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Helping patterns in Finland, from the war generation to the children of baby boomers

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Public welfare services have partially replaced tasks which used to be duties of family and especially women (see eg. Kazepov 2008). The role of family in western societies has been claimed to be decreasing also due to the changes in family size. For example nowadays single household and couples who have only one or two children are the most prevailing family forms in Finland (Castrén 2000). It has also been argued that modernization has changed the nature of social relations, which would be based more on individual's choice and thus biological relations have become a less important factor in modern societies (e.g. Giddens 1991; Beck 1993). As a result, the disappearance of informal or personal helping has been a common concern. In fact, the opposite seems to be more true about the importance of biology versus culture: the less binding traditions are, the more equal people become (both in families and in society generally), the more important biological factors become as determinants of action (see Jokela 2005)

Also despite the fact people are physically living in small families, most of us are still psychologically living in extended family (Sarmaja 2003). In general individuals count some relatives outside of their household as family members. This concerns especially parents and children but for example, over half of the Finns names also siblings and grandparents as a part of their family. (Paajanen 2007) Also, on the contrary to the social constructionist approach, from the evolutionary standpoint, genetic relations have still a remarkable place among human's social relations and empirical researches have also shown that kin is essential part of human life in modern as well as in traditional societies (eg. Flinn, Quinland, Coe & Ward 2008; Tanskanen, Hämäläinen & Danielsbacka 2009).

In addition, studies have shown that the relation between welfare state and informal assistance is not as straightforward as it is commonly assumed to be. If public services are

cut it would increase the role of family help, but generous welfare state can also promote interaction among people by for example making it easier and cheaper (Attias-Donfut & Segalen 1998). It is also stated that the crossgenerational relations have become even more important in modern societies and they may replace the traditional duties of nuclear family (see Bengtson 2001). Göran Therborn (2004) has pointed out that in spite of the pressures to family structure in Western societies, modernization has not abolished local disparities. Helping habits and expectation towards kin assistance still vary between different countries and cultures (Davey et al. 1999; Borbone 2009). The cultures of help differ from one family to another in important ways (Haavio-Mannila et al. 2009).

The progress of individualization has also led to the fragmentation of non-kin communities. In contemporary western societies individuals are not bonded to one particular community but they usually belong to many different communities which are based on friendship, acquaintanceship or for example on work. However, the heterogeneity of relationships does not directly imply that individuals' relationships are more fragile or that the informal help is withering away. Conversely, it is possible the expansion of interaction promotes diversity and growth of the helping behaviour.

In this paper we shall examine what kind of informal helping patterns and kin solidarity can be found in modern society – contemporary Finland – and what are the differences compared to assistance among non-kin. Especially we are interested in intergenerational help. Generation can be understood in social or biological terms. In this article we are specially concentrated on the latter one, but we also take the context of the social generation into account

Generational perspective

In this paper we shall discuss helping relationship among three family generations: our pivot generation are the Finnish baby boomers (born between years 1945–1950), their parents (born at the 20's or early 30's) and their adult children, born in the 60's to 80's). We are mainly concentrating on the baby boomers and their children, but indirectly we are also studying the oldest generation as well as the grandchildren of baby boomers.

These generations have been born and grown up in very different societal surroundings, which presumably have had an influence on their way of living. The vast majority of the oldest generation have experienced miseries and scarcity of resources in the early parts of their life and they underwent the Second World War. The oldest generation appears to be a generation of great changes: they took part to the reconstruction and building of the welfare state and as a result there was also a chance to materially ensured life. Nowadays the oldest generation is at the end of their lifetime and they need a lot formal and informal support to cope with everyday life. (Roos 1987)

Baby boomers are born right after the end of the war and they have undergone the rise of the extensive welfare state, which also meant improved economical security and increased possibility to educate themselves that is opportunity to social climb which many managed to do, hence they can be entitled as a welfare generation. Nowadays they are about to go into retirement and since they are quantitatively a big generation it also means remarkable reduction from workforce and enormous expenses for the state. However the important questions are how healthy they are going to be, do they need welfare services much and how they use their own wealth that is to say do they use resources on their own wellbeing as well as are they going to give them also for the younger generation (Roos 1987). The Second World War has influenced both the baby boomer generation and their parents: the first indirectly and the latter directly. The indirect effect comes from the situation immediately after the war, where the effects of war were manifold, but also based on the family situation, as especially the fathers of the baby boomers were strongly influenced by their war experiences.

Respectively, the youngest generation were born during very good economical and societal situation. They can be said to be highly urbanized and well educated generation. (Roos 1987) However, after the 90s recession the employment situation has become more insecure for young people: unemployment rate has risen, part-time-jobs become more common and permanent jobs less frequent. As a consequence the youngest generation can be said to be a precarious generation. Ironically, at the same time they are the generation on whose shoulder is the financing of the welfare state that is the pension of their parent's generation.

In short, the three generations have different ways of life, lifestyles and presumably they differ also by their ethics and values. The important question is, does these differences effect on their helping behaviour toward other people. It is evident that the accessibility to resources is a determinant of helping. However, in contemporary Finland, the adequacy of resources is not the main question but rather how the resources are used; selfishly for own wellbeing or spreading them to other people and especially to those who are in need.

According to kin selection theory greater genetic relatedness is associated with higher levels of altruism. The reason for this is that an individual can enhance its inclusive fitness by supporting close relative's reproduction capability (indirect fitness) at the cost of his own direct reproductive fitness. In other words, the closer individuals are related, the greater altruistic acts are. In addition, according to kin selection theory, it is essential that altruistic behaviour benefits the reproduction of the recipient, hence altruism is directed more towards to younger and fertile generations than older ones. (Hamilton 1964a, 1964b; see also Trivers 1972; Sarmaja 2003.) Therefore – besides supporting one's own offspring – individual can increase its inclusive fitness by supporting its fertile siblings or their children (Pollet 2007; Pollet, Kuppens & Dunbar 2006). Similarly when persons are aged – and especially postmenopausal women – they can promote the survival of their genes in future generation by investing in their children and grandchildren (Williams 1957; Hawkes & Blurton 2005; Lähdenperä et al. 2004). In addition, it is argued that because the uncertainty of paternity, altruism is emphasized on maternal kin line.

There is accumulating evidence from variety of sociological and evolutionary researches to support these hypotheses. Individuals do help more their biological relatives than other ones and the majority of all the given help goes from older generation to younger; the net flow of assistance move downward in the kin line (eg. Haavio-Mannila et al. 2009; Albertini et al.

2007). Besides the amount of assistance, generations also differ by the form of given and received help. The youngest generation give mainly small-scale practical help to their parents, but receive greater amount of practical and especially financial aid from baby boomers. (Haavio-Mannila et al. 2009.) It has been shown that siblings give more help to sisters and their children than to brothers (e.g. Pollet et al. 2006). Likewise researches illustrate evidence that namely the maternal grandmothers have an important role for the grandchildren's welfare (e.g. Tanskanen et al. 2009; Gibson & Mace 2005; Sear et al. 2000).

In addition, from the evolutionary perspective, the cost of assistance forms a lynchpin in individuals' helping decisions. Persons are more inclined to invest costly help to close relatives, especially downward in kin line and the investments to distant relatives or non-kin tend to be low-cost assistance or bilateral exchange of support. (Hamilton 1964a, 1964b; Aleksander 1974; see also Trivers 1971). Empirical studies have illustrated that the willingness to help – and especially to give costly assistance – indeed increases along with the degree of relationship (eg. Madsen 2007; Stewart-Williams 2007). However, people are also investing in distant relatives as well as in non-kin, so there must be other factors which contribute to the helping decisions.

According to Korchmaros and Kenny (2001; 2006) the felt closeness is an important determinant of the helping decisions. They argue that emotional closeness is a psychological mechanism which mediates the kin selection theory's predictions into action: individuals are more inclined to help people who they feel close and the felt closeness is a quite analogous with the degree of relationship. On the other hand, Korchmaros and Kenny state that this mechanism also gives a possibility 'to become a part of the family'. Rachlin and Jones (2008) point out that social closeness has an remarkable influence on behaviour but, according to their study, even when the social distance is the same to a friend compared to relative, individuals more inclined to help relatives

Data and methods

In this paper we are examining helping habits and patterns among relatives and non-kin. The paper has been done as part of the Gentrans research project (Baby Boomers' Generational Transmissions in Finland, Academy of Finland), which study help and interaction in Finnish families and kin. In the project we have been examining several different forms of given and received practical assistance, financial aid as well as communication in relationships. (see Haavio-Mannila et. al. 2009.)

As data we use 38 thematic interviews. The interviewees were recruited from three different generations which were members of the same family: baby boomers, their parents and children. The first mentioned are born between years 1945–1950, the oldest generation 1920–1930's and the youngest 1960–1980's. The aim was to interview people from “normal families”, but who represent different kinds of helping behaviour and habits. The focus of interviews was to gather information about financial and practical aid and in some extend also to emotional support. Financial aid refers to given, received or lent money. Practical help concrete actions, like childcare, housework, assistance with transportation or for example pieces of advice.

The data were collected between April 2007 and May 2008. Reaching the oldest generation turned out to be difficult and as a result the data is emphasized to the baby boomers and their children. The material includes 17 interviews from baby boomers, 17 from youngest generation and four from the oldest generation. The distribution of gender is emphasized to females: 30 women and 8 men. The interviewees' place of residence is distributed all around Finland: Lapland (10), Western-Finland (5), Metropolitan-area (14) and elsewhere in Southern-Finland (9). The duration of a single interview varies from one to two and half an hours and length of transcription from 10 to 30 pages.

The interview structure consists of five main themes, which are focused to the interviewee's relationships, family traditions, disagreement between relatives and especially given and received help. In the interviews respondents bring out very diversely their opinions and experiences about interaction and helping. In the analysis of the data we are looking answer for three main questions, which are:

- (a) What kind of helping patterns can be found?
- (b) What are the bases those helping patterns are founding on?
- (c) Which factors distinguish one helping pattern from another?

First we divided interviews into different themes on the grounds of represented helping and interaction habits. After that, we formulated three different models of helping patterns, which are here called: *nuclear family*, *extended family*, and *family cluster model*. In these models the contents of interviews are condensed into general forms, which illustrates the different ways to help and communicate among relatives and non-kin and the models are based on the amount, quality and form of given and received help. Next we will portray these models briefly. At the beginning of each subchapter there is a summary of an interview which brings out characteristics features of the discussed model. We will also display some fragments of the interviews, which are not direct word for word translations but roughly translated from Finnish to English.

Three models of helping patterns

Nuclear family model

Ilari is a sick pensioner who earlier worked as construction worker. He is living together with his wife and they have two adult daughters and one grandchild. Ilari is regularly in touch with his daughters' families and they mutually visit at each other's. About other relatives Ilari mention his mother, sister and brother as well as several aunts, uncles and cousins. Except from his mother and children, Ilari doesn't keep in touch with his relatives and he doesn't refer to any of them as a close relative. Ilari says the isolation from relatives is typical in his kin. Ilari also says he hasn't been in any contact with his father or sister in several years, because he felt his father support his sister more than himself.

According to Ilari there are no arranged big family meetings in their kin. He says that his mother's birthdays are the only celebrations when close relative are gathering together. Ilari doesn't take part in his wife's family meetings either. Traditional holidays – like Christmas – Ilari spends with his wife and children. About friendships, Ilari state that he doesn't have many true-friend and actually the only one he mention is his sister's – who died many years ago – husband, with whose family he keep in touch.

Ilari repeats many times during the interview that he doesn't have had almost any help in his entire life. He mentions only a couple situation when he have received some modest assistance, childcare help from his grand-aunt years ago and a official loan guarantee from his previously mentioned sister's husband. Any other support Ilari doesn't bring out in the interview, though he has been in need of help from times to times. Also the given aid is very limited on Ilari's behalf. He has been given some house repairing assistance for his perished sister's husband. Occasionally Ilari also helps his mother with housework. As a reciprocal favour the mother give money for gas and some groceries. Ilari tells he tries to help his children according to their needs and his own capability to give help, but he adds that isn't much of a support. However, Ilari and his wife give often childcare help for their daughter and her grandchild.

(Baby boomers, male)

The first model is titled as a nuclear family model. In this model social relations are mainly restricted to a few close relatives: parents, children and grandchildren and in limited extend to siblings. Active contacts with other relatives are predominantly rare and communication between them takes usually place only in family events such as funerals and weddings. The exiguity or even absence of friendship is also peculiar to the nuclear family model. The

friendship networks are mainly quite small and they are more similar to an acquaintanceship than intense friendly relations by their nature. Friendships are not part of the daily life and for the most part contacts occur in formal situations, like meeting workmates at the place of employment.

“Well, I’ve always been quite alone. Well, I got workmates there, but I haven’t seen them outside of work. And actually I don’t know my neighbours yet.”

(Baby boomers, female)

“I’ve got used to keep myself to myself, alone at home. So I don’t like to hang about at my relatives every Sundays and holidays.”

(Baby boomers, male)

The narrowness of active social relations is combined to the helping behaviour that is to say assisting is very limited. As well as the number of social relations, the amount of given help is also quite modest. Assistance is mainly exchanged only between the closest relatives, which here refer to parents, children and grandchildren and predominantly helping goes downward in the family line. Helping situations takes place on random basis and support is usually given in the case of acute need.

Due to the irregularity of helping situations and the modest amount of support, the forms of assistance are restricted in a few types of help. Typically helping is confined to some small assistance with housework for baby boomers’ parents and especially supporting one’s own children and for example giving childcare for (grand)children. In nuclear family model – which mainly consists of baby boomers – help is usually given in one direction: from baby boomers to their parents and predominantly to their children.

In the nuclear family model attitude towards helping can said to be typically reluctant rather than willing, except toward to their children and partly to parents. Likewise, it is characteristic for the model that expectations for receiving help are quite low: individuals think they have to manage on their own because they assume to get help if they are in need of it.

“Soon I’ll be old. My children are far away, so how I’ll get along at the time? How I’ll shape up then and where is this world going to...? How aged women like me are going to survive? Are they going to live in some institution or is there institutions anymore? What becoming old will bring? Or is it that way everybody must get along by herself – I think so.”

(Baby boomer, woman)

Earlier studies have also noted that the state of social relations have an impact on individual’s decisions to help. In general willingness to help is much higher when it comes to one’s close relatives compared to non-kin and especially eagerness is stronger toward younger kin than older ones. (Hamilton 1964a, 1964b.) The traits of nuclear family model seem to be in accordance with evolutionary perspective and it can be seen as a minimal helping strategy. Below we discuss the factors which contribute the three models and makes differences in respect of helping behaviour toward other relatives as well as non-kin.

Extended family model

Saara is living together with her husband and they have three adult daughters and four grandchildren. All the children lives in another place of residence which is why they don’t meet face-to-face very often but keep in touch almost weekly by phone and email. Saara’s mother has passed away years ago. Her father is also living in a different town, but they talk every week by phone. About other close relatives Saara mention two sisters and a brother and with the first ones she keeps in touch monthly, but with her brother less frequently. Saara says she also have irregular contacts with her aunts, uncles, cousins and some of her husband’s relatives. However, with these distant relatives Saara is mostly contact in different kinds of family meeting and celebrations. About friendship Saara tells that with her husband they keep in touch with a few couples with whom they every now and then spend holidays together. In addition Saara mentions she has some personal friend also – from work and neighbourhood – and they spend time together occasionally.

At the time when Saara’s mother was still alive and seriously ill, Saara took care of her for a few years and also helped her with housework and other related tasks. Saara has helped her children by giving childcare help when they have been in need of it, but the long distance between them has restricted the possibilities to help. However, Saara tells they have been planning to take care of the grandchildren for longer periods at future holidays. They have also been given childcare help for her sister-in-law’s family. In addition, Saara mentions she has taken part to neighbourhood’s yard works.

Saara is clearly a help-oriented-person. For example she has been considering take part in voluntary work, but she hasn't yet time enough to do it. Furthermore, Saara mentions that as a result of the shortage of possibility to help and the long distance between Saara and her children's families, she couldn't have helped as much as she would have wanted to. Another factor which has had an impact to reduce the amount of help is that there hasn't been a great need for support among Saara's close relatives. As it comes to Saara herself, she says she hasn't really need any outsider to help her.

(Baby boomers, female)

In the extended family model social relations are a bit wider and they consist of more active relationships. However, frequent contacts with kin are concentrated mainly on comparatively close relatives such as parents, children, siblings and their families. Especially contacts between siblings are much more vital than in the nuclear family model. Contacts with other relatives are rather occasional and interaction with them takes place usually only in organized family event or celebrations. In contrast to previous model, this one includes more vital friendly relations. In general the number of friends is varied, but usually friend network are modest, though friendships are typically vital by their nature. In extended family model it is common that friends keep in touch frequently and spend leisure time together.

Similarly as there are more active social contacts in extended family model also assisting occurs on more larger and extensive scale but it is mostly concentrated on close relationships. Help is given for parents, children and grandchildren as well as – in contrast to nuclear family model – for siblings and in limited extent for some other close relatives and friends. In other word, help is given and received between people who are regularly or in daily contact with each other. It is peculiar for this model that help is not just been given or received, but particularly exchanged in upwards, downward and sideways in kin line. However, phases of life and the different needs following them create an asymmetry helping situation between generations and assistance is directed more to younger than older, but still assistance is given rather on multi- than unilateral basis.

In the extended family model assisting takes place on more continuous and also – in quantitative terms – bigger basis than in the nuclear family model. Help is exchanged regularly and in many kinds of situations. In addition, also the forms of assistance are quite diverse including several types of practical help and financial aid. Typical forms of help are

some daily practical assistance such as housework, repairing, nurturing, childcare or transportation assistance.

“Well, when I pay a visit to my mother, I always take her to a grocery shop. [...] And we’ll see if we have her living with us when she is getting too old to live by herself. [...] And for our children we give childcare assistance. [...] I think childcare help is the most important thing, and then there is some helping with transportation.”

(Baby boomer, woman)

The forms of given aid are also depending on the degree of relationship. It seems that what closer individual are related, the more costly help they are willing to give and vice versa. The interconnection between the cost of help and relatedness or social closeness has been noticed also in earlier researches (see Madsen 2007; Rachlin & Jones 2007; Stewart-Williams 2007).

“It’d be much harder to give money to someone outsider or not-so-close-friend. It is more like that I could give money to my children or someone close relative.”

(Baby boomer, woman)

A positive attitude toward helping is fairly general in extended family model. In case someone is in need of assistance, people are willing to help. The next quotation reflects quite well the model’s characteristic strong willingness to help close relatives.

”At many times when I’ve been tired or had some own things to do, I have gone to help if there have been a need. Even with blood taste in my mouth, I’ve helped if there is someone in need. I’d feel abandoning my relatives if I wouldn’t help them. I also feel good, if I can help mother and my children. I get pleasure when I can make their life or some situation easier for them.”

(Baby boomer, woman)

Family cluster model

Matti lives together with his and they have two adult sons. Matti's father has already passed away but his mother is still alive and she is living in a home for the elderly. About other relatives Matti mentions sister and her children, aunts and uncles, cousins and second cousins and their families. With his sons Matti keeps in touch closely and regularly as well as with his mother. Matti says he is also frequently contact with his sister, sister's adult child, his uncle's family and with his three cousins. Matti doesn't speak much of his friends but in the interview it comes up indirectly that Matt has an active social life also when it comes to friendship, because he speaks many times about helping some friend, neighbour, acquaintance or workmate.

The interview highlights very variedly different forms of help. Most of all, Matti helps a lot his mother. He takes care of her current business such as pay the bills, visits shops for her and gives her transportation assistance. Matti says he helps also his sister – whose husband has passed away – and his nephew when there is a need for it, for example he helped nephew to deal with social security bureaucracy. According to Matti assistance does not normally include money but given as well as received aid is usually related to practical forms of help such as repairing, renovating and helping with some daily tasks. Additionally Matti underlines many times he has also been using his extensive personal relationship network and good image to help other people for example to get a job.

Nowadays, as it comes to helping, Matti seems to be more giving than receiving party – as opposite to when he was young himself. However, for Matti's social network it is characteristic than help is also given in collective basis, which means people are assisting reciprocally each other; people forms kind of chains or networks of help where they are reciprocally changing favours, knowledge and materials.

(Baby Boomers, male)

In the family cluster model social relations are numerous and versatile whereby they constitute a big social network between different people. Since there is more active social contacts they also extend to wide-ranging group of people including – besides close kin – friends, neighbours, workmates and more distant relatives. In addition respondents seem to take more actively part in family events and different kinds of community activity or hobbies.

“With some of the neighbours we’ve ping-pong and card group. We play ping-pong a few times a week. There are five or six people in the group, but usually there are only four of us playing at once.”

(Baby boomers, male)

The assisting network is extensive in the family cluster model. Helping is comprehensive and takes place on very wide scale of situations. In contrast to previous models, in this one greater amount of help is exchanged between more numerous people such as parents, children, siblings, other more distant relatives, friends and acquaintances. Similarly as in the extended family model, also in cluster family model individuals have adopted a willingness attitude toward helping. However, there can be seen a subtle difference in assisting behaviour between these models. In the first mentioned help is given regularly, but mainly only when the need of assistance comes to light. For cluster model’s part help is given on active and continuously basis that is to say people are offering their assistance more spontaneously in daily life.

“If someone is moving and needs like pieces of furniture, I offer to give them my spare items like rugs and bookshelf. So they’ll be recycled. Also if somebody gives a birth, I’m always immediately offering baby clothes and stuff like that.”

(Youngest generation, female)

Due to the diversity of helping situations, the forms of help are also very varied including multiple forms of practical help and financial aid. In addition, among the interviews which are characteristic of the model comes up special forms of assistance. One of them is helping other people by using own personal contacts and informal network, of which the next fragment of an interview tells about.

“I’m excellent in doing documents and official papers. I’ve also good personal social network and through it I can find out about things and ask help if I need. That’s my strength. When my nephew was unemployed – and was getting financially in bad shape – I helped him to get over the bureaucracy and to receive social security more quickly than normal.”

(Baby boomers, male)

For family cluster model it is also characteristic that help can be highly organized between friends and relatives. People are forming chains or circles of help, where they reciprocally exchange favours, materials and knowledge.

“With neighbours we lend tools to each other, exchange some repairing materials and also help with repairing. It’s good that if you don’t have something you need, you can always ask from your neighbours and helping goes in both ways. We have so good group of friends and there is experts from many different fields. Well, electrician we didn’t have when someone would’ve needed it.”

(Baby boomers, male)

In the context of circles of help, the expectation of reciprocity comes up as an essential factor of non-kin help. Although, interviewees doesn’t necessarily emphasize the importance of reciprocity – sometimes they even state the opposite – but in practice the circles of help are based on the bi- and multilateral reciprocity of help. When one is helping members of the circle at a cost of oneself, he is expecting to get returning benefit in future and without the return of the benefit the circle of assistance would collapse. (see Trivers 1971.) Also Trivers noticed the conflict between the denial of claimed reciprocity and the actual reciprocal behaviour. According to him adopting a generous attitude could be a psychological adaptation which support the cohesion of the reciprocal system. People who are truly acting generously appear to be more trustworthy partners for reciprocal helping to others. Respectively individuals who are self-interest can’t be part of altruistic circle and therefore they lose the possible benefits of multilateral activity. (Trivers 1971.) In addition, by acting generously individual can gain good image in his group, thereby be more valuable and get better status inside the group.

However, in a system which is based on reciprocity there is always a possibility of cheating and this is when the importance of reciprocity comes up clearly. The recipient can try to cheat subtly and give always less to others than gets himself or he can cheat grossly and give nothing back (see Trivers 1971). In the next quotation a man talks about the requests of help from people outside the circle of assistance and indirectly ponder the importance of reciprocity or namely lack of it in the outsider’s attitude.

”When it comes to people outside of our group the attitude is a bit weird. We’ve been laughing with mates that when someone outsider ask help with house repairing, they

expect the job will be done immediately. They also seem to think work should be free for them and just about even the materials should be stolen from our employers.”

(Youngest generation, male)

The quotation above illustrates that altruistic behaviour among non-kin is based on reciprocity and the cost of activity is measured in terms of returning benefit, which directly have an effect on the willingness to help. Without the expectation of – indirect or direct – returning benefit or if the recipient is an untrustworthy partner, individuals are not inclined to help, at least when it comes to acts that are costly to the performer. The quotation reflects particularly a kind of moralistic and amused irritation towards those who can be seen as grossly cheaters. (see also Trivers 1971.)

Table 1. Three models of helping.			
	Nuclear family	Extended family	Family clusters
The amount of help	A little bit of help on random basis	Plenty of help on occasional, but regular, basis	Lots of help on continuously basis
The range of helping	The range of helpers is very limited. Assistance is predominantly given to children and grandchildren but also to parents	The range of helpers is mediocre. Assistance is mainly exchanged between parents, children, grandchildren and siblings but in limited extent also between other close relatives and the closest friends	The range of helpers is wide. Help is exchanged between parents, children, siblings and other relatives as well as between friends and acquaintances
The direction of help	Help is given vertically and predominantly downward in kin line	Help is given vertically and horizontal in kin line, on relatively multilateral basis	Help is given vertically and horizontal in kin line, on strongly multilateral basis
Helping situations	Assistance is mostly given when there is an acute need which is why the helping situations are random	Help is given in many kinds of situations. Assistance is need-based, but given regularly	Help is given continuously in varied kinds of situation
Forms of help	The forms of help are restricted in a few types of assistance such as housework for parents and childcare for grandchildren	The forms of help are mediocre including several forms of practical help and financial aid	The forms of help are wide-ranging including many types of practical help and financial aid. It is also characteristic for the model that assistance is organized among group of individuals

Discussion

In this paper we have examined the helping patterns among three family generations: the Finnish baby boomers, their adult children and indirectly baby boomers' parents. These generations have been born, grown up and spent their life in very different societal surroundings compared to each other. As a consequence they have distinct lifestyles, ethics and values. (see Roos 1987.) The significant question is whether the generational differences have an effect on the individuals' helping behaviour.

From a traditional sociological standpoint the experiences in lifetime have an important influence on individuals' behaviour. Experiencing the Second World War and scarcity of resources will result in different kinds of behaviour compared to individuals who have not experienced such difficult times. However, according to the evolutionary viewpoint, the main determinants of altruistic behaviour towards other people are the degree of kinship between individuals and the endeavour to enhance one's inclusive fitness. On the grounds of the evolutionary hypothesis, the closer individuals are related, the greater altruistic acts are and individuals are especially more inclined to invest downwards in the kin line, because it supports the survival of their genes in future generation (Hamilton 1964a, 1964b; see also Trivers 1972; Sarmaja 2003). There is also accumulating evidence from variety of empirical sociological and evolutionary researches to support these hypotheses (see Haavio-Mannila et al. 2009; Albertini et al. 2009; Tanskanen et al. 2009; Pollet 2006). One of the most interesting general results about the role of evolution is that the weaker different social determinants are (traditions, class differences, social influences such as war and scarcity) the more important the evolutionary influences become. Simply because the other influences are not determining anymore. (see Jokela 2008) Therefore it is to be expected that kinship relations would have a more important role in situations of free choice and less external obligations.

We have considered individuals' helping behaviour among different Finnish generations and formulated three models of helping by analysing and condensing our theme interview data. After the construction of the models we have explored the foundations of them and studied the factors which distinguish one model from another. The three models – which are called nuclear family, extended family and family cluster model – represent different kinds of

helping strategies and there can be found several elements which differentiate these models from each other. The first model is in a sense, extreme, and relates to a situation where the personal relationships have undergone various crises. We might speculate that the Second World War has had an impact on this model.

On the other hand, resources do not seem to be in a linear relationship to helping or receiving help.

However, the discussed models are partly cumulative by their nature. The first one represents a minimal investing strategy, the next one is a bit wider and the last is the most extensive strategy. In the core of every model is help for the closest relatives, that is own parents and children. Basically this strategy chimes in with the nuclear family model, where help is given only vertically in kin line but predominantly downwards to children and grandchildren. In the light of kin selection (Hamilton 1964a; 1964b) and parental investment (Trivers 1972; 1974) theories this model embodies the most minimal investing strategy to increase one's inclusive fitness. (see also Kurland & Gaulin 2005.)

Similar – minimal investing – strategy is performed in the background of the two other models but in them can be found also other assisting relations. There are two important differences between nuclear family and the extended family models. Firstly, in the last mentioned assisting is performed on multilateral basis rather than given one-way, which also means that assistance is given more from younger to older generation compared to nuclear family model. The second significant difference is that helping is also directed towards to siblings and their families. Investing in siblings and especially their children can be seen as an extension of increase one's inclusive fitness. By helping close and fertile – siblings, nephews and nieces – relatives, with whom one shares same genes an individual support the survival of his own genes in future generation. (Hamilton 1964a; 1964b.) In short, the extended family model can be seen as a “normal” investing strategy to improve individual's inclusive fitness.

These strategies are also a part of the cluster family model. The remarkable factor which distinguishes it from previous ones is that assisting relations include a greater amount of more distant relatives as well as also non-kin like friends and acquaintances. Assisting between non-kin brings an interesting element in the helping behaviour that is reciprocity, which doesn't come out so explicitly with relatives. When individual is investing in his

(fertile) relatives, the returning of the benefit can be measured in terms of survival of one's genes. When it comes to non-kin this is not the case. Therefore help – especially costly assistance – among non-kin is claimed to be based on reciprocity. People are inclined to invest in non-kin if they can expect the benefit of the act will return them – directly or indirectly – in future. (Trivers 1971) In other words, multilateral reciprocity promotes the advantage of the members of the group, and thus acting generously now is expected to be valuable in future. This factor came up in the context of the circles of help, where people are committed to multilateral exchange of different kind of assistance.

The question remains: why there are different kinds of helping strategies? Individuals make their helping decisions according to kin selection theory's predictions (Madsen et al. 2007) but there are elements which channel the decisions is individual's social relations and the felt closeness towards to kin as well as non-kin (Korchmaros & Kenny 2001, 2006; Rachlin & Jones 2008). On the grounds of interviews, the number of relatives is not a deciding factor for helping behaviour, but the crucial element is the intensiveness of contacts with them, which can be also seen as a reflection of felt closeness. In other words, the more a person has active social contacts, the more help will occur.

However, it is stated that even when the felt closeness is the same towards to kin and non-kin, individuals are more inclined to help the first group (Rachlin & Jones 2008). An important factor which has an effect on the helping decisions is the cost of assistance, because in general the more costly help is, the higher is the probability that it is given to close relative (Stewart-Williams 2007). In the analysed data this comes to light quite clearly when we consider the differences between the three models. When the number of helping relations rise especially the amount of inexpensive assistance increases and this is because distant relatives and friends or acquaintances are given low cost assistance or helping is based on reciprocal basis.

In conclusion it can be argued that the assistance between the closest relatives forms the core of every three model of helping and from there the helping relations wider to other relatives and finally to friends and acquaintances. The number of social relations, the activeness of them and the costs of help shapes the formation of different helping strategies. As a consequence of the used data, we couldn't measure these factors precisely or in quantitative terms. As a rough estimate the majority of all baby boomers and their children belong to the

extended family model. The family cluster model contains a small share of baby boomers and a bit larger proportion of youngest generation. Respectively, the nuclear family model is a quite small in quantitative terms and it is comprised almost entirely of baby boomers.

We know from the life stories of the baby boomer generation and their parents (see Roos 1987) that they lived in large families, in conditions which they could not influence very well and had several very strong restrictions concerning their lives (e.g. divorce was rare even when the family situation was totally dysfunctional). There is also very clear testimony about the lack of closeness between family members (children complain about not having been touched by their parents, of punishments, discipline and being obligated to do things against their will). This implies that even helping was felt more as a social constraint than something done naturally. For the baby boomers, all this changed dramatically during the 60's and 70's, as they themselves had much fewer children and were able and willing to invest more in them. Among the baby boomers' own children, the change has been less dramatic, as they have grown up in conditions which remind of the present-day situation and where there are no strict social traditions and obligations leading to a given behavior. This would therefore be leading to a more freely expressed altruism and helping behavior

These different helping strategies reflect distinct cultures of help. However, the strategies are also age-related. The net flow of all assistance is going from older to younger generations from which follows that – in general – younger people are predominantly the receivers of help and older ones rather those who give more than receive themselves. Young people tend to have wider circle of friends and acquaintance which also shapes their helping behaviour. According to evolutionary predictions, this overall pattern of behaviour is not going to change in future: younger generations will become more altruistic net givers along with ageing and especially after they have own children.

The presented helping models offer a fruitful foundation for further studies, which can examine the different influential elements and their mutual relations as well as is some group of people more inclined to perform one particular helping strategy.

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