employers look for a competent and educated workforce to replace the retiring baby boomers. Just like many other texts in the previous phases, the expressions in the newspaper about the advantages of youth denoted an anticipated future that was not much based on facts or evidence.

The shortage in the labour force resulting from the retirement of the baby boomers was contextualised in the newspaper mainly in two ways. One way was to exemplify the problem by focusing on occupations in particular fields of industry. Teachers, registered nurses and care workers were typically described as threatened occupations due to the workforce shortfall. Selecting certain professions familiar to the everyday life of lay people likely mirrored the intension of *Helsingin Sanomat* to raise readers' awareness of the issue. The other way, which appeared more frequently, was to describe the shortage in the labour force as a serious difficulty experienced in the labour market in general as well as by the entire Finnish national economy.

Discussing the topic of workforce shortage led to an argument about the importance of prolonging working life among Finnish citizens. The inevitability of extending working life is indeed the second important issue addressed under the theme *impact of boomer retirement on the labour market*. Analysing diverse texts about the need for prolonging working life revealed two styles of newspaper reports. The first trend regarded the extension of working years as a self-evident answer to addressing workforce shortage. On the other hand, the second group of texts considered measures for how to add more years to working life.

The data revealed notable changes in the intensions and connotations of phrases exclusively highlighting the need to extend working life over the course of the study period. The years preceding and during the early retirement of the baby boomers were characterised by the assertion that people should work longer and postpone their retirement by a couple of years compared to present retirees. The following quote implies that older workers can serve as a reserve workforce to supplement the decreasing numbers of younger workers:

In any case, efforts to keep people in work until the official retirement age have to continue and increase. When the eldest of the baby boomers turn 55 years old this year, proportion of those who are over 55 years old in relation to the general population will start to grow steeply.

Over the last five years, the amount of 25-49 year olds, who are most in demand in the labour markets, decreased by nearly 150,000 persons, whereas the number of people aged 50-64 grew by 170,000. The numbers show where the available labour force can be found. (F5 5.8.2000: Nice turn in pension bomb threat)

As the aforementioned extract demonstrates, the newspaper reports frequently referred to the baby boomers when they attempted to convey a message about the need for extending working life. Here, the baby boomers can be interpreted as a symbol of older employees who have the potential for benefitting all society; postponing their retirement age can contribute to coping with the challenges of workforce shortfall. In the next paragraph, extracted from one article, expectations about the boomers became even more intensified, indicating their valuable experiences and knowledge. Even though the idea of productive ageing is not as evident as in Japanese newspapers, social expectations toward the potential contributions and benefits of the baby boomers are certainly discernible:

Finns have to extend their careers from recent years in order to avoid severe economic hardships. The baby boomers and younger population can no longer retire at an average age of 59 years old because there are not enough young employees coming to replace them. Besides, those born immediately after the war might take abundant experience and knowledge away with them, which should be transferred as capital for working places and young employees. (F6 17.2.2003: Dissimilarity between people should be utilised in working life)

The frequent reference to boomers when discussing the extension of working years faded during the period of normal retirement. Instead, what emerged in this particular phase was a debate at the general level about prolonging working life and the increase in the employment rate. The ongoing withdrawal from working life by baby boomers seemed to affect a change in the focal point of the newspaper discussions.

As explained earlier, the editorials in *Helsingin Sanomat* also dealt with possible measures for extending working life. Improving the working environment and pension reform were main measures considered in the articles as a response to the question of how the working life of Finnish citizens can be extended. In articulating the arguments, the baby boomers frequently served as metaphor for indicating the importance of staying in the workplace and coping with the workload, just as the following sentences from two different editorials note:

We can survive the retirement of the baby boomers and expected workforce shortage only when managing to let people be able and willing to work at least two or three years longer than at present day. Working life has to be developed to enhance the productivity of work as well as the wellbeing of personnel, which indeed are dependent on each other. (F7 24.3.2002: Age programme had influence, but work has to be continued)

Improving working conditions must be continued. It is known that a poor atmosphere increases sick leaves in a significant way. Employees in the municipal sector perceive their work as strenuous more frequently than others do, but when measuring absences, working places in the private sector are also already showing symptoms. When enhancing the atmosphere and coping skills, we have to consider whether each employee is in the right place and in the proper task for his/her own strength. It is vitally important so that the baby boomers could cope with work longer than their predecessors. (F8 16.5.2003: Sick leaves are still increasing)

The issue of pension reform, which is another way to address the extension of working years, was a topic of diverse discussion in the newspaper. These discussions included detailed explanations about amendments to the legislation, such as postponing retirement age and closing down different channels to early retirement, aims at revisions and disputes between relevant parties over the nature of pension reform. However, the essence of the various media discussions is crystallised in the next excerpt. Here, the argument develops concisely by mentioning the problem, what should be done to solve the problem and how to achieve resolution in terms of the impact of the retirement of the baby boomers:

Developments in the demographic structure and proportions between working age and retired population will become unsustainable from the viewpoint of the national economy if the baby boomers retire, on average, under 60 years of age, just as is currently occurring. Only one out of ten persons continues to work until the official retirement age of 65 years old.

The problem has been recognised and lengthy discussion about the issue have taken place. People should stay in working life two or three years longer, namely until 61-62 years old, on average. The purpose does not seem to be unreasonable, but achieving it is difficult from experts' perspectives. Significant changes in people's attitudes and in the atmosphere of working places should be necessary; entry into retirement should be hindered and staying in working life should be rewarded with more remuneration than is currently the case. (F9 7.10.2001: The pension reform requires concrete proposals and not just endless talk)

There remains one more aspect to the theme *impact of boomer retirement on the labour market*. It signifies other possible measures to compensate for the loss of those in the workforce. Introducing work-related immigration was the most often mentioned way to combat the loss of workers in this sense.

Furthermore, discussion about increasing the employment rate was somewhat visible, which covered not only activating the unemployed but also the inclusion of those who can only work part-time in working life. Regardless of its minor appearance in relation to the total number of articles, one notable measure for compensating for workforce loss was the idea of respecting the experiences and skills of older employees and transferring them to younger generations. As the next extract demonstrates, this is a kind of a political attempt to combat public perceptions of undervaluing older adults. Ageism, which drives older adults away from working life, was evident when exploring the subject of 'ageing, health and care', which is explained later in more detail. In a somewhat contradictory manner, the following texts imply that the shortage in the labour force is so serious that there should no longer be any room for Finish society to let ageism prevail:

Along with many other important matters, the successful management of different age groups and transferring experiential knowledge to younger employees were discussed in a recent follow-up report on last year's implementation of a government programme about coping with work. According to it, it is not sufficient that differences between people are accepted, but rather it also should be utilised. Executives have to figure out the strengths of people from different ages, different genders and different ethnic origins or otherwise with individual traits that benefit society and weaknesses that can be fixed. (F10 17.2.2003: Dissimilarity between people should be utilised in working life)

In the meantime, reports in the newspaper depicted the practices of lay people that are targets of various national efforts for prolonging working life. *Attitudes toward work among older workers* is the second theme uncovered through analysing the data on 'work, retirement and pension'. While the previous theme, *impact of boomer retirement on the labour market*, unfolds from a broad viewpoint, the focus of the present theme is mainly on people, not on policy measures or on legislation.

What are the attitudes of baby boomers and older workers in Finland standing on the threshold of retirement about working? Their practices and preferences, as described predominantly in the newspaper articles, concentrated on early retirement. The popularity of early retirement was implied in different ways with a variety of words and phrases. Moreover, the mainstream attitude of favouring early retirement was persistent in newspaper reports throughout the study period. The next two quotes portray how older workers are inclined to retire earlier and are looking forward to their post-retirement days:

According to many surveys, citizens would not like to postpone retirement. On the contrary, it seems that people retire earlier

than before, and in most cases immediately after turning 63 years old, which the current law enables.

75 per cent of 55-60 year old people are currently in working life; only 30 per cent of those aged 60-65 are working. (F11 16.4.2005: Threatening workforce shortage endangers economic growth, Timo K. Savaspuro)

On the occasions that two or more Finns in their sixties encounter one another, the topic of conversation is definite: it is about retirement. Some people in their sixties are longing for different kinds of early old-age pensions and some employers actually push them into these pensions. (...) (F12 7.3.2009: A Finn works diligently, Marjut Lindberg)

One article stated quite clearly that ‘the characteristic in Finnish working life is the scant participation of older people in working life’ (F13 10.6.2001: Ageing creates tax trap, Janne Virkkunen). This idea was further explored in other article invoking the customs practiced in neighbouring countries as contrasting examples:

Finns are accused harshly of the fact that only a few people work until official retirement age. As role models, a Swedish nurse or Icelandic driver, who are over 70 years old, are sometimes highlighted. (F14 7.3.2009: A Finn works diligently, Marjut Lindberg)

Nevertheless, in reality the participation of older adults in the workforce has increased substantially. According to a report by the Finnish Centre for Pensions, particularly powerful growth in the employment rate has occurred in the age groups 55–59 and 60–64 since the end of the 1990s (Kannisto 2017). The employment rate of people aged 55–59 exceeded that of the whole population in 2009, increasing to 75.6 per cent by 2016. Likewise, the employment rate of people aged 60–64 has increased briskly throughout the 2000s, achieving a record high of 47.4 per cent in 2016. Increasing involvement in working life among older adults appears also in the statistics on effective retirement age. The average effective retirement age during the examination period of this study (2000–2015) increased by three years from 57.5 years old to 60.7 years old (Statistical Database of the Finnish Centre for Pensions 2019). The corresponding values of the expected effective retirement age, an indicator unaffected by the demographic age structure (Kannisto 2019), are 58.8 and 61.1, respectively. However, despite the increase in both indicators the effective retirement age in Finland is still well below the earliest age of eligibility for normal old-age pension, in the case of the boomers 63 years old.

Meanwhile, *Helsingin Sanomat* paid attention to the growing popularity of receiving a part-time pension among older employees. The following extract

from one paragraph delineates the way in which people behave rationally as well as strategically during the period in which they approach retirement.

The aim of a part-time pension was to let people stay longer in working life; however, the system has also encouraged many healthy people to step aside from their full-time job, as the received pension does not become worse. Citizens are fully entitled to utilise the opportunities offered to them. (...) (F15 7.10.2001: The pension reform requires concrete proposals and not just endless talk)

Under the surface of these texts, there exists a latent idea that seems to steer the actions of people in terms of work and retirement. This particular idea can be called a reluctance to work longer years at a full workload. The part-time pension system is supposed to intensify people's desire to withdraw from full-time work at an earlier stage, because the 'final pension and the money paid out do not decrease so much, but the workload can be reduced by half (F16 20.5.2000: Working condition should be improved immediately). Various descriptions in the newspaper about the popularity of early retirement as well as a preference for receiving a part-time pension vividly illustrate how people's behaviours do not always coincide with Finnish national policy, which aims to extend working life as a means to address the shortage in labour force.

The retirement behaviours of the baby boomers was also an issue of concern in the articles that considered people's attitude toward work. The following excerpt about the pessimistic views on boomers' retirement contradicts the expressed expectation for them previously discussed in relation to extending working life:

Over the past several years, an active attempt to hinder developments has occurred. The baby boomers are on their way to an early retirement age, and nothing suggests that this generation would agree to stay longer in working life than previous age groups did unless channels to retirement are blocked and working life is made more attractive. Why does a worker a little over fifty years old stress her/himself with working when s/he has a chance to retire early, and incomes do not crucially decrease? (F17 7.7.2002: Pension reform should be speeded up)

As the above text indicates, the article predicted that the behavioural patterns of the baby boomers would hardly deviate from those of previous birth cohorts, who had favoured early retirement. However, the authors of the different editorials in the same newspaper expected that postponing retirement and retaining a workforce of baby boomers would serve to supplement the decreasing number of younger workers. The contrast between the two reporting styles represents ambivalent features about how the Finnish baby boomers are portrayed in public discussions.

As the editorial written in the year 2002 anticipated, pension reform did take place in 2005. A major aim of the reform was to delay the effective retirement age by 2–3 years by curtailing the range of pension options available and streamlining pension systems (Kannisto 2019). The key legislative amendments implemented in connection with the 2005 pension reform were as follows: (1) old-age pension may be drawn flexibly between ages 63 and 68 and (2) persons born after 1949 are no longer eligible for an unemployment pension.

The exploration of diverse texts including the theme *attitudes toward work among older workers* revealed the reasons behind the popularity of early retirement and reluctance to work longer years. The rationale for the behaviours and attitudes of people facing retirement can be organised into two categories. The first reason is that people tend to regard the workload as too strenuous, or perceived their health as not being good enough to continue working. Second, dissatisfaction with work can be another reason for dreaming about a pension. These causal reasons for the withdrawal from working life is well described in the next narrative:

Improving working conditions is also understood as inevitable in the future strategy. A healthy and qualified person begins to dream of whole-day hobbies if the work requirements become unreasonable and possibilities to influence it decrease, just like what has happened for the last few years. Managers and superiors have to be able to calculate the right amount of personnel and organise work well so that haste does not become intolerable.

Days of being retired soon start to attract an employee, who can never feel a sense of fulfilment when leaving the workplace for home. Managers have been trained more to encourage people to continue making greater efforts than to realise when the employee is sacrificing her/his own health. (F18 17.4.2001: New measures and attitudes for staying in working life)

The popularity of early retirement and reluctance to work longer years described in the newspaper reports far exceeded instances in which they used words and phrases that suggested a positive stance by older workers to continuing to work. Only four articles involved discussions about a desire to stay longer at work among older adults or positive developments in the number of older workers. The number is amazingly small given the fact that the concept of active ageing, which also covers the idea of extending working life, has prevailed for a couple of decades in developed countries, especially in a European context, together with the ageing of the population (WHO 2002; Walker 2002; Foster & Walker 2015). Instead of depicting older adults who feel a sense of meaningfulness and satisfaction by working, what regularly appeared in the editorials of *Helsingin Sanomat* were older workers who had suffered mentally or physically from heavy duties and perceived themselves as being discontented with work. Repeated text representations about a longing

for retirement and propensity for avoiding a strenuous workload stand in striking contrast to the Japanese media discussions, in which older adults who are eager to work are visible, whether by postponing retirement, by utilising their own skills and experiences, or discovering a latent competency.

The last theme identified from the articles relevant to the topic of 'work, retirement and pension' describes *different characteristics of retirees and their lifestyles*. While the first theme comprehends the retirement of the baby boomers from a macro perspective and the second theme casts a spotlight on the attitudes of people, the third theme has mixed viewpoints: one has to do with people's subjective experiences concerning the ideals and reality of post-retirement life and another with public images and social expectations for new retirees.

The number of articles and texts involving the theme *different characteristics of retirees and their lifestyles* was less than the number related to the previous two themes. However, it is worth mentioning that the majority of relevant articles were published in the period of normal retirement of the baby boomers (phase III). This can be understood as suggesting that ongoing retirement generated new topical discussions in the newspaper.

In delineating one's expectations of and the reality of retirement, the newspaper started by describing the people born in the 1940s who dream of moving to the countryside after retirement or else reported on the desirable amount of pension for current and future retirees to lead a decent life. However, a difference between the ideals and the reality exists, and it is explained persuasively as follows:

The desire for sufficient living standards in retirement years and the opportunity to do whatever one wants remain far from the reality for a large number of people who are approaching retirement. There already exists an enormous gap between the amount of earned pension and that of a preferable one. (F19 27.2.2011: Desirable and received pension are distant from each other, Marjut Lindberg)

Discussing a gap between the ideals and the reality of retirement in terms of pension amount involved notions of men's advantage over women. This is the only instance in which gender difference was highlighted in all the newspaper articles covering the topic of 'work, retirement and pension'. Given the general trend of Finnish editorials, in which gender perspective is not apparent when discussing work and retirement, the next citation especially highlights a potential disadvantage faced by women:

A report by the Finnish Centre for Pensions shows that inequality between women and men stands out when pensioners are divided into income quintiles. One third of women belong to the group who receive no more than 1,100 euros of pension per month. Correspondingly, well over one fourth of men belong to the quintile in which one gets the best

pension, over 2,355 euros per month. (F20 27.2.2011: Desirable and received pension are distant from each other, Marjut Lindberg)

The distance between the dream and reality of retirement, however, does not necessarily mean a downturn in living standards. The next excerpt describes that retirement does not dramatically change one's lifestyle, but rather that life continues much as before:

Although people in their working life plan to be active and find new hobbies in post-retirement life, following the principle of 'eventually', the survey of the periodical shows that life does not actually change so much in retirement. Reading and outdoor activities remain the most favourite hobbies. An excursion to somewhere in the home country is taken every two months and traveling abroad a couple of times in a year. (F21 27.2.2011: Desirable and received pension are distant from each other, Marjut Lindberg)

Meanwhile, various words and expressions that herald an anticipation by retirees to engage in volunteer activities are most visible in the accounts of texts denoting public images and expectations for new retirees. In describing people's expectations for young retirees, the newspaper paid attention to the baby boomers, too, who were about to leave working life. The subsequent extract from one article typically notes a great expectation regarding possible retirement behaviours of the baby boomers. The texts see the baby boomers as a potential power or hidden social resource, and they suggest that utilising this latent force will likely benefit other people as well as increase the self-esteem of the boomers themselves.

Men and women born in the post-war era, who are healthier than previous generations, can still offer a lot of joy and benefits as pensioners, too.

Healthy people who just left working life have to be considered as reserve manpower, who have a lot to give to others and simultaneously have an opportunity to feel themselves important. They are likely to become a significant new resource for voluntary work, of which demand is growing all the time faster than supply. Requests for helping the elderly are coming more frequently than volunteer centres are able to provide. Sub-grandpas and -grandmas are longed for in families with small children lacking their own grandparents. (F22 28.2.2002: Spare force of volunteers)

The intention of the texts was to make readers, including the baby boomers, more aware of social concerns and expectations regarding the boomers. The article conveyed the message that instead of being disappointed with the gap between the ideal and reality of retirement, or just living an unchanged life, the baby boomers should adopt new roles according to the wishers of society. The newspaper raised the issue during the early retirement of the baby boomers, as the media discussions then tended to have a strong influence on the people just retiring or approaching retirement. Although not as obvious in Japanese newspaper portrayals that accentuated the utilitarian view of the boomers, these texts in Finnish newspapers also involved the idea of productive ageing. Productive ageing in this context refers to the broader conceptualisation, which includes the capacity to engage in voluntary activities and assist with the family (Butler & Schechter 1995) or else a focus on inner-directed and personally meaningful behaviours (Kaye, Butler & Webster 2003).

Over time, the issue of baby boomers as young pensioners started to emerge in the newspaper. The descriptions in the articles frequently combined the reality of retired boomers with social images of them created through textual articulations. The following is an example of how public discussions captured the baby boomers then enjoying a post-retirement life:

The structures of Finnish society are currently changing radically. However, contrary to many previous phases, the people belonging to the baby boom generation are now in supporting roles. They are no longer carers of their parents nor sponsors of their children, yet they themselves do not need significant financial or care support from close relatives.

It can be said that the ideal of a welfare society is actualised here: the representatives of the baby boomers have mainly completed their roles in working life and can now enjoy their own lives in healthy and quite stable conditions. In politics, their status as voters is still essential. There are a great many of them, and they are active.

One's own life stage is often reflected also in voting behaviours. A couple of years later, when other parts of Finland are in the midst of a turning point, a mass of young pensioners living a stable life and being free from responsibilities will go to the polls. (F23 31.10.2013: The baby boomers are now on a plateau)

The passages above suggest that the lives of many baby boomers currently embody the concept of the Third Age (Laslett 1989), and it is supposed to continue for some time. Regardless of mentioning supporting roles, the tone of the article suggests that with their number and activeness, the baby boomers will maintain their power in society as retirees.

9.1.3 COMPARISON OF JAPANESE AND FINNISH DATA

Analysis of the topic of **'work, retirement and pension'** in Japanese and Finnish newspaper articles revealed a similarity between the two data sets in the sense that the themes are formulated on three levels: macro level, attitudinal and behavioural level as to working, and subjective or objective perceptions about retirement. However, the two data sets also contrasted in the ways in which they discussed baby boomers, their prospective retirement and the looming labour shortage.

It is apparent that both the Japanese and Finnish newspapers shared a concern over the prospective shortage of workers in the labour force due to the large-scale retirement of the baby boomers, and they paid keen attention to the boomers' behaviours in terms of work and retirement. Hence, extending the working life of the baby boomers and successive birth cohorts was a key issue for newspaper discussions in both countries. Nevertheless, the Japanese debates centred around the postponement of retirement beyond the age of eligibility for an old-age pension or continuing (part-time) work after retirement. The focal point in the articles was how to utilise the rich experiences and skills of the baby boomers, with the aim, among other things, of handing down knowledge and expertise from the boomers to younger employees so as to maintain Japanese economic vitality. On the other hand, the point of focus in the Finnish media discussions was on delaying the effective retirement age so that it is closer to the legislative age for collecting a normal old-age pension. Thus, the Finnish debates surrounding the retirement of the baby boomers and its potential impact on the labour market focused in general on ways to curtail practices of early retirement.

The discrepancy in treating the same issue from different points of emphasis can be explained in light of statistics by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) regarding the average effective age of retirement versus normal retirement age (OECD 2019). According to the data for 2012–2017, the average effective age of retirement in Finland was 63.8 years old for men and 63.1 years old for women, whereas in Japan it was 70.6 years old for men and 69.3 years old for women. For both countries, the normal retirement age was 65 years old.¹³ Irrespective of increased labour force participation among the older adults in Finland since 2000 (men: 60.2 years old, women: 59.8 years old), the effective age of retirement is still well below the normal age for receiving a full old-age pension. The corresponding numbers in Japan for the year 2000 was 70.1 years old for men and 66.2 years old for women. These numbers indicate the different degrees of labour force participation among older adults in Japan and in Finland. While in Finland people generally retire earlier than normal retirement age, in Japan withdrawal from working life is usually experienced later than normal.

The different figures regarding the average effective age of retirement as well as the different emphases in media discussions about extending working life can be grounds for understanding why Japanese newspapers and Finnish

¹³ According to the OECD, normal retirement age is the age at which an individual can retire without any reduction in their pension, after having had a full career from age 20. Strictly speaking, the normal retirement age in Finland varies between 63 and 68 years old. However, for simplicity sake, the OECD assumes 65 years old as the normal retirement age.

newspaper illustrated people's motivation for work quite differently. While Japanese newspapers repeatedly reported on boomer men and women who were willing to work and continue to have a 'role' in society, what was visible in the discussions in Finnish editorials was that people were reluctant to work longer years, but instead favoured early retirement. The contrasting styles of articulating the relationship between retirement and working crystallised into shaping distinct themes in media discussions in the respective countries: *continuing work into the post-retirement period* for Japan and *(negative) attitudes toward work among older workers* for Finland.

Another issue demonstrating the distinction between Japan and Finland regarding work and retirement of baby boomers is how the genders are represented in newspaper discussions. Since Japanese baby boomer men and women have established different life courses in terms of both family and work roles, retirement as well as continuing to work during the post-retirement years have different implications for men and women. This dissimilarity between genders was well reflected in the newspaper discussions. Clearly gendered spheres originated from a family model of the male breadwinner and female homemaker, which the newspapers then reported in terms of men being anxious about losing a working place to which they felt strong attachment and sense of identity and women's stress about spending more time with their husbands. In discussing the extension of working life, the idea of utilising skills and experiences accumulated over long years of work applied principally to men. On the other hand, women had a substantial presence in the stories on community activities and care and service work. These stories highlighted women's latent competencies as being potentially useful for addressing the challenges in contemporary society.

Unlike the Japanese media discussions, gender difference was seldom evident in the articles in the Finnish newspaper on the topic of 'work, retirement and pension'. This can be regarded as a corollary of practices in Finland where men and women take part almost equally in the labour market. Retirement and ageing in Finland are not as gendered as in Japan, which can lead to the invisibility of gender in newspaper discussions. However, the reality of work circumstances, harmonising working life and family life, and implications of retirement are different for men and women. In the editorials, which tended to deal with particular topics in a generalised manner, older workers and retirees, represented figuratively by the baby boomers, were likely to appear as an aggregation of people who had spent their time in standard Finnish working life. Hence, the standardisation of the baby boomers may have hindered the newspaper articles from expressing subtle nuances and connotations associated with different genders.

9.2 AGEING, HEALTH AND CARE

9.2.1 JAPANESE BABY BOOMERS IN THE CONTEXT OF AGEING AND CARE

Analysis of 145 articles that included the topic ‘ageing, health and care’ revealed four themes ranging from macro-level issues to individual experiences: *social impacts arising from ageing of the baby boomers*, *healthy lifestyle*, *health problems and care*, and *ageing experiences*. Figure 11 provides an overview of the four themes with several essential elements.

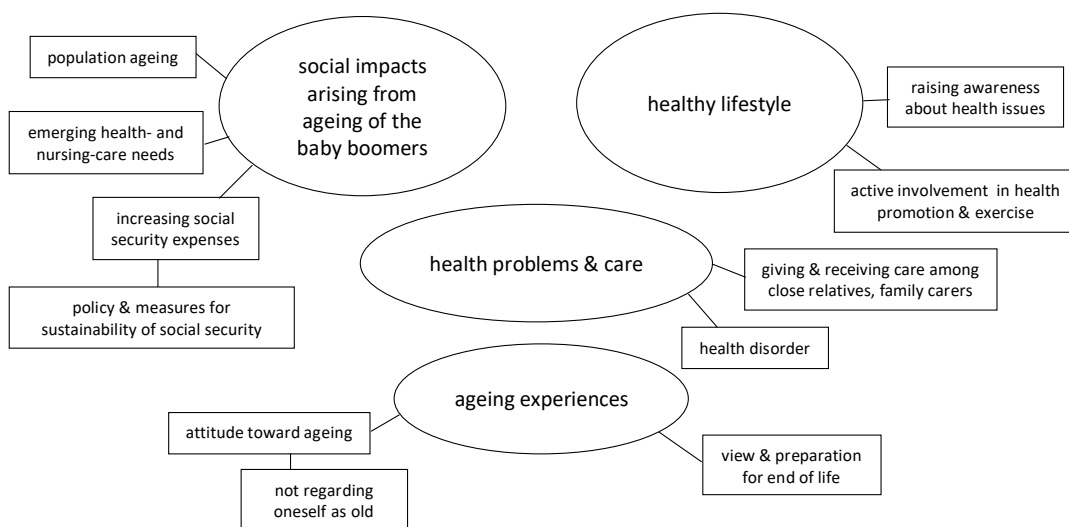


Figure 11. Thematic map of the topic ‘ageing, health and care’ in the Japanese data.

The first and most prominent theme, *social impacts arising from ageing of the baby boomers*, primarily emphasises population ageing. The recurring phrasing in the two newspapers is such that Japanese society is ageing at an unprecedentedly rapid pace, and the baby boomers are the foremost factor in the transformation of the population structure. The newspapers not only discussed how fast the population is ageing, but also focused on the unique aspects of the ageing of the population that have never occurred before and that will be engendered by characteristics of the baby boomers. The first of them is that the old-old population will exceed the young-old population in overall size in the near future due to the advancing age of huge numbers of boomers. Another distinguishing feature is that the population will age more

rapidly in urban areas, especially in the metropolitan areas of Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya, where the baby boomers moved in their youth and will continue to stay in their old age.

Population ageing with a growing proportion of old-old persons among the elderly, as accentuated in urban cities, will present serious challenges to society. The newspapers exhibited concerns over emerging health- and nursing-care needs anticipated in the coming years. Sample texts touched on themes like the deficiency of nursing-care facilities and professional care staff caused by the ageing population, an increasing number of people with dementia and care needs, and the high likelihood of older people turning to public care services in urban areas due to the weaker family ties. The articles then emphasised just what is meant by growing care needs – increasing social expenditures, particularly in medical and nursing care. Both newspapers introduced government cost estimates for social security programmes, which will be difficult to achieve without raising the tax rate and insurance premiums. The wording attempted to remind readers of the impending social crisis created by population ageing. The tone of the articles, thus, tended to take on the characteristics of apocalyptic or alarmist demography (Katz 1992; Robertson 1997; Gee 2002; Rauhut 2010), emphasising catastrophic demographic projections and reinforcing a sense of fear about the ageing of the population. However, the two newspapers also discussed concrete government policy measures for maintaining the sustainability of the social security system, followed by presenting the particular standpoint of each paper. The next argument is the solution proposed by the newspaper *Asahi*:

Population will age rapidly during the 25 years when the baby boomers enter their 80s. The challenge to be addressed is how to cover the increasing social security expenses while improving at the same time the stability of public finance, which currently has a huge debt.

This is a difficult task, but the solution is ‘sustainable economic growth’. With sustainable economic growth, the following positive cycle will result: economic development -> increase in company profits and salary -> growing tax income and insurance premium payments -> being able to maintain quality of social and health services will minimise the share of cost increases and enhance the fiscal balance.

What is then the prerequisite for economic growth? Its main elements are the number of persons in the labour force and increasing productivity. In order to ensure a workforce when the whole population diminishes, it is necessary to create an environment that favours women and older adults becoming involved in paid work. In order to enhance productivity, it is important to improve the quality of the whole labour force by ensuring equal opportunities for education and retraining and achieving technology development and efficient business management. (J13 Asahi 2.4.2006: (Time of choice — How

tomorrow will look due to the declining population – Introduction) Acceleration of demographic ageing combined with declining birth rate – Can we create a bright society?, Hiroyuki Ōta)

The editorial of the newspaper *Yomiuri* chose to address the same challenge in the following manner:

The baby boomers as a mass will withdraw from working life in the near future, and they are entering a period of old age in which they will be counting on social security benefits.

The upper part of the population pyramid is swelling at a rapid rate, whereas the much smaller group of younger cohorts are located on the base. Ageing of the population combined with the diminishing number of children is advancing year by year. The working-age population supporting the social security system will not be able to endure if the government tries to maintain the same benefit levels without reforming the current system, which is considerably dependent on the working-age generation.

Both the older and younger population should bear the cost of the social welfare system with wide-ranging but small contributions. By doing this, burden will be dispersed regardless of a population structure with more old people and less working-age people. (J14 Yomiuri 18.1.2009: [Editorial] Calling seriously for preparing a social security tax – It is time for addressing the problem in a bipartisan way)

The *Asahi* articles discuss economic growth, while the articles in *Yomiuri* see sharing costs among different generations as the key means of addressing the challenge. Though the point of emphasis is different between the two papers, both newspapers implicitly require some contributions from the baby boomers. This is relevant to the notion of baby boomers as a resource for society identified previously in the topic of ‘work, retirement and pension’. Society expects continuing active commitment from the boomers so that the national social security system will remain strong without any generational conflict. Just as the aforementioned extracts demonstrate, the theme *social impacts of the ageing of the baby boomers* does not particularly see the boomers as a burden to society or a social problem (Robertson 1997; Bristow 2016; Hudson & Gonyea 2012; Rozanova 2006), nor does it blame them for future costs arising from their prospective physical and cognitive decline (Fealy et al. 2012; Raozanova 2006). Rather, articles under this theme present the boomers as a metaphor for an ageing population that entails an inevitable reform of health- and nursing-care services and their expenses. Here, the baby boomers are depicted as a mass with non-gendered features.

Another interesting remark with respect to the theme is that the somewhat ambiguous phrasing regarding population ageing and its influence on society in the early phases became more concrete in form in the later periods. Articles in the last phase of the study period, i.e. the time during normal retirement, frequently mentioned that from the year 2025 onwards, when all members of the baby boom generation turn 75, health- and nursing-care needs will increase dramatically. This reflects a future scenario about an increasing old-old population inclined to rely on care services. What is notable is that the articles not only discussed the ageing of the baby boomers, but also started to focus on end of life care in general.

The second theme discovered in the category of 'ageing, health and care' is *healthy lifestyle*. This theme comprises two major components – one is active involvement in health promotion and exercise, and another is raising awareness about health issues. The articles depicting active involvement in health promotion and exercise included example stories of the boomers and older people who were taking special care of their health and who engaged quite often in exercise, mentioning especially the increasing membership of middle- and old-age people in fitness centres and reporting on the improving physical capacity among the current retired population. The baby boomers were often referenced as a symbol of healthy and energetic older adults who were helping transform the traditional image of old age. Both male and female baby boomers were equally visible in this regard.

Another group of texts including the theme *healthy lifestyle* appealed to the importance of keeping oneself healthy as long as possible by doing exercise and sports, having good eating habits, maintaining cognitive ability to prevent dementia, and so forth. The majority of the articles provided the readers with instructions on how to follow a healthy lifestyle. Though rarely making explicit references to gender, the context of the texts suggests that the baby boomers mainly refer to retired men who are facing a change in their daily lives after long years of working. The following fragments of texts typically indicate that the baby boomers in question are men, focusing particularly on their work-centred lives:

'The baby boom generation is at risk of developing dementia when they retire'.

Akikazu Takada (71), a scholar of cerebral physiology (professor emeritus at Hamamatsu University School of Medicine) raises the alarm. The majority of the baby boomers, who have had many contemporaries, are work-oriented and preoccupied with the promotion race. They are poor at finding a new purpose in life after retirement, and some are predicted to shut themselves up at home. (J15 Yomiuri 7.2.2007: [Creating vigorousness] Life of 90 years (2) – Let's do brain training first when you retire (serial))

The theme *healthy lifestyle* included a number of stories about individual baby boomers. However, the aim of the articles was to highlight population

health as a whole, paying particular attention to the health promotion of an ageing population represented by the baby boomers.

Exploring specific patterns in the topic 'ageing, health and care' revealed the third theme of focus – *health problems and care*. The number of texts relevant to this theme is not substantial, probably because the baby boomers have not yet been confronted with the concrete health problems associated with advancing age. However, the texts can easily be distinguished from the other themes. One identifiable cluster within the theme consists of reports on health disorders that retired or retiring baby boomers are exposed to. These disorders include depression, cognitive impairment and addiction to alcohol. The articles dealing with the subject either presented concrete examples of male boomers who suffered from such illnesses, or else it was discernible from the context that the texts referred mainly to men. The articles showed concern about the typical lifestyles of male baby boomers, namely working long hours and having few hobbies and/or little social interaction, which makes them vulnerable to recurring health problems.

The Japanese male baby boomers depicted explicitly or implicitly in discussions of health problems and the promotion of a healthy lifestyle support the recent scholarly observation that some groups of older men may experience disadvantages in later life (Arber, Davidson & Ginn 2003; Venn, Davidson & Arber 2011).

Giving and receiving care among close relatives and issues concerning family carers are other significant aspects constituting the theme *health problems and care*. Interestingly, all relevant texts in question appeared in the newspaper *Asahi*. In the early phases of the study period, the articles dealt with care for parents of the baby boomers, many of whom lived far from their children. Then as time went on, the discussion of care for the boomers themselves became more and more frequently evident. Some articles focused on spousal care, while other articles predicted that the children of the baby boomers would be forced to commit themselves to providing care due to the lack of care services. The change in discussions over the course of time reflected the ageing process of the baby boomers.

A notable topic discussed in the articles was that increasing numbers of men, including male baby boomers, are nowadays involved in caring for their wives or parents. According to the report, nearly one-third of family carers nowadays are men (Asahi 29.12.2008: (Training course for vocabulary) The generation of Dankai; Asahi 15.3.2009: (Towards a secured society – The time of choice: 8) On the spot care – Struggling men in caring, Hiromi Minami & Atsuko Ishii). The next excerpt from one article aptly describes how men confront the issue of providing care for their close relatives:

It used to be mainly a 'daughter-in-law' who supported an old person in need of care. Nowadays, however, also husbands and sons are becoming providers of care.

The reason behind this change is that households consisting of an older married couple alone (husband 65 years old or over, wife 60 years old or over) are increasing. (...)

In case the wife needs extensive care, the husband becomes a care provider. The only son takes care of his mother, with whom he lives. There are growing numbers of such cases.

According to research on male family carers in their thirties through their nineties, conducted in 2006 by Masatoshi Tsudome, a professor in community development at Ritsumeikan University, 53 per cent of 295 respondents lived alone with a person in need of care. Their answers portrayed a situation in which men are bewildered by unfamiliar domestic work, such as cooking and cleaning. Professor Tsudome considers 'men are more likely to confront difficulty than women are because they lack the skills for domestic work'.

Besides, the majority of men have an entrenched lifestyle centring on work, in which rationality and efficiency are pursued. Hence, they tend to bear stress and anxiousness by striving for achievement in care practices, too. (J16 Asahi 15.3.2009: (Towards a secured society – The time of choice: 8) On the spot care – Struggling men in caring, Hiromi Minami & Atsuko Ishii).

The excerpt highlights the extent to which the newspaper articles generally emphasised a change from the era when a daughter-in-law used to assume care responsibility within the family and demonstrated how men tend to face challenges when providing care due to a lack of previous experience with domestic work. The argument indicates that the baby boomers are the first generation undergoing such changes in the division of labour among family members and in roles of giving and receiving old-age care.

The final theme identified from the news stories is *ageing experiences*. Unlike the previous three themes, which approach the subject of ageing, health and care from macro or mezzo perspectives, the theme *ageing experiences* consists mostly of personal stories or substantially introspective texts that make readers contemplate the way of living in old age.

The articles written in the period of impending retirement dealt with issues of looking back at one's life and considering how to grow old. The majority of them included interviews with intellectuals belonging to the baby boom generation or articles written directly by the intellectuals or else consisted of essays by newspaper editors. While one article suggested that the baby boomers had to figure out how to manage life in old age simultaneously with addressing care needs for their parents, other texts emphasised the importance of a relaxed post-retirement daily life in which one could find happiness. Here, the discussion concluded by emphasising the need to accept one's own ageing despite having such a mixed situation. Nevertheless, the baby boomers' attitudes toward ageing included conflicting ideas, too, namely not regarding oneself as old. Indeed, the notion of anti-ageing or resisting old age was particularly observable in the periods during early retirement and before normal retirement. One striking example was a report on declining membership in senior citizens clubs:

According to Japan Federation of Senior Citizens Clubs (Zenrōren, Tokyo), approximately 130,000 senior citizens clubs at their peak had then decreased to 120,000 in 2009, and the number of total members declined from 8,900,000 to 7,400,000. During this period, the population aged 65 and over increased by 8,500,000, thus a loss of interest in clubs is obvious.

For various reasons, a significant change of stance can be detected among 'the baby boom generation', who are entering their 60s. The proportion of members in their sixties in relation to the entire membership dropped from 25 per cent in 1998 to 19 per cent in 2008. In contrast, members 70 years old and over have grown dramatically, counting 80 per cent in 2008. 'People do not join the club probably because they seem to feel uncomfortable being called aged or elderly' (Okayama Prefectural Federation of Senior Citizens Clubs).

A man (65) from Hyogo prefecture argues, 'I was frightened to get a notification of long-term care insurance, yesterday. I am still young, and I have never thought of becoming a member in a senior citizens club'. He spends his days being busy going to libraries and walking around the city. He also has blog friends across the country. 'I do not deny the need for the existence of the senior citizens clubs, but I feel unrelated to that world'. (J17 Asahi 17.9.2010: The baby boomers keep distance from senior citizens clubs – in one's sixties, 'I am still young' – 1,500,000 decrease in membership, Sonoko Miyazaki & Miki Morimoto)

Additionally, a female novelist in an interview article noted the following:

We, the baby boomers, will continue to live without abandoning our own lifestyle. We rarely care about how people of a particular age should behave. I still wear jeans and a miniskirt regardless of my age. We put more emphasis on individual characters and preferences rather than capturing things by age. So, I think it is favourable that we will live in the era of the ageless, not in 'the culture of dead-tree old people'. (J18 Asahi 26.6.2009: (A present from life) Novelist-Nobuko Takagi: 5) Getting rid of the culture of dead tree old people and letting 'gendered life expectancy' shine, Keiske Tanaka)

The contrasting texts between valuing peaceful old age in retreat and disfavouring a specific type of maturity to be reached along with age demonstrate ambivalent attitudes among the baby boomers toward ageing. The baby boomers have grown old just like former age groups. However, as the generation that created youth culture and other new trends, they are not necessarily satisfied with adapting themselves to the traditional image of the

elderly. It can also be inferred from the texts that the boomers might be in the process of transforming themselves into a new type of older adults.

The idea of anti-ageing and agelessness identified in Japanese newspapers in terms of the ageing experiences of the baby boomers share a similarity with findings from studies done in Western countries. Gale (2012: 51) argues that while the baby boomers are the first and will be the largest generation to be in a position to question and choose how they age, they have influenced the development of new social constructs that have made it acceptable to create distance from active participation in the natural process of ageing. The active avoidance of ageing has made the boomers view physical change or the loss of vitality as a negative. Meanwhile, a study on ageing identity among British first-wave baby boomers reveals a strategy of intergenerational 'downward blurring', by which the baby boomers blur the boundaries between themselves and younger adult generations (Biggs et al. 2007b: 56).

Even though the two Japanese newspapers have not yet established a unified image of ageing baby boomers, issues related to the end of life became apparent in later phases of the study period, especially during normal retirement. The discussion covered topics such as creating a testament, preparing for one's own funeral, considering how to spend the last moments of life in one's own way and end of life care at home. The underlying idea throughout the texts is the baby boomers' preference for individualism.

The articles dealing with the theme encapsulating *ageing experiences* did not focus on distinct gender differences. Most articles introduced stories of both men and women, or else the indication of gender was neutral in the entire context of the article. This might be related to the assumption that the ageing experiences of the baby boomers have not yet sufficiently given rise to public discourses that differ between men and women.

9.2.2 FINNISH BABY BOOMERS IN THE CONTEXT OF AGEING AND CARE

Analysis of the topic '**ageing, health and care**' revealed three distinct themes among 39 editorials reviewed in *Helsingin Sanomat* newspaper: *problems and challenges of population ageing, organising care and services for the elderly* and *personal and public awareness of age and ageing*. The first two themes capture macro aspects and influences of the ageing population, while the focus of the last theme is on individual ageing experiences or the perceptions of intermediate groups regarding such issues as social conventions. Each theme includes several important components. Those elements, in turn, come together to highlight the meaning of the particular theme. Figure 12 illustrates the entire picture generated from analysing the relevant data.

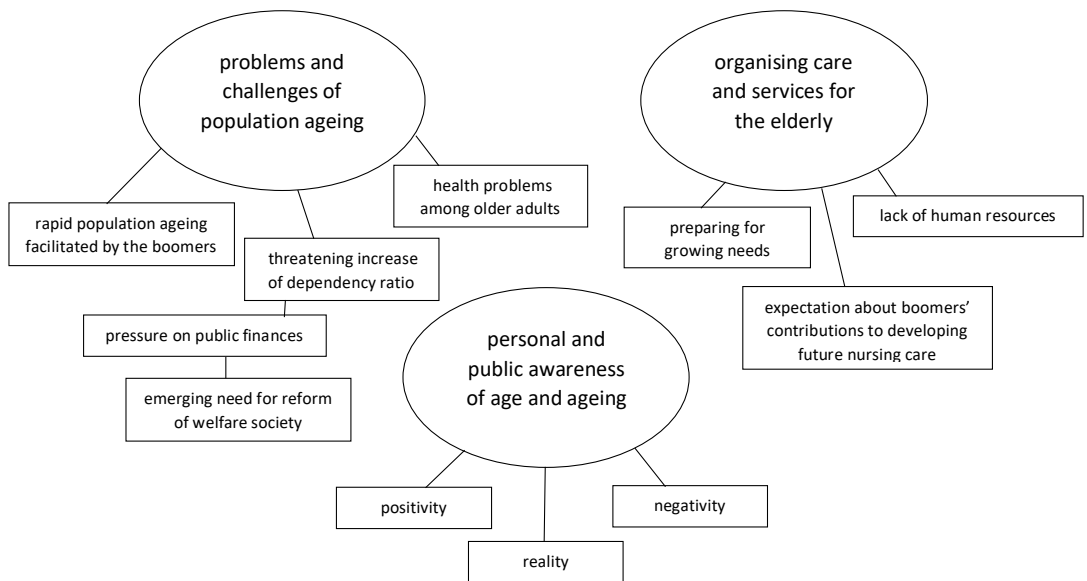


Figure 12. Thematic map of the topic 'ageing, health and care' in the Finnish data.

The first theme, *problems and challenges of population ageing*, covers the largest part of the newspaper data focusing on the topic of ageing, health and care. Hence, the theme encompasses diverse features related to the impacts of population ageing. Many of the articles in *Helsingin Sanomat* tended to draw readers' attention by addressing the fact that the Finnish population is ageing rapidly in an unprecedented manner, a dramatic demographic change being initiated by the baby boomers. The wording in one editorial even directly equated population ageing with the retirement of the baby boomers: '*Population ageing, namely the approaching retirement of the baby boomers*' (F24 24.3.2002: Good signs and bad signs, Janne Virkkunen). Additionally, as next excerpts demonstrate, the newspaper frequently referred to examples from other countries to emphasise the unique and serious situation in Finland:

Finnish citizens are the second oldest in the world following the Japanese. The largest generation born after the war begins to enter the age of early retirement. (F25 15.11.2002: Population ageing requires harsh actions in Uusimaa, Aki Kangasharju)

Ageing and the growing number of pensioners are a challenge for the whole of Europe but especially for Finland: the post-war baby boomers will come to an age when more and more

services are required. (F26 26.3.2012: Ageing considered as a burden)

The baby boomers were born in Finland in several years, whereas in other parts of Europe a similar post-war phenomenon continued for a little longer. Hence, demographic change will hit Finland in a more pronounced way than elsewhere: a lot of working-age people will suddenly leave working life, and correspondingly, a terrific rise in health and elderly care expenditure is expected after the year 2025. (F27 14.6.2015: Greater part of income is pensions)

The alarming characteristics regarding population ageing, as accelerated by the baby boomers, was a persistent topic in the editorials over the 16 years of the study period. However, nuances in the statements about the relation of the baby boomers to the ageing population shifted over the course of the time: from emphasising the imminent retirement of the baby boomers in the early phase of the study period to referring to their advancing age in the last years.

The newspaper's focus on population ageing led to a discussion about the problems caused by it. The most frequent issue raised in the newspaper had to do with the increasing dependency ratio, or more particularly, the increase in the old-age dependency ratio. However, the paper did not always use the technical term 'dependency ratio' as such. Rather, by employing various expressions and phrasing, sometimes with the help of concrete numbers and percentages, the editorials attempted to declare how serious it will be for Finnish society when increasing numbers of the old-age population become dependent on a decreasing working-age population. The next extracts from two articles typically describe the emerging problems due to the imbalance in the population structure in terms of the social security system:

Still in the last year, there were about 50 children and pensioners per hundred working-age people in Finland. The dependency ratio, however, is weakening quickly at the same time as the baby boomers are becoming older. Seven years later, in the year 2016, the dependency ratio will already exceed the limit of 60 and by 2026 the limit of 70.

This means that fewer and fewer working-age people will provide for ever greater numbers of the population outside the workforce – if one retires at the age of 65. (F28 4.10.2009: Age catastrophe is already at the door, Marjut Lindberg)

The cold fact about the Finnish population structure is that the number of working-age, 15–64 year old people decreases yearly by approximately 10,000 persons, and annual growth

in the number of those who are turning 65 years is about 38,000.

The shrinking number of working-age people began several years ago, when the baby boomers reached retirement age.
(F29 14.6.2015: Greater part of income is pensions)

These excerpts, which use recurring phrases about rapid population ageing, aimed to persuade readers to consider that the ageing of the baby boomers is the most significant source of threat for the Finnish welfare society. This further entails the risk of creating the social perception that the baby boomers will become a burden on society when they grow old. Repeatedly highlighting such statistical projections represented a typical way in which the newspaper formulated an alarmist or apocalyptic debate around the demographic features of the ageing population (Katz 1992; Robertson 1997; Gee 2002; Rauhut 2010). Even the title of one article, '*Age catastrophe is already at the door*', sounded the alarmist tone.

As the result of such demographic alarmism, the discussions in the newspaper articles began to focus on the concrete challenge engendered by population ageing and an increasing dependency ratio. The challenge will put pressure on public finances and make it difficult to maintain a sustainable social and health care system, especially with respect to the predicted sharp rise in health and nursing care expenditures for the elderly as well as payments for old age pensions. Several editorials expressed concern over how to solve the difficult equation, only to conclude by acknowledging an emerging need for structural reforms to the welfare system. The suggested structural reforms included issues like a tax increase and budget cut, increasing labour productivity, economic growth and supportive taxation, and employing clear programmes for pension, social security and education systems.

As the articles in *Helsingin Sanomat* demonstrate, the alarmist debate on population ageing tended to draw heavily on the term dependency ratio. The dependency ratio, however, is only an indicator to describe the age structure of the population. The dependency ratio is problematic for measuring the burden of support for older age groups because it determines those who are independent and dependent based on chronological age alone (United Nations 2017; Gee 2002). Furthermore, the elderly are not the homogeneous, unproductive and dependent population depicted in the alarmist rhetoric (Katz 1992), instead being much more diverse (Gee 2002). Thus, the counterargument to the alarmist demography argument demands a reinterpretation of dependency ratio statistics and a reconceptualisation of the economic basis for dependency and the allocation of resources (Katz 1992).

Another aspect that the theme *problems and challenges of population ageing* entails has to do with health problems among older adults. The baby boomers again had some relevance for media discussions, despite the fact that concrete health problems appeared in the articles far less frequently than

matters related to public finance. Topics picked up for consideration tended to focus on excessive alcohol consumption among older adults and increasing cases of age-related diseases, like skin cancer. The newspaper articles touched upon the boomers' increasing likelihood to contribute to the negative development of such health problems.

The next theme discovered within the category 'ageing, health and care' is that of *organising care and services for the elderly*. This theme is also closely connected with discussions about population ageing. However, unlike the previous theme, which mainly underscores the looming threat of maintaining public finances in a welfare society, the second theme delineates the concrete needs of ageing citizens, that is to say, the arrangement of care and health services for the elderly. Interestingly, each study phase (before early retirement, during early retirement and during normal retirement) has its own features when informing the debate on old-age care and services. This appears to be associated with the ageing of the baby boomers. Three separate elements constitute the evolving newspaper discussions at different stages: lack of human resources in the elderly care sector, preparing for growing care needs and expectations regarding boomers' contributions to developing future nursing care. The newspaper focused on all three elements as integral parts to constructing the theme *organising care and services for the elderly*.

A remarkable pattern emerged in the articles during the first analytic phase, i.e. the period before early retirement, in which journalists expressed serious concern over the lack of human resources that would lead to a miserable reality in caring for the elderly. By drawing on such issues as the approaching retirement of the baby boomers, increasing numbers of elderly people and the predicted growth in the demand for health and nursing care, the editorials sought to invoke the importance of arranging humane elderly care and services, which currently are not available due to a scarce workforce.

In the next phase, during the period of early retirement for the boomers, the focus of the newspaper articles expanded from expressing anxiety about current and future elderly care to discussing concretely how to prepare for growing old-age care needs. Diverse debates in the newspaper included introducing examples of efforts by particular municipalities, considering regional differences on preparing for an ageing population and underlining the significance of private and third-party sectors in organising care services.

Entering the normal retirement period (phase III) means that the retirement of the baby boomers will begin to take actual shape, and in due course of time they will get older and need more care. This prompted further discussions about organising care and services for the elderly. The following three phrases best describe anticipation about the baby boomers becoming receivers of care before too long:

The ageing of the baby boomers, as those needing services, will force municipalities to develop affordable and more diverse

services than current ones. (F30 6.5.2009: Money should not alone guide quality of elderly care)

It is high time to evaluate the capacity of responding to the service needs of the elderly, as the baby boomers are entering retirement age. (F31 10.3.2011: You should not promise too much for the elderly)

Establishing senior communities and offering different kinds of services for the ageing population should start immediately, as the eldest of the baby boom generation are already turning 70 years old. (F32 27.2.2011: Desired and given pension are distant from each other, Marjut Lindberg)

The increasing needs of baby boomers as future care receivers in newspaper discussions during the later phase added new colour to the formulation of the specific theme *organising care and services for the elderly*. The new colour added to the theme refers to an idea that the ageing of the enormous baby boom generation will lead to diversity in the old age population. Diversity in this sense means, on the one hand, that the baby boomers as the most recent and young elderly will differ from previous cohorts, whereas on the other hand substantial heterogeneity exists within the baby boom cohort. Thus, dissimilarity between cohorts and within a single cohort will make it inevitable that old-age care services will need to be arranged to include more variety.

The ageing of the baby boomers, as those needing services, will force municipalities to develop affordable and more diverse services than current ones. It is impossible to make packaged services intended for a certain age of people, but rather every single person ages at his/her own individual pace.

Services for the elderly should not be divided into merely institutional or home services. Hospice services, day centres and stimulus services brought to areas of dispersed settlements are also needed. Seclusion and loneliness are larger problems for many older adults than heart disease or osteoarthritis.

Costs for different forms of elderly care services must be calculated for open comparison so that decision makers can become aware of what service costs how much. However, money should not be the sole indicator in choosing services. Not only care, but also opportunity for social life, belong to decent old age. (F33 6.5.2009: Money should not alone guide quality of elderly care)

The aforementioned excerpt from one editorial implies that diversity, cost efficiency and high-quality old-age care services are the keys for addressing the expected frailty of the baby boomers in the coming years. Then, in the next quotations the role of the baby boomers is emphasised even more by discussing their expected contributions to developing future nursing care. This is another special attribute of the media portrayals that emerged in the last phase of the study period:

Child mortality and emigration in the 1970s have taken a toll on the ranks of the baby boomers, but there are still many of them as pensioners. And in precisely the same way as they revised Finnish schools, youth culture, working life and the whole welfare state, they are now altering understandings about post-retirement years.

(...)

The same researchers recommended in their previous research that service districts should be constructed in the downtowns of population centres where the elderly would live in normal apartments, not in institution-like service homes. Both public services and services produced by entrepreneurs would be available in the district, which people could then buy on their own or use a municipal service coupon for them.

Such an idea is called for. The baby boomers are again in a key position, this time modifying the understandings of Finnish people about elderly care. (F34 21.9.2015: Modern senior does not live in an institution)

The article states that the baby boomers shall modify general understandings of what elderly care means. This can be interpreted in two ways. One interpretation is that, due to the unique characteristics of the baby boomers, they will induce researchers and experts to create novel ideas about arranging care and services for older adults. Secondly, it is also possible that such ideas and suggestions will arise from the baby boomers themselves. The next editorial, entitled *'The last favour of the baby boomers'* (12.2.2015: Teija Sutinen) makes more concrete the latter notion regarding the expected active involvement of the boomers. The article starts the debate by mentioning the life course of the baby boomers as follows:

The baby boomers pass through Finnish modern history making noise.

They are the people who went to primary school in two shifts, continued to study at university, became sexually liberated,

moved to Sweden and thereby established the Finnish welfare state. It is thus not surprising that now they are slightly tired when approaching their seventies. (F35 12.2.2015: The last favour of the baby boomers, Teija Sutinen)

Then, the newspaper expresses a desire for the baby boomers to take an active part in discussions about ageing and care, in just such a manner as they have taken the initiative in many other issues over the course of their lives:

But they cannot become exhausted on the way! There is one more favour left to do.

The representatives of the baby boom generation always have had the power to determine topics of discussion. Their issues tend to rise as those of the whole nation – or at least they have been able to talk about the issues in so loud a voice that others have to be silent and listen to them.

Therefore, hopefully they still have the value to raise another big topic of discussion, how Finns have to prepare for old age. (F36 12.2.2015: The last favour of the baby boomers, Teija Sutinen)

Additionally, a feeling of reliance on the baby boomers by younger population groups is shown in terms of addressing old-age care and services:

It would be nice from the perspective of our younger population if the baby boomers could, with their own value, squeeze out a minimal level of expected public elderly care. What sorts of services is one eligible for when the old-age population grows to ever greater numbers? (F37 12.2.2015: The last favour of the baby boomers, Teija Sutinen)

As the extracts suggest, the newspaper saw the baby boomers as innovators who had modified conceptions of social conventions throughout their lives. Accordingly, the articles expected the baby boomers to continue in their unique role regardless of ageing. This shows a sharp contrast with the image of ageing baby boomers as a social burden that emerged in conjunction with alarmist debates surrounding population ageing. The different insights in different editorials of the same newspaper present contradictory portrayals of the baby boomers in Finnish public discussions.

The third theme identified under the topic of ‘ageing, health and care’ is *personal and public awareness of age and ageing*. This theme has a very different structure from that of the two previously described themes. The first

and second themes deal with population ageing and its societal and economic influences. Those that are affected by the massive social phenomenon of population ageing, such as dependency ratios, policy measures, care services and health disorders, are substantial and quantitative. On the other hand, the last theme draws special attention to attitudes, behaviours and experiences arising from ageing at the individual and population level. Therefore, the issues incorporated in the theme are abstract in their nature.

The stances, attitudes, behaviours and experiences associated with age and ageing covered in the newspaper were sometimes personal or subjective. Other times they were discussed from a public or general perspective. Additionally, the contents of personal awareness and general perceptions about ageing involved positive and negative aspects and reality. Such ambivalent features constituted the specific theme *personal and public awareness of age and ageing*. In frequent cases, the role of the baby boomers in shaping the theme served as a sort of stimulus for activating discussions.

What people expect from their own ageing and end of life was reported in the newspaper as follows:

More people want to stay alive longer and die at some point after having lived an average lifetime in reasonably good spiritual and physical strength. (F38 22.3.2000: I may wish for something impossible, Arja Leppänen)

Survey researches intended for younger retirees inform them of the desire to live longer until becoming as old as possible in an absolute healthy condition and passing away abruptly in a happy state. (F39 27.2.2011: Desired and given pension are distant from each other, Marjut Lindberg)

These phrases express a positive desire and ideal about ageing, and with an ironic tone they exclude any feelings of anxiety. In a similar fashion, a description by the editor of *Helsingin Sanomat* about the imaginary picture of her own life in old age incorporates three important concepts: being independent as long as possible, maintaining social relationships and maintaining human dignity even when needing extensive nursing care. They represent fundamental ideas about good ageing. However, the reality is not necessarily similar to what is expected; rather, getting old should inevitably include a decline in physical and cognitive capacity, sickness, frailty, and so forth. The next passage implies a paradox that the more optimistic the image of ageing, the more difficult it is to prepare for old age:

At the latest now, decision makers, the baby boomers and also all other people should consider what kind of old age they would want for themselves. Regardless of small repairs, frailty

may seem to be unreal and almost impossible until one suddenly realises oneself lying on a care bed needing to be turned and fed by others. What kind of care and treatment would appear to be good then? (F40 22.3.2000: I may wish for something impossible, Arja Leppänen)

The editorial also noted the subjectively experienced reality that for women old age is more severe than for men. Longevity is likely to bring women more suffering due to the decaying physical function and poverty risk caused by disadvantaged working histories. Though the newspaper did not particularly mention the baby boomers in developing the discussion, this was the only case in which gender difference, specifically the disadvantages faced by women compared to men, was highlighted in the topic of ageing, health and care. Later life indeed shows a difference between genders in Finland, as old age for women is often experienced alone, whereas men generally grow old in a marital relationship. According to a report by Väestöliitto (The Family Federation of Finland) (2019), the fact that women live longer than men is leading to a situation in which the majority of women are widows in the older age groups.

As illustrated above, subjective awareness of age and ageing encapsulates both positive views and an unfavourable reality. In contrast, negative wording stands out when the newspaper articles referred to public perceptions of ageing or social conventions with respect to older adults. An issue repeatedly reported in a negative manner is ageism, specifically ageism in working life, which older employees tend to encounter in Finnish society. Dominant understandings of work and age from the perspectives of various institutions in society are crystallised in the next excerpt:

The most important festive day is missing from the list of annual celebrations among Finnish working people. A more important point of age than even years is the border of 55 years old. After that, a previously unexperienced uncertain period starts in working life, which will continue at least until 60 years of age, generally for the rest of one's whole working life.

The age border of fifty-five years old has received a name in national administrative offices and in the reports of research institutes, one which sounds nasty but is well described. At that time, a person becomes aged.

It is almost similar to decrepit, deteriorated and ancient. The word means, for employers, a large risk and inability for reform and learning. (F41 11.4.2007: 55 years old is a risk age in work, Marjut Lindberg)

The account presented in the article signifies that Finnish society is apt to regard the age of maturity in working life as the beginning of stagnation or even decay in competencies. This conception reflects a classic definition of ageism as a process of systematic stereotyping and discrimination against people because they are old (Butler 1969). Social cognition of appreciating youthful energy and undervaluing older adults leads to a practice in workplaces described as follows:

The skills and experiences of older people will simply not be respected or utilised in workplaces until they are forced to do so. Instead, people are still driven off into retirement already before the official age. (F42 26.10.2002: Work has started to interest retirees)

The inherent ageism apparent in Finnish media discussions, which is particularly underlined in terms of working life, is totally different from the idea that emerged in Japanese newspapers. Both Japanese newspapers appreciated the skills, knowledge and experiences that the baby boomers had accumulated throughout their long work history and showed concern over their retirement, as it meant a loss of such valuable expertise.

Helsingin Sanomat discussed ageism in working life most frequently between 2001 and 2007, which corresponds to the period during the early retirement of the baby boomers. The very real ageism-related incidents affecting the baby boomers and closer age groups might have influenced media discussions at this particular time. Meanwhile, the earliest phase (the period before early retirement) was characterised by expressions of a desire for and ideal about ageing that had a positive as well as an ironic tone, whereas the reality of ageing became evident in the last phase, the period of normal retirement. Thus, the articles containing the theme *personal and public awareness of age and ageing* encompassed diverse and partly contradictory aspects of ageing.

9.2.3 COMPARISON OF JAPANESE AND FINNISH DATA

Japanese and Finnish newspaper articles with the topic of '**ageing, health and care**' show a general similarity in terms of the content of the articles as well as formulation of themes across the entire data set. Public discussions in the two countries approached the concept of ageing and old age at both the population and individual levels. Matters related to health and care, on the other hand, had specific discussion patterns; while Japanese newspapers frequently focused on individual stories, the societal viewpoint was predominant in the Finnish media discourse.

In discussing rapid population ageing accelerated by the baby boomers, the Finnish newspaper took an obvious alarmist tone by depicting a gloomy future scenario, with frequent mentions of statistic projections. This likely helped

shape the image of ageing baby boomers as a burden to society, which further entails a risk for the emergence of intergenerational conflict. Japanese newspaper discussions also included apocalyptic and alarmist expressions when they highlighted the ageing of the population. Nevertheless, by calling for intergenerational solidarity with respect to labour force participation and bearing the cost for maintaining the social security system, Japanese public discussions seemed to refrain from blaming a particular population group, in this case the baby boomers.

Notwithstanding the connection of the Finnish baby boomers with demographic alarmism, they were also expected to take a leading role in developing future old-age care. In expressing a desire that baby boomers would help develop old-age care and services, the newspaper referred to the boomers' pioneering role in every shaping new lifestyles and cultures throughout their lives. Indeed, one of the notable features of the Finnish newspaper was that the baby boomers were portrayed in a contradictory manner. While some articles constructed the boomers as a burden or threat to maintaining the welfare society, other articles saw boomers' potentiality for promoting a sustainable ageing society.

Both Japanese and Finnish newspapers also drew special attention to ageing experiences and awareness. What is significant in terms of distinction is how negative attitudes toward ageing were articulated in the debates of the respective countries. In Japan, individuals' unfavourable perspectives on ageing appeared in the form of anti-ageing and resisting old age. In contrast, in Finnish media discussions ageism emerged in terms of the disadvantageous aspect involved in public perceptions of ageing and older adults.

Gender difference did not play a distinct role when both Japanese and Finnish newspapers dealt with the topic of 'ageing, health and care'. The majority of the articles represented the gender of the baby boomers as both men and women or presented them in a non-gendered manner. However, adverse circumstances for Japanese men could be observed when the newspaper articles reported on their health disorders or on their struggle to care for family members. Meanwhile, although there was only one sole case, one Finnish editorial highlighted the disadvantage of women compared to men in later life in terms of poorer physical functioning and the risk of poverty.

9.3 BABY BOOMERS AS A GENERATION

9.3.1 JAPANESE BABY BOOMERS IN THE CONTEXT OF GENERATION

The manifest content analysis conducted prior to the thematic analysis identified 582 Japanese newspaper articles that included 'lifestyles and identities' as either the main topic or else a minor topic. Those articles were further categorised into three sub-topics ('consumption and marketing', 'activities, associations and relationships', and 'baby boomers as a generation'), of which 125 articles were determined to fall under the topic

‘baby boomers as a generation’. Identifying specific patterns within the data related to the baby boom generation revealed three motifs: *conceptualising the baby boom generation*, *self-reflection of the baby boomers* and *boomers as culturally constructed subjects*. Figure 13 depicts the notable themes identified in the data.

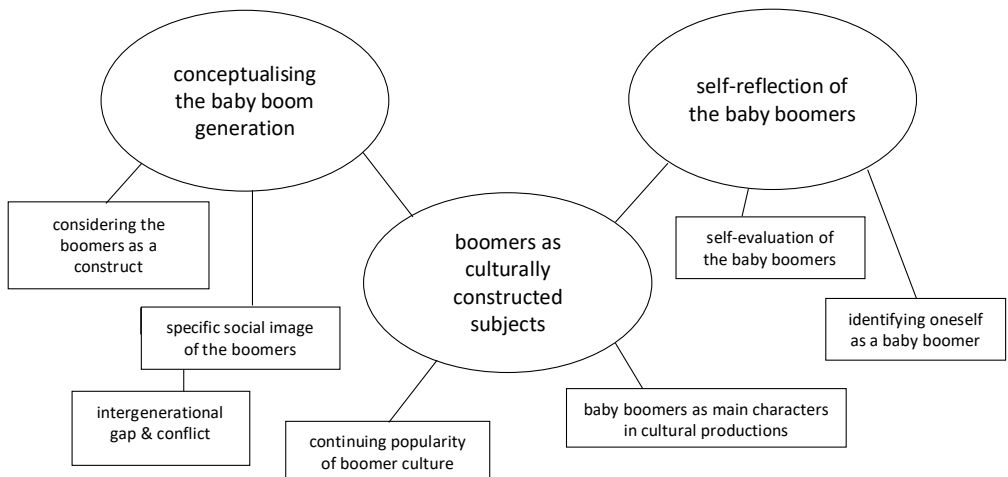


Figure 13. Thematic map of the topic ‘baby boomers as a generation’ in the Japanese data.

Conceptualising the baby boom generation, which is the first recognisable theme, emerged principally in the newspaper articles highlighting the baby boom generation or in which experts stated their opinions on the baby boomers. The objective of those articles was to ponder the concept of baby boom generation once again, when retirement and the ageing of a massive amount of the population are expected to have an enormous impact on Japanese society in the near future. The typical life course of the boomers were depicted in the texts as follows. They were born into poverty in the immediate post-war years, received an education based on liberal democratic ideas from childhood to adolescence, started working life in the peak of economic development, established a nuclear family detached from the traditional kinship model, experienced a bubble economy and its bursting in their middle age and now face retirement and the beginning of old age. Some articles described how well boomers’ life courses paralleled such major societal changes by using brief phrases:

It is their very life that has embodied the growth and decline of the post-war Japanese economy. (J19 Yomiuri 8.1.2006:

[Rediscovering affluence] Part I – New life for the baby boomers
(6) Description in figures = the first volume (serial))

*The baby boomers have played a main role in the era on the stage of post-war Japan (J20 Yomiuri 17.7.2014: [Japan 2020]
The baby boom generation – ‘Past’ and ‘future’ of myself,
Yoshihisa Watanabe)*

Given this standard life trajectory, the newspapers explored what and who are the baby boomers. It is noteworthy that on many occasions, the editors of the articles and interviewed intellectuals themselves were the baby boomers. The aspects most emphasised when considering the formation of the boomers and the perceptions of members of the boomer generation were shared experiences in adolescence, characterised by keen competition among peers when entering further education, encountering new cultural items imported from Western countries, such as rock music and blue jeans, involvement in campus strife, and so forth. The narratives of the boomer intellectuals and statements made in the texts inform readers that these shared experiences have had a fundamental influence on the later lives of the said people and have united them as a distinct population group. The idea applies precisely to Mannheim’s (1952/1928) theory on the formation of generation – the baby boom generation has been constructed by sharing a distinctive cultural identity among the contemporaries through experiencing the same historical events in the same ways during their formative years (Edmunds & Turner 2002; Alwin & McCammon 2007).

The Japanese baby boomers, shaped by shared experiences and a shared consciousness, also helped create a specific image in terms of their character and behaviours. The boomer image described in the newspaper articles included statements, such that they are self-confident individuals, they are the people with peculiar tastes, they prefer to look cool and behave as if they know it, they like to draw attention to themselves and they like to have argumentative discussions over anything. The reporters or interviewed experts in the articles anticipated the persistence of just such a social image of the boomers, which would modify the conventional portrayal of older adults in the coming years. The next short column describes a future image of the baby boomers as older persons in a humorous way:

A writer, Hiro Arikawa, depicts strong and reliable ‘grandpas’ in her novel ‘THREE MIDDLE-AGED GUYS’ (Bungeishunzhū).

Kiyota is a master of Kendo, the Japanese art of fencing. He figures out with his keen intuition that his grandson is involved in a conspiracy by hooligans. He helps his grandson together with his childhood friends. They establish a group ‘three middle-aged guys’ and start to patrol the town. The reason why

they call themselves middle-aged guys is because they feel odd being described as old men.

The baby boomers begin turning 65 years old this year. The number of people who are freshly included in the elderly population are 2.1 million, an increase of 800,000 over last year. They will be celebrated tomorrow on Respect-for-Senior-Citizens Day. However, I guess many of them have 'a feeling of strangeness', don't they? The baby boom generation consist of many talented people who have developed excellent skills and knowledge in companies and so on. (...) In several years, one more feature might be added to the true worth of the traditional elderly.

As I leaned towards males, so I pay attention to women, too. I suppose, you put on a miniskirt when you were young, didn't you? It is also totally unlikely for the elderly of old times. Cheers for the new power in the new era! (J21 Yomiuri 16.9.2012: [Editing notebook] September 16th)

Meanwhile, such a large generation with its own distinct characteristics tends to cause friction in society, which is symbolised by an intergenerational gap and conflict. In this regard, the Japanese baby boomers became a target of criticism for the first time in media discussions. Criticism against them encompassed various aspects, from personal dissatisfaction with boomers' self-assertive behaviour to a sense of intergenerational inequity shared among younger age groups regarding entitlement to social security benefits. The articles, however, attempted to find a solution to reconcile such intergenerational conflict by suggesting that the baby boomers relinquish some of their established interests. The next excerpt from one article, which discusses the sustainability of the social security system, encapsulates the objective of the press to steer public discussions to a certain direction in order to avoid discord between the different generations:

Are two generations able to reach an accord with each other?

The direction to proceed is obvious. While the younger generation should bear growing burden of cost to some extent, the baby boom generation should eventually reduce the amount of benefits they receive. Mutual support within the same older generation should advance. This should be the only scenario in order to avoid intergenerational dispute. (J22 Asahi 12.1.2006: (Editorial) Tomorrow for the baby boomers – Can the baby boomers relinquish established interests?)

While such a conceptualisation of the baby boom generation depicts the boomers objectively, the second theme refers to subjective reflections by the boomers themselves. Yet, the border between subjectivity and objectivity is often obscure, as exemplified by the fact that the personal pronouns used by the baby boomers switched between 'I', 'we' and 'they' in one article where interviewees considered the boomers as a generation; the same issue occurred when a reporter wrote an essay on the said population. Regardless of this challenge, the analysis revealed patterns of subjective constructions, termed *self-reflection of the baby boomers*.

Self-evaluation of the baby boomers in general about their past and present life is most evident in survey studies conducted by both *Yomiuri* and *Asahi* in the period when the retirement of the boomers was approaching. According to the results of these surveys, the respondents on the one hand were proud of themselves for having contributed to the rapid economic growth of the country, but at the same time they reported feeling a sense of remorse for the loss of morality in society and for weakened ties within community and family. On a personal level, some people expressed satisfaction with their international careers, which had advanced along with the size of the businesses run by their employers, whereas others regretted having sacrificed family for their own career (mostly among males) or quitting a job due to marriage and child rearing (mostly among females). Given the answers of the respondents, a chief editorial writer of the paper concluded, 'The self-portrayal of the baby boom generation has contradictory faces to it' (**J23** *Yomiuri* 1.1.2007: [Non-reserved seat] The problem of the year 2007 – Let's draw a self-portrayal of the baby boomers, Masaharu Shio).

Moreover, the self-evaluations of the baby boomers became more critical when viewed through the eyes of intellectuals. Jitsuro Terashima, a critic and member of the boom generation, formulated the argument in his essay as follows:

When questioning our self-portrait rigorously, 'economism' and 'me-ism' have accumulated in our sense of values. Japan summarised the defeat in war as 'a defeat by the abundance of the United States'. From this point of view, the reconstruction of abundance and quest for development were initiated, which has enhanced our tendency to put primal value on the 'economy' beyond any ideologies. (...)

On the other hand, the baby boomers are the people who have lived the post-war era without extreme oppression and control and who have become the first generation in Japan that 'can decide their own lives by themselves'. I suppose this has made us inclined toward me-ism. (...) (**J24** *Asahi* 4.4.2006: (Thought of 21) For the baby boomers – Ask yourselves 'peace' and 'public' before pretending to be aged, Jitsuro Terashima)

The ambivalent feelings of the baby boomers about their lives could be explained by Terashima's theory. Emphasising economic growth has fostered satisfaction with one's own established careers and pride in achieved affluence. However, the pursuit of personal interests has eroded traditional communality in society, which the baby boomers now seem to miss.

Another element constituting the theme *self-reflection of the baby boomers* is identifying oneself as a member of the baby boom generation. The idea was particularly discernible in the interview articles with boomer celebrities, such as musicians and athletes. Their narratives included remembrances of their childhood, impressionable experiences in youth and the way in which they had established themselves in their careers. By reflecting on the trajectory of their own life and narrating it as a story, they identified themselves as an integral part of the baby boomers.

The baby boomers who appeared in the texts of newspapers were usually aware of belonging to the specific generation. Some individuals, however, expressed an unwillingness to be treated as a mass, appealing for diversity within the same age group as well as individual characteristics. Resistance to mainstream thought was noteworthy, but simultaneously it indicated the magnitude of the generational significance of the baby boomers.

When the newspaper articles sought to conceptualise the baby boom generation as an entity or highlighted the self-reflections of the baby boomers, the word 'baby boomers' generally involved both women and men. Individual narratives of the baby boomers sometimes focused on either of the genders. Nevertheless, the data as a whole dealt with the baby boomers in a non-gendered way.

The last theme identified under the topic of 'baby boomers as a generation' is *boomers as culturally constructed subjects*. The majority of the articles including this theme belonged to the culture and arts pages. Among a variety of reports, the first visible indication of cultural constructionism as an idea had to do with the explanation that baby boomer culture, as represented by rock music and contemporary folk music, has remained popular over the decades. The discussions covered reviews of concerts, interviews with boomer musicians, advertising releases of revival albums, commentaries on hit songs from the 1960s to the 1970s, and so forth. The texts not only evoked nostalgia for the past, but also articulated the argument that the boomers had played a significant role in establishing popular culture and persisted in the role of defining post-war material culture.

Another important aspect of the theme is that the baby boomer themselves are the main characters in the cultural productions discussed in the newspaper articles. Movies, television dramas, theatres and novels have all been strongly associated with the boomers, with many being created mostly in the periods before and during early retirement, thus encouraging the two newspapers to publish review columns on the boomers as purveyors of culture. In the fictional stories of movies or other cultural works, the baby boomers were depicted, for instance, as a married couple facing the crisis of divorce, retired

men actively participating in community activities, and a widow seeking independence and her own identity. These characters indeed overlap with portrayals of the baby boomers in the key turning points of their lives, as formulated in the Japanese newspapers over the years. Being the main characters in cultural productions meant the baby boomers were more than just the supporters of culture, but also a prominent cultural subject in their own right. It can be argued that the focus of the media on the baby boomers with respect to cultural products has had an important role in reinforcing the idea that the Japanese baby boom generation has constituted itself as a distinctive socio-cultural phenomenon.

9.3.2 FINNISH BABY BOOMERS IN THE CONTEXT OF GENERATION

The number of Finnish newspaper articles including **'baby boomers as a generation'** as the main or minor topic was 18. Exploring the distinct patterns in those articles uncovered three motifs: *emerging tension between generations*, *transition of power between generations* and *legacy of the baby boomers*. Figure 14 illustrates the three themes and their mutual relations with key elements incorporated in each theme.

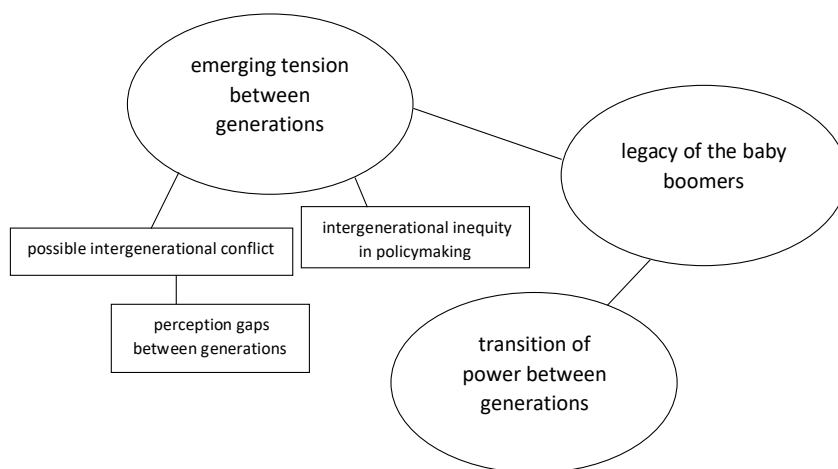


Figure 14. Thematic map of the topic 'baby boomers as a generation' in the Finnish data.

The first theme, *emerging tension between generations*, dominated the data in terms of frequency and quantity, with 15 articles including this theme. Perception gaps between different generations took shape when the newspaper discussed questions of social and public policy, such as taxation,

pension scheme and employment. A typical way that the newspaper considered generational difference and the generation gap was by first mentioning retirement and ageing of the baby boomers. What the newspaper pointed out here was a possible generational conflict stemming from dissatisfaction among the younger population with the increasing social expenditure caused by ageing boomers. The articles emphasised that the anticipated future cost increases would inevitably be borne by younger age groups. The following excerpt predicts a change in attitudes among youth and provides a sense of threat by using a specific term, 'war between generations':

People diminish and grow older. Can the possibly arising war between generations be avoided, for instance, by means of social policy, employment policy and distribution of power?

Pauli Forma writes in the View of Welfare journal (1/2002) that there is not a wide gap between generations. On the contrary: the younger generations support the current kinds of social policy even more than their parents do. He warns at the same time that disagreement between generations may increase along with the ageing of the population and retirement of the baby boomers. (F43 30.8.2002: It is necessary to let the youth build a society in good time, Elina Moision)

Likewise, the next passage questions intergenerational solidarity on maintaining the social security system and leads the readers to imagine a worst-case scenario. The scenario might be a 'war' between generations arising from disputes over costs and benefits distributed unequally to different age groups. The texts are extracted from one article debating the strength of the current employment pension system in light of demographic change and uncertain yields from pension funds:

If population prediction as well as the yield of funds put powerful pressure on raising the amount of employment pension contribution, and at the same time if other taxes in society are rather increasing than decreasing, how is it likely that the generation in power after a couple of decades will still be willing to pay all the extra invoices? Particularly, when, as far as they are concerned, the extra invoices do not mean any improvement in pension benefits. According to an estimate by Etila, the surplus in the public economy will become a deficit in approximately 15 years. (F44 12.9.2007: Prohibited question, Antti Blåfield)

The changing employment environment is also likely to bring about friction between generations. The *Helsingin Sanomat* put younger people in an

oppositional position with respect to the baby boomers; while the baby boomers can enjoy a decent and relaxed retirement life thanks to their long stable working years, younger people struggling with insecure employment will soon have to cover the costs of the ageing boomers. The following is a passage from an editorial focusing on the changing labour market, in which young people suffer from unstable employment with low salaries, poor social security and continuous uncertainty. The text suggests how a feeling of unfairness experienced by young people could ultimately create a rift within society:

Meanwhile, they (the youth) have to listen to how the baby boomers, who got themselves absorbed in working life and whose debt has been remedied by inflation, are now marching with a contented look toward retirement, grumbling about youngsters' talk about grunt work. 'Work was good enough in previous times.' Unless the society takes into account the new rules in labour markets, and unless reforms are implemented in employment as well as social and pension policy, in which current working life is taken into consideration, the gap between those in permanent employment and those in atypical employment will grow intolerable. (F45 13.5.2009: Atypical cost item, Antti Blåfield)

The argument made in the *Helsingin Sanomat*, in which the interests of the baby boomers and the younger age groups are pitted against one another, demonstrates a typical pattern in which demographic alarmism is problematising intergenerational relations. According to Katz (1992: 205), when the debate on population projection assumes that the young will fund a welfare system from which they will never benefit, the demographic crisis emerges as an intergenerational conflict. Once intergenerational conflict occurs, the elderly will increasingly depend not only upon the productivity and resources of the younger generations, but upon their good will as well.

Regardless of repeated warnings about potential intergenerational conflict, the newspaper did not report any actual clashes between different generations. The only exception was a minor example of a handful of individuals accusing the baby boomers of being a greedy generation. Rather, what is left after heated discussions appears to be a deep perception gap between generations, one which is difficult to bridge. As example, one article introducing a play about the boomers and their adult children concludes as follows:

And as we expect a big clash, generational war does not happen at all. Only perplexity remains. (F46 22.9.2012: Patriarchs versus mashed buns (Generation X), Jaakko Lyytinen)

The baby boomers appearing in the newspaper are typically perplexed by the stance of younger people to work. The next excerpt depicts how veteran politicians belonging to the boom generation feel puzzled when a young party leader decided not to challenge them by competing for a top position within the party:

Väyrynen and Pekkarinen are perplexed. Those in their sixties, who have spent forty years in political activities, belong to a different generation, to the eldest of the baby boomers. They are accustomed to enduring, coping with, pushing along – continuing.

From Väyrynen's viewpoint, it must be totally inconceivable that the young party leader is ready to quit after two years only because criticism comes from the ranks. After two years! (F47 6.4.2012: Oh, the times! Oh, the customs!, Ville Blåfield)

From these phrases, one can realise that the working model established by the baby boomers does not resonate with the next generations. Different generational stances on work and way of life not only concern politicians; the newspaper frequently mentioned ongoing changes in attitudes among the general public as well. While the articles characterised the personality of baby boomers using words such as continuation, patient, stability, modest and tough, they characterised the attitudes of the younger population as demanding, vulnerable and favouring flexibility and freedom. Hence, a gap exists between the two age groups in terms of values and philosophies.

As explained earlier, the editorials in *Helsingin Sanomat* were keen to discuss possible intergenerational conflict, which ended up revealing perception gaps between generations. Nevertheless, particular wordings and phrasings in the articles might have aroused the generational consciousness of readers and thereby triggered disputes between population groups of different ages. These expressions refer to texts highlighting intergenerational inequity in policymaking, especially in the pension scheme and its reform. For instance, the following paragraph questions the fair treatment of different generations based on the 2005 pension reform by contrasting the baby boomers and others:

The 2005 pension reform was implemented in such a way that the so-called baby boomers, who are presently retiring, do not actually lose anything, but those born in the years 1960–1980 will get significantly lower level of pension, though the amount calculated in cash may be even better than the current pension. (F48 8.3.2009: Decisions have to be made, Janne Virkkunen)

The 2005 reform indeed gave rise to active debates in editorials. The next excerpt from another article introduced the viewpoint of several researchers, which was slightly critical of the behaviour of the boomers and attempted to persuade them to be more responsible in maintaining the pension scheme:

Researchers raise a good question, couldn't the 'inheritance' left by generations also be a starting point for reform? According to this principle, the payments of the baby boomers should be raised and the pension amount cut because they have given birth to less children compared to former generation to carry the system forward. According to this principle, those who delivered smaller birth cohorts should be liable for a future increase in pension contributions. This would emphasise the prospective risks in addition to the present benefits. (F49 14.3.2005: A person is as cunning as planners of the pension scheme)

The sense of intergenerational inequity intensified when the Finnish government decided to enact a pension reform yet again. The aim of the latest reform was to postpone entitlement to an old-age pension in accordance with increasing life expectancy. The newspaper now clearly demonstrated its stand that repeated pension reforms have favoured the baby boomers by disadvantaging the younger population. The following phrases may evoke a feeling of ill-will for the boomers among younger readers:

Ten years of age difference leads to quite large inequality in retirement possibilities: those born in 1954, that is, those who turn 60 years old this year, can still retire at the age of 63. For those who are only ten years younger, the lowest retirement age is already two years higher.

It should have been justifiable that the reforms reach even in a mild way also the age groups who are close to retirement age. Now, an image arouses by force that the baby boomers – while those born in the 1950s can also be counted – had time to take the whole pot. They got extremely good benefits in return for a low pension contribution. (F50 1.10.2014: Flexible retirement age was fever for a moment)

The paragraphs explicitly present a situation where the interests of the elderly (the baby boomers) are destined to conflict with those of the young (Katz 1992: 205). Several excerpts chosen from the *Helsingin Sanomat* articles exemplify the extent to which conceptualising populations in terms of dependent and independent sub-groups with regards to public resources facilitates the intergenerational equity debate (Gee 2002: 752). Underlying the

development of an intergenerational equity debate is the notion of demographic alarmism.

The *transition of power between generations* is the second theme identified from the data dealing with the topic 'baby boomers as a generation'. Despite only a small number of articles focusing on this theme (three articles), the baby boomers again had a presence in the context of the socio-economic transition of power. The newspapers regarded the baby boomers as representatives of older age groups who had dominated politics, business and society for many years. While one article appealed to the idea of a redistribution of power and knowledge transfer between different age groups, the other editorial reported on the diminishing dominance of the baby boomers over politics and the economy. Regardless of whether or not they fully withdraw from mainstream socio-economic activities along with retirement, the boomers shall continue to keep their power alive as active voters. The following excerpt from one editorial considered the issue of lowering the age limit for voting in municipal elections. The text is concerned that an imbalanced population structure and different voting behaviours by different age groups may cause an imbalance in political representation and thus pose a threat to democracy:

Our demographic structure is skewed in the direction of the baby boomers. If added to this is the fact that older people vote most actively, there is a risk that the voice of youth will no longer be heard in democratically elected system. (F51 12.6.2010: More enthusiasm for voting by every possible means)

Notwithstanding retirement and reaching an advanced age, the baby boomers appear to still have an influence on society. However, who really are the baby boomers? The *legacy of the baby boomers*, which is the third theme identified under the topic 'baby boomers as a generation', is based on this fundamental question.

The majority of the newspaper articles took the existence of the baby boomers for granted, and they made implicit assumptions about their life course and legacy. Only two editorials took time to contemplate just what the baby boomers had accomplished. One of the two articles examined, both ironically and comprehensively, the achievements of the baby boomers before attempting to criticise them from the perspective of younger age groups. The aim of the whole article, to explore socio-cultural contributions of the boomers, was expressed sarcastically as follows:

Before we, as representatives of the small generation, start a war against the larger generation, we should weigh up the achievements of the baby boomers properly.

It would be simplistic to condemn this group just because it is greedy: it paid a small amount of pension for its parents and is making its children pay a larger amount for itself. We should remember the whole. Let's say the pioneering work, which this mass has performed in every field of culture, and by which those approaching retirement age have cleared the way for us.

In other words, what items outside financial calculation and cultural knowhow will go down in history when they retreat to their villas or to Spain? (F52 4.5.2006: They took absolutely everything from us!, Paavo Rautio)

Through scrutinising the achievements of the baby boomers, the editorial writer became aware that the boomers had established the typical customs and habits of Finns. These customs and habits have gone on to form an integral part of Finnish lifestyles, from eating habits to sports, to types of habitation and interior design, to dressing, and to ideas and philosophy. In the end, the article concluded in this way:

This brief examination already indicates, Osku,¹⁴ that the baby boomers take away the core of Finnishness besides our money. The core. Without it, our country will look like a Makkaratalo (Sausage House) without the sausage.¹⁵ (F53 4.5.2006: They took absolutely everything from us!, Paavo Rautio)

The connotation involved in this paragraph is that the contribution of the baby boomers in creating the Finnish way of life has been so crucial that it is nearly impossible to exclude the boomers from any discourse. Over the course of their lives, the baby boomers have created the general and seemingly self-evident culture and lifestyle of Finland and Finnishness. Hence, a questioning of the boomers' achievements by younger generations may lead to a denial of what the youngsters themselves have achieved in turn. This concluding remark even includes a sense of irony and self-mockery by the younger age groups.

Meanwhile, another article focused on the socio-economic development of Finland, acknowledging contributions made by the baby boomers throughout their working lives. However, it simultaneously considered the chaotic environment and uncertainty in society brought about by the global market economy and information technology. The article argued that it is work of the next generation to fix the problems initiated by the baby boomers.

¹⁴ Osku seems to indicate an ironic joke referring to the then-young politician from the Social Democratic Party of Finland, Osku Pajamäki, who wrote a book about the baby boomers entitled *Ahne sukupolvi* (The greedy generation).

¹⁵ Makkaratalo (Sausage House) is a nickname for a commercial and office building located in the heart of the City of Helsinki. Makkaratalo received the name because of an overhang surrounding the face of the building, which looks like a sausage. Because of its central location and unique appearance, it has become one of the places best representing Helsinki.

All the articles falling under the topic 'baby boomers as a generation' were published in phases II and III, that is, during the periods of early retirement (2001–2007) and of normal retirement (2008–2015) for the baby boomers. Of the three themes identified from the data, *emerging tension between generations* and *transition of power between generations* appeared more frequently in period III. This coincided with actual retirement of the baby boomers, which helped shape media discussions. The newspaper always treated the boomers as a mass and did not pay special attention to differences in individuals or to gender differences.

9.3.3 COMPARISON OF JAPANESE AND FINNISH DATA

It was common for both Japanese and Finnish newspaper articles focusing on the topic of '**baby boomers as a generation**' to view the baby boomers from a generational perspective, as a culturally and socially distinct population group. However, analysis and comparison of the two data sets revealed a wide gap in how the print media in the respective countries depicted the baby boomers through the lens of the concept of generation as well as in how they formulated themes.

In conjunction with retirement and the approaching ageing of a great number of boomers, the Japanese newspapers comprehensively explored the concept of the baby boom generation and socio-cultural constructions of the baby boomers. The life course of the boomers generally, the personal significance of such life events, their current status in life and views for the future were discussed both objectively and subjectively by turning to the opinions of experts, conducting surveys, introducing various narratives of individual boomers, and so forth. These media reviews of the boomers' lives in the past, present and future led to a renewal of the generational identity of the baby boomers. Due to the publicity that media generate, the renewal of the generational identity of the Japanese baby boomers was and is not only being experienced by the boomers themselves, but also influenced and is influencing the perceptions of other people. A fresh public image of the baby boomers in society was thereby constructed through recurring media discussions.

The renewed socially constructed image of the baby boomers is as follows: the Japanese baby boomers have committed themselves over the course of their lives both to economic development and dismantling the traditional kinship model as well as community ties, which brings them ambivalent feelings of contentment and regret. Since they traversed life in tandem with significant post-war events in Japan, which have inevitably made them forerunners in social and cultural transformations, they are aware that their self-identity after retirement will shape the image of older adults in the new era.

The Finnish newspaper articles primarily constructed the baby boomers as the opposition in discussions about a potential intergenerational conflict, which tended to arise from the alarmist debates taking place around the ageing

of the population. In other words, the newspaper represented the baby boomers as an older generation whose interests conflict with those of the younger age groups. Irrespective of repeated warnings, an intergenerational war over the costs and benefits of public resources never materialised as a result of any of the relevant articles. Instead, the media discussions concluded by identifying unbridgeable perception gaps between generations and suggesting that nothing valuable would be passed on from the baby boomers to the following generations. As a consequence of these textual articulations, a social image emerged of the Finnish baby boomers and their characteristics as already old-fashioned, just as many in Finnish society used to describe previous cohorts. Even though the baby boomers have taken the initiative in introducing social, political and cultural innovations since their formative years and their achievements are widely acknowledged, society regards them as old presumably because of their present chronological age. Accordingly, the Finnish baby boomers will not be able to constitute themselves as a renewed social image of the boomers nor as the older adults of the new era through media coverage.

The aforementioned conclusion regarding the possible failure of updating the social image of the baby boomers, however, might be due to the data set, which is confined to editorials and comment articles. Unlike the Japanese data, Finnish newspaper articles did not include the reflections or evaluations of the baby boomers themselves, but rather they always dealt with the baby boomers from a societal viewpoint. Nevertheless, considering that editorials disseminate and reflect on the contents of other articles published in the same newspaper, and especially given the informative nature of editorials in *Helsingin Sanomat* (Tirkkonen-Condit & Liefländer-Koistinen 1989), it can be argued that my conclusion has validity.

10 PORTRAYALS OF AGEING BABY BOOMERS UNIQUE TO JAPANESE AND FINNISH MEDIA DISCUSSIONS

Chapter 10 illustrates portrayals of the ageing baby boomers that emerged from investigating different topics in Japanese and Finnish data individually. The unique topics of focus in Japanese media discussions were ‘consumption and marketing’ and ‘activities, associations and relationships’, whereas Finnish media discussions focused more on ‘current events in economic and political affairs’.

10.1 CONSUMPTION AND MARKETING HIGHLIGHTED IN JAPANESE DATA

Interest in the topic ‘**consumption and marketing**’ was unique to the Japanese data. Originally classified as a subcategory of the topic ‘lifestyles and identities’ when conducting manifest content analysis, the topic increasingly took on greater importance in its own right. Of a total of 582 articles containing ‘lifestyles and identities’ as a topic, 196 articles ultimately included the subject ‘consumption and marketing’.

The initial point of emphasis when analysing the topic ‘consumption and marketing’ was that over 90 per cent of the relevant articles belonged to the phases before and during the early retirement of the baby boomers. The concentration of discussions in the early stage of the study period suggests that the topic is closely connected to the beginning phase of retirement of the baby boomers. Despite recurring phrasings in the texts and similarities between the articles over time, the analysis revealed two themes – *marketing initiated by different industries* and *baby boomer consumption trends*. Figure 15 shows a thematic map developed through analysis.

The theme *marketing initiated by different industries* includes descriptions of various products and services intended for the baby boomers, and the articles reported on product development or sales promotion in different business fields. The first visible example was articles about financial products targeting the retirement allowance of the baby boomers. As is the custom in Japanese workplaces, employees receive a retirement allowance when they leave employment. The amount of the allowance is substantial when a person has been in the service of a particular company for a longer period until retirement age. This absolutely applied to the baby boomers, particularly male baby boomers, which subsequently stimulated the marketing operations of financial institutions. The newspapers’ depictions of the efforts initiated by different banks and brokerage firms, such as developing financial products

with a higher interest rate, contributed to shaping the public image of the baby boomers namely as wealthy retired citizens.

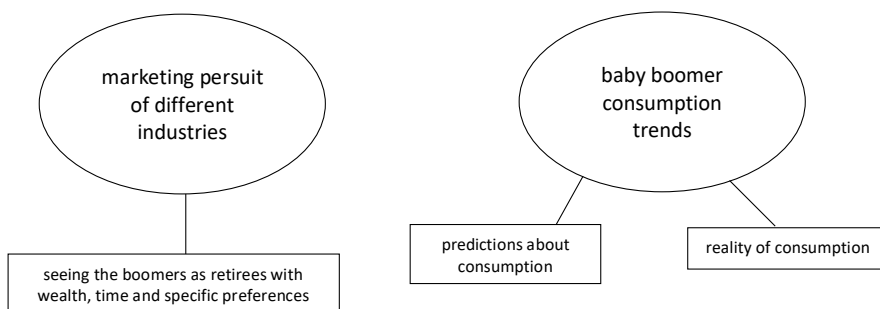


Figure 15. Thematic map of the topic 'consumption and marketing'.

Accordingly, the business community has taken a keen interest in how the wealthy retired baby boomers in question behave in terms of consumption. The travel industry is planning new types of tours, ones which customers have never experienced before, emphasising high quality, luxury and uniqueness. Likewise, department stores are preparing a diverse range of products of a high quality and price that people with particular tastes prefer to purchase. The accounts in the newspapers introducing these marketing activities articulated the idea that a huge and affluent population with certain preferences regarding consumption and lifestyle are emerging along with the retirement of the baby boomers. Companies in various industries are expanding their customer targeting operations to include the said population in order to enhance business activities and to make new profits. Even product development and sales promotion intended exclusively for the baby boomers were addressed frequently in the newspapers. This caused readers to become more aware of the massive social impact of the boomers.

Indeed, the image of the baby boomers as senior citizens with wealth, time and specific preferences seemed to intensify with repeated discussions in the newspapers that highlighted the marketing plans of different industries. The baby boomers were in this context depicted as mass consumers. The articles dealing with endeavours by the financial industry and tourism sector seldom mentioned the gender of the baby boomers. On the other hand, gender was more apparent in the stories about other business fields, though the number of words and phrases associated with the male baby boomers obviously exceeded those associated with female baby boomers. The typical topics in relation to men were automobiles, audio equipment, casual fashion to replace business attire, musical instruments, amusement facilities, and so forth. The discussion on the marketing of the products and services evolved around the

retirement of the male boomers and their prospective lifestyles thereafter, particularly with respect to hobbies. In contrast, work and retirement did not have any substantial connection to the products intended for women, such as cosmetics or health-related commodities. The idea of anti-ageing and remaining active was instead underlined in the debate surrounding female-related products and services.

Another theme identified under the topic 'consumption and marketing' was that of *baby boomer consumption trends*. It included two main components: (1) predictions about baby boomer consumption patterns or experts' conceptions of the characteristics of boomer consumption patterns, and (2) the reality of consumption as practiced by the baby boomers. Regarding the first component, namely future baby boomer consumption patterns and their characteristics, the newspapers pointed out that the baby boomers have created various trends in consumption from their youth onward, and they estimated that the boomers will continue to influence the market regardless of advancing age. The following extracts from articles describe quite well the magnitude of consumption among the baby boomers and expectations regarding their future behaviour:

The baby boomers have led the era of mass consumption, identifying their own lives with rapid economic growth. They like something new, they are active and their income level is high. As this generation used to create numerous social phenomena, such as competition to get into universities, campus strife, increase in private car ownership, housing shortage, boom in money management, they might next cause a revolution in consumption patterns of the elderly. (J25 Yomiuri 4.1.2004: [A quick note to tell you] The baby boom generation shines, Yōzō Matsuda)

On the other hand, since the baby boomers have particular tastes in lifestyle and fashion, and since they have a positive attitude toward hobbies and work, their consumption trend after retirement is receiving growing attention. There is a great expectation that a new market that is different from the market pertinent to traditional senior age groups who 'regard saving as virtue' will arise in diverse fields from food, garments to living. (J26 Yomiuri 14.6.2005: [Consumption keyword] 'The problem of the year 2007' Retirement of the baby boomers – Casting a spotlight on the consumption trend as well)

However, the predictions about baby boomer consumption patterns also involved remarks on the diversity among baby boomers. The following passages present the opinions of specialists interviewed by the newspapers, whose viewpoints are obviously different from the marketing pursuits of

industries that exclusively see the boomers as a mass of senior citizens with wealth and time on their hands:

(...) hobbies, consciousness and incomes of the baby boomers are as manifold as their population is simply large. (...) (J27 Yomiuri 1.6.2007: [A turning point for magazines] (4) Targeting the baby boomers by '55 years old and over limited' (serial))

There still exists a strong stereotypical idea that the baby boomers are a mass. However, unlike the period of rapid economic growth, they nowadays no longer constitute a 'homogeneous market' in the time of abundance. (...) their consumption behaviours have diversified according to their variability in terms of body, life stage and post-retirement lifestyles (J28 Asahi 6.1.2007: (be word) The baby boomer market – 'Homogeneous mass' is an illusion, Hiroyuki Murata)

(...) a leading role in the senior market will be taken by women. (J29 Asahi 6.1.2007: (be word) The baby boomer market – 'Homogeneous mass' is an illusion, Hiroyuki Murata)

The newspapers not only reported on anticipated consumption patterns, but also on the actual consumption practices of the baby boomers. The discussion about their actual consumption practices covered the stories of both women and men, though male baby boomers were again more visible. The newspapers found that the baby boomers favour high quality, environmental friendliness, uniqueness, individuality and luxury when purchasing products and services. Additionally, one remarkable statement made in the articles is that the baby boomers regard themselves as younger than their actual age and do not want to be treated as seniors from the standpoint of marketing strategies. This perception corresponds to the idea of anti-ageing and resisting old age discerned as part of the topic 'ageing, health and care'. The reluctance to measure oneself by chronological age is in part consonant with earlier study results that baby boomers in the United Kingdom feel younger than their actual age and seek to maintain a balance between youthful and mature identities through their consumption practices (Biggs et al. 2007b: 56).

10.2 ACTIVITIES, ASSOCIATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS HIGHLIGHTED IN JAPANESE DATA

'**Activities, associations and relationships**' is another distinctive subject in the Japanese data. It originally belonged to the broader topic of 'lifestyles and identities' identified via manifest content analysis. A total of 296

articles dealt with matters related to activities, associations and relationships of the baby boomers.

The topic ‘activities, associations and relationships’ covers various issues associated with the life stage and lifestyles of the baby boomers around and after retirement. Analysis of the topic by refining patterns within the data, however, revealed three distinct themes: *confronting transformations in marital and family relationships*, *involvement in volunteer and community activities*, and *self-fulfilment gained through engaging in new activities*. The three themes together with their essential elements are shown in Figure 16.

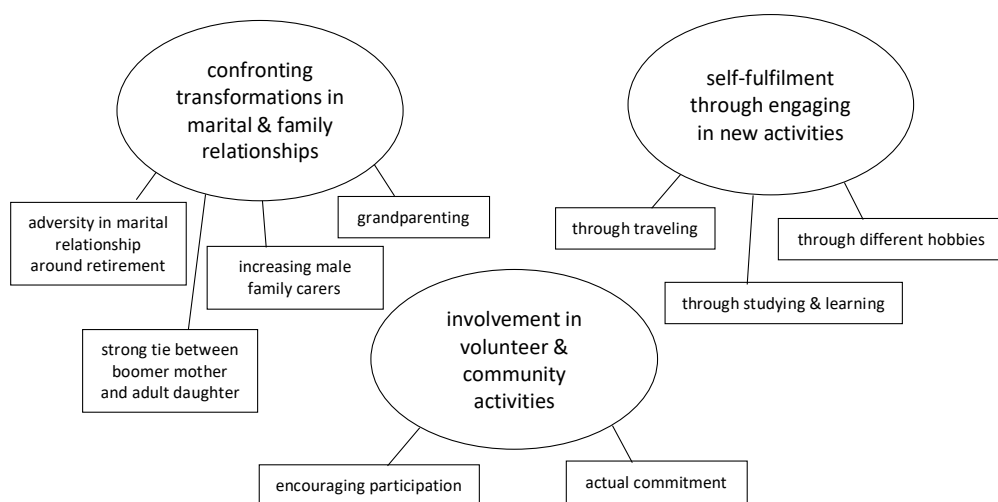


Figure 16. Thematic map of the topic ‘activities, associations and relationships’.

The two Japanese newspapers frequently shed light on *the baby boomers facing transformations in their marital and family relationships*. The contents of relevant articles were quite diverse. Nevertheless, the principal point, which was repeatedly mentioned in the early phases of the study period, is that retirement marks a new stage in a marital relationship. The model boomer family depicted in this context was the nuclear family with a clear role division between husband and wife. When looking at the life course of the baby boomers, marrying for love, as practiced by the majority of boomers, was a new social phenomenon at that time, with arranged marriage between two families having been traditionally the most common type of marriage in Japan until the early 1970s (Amano 2001; Yamasaki 2001). The boomers then have shaped the idea of a nuclear family consisting of a married couple and typically two children, with a house in a suburban metropolis and lives spent apart from old family and local ties. As boomers’ youth and middle age have advanced in parallel with rapid economic growth, most men have been devoted

predominantly to paid work, whereas women as housewives have taken responsibility for domestic work and child rearing. The male breadwinner model established and followed by the baby boomers has generated an apparent role division among married couples, which has eventually resulted in different spheres occupied by the respective genders: a work place outside the home for men and the home with its surrounding neighbourhood for women (Okamura 2001; Yamasaki 2001). Miscommunication between husbands and wives due to this distinctive family system emerges as a challenge or even as a crisis in marital relationships when retirement brings with it more time to spend together. The following extracts express the seriousness of the problem:

In late November of last year, a 'retirement lecture' intended for the baby boom men and married couples was held at a restaurant in a suburb of Tokyo. The aim of the lecture was to give guidance on how to spend life after retirement, but the male participants uttered words of anxiety and confusion.

'I have thought it is just all right that I earn income only', or 'I feel embarrassed that a married couple comes face-to-face with each other at my age.' (J30 Yomiuri 4.1.2007: [Man's emotions – Transcending '-ness'] (2) I do not restrict my partner's way of life (serial))

When the husband stays at home all day after retirement, the burden on the wife, such as preparing lunch, increases and time of her own decreases. Because of accumulated stress, wives tend to suffer from an illness called 'retired husband syndrome'. The syndrome exhibits various mental and physical symptoms from high blood pressure and dizziness to ulcer and depression. (J31 Yomiuri 15.9.2012: For my wife – Declaring domestic independence – Suffering from tinnitus and frustration when retired husband is at home..., Ayako Nishidōji)

The newspapers discussed adversity in the marital relationships of baby boomers from both spouses' perspectives and illustrated how they coped with the problem emerging at such a turning point in their lives. The solution was sometimes divorce. A woman in one narrative, who had terminated a marriage of more than 30 years, said 'I do not have regrets; rather, I feel good' (J32 Asahi 21.11.2005: (Seven millions ways of 'the baby boomers':1) Divorce in later years – Wives who are waiting quietly, 'splitting the pension system'). Another article introduced the thoughts of a woman who had considered divorce: 'You only live once, so I do not think I have to be patient any longer' (J33 Asahi 13.7.2006: (At the crossroads – Why get a divorce in the later years: the first volume) Loveless marriage – No emotional bond regardless of

being next to each other, Tokiko Tsuji & Takako Morikawa). The extracted phrases highlight each woman's desire to live her own life, as she had long been suffering from scarce interactions with her spouse, who was not committed to domestic matters on the grounds of having a busy working life.

More often, however, other people have overcome the crisis with efforts to reconstruct their marital relationships. Here, the newspapers underscored changes in the attitudes and behaviours of men. In some stories, health and mental problems or disputes at the workplace made male baby boomers more aware of the importance of kinship ties and convinced them of the following: 'I thought I was providing for my family by working, and I left all domestic affairs to my wife. I did not understand the dissatisfaction of my wife' (**J34** Yomiuri 17.11.2005: Special topic about rich senior life – Cooking by males – Developing one's skill to strive for an independent husband), or 'I believed we were a married couple who could discuss things with each other spontaneously. However, I have realized that I just pressed my opinion on my wife' (**J35** Yomiuri 4.1.2007: [Man's emotions – Transcending '-ness'] (2) I do not restrict my partner's way of life (serial)). The articles presented such reflections by men and described how they have restored their marital relationships: with mutual respect and appreciation, by showing affection, by enhancing communication, by doing the cooking and other domestic chores, and so forth.

The depictions in the Japanese newspapers of the marital hardships experienced by the baby boomers are an interesting example of the disadvantages and advantages faced by men and women in later life (Venn, Davidson & Arber 2011). The articles illustrated that divorce liberated baby boomer women and let them to feel a greater sense of freedom and autonomy. This indicates potential advantages for women, though the previous related studies in Western countries have largely focused on widowhood (Arber & Ginn 1995; Arber, Davidson & Ginn 2003; Venn et al. 2011). Meanwhile, the portrait of Japanese baby boomer men struggling with crises in marital relationships as they stand on the threshold of retirement suggests the disadvantage for men in terms of family and social relationships.

The newspapers delineated not only narratives of the boomers but introduced the advice of specialists on improving marital relationships. The premise underlying such debates is that the duration of marriage would be extraordinarily long for the baby boomers due to their projected longevity, and the quality of interaction between married couples would inevitably affect their old age. The articles thus persistently pointed out the importance of the period around retirement in terms of undergoing a transformation in marital relationships.

Since the baby boomers established a new type of family model, relationships with children in general have also changed. A notable media topic in this sense was the strong ties between female baby boomers and their adult daughters. The articles presented stories of a mother and a daughter who support each other by giving and receiving help in homemaking, child rearing

and shopping. This new family practice rarely existed in the traditional Japanese family system based on the idea of filial piety and patriarchy, where a daughter had to leave her parents to get married (Kawashima 2000/1946; Kawashima 2000/1955). On the other hand, as previously mentioned in the analysis of topic 'ageing, health and care', an increasing number of male family carers drew the attention of the media. Hence, it can be argued that the articles in the newspapers *Yomiuri* and *Asahi* demonstrate in a concrete way how public discourses represent ongoing societal changes in terms of family relationships.

A prominent issue observed in the later phase of the study period had to do with grandparenting. The discussion, though, referred exclusively to grandfathers, whereas grandmothers did not appear in the texts. The context of the argument made about grandparenting is that newly retired men representing the baby boomers enjoy associating with their grandchildren, as they could not sufficiently spend time with their own children due to the hectic working life in middle age. The next passage is from an article focusing on active grandparenting by one man, which aptly describes the situation of male retirees in general:

Involvement in grandparenting stems from introspection on his own child rearing. He was a sales representative for a consumer electronics company headquartered in Osaka. He worked also on holidays and relied on his wife for raising the children. He had also lived away from his family while in Hiroshima on a job assignment. Then, he finally had more spare time. However, his children had already grown up and his wife had had her own hobbies at that time. (J36 Asahi 30.1.2014: (Person) Isami Yamasaki – Established 'Association of official examination for grandparenting', Miki Morimoto)

Indeed, the committed grandfathers featured in the articles sometimes explained their behaviours as an atonement for a past work-centred life. By presenting the narratives of those men, the newspapers emphasised the new roles being taken on by retired male boomers and the great pleasure gained through grandparenting. The articles further discussed that the engagement of men in grandparenting has expanded to include volunteer activities in the community, namely helping with childcare in neighbourhood.

The discussions over time on the theme of *boomers' experiences in transforming marital and family relationships* demonstrate the Japanese media's intention to encourage male baby boomers to rediscover their place in the family through grandparenting, after first confronting a marital crisis around the time of retirement. What then is the new role for female baby boomers later in life? The invisibility of women in terms of grandparenting does not mean that female boomers are less active as grandmothers. It rather implies that the involvement of women in family and community issues are so

self-evident that it does not warrant attention in the newspapers. In this regard, the summary derived from the Japanese public discussions about the retirement and ageing of the baby boomers could be that retirement has demarcated a new phase in family life for men, whereas for women continuation in such a life has been more obvious in terms of their associations with family members. The different implications of later life for women and men in the Japanese context stand in contrast with the implications in the Finnish context. Although the family life and social relationships of the baby boomers are not a distinct topic in the editorials of *Helsingin Sanomat*, the Finnish part of the study reveals that views on retirement and old age are more often articulated for women than for men: while ageing women can expect social positions and spaces for involvement during retirement, including active grandparenting, stories on the retirement years for men are narrower and more limited in scope and present the men in a more socially marginalised position (Ojala & Pietilä 2010).

The next identified theme under the topic of ‘activities, associations and relationships’ is *involvement of the baby boomers in volunteer and community activities*. The activities include environmental protection, care for the elderly, prevention of disaster, baby-sitting and childcare in the local community, revitalising ageing suburbs, and so forth. The theme consists of two aspects: articles or sentences encouraging the participation of the baby boomers in these activities, and second, example stories on the energetic commitment of boomers to various activities.

Articles that attempted to stimulate an interest in volunteer and community activities appeared frequently during the periods before and during early retirement (2004–2009). The newspapers regarded retiring baby boomers as a potential resource for society, and stories appealed that their intelligence, physical strength, expertise and experiences could be utilised to help develop local communities. Such an argument was persistently evident in the editorials, interviews with experts and articles introducing the efforts of local authorities and third-sector organisations. Here, the fundamental logic was that the baby boomers should continue to contribute to society irrespective of retirement. This idea is particularly attractive in the era of austerity, as enhanced volunteer and community activities engaged in by retirees would help supplement local public services suffering from cutbacks.

However, the baby boomers in this context referred unconditionally to men, whether the texts indicated a particular gender or not. The following extract, presenting the comments of one independent intellectual, excellently illustrates the preconceived notion that any general reference to baby boomers in point of actuality means male baby boomers:

The baby boomers are the generation with vigour, strength and knowledge, who have led the Japanese economy from its development to maturity. I think that when they return from their working places to local communities, the vitality of

locality will improve dramatically. Until now, women have taken the central role in addressing the majority of the challenges in neighbourhoods, such as care for the elderly and watching out for the safety of children. However, given the increasing number of older people with dementia, for instance, women alone cannot support the local communities any longer. The participation of men is absolutely necessary. (J37 Yomiuri 1.1.2007: The baby boom generation, let's fight with the spirit – Interview with Tsutomu Hotta, Akiyoshi Morikawa)

The newspapers approached the actual participation of baby boomers in volunteer and community activities from several angles. The first typical story noted that men have overcome a feeling of emptiness suffered following retirement by becoming involved in community activities, which had been unfamiliar to them before. Newspaper articles described the process by which they had rediscovered a sense of fulfilment in life through new involvement and subsequent association with people. Other articles reported on boomers who had changed their work-centred life and started to devote themselves to contributing to society. The turning points prompting a lifestyle change, as the articles frequently depicted them, resulted from experiences of sickness or some other crucial incident in middle age or during the period approaching retirement. A feeling of incompleteness in working life motivated some people to seek out socially more significant activities, including volunteer work abroad, in which they could use their own skills and experiences. The strong desire to contribute to society even expanded to include political activities in a way that the newspapers published a series of articles featuring baby boomers who were candidates in municipal elections.

Though individual narratives proved diverse, nevertheless the newspapers typically focused on boomers who had discovered pleasure and value in continuing to have a 'role' in society after retirement. The main characters in the discussion were again the male baby boomers, though a minor number of articles explained the volunteer and community activities engaged in by women. With respect to the gender differences apparent in the debate, the articles repeatedly highlighted that men tended to take a new step into such activities along with retirement, whereas the activities of women were rather an extension of their past and current lives, associated as they were with family and local ties. Indeed, the female baby boomers had long been keenly involved in consumer cooperative activities and civic activities, which had raised political awareness of them (Okamura 2001; Yamasaki 2001; Asahi 6.1.2005: Manicure – As a citizen rather than a wife or a mother (Beyond the nuclear family – Binding together: 5)). For instance, a woman who had decided to run in the municipal election stated the following in an interview. Along with taking principal responsibility for raising three children and caring for both her own aged parents and those of her spouse, she had been actively involved in the community movement for improving school meals:

'I have always devoted my life to other people. It is high time that I go my own way in life. Besides, I believe the political field needs people who know and understand the hard reality of child rearing and nursing care for the elderly'. (...) (J38 Asahi 6.1.2005: Manicure – As a citizen rather than a wife or a mother (Beyond the nuclear family – Binding together: 5))

Analysis of the topic on activities, associations and relationships revealed the third theme, *self-fulfilment gained through engaging in new activities*. Activities of the baby boomers in this regard were driven purely by their individual orientation, while the newspapers generally discussed their involvement in volunteer pursuits in terms of social contributions. The newspapers examined personally motivated involvement in activities, postulating that the boomers can finally devote their time, energy and money to what they have longed for once freed from the responsibility of work and family. Hence, they characterised the attitudes of the baby boomers toward committing themselves to such activities using cheerful turns of phrase, such as 'searching for meaningfulness in life', 'finding one's unknown self', 'launching upon a new challenge' and 'beginning the second half of life'.

The activities introduced in the newspapers spanned a diverse range of interests, reflecting the sheer numbers of baby boomers. Classifying them according to their characteristics resulted in three major groups: traveling, studying and learning, and engaging in different hobbies.

Texts highlighting the popularity of traveling depicted the baby boomers as representatives of retirees who take new types of trips. Unlike typical travel for working-age people, in which one rapidly visits a number of major tourist destinations in a few days, a growing number of boomers prefer having unique experiences. The articles provided example stories of boomers who stayed abroad for a longer period of time in a relaxed manner enjoying a favourable climate or who visited rural parts of Japan to experience farming and learn about local history and culture. As the next comments by a retired married couple show, other interests emphasised in the newspapers had to do with satisfying one's intellectual curiosity once freed from work-related pressures and new types of associations with people, both of which enhance joy and richness in post-retirement life. They had travelled to 18 countries for a total of 630 days as part of a dream to travel throughout the Eurasian continent after retirement:

'I can face the world without acting formally, when I am now finally free from the company (a husband's utterance)', or 'When I get friendly with local people in a foreign country, it alters the image of the country itself' (a wife's utterance). (J39 Yomiuri 13.9.2013: [Shining senior] Travelling abroad for a longer period – With less luggage and taking it easy)

Studying is another activity that older people are willing to engage in. The articles portrayed baby boomers and retirees who were eager to learn. Their keen attitude towards studying appeared to come from a genuine enthusiasm for knowledge. The texts mentioned that some of them attended summer courses at universities to learn what they were interested in, while other people went abroad to study English and still others even enrolled as university degree students seeking substantial study and research. By featuring those narratives, the newspapers made the case that studying and learning for the boomers no longer merely constitute a spare-time activity in post-retirement days, but rather are done to develop a new part of their identity and a new aspiration in life and as a means to cultivate ones' character.

The baby boomers also have begun taking part in various leisure activities or have restarted hobbies during the period approaching retirement. Their expectations for new lifestyles in early old age are vividly described in the next passage:

Wishing to regain the spotlight. Men in the face of retirement and women who finished child rearing a little earlier and have more free time share this idea. There are increasing numbers of people who jump into new challenges in the start of their second half of life. (J40 Yomiuri 3.1.2006: [Rediscovering affluence] Part I – New life for the baby boomers (1) Let's challenge! – The second act of life (serial))

People who have restarted hobbies practiced in their youth or who chose to pursue some new passion uttered their past thoughts on the matter with such words as 'I would regret it if this went on' and 'I have left something I wanted to do' (J41 Yomiuri 3.1.2006: [Rediscovering affluence] Part I – New life for the baby boomers (1) Let's challenge! – The second act of life (serial)). The hobbies explained in the articles were varied; they included playing musical instruments, singing in a choir, cooking, photography, farming and gardening, practicing Japanese traditional arts, dancing, and so forth. The stories that both newspapers presented several times and that symbolised the new challenges taken on by the baby boomers included taking drama lessons or establishing amateur theatres. The articles reported on people finding a passion by acting onstage in their middle and older age. They regarded self-expression and discovering oneself as the most appealing aspects of acting. Nevertheless, their acting performances were indeed manifestations of their life histories and accumulated experiences, which was the main message that the articles tried to convey to readers. The next passage from one article illustrates quite well this idea:

In June, an audition at the Kakehashiza Theatre for this fiscal year was held. The City of Osaka sponsors a citizens' theatre

that deals with human-rights issues. Sixty persons passed the trial. Several of those were people of the senior generation. They include: a former businessman who seeks again the challenges of the world of theatre that he gave up in his twenties; a women who tries to fill the void in her heart through acting following the loss of her mother; a primary school teacher who jumped into the unknown field with the wish 'I want to express myself. (...)

(...)

Akihiko Uzuno, an artistic director at the Kakehashiza Theatre tells: 'Acting reveals the whole personality of yourself. Because one's life is projected onto acting, it has depth and is impressive.' (J42 Asahi 23.11.2006: (Again – Retirement of the baby boomers) Citizens' theatre – A new step. I want to express renewed myself, Naoko Kawamura)

Easily discernible in the stories on acting and amateur theatres, the media focus on boomer involvement in hobbies constructs the public image of the baby boomers as contemplating their past and looking to the future through undertaking such activities.

The theme *self-fulfilment gained through engaging in new activities* encompasses both men and women. However, the articles still implied that those male and female pensioners must possess wealth, good health and time. In the articles discussing the strong commitment of the baby boomers to various activities, texts relevant to economic hardship, current health problems or nursing care needs for family members rarely emerged. The media discussions about an energetic post-retirement life followed the same idea raised in critical studies on ageing, i.e. that people with favourable circumstances in terms of life resources can primarily enjoy the Third Age – a period devoted to personal fulfilment (Hendricks & Hatch 2009; Holstein 2011). This is also in harmony with the argument that the emergence of the Third Age for the baby boomers is dependent upon lifestyle choices, which are constrained by life chances and different opportunities (Karisto 2007; Katz & Calasanti 2014).

Regarding the themes *involvement in volunteer and community activities* and *self-fulfilment gained through engaging in new activities*, retirement and ageing are described in a positive light. This stands in stark contrast with other articles relevant to the topic of 'ageing, health and care', which includes alarmist tones about ageing populations. The differing or even contradictory descriptions in the same national newspapers demonstrate that the cultural representations of old age have two faces: on the one hand, they portray ageing as a period of inactivity, dependency, decline, loss, restraints, necessities and disengagement, while on the other it is a time to enjoy one's social and economic resources, a time of growth, vitality, choices, opportunities and

personal fulfilment (Baltes & Carstensen 1996; Foster & Walker 2015; Karisto 2007).

10.3 CURRENT EVENTS IN ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL AFFAIRS HIGHLIGHTED IN FINNISH DATA

Analysis of the Finnish data revealed the unique importance of the topic ‘**current events in economic and political affairs**’, with 22 editorials in *Helsingin Sanomat* discussing the topic. Unlike the three other topics of note (‘work, retirement and pension’, ‘ageing, health and care’ and ‘baby boomers as a generation’) analysed previously, the majority of the articles dealing with current events in economic and political affairs did not designate retirement and ageing of the baby boomers as a starting point for the discussions, nor did they give the boomers a pivotal role in the narrative. Rather, the focal point of each article was on topical issues in economic and political fields, and the baby boomers appeared in an indirect or illustrative manner.

The current events in economic and political affairs discussed in the articles can be classified broadly into two groups: economic recession and the accompanying fiscal crisis of the state, and second, the various policy measures adopted to improve administration of the public sector. These two types of debates led to a focus on specific themes, *challenging economic environment partly influenced by the boomers* and *reforms in public administration contributed to by the boomers*. Figure 17 presents a thematic map generated based on the data analysis.

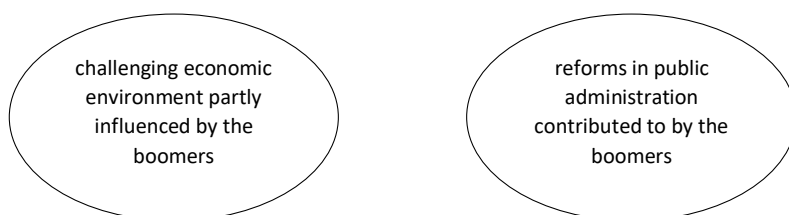


Figure 17. Thematic map of the topic ‘current events in economic and political affairs’.

Texts that included the first theme, *challenging economic environment partly influenced by the boomers*, tended to imply that the retirement of the baby boomers would likely worsen and extend the economic recession, in lieu of regarding boomer retirement as the origins of a harsh economic climate. Mention of the implicit influence of the boomers on economic decline began to be more apparent during the period of normal retirement (2008–2015).

Well-grounded explanations for linking the boomers with economic downturn had to do with the full-scale retirement of the baby boomers occurring simultaneously with the global recession triggered by the 2008 financial crisis. Increasing deficit due to the recession and the demographic changes caused by the retirement of the boomers defined the fiscal crisis in the minds of most in the country. Debates about the concurrent two-fold hardship typically took the form described in the following excerpt:

The central problems in the Finnish economy are unaltered, and everyone is aware of them. The baby boomers are retiring, followed by increasing pressure for extending work careers. Pension level in the next few decades has already been reduced by means of the life expectancy coefficient, and future pension reforms will postpone pension age probably by several years from the current one.

So, what will we be confronted with during the next period of government, when it will begin to tackle the growing amount of debt? The list is horrifying. Income tax will become strained, municipal tax will rise, employment pension contributions will increase, health insurance fees will increase, and their synergy will lead to faint economic growth. (F54 20.12.2009: On the border of a turning economic trend, Janne Virkkunen)

The wording of the paragraphs suggests that austerity measures are to be tough not only because of serious recession, but also due to the prospective pressure on the state budget caused by massive boomer retirement. The newspaper argues that the retirement of the baby boomers may hinder prompt recovery from the recession, which will eventually have a negative impact on the long-term national economy.

The second theme identified under the topic of ‘current events in economic and political affairs’ is *reforms in public administration contributed to by the boomers*. Contrary to the pessimistic view incorporated in the previous theme, what is visible in the texts relevant to this theme are statements about making good use of the boomer retirement for implementing particular policies. As the following paragraph shows, one of the national policies that the newspaper focused on had to do with the decentralisation of government authority, intended for promoting regional development:

Transferring government activities to places outside the metropolitan area per se has reasonable grounds. Decentralisation helps balance regional development of the country. Governmental working places are also welcome in every municipality struggling with unemployment and scarce tax revenues. Retirement of the baby boomers will free up a

great number of positions and offices, thereby it will provide an opportunity to reorganise public administration. (F55 19.9.2005: Government has failed in achieving regionalisation)

The texts view the baby boomers as potentially contributing to the administrative restructuring of the public sector. This implies that the scale of the boomer retirement will be so enormous that it could affect the implementation of national policy. The influence of the boomer retirement emerged also in debates about improving the productivity of public administration. In the next extract, the baby boomers are again referred to as a motivating factor affecting government policy:

The productivity programme of the government launched approximately ten years ago from negotiations held by the Minister of Finance and top-level civil servants of the ministry, where the budget for the next fiscal year was prepared. An opportunity came up in the discussion consisting of the idea that the baby boomers will also retire from public administration from the end of this decade onwards. It is thus possible to rationalise public administration and enhance the productivity of its activities by taking advantage of natural wastage. (F56 2.12.2007: Productivity programme of the government should not only be reorganisation)

Half of the data (11 articles) discussed issues related to the decentralisation of government authority and reorganisation of public administration. The newspaper, however, did not regard the retirement of the baby boomers as a direct reason for reforming public administration. Rather, the baby boomers provided the incentive for constructing public discussions around disputed national policies. It can be argued that the Finnish media at the time had the tendency to associate the baby boomers and their retirement with all kinds of subjects, particularly when attempting to encourage active debates around socially and politically important questions.

11 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The previous chapters (Chapter 7 to Chapter 10) provided a comprehensive report on the empirical study, in which 1,236 newspaper articles were categorised into several manifest topics and the data explored qualitatively to ascertain notable patterns and define them as identifiable themes shaping media discussions. The analyses involving these multiple processes were conducted separately for the Japanese and for the Finnish newspaper articles and the results compared against one another. This was essential in order to systematically investigate a large amount of empirical materials consisting of texts in two different languages.

The aim of the final chapter is to summarise the foregoing research results and discuss them from two main viewpoints. The first point of view has to do with how media representations of the ageing baby boomers helped construct images and social perceptions of ageing and older adults in Japanese and Finnish contexts. The second viewpoint deals with how the socio-cultural constructions of ageing and old age presented in the newspaper discussions on the baby boomers incorporate issues of gender. After discussing the study results from these two perspectives, the strengths and limitations of the study are then assessed.

11.1 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY RESULTS

This section summarises concisely the results of the empirical study. It answers the fundamental research questions as follows:

- (1) How do Japanese and Finnish national newspapers portray the baby boomers during the period of their retirement and beginning of old age?
- (2) How are newspaper portrayals of ageing baby boomers different or similar in Japan and Finland?
- (3) In what ways is gender involved when Japanese and Finnish newspapers articulate the retirement and ageing of the baby boomers?

Studying the articles published in Japanese and Finnish newspapers revealed that the baby boomers were represented in different ways in the mass media of the respective countries. The manifest content analysis systematised the diverse articles by clustering them into several broader subjects. The Japanese data consisted of the topics 'work, retirement and pension', 'ageing, health and care', and 'lifestyles and identities' (with three subcategories: 'consumption and marketing', 'activities, associations and relationships', and

'baby boomers as a generation'). The Finnish data consisted of the topics 'work, retirement and pension', 'ageing, health and care', 'current events in economic and political affairs', and 'baby boomers as a generation'. The subsequent thematic analysis qualitatively investigated socio-cultural constructions of ageing baby boomers according to the classified topics, while taking account of the latent and underlying meanings involved in the data.

Both Japanese and Finnish newspapers portrayed the baby boomers in a varied manner. At times, they depicted the baby boomers as posing critical challenges to ageing societies due to their mass retirement, which would cause shortages in the workforce, or because of the prospective increase in old-age care. At other times, social expectations regarding the boomers were obvious in textual articulations that encouraged them to postpone retirement age, continue working into the post-retirement period or participate in volunteer and community activities. Particularly in the Japanese context, a spotlight was also cast on those baby boomers who engaged themselves keenly in various pursuits. In these cases, the media postulated that the baby boomers had the capacity and resources to contribute to maintaining the stability of national economy, to addressing the sustainability of the social security system or otherwise to enhancing the vitality of society. The wide-ranging and sometimes contrasting portrayals of the Japanese and Finnish baby boomers are a fine example of the two-faced cultural representations of old age. Previous research demonstrates that, on the one hand, old age has been portrayed as a period of inactivity, dependency, decline, loss and disengagement, but at the same time it has involved depictions of strong social and economic resources, growth, vitality, contentment and opportunities among the elderly (Baltes & Carstensen 1996; Foster & Walker 2015; Karisto 2007a). It can be argued that the two faces of old age emerging in media portrayals became particularly prominent in the present study because it dealt with the period when baby boomers stood on the threshold of old age, which is characterised by the term Third Age.

The two-faced – or to be more accurate, multifaceted – nature of the ageing baby boomers crucially came to the surface when exploring topics common to both the Japanese and Finnish data ('work, retirement and pension', 'ageing, health and care' and 'baby boomers as a generation'), and especially when comparing the contents of the relevant articles for each country.

For articles including the topic 'work, retirement and pension', the socially perceived problems and challenges were quite similar for Japan and Finland. Due to the demographic significance of the baby boom and subsequent smaller birth cohorts, media in both countries understood that the retirement of the baby boomers would bring about a serious shortage in the labour force and increasing social security expenses, and thereby, it posed a threat for stagnation of the economy. Hence, the baby boomers were expected to delay their effective retirement age in Finland, whereas in Japan they were encouraged to postpone retirement or to continue working part-time in the post-retirement period, because these measures would supposedly alleviate

the negative impact of massive retirement. However, a marked contrast between the two societies could be discerned when drawing attention to how the newspaper articles depicted the attitudes and behaviours of the boomers toward extending working life. Recursive articulations in the Japanese newspapers focused on stories of baby boom men and women who had eagerly continued engaging in work that they found meaningful. The media narratives of ageing boomers had echo effects in terms of how they influenced the retirement behaviours of contemporaries as well as younger people approaching retirement; thus, it can be inferred that the stories helped generate social and cultural circumstances that favour the extension of working life or even take it for granted. Meanwhile, Finnish newspaper reports predominantly focused on persons reluctant to work longer years, and who instead preferred early retirement due to such diverse reasons as health problems, dissatisfaction with work and age discrimination in the workplace. The unfavourable attitudes toward continuing work, as depicted in the media, applied to a range of older workers both then and now, from previous cohorts to the baby boomers and presumably successive cohorts as well. It can be argued that such media articulations have led in part to the persistence of a culture that regards ageing as negative, obstructive and disadvantageous, particularly with respect to work and retirement.

Likewise, the settings for discussions on the topic 'ageing, health and care' were similar for both Japan and Finland. The shared experience of unprecedentedly rapid ageing of the population meant that the contents of the newspaper articles and reporting patterns in both countries were very much alike. The media in the respective countries frequently emphasised the social impacts and challenges of population ageing being accelerated by the baby boomers. These issues were generally debated in relation to managing public finances to ensure a sustainable social security system and arranging care and services for the elderly. A future demographic scenario drawing on gloomy statistical projections and pessimistic estimates of increased social expenditures were the decisive factors for the alarmist tone in the media representations of both countries. However, demographic alarmism was more pronounced in Finnish newspaper discussions, which tended to promote an intergenerational equity debate that revolved around the theme of the baby boomers as a social burden. Contrastingly, the Japanese newspapers attempted to avoid possible intergenerational conflicts by calling for solidarity between the different generations.

Unlike debates around population ageing that took place exclusively at the population level, the media of each country depicted experiences and awareness about individual ageing differently. While Japanese newspapers focused on subjective perceptions of age and the ageing of individual boomers, Finnish discussions were somewhat mixed, having both personal and public perspectives. A notable difference between the two countries emerged in relation to how negative attitudes toward ageing were articulated. In Japanese newspaper articles, the disfavour shown by boomers to the ageing process in

general led to the idea of anti-ageing and resisting old age, whereas the Finnish media repeatedly reported on the problem of ageism, namely social conventions discriminating against older adults.

To generalise from the analytical results on the aforementioned two topics, 'work, retirement and pension' and 'ageing, health and care', similarities could be discerned in the media representations of the ageing baby boomers in both Japanese and Finnish newspaper articles with respect to the boomers being treated as an undifferentiated mass. This was typical when the newspapers debated issues surrounding the impending workforce shortage and general population ageing, which would have crucial impacts on society, the economy and politics. Discussion of these issues occurred at the population level; rather than paying particular attention to the individual characteristics of the baby boomers, the articles emphasised instead their numbers and volume. Common media discourses in Japan and Finland underscored the need to postpone retirement as a means of sustaining the welfare societies and increase the number of active and healthy years in later life, which can be interpreted through the concept of the global North. Due to the globally experienced crisis surrounding pension and social security, as well as the widening inequality gap, people in the global North are increasingly pressured to take individual responsibility for managing their later years (Ojala et al. 2016; Phillipson 2009).

In contrast to population-level discussions, portrayals of the baby boomers diverged in the two countries when the media presented the baby boom generation as individual persons or a group consisting of individuals. Individualities or personas and social understandings of them emerged when the newspaper articles highlighted behavioural aspects of the baby boomers. This observation was particularly accentuated under the topic 'baby boomers as a generation', in which the depictions of ageing baby boomers were substantially different between the two countries. By comprehensively delineating the lives of the baby boomers in the past and present, as well as their future prospects, the Japanese media constructed an updated public image of the boomers as forerunners in re-shaping old age. Meanwhile, the Finnish media adhered to pitting the baby boomers and younger age groups against one another over interests and resources. This led to leaving in place an old-fashioned image of the boomers instead of formulating a new image of older adults entering a new era.

Extensive investigation of the socio-cultural constructions of ageing baby boomers via cross-national comparisons also uncovered the fact that in the Finnish media, societal perceptions toward ageing and old age at the level of individuals sometimes fused with discussions at the population level, whereas those two levels of debate mainly operated independently in the Japanese media. Hence, regardless of a somewhat alarmist tone when discussing the rapid ageing of the population or expressing concern about the impending mass retirement of baby boomers, the Japanese newspapers predominantly portrayed the baby boomers as a group of individuals in a positive light,

drawing on their capacity and potential to meet the challenges of an ageing society. Narratives of individual baby boomers with respect to their retirement behaviours and lifestyles seldom merged with anxiety about an ageing population. Meanwhile, portrayals of ageing Finnish baby boomers involved contradictory or ambivalent features. Newspaper articles easily transferred alarmist or apocalyptic demography discussions to discussions about individual boomers, which viewed them as a burden to society, as older persons similar to their predecessors or as an older generation whose interests conflict with those of the younger generation. Simultaneously, though with much less frequency, the articles suggested that boomers should take the initiative in extending their working life or arranging for future old-age care services. Section 2 of this chapter considered the rationale for country-specific characteristics of media representations of ageing baby boomers and what implications the study results have for understanding social perceptions of ageing, older adults and later life.

Finally, studying the intersection of gender and ageing in newspaper portrayals of the baby boomers again highlighted a distinction between Japan and Finland. In Japanese newspaper articles, underrepresentation of female baby boomers compared to their male peers was statistically significant when gender representation was examined in a quantitative way. However, qualitative analysis of the data raised questions as to whether women's underrepresentation was justified. A profound reading of the texts revealed that the Japanese newspapers frequently presented male baby boomers in a disadvantageous position where retirement from a work-centred life confronted them with an identity crisis, adversity in marital and family relationships, health problems, and so forth. In contrast, the advantage of women emerged when the media described those who had liberated themselves through divorce or who had found contentment by engaging in paid or unpaid labour in which they discovered their own abilities. Such articulations demonstrated a difference from the traditional understanding of a 'double standard of ageing', which refers to discrimination against older women both because of their gender and age. Gender-conscious portrayals of ageing baby boomers in the Japanese media added a new layer to generational debates that had hitherto been either masculine or non-gendered.

In Finnish newspaper articles, gender did not have any special relevance when discussing the retirement and ageing of the baby boomers. The Finnish boomers were predominantly represented as non-gendered. Thus, irrespective of introducing a gender perspective in order to challenge the conventional concept of generation, the present study did not identify gender differences or gendered characteristics in the public portrayals of the baby boomers. Furthermore, men's and women's experiences of retirement and ageing in relation to one another remained largely unclear. Portrayals of ageing baby boomers in the Finnish media were, consequently, gender neutral. However, to put it another way using a critical tone, they embraced an indifference to gender.

Section 3 of this chapter considered why Japanese media discussions emphasised gender differences, whereas a certain gender indifference characterised Finnish media discussions.

11.2 INHERENT AGEISM AND LATENT AGEISM

Previous chapters on the empirical study demonstrated that the Japanese and Finnish newspaper discussions had several topics in common: ‘work, retirement and pension’, ‘ageing, health and care’, and ‘baby boomers as a generation’. On the other hand, media discussions in the respective countries also centred around other sets of topics: ‘consumption and marketing’ and ‘activities, associations and relationships’ in the Japanese data and ‘current events in economic and political affairs’ in the Finnish data. Irrespective of how common or unique the various topics, underlying the both data sets were explicit or implicit ideas about ageing, old age and older adults formulated at both the population and individual levels. Such ideas emerged when newspapers highlighted in various ways the retirement and ageing of the baby boomers and the acceleration of population ageing as a result of the boomers entering retirement age. As indicated in the previous section, Japanese and Finnish media discussions viewed ageing at the population level in similar ways, as a challenge, concern and even a crisis, though an alarming overtone was relatively more pronounced in the Finnish context. Differences between the two countries stood out when newspaper debates focused on individual ageing experiences, such as depicting the attitudes and behaviours of ageing boomers. While the Japanese media constantly praised energetic boomers for engaging in a diverse range of activities and regarded them as a social resource, the Finnish media in contrast viewed the boomers as obsolete, with negative connotations. In the following paragraphs, I explore these country-specific features in depth to seek the grounds for such views and consider the implications for understanding social perceptions of ageing and old age.

The distinct features that stand out in the Finnish newspaper discussions are as follows: the debate around population ageing tends to have an alarmist tone with an emphasis on the rising old-age dependency ratio and pessimistic projections. The newspaper articles in question focused on how discrimination and prejudice against older workers prevail in society and hinder practices of extending working life. At the same time, the media often noted the phenomenon that people share a reluctance to prolong work career partly due to such age discrimination. Moreover, as part of the emerging tensions between generations the baby boomers have come to be seen as a symbol of the older generation, with critical and unfavourable overtones. These characteristics tend to reinforce social and cultural constructions of ageing, old age, old people and ageing of the population as largely negative. Such images of ageing and old age revealed through an analysis of Finnish media discourse can be understood as an embodiment of ageism. The following classic definition of ageism by Robert Butler appears to hold true for practices in Finland:

Ageism can be seen as a process of systematic stereotyping of and discrimination against people because they are old, just as racism and sexism accomplish this for skin colour and gender. Old people are categorised as senile, rigid in thought and manner, old-fashioned in morality and skills. (...) Ageism allows the younger generations to see older people as different from themselves, thus they subtly cease to identify with their elders as human beings. (Butler 1975: 35)

The baby boomers are frequently portrayed as 'others' in Finnish media discussions. As indicated by the above expression, 'ageism allows the younger generations to see older people as different from themselves', the Finnish newspaper articles are inclined to distance the ageing baby boomers from the rest of 'us', i.e. society. Meanwhile, such practices of alienating the boomers were not observed on the same level in Japanese newspaper articles at the time; rather, they discussed the Japanese baby boomers more as 'us' than 'others'.

It is small wonder that ageism, decades after its initial conceptualisation and critical discussion, still shows up, whether explicitly or implicitly, in the Finnish major national newspaper, while at the same time lively discussions about the Third Age and active ageing are being held in other societal contexts. The explanation offered by Stephen Katz about the social construction of the elderly as a special population and social problem seems to be valid for considering the question at hand. With reference to the history of old-age institutions, the influence of Malthusian discourse in the 19th century and the development of the social survey, which produced demographic knowledge using statistical methodologies, he suggests that the alarmist and largely negative image of the elderly is a basic historical construction in Western societies, one which still endures (Katz 1992). Custodial practices of the old age home institutionalised and marginalised the elderly as a poor, dependent, infirm, incapacitated, unproductive, unreformable and differentiated population, whereas sociological study of elderly persons in the 19th and early 20th century was underpinned by Malthusian anxiety over the growth of dependent populations and their disproportionate need for public resources. Katz (1992: 220) contends that despite the fact that these historical systems and ideology no longer exist to influence modern welfare policies, what has not changed significantly is the integrated figure of the elderly as a special, separate and dependent population whose very existence jeopardises the intergenerational harmony and social prosperity of the future. This argument appears to be fruitful when trying to understand why ageism often underlies Finnish media discussions of ageing baby boomers. Though the baby boomers are still the young-old living in their Third Age, the newspaper tends to envisage their future as one of dependence, which takes on an even more gloomy tone due to their vast numbers. An historically rooted culture that alienates and underrates older persons, combined with the anticipatory nature

of media reports, forms the backdrop for the ageist implications involved in the Finnish newspaper debates.

According to Bytheway (2005a, 2005b), ageism can be defined either broadly or narrowly. Ageism defined in the narrow sense is discrimination and prejudice against older people on the grounds of age. Ageism in the broader sense, on the other hand, is an experience of the fear of ageing and the oppressive use of chronological age, which concerns people of all ages throughout their life course. Butler's concept of ageism introduced earlier in this section is said to be the classic formulation of the narrow definition (Bytheway 2005a, 2005b). Bytheway (2005b) further elaborates on the difference between the narrow and the broad definitions of ageism as follows: we experience ageism in the narrow sense through being judged to be old, whereas we experience ageism in the broader sense through being made aware of age and through being judged according to how we are ageing. To sum up, while narrowly defined ageism is an external manifestation of discrimination and prejudice toward older people, broadly defined ageism refers to internalised beliefs about ageing. I regard the type of ageism emerging in the Finnish media discussions as being analogous to the narrow definition, because newspaper articles judge the baby boomers as old by distancing them from the rest of society in a rather obvious manner. Furthermore, given the claim that the elderly constitute a special and problematic population (Katz 1992), it appears that ageism in Finnish society has been historically constructed and has inherently existed in social perceptions as well as in people's understandings of age. Thus, I call what I identified from newspaper portrayals of ageing Finnish baby boomers 'inherent ageism'.

As demonstrated in the previous section, socio-cultural constructions of ageing baby boomers at the level of individuals in the Japanese context exhibited an interesting contrast with Finnish media discussions. What can obviously be discerned from the newspaper depictions are narratives of those who continue to have roles in and thereby contribute to society, or those who wish to do so, by extending working life into the post-retirement period and by enthusiastically engaging in diverse activities. Corresponding social expectations could also be identified from the repeated notion of viewing retiring/retired boomers as a social resource. The crucial attribute in Japanese media discussions that report population ageing in a rather pessimistic tone while at the same time portray individual ageing optimistically may be relevant to what is called 'a double structure of views on the elderly' (Teshima 2015a; Teshima 2015b). According to Teshima (2015a, 2015b), views on the elderly in present-day Japan comprise a double structure, in which the traditional idea of respect for the elderly backed by Confucian philosophy is coupled with a trend existing throughout the post-war economic growth period that sees older people as socially vulnerable and not economically productive. It can be argued that the positive portrayals of individual boomers are not only influenced by an emerging utilitarian notion of productive ageing, but also by the traditional Japanese custom of respecting the elderly because of their

knowledge, experiences and wisdom. Given the social appreciation of expertise and experiences that the Japanese baby boomers have accumulated through long working careers, it is understandable that optimism at the individual level can operate in parallel with pessimism at the population level.

Optimistic constructs of the ageing baby boomers indeed help the demographic debates on ageing from developing an excessive, alarmist tone. However, it is equally evident that cheerful and bright descriptions never ensure a rosy future for the ageing baby boomers or for the ageing society. I would rather say that a complex and difficult problem remains concealed in Japanese newspaper discussions. The hidden problem refers to the fact that regardless of enthusiastic media attention regarding the retirement and ageing of the baby boomers as a precursor to re-shaping later life, it fails to create concrete images of ageing and old age. Rather, what the media emphasises is the baby boomers as being 'forever young'; the boomers ostensibly never get old!

This lasting image of being 'forever young' or of 'eternal youth' attached to the Japanese baby boomers, one which differentiates them from previous older persons, can be comprehended by the concept of the 'temporal construction of old age'. Jönson (2013) argues that a temporal construction of old age and older people as existing in the past, the present and the future has been a prominent feature in the construction of old age and older people for many decades, and at present, it is focused on the ageing baby boomers. With the idea of temporal construction of old age, a cohort of 'new old' (in this case, the baby boomers) is described as active and self-conscious, being different from the passive, frail and grateful older people of the past or preceding generations. The temporal construction of old age, thus, functions to improve images of older people, but at the same time it obstructs attempts to develop identities as 'older people' (Jönson 2013: 198, 203).

The temporal construction of old age also operates when Japanese newspaper articles discuss retirement and ageing of the boomers, rendering characteristics of very old age, such as frailty, decline and dependence, more and more distant from what is regarded as normative for the lives of the new old people. Distancing the reality of old age irrespective of the media's attention to the baby boomers, who represent an ageing population in the new era, appears to be comparable to polarisation within later life between the Third and Fourth Age. Karisto (2007b) notes that the more cheerful picture we draw of life after retirement, the gloomier we view any type of old age that does not fit into this construction. This means that different discourses concerning old age influence one another. Furthermore, according to the arguments made by critical gerontologists, there is growing evidence that the Third Age is being praised for its 'sameness' and as an 'extension' of midlife, while the Fourth Age is being negatively stereotyped for its 'otherness' (Baltes & Smith 2003: 124; Biggs 2004: 103–104; Bytheway 2005: 369; Gilleard & Higgs 2011: 138–140; van Dyk 2016: 110). The observation that the Third Age manifests itself as an extension of midlife or as being similar to midlife fits into

newspaper portrayals of the Japanese baby boomers, at least to some extent. Comparison of Japanese and Finnish newspaper discussions revealed that although the ‘othering’ of old age and older people appears also in the Japanese media, it is placed in later years, in the Fourth Age. Unlike this postponement of the ‘othering’ process, Finnish media discussions tend to view the baby boomers as ‘others’ already before their actual retirement.

van Dyk (2016) further elaborates on the growing polarisation in later life based on empirical results from a German study. She proposes the idea that instead of sameness (Third Age) and otherness (Fourth Age) in relation to midlife, what is more apparent is a double process of othering in later life, with the young-old being valued as other and the oldest old disdained as other (van Dyk 2016: 110, 117). The twofold process of othering characterises people in their Third Age as being capable and valued as a new social resource, with reference to their attributes deviating from those who in middle-age are more oriented towards their achievements: third agers are less competitive and egoistic, more cooperative and reliable, and more warm-hearted (van Dyk 2016: 111, 117). This argument applies to Japanese media discussions regarding the benefit of utilising boomers’ expertise, yet career-related achievements are much more pronounced and extending the prime years of their working life is more obviously expected in Japanese contexts. Unlike work-related debates, the notion of a double process of othering does not help explain the various activities of the baby boomers focused on by the Japanese media. Nonetheless, I am far less confident in claiming that Japanese boomers committed to engaging in new activities live an extended midlife.

The temporal construction of old age occurring in the Japanese media discourse, at any rate, makes the construction of identities as older people more difficult and strongly distances those persons in the oldest category from normal and active older adults. This deviation from the reality of very old age sometimes transforms itself into a specific form, namely the notion of anti-ageing and resistance to ageing, which in part comprises the ageing experiences of the Japanese baby boomers highlighted in the media. I regard both distance from and resistance to ageing as the other manifestation of ageism, that is to say, ageism in the broader sense as an experience of the fear of ageing (Bytheway 2005a, 2005b). Ageism in a broader sense tends to be concealed in the cheerful depictions of energetic Japanese baby boomers and in the strong societal expectations for them. Thus, I term the ageism identified when investigating newspaper portrayals of ageing Japanese baby boomers ‘latent ageism’.

The temporal construction of old age, which operates in newspaper portrayals of the ageing baby boomers, might somehow be tied to Japanese culture. However, when considering Japanese boomers’ transition from work to retirement as underlined by an active, engaged lifestyle, the classic theory of ‘the busy ethic’ that David Ekerdt devised more than thirty years ago – and which Stephen Katz (2000) echoed with his concept of ‘busy bodies’ – still appears to be viable. Ekerdt (1986) defines the busy ethic as follows:

There is a way that people talk about retirement that emphasizes the importance of being busy. Just as there is a work ethic that holds industriousness and self-reliance as virtue so, too, there is a “busy ethic” for retirement that honors an active life. It represents people’s attempts to justify retirement in terms of their long-standing beliefs and values. (Ekerdt 1986: 239)

The busy ethic forms a moral continuity between work and retirement. As the definition indicates, the busy ethic endorses conduct that is consistent with the abstract ideals of the work ethic, and thereby it esteems leisure that is earnest and active and that occupies one’s time (Ekerdt 1986: 239). Japanese baby boomers’ attitudes and behaviours, as well as the social expectations depicted in the media, are quite understandable given the several purposes that the busy ethic serves: it legitimates the leisure of retirement, it defends retirees against judgements about their ageing, it gives definition to the retirement role and it adapts retirement to prevailing societal norms (Ekerdt 1986: 240–242). Contrary to the ideas of the polarisation between the Third and Fourth Age and the double process of othering in later life that view the elderly mainly from a societal point of view, the concept of the busy ethic entails more comprehensive and multiple perspectives. According to Ekerdt (1986: 240–241), the busy ethic has three components: first, older workers and retirees as the subjects of the busy ethic; second, the group comprises other participants, such as relatives and friends; and third, parties, including the popular media, are institutional conservators of the busy ethic that prioritise implicit and explicit models about retired life. Thus, it can be argued that the busy ethic, with its holistic approach to retirement, justifies Japanese media discussions in which both the subjectivity of the boomers and normative models of retired life for the boomers are evident. The busy ethic can be identified also in Finland, but it is not as visible as in Japan. In the Finnish newspaper, viewing the baby boomers as obsolete is perhaps more typical than depicting them as active and engaged.

11.3 EMERGING GENDER DIFFERENCES AND GENDER INDIFFERENCE

The quantitative investigation of gender representation showed that in both the Japanese and Finnish newspapers, only a minor portion of the discussions approached the baby boomers from a gender perspective. A majority of the articles, 50 per cent in the Japanese data and 97.6 per cent in the Finnish data, represented the baby boomers in a non-gendered manner. However, when the intersection of gender and ageing was studied qualitatively, clear gender differences emerged in the Japanese newspaper discussions. The qualitative analysis of the Finnish media discussions, in contrast, did not reveal gender

differences, but rather a general indifference to gender dominated the newspaper discourse. This section considers why the Japanese media highlighted gender differences and the gendered characteristics of the baby boomers, and conversely, why the Finnish media did not draw attention to the gender of the baby boomers.

The fact that baby boom men and women in Japan have followed very different life-course paths in terms of both work and family roles is projected onto particular patterns in the media discussions. The Japanese newspapers constructed a typical image of male baby boomers at a turning point in their lives as follows. Upon retirement, men who have devoted themselves mostly to work and neglected domestic matters first face a loss of identity and a crisis in their marital and family relationships, which they then overcome by taking part in paid or unpaid work utilising expertise accumulated over many years, by restoring the marital relationship or by becoming actively involved in grandparenting. The point of emphasis in the media discourse is that by engaging in post-retirement pursuits, male baby boomers continue to have roles in society or find new places in family and local community settings. Meanwhile, the media has chosen to focus on the latent competency of female boomers that they developed in the domestic and neighbourhood realm and identify its usability in a broader social context, such as undertaking paid work and taking part in community activities. The underlined issue here is that both women and society can benefit from utilising their potential competency: women gain personal meaningfulness through such participation, whereas society obtains a tool for addressing the challenges of a labour force shortage and ageing population.

These gender-conscious narratives diversify the image of the Japanese baby boom generation that originated from highly masculine descriptions (Sakaiya 2005/1976; Sakaiya 2008/2005). They also contribute to enhancing an understanding that the retirement and ageing of the baby boomers, and more generally speaking, that the experiences of ageing are gendered. Nevertheless, the gendered experiences articulated in the media involve more male perspectives than female viewpoints. This leads to the assumption that the post-retirement years represent a new phase in life for men, whereas a continuation of past and current lifestyles frames women's narratives later in life. The newspapers take the different gendered life courses of men and women throughout the working age period, life courses that then shape later life differently for men and women, as historically given and never criticise such a narrative. Thus, gender differences in the media emerge from blindly accepting a gender-segregated model of boomer lives, without raising any questions about it. Even as the Japanese media posit such monolithic gender differences, the discussions in the articles remained largely indifferent to diversity and inequality among both men and women. Given that cumulative advantages and disadvantages over one's life course increase the complexity of experiences in later life (Dannefer 2003), maintaining a gender-segregated model of the baby boomers may be problematic. It is of great interest how

Japanese newspapers will continue to portray baby boom men and women when advancing age cause dependency and the need for economic, physical and cognitive support.

The gender indifference identified in Finnish newspaper discussions cannot be simply ascribed to the data confined to editorials and comment articles. Discussions in the editorials tended to focus on the baby boomers as a population group rather than describing issues related to individual boomers as part of an effort to integrate various news articles and shape the essence of public opinion. However, this argument is not valid with respect to Japanese newspaper editorials, as some of them included a gender perspective or mentioned baby boom men and women respectively. Thus, the non-gendered nature of Finnish media discussions was not mainly due to the editorials themselves, but rather because of the culture-bound specifics of Finnish society. One reason for cultural influence can be found in how the Finnish media discussions depicted the transition from working life to retirement. In a similar manner as in the Japanese case, Finnish newspaper portrayals of ageing baby boomers reflected the typical life course of the boomers, but manifested in the opposite way. Irrespective of minor differences within and between genders, the normative life course of boomers from education to working life to retirement has shaped a similar route for both male and female baby boomers in Finland. Since men and women almost equally participate in the labour market, and since within this framework they have specific family roles, the Finnish media did not designate the gendered implications of retirement and ageing. Gender indifference thus derives from the way in which the media has chosen to take the standard Finnish life course for granted.

Another socio-cultural explanation for the indifference to gender is related to the images and social perceptions of ageing constructed by the Finnish media. As repeatedly described, the Finnish newspaper debates depicted the ageing of the population as a crisis and anticipated that the baby boomers would become a dependent population in the future. When the newspaper expressed concerns about the sustainability of social and health services and the pension scheme being threatened by the ageing of the baby boomers, differentiating between men and women is of little importance. Instead, the articles focused on the large population of ageing boomers as a problem. Thus, it can be argued that the tendency to comprehend the ageing baby boomers and older adults as a special and problematic population is the reason why gender is seldom discussed in the Finnish media. Gender indifference in portraying ageing baby boomers entails the risk of reinforcing the traditional tendency of gerontology to lack a gender perspective and to hinder discussions of heterogeneity in old age.

Emerging gender differences in Japan and gender indifference in Finland show contrasting characteristics. However, the media representations are constructed to fit the inherent and specific concerns of the respective societies. While the Japanese media tends to turn a blind eye to emerging gender differences or to questioning a gender-segregated model of the boomer life

course, indifference to gender is the result of the Finnish media neglecting a gendered perspective when discussing retirement and ageing. The present study revealed how gender is incorporated differently in Japanese and Finnish societies.

11.4 STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present study shed light on the similarities between Japanese and Finnish baby boomers in terms of both demographic and generational characteristics, and it provided detailed analyses on how national newspapers in Japan and Finland have portrayed the boomers when they retired from work and entered old age. Given the visibility and publicity of baby boomers as a distinct population group and considering their generational position as a bridge between the past and the present, studying media discussions about their retirement and ageing revealed the ways in which ageing, old age and older adults are viewed in both societies. The cross-national comparison of the study results from Japan and Finland particularly highlighted the strong social and cultural influences on perceptions of ageing and old age in the respective countries. The ‘inherent ageism’ observed in the Finnish media discussions tends to expose people already in their middle age to age discrimination, especially with respect to working life. The fact that retirement age in Finland is still well below the age of eligibility for normal old-age pension appears to be associated with the inherent ageism that persists within society. Meanwhile, the ‘latent ageism’ existing in Japanese society implies the persistence of an ageism that occurs by transferring age-related prejudice and discrimination from older adults in general to people in the Fourth Age (Holstein 2011).

The study also discovered emerging gender differences in Japan and gender indifference in Finland in terms of newspaper discussions, arguing that they derived from the Japanese media’s way of taking a gender-segregated model of boomer lives as a given and the Finnish media’s way of neglecting a gender perspective with respect to retirement and ageing. These findings are noteworthy in light of gerontological research and studies on generations, which so far have largely lacked a gender perspective. Nevertheless, the study did not focus on LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) persons partly because there was not any discussion related to this group in the research material. Expanding a perspective from the conventional dichotomy between men and women, however, is essential for further study, precisely because there is growing interest in ageing LGBT persons, which certainly concerns the baby boomers, too.

One of the limitations of the study is that the Japanese data set and Finnish data set are not identical. While the Japanese data set consists of all articles containing the combined search words (baby boomers and their lives or retirement) from two leading newspapers, *Yomiuri Shimbun* and *Asahi*

Shimbun, the Finnish data set consists of anonymous editorials and comment articles written by journalists of the newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat*. Notwithstanding the informative nature of the editorials in *Helsingin Sanomat*, as demonstrated by a comparison with editorials from English and German newspapers (Tirkkonen-Condit & Liefländer-Koistinen 1989), as well as in comparison with the contents of Japanese editorials, the Japanese data set is disproportionately larger than the Finnish data set. Additionally, it can be argued that the discussions about population ageing tend to be more strongly linked to the baby boomers in the Finnish data, as the data were selected from approximately 1,500 collected editorials concerning ageing and retirement issues.

The second weakness is related to investigating the research materials from two different languages, one of which is not the native language of the researcher. I am not a bilingual person, but I read Japanese newspaper articles as my mother tongue, whereas I read Finnish articles as a foreign language that I have learned over the past 15 years. Throughout the study process, I read, coded and analysed a large amount of data from two languages all by myself. Even though I handled and processed the texts very carefully, especially with respect to the Finnish data, the fact that Japanese is my native language and Finnish a foreign language may have unintentionally created a bias when analysing and interpreting the data.

If pursuing a more accurate comparative study, I should find a research collaborator whose native language is Finnish, confine the amount and quality of Japanese and Finnish data to identical sample sets, analyse separately the data written in each native language and compare the results of the analyses with one another. However, I would rather claim that the advantage of this study is that I could explore the ageing societies of Japan and Finland with somewhat of an outsider's view, as a foreigner who has lived for over ten years in Finland and as a Japanese person who has been away from her native country for the equivalent number of years.

APPENDIX I

Citations for original Japanese newspaper data (in the order the citations appeared in the thesis)

Work, retirement and pension

J1

Title: (サザエさんをさがして) 定年 そこから足し算が始まる

Newspaper: Asahi

Date of issue: 12.11.2005

Name of the reporter: 斎藤鑑三

Citation: (...)「定年とは乗り継ぎ駅に着くことです。残りあと何年、ではなくて、そこから足し算が始まる。鈍行列車で線路は狭くても、のんびりと好きな所へ行けばいい」(...)

J2

Title: 退職シニアは地域ビジネス 防犯やパソコン支援、公共サービス補う

Newspaper: Asahi

Date of issue: 27.5.2005

Name of the reporter: 清川卓史

Citation: (...)「会社ではそれなりの地位で胸を張れたのに、地域では『どこの人?』。落差がすごく、もう役に立たんのかと悶々（もんもん）としていた」と退職当時に振り返る。

J3

Title: 読売・中公女性フォーラム21 大量定年時代 いまこそ夫婦維新

Newspaper: Yomiuri

Date of issue: 7.2.2004

Name of the reporter:

Citation: (...)「夫の定年は妻の社会活動定年」なんて言われるゆえんです。

J4

Title: [8分の5の生き方] (12) 「隠居」でゆったり マイペースで暮らす (連載)

Newspaper: Yomiuri

Date of issue: 16.1.2004

Name of the reporter: 辻本洋子、山畑洋二、長谷川敏子、前田利親

Citation:

元オーナーシェフ美木剛さん(57)は今、神戸市内で「隠居生活」を送っている。

朝、仕事を持つ妻を送り出した後は、本を読みふける。パスタやうどんで昼食を済ませ市場と書店をのぞく。時には美術館に足を延ばす。

夕食は妻の希望に沿って作る。(…)力を抜いて自分たちだけのために作る料理には、また違った楽しさがある。

朝から夜中まで働き続けた過去を「修羅場だった」と振り返る。「常に100%、目いっぱい心をかけていた」

そのころから、常に引退が頭にあった。「(団塊の)世代特有の破壊衝動」に加え、旅や読書など仕事以外の「百ある夢」への思いも強かった。二人の子どもも独立。料理人としてのピークを見極めてすっぱり閉店を決めた。

復帰を望む声もある。しかし、その気はない。今の生活が気に入っている。「好きなだけ自分の時間がある。こんな幸せなことはありません」

J5

Title: [幸せさがし・団塊世代の新ライフ] (1) まだ60歳

Newspaper: Yomiuri

Date of issue: 1.1.2007

Name of the reporter:

Citation: (...) 新しい社会現象を巻き起こしてきた「塊」たち。一線を退いても、社会に影響を与えていくことだろう。(…)

J6

Title: (社説) 団塊のあした その技能、もったいない

Newspaper: Asahi

Date of issue: 6.1.2006

Name of the reporter: Editorial

Citation:

三菱重工業は、04年度から全工場で技能塾を始めている。

名古屋市郊外の空調機工場では、選ばれた若手の8人を半年間、ラインから外し、塾に専念させている。千分の18ミリ単位という高度な旋盤技能を伝えたり、完成後の検査工程を組立工に経験させたりする。仕事の全体像をつかませるためだ。

団塊の世代が先生である。

不況の連続で新卒採用が長年、抑えられてきた。正社員の技能工4000人のうち、50歳以上が4割近くを占める。

「自分たちが退職したらどうなるのか心配だった。何年も前から言ってきたことが実現した」。現場主任、広田哲さん(58)は誇らしげだ。

製造業だけではない。東京都水道局も昨年秋、技能継承センターをつくった。地面に伝わるかすかな音で地中の水道管の水漏れを見分けるコツや、どの弁から締めると漏水を効果的に抑えられるかなどの知恵を若手に伝えている。

経験に裏打ちされた技能は、機械やマニュアルには簡単に置き換えられない。

J7

Title: [ひと・しごと] ものづくり教育 高度な技能、若手に伝承

Newspaper: Yomiuri

Date of issue: 10.6.2008

Name of the reporter: 岩崎拓

Citation:

東京大学の藤本隆宏教授（技術・生産管理論）は「団塊の世代には、（設計から販売までの全工程にわたる）ものづくりの良い流れを知る人がたくさんいる。この人たちが『先生』に育てることが急務。大企業は社内師範学校を作るべきだ」と提言する。

J8

Title: [自由席] O B 人材活用 経験と意欲を大切に

Newspaper: Yomiuri

Date of issue: 11.6.2006

Name of the reporter: 波多野敬

Citation:

(...)「これは“終職”なんです。人生の終わりまで、仕事を続けることは勉強であり、生き甲斐（がい）にもなるんですよ」

J9

Title: [今日のノート] 求む団塊先生

Newspaper: Yomiuri

Date of issue: 28.11.2006

Name of the reporter: 田口晃也

Citation:

団塊の世代を対象にした本社アンケートでは、働く人の4人に3人が「60歳以上になっても働きたい」と答えている。

J10

Title: ナビ・楽しむ 人生経験、ダテじゃない

Newspaper: Asahi

Date of issue: 1.1.2007

Name of the reporter:

Citation:

「60歳をすぎてこんなにも新しい出会いがあり、自分の世界が広がるなんて」。日給は高くないが、目の前に無限に広がる出会いの可能性ははるかに魅力的だ。

J11

Title: (人生デザイン) 「現役」続行術：11 就労 65歳まで同じ会社で

Newspaper: Asahi

Date of issue: 20.3.2010

Name of the reporter: 高橋美佐子

Citation:

埼玉県的女性（62）は、家事代行会社「ベアーズ」（東京）でパート勤めを始めて2年。今は週4日、日に3時間働く。共働き世帯の留守宅に合鍵で入って掃除をしたり、「やる気が出なくて」とふさぐ更年期の主婦に寄り添ったり。

(...)

子どもたちが独立してから、「仕事を通じて社会とつながりたい」という思いも募り、家事代行の仕事に「これなら能力が生かせそう」と飛び込んだ。「リタイアした夫の応援もあり、生きる手応えを得られてうれしい。プロ意識を持って動けるうちは続けたい」

J12

Title: (b e r e p o r t) 団塊女性が働いて輝く 「アラ還」が欲しがられる理由

Newspaper: Asahi

Date of issue: 10.1.2009

Name of the reporter: 保科龍朗

Citation:

「団塊」周辺の「アラ還」世代は働きたがっている。60～64歳の就業希望者は男性の約65万人に対して、女性も約59万人いるのである。

団塊女性が「モグラ女」と評されたのは、大学進学率が1割そこそこの彼女たちは就職しても、大部分が結婚や出産を機に専業主婦に収まったからだ。

ところが子育てがひと区切りつくと「地中」から這（は）い出し、パートで働く女性もおびただしい数いたのである。リベラルな民主主義教育の洗礼で、無垢（むく）な男女平等、機会均等幻想を抱えこんでいる彼女たちの働くモチベーションは衰えず、企業はその活用を試そうとしている。

Ageing, health and care

J13

Title: (選択のとき 人口減で明日は 導入編) 進む少子高齢化 明るい社会をつくれるか

Newspaper: Asahi

Date of issue: 2.4.2006

Name of the reporter: 太田啓之

Citation:

団塊の世代が80歳代に達する25年間で、高齢化は急速に進む。そんななかで、巨額の借金を抱える国の財政を改善しつつ、膨らむ社会保障費をどう賄うかが課題だ。

難題だが、「持続的な経済成長」が解決策になる。経済が発展→企業利益や賃金が上がる→税収や保険料収入が増える→負担増をできるだけ抑えつつ福祉サービスの水準を

保ち、財政も改善する、という「プラスの循環」=図の左側=ができるからだ。

では、経済成長の条件は何か。大きな要素と言われるのが、働き手の数と生産性のアップだ。人口が減る中で働き手を確保するには、女性や高齢者など多くの人が働きやすい環境をつくる必要がある。生産性を上げるには、教育や再教育の機会を平等に保障して労働力全体の質を高め、技術開発や効率的な経営を実現することが大切になる。

J14

Title: [社説] 着実に社会保障税の準備を 超党派で取り組む時だ

Newspaper: Yomiuri

Date of issue: 18.1.2009

Name of the reporter: Editorial

Citation:

団塊世代はまさに大きな塊となって、遠からず現役を離れ、社会保障を頼りとする高齢期を迎えようとしている。

人口ピラミッドの上部は急速に膨らむ。一方で、土台に位置する平成世代は押しつぶされそうなほど少ない。超少子高齢化は年々進行する。現役世代の負担に大きく頼る現行制度のまま、社会保障給付を維持しようとするれば、支える側は耐えきれないだろう。

老いも若きも、広く薄く、福祉財源を負担し合う必要がある。そうすれば、高齢者層が大きく、現役層が小さくとも、負担の重さは分散される。

J15

Title: [元気をつくる] 人生90年(2) 退職したら、まず脳トレ (連載)

Newspaper: Yomiuri

Date of issue: 7.2.2007

Name of the reporter:

Citation:

「団塊の世代は定年退職後、認知症になる危険性が高い」

警鐘を鳴らすのは、大脳生理学者の高田明和さん(71)(浜松医大名誉教授)だ。同期入社が多い団塊の世代には、出世競争に明け暮れた仕事人間が多い。退職後に新しい生きがいを見つけるのが下手で、家にこもりきりになる人も出てくると見る。

J16

Title: (安心社会へ 選択のとき: 8) 介護の現場 介護、もがく男性たち

Newspaper: Asahi

Date of issue: 15.3.2009

Name of the reporter: 南宏美、石井暖子

Citation:

要介護状態の高齢者を身近で支えるのは「嫁」が多かったが、今は夫や息子も介護の担い手になっている。

背景にあるのが高齢夫婦(夫65歳以上、妻60歳以上)だけの世帯の増加。(…)

妻が要介護状態になれば、夫が担い手に。一人息子が同居する母親の世話をする。こんなケースが増えている。

立命館大学の津止正敏教授（地域福祉論）が06年、30～90代の男性介護者を調査したところ、回答した295人の53%が要介護者と2人暮らし。回答からは炊事や掃除など、慣れない家事に戸惑う様子が浮かび上がった。津止教授は「男性は家事のスキルが乏しいため、女性より困難に直面しやすい」とみる。

また、多くの男性は、合理性や効率性を追求する仕事中心の生活スタイルが染みついており、介護にも達成感を求めてストレスや悩みを抱え込む傾向があるという。

J17

Title: 団塊、老人クラブ離れ 60代「自分はまだ若い」 会員150万人減

Newspaper: Asahi

Date of issue: 17.9.2010

Name of the reporter: 宮崎園子、森本美紀

Citation:

全国老人クラブ連合会（全老連、東京）によると、最盛時には約13万あった老人クラブは2009年には約12万に、会員総数も約890万人から約740万人に減った。この間、65歳以上の人口は850万人増え、クラブ離れは明らかだ。

理由は様々だが、60代を迎えた「団塊の世代」前後の意識の変化が大きい。1998年には25%いた60代会員は、08年は19%に減少。逆に70代以上が急増し、08年は8割を占めた。「老人や高齢者と言われることへの抵抗があるのか、クラブに加入してくれない」（岡山県老人クラブ連合会）

兵庫県内の男性（65）は「介護保険の通知が先日届いてギョツとした。まだまだ若いし、老人クラブに入るなど考えたこともない」と話す。図書館に行ったり街を散策したり、忙しい毎日。ブログ仲間も全国にいる。「クラブの存在は否定しないけど、僕には無縁の世界」

J18

Title: (人生の贈りもの) 小説家・高樹のぶ子：5 枯れ木老人を脱し、輝け「有性寿命」

Newspaper: Asahi

Date of issue: 26.6.2009

Name of the reporter: 田中啓介

Citation:

私たち全共闘世代、団塊の世代って、自分たちのもってる生活文化を捨てないで、そのまま生きてますよ。年甲斐ってほとんど意識してない。私、この年になっても構わずジーパンはいてるし、ミニスカートはいてるし。年齢による括（くく）りではなくて、その人の個性であり、好みであり、そういうもので。だから、エイジレスの時代になっていったほうが、いいんじゃないですか。「枯れ木老人文化」じゃなくてね。

Baby boomers as a generation

J19

Title: [豊かさ再発見] 第1部 新団塊ライフ (6) 数字で見る＝上 (連載)

Newspaper: Yomiuri

Date of issue: 8.1.2006

Name of the reporter:

Citation:

まさに、戦後日本経済の発展と陰りを体現した人生だった。

J20

Title: [日本2020] 団塊の世代 私の「これまで」「これから」

Newspaper: Yomiuri

Date of issue: 17.7.2014

Name of the reporter: 渡辺嘉久

Citation:

(...) 団塊 (だんかい) 世代は戦後日本を舞台に、時代の主役も演じてきた。(...)

J21

Title: [編集手帳] 9月16日

Newspaper: Yomiuri

Date of issue: 16.9.2012

Name of the reporter:

Citation:

作家の有川浩さんは小説『三匹のおっさん』(文芸春秋)で、強く頼もしい「おじいちゃん」たちを描いている◆ゼネコンを定年退職した清田は剣道の達人。孫がちんぴらの陰謀に巻き込まれていることを鋭い洞察力で見抜き、近所の幼なじみと組んで救い出す。「三匹のおっさん」として街のパトロールも始める。おっさんと名乗るのは「俺たちはじいさんか」という違和感からだ◆今年から団塊世代が65歳を迎える。新しく高齢者の仲間入りをするのは、昨年より80万人も多い210万人。あすの敬老の日に祝福される。けれど“違和感”を覚える方も多々おられるのでは? 団塊世代は企業などで優れた技能を培った多士済々である◆(...)あと数年もすれば、従来のお年寄りの真骨頂に、もう一つ何か加わるかもしれない◆男性に偏ったので女性の方々にも。若い頃、ミニスカートはいてませんでした? それも、昔の年寄りには考えられなかったことです。新しい時代の新しいパワーに。

J22

Title: (社説) 団塊のあした 既得権を手放せるか

Newspaper: Asahi

Date of issue: 12.1.2006

Name of the reporter:

Citation:

二つの世代は折り合えるのか。

方向は見えている。若い世代に多少の負担増を辛抱してもらうにしても、最終的には団塊の世代が自らの給付を削る。同じ高齢世代内の助け合いをもっと進める。世代間の戦争を避けるには、このシナリオしかないだろう。

J23

Title: [自由席] 2007年問題 団塊の自画像を描こう

Newspaper: Yomiuri

Date of issue: 1.1.2007

Name of the reporter: 塩雅晴

Citation:

(...)この世代の自画像には、相反する二つの顔があります。

J24

Title: (思潮21) 団塊の世代へ 老成を気取る前に「平和」「公」自問を

Newspaper: Asahi

Date of issue: 4.4.2006

Name of the reporter: 寺島実郎

Citation:

厳しく自画像を問い詰めるならば、我々の価値観に蓄積されたものは「経済主義」と「私生活主義」であった。日本は敗戦を「米国への物量の敗戦」と総括した。その視角から生まれたのは物量の復興・成長への希求であり、イデオロギーを超えて「経済」に一義的価値を感じる傾向を深めた。(…)

もう一つ、極端な抑圧や統制のない戦後という時代を生き、日本人として初めて「自分の人生を自分で決めうる世代」となったのが団塊であり、それが「私生活主義（ミーズム）」への傾斜という価値観を身につけさせたといえる。(…)

Consumption and marketing

J25

Title: [一筆経上] 光り輝く、団塊の世代

Newspaper: Yomiuri

Date of issue: 4.1.2004

Name of the reporter: 松田陽三

Citation:

団塊の世代は、高度成長に自らの人生を重ね合わせ、大量消費時代をリードしてきた。新しもの好きで、行動的、所得水準も高い。かつて、この世代が受験戦争、大学紛争、マイカーブーム、住宅難、財テクブームなど数々の社会現象を引き起こしてきたように、次は高齢者の消費生活に革命を起こすかもしれない。

J26

Title: [消費キーワード] 「2007年問題」 団塊世代定年退職、消費動向にも注目

Newspaper: Yomiuri

Date of issue: 14.6.2005

Name of the reporter:

Citation:

一方で、団塊の世代は生活スタイルやファッションにこだわりを持ち、趣味や仕事に前向きであることから、退職後の消費動向に注目が集まっている。食や服飾、暮らしなど多岐にわたる分野で、従来の「節約は美德」とするシニア層とは異なるマーケットが生まれることへの期待は大きい。

J27

Title: [雑誌の曲がり角] (4) 団塊狙い「55歳以上限定」(連載)

Newspaper: Yomiuri

Date of issue: 1.6.2007

Name of the reporter:

Citation:

(...)「団塊世代は人口が多いだけに、趣味や志向、所得などがバラバラ。(...)

J28

Title: (b e w o r d) 団塊市場「均質の塊」は幻想だ

Newspaper: Asahi

Date of issue: 6.1.2007

Name of the reporter: 村田アソシエイツ・村田裕之代表

Citation:

団塊世代は大きな塊という固定観念が強いが、高度成長期と違い、モノ余りの時代の今は、「均質のマーケット」ではなくなっている。もちろん悠々自適の人もあるだろうが、肉体やライフステージの変化、退職後のライフスタイルの多様化で、消費行動も多様化している。

J29

Title: (b e w o r d) 団塊市場「均質の塊」は幻想だ

Newspaper: Asahi

Date of issue: 6.1.2007

Name of the reporter: 村田アソシエイツ・村田裕之代表

Citation:

(...)シニアマーケットの主導権をとるのは女性だ。

Activities, associations and relationships

J30

Title: [男ごころ・「らしさ」を超えて] (2) 相手の生き方、縛らない (連載)

Newspaper: Yomiuri

Date of issue: 4.1.2007

Name of the reporter:

Citation:

昨年11月下旬、東京郊外の料理店で、団塊世代の男性や夫婦を対象に「定年塾」が開かれた。定年後の暮らし方を指南する講座だが、参加した男たちの口から不安や戸惑いの言葉が漏れた。

「稼いでさえいればいいと思っていた」「この年になって、夫婦向き合うのは照れくさい」

J31

Title: 妻のため 家庭内自立宣言 退職夫が家にいると耳鳴りやイライラ…

Newspaper: Yomiuri

Date of issue: 15.9.2012

Name of the reporter: 西堂路綾子

Citation:

夫が定年退職などで一日中家にいるようになる。すると、昼食の準備といった妻の負担が増え、一人の時間もなくなってストレスがたまり、同症候群になる。血圧の上昇やめまいから、胃潰瘍やうつ状態まで、心身にさまざまな症状が表れるという。

J32

Title: (「団塊」七百万人流：1) 熟年離婚 「年金分割」静かに待つ妻

Newspaper: Asahi

Date of issue: 21.11.2005

Name of the reporter:

Citation:

(...)「後悔はしていない。むしろすっきりした」(...)

J33

Title: (わかれみち 今なぜ熟年離婚：上) 仮面夫婦 隣にいても心通わず

Newspaper: Asahi

Date of issue: 13.7.2006

Name of the reporter: 辻外記子、森川敬子

Citation:

(...)「1回の人生ですもの。もう我慢しなくていいと思う」。

J34

Title: 豊かなシニアライフ特集 男の料理 自立した夫目指し腕磨く

Newspaper: Yomiuri

Date of issue: 17.11.2005

Name of the reporter:

Citation:

(...)「自分は働いて家族を養っているんだ、と思い、家のことはすべて妻任せ。妻の不満がわからなかった」(...)

J35

Title: Title: [男ごころ・「らしさ」を超えて] (2) 相手の生き方、縛らない (連載)

Newspaper: Yomiuri

Date of issue: 4.1.2007

Name of the reporter:

Citation:

「今までずっと、お互いに話し合いができる夫婦だと思ってきた。でも実は自分の意見を押しつけてきただけ。(...)」

J36

Title: Title: (ひと) 山崎勇三さん 「孫育て検定協会」をつくった

Newspaper: Asahi

Date of issue: 30.1.2014

Name of the reporter: 森本美紀

Citation:

孫育ては、自らの子育ての反省の上にある。大阪に本社がある家電メーカーの営業マンだった。休日返上で働き、子育ては妻任せ。広島に家族を残し、単身赴任もした。やがて時間に余裕ができた。だがそのときには子どもは育ち、妻も自分の趣味を持っていた。

J37

Title: Title: 団塊世代、肩書外して心意気で勝負 堀田力さんに聞く

Newspaper: Yomiuri

Date of issue: 1.1.2007

Name of the reporter: 森川明義

Citation:

日本経済の発展から成熟まで引っ張ってきた気力、体力、知力がそろっている世代です。会社から地域社会に戻れば、地域の活力が一気に増すのではないかと思います。これまで、高齢者の介護や子どもの安全の見守りなど地域の課題の多くは女性が担ってきました。しかし、認知症高齢者の増加など、もう女性だけでは支え切れません。男性の参加が不可欠なのです。

J38

Title: マニキュア 妻、母より市民として（核家族のむこう 結ぶ：5）

Newspaper: Asahi

Date of issue: 6.1.2005

Name of the reporter:

Citation:

「ずっと人のために生きてきた。そろそろ自分の人生を歩みたい。それに、育児や介護の現場の大変さを知っている人間が、政治の場にも必要なはず。(...)」

J39

Title: [キラッとシニア] 海外長期旅 荷物少なく、無理しない

Newspaper: Yomiuri

Date of issue: 13.9.2013

Name of the reporter:

Citation:

「会社から離れ、自由になった今こそ、肩ひじをはずさず世界と向き合える」「現地の人と仲良くなると、国そのもののイメージも変わってくる」(...)

J40

Title: Title: [豊かさ再発見] 第1部 新団塊ライフ（1）挑戦！ 人生第2幕（連載）

Newspaper: Yomiuri

Date of issue: 3.1.2006

Name of the reporter:

Citation:

もう一度、スポットライトを浴びてみたい――。定年退職を目前に控えた男性と、一足先に子育てを終え、時間のゆとりができた女性。第2の人生の始まりに、新たな挑戦に踏み出す人が増えている。

J41

Title: Title: [豊かさ再発見] 第1部 新団塊ライフ（1）挑戦！ 人生第2幕（連載）

Newspaper: Yomiuri

Date of issue: 3.1.2006

Name of the reporter:

Citation:

「このままでは悔いが残る」

(...)

「やりたかったことを残したままだ」

J42

Title: (再び 団塊世代の定年) 市民劇団 踏み出した一步。表現したい、新しい私

Newspaper: Asahi

Date of issue: 23.11.2006

Name of the reporter: 川村直子

Citation:

6月、大阪市が主催する、人権をテーマにした市民劇団「かけはし座」の今年度のオーディションが開かれた。合格したのは60人。なかにはシニア世代の合格者が何人かいた。20代で断念した演劇の世界に再挑戦する元サラリーマン。母を亡くした心の隙間を芝居で埋めようとする女性。「自分を表現したい」と未知の分野に飛び込んだ小学校教師……。(...)

(...)

かけはし座の芸術監督、鶉野（うずの）昭彦さんは、「芝居には人間の内面がすべて出る。送ってきた人生を投影した演技には深みがあり、人の心を揺り動かす」と語る。

APPENDIX II

Citations for original Finnish newspaper data (in the order the citations appeared in the thesis)

Work, retirement and pension

F1

Title: Ulkomaisen työvoiman uhka ja tarve

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 14.4.2003

Name of the reporter:

Citation:

Odotettavissa oleva kärjistävä työvoimapula liittyy alkavaan suurten ikäluokkien lähtöön eläkkeelle.

F2

Title: EU:n laajeneminen luo haasteita

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 4.11.2006

Name of the reporter:

Citation:

Vuosien 2010 ja 2020 välisenä aikana ikärakenne muuttuu syvämmän kuin koskaan aikaisemmin. Se johtuu siitä, että 1940-luvun lopulla ja 1950-luvulla syntyneet suuret ikäluokat jäävät nyt pois työelämästä ja heitä seuraavat ikäluokat ovat pienempiä. Samalla kun työikäisen väestön määrä laskee, eläkeikäisen väestön määrä jatkaa voimakasta kasvuaan. Vuoteen 2020 mennessä 75 vuotta täyttäneiden määrä kasvaa lähes 40 prosenttia: nykyisestä 350000 runsaaseen 500000 henkeen.

F3

Title: Suomalainen tekee työtä ahkerasti

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 7.3.2009

Name of the reporter: Marjut Lindberg

Citation:

Suomen huono ennuste perustuu väestön ikärakenteen vinoutumaan. Suuret ikäluokat jäävät lähivuosina eläkkeelle, olipa eläkeikä sitten 63 tai 65 vuotta. Seuraavat ikäluokat ovat paljon pienempiä, eikä väkeä riitä läheskään kaikkiin nykyisiin työpaikkoihin.

F4

Title: Suomalainen tekee työtä ahkerasti

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 7.3.2009

Name of the reporter: Marjut Lindberg

Citation:

Vinoutuma on osittain suurten ikäluokkien itsensä aiheuttama. Kun 1940-luvun lopulla syntyneet kypsyivät synnytysikänsä, he eivät halunneet tuottaa yhtä suuria sisarusparvia, joissa itse olivat kasvaneet. Vuonna 1975 koettiin tähän asti pienin hedelmällisyysluku: vain joka toinen nainen synnytti kaksi lasta.

F5

Title: Hyvä käänne eläkepommiuhkassa

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 5.8.2000

Name of the reporter:

Citation:

Joka tapauksessa ponnistuksia pitää ihmiset työssä viralliseen eläkeikään asti täytyy jatkaa ja lisätä. Kun suurten ikäluokkien vanhimmat täyttävät tänä vuonna 55 vuotta, yli 55-vuotiaiden osuus väestöstä alkaa kasvaa jyrkästi.

Viime viisivuotiskaudella työmarkkinoilla kysytyin 25-49-vuotias väestö väheni vajaat 150000 henkeä, kun 50-64-vuotiaiden määrä kasvoi 170000 henkeä. Luvut osoittavat, mistä työvoimaa on saatavissa.

F6

Title: Ihmisten erilaisuus osattava hyödyntää työelämässä

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 17.2.2003

Name of the reporter:

Citation:

Suomalaisten täytyy pahojen talousvaikeuksien välttämiseksi pidentää työuraansa viimeaikaisesta. Suuria ikäluokkia ja heitä nuorempia ei voi enää päästää eläkkeelle keskimäärin 59-vuotiaina, sillä tilalle ei ole tulossa riittävästi nuoria työntekijöitä. Lisäksi heti sodan jälkeen syntyneet veisivät mukanaan valtavasti kokemusta ja tietoa, joka pitää saada siirretyksi työpaikkojen ja nuorten työntekijöiden pääomaksi.

F7

Title: Ikäohjelma vaikutti, mutta työtä täytyy jatkaa

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 24.3.2002

Name of the reporter:

Citation:

Suurten ikäluokkien eläkkeistä ja odotettavissa olevasta työvoimapulasta selviydytään vain, jos ihmiset onnistutaan pitämään työkykyisinä ja -haluisina ainakin pari kolme vuotta nykyistä pitempään. Työelämää pitää kehittää edistämään sekä työn tuottavuutta että henkilöstön hyvinvointia, jotka ovatkin riippuvaisia toisistaan.

F8

Title: Sairauslomat lisääntyvät aina vaan

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 16.5.2003

Name of the reporter:

Citation:

Työolojen parantamista täytyy vain jatkaa. Huonon ilmapiirin tiedetään lisäävän merkittävästi sairauslomia. Kuntien väki kokee työnsä rasittavaksi muita useammin, mutta poissaoloilla mitaten myös yksityisen sektorin työpaikoilla oireillaan jo. Ilmapiiriä ja jaksamista kohennettaessa täytyy miettiä, onko jokainen oikealla paikallaan ja voimilleen sopivissa tehtävissä. Se on elintärkeää, jotta suuret ikäluokat jaksaisivat edeltäjiään pitempään.

F9

Title: Eläkeuudistuksessa päästävä vatvomisesta esityksiin

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 7.10.2001

Name of the reporter:

Citation:

Väestön ikärakenteen kehitys ja työssäkäyvien ja eläkkeellä olevien suhde muuttuu kansantalouden kannalta kestävämmäksi, jos suuret ikäluokat lähtevät eläkkeelle keskimäärin alle 60-vuotiaana, kuten nyt tapahtuu. Vain yksi kymmenestä jatkaa viralliseen 65 vuoden eläkeikään.

Ongelma on tiedostettu ja siitä on puhuttu jankuttamiseen asti. Ihmiset olisi saatava pysymään työelämässä pari kolme vuotta pitempään eli keskimäärin 61-62-vuotiaiksi. Tavoite ei kuulosta kohtuuttomalta, mutta sen saavuttaminen on asiantuntijoista vaikeata. Tarvittaisiin merkittävä muutos ihmisten asenteissa ja työpaikkojen ilmapiirissä; eläkkeelle pääsyä olisi vaikeutettava ja työelämässä pysymistä palkittava nykyistä suuremmissa määrin.

F10

Title: Ihmisten erilaisuus osattava hyödyntää työelämässä

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 17.2.2003

Name of the reporter:

Citation:

Onnistuneesta eri-ikäisten johtamisesta sekä kokemustiedon siirtämisestä nuorille työntekijöille puhutaan monen muun tärkeän seikan ohella tuoreessa hallituksen jaksamisohjelman viime vuoden seurantaraportissa. Sen mukaan ei riitä, että ihmisten erilaisuus hyväksytään, vaan sitä on myös hyödynnettävä. Johtajan on keksittävä eri-ikäisten, eri sukupuolta ja etnistä alkuperää olevien sekä muuten yksilöllisten ihmisten vahvuudet, joita hyödynnetään ja puutteet, joita korjataan.

F11

Title: Uhkaava työvoimapula vaarantaa talouden kasvun

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 16.4.2005

Name of the reporter: Timo K. Savaspuro

Citation:

Useiden kyselyiden mukaan kansalaiset eivät halua myöhentää eläkkeelle lähtöään. Päinvastoin näyttää siltä, että eläkkeelle lähdetään entistä aikaisemmin ja useimmiten

heti nykyisen lain salliman 63 vuoden iän täytyttyä.

Työelämässä on nyt mukana 75 prosenttia 55-60-vuotiaista; 60-65-vuotiaista on töissä enää 30 prosenttia.

F12

Title: Suomalainen tekee työtä ahkerasti

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 7.3.2009

Name of the reporter: Marjut Lindberg

Citation:

Missä kaksi tai useampi kuusikymppinen suomalainen kohtaa, puheenaihe on varma: eläkkeelle jääminen. Osa kuusikymppisistä hinkuu erilaisille varhennetuille eläkkeille ja osaa työnantaja suorastaan työntää niille. (...)

F13

Title: Ikääntyminen luo veroloukun

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 10.6.2001

Name of the reporter: Janne Virkkunen

Citation:

Suomalaisen työelämän tunnuspiirteitä on ikääntyneiden ihmisten vähäinen osallistuminen työelämään.

F14

Title: Suomalainen tekee työtä ahkerasti

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 7.3.2009

Name of the reporter: Marjut Lindberg

Citation:

Suomalaisia syyllistetään rankasti siitä, että vain harvat tekevät työtä viralliseen eläkeikään asti. Esikuviksi nostetaan milloin yli 70-vuotias ruotsalainen sairaanhoitaja, milloin islantilainen autonkuljettaja.

F15

Title: Eläkeuudistuksessa päästävä vatvomisesta esityksiin

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 7.10.2001

Name of the reporter:

Citation:

Osa-aikaeläkkeen tarkoituksena oli saada ihmiset pysymään pitempään työelämässä, mutta järjestelmä on myös houkuttellut paljon terveitä ihmisiä siirtymään pois täysiaikaisesta työstä, koska eläke ei siitä huonone. Kansalaisilla on täysi oikeus käyttää tarjolla olevia mahdollisuuksia. (...)

F16

Title: Työoloja parannettava äkkiä

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 20.5.2000

Name of the reporter:

Citation:

(...) lopullinen eläke ja käteen jäävä raha eivät pienene kovin paljon, mutta työtaakka voi keventyä puoleen (...)

F17

Title: Eläkeremonttia kiirehdittävä

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 7.7.2002

Name of the reporter:

Citation:

Muutaman viime vuoden aikana kehitystä on yritetty aktiivisesti jarruttaa. Suuret ikäluokat ovat tulossa varhaiseläkeikään, eikä mikään viittaa siihen, että nämä ikäluokat suostuisivat pysymään töissä yhtään sen kauemmin kuin edellisenkään, jos eläkeväyliä ei tukita ja työelämää tehdä houkuttelevammaksi. Miksi vähän yli viisikymppinen työntekijä stressaisi itseään työnteolla, jos hänellä on mahdollisuus lähteä varhain eläkkeelle, eivätkä ansiotkaan putoa ratkaisevasti?

F18

Title: Uudet keinot ja asenteet työelämässä pysymiseen

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 17.4.2001

Name of the reporter:

Citation:

Myös työolojen kehittäminen ymmärretään tulevaisuuden strategiassa välttämättömäksi. Terve ja ammattitaitoinenkin ihminen alkaa haaveilla kokopäiväharrastuksista, jos työn vaatimukset käyvät kohtuuttomiksi ja omat vaikutusmahdollisuudet hupenevat, kuten viime vuosina on tapahtunut. Johtajien ja esimiesten pitää osata mitoittaa henkilökunnan määrä oikein ja järjestää työt niin hyvin, ettei kiire käy sietämättömäksi.

Eläkepäivät alkavat pian houkutella työntekijää, joka ei koskaan kotiin lähtiessään voi tuntea tehneensä riittävästi. Johtajia on koulutettu enemmän kannustamaan väkeään yhä mittavampiin ponnistuksiin kuin tajuamaan, milloin työntekijä uurastaa jo terveytensä kustannuksella.

F19

Title: Toivottu ja saatu eläke ovat kaukana toisistaan

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 27.2.2011

Name of the reporter: Marjut Lindberg

Citation:

Toiveet eläkevuosien elintasosta ja mahdollisuudesta tehdä mitä haluaa jäävät suurella joukolla eläkevuosia lähestyvistä ihmisistä kauas todellisuudesta. Jo pelkässä ansaitun ja hyvänä pidetyn eläkkeen määrässä on huikea ero.

F20

Title: Toivottu ja saatu eläke ovat kaukana toisistaan

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 27.2.2011

Name of the reporter: Marjut Lindberg

Citation:

Eläketurvakeskuksen selvitys osoittaa, että naisten ja miesten eriarvoisuus korostuu, kun eläkkeensaajat jaetaan viiteen tuloryhmään. Naisista kolmannes kuuluu siihen joukkoon, joka saa eläkettä korkeintaan runsaat 1100 euroa kuussa. Vastaavasti runsas neljännes miehistä kuuluu siihen viidennekseen, joka saa parasta eläkettä, yli 2355 euroa kuussa.

F21

Title: Toivottu ja saatu eläke ovat kaukana toisistaan

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 27.2.2011

Name of the reporter: Marjut Lindberg

Citation:

Vaikka työelämässä olevat ihmiset suunnittelevat "sitten kun" -periaatteen mukaisesti olevansa eläkkeellä aktiivisia ja löytävänsä uusia harrastuksia, aikakauslehden kysely osoittaa, ettei elämä kuitenkaan muutu eläkkeellä kovin paljon. Lukeminen ja ulkoilu säilyvät rakkaimpina harrastuksina. Joka toinen kuukausi pyörähdetään jossain päin kotimaata, ja ulkomaille matkataan pari kertaa vuodessa.

F22

Title: Vapaaehtoisten varajoukko

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 28.2.2002

Name of the reporter:

Citation:

Edellisiä sukupolvia terveemmistä, sodan jälkeen syntyneistä miehistä ja naisista voi olla vielä paljon iloa ja hyötyä eläkeläisinäkin.

Hyväkuntoisia työelämästä lähteneitä pitää vain osata ajatella varajoukkona, jolla on runsaasti annettavaa muille ja samalla mahdollisuus tuntea itsensä tarpeelliseksi. Heistä voi tulla huomattava, uusi voimavara vapaaehtoistyöhön, jonka kysyntä kasvaa koko ajan tarjontaa nopeammin. Vanhuksille pyydetään apua enemmän kuin vapaaehtoiskeskukset pystyvät välittämään. Varavaareja ja -mummoja kaivataan omia isovanhempia vailla olevissa lapsiperheissä.

F23

Title: Suuret ikäluokat ovat nyt suvantovaiheessa

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 31.10.2013

Name of the reporter:

Citation:

Suomalaisen yhteiskunnan rakenteet ovat nyt kovassa muutoksessa, mutta vastoin monia aikaisempia vaiheita suuriin ikäluokkiin kuuluvat ovat nyt sivuosassa. He eivät

ole enää vanhempiensa hoitajia eivätkä lastensa rahoittajia mutteivät itsekään tarvitse lähipiiriltään merkittävästi taloudellista tai hoitoapua.

Voi sanoa, että tässä toteutuu hyvinvointiyhteiskunnan ihanne: suurten ikäluokkien edustajat ovat pääasiassa tehneet osansa työelämässä ja voivat nyt nauttia elämästään terveinä ja varsin vakaisissa olosuhteissa. Poliitikassa heidän asemansa äänestäjinä on yhä keskeinen. Heitä on paljon, ja he ovat aktiivisia.

Oma elämänvaihe heijastuu monesti äänestyskäyttäytymiseenkin. Parin vuoden kuluttua, kun muu Suomi on keskellä murrosta, urnille astelee suuri joukko vakaasti eläviä ja vastuista vapaita nuoria eläkeläisiä.

Ageing, health and care

F24

Title: Hyviä ja huonoja merkkejä

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 24.3.2002

Name of the reporter: Janne Virkkunen

Citation:

“Väestön ikääntyminen eli suurten ikäluokkien lähestyvä eläkkeelle siirtyminen”

F25

Title: Väestön ikääntyminen vaatii rajuja toimia Uudellamaalla

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 15.11.2002

Name of the reporter: Aki Kangasharju

Citation:

Suomen kansa on Japanin jälkeen maailman toiseksi vanhinta. Suurimmat sodanjälkeiset ikäluokat alkavat olla varhaiseläkeiässä.

F26

Title: Ikääntyminen katsotaan rasitteeksi

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 26.3.2012

Name of the reporter:

Citation:

Ikääntyminen ja eläkeläisväestön määrän kasvu on haaste koko Euroopalle mutta etenkin Suomelle: sodanjälkeiset suuret ikäluokat alkavat tulla ikään, jossa palveluita tarvitaan yhä enemmän.

F27

Title: Yhä suurempi osuus tuloista on eläkkeitä

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 14.6.2015

Name of the reporter:

Citation:

Suomessa suuret ikäluokat syntyivät muutamassa vuodessa, kun muualla Euroopassa sama sodanjälkeinen ilmiö jatkui hieman pitempään. Siksi ikärakenteen muutos iskee Suomeen kärjistyneempänä kuin muualla: yhtäkkiä työelämästä lähtee paljon työikäisiä, ja vastaavasti vuoden 2025 jälkeen on odotettavissa terveyden- ja vanhustenhuollon menojen hurja nousu.

F28

Title: Ikäkatastrofi on jo ovella

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 4.10.2009

Name of the reporter: Marjut Lindberg

Citation:

Vielä viime vuonna Suomessa oli noin 50 lasta ja eläkeikäistä sataa työikäistä kohti. Huoltosuhde kuitenkin heikkenee nopeasti samalla kun suuret ikäluokat vanhenevat. Seitsemän vuoden kuluttua, vuonna 2016, huoltosuhde ylittää jo 60:n rajan ja vuoteen 2026 mennessä 70:n rajan.

Tämä merkitsee sitä, että yhä harvempi työikäinen elättää yhä suurempaa joukkoa työvoiman ulkopuolella olevia - jos eläkkeelle jäädyään 65-vuotiaana.

F29

Title: Yhä suurempi osuus tuloista on eläkkeitä

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 14.6.2015

Name of the reporter:

Citation:

Kylmä tosiasia Suomen ikärakenteesta on se, että työikäisten eli 15–64-vuotiaiden määrä vähenee nyt noin 10 000 hengellä vuosittain ja 65 vuotta täyttäneiden määrä kasvaa vuodessa noin 38 000:lla.

Työikäisten määrä alkoi pienentyä muutama vuosi sitten, kun suuret ikäluokat tulivat eläköitymisikään.

F30

Title: Raha ei saa yksin ohjata vanhusten palveluiden laatua

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 6.5.2009

Name of the reporter:

Citation:

Suurten ikäluokkien vanheneminen palveluiden tarvitsijoiksi pakottaa kunnat kehittämään edullisia ja nykyistä monimuotoisempia palveluita.

F31

Title: Vanhuksille ei pidä luvata liikaa

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 10.3.2011

Name of the reporter:

Citation:

Kykyä vastata ikääntyneiden palvelutarpeisiin on jo aika arvioida, kun suuret ikäluokat ovat eläkeiässä.

F32

Title: Toivottu ja saatu eläke ovat kaukana toisistaan

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 27.2.2011

Name of the reporter: Marjut Lindberg

Citation:

Seniorikommuunien rakentamiseen ja erilaisten palvelujen tarjontaan ikääntyvälle väestölle pitäisi ryhtyä heti, sillä suurten ikäluokkien vanhimmat täyttävät jo 70 vuotta.

F33

Title: Raha ei saa yksin ohjata vanhusten palveluiden laatua

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 6.5.2009

Name of the reporter:

Citation:

Suurten ikäluokkien vanheneminen palveluiden tarvitsijoiksi pakottaa kunnat kehittämään edullisia ja nykyistä monimuotoisempia palveluita. Tietyn ikäisille ihmisille ei voida rakentaa pakettipalveluita, vaan jokainen ihminen vanhenee omaan tahtiinsa.

Vanhusten palveluita ei pidä jakaa vain laitos- tai kotipalveluihin. Tarvitaan myös hoivakotipalveluita, päiväkeskuksia ja kyliin vietäviä virikepalveluita haja-asutusalueille. Erakoituminen ja yksinäisyys ovat monelle vanhukselle suurempi ongelma kuin sydänvaivat tai nivelten kulumat.

Vanhusten eri palvelumuotojen kustannukset pitää laskea avoimesti vertailtaviksi, jotta päättäjät tietävät, mitä mikin maksaa. Raha ei kuitenkaan saa olla ainoa mittari palveluita valittaessa. Inhimilliseen vanhuuteen kuuluu hoivan lisäksi myös mahdollisuus sosiaaliseen elämään.

F34

Title: Uuden ajan vanhus ei asu laitoksessa

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 21.9.2015

Name of the reporter:

Citation:

Varhaiset kuolemat ja 1970-luvun maastamuutto ovat verottaneet suurten ikäluokkien rivejä, mutta vielä eläkeläisinäkin heitä on paljon. Ja aivan samalla tavoin kuin he muokkasivat suomalaista koulua, nuorisokulttuuria, työelämää ja koko hyvinvointivaltiota, he muokkaavat nyt käsitystä eläkevuosista

(...)

Samat tutkijat suosittelivat aiemmassa tutkimuksessaan, että taajamien keskustoihin rakennettaisiin palvelukortteleita, joissa vanhukset asuisivat normaaleissa asunnoissa,

eivät laitosmaisissa palveluasunnoissa. Korttelissa voisi olla sekä julkisia että yrittäjien tuottamia palveluita, joita voisi ostaa itse tai käyttää niihin kunnan palveluseteliä.

Tällaisia ideoita tarvitaan. Suuret ikäluokat ovat jälleen avainasemassa, tällä kertaa muuttamassa suomalaista käsitystä vanhustenhoidosta.

F35

Title: Suurten ikäluokkien viimeinen palvelus

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 12.2.2015

Name of the reporter: Teija Sutinen

Citation:

Suuret ikäluokat kulkevat läpi Suomen lähihistorian meluten mennessään.

He ovat niitä, jotka kävivät kansakoulun kahdessa vuorossa, pistivät ranttaliksi yliopistossa, vapautuivat seksuaalisesti, muuttivat Ruotsiin ja rakensivat siinä sivussa suomalaisen hyvinvointivaltion. Ei siis ihme, että nyt seitsemääkymppiä lähestyttäessä pikkuisen väsyttää.

F36

Title: Suurten ikäluokkien viimeinen palvelus

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 12.2.2015

Name of the reporter: Teija Sutinen

Citation:

Mutta ei saa uupua kesken! Vielä on yhden palveluksen vuoro.

Suurten ikäluokkien edustajilla on aina ollut voimaa määritellä keskustelunaiheet. Heidän asioidensa on taipumus nousta koko kansakunnan asioiksi – tai ainakin he ovat osanneet puhua niistä niin kovalla äänellä, että muiden on pakko vaieta ja kuunnella.

Siksi heillä on toivottavasti vielä painoarvoa nostaa isoksi keskustelunaiheeksi se, miten suomalaisten pitää varautua vanhuuteensa.

F37

Title: Suurten ikäluokkien viimeinen palvelus

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 12.2.2015

Name of the reporter: Teija Sutinen

Citation:

Olisi hyvä meidän nuorempien kannalta, jos suuret ikäluokat saisivat omalla painoarvolla puristettua esiin odotettavissa olevan julkisen vanhustenhoidon minimitason. Millaisiin palveluihin on oikeus, kun vanhusmäärä tästä vain kasvaa?

F38

Title: Taidan toivoa mahdotonta

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 22.3.2000

Name of the reporter: Arja Leppänen

Citation:

Useimmat ihmiset haluavat pysyä hengissä pitkään ja kuolla joskus keskimääräisen eliniän ylittyään kohtuullisen hyvissä sielun ja ruumiin voimissa.

F39

Title: Toivottu ja saatu eläke ovat kaukana toisistaan

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 27.2.2011

Name of the reporter: Marjut Lindberg

Citation:

Nuorimmille eläkeläisille tehdyt kyselytutkimukset kertovat toiveista elää mahdollisimman vanhaksi täysin terveenä ja kuolla äkillisesti onnellisena.

F40

Title: Taidan toivoa mahdotonta

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 22.3.2000

Name of the reporter: Arja Leppänen

Citation:

Viimeistään nyt pitäisi päättäjien, suurten ikäluokkien ja kaikkien muidenkin miettiä, millaisen vanhuuden haluaisi itselleen. Pienistä rempoista huolimatta raihnaisuus saattaa tuntua epätodelliselta ja melkein mahdottomalta, kunnes äkkiä huomaakin makaavansa jo laitasängyssä muiden käännettävänä ja ruokittavana. Millainen hoito ja kohtelu tuntuisi silloin hyvältä?

F41

Title: 55 vuotta on riski-ikä työssä

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 11.4.2007

Name of the reporter: Marjut Lindberg

Citation:

Suomalaisen työväestön vuosijuhlien listasta puuttuu kaikkein tärkein juhlapäivämäärä. Tasavuosiakin tärkeämpi ikäpyykki on 55 vuoden raja. Sen jälkeen alkaa työelämässä aiemmin kokematon epävarmuuden kausi, joka kestää ainakin 60-vuotiaaksi, yleensä koko työelämän loppuajan.

Viidenkymmenenviiden vuoden ikäraja on valtionhallinnon virastoissa ja tutkimuslaitosten selvityksissä saanut ilkeältä kalskahtavan mutta kuvaavan nimen. Silloin ihmisestä tulee ikääntynyt.

Se on melkein sama kuin ikäloppu, ikäkulu tai ikivanha. Työnantajille sana merkitsee suurta riskiä sekä uudistumis- ja oppimiskyvyttömyyttä.

F42

Title: Työ on alkanut kiinnostaa eläkeläisiä

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 26.10.2002

Name of the reporter:

Citation:

Ikäväen taitoa ja kokemusta ei vain osata arvostaa ja hyödyntää työpaikoilla ennen kuin on pakko. Sen sijaan ihmisiä hätistellään yhä edelleen eläkkeelle jo ennen virallista ikää.

Baby boomers as a generation

F43

Title: Nuorten päästävä ajoissa yhteiskuntaa rakentamaan

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 30.8.2002

Name of the reporter: Elina Moisio

Citation:

Väki vähenee ja ikääntyy. Onko mahdollisesti syntyvä sukupolvien välinen sota vältettävissä esimerkiksi sosiaalipolitiikan, työpolitiikan ja vallanjaon avulla?

Pauli Forma kirjoittaa Hyvinvointikatsaus-lehdessä (1/2002), että sukupolvien välillä ei ole leveää kuilua, päinvastoin: nuoret sukupolvet kannattavat jopa vanhempia enemmän nykyisen kaltaista sosiaalipolitiikkaa. Samalla hän varoittaa, että sukupolvien väliset ristiriidat saattavat lisääntyä väestön vanhetessa ja suurten ikäluokkien jäädessä eläkkeelle.

F44

Title: Kielletty kysymys

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 12.9.2007

Name of the reporter: Antti Blåfield

Citation:

Jos sekä väestöennuste että rahastojen tuotto aiheuttavat työeläkemaksuihin voimakkaan nousupaineen ja jos samalla yhteiskunnan muutkin verot ovat pikemminkin nousussa kuin laskussa, miten todennäköistä on, että parinkymmenen vuoden kulutta vallassa oleva sukupolvi haluaa maksaa kaikki lisälaskut? Varsinkin, kun lisälasku ei heidän omalla kohdallaan merkitse eläke-etuuden parantumista. Etlan arvion mukaan noin 15 vuoden kuluttua julkisen talouden ylijäämäisyys kääntyy alijäämäisyydeksi.

F45

Title: Epätyypillinen kustannuserä

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 13.5.2009

Name of the reporter: Antti Blåfield

Citation:

Samaan aikaan he joutuvat kuuntelemaan, miten suuret ikäkuokat, jotka itse imettiin työelämään ja joiden velat inflaatio hoiti, marssivat nyt itseensä tyytyväisinä eläkkeelle maristen nuorten paskaduunipuheista. "Ennen työ kelpasi." Ellei

yhteiskunta ota huomioon työmarkkinoiden uusia sääntöjä ja ellei työ-, sosiaali- ja eläkepolitiikassa tehdä muutoksia, joissa otetaan huomioon tämän ajan työelämä, kiilu vakituisessa työsuhteessa olevien ja epätyypillisissä työsuhteissa olevien välillä kasvava sietämättömyys.

F46

Title: Patriarkat vastaan pullamössöt

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 22.9.2012

Name of the reporter: Jaakko Lyytinen

Citation:

Ja juuri kun odotamme suurta yhteenottoa, sukupolvisota ei sytykään. Jää vain hämmennys.

F47

Title: Jo on aikoihin eletty!

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 6.4.2012

Name of the reporter: Ville Blåfield

Citation:

Väyrynen ja Pekkarinen ovat ymmällään. Neljä vuosikymmentä politiikassa toimineet kuusikymppiset kuuluvat eri sukupolveen, suurten ikäluokkien vanhimpiin. He ovat tottuneet sietämään, kestämaan, puskemaan - jatkamaan.

Väyrysen näkökulmasta täytyy olla aivan käsittämätöntä, että nuori puheenjohtaja on valmis heittämään hanskat tiskiinkin kahden vuoden jälkeen vain, koska riveistä kuuluu arvostelua. Kahden vuoden jälkeen!

F48

Title: Päätöksiä pitää valmistella

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 8.3.2009

Name of the reporter: Janne Virkkunen

Citation:

Vuoden 2005 eläkeuudistus tehtiin siten, että parhaillaan eläkkeelle siirtyvät ns. suuret ikäluokat eivät menetä oikeastaan mitään, mutta vuosina 1960-1980 syntyneet saavat huomattavasti alhaisemman eläketason, vaikka eläke saattaakin rahassa laskettuna olla jopa nykyistä parempi.

F49

Title: Ihminen on yhtä ovela kuin eläkejärjestelmän suunnittelijat

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 14.3.2005

Name of the reporter:

Citation:

Tutkijat nostavat esiin hyvän kysymyksen, eikö uudistuksen lähtökohtana olisi voinut

olla myös sukupolvien jälkeensä jättämä "perintö". Tämän periaatteen mukaisesti suurten ikäluokkien maksuja tulisi nostaa ja eläkkeitä leikata, koska he ovat synnyttäneet aiempaa sukupolvea vähemmän lapsia kantamaan järjestelmää eteenpäin. Tämän periaatteen mukaan pieniä ikäluokkia synnyttäneet pantaisiin vastuuseen tulevasta eläkemaksujen noususta. Tämä korostaisi tulevia riskejä nykyisten etujen rinnalla.

F50

Title: Joustava eläkeikä oli hetken huuma

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 1.10.2014

Name of the reporter:

Citation:

Kymmenen vuoden ikäero johtaa varsin suureen epätasa-arvoon eläköitymismahdollisuuksissa: vuonna 1954 syntyneet, siis tänä vuonna 60 vuotta täyttävät, voivat yhä jäädä eläkkeelle 63-vuotiaina. Vain kymmenen vuotta nuoremmilla alin eläkeikä on jo kaksi vuotta korkeampi.

Olisi ollut aiheellista ulottaa muutokset edes lievinä myös ikäluokkiin, jotka ovat eläkeikänsä tuntumassa. Nyt syntyy väkisinkin mielikuva, että suuret ikäluokat – joiden jatkoksi 1950-luvulla syntyneetkin voi laskea – ehtivät korjata koko potin. He saivat matalaa eläkemaksua vastaan suhteettoman hyvät edut.

F51

Title: Lisää äänestysintoa kaikin keinoin

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 12.6.2010

Name of the reporter:

Citation:

Ikärakenteemme on vinoutunut suurten ikäluokkien suuntaan. Kun tähän lisätään se, että iäkkäämmät ihmiset äänestävät aktiivisimmin, vaarana on, että nuorten ääni ei enää kuulu kansanvaltaisesti valituissa elimissä.

F52

Title: Ne vievät meiltä ihan kaiken!

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 4.5.2006

Name of the reporter: Paavo Rautio

Citation:

Ennen kuin aloitamme pienemmän sukupolven edustajina sodan suurempaa vastaan, kannattaa punnita suurten ikäluokkien aikaansaannokset kunnolla.

Olisi yksioikoista tuomita tämä ryhmä sen vuoksi, että se on ahne: maksoi omille vanhemmilleen pientä eläkettä ja maksattaa lapsillaan itselleen suurta. Pitää muistaa kokonaisuus. Vaikkapa se pioneerityö, jonka tämä massa on kaikenlaisen kulttuurin alalla tehnyt ja jolla nämä eläkeikää lähentelevät ovat raivanneet tietä meille.

Eli mitä taloudellisen laskelman ulkopuolisia eriä ja kulttuurillista knowhowta menee

historiaan, kun he vetäytyvät huviloilleen tai Espanjaan?

F53

Title: Ne vievät meiltä ihan kaiken!

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 4.5.2006

Name of the reporter: Paavo Rautio

Citation:

Jo tämä suppea tarkastelu osoittaa Osku, että suuri ikäluokka ottaa mukaansa rahojemme lisäksi suomalaisuuden ytimen. Ytimen, jota ilman maamme on kuin Makkaratalo ilman makkaraa.

Current events in economic and political affairs

F54

Title: Suhdannekäänteeseen reunalla

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 20.12.2009

Name of the reporter: Janne Virkkunen

Citation:

Suomen talouden keskeiset ongelmat ovat entisellään, ja ne ovat kaikkien tiedossa. Suuret ikäluokat ovat siirtymässä eläkkeelle, minkä seurauksena kasvaa paine työurien pidentämiseen. Elinaikakertoimen avulla tulevien vuosikymmenten eläkkeiden tasoa on jo pienennetty, ja tulevat eläkeremontit johtavat eläkeiän siirtymiseen todennäköisesti usealla vuodella nykyisestä.

Mitä meillä siis on edessämme seuraavalla hallituskaudella, jolloin aloitetaan parhaillaan kasvavan velkakuorman purkaminen? Luettelo on karmaiseva. Palkkaverotus kiristyy, kunnallisvero nousee, työeläkemaksut nousevat, sairausvakuutusmaksu nousee, ja näiden yhteisvaikutus johtaa vaisuun talouskasvuun.

F55

Title: Hallitus on epäonnistunut alueellistamisen toteutuksessa

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 19.9.2005

Name of the reporter:

Citation:

Valtion toimintojen siirtämiselle pääkaupunkiseudun ulkopuolelle on sinänsä hyväksyttävät perusteet. Hajasijoittaminen auttaa maan tasapuolista alueellista kehitystä. Valtion työpaikat ovat myös tervetulleita jokaiselle työttömyyden ja vähäisten verotulojen kanssa painivalle kunnalle. Suurten ikäluokkien siirtyminen eläkkeelle vapauttaa suuren määrän virkoja ja antaa siten mahdollisuuden järjestää hallintoa uudestaan.

F56

Title: Valtion tuottavuusohjelma ei saa olla vain saneerausta

Newspaper: Helsingin Sanomat

Date of issue: 2.12.2007

Name of the reporter:

Citation:

(...)Valtion tuottavuusohjelma käynnistyi noin kymmenen vuotta sitten valtiovarainministerin ja ministeriön korkeimpien virkamiesten neuvonpidosta, jossa pohjustettiin seuraavan vuoden budjettia. Keskusteluissa esille nousi mahdollisuus, joka sisältyy siihen, että valtionhallinnostakin suuret ikäluokat siirtyvät tämän vuosikymmenen lopulta alkaen eläkkeelle. Näin valtionhallintoa pystytään rationoimaan ja toiminnan tuottavuutta lisäämään luonnollista poistumaa hyväksi käyttäen.

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