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<p>Tiivistelmä-Referat-Abstract</p> <p>The topic of research is young women's representations of woman's body and their own body experiences. Research subjects (19 young women) are 17–18 years old high school students in Helsinki. Research material consists of three group discussions and individual writings (22 writings). Young women's embodiment is explored from two perspectives. On the level of representations this study explores what kind of social representations, that is, socially shared ideas about women's embodiment young women have. On the level of individual experiences the study focuses on young women's body experiences, seen from the perspective of phenomenology. Also the relationship between experiences and representations is discussed. Analysis of research material is based on grounded theory methodology.</p> <p>Young women's socially shared ideas about women's embodiment are divided into six prototypes. Prototypes express the most typical properties of each representation. Prototypes form positive/negative opposites. They describe three areas of women's embodiment: health (healthy/anorectic), shaping the body (fit/man-woman), and sexual attractiveness (good-looking/chick). Group distinctions between young women are formed according to the body – “good women” are healthy, fit and good-looking, while “bad women” are anorectic, manly women and sexy chicks.</p> <p>Young women's body experiences are contradictory. On one hand body is a private lived and experienced body, like a comfortable home. On the other hand body is a public object, constantly under evaluation, surveillance and public attention. Positive attention given to object body can feel good, but it also reinforces the public character of women's bodies. Main experience is the experience of contradiction: young women compare their bodies to the normative body of an ideal woman, which is almost impossible to reach. Young women criticize normative requirements for women's bodies, but still they experience pressures and feelings of inadequacy in relation to cultural body ideals.</p> <p>Separating experiences and representations totally from each other is almost impossible. Representations and experiences interact with each other all the time, which means that individual body experiences are constructed in relation to cultural ideas about body and gender.</p> <p>Main sources were: Grosz, Elizabeth (1994): Volatile Bodies. Towards a Corporeal Feminism; Puuronen, Anne &amp; Välimaa, Raili (toim.) (2001): Nuori ruumis; Oinas, Elina (2001): Making Sense of the Teenage Body. Sociological Perspectives on Girls, Changing Bodies, and Knowledge; Heinämaa, Sara (1996): Ele, tyli ja sukupuoli. Merleau-Pontyn ja Beauvoirin ruumiinfenomenologia ja sen merkitys sukupuolikysymykselle; ja Deaux, Kay &amp; Philogene, Gina (toim.) (2001): Representations of the Social. Bridging Theoretical Traditions.</p>			
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