# Visual
# Discussions

**Understanding the socio-cultural functions of
vernacular photography in contemporary communities**

Altti Näsi

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# VISUAL DISCUSSIONS

## Understanding the socio-cultural functions of vernacular photography in contemporary communities

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**Supervised by**

Professor Riitta Brusila, University of Lapland

Adjunct Professor Hannu Vanhanen, University of Lapland

**Reviewed by**

Professor Mikko Villi, University of Jyväskylä

Ph.D. Kimmo Lehtonen

**Opponent**

Professor Mikko Villi, University of Jyväskylä

# Abstract

Using photographs for communication – as tools for visual discussion – is typical in various contemporary communities. Understanding the functions of sharing photographs among community members is important, because the history does not go back very far. As a research object, vernacular photography has been studied actively since the 1970s as a practice within families and among relatives and close friends. Before digitalization, these naturally formed groups created spheres for amateur photography; where people engaged in photography, the results were looked at and archived in picture frames, albums and shoeboxes. Photographic communicational dimensions occurred mostly privately within families and within the bordering walls of a home or a work office. Digitalization, new camera technology (photographs forming on a sensor and not film) and the birth of networks, have made taking, editing and sharing photographs faster, easier and cheaper, simultaneously also imposing new requirements for research.

As the photographic communicational dimensions expanded significantly via digital networks, photography has consequently become simultaneously more private and public. On the one hand, personal and privately operated camera-phones emphasize individuality in the sense that every individual has their own device, and shared cameras are rare, if not non-existent. On the other hand, as these same devices are connected to a network of various communities, it makes photographic sharing easy and therefore more public, if so desired. Concerning this development, the purpose and goal of this dissertation is to add to the understanding of the socio-cultural functions of vernacular photographs in contemporary communities.

The doctoral thesis consists of a media production and three peer-reviewed articles. It falls inside the practice-led research field, where the dissertation is commenced with practice, which in this case was a semi-rural community media production. It counts for a central piece of methodology by providing a learning process and by building understanding about community communication. Simultaneously, it steered the approaches of the following more traditional peer-reviewed articles. As a body of qualitative research, the research data was mostly gathered through semi-structured interviews and analysed through content analysis and interpretive concept analysis.

The main findings suggest that the socio-cultural functions of vernacular photography in communities are vast. They count as emotional and informational content in creating and maintaining relationships, in identity forming by self-

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presentation and self-expression. As examples, these photos are used as tools for sharing locations, activities, accomplishments, ideas, humour, likes and opinions among other members of a given community. Photographs are not only able to create visual co-presence between the sender and the audience; they are practical in conveying useful information and helping memory. Sharing photographs works best when the community succeeds in fulfilling its members' needs and expectations regarding the content.

The main contribution of the thesis is in providing theoretical refinement to vernacular photography research. It introduces the concept of *visual discussion*, that refers to communication occurring inside contemporary communities primarily in the form of exchanging photographs without excluding other visual elements. In contemporary communities, photos are tools for discussion through the jointly agreed social media channels. Photographs supplement other modes of discussing because they are an easy, fast, free and a self-explanatory way to communicate. Other significant contributions include analysing the role of self-disclosure as an agent between private and public photographs and the change in the media environment for the established media houses thanks to readers' images.

Keywords:
vernacular photography, visual communication, visual discussion, community communication, private and public photographs, digitalization

# Abstrakti

Valokuvien käyttäminen kommunikoinnin välineenä – *visuaalisena keskusteluna* – on tavanomaista nykyajan yhteisöissä. On tärkeää ymmärtää valokuvien jakamisen uusia funktioita yhteisöissä, sillä nykymuotoisen jakamisen historia ei ole kovin pitkä. Ylipäätään arkivalokuvaamista (eng. vernacular photography) perheiden, sukulaisten ja ystävien keskuudessa on tutkittu vasta 1970-luvulta alkaen. Ennen digitalisaation aikaa näissä luonnostaan syntyneissä ryhmissä otettiin ja katseltiin tulostettuja valokuvia. Niitä säilytettiin ensisijaisesti albumeissa tai kenkälaatikoissa ja pieni osa päätyi esille piirongin päälle kehystettyinä. Valokuvien jakamisen piirin kuuluivat sukulaiset ja ystävät. Digitalisaatio, uusi kamerateknologia (valokuvat muodostuvat filmin sijaan sensorille) sekä informaatioverkostojen synty ovat sekä nopeuttaneet että helpottaneet valokuvien ottamista, muokkaamista ja jakamista sekä tehneet siitä huomattavasti edullisempaa. Samalla on syntynyt uusia näkökulmia arkivalokuvaamisen tutkimukseen.

Kun valokuvallisen kommunikaation piiri on laajentunut digitaalisten verkostojen myötä, valokuvauksesta on tullut samanaikaisesti sekä yksityisempää että julkisempaa. Yhtäältä henkilökohtaiset kamerapuhelimet korostavat yksilöllisyyttä, sillä lähes jokaisella on oma laite ja yhteisistä kameroista on tullut harvinaisia. Toisaalta nämä samat laitteet ovat kytkettyinä erilaisten yhteisöjen verkostoon, mikä tekee valokuvien jakamisesta helppoa ja laajemmin julkista, jos niin halutaan. Tämä kehitys toimii lähtökohtana väitöskirjatutkimukselle, jonka tavoitteena on lisätä ymmärrystä arkivalokuvaamisen sosiokulttuurisista funktioista nykyajan yhteisöissä.

Väitöskirja koostuu käytännön mediatuotannosta sekä kolmesta vertaisarvioidusta artikkelista. Se sijoittuu käytäntölähtöisen tutkimuksen (eng. practice-led research) alalle. Työ alkoi käytännön toiminnasta eli esikaupunkialueella toteutetusta mediatuotannosta, joka muodosti keskeisen osan koko väitöskirjan oppimisprosessia, lisäten ymmärrystä yhteisöjen sisäisestä viestinnästä. Samalla se määritti sitä seuranneiden, perinteisempien vertaisarvioitujen artikkelien lähestymistapoja. Väitöskirjan artikkelit edustavat laadullista tutkimusta. Merkittävimmässä roolissa datan keräämisessä olivat teemahaastattelut. Analyysimenetelminä käytettiin muun muassa sisällönanalyysiä sekä tulkitsevaa konseptianalyysiä.

Tärkeimmät tutkimustulokset viittaavat siihen, että arkivalokuvaamisella on monia sosiokulttuurisia funktioita erilaisissa yhteisöissä. Valokuvat välittävät sekä tunteita että tietoa. Ne tukevat näin uusien ihmissuhteiden luomista ja olemassa olevien ylläpitoa sekä identiteetin muodostamista itsensä esittämisen ja itseilmaisun

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kautta. Arkivalokuvia käytetään esimerkiksi sijainnin, aktiviteettien, saavutusten, ajatusten, huumorin, mielenkiinnon kohteiden ja mielipiteiden jakamiseen yhteisöissä. Valokuvat kykenevät luomaan vastaanottajalle läsnäolon tunteen ja välittämään hyödyllistä tietoa sekä auttamaan jonkin asian muistamisessa. Valokuvien jakaminen toimii parhaiten silloin, kun kuvasisältö vastaa yhteisön jäsenten odotuksia ja tarpeita.

Tämän väitöskirjan tärkein anti on arkivalokuvaamisen tutkimuksen teorian täydentäminen. Se esittelee *visuaalisen keskustelun* konseptin, joka viittaa nyky-yhteisöjen sisällä esiintyvään, ensisijaisesti valokuvia vaihtamalla tapahtuvaan kuvaviestintään. Tämänkaltainen viestintä sisältää usein myös muita visuaalisia elementtejä. Yksilöiden lisäksi myös organisaatiot osallistuvat visuaaliseen keskusteluun. Valokuvat ovat siis nyky-yhteisöissä kommunikoinnin muoto, jota käytetään valituilla sosiaalisen median kanavilla. Valokuvat täydentävät muuta keskustelua, sillä ne ovat helppo, nopea, ilmainen ja selkeä kommunikoinnin väline. Lisäksi väitöskirjassa analysoidaan henkilökohtaisten valokuvien jakamisen harkintaa (eng. self-disclosure) sekä vakiintuneiden mediatalojen toimintaympäristön muutosta lukijan kuvien seurauksena.

Avainsanat: Arkivalokuvaus, kuvaviestintä, visuaalinen keskustelu, yhteisöt ja viestintä, yksityiset ja julkiset valokuvat, digitalisaatio

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# 1.   Introduction

## 1.1. Motivation

As a researcher, the manifold nature and choice of approach to photography from its most minute details to its ubiquitous presence never cease to amaze us. Because the reflections on photography are always so time-relative, this dissertation adds understanding to photography with a research lens by contemplating it from the 2010s. Today, in the Nordic countries, everyone has a camera – at least integrated into a mobile device. By being connected online to various and inter-lapped communities with this device, the communicational functions of photographs shape our understanding and behaviour, as well as our mutual discussions. Not only by using words and text, but by sharing photographs as well. This research compilation demonstrates how the changes in the uses of photographs are also changes in how various communities communicate; photography affects people's everyday lives.

As noted, this research was conducted in a decade when digital photography has established itself as the predominant form of photography. We now see the first generation of camera users who only know the digital way. As a researcher, to have been able to experience the change in photography from analogue to digital during my own lifetime has helped me to understand the importance of continuous research. With digitalization being the order of the day, it is still important not to neglect the historical aspect of photography. This means that even though photography has gone through a revolution, few, if any of the old photographic functions have completely disappeared. The revolution has rather expanded the functions of photography vastly and possibly altered the focus without eliminating those from the analogue era. This is a typical viewpoint on photography; the many theories seem to complement each other, rather than being mutually exclusive.

Furthermore, if we look at dedicated social media groups, the motivation to making sense of photography is at least as popular outside as it is inside academia, especially among practitioners and amateur photographers. The empowering impressions of the process of making and sharing images inspires many people. Among philosophers, many have been inspired from analysing photography through self-reflection. Roland Barthes, for example, in *Camera Lucida* (1981), along with Susan Sontag's *On Photography* (1977) are considered to be some of the most important authors of criticism and theorization on photography. They both maintain a very self-reflecting and an essayistic style of writing. Questions on the private and public functions of photography are essential elements in these works.

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Even though they were written some 40 years ago, they nevertheless influence this dissertation as they address similar questions that we face in our time, consciously or not: "why is photography and photographs important to me, every day?" and "why do I carry a camera and take photographs?".

Thanks to digitalization, we are increasingly forced to look at photographs as tools for visual communication among individuals and groups in most communities. If ever, this raises questions on the functions of personal and public photographs just as it did decades ago. As noted, all the while, we carry a personal camera. What is the point?

Thus, as in many works before this one, the theoretical understanding of photography has been significantly initiated through self-reflection and epiphanies from taking, sharing and looking at photographs. Also, the media production portion of this doctoral thesis was executed by the researcher, and therefore concretizes the role of practice as a part of photographic research. As I later explain, this thesis is a practice-led entity. It starts with a project of photographic visual discussions within my own living community and continues with more traditional studies by looking at other types of communities where visual discussions take place. All this together aims at adding to the understanding of the socio-cultural functions of vernacular photographs in different contemporary communities.

Lastly, this dissertation is divided into five main chapters (1-5). The first chapter introduces the topic, research questions and the progress achieved during the research process. In the second chapter, the theoretical key concepts of the dissertation are explained and defined more thoroughly. The third chapter explains the experimental media production incorporated as part of the dissertation and its relevance in accordance with the three following articles in Chapter Four. The fifth chapter concludes the dissertation and sums up the theoretical and practical contribution of the research while also raising further questions considering future research.

## 1.2. Background of the study

In this chapter, the background of the study is approached much through basic concepts on the subject. The research and its examples are mostly from the Nordic countries with a similar technical status and social structure to that of Finland. The work started as part of an EU funded project *Integrated Media,* with collaboration between the University of Lapland in Rovaniemi, Luleå University of Technology in Sweden and Norut Research Institute in Tromsö, Norway. Later, as part of a researcher exchange programme, the dissertation was partly processed and written in Scotland, at the Ayr Campus belonging to the University of the West of Scotland. This is mentioned because participating actively in seminars in Scotland during a

nine-month period, and sharing and presenting the work process and the empirical data from Finland, revealed no differences regarding the use of photographs from that of Scotland. It is conceded, however, that in some parts of the world the research results introduced in this dissertation may not be applicable due to such issues as lack of data networks or the amount and technical development of camera-phones and their established role in society.

As mentioned in the opening chapter, the functions of modern community photo sharing include two parent-level digital revolutions that affect one-another. These revolutions are thoroughly analysed in Chapter Two, but in brief are 1) the change from analogue to digital photography and 2) the change from spatially to relationally defined communities. This revolution necessitated the key development through the building of a digital information network for camera-phones to connect to. Thus, digital photography enables us to use photographs as tools for instant visual communication and communities are in no way restricted to only face-to-face encounters and interactions between distant members today are feasible without any notable delay. Comprehensively, both revolutions took place in the first years of the new millennium.

Without underestimating the importance of the technical questions, in this study, the focus is on the *socio-cultural functions of vernacular photography*, also introduced in the main title. Obviously, *socio-cultural* is a concept related to social and cultural factors that are here considered as shared traditions, habits, beliefs, patterns or modes of operation that are present in the society at hand. The tradition of exploiting photography within social sciences, and especially sociology is vast (e.g. Seppänen 2001, 59). As Seppänen explains, photography can be used as a tool for research in social sciences, especially as photographs are images of information from a certain time and place. They provide valuable information for research from the past. Yet photography is also much more. It is integrated in sociology, because it is such a ubiquitous part of being human; photography has a role in people's personal daily communication, professional journalism, building and aiding memory, various art forms and as a hobby, to mention just some of the many socio-cultural segments of photography. Seppänen argues that research on photography is simultaneously research on sociology (2001, 59). Thus, the act of taking photographs with a personal camera-phone has become an everyday routine and a habit for many, making it an inseparable part of the social and cultural aspects of being a human in the 2010s.

Concerning other concepts of the thesis, *visual communication* is used as an umbrella term in much of the research and serves as a suitable parent-level concept. As visual communication is often seen as all-inclusive and ever-present, here it refers to vernacular (amateur) photographs and their functions in various communities from both personal and public viewpoints. As explained more thoroughly in Chapter Two, and bearing in mind the limits of this approach, the communicational

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functions of vernacular photography have become more prominent, in society as well as in this research.

As this research progressed in earlier years, a more precise concept evolved to portray and explain the former situation. The new concept is *visual discussion*. The term was coined as part of the seminar work with the supervisors involved, and it is introduced in the second peer-reviewed article (Näsi 2019). Specifically, *discussion* incorporates the notion of communication between individuals. Within communities, discussion is of major importance and the way that members share thoughts, feelings, aspirations, humour, goals, failures, successes, fears, dreams, likes and dislikes, to mention a few. Discussion leads to making decisions, exchanging ideas, debate and so on. The use of photographs as communication tools is comparable to any modern text-based discussion with similar objectives and qualities to those listed above. The images sent are not invariably but at least frequently time-related in the sense that they serve as discussion for that specific moment and discussion. Defining and explaining *visual discussion* later, as a concept, is one of the main contributions of this thesis.

Another characteristic of visual discussion is that contemporary vernacular photography (the process of planning, shooting, editing and sharing photographs) has become cheaper, easier and quicker through digitalization. It has also sometimes resulted in a state of feeling saturated from image overflow (Rubinstein & Sluis 2008, 23). Typical social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram and so forth, are packed with an outstanding number of shared photographs. This may result in a behavioural pattern in which photographs are not even necessarily even looked at (Lister 2014, 12). Sometimes, the visual discussion does not really begin or it is on a very superficial level. The reasons may be many, but it is also important to note that people are not equally active with everyone they know.

More precisely, visual discussion through photography is a prominent element of camera-phone use, but its overall importance may sometimes be overstated. For example, according to a survey by Matikainen and Villi (2015, 160), regardless of age, most Finns see themselves as traditional passive online followers. The research indicates that online participation focuses primarily on personal networks and communities, signifying that people are not equally interactive, but rather concentrate on the relationships that are most meaningful to them. People share a more diverse range of photographs within close communities. Furthermore, not all photographs are taken in order to be shared.

Figure 1. depicts an imaginary example of what a photographic sphere could look like from an individual camera-user's perspective. In relation to the two previous paragraphs, in the case of social media forums with a wide user base peers do not necessarily have a close relationship with each other. The importance of the relationship seems to affect the motivation for participating in the visual discussions.

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**A depicted idea of visual discussion activity**

Work acquaintances

Anyone

Social media group with common interest

Neighbours

Colleagues

Pals

School teacher

Sports team members

Best Friends

Relatives

Immediate family

Spouse

**Degree of photo sharing**

Visual discussion degree of activity

**Public photographs**

**Private photographs**
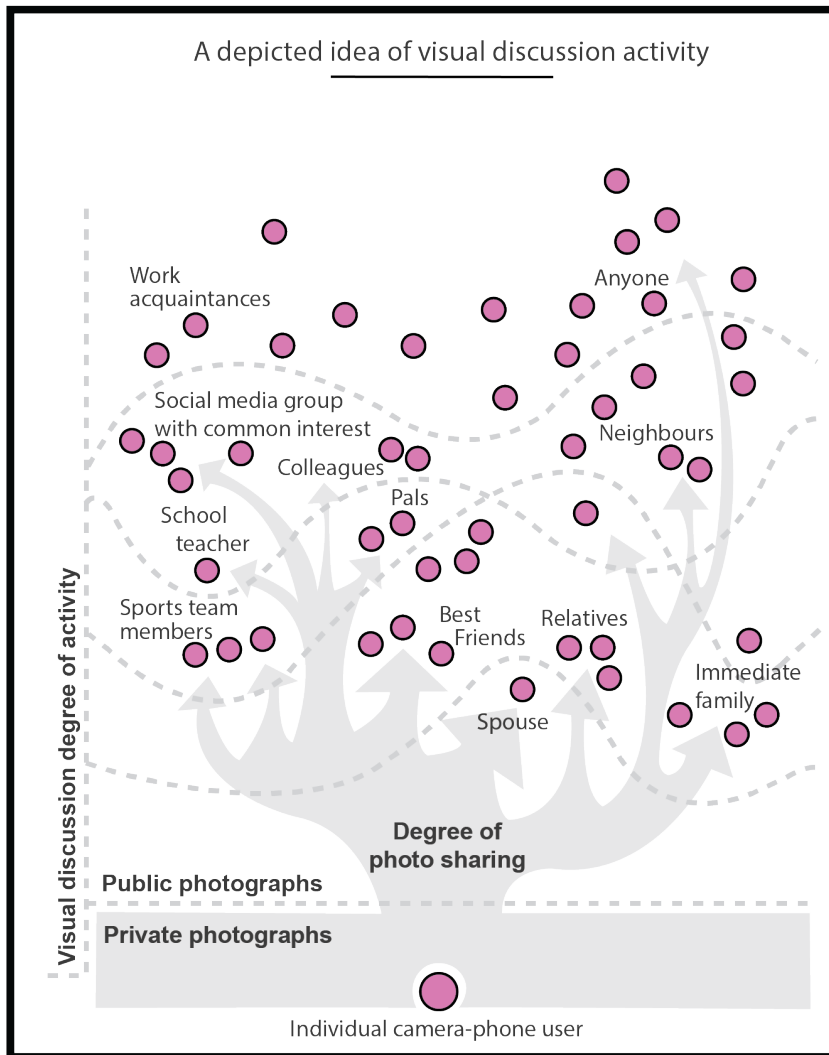
Individual camera-phone user

*Figure 1. Everyone has a personal network of communities where photographs are shared. Visual discussion through photographs is most active among close friends, family and other individually important social groups.*

The results published by Matikainen and Villi (2015) are in accordance with those of many other studies concerning the degree of photographic sharing in social media (Blanchard & Markus 2004; Rotman et al. 2009; Rotman & Wu 2014; Malinen 2016). For example, according to Malinen (2016, 34), online one–to–one and small group relationships display a higher degree of photo sharing. Photos are therefore shared less frequently with a wider audience and instead, more photos are circulated among close family members and friends. Under these circumstances,

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this dissertation also aims to propose a theoretical refinement and to build an understanding of the functions that explain community member activity regarding visual discussions, especially in the published articles.

Lastly, the term *vernacular photography* is mostly used because of its somewhat general nature, taking into account that a considerable number of studies have been conducted with many other terms used to describe photographic performance taking place outside economic, institutional and professional engagements: personal (van Dijck 2008), amateur and user-created (Lange 2011), domestic and vernacular (Cobley & Haeffner 2009; Sarvas & Frohlich 2011), witness (Peters 2001; Tait 2011; Frosh & Pinchevski 2009), home mode and snapshot (Chalfen 1987) and family photography (Sontag 1978). All these terms are interpreted as falling within the category of *vernacular* or *amateur*, albeit often with a more limited scope. Vernacular photography as a concept is discussed more thoroughly in chapter 2.1.

The distinction between professional and amateur photography follows the ideas of Robert Stebbins (1992). According to Stebbins, in contrast to amateurism, professionals: a) put a substantial amount of time into the outcome, b) achieve income from their work, c) master and specialise in techniques and competencies within a professional culture, d) self-identify with other professionals, e) draw on institutionalised means for validation and f) enjoy a publicly professional status. This is a rough division because especially contemporary news media and entertainment channels, such as Youtube, include material made by both ends of the scale and everything in between. This phenomenon could be considered as a democratization of journalism (Vanhanen 2015, 99), but on an even wider scale regarding all the published content, it could be considered as social participation. Of course, the possibility for income through social media, has steered many individuals to becoming professionals in visual communication.

## 1.3. Research goals and evolution of the research

The purpose and goal of this dissertation is to add to the understanding of the socio-cultural functions of vernacular photographs in various contemporary communities.

In order to initiate discourse on the research methodology, the evolution of the research is explained from section to section with their interrelations. Figure 2. below introduces the research process and its goals as an overview. It also visually reveals the evolution of this practice-led dissertation described in detail in the following chapters. Note also, that in chapter three, the documentation with specific examples of the media production is explained in more detail.
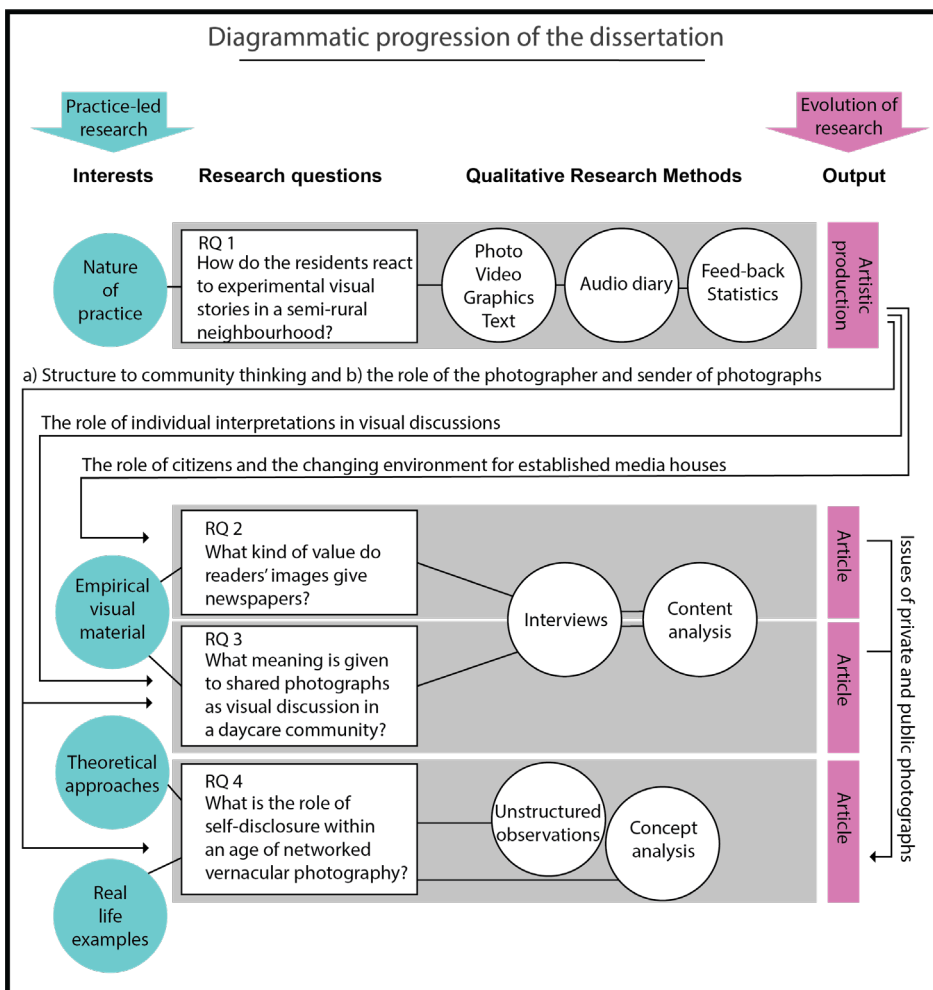
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## Diagrammatic progression of the dissertation

**Practice-led research**

**Interests** — **Research questions** — **Qualitative Research Methods** — **Output**

**Nature of practice**

RQ 1
How do the residents react to experimental visual stories in a semi-rural neighbourhood?

Photo Video Graphics Text

Audio diary

Feed-back Statistics

Artistic production

a) Structure to community thinking and b) the role of the photographer and sender of photographs

The role of individual interpretations in visual discussions

The role of citizens and the changing environment for established media houses

**Empirical visual material**

RQ 2
What kind of value do readers' images give newspapers?

RQ 3
What meaning is given to shared photographs as visual discussion in a daycare community?

Interviews

Content analysis

Article

Article

**Theoretical approaches**

RQ 4
What is the role of self-disclosure within an age of networked vernacular photography?

Unstructured observations

Concept analysis

Article

**Real life examples**

**Evolution of research**

Issues of private and public photographs

*Figure 2. Diagrammatic overview of the research questions and progression of the dissertation.*

Shown at the top of Figure 2, the explorative media production was an online community website consisting of 38 visual stories (photos, text, graphics, video) about a semi-rural neighbourhood near the city of Tampere, Finland. To begin with, the research goal for the practical work was to improve further questions for the forthcoming research whilst building an understanding of the issue. As such, the researcher *was placed* at the hub of community communication in the selected semi-rural neighbourhood. It was inevitable that questions regarding the contemporary media environment would emerge. This obviously included issues on visual discussion *per se*, but also citizen participation and journalistic norms, individual interpretations, the role of the sender of photographs and issues of private and public borders, to mention a few topics.

Regarding the first article after the media production, reader participation was at the core, because the residents of the semi-rural neighbourhood were active in giving feedback and introducing their own ideas and stories about the neighbourhood and the website. As part of the doctoral program, it was appropriate and possible to work with selected media houses in Finland (Aamulehti from Tampere, Kaleva from Oulu and Keskipohjanmaa from Kokkola), and take a closer look at the role of readers as visual content providers for three well-known newspapers. *What kind of value do readers' images give newspapers* was chosen as the key research question for the first peer-reviewed article.

The media production also proved that people, as the audience, interpret images in different ways. From there, the discussion progressed towards the notion that individuals have different expectations of the photographs received and even of the producer and sender. As such, choosing a community and a case study for an academic article was easy, with plenty of options to choose from. The goal for the second peer-reviewed article was to build an understanding of the experiences and views of parents of small children in daycare as recipients of photographs. The research question was: *What meaning is given to shared photographs as visual discussion in a daycare community?* In addition to shedding light on how the recipients may have different expectations regarding the photographs received, it also revealed that there are expectations of other members and their behaviour in the community as camera-phone users.

The third peer-reviewed article was theoretical in nature. The roots of the article were decidedly in the media production even though it was published last because the questions regarding self-disclosure and the borders between personal and public photographs were already present during the media production and are key elements in determining the functions of vernacular photography in a community. The article was also the result of extensive seminar work around the dissertation topic. The research question in the article is: *what is the role of self-disclosure in an age of networked vernacular photography*? In addition to introducing theory refinement to earlier well-established theories on vernacular photography, it was intended also to serve as a summarizing article for scholars less familiar with the topic. Overall, the questions on self-disclosure and boundaries between private and public photographs evolved throughout the whole process.

## 1.4. Overview of methods

This dissertation falls inside the practice-led research field of the Faculty of Art and Design, University of Lapland. With traditions in incorporating practice within research, executing a practice-led thesis was encouraged. Practice does not necessarily conform to traditional research norms, but is a significant method for

generating new knowledge as Candy and Edmonds (2018, 8) describe. In cases where initially the matter is not necessarily very familiar, the practice (which in this case was a media production), can be a central piece of methodology primarily directed to building an understanding. The final artefact as an output itself may not be the focus of research, likewise in this doctoral thesis. The learning process occurring in the course of making the production is the true purpose. As Figure 2. depicts, the practice process of the media production started and led this dissertation by generating questions that directed the research in the articles that were to follow.

The decision to use the term *practice-led research* instead of *practice-based research* is simply to emphasise ultimately that the making of the media production in order to build an understanding was deemed more important than the final outcome.

*"If a creative artefact is the basis of the contribution to knowledge, the research is practice-based. If the research leads primarily to new understandings about practice, it is practice-led."* (Candy & Edmonds 2018, 3)

As explained, initially community communication was not very familiar to the researcher. Choosing to do research through practice, or to include practice, was a decision taken with this in mind. A defining element from a practice-led process standpoint was the objective of asking as open a question as possible concerning the research topic, and to continue from there on by further asking more pertinent questions as the process continued (also Trimingham 2002, 57). This means that the researcher involved understands that the research improves through practice. In this case, as the research commenced at the very beginning, the proposed questions regarding the functions of vernacular photography in communities were not necessarily very well thought out or structured. The media production served as a learning process and primarily as an instrument for generating better questions.

Thus, the work-specific research questions evolved during the years of work, thanks to recorded self-reflections, concept mapping and the planning process that came about especially during the practice section of the thesis. The themes and approaches to the articles were influenced by the realizations that occurred. This means that the practice was not merely embedded in the research process but research questions arose from the process of making the media production (Candy & Edmonds 2018, 1). Concretely, the media production introduced *an environment* where visual discussions take place. This evoked better questions regarding both personal sensations and knowledge about being the creator and sender of visual material (i.e. being the initiator of a visual discussion). More precisely, these questions included issues on the role of the sender especially regarding self-disclosure, the role of the recipient with different expectations towards the sender and in demonstrating how the recipients interpret the visuals in different ways. Also, it helped to ask better questions regarding the

changing media environment where individuals can create and share content that traditionally belonged to established media houses.

Quite often, the term *artistic production* is used for the practical portions of a doctoral thesis in the art and design field in Finland. In this dissertation, the decision to use the term *media production* is merely a choice of utilizing a term that best describes the artefact. From a research tradition viewpoint, the artefact could also be considered to be an artistic production.

As required, practice-led research must include certain elements, such as being mindful of the research question and documenting the key elements accordingly. In Chapter Three, the media production is presented with its commencement, methodology, implementation and reception in more greater detail. The media production was also peer-reviewed (Lehtonen, see attachment).

Three out of four sections (the production documented in Chapter Three and the first two articles in Chapter Four) are based on empirical material whilst the third article is theoretical. The empirical studies involved typical qualitative research entities where time and specific surroundings affect research methodology and naturally the ensuing outcomes. Furthermore, practical and theoretical experiences initially of the researcher and of following a vast number of participants, yield detailed meanings, expressions and interpretations as results.

From a general research methodological viewpoint, Table 1. represents an overview of the qualitative research methods used.

| Research Method/Data | Contribution in this thesis |
|---|---|
| Practice-led research | A new artefact is created. The purpose is to increase understanding by means of practice and analysing the process of practice |
| Audio diary | Is particularly useful in obtaining rich subjective data |
| Statistics | Data collection method to build an overall understanding of web traffic during a specific period |
| Semi-structured interviews | Based on a well-defined set of questions, but allow room for new information and insights to be incorporated as the interview progresses |
| Content analysis | A tool used to determine the presence of certain words, themes or concepts within the given qualitative data |
| Interpretive concept analysis | Used for theory refinement, where concepts, their characteristics and relations to other concepts are clarified and analysed |
| Unstructured observations | A flexible data collection method for giving real-life examples to concretize a theory |

*Table 1. The main research methods in this doctoral thesis*

Obviously, the listing in Table 1. is not chronological and some of the methods introduced are used more than once. As this is qualitative research, the semi-

structured interviews could be highlighted because they had a significant role concerning the work. Especially in the first and second articles, the interviews formed the backbone of the studies.

The detailed descriptions of the methods used are to be found in the respective articles in Chapter Four and regarding the media production in Chapter Three.

# 2.    Key concepts and theories

## 2.1. From prints to pixels, discussions on vernacular photography

"You Press the Button, We Do the Rest" was an advertising slogan coined by George Eastman, the founder of the Kodak company and aptly describes the ideology of the company in trying to make photography easy and accessible to everyone. As a target of research, vernacular photography was already extensively studied during the Kodak era as a practice within families, relatives and close friends (e.g. Sontag 1978; Barthes 1981; Chalfen 1987). These naturally formed groups created spheres for amateur photography; where photography took place and where the results were looked at and archived in picture frames, albums and shoeboxes.

Thus, vernacular photography evolved into a ubiquitous part of our everyday lives and as a target of research already before digitalization. But digitalization, as regards the new camera technology (photographs forming on a sensor and not film) and the birth of networks, made taking, editing and sharing photographs faster, easier and cheaper, simultaneously also setting new requirements for research. The two distinct advantages of digital cameras; 1) being able to see the final image and erase unwanted pictures instantly and 2) being able to carry along the whole archive, manage, enjoy and share the results with others are self-evident technical developments of digitalization.

The technical development has paved the way for new socio-cultural ways of adopting photography. It is of course a generation-related issue, but it is nevertheless a question of photography becoming more pervasive in present-day life; both on and offline. Maybe surprisingly, photography has simultaneously become more private and more public. On the one hand, personal and privately operated modern camera-phones emphasize individuality in the sense that every individual has their own device and shared family cameras are rare, if not non-existent. As a result, most photographs are only seen by the owner of the camera-phone in question and everyone creates and manages their very personal visual archive. Again, family photography was previously a collective operation, a ritual, where the photographs represented a family history conducted by one family member who operated a family camera (Chalfen 1987); the photographic decisions were at the whim of one person and thus represented just one perspective, also sometimes creating embarrassing outcomes (Mäkiranta 2012). Today, from a very young age, the *ownership of visual representing* has become individually managed. Failed and embarrassing photographs can be easily deleted, or they are at least in the safe possession of the camera-phone

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owner. On the other hand, as these same devices are connected to a network of endless audiences, it naturally makes photographic sharing easy and therefore also more public. If so desired, the whole world could be the audience.

In much of the work involved in this dissertation, the term *camera-phone* is used simply to emphasize that a camera is nowadays typically integrated into the personal phone and that the phone is operated for tasks which before digitalization were done by a plain camera. Most camera-phones also include photo editing options, making the operations comparable to those of a small computer. This is an important aspect, because the camera-phone is not necessarily used only for taking photographs, but also for purposes of editing and sending. Photographs are sometimes transferred to a phone from a separate camera via Bluetooth or a personal WIFI connection for enhancement and sending. And yet, in spite of their many computer-like features and capabilities, the apparatus continues to be referred to as a phone in everyday talk about *camera-phones, cell-phones, mobile phones, smart-phones* and *hand-phones.*

Another essential concept of both contemporary vernacular photography and modern communities is the idea of *being mobile.* Calling a phone *mobile* was somewhat different in the times when landline phones were the other option. One would have the option of calling another person at home (non-mobile) or away (mobile). From a contemporary socio-cultural viewpoint, using the term *mobile phone* is no longer as important as that of making a distinction between mobile and non-mobile, because the same phone is present not only *on the go*, but also at home, at work and practically everywhere. Thus, having a mobile phone means largely that a person is *available* or *online* at any given time (e.g. Ito et al. 2005; Castells et al. 2007, 218; Villi 2010). Being constantly available changes our everyday social behaviour and the visual culture that we live in.

Moreover, the concept of being mobile as regards vernacular photography means that the barriers to and consideration for taking photographs are very low. People seem to be acutely aware of the fact that they have a camera with them and that photographing does not cost anything. Taking photographs could be seen as an inseparable part of being a modern human being.

It is also important to understand that camera-phone development has made remarkable advances in the visual direction through touch screens, corollary applications, improved phone display precision and general user interface design. In consequence, the communication that happens via mobile phones has developed from black and white text messages and talking to a full audiovisual experience. Phone vibration makes the experience even somewhat sense-audio-visual.

The shift from what amateur photography was in the analogue era to what it is now is mostly a shift in focus as this study approaches the functions of vernacular photography through the theoretical lenses by Van House and Davis (2005), Van Dijck (2008), Rose (2010), Sarvas and Frohlich (2011) and Villi (2014),

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the framework is built on the idea that using photographs primarily to preserve memories has decreased and using them to communicate has remarkably increased. As Villi (2014) argues, the question has expanded from how Barthes (1981) analysed photographs as depicting something *that has been* to rather presenting *what is going on* (see also Ito & Daisuke 2005; Lee 2010; Sarvas & Frohlich 2011; Larsen & Sandbye 2014). In other words, the impulse for photography has shifted after the turn of the new millennium from preserving memories to functions of exchanging information, maintaining and creating new social relationships, self-presentation and self-expression.

Admittedly, all photographs become memories at some point and people will probably always want to make concrete prints, books and Christmas cards from their favourite personal photo collections for preserving visual memories of a time and a place. Thus, the functions of vernacular photography are rarely limited and unambiguous, but often overlapping, open to interpretations and highly adaptable (Näsi 2020, 31).

During the dissertation process interest increased in the functions of photography in communities that are not solely online, but rather among people who also know each other from face-to-face interactions. From there, thoughts of self-presentation and self-reflection regarding personal photo sharing emerged. Obviously, the realisation of the role of self-disclosure in how people represent themselves in different types of communities (online and offline) can be seen as a key element of not only the last article (Näsi 2020), but also of the dissertation as a whole.

## 2.2. From spatially to relationally defined communities, discussions on the evolution of communities

There is often a positive tone when there is small talk about a sense of community due to associations with offering human connections, giving inspiration, resources and other kinds of support. Concerning research, talking about communities and a sense of community is anything but straightforward due to various perspectives and interpretations in the social sciences (e.g. Paasivaara & Nikkilä 2010, 9; Voydanoff 2001; Nivala 2008; Saastamoinen 2009). Researchers have conceptualized sense of community at least as a cognition, a behaviour, an individual affective state, an environmental characteristic, or a spiritual dimension (Chipuer & Pretty 1999, 644) with no general consensus on one preferable norm. Approaching community thinking and a sense of community varies across studies. Yet what is important for the basis in this study is the fact that, regardless of the approach angle, communication amongst community members is at the core of what makes a community.

Throughout this dissertation, the interest has been in how members of communities (the participation of the researcher in the media production, the informants in the

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empirical papers and the subjects in the real-life examples) experience and act with vernacular photography in their respective communities. As such, concerning the various interpretations of community research, the results should be seen rather as a psychological dimension. The understanding on the functions of photography is based on qualitative research data.

From a community point of view, the digital revolution concerning communication between individuals and groups had a direct impact on how communities came into being and on how existing communities function. If we look at any community in the past, or indeed in the present, to exist at all the community must have important meaning for its members. Ancient villagers relied on each other for survival (food, craftsmanship, safety and healing) and at that time, the meaning of the community was not only very concrete with cause-consequence relationships, but its functioning was crucial. Today, the relationships are not so clear in relation to survival, but work, school, sports teams, musical ensembles, families and friends are meaningful for the members because individuals supplement each other, have emotional ties and engage in activities with a common interest. Thus, the functions of communities have changed, but nevertheless, the idea of being part of a community, is anything but insignificant.

Digitalization has made relating to space and time very different from earlier times, such as the era before the Internet. Today, a significant number of communities operate solely online. Even if a community mainly functions face-to-face, or if its origins are in physical presence, there is the option or often pressure to expand communication online. Applications such as WhatsApp and Messenger offer easy and fast ways of connecting the respective members to a shared online communication channel or forum. Members may be located anywhere in the world and choose to establish a live audio or/and visual connection at any time and anywhere, or join in the conversation by sharing photographs. Of course, participation in visual discussions is also possible afterwards, with a time lag.

In brief, the concept of a community where the members are available to each other immediately or with a very short delay has changed the way in which members communicate and how communities are understood. Considering the change from spatially to relationally defined communities and the specific interest in the functions that photographs have in the chosen communities, the division into four by Sarason (1974) and elaborated by McMillian and Chavis (1986) guided community thinking in the second published article. Also, concerning the contribution of the dissertation as a whole, this theoretical framework brings structure to the thinking.

Briefly, the division into four in the psychological sense of community (PSOC) is a key concept in community psychology (McMillian and Chavis 1986). The four interrelated dimensions that can be used as tools to measure sense of community are; 1) membership, 2) mutual influence, 3) shared emotional connection and 4) integration and fulfilment of needs. Membership includes a feeling of belonging to the community. Mutual influence means that an individual feels that a person is

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both able to influence the community and be influenced by the participation. Shared emotional connection refers to bonds developed through positive interactions over time. Integration and need fulfilment indicates that members feel that they benefit from the association that they have with the community. These domains interact dynamically to create a PSOC.

The theoretical framework above was thus originally aimed at creating a tool to help measure sense of community in various groups. As that is not the aim of this study, the division into four was applied by giving similar structure to critical thinking as well as building a basis for the semi-structured interviews. Consequently, and similarly, using the same division helped gather data and analyse the functions of photographs in communities as described in more detail in Table 2. in Chapter Three. It is plain to see how the functions of photographs fall rather effortlessly inside the division into four by McMillian and Chavis (1986). Thus, it should be acknowledged that there is much more potential in exploiting and developing the ideas introduced here in future studies.

Lastly, in the communities that are in the focus in all of three published articles as well as in the media production, many of the members knew each other or had at least a slight idea of the other members also outside the online communication channel. These communities are regarded as some sort of hybrids, where members communicate both online and face-to-face (e.g. Lu et al. 2017). *Hybrid communities* supports the blend of computer-mediated communications with face-to-face interactions. Communication online affects and compliments offline interactions. "Can you send me a picture of the recipe?" or "Can you send me a photo of your new dress?" are typical sentences during a face-to-face conversation, where the sequel to the discussion is directed online. From a research point of view, many earlier works concerning topics similar to that of the role of photographs in contemporary communities are not fully comparable because they have been conducted regarding purely online communication.

## 2.3. Visual discussion - Active sharing or forced participation?

The two previous chapters described how digitalization affected the shift to mobile camera-phones and how consequently it even changed the very essence of photography. Simultaneously, communities expanded online and communication methods broadened. Due to the very same reasons and partly incorporated in how modern community members communicate, one could say that the mode of operation is a catalyst for the change in photography and vice versa; a modern community offers an ideal platform for photo sharing but simultaneously this visual discussion with photographs affects the sense of community (e.g. Näsi 2019, 136) that members experience.

Very concretely, this study embodies the greater change from mass media to social media logic in the sense that vernacular photography, as a tool for sharing user-generated content, has invaded the public media sphere (van Dijck and Poell 2013, 5). Alongside text, videos, animated gifs, audio recording and graphics such as emoticons, also photographs are shared on various media platforms with versatile purposes. As van Dijck and Poell address in their article (2013, 11), it is fairly easy to understand the principles, mechanisms, and strategies of social media logic, but it is much harder to map the complex connections between platforms that distribute, users that use them, technologies that drive them, economic structures that scaffold them, and institutional bodies that incorporate them. That said, from a theoretical standpoint, it could be fruitful to analyse the chosen case studies in this dissertation in relation to van Dijck' and Poell's (2013) ideas on social media logic, but understandably, as a whole that is beyond the scope of the study. The emphasis here is to build understanding fairly profoundly regarding the functions of photo sharing in smaller hybrid communities, where there is often a blend of computer-mediated communications with face-to-face interactions.

However, the economic structures and institutional aspects are considered to some extent in the different portions of this dissertation (the media production per se, newspapers in the first article and the daycare in the second article). Furthermore, it has also been considered that the social media spheres in this study are anything but *natural* and that they intertwine with distinct interests and constantly renewing themes (van Dijck and Poell 2013, 4). Thus the conclusions in this study could possibly be applicable to photo sharing more broadly on online photo sharing platforms such as Instagram, Snapchat and Facebook, where the global community has often been created around a common theme or interest and where the members know each other through a social media profile.

As the articles only of this doctoral thesis explain, vernacular photographs often work differently in different communities. Possibly to some extent self-evidently, it was noted that applying the PSOC division into four reveals differences in the meaning which individuals attach to visual discussion. The articles (Näsi 2019; Näsi 2020) demonstrate consistently with other studies (e.g. Larsen 2014; Rose 2014), that experiences of photographic sharing do not mean that photo sharing happens without intent and thought, but is markedly affected by the fourth element proposed by McMillian and Chavis (1986); integration and need fulfilment. Members have different needs and expectations of visual discussions. Even though the personal expectations are clear, comprehension of the needs of others is not necessarily so clear. Assumptions that the needs for photo sharing are the same among all members are plausible. (Näsi 2019, 133). The photographs in a community *embody* this need fulfilment with varying success.

Needs therefore vary depending on the individual, which in return affects the motivation to participate in visual discussions in a community, as in the following

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example from the daycare participants; five out of nine guardians did not think it was very important to see their own child in the photographs, when accordingly, four were not really interested in pictures other than those of their own child (Näsi 2019, 133). This example raises a question as to where the need for some parents to see their own child during the day was not very well fulfilled. So being, the basis for sharing photographs was not announced anywhere to include every child in the photographs every day. In this example, the need fulfilment was more successfully fulfilled for the five other parents who did not think seeing their own child was very important. They had a more pedagogical approach towards the photographs and wanted to see what activities the daycare had planned for all the children.

Understandably, the content of photographic sharing affects the way that people experience the community, but it also affects how people experience the functions that the photographs have or should have.

As we know from other works (e.g. Rubinstein & Sluis 2008, 23; Lister 2014, 12), there is a superfluity of vernacular photo sharing and this has resulted in many feeling sated from it. This is mentioned because it is also important to see that many factors affect the interest of individuals in a community. The content may be entirely appropriate, but there is simply too much of it. Conflictingly, despite this state of image overflow, only a fraction of all photographs taken are shared (e.g. Larsen 2014; Rose 2014). This demonstrates aptly how the whole of society and its almost infinite number of communication channels are attuned to photographic sharing. This idea was also included in Figure 1, where the degree of visual discussion is not standard but varies across individual communities and relationships.

As it is, there is an incomprehensible number of photographs in circulation and understanding the need fulfilling elements in photographic sharing for specific communities is a key element from a strategic point of view, for organizations as well as individuals. Moreover, as noted in Chapter 1.2. (Matikainen and Villi 2015, 160), most people perceive themselves as traditional passive online followers.

Thus, in to amplify and to justify the title of this chapter, asking whether visual discussions is active sharing or forced participation, depends on the individual and the community. People have individual expectations and even recognizable needs for various communities, and visual discussion is not an unrelated entity as regards this issue. The shared photographs may be of value *per se* or they may serve as mediators. Of course, the sensitivity and orientation towards taking and sharing photographs varies not only from person to person, but also case by case. Concretely, photographs may, for example, include persons or material that are of importance to the sender or viewer and are considered intrinsically valuable. For others, these very same photos may not have any value at all. As it is, photographs convey, for example, information, organizational values, themes, doings, places and so on. Depending on the recipient's expectations and needs, the success of the visual discussion may be variable.

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# 3.   Media production – hoytamo.com

## 3.1. Introduction

From time to time, it is normal to stop and question the rationality of our own doings in a digitalized networked society. Adopting new technology and entering new online communities is often done hastily and without too much hesitation. It is also natural to try things and form an opinion after a while because understanding benefits, disadvantages, risks and cause-effect relationships is difficult without personal experience. As a researcher, I have been very critical of my own behaviour in exploiting new technology and expressing myself in front of others. Maybe this is due to undergraduate studies on these issues, work experience, some personal traits, or all of these together. This line of thought about the rationality of how people have become part of a world of visual discussion so effortlessly and on their own initiative was the inspiration underlying the media production and for making it part of the dissertation.

The purpose of this third chapter is to serve as a documentation of the media production while simultaneously it introduces the media production as the beginning of this practice-led research and its impact on what followed ensued. My aim is to demonstrate how the production as an output itself is not in the spotlight, but rather the learning process acquired and that occurred while making the production. In other words, just as it was pre-planned before being put into practice, the production succeeded in serving as an instrument for formulating better questions regarding visual discussion in communities, as explained in Chapter 1.4.

## 3.2.  Semi-rural neighbourhood visual discussion

The semi-rural neighbourhood (Höytämö, in the southern Finnish municipality of Lempäälä), in which the media production took place, is a municipality of a few hundred residents in Finland. It can be regarded as a village community surrounded roughly by two lakes and two highways. Interestingly, these natural and man-made barriers make the community a rather distinct area. The decision to start the dissertation process in and from there was a personal choice that goes back to face-to-face discussions with neighbours about the rich history of the village after moving there myself in 2010.

As regards the introductory paragraph, I decided to create an online community website that finally consisted of 38 audiovisual stories (photos, text, graphics, video)

about the community during a 12-week period. These stories were divided into four main categories: 1) general, 2) people, 3) hobbies & outdoors and 4) services & businesses. The site was advertised on noticeboards in the neighborhood and on local Facebook pages. The visual stories were created during the week and published at the weekends.



*Image 1. The author of the media production fixing an advertisement on a notice board (photo: Jussi Saarinen)*



*Image 2. Front page of the media production*

Of course, there was a challenge in creating a website carrying the name *Höytämö* with the Finnish alphabetic letters ä and ö. As a result, the site name was transformed to *www.hoytamo.com (not currently in use).*

## 3.3. Practice-led research – a more profound understanding through the process

This dissertation process started with the making of the media production and it was expected that thanks to the practice in a practice-led piece of research, new questions would arise from the process through doing practice (Candy & Edmonds 2018, 1). The practice-led beginning to this thesis was directed towards enlightening and enhancing the research process of community communication with an emphasis on understanding visual discussion. Thus, the attraction of creating a site, such as this, provided a means for exploration that extended the research on a personal level, making the beginning somewhat subjective, but aimed at contributing to the wider picture by submerging the researcher inside the process and formulating better questions about the research topic. Obviously, when I started, I knew very little about community communication, visual discussion (the term had not even been coined) and its research. This is where the practice-led research process proved its worth.

Thus, the finished artefact as a website was not the object of research, but 1) a tool for building a preunderstanding of the topic and 2) a tool to improve the research process as a whole by formulating better questions. As part of the dissertation, it operates as a driver and an inter-dependent and recognised complementary processes before the traditional peer-reviewed articles. This media production was also peer-reviewed (Lehtonen, see attachments).

*"By commencing the dissertation process with a practice-led piece, it has a central status in shaping the contents of the following works"* was also noted in the statement (Lehtonen, see attachments)

As mentioned, the interest in the surrounding community had emerged from hearing stories from local history. Being part of the creative arts research community in the university drew me towards alternative ways of seeing practice as part of research. The process of making was done to consciously seek out new knowledge and modify the research process.

## 3.4. Objective and methodology

The objective of making the media production involved exploration of existing working practices in order to reflect on the new knowledge that has operational significance concerning visual discussions. More specifically, the process of making a

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production was aimed at bringing together practical experience, self-reflection and concept mapping for me as the researcher, and thus draw at least *mental guidelines* of what it is to create content for a pre-defined audience.

The primary idea of exploring visual discussions was built on a notion that if the site or any of its content attracted no attention from the audience, they would not be meaningful for the recipients and vice versa.

The production was subject to my personal qualities and slight prior knowledge and knowhow about building a site and making its content. Obviously, I had graduated from university in audiovisual media and culture and had some six years' experience of working in communications. Also, as noted earlier, in addition to recognizing the research process, the documentation of the work progress was a crucial part of the research process. To gain empirical data, three methods were chosen:

1) keeping an audio diary during the 12 weeks of production
2) receiving feedback and comments on site, Facebook and e-mail and
3) tracking the website traffic

All three methods of gathering data were chosen to help build an understanding of the functions of making visual discussions within a community. The data was then analysed in three ways:

1) by self-reflection as regards the audio diary analysing the creation process and my role as the *creator and sender* of content,
2) by content analysis as regards creating topics and sorting out factors emerging from the data (feedback and web traffic)
3) by intentionally exploring various unconventional visual communication modes to challenge personal ideological norms of how to make news stories.

Even though no article was actually written about the media production, some of the most significant outcomes and contributions are next introduced by describing the process of analysing the practice and its documentations. The outcomes and contribution, as an overview, are also depicted in Figure 2.

Lastly, in addition to being peer-reviewed as a part of this thesis in 2014 in Finland (Lehtonen, see attachments), the media production was also presented at two scientific conferences (ICIDS 2013 - 6th International Conference on Interactive Digital Storytelling in Istanbul, Turkey and WDC2012 Helsinki-Rovaniemi World Design Capital in Rovaniemi).

## 3.5. Outcomes and contribution

The first significant contribution of the production was in building an understanding of how to approach the question of visual discussions in communities and find a suitable theory to apply. This was especially useful for the second and third published articles.

The following Table 2. below, is intended to demonstrate the inspiration and realization (epiphany) that happened due to the media production. The table demonstrates how by creating topics and sorting out factors that merged from the data (audio diary, statistics and feedback and website traffic), articulated similarities and led to finding the previously introduced elements discovered by McMillian and Chavis (1986) concerning psychological sense of community (PSOC). Simultaneously, as the data was being analysed and sorted, it was conducive to discovering previous scientific works on community research and comparing similarities to my findings in themes. Also, sorting out the data and finding common denominators led to making Table 2. This discovery is due to the practice-led media production and aptly demonstrates not only the compatibility of my findings with those of the theoretical framework by McMillian and Chavis, but also demonstrates the role of practice as generating useful data.

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| Method of gathering data | Outcome: Practice-led contribution to building understanding | Relevance to which of the four sense of community factors (McMillian and Chavis (1986)) 1) membership 2) mutual influence 3) shared emotional connection 4) integration and fulfilment of needs? |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
| Audio diary | Understanding the challenge and personal pressure of maintaining the interest of people throughout the whole project. Fear of failing. | Mutual influence<br>Integration and fulfilment of needs |
| | Understanding the importance of quality. Time consumption. | Integration and fulfilment of needs |
| | Realizing the complexity of engaging the community; is communication enough or should the project strive for physical participation in making sense of community | Membership<br>Shared emotional connection<br>Integration and fulfilment of needs |
| | Understanding that the community of interest already exists without this project, but this production creates meaning and possibly enhances (maybe temporarily) a sense of community. This communication-based project is only an outcome of a community and only possible because of the community. | Shared emotional connection |
| | | |
| Feedback and comments received | Extensive positive feedback on social media among residents | Shared emotional connection |
| | The need for audience to share their own stories about Höytämö and its residents | Mutual influence<br>Integration and fulfilment of needs |
| | An urge to see the project as a cultural artefact that needs wider recognition. Being proud of roots in the semi-rural neighbourhood. | Shared emotional connection |
| | Seeing people share awareness of the project without being asked to do so | Mutual influence<br>Shared emotional connection |
| | | |
| Website traffic | 13,791 individual visits to the site during the 12 weeks of the project | Shared emotional connection<br>Integration and fulfilment of needs |
| | 49 comments given | Mutual influence |
| | The most visited stories introduced local people<br>Youth of Höytämö in the 60s and 70s<br>Matti Valkama, lived in Höytämö since the 1920s<br>Marjaana Oksanen, Paunu is part of Höytämö | Membership<br>Integration and fulfilment of needs |

*Table 2. Examples of the discoveries that helped find a theoretical framework for what was to follow in the form of scientific articles.*

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Regarding Table 2 the various documented data supported or were compatible with the topics of the PSOC and furthermore, whilst gathering the data, it became clear that applying theories from social sciences could be useful in this study as well, even though the interest of research and approach angle are different as follows:

1) Research on psychological sense of community (PSOC): What is the extent of a sense of community among a chosen group of people?

2) Research on visual discussion in this dissertation: What is the function of amateur photographs within a community?

Thus, the contribution of the theoretical framework by McMillian and Chavis (1986) is mostly in bringing structure to the work. Only through the process of the media production was it possible to sort out and analyse the issues that stood out and thereafter search for theories that were also applicable to visual communication studies. As the research questions right above indicate, the second question could be looked at in many cases as subordinate to the first question; visual discussions could be categorized as *only* one element among others that create a sense of community. In these cases, especially if the community already existed before visual communication, this positioning is somehow justified, because in these cases visual discussions only added a new method of communication to the existing community.

However, because photography lends itself to the division into four of psychological sense of community (PSOC), it also indicates that photographs seem to be compatible with the relevance of a sense of community. For researchers, this compatibility should be of great interest.

Furthermore, some communities have been created for visual discussion purposes *per se*, or a new communication channel in a community has been opened purely for purposes of visual discussion, in which cases the sharing of photographs often accounts for the majority of all communication. As an example, in the second published article (Näsi 2019), starting visual discussion was seen to have positive effects on the relationship between home and the daycare. The idea of having this kind of visual discussion has come as a surprise for parents who have heard of this type of visual discussing for the first time and who have their own children cared for elsewhere. With their respective daycare providers, there is very little, if any, visual discussion between home and daycare, which means that the relationship between daycare and among guardians is very different; they might really not know much at all about each other nor might there be much interaction amongst them.

The second major contribution of the media production was, and to some extent subjectively is, that the production refined personal thinking in the dual role of being the researcher and simultaneously the producer. Self-reflection by placing myself inside the production as well as at the hub of the community, brings to light concerns

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similar to those of taking an active member role inside any other contemporary community. It emerges in the seven audio diaries that as the producer, I was very acutely aware of such issues as content quality, audience reception and evaluation and feedback tone. I had major concerns about keeping the audience engaged in the process right to the end, as demonstrated here:

*"After the first week is over, this has been very exciting. But at the same time I feel mental pressure in the background about succeeding with this production. As I see the traffic high after the first week, now I am concerned about the next week and the one after that, if people will want to come back or not. So seriously, here right from the start, I'm worrying about succeeding in engaging people... and so I'm doubting myself whether my stories are strong enough, or if I should try to engage more and get people to participate in making the production?"*

Sample of the fourth (4 February, 2013) audio diary transcribed and translated.

Exploring and discovering these self-reflections led to planning especially the second (Näsi 2019) and third articles (Näsi 2020). For example, considering my article on the daycare community, it was easy for me to identify with working for the daycare and being responsible for creating visual discussions with the children's parents. The very same factors that build pressure concerning daycare image, reputation and other impressions are present with the media production. For their part, the photographs play a decisive role.

Also, feeling the pressure was a notion that resurfaced constantly throughout the dissertation process. It prompted the question whether people as camera-phone users share any photographs without the presence of self-disclosure. The third peer-reviewed article (Näsi 2020) discusses photographic sharing and self-disclosure, with many thanks to the self-reflection that already began during the media production.

Thirdly and lastly, the media production was instructive in demonstrating the manifold functions of photographs. Planned as highly experimental, it afforded a wide test bed for different visual discussions especially regarding time and space. The norms of newspaper-like journalism were consciously disregarded and there was no unified implementation guide. Publicly, for the audience, the stories were divided into four categories (1. general, 2. people, 3. hobbies & 4. outdoors and services & businesses), but simultaneously there was an underlying personal complete backup check-list of different approaches and methods of creating the new stories that were used.

    List of story approaches
    Fact – Fiction
    Art - News
    Passive – Interactive
    History – Present
    Single story – Continuing story

Person – Location – General – Hobbies – Services
Phenomenon – Topicality
Text – Graphics – Photographs – Video

This list was made to create diversity, evoke contradictions and introduce imagination to the work and the presence of these elements were a goal *per se.* They were used as guiding inspiration and to help approach a new story, but simultaneously to evoke reactions (feedback, comments and traffic) from the audience. Explaining this approach to making stories is best explained through three examples. The examples are there to demonstrate how the practice-led production shaped my thinking and ultimately influenced the following articles.

The first example was the most visited story on the site about the young people in the neighbourhood in the 1960s and 1970s. The focus was on photographs taken then and now. In the three most popular stories, people and individuals were in focus.



*Images 3 (Altti Näsi) and 4 (Mikko Nurminen). Now and then. A historical story about the young people in the 60s and 70s and finding the same group to be photographed on the same spot.*

Surprisingly, as the story also included interviews and there was a mention of alcohol consumption and drinking problems in the past, it aroused a discussion as follows:

*"I don't believe that there was a drinking problem in families where we grew up in Höytämö. The drinking was mostly during weekends. And moreover, there was an outdoor dancing stage that held 2-3 parties every weekend and then if there was some scuffle, it was people from elsewhere who were to blame. Of course, there were a few problem householders here, too but it cannot be generalized. But I have to admit that too many of those born in the late 40s are gone forever due to excessive alcohol consumption. Nevertheless, those were nice lads and everyone have a good spring!"*

First comment of seven on the story

The example story and especially this particular comment generated questions on the functions of vernacular photography as a tool for making statements and sharing opinions; what was said during the interview, how it was depicted and written and finally to some extent challenged in comments. The comment above was from one of the interviewed informants and the opinion regarding alcohol use was very different during the interview compared to this later online comment. Naturally, it prompted questions on the changing media environment, the power of individuals as storytellers and of course, multimodality. Multimodality refers to the use of a multiplicity of modes, especially text and images (Kress, 2005). Different modes have different representational potentials and different social practices and meanings.

The meaning of vernacular photographs and their relation to text as individual opinion expression and interpretation was to some extent unclear. Publishing images alongside a story that was created from interviews provoked comments. Obviously, the inspiration for making the first article concerning readers' images (Näsi 2015) started in response to comments similar to the one in this example. The contribution of the first article was to achieve theoretical refinement in the role of reader participation via vernacular photographs in the making of newspapers.

This example together with monitoring website traffic volumes per story indicated that people interest people. A tool for making striking visual discussions is to put individuals and groups of people at the centre. Moreover, these human-interest stories evoke a variety of comments involving certain risks of inappropriateness, copyright and invasion of privacy. Such questions accentuated the need to make an article that covers self-disclosure, individual actions and decision making (Näsi 2020).

In the second example, recipient *interpretations, observations* and *how the audience read the stories* played a significant role in enhancing understanding. In one of the stories created, famous politicians, such as Angela Merkel, Barack Obama and Silvio Berlusconi were placed in the semi-rural neighbourhood using considerable photo manipulation. Following the list of story approaches above, the photographs were created with the aim of challenging fact and fiction with history and present. It was anticipated that the photographs would stimulate discussions on politics and about the prominent figures included in the photos. This did not happen; there were no political comments on these topics. Quite the reverse, there were three comments about the familiar scenery.

*"Lovely familiar scenery. I spent my childhood in Höytämö* (the semi-rural neighbourhood) *and in the surrounding forests. I still miss the chance to get to the forest easily after leaving home. In those days I even saw some moose and the stars at night shone brightly."*

A second comment on the story about the famous politicians in the photographs

This comment was the first to show that the recipients read the images from their own positions and did not necessarily consider or express interest in the sender's intentions, at least not very profoundly. Planning and shooting an imaginary photograph that is a composite of two or more separate images needs lots of time and careful adjustment with light, angle of view and knowledge of photo editing capabilities. Adding shadows and making credible edges to create a realistic looking photograph, is not very easy, either. Receiving a comment that did not really appreciate or in any other way take into account the significant amount of labour and time invested in making the manipulated photographs was disappointing on a personal level. The feeling that this kind of a comment evoked was that the photograph could have been published just as well without the famous politicians.

The contribution in the second example and other similar unforeseen reactions was in making the decision that the dissertation needed articles with an approach from both the recipient's (Näsi 2019) and the sender's (Näsi 2020) point of view. Understanding the motivational and influential factors of the sender are important, but yields only one approach.

Also, the second example concretized the very basics questions of the functions of earlier vernacular photography research. Regarding the typical approaches, the four functions of vernacular photography: 1) preserving memories, 2) maintaining and creating new social relationships, 3) self-presentation and 4) self-expression introduced by Van House and Davis (2005; Van House 2011) form in many cases an appropriate basis through which to analyse the use of camera-phones, but the criticism of its generality and universality (Lister, 2014, 4) is also justified.

So, the research on vernacular photography in recent studies affiliates with at least one or two of the approaches introduced above by Van House and Davis (2005; Van House 2011). For example, in a study by Ehrlén and Villi (2020), the use of photographic sharing was analysed within climber and trail runner communities. In relation to the four functions by Van House and Davis, the results show that the photographs maintain social relationships and serve as self-presentation and self-expression (Ehrlén and Villi 2020, 11). In more detail, the community members articulate that the shared photographs inspire and motivate each other in the hobby-related decision-making process. The members share photographs to communicate *with* the images but also *about* the images. The communicative value is both in the aesthetic natural surroundings as well as in the athletic performances and togetherness in overcoming challenges.

However, the relevance of the manipulated photographs of the politicians regarding the media production example, was difficult to assign to any of the four functions by Van House and Davis (2005; Van House 2011). Or at least it would need deeper examination or a specific approach angle. The same could be said for

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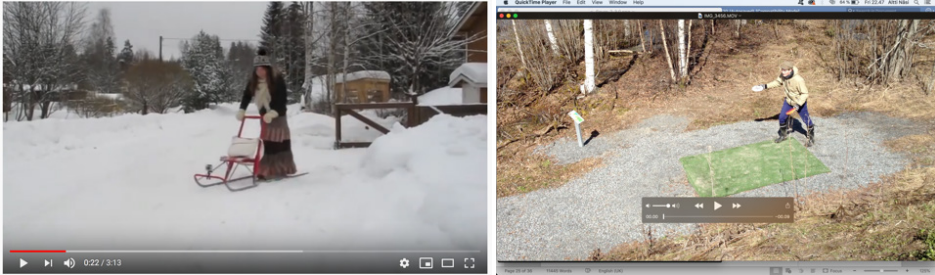of Vernacular Photography in Contemporary Communities

the very similar arguments and division into three by Van Dijck (2008), where the photographic functions are; 1) communication, 2) identity formation and 3) memory building. In both theoretical frameworks, the functions are somewhat umbrella-level terms. Obviously, because the media production in this case does not fall inside family photography, or even family and friends, it struggles in this respect to find an entirely suitable theoretical framework. Surely the communicational aspect is a valid function in all its generality, but making manipulated photographs, for example, like those of the politicians in this example and sharing them within a neighbourhood, does not necessarily perfectly fit in with the continuum of family photography research, nor even with vernacular photography, to some extent.

Lastly, the second example also contributed by asking better and more critical questions concerning suitable and available theoretical frameworks; the relation between vernacular photography theories and photography in general. If we look, for example, at the arguments by Seppänen (2001), the functions of photography could be also analysed in relation to truth, aesthetics, meaning and (economic) motivations and by studying ways of seeing and looking, to mention a few. Thus, the dialogue between theory of photography in general and vernacular photography in particular was constantly present. This dialogue is most obviously present in the last published article (Näsi 2020).

Also, silly as it may seem, looking at the media production as a learning process, in this example, the brief comments initiated a process of self-reflection and prompted the question: "why and how do the photographs raise comments I had not anticipated?". In consequence, in the semi-structured recipient interviews concerning the daycare photographs (Näsi 2019), such issues as media literacy and personal experiences of using visual communication were raised as questions.

The third and last example demonstrates how the media production also raised questions regarding issues of private and public photo sharing. Thirteen of the 38 stories were produced with someone from my immediate close family and friends. Activities included cross-country skiing, kick sledding, frisbee golf, running and food critiques, to mention a few. This raised such questions as "to what extent do I want to share my personal life with the world (approach angle of the story) and how much do I want to involve people close to me in this process (who are the people performing)?"

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*Images 5 (Altti Näsi) and 6 (Altti Näsi). Close family and friends performing in the stories produced. This raised questions regarding the private and public visual discussions.*

Obviously, the production prompted and concretised issues discussed at length in the third article (Näsi 2020) on vernacular photography and self-disclosure. But the experience also had a bigger effect throughout the process of making the dissertation. All three published articles include issues regarding various objectives of sharing images. Briefly, the contribution of this dissertation brings to light at least two noteworthy issues with relation to private and public photos.

First, it should be noted that when approaching the issue by self-disclosure as an agent of vernacular photography, it easily provides control and a management tool for individual camera-phone users in the form of understanding causation and media literacy. Instead of considering self-disclosure as a somewhat predefined matter, it could be seen as a concept that steers the process of individual photography as a whole; planning, shooting, editing and sharing the outcomes. More research on the topic would also contribute to similar issues of morality, consideration, self-criticism and their wider impacts. This could be even a possible option for basic media literacy studies in schools, starting by acknowledging the nature of self-disclosure.

And second, the contemporary photographic public sphere (represented in Figure 1.) is like a double-edged sword. On the one hand, personal and privately operated modern camera-phones emphasise individuality in the sense that all individuals have their own devices from children to old folk. The networked photographic sphere offers endless audiences for visual discussions with all the benefits of sharing information and emotions. On the other hand, it naturally demands more conscious self-disclosure, because once the decision to share a photograph is taken and acted upon, removing it from inside the photographic sphere is difficult, especially if many have saved the image or taken a screen shot of it. Of course, the world abounds in cases where, for example, celebrities try to remove unwanted images from the Internet with varying success.

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Hence, Chapter Three has demonstrated and explained how the media production was documented and what significance the practice-led beginning had for the dissertation. Choosing to do research through practice shaped the thesis profoundly to what it is now. The next chapter presents the three peer-reviewed and published articles that followed the practice-led beginning.

# 4. Articles

## 4.1. The Reader's Image: Amateur Photographs in the Finnish Newspaper

Original publication: The Reader's Image: Amateur Photographs in the Finnish Newspaper. In Brusila, R. & Vanhanen, H. (Eds.), Integrated Media in Change. Rovaniemi: Lapland University Press. 109-129.

# The Reader's Image: Amateur Photographs in the Finnish Newspaper

**Altti Näsi**

Within professional journalism, the value of the amateur photograph has undergone a marked shift during the last decade. One indication of the increase in its value is the small advertisements in newspapers that encourage ordinary people – the readers – to send in photographs and thus participate in the organized flow of visual communication. In Finland, of the ten biggest newspapers by circulation, nine ask readers to send in photographs. The one exception is *Kauppalehti*, which is the biggest financial newspaper in the country. The rest are regional newspapers or tabloids that cover all areas of life.

Some time ago, seeing an image taken by an amateur photographer in professional newspapers was rare. Encouraging people to take photographs on such an extensive scale strongly suggests that we are witnessing a significant change in attitude. The process of publishing amateur photographs reflects a new approach towards non-professional photography and its potential as a source of images. At the latest, the attacks on the World Trade Center in 2001 can be seen as a milestone, when much of the video and photographic evidence of the impact was obtained by amateurs using video camcorders and pocket-size cameras (Zelizer 2002, 48; Marshall 2011). Regardless of whether we can point to a definitive breakthrough where this development is concerned, it is clear that the use of amateur images in professional publications has increased markedly during the last ten years.

In academic research, the focus on amateur images and the examples of them typically relate to media spectacles that have a massive, even worldwide audience, as was the case with the attacks on the World Trade Center. War imagery, candid photographs of celebrities and politicians and footage from significant accidents or catastrophes are often the core of such studies. The contribution of this paper differs in that it examines published amateur photographs

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taken in a Nordic country not involved in warfare and not suffering from any major internal state of emergency. This paper concentrates on defining more precisely the current and future value of amateur images within the sphere of regional newspapers in Finland.

As this research has been conducted to elucidate the focal phenomena from the newspapers' point of view, such issues cannot be brushed aside as [1] the impact of amateur images on the quality of journalism, [2] the newspaper as a media business and [3] the use of power. All of these considerations are fundamental pillars of journalism, as described by John Wilson:

> The proper relationship between a journalist and a politician is the same as the relationship between a dog and a lamp-post. No one believes, though, that news and journalism are simply a service to democracy. They are products, commercially judged even when, as with the BBC, they are paid for by a tax, not the money earned in the market place. News is a way of making money just as selling bread is a way of making money. News is also in some hands a way of exercising power. The social importance of news remains. In industrial society, which may be called scientific society, news is, for all its failings, a major branch of the infor-mation business, not an option, a basic necessity. (John Wilson 1996, 28.)

In general terms, the present research is an explorative study. While the three values cited by Wilson above form the foundation of the paper, today the tra-ditional sphere of journalism is subject to more outside influences than ten to fifteen years ago. One such influence disrupting the *traditional* threesome of values is the rise of amateur photographers. Ordinary people are self-deter-mining in that they communicate with ease using photographs regardless of what happens in mainstream media. This has caused newspapers to perceive their readers as possible eyewitnesses and even performers of predetermined photographic tasks. Whether this type of action is called *crowdsourcing* (Howe 2008), *networked journalism* (Beckett 2008) or *co-creation* (Aitamurto 2013), the fundamental idea is the same: A job traditionally performed by employees is outsourced to a large, undefined group of people in the form of an open call. Towards the end of this paper I discuss how some newspapers have gone to very extreme lengths in outsourcing photojournalism to their audience.

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As mentioned, amateur images highlight bystander presence at a news scene and thus create witness value for the newspaper reader (Salo 2002, 108;

Peters 2001, 719). Live or nearly live images, authenticity and cogency are features used to describe this value (Frosh 2006, Frosh & Pinchevski 2009, Puustinen & Seppänen 2011, Bock 2012, Zelizer 2012). Other functions of amateur images within newspapers have been less actively discussed and researched. What needs to be taken into account is that not all amateur photographs are published solely because of their witness value. In fact, Finnish newspapers today are interested in amateur photographs for rather different reasons. In the three newspapers examined in this paper, two sources – [a] empirical material consisting of 95 photographs and [b] the answers given by staff who were interviewed – indicate that only a fraction of all of the amateur photographs appearing in the newspapers are published because of their news value and thus their witness value.

In Finland, engaging with readers and involving them in making the publication currently seems to have become at least equally important to publishing exclusively amateur news photographs. Established newspapers are interested in building a social bond with their readerships and direct the media time the readers consume towards the newspaper. Naturally the link between the printed paper and the online version is stronger than ever. As newspapers shift towards digital news services, they simultaneously crave a strong position in peoples' everyday lives. This is why the theoretical background in the latter part of the discussion section of this paper brings in the perspective of contemporary social networks and especially society's transition from spatially defined communities to relationally defined ones. This transition, researched by Barry Wellman, has inevitably changed peoples' consumption of news and information (Chua, Madej & Wellman 2001, 101). Understanding personal communities also helps understand the possible future role of a newspaper.

The newly emerging journalistic environment that we can all participate in enables news audiences to interact with both professional and amateur journalists. This adds new value to communication in the form of entertainment, peer support, expertise and social capital (Dahlgren 2005, 151; Nah & Chung 2012, 715). Thus, for newspapers publishing amateur images it is a conscious business strategy that could be analyzed as an act of marketing directed towards their readers (e.g., reader engagement and stimulation of local discussion).

## Research Question

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This paper discusses the values that determine which amateur photographs are published in traditional Finnish newspapers. The approach looks at the pro-

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cess from the newspapers' point of view. The questions addressed are: What kind of a publishing platform does the local newspaper provide for amateur images? What kind of value do these images give to the newspaper? How often do these images correspond with the customary or traditional values of news images? and Have the amateur images started a new class or a genre within photojournalism? Overall the aim of the paper is to build an idea of the role of non-professional images in relation to contemporary photojournalism. The phenomenon is also discussed as part of modern visual and socio-cultural behavior in digitalized Finland. As we know, a phone-integrated camera seems to be ever-present – in time and in place.

## Methodology and Empirical Data

The conclusions of this paper have been achieved through mixed methods research on three different sized newspapers: [1] *Aamulehti* from Tampere, with a circulation of 130 000; [2] *Kaleva* from Oulu, with a circulation of 72 000; and [3] *Keskipohjanmaa* from Kokkola, with a circulation of 25 000.

The first stage in the twofold methodology is a quantitative visual analysis that reveals the types and amounts of amateur images published in three significant Finnish newspapers. Applying visual analysis to the empirical material was considered useful with a view to making some generalizations – if possible – about image content (Van Leuween 2004, 13–18). The hypothesis was that the published amateur photographs could be categorized using some sort of variables as well as more detailed values. In the process of dividing the images into categories, it was noted that visual content is highly open to interpretation. Accordingly, many images were categorized as falling under more classificatory variables and values than just one. Moreover, in many cases defining some variables, such as gender, proved uncertain. Regardless of these uncertainties, the trends that emerged from the visual analysis (Figure 1) provided informative data and formed the basis for detailed interview questions in the second phase of the research.

The three newspapers were chosen for this survey based on their varied circulations and geographical target areas. The aim was to build a comprehensive understanding of how many and what types of readers' images are published in general. During the 21 days of observation (1–21 January 2013), a total of 95 readers' images were published in the selected newspapers. This amounts to an average of about four photographs per day. *Aamulehti* is most consistent with pictures of the day, as it has a reserved slot for one reader's image

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per day. The paper quite rarely publishes readers' images as news photographs, the number being an average of two per week. *Kaleva* is the most active in publishing readers' images and the newspaper often even publishes two pictures of the day. The average for amateur news photographs in *Kaleva* is the same as for *Aamulehti*. *Keskipohjanmaa* is the most reserved when it comes to publishing photographs from its readers and may have days without any readers' images in the newspaper.

The qualitative second part of the research methodology consists of three theme interviews with the staff executives responsible for publishing amateur images. The face-to-face interviews shed light on the motivation and standpoint of newspapers in the use of amateur images. The interviews were conducted from an interpretive constructionist perspective, since the study is concerned with the lenses through which the publishers look at amateur images (Rubin & Rubin 2005, 28). It was expected that employees from different media houses would view the phenomenon somewhat differently. The responsive interviewing encouraged by interpretive constructionist is particularly appropriate in such cases. Inspired by previous answers, additional and more detailed questions were posed during the interviews, which proved to be very helpful in discovering the similar and opposing viewpoints that the three newspapers had towards their own publication (Gubrium & Holstein 1997, 171). Owing to the flexible interviewing style, the reasons behind certain work practices were thoroughly discussed.

The responses obtained from the newspapers are discussed and analyzed in relation to the visual content analysis. The employees interviewed at the newspapers were:

- Informant 1. Communications Director and Executive Editor of the Reader's section at Aamulehti, Tampere.
- Informant 2. Reader's Section and Online Executive Producer at Kaleva, Oulu.
- Informant 3. Managing Editor and Executive Editor of the Reader's section at Keskipohjanmaa, Kokkola.

## Terminology

The beginning of this paper has used the terms *bystanders* and *amateur images* to distinguish those sources from the members of the newspaper staff and the images and footage they take. I would like to introduce another term that I would prefer to use in this paper: *reader's image*. This term seems to be in use

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↑ Picture 1. Bats' nest. Published in Aamulehti, Pasi Alanampa.
↗ Picture 2. The savior of the mosquito summer: pantyhose and a fan.
Published in Kaleva, Riitta Marttila.

quite widely, although *photo*, *photograph*, *picture* or *pic* often replaces the second part of the term. For example, *The Guardian* utilizes the term *readers' photographs* widely while *USA Today* describes these images as *reader photos*. In the French *L'Express*, these same photos are referred to as *vos photos*, ("your photos"). In Finland the term *lukijan kuva* ("reader's image") has established itself in all discussion forums and thus become a part of the everyday language.

The term *reader* correlates rather well with the intended photographers since it makes no reference to the photographic skills of the photographer. Significantly, a professional photographer of some sort could be behind some of the readers' images. *Reader* is also a convenient term, because it reveals that the photographer has had to read the newspaper to know about the publication's interest in publishing his or her snapshots. The term *reader's image* also indicates clearly that the photographer and the newspaper do not have a typical working contract but that the photograph has emerged from among the readership. An interesting remark was also made during the interviews to the effect that the newspapers' own professional photojournalists demand that the term *reader's image* be clearly displayed alongside such photographs:

> *Our own photographers fear, or should I say they are concerned about, the overall standards of the newspaper's visual appearance as the numbers of readers' images increase. That is why at least our own photojournalists feel it is important to mark prominently the published amateur photographs as readers' images.* (Informant 3, Keskipohjanmaa.)

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Even though this concern was brought to my attention in the interviews, readers' participation was seen as something normal and necessary for the survival of the newspapers in the study. Attitudes toward and the status of readers' images are discussed later.

## The Two Purposes of Readers' Images

### 1. Pictures of the Day Decorate the Newspaper

> *The criterion for the pic of the day is that it has to give our audience a good feeling, so in other words the content has to be in someway positive. It can be for example a smiling kid swimming. We also like those photographs that make you wonder and even puzzled, like this picture from a bat's nest. And of course we have nature photographs, like those of birds and squirrels. It's part of the quest to create a favorable atmosphere. Then lastly there can be an artistic premise so that the picture has rhythm, maybe some geometric elements; or maybe the image is just esthetically pleasing. Of course it also depends on what people have to offer us.* (Informant 1, Aamulehti)

Informant 1, from *Aamulehti*, speaks of the criteria that the paper has set out for the readers' images that are published in the "Opinions" section as "Pictures of the day". The two other newspapers follow very similar principles with regard to such photographs. Furthermore, they have very similar fundamental tasks: to create a positive sensation for their readership. Most of the pictures are nature photographs representing scenery or perhaps domestic animals or wildlife. Some of the photographs are from the city, showing empty bus stops, buildings and streets. These images also typically represent a pictorial window on the season at hand and encapsulate the weather from the previous day.

> *Sometimes I admire how good the photographs are that normal readers are able to take. They are not professionals and their photographs display the beauty of our region so well… We've thought of it also as a way for the bond between us and the reader to become stronger and closer, which is something we would like. We know that these readers' images touch the circle of friends and family that know the photographer. In villages many people notice the familiar photographer and hopefully this brings*

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> *the process of making the paper as well as the final product closer to our audience.* (Informant 3, Keskipohjanmaa.)

Complementing the sample images in this article, the following table demonstrates quantitatively what sort of content was found in the images surveyed. The purpose is to show what kind of trends were the most popular.

**Variables**

| Person | Animal | Setting | Shot location | |
|--------|--------|---------|---------------|---|
| • Male (8) | • Birds (8) | • Domestic (9) | • Forest (8) | **Values** |
| • Female (5) | • Squirrel (4) | • Public (66) | • Ocean/Lake (12) | |
| • Uncertain (4) | • Cat (1) | • Uncertain (20) | • River (4) | |
| | • Bear (2) | | • Field (4) | |
| | • Deer (3) | | • City center (6) | |
| | • Sheep (1) | | • Suburb (12) | |
| | • Rabbit (1) | | • Mountain (2) | |
| | • Dog (1) | | • Uncertain (48) | |

↑ Figure 1. The trends found in the image content of 95 images.
Values may fall under more than one variable.

As the table shows, the setting in many photographs is a forest, waterfront, field or home garden. Out of the 95 images, 26 had an animal.

Photographs of nature and animals have an esthetic value. The interviewees at all three newspapers share the esthetic achievements of their readers and believe that the photographs decorate the pages of the newspaper, as put into words by Informant 3 in the interview excerpt above. The pleasures of visual culture are nothing new (e.g., Walker & Chaplin 1997, 147; Sontag 1999, 92). As Walker and Chaplin state in their book, humans would pay no attention to visual culture if it did not provide esthetic pleasure. This esthetic value is closely related to the notion of building a social bond between the reader and the newspaper. Locality is important, because feature-type photographs taken by amateurs strengthen the social bond between the media house and the reader as well as among the readers themselves. McCallum (2007, 27) and Meadows (2013, 51) use the term *local talk* in describing local news that is produced from within the community of the medium's audience. The audience values news stories that are made by and/or introduce someone they know or know through

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a shared friend. According to McCallum and Meadows, at least a news story should be local and have a *community-level narrative* to make it important for people (Meadows 2013, 51). This all makes sense in that positive familiarity through identifiable locations, people and nature add interest in the publication. In other words we are interested in seeing news from our own neighborhood.

There is another aspect to nature photos. In terms of data protection, these pictures offer an image genre that is a convenient and low-risk channel of participation to get readers involved. As people are excluded from the photographic content, it offers newspapers quick and easy material for publication with little fear of legal repercussions. This is somewhat contradictory compared to the other content of the paper's opinion pages, because nature photographs express very little in the way of opinion. As the sample from the three-week period reveals, only 18 out of 95 images show a discernible person.

The lack of persons in readers' images was one of the topics discussed in the interviews. Since the written content of the "Opinion" sections (nowadays called "From the reader") is highly confrontational and charged with a particular agenda, the question arose of whether images could similarly take a stand and

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**Readers' news photographs (10 pcs. / 11%)**
Noticeable person (1 pcs. / 10%)
Photographs without a person (9 pcs. / 90%)

**Pictures of the day (85 pcs. / 89%)**
Noticeable person (17 pcs. / 20%)
Photographs without a person (68 pcs. / 80%)
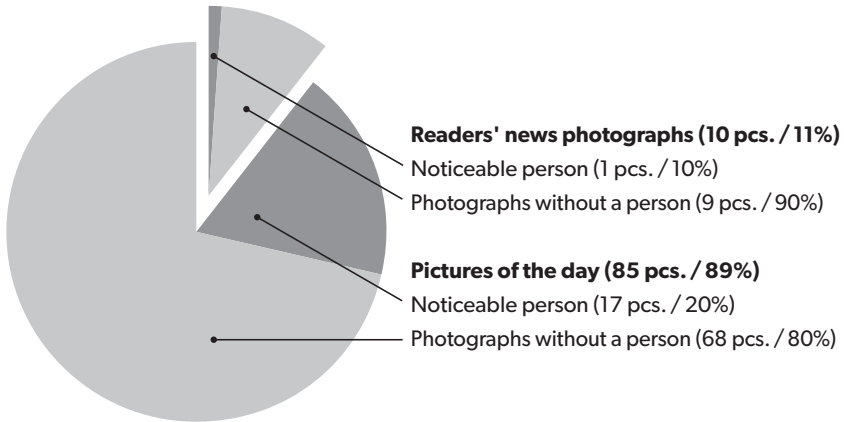
↑ Figure 2. The number of readers' images and the number of discernible persons in these photographs in three Finnish newspapers between 1st and 21st of January, 2013.

have a role other than just to decorate the pages of the newspaper. The ideas for the future development of the "Opinion" section were not uniform among the newspapers studied. The two bigger newspapers, *Aamulehti* and *Kaleva*, are cautiously interested in publishing images that also take some sort of a stand or, for example, that point to social wrongs that people have come across in life. In this way in the future readers' images could be compared with any opinions and thus evolve to elements serving as hardcore journalism, making society face its ills wherever they are (Wilson 1996, 28). The smallest newspaper, *Keskipohjanmaa*, is more reserved on this issue and brings out concerns with data protection and publishing images that have an identifiable person or that readers might find offensive in some other way.

> *So for example if there's a reader's image of a person celebrating the end of the school year and we publish that online, it could be that in three or four years this person is applying for a job and knows that if you put her name in Google, the search engine will bring up this photo third in the results. It would be a typical situation that was ok in the first place but became inconvenient later and this person would want that photograph to be removed. We're cautious on this issue.*
> (Informant 3, Keskipohjanmaa.)

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The newspapers are clearly prepared to deal with peoples' requests concerning earlier issues. Informant 2, from Kaleva, also addresses this question but

does not see it as a problem. According to him, if the article or the image has mistakes or false information, removal is possible. Otherwise there is no legal necessity to remove old image material. Moreover, according to Informant 2, as readers' images are increasingly published, the norms of correctness regarding images and captions must apply to them as much as to all journalistic work.

## 2. Readers' Images as News Photographs

The second major use of readers' images is in their role as news. To begin with, a reader's image can either function as a starting point for a longer news story or it can support and reveal more information about an event that has already happened.

> *The technical demands for a reader's image are much lower than those for our own photographers. I don't see this as a weakness, because the idea of a reader's image is to enrich the story and increase the amplitude of the event.* (Informant 2, Kaleva.)

Where news coverage is concerned, the "cutting edge" of readers' images lies in the ubiquitous presence of pocket-size and cell-phone integrated cameras. Each reader is a potential photojournalist everywhere and at any time. For a regional newspaper this can be very useful indeed, because readers' images allow the newspaper to take another step in retaining its role as chair when it comes to sharing local information. If bystander photographs are published in some forum in any case, then newspapers should be interested in offering an attractive site for this. Informant 2 describes well how they do not have the resources to send a photojournalist to all the small villages and their happenings around the Oulu metropolis. He perceives readers as a resource that on their own initiative or with very little guidance share occurrences through snapshots. It is very probable that people share interesting photographs anyway, so for *Kaleva* it is important that people want to send the pictures to its editing office in particular. Informant 2 continues describing that often readers need no incitement, as in the case where streets were flooding in downtown Oulu in 2012. In a few hours the editing office received hundreds of photographs, as people were simultaneously astonished and cheerful about the incident. *Kaleva* published some of the photographs in the paper and put up a gallery online. The web gallery had the highest ranking that year in visits of any of the newspaper's sites.

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↑ Picture 5. Deluge in Oulu in 2012. Published in Kaleva, Pekka Ala-aho.
↗ Picture 6. Electrical center on fire. Published in Kaleva, Marko Kanniainen.

Informant 2 admits that sometimes journalists end up guiding their readers with photo tasks, as in the case of a thunderstorm in 2013. The editing office had received information about an electrical center on fire some 20 km from the office. This resulted in a wide power outage in one of Oulu's suburbs. One of the newspaper's journalists posted a request on Facebook for an image of the burning center. Informant 2 says that they received a photograph (photograph on top right) only 5 minutes after the post and it was published online, but due to its very poor technical quality it was rejected for publication in the print version of the paper. Thus, newspapers take advantage of social media forums where people are active. On the other hand, Facebook, just like any other social media forum where people can publish images, poses a challenge to and sparks a rivalry with traditional newspapers. It is important for newspapers to be present and active in major social media forums, as these are becoming something like notice boards for ongoing social debates.

> *I see the criterion for a reader's news image as being the same as that typical of any news. It's the importance and the weight of the event that counts – and of course its appeal. We look at the image and apply the same news criteria as with all breaking news. We might emphasize locality and certainly image content is important. Sometimes it comes down to personal decisions and it's the chief of our editing office who decides. And one more thing about the criterion: Technically the photograph doesn't have to be great if it has an authentic grasp of the situation that highlights presence at the scene – as if it's a documentary from the venue.* (Informant 1, Aamulehti.)

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The comment by Informant 1 is in a way surprising, because it demonstrates that the notion of photography in relation to realism is twofold: Newspapers (and even the general public) today still adhere to authenticity and truth-value in photographs when for decades this idea has been undermined by semiotic analysis. (Kember 1998, 17; Lister 2004, 328; Price 2004, 71.) Arguably, from the newspapers' point of view publishing a photograph is generally better than having nothing. Especially with readers' images many incidents are unique occasions and are quickly over. Any visual image of a scene produces one view of what happened regardless of whether it is all-embracing or not.

In sum, when readers' images are published as news photographs, above all this is because the images possess witness value. The content analysis and interviews conducted in this research support this contention. News-like readers' images are straightforward visual evidence of an event that has happened. They represent a window of sorts on reality and authenticity (Salo 2002, 108). Puustinen and Seppänen (2011, 189) demonstrate in their study that amateur images in newspapers are equally trustworthy or even more trustworthy than photos taken by a professional photojournalist. According to their research, readers' images provide immediate and authentic testimony to the fact that the bystander has been on the spot. According to their study, pre-planning, assignment, briefing and skilled image editing degrade this authenticity.

The question of *who takes the photograph* seems to have posed a bigger challenge inside the editing office. Informant 2 and Informant 3 both recognize a rising but often ephemeral rivalry between amateur and professional images:

> *Sometimes we might have a slightly problematic situation if, say, there is a house on fire 10 km from here. If we send a photographer there, we've probably received plenty of readers' images of the incident by the time our own photographer has left the editing office. Some of these images can be more splashy and visually stronger than those taken by our own photographer. This is because the readers' images have been taken when the fire was still uncontrollable. Certainly readers' images are typically lower in technical quality but anyway these situations may sometimes become awkward when deciding which picture to publish in the newspaper.* (Informant 2, Kaleva.)

Although challenging situations sometimes occur, a printed newspaper sets some restrictions on how many and what type of readers' images can and should be published. The interviews suggest that the restrictions on readers' images are

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considerations such as technical quality in image resolution and file type, image aspect ratio and dimensions in relation to the newspaper layout and size. Most importantly, newspapers are interested in achieving the appearance and visual impressiveness of traditional newspapers. As the interviewees stated, modern newspapers are compact and use large and effective photographs to avoid scattered and unorganized pages with many little photographs. Clarity and impressiveness are the criteria that typically set limits for readers' images in print newspapers. Naturally, these restrictions are less of a limitation online; space is no limit, and low screen resolution and web-style short news stories in some way favor readers' images. Merely the possibility to build an online picture gallery of tens and hundreds of photographs makes digital publishing different from publishing in a traditional newspaper. For example, the *Aamulehti* picture gallery has over 130,000 photographs taken by over 4000 photographers. The gallery was established in the beginning of 2009 (August 2013) and it is the source from which *the newspaper* selects the pictures of the day for publishing.

## Discussion – Participatory Image Sharing

From a journalistic point of view, newspapers face some serious fundamental questions about how to deal with readers' increasingly active role in visual communication. If we think of present-day digitalized networks and their communication possibilities, we see that a modern person is not merely a photographer but increasingly a producer and publisher as well. The Internet provides ordinary people with an environment that could once be accessed only by professional journalists. This means that ordinary people not only have the opportunity to create, combine and send visual content to one another but can also deliver desired information online in a variety of social media forums. What is more, social media, personal websites and blogs offer a limitless audience as long as the marketing and the content is well planned and executed. With this new digitalized journalistic environment being exploited by many talented private individuals and groups, traditional newspapers have to eventually – if not already – compete as one publishing channel among others. The question that must be asked by both a newspaper and its readership is: What more does a newspaper offer to readers' images compared to other publishing platforms?

122        For newspapers the question also leads to questions regarding what part of ordinary peoples' visual communication should be presented on their pages. In other words, when is an amateur photograph too insignificant to not

| News | From the reader (opinions) |
|---|---|
| READER'S NEWS PHOTO | READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY |
| • Reader committing | • Reader committing |
| • Locally inclusive | • Positive |
| • Documentaristic | • Bond building |
| • Present on location | • Easily perceivable |
| • Live/intimate | • Risk-free |
| • Harsh | • Esthetic |
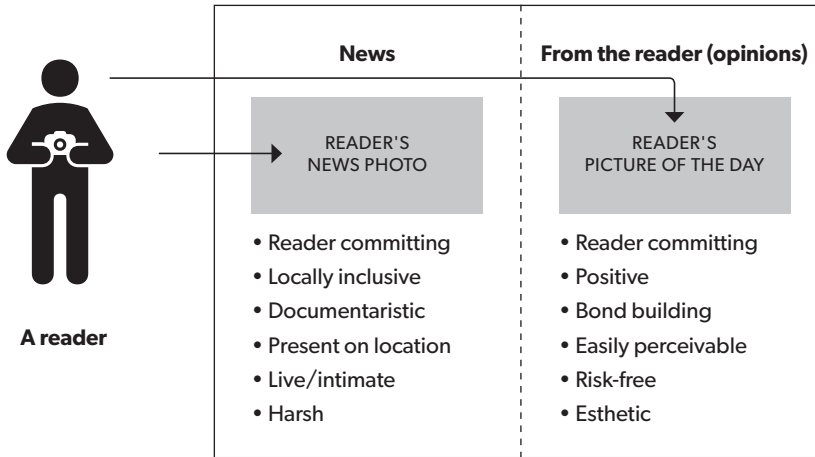
A reader

↑ Figure 3. The categories and characteristics of readers' images in Finnish newspapers.

get published? There is a danger that if the bar for publishing readers' images is set too high, people will learn that their images never or rarely get published on the pages of the regional newspaper. This will most likely direct the readers' attention elsewhere in order to get their images "out there". Where a newspaper neglects readers' images completely, the question to be considered becomes whether a modern newspaper can remain, as regards images, completely self-supporting with only its own photojournalists. According to *Aamulehti* and *Kaleva*, this vision is highly improbable. Informant 1 and Informant 2 foresee that the number and types of readers' images are more likely to increase in the future. As a matter of fact, they anticipate that all types of reader participation will grow and diversify.

An interesting observation from the interviews is the similarity among all three newspapers concerning a handful of photographers that send in their work weekly. For example, according to Informant 1 from *Aamulehti*, it is clear that this group consists of individuals that consciously have a camera prepared. They look for the smallest news-like images and are eager to send in the results. They are typically excited about having had their photograph published recently and wish to be successful in doing it again.

This raises cautious thoughts of a situation where amateur photographers are prepared beforehand to serve the newspaper. How extensive and how organized could such a practice become? The division of readers' images into two categories –pictures of the day and news photographs – is significant in

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this respect as Informant 1 continues that in the case of its "Pictures of the day" *Aamulehti* tries to avoid publishing photographs taken by the same photographer. With news images, there is no such evaluation and potential news photographs are only considered for their news value; the photographer's name is insignificant.

## The Change in Communication Is Restructuring Newspapers

As stated in the previous section, the anticipation is that all types of reader participation in newspapers will grow and become more diverse. In some cases readers' images can become essential. New stock photography applications for social media such as *Scoopshot*, *Foap* and *EyeEm* are good examples of digital applications that stimulate reader participation on an entirely new level. The basic idea with these applications is the same: Anyone can upload interesting images online for sale. Furthermore, one can create photo tasks for mobile photographers to carry out. For example, a local free newspaper, *Uusi Lahti*, uses *Scoopshot* on a daily basis. *Uusi Lahti* crowdsources its readers in order to illustrate news stories with photographs. This is one form of strategic outsourcing of photojournalism. *Uusi Lahti* also advertises for readers' images aggressively since *Scoopshot* has a permanent, prominent place on the paper's front page that encourages readers to participate in current photo tasks assigned by its editing office.

The three informants for this paper were aware of the new stock photograph applications, although none of the three actually utilizes them. Yet, the informants are ambitious in that they assign slightly similar photo tasks in the form of photo contests for their readers online through their own website. Informant 2 pointed out that preplanned, assigned photo tasks require certain kinds of news stories because assigning tasks for unexpected and surprising events is quite impossible. Another practice is guiding people to photograph everything abnormal and interesting in life in order to send the results to the regional newspaper's editing office. This again brings up questions concerning the attractiveness of the newspaper compared to other publishing platforms. Ordinary people might start to see the potential revenue in unique shots.

If investing money in readers' images is not seen as attractive enough by newspapers, some other kinds of motivation for the readership must be created to get them to interact. From what has been said so far in this paper, the issue could be considered in two interesting perspectives. First of all, the number of readers' images submitted as pictures of the day represents a significant appetite

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for positive, locally recognizable images. This kind of participation, which falls well within the category that could be described as community media (Forde et al. 2010; Meadows et al. 2007; Meadows 2013), interests the readership and seems to be highly engaging if not even empowering (Grossberg 1987, 95; Meadows 2013, 48) If there is any cultural legacy of reluctance towards reader participation in the editing office, described here by Michael Meadows, newspapers should carefully question such traditions:

> *The editorial policies of the vast majority of news rooms, if not all, discourage active engagement with audiences (and sources) over meaning. In fact for most, this is seen as editorial interference.* (Michael Meadows 2013, 51.)

Unlike this tradition would have it, in order to keep a steady, high level of interest in the publication, a regional newspaper should fully exploit the possibilities of digitalization in offering people an easy channel through which they can approach the editing office. The engagement principles of community media according to the audience are that [1] they perceive it to be accessible and approachable; [2] they like the laid back, "ordinary person" perspective in the presentation; [3] they want to access local news and information; and [4] they appreciate the diversity represented in terms of both format and content (Meadows 2007, 1).

Secondly, we are forced to take into account the remarkable communicational changes that are taking place in Finnish society as in all Western countries. Modern social network analysis explains the importance of contemporary personal communities, where a shift has occurred from spatially defined to relationally defined communities (Chua et al. 2011). We use personal networks to maintain a mental network map showing who our friends – and even our enemies – are. Who are the people and institutions that we contact and, for example, what social media services do we use? Personal communities (both offline and online) exist between individuals, groups and organizations. For a newspaper, it should be important to establish a firm position on people's personal network maps. Maintaining and strengthening the newspaper's position as a bond between individuals would increase the newspaper's status as the moderator of public debate (Bovée 1999; Carey 1997).

With a glimpse of what can be expected in the future, newspapers will shift from print towards online versions. As this occurs, the importance of the bond between the newspaper and its audience will only increase, because the

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online rivalry will become keener. With printed newspapers people rarely have a vast range of regional newspapers to choose from. This does not change the fact that already now we tend to satisfy our news hunger from familiar news sites with which we have developed a bond; but with many options to choose from, changing habits and creating new bonds is much easier.

If regional newspapers succeed in maintaining their role as chair in public discussions, it creates reason and motivation for individuals to participate in the making of such web services. In this scenario the social bond between the online newspaper and its sphere of influence is generally acknowledged, as is its power and impact on society.

## Conclusions

One of the principal findings of this paper is what can be considered the surprisingly small proportion of published readers' news images. As modern printed newspapers easily have up to ten professional photographs per page, publishing two or three amateur news images per week is a rather modest acknowledgment of that category of image. On the other hand, as readers' images overall are rather uncommon, perhaps each of the individual shots published has more weight. The clear separation into two main categories – [1] *readers' news photographs* and [2] *pictures of the day* – was surprising in that it shows how similarly Finnish newspapers classify and view pictures taken by amateurs.

Secondly, the research provided the classifications used in Figure 2, which depicts the values and the functions of amateur photographs in contemporary newspapers. Newspapers perceive readers' images as an essential part of audience participation in the making of the publication. As discussed through the example of the free newspaper *Uusi Lahti* in the preceding section, stock photo applications make it possible to increase the significance of readers' images even to the point of making them a primary photo source, with the newspaper editing staff creating photo tasks for mobile photographers to carry out. In the near future it would come as no surprise if more of the images produced by professional photojournalism were replaced by photographs taken by amateurs.

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Thirdly, readers' images provide a real-time window on what is happening within the newspaper's target region. For example, photographs of a house on fire taken on location and instantly sent to the editing office [1] work as a news

tip on what is happening and [2] are also possible material for the next day's paper. Sometimes readers' images can work as the impetus for journalists to build a longer and deeper news story on the subject.

The content of readers' images was analyzed in light of the interviews conducted with the three informants. Pictures of the day have a fixed place alongside other material sent in by the newspaper's audience in "From the reader". Most of the images submitted were nature photographs featuring land-scapes as well as wild and domestic animals. There were also many pictures of empty city streets. These images typically possess little news value or express little in the way of an opinion in contrast to the written material on the very same page. The interviewees at *Aamulehti* and *Kaleva* expressed keen interest in amateur photographs with a distinct standpoint, such as pictures that indi-cate a failure in society, instead of images that have no more than esthetic or meteorological value.

Lastly, in any event the number of pictures of the day attests to people's interest in visual representation of their own community. As discussed in the previous section, community news is highly engaging and even empowering. As newspapers progressively shift to increased online delivery, valuing com-munity news could be seen as a prospect for a profitable future newspaper. Providing people with "hyperlocal" news in the future should become much easier technically, unlike the case with print content. Ordinary people are already members of relationally defined communities. They have full control in that they may pick and choose what type of news they read and from where.

Strengthening the bond between the publication and individuals should be a high priority for newspapers today, since reinforcing that bond also but-tresses the role of the newspaper as chair of public discussion. This results in higher attractiveness for the publication and heightened interaction between the audience and the editing office.

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### 4.2. Digitaalisen valokuvan merkitys visuaalisena keskusteluna ja yhteisöllisyyden rakentajana pirkanmaalaisen päiväkodin WhatsApp-ryhmässä

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## Artikkeli

# Digitaalisen valokuvan merkitys visuaalisena keskusteluna ja yhteisöllisyyden rakentajana pirkanmaalaisen päiväkodin WhatsApp-ryhmässä

Tutkimus pyrkii lisäämään ymmärrystä modernin viestintäteknologian avulla välitettyjen valokuvien merkityksistä yhteisöjen sisäisessä viestinnässä. Tapaustutkimuksen kohteena on pirkanmaalaisen päiväkodin perustama WhatsApp-ryhmä ja siellä jaetut valokuvat, joita analysoidaan visuaalisena keskusteluna ja joiden merkitystä tarkastellaan yhteisöllisyyden kokemisen näkökulmasta. Tutkimuksen teoreettisen viitekehyksen muodostavat Mikko Villin tutkimus (2010) valokuvajakamisen aikaansaamasta *etäläsnäolon* tunteesta sekä Asko Lehmuskallion (2012) pohdinta filmiajan ja digitaalisen ajan amatöörivalokuvan käytön eroista. Edellä mainittuun valokuvatutkimukseen yhdistetään lisäksi Seymor Sarasonin (1974) kehittämiä ajatuksia yhteisöstä ja yhteisöllisyyden tunteen rakentumisesta.

Empiirinen aineisto koostuu lasten huoltajien puolistrukturoiduista teemahaastatteluista, joita tyypiteltiin sisällönanalyysillä. Tutkimuksen tulokset vahvistavat digiajan perhevalokuvauksen tutkimuksista saatuja tuloksia siltä osin, että kuvat herättävät voimakkaita tunteita ja aikaansaavat vastaanottajissa läsnäolonkokemuksen. Päiväkodin henkilöstö valikoi jaettavaksi päiväkodin tapahtumia myönteisessä valossa esittäviä kuvia (vrt. Lehmuskallio 2012), jolloin kuvat lisäsivät vanhempien kokemaa turvallisuudentunnetta sekä paransivat ryhmän jäsenten keskinäistä tunnistamista. Koska päiväkoti on lähiyhteisö ja perhettä julkisempi ryhmä, huoltajat eivät halunneet itse aktiivisesti osallistua vapaa-ajalla otettujen valokuvien jakamiseen. Päiväkodin WhatsApp-ryhmä toimikin perinteisen yksisuuntaisen tiedotuskanavan tavoin. Huoltajien valokuville antama merkitys vaihteli sen mukaan, millaisia odotuksia heillä oli valokuvia kohtaan ja miten hyvin nämä odotukset täyttyivät tai olivat täyttymättä.

AVAINSANAT: Digitaalinen valokuva, visuaalinen keskustelu, yhteisöllisyys, WhatsApp-sovellus

Tässä artikkelissa pureudutaan moderniin viestintäteknologiaan perustuvan valokuvaviestinnän merkitykseen visuaalisena keskusteluna ja yhteisöllisyyden vahvistajana. Tapaustutkimuksen kohteena on yhden pirkanmaalaisen päiväkodin

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muodostama yhteisö ja sen ylläpitämä älypuhelimella toimiva WhatsApp-ryhmä, johon kuuluvat päiväkodin henkilökunta ja päiväkodissa käyvien lasten huoltajat. Tutkimusta varten on haastateltu ryhmään kuuluvia henkilöitä, ja tutkimustulokset perustuvat näin hankitun laadullisen haastatteluaineiston analysointiin ja tulkintaan.

Tutkimus pyrkii osaltaan kehittämään sekä digitaalisen valokuvaviestinnän teoriaa että visuaalisen viestinnän käytäntöjä. Tutkimuksessa selvitettiin, millaisia konkreettisia hyöty- tai haittanäkökulmia sekä kehittämistarpeita digitaalinen valokuvaviestintä sisältää. Lähtökohtana oli ajatus, että tutkimuksen kohdepäiväkoti toimisi mainiosti ilman valokuvien jakoakin, mutta voidaan olettaa, että kuvaviestintäryhmässä jaetut valokuvat tuovat päiväkotiyhteisön toimintaan lisäarvoa ottaen huomioon, että valokuvien jakaminen on jatkunut jo kolmen lukukauden ajan.

Artikkelissa tarkastellaan ensin valokuvaa visuaalisena keskusteluna, sen jälkeen yhteisöllisyyden käsitettä ja yhteisöllisyyden tunteen eri osa-alueita sekä päiväkotiyhteisön luonnetta lähiyhteisönä. Haastatteluaineiston ja analyysimenetelmän esittelyä seuraavat analyysin tulokset sekä johtopäätökset. Lopuksi esitetään digitaalisen valokuvaviestinnän jatkotutkimusmahdollisuuksia.

## Valokuva visuaalisena keskusteluna ja etäläsnäolon tunteen mahdollistajana

Digitaalisuus on muuttanut merkittävästi viestintätottumuksiamme. Visuaalisuus on korostunut ja valokuvien sekä lyhyiden videoiden käyttö on kasvanut räjähdysmäisesti. Digitaalisuuden myötä amatöörivalokuvauksen ensisijainen funktio on muuttunut muistojen keräämisestä erilaisten yhteisöjen välillä tapahtuvaksi visuaaliseksi keskusteluksi eli reaaliaikaiseksi kuvaviestinnäksi (Villi 2014; Ito ym. 2005; Lee 2010; Sarvas & Frohlich 2011; Larsen & Sandbye 2014). Tämä ei tarkoita sitä, etteikö valokuvaamista ja valokuvien katsomista olisi voitu filmiaikanakin ajatella yhteisölliseksi tekemiseksi, mutta merkittävin muutos filmiajasta digiaikaan on älypuhelinten käyttäjien mahdollisuus jakaa valokuvia ilman henkilöiden fyysistä läsnäoloa samassa tilassa.

Käsillä olevan tutkimuksen yhtenä lähtökohtana onkin Mikko Villin tutkimus valokuvajakamisen aikaansaamasta *etäläsnäolon* tunteesta (Villi 2010, 92), mutta yhtä lailla Asko Lehmuskallion pohdinta filmiajan ja digitaalisen ajan amatöörivalokuvan käytön eroista (Lehmuskallio 2012, 134– 148). Lehmuskallio kuvaa sitä, kuinka digitaalisuus sekä älypuhelinten kokonaisvaltainen käyttö on muuttanut valokuvausta; ihmiset suunnittelevat kuvaamista tietoisina kuvien mahdollisesta jakamisesta. Tähän liittyy olennaisesti motivaatio opetella kameran erilaisia käyttötoimintoja, kuvasuunnittelua, kuvien editointia ja kuvien jakamisen eri strategioita.

Digitaalinen valokuva luo lähettäjän ja vastaanottajan välille hetkellisen kuvayhteyden, jota on kuvattu etäläsnäoloon verrattavalla tavalla käyttäen englanninkielisiä termejä *mediated presence* (Villi 2016, 110) tai *visual co-presence* (Ito 2005). Tämän yhteyden ensisijainen tarkoitus ei ole kerätä muistoja tai kasvattaa valokuva-arkiston kokoa, vaan toimia visuaalisena keskusteluna reaaliajassa. Vaikka valokuvalla luotu

kuvayhteys on vain kapea viipale siitä kokonaisuudesta, jonka kuvaaja kokee ja näkee kuvaushetkellä, pystyy valokuva silti kertomaan vastaanottajalle yhteenvetomaisesti etäällä olevasta paikasta sekä siellä tapahtuvasta toiminnasta ja tunnelmasta. Villi kuvailee etäläsnäoloa kuvan vastaanottajalle syntyneeksi tunteeksi tai illuusioksi siitä, että hän itse olisi paikalla (Villi 2016, 111).

Edellä kuvattu tulokulma edustaa tämän tutkimuksen tärkeintä valokuvateoreettista viitekehystä, jota lähdetään laajentamaan yhteisöllisyyden suuntaan. Päiväkotilasten huoltajat muodostavat valokuville merkityksiä antavan yhteisön, jonka yhteisöllisyyttä WhatsAppissa jaetut valokuvat vahvistavat.

## Yhteisöllisyyden käsite ja yhteisöllisyyden tunteen eri osa-alueet

Yhteisöllisyyden ja koetun yhteisöllisyyden tunteen voidaan nähdä rakentavan pohjaa ajatukselle yhteisestä WhatsApp-ryhmästä; päiväkoti yhteisönä ja siinä koettu yhteisöllisyyden tunne luovat alustan valokuvien jakamiselle. Yhteisöistä ja yhteisöllisyydestä puhuttaessa on tärkeää tiedostaa, ettei näiden käsitteiden määritteleminen ole lainkaan ongelmatonta, sillä niille on olemassa useita tulkintoja tai lähestymiskulmia (ks. esim. Paasivaara & Nikkilä 2010, 9; Voydanoff 2001; Nivala 2008; Saastamoinen 2009). Chipuerin ja Prettyn (1999) kokoaman yhteisöllisyyttä käsittelevän yhteenvedon mukaan yhteisöllisyyttä on tutkittu useista eri lähtökohdista, muun muassa havaintoina, käytöksenä, yksilön kokemuksena, ympäristötekijänä tai hengellisenä ulottuvuutena.

Tätä tutkimusta varten etsittiin aiemmasta tutkimuskirjallisuudesta erityisesti sellaista yhteisöllisyyden määritelmää ja viitekehystä, joka palvelisi tavoitetta tulkita ja ymmärtää päiväkotilasten huoltajien kokemuksia ja näkemyksiä jaetuista valokuvista yhteisöllisyyden rakentumisen näkökulmasta. Samalla pyrittiin löytämään teemahaastatteluille selkeä ja konkreettinen rakenne. Etsintä johti soveltamaan Seymor Sarasonin (1974) kehittämiä ajatuksia yhteisöstä ja yhteisöllisyydestä.

Sarason (emt.) määritteli yhteisöllisyyden tunteen eri osa-alueet ja alkoi käyttää termiä *psychological sense of community* (*PSOC)*. Myöhemmin David McMillan ja David Chavis (1986) määrittelivät artikkelissaan PSOC:n perustaksi mallin, jonka mukaan yhteisön jäsenten tuli kokea keskinäistä yhteenkuuluvuuden tunnetta sekä eritasoista sitoutumista (1986, 9). McMillanin ja Chavisin mukaan yhteisöllisyyden tunnetta voidaan tarkemmin arvioida 1) jäsenyyden (membership), 2) vaikutuksen (influence), 3) integraation ja tarpeiden tyydyttämisen (integration and fulfillment of needs) sekä 4) yhteisen tunneyhteyden (shared emotional connection) kautta.

Edellä mainitut neljä kategoriaa sisältävät tiivistäen seuraavia teemoja: 1) Kokemukset yhteisön jäsenyydestä tarkoittavat kokemusta yhteisön rajoista, tunnetta jäseneksi kuulumisesta sekä panostusta henkilökohtaisella tasolla yhteisöön. 2) Vaikutuksen kokemus liittyy yksilön tahtoon ja mahdollisuuksiin vaikuttaa yhteisön muihin jäseniin sekä päinvastoin. 3) Yksilön integraation ja tarpeiden tyydyttämisen kokemus liittyy siihen, kuinka yhteisö onnistuu tai epäonnistuu tyydyttämään yksilön yhtei-

sölle asettamat tarpeet ja odotukset. 4) Yhteisön tunneyhteys McMillanin ja Chavisin mukaan vahvistuu siitä, että kommunikointi on merkityksellistä ja että yhteys jäsenten välille ylipäätään muodostuu. Lisäksi yhteisön sisällä annettu positiivinen palaute ja kehuminen vahvistavat tunneyhteyttä.

Koska yhteisöllisyyden käsite on vanha ja siihen liittyvä McMillanin ja Chavisin luoma teoreettinen mallikin kehitettiin kauan ennen digitalisaatiota, on sen soveltuvuutta nykyisessä mediaympäristössä tarkasteltu useampaan otteeseen viime vuosina. Digitaalisissa verkkoympäristöissä tapahtuvissa kanssakäymisissä on todettu yksilön kokemuksen omista vaikutusmahdollisuuksistaan olevan jossain määrin vähäisempää kuin kasvotusten tapahtuvissa kanssakäymisissä (ks. esim. Obst ym. 2002; Blanchard & Markus 2004). Verkkoympäristöissä tapahtuva kanssakäyminen on myös monitasoista. Se hyödyntää erityyppisiä alustoja ja toimii sekä reaaliajassa että viiveellä.

On myös huomattu, että verkkoympäristöissä yksilöiden keskinäiset sekä kahden–kolmen hengen ryhmien jäsenten väliset suhteet ovat merkityksellisempiä kuin ennen (McMillan 1996; Blanchard & Markus 2002, 2004; Rotman ym. 2009; Rotman & Wu 2014). Tämä tulos vahvistaa McMillanin ja Chavisin kehittämän nelijaon neljättä kohtaa (tunneyhteys) ja osoittaa, että riippumatta viestinnän keinoista, ihmiset kommunikoivat enemmän heille tärkeiden ihmisten kanssa kuin että he viestisivät verkossa kaikkien kanssa tasapuolisesti. Samaan tulokseen on päätynyt myös Malinen väitöskirjassaan (2016, 34). Yhteisöllisyyden tunnetta ruokkii usein sekä reaali- että verkkomaailmoissa merkityksellinen kanssakäyminen ennalta tuttujen henkilöiden kanssa. Malinen kuvaakin verkkoyhteisöllisyyttä joukoksi moninaisia verkostoja, joihin kuitenkin yksilölähtöisesti liitytään ja joista erotaan (emt., 44).

## Päiväkotiyhteisö on reaali- ja digitaalimaailman hybridi, lähiyhteisö

Tässä artikkelissa tutkittu ympäristö, päiväkotiyhteisö, on sekä kasvotusten että verkossa tapahtuvan kanssakäymisen yhdistelmä, lähiyhteisö. Päiväkotiyhteisön huoltajat, lapset ja henkilökunta tuntevat tai tietävät toisensa reaalimaailmassa ja muodostavat konkreettisen yhteisön päiväkodin piirissä. Tarve hoitaa ja kasvattaa lapsia sitoo nämä ryhmän jäsenet perinteiseen kasvotusten tapahtuvaan kanssakäymiseen. He tapaavat päivittäin lapsia vietäessä ja haettaessa päiväkodista sekä varsin säännöllisesti päiväkodin järjestämissä juhlissa. Tämän lisäksi useilla on keskinäisiä ystävyys-, naapuruus- tai sukulaissuhteita ja he tapaavat siksi myös päiväkodin ulkopuolella. Yhteisö kommunikoi siis sekä kasvotusten että verkossa ja on näin ollen eräänlainen reaali- ja digimaailman hybridi.

Monissa valokuvien jakamista käsittelevissä tutkimuksissa (esim. Frosh 2015; Lobinger 2016; Serafinelli 2017) on tarkasteltu vain digitaalisesti verkossa tapahtuvaa kanssakäymistä. Serafinelli haastatteli kuvaviestintää käsittelevää tutkimustaan varten 44:ää henkilöä heidän älypuhelinten käytöstään ja valokuvien jakotottumuk-

sistaan. Tutkimuksen mukaan valokuvien jakaminen vähentää ihmisten tarvetta kasvotusten tapahtuvalle kanssakäymiselle, vaikkakin samalla vastaajat kertoivat kasvokkaisviestinnän olevan verkossa tapahtuvaa kommunikointia merkityksellisempää (Serafinelli 2017, 109). Käsillä oleva tutkimus poikkeaa aiemmista tutkimusasetelmista siinä, että tutkimuksen kohteena oleva yhteisö viestii keskenään jatkuvasti sekä kasvotusten että verkossa. Siten lähtökohtana on lähiyhteisö ja sen kaksitasoinen kommunikointi.

Suomessa on olemassa erilaisia virallisia kommunikointijärjestelmiä kodin ja koululaitosten väliseen viestintään, kuten *Daisy, Tenavanetti* ja *Wilma*. Perinteisiin viestintäkanaviin verrattuna pikaviestipalvelujen, kuten WhatsApp-sovelluksen, käyttöön liittyy tutkimusten mukaan epävirallisen ja vapaamuotoisen kommunikoinnin leima (Church & Oliveira 2013, 355). WhatsApp-puhelinsovellusta käytetään laajasti muun muassa perheiden, ystäväryhmien ja harrastejoukkueiden kesken. Suomessa WhatsApp-sovellus on yksi suosituimmista 2010-luvun sosiaalisen median palveluista (Tilastokeskus 2019). Sovelluksen yleisyys ja suosio ovat oletettavasti merkittäviä syitä siihen, että sen käyttöönotto päiväkotiryhmän henkilökunnan ja vanhempien välille oli helppoa.

## Tutkimuskysymys, empiirinen aineisto ja tutkimusmenetelmä

Tässä tutkimuksessa tarkastellaan digitaalisten valokuvien merkitystä visuaalisena keskusteluna ja yhteisöllisyyden rakentajana. Yhteisöllisyys yhdistetään tässä valokuvien aikaansaamaan etäläsnäolon kokemukseen. Tutkimusta ohjaava tutkimuskysymys voidaan muotoilla seuraavasti: mitä merkityksiä päiväkotiyhteisön jäsenet antavat WhatsApp-ryhmässä jaetuille valokuville visuaalisena keskusteluna ja yhteisöllisyyden rakentajana?

### WhatsApp-ryhmän kuvat tutkimuksen taustamateriaalina

Tutkimusajanjaksona oli yksi kokonainen lukukausi (1.8.2016–30.6.2017), jonka aikana yhteisössä jaettiin yhteensä 354 valokuvaa. Koska kyse oli lähes yksisuuntaisesta valokuvien välittämisestä päiväkodista huoltajille, kuvien jakamiseen voidaan suhtautua päiväkodin tarjoamana lisäpalveluna sekä toimintaperiaatteiltaan perinteisenä mediasisältöjen jakamisena, jossa sisältöjen jako ei ole vastavuoroista, vaan yksi taho tuottaa sisältöä muille.

Tutkimusajankohtana lähetetyt valokuvat toimivat tutkimuksen taustamateriaalina. Valokuville ei tehty kuva-analyysiä, mutta kuvat auttoivat haastatteluihin valmistautumisessa, sillä valokuvien läpikäynti antoi tutkijalle kokonaiskuvan kuvien määrästä ja sisällöstä. Ensinnäkin suurin osa (95 prosenttia) valokuvista oli henkilökunnan lähettämiä tilannekuvia päiväkodin arjesta. Valtaosa (72 prosenttia) kuvista oli otettu päiväkotikiinteistön alueelta päiväkodin työntekijöiden toimesta. Henkilömäärät kuvissa jakautuvat seuraavasti: ei yhtään henkilöä 6 prosentissa kuvista, yksi henkilö 28 prosentissa, kaksi henkilöä 20 prosentissa, kolme henkilöä 14 prosentissa, neljä henkilöä 10 prosentissa ja viisi henkilöä tai enemmän 22 prosentissa kuvista.

### Teemahaastattelujen toteuttaminen

Tutkimusaineisto koottiin haastattelemalla lasten huoltajia puolistrukturoiduin teema-haastatteluin (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2001, 48). Tähän aineistonhankintatapaan päädyttiin siksi, että aihealue on varsin vähän kartoitettu. Teemahaastattelut sopivat hyvin tilanteeseen, jossa tutkijan on vaikea etukäteen ennakoida vastausten sisältöjä (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2001, 35). Haastattelurunko koostui 17 kysymyksestä, ja se oli rakennettu edellä esiteltyä yhteisöllisyyden Psychological Sense of Community -nelijakoa ja sen laatua mittaavaa *Sense of Community Indexiä (SCI)* soveltaen (Chipuer & Pretty 1999, Long & Perkins 2003).

Yhteisöllisyyden vahvuuden arviointiin tarkoitettu mittaristo SCI on ollut laajasti tutkijoiden käytössä. Yhteisöllisyyden vahvuuden mittaamisen sijaan tässä tutkimuksessa haluttiin selvittää valokuvien merkitystä päiväkotiyhteisön visuaalisena keskusteluna ja yhteisöllisyyden rakentajana, joten SCI-mittaristo toimi vain pohjana haastattelukysymysten muotoilussa. Kysymykset käsittelivät valokuvien merkitystä kyseisessä WhatsApp-ryhmässä 1) jäsenyyden, 2) vaikuttamisen, 3) integraation ja tarpeiden tyydyttämisen sekä 4) tunneyhteyden näkökulmista. Näiden neljän teeman kautta pureuduttiin siihen, millaisia ajatuksia ja kokemuksia huoltajilla on WhatsApp-ryhmässä jaettujen valokuvien suhteen. Haastateltaviksi valittiin satunnaisesti yhdeksän huoltajaa 34:n joukosta. Haastatteluja jatkettiin, kunnes vastaukset alkoivat toistaa itseään eikä uusien haastattelujen avulla enää saatu mainittavaa uutta tietoa.

Aluksi harkittiin ryhmähaastattelujen järjestämistä, mutta tästä luovuttiin yksilölähtöisen tarkastelunäkökulman takia. Ryhmähaastattelujen järjestämisen riskiksi koettiin se, että ryhmäkeskustelussa joidenkin huoltajien mielipiteet ja ajatukset saattaisivat vaikuttaa toisten ryhmässä olevien huoltajien vastauksiin (Vaughn ym. 1996, 8). Ryhmähaastattelujen mahdollisena haittana nähtiin myös se, että yksi tai kaksi henkilöä dominoisivat ryhmää siten, etteivät kaikkien äänet saisi yhtäläistä painoarvoa (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2001, 63; Stewart ym. 2007, 28). Riskien pohtiminen ja pysyminen yksilöhaastatteluissa kannatti, sillä kuten tässä tutkimuksessa käy ilmi, haastatteluissa käytiin läpi asioita, joita osa huoltajista oli miettinyt tarkkaan, mutta osalle nämä asiat tulivat aivan uusina. Tutkimustulosten käytäntöön soveltamisen kannalta tämä on merkittävää, sillä pohdittaessa vastaavien kuvaviestintäryhmien perustamista laajemmin eri yhteisöissä on huomioitava valokuvien jakamisen tarkoitus, ryhmän toimintaperiaatteiden määrittely ja näiden perustelu kaikille osallisille.

### Haastatteluaineiston sisällönanalyysi ja tyypittely

Teemahaastatteluaineiston analysointimetodina käytettiin sisällönanalyysin tyypittelyä. Noin tunnin mittaiset haastattelut ensin litteroitiin, minkä jälkeen haastateltavien vastauksia verrattiin toisiinsa. Tyypittelyn työkaluna käytettiin värikoodeja merkitsemään vastausten samankaltaisia repertoaareja sekä vastausten eroavaisuuksia. Repertoaareilla tarkoitetaan tässä samanlaisia sanontatapoja, käsitteitä tai asiakokonaisuuksia (Suoninen 1990, 230; Eskola & Suoranta 2014, 198). Toisistaan poikkeavista

vastauksista voidaan tyypittelyllä hakea eroavia näkemyksiä (Eskola & Suoranta 2014; Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018).

Analysointimetodina värikoodien käytön vahvuus oli siinä, että litteroitujen, tulostettujen ja värikoodeilla merkittyjen haastatteluiden käsittely ja kokonaiskuvan ymmärtäminen helpottuivat. Vertaamalla eri väreillä merkittyjä vastauksia syntyi selkeä kuva niin vastaajien samanmielisyyksistä kuin erimielisyyksistäkin kyseisten aiheiden suhteen. Tyypittelyn haasteeksi on joskus koettu tutkijan mielivaltaiset päätökset siitä, mitä aineistosta valitaan tarkasteluun ja mitä ei. Koska tämä tutkimus on vahvasti aineistolähtöinen, vaikkakin aiempien teoreettisten viitekehysten ohjaama, ja toimii hyvin uudella tutkimusmaaperällä, on haastatteluaineisto pyritty hyödyntämään mahdollisimman perusteellisesti ja huolellisen tyypittelyn tuloksena esiin nousseet asiat on otettu syvemmän analyysin kohteeksi.

## Aineiston analyysi ja tulokset

Tyypittelyn tuloksena haastatteluista nousi esiin seuraavat viisi teemaa, joiden kautta voidaan analysoida päiväkotilasten vanhempien antamia merkityksiä WhatsApp-ryhmässä jaetuille valokuville (suluissa oleva numero kertoo, kuinka monta kertaa samankaltainen vastaus toistui yhdeksän haastateltavan vastauksissa):

Päiväkodin WhatsApp-ryhmässä jaetut kuvat
- kertovat, mitä päiväkodissa tapahtuu (9)
- herättävät positiivisia tunteita (8)
- parantavat keskinäistä tunnistamista (6)
- lisäävät vanhempien kokemaa turvallisuudentunnetta (5) sekä
- määrittävät yhteisöä (5).

Seuraavat analyysiosiot on otsikoitu näiden teemojen mukaan. Jokaisessa esitetään sitaatti tai kaksi, jotka toimivat esimerkkeinä joko tyypillisistä tai toisistaan poikkeavista haastatteluvastauksista eri aiheista (ks. Eskola & Suoranta 2014, 198). Sitaateista on pyritty siistimään murteesta ja puhekielisyydestä johtuvat sanamuunnokset kieliopillisesti korrekteimmiksi säilyttäen kuitenkin itse asiakokonaisuuden alkuperäisenä. Anonymisoituihin haastateltaviin viitataan termillä *informantti* ja järjestysnumeroilla 1–9.

## Valokuvat kertovat, mitä päiväkodissa tapahtuu

Kaikki yhdeksän haastateltavaa kertoivat pitävänsä tärkeänä sitä, että he tietävät, mitä päiväkodissa tehdään. Valokuvat toimivat iltaisin keskustelun avaajina ja antavat samalla huoltajille tietoa päivän kulusta.

*Minusta on kiva nähdä, mitä päivän aikana on tapahtunut, varsinkin kun sitä informaa-tiota en tunnu muuten saavan. Niin niistä valokuvista nyt ainakin pystyy näkemään, että mitä on tehty. Näkee vähän sitä päivän kulkua. (Informantti 3.)*

Kysyttäessä tarkemmin sitä, palaako informantti 3 kuviin lasten kanssa päivän päätteeksi, hän vastasi:

*Aina silloin tällöin. Varsinkin jos ei saa sieltä sellaista vastausta, jota haluaa. Kysyn vaikka että ettekös te piirtänyt tänään? Sitten lapset vastaavat, että "joo". Että kyllä me silloin tällöin palaamme niihin, joo. (Informantti 3.)*

Päiväkodin toiminnasta keskusteltaessa kuvia kuvailtiin "helpoiksi katsoa", ja neljä vastaajaa käyttikin samanlaista repertoaaria sanomalla, että "yksi kuva kertoo enem-män kuin tuhat sanaa". Samalla kuvat auttavat vanhempia käymään läpi päivän tapah-tumia lapsen kanssa, sillä lapsi ei välttämättä muista tai osaa vastata ympäripyöreään kysymykseen siitä, mitä päivän aikana tapahtui.

Valokuvat toimivatkin dokumentaarisina elementteinä, jotka aikaansaavat kes-kustelua valokuvissa olevista tapahtumista. Ilmiselvän valokuvatulkinnan lisäksi ne käynnistävät monitasoisia keskusteluja lasten kanssa, sillä ne herättävät usein lisää kysymyksiä päiväkotipäivän tapahtumista. Haastateltujen vastauksia tuleekin helposti katsottua valokuvan perinteisiä lähestymistapoja hyödyntäen. Esimerkiksi Janne Sep-päsen esittämä diskursiivis-funktionalistinen lähtökohta toimii erinomaisesti (Seppä-nen 2001, 129). Englantilaisen John Taggin (1988, 1992) ajatusten jatkoksi Seppänen on esittänyt, että valokuvalle ei tulisi luoda mitään ennalta määrättyä identiteettiä tai olemusta, vaan siihen liittyvät merkitykset rakentuvat tapauskohtaisesti. Huolta-jathan katsovat ja tulkitsevat kuvia eri taustoista käsin, ja heidän lasten kanssa käy-miensä keskustelujen lopputulemaa on vaikea ennustaa. Valokuvat ovat siis itsessään yhteisön sisäistä visuaalista keskustelua, mutta samalla käynnistävät ja ylläpitävät verbaalista keskustelua vanhempien, lasten ja päiväkodin välillä siitä, mitä päivä-kodissa tapahtuu. Tämä on huoltajista mielenkiintoista, mutta myös tärkeä pedago-ginen kysymys, sillä valokuvat kertovat muun muassa, mitä päiväkodissa on päivän aikana lasten kanssa tehty.

Toisekseen valokuvat synnyttävät mielikuvia, joita voidaan purkaa esimerkiksi totuus-idylli-akselilla. Kuten Seppänen kirjassaan esittää, diskursiivis-funktionaali-seen näkökulmaan kuuluu kriittinen pohdinta kuvien totuusarvosta, sillä valokuville usein asetetaan reunaehtoja ja niiden lähettämiseen liittyy esimerkiksi hallinnallisia tai taloudellisia intressejä. Tämän tutkimuksen valokuvat eivät tee tässä poikkeusta. Seuraavassa osiossa käsitellään muun muassa tärkeäksi asiaksi nousevaa valokuvien totuusarvoa suhteessa niiden herättämiin ajatuksiin.

## Valokuvat vaikuttavat vanhempien turvallisuudentunteeseen

Kuten jo johdannossa viitatuissa valokuvateorian uusissa tutkimuksissa on todettu, valokuvan tehtävä on muuttunut muistojen vaalijasta reaaliaikaiseksi viestintävälineeksi (Villi 2014; Ito ym. 2005; Lee 2010; Sarvas & Frohlich 2011; Larsen & Sandbye 2014). Haastatteluiden perusteella valokuvat viestintämuotona kasvattavat huoltajien turvallisuudentunnetta juuri tämän kuvayhteyden ansiosta.

Poikkitieteellisestä näkökulmasta katsoen McMillanin ja Chavisin (1986) yhteisöllisyyden ja tarpeiden tyydyttämisen suhteen voidaan katsoa siirtyneen aivan uudelle tasolle valokuvien ansiosta. Älypuhelimella otettu valokuva luo lähettäjän (päiväkoti) ja vastaanottajan (huoltajat) välille hetkellisen tunteentäyteisen kuvayhteyden. Haastateltavat kertoivat kokevansa valokuvat reaaliajan kuvasyötteenä tai "fiidinä", johon paneudutaan vaihtelevalla panostuksella. Kuvia katsellaan lähinnä saman päivän aikana, kun ne on lähetetty, eikä niihin juuri myöhemmin palata. Informantti 5 kertoi kuvien edustavan hänelle "hetken ikkunoita lastensa arkeen". Kuvien kautta hän pystyy kurkistamaan kuin ikkunasta ulos, mitä hänen lastensa päivään kuuluu.

Jotkut tutkijat näkevät tämän reaaliajassa tapahtuvan kuvaviestinnän ja valvonnan välillä samankaltaisuutta, minkä tuloksena on lanseerattu muun muassa termi *interveillance* (Christensen & Jansson 2014). Termissä yhdistyvät termit *interconnectedness* (keskinäinen yhteys) ja *surveillance* (valvonta). Interveillance-termissä yhdistyvät myös tietoisuus lähettäjän olotilasta (sijainti ja aktiivisuuden laatu) sekä tälle ajalle tyypillinen kuvavirran jatkuvuus.

Miyase Christensenin ja André Janssonin (emt.) lanseeraaman termin *interveillance* perusajatus ilmeni tässä tutkimuksessa kahdella merkittävällä tavalla. Ensinnäkin päiväkodin aktiviteettien monipuolinen esittely valokuvilla oli synnyttänyt kaikille haastateltaville sellaisen mielikuvan, että päiväkodin toiminta on mielenkiintoista ja lapsen kehitykselle hyväksi. Toisekseen kävi ilmi, että useampaa huoltajaa huolestutti ennen päiväkodin alkamista oman lapsen pärjääminen oman kodin ulkopuolella. Valokuvien kautta huoltajat saivat kuvatodisteita siitä, että heidän lapsensa pärjäävät ja viihtyvät päiväkodissa.

> Meidän aamut ovat aina aika vaikeita, niin niistä kuvista näkee, että ahaa, siellä taas painellaan menemään ja niillä on kivaa ja sinne on integroiduttu, vaikka aamulla olisikin ollut jotkut itkupotkuraivarit. Varsinkin toisen lapsen kanssa meillä on ollut vähän vaikeuksia päästä käyntiin aamulla. Eli kuvista tulee hyvä mieli. Ja sitten on myöskin ikävä niitä lapsia kesken päivän. On kiva katsella kuvia, että kiva kun ne tuolla menee. Ja kyllä se sitä päiväkodin arjen konkretiaa tuo lähemmäksi. (Informantti 5.)

Valokuvat siis kertovat huoltajille heidän lastensa integroitumisesta päiväkotiyhteisöön. Ne vahvistavat huoltajissa turvallisuudentunnetta osoittamalla, että heidän lapsensa pärjäävät muiden mukana ja ovat tyytyväisiä, mitä myös kuvissa näkyvä kehonkieli ilmentää. Tämä on eräänlaista reaaliaikaista valvontaa.

Palataksemme edellisen kappaleen diskursiivis-funktionalistiseen lähtökohtaan ja kuvien totuusarvoon, haastatteluvastauksista käy ilmi kuvien aikaansaama vahva luottamus päiväkodin toimintaa kohtaan, vaikkakin samasta näkökulmasta valokuvien totuusarvo tulisi asettaa kriittiseen valoon. Tämä herättää kysymyksen huoltajien kuvanlukutavoista, sillä WhatsApp-ryhmän valokuvat toimivat yhteisöllisyysajattelussa integraation tukipilareina: lapset esiintyvät valokuvissa tyytyväisen näköisinä ja samalla valokuvat esittävät päiväkodin toimintaa monipuolisena.

Haastattelujen pohjalta vain kaksi yhdeksästä oli tietoisesti miettinyt, että päiväkoti saattaisi romantisoida toimintaansa valikoimalla vain positiivisia kuvia jaettaviksi. Kun valikoivasta valokuvien jakamisesta keskusteltiin haastatteluiden yhteydessä, yllättäen tämä ei kuitenkaan tuntunut huoltajia haittaavan tai vaikuttavan heidän mielikuvaansa päiväkodista. Seitsemälle vastaajalle valikoiva kuvien lähettäminen oli asia, jota ei ollut mietitty tietoisesti. Informantti 5 oli toinen niistä, joka oli asiaa pohtinut:

*Tämähän on sellainen kuvanlukutaito, mistä on kyse. Omassa työssäkin joudun aika paljon kuvilla myymään omia luomuksia, niin tämä on sillain minulle tuttua juttua. Olen minä aika realisti päiväkodin arkea kohtaan, kuten kotonakin olen. En kaipaa päivääni lisädraamaa, että pitäisi kuvissa olla jotain pissa-kakka-juttuja tai jotain vahinkoja tai että päiväkotiohjaajat ovat jossain missä niiden ei kuuluisi olla. (Informantti 5.)*

Informantti 5:n kommentti kertoo vastaanottajien odotuksista ryhmää kohtaan. Odotusarvona on saada nimenomaan positiivisia kuvia. Valokuvien positiivinen ja monipuolinen sisältö on mitä luonnollisin keino yksityiselle päiväkodille kertoa toiminnastaan. Päiväkodilla on taloudellisia ja hallinnollisia intressejä sekä viime kädessä kyseessä on päiväkodin maine. Valokuvien lähettäjän näkökulmasta onkin ymmärrettävää, että valokuvien julkaiseminen on valikoivaa.

Valokuvat mahdollistavat erinomaisen työkalun halutun imagon luomiselle joko 1) valikoimalla vain sellaiset valokuvat, jotka tukevat haluttua sanomaa tai 2) muokkaamalla valokuvien sisältöä halutulla tavalla. Valikoiva valokuvien esittäminen toimi filmiaikana hyvin samaan tapaan kuin nykyäänkin, mutta valokuvien muokkaaminen digitaalisuuden ansiosta on merkittävästi helpottunut.

Valikoivan kuvien jakamisen ja kuvanmuokkauksen lisäksi on muistettava, että valokuvan olemusta pohdittaessa lopputulos syntyy aina kuvaajan tekemien valintojen jatkumona. Valokuvaaminen on valintoja aina siitä hetkestä asti, kun kuvaaja miettii kuvaavansa jotain – esimerkiksi aiheen tai kuvakulman osalta. Hän voi painaa laukaisinnappia tai päättää olla painamatta. Valokuvaajalla itsellään tai hänen edustamalla taholla on intressejä, jotka vaikuttavat valokuvan totuuskäsitteeseen.

Vaikka valokuvan totuusarvon kuolemisesta on kirjoitettu joitakin artikkeleita 1990- ja 2000-lukujen taitteessa (esimerkiksi Mirzoeff 2000, 88; Quéau 1996, 110), voitaneen todeta, että keskustelu on siirtynyt siihen, ettei valokuvauksen tekninen toteutus riitä määrittelemään valokuvan totuusarvoa: valokuvaahan on manipuloitu sen syntyajoista lähtien tekniikasta riippumatta (Elo 2005, 42). Tässä tutkimuksessa

päiväkodin henkilökunta määrittelee, millaista visuaalista keskustelua he ylläpitävät päiväkodin toiminnasta ja mistä he jättävät keskustelematta.

Erilaisen tulokulman jaettujen valokuvien totuusarvoon tuo pohdinta kuvien ammattimaisuudesta ja jopa estetiikasta. Aiemmat suomalaiset tutkimukset osoittavat, että sanomalehdissä niin kutsutut *lukijan kuvat* koetaan jossain määrin autenttisuudellaan ja välittömyydellään totuudenmukaisemmiksi kuin ammattikuvaajien ottamat täydellisyyttä hipovat kuvat (Matikainen 2009; Puustinen & Seppänen 2010; Näsi 2014). Päiväkotiryhmän kuvissa tekninen laatu heittelee merkittävästi sen mukaan, kuka päiväkodin henkilökunnasta kuvat on ottanut. Mikäli kuvajournalismista voidaan tähän tutkimukseen vertauskohtaa hakea, kotikutoisuus esimerkiksi kohinan, rajauksen ja terävyyden osalta saattavat jopa lisätä päiväkotikuvien autenttisuuden ja välittömyyden tunnetta.

## Valokuvat herättävät positiivisia tunteita

Edellisessä kappaleessa käsitellyn turvallisuusnäkökulman ja valikoivan kuvajakamisen lisäksi valokuvat herättävät paikkoihin ja henkilöihin sidottuja tunteita (esim. Slater 1995, 134; Rose 2010, 43–45; Prieto-Blanco 2016). Haastatteluaineistosta käy ilmi, että vastaukset valokuvien herättämään tunneyhteyteen liittyen ovat varsin positiivisia. McMillanin ja Chavisin (1986) yhteisöllisyysnelijaon mukaan tunneyhteys vahvistuu siitä, että kommunikointi on merkityksellistä. Valokuvien herättämiä tuntemuksia kuvailtiin termeillä *ilo*, *onnellisuus*, *mielihyvä*, *läheisyys, läsnäolo* ja *positiivisuus*. Huoltajat kokivat, että katselemalla valokuvia he pääsevät lähemmäs oman lapsensa arkea.

> *Kyllähän tässä pääsee paljon lähemmäksi sitä lasten arkea. Eli se ei ole pelkästään sitä viemistä tai hakemista, jonka yhteydessä parilla lauseella käydään läpi, mitä on tehty vaan pääsee itsekin paljon lähemmäs sitä, mitä siellä tehdään ja mikä fiilis on päällä. Enkä usko, että tekstin avulla siitä saisi mitään irti, ja se olisi varmaan myös aika puuduttavaa. (Informantti 8.)*

Vastauksissa ilmenevät tunteet vahvistavat aiheeseen liittyviä aiempia tutkimustuloksia. Olipa kyse ystävistä, perheenjäsenistä tai muista läheisistä henkilöistä, valokuvat luovat mielikuvan läheisyydestä ja läsnäolosta. Patricia Prieto-Blancon (2016) ja Gillian Rosen (2010) tutkimukset kuvaavat tätä tunteena yhdessäolosta (engl. togetherness), vaikka valokuvan lähettäjän ja vastaanottajan välissä olisi tuhansia kilometrejä. Heidän tutkimuksissaan valokuvat pystyvät mielikuvan tasolla viemään katsojansa tapahtumapaikalle, mikäli vastaanottaja on käynyt kuvissa esiintyvässä paikassa ja tunnistaa sen. Prieto-Blanco (2016, 135) kuvaa tätä ilmiötä termillä *mediated production of place*, joka voitaisiin suomentaa vaikkapa sanoilla *välitettynä rakentunut tila*. Prieto-Blancon ajatukset vastaavat pitkälti Villin (2010, 92) ajatuksia etäläsnäolosta. Digitaalisen valokuvan herättämiä tunteita voidaan siis kuvailla sekä etäläsnäolona että mielikuvana jaetusta tilasta.

Päiväkotilasten huoltajat siis kokevat olevansa paremmin läsnä lastensa arjessa valokuvien kautta. He pystyvät samastumaan lapsensa kokemukseen ja voivat jossain määrin kokea olevansa jopa samassa tilassa. Valikoivaan kuvien julkaisemiseen liittyen ei ole siis ihme, että positiivisessa valossa otetut kuvat yhdistettynä vanhempien kokemukseen läsnäolosta herättävät ilon ja onnellisuuden tunteita. Yhteisöllisyyden näkökulmasta WhatsApp-sovellus on oiva väline vahvistamaan tunneyhteyttä sekä perheenjäsenten että koko ryhmän kesken.

Valokuvien herättämien ajatusten suhteen eroavaisuuksiakin vastauksissa löytyi kysyttäessä huoltajilta, kuinka kiinnostuneita he ovat muiden lasten kuvista verrattuna kuviin omasta lapsestaan. Neljän huoltajan mukaan oman lapsen näkeminen on tärkeämpää, kun sen sijaan viisi huoltajaa kertoi olevansa enemmän kiinnostunut toiminnasta kuin siitä, keitä kuvissa esiintyy.

*No en tietenkään ole niin kiinnostunut muista kuin omista. On tietysti hauska nähdä, että kenen kavereiden kanssa se siellä touhuaa. Varmaan vähän niin kuin kaikille, että haluaa nähdä oman lapsen kuvia. (Informantti 8.)*

*Ei se oman lapsen näkeminen niin tärkeätä ole. Kiva sekin on nähdä, mutta enemmänkin ne ovat ne tilanteet. Siis sillain laajemmat otokset siitä, mitä tapahtuu… En minä sitä osaa sillain tärkeänä pitää, että oma lapsi on mukana kaikissa kuvissa. (Informantti 2.)*

Kuvien sisällön osalta osa huoltajista etsii kuvista omaa lastaan, kun taas osa katsoo kuvia toiminnan näkökulmasta. Kahtiajako oli ilmeinen, ja huoltajat luovatkin erilaisia ennakko-odotuksia kuville, mistä seuraavassa luvussa kerrotaan tarkemmin.

## Valokuvat helpottavat keskinäistä tunnistamista

Valokuvaryhmiin liittyvissä aiemmissa tutkimuksissa Suomessa ja maailmalla on keskitytty pitkälti perheen sisäiseen kuvaviestintään (engl. family photography). Päiväkodin WhatsApp-ryhmä edustaa jotain uutta siinä mielessä, että se on eräänlainen laajennettu perhe ja toimii yksityisen ja julkisen rajapinnassa.

WhatsApp-ryhmässä huoltajat joutuvat kuvavirtaa selatessaan katsomaan kuvia kaikista lapsista. Kokonaisuutta tarkasteltaessa oma lapsi ei itse asiassa esiinny kovinkaan useassa kuvassa, jolloin huoltajat eivät välttämättä pääse kokemaan etäläsnäolon tunnetta samalla tavalla tai samassa mittakaavassa kuin perheen sisäisessä WhatsApp-ryhmässä. Huoltajat ovat eräällä tavalla pakotettuja tutustumaan päiväkodin toimintaan oman perheen ulkopuolelta tulevien lasten kautta.

Se, että päiväkodin käyttöön on valittu juuri WhatsApp-ohjelma, jonka ominaisuus on, että kaikki pääsevät näkemään kaikki kuvat, ja josta puuttuu hakutoiminto sekä kuvien merkitsemismahdollisuus, tekee kuvaviestinnästä luonteeltaan monella tapaa perheen sisäiseen viestintään rinnastettavaa. Kuusi yhdeksästä huoltajasta kertoi, että valokuvien avulla he tuntevat paremmin päiväkotia käyvät muut lapset. Heidän

mielestään tämä avoimuus vahvistaa yhteisöllisyyden tunnetta jäsenyyden ja integraation tasoilla. Nämä tekijät samalla madaltavat kynnystä tutustua toisiin huoltajiin.

> *No ehkä siinä mielessä, että ne kaikki lapset tulevat jotenkin tutummaksi, vaikkei niitä oikeasti tunnekaan. Oman lapsen kanssa illalla minä joskus kysyn, että kuka tämä on, jos on joku oudon näköinen tyyppi. Ehkä se jollain tavalla madaltaa sitä kynnystä tutustua myös niihin muihin aikuisiinkin. (Informantti 1.)*

Koska suurin osa valokuvista (57 prosenttia) oli otettu päiväkodin sisätiloissa hyvässä valossa, kuvien merkitys lasten tunnistamista edesauttavana tekijänä korostuu. On muistettava, että Suomessa suuren osan vuotta lapsia päiväkotiin vietäessä ja heitä sieltä haettaessa ulkona on kylmää ja pimeää ja lapset on puettu lämpimiin ja kasvojen tunnistamista vaikeuttaviin vaatteisiin. Sisätiloissa otetut valokuvat toimivat tunnistamista helpottavana ratkaisuna.

## Valokuvat määrittävät yhteisöä

Julkisen ja yksityisen rajapinnalla toimivassa sosiaalisen median ryhmässä on yhteisön ylläpitäjän määrittämät rajat; ylläpitäjä liittää ja erottaa henkilöt ryhmästä, jolloin jäsenyys on selkeä ominaisuus. Yhteisöön joko kuuluu tai ei kuulu. Tämä määrittää henkilön identiteettiä kuulumisen ja kuulumattomuuden näkökulmista. Tutkimuksen kohteena olevassa ryhmässä jaetut valokuvat edustavat päiväkotiin liittyvää yhteisön yhteistä jaettua aikaa ja kokemusta sekä suoraan että välillisesti lasten kautta. WhatsApp-ohjelmaan tallentuneet kuvat kertovat myös myöhemmin yhteisön jäsenten yhteisestä menneisyydestä. Filmiajalta perintönä saatu suhtautuminen valokuviin muistojen vaalijoina ei siis ole välttämättä kokonaan loppunut.

Hieman ristiriitaisesti nykypäivän digitaalinen mobiilivalokuvaus on yhtäältä yksityisempää ja toisaalta julkisempaa kuin ennen. Perheillä on vähemmän yhteisiä kameroita ja valokuva-albumeja, sillä perheenjäsenten ikiomat älypuhelimet sisältävät henkilökohtaisia valokuvakokoelmia. Tämä tarkoittaa sitä, että valokuvia ei välttämättä näe kukaan muu kuin itse valokuvaaja, mikä tekee kuvista hyvin yksityisiä. Toisaalta internet mahdollistaa valokuvaajalle äärettömän yleisön, ja osa valokuvista saattaakin päätyä erittäin julkisiksi.

Päiväkodista lähetetyt valokuvat ovat osa keskustelua, johon liittyy pohdintaa yksityisen ja julkisen rajapinnoista. Menemättä yksityiskohtiin älypuhelimen asetuksista ja eri käyttäjien suosimista ohjelmista voidaan ajatella, että päiväkotikuvat sekoittuvat päivän kuvavirrassa muualta vastaanotettuihin sekä itse otettuihin valokuviin. Älypuhelin sisältää henkilökohtaisen valokuvapankin, johon päiväkotikuvatkin integroituvat. Nancy van House kutsuu tätä kuvakokoelman rakentumista termillä *henkilökohtainen ja yhteinen muisti* (engl. personal and collective memory) (van House 2016, 276). Puhelimen muistiin tallentuva kuvavirta rakentaa visuaalista mielikuvaa tästä hetkestä sekä menneestä ajasta. Päiväkotiyhteisö on yksi kuvayhteisö muiden rin-

nalla, mutta sen rakentaminen ja siihen kuuluminen on osoitus tietoisista päätöksistä, joilla halutaan vahvistaa päiväkodin ja kotien välistä sidettä.

Yhteisöllisen siteen vahvistamisen lisäksi valokuvat ovat helppo visuaalisen keskustelun väline, sillä ne eivät vaadi vastaanottajalta juuri muuta kuin kuvien katsomista. Monelle riittää se, että valokuvat pysyvät WhatsApp-ohjelmassa tallennettuina. Valokuvien varmuuskopioiminen oli tutkimuksen mukaan harvinaista, sillä ainoastaan informantti 3 kertoi tallentavansa osan kuvista vielä erilliselle kovalevylle.

Tämän ryhmän osalta kaikki yhdeksän haastateltavaa kuvailivat omaa suhdettaan valokuviin mieluummin passiiviseksi kuin aktiiviseksi. Usea käytti termejä *seurata* tai *seuraaja*.

> *En ole oikeastaan kovin aktiivinen. Seuraan kyllä. Minä koen sen niin, että se on sellaista yksisuuntaista viestintää. Päiväkodin viestintää minulle. Minä olen sitten vain joskus sanallisesti kommentoinut sinne ryhmään jotain. (Informantti 1.)*

Haastattelujen yhteydessä vahvistui käsitys siitä, että vanhemmat kokivat WhatsApp-ryhmän valokuvien jaon niin, että se on päiväkodista vanhemmille suuntautuvaan viestintään tarkoitettu väline ja tällä tavalla se erosi merkittävästi heidän muista WhatsApp-ryhmistään. Janne Matikainen ja Mikko Villi (2015) ovat jakaneet nykyajan mediakuluttajat karkeasti kolmeen mediayleisöä kuvaavaan representaatioon: 1) perinteinen mediayleisö, 2) aktiivinen kansalainen ja 3) digieläjä. Heidän tutkimuksessaan sosiaalisen median palvelujen osallisuus ja aktiivisuus kasvavat asteittain ensimmäisestä kolmanteen representaatioon. Tässä tutkimuksessa haastateltavat kuuluvat perinteiseen mediayleisöön, sillä heidän aktiivisuuttaan ryhmässä voisi kuvailla Matikaisen ja Villin mukaan *näkymättömäksi olemiseksi*: huoltajat eivät halua osallistua kuvien jakoon, vaan pitävät itseään seuraajina.

Kuusi koki huoltajien aktiivisuuden häiritsevän hieman tai merkittävästi ryhmää, kun taas kolme toivoi ryhmän olevan enemmänkin interaktiivinen.

> *Minua häiritsee se, kun vanhemmat vastailevat ja kommentoivat näihin viesteihin. Minä kun olen viestintäalalla töissä, niin en koe, että tämä on se foorumi, jossa minun pitää julkisesti kommentoida kuvia. Ehkä interaktiivisuudelle on eri paikka... WhatsApp-sovelluksen ongelma on myös siinä, että jos johonkin reagoi, niin siitä tulee aina "lisäkommentti", joka lisää sitä informaation määrää. (Informantti 4.)*

Informantti 4 jatkoi kertomalla, että sellaiset sosiaalisen median palvelut ovat parempia, joissa valokuvasta voi esimerkiksi tykätä, jolloin reaktiosta ei tule omaa erillistä viestiriviä. Tämä niin kutsuttu tykkääminen olisi kevyempi ja jouhevampi tapa reagoida valokuviin.

Huoltajien aktiivisuus ryhmässä ja suhtautuminen kuvien jakamiseen eivät kuitenkaan ole sama asia. Mielipiteen tasolla oma ja muiden osallistuminen jakoi vastauksia. Informantti 9 sen sijaan oli esimerkki haastateltavasta, joka toivoi lisää interaktiivisuutta. Hänen kiinnostuksensa keskittyi päiväkodin erityispiirteeseen, joka on se, että

päiväkodissa ohjaus tapahtuu vieraalla kielellä. Hän toivoi enemmän kokemusten vaihtoa lasten kielitaidon kehityksestä ja kyseisen kielen käytöstä päiväkodin ulkopuolella.

*Se voisi olla vielä enemmän interaktiivisempi, että vanhemmat olisivat vahvemmin mukana. Minua kiinnostaa, että jos lapsi on käyttänyt ulkomaankieltä hyvin jossain. Että sillain voisi olla tosiaan, jos tästä kielestä olisi jotain kommenttia, miten lapsi on sitä käyttänyt. (Informantti 9.)*

Koska WhatsApp-ryhmä toimii ensisijaisesti valokuvien lähettämisen kanavana, tekstin tai muun informaation määrä on vähäisempää. Valokuvateoreettisesta näkökulmasta kuvia selittävät tekstit vähentäisivät tulkinnan eroavaisuuksia (Seppänen 2001, 8). Ilman selittävää tekstiä valokuvan tulkinta on enemmän ajasta ja katsojasta riippuvaista. Informantti 9:n esittämien toiveiden mukaisesti esimerkiksi lapsen onnistunutta vieraan kielen käyttöä saattaisi olla vaikea esittää valokuvan keinoin ilman selittävää tekstiä. Informantti 9:n kommentti voidaan tulkita myös siten, että keskinäistä viestintää voisi olla muustakin kuin päiväkodissa tapahtuvasta lasten oppimisesta ja että viestintä voisi olla muutakin kuin kuvaviestintää.

## Tutkimuksen johtopäätökset ja anti

Nopeiden verkkoyhteyksien ja älypuhelinten kehitys on paljon muutakin kuin vain tekninen edistysaskel. Ne ovat muokanneet ihmisten viestintäkäyttäytymistä. Osana tätä kehitystä yhteisöjen tapa käyttää ja suhtautua valokuviin on muuttunut.

Tämä tutkimus paneutui niihin merkityksiin, joita päiväkodin WhatsApp-applikaation kautta vastaanotetut valokuvat luovat lasten huoltajille. Tutkimuksen tavoitteena oli näin lisätä ymmärrystä näiden mobiilikuvien merkityksestä visuaalisena keskusteluna ja yhteisöllisyyden rakentajana. Valokuviin liittyvien merkitysten hahmottaminen perustui teemahaastatteluihin, laadullisen aineiston sisällönanalyysiin ja tulkintaan. Empiirisen tutkimuksen kohteena päiväkotiryhmä omaa erityispiirteitä, jotka mahdollistavat muun muassa seuraavien johtopäätösten tekemisen.

Ensinnäkin tutkimusasetelma poikkeaa sekä perhevalokuvauksesta että julkisten kuvafoorumeiden tutkimuksista sikäli, että päiväkodin WhatsApp-ryhmä on eräänlainen *puolijulkinen tila*. Valokuvien lähes yksisuuntaisesta (päiväkodista huoltajille) jakamisesta johtuen tutkimuksessa keskityttiin yksinomaan huoltajien antamiin merkityksiin valokuvien vastaanottajina. Yksisuuntaisuuden takia huoltajat kuvailivat kokevansa roolinsa ryhmässä seuraajiksi, eivät sisällöntuottajiksi, toisin kuin muissa, esimerkiksi perheenjäsenistä ja ystävistä koostuvissa ryhmissä. Matikainen ja Villi kuvaavat tällaista ryhmäjäsenyyttä termillä näkymätön oleminen (2015, 159). Tutkimuksen ensimmäisenä johtopäätöksenä onkin avata sitä, miksei tällaisessa puolijulkisessa tilassa valokuvien jakaminen ole välttämättä interaktiivista.

Päiväkotiyhteisön sosiaaliset suhteet kokonaisuutena ovat selkeästi perhettä ja monia ystävyyssuhteita etäisemmät, jolloin syntyy tarve avata ryhmän perustamisen

tarkoitusta jollain tasolla. Päiväkoti on asettanut ryhmälle tarkoituksen: jakaa valokuvia vapaamuotoisesti päiväkodin toiminnasta. Näkymätön jäsenenä oleminen myötäilee huoltajien sitoutuneisuutta ryhmän tarkoitukseen, sillä ilman määriteltyä tarkoitusta ryhmässä voitaisiin lähettää kuvia vaikkapa huoltajien työpäivän kulusta, jäsenten lomamatkoista tai tunnetiloista tai vastaavaa. Toisaalta ryhmän tarkoituksen määrittelyssä ei kielletä jäsenten välistä molemminpuolista kuvanvaihtoa, eikä se sisällä tiukkoja sääntöjä ja ohjeita kuvien jakamisesta, kuten tyypillisissä täysin julkisissa kuvafoorumeissa on tapana olla. Huoltajat, jotka kokivat interaktiivisen jakamisen negatiiviseksi, perustelivat asian niin, että aktiivisempi kuvien jakaminen häiritsisi työtä ja arkea ja että omien kuvien jakaminen olisi myös itsen liiallista esille tuomista tai eräänlaista kehumista. Näin ollen tutkimuksen valokuvateoreettiseen viitekehykseen kuulunut Villin (2010, 92) etäläsnäolon kokemus toimi erinomaisesti, mutta vain lasten huoltajien osalta.

Ryhmän tarkoituksen määrittelyllä on toinenkin ulottuvuus, joka liittyy Lehmuskallion ajatuksiin kuvasuunnittelusta ja kuvien jakamisen eri strategioista (Lehmuskallio 2012). Huoltajilla on ryhmää ja yhteisöä kohtaan ennakko-odotuksia, sillä valokuvilla on merkittävä vaikutus siinä, että päiväkodista välittyy positiivinen mielikuva lasten hoitopaikkana ja kasvattajana. Kuvat aikaansaavat huoltajissa ilon, mielihyvän ja onnellisuuden tunteita. Kuten eräs huoltajista totesi, kuvat ovat kuin ikkunoita lasten arkeen. Positiivisessa valossa esitetyt tilanteet yhdistettynä etäläsnäolon tunteeseen vastaavat ryhmän jäsenten odotuksia.

Yhteenvetona voidaan käsillä olevan tutkimuksen teoreettisen kontribuution osalta todeta, että se tukee vahvasti Villin (2010) tutkimuksen esille tuomaa ajatusta valokuvajakamisen aikaansaamasta etäläsnäolon tunteesta, ja että päiväkodin toimintaa vain positiivisessa valossa esittävien valokuvien jakaminen tukee Lehmuskallion (2012) esittämiä pohdintoja siitä, kuinka digitaalisuus sekä älypuhelinten käyttö on muuttanut valokuvausta. Kuvaamista suunnitellaan ja jakamista toteutetaan tietoisina kuvien mahdollisesta jakamisesta. Olipa kyseessä tietoinen ajattelu tai tiedostamaton suhtautuminen ryhmän toimintaa kohtaan, huoltajat kokevat kuvien katsojina asetelman toimivaksi.

Käsillä olevan tutkimuksen tärkein anti liittyy kuitenkin valokuvan viestintäteoriaa laajentaviin ja syventäviin näkökohtiin. Ensinnäkin nykypäivän digitaalisten valokuvien käyttötavat (Villi 2014; Ito ym. 2005; Lee 2010; Sarvas & Frohlich 2011; Larsen & Sandbye 2014) liittyvät olennaisesti McMillanin ja Chavisin (1986) esittämiin yhteisöllisyyden kriteereihin. Tämän tutkimuksen WhatsApp-ryhmässä jaetut valokuvat palvelevat yhteisöllisyyden vahvistamista etenkin jäsenyyden ja integraation sekä tarpeiden tyydyttämisen osalta.

Valokuvat ovat osa päiväkotiyhteisön visuaalista keskustelua. Kuvamaailman ansiosta päiväkodin arki tulee näkyväksi, yhteisön jäsenten välistä keskustelua on enemmän ja se on monipuolisempaa. Kuvat ovat huoltajille sekä itsessään merkityksellisiä että ne luovat uusia merkityksiä. Yhteisöllisyyden vahvistamiseen kuuluvaa jäsenyyttä tulkittaessa valokuvat paitsi esittävät lapsen jäsenyyttä päiväkotiyhteisössä, myös vahvistavat sekä lapsen ja huoltajien keskinäistä yhteyttä arjessa ja sitovat perheenjäsenet voimakkaammin osaksi yhteisöä.

Integraation ja tarpeiden tyydyttämisen osalta kuvat onnellisesta lapsesta monipuolisen toiminnan ympäröimänä sitovat lapsen osaksi yhteisöä ja synnyttävät tyytyväisyyden tunteita huoltajissa. Valokuvat kertovat siitä, että päiväkoti on onnistunut täyttämään sille asetetut odotukset, sillä huoltajilla on tarve järjestää lapsilleen päivähoitopaikka, mutta samalla heitä askarruttaa oman lapsensa pärjääminen. Yhteisöllisyysteorian yhteisen tunneyhteyden näkökulmasta positiivinen palaute ja kehuminen vahvistavat yhteisöllisyyden tunnetta ja huoltajat kokevatkin onnistuneensa päiväkodin valinnassa nähdessään lapsensa tyytyväisenä. Tarpeiden tyydyttämisen näkökulmasta haastatteluaineistossa nousi esiin yhtenä keskeisimmistä elementeistä huoltajien kuvien myötä kokema turvallisuudentunne.

Yksittäisenä lähes yksisuuntaiseen kuvajakamiseen liittyvänä huomiona voitaisiin nostaa se, että koska huoltajien kuvien jakamista ei ollut missään kohtaa edes kokeiltu, McMillanin ja Chavisin (emt.) teorian mukainen yhteisön tunneyhteyden vahvistuminen ei ole päässyt kehittymään kunnolla päiväkotiyhteisön sisällä. Myöskään vastavuoroisen vaikuttamisen osalta johtopäätöksiä ei tämän tutkimuksen pohjalta voi juurikaan tehdä, koska valokuvien lähettäminen oli lähes yksinomaan yksisuuntaista.

Käytännön tasolla erittäin merkittäväksi yhteisöllisyyden vahvistamiseen liittyväksi näkökohdaksi nousi vieraiden lasten tunnistaminen. Ryhmän jäsenet altistuvat näkemään säännöllisesti myös muiden kuin oman lapsensa kuvia, minkä ansiosta ihmiset oppivat tunnistamaan toinen toisensa nopeammin. Tämä edesauttoi tutustumista ja esimerkiksi madalsi kynnystä kutsua aiemmin vieraampia lapsia ja heidän huoltajiaan kylään.

Tutkimus herätti uusia kysymyksiä liittyen valokuvien merkityksiin erilaisissa yhteisöissä. Yhteisöllisyys on monimuotoista ja -tasoista. Esimerkiksi tässä tutkimuksessa oli pienempiä yhteisöjä huoltajat-lapsi-, huoltajat-päiväkoti- ja lapset-päiväkoti-akseleilla. Nämä kolme yhteisöä linkittyvät yhdeksi isommaksi päiväkodin piirissä muodostuvaksi yhteisöksi, mikä sekin on silti suhteellisen pieni ryhmä ihmisiä. Voidaan olettaa, että kaikilla tämän yhteisön jäsenillä on paljon muitakin yhteisöjä, joihin he kuuluvat esimerkiksi suvun, harrastusten, koulun ja työn kautta. Mielenkiintoista olisi tehdä jatkotutkimusta valokuvien merkityksistä suhteessa moniyhteisöllisyyteen. Tärkeää olisi perehtyä myös esimerkiksi luottamuksen merkitykseen osana sosiaalisen kuvien jakamisen tarvetta.

Valokuvien merkitys vastaavissa kuvaviestintäryhmissä herättää myös jatkotutkimusajatuksia. Valokuvien jakamiseen tarkoitetulla teknisellä ratkaisulla on suuri merkitys siinä, kuinka avointa ja vaivatonta valokuvien lähettämisestä ja katsomisesta on tehty. WhatsApp-sovelluksen käyttöä voisi tutkia enemmänkin, sillä se edustaa ratkaisua, jossa kaikki yhteisön jäsenet saavat kaikki kuvat reaaliajassa suoraan puhelimeensa ajasta ja paikasta riippumatta eikä niitä katsoakseen tarvitse läpikäydä esimerkiksi hidasta sisäänkirjautumista. Huoltajat käyttävät sovellusta pitkin päivää muutenkin. Tämä tekninen ratkaisu vaikuttaa valokuvien katselu- ja käyttötapoihin, mutta myös erottaa tämän tutkimuksen monista aiemmista.

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### 4.3. Photographic public sphere: Identity building with vernacular photography

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**ALTTI NÄSI**
University of Lapland

# Photographic public sphere: Identity building with vernacular photography

## ABSTRACT

*The foundation of the article is based on the notion that self-disclosure is one of the most significant factors of contemporary vernacular photography. Argued through conceptual analysis and real-life examples, the role of self-disclosure is analysed in relation to the somewhat institutionalized functions of vernacular photography: (1) preserving memories, (2) maintaining and creating new social relationships, (3) self-presentation and (4) self-expression. The article sheds light on the widespread use of cameraphones and how the role of self-disclosure differs notably within the four chosen functions, since its absence among private photographs contributes to personal and unique memories; and within shared photographs, it defines how people want to be seen by others and themselves. The benefits and challenges of private and shared photography are also evaluated.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this article is both to provide an overview of the evolution that has taken place in amateur photography over the last fifteen years and to add to the theoretical understanding regarding its functions. The two parallel technical evolutions of digitalization and the birth of information networks have produced new visual means for people to share experiences when physically apart.

The primary approach of this article is in regard to photography, not social media. Surely, photography contributes significantly to the *visual communication* seen in social media, but it is important to understand that social media consists of much more than just photography, and only a proportion of all taken photographs end up in social media (Larsen 2014; Rose 2014). In order to take into account both private and shared photographs, the four functions of vernacular photography introduced by Nancy Van House and Marc Davis (2005; Van House 2011) form an appropriate basis through which to analyse the use of cameraphones in this article. These functions are as follows: (1) preserving memories, (2) maintaining and creating new social relationships, (3) self-presentation and (4) self-expression. Moreover, similar to the study by Van House and Davis, within this article, photography is discussed as a whole, not merely as a reception study that views photographs from an audience's perspective. Self-disclosure should guide an individual's actions in all areas of life, and to this, photography makes no exception.

It is noted that this theoretical division of the functions of vernacular photography has come under some criticism of its generality and universality (Lister 2014: 4). However, as such and to the same extent, this article aims to build an overview of the issue whilst also introducing literature of precise detail to those more interested in the specificities of the research topic.

Thus, the objective of the article is to explain the role of self-disclosure within an age of networked vernacular photography.

## 2. METHODS AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Making use of interpretative concept analysis (Takala and Lämsä 2001); and real-life examples, the article at hand provides a theoretical refinement to the existing understanding on the functions of vernacular photography. The interpretative concept analysis is applied by considering the four-division concept laid out by Van House and Davis (2005) as a norm of digital vernacular photography. The four functions are treated as separate concepts, and by introducing overlapping and close concepts on photography, the article will clarify the significance of self-disclosure within vernacular photography (Figure 1).

The chosen photographic theories and photographic procedures by which self-disclosure is either evident or could have relevance were identified and carefully analysed. Alongside clarification, active observations of the author are shown in the presentation of typical uses of the cameraphone. These real-life examples are results from a time period of six months during which the author took notes of photographic occurrences that are universally relatable. As a theoretical article, the given examples should help demonstrate and concretize how self-disclosure works in real life.

Next, this article continues by clarifying the terminology regarding vernacular photography and self-disclosure. Thereafter, self-disclosure is analysed in more detail in relation to the somewhat institutionalized four functions of vernacular photography. Lastly, the final section comprises the conclusions and contribution of the article and presents a critical discussion in regard to self-disclosure in photography.
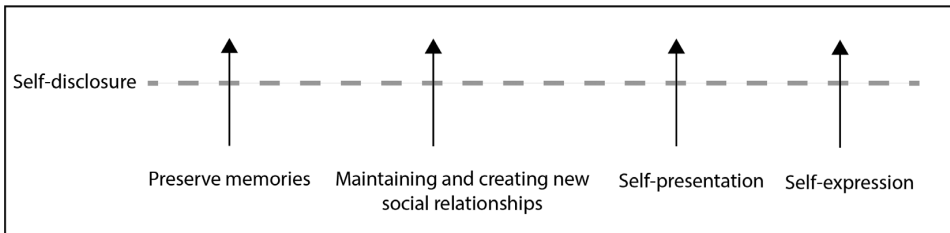
*Figure 1: Theoretical framework for this research.*

The relevant literature in this article has been introduced and analysed – not like in most scientific works, in a separate 'earlier literature' section, but in the respective areas of the text. This is because the literature is rich but fragmented, and this article strives to introduce several equally important viewpoints in each discussed issue.

## 3. TERMINOLOGY

### 3.1. Vernacular photography

One could term contemporary vernacular photography as 'consumption', as *fast-food photography*; the whole process of planning, shooting, editing and sharing has become cheaper, easier and quicker. It has also resulted in a state of feeling gorged from image overflow (Rubinstein and Sluis 2008: 23). The photographic public sphere is packed with many photographs, which results in a behaviour pattern in which photographs are not even necessarily looked at (Lister 2014: 12). The use of camera-integrated phones has become part of an everyday routine.

Due to the ever-changing nature of photography, a considerable number of research studies have been conducted. Consequently, different terms have been used to describe photographic performance that takes place outside economic, institutional and professional engagements. Terms such as personal (van Dijck 2008), amateur and user-created (Lange 2011), domestic and vernacular (Cobley and Haeffner 2009; Sarvas and Frohlich 2011), witness (Peters 2001; Tait 2011; Frosh and Pinchevski 2009), home mode and snapshot (Chalfen 1987) and family photography (Sontag 1978) are used to refer to non-professional photography. Considering the approach relating to the structure of this article, the term vernacular photography is mostly used due to its generality.

The distinction between professional and vernacular photography in this article follows the ideas of Robert Stebbins (1992). According to Stebbins, in contrast to amateurism, professionals: (a) put a substantial amount of time into the outcome, (b) achieve income from their work, (c) master and specialize in techniques and competencies within a professional culture, (d) self-identify with other professionals, (e) draw on institutionalized means for validation and (f) enjoy a publicly professional status.

### 3.2. Self-disclosure

Self-disclosure can be described more broadly as the self-observation and self-control exhibited when conducting oneself appropriately in social situations,

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with the guidance of situational cues (Snyder 1974). With photographs, the phenomenon is about visually expressive behaviour and the evaluation of how an individual wishes to be perceived.

The use of printed photographs has significantly diminished, having been replaced by modern cameraphone users who either join or are invited to various digital social communities in which a vast number of images are shared. Participation in digital photo-sharing is an enactment of identity where self-disclosure determines much of the online identity visible to an audience.

Photography carries the burden of an ideal identity that demands an individual to consider the visual stories that are represented to both others and themselves. Self-disclosure is comparable to a writing or composing process; in terms of online photography, people do not merely represent but rather enact (Poletti and Rak 2014; Van House 2011, 2016). Controlling the process of sharing personal photographs is at the core of modern vernacular photography.

Self-disclosure also means that one has control over privacy, which provides a sense of ownership over one's information (Petronio 2002: 1). Consequently, the type of disclosure often determines the nature of a relationship. In the following sections, real-life examples are provided to point out the different types of self-disclosure that can affect relationships by increasing, improving, decreasing or damaging the intimacy between individuals and groups. These examples also demonstrate the context-sensitive nature of self-disclosure. On the one hand, there are risks of sharing private photographs with potentially the wrong people or at the wrong time, but alternately, photographic self-disclosure can also be very enriching by providing, for example, such elements as empathy, encouragement and care (Venema and Lobinger 2017; Litt and Hargittai 2014).

## 4. SELF-DISCLOSURE IN VERNACULAR PHOTOGRAPHY

### 4.1. Self-disclosure in preserving memories

The first of four functions (Van House and Davis 2005), under a more detailed review, is the preservation of memories. To begin with, from a perspective of self-disclosure, philosopher Jeffrey Blustein (2008: 57) argues that to understand who we are requires that we understand where we came from. In light of this, photographs are concrete evidence of something that used to be.

The digital revolution has challenged the major analogue-time photographic theories introduced by Roland Barthes (1981) and André Bazin (1981), where photographs were looked upon as something that *has been*. In a sense, the whole foundation of photography has transformed. This particularly relates to the photography of families and friends, in which the primary mission was to preserve and strengthen personal and collective memories or stories. Photographs acted as a means to access that which is in the past. Simultaneously, these photographs carried the burden of loss, absence and even death. The viewer would see images of themselves ageing in time, or images of deceased family members, relatives and friends. As an example of this, in his book, Roland Barthes himself grieves for his mother as he studies her photographs ([1980] 1981: 73).

Today, we are forced to look at photographic performance as a tool of communication. The question has evolved from *what has been* to also include *what is going on,* as Villi suggests (2014; see also Ito and Okabe 2005; Lee 2010;

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Sarvas and Frohlich 2011; Larsen and Sandbye 2014). This is an evolution that sees some of the images now perceived as visual messages, having moved from the concept that is an 'archived' family album. However, this does not mean that the memory function of photographs is now completely obsolete; the very nature of photographs is such that, at a certain stage, all images inevitably turn into memories.

When considering self-disclosure and its effects on the memorabilia function of photography, a vast change has occurred within the extension of photographic decision-making. Various alternative visual memories of a certain event are documented, as opposed to just one, thus providing any individual operating a camera with the power of visual memory-building. Family photography was previously a collective operation where the photographs represented a mutual history conducted by one family member who operated a shared camera (Chalfen 1987); the photographic decisions were at the whim of one person and thus represented just one perspective (Mäkiranta 2012).

Today, photographic self-disclosure begins at an early age. In the Nordic countries, after children reach school age, they start operating their own cameraphones. Due to this, and the decreasing role of a shared family camera, the task of self-disclosure is left to the individual. These various individual memories can be perceived as an enriching factor. As noted in the introduction, only a small fraction of photographs are shared with others; most pictures end up as digitally coded archives on hard-drives (Larsen 2014; Rose 2014). Without a question, opening these huge digital archives later in life, whether it is individually or within a group, strengthens and revives both personal and collective memories. Van House (2016: 276) addresses memory preservation in her study, naming it *personal and collective memory*. Whether individually or together with close friends, browsing through private photo archives revives the time as it was, thus acting as a memory.

Furthermore, in regard to the safeguarding of most personal photographs, contemporary private photographs build a realistic personal memory in the minimal or complete lack of self-disclosure. For the photographer's eyes only, these photographs provide rough evidence of a certain situation and, therefore, do not meet the necessary criteria for sharing in the public view (discussed in the following sections).

Having a digital photographic memory means that the cameraphone works like a hub, in which personal photographs blend together with photographs received from other individuals in various personal communities and different public sources. Consequently, an individual's photo collection as a whole is unique, but  contains small pieces identical to the photo collections of others.

Finally, in an interesting note regarding memory, many use cameraphones as a direct support tool. This happens, for example, when students take photos of overheads during lessons, when customers take pictures of items on sale and when individuals take pictures of documents to assist in remembering challenging number combinations (birth dates, lock access codes or invoice reference numbers). Using the cameraphone in this manner is an easy, free and quick way to create a visual note. One could say that digital vernacular photography, to the letter, has kept its function as a memory-helping tool.

As discussed in this essay, the memory-building function of vernacular photography has not perished completely, but has a smaller role than before. Its significance has shifted from preserving collective visual memories to preserving memories that are mostly personal.

### 4.2. Self-disclosure in maintaining and creating social relationships

The second function under review is the maintenance and creation of social relationships (Van House and Davis 2005). The emotional and informational connection between friends and family members created by vernacular photographs can be perceived as a concept that significantly enhances an individual's well-being. Naturally, the level of self-disclosure is dependent on the characteristics of the relationship; for example, some individuals are closer with their best friend(s) than with their family members.

A significant amount of photographic communication between family members is similar to *extending the discussions of the dinner table*. Earlier studies indicated that sharing photographs deepens the sense of community and togetherness of a group, especially within a family (Rose 2010: 43–45, 2014: 76; Prieto-Blanco 2016). As Prieto-Blanco (2016: 134) describes, when family members are physically apart, mobile image-sharing illustrates two contemporary phenomena of digital photography: the search for immediacy through pictures, and the need to overcome space. These results are also consistent with the studies introduced in the earlier sections. Prieto-Blanco's idea emphasizes the ease in narrowing the mental distance over the physical distance; today, an individual can live physically far away from those closest and still share personal visual content, thus decreasing the mental – not the physical – distance that exists.

Photographs can also possess valuable or useful information. For example, some time ago, my sister was able to share with my family, through an online group chat, a photograph demonstrating the location of the spare key to her house. Naturally, this type of photograph is highly informational and more self-explanatory than the equivalent would be in words. Furthermore, if the photograph were to end up in the public sphere, the result could be potentially harmful.

If family members live far away from each other, participation in birthday parties and other meaningful events is sometimes impossible. Sharing images through a private messenger application is a way to overcome this space and to convey the atmosphere to the absent individual. Regardless of whether the self-disclosure through photographic content is more informational (as to demonstrating the location of a hidden key) or emotional (such as congratulating a family member on a birthday), these photographs possess a significant intimacy value; they are an indication of closeness and trust.

Maintaining social relationships is one thing, but when creating new ones, photographic self-disclosure determines much of what the audience sees. Creating new contacts on various online platforms has become the norm, but nevertheless, organizing, polishing and archiving processes are found to be somewhat tedious assignments to most people (Larsen 2014: 39). This explains why people tend to publish only one or two images out of a large quantity. Taking many photographs of the same situation and choosing the most polished picture to share is a typical mode of self-presentation in contemporary vernacular photography. Therefore, although it might feel as if the photographic public sphere is drowning in an overflow of photographs, it must be noted that this is only a fraction of the images that exist as the majority are not on display.

Thus, polishing is not pervasive of the whole photo collection, and is a means of self-presentation. It is an instrument used to portray the desired

message of the individual aiming to create new relationships or a positive online identity. Camera phone applications offer thousands of editing tools for retouching every part of the human body. In addition to adding desirable and removing unwanted features in one's personal appearance, it is also easy, for example, to remove undesired people from multi-person photographs.

The risk with failed self-disclosure is when sending inappropriate content without consideration. One of the biggest risks is in the changing nature of human relationships. Photos sent with assumed confidentiality can be exposed in the public sphere, causing distress and legal complications. In some cases, this could lead to lawsuits and pose a number of problems as peoples' relationships change.

An example of a failed visual friendship maintenance was seen in 2016 where Finland faced its first major WhatsApp group scandal. A famous TV presenter was accused of filming dozens of women without their consent during sexual intercourse.[1] The convicted entertainer had posted visual material to a WhatsApp group consisting of his close friends. After one of the victims noticed this, the incident not only ended up as a legal case with sanctions, but also resulted in a loss of reputation for all the members of the group. The case reaching the public sphere caused strong emotions among the victims, including depression, shame and anger. Therefore, there are major risks to not only sharing visual content but also in the act of creating potentially illegal or sensitive pictures or videos in defiance of getting caught. Here, the self-disclosure process is down to one individual, but the gatekeeping function is assigned to fellow users *after publishing*. While social media service providers expect other users to directly address the sender or service provider of unwanted photographic content, the damage is intrinsically irreversible; once uploaded online, the content is permanent. Many individuals take copies or screenshots of the inappropriately shared images, after which removing the content completely is even harder.

The functions of photographs to maintain and create relationships differ substantially between close relationships and public domains. Evaluating the actions with a camera and through the level of trust with other peers is inevitable. Through wide media coverage and prejudiced cases, the understanding of the importance of self-disclosure increases.

### 4.3. Self-disclosure in self-presentation

In following the categorizing of the contemporary functions of vernacular photography by Van House and Davis (2005), the next element under revision is self-presentation. Although Van House and Davis justifiably find differences between self-presentation (self-portraits or 'selfies' and images where the photographer is in the spotlight) and self-expression (artistic, entertaining, experimental, informational and funny ambitions), the separation also leads to some questions of ambiguity in the overlapping characteristics of the two categories. The difficulty would be found in placing many photographs into just one category. Many self-portraits have elements of self-expression, and vice versa.

The idea that self-disclosure is the counterpart of self-presentation is not a new concept. In the 1950s, Erving Goffman (1959) explored the importance of audience consciousness in determining the ways in which one behaves. He argued that a performance takes place as a result of a performer's awareness and whenever the social is involved. Although self is not always the purpose

1. https://yle.fi/uutiset/ osasto/news/ex-vj_ sentenced_for_secret_ sex_tapes/9484082.

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of performance, it is always a product, and this is more evident than ever before as a result of the widespread use of digital photography.

Many photographic self-presentation studies are based on Goffman's ideas, where the aim of self-presentation is to convey an ideal image of oneself that is deemed socially desirable. Idealization (and thus the presentation of oneself) varies from performance to performance as audience spheres and performance contexts change (Goffman 1959).

Zizi Papacharissi's (2010) research results are in accordance with Goffman's concept. According to Papacharissi, the process of self-presentation is an ever-evolving cycle through which individual identity is presented, compared, adjusted or defended. It is modern technology that paves the way for this stage of identity negotiation, linking the *networked self* separately or simultaneously with multiple audiences. Furthermore, in everyday cycles of self-disclosure and impression formation, individuals perform on multiple stages and, in doing so, blend social communities online that may have been separate offline. This might sometimes confuse private and public boundaries when evaluating the role of self-disclosure. Also, by time, motivation and goals can change, and thus the cycle is indeed ever-evolving.

In studies emphasizing photography, van Dijck (2008) argues that the roles of personal images as identity builders and as a means of experiencing communication are of a greater importance than ever before. The communication mode has become, in some sense, a superior function (van Dijck 2008: 70). Self-disclosure is a gatekeeping instrument because photographs work as building blocks for personal identity. Garde-Hansen (2014: 97) has termed this future memory dynamic *modern image entrepreneurship*, effectively branding identities through online self-portraiture. The cameraphone is a tool not only for publishing but also for the self-reflection of the changeability of everyday life in regard to places, friends and activities.

Location is equally important to the self-image and has a solid history in tourist photography. An example of this is the case of a young individual from a football stand at the Camp Nou football stadium in Barcelona. The young man had bought plenty of team merchandise, including club jerseys, scarves and flags, and was posing with these for his friend with a cameraphone. All the purchases were well presented before him with the football stadium acting as a backdrop. The behaviour that aroused my interest was that straight after updating the photographs to his various social media feeds, the young man fell asleep before the game even began and slept until the end of the match. Here, as in many photographs, location is a significant factor in self-presentation. In this example, posing in a football arena and sharing the images with the public was more important than watching the actual game.

Among online forums, a considerable amount of research has been conducted regarding Facebook photo-sharing and the association between self-presentation and personality traits (e.g. Amichai-Hamburger and Vinitzky 2010; Gosling et al. 2011; Moore and McElroy 2012; Ross et al. 2009; Wang et al. 2017). Moore and McElroy (2012: 271) argue that there is a higher prevalence of self-presentation in the sharing of photographs among women, which suggests that self-disclosure works differently among genders. Ok Lyu (2016) uses the term *objectification* in her study to explore how women strategically take touristic selfies because they are more conscious of their outer appearance as objects, where they are constantly monitored and evaluated by others (see also Fredrickson and Roberts 1997; Siibak 2009). However, it is

difficult to generalize issues such as this, as the degree of image-sharing varies heavily among individuals; as the example of the young man at the football stadium demonstrates, this is not gender-specific.

In an interesting study conducted by Michael Stefanone et al. (2011), the behaviour of young people was studied in relation to their opinion of their self-worth. The researchers argued that people's self-esteem can be categorized into two main classes according to how they behave. One class, defined as approval, consisted of individuals who based their self-esteem on public-based factors, such as physical appearance and outdoing others in competitions. The other class, defined as academic competence, consisted of those who based their self-esteem on private factors, such as family love and a personal sense of morality. Those who both valued the first elements and whose self-worth was most dependent on appearance displayed a higher intensity of online photo-sharing. The conditions by which people assess their self-worth represents a new approach to understanding how personal identities are developed and maintained.

Although self-presentation with vernacular photography is an upfront element difficult to bypass by anyone using a cameraphone, it is sometimes overstated. According to a recent survey by Matikainen and Villi (2015: 160), regardless of age, most Finns see themselves as traditional passive online followers. Executed on over 1000 random participants, the research indicates that online participation focuses primarily on personal networks and communities, signifying that people are not evenly interactive, but rather concentrate on relationships that are most meaningful. In other words, people share a more diverse range of photographs within their closer communities, whereas a wider audience sees only a selected few. This is particularly the case on social media forums, where many peers do not have a close relationship to the individual; as a result of its obvious presence, they might consider the self-presentation function more meaningful than it really is.

The results published by Matikainen and Villi are in accordance with many other studies concerning the degree of photo-sharing in social media (Blanchard and Markus 2004; Rotman et al. 2009; Rotman and Wu 2014; Malinen 2016). For example, according to Malinen (2016: 34), online one-to-one and small-group relationships display a higher degree of photo-sharing. Photos are, therefore, shared less frequently with a wider audience and, instead, more photos are circulated amongst close family members and friends.

To summarize, self-presentation in vernacular photography is strongly connected with a positive presence on public forums (concerning photography, see also Slater 1995: 134; Sarvas and Frohlich 2011: 6). The factor of self-presentation affects peoples' behaviour with the camera, and the decisions regarding self-disclosure are down to the cameraphone user. The conscious performances carried out by the subject and the photographer (who may also be the same person, such as in the case of selfies) contribute to the output of the image and affect identity formation inside and out.

The presence of self-disclosure is all-encompassing; the selection and choices are often made beforehand (in planning and taking the camera along) during the shooting (location, atmosphere, framing, composition or light) and afterwards in editing (selecting, removing, manipulating or sharing images).

### *4.4. Self-disclosure in self-expression*

Lastly, self-expression is to be discussed as a function. Many find it comfortable to manage their personal imagery by documenting and sharing photographs from their own hobbies and interests in life. For some, photography and the visually rewarding outcomes are the core focus of interest. One can experience a feeling of success from building up photographic abilities, which would increase, for example, the quality and aesthetics of the photos taken. Enthusiasts and dedicated hobbyists exist in great numbers.

Some recent studies, such as Lee (2010), Lange (2011), Morlot (2013), Sandbye (2014) and Schreiber (2015), demonstrated that photography has kept its ground as an art that is playful, fun and entertaining. This is surely an element that has fundamental roots deep in analogue times. Following on from, for example, Lange's article (2011: 41), younger individuals approach image-making with more fluidity, with aims and purposes traversing both memory preservation and the instant sharing of experiences. Lange's article mainly discusses online image production by younger people, in how it is deemed as a way to have fun, to become closer with peers, to improve technical skills and to help friends with similar interests.

Classic pioneering examples of hobbies in which the use of the camera coalesces with the action itself are skateboarding and snowboarding. The presence of a camera has been apparent within these communities from the very beginning, and many shots are executed on photographic terms. A fresh example of photographic self-expression in the Nordic countries are the so-called *moped meetings* (in Finnish: mopomiitti), where young people gather at a pre-arranged road-strip with various types of mopeds and other motorized vehicles to demonstrate acrobatic tricks. Photography and filming are a built-in element of these moped meetings. The visual results are important and shared through social media channels.

There are various ways that make photography self-expressive. It could be part of a social event (as described above) or for purely personal aesthetic gratification (Morlot 2013: 29). Sometimes the purpose is to depict the course of time (Lee 2010: 272) within a series of photos. In the late 1970s, Sontag (1978: 5) acknowledged that photography could at times act as a defence against anxiety. Back then, as much as now, vernacular photography could be approached in how individuals experience and enjoy being both behind and in front of the lens. Some may use the camera as a protective shield, or perhaps as an escape route in social situations. In the example of moped meetings, using the cameraphone easily justifies the presence of many individuals who are not interested in performing themselves.

Photographing aesthetically pleasing details, such as nature or animals, also offers a comfortable and risk-free way to manage personal imagery. When sharing photographs with a vast audience, this neutral form of self-expression requires very little self-disclosure due to its non-controversial content. Similarly, this neutrality is the reason why the content of readers' images on Finnish newspapers are nature-orientated (Näsi 2014). Photographs of animals, landscapes and seasonal hobbies offer an aesthetically rewarding, but simultaneously risk-free, way to engage the community with the newspaper.

Therefore, for many, the function of self-expression offers an attractive approach to photography. As described above, it demonstrates rewardingly the proficiency and technical skills of an individual in using the camera and visually expressing something in front of the lens. Often, proficiency and the

content are equally important. Also, if we think back on the described risks of self-presentation, the types of photography discussed here offer a suitable and risk-free basis for manageable self-disclosure. Through self-expression, one can share images with people who are not necessarily close to the photographer.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS AND CONTRIBUTION

This article focuses on the evolution or – we could say – revolution of vernacular photography that has significantly commenced since the early 2000s. It attempts to provide a fresh perspective and theoretical framework to the somewhat institutionalized functions of vernacular photography by analysing how the concept of self-disclosure works within.

First, as the article proceeds, we see that contemporary vernacular photography is a complex process that involves overlapping and diffused perspectives; it is difficult to categorize photographic actions and the outcomes of these in just one of the four functions. With this in mind, the following conclusions aim to clarify the significance of self-disclosure within vernacular photography.

Second, there is a lack of research that discusses self-disclosure as the defining factor of photography. However, there are many case studies on digital photography and personality traits, gender and aesthetic gratifications that in particular concern self-presentation. In these studies, self-disclosure is often interpreted as something subordinate to various individual features and emotional motives. It is not seen as a concept of high value, nor is it seen to direct controlled decision-making of individuals. A typical example of this kind is seen in a study conducted by Wang et al. (2017). Their study aims to examine the psychological effects of posting and viewing of selfies and groupies on social media. The main focus of the study is on self-esteem, life satisfaction and an individual's need for popularity, and how these factors (as opposed to conscious preplanned self-disclosure) conduct behaviour. Thus, the standpoint differs significantly from this article. Self-disclosure means controlling the process of sharing personal photographs and control over ownership of one's photographs.

As to the critical discussions, it should be noted that approaching self-disclosure as an agent affecting all vernacular photography could lend more control to individual cameraphone users in the form of understanding causation and media literacy. Instead of considering self-disclosure as a somewhat predefined matter, it could be seen as a concept that advances parallel to the process of photography as a whole, in planning, shooting, editing and sharing. More research on the topic would also contribute to similar issues on morality, consideration, self-criticism and wider impacts. Acknowledging the nature of self-disclosure by Snyder (1974) should provide a solid basis for more manageable photo-sharing and ultimately better media literacy.

Third, self-disclosure works very differently when interpreting private and public photographs. For example, when referring to self-disclosure in preserving memories, the contemporary photographic public sphere is like a double-edged sword. On the one hand, personal and privately operated modern cameraphones emphasize individuality in the sense that every individual has their own gadgets, and there is seemingly less or no need for self-disclosure. On the other hand, as these same gadgets are connected to a network

of endless audiences, it naturally insists on more individual-conscious self-disclosure.

Understanding this evolution in photography is important, especially to those who are old enough to remember analogue-time vernacular photographic culture and procedures; I myself am embarrassed when looking at some pictures taken in the 1980s and 1990s of myself from my parents' photo albums. These albums compose photographs mostly taken by my mother and are reflective of her decisions regarding self-disclosure. The photographs represent a collective visual memory for all family members. Interestingly, my own children have grown to know only the digital way. They operate their own cameraphones and make their own decisions based on self-disclosure. In contrast to analogue times, each family member now has their own digital photo album. As my children grow older, they must understand the significance of individual responsibility regarding self-disclosure when sharing pictures from their personal collections with others. They must also make their own decisions on what to do with potentially embarrassing photos; delete or keep, safeguard or share.

Lastly, the major aim of this article was to provide an overview of the evolution that has taken place in amateur photography, and to aid in understanding self-disclosure in relation to the four functions of photography. For those scholars who are just beginning to research visual communication, this article is intended as an informed perspective of historical development, as an alternative approach to the amateur photographic public sphere, and as a contribution to education and the development of media literacy skills. If nothing else, this article should be relieving to comprehend that we are influenced by selective visual fragments from other people's lives and that controlling one's own visual identity demands for active consideration of self-disclosure.

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**CONTRIBUTOR DETAILS**

Altti Näsi is a Ph.D. student at the University of Lapland. His research focuses on the functions of shared digital photographs within different types of communities.

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Altti Näsi

Contact: University of Lapland, Yliopistonkatu 8, 96300 Rovaniemi, Finland.
E-mail: altti.nasi@gmail.com

 https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5021-4766

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# 5.    Conclusions and further research

The purpose of this dissertation was to add to the understanding of the socio-cultural functions of vernacular photographs in different contemporary communities. The research was mostly conducted in Finland, with ties to other Nordic countries and Scotland. Adding to understanding is done by providing theory-refinement to earlier works regarding the use of vernacular photographs as a tool for communication between community members.

The dissertation consists of three peer-reviewed articles and a documentation of the media production that guided this practice-led work throughout the process. In addition, it contains a synthesis comprising an outline of the research objectives of the dissertation and how the media production with the individual articles build a totality. The chapters in the middle of the dissertation have explained the scope of the work, including the revolution that took place simultaneously regarding the concepts of vernacular photography and the notion of community, thanks to digitalization. The fourth chapter consists of the published articles and in this final chapter I summarise the discussion, the contribution of the study and represent critical viewpoints regarding the work and future perspectives.

As explained in Chapter 2.1., the roots of this dissertation are in the works of those studying the functions of amateur photography beginning in the 1970s, (e.g. Sontag 1978; Barthes 1981; Chalfen 1987 and Slater 1995). Guided and constrained by the essence of film-based photography (slowness of process, high cost and a mechanically driven system aiming to produce prints, to mention a few), if possible to generalize, the focus was then mostly on the visual memory building aspects of photography. Also, due to the reasons above, in the analogue era photographs were mostly placed in photo albums, shoeboxes, frames on mantle shelves and hung on walls, which meant that their communicational dimensions were restricted to families and the walls bordering home or office.

Soon after the burgeoning of communication networks towards the turn of the new millennium, visual communication in the form of text messaging was introduced in mobile phones as a new way of discussing alongside speech. Even though text messaging was restricted to only the characters provided by a keyboard and a black and white display, already then, users indicated an interest towards sharing moods through facial expressions in the form of icons that are also known as *emoticons.* Since then visual communication has grown exponentially (e.g. integrated camera-phones, full-colour displays, photo editing and image sharing applications) and

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therefore sharing information and emotions can be done in multiple ways; much of it by sharing photographs.

From a community point of view, the digital revolution in communication between individuals and groups had a direct impact on how communities were created and how the existing communities functioned. If we look at any community past or present, its existence is necessarily important to the members for it to exist at all. Ancient villagers relied on each other for survival and at that time the meaning of community was not only very concrete with cause-consequence relationships, but its functioning was crucial. Today, the relationships are not so clear in relation to survival, but work, school, sports teams, musical ensembles, families and friends are meaningful for the members, because individuals complement each other, have emotional ties and engage in activities with a common interest. The functions of communities have changed, but the idea of being part of a community is far from insignificant.

It is fair to say that the notion of moving from spatially to relationally defined communities unfolded through the birth of various social media forums, where the newly created communities did not necessarily have a geographic home or location. Especially for these relationally defined communities, where members are from around the world, sharing information and emotions is practical when there are various ways of doing it. Thus, photography offers a quick, easy and free form of communication. Furthermore, for those communities that existed before digitalization as well as for those whose existence is based on face-to-face activities, the new technology added a new dimension or option for communication. In the latter, the birth of networks is not a matter of the existence of a community, but rather of how it adds value in providing new communication methods that make communicating diverse, easy and fast.

For this dissertation, the angle of approach to community understanding was found by studying research on the notion of sense of community. Talk about a sense of community tends to be positive in tone due to associations with offering human connections, giving inspiration, resources and various other support. With this in mind, the empirical data gathered during the media production steered this study towards the theoretical framework of psychological sense of community (PSOC) (originally) proposed by Sarason (1974) and (further) elaborated by McMillian and Chavis (1986). When the collected data was analysed and organised, it fitted well with the four interrelated dimensions of PSOC, namely 1) membership, 2) mutual influence, 3) shared emotional connection and 4) integration and fulfilment of needs. The process is described in Chapter 3.4 and sense of community is discussed in detail in Chapter 2.2.

From a research process standpoint, this practice-led dissertation naturally evolved during the years of its preparation. In the beginning, such issues as visual journalism and citizen journalism had a stronger impact on the idea of community

communication. In the first article, the strong institutional management of reader's images through newspapers serves as a sovereign example where traditional mass media intertwines with contemporary social media and where community members address an urge to participate in community discussions in a vast array of channels (see e.g. van Dijck and Poell 2013). Also, the media production had journalistic elements embedded in many of the published stories as well as how it was constructed as a website. Thus, from a purely process-driven standpoint, the considered journalistic basis helped generate the follow-up questions represented in Figure 2.

Also, the conclusions in the first and third articles and in chapter three of the dissertation regarding the media production, institutional and personal photo publishing are discussed similarly from gatekeeping and self-disclosure approach angles. Even though they are two different concepts, they share many similarities and are in away interlocked to some extent. For example, questions addressing reasons for gatekeeping as well as self-disclosure typically lead to follow-up questions regarding intent and motivation for publishing photographs.

These first paragraphs of the conclusion therefore summarise the historical evolution which must be understood before progressing to the conclusions. The historical aspect is also important in helping understand the scope of the work. Next, the conclusion and contributions of the thesis are divided into theoretical and practical sub-sections.

## 5.1. Theoretical contribution

Communication among members has, of course, always been a key component of an existing community. The main contribution of this practice-led doctoral thesis is in introducing the concept of *visual discussion*, referring to communication occurring inside contemporary communities, primarily in the form of exchanging photographs, but also other visual elements. These photos are tools for discussion, where, for example, locations, activities, accomplishments, ideas, humour, likes and opinions are shared among other members. Explaining visual discussion happens by placing it inside photography studies, as follows.

The theoretical refinement to earlier works begins in this study by including an institutional aspect that shifts the focus from *chitchat* and feeling-driven photo sharing to finding a suitable concept where organized pre-planned actions are also considered alongside the more informal ways of photo sharing. In other words, organizations are also interested in participating in visual discussions. The newspapers in the first article, the media production per se and the daycare in the second article all add an institutional aspect to the concept of visual discussion.
 Also, the theoretical advance from earlier works regarding the concept of visual

discussion is in creating a more detailed understanding of the functions of photo sharing in communities by analysing it in relation to the four elements of a PSOC (psychological sense of community) by McMillian and Chavis (1986). This is explained in more detail later.

As we know, initiating photographic research is challenging because there are often difficulties in defining photography *per se*. For example, regarding the essence of photography and the concept of a *medium* (e.g. Elo 2005, 13). Is photography itself the medium or are photographs sent through a channel that is regarded as the medium? Sometimes merely investigating the terminology helps to position the work. In addition to this valid question, the relationship between the act of photography and the final outcomes is so strongly connected that the discourse easily intervenes between the actual occurrence, the photography that took place, the photograph itself and its interpretations. Thus, the cause-effect relationship is so strong that breaking down the process into smaller sections or clear approach angles is not always easy. This problematizing is also introduced by Seppänen (2001, 59) with reference to works such as Wagner (1979). Briefly, photographs are images with information; they display and reveal information from a certain time and place. They communicate from the past and, in so doing, photography is an inseparable part of social sciences. Photographs have been a self-evident tool, for example, in social anthropology. The task of selecting and interpreting is left to the one viewing the photograph. Then, if the focus is on the photograph, it prompts instant questions on how photographs should or could be interpreted.

In this dissertation, photography is therefore also approached in relation to social and cultural factors considered here as shared traditions, habits, beliefs, patterns or modes of operation present in the society at hand. The whole question of the medium is approached from a rather classical theoretical perspective by Berlo (1960). The *medium* is seen as rather the channel in which photographs are shared as part of the communication stages; sender-message-channel-receiver. The reason for this approach is that in this practice-led research, the media production created an overview of community communication for the researcher. It also rendered the media production alongside the dissertation process more comprehensible. The researcher was merged with the whole process from planning to shooting and building the channels to enable photographic sharing.

After the media production, the first article (Näsi 2015) focused mainly on the messages (photographs) and on a specific medium (newspaper) and their views on the matter. The second article (Näsi 2019) focused on the recipients of photographs (parents in the daycare community) and the third (Näsi 2020) mainly on the senders and their actions (self-disclosure). Thus, each specific portion was harnessed to provide a new understanding from a limited perspective, but to combine to produce a lucid totality. Also, delimiting the research to a specific angle in each article afforded an understanding of visual discussion even if only from that particular viewpoint.

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Seeing photographs as media could have also worked, and this is primarily a matter of definition and work-flow preference.

The concept of visual discussion among community members builds on the ideas of Villi (esp. 2012 and 2014). According to him, amateur photography has evolved from *what has been* to *what is going on* (see also Ito & Daisuke 2005; Lee 2010; Sarvas & Frohlich 2011; Larsen & Sandbye 2014) through a change of focus; the communicational functions of photography have been decisive and at the heart of the matter since the birth of networks because the purpose of taking photographs is often to share emotions or information with remote persons (Villi 2014) or as Villi describes: "to maintain interpersonal connections over distances" (Villi 2012, 45). In a way, Villi paves the way for this research by arguing that the focus of contemporary vernacular photography is on the *here and now* and no longer on the *there and then* (Villi 2014, 50). The concept of spatial immediacy or quasi immediacy has changed the essence of 1) the time when and 2) the space where photographs are used.

Shared photographs are often a result of an anticipated or a spontaneous act of photography, where the photographer aims at creating something to be sent and shared instantly. The function of the photograph is not to represent a memory from the past nor to be sent later in life but to depict something occurring at that very moment. Photographs move through the network instantaneously in the twinkling of an eye from one space to another. This is also an important notion in the ideas of Seppänen (2001, 59) mentioned above. Photographs are still images with information; they display and reveal information from a certain time and place, but during the first two decades of the new millennium this often happens in real time. Photographs are more than ever tools for interaction, integrated into people's social and cultural routines.

Accordingly, in the articles of which this dissertation is composed, the focus remains mostly in the communicational functions of photography, and develops towards a concept of *visual discussion*.

A possible institutional aspect is important to consider when talking about visual discussion. As an excellent example, the daycare in the second article represents the interests of a private owned organization though the imagery is manifested through individual employees. Given, that all the parents interviewed (Näsi 2019, 128) reported that the shared photographs functioned best in representing what was going on at the daycare centre during the day and it was possible for the parents to get a feeling of a *mediated presence* (Villi 2016, 110) or *visual co-presence* (Ito & Daisuke 2005) by looking at the pictures from the daycare. And that a familiar and recognisable space (the daycare playground) with a close family member (child) created a feeling of presence, almost as if the recipients could imagine themselves to be present in that very moment and place, seen in the photograph. Nevertheless, the notion of selective photo sharing (gatekeeping) from the daycare came as a surprise to many parents; the daycare had reputational and financial interests embedded in

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the WhatsApp –group that they had established and within the photos that they shared with the parents. Thus, the concept of visual discussion refers to including also more formal and professional communication than just informal chitchat between individuals that has been the focus in many earlier studies.

As also mentioned, the theoretical advance from earlier works is in creating a more detailed understanding of photograph sharing in communities. Despite the perfect example of a mediated presence above, in a theoretical context, it can be argued that the diverse image content in communities counts for much more, because the imagery is extensive in its diversity. The second published article demonstrate that for community members the PSOC division into four (McMillian and Chavis 1986) borrowed and applied from social sciences adds a new approach angle to how sharing photographs in communities can be contemplated and analysed. This means that, for example in cases where the place of the photography, the time of shooting and sending are clearly unknown to the recipient, a mediated presence is not necessarily what happens or is even anticipated. For example, in the case of the daycare article (Näsi 2019), the photographic content was sometimes predominantly informational, depicting artwork completed during the day or an informational poster of an upcoming event, which meant that for many parents the value of seeing these images was primarily in knowing what the children had done or what was expected of them in the near future. The location of the photograph and the time of taking were unclear. With these example photographs, the visual discussion was highly informative and reminiscent of reporting or arranging something. All this above also counts for visual discussion.

Another function worth mentioning is that in a community, photographs can serve as a tool for better individual recognition, getting to know each other and sharing guiding information. In the very same article (Näsi 2019), six out of nine informants explained that visual discussion within the daycare community had helped them get to know the children and their parents better. Being part of a community where there are unfamiliar members, photographs *forces* them to get to know each other. The visual acquaintance through photographs speeds up and facilitates also getting to know each other in face-to-face situations. In large-scale companies, we see similar actions where facial photographs are becoming mandatory add-ons to personal user accounts in order for colleagues to recognize each other.

Thus, the concept of visual discussion is often, but not always, attached to time and space nor restricted to a specific medium. The division into four of PSOC by McMillian and Chavis (1986) in this thesis offered a new approach to seeing the various functions of visual discussions, as briefly described above through two examples and in the second article (Näsi 2019) point by point: 1) membership, 2) mutual influence, 3) shared emotional connection and 4) integration and fulfilment of needs are well categorized headings also for analysing visual discussions in communities. This also means that from a social sciences point of view, photographs

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embody belonging to a community, mutual influence, shared emotional connection and fulfilment of needs. For the last function, photographs are especially practical for depicting a location, in guiding and giving inspiration.

Many modern communities are neither purely online nor purely face-to-face, but they can be considered hybrids (e.g. Lu et al. 2017). Hybrid communities support the blend of computer-mediated communications with face-to-face interactions. Communication online affects and complements offline interactions. "Can you send me a picture of the bicycle, recipe or birthday invitation?" are typical requests during a face-to-face conversation, where the sequel to the discussion is directed online. This intertwined nature of online-offline interactions in hybrid communities must be taken into account because the results may differ from research conducted on exclusively online communities.

Furthermore, visual discussion may occur through readers' images in newspapers (Näsi 2015). With newspapers, the delay between the time of photography and when readers see the photograph may be significant. Thus it is often hard to talk about immediacy or near immediacy. Nevertheless, the fundamental elements are often very similar to any other community where visual discussion occurs, because the photographer wants to discuss with the community using photographs rather than some other mode of communication. In the case of readers' images, it was observed that a considerable amount of the photographic content is sent to the newspaper by a rather small group of people who have their camera-phones consciously ready at all times and are eager to share their experiences (Näsi 2015, 123). The readers of a certain newspaper can be regarded as a community, but this type of visual discussion is specific, because, in addition to the slowness of publishing, there is also a gatekeeping system involved; the approval of the newspaper. Making arguments or expressing opinions through photographs (showing a flaw in traffic, leaving litter, or a certain behaviour, to mention a few) and giving responses to these photographs is a normal procedure of visual discussion between community members. Only in this case the discussion happens via a newspaper.

For many, the reason for choosing visual discussion over another mode is that photographic communication is free, easy, fast and practical. In the second article, visual discussion is described as more self-explanatory than using text (Näsi 2019, 129). Many describe the use of photographs as visual discussion by stating that "a picture is worth a thousand words." This cliché emerged repeatedly in cases when asking why people choose to use photographs for communicating. Vernacular photographs blend in easily alongside other shared visual elements; text, gif animations, drawings, small videos and so on.

Lastly, this thesis also emphasises the role of self-disclosure as a key element in networked vernacular photography (Näsi 2020). For future research, this should contribute to how people are seen as participants and especially initiators of visual discussions and the choices that are seen to affect choosing to discuss in the first place,

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and then choosing photographs rather than some other modes of communication. The emergence of emphasising self-disclosure as part of contemporary vernacular photography is in many ways natural because personal camera-phones have made photography simultaneously more private and more public. On the one hand, personal and privately operated modern camera-phones emphasise individuality in the sense that all individuals have their own devices, and shared family cameras are rare. On the other hand, through the Internet, there are endless possibilities for new audiences if so desired.

Thus, from this idea of private versus public, it is also argued that the high-lighted importance of self-disclosure is due to the change in photography as being no longer merely a family ritual in the hands of a few (also Mäkiranta 2012). The decision-making goes from when the camera is present and taken along to the choices of photographic objects and their level of publicness is no longer limited to a shared family camera. From a very early age, individuals carry their own camera-phones and make their own decisions on what to shoot. This individuality-centred idea is depicted in Figure 1. and in Figure 3. below. Self-disclosure, consciously or not, steers self-enactment and thinking. It determines how we are seen and want to be seen, bearing in mind that the interpretations are vast and manifold.
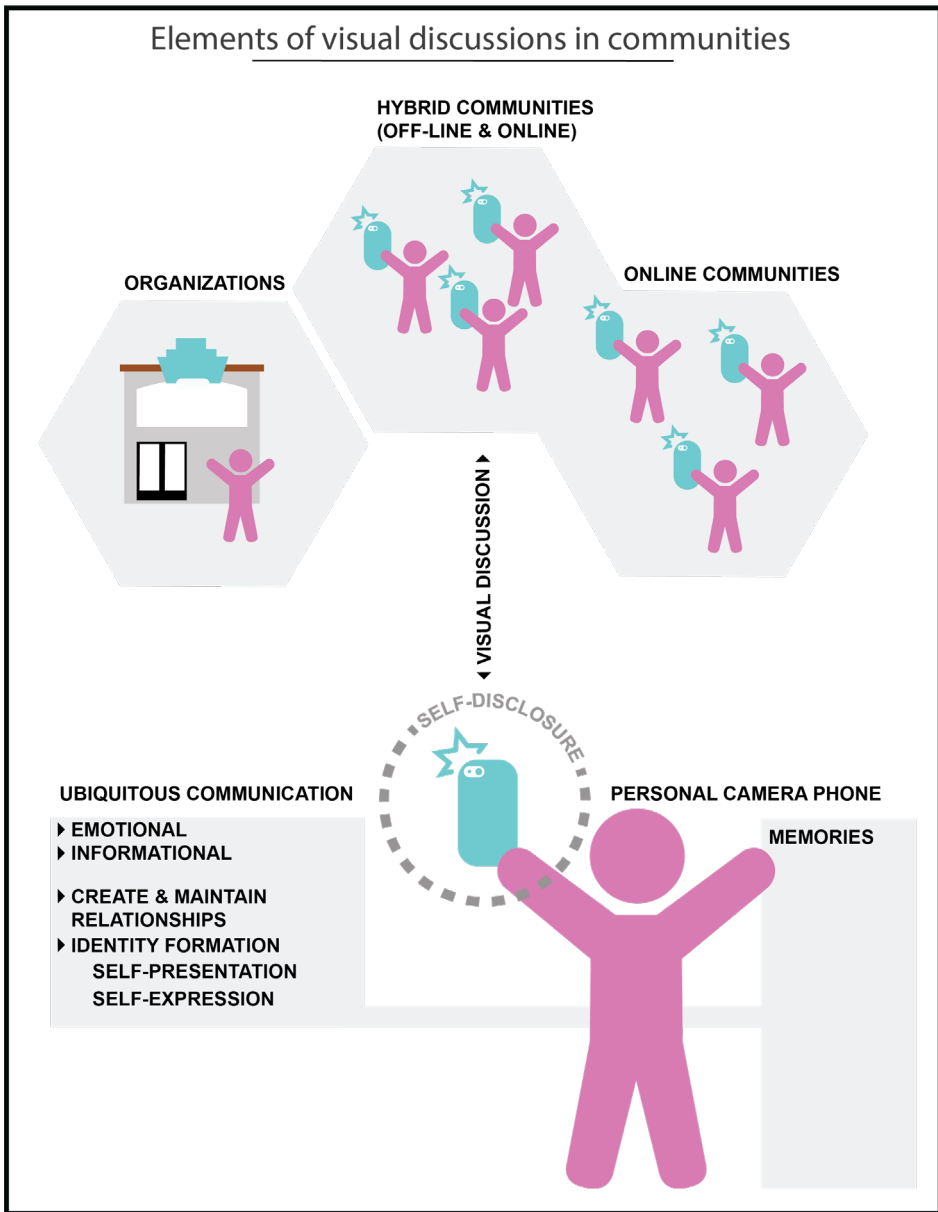
*Figure 3. The central role of personal decision-making through self-disclosure and camera-phone use between community members.*

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Because the figure above has many similarities to that in Figure 1. in Chapter 1.2, it could be useful to view them side by side. The figure emphasises self-disclosure as in the earlier chapters, and designing the figure in this way was a direct result of this practice-led dissertation. Thoughts and data on self-disclosure arose from the very beginning: amid being at the hub of communication in a semi-rural community to making the media production and the data collection for the articles.

The functions in the lower left corner in Figure 3. are typical elements of vernacular photography research (e.g. Van House & Davis 2005; Van Dijck 2008; Van House 2011; Sarvas & Frohlich 2011). The third article incorporated (Näsi 2020) should be considered as one of the most significant elements in demonstrating the role of self-disclosure in determining the content and much of the outcomes of visual discussion in communities.

Admittedly, the functions in the figure have been criticised for their generality and universality (e.g. Lister 2014), but making a more detailed list of the functions could only be done with a significant number of additional case studies. For its part, this research compilation covered many of these functions through its published articles, but with an anticipatory view towards some of the work in progress, the detailed functions of visual discussions are vast and vary widely depending on the case community. We can already see, for example, that in workplaces the use of vernacular photography is developing and expanding quickly regarding the informational aspect in Figure 3. and the exploitation of visual discussion in working life is seen to afford many options.

To sum up the theoretical contribution described above, readers of this dissertation should have gained an idea of what the concept of visual discussion means. This is, of course, useful for anyone, but especially for scholars beginning their research careers on some of the topics. Hopefully, also for more experienced scholars, this thesis offers a fresh approach to a familiar subject. This said, the work presents novel ideas in combining social sciences and community thinking with visual communication. After all, communication is an essential element of all communities – for a short time in history, it has become profusely visual.

## 5.2. Practical contribution

The practical contributions of this thesis can also be divided into three categories. First, all three published articles in one way or another raise questions of personal media literacy. Lack of critical thinking combined with individual needs and expectations towards a community can create unexpected situations. For example, during the media production and the interviews conducted for the second article (Näsi 2019), some of the informants had given very little thought to such issues as economically motivated selection of shared photographs or how the sender of

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photographs might have clear objectives about the mental image conveyed to the audience. On the other hand, some informants are acutely aware of such issues, thanks to their work experience, for example. Therefore, the articles of this thesis raise concerns about the variance of media literacy alongside depicting elements of visual discussion in Figure 3. The figure offers at least a starting point for people to critically look at how they themselves interact with a camera-phone: as participants in visual discussion. Especially the third article (Näsi 2020) is devoted to this issue, for those who are more interested.

Second, this thesis suggests that most of our photo sharing happens within our personal communities; between friends, family members and colleagues via such social media applications as WhatsApp and Messenger (see Figure 1 in Chapter 1.2.). The networked society is intertwined and everyone with a personal camera-phone has their own personal visual discussion modes and motivations regarding other members, depending on the community. Of course, the modes and motivations of discussing naturally vary case-by-case, community-by-community. This dissertation helps in making sense, or in creating a structure through which to better understand one's personal communities and the visual discussions taking place there.

In film-based photography, making sense was easier, because vernacular photography was mostly about capturing visual memories. Now, as photography has also become a tool for communication between community members, clarifying and sorting out the functions and motivations for photography, the cause-and-effect relationships of each personal community and the photographic performances, takes time, but is surely beneficial because understanding the functions leads to more fluent photographic use.

Third and lastly, a practical contribution is to anyone planning on starting a self-made community web site, such as the media production here. Considerations introduced especially in Chapter Three, offer inspiration, guidance and even some realism regarding what kind of issues are at hand when starting a similar project. Furthermore, the media production resulted in emphasising the importance of considering the role of the producer; how personal can and should this kind of a project be and what challenges does it present. Also, questions related to the quality of the content, self-criticism and readers' interpretations emerged during the production.

## 5.3. Further discussions and implications

Photo sharing cannot be separated from the rest of life and the evolution that it is going through may not always be very predictable. This means at least three follow-up ideas. Firstly, people discover and adopt the potential of new technologies rapidly as, for example, in the second article (Näsi 2019), where daycare centre personnel

started sharing images of the daily activities with parents. As such actions spread quickly to other daycare centres, concerns regarding GDPR and other misuses arise. Research on such issues is needed to enhance the general knowledge of photographic use.

This is especially important because the interviewees seemed to have put different amounts of thought into the factors behind visual discussions. Thus, the foundation for honest visual discussions is in openness and transparency. Especially with communities where member relationships are not necessarily very close, questions such as the purpose of the communication channel, the role of the members and the functions of the shared photographs are of primary validity. This type of development is already to be seen in various social media forums, where answering these questions creates rules and guidelines for community members. Consequently, it helps members to decide whether or not to join the community, and if so, how to discuss.

Secondly, as this dissertation nears completion, the Corona virus (COVID-19) has had an immense impact on the whole world. As we speak, communities have had to find solutions to communicate at a distance, due to restrictions on gatherings and travel issued by governments in many countries. Therefore, visual discussion and research on the issue are of great importance due to pandemics or any other states of emergency, because distant interactions help in keeping society active. Having the technology and knowhow needed mitigates the problems that occur in exceptional situations. In addition to normal day-to-day photo sharing, visual discussion has spread to medical advice, mental support and education during the COVID-19 pandemic, as examples.

Lastly, while predicting what further research the present study may give rise to and is indeed ongoing at the time of writing, we see that the use of photographs continues to expand. As an example, workplaces are integrating photographs and photo technology into everyday procedures. This includes such issues as face recognition in personal user interfaces in large-scale companies, sharing and documenting risks at work sites beforehand between the management and workers and work well-being by creating visual discussion groups for informal talk. All these functions of photographs are amateur in the sense that the photographers are mainly not professional photographers, but part of the existing staff. Thus, the functions of these photographs do not necessarily fit the theoretical frameworks introduced in this dissertation, but at least they further expand the number of functions.

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Surprisingly, an irreplaceable supporter of my dissertation process is found from my own family. Thank you, mother, Professor Emerita Salme Näsi for believing in me, reading my papers and guiding me during every step of the way. Hopefully, following this process closely enriched your amazing academic career at least to some extent. My lovely sisters, your presence is priceless. Ella, you always set the bar for standards and as a researcher yourself, I look up to you. Anni, your bravery and decision-making abilities with tender words are purely inspirational. I aim at living my life more the way that you do.

Finally, the whole process has demanded me to escape home every now and then to seek for a quiet working environment. I owe gratitude to the best possible wife for taking care of business while I was away. Thank you, beautiful Milja, and our three lovely inspirations; Hilla, Niila and Aila. Love you so much!

## Attachments



Attachment 1. A poster about hoytamo.com, that was introduced in two scientific conferences in 2013 (**ICIDS 2013 - 6th International Conference on Interactive Digital Storytelling** in Istanbul, Turkey and **WDC2012 Helsinki-Rovaniemi** World Design Capital in Rovaniemi). *Designer Viivi Tuominen.*

Lapin yliopisto

Taiteiden tiedekunta

Graafisen suunnittelun koulutusohjelma


Kimmo Lehtonen (FT)

Tiedepolku 1c

40720 Jyväskylä

**LAUSUNTO**


Lapin yliopiston taiteiden tiedekunnan nimeämänä ennakkotarkastajana esitän Altti Näsin väitöskirjatyöhön *"The emergence of a social bond inside visual digitalized communities"* sen taiteelliseen osuuteen*"www.hoytamo.com"* liittyen seuraavat huomiot.


**Aluksi**

Altti Näsin työ sijoittuu graafisen suunnittelun, audiovisuaalisen mediakulttuurin ja journalismin välimaastoon. Arvioitavana oleva *Hoytamo.com* –sivusto on kokonaisuudessaan Näsin itsensä toteuttamana teoksena se kattaa mainitut erityisalat. Sivuston saama vastaanotto ja sivustolle tehtyjen vierailujen määrä, lähes 14 000 kävijää, todistavat kiistattomasti Näsin julkaiseman kokonaisuuden tarpeellisuudesta ja sen sisällön kiinnostavuudesta ainakin kohteena olevan noin 500:n asukkaan kyläyhteisön näkökulmasta nähtynä. Viivi Tuomisen ansiokkaasti laatimassa posterissa *www.HOYTAMO.COM, integrating media production with the new modes of communication* kuvataan sivuston toteuttamisen keskinäiset suhteet mikro- ja makrotoimintaympäristöinä ja suhteessa asetettuun tutkimukselliseen haasteeseen. Keskityn arviossani Näsin määrittämiin kolmeen painopisteeseen, journalismiin, audiovisuaaliseen ilmaisuun ja graafiseen suunnitteluun.


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## Journalismi

Journalismin tutkimustradition kannalta väitöksen paneutuminen paikallisen yhteisön oman uutistuotannon mahdollisuuksien tarkasteluun suhteessa hyvinvoinnin tuottamiseen sosiaalisena pääomana palaa kansalaisjournalismin pohdintojen ytimeen. Näsi pyrkii työllään selvittämään, kuinka työlästä pientä yhteisöä käsittelevän visuaalisen Internet-sivuston tekeminen ja ylläpitäminen on. Tarkasteltavana on myös miten ihmiset vastaanottavat sivuston, kuinka yhteisön jäsenet osallistuvat sisällöntuotantoon ja miten he kokevat tällaisen projektin. Näsi hyödyntää erilaisia kävijätilastoja, yleisön palautteita, kommentointeja ja sivuston jakamista sosiaalisessa mediassa. Näsin tutkimuksen näkökulmasta keskiössä ovat yhteisön jäsenten kommentit ja heidän osallistumisensa sivuston tekemiseen. Tekijä luonnehti itse teostaan sen journalistisesta näkökulmasta käsin eikä pyrikään liittämään työtään perinteisen kuva- tai mediataiteen lajityyppeihin. Sen sijaan Näsi tarkastelee kuinka houkutteleva vaihtoehto kyläyhteisölle oman sivuston perustaminen on, kuinka suuri yleisö on mahdollista saavuttaa ja miten asiasta kiinnostuneet lukijat sivuston kokevat.

Tekijänä Näsi on ilmeinen heittäytyjä, joka pystyy motivoimaan spontaanin idean tai teon journalismiksi. Höytämössä naiset ulkoiluttavat koiria -juttuidea on mitä mainioin esimerkki. Aihe on kiistatta sekä paikallinen että universaali ja sellaisenaan kiinnostava. Toteutuksessa keittimen ääressä kököttäminen saa selkeitä performanssin piirteitä, ja tarkasteltaessa sivuston aihegalleriaa tätä puolta olisi voitu korostaa toteutuksessa enemmänkin. Nyt julkaistussa muodossa "osallisuus esteettisenä valintana" jää suotta täsmentymättä ja samalla piiloon, vaikka keskeinen osa sivuston materiaalista perustuu Näsin omaan osallistumiseen ja ideointiin. Ratkaisu avaa omalla konkreettisella tavallaan kansalaisjournalismin kohtaaman yhteisön aktivoimisen ja materiaalin tuotannon haasteet. Tätä kokonaisuutta arvioitaessa tulevan väitöksen tekstiosuus ei ole vielä saatavilla, ja olettaisin yhteisön sosiaalisen integroitumisen ja substantiaalisen aktiivisuuden nousevan tarkastelussa keskeiseen rooliin partisipaationa journalistisesta näkökulmasta käsin. Tässä kokonaisuudessa, tekijän, siis Näsin oma läsnäolo on erittäin painava osa sivukokonaisuutta. Lopputulos lähestyy tässä mielessä

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kylätoimikuntien taajalti julkaisemia painettuja kylähistorioita ja Suomessa vielä 1990 –luvulla niin suosittuja kuntakirjoja, jotka etääntyvät kansalaisjournalistisesta ilmaisusta tekijän roolin ja näkökulman painottuessa.

### Audiovisuaalinen ilmaisu

Hoytamo.com tavoittelee ilmaisussaan välittömyyden ja samalla helposti lähestyttävyyden tyyliä. Esitettyjen videoiden leikkaukset ovat mobiililaitteilla toteutetun kuvailmaisun kaltaisia, spontaanin rosoisia kokonaisuuksia. Mikäli materiaalin tekijöinä tai osallistujina olisivat selkeästi kyläyhteisön jäsenet, ratkaisu palvelisi kokonaisuutta erinomaisesti.

Suomessa julkaistaan paljon sekä kaupallista materiaalia että riippumattomien tekijöiden tuotantoja. Teokset ovat usein sangen korkealaatuisia. Erittäin suuren suosion saaneena omaa ääripäätään edustavana esimerkkinä voidaan mainita "Tykkyläinen", jonka "jäädytetyn kameran" ja "siistimättömän" ääniraidan estetiikka on huomattu kansainvälisestikin. Suomi on myös johtavia talvi- ja ekstremeurheilun videotuotantojen maita maailmassa, ja Näsin osallisuuteen perustuvien teoksen vertauskohdat ovatkin tässä mielessä sangen vaativia. Sivukokonaisuuden äänen editointi on minimalistista ja sellaisenaan se toimii hyvin sellaisen materiaalin kanssa, joissa ollaan konkreettisesti keskellä aiheena olevaa tapahtumaa. Sen sijaan kokonaisuuteen valittujen musiikkiteemojen tyylit ja etenkin asiayhteydet jäävät osin epäselväksi.

Videomateriaalissa dominoi pelimaailmasta tuttu "first action shooter" ilmaisu, jossa videokamera seuraa toimijan liikkeitä ja katsetta. Mäenlaskun yhteydessä audiovisuaalisen ilmaisun yhteys aiheeseen ja kylähistoriaa on erittäin onnistunut ja valaiseva, mutta eteenpäin sivustolla navigoidessa ratkaisu menettää sekä efektin että informaation tehoaan. Kylän nuorison kanssa toteutettu Harlem Shake on ajankohtaisuudessaan ja toteutuksessaan sivuston ehdotonta parhaimmistoa. Tyylillinen asiayhteys on kohderyhmän hallussa, globaalin ilmiön lähentäminen oman kylän kokoiseksi palvelee informaation välitystä kahdellakin tapaa. Se dokumentoi

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paikallisten tekijöiden yhteisöllisen teoksen, ja liittää sen suoraan laajempaan sisällölliseen ja tyylilliseen kontekstiin. Toista ääripäätä sivustolla edustaa avantouinti –"timelaps" kuvaus, joka eroaa muusta materiaalista hetkeä, valoa ja tunnelmaa korostavalla toteutuksellaan.

Still-kuvien käytössä on ilmeisesti tavoiteltu albumikuvan kaltaista "autenttisuutta". Tämä ei kuitenkaan ole perustelu kuvien satunnaisuuteen aiheyhteyksien, sijoittelun tai kokonaisuuden kuvakerronnan suhteen vaan loppuvaikutelmaksi jää eräänlainen välinpitämättömyys, johon tekijä ei varmaankaan pyri. Mukana on herkullisia myös otoksia, mutta aloitussivun yleisilmeen ryhdikkyys sirottuu sivuston osioissa kuvien satunnaisuudeksi. Öinen kylä on kaunis, mutta samalla irrallaan kokonaisuudesta, aivan samoin kuin juttujen ulkopuolelle jääneistä kuvista koottu galleria vaikuttaa jäsentymättömälle. Tekijän kannattaakin kiinnittää jatkossa huomiota kuvan käyttöön, ja hahmottaa kuvakerronnan tarjoamia mahdollisuuksia asiayhteyttä tai kronologiaa laajemmin. Karttojen ja historiallisen kuvamateriaalin käyttö antaisi odottaa, että myös yhteisön itsensä ja siihen suoraan liittyvän kuvamateriaalin kautta sivuston esteettistä mutta myös informatiivista syvyyttä on mahdollista parantaa.

### Graafinen suunnittelu

Teoksen yleisilme on selkeä ja yksinkertainen. Aloitus sivu on erinomaisen selkeä ja pidän pelkistetystä elementtien suunnittelusta. Tuotesijoittelua tällaisessa yhteydessä en oikein ymmärrä, etenkin kun sille ei löydy sivustolta perustelua, ja esimerkiksi Kentucky Fried Chicken –asiayhteys pitäisi ehdottomasti tehdä ymmärrettäväksi. Tuotemerkkien käytössä on myös epätäsmällisyyttä. Varusteiden listaaminen ulkoiluun erikoistuneen median tavoin on toistuessaan lähinnä hämmentävä, ja mikäli sitä käytetään sen tulisi olla täsmällistä, ja mainita myös villapipon valmistaja ja materiaalitiedot.

Käyttöliittymän ja käyttäjä-näkökulmasta tarkasteltuna juttulinkit julkaistujen sivun lopussa seuraavat julkaisemisjärjestystä, mikä on erittäin kätevää selaamista ajatellen. Juttukategoria –rakenteen toteutus voisi jatkua kautta sivuston tarjolla

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olevana navigointivaihtoehtona, jolloin selaaja voisi siirtyä halutessaan johonkin kategoriaan kiinnostavan aihealueen löytäessään.

Sivuilla julkaistuja kuvia ei voi avata omaan ruutuunsa. Ratkaisi kätkee suotta kuvien teos- tai dokumenttiarvoa. Ne istuvat pääsääntöisesti erittäin hyvin kulloiseenkin tarinaan ja kuvien sijoittelu tekstin ja tarinan etenemiseen nähden on johdonmukaista. Kuvia on vähän – selaillessa mietin löytyykö sivustolta kuvakertomuksia?

Esteettistä ja multimediaalista ilmaisua ajatellen on käyttöön valittujen ilmaisukeinojen toistollisuus pienoinen pettymys. Sivun selaaja joutuu pohtimaan onko toistollisuudessa jokin, esimerkiksi yhteisöllinen tavoite, tai toisaalta sitä eikö yleisesti verkkoympäristössä tunnettuja ilmaisun muotoja ja keinoja ole haluttu tai osattu ottaa käyttöön. Jos kyse on yhteisöllisyyden korostamisesta, ainakin harrastusosiossa kylä ja siinä elävä yhteisö jäävät varsin viitteelliseen rooliin.

**Lopuksi**

Teoksen yhteenvedoksi katsottava Hoytämo.com lähestyy loppuaan on hyvin koottu juttu. Informaatiografiikka selkeä ja summaa relevantit asiat. Kokonaisuuden design ja varsinkin fontistojen käyttö hyödynnetään vaatimattomasti. Minimalismi, tyylillinen typistäminen, tai "kansanomaisuus" ovat kukin omilla tavoillaan linjakkaita, ja hoytamo.com sivustolla tällainen linjakkuus ei vielä täsmenny kokonaisuudeksi. Toisaalta, sivuston informaatiografiikka onnistutaan kaikessa toteavuudessaan kohottamaan riemastuttavaksi kylähistorioinniksi.

Näsi määrittää itse päämääräkseen selventää, kuinka helppoa tai monimutkaista yhteisön jäsenen on halutessaan julkaista valokuvia ja videoita oman sivuston kautta, eikä nojata julkaisukanavana olemassa oleviin mediataloihin tai muihin valmiisiin sovelluksiin. Hoytamo.com sivusto ja sen laatiminen ovat tarjonneet Näsille paljon arvokasta tietoa asettamansa kysymyksen tarjoamista haasteista. Tässä arvioidun sivuston suhteen onkin paikallaan korostaa sen toteuttamisen ajoittumista väitöksen kokoamisen alkuvaiheeseen ja sen keskeistä asemaa tutkimuksen lopullisten

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muotojen ja sisältöjen hahmottumisessa. Toivoisin väittelijän ottavan tässä esitetyn kritiikin huomioon valmistellessaan väitöskirjan toisia taiteellisia osuuksia ja laatiessaan väitöksensä pohtivaa osuutta.

Olen esittänyt väitöskirjan tekijälle lausunnossani tekemäni parannusehdotukset, ja Altti Näsin väitöskirjan taiteelliseen osuuteen kuuluva *hoytamo*.com –sivusto muodostaa jo nykyisessä asussaan johdonmukaisen kokonaisuuden ja se on hyväksyttävissä osaksi väitöskirjaa.

Jyväskylässä 20.11.2014

Kimmo E. Lehtonen (FT)

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*Rakkaan Isäni,
professori Juha Näsin
muistolle*