

Youth

**College Students
16 to 20 years**

Education, culture, leisure, sports activities
and future vision among college youth
in Iceland



ICSRA

Icelandic Social Research and Analysis

Prepared for:

**The Icelandic Ministry of
Education and Culture**

2009

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form or by any means electronic or mechanical, including, photocopying, printing, photographing, audio recording or by any other information storage or retrieval system, without the written consent of Rannsoknir & greining - Centre for Social Research and Analysis.

Translated from Icelandic

© 2009 ICSRA - Rannsóknir & greining ehf

Table of contents

<i>Table of contents</i>	4
<i>Index of graphs</i>	5
<i>Introduction</i>	9
<i>Methodology and data</i>	11
Participants and execution	11
Means of measurement	11
Execution and processing of data	12
<i>Youth in 2007 – College Students</i>	13
Relations with parents	13
Roundup of graphs in “Relations with parents”	19
Peers	20
Roundup of graphs in “Peers”	28
Studies and school	29
Roundup of graphs in “Studies and school”	48
Health behavior and health indicators	49
Roundup of graphs in “Health behavior and health indicators”	56
Sports and physical exercise	57
Roundup of graphs in “Sports and physical exercise”	67
Participation in social life, leisure activities and salaried work along with studies	68
Roundup of graphs in “Participation in social life, leisure activities and salaried work along with studies”	78
<i>Bibliography</i>	81

Index of graphs

- Graph 1.** The proportion of girls in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, responding to the statement: „My parents think it is important that my studies go well.” 14
- Graph 2.** The proportion of boys in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, responding to the statement: „My parents think it is important that my studies go well.” 14
- Graph 3.** The proportion of girls in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, saying they often do the following with their family: Watch TV, participate in sports or outdoor life, talk together. 16
- Graph 4.** The proportion of boys in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, saying they often do the following with their family: Watch TV, participate in sports or outdoor life, talk together. 16
- Graph 5.** The proportion of girls in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, by how easy or hard they think it is to get advice on their studies from their parents. 18
- Graph 6.** The proportion of boys in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, by how easy or hard they think it is to get advice on their studies from their parents. 18
- Graph 7.** The proportion of girls in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, responding to the statement: „My friends think it is important that the studies are going well.” 21
- Graph 8** The proportion of boys in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, responding to the statement: „My friends think it is important that the studies are going well.” 21
- Graph 9.** The proportion of girls in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, responding to the statement: „I spend time with schoolmates after school hours.” 23
- Graph 10.** The proportion of boys in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, responding to the statement: „I spend time with schoolmates after school hours.” 23
- Graph 11.** The proportion of girls in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, by how easy or hard they think it is to discuss personal matters with their friends. 25
- Graph 12.** The proportion of boys in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, by how easy or hard they think it is to discuss personal matters with their friends. 25
- Graph 13.** The proportion of girls in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, by how easy or hard they think it is to get help on various chores from their friends. 27
- Graph 14.** The proportion of boys in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, by how easy or hard they think it is get help on various chores from their friends. 27

- Graph 15. The proportion of girls in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, by how prepared they think they were for the studies in college. 30**
- Graph 16. The proportion of boys in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, by how prepared they think they were for the studies in college. 30**
- Graph 17. The proportion of girls in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, by how much time they spend on home studies every day. 32**
- Graph 18. The proportion of boys in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, by how much time they spend on home studies every day. 32**
- Graph 19. The proportion of girls in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, who say they often or nearly always feel that the studies are meaningless, or they are bored by the studies.34**
- Graph 20. The proportion of boys in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, who say they often or nearly always feel that the studies are meaningless, or they are bored by the studies.34**
- Graph 21. The proportion of girls in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, who say they often or nearly always feel that the studies are too easy, or too heavy. 36**
- Graph 22. The proportion of boys in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, who say they often or nearly always feel that the studies are too easy, or too heavy. 36**
- Graph 23. The proportion of girls in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, who say they agree very or rather much with the statement: „If I could decide more on what to study, then I would study more.” 38**
- Graph 24. The proportion of boys in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, who say they agree very or rather much with the statement: „If I could decide more on what to study, then I would study more.” 38**
- Graph 25. The proportion of boys and girls in college in the year 2007, who say that the following has much or very much influence on their study performance; dyslexia, slow reading, dysgraphia. 40**
- Graph 26. The proportion of boys and girls in college in the year 2007, who say that it applies very or rather well to them that they are interested in taking more vocational courses, arts courses, and to have more freedom of choice in each line of study. 41**
- Graph 27. The proportion of girls in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, who say that the following reasons had rather or very much effect on their choice of college: Proximity to school, peer choice, possibilities of university studies after finishing college.42**
- Graph 28. The proportion of boys in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, who say that the following reasons had rather or very much effect on their choice of college: Proximity to school, peer choice, possibilities of university studies after finishing college.42**
- Graph 29. The proportion of girls in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, who say that the following reasons had rather or very much effect on**

their choice of college: The college's image, social activities within the college, personal interest in the studies. 44

Graph 30. The proportion of boys in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, who say that the following reasons had rather or very much effect on their choice of college: The college's image, social activities within the college, personal interest in the studies. 44

Graph 31. The proportion of boys and girls in college in the years 2004 and 2007, who say it is very or rather likely that they will go to university in Iceland immediately after college. 46

Graph 32. The proportion of boys and girls in college in the years 2004 and 2007, who say it is very or rather likely that they will start non-university level studies in Iceland immediately after college.47

Graph 33. The proportion of boys and girls in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, who state that their physical health is good or very good. 50

Graph 34. The proportion of boys and girls in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, who state that their mental health is good or very good. 51

Graph 35. The proportion of boys and girls in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, who say that it applies very or rather well to them that they have no one to talk with. 52

Graph 36. The proportion of girls in college in the years 2004 and 2007, by how many hours they say they sleep each night. 53

Graph 37. The proportion of boys in college in the years 2004 and 2007, by how many hours they say they sleep each night. 53

Graph 38. The proportion of girls in college in the years 2004 and 2007, who say they consume fruits, vegetables, candies or sweet cookies, and soft drinks containing sugar, daily or often each day.55

Graph 39. The proportion of boys in college in the years 2004 and 2007, who say they consume fruits, vegetables, candies or sweet cookies, and soft drinks containing sugar, daily or often each day.55

Graph 40. The proportion of girls in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, by how often they say they practice sports or physical training. 58

Graph 41. The proportion of boys in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, by how often they say they practice sports or physical training. 58

Graph 42. The proportion of girls in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, by how often they say they practice sports in a sports club. 60

Graph 43. The proportion of boys in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, by how often they say they practice sports in a sports club. 60

Graph 44. The proportion of girls in college in the years 2004 and 2007, who say that the following mattered rather or very much in their decision to quit practicing sports in a sports club: Cost (too expensive), my friends quit, lack of time, too much competition. 62

Graph 45. The proportion of boys in college in the years 2004 and 2007, who say that the following mattered rather or very much in their decision to

quit practicing sports in a sports club: Cost (too expensive), my friends quit, lack of time, too much competition. 62

Graph 46. The proportion of girls in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, by how often they say they strain themselves physically so that they wind considerably, or sweat. 64

Graph 47. The proportion of boys in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, by how often they say they strain themselves physically so that they wind considerably, or sweat. 64

Graph 48. The proportion of girls in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, who practice physical training at a fitness center. 66

Graph 49. The proportion of boys in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, who practice physical training at a fitness center. 66

Graph 50. The proportion of girls in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, who go to the movies, a coffee house, and/or a party, weekly or more often. 69

Graph 51. The proportion of boys in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, who go to the movies, a coffee house, and/or a party, weekly or more often. 69

Graph 52. The proportion of girls in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, by how much they say they take part in social activities in their school. 71

Graph 53. The proportion of boys in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, by how much they say they take part in social activities in their school. 71

Graph 54. The proportion of girls in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, by how many hours each week they say they are reading books, other than school books. 73

Graph 55. The proportion of boys in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, by how many hours each week they say they are reading books, other than school books. 73

Graph 56. The proportion of girls in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, by how many hours each week they say they are reading newspapers. 75

Graph 57. The proportion of boys in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, by how many hours each week they say they are reading newspapers. 75

Graph 58. The proportion of girls in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, by how much they say they work each week in a salaried job along with their studies. 77

Graph 59. The proportion of boys in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, by how much they say they work each week in a salaried job along with their studies. 77

Introduction

Research on the life and circumstances of children and adolescents is the prerequisite for successful policy making in that field. The Icelandic Ministry of Education, Science and Culture has since 1992 supported such research under the name Icelandic Youth. 1999 saw the start of collaboration with Icelandic Centre for Social Research and Analysis (ICSRA - Rannsoknir & greining) and the Ministry, Reykjavik University and ICSRA now hold an agreement on youth research among elementary schools and colleges, more specifically among 10 years to 20 years old students and among all years in college until the year 2016. In addition, the Ministry also supports research among young people who are not studying. With this research, the ministry has ensured that a number of parties can analyze comprehensive and comparable data on the circumstances of children and adolescents. As demands for research based policy formulation have been rapidly increasing, those working on the affairs of Iceland's youth have leveraged the outcomes of this research work, but all these research make it possible to compare country areas and periods.

ICSRA works with a multitude of partners as the support of the Ministry has meant that nearly all municipalities in Iceland take to some extent advantage of information from the research in their policymaking and in direct and indirect actions when it comes to their youth. When the research Icelandic Youth is discussed, then it is proper to stress the tremendously good collaboration with school management, teachers and students in the elementary schools and colleges of Iceland. Their contributions and help in presenting the questionnaires in the past years have made it possible to implement such extensive gathering of data as the research Icelandic Youth has been. The information gathered in this way become a practically priceless tool for those working on the affairs of children and teenagers, and the outcomes have shown that this work has yielded very good results.

This research report contains an abstract of the outcomes of research that was conducted in the years 2007 among students in colleges in Iceland. The data was gathered with questionnaire surveys in 2007, and this abstract was made by ICSRA at the request of the ministry in the spring of 2010. In the questionnaires, the attention was on a great number of factors in the lives of these students. Since this research began in Iceland, data has been gathered that gives a clear picture of the

circumstances, wellbeing, health and social situation of youth. The focus is on the relations between student and their parents and family, on the relations with peers and friends, and their ideas and angle on the studies and school. In addition to that, work along with studies is dealt with among college students, as well as diet, exercise and mental condition, both among family and friends, and the peers and at school. Also loneliness and bullying, social activities, participation in sports, and about various leisure activities among older students, such as going to coffee houses, parties, and entertainment culture; about bands, concerts and theatre; about reading and writing poetry, and much more. In the year 2000, the Icelandic Ministry of Education, Science and Culture in collaboration with ICSRA, did also conduct research among college students, as well as the years 2004 and 2007. This report focuses on comparing with the surveys from 2000 and 2004, but one can regard the survey Icelandic Youth as being a direct continuation of those.

In the past years, the staff of ICSRA has serviced many associations and unions, for instance sports clubs and youth associations, municipalities and public organizations, with dependable extraction and interpretation of data in numerous fields of research.

Methodology and data

Participants and execution

The research surveys *Icelandic Youth* are population surveys, which means that they are not based on traditional statistically independent sampling, but rather that the goal is to get replies from as many as possible within the defined population. This is done by presenting a questionnaire to all students who are at school, with the aim of minimizing the confidence limits of the survey results. The questionnaires were sent to all schools in Iceland, where teachers were responsible for administration. The respondents were the students who were present in class at the time when the survey was presented. The outcome of these surveys are thus highly dependable, whether one looks at geographic areas or different groups.

The data which this abstract is based on is the outcome of the three research reports *Icelandic Youth* that were made for the ministry in the period 2000 – 2007. Valid replies were gathered from 11.229 college students among the defined population of 2007. The response rate is 72,2% of all the possible respondents in the defined population.

Means of measurement

The measurement gauges of the surveys were comprehensive questionnaires which have been developed year by year, first by the staff of the Institute for Educational Research in Iceland (RUM), working with the Ministry of Education , Science and Culture, but in the latter years by the ICSRA. The questions are formed by social science professionals who adhere to very stringent demands regarding the accuracy of the results, so that dependability and integrity are always the highest priority. Scaled responses are typically used as reply options to increase the integrity of the replies to the questions. The so-called Likert-scale¹ is the most commonly used in these questionnaires.

¹ See further: De Vaus 2002.

Execution and processing of data

The surveys were conducted such that questionnaires were sent to all colleges in Iceland, where teachers presented them to the students according to specific instructions. The respondents were asked neither to sign the questionnaires nor write their social security numbers to keep anonymity and so it would be impossible to trace replies to them. The students were also asked to answer all questions the best they could and ask for help if needed. Percentage proportions are presented with pictures and graphs with proportions and comparison of various elements. It would take too many words to count all the questions that are used in the reports or how individual variables are coded. Those interested can instead contact ICSRA if they request further explanations. www.rannsoknir.is or by e-mail rannsoknir@rannsoknir.is

Youth in 2007 – College Students

Relations with parents

Research from past years and decades indicate that the relations between adolescents and their families have a significant effect on their development and maturity, as well as has the time spent together with the family.² Parents are very important for young people and strong role models for them³, and they are key players in their social support network⁴. Research has for instance shown that supervision, surveillance and support of parents has a positive effect on educational performance of young people⁵, and that young individuals who spend a great deal of time with their parents and/or have good connections with them are less likely than other youngsters to start abusing drugs, in the case if they get into the company of youngsters where drug abuse is common.⁶ It has also been shown that the attitudes of youngsters are likely to be like the basic attitudes of their parents if relations between them are strong.⁷ Youngster who enjoy steady and positive relations with their parents, and receive a great deal of support from them, are in addition to that more likely to enjoy success in their studies⁸ and to acquire friends who enjoy a similar situation.⁹

Graphs 1 to 6 of part one show the development over time of the proportion of boys and girls in colleges, in the capital area of Reykjavik – with the neighboring towns of Hafnarfjordur, Gardabaer, Alftanes, Kopavogur, Seltjarnarnes and Mosfellsbaer – and outside the capital area – in rural Iceland and the towns there - by whether they think their parents find their studies to be important, by how often they watch TV, participate in sports or outdoor activities with their parents, or have conversations with them, and whether they can easily get advice from their parents regarding their studies.

² Coleman, 1988; Warr, 1993, Þóroddur Bjarnason et.al. 2005.

³ Bandura, 1977.

⁴ O'Byrne et.al. 2002.

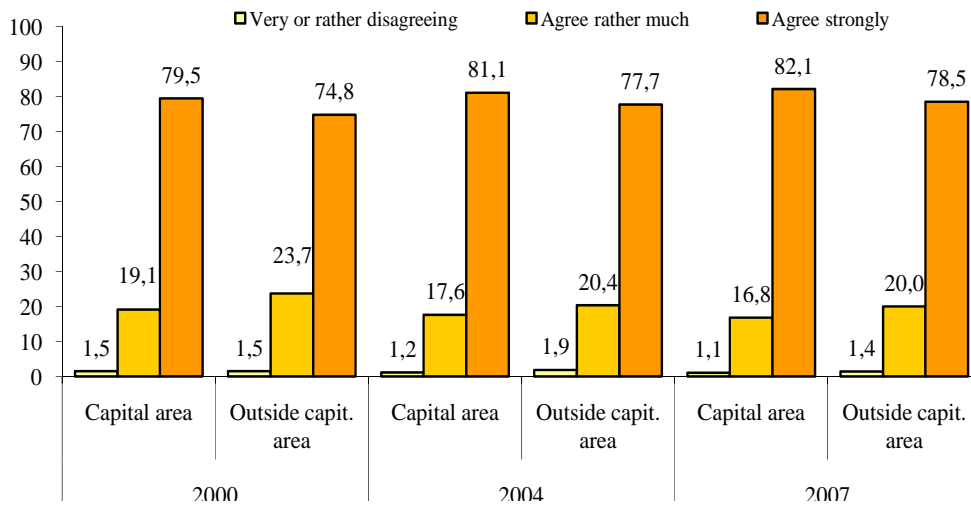
⁵ Coleman, 1988; Sheldon and Epstein 2005.

⁶ Bachman et.al. 1987.

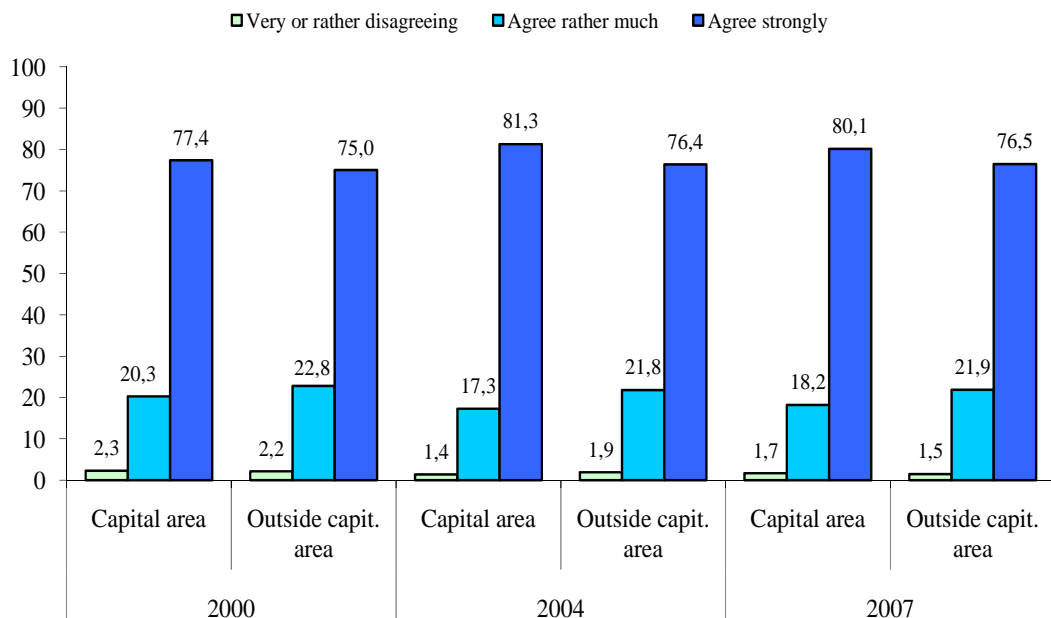
⁷ Gorman 1998.

⁸ Álfgeir Logi Kristjánsson et.al. 2006.

⁹ Þórólfur Þórlindsson et.al. 1998.

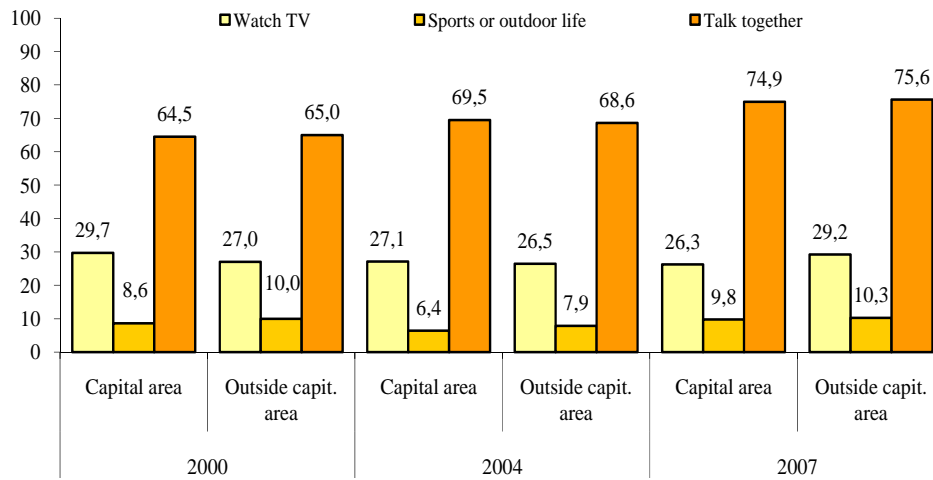


Graph 1. The proportion of girls in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, responding to the statement: „My parents think it is important that my studies go well.”

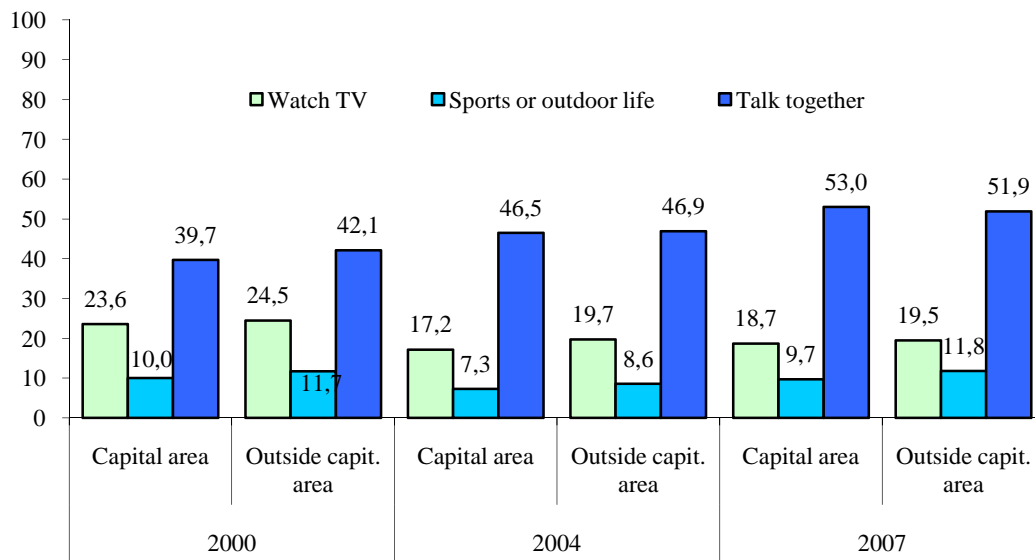


Graph 2. The proportion of boys in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, responding to the statement: „My parents think it is important that my studies go well.”

Graphs 1 and 2 show the proportions of college students, in 2000, 2004 and 2007 replying to the statement „My parents think it is important that my studies go well.” The graphs reveal that both girls and boys believe that their families see it as important that they do well at school. However, it is possible to see a difference between the two gender, between years and also location of residency. Girls living in the Reykjavik capital area generally believe that their families find it important that they do well in their studies, and there is a 2,6% increase from the years 2000 to 2007, or from 79,5% to 82,1%. The change is even more outside the capital area, or an increase of 3,7% from 2000 to 2007. The greatest difference was regarding residency in the year 2000, or 4,7%. Among boys the picture looks different. Boys in the capital area believe that their families think it is important that they are successful in their studies, but there the difference based on location is the smallest in the year 2000 or 2,4%, and the largest in 2004 when it was 4,9%. Overall it can be said that a slightly greater proportion of girls say that their families find it important that they do well in their studies than do boys, and that is not correlated to location.

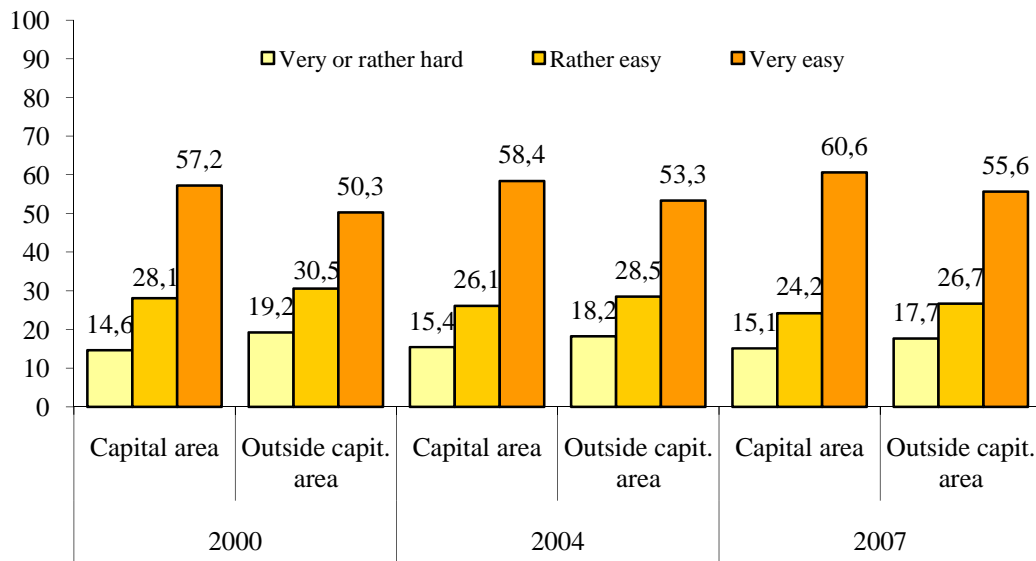


Graph 3. The proportion of girls in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, saying they often do the following with their family: Watch TV, participate in sports or outdoor life, talk together.

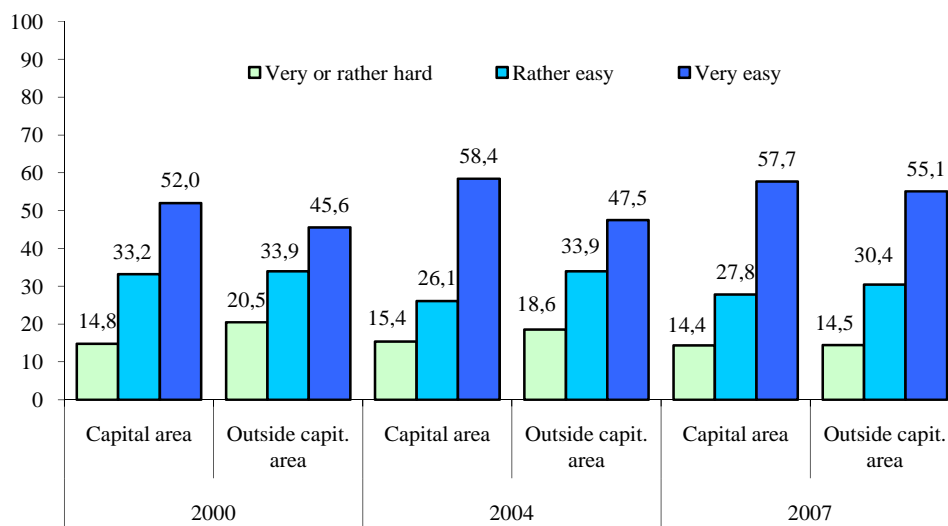


Graph 4. The proportion of boys in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, saying they often do the following with their family: Watch TV, participate in sports or outdoor life, talk together.

On graphs 3 and 4 we see the proportions of girls and boys in colleges, in the years 2000, 2004 and 2007, and the time they spend with their families, by residence. It can be seen that girls seem to talk more to their parents or custodians than boys do, and that is not dependent on the location of residence. A significant increase of such time together is between the years, both in the capital area and outside it. It should be noted that there is a 13,5% increase in the time that boys and their families in the capital area spend talking together from 2000-2007. The increase is 9,8% outside the capital area. Girls spend more time watching TV with their families than boys, and that is independent of location. Boys seem to do more than girls of enjoying sports and outdoor activities with their families, and that is also independent of location. Girls outside the capital, on the other hand, area are more into sports and outdoor related activities with their families than are girls in the capital area.



Graph 5. The proportion of girls in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, by how easy or hard they think it is to get advice on their studies from their parents.



Graph 6. The proportion of boys in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, by how easy or hard they think it is to get advice on their studies from their parents.

Graphs 5 and 6 show how easy or hard youngsters think it is to get advice on their studies from their parents, based on gender and location of residency, looking at the development between the years 2000, 2004 and 2007. Youngsters living in the capital area think it is easier for them to get advice on their studies from their parents than are the youngsters living outside the capital area, and this difference is independent of gender. An increase is discernible between the years among the girls who think it is very easy to obtain advice from their parents, and that is not dependent on location. There is also an increase in boys outside the capital area who think it is very easy to get advice on their studies. Among boys living within the capital area there is a 6,4% increase in those who think it is very easy to get advice on the studies between the years 2000 and 2004. The increase is 9,5% from the year 2000 to 2007 among boys outside the capital area. Youngsters living outside the capital area are more inclined than those located within the capital area to feel that it is very or rather difficult for them to get advice on their studies, and that difference is not dependent on gender. The exception to this is in the year 2007, when around 14,5% of boys think that it is very or rather difficult for them to get advice on their studies from their parents, which is not dependent on location.

Roundup of graphs in “Relations with parents”

A roundup of graphs 1 through 6 shows that a predominant majority of boys and girls believe that their parents think it is important that they do well in their studies. This proportion is relatively independent to location of residency, and it has changed very little through time. It is also apparent that proportionally more girls and boys say they talk often with their parents in 2007 than they did in 2000, but also that girls spend more time with their parents than boys, whether it is talking together, watching TV, or participate in sports or outdoor activities with their parents. The majority of students also think it is easy for them to get advice from their parents, although however 15% to 20% of college students answer that it is rather or very difficult to get such advice from their parents.

Peers

The social life of youngsters takes place to a great extent in peer groups¹⁰. The influence of the peer group in the life of youngsters has been the subject of numerous research focusing on youngsters. Most oftenly they show that the peer group has a strong influence and that the ideas, paradigms and values of the group are usually the most important items when predicting specific factors within the group¹¹ along with factors that have to do with parents and family. Study performance and grades are a good example. Youngsters who have friends and pals who are successful in their studies are likely to be successful too compared to those who have friends that are not successful.¹² Various types of risky behaviour and health-affecting behaviour has also been the subject of thorough research in respect with the peer group. These indicate that youngsters who participate in sports and regular exercise are more likely to have friends who do that too¹³, and moreover, negative reaction of friends towards the use of tobacco have an effect to decrease the likelihood of tobacco use.¹⁴ Research have also shown that entertainment and partying habits of peers has an influence on drug abuse among youngsters¹⁵.

Graphs number 7 to 14 in the section “Peers” show the development over time of the importance of studies among boys and girls in the Reykjavik captial area and outside it, in respect with whether they think that their friends find the studies important, how much time they spend with their schoolmates after school hours, how easy or difficult it is to get their friends into discussing personal matters, and whether they think its easy to obtain help on various feats from their friends.

¹⁰ Sutherland 1978; Hirchi, 1969, Bandura, 1977.

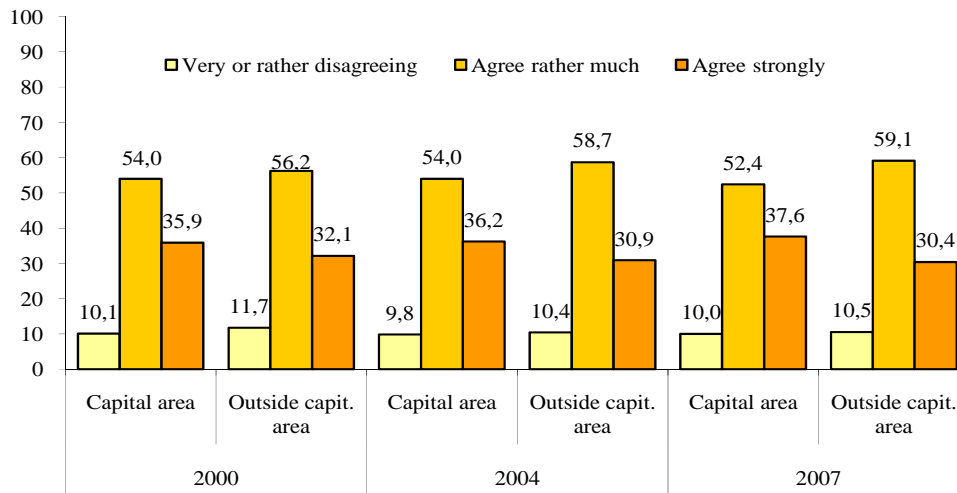
¹¹ Altermatt and Pomerantz 2005; Bowker et.al. 2000; Carter et.al. 2003.

¹² Zettergren 2003.

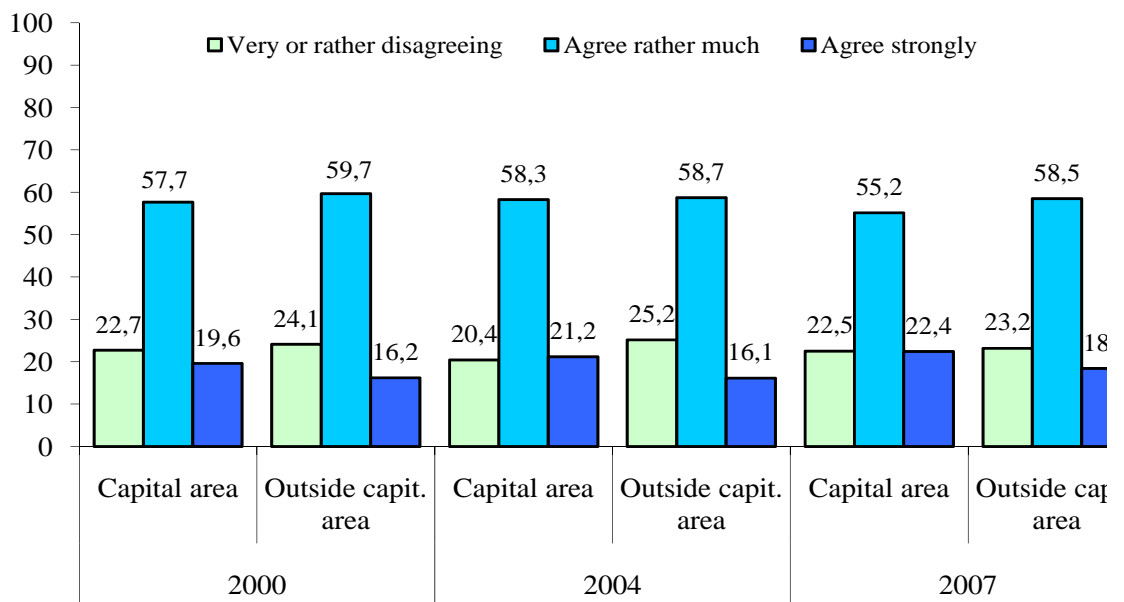
¹³ Álfgeir Logi Kristjánsson et.al. 2006.

¹⁴ Álfgeir Logi Kristjánsson et.al. 2008a.

¹⁵ Þórólfur Þórlindsson and Jón Gunnar Bernburg, 2006.

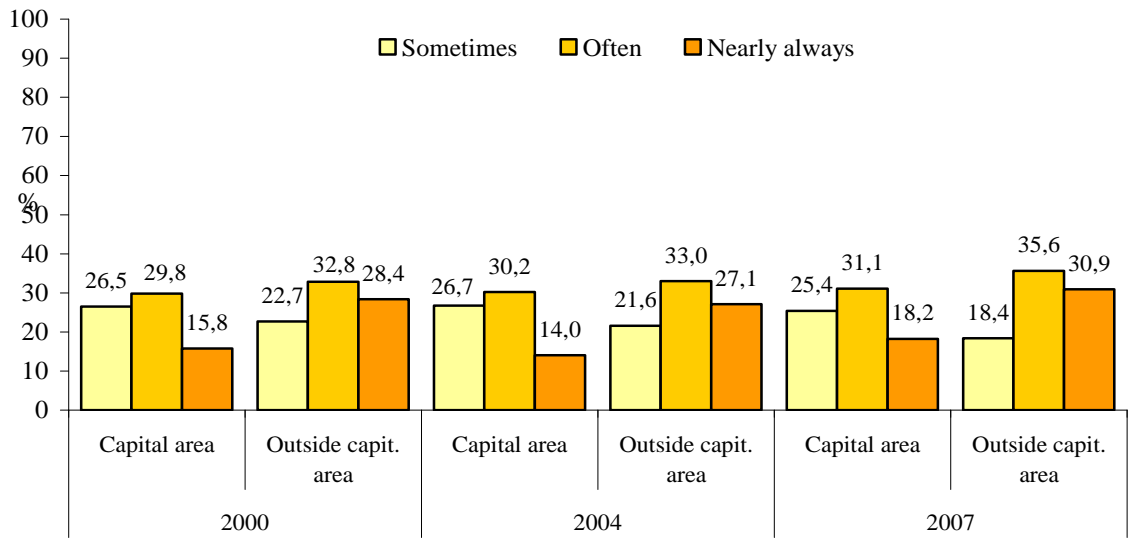


Graph 7. The proportion of girls in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, responding to the statement: „My friends think it is important that the studies are going well.”

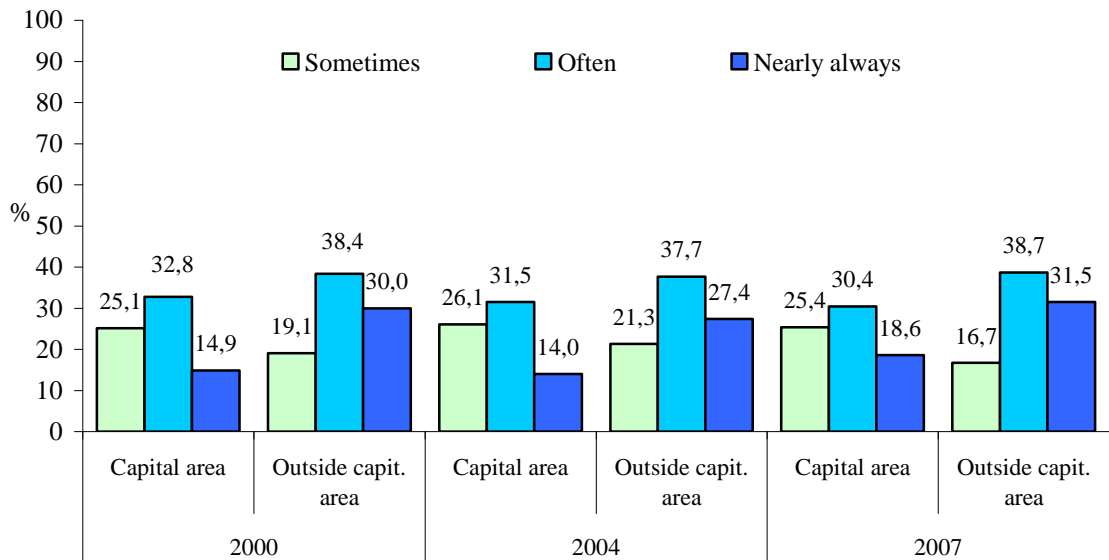


Graph 8 The proportion of boys in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, responding to the statement: „My friends think it is important that the studies are going well.”

Graphs number 7 and 8 show the proportion of girls and boys in college in the years 2000, 2004 and 2007 by the statement „My friends think it is important that the studies are going well.” Both gender generally agree on that their friends think it’s important to do well in the studies , and that is not dependent on location. The proportion of boys residing in the capital area who believe that their friends find it important to do well in the studies, however, seems to be slightly declining. One can see a reduction of 3,1% between the years 2004 and 2007. There is a considerable difference between the boys and girls who disagree very or rather much with the statement that their friends find it important to do well in the studies. More than 20% of boys respond in that way through all the years, independent of location, but around and over 10% of girls. It is notable how unchanged these proportions are over time.

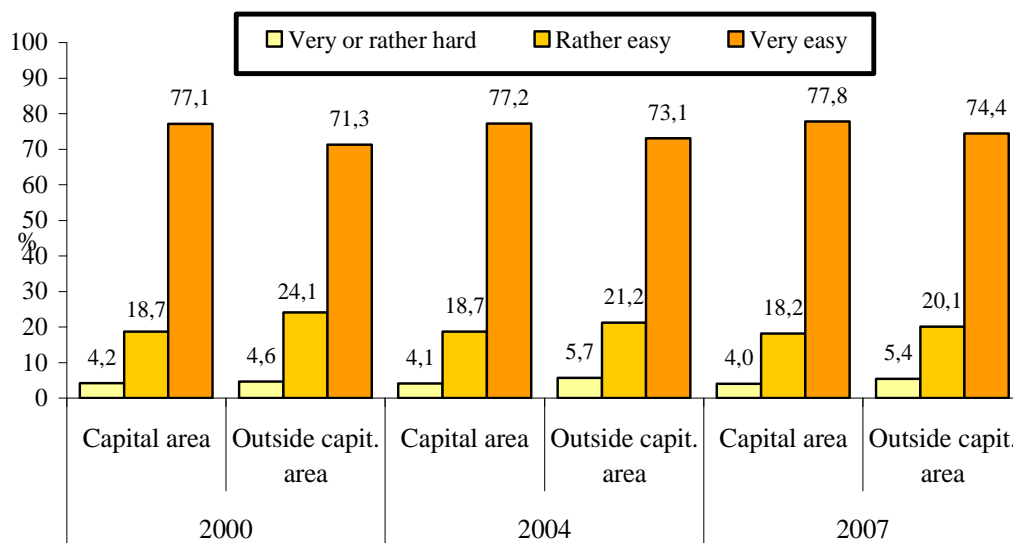


Graph 9. The proportion of girls in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, responding to the statement: „I spend time with schoolmates after school hours.”

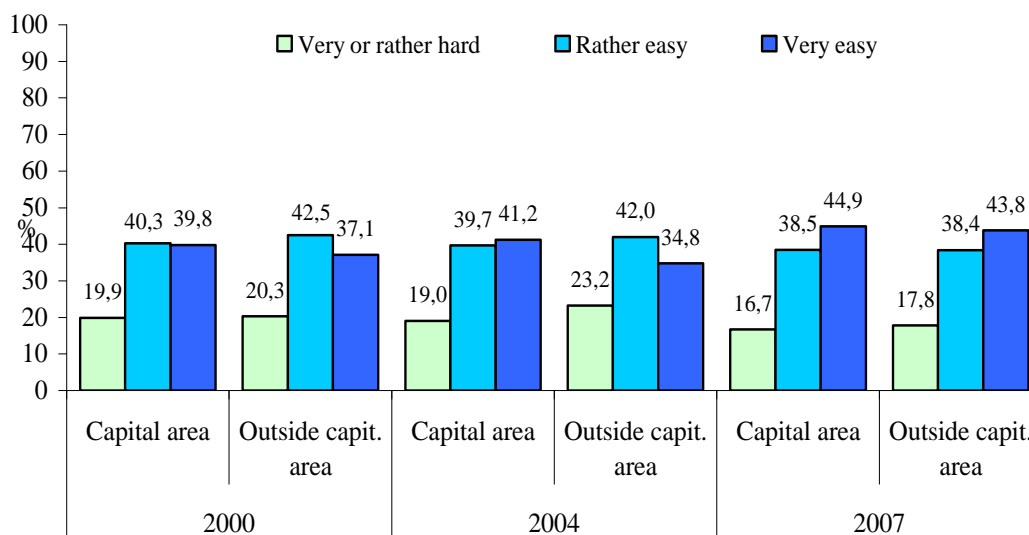


Graph 10. The proportion of boys in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, responding to the statement: „I spend time with schoolmates after school hours.”

On graphs 9 and 10 one can see the proportional answers of boys and girls in the years 2000, 2004 and 2007 to the statement „I spend time with schoolmates after school hours.” Generally speaking, most among both gender answer that they often spend time with school mates outside school hours. Youngsters living outside the capital area seem to spend more time together after school hours, and that applies also when it comes to nearly always spending time with the school mates, irrespective of gender. In 2007, 38,7% of boys outside the capital area say that most oftenly they spend time with schoolmates outside school hours, while 30,4% of boys in the capital area say the same. The proportion of girls outside the capital area who say the same is 35,6% against 31,1% of girls living in the capital area.

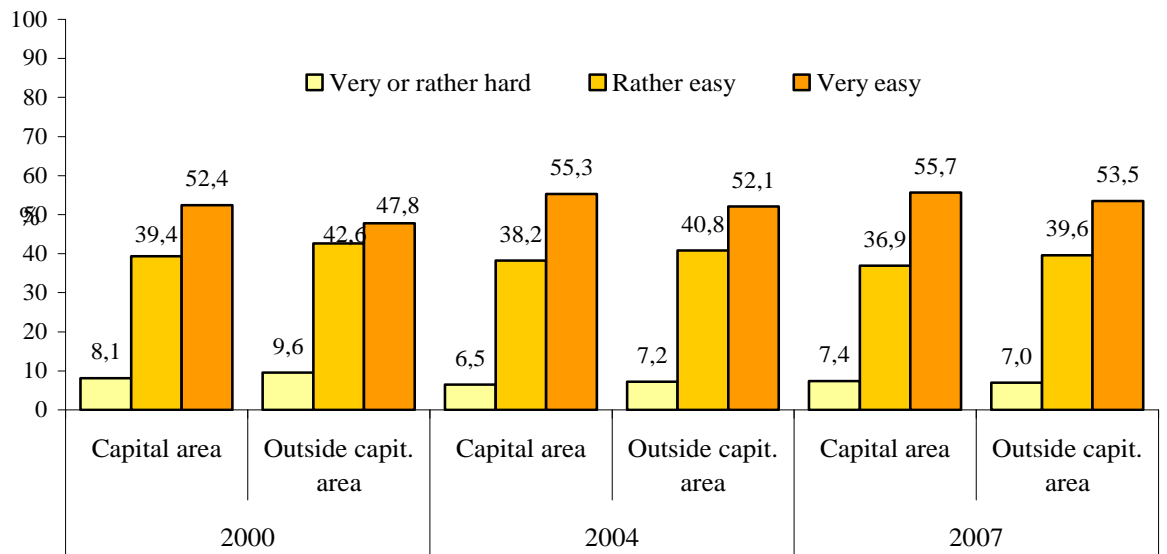


Graph 11. The proportion of girls in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, by how easy or hard they think it is to discuss personal matters with their friends.

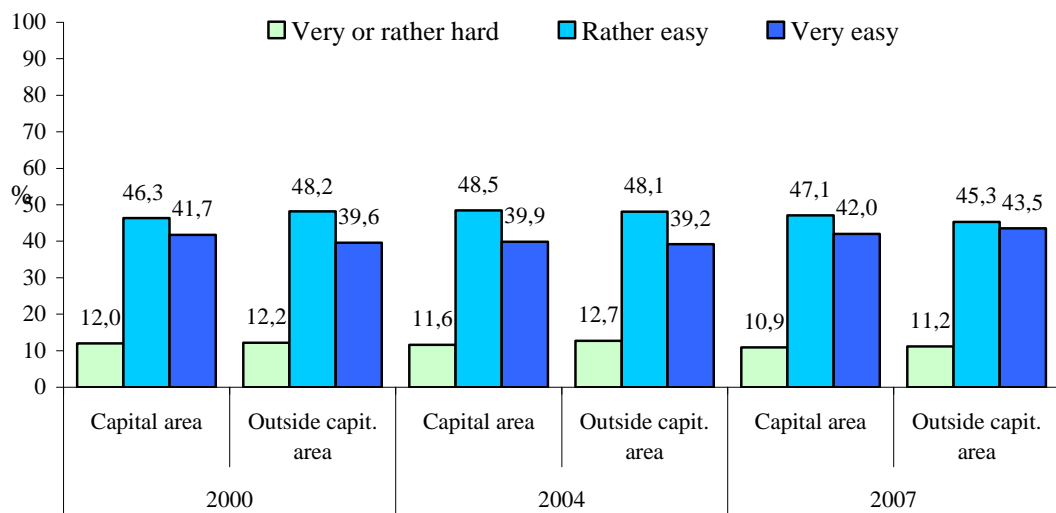


Graph 12. The proportion of boys in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, by how easy or hard they think it is to discuss personal matters with their friends.

Graphs 11 and 12 show the proportion of boys and girls in college, in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, by how easy or difficult they think it is to get their friends into discussions about personal matters. Among girls living in the capital area, who think it is very easy to get friends to discuss personal matters, there is almost no change over time; the proportion is more than 77% in all the years. The proportion is slightly lower among girls living outside the capital area in 2007, or 74,4% compared to 77,8% among girls in the capital area. 44,9% of boys, in the capital area in 2007, find it very easy to get friends to discuss personal matters. Thus there is a considerable difference between the two gender in their responses to that question. It can also be seen that boys are much more likely than girls to say that it is very or rather difficult to get their friends to discuss personal matters. 17% of boys, as an example, think that is the case in the year 2007, whereas around 4% of girls say so.



Graph 13. The proportion of girls in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, by how easy or hard they think it is to get help on various chores from their friends.



Graph 14. The proportion of boys in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, by how easy or hard they think it is to get help on various chores from their friends.

Graphs 13 and 14 show comparisons of the proportion of boys and girls in college, between the years 2000, 2004 and 2007, by how easy or difficult they find it to get help on various chores from their friends. Girls most commonly answer that it is very easy for them to get help on various chores from their friends, and that is independent of location. About 55,7% of girls in the capital area say that in the year 2007, while 42% of boys in the same area say so. Boys in general say it is rather easy, or 46,3% of boys in the capital area in 2000, 48,5% in 2004 and finally 47,1% in the year 2007. Changes are overall small between the years among both gender, independent of location, but girls are generally much more likely to say that it is very easy to get help on various chores from their friends. Boys are also more numerous proportionally than girls among those who say that it is rather or very difficult to get help on various chores from their friends. In total there are, however, rather few who think it is very or rather difficult to get help on various chores from their friends.

Roundup of graphs in “Peers”

A roundup of graphs 7 to 14 indicate that most college students think that their friends find it rather or very important to do well in their studies. This proportion has changed little over time. Around and over 10% of girls and around 20-23% of boys, on the other hand, say they disagree rather or very much the statement that their friends think it is important to do well in school. Most of boys and girls in college say that they often or nearly always spend time with their schoolmates after school hours, and that proportion has changed very little from 2000 to 2007. 95% of girls also say that it is rather or very easy for them to get friends into discussion about personal matters, and that proportion has changed very little over time, but considerably fewer boys say that that is the case. Boys are also more likely than girls to find it difficult to obtain help in doing various chores from their friends; around 11 to 12 % of boys say that, compared to 6 to 9% of girls.

Studies and school

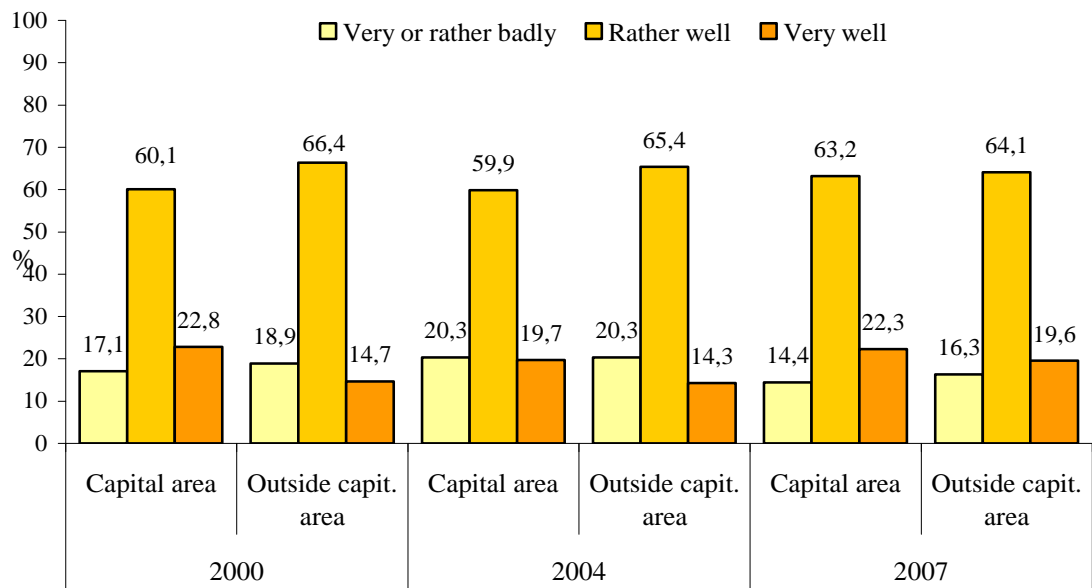
A great number of research show that the relations between children and youngsters with their school, how they feel at school, and their dedication to the studies are important factors influencing their wellbeing and self image¹⁶. The college is the workplace of the youngsters attending it, and they spend a considerable amount of time there during a formative period in their lives. The social development is great and swift during these years, and the school has many functions in their lives. New acquaintances and friendships for life are formed there, and social life with schoolmates is an important part of the college study. Research has also shown that the lifestyle of youngsters during these years has a strong correlation to study performance¹⁷. Research also shows that the influence of parental and schoolmate support is important through the college years.¹⁸

Graphs 15 to 32 show how well or badly college students think they were prepared for their studies at college, how much time they spend doing homework, and whether they think that the studies are meaningless, or that they find the studies boring. The graphs also reveal the number of students who think that the studies are too easy or too difficult, whether they think that they would study more if they could decide more on what to study, and an analysis of how many think that dyslexia, slow reading or dysgraphia affect their study performance. The respondents of the survey are also asked whether they think would take more vocational courses and arts courses if those were being offered, and if they would like to have more freedom of choice in each line of study. The students are also asked about their main reasons for the choice of college, and the development of the proportion of those who plan to enter university or some other type of studies after they have finished college.

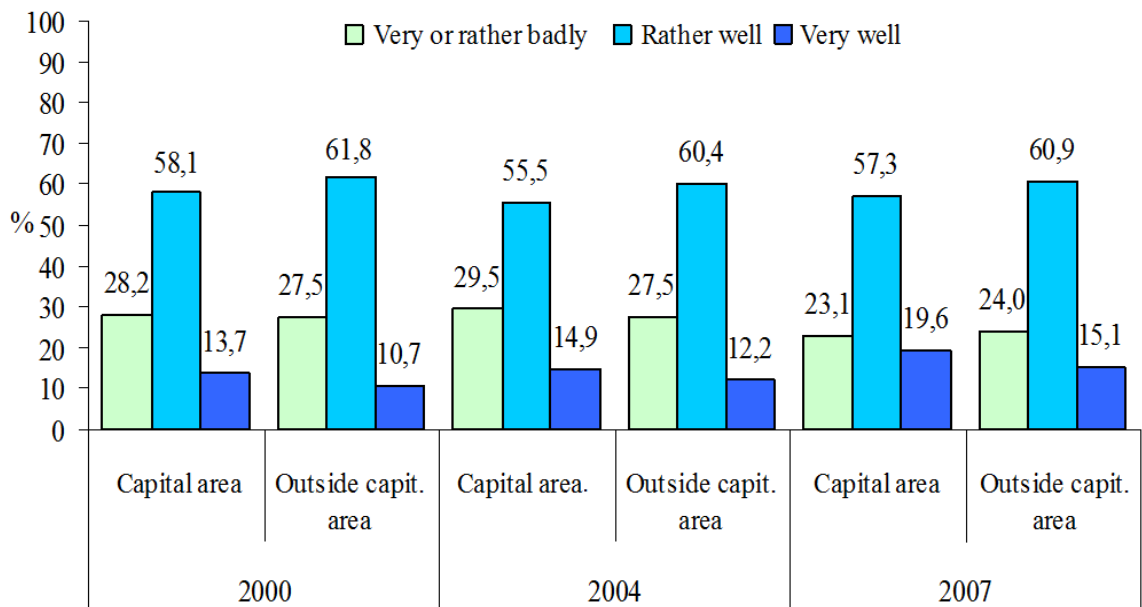
¹⁶ Álfgeir Logi Kristjánsson et.al. 2005, 2006; Coleman 1988; Hirchi 1969.

¹⁷ Crosnoe et.al. 2002; Lahelma 2002; Roeser et.al. 1996; Smerdon 2002.

¹⁸ Colarossi 2001; Finnbogí Gunnarsson et.al. 1996; Jón Gunnar Bernburg and Rannveig Þórisdóttir 1997.

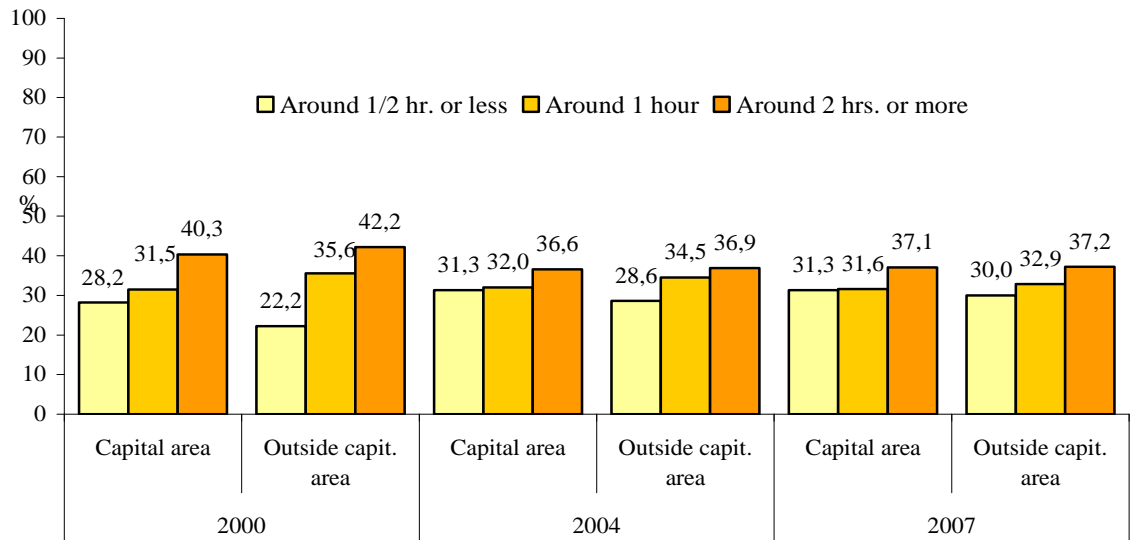


Graph 15. The proportion of girls in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, by how prepared they think they were for the studies in college.

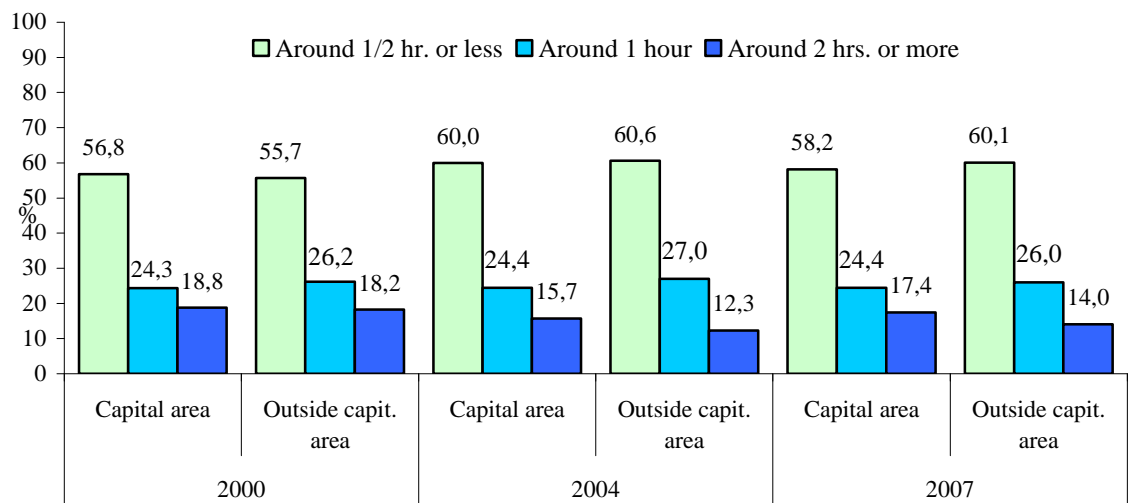


Graph 16. The proportion of boys in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, by how prepared they think they were for the studies in college.

Graphs 15 and 16 show the proportion of girls and boys in college, in the years 2000, 2004 and 2007, by how prepared they think they were for the studies in college. If the answers of boys and girls outside the capital area in 2007 are studied, who believe they were very well prepared for the college studies, then one sees that 19,6% of girls believe that applies for them, and 15,1% of boys. 64,1% of girls and 60,9% of boys, on the other hand, outside the capital area believe they were rather well prepared for the college studies in 2007. The proportion of those who think they were very or rather ill prepared for the college studies is higher among boys throughout all the years studied than among girls, and that is independent of location. In 2004, 29,5% of boys in the capital area said they were very or rather ill prepared for their college studies, while that proportion had been reduced to 23,1% in 2007.

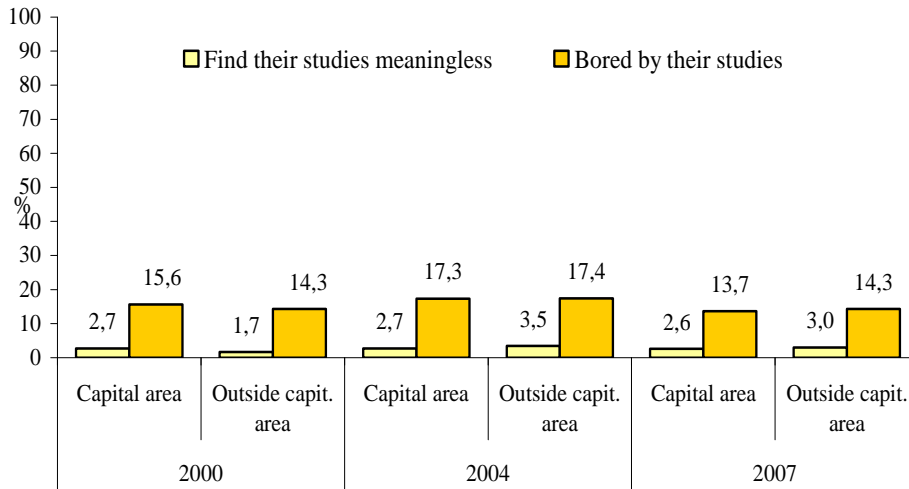


Graph 17. The proportion of girls in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, by how much time they spend on home studies every day.

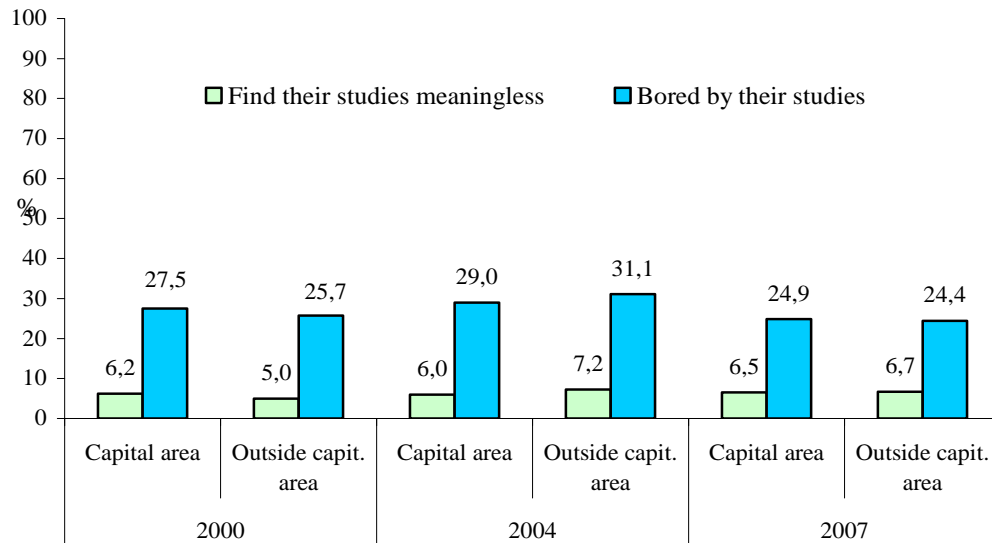


Graph 18. The proportion of boys in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, by how much time they spend on home studies every day.

In graphs 17 and 18 one can see the proportion of girls and boys in college, in the years 2000, 2004 and 2007, by how much time they spend on home studies every day. There is a considerable difference between girls and boys in their responses. Generally speaking, boys spend less time on their home studies than girls, and that is independent of location. Around 60,1% of boys outside the capital area say they spend around half an hour or less each day studying home in 2007, while 30% of girls reply in that way. Around 37,1% of girls in the capital area say they spend two hours or more every day in 2007 against 17,4% of boys. The responses of the girls are less distributed when the development over time is analysed, compared with the boys.

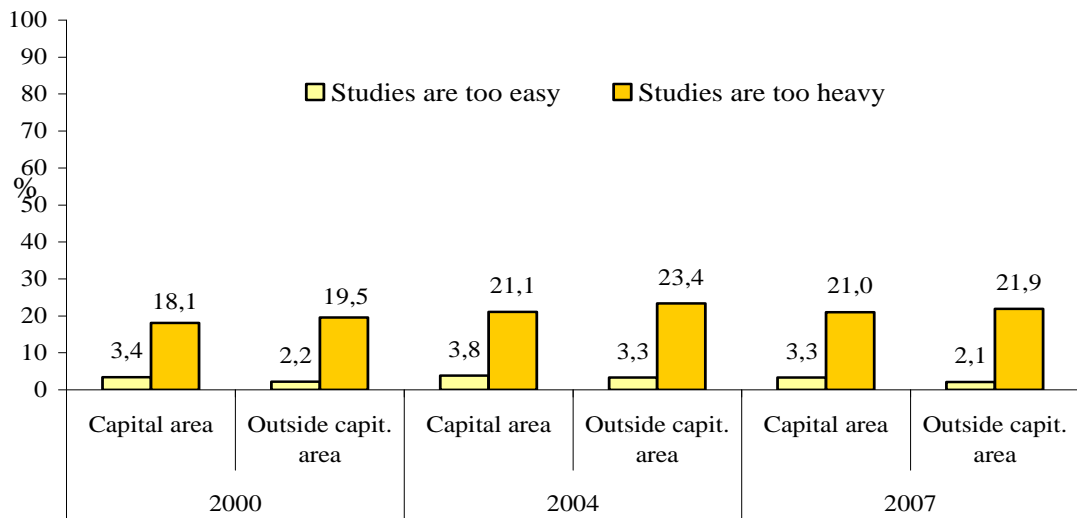


Graph 19. The proportion of girls in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, who say they often or nearly always feel that the studies are meaningless, or they are bored by the studies.

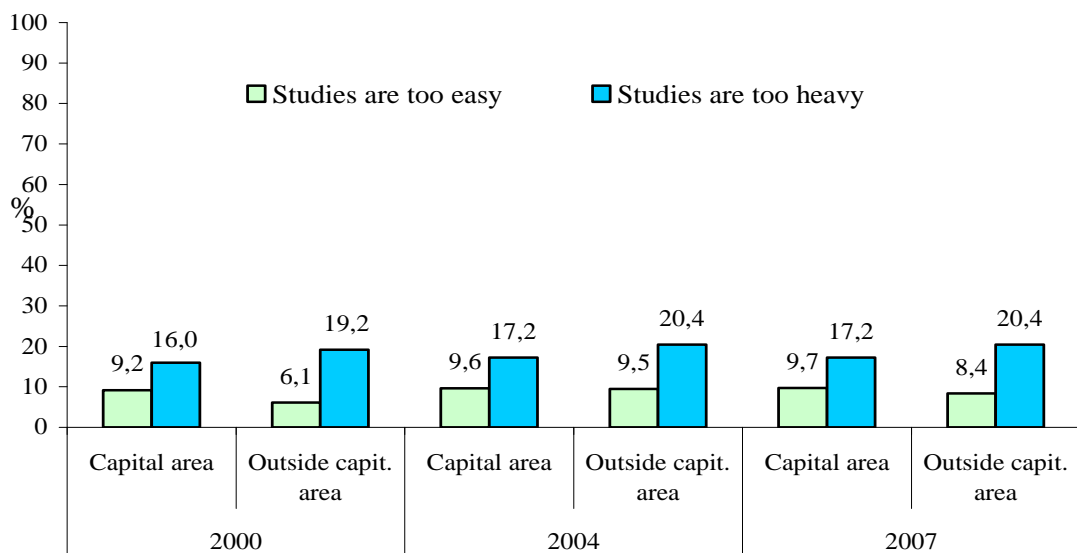


Graph 20. The proportion of boys in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, who say they often or nearly always feel that the studies are meaningless, or they are bored by the studies.

Graphs number er 19 and 20 show the proportion of boys and girls in college, in the years 2000, 2004 and 2007, who say that it applies to them often or nearly always that they think the studies are meaningless, and the proportion of those who say they are bored by the studies. The graphs show a considerable difference of the gender, irrespective of location. Boys are more likely to find the studies boring and meaningless. In 2004, 31,1% of boys outside the capital area said they were bored by their studies, compared to 24,4% in 2007. Moreover, 14,3% of girls outside the capital area said they were bored in their studies, and around 3,0% find the studies meaningless when the year 2007 is examined specifically. Compared to the year 2004, then there were 17,4% of girls outside the capital area who thought the studies were boring, and 3,5% found them to be meaningless.

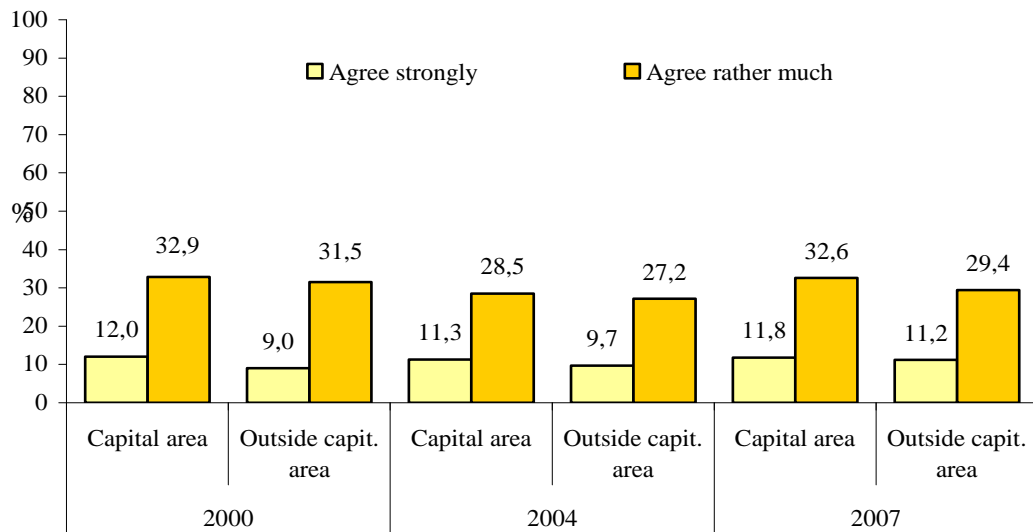


Graph 21. The proportion of girls in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, who say they often or nearly always feel that the studies are too easy, or too heavy.

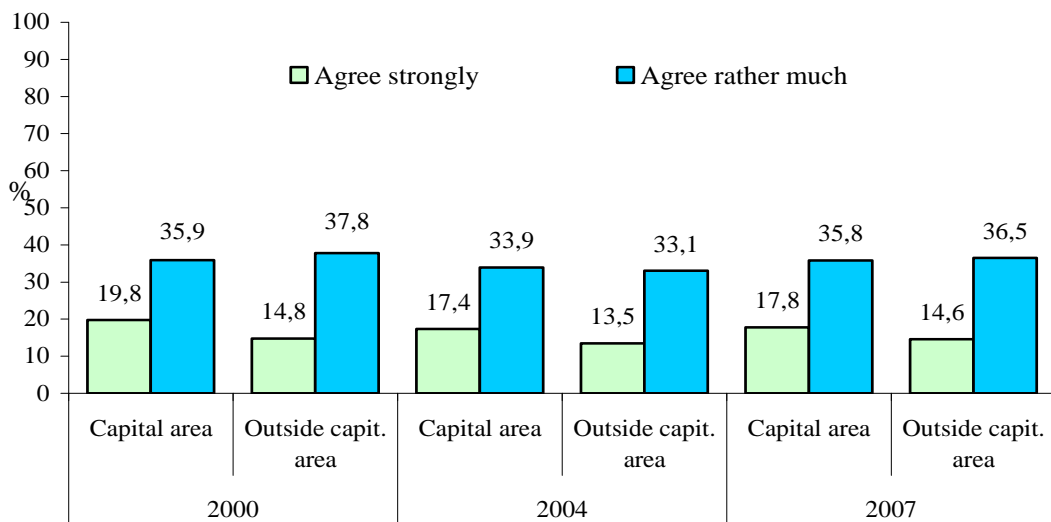


Graph 22. The proportion of boys in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, who say they often or nearly always feel that the studies are too easy, or too heavy.

In graphs number 21 and 22, there is a comparison of the proportion of boys and girls in college, in the years 2000, 2004 and 2007, who say they often or nearly always feel that the studies are too easy, or too heavy. There is little difference between the proportions among boys and girls between years, but a difference between the gender is noticeable. There is also a noticeable difference when one looks at the location; there, more youngsters living outside the capital area think that the studies are too difficult, and at the same time fewer think that the studies are too easy. In addition, proportionally more girls than boys think the studies are too difficult, and at the same time fewer girls who think it is too easy, with a similar development between the years.

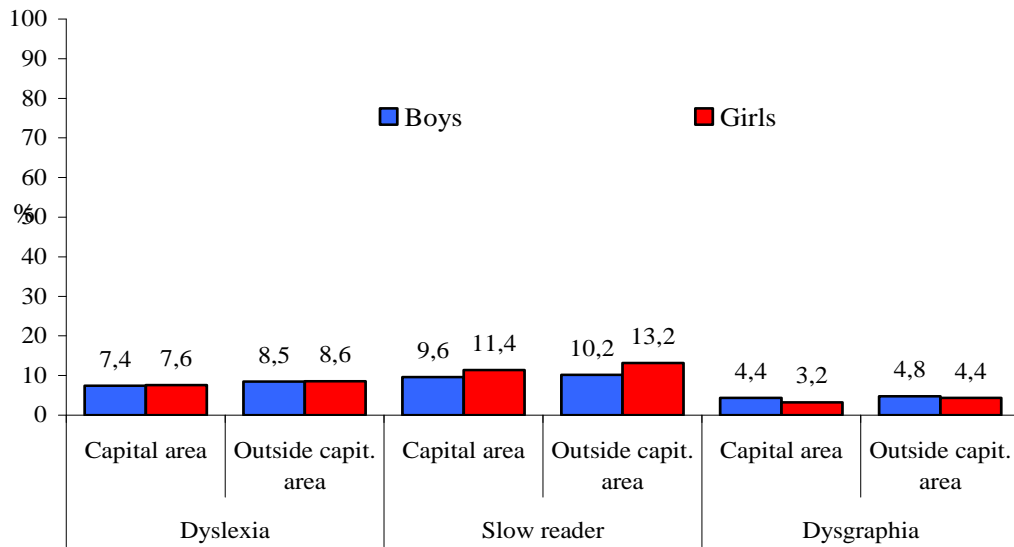


Graph 23. The proportion of girls in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, who say they agree very or rather much with the statement: „If I could decide more on what to study, then I would study more.”



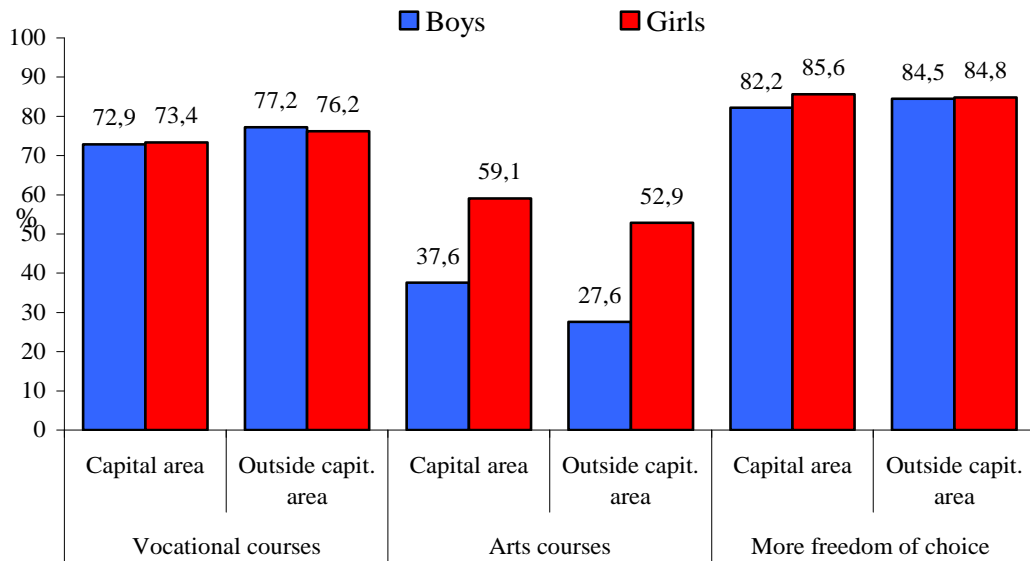
Graph 24. The proportion of boys in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, who say they agree very or rather much with the statement: „If I could decide more on what to study, then I would study more.”

In graphs 23 and 24 one sees the proportion of boys and girls in college, in the years 2000, 2004 and 2007, who say they are rather or very agreeing with the statement: „If I could decide more on what to study, then I would study more.” This question reveals a considerable gender difference in responses, and that is independent of location and development over time. In 2007, around 36% of boys are rather agreeing with the statement both in and outside the capital area, but just under 18% of boys in the capital area very agreeing, while a little less than 15% of boys outside the capital area are very agreeing, in that same year. Similar proportions among girls in 2007 are that 32,6% and 29,4% who say they agree rather much, while a little less than 12% of girls in the capital area and a little more than 11% outside it say they agree very much with the statement in 2007.



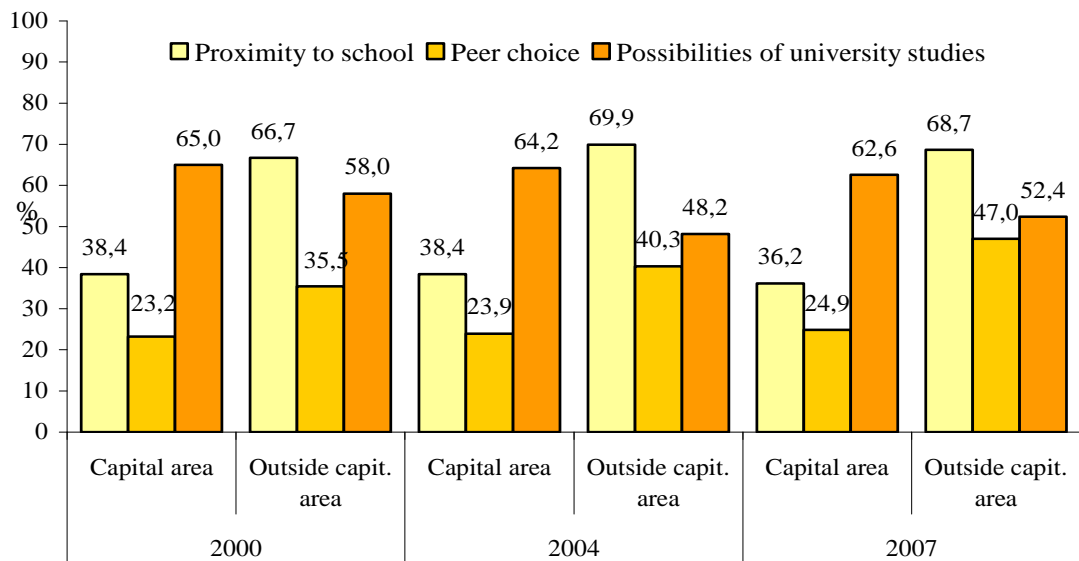
Graph 25. The proportion of boys and girls in college in the year 2007, who say that the following has much or very much influence on their study performance; dyslexia, slow reading, dysgraphia.

Graph number 25 shows the proportion of boys and girls in college in the year 2007, who believe that dyslexia, slow reading, or dysgraphia is having a negative effect on their study performance. The two gender show almost the same results en respect of dyslexia, and that is independent of location. A slight difference, on the other hand, can be seen youngsters in the capital area and outside it, where more youngsters in the capital area find that dyslexia affects their performance at school in a negative way. Girls rather than boys seem to be prone to thinking that slow reading has much or very much influence on their studies, or a little bit more than 11% in the capital area and a bit more than 13% outside the capital area, against 9,6% of boys in the capital area and a slightly more than 10% outside the area. Moreover, a greater number of boys in the capital area than girls say that dysgraphia affects their educational performance, or 4,4% of boys compared to 3,2% of girls. Difference between the gender outside the capital area is hardly discernible.

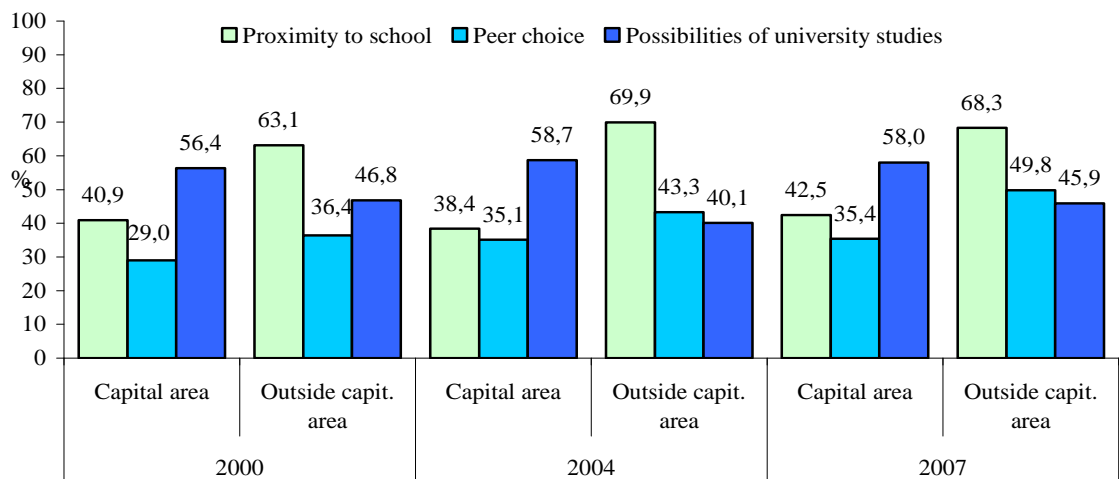


Graph 26. The proportion of boys and girls in college in the year 2007, who say that it applies very or rather well to them that they are interested in taking more vocational courses, arts courses, and to have more freedom of choice in each line of study.

Graph 26 shows the proportion of boys and girls in college, in the year 2007, who say it applies very or rather well to them that they are interested in taking more vocational courses, arts courses, and to have more freedom of choice in each line of study. Both of the two genders seem to be highly interested in having a choice of more vocational courses in college, and youngsters outside the capital area seem more strongly interested than those in the capital area. Girls seem to be more interested in arts courses than boys, and that is independent of location. Both boys and girls show very similar responses when it comes to wanting more freedom of choice in college, and that is independent of location. In the capital area around 85,6% of girls answer in that way, against 82,2% of boys. Outside the capital area, those same proportions are 84,8% among the girls and 84,5% with the boys; a difference which is hardly discernible.

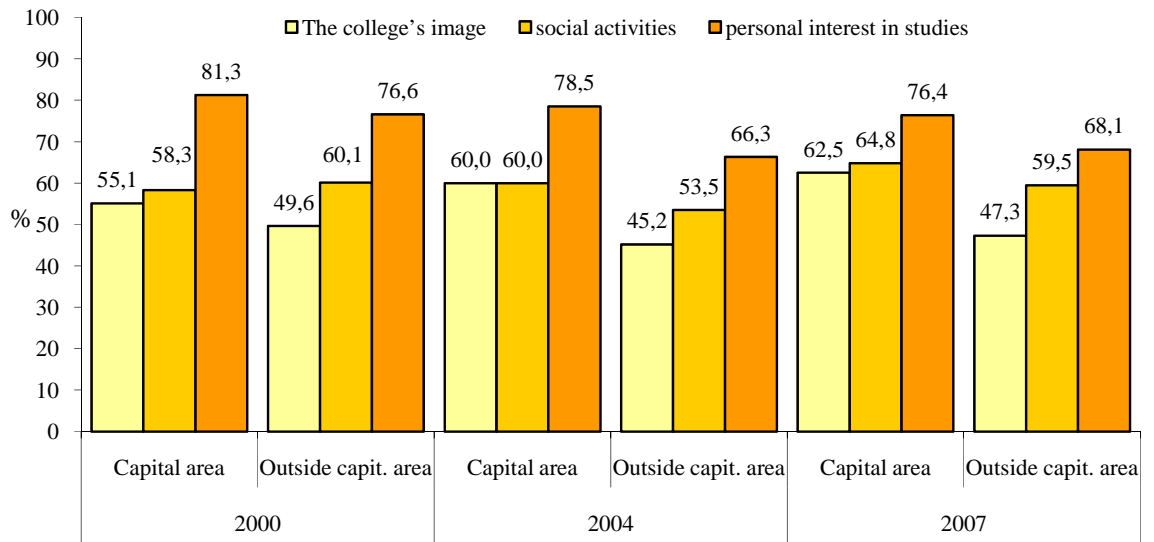


Graph 27. The proportion of girls in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, who say that the following reasons had rather or very much effect on their choice of college: Proximity to school, peer choice, possibilities of university studies after finishing college.

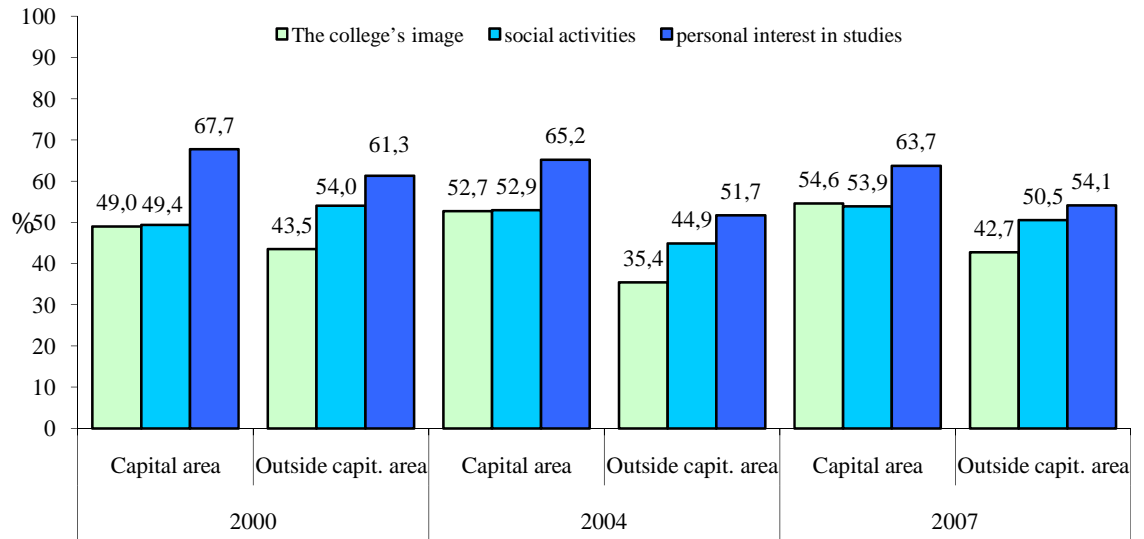


Graph 28. The proportion of boys in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, who say that the following reasons had rather or very much effect on their choice of college: Proximity to school, peer choice, possibilities of university studies after finishing college.

In graphs 27 and 28 one sees the proportion of boys and girls in college, and the development, between the years 2000, 2004 and 2007, of the factors that the students thought had a rather or very great influence on which college they chose. Outside the capital area, the proximity of the school is a strong factor regarding which school is chosen, and that is independent of gender. Among youngsters living in the capital area, the possibilities of university studies have rather or very much to do with their choice of college, a development that is similar between the years. Among the girls, the response proportions are a bit higher than with the boys, or 62,6% compared to 58,0% if the year 2007 is looked into. Peers' choice of college has much more to do among youngsters outside the capital area, and that is independent of gender. To compare, one sees that around 47% of girls outside the capital area reveal that as their reason when they chose the college, against a little less than 25% of girls in the capital area, in 2007.

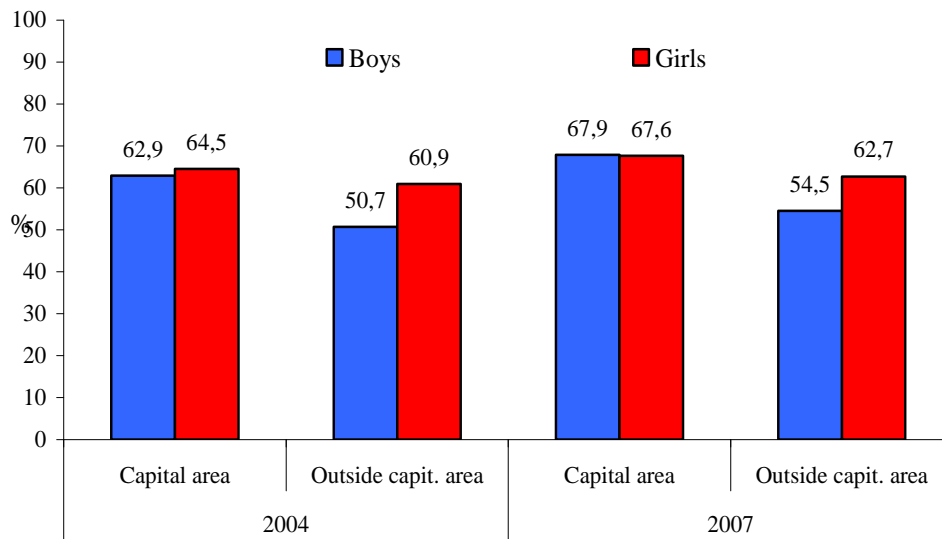


Graph 29. The proportion of girls in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, who say that the following reasons had rather or very much effect on their choice of college: The college's image, social activities within the college, personal interest in the studies.



Graph 30. The proportion of boys in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, who say that the following reasons had rather or very much effect on their choice of college: The college's image, social activities within the college, personal interest in the studies.

In graphs 29 and 30 there can also be seen a comparison of various factors that college students think was important in their choice of college, between the years 2000, 2004 and 2007, and by location as well. Both gender say that their interest in the studies had a great influence when they chose which college to attend, and that that changed little through the years, as well as being independent of location. The proportion, however, is quite higher among girls than boys, and that is independent of location too. It is however noticeable that the proportion of girls in the capital area has decreased from 81,3% in the year 2000 to 76,4% in the year 2007, or by a little lower than 5% in that group. Among the girls, the social activities at school seem to matter more, generally, than the school's image, but the difference is though hardly discernible in the year 2004 among girls in the capital area. Among boys outside the capital area, the social life at school matters more than the school's image, and that difference is unchanged between the years. Among the boys in the capital area, the change is rather small between the years, and the difference in proportions between years is hardly discernible.



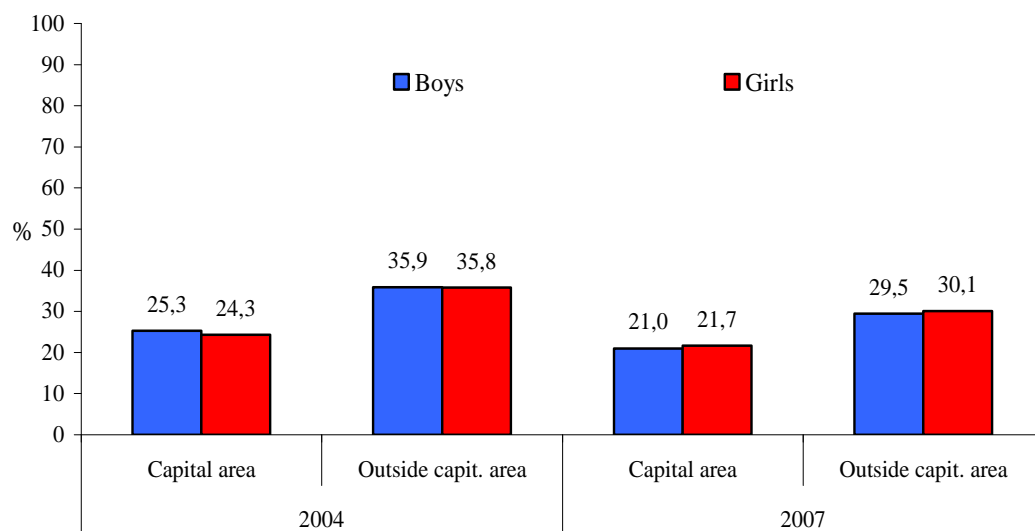
Graph 31. The proportion of boys and girls in college in the years 2004 and 2007, who say it is very or rather likely that they will go to university in Iceland immediately after college.

Graph 31 reveals the proportion of boys and girls in the capital area and outside the area, in the years 2004 and 2007, who think it is rather or very likely that they will enter university in Iceland after they finish college. It attracted some considerable attention in the research report *Youth in Iceland 2004*, which was also published in a partnership between the ministry of education, science and culture and ICSRA, that a considerable increase in numbers was seen between the years 2000 and 2004, in the group that was planning to study at a university in Iceland. There are, on the other hand, certain methodological difficulties in interpreting the outcome, as the questions about university studies in Iceland that were used in the year 2000 were different from those that were used in the year 2004¹⁹. The questions both in the 2007 and the 2004 surveys are exactly the same, so the outcomes of those are fully comparable.

As can be easily seen on the graph, the proportion of those who think it is rather or very likely that they will enter university, is still on the increase. In 2004, a little less than 63% of boys in the capital area found it rather or very likely that they would go to university in Iceland right after college, and 64,5% of girls. These proportions have

¹⁹ In 2000, two questions were asked; both about studying at the University of Iceland and other university level studies in Iceland. In 2004 and 2007 on the other hand, there was only one question, about university level studies in Iceland.

grown to a little less than 68% among both gender in 2007. The difference between boys and girls is, however, considerable outside the capital area, but still there are more boys and girls who think it is rather or very likely that they will study at a university in Iceland after college in the year 2007, than in the year 2004. A little less than 51% of boys said they would do that in the year 2004 against 54,5% in the year 2007. Among girls, the proportion goes to a little less than 61% to a bit less than 63%.



Graph 32. The proportion of boys and girls in college in the years 2004 and 2007, who say it is very or rather likely that they will start non-university level studies in Iceland immediately after college.

In graph 32 one can see an observation of the proportion of boys and girls in the capital area and outside it, in the years 2004 and 2007, who say it is rather or very likely that they commence studies in Iceland, in a school that is on a non-university level directly after they have finished their present studies. As one can see, there is a development reverse to the proportional number of students who think it is likely that they will enter university right after college. More than 25% of boys and more than 24% of girls in the capital area say it is rather or very likely that they would apply for a place in a school that is on a non-university level directly after finishing their college studies, but this proportion lowers down to 21% among boys and to a little less than 22% among girls, in the year 2007. A similar development can be seen among college students living outside the capital area. A little less than 36% of both

boys and girls thought it was rather or very likely that they would study on a non-university level right after finishing college in the year 2004. Similar proportions are, on the other hand, 29,5% among girls and around 30% among boys in the year 2007.

Roundup of graphs in “Studies and school”

A roundup of graphs 15-32 shows that girls are more likely than boys to think that they were very or rather well prepared for their college studies, throughout all the years that are focused on here. Around one fourth boys think they were very or rather badly prepared for the college studies, although this proportion has lowered from the year 2000. A lot more boys than girls say that they spend around half an hour or less on their home studies daily, or around 60%, independent of location, in the year 2007. This proportion is around 30% among girls, and they are also more likely to spend 2 hours or more each day on their home studies than boys are, irrespective of year or location. Boys are also more likely to be bored by their studies, as around one fourth of them respond so in the year 2007, compared to around 14% of the girls. In addition, boys are more likely to think that the studies are meaningless, and yet few college students say that is the case, or about 3% of girls and around 6,5% of boys in the year 2007. When it comes to looking at the proportion of those who think their studies are too easy, then one sees that much more boys than girls in college think that is so, while the proportion of both gender who find the studies to be too difficult is similar, or around one fifth in the year 2007, independent of location. Around and over 40% of girls and around half of boys in college say they agree very or rather much with the statement that they would learn more if they could decide more on what to study. This proportion has changed little between years, and is independent of location. In 2007, around 7,5% of girls and 8,5% of boys say that dyslexia influences their study performance much or very much, but a bit more think that slow reading has a great effect there on. Furthermore, around and more than 4% of both gender think that dysgraphia has much or very much influence on their study performance. A great majority of students agrees that they are interested in taking more vocational courses and to be able to choose more in each in each line of study in colleges, and there is nearly no difference based on gender, or based on location in this respect. Girls, on the other hand, are quite more proportionally than boys, in the group that would like to take more arts courses in college. College students think that many reasons are

behind their choice of school. The main reasons are proximity to school, possibilities of university studies afterwards, and interest in the studies, but fewer think that the school's image or their peers' choice is important in this respect. Finally it can be seen that the proportional number of students in colleges, who think it is very or rather likely that they will attend university level studies in Iceland, directly after college, increases still compared with 2004. This increase is most oftenly around 4-5%. The college students reduce in numbers, however, over the same time, who find it rather or very likely that they will start studies that are not on a university level directly after college.

Health behavior and health indicators

Health behavior is a term that stands for any kind of behavior which affects health and wellbeing. Obviously, the words indicate that health behavior is a wide ranging concept. Examples of behavior that affects health and wellbeing are hours of sleep, exercise, smoking and alcohol consumption. Recent research in Iceland has shown that youngsters who eat healthy food and consume relatively little of sweets and junk food, along with getting regular exercise, are both more likely to be succesful in their school studies than those who have a less wholesome health behavior, and also more likely to have a stronger self image²⁰. Furthermore, research has also shown a relationship between hours of sleep and study performance among youngsters²¹ as well as between the consumption of alcohol and tobacco, and study performance and feeling good or bad²², and other types of risky behavior²³.

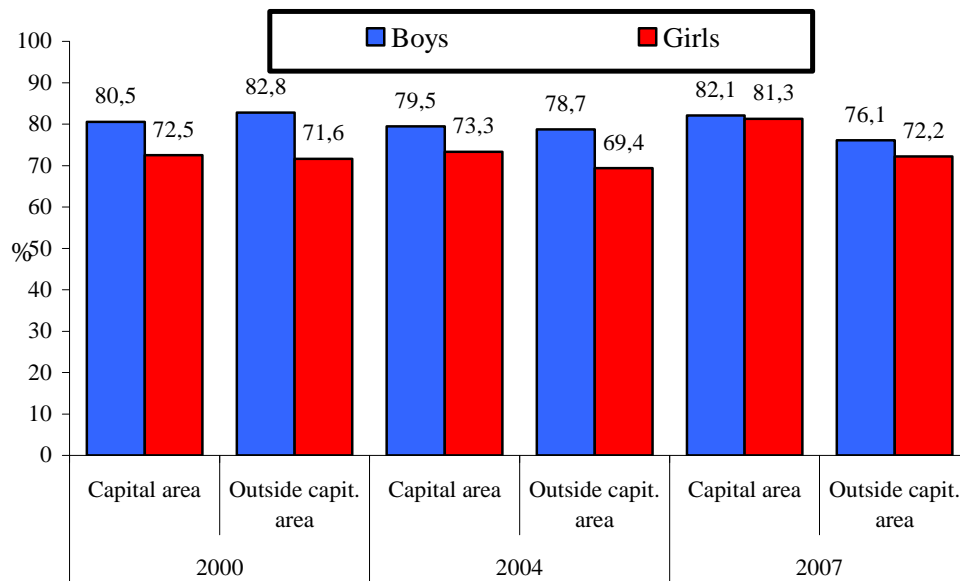
In graphs 33 to 39 one can observe over time how good college students believe their physical and mental health is, the number of those who don't think they have anyone to talk to, data on sleeping hours and how their consumption habits were when it came to vegetables, fruits, sweets and soft drinks containing sugar.

²⁰ Inga Dóra Sigfúsdóttir et.al. 2007; Álfgeir Logi Kristjánsson et.al. 2008b.

²¹ Álfgeir Logi Kristjánsson et.al. 2005.

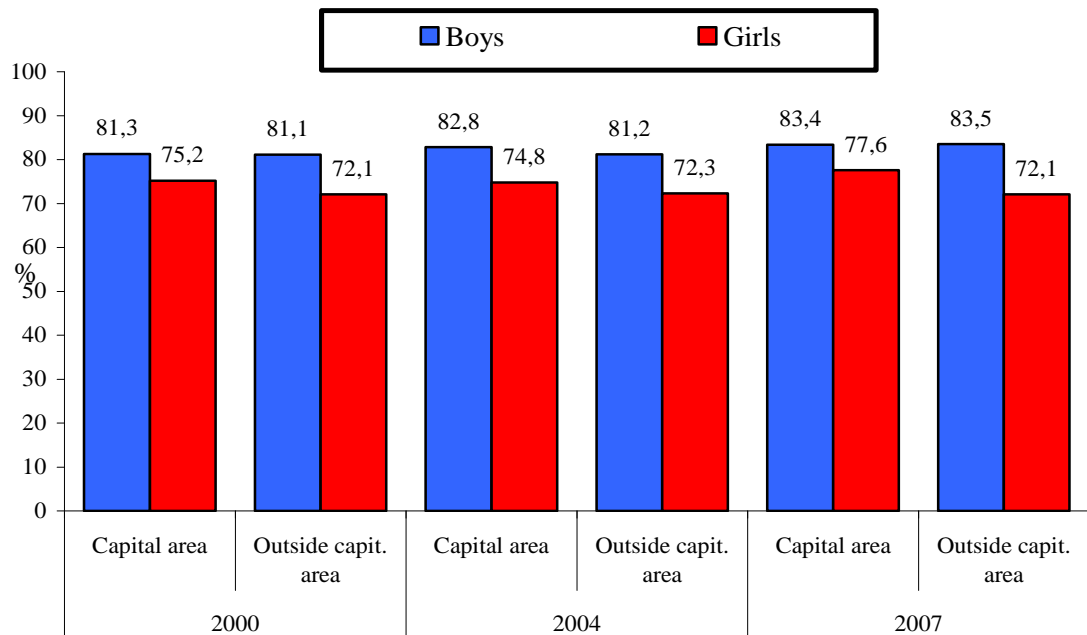
²² Álfgeir Logi Kristjánsson et.al. 2006.

²³ Þórólfur Þórlindsson et.al. 1998



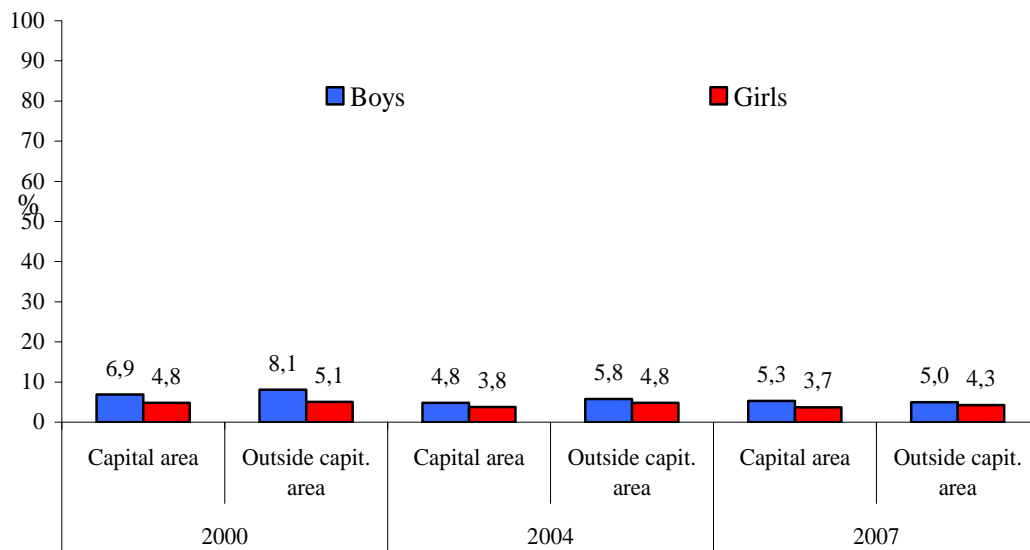
Graph 33. The proportion of boys and girls in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, who state that their physical health is good or very good.

Graph 33 shows a comparison between the years 2000, 2004 and 2007 on how girls and boys in college assess their physical health. The greatest majority think their physical health is good or very good. In all occurrences, more boys than girls think it is good or very good, and that is independent of location. This difference, however, has been narrowing over time, and is hardly discernible in the capital area in the year 2007, while it is around 4% outside the capital area.



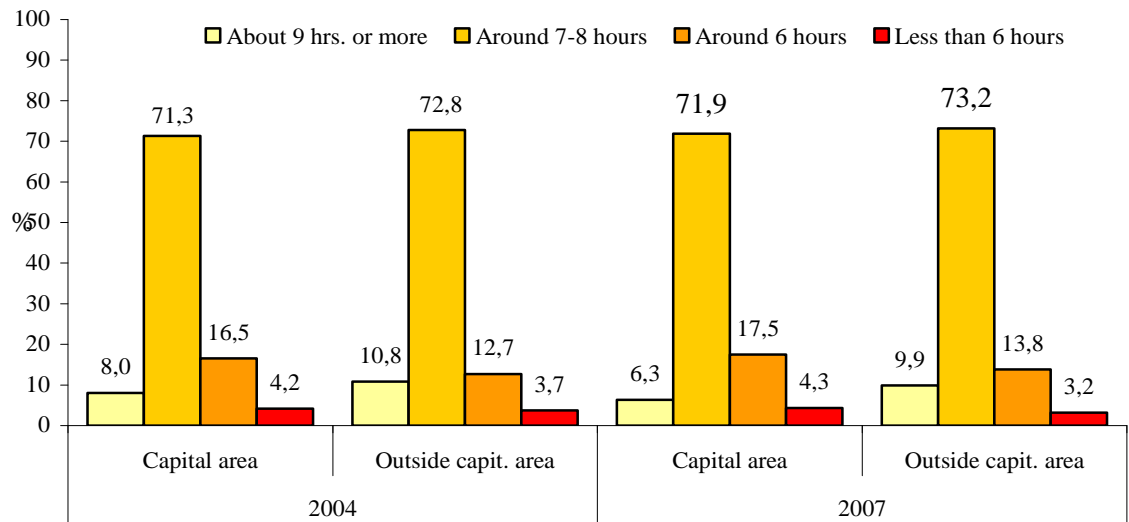
Graph 34. The proportion of boys and girls in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, who state that their mental health is good or very good.

Graph 34 shows a comparison between the years 2000, 2004 og 2007 of how girls and boys in colleges assess their mental health. A great majority think that their mental health is good or very good but, as can be seen on graph 34, more boys than girls think that is the case, with a rather even development between years among the boys, and independent of location. A comparison between the years of the proportion of girls in the capital area, shows an increase in those who have a positive view of their mental health, or from 74,8% in the year 2004 to 77,6% in the year 2007. There have been little change in the proportion of girls outside the capital area between the years.

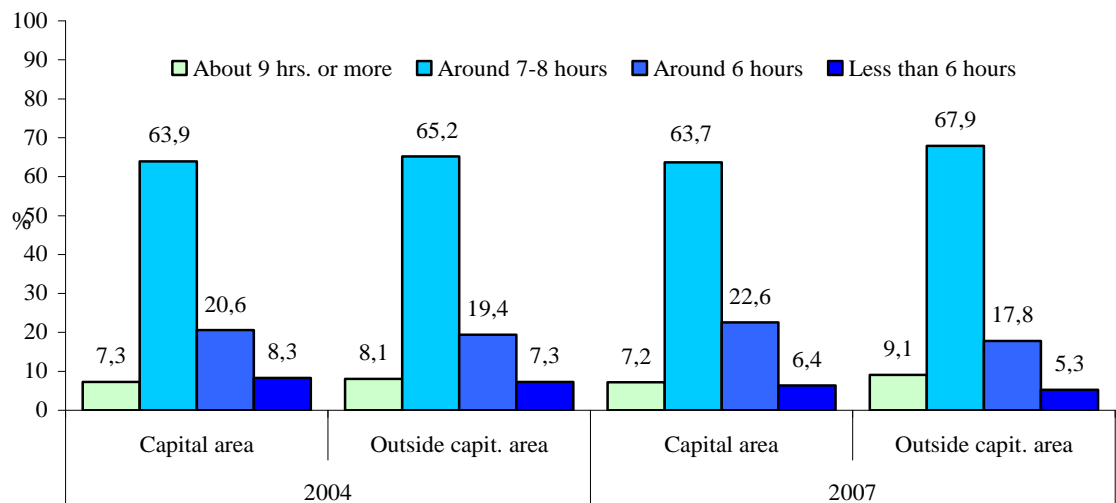


Graph 35. The proportion of boys and girls in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, who say that it applies very or rather well to them that they have no one to talk with.

Graph 35 shows a comparison of the proportion of boys and girls in college, in the years 2000, 2004 and 2007, who say that it applies rather or very well to them that they have no one to talk to. In the years 2000 and 2004, there are more boys than girls who think that it applies very or rather well to them not to have anyone to talk to, and that is independent of location. This proportion is though slightly higher among the boys outside the capital area than within it, and that was highest in the year 2000 or 8,1%. In 2007, the proportions are that 5,3% boys in the capital area say they don't have anyone to talk to, and 5,0% of boys outside the capital area say so. At the same time, 3,7% of girls in the capital area in the year 2007 say that it applies rather or very well to them that they have no one to talk to, but the same proportion is 4,3% among girls who live outside the capital area.

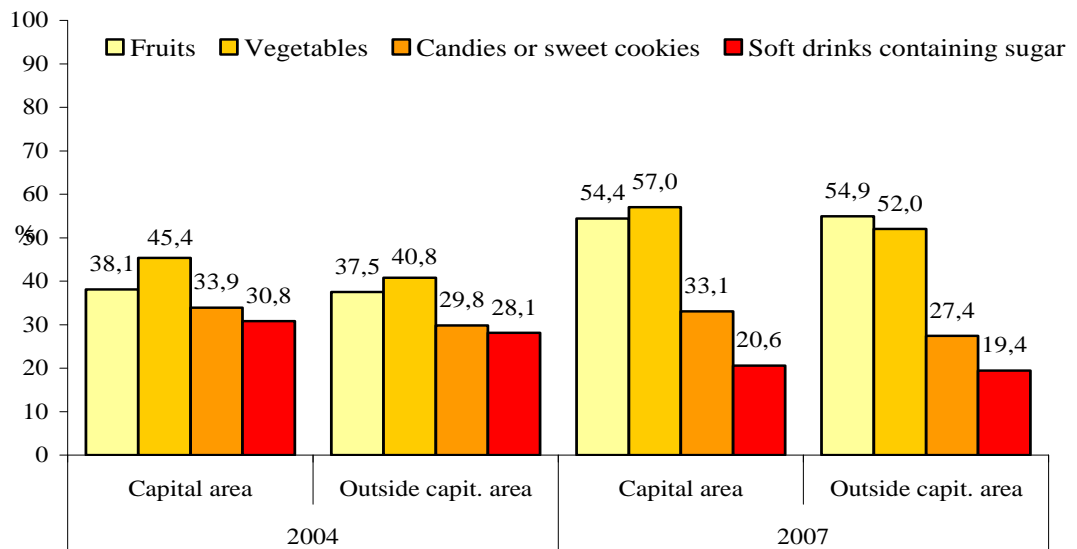


Graph 36. The proportion of girls in college in the years 2004 and 2007, by how many hours they say they sleep each night.

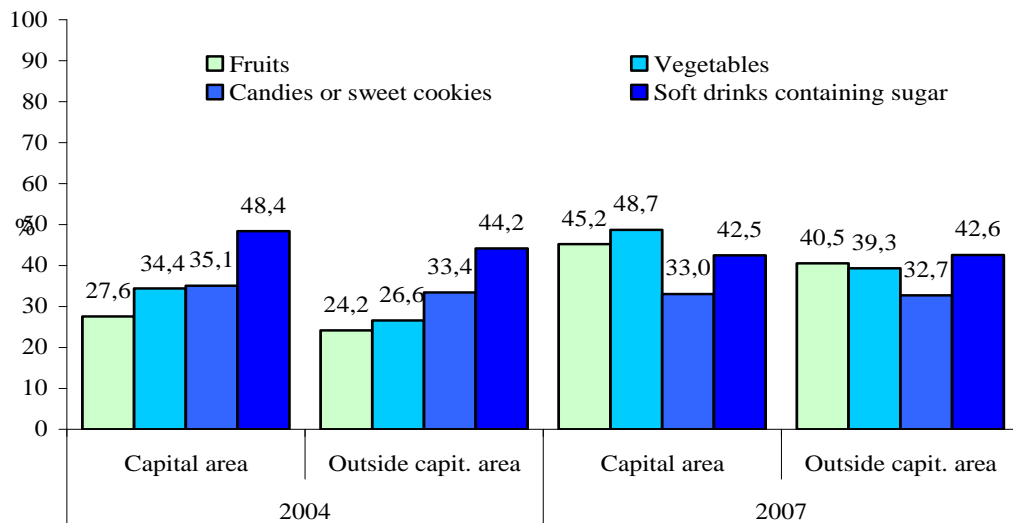


Graph 37. The proportion of boys in college in the years 2004 and 2007, by how many hours they say they sleep each night.

On graphs 36 and 37 one sees a comparison between the years 2004 and 2007 of hours of sleep among college students, by gender and location. Girls generally seem to sleep longer hours each night than boys, and that is independent of location. The development between years is also similar. Yet, the proportion of boys who sleep less than 6 hours each night has become lower over time, and that applies both for the capital area and the area outside it. On the other hand, more boys than girls say they sleep around 6 hours or less than 6 hours each night, both outside the capital area and within it. In 2007, a little less than 23% of boys in the capital area and around 18% outside of it say that they sleep around 6 hours every night, while the same proportions among girls are 17,5% and a little less than 14%, respectively. In addition, 5% to 6% of boys sleep less than 6 hours each night, while 3% to 4% of girls say they do that.



Graph 38. The proportion of girls in college in the years 2004 and 2007, who say they consume fruits, vegetables, candies or sweet cookies, and soft drinks containing sugar, daily or often each day.



Graph 39. The proportion of boys in college in the years 2004 and 2007, who say they consume fruits, vegetables, candies or sweet cookies, and soft drinks containing sugar, daily or often each day.

Graphs 38 and 39 show a comparison of the consumption of vegetables, fruit, sweets and soft drinks containing sugar among boys and girls in colleges in the years 2004 and 2007. The graphs show a considerable difference in consumption patterns between the two genders among college students. More girls than boys eat fruit and vegetables daily or often each day, and that is independent of location. Boys, on the other hand, are more prominent than girls in the group of those who consume sweets or sweet biscuits daily or often each day. One can also see a great difference in the number of boys and girls who say they drink soft drinks containing sugar daily or often each day, and that proportion is independent of location. Around of 20% girls say that applies to them in the year 2007, while more than 40% of boys say the same. Generally speaking, there is though a reduction in the consumption of food stuffs containing sugar from the year 2004, but the consumption of fruit and vegetables is generally on the increase. This applies for both boys and girls, and is independent of location.

Roundup of graphs in “Health behavior and health indicators”

A roundup of graphs 33 to 39 reveals that most college students think that their mental and physical health is good or very good. However, there is a difference discernible between the two genders in this respect. Few students think that it applies very or rather well to them that they have no one to talk to, or about 5% of boys in the year 2007, and around 4% of girls in that same year. These proportions, among the two genders, have also become lower since the year 2000. Moreover, slightly more than 70% of girls sleep around 7-8 hours every night, but notably fewer of the boys say so. On the other hand, boys are greater in numbers proportionally than girls in the group of those who say that they sleep around 6 hours each night or less. A little less than 30% of boys in the capital area reply in that way in the year 2007, against around 23% of boys outside the capital area. The corresponding proportion among girls is a little less than 22% in the capital area in 2007, but 17% outside it. More than half of girls say that they consume both vegetables and fruit daily or often each day in the year 2007, independent of location, and that proportion has increased considerably from the year 2004. A similiar development can be seen among boys. In the year 2007, a little less than half of boys say they eat vegetables and fruit, while these proportions were just a little more than one fourth in the year 2004. It can also be seen that around 30% of girls consume sweets or sweet biscuits daily or often each day in

the year 2007, and around one fifth say they drink soft drinks that contain sugar every day. Similar proportions among boys are considerably higher, as around 33% of them say they consume sweets or sweet biscuits daily or often each day, and around 43% say they consume soft drinks containing sugar that often.

Sports and physical exercise

Too much body weight and obesity are one of the main threats to public health currently faced by man. It has been pointed out that people are getting less physical exercise because of changes in lifestyle, especially in western societies²⁴. A recent survey in Iceland among children in the oldest classes in elementary school shows that a similar development has taken place in the last decade, proportionally, when assessing the situation among those adolescents who get much or very much exercise compared to those who get close to no exercise²⁵. In that sense, this analysis over time implies that the proportion among this age group, who get much or very much exercise, is rather on the increase in the last decade, but at the same time that the proportion of those who get almost no exercise has increased as well. In light of this, it is right to point out that research has repeatedly shown that adolescents who participate in sports and/or physical exercise regularly are more likely to feel good on a daily basis than other adolescents²⁶, they are less likely to smoke cigarettes²⁷, less likely to use illegal drugs, or to partake in other negative activities, than other adolescents are.²⁸

On graphs 40 to 49 one sees results from surveys over time on the participation among girls and boys in colleges in sports and physical exercise, of the proportion of those who practice sports with a sports club, and the main reasons why youngsters have quit practicing sports with a sports club. One can also see the proportion of boys and girls who say that they strain their bodies to the point of breathing heavily or sweating. There is also a comparison of the number of participants in various sports, and of those who do physical exercise in fitness centers.

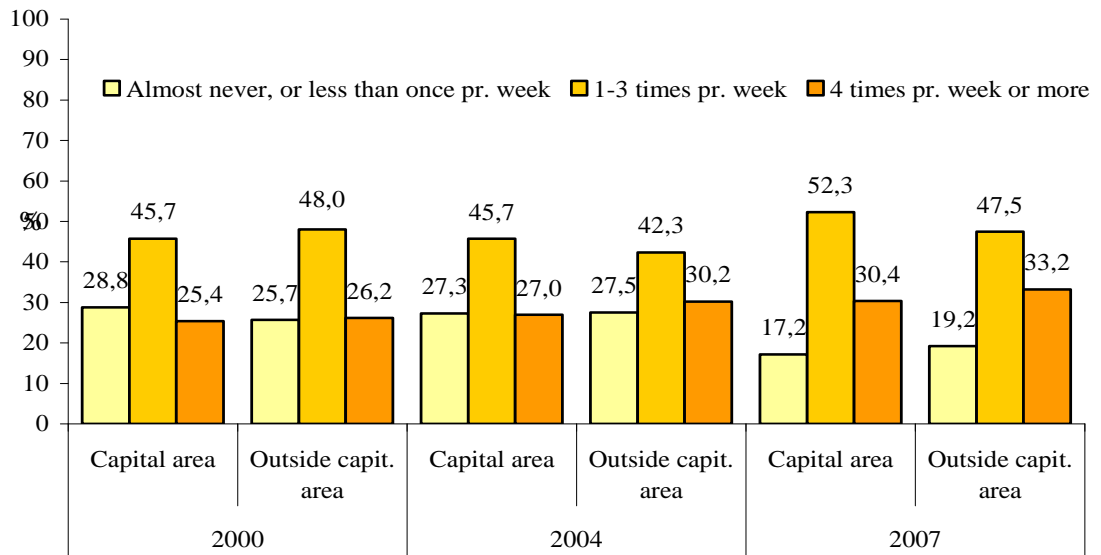
²⁴ Allegrente 2004.

²⁵ Sigríður Þóra Eiðsdóttir et.al. 2008.

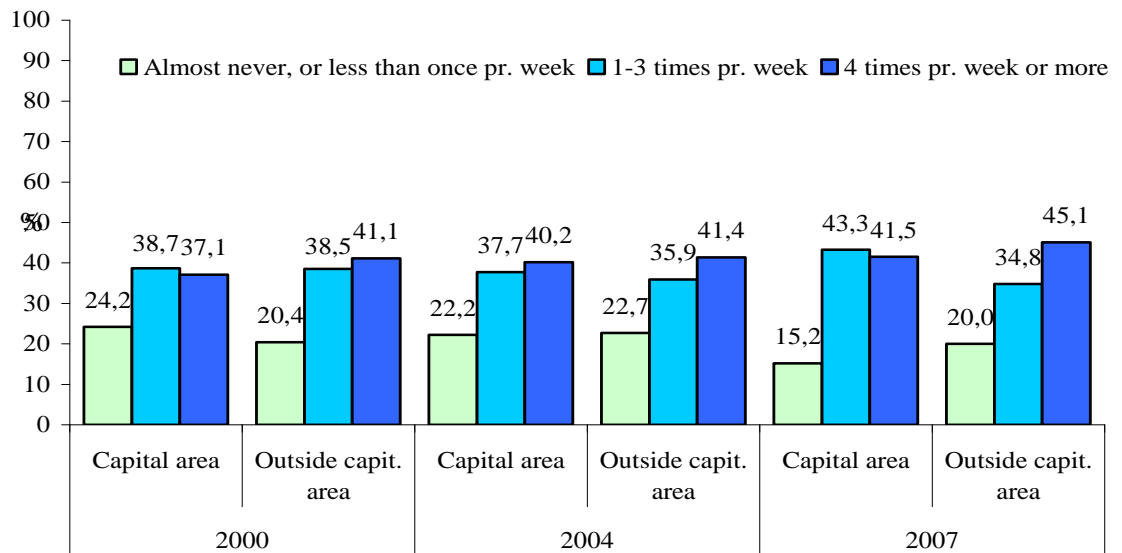
²⁶ Álfgeir Logi Kristjánsson et.al. (2006).

²⁷ Álfgeir Logi Kristjánsson et.al. (2008a).

²⁸ Rúnar Vilhjálmsson and Þórólfur Þórlindsson 1992; Þórólfur Þórlindsson et.al. 1998; Þórólfur Þórlindsson et.al. 1994.

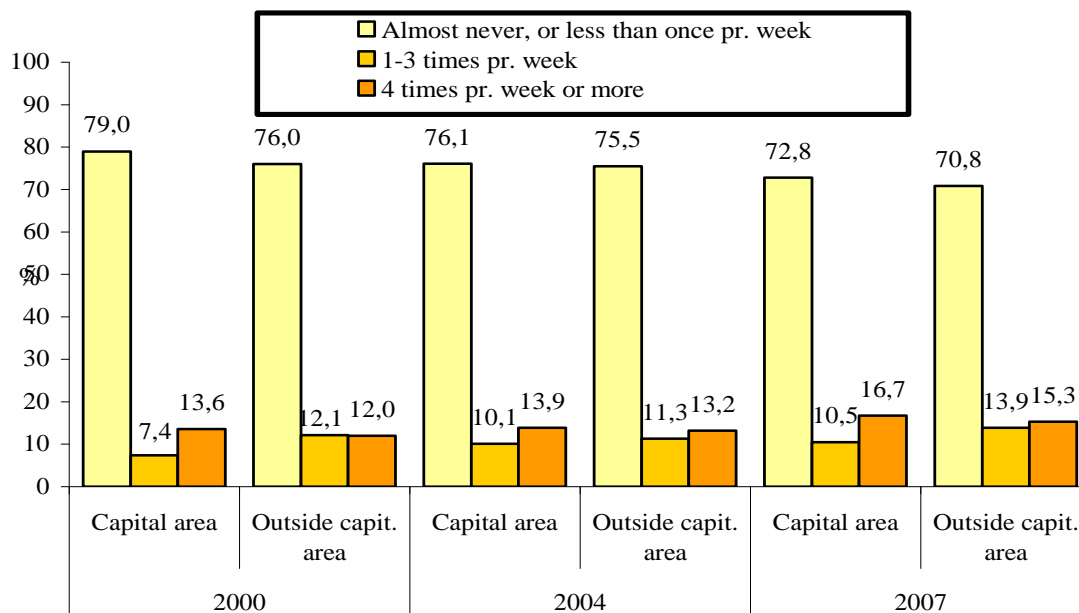


Graph 40. The proportion of girls in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, by how often they say they practice sports or physical training.

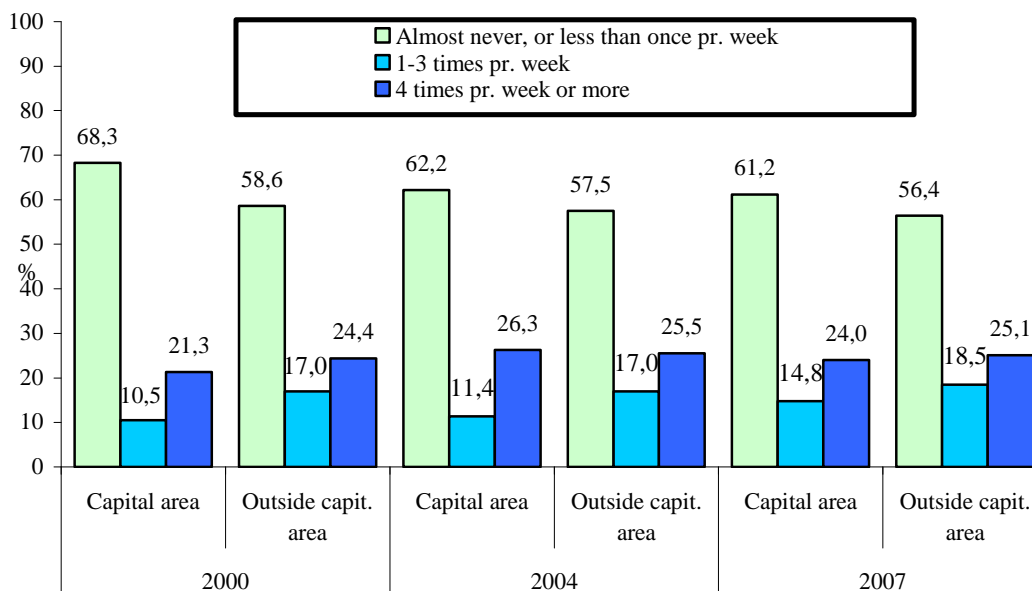


Graph 41. The proportion of boys in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, by how often they say they practice sports or physical training.

Graphs 40 and 41 show a comparison of the proportion of boys and girls in colleges, in the years 2000, 2004 and 2007, by how often each week they say they practice sports or physical exercise. Girls seem to do less of that generally than boys, and that is independent of location. A higher proportion of boys than girls say that they practice sports or physical exercise 4 times each week or more. Among the boys in the capital area, 41,5% of boys said they practiced 4 times a week or more, compared to 30,4% of girls. In addition, there are more girls than boys who say that they participate in sports or physical exercise 1-3 times a week, which is independent of location. Among the girls in the capital area, in the year 2007, 52,3% say they practice 1-3 times a week against 43,3% of boys, but the same proportions outside the capital area are 47,5% and 34,8%, respectively. Girls are proportionally greater in numbers than boys when it comes to nearly never practicing sports or physical exercise, or to doing that less than once a week. This proportion has, however, lowered among the girls between the years, and that reduction is independent of location.

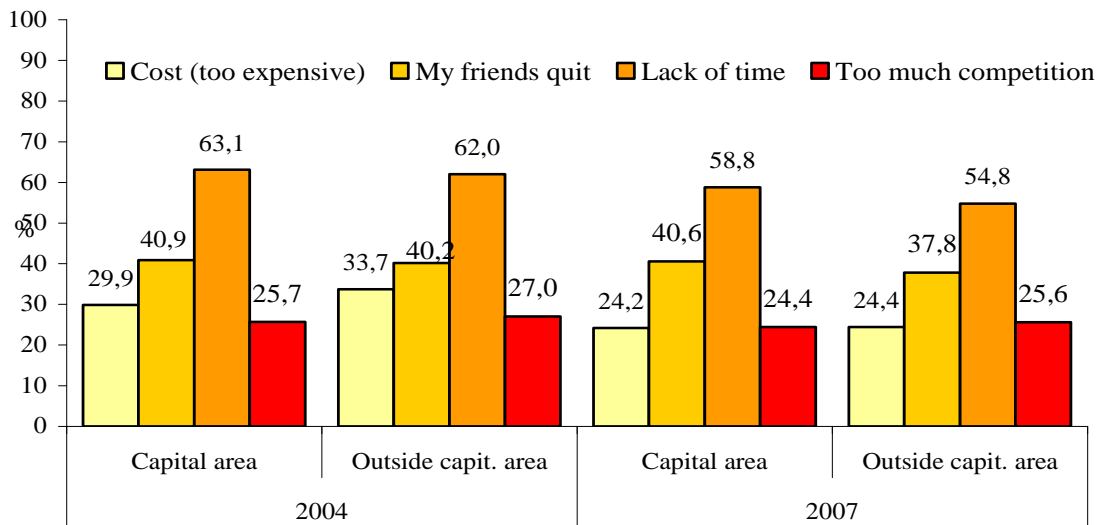


Graph 42. The proportion of girls in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, by how often they say they practice sports in a sports club.

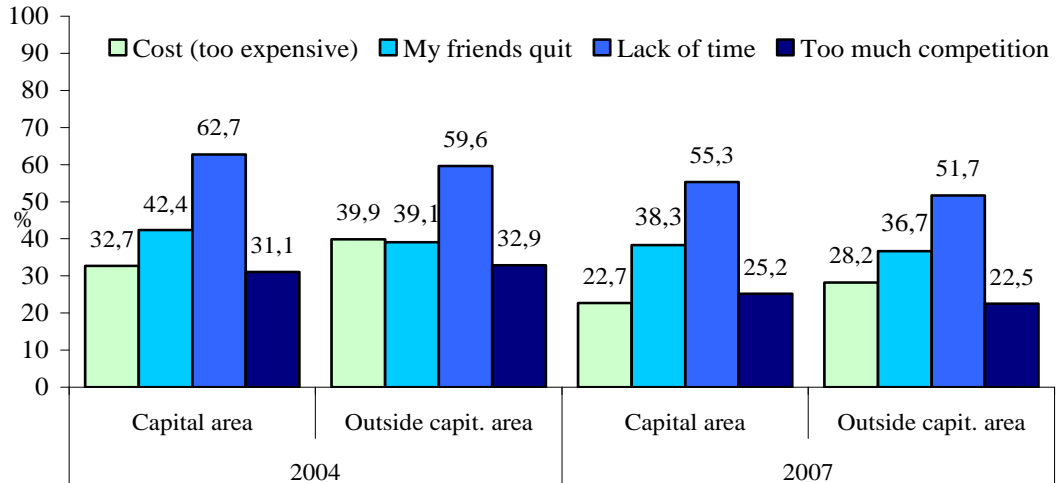


Graph 43. The proportion of boys in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, by how often they say they practice sports in a sports club.

In graphs 42 and 43 one can see the proportion of boys and girls in college, in the years 2000, 2004 and 2007, by how often they practice sports with a sports club. Girls seem to do so less frequently than boys, which is independent of location. The proportion of girls is considerably higher than of boys when it comes to nearly never practicing sports with a sports club, or to do so less than once a week. Outside the capital area, 70,8% of girls but 56,4% of boys practice sports with a sports club nearly never or less than once a week in the year 2007. More boys than girls proportionally practice sports more often with a sports club, and yet the proportion of girls who never or very seldom practiced with a sports club has become lower from the year 2000 to the year 2007. The proportion of girls in the capital area who practice sports seldom or never dropped from 79% in the year 2000 to 72,8% in the year 2007, but among the boys in the capital area this proportion lowered from 68,3% in the year 2000 to 61,2% in the year 2007. There has also been an increase among the girls, when it comes to practicing 1-3 times a week or more often than that, and this applies both to girls living in the capital area and outside it.

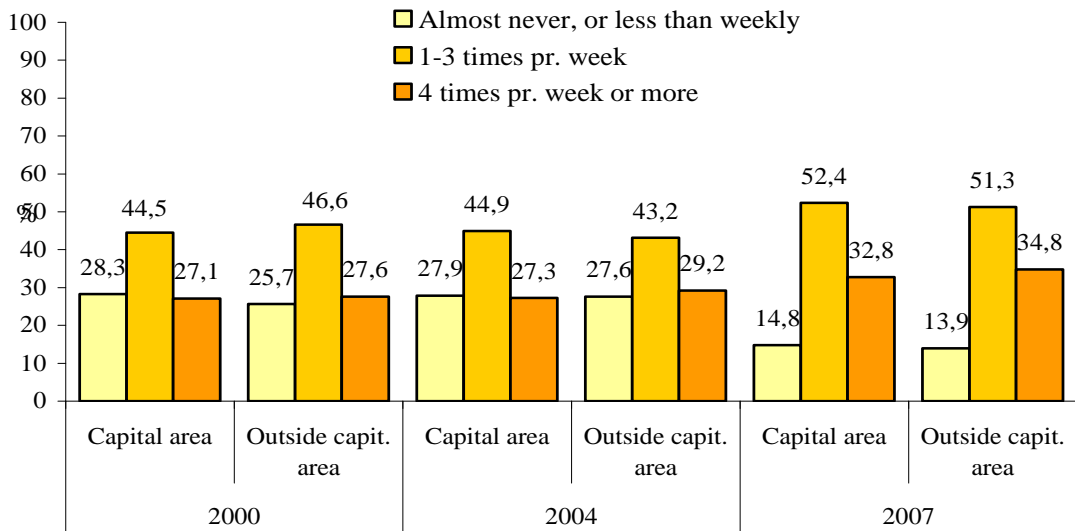


Graph 44. The proportion of girls in college in the years 2004 and 2007, who say that the following mattered rather or very much in their decision to quit practicing sports in a sports club: Cost (too expensive), my friends quit, lack of time, too much competition.

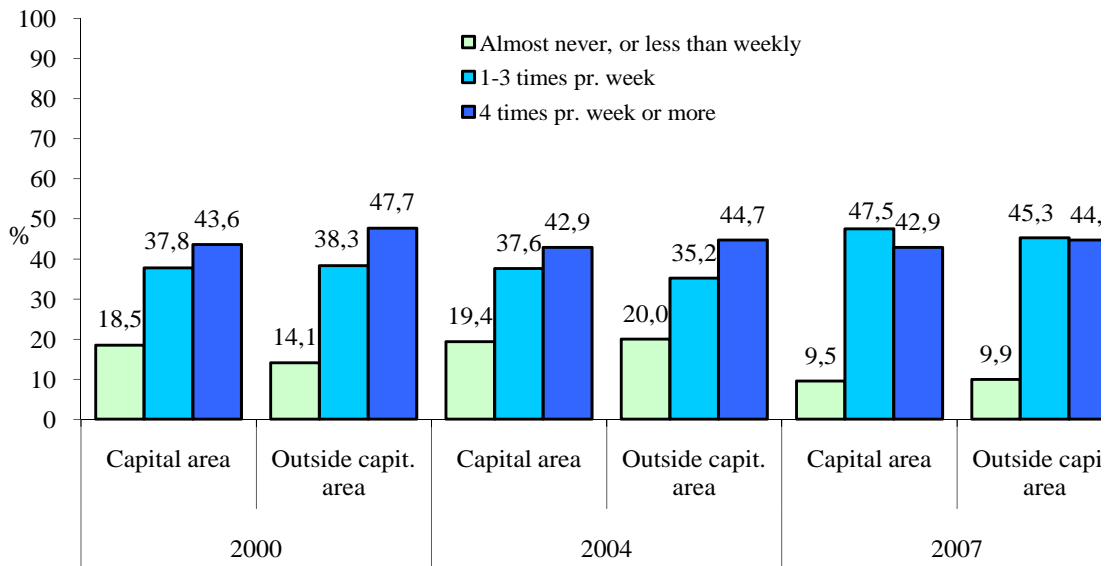


Graph 45. The proportion of boys in college in the years 2004 and 2007, who say that the following mattered rather or very much in their decision to quit practicing sports in a sports club: Cost (too expensive), my friends quit, lack of time, too much competition.

Graphs 44 and 45 show a comparison of the proportion of boys and girls in college, in the years 2004 and 2007, who say that the following mattered rather or very much in their decision to stop practicing sports with a sports club: Cost (too expensive), that their friends quit, lack of time, or too much competition. As can be seen, the greatest proportion, both among girls and boys and independent of location, say that lack of time mattered rather or very much in their decision to quit their practices. Between 50% and 60% of both gender think that that was the case in the year 2007, but certainly there can be more than one reason behind such a decision. A considerable number, or around and over 40%, think that the fact, that their friends quit practicing sports with a sports club, had much influence on their decision to do the same. Somewhat fewer name the cost, that it was too expensive to practice sports. And the lowest proportion, of those replies that are in focus here, think that too much competition was a rather or very important reason for that they quit practicing practicing sports with a sports club, where around one fourth girls and boys gave that answer in 2007.

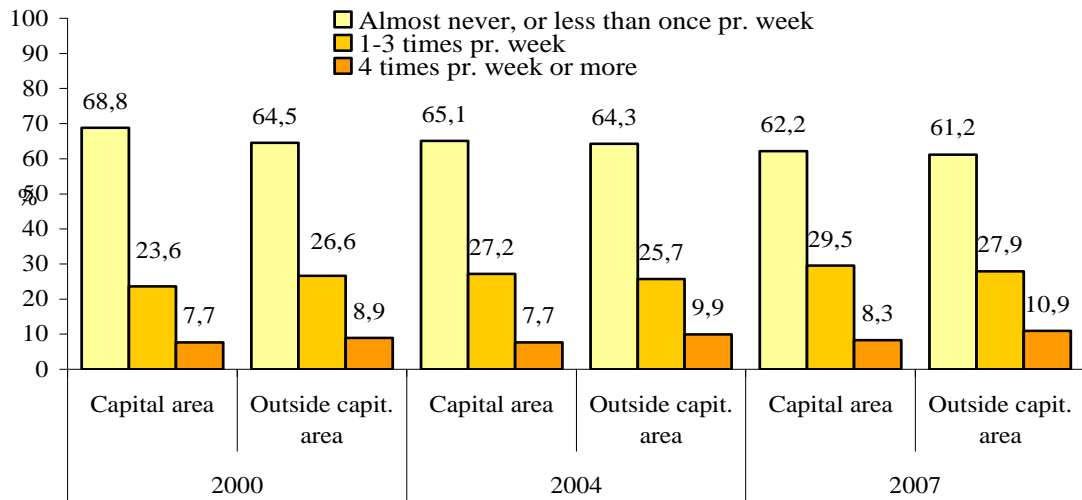


Graph 46. The proportion of girls in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, by how often they say they strain themselves physically so that they wind considerably, or sweat.

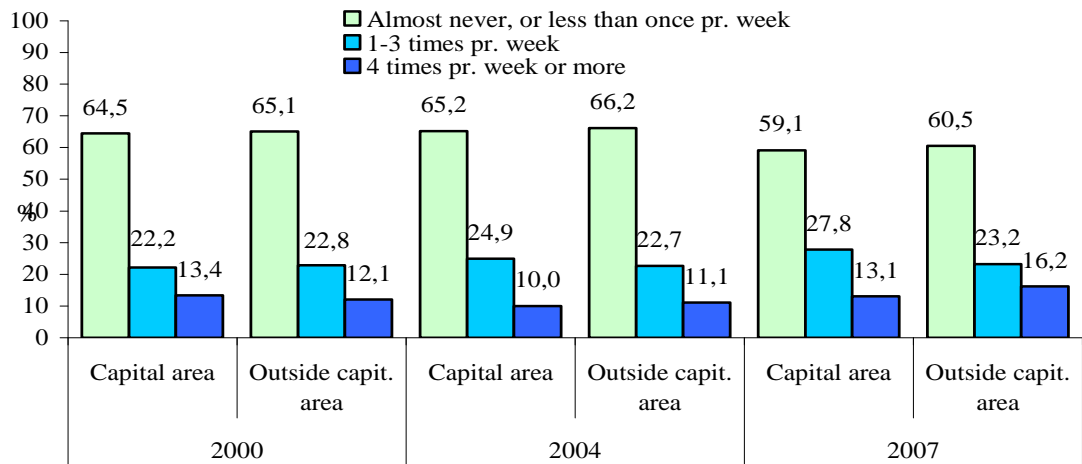


Graph 47. The proportion of boys in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, by how often they say they strain themselves physically so that they wind considerably, or sweat.

Graphs 46 and 47 show the proportion of college students, in the years 2000, 2004 and 2007, by how often they strain themselves physically so much that they breathe heavily or sweat. Boys do that proportionally more often than girls, when it comes to taking on physical strain to that point 4 times a week or more often, independent of location, and that development changes little over the years of the survey. A higher proportion of girls than boys say that they nearly never or less than once a week strain themselves physically in that way, and that is also independent of location. This proportion, however, has lowered between the years, both among girls in the capital area and outside the capital area. There are also more girls than boys who say that they strain physically in this way 1-3 times each week. There has been, however, an increase between the years among the girls who strain physically 4 times a week or more, and that applies both for the capital area and outside it. In 2000 around 27,1% of girls in the capital area said that they strain themselves physically so that they breathe heavily or sweat 4 times a week or more, against 32,8% in the year 2007. Among the boys, these proportions have changed little over the period.



Graph 48. The proportion of girls in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, who practice physical training at a fitness center.



Graph 49. The proportion of boys in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, who practice physical training at a fitness center.

On graphs 48 and 49 you can see a comparison of the proportions of college students, between the years 2000, 2004 og 2007, who do physical exercise at fitness centers. Boys seem to attend such physical exercise more often than girls, when it is 4 times a week or more often than that, and there is little change between the years in that period. However, the proportion of girls is higher when it comes to going 1-3 times a week, and there have also been little changes between the years. A similar proportion of boys and girls is revealed when one looks at the number of those who go nearly never or less than once a week to a fitness center. This proportion has though become lower among both gender as the years have passed. The proportion of boys in the capital area, who said that they went nearly never or less than weekly to a fitness center, was 65,2% in the year 2004, but 59,1% in the year 2007. Among the girls, the same proportions were 65,1% in the year 2004, but 62,2% in the year 2007. A similar development is apparent among youngsters living outside the capital area.

Roundup of graphs in “Sports and physical exercise”

A roundup of graphs 40 to 49 shows clearly that most college students get regular exercise. Boys are more likely than girls to practice sports or physical exercise 4 times a week or more often than that, but girls on the other hand are more likely than boys to do that 1-3 times a week. Boys are also more likely to practice sports with a sports club, as around one fourth of them did that four times a week or more, in the year 2007 compared to around 16% of the girls. Then it can be seen that boys and girls who practice sports with a sports club have increased in numbers proportionally through the years from 2000 to 2007. Lack of time is the most common reason that college students name to why they quit practicing sports with a sports club, but the smallest proportion of those mention too much competition as the reason. A considerable increase of regular physical exercise is seen among college students in general, and the proportion has decreased very much over time of those who say that they nearly never or less than weekly strain themselves so much, that they breathe heavily or sweat. This proportion is today under 10% among boys and a bit more than 14% among girls. Out of specific types of sports, the ball sports are, as before, very popular and of these football (soccer) has the greatest popularity. Finally, it can be seen that there has been a steady increse in students practicing at fitness centers among both boys and girls in colleges, and around or over 40% of girls and boys say they practice physical exercise in a fitness center every week.

Participation in social life, leisure activities and salaried work along with studies

Research on adolescents often reveal that their self image is considerably shaped by their participation in spare time- and leisure activities, which often take place outside their family- and school environments²⁹. Theories and research on the lifestyles of adolescents, which often focus on revealing what they are doing in their spare time and with whom, have shown that it has a significant effect on the wellbeing of children and youngsters what kind of activities they are into in their spare time.³⁰ It has also been shown, that early in their lives, adolescents develop a certain sense that has an effect on the lifestyle that they choose for themselves. The types of social- and leisure activities has also been researched, and the outcomes show that such activities, that are organized and administered by answerable individuals, are more likely to have a constructive influence on their lives, rather than activities that are not organized and administered by answerable agents³¹, and that organized leisure activities decreases the likelihood of adolescents adopting a lifestyle that is characterized by risky habits such as drug abuse.³² The leisure activities and lifestyle of adolescents is shaped as well by their personal interests, but also of lifestyle trends that quite commonly have international roots.³³

Graphs 50-59 show, over time, the proportion of college students who go to the movies, coffee houses and to parties. There is also an analysis of the number of those who go to see theater plays, to museums and classical concerts. The graphs also reveal the proportion of boys and girls who take part in their school's social life, and who read books and magazines. Finally, there is a graph that shows the hours that college students are working in a salaried job along with their studies.

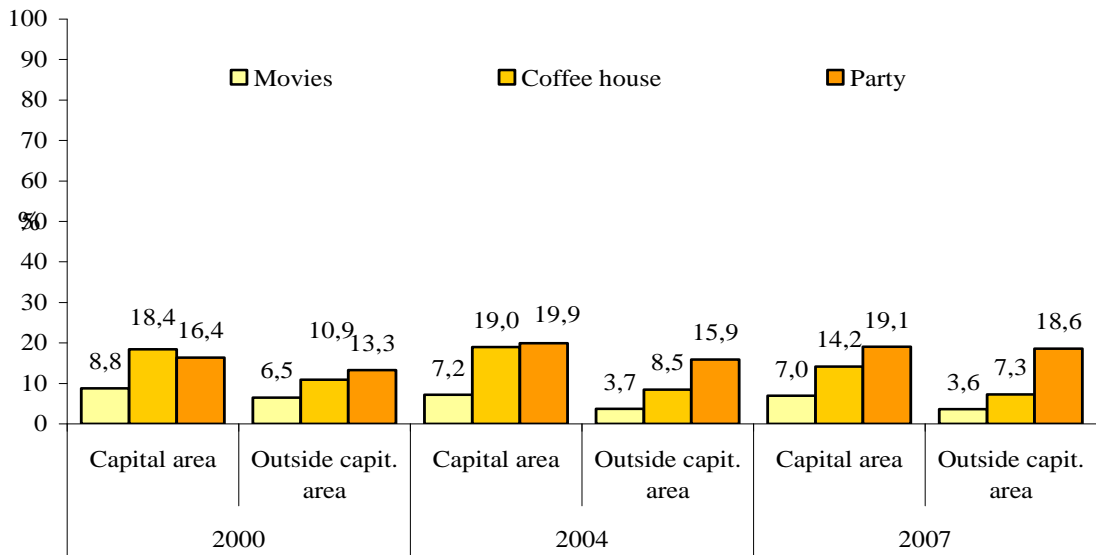
²⁹ Þórólfur Þórlindsson et.al. 1998; Þórólfur Þórlindsson and Jón Gunnar Bernburg 2006.

³⁰ Osgood et.al. 1996; Peretti-Watel and Lorente 2004.

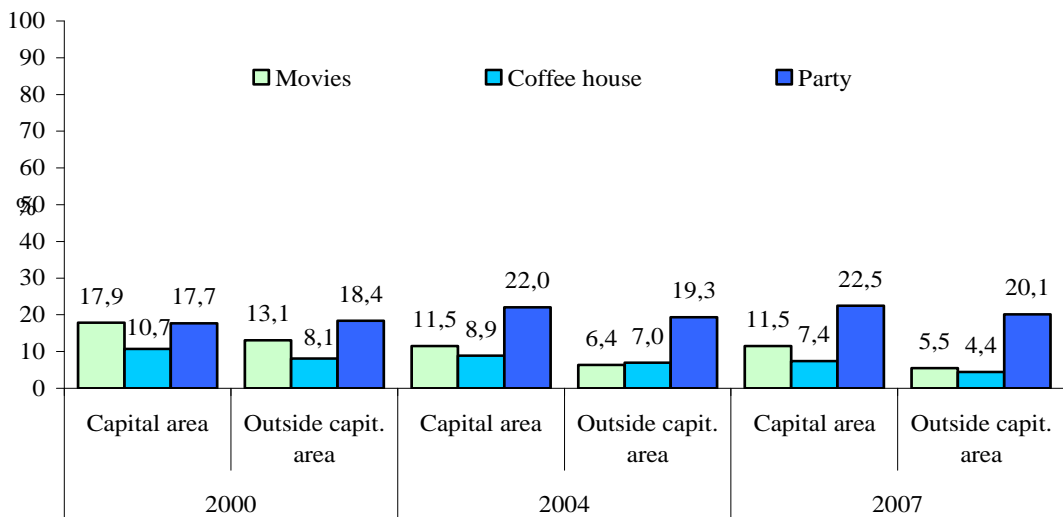
³¹ Álfgeir Logi Kristjánsson et.al. 2005; Álfgeir Logi Kristjánsson et.al. 2006.

³² Piko and Fitzpatrick 2004.

³³ Þóroddur Bjarnason and Þórólfur Þórlindsson 1993; Þórólfur Þórlindsson et.al. 1998.

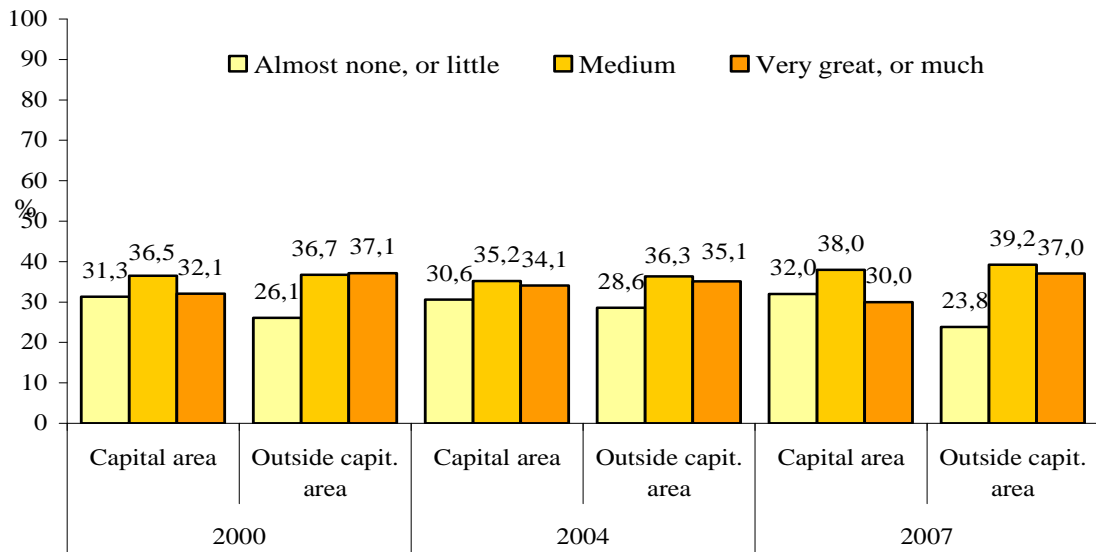


Graph 50. The proportion of girls in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, who go to the movies, a coffee house, and/or a party, weekly or more often.

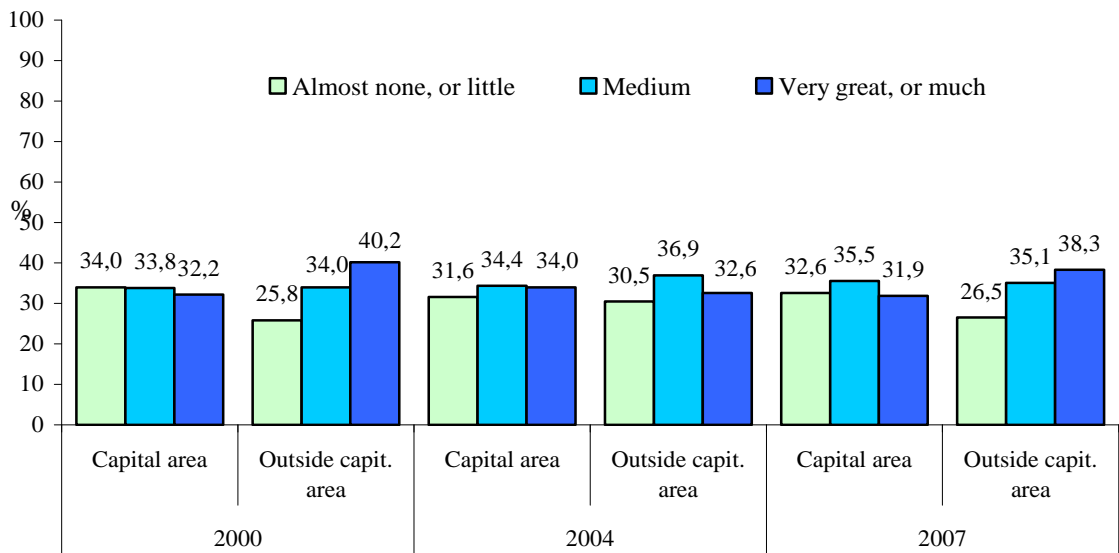


Graph 51. The proportion of boys in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, who go to the movies, a coffee house, and/or a party, weekly or more often.

On graphs 50 and 51 one sees a comparison between the years 2000, 2004 og 2007 of the proportion of college students who are involved in certain types of unorganized spare time activities. Here above one sees the proportions of those who go to the movies, coffee houses or go to a party weekly or more often than that. The graphs show a comparison between the years, by gender and location. As can be seen, of the options enquired about coffee houses and parties are most popular among girls, and that is independent of location. Going to the movies has been on the decrease, on the other hand. In the year 2000 8,8% of girls in the capital area said they went once a week or more to the movies, but 7,0% in the year 2007. The boys go more frequently to the movies than to coffe houses, and that is also independent of location. Outside the capital area going to parties has become more common among girls and boys, or from 13,3% in the year 2000 to 18,6% in the year 2007 among girls. Among the boys the proportion goes from 18,4% in the year 2000 to 20,1% in the year 2007.

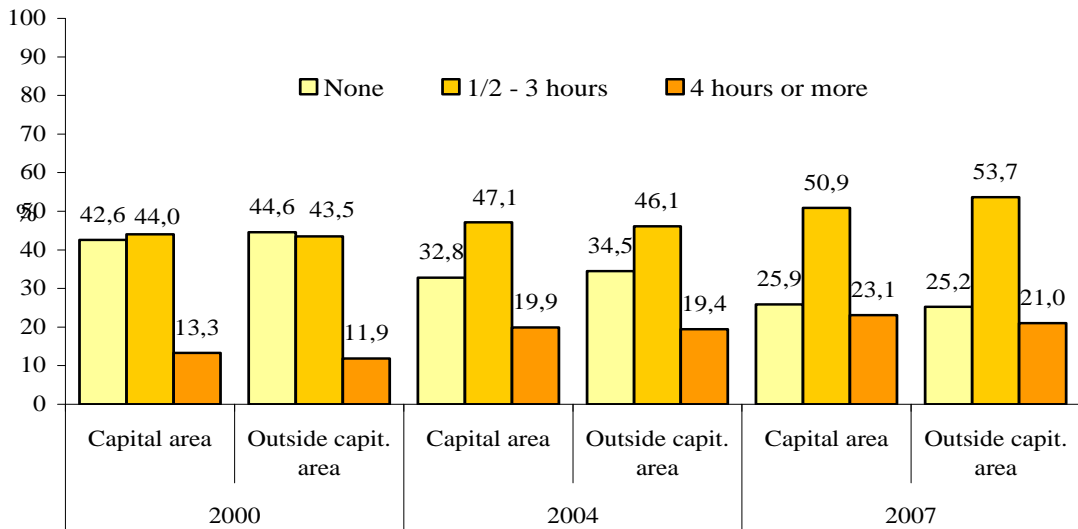


Graph 52. The proportion of girls in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, by how much they say they take part in social activities in their school.

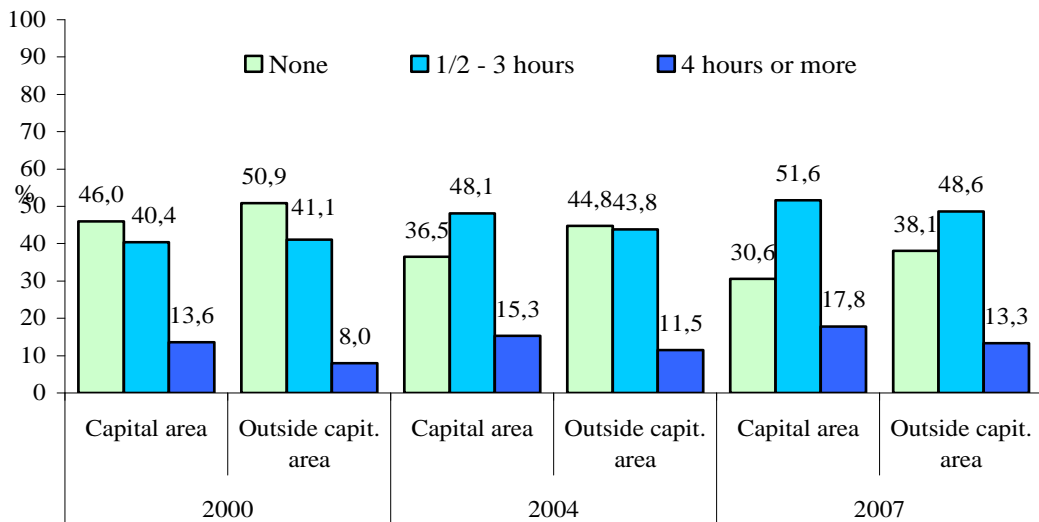


Graph 53. The proportion of boys in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, by how much they say they take part in social activities in their school.

Graphs 52 and 53 show a comparison among college students, in the years 2000, 2004 og 2007, by how much part they say they take in the social life of their school. The graphs also compare the gender and the location. Among both gender, and independent of location, the proportional number decreases rather of those who take much or very much part in their school's social life. Among boys outside the capital area there was though an increase between the years 2004 and 2007, but the proportion went from 32,6% to 38,3%. More boys than girls in the capital area take nearly no part in the social life of their school. Marginally more of girls than boys in the capital area, on the other hand, take somewhat much part in the social life. In the year 2007, 38% of girls in the capital area said they took part that often in the social life of their school, against 35,5% of boys. The graphs also reveal that in the year 2007, there are more girls and boys living outside the capital area who take much or very much part in their school's social life, than among both the genders in the capital area.

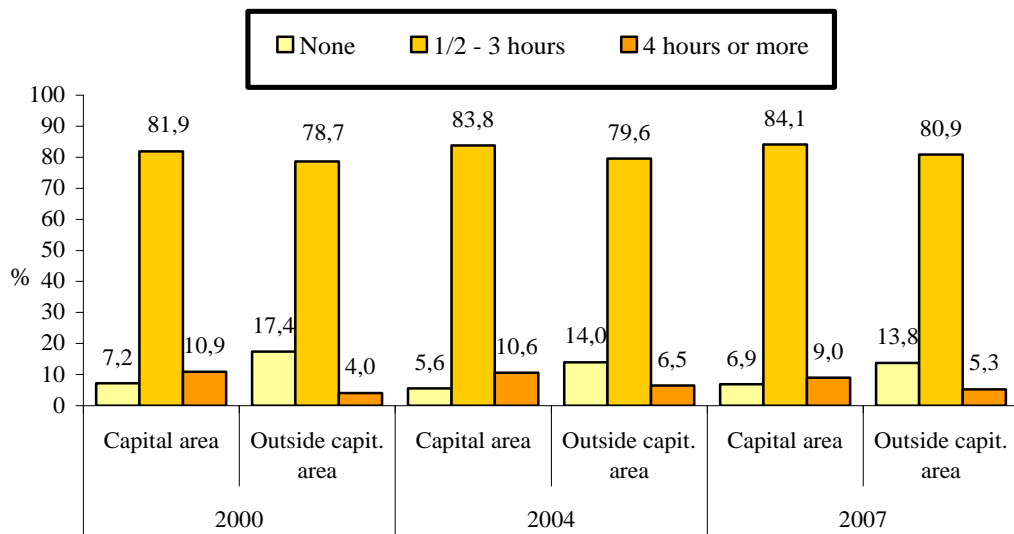


Graph 54. The proportion of girls in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, by how many hours each week they say they are reading books, other than school books.

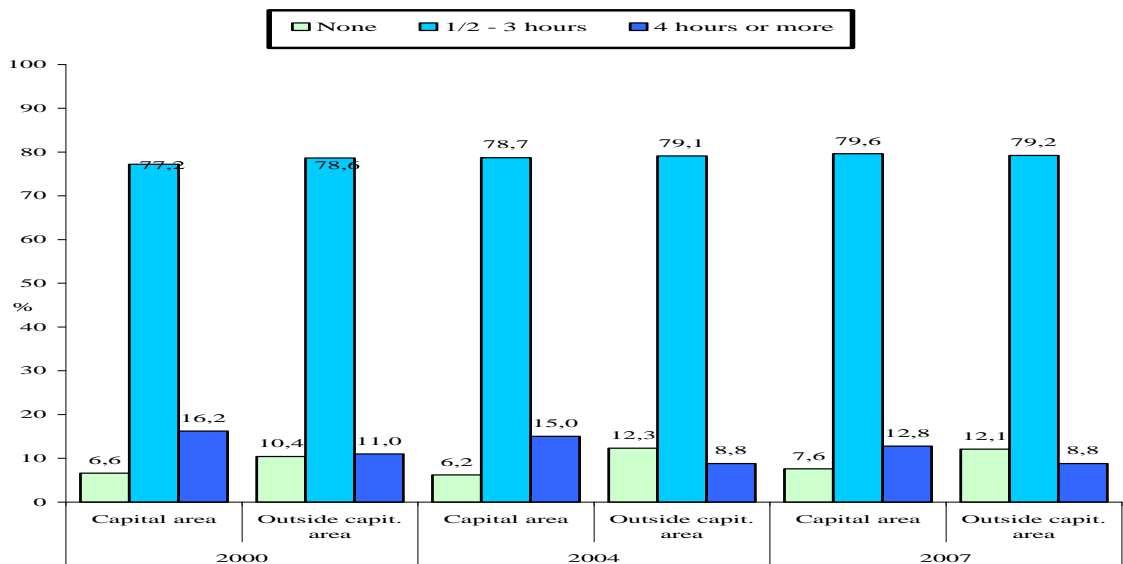


Graph 55. The proportion of boys in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, by how many hours each week they say they are reading books, other than school books.

Graphs 54 and 55 show the proportional number of college students, in the years 2000, 2004 og 2007, by how many hours they say they use weekly to read books, other than school books. On the graphs one can see that book reading has quite increased, and that applies to both those who read for ½-3 hours each week and for 4 hours or more every week. This has the consequence that the individuals have decreased in numbers proportionally, who say they don't use any time to read books other than school books in a normal week, and that development is independent of location and gender. In 2004, 36,5% of boys in the capital area said they didn't read any books, other than school books, at all, against 30,6% in the year 2007. The same proportions among boys outside the capital area were a little less than 45% in the year 2004, but around 38% in the year 2007. Among the girls one sees a similar development irrespective of location. The proportion of those who said they spent no time reading books other than school books decreased significantly between the years 2004 and 2007.

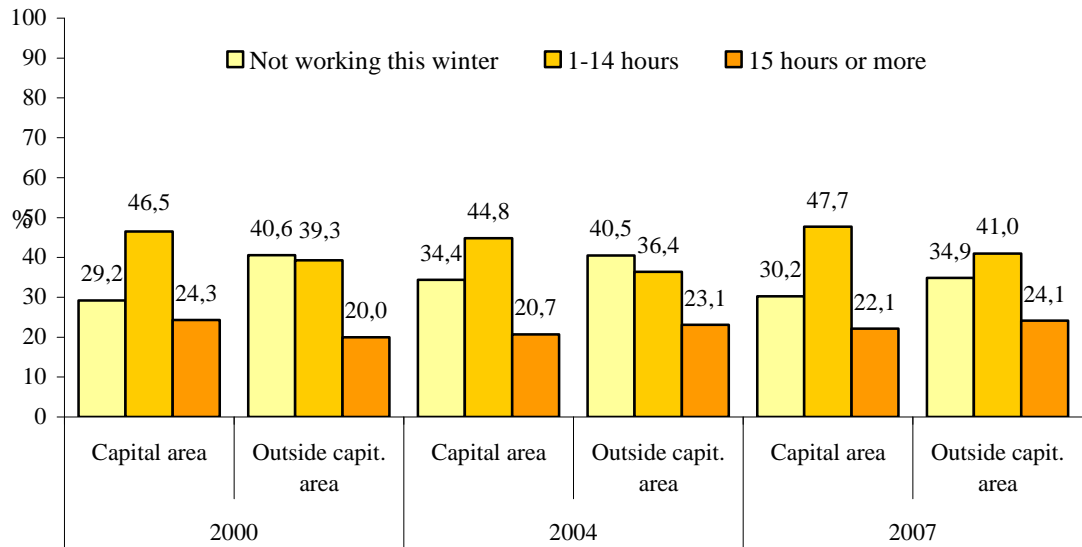


Graph 56. The proportion of girls in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, by how many hours each week they say they are reading newspapers.

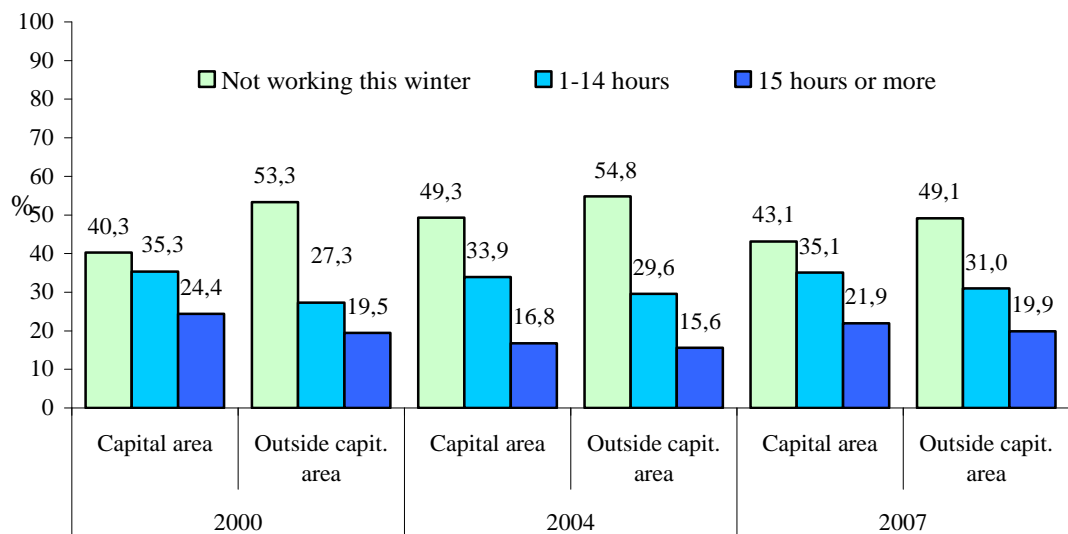


Graph 57. The proportion of boys in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, by how many hours each week they say they are reading newspapers.

Here one sees, on graphs 56 and 57, the proportion of college students, in the years 2000, 2004 and 2007, by how many hours they spent each week on reading newspapers. As before, one can examine the development between the years and between the two genders. As the graphs show, this type of reading among boys and girls is mostly unchanged, and that is independent of location and gender. Reading of newspapers thus shows little change generally. It can be mentioned that a tiny increase is among those who say they spend $\frac{1}{2}$ -3 hours each week reading newspapers, but at the same time the number of those decreases who say that they spend 4 hours or more each week reading newspapers.



Graph 58. The proportion of girls in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, by how much they say they work each week in a salaried job along with their studies.



Graph 59. The proportion of boys in college in the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, by how much they say they work each week in a salaried job along with their studies.

In graphs 58 and 59 one can see a comparison of the years 2000, 2004, and 2007, between boys and girls in the capital area and outside it, by how many hours they say they work each week in a salaried job along with their studies. Girls seem to work more along with school than boys, and the tendency is the same whether one looks at the capital area, or the area outside it. This applies for both categories, e.g. 1-14 hours, and 15 hours or more. A higher proportion of boys than girls do not work in a salaried job along with school, and that is independent of location. In that respect one sees that around 70% of girls in the capital area, in the year 2007, are employed in some sort of job along with the studies, while around 65% of girls living outside the capital area do that. It is notable that around 22% of girls in the capital area and around 24% outside it work more than 15 hours a week along with the studies. A little less than 57,0% of boys in the capital area, on the other hand, work to some extent in a salaried job with the studies, but a little less than 51% of those living outside it. A similar proportion of boys and girls in the capital area work 15 hours or more each week, but around 20% of boys outside the capital area works that much with the studies.

Roundup of graphs in “Participation in social life, leisure activities and salaried work along with studies”

The roundup of data from graphs 50-59 shows that fewer college students go to the movies in the year 2007 than in the year 2000. Going to movies, on the other hand, is considerably more popular among boys than girls as 11,5% of boys in the capital area said they went to the movies once a week or more in the year 2007, compared to 7% of girls. Around one fifth of college students say they go to a party every week, but girls are much more likely than boys to go regularly to a coffee house. The participation of students in the social life of their school has remained rather even over time, but between 30% and 40% of boys and girls say that they take much or very much part in the social life in their school, independent of location. It is also apparent that reading books, other than school books, increases over time, where around 23% of girls in the capital area and around 18% of boys say they spend 4 hours or more each week on that sort of reading. In addition, the proportion of those, who say they don't spend any time reading books other than school books, has decreased from the year 2000 til 2007, among both the gender. The reading of

newspapers, on the other hand, remains mostly the same among both gender, and independent of location. Around and over 80% of girls and boys say they spend from ½ hour and up to 3 hours each week in reading newspapers. Also it can be seen that working for a salary along with the studies seems to be on the increase. Fewer are not working a salaried job with the studies, and more work more than 15 hours a week or longer each week. Boys are considerably more likely to work for a salary along with their studies than girls are.

Bibliography

Allegrante, J.P. (2004). Unfit to learn. *Education Week*, 24: 38-40.

Altermatt E.R. og Pomerantz, E.M. (2005). The implications of having high-achieving versus low-achieving friends: A longitudinal analysis. *Social Development*, 14, 61-81.

Álfgeir Logi Kristjánsson, Inga Dóra Sigfúsdóttir, Allegrante, J.P. (2008b). Health Behavior and Academic Achievement Among Adolescents: The Relative Contribution of Dietary Habits, Physical Activity, Body Mass Index, and Self-Esteem. *Health Education and Behavior* (prepublishing before printing, www.pubmed.gov).

Álfgeir Logi Kristjánsson, Inga Dóra Sigfúsdóttir, Allegrante, J.P., Ásgeir R. Helgason (2008a). Social correlates of cigarette smoking among Icelandic adolescents: a population-based cross-sectional study. *BMC Public Health*, 8:86.

Álfgeir Logi Kristjánsson, Inga Dóra Sigfúsdóttir, Jón Sigfússon (2006). *Young People 2006. Education, culture, leisure and sports activities among adolescents in Iceland*. Reykjavik: Rannsóknir & greining / The Icelandic Centre for Social Research and Analysis.

Álfgeir Logi Kristjánsson, Silja Björk Baldursdóttir, Inga Dóra Sigfúsdóttir, Jón Sigfússon (2005). *Young People 2004. Education, culture, leisure, sports activities and vision for the future among adolescents in Iceland*. Reykjavik: Rannsóknir & greining / The Icelandic Centre for Social Research and Analysis.

Bachman, J.D., Johnston, L.D. og O'Malley, P.M. (1987). *Monitoring the future*. Ann Arbor: Institute for Social Research.

Bandura, A. (1977). *Social Learning Theory*. Prentice-Hall. Uppersaddle River, N.J.

- Bowker A., Bukowski W.M., Hymel S. and Sippola L.K. (2000). Coping with daily hassles in the peer group during early adolescence: Variations as a function of peer experience. *Journal of Research in Adolescence*, 10, 211-243.
- Carter, D.S.G., Bennetts, C. and Carter, S.M. (2003). 'We're not sheep': Illuminating the nature of the adolescent peer group in effecting lifestyle choice. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 24, 225-241.
- Colarossi, L.G. (2001). Adolescent gender differences in social support: Structure, function, and provider type. *Social Work Research*, 25, 233-241.
- Coleman, J. (1988). Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital. *American Journal of Sociology*, 94: 95-120.
- Crosnoe, R., Erickson, K.G. and Dornbusch, S.M. (2002). Protective functions of family relationships and school factors on the deviant behaviour of adolescent boys and girls: Reducing the impact of risky friendships. *Youth & Society*, 33, 515-544.
- De Vaus, D. (2002). *Surveys in Social Research* (5. útgáfa). London: Routledge.
- Finnbogi Gunnarsson, Jón Gunnar Bernburg, Þórólfur Þórlindsson. (1996). *Young people and education in South Iceland*. Reykjavik: The Institute for Educational Research in Iceland (RUM).
- Gorman, T.J. (1998). Social class and parental attitudes toward education: Resistance and conformity to schooling in the family. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 27, 10-44.
- Hirchi, T. (1969). *Causes of Delinquency*. California: University of California Press.
- Inga Dóra Sigfúsdóttir, Álfgeir Logi Kristjánsson, Allegrante, J.P. (2007). Health Behavior and Academic Achievement in Icelandic School Children. *Health Education Research*, 22: 70-80.

- Jón Gunnar Bernburg, Rannveig Þórisdóttir (1997). *The situation in school and youth affairs on Reykjanes*. Reykjavik: The Institute for Educational Research in Iceland (RUM).
- Lahelma, E. (2002). School is for Meeting Friends: Secondary school as lived and remembered. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 23, 367-381.
- O'Byrne, K.K., Haddock, C.K., Poston, W.S.C. (2002). Parenting Style and Adolescent Smoking. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 30: 418-425.
- Osgood, D.W., Wilson, J.K., O'Malley, P.M., Bachman, J.G. and Johnston, L.D. (1996). Routine activities and individual deviant behavior. *American Sociological Review*, 61, 635-655.
- Peretti-Watel, P. and Lorente, F.O. (2004). Cannabis use, sport practice and other leisure activities at the end of adolescence. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, 73, 251-257.
- Piko B.F. and Fitzpatrick K.M. (2004). Substance use, religiosity, and other protective factors among Hungarian adolescents. *Addictive Behaviors*, 29, 1095-1107
- Roeser, R.W., Midgley, C. and Urdan, T.C. (1996). Perceptions of the school psychological environment and early adolescents' psychological and behavioral functioning in school: The mediating role of goals and belonging. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 88, 408-422.
- Rúnar Vilhjálmsson and Þórólfur Þórlindsson (1992). The integrative and physiological effects of sports participation: A study of adolescence. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 33, 637-647.
- Sheldon, S.B., Epstein, J.L. (2005). Involvement Counts: Family and Community Partnerships and Mathematics Achievement. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 98: 196-206.

- Sigríður Þóra Eiðsdóttir, Álfgeir Logi Kristjánsson, Inga Dóra Sigfúsdóttir, Allegrante, J.P. (2008). Trends in physical activity and participation in sports clubs among Icelandic adolescents. *European Journal of Public Health* (prepublishing before printing, www.pubmed.gov).
- Smerdon, B.A. (2002). Students' perception of membership in their high schools. *Sociology of Education*, 75, 287-305.
- Sutherland, E.H. (1978). *Criminology* (10. útgáfa). New York: Lippincott.
- Warr, M. (1993). Age, peers and delinquency. *Criminology*, 31: 17-40.
- Zettergren, P. (2003). School adjustment in adolescence for previously rejected, average and popular children. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 73, 207-221.
- Þóroddur Bjarnason, Þórólfur Þórlindsson, Inga Dóra Sigfúsdóttir, Welch, M.R. (2005). Familial and Religious Influences on Adolescent Alcohol Use: A Multi-Level Study of Students and School Communities. *Social Forces*, 84: 375-390.
- Þóroddur Bjarnason and Þórólfur Þórlindsson (1993). *Leisure activities among Icelandic adolescents, spring 1992*. Reykjavik: The Institute for Educational Research in Iceland (RUM).
- Þórólfur Þórlindsson, Jón Gunnar Bernburg. (2006). Peer groups and substance use: Examining the direct and interactive effect of leisure activity. *Adolescence*, 41: 321-339.
- Þórólfur Þórlindsson, Inga Dóra Sigfúsdóttir, Jón Gunnar Bernburg and Viðar Halldórsson (1998). *Drug abuse among adolescents: Environment and conditions*. Reykjavik: The Institute for Educational Research in Iceland (RUM).

Þórólfur Þórlindsson, Þorlákur Karlsson and Inga Dóra Sigfúsdóttir (1994). *On the value of sports for Icelandic adolescents*. Reykjavik: The Institute for Educational Research in Iceland (RUM).