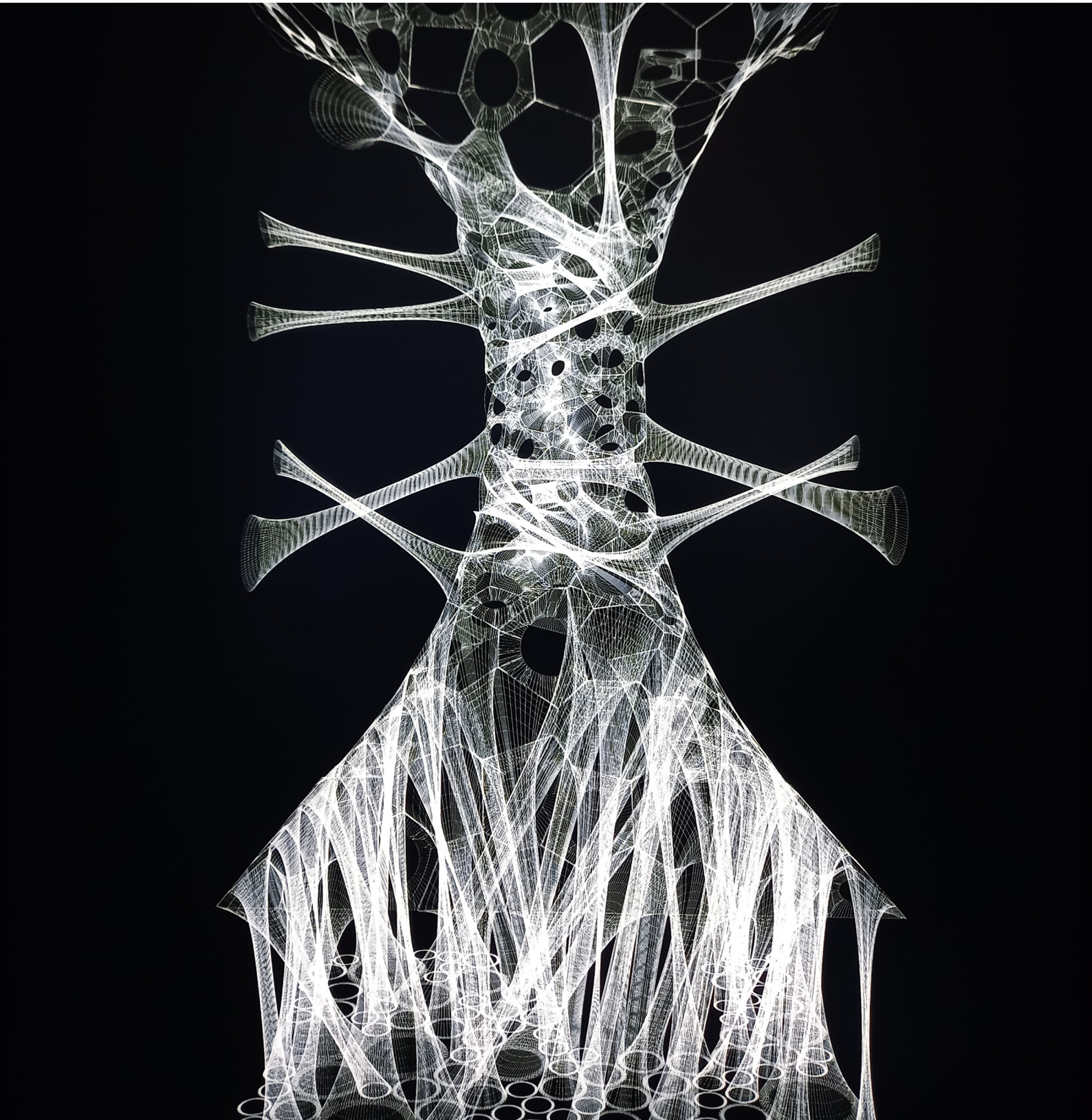
NORDISK ARKITEKTURFORSKNING
NORDIC JOURNAL OF ARCHITECTURAL RESEARCH

1

ISSUE 1 2025



NORDISK ARKITEKTURFORSKNING

Nordic Journal of Architectural Research

1–2025

Nordic Journal of Architectural Research
ISSN: 1893–5281

For more information on the editorial board for the journal and board for the association, see http://arkitekturforskning.net/na/.

Submitted manuscripts
Manuscripts are to be sent to Sten Gromark (sgromark@outlook.com) , Magnus Rönn (magnus.ronn.arch@gmail.com) and Petra Thorpert (Petra.Thorpert@slu.se) as a text file in Word, using Times New Roman font. Submitted articles should not exceed 8 000 words exclusive abstract, references and figures. The recommended length of contributions is 5 000–8 000 words. Deviations from this must be agreed with the editors in chief. See Author's Guideline (http://arkitekturforskning.net/na/information/authors) for further information.

Subscription
Students/graduate students
Prize: 27.5 Euro.
Individuals (teachers, researchers, employees, professionals)
Prize: 38.5 Euro.
Institutions (libraries, companies, universities)
Prize: 423 Euro.

Membership for the association
5.5 Euro (for individuals who get access to the journal through institutions).

Students and individual subscribers must inform about their e-mail address in order to get access to the journal. After payment, send the e-mail address to Trond Haug, trond.haug@sintef.no.

Institutional subscribers must inform about their IP-address/IP-range in order to get access to the journal. After payment, send the IP-address/IP-range to Trond Haug, trond.haug@sintef.no.

Payment
Sweden pay to plusgiro: 419 03 25-3
Outside Sweden pay in Euro to Nordea IBAN: SE67 9500 0099 6034 4190 3253 BIC/SWIFT: NDEASESS

Published by SINTEF Academic Press
P O Box 124 Blindern, NO-0314 Oslo, Norway.

CONTENTS

Photo, front cover: Magnus Rönn
Photo is describing a Lumen Prototype from an exhibition 2024 at Louisiana in Denmark called *The Living Structures*. The exhibition is the first in a new series 'Architecture Connecting', spotlighting the evolution of architecture in an era of climate crisis and the social, cultural and political challenges this reality poses.

NORDISK ARKITEKTURFORSKNING
NORDIC JOURNAL OF ARCHITECTURAL RESEARCH

THE ACCESSIBILITY ACTIVISM OF THE DISABILITY RIGHTS ASSOCIATION THRESHOLD, 1973–1982

MARJA RAUTAHARJU

Abstract

Architectural accessibility has developed since the mid-twentieth century, yet accessibility history has remained an understudied topic in the Nordic countries, particularly in relation to the intersecting historical trajectories of accessibility and the disability rights movements. This article analyses the accessibility activism of the Finnish disability rights association Threshold between the years 1973 and 1982. The research is a historical inquiry into Threshold's archives and publications, in which the association's materials are conceptualized as previously unrecognized sources of architectural history. Threshold's activity is contextualized historically in relation to the histories of accessibility, social movements, and the construction of the welfare state in Finland, and to previous international research on accessibility and disability history. The article shows that accessibility was widely discussed and understood in the association's agenda as an issue of disability policy. In Threshold's architectural discourse, the activists articulated understandings of the user-centred accessibility expertise of disabled people, indicated the significance of architects' knowledge for implementing accessibility, and called for progressive legislation. The article presents a history of disability activism, arguing that this recognition can augment our knowledge of accessibility. Furthermore, the research presents a novel perspective on the disability history of architecture in the Nordic countries.

Keywords:
accessibility, disability, disability rights movement, 1970s, activism, ghost archive, Finland

1. Introduction

> *In the beginning, when we were choosing a name for our organisation, Threshold was almost an obvious choice. We were all experiencing a big threshold ahead of us, preventing us from studying and living an equal life in society. We wanted then, and still now want to fight all the thresholds that restrain the disabled people's life.* (TK 1/1975, pp. 3–4)

The Finnish disability rights association Kynnys [Threshold] was founded in 1973 – the same year that the first accessibility legislation came into force in Finland. In the association's first bulletin, in 1975, a leader described how their choice of name reappropriates the architectural gesture of the threshold as an object of disability politics. Threshold's[1] discourse presented architectural barriers and the social stratification of disabled people[2] as interlaced, both symbolically and literally. In concert with the growing international disability rights movements at the time and their emerging ideas, Threshold emphasized disability as a societal condition, arising as a result of a society and spaces that fail to meet the needs of disabled people. In the social struggle of the disability rights movement, architectural access played an important material role. As the writer of the bulletin further expanded, a threshold "does not have to be high nor does it have to prevent us from moving. On the contrary, it can be well designed and shaped". For Threshold, architectural design was a tool for equity.

In Finland, advancements in accessibility in the 1970s coincided with the construction of the welfare state. The 1960s and the 1970s marked the establishment of the administrative welfare state, as legal reforms shaped areas such as comprehensive school, daycare, social security, and primary healthcare (Tyvelä, 2023). Compared with previous decades, the 1970s had the highest number of newly constructed buildings in Finland, with only the 1980s surpassing this figure (OSF, 2024). These decades were also characterized by urbanization driven by economic transformation. As Tyvelä also notes, legislation and building typologies were developed in tandem, with building standardization supporting the progress.

The accessibility legislation of 1973 meant that, for the first time, new buildings with public services were obligated to provide access to persons with mobility impairments (Asetus rakennusasetuksen muuttamisesta 791/1973, 85a§). In 1979, the updated National Building Code included a set of measurement instructions for accessibility (TK 1/1979, pp. 15–21). The first Finnish accessible design handbooks had already been published in the 1960s by Invalidiliitto [The Finnish Association of People with Physical Disabilities],[3] and disability organizations continued publishing new accessibility handbooks in the 1970s, and also conducted the first accessibility survey projects.[4] Unlike today, the Finnish language of the time did not yet have a specific, established word for

1 I use the association's English-language name throughout the article to relay the message embedded in the name.

2 In this article, I use identity-first language (instead of person-first language) when referring to disabled people, since identity-first language corresponds better to both early Threshold's discourse and the Finnish language in general. See, for example, Best et al. (2022) for further discussion.

3 *Ohjeita pyörätuolia käyttävien invalidien asuntojen suunnittelijoille* [*Guidelines for designers of apartments for invalids using wheelchairs]* (1963), and *Ohjeita liikuntaesteiden poistamiseksi* [*Guidelines for removing mobility barriers*] (1965), published by Suomen Siviili- ja Asevelvollisuusinvaliidien Liitto.

4 The publications *Suunnittele ja rakenna kaikille* [*Plan and Build for Everybody*] (1976) and *Liikuntaesteinen rakennetussa ympäristössä: ongelmat ja parantamiskeinot* [*The mobility impaired person in the built environment: problems and solutions*] (1977), and Asumisympäristötutkimus AYT [the study on residential environments] of 1976.

"accessibility" or "barrier-free environments" (Koivukoski, 2020, p. 32) capable of describing accessibility as a phenomenon or as a positive spatial quality. Instead, aspects of architectural accessibility were discussed and referred to by using person-centred or barrier-centred notions such as "spaces suitable for *people with mobility impairments*" or "removing *mobility barriers* in the built environment".[5]

5 See early accessibility literature such as *Ohjeita liikuntaesteiden poistamiseksi* (1965) and *Suunnittele ja rakenna kaikille* (1976).

The research that informs this article draws on the framework of disability history. The field of inquiry, which emerged in the 1980s, employs the evolving concept of disability as an analytical perspective and seeks to highlight disability in broader historical narratives (Blackie & Kuulila, 2021). A growing body of disability history research in architecture and design has identified the presence of architectural accessibility in ideas, practices, and developments in the context of the early disability rights movement in the United States (Guffey, 2017; Hamraie, 2017; Williamson, 2019). Similarly, previous historical inquiry both within and external to the disability rights movement in Finland (Kinnunen, 2015, pp. 49–52; Koivukoski, 2020; Laitinen & Saraste, 2014, pp. 24–27; Leppälä, 2014, pp. 218–230) has identified the topic of architectural accessibility in Threshold's activism: Threshold became an active participant in the Finnish accessibility discourse in the 1970s, and accessibility was one of the most frequently discussed topics in its early communications. As a human rights organization, Threshold devoted itself to expressing and promoting disabled people's views.

This article addresses the following research question: During its first years, from 1973 to 1982, what was the Threshold association's approach to architecture and accessibility, and how was this manifested in the association's activism? The research thus gives an account of the early Finnish disability rights movement's critical and active architectural discourse rooted in disability politics. The movement regarded architecture and the built environment as a concern for disability rights, and its activism therefore sought to advance architectural accessibility. This article introduces Threshold's disability activism as a novel trajectory of disability history within the Finnish architectural history of the late twentieth century by analysing it as a human rights-focussed architectural agency. The research was conducted based on an archival study of the Threshold association's archive and publications from 1973 to 1982, a period marked by both the first decade of the disability rights movement and the enshrining of accessibility legislation in Finland.

While the promotion of architectural accessibility was added to Threshold's agenda during one of their first meetings, Threshold's capacity to anticipate and discuss the topic was increased when Maija Könkkölä (née Elomaa, 1947–2012) joined the group in 1973. She was an architecture student who had become blind during the last years of her studies. While serving as a Threshold board member, Könkkölä graduated as

an architect in 1975, after which she started working as an accessibility specialist in a series of early accessibility projects (which led to the establishment of a permanent organization with this remit in 1982).[6] During the 1970s, Threshold was one of many disability organizations advocating for accessibility. Könkkölä's networks facilitated her and Threshold's expansive views on the ecologies of accessibility discourse. Könkkölä also brought her professional knowledge of architectural processes and education to Threshold. However, since Threshold's archival documents essentially represent and record collective activity, an analysis of collective discourse is prioritized instead of distinguishing individual contributions.

6 Könkkölä started in an accessibility and housing survey project carried out by CP-liitto [the Finnish CP Association], and then moved to the Vammaisten yhdyskuntasuunnitteluprojekti VYP ["spatial planning project for the disabled"], which was later, in 1982, established as a permanent organization under Invalidiliitto. She was also a member of the spatial planning committee of Helsingin Invalidien Yhdistys [Helsinki Invalids' association] in the late 1970s and early 1980s. This committee regularly surveyed and commented on building and planning projects.

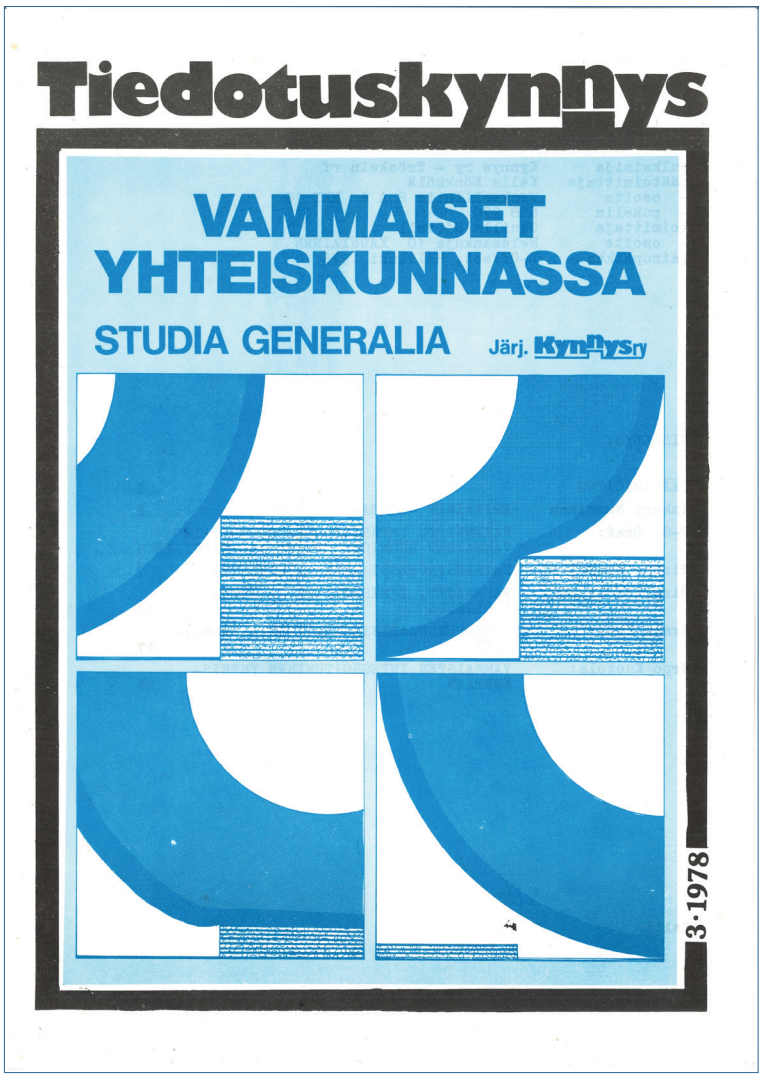


Figure 1
Cover of a *Tiedotuskynnys* magazine from 1978 advertising the lecture series "The disabled in the society. Studia generalia. Organized by the Threshold association". The minimalist series of pictures depicts a wheelchair wheel crossing a threshold.
SOURCE: THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF FINLAND, NATIONAL COLLECTION (FENNICA)

2. Theory, literature, and methods

2.1. Architectural research and disability

Threshold's accessibility activism was informed by the activists' lived experiences as disabled individuals in society, as well as the politics of disability rights movements. The disability rights movements of the 1960s and 1970s politicized the common conception of disability – a concept that can be understood as manifold and intrinsically historical, and thus requires closer consideration. For much of the twentieth century, the predominant apprehension of disability was based largely on medical standpoints; disability was regarded as an individual, medically treatable problem. The movements' activist-led politicized discourse was a breeding ground for the coining of the *social model of disability* (Barnes, 2020, pp. 14–31), which distinguishes between *impairment* and *disability*, where disability results from the social environment's failure to accommodate and include individuals with impairments (Blackie & Kuuliala, 2021, pp. 156–158). Currently, the field of disability studies and adjacent fields sustain a diverse, progressive, and complex contemporary discourse on disability (see, for instance, Watson & Vehmas, 2020). In what follows, I will, however, focus on the scholarly discussion of the connections between disability and architecture.

Within design history, Bess Williamson & Elizabeth Guffey (2020, pp. 4–6) propose a *design model of disability* that seeks to elaborate on the role of design in determining disability – this model also applies to architecture. It draws on Rosemarie Garland-Thomson's (2011) influential theory of the *misfit*. Garland-Thomson argues that bodies can fit or misfit into their environment contexts. Disability equals a misfit, located not in the environment nor in the body, but in their dynamic, contingent, and thus vulnerable relationships. A misfit can also be interpreted as an epistemic position. In other respects, the concepts of design and disability are connected by the notion of the problem, as both something that design is expected to solve, and an often-used, negative, dehumanizing understanding of disability (von Busch & af Ekström, 2021, p. 66).

Other recent architectural research engaged with disability history and disability explores the epistemological potential of disability that unfolds both within design practices and historical inquiry. According to David Gissen (2023), in historical inquiry, architecture and disability should be understood as being fundamentally connected both historically, theoretically, and practically, particularly since conceptions of the human body are embedded in the history and theory of architecture. Gissen thus states that focussing on the framework of accessibility alone expresses a limited understanding of the relationship between architecture and disability. Similarly, yet in reference to contemporary design practices, Jos Boys (2014) argues that by recognizing the intertwined, complex nature of architecture and disability, and by "starting

from disability", disability builds a creative, potential space in architectural design practices.

While architectural research devoted to disability perceives it as a creative and rich regime, disability is treated as a more ambivalent issue in architectural research on accessibility. Recent research in this area, published in the Nordic academic context by, for example, Erdtman et al. (2021); Grangaard et al. (2016); van der Linden et al. (2016); Kajita (2016); García Lantarón (2016); Ryhl et al. (2016), and Müller et al. (2022), has mainly focussed on the current and future prospects of inclusive design and Universal Design. They are being addressed and developed as complex, future-oriented, potential practices holistically capable of advancing social sustainability and inclusion, though hindered by inadequate or ambivalent dissemination, competence, or attitudes in the field. In this discourse, the role of the disability rights movement is often recognized as an important contributor to the emergence of Universal Design and inclusive design practices. It is not uncommon for this research to suggest that accessible and barrier-free design – in contrast to Universal Design – is framed as a special or separate practice, and thus regarded as creating and upholding disability-related stigma.

Other research has observed an oblivious attitude towards disability in Universal Design, as well as proposed disability-led approaches to prevent Universal Design from failing disabled users (Guffey, 2023, pp. 1–11; Hamraie, 2017, pp. 211–221). At the same time, researchers, particularly in the field of disability studies, have looked into the experiences of disabled users in different contexts within the contemporary built environment, proving that disabled users experience the accessibility of built environments as inadequate (Burns et al., 2023; Mao & Chen, 2022; McKinney & Amosun, 2020; Pritchard, 2016). On the contrary, von Busch & af Ekström (2021, p. 66), critical of the universality of access and pointing to another boundary of accessibility, add that access to environments as "living forms" and experiences is not guaranteed by physical access. Through studying the architectural activism of the disability rights movement, this article aims to bring forward the political, critical heritage of architectural accessibility, in which disability is not regarded as a stigma or deficit.

2.2. Timelines of access-knowledge?

A growing body of cross-disciplinary research on accessibility history narrated by scholars Guffey (2017), Hamraie (2017), and Williamson (2019; also Williamson & Guffey, 2020) – which studies material and spatial trajectories of disability focussing on the context of the twentieth-century United States – has linked the development of accessibility to phenomena as diverse as war and pandemics, ergonomics and home economics, citizenship and consumer culture, civil rights, rehabilitation, assistive technology, and infographics. The agency of disabled individuals has not

been a self-evident fact within these histories. Highlighting the contextual characteristics of histories of access, this research area has recognized particular geographies of modern accessibility development, such as car-loving California, American post-war suburbia, and university campuses. Certainly, policies related to and developments pertaining to accessibility have been shaped not only by diverse laws and regulations in different countries, but also by larger disability policy discourses. For example, as illustrated by Andersson (2016) in the context of the late-twentieth-century Swedish welfare state, accessibility concepts have been defined and developed in an ongoing societal discussion involving multiple authorities, organizations, and other stakeholders.

There is currently little previous transnational comparative research on accessibility history. Moreover, the history of accessibility is an ambiguous trajectory in which accessibility has been advanced both through legislation and building standards and through professional literature, but also as a result of activists' claims, DIY practices, professional gatherings, and the like. Consequently, it would not be uncomplicated to situate the accessibility history of either Threshold or Finland on a transnational timeline, also since the framing of such a timeline has not been adequately discussed in the research. Even so, the 1963 book by United Kingdom-based Selwyn Goldsmith is referenced as the advent of accessibility guidelines outside the United States, though Goldsmith did turn in the book to emerging accessible design ideas developed in the United States (Guffey, 2020, p. 102). Focussing further on the Nordic context, the transnational chronology of Finland's and Threshold's accessibility history can be initially analysed based on the international influences: The first accessibility handbook published in Finnish, in 1963, was a translation of a Danish publication that was already published in 1958 by a local polio organization (Suomen Siviili- ja Asevelvollisuusinvaliidien Liitto, 1963). Other Finnish language accessibility handbooks of the 1960s and the 1970s also referenced Swedish, English, German, and Norwegian language literature. Parallel to Finland, the 1960s was the first decade of accessibility advancements in Sweden (Andersson, 2016).

To further contextualize the research within trajectories of accessibility history, I interpret Threshold's accessibility activism as acts of transformative architectural agency that are situated in relation to the regime of *access-knowledge*. The concept, coined by Aimi Hamraie (2017), encompasses the heterogenous, historical, multidisciplinary expert project of defining and creating access that has operated through challenging and reshaping what the norm of the user in architecture is. Hamraie describes *access-knowledge* as a regime of "knowing-making", in which the built world is perceived as inseparable from the political nature of knowing, and knowledge "as a site of engagement and transformation" (Hamraie, 2017, p. 10). Moreover, by employing the term *architectural agency* when referring to the Threshold association's activism in this article,

I indicate that this article acknowledges that the activism has contributed to the domain of architecture as "capacity to set objectives, make decisions, and either take action or refrain from action in pursuit of those objectives" (Tieteen termipankki, 2025).

2.3. Accounts of activism in architecture and design history

As narrated by Hamraie (2017, pp. 95–130) and Williamson (2019, pp. 96–128), in the context of the United States, the emerging disability rights movement of the 1960s and the 1970s embodied a shift in who had agency within the realm of architectural accessibility, or in access-knowledge. While prior to the disability rights movement's organizing and public activist discourse on accessibility, the access-knowledge regime was determined by expert-led professionals in the fields of rehabilitation, anthropometry, and human factors research, as well as, increasingly, by legal compliance. It was then that user-led contributions to access-knowledge by disabled activists started to gain traction, resulting in greater social and professional recognition and impact. This historical agential shift also implies moving from the conception of "the user as object", to recognizing the user as a subject of access.[7] A pioneering context for this development, recognized in previous research, was the disabled community at the University of California (UC), Berkeley. Advocating for accessibility was a consistent aspect of their activism on campus. The Berkeley activists founded the first Center for Independent Living in 1972, and their pioneering policies, agendas, and practices served as a central influence for the growing disability rights movement in the United States (Danforth, 2018). At UC Berkeley, activists' experiences were also incorporated into experimental spatial design pedagogies later in the 1970s (Galan, 2023). Threshold was a contemporary of the Independent Living Movement in Berkeley and had contacts in the United States; they belonged to the same global generation of disability rights activists, and shared similar accessibility ideals.

7 The disability rights movement's new accessibility ideology and public discourse were preceded by a DIY culture of disabled people originating in the domestic sphere and special campuses (Williamson, 2019, pp. 43–95).

While the disability rights movement of the 1970s has not previously been studied in the context of Finnish architectural history, research has nonetheless recognized other protests and movements. Threshold's activities were linked to broader architectural developments and social critiques at this time. The early 1970s in the field of architecture in Finland were characterized by a strong production-oriented rationalism, through which architects assumed collective responsibility for the construction of the welfare state, while this rationality shattered in the later part of the decade, which was characterized by manifold postmodernist ideas (Kummala, 2023; Vartola, 2023; Mukala, 2023b). A marginal yet prevailing historical narrative also recognizes a growing "leftist awareness" (Maula, 1992) arising from the Marxist-Leninist tendencies among Finnish architects and architecture students in the 1970s, which were preceded by the 1969 occupation of the architecture school at the Helsinki University of Technology (Vartola, 2023). In 1970, an architect-led protest

against elitism in architecture was held, alongside the publishing of a famous pamphlet opposing the prevailing values of urban planning in Helsinki; both of them put forward a commitment to built heritage (Mukala, 2023a). In the previous decade, a single-issue movement focussing on gender equality had engaged in discourses on housing and suburban development, demanding that suburban planning should support equality in family life (Turunen, 2023; Tyvelä, 2019). In the neighbouring field of design, a growing social and environmental awareness emerged among Finnish design students, and the later Marxist-Leninist student movement of the 1970s further politicized the students. This momentum led to critical discussions about the curriculum, and the recognition of the social and environmental impacts of design profession (Savola, 2023).

2.4. The non-architectural archive as a ghost archive in architectural history

In Threshold's archive, I have studied the following documents from the years 1973 to 1982: annual reports and action plans; the minutes of board and annual meetings; a selection of sent letters; a collection of press clippings; and the association's *Tiedotuskynnys* [*Information Threshold*] magazine, launched in 1975.[8] The archive contains few documents that would commonly be studied as architectural documents, such as drawings or design minutes, nor is the archive linked to any architectural institution. Viewed from within the framework of architectural historiography, the Threshold archive can be assigned the supplementary status of a *non-architectural archive*. Having conducted the research in such an archive, I have nonetheless utilized the notion of architecture as a search tool. First, I read the abovementioned documents (and in the case of association's magazines, the tables of contents) and looked for architecture- and accessibility-related words such as – the English equivalents of which would be – "architecture", "architect", "design", "access", "barriers", "barrier-free", "building", "environment", and "space", to name but a few; also including the related, more specific sub-concepts such as "ramp", "entrance", and "apartment". I recorded these passages and documents by taking written notes and, when allowed, by photographing them. After collecting and documenting the architecture-themed materials, I analysed the excerpts by re-reading them and constructing thematical groupings, while also making contextual and source-critical remarks in writing. The entire writing process was informed by knowledge and questioning by previous research on histories of accessibility, the welfare state, and the disability rights movement.

Furthermore, I follow Janina Gosseye's line of thinking (2019, pp. 11–25), in which she turns to feminist thinker Rebecca Solnit's ideas of silence and "ghost libraries holding all the stories that have not been told"; through this, she introduces the notion of a *ghost archive* in architectural historiography. With ghost archive, Gosseye refers to the critical potential of oral histories in the project of broadening architectural historiographies

8 The archive, located in the Finnish Labour Archives, was not yet formally organized during my archival research in 2022–2023. I studied some issues of the *Tiedotuskynnys* magazine in the National Library of Finland, as they were missing from the Labour Archives. In addition to the aforementioned materials, the archive contained miscellaneous notes, documents, and photographic documentation.

and introducing previously excluded narratives and perspectives into the history of architecture. By referring to Threshold's non-architectural archive as a ghost archive in this research, I denote a relationship analogous to that between oral histories and established architectural history; this type of archival research implies listening to "what Threshold had to say" about architecture.[9] By referring to Threshold's archive as a ghost archive, I also provide an analysis of its status amongst established architectural archives. I lean as well on the understanding that engaging with a non-architectural, *other* archive is conducive to producing a more democratic architectural history by accepting architecture as processes that transcend and defy disciplinary, institutional, and, finally, archival settings (Groen, 2023; Rusak, 2023).

More generally, I utilize the methods of historical contextualization and source criticism in the analysis of the ghost archive. The historical context is layered and complex, while the research – the movement towards that context – I produce is partial and influenced dialogically by present and situated ways of knowing and not-knowing. A significant contextual detachment also emerges as I analyse the materials produced in non-architectural historical contexts as architectural discourse, while simultaneously encountering, constructing, and analysing this distance from the position of my lived reality as a non-disabled researcher and architect analysing records produced by disability rights activists in the 1970s.[10] Ultimately, I consider Threshold's early activities to only partially overlap with the field of architecture and its discourses of the time, mainly as a result of Threshold's efforts to negotiate accessibility with design professionals and authorities. Moreover, neither accessibility nor, for example, disabled users were a commonly visible topic in the architectural discourse of 1970s Finland: between 1970 and 1979, the leading architecture magazine, *Arkkitehti* [*Finnish Architectural Review*], published only four accessibility-themed pieces in a total of seventy-eight issues.

9 Another recent interpretation of a ghost archive in architectural historiography by Algimantas Grigas (2023), discusses the ghost archive as an example of "a private archive of an architect that is not fully indexed, or a set of documents held now from a no longer existing institution" in Lithuania's post-Soviet context. Grigas's definition implies that tangible architectural and technical documentation are stronger historical evidence by comparison with oral histories, or a "story heard in an interview"; this definition thus diverges from the one outlined by Gosseye.

10 Koivisto & Katsui (2021, p. 182) have noted that acknowledging the researcher's positions supports transparency within research that concerns disabled people and minorities.

3. Analysis

3.1. Threshold as a pioneer of the disability rights movement in 1970s Finland

Threshold was founded by a group of disabled university students who experienced barriers to access and problematic study conditions at the University of Helsinki. The early members have recalled that the university buildings "had stairs everywhere", meaning that disabled students had to rely on assistance from student peers and university personnel to navigate its spaces – conditions that were mirrored in and prevalent throughout many inaccessible contexts in society at large (Laitinen & Saraste, 2014, pp. 88, 192). From its inception, Threshold was explicitly a cross-disability association, and its agenda emphasized social inte-

gration, independence, and the human rights of disabled persons. The association soon grew to have a presence in other university towns in Finland, yet it did not limit its activities and concerns to issues within university contexts. Despite its membership not being very large, Threshold became an influential actor in Finnish disability politics (Leppälä, 2014, p. 24), embodying the new disability rights movement in Finland.

While the 1970s was the peak period of constructing the welfare state, it was also a decade in which new social movements proliferated. The association's founding in 1973 and its activities were both influenced by earlier and contemporary Finnish and international social movements. The late 1960s in Finland bore witness to an emergence of new, single-issue movements – radical groups, many of which included minorities' issues on their agendas. The movements of the 1960s greatly influenced the development of the welfare state (Siisiäinen, 1996, p. 44). Long-time Threshold leader Kalle Könkkölä (1950–2018) later contextualized Threshold as belonging to the same "radical wave" as the peace movement and youth movement (Könkkölä, 1988). Although the disability rights movement has not been acknowledged within previous research on social movements and activism in Finland in the 1970s, and researchers have also not identified disability politics shared by social movements of the time, Threshold did embody some of the characteristics of the evolving, new movements of the later part of the decade: The 1970s marked a turning point within social movements, as towards the end of the decade, movements and groups that emphasized identity and individuality grew larger than the previous party-political, societal planning, and state-oriented movements (Bergman, 1998; Ilmonen, 1998; Konttinen, 1998; Siisiäinen, 1998).

The disability rights movement's activism developed against a backdrop of the implementation of Finnish public disability policies, and the advocacy of other disability organizations. The 1970s marked the progress from rehabilitation-centred disability policies to ideals of normalization and equal citizenship (Leppälä, 2014, pp. 285–286). In post-war Finland, disability organizations were influential in ensuring that national disability policies both provided and outlined welfare, yet Threshold sought to provide an alternative to the more established disability organizations of the time by disparaging charity, emphasizing a cross-disability approach, and focussing on lobbying and communications instead of producing services for disabled people (Leppälä, 2014, pp. 23–24). Threshold's critical attitudes towards "traditional" disabled people's organizations are often mentioned in the movement's own historiography, whose narratives recount that Threshold activists were perceived as radicals and utopians who were fighting against a wide range of prejudices against disabled people and their place in society.[11]

Threshold's history and ideologies share common ground with foreign

11 For information and histories that recall the early years of the Threshold association, see, for example: Kinnunen (2015); Kontkanen (1995); Könkkölä (1988); Laitinen & Saraste (2014); Saraste & Könkkölä (2010).

disability rights movements. According to Baar (2022), the Europe- and North America-centred "global" disability rights movement developed in correspondence with the peace movement, women's movement, U.S. Civil Rights movement, and anti-apartheid movement. The disability rights movement faced increased internationalization and diversification in the 1970s, and the number of new disability organizations also grew. Within these networks, the innovations and ideologies of local disability rights movements were often disseminated through transnational encounters between activists. Threshold and its activists had contacts in the United States, Sweden, and Denmark, for example, and they were connected to many international disability rights organizations (Saraste & Könkkölä, 2010, pp. 124–128; TK 1/1977, pp. 5–16; Könkkölä, 1988). One example of an influential encounter was a study trip that Kalle Könkkölä made to the United States in 1976, where he visited local universities, met with disability rights activists, and sought knowledge about study conditions. In Berkeley, for example, he explored the Center for Independent Living and other local initiatives, and admired the lively Telegraph Avenue, where he was impressed by disabled people "blending in with the crowd" (TK 1/1977, p. 9).

3.2. Architectural barriers denoted inequality in Threshold's discourse

The Threshold association produced their architectural discourse through a framework that emphasized access and barriers in the built environment. Otherwise, *architecture* per se is seldom explicitly discussed in the archived materials and texts the activists produced. Yet, at the same time, it is visible that Threshold's accessibility activism was linked to varied architectural processes, institutions, spaces, and conditions. Access-knowledge was discussed in the overlapping spheres of lived experience, the critique of design expertise, and the association's legislative ambitions. The issue of accessibility permeated many aspects of Threshold's discourse[12]: An awareness of access and barriers was present when topics like work, employment, education, travelling, and cultural services were discussed (TK 1/1977, pp. 5–10; TK 1/1978, pp. 2, 12–13; TK 2–3/1979, pp. 23–24, 30; TK 5/1981, pp. 17–18). A lack of accessibility in the built environment was framed as contradicting Threshold's ideals of independence and the societal integration of disabled people: "If a citizen in a wheelchair lives on the third floor of a house without an elevator, civil rights are of no use" (TK 3/1976, p. 2). While in the 1970s the peer association Invalidiliitto was constructing and celebrating new special housing units and service centres (Mähönen & Remes, 1998, pp. 188–193, 211; Leppälä, 2014, p. 183), Threshold rejected and criticized these separative solutions. They instead called for integrated housing and the inclusion of accessibility legislation measures that would make built environments available to disabled people.

12 By using the expression "Threshold's discourse", I refer to the collective thinking, ideas, and discussion pronounced in the association's external and internal communication. While the voices of board members and activists in other key roles were often at the forefront, the discourse consisted of multiple voices and perspectives. Threshold published texts and thinking produced by external agents such as authorities, researchers, accessibility experts, and other disability rights advocates in the *Tiedotuskynnys* magazine, resulting in these views also becoming part of the discourse.

In Threshold's discourse, architectural accessibility was framed as being connected to disability in a manner that reflects both social and societal understandings of disability (see also Leppälä, 2014, p. 229). There are many instances in Threshold's *Tiedotuskynnys* magazine in which this position is put forward, such as in an article from 1978, which stated: "Disabled people have 'problems' (one or many). Elements of the environment cause the problem/problems. The cause of the problem can be eliminated, it can be changed or amended" (TK 3/1978, p. 5). A subsequent 1979 article noted that "[c]ounter to the unfortunately common understanding, an impairment is not an individual feature, but is rather a barrier affecting many things – including how culture can be consumed" (TK 2-3/1979, pp. 23–24). A similar position was reiterated again later in the same issue: "Mobility impairments can be reduced or even removed by correcting the physical environment. Although nothing can be done, as such, to change an impairment, it is possible to minimize the disadvantages it causes, and thus notably enhance the mobility and activity prospects of the disabled person herself" (TK 2-3/1979, p. 28). In summary, the underlying foundation of Threshold's accessibility discourse was that accessibility is a phenomenon that goes beyond the architectural to also encompass issues such as human rights and quality of life.

During its early years, the Helsinki-based Threshold association was joined by local committees in the university cities of Tampere, Jyväskylä, and Turku. As recorded in diverse documents of the Helsinki organization and the local committees (MoM 10/3/76; MoM 11/10/76; MoM 13/9/79; AR 1974; AR 1977; correspondence; annual reports of local committees), Threshold closely followed and engaged in spatial assessment and development processes within the university contexts. The university as an everyday yet inaccessible socio-spatial environment prompted Threshold's early user-oriented activism. In Helsinki, Threshold appealed to both university administrators and the student union, putting forward accessibility improvements unprompted, as well as proposing that accessibility should be taken into consideration during planned renovations and new construction. The committees in Turku and Tampere initiated accessibility surveys of the university spaces, followed by supervising the removal of barriers. The Turku Threshold committee produced a student guide for disabled students that included descriptions of access and barriers in university buildings, tips for routes, and the location of the accessible toilet, for example. The Turku and Jyväskylä committees also appealed to local city authorities, calling for accessibility improvements in public spaces. In all these university cities, Threshold proposed student housing for disabled people. The local committees utilized Maija Könkkölä's expertise in their negotiations with local actors.

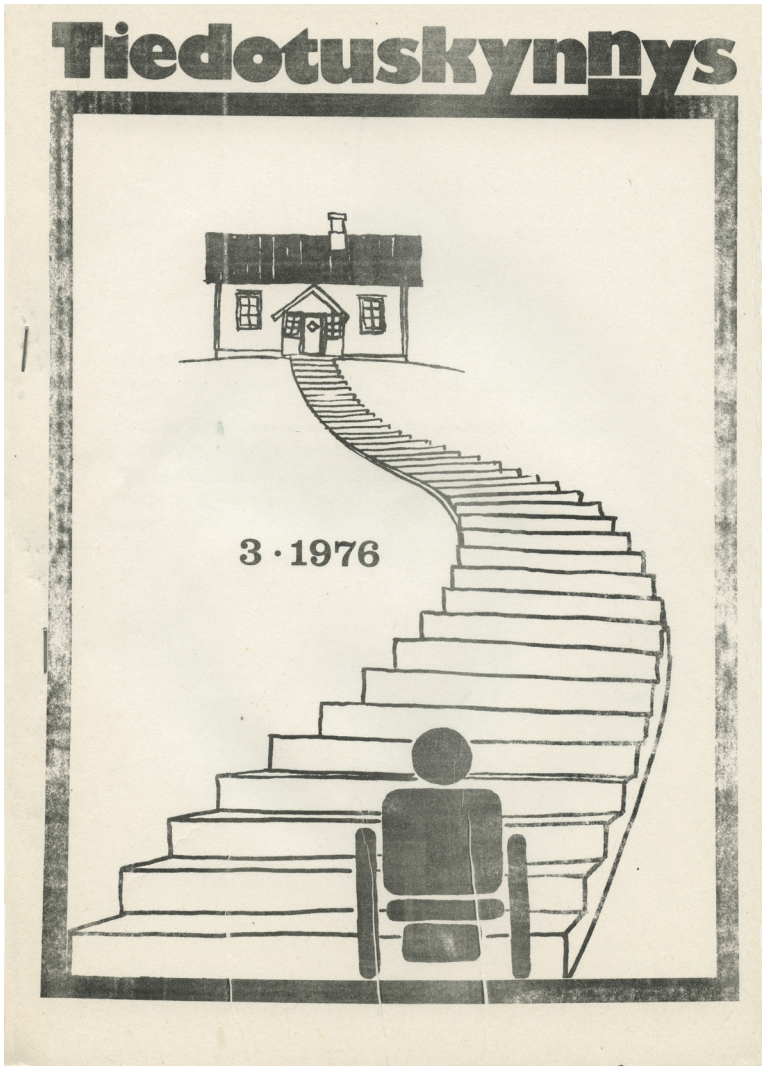


Figure 2
Cover of a *Tiedotuskynnys* magazine from 1976.
SOURCE: TYÖVÄEN ARKISTO / THE FINNISH LABOUR ARCHIVES

3.3. Disabled experiences as a source of knowledge

After the new accessibility legislation of 1979 entered into force, the association's *Tiedotuskynnys* magazine published architecture criticism in a recurring column titled "Ylitimme kynnyksen" ["We crossed the threshold"]. This commentary took the form of spatial reviews describing the activists' and collaborators' experiences from site and building visits. Similar spatial analyses also occasionally surfaced in other articles published in the magazine. For example, the reviews included a new department store, a cruise ship, a housing fair, the Parliament House, and a rehabilitation centre (TK 2–3/1979, pp. 34–36; TK 1–2/1981, p. 34; TK 5/1980 p. 20–21; TK 4/1979, p. 25).

The spatial critiques were based on first-hand experiences and documented in written texts. They observed and evaluated the accessibility of the spaces, and were most often analysed through paying attention to successful or failed detailed design solutions, such as thresholds and stairs, ramps, orientation, heights and dimensions, and the accessibility

of toilets, to name but a few. Some of the reviews communicated knowledge of current accessibility legislation, while others were based mostly on personal observations. Many reviews also bear witness to the failure of architecture that led to a need for on-site help and care from staff members (TK 1/1979, p. 22; TK 2–3/1979, pp. 35–36).

The column's inaugural review (TK 2-3/1979, pp. 34–35; see also Leppälä, 2014, pp. 225–226), for example, describes two activists' observations during their visit to a new Sokos department store in Espoo. The text begins with a reference to the new building legislation, and a call for action. The activists then review the building's entrance, ways to orient oneself, and the accessible toilet in relation to accessibility guidelines, among other things. They pay attention to various shortcomings in accessibility: An open staircase is dangerous for persons with visual impairments; there is a lack of alternatives for those with special diets in the café; the wall-to-wall carpeting makes moving difficult for individuals who use a wheelchair; and grab rails are not installed in the toilet. At the end of their visit, the activists meet the director of the department store to deliver their comments. They observe the director listening and making notes. The article closes with a description of a subsequent inspection visit, during which they observe that changes have been made in response to some of their comments.

In these critiques published in *Tiedotuskynnys*, Threshold's members generate a body of *expertise by experience*, a type of (user-led) accessibility knowledge that supports an understanding of the expertise of disabled people. This position can be gleaned from reading the pages of *Tiedotuskynnys*; scattered throughout some articles are disabled writers informally identifying themselves as experts on accessibility (TK 1/1978, p. 2; TK 5/1979, pp. 19–21). This type of understanding, however, was mostly presented implicitly, and can be read through detailed critiques of the accessibility of built spaces. Such an understanding would nevertheless help to traverse the bridge between early professional accessibility expertise and the knowledge and lived experience of disabled activist subjects.

Another indication of the perceived relevance of architectural accessibility in the association were the efforts to educate both its members and the general public about accessibility issues. For example, in 1978–1979, accessibility in the built environment was the topic of three open educational seminars held by the association (AR, 1978; AR, 1979). This public programming would not only seek to emphasize the importance of accessibility in public discourse, but also to produce and encourage the concept of an attentive and knowledgeable disabled user and association member who possessed expertise in relation to accessibility and the built environment. As already mentioned, many of the spatial reviewers' observations indicated they were well-aware of the latest accessibil-

ity legislation and measurements. After the mid-1970s, when the early accessibility guideline projects of other organizations were established, Threshold also mediated and published information about the latest advancements in the field in Finland. Additionally, they followed and often shared information from the discourse of the neighbouring country Sweden.

Accessibility, or rather architectural barriers, was a topic that disabled activists often referred to in press interviews in the mid- and late-1970s. For example, in 1974, Kalle Könkkölä admitted that he would have preferred to study social sciences instead of mathematics, yet it would have been impossible to navigate that university department as a wheelchair user (HS 27/9/1974, p. 20). The United Nations proclaimed 1981 the International Year of Disabled Persons, and Threshold addressed this by initiating a communications project aimed at schools and teachers, care, medical, and social workers, officials and policymakers, and designers. The project positioned disabled activists as spokespeople who communicated "accessibility" as one of the key themes; around thirty designated presentations and introductory remarks discussed mobility barriers and accessible design and environments.

3.4. Critical understanding of design expertise and knowledge

In addition to promoting the concept of the disabled user-expert, Threshold's discourse recognized the accessibility expertise of professional designers and architects, and both criticized and discussed this as a substantial factor in the development of accessibility. On the pages of *Tiedotuskynnys*, this was shown, for instance, through follow-up articles about the contributions of current accessibility guidelines and survey projects, as well as by diverse critical commentary on the attitudes, imaginations, and knowledge of professional designers, which were seen as leading to failures in accessibility (TK 3/1978, pp. 5–6; TK 4/1979, p. 25; TK 5/1979, pp. 15, 19–21). In a comprehensive article titled "Ketä varten suunnitellaan" ["Design for whom"],[13] which discussed the need for accessibility in society, Maija Könkkölä introduces the topic by reflecting on her experience of becoming disabled, and its impact on her attitude towards disabled people when working as an architect: "Speaking for myself, I can say that my eyes opened as I lost my sight. … It became clear to me that the disability that I had considered to be a feature that would certainly restrict my mobility and functioning, instead proved to be simply a technical problem, and thus a repairable one" (TK 1/1977, pp. 17–23).

13 The article was first published in the professional magazine *Tiili* [*Brick*] 3/1976.

Threshold's understanding of the significance of designers in the development of accessibility resulted in its organization of extracurricular educational inputs. In its founding year alone, the association created and managed a designated image slideshow for educating architecture students about accessibility (AR, 1973). Disabled Threshold activists gave yearly presentations at the architecture department of the Helsinki

Figure 3
Selected images from Threshold's educational slideshow depicting accessibility and barriers, dated 1984.
SOURCE: THRESHOLD ASSOCIATION ARCHIVE, TYÖVÄEN ARKISTO / THE FINNISH LABOUR ARCHIVES

University of Technology. Consisting of images showing mobility possibilities and problems that disabled people encountered in public spaces, and later also covering housing, this visual instrument was a medium of activism that appealed to the conventions of architectural education and professionalism. Educating architecture students was regarded as also making an impact on the design profession, an outcome most likely determined by Maija Könkkölä's recent experiences and contacts as an architecture student, as well as Threshold's origins as a student organization. Over the years, Threshold updated and expanded this open-ended tool, producing several slideshows that were used to educate different professional groups, policy makers, and the general public.

Threshold's accessibility discourse shows that the advocates of accessibility had to recognize and challenge prejudices around accessible design solutions: That they were expensive and benefit only a small minority.[14] This perception was evident, for example, in officials' responses to the accessibility complaints published in *Tiedotuskynnys*. When, in 1980, Threshold filed a complaint against a municipal hall building project in Loppi, the municipality's correspondence with Threshold framed accessibility as a minority issue and stated that the majority rule justified neglecting accessibility, even though this was against the law (TK 5/1980, pp. 8–9). When critically responding to such attitudes, Threshold promoted accessible design as universally beneficial not only for disabled people, but also for children and the elderly (TK 3/1978, pp. 5–6; TK 1/1977, pp. 17–23; TK 1–2/1981, p. 34). The concept of disability as a "special" need or deviating premise for design was thus questioned and criticized (TK 3/1981, pp. 14–15).

Threshold also made contributions to accessibility guidelines and literature in Finland. In the late-1970s and early-1980s, the association was invited to comment on the drafting of new building information standards [RT-kortti] for accessibility (AR 1978; AR 1979; AR 1980; AR 1981). Another contribution was Threshold's publishing practice concerning accessibility, in which the positions of different disability groups were promoted. Given that Threshold is a cross-disability organization, its understanding of accessibility encompassed considerations of a variety of accessibility needs. In 1979, Threshold reprinted and distributed (to local architects and designers) the Swedish accessibility guideline research report *De handikappade och den fysiska miljön* [*The disabled and the physical environment*], and in 1984, they published a Finnish translation of the report.[15] This research, conducted by Swedish architect Per-Gunnar Braf with his working group, looked at the spatial accessibility needs of people from more than twenty different disability groups, and produced a matrix describing the correlations of disabilities to a list of different spaces and environments. The publication differed from most of the accessibility guidelines and publications of the time, as it focussed equally on both design guidelines and information about disabilities, and in this

14 Threshold thus consolidated the views that Invalidiliitto had previously expressed on the universal utility of architectural accessibility (see Leppälä, 2014, pp. 222–230).

15 Braf, P.–G., & Pardon, W. M. (1984). *Vammaiset ja fyysinen ympäristö: Selvitys ongelmien inventointivaiheesta*. Kynnys.

way, emphasized a thinking about accessibility that stemmed from collective knowledge about the needs of disabled people.

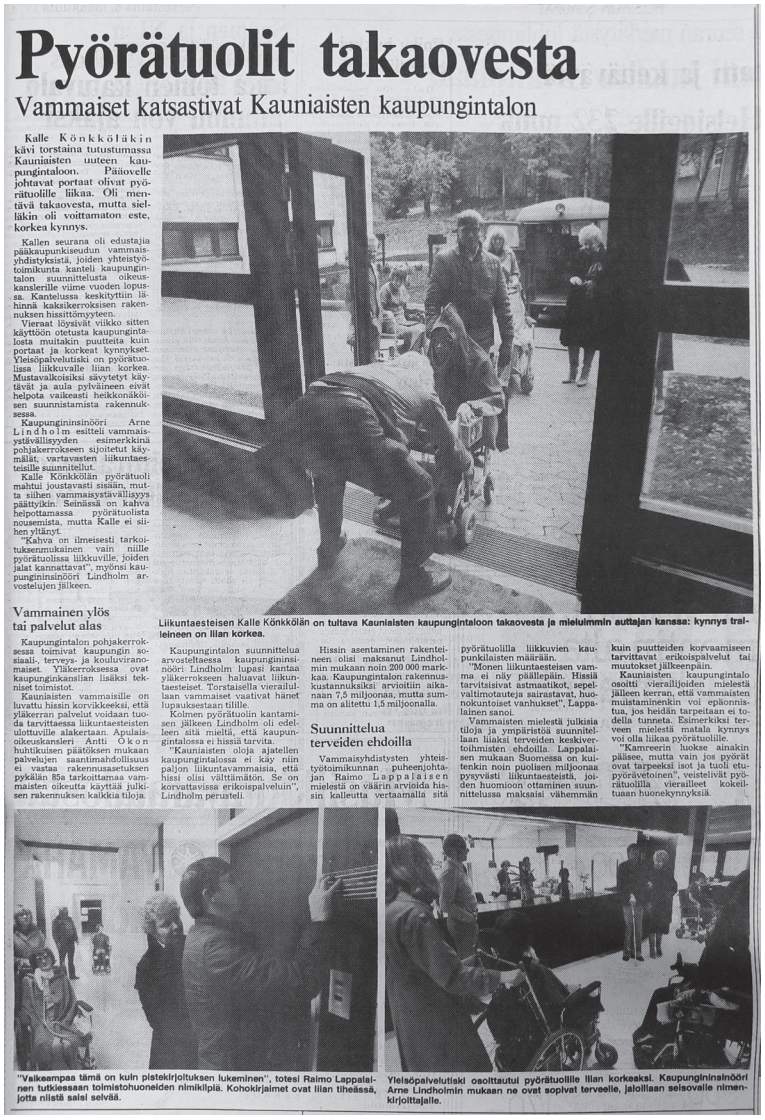
3.5. Threshold's commentary on policy and legislation

Beyond design knowledge, Threshold recognized accessibility as a concern for legislation and policy making; accessibility policies were also a topic mediated and commented on in the pages of *Tiedotuskynnys*. A prominent example of this endeavour can be found in the 1/1979 issue, which featured a reprint of the new 1979 building code in its seven-page entirety. For Threshold, accessibility legislation was both an object of critique and progressive demands, as well as a legal instrument they could utilize in their struggle to create a more accessible society.

Between 1973 and 1979, Finnish accessibility legislation had decreed that new buildings providing public services needed to be built to be accessible. But the legislation was not binding, leaving room for interpretation, and the authorities did not provide official instructions on how to apply the legislation until 1979, when a new building code came into effect. Both before and after this new building code, Threshold lobbied for more specific, comprehensive, and binding legislation that would not only cover public buildings, but also workplaces and housing (TK 1/1979, p. 3; correspondence; see also Leppälä, 2014, p. 227). They appealed to the Minister of the Interior with a statement on the precision and field of application of the accessibility legislation, and suggested guidelines regarding which buildings in state-financed housing require elevators; to the National Housing Board with suggestions for developing housing design guidelines and the implementation of accessibility; and also to the Minister of Education, proposing an appropriation of 1.5 million Finnish markka for removing barriers in Finnish schools (TK 3/1981, p. 16; TK 2/1978, p. 16; correspondence). Threshold's guiding principle for housing was that instead of special solutions for disabled people, all housing stock should be built to be accessible. The association not only gave independent statements concerning the building legislation, but, as stakeholders, were also approached by officials to comment on the development of the new building code (AR 1976; AR 1977).

Threshold also monitored the quality and implementation of the accessibility legislation in Finland, on occasion in coordination with other disabled people's organizations and groups. For example, they petitioned the State Provincial Offices of the Uusimaa and Lappi regions, insisting that these authorities supervise the implementation of building legislation with respect to accessibility issues (MoM 20/10/82; MoM 15/9/82). Threshold filed several official complaints to the Chancellor of Justice concerning new building projects and public spaces that did not meet the legal accessibility standards, with one of the complaints stating revealingly that "disability organizations or disabled persons cannot monitor all building processes in our country" (MoM 5/5/80; MoM 10/2/82;

MoM 20/6/83; TK 1/1979, pp. 13–14; TK 5/1980, pp. 8–9; see also Leppälä, 2014, p. 224). Both the petitions and complaints – as well as the letters to municipalities concerning building projects or directives – were not limited to cities where Threshold's local committees operated, but also concerned other regions in the country (MoM 18/4/83; MoM 12/1/83; MoM 18/8/82; MoM 29/11/77). In some cases, appeals were sent directly to private service providers.



Pyörätuolit takaovesta

Vammaiset katsastivat Kauniaisten kaupungintalon

Kalle Könkkölän kävi torstaina tutustumassa Kauniaisten uuteen kaupungintaloon. Pääovelle johtavat portaat olivat pyörätuolille liikaa. Oli mentävä takaovesta, mutta sielläkin oli voittamaton este, korkea kynnys.

Kallen seurana oli edustajia pääkaupunkiseudun vammaisyhdistyksistä, joiden yhteistyötoimikunta kanteli kaupungintalon suunnittelusta oikeuskanslerille viime vuoden lopussa. Kantelussa keskityttiin lähinnä kaksikerroksisen rakennuksen hissittömyyteen.

Vieraat löysivät viikko sitten käyttöön otetusta kaupungintalosta muitakin puutteita kuin portaat ja korkeat kynnykset. Yleisöpalvelutiski on pyörätuolissa liikkuvalle liian korkea. Mustavalkoisiksi sävytetyt käytävät ja aula pyhäineen eivät helpota vaikeasti heikkonäköisen suunnistamista rakennuksessa.

Kaupungininsinööri Arne Lindholm esitteli vammaisystävällisyyden esimerkkinä pohjakerrokseen sijoitetut käymälät, vartavasten liikuntaesteisille suunnitellut.

Kalle Könkkölän pyörätuoli mahtui joustavasti sisään, mutta siihen vammaisystävällisyys päättyikin. Seinässä on kahva heipottamassa pyörätuolista nousemista, mutta Kalle ei siihen yltänyt.

"Kahva on ilmeisesti tarkoituksenmukainen vain niille pyörätuolissa liikkuville, joiden jalat kannattavat", myönsi kaupungininsinööri Lindholm arvostelujen jälkeen.

Liikuntaesteisen Kalle Könkkölän on tultava Kauniaisten kaupungintaloon takaovesta ja mieluimmin auttajan kanssa: kynnys tralleineen on liian korkea.

Vammainen ylös tai palvelut alas

Kaupungintalon pohjakerroksessa toimivat kaupungin sosiaali-, terveys- ja kouluviranomaiset. Yläkerroksessa ovat kaupunginkanslian lisäksi tekniset toimistot.

Kauniaisten vammaisille on luvattu hissin korvikkeeksi, että yläkerran palvelut voidaan tuoda tarvittaessa liikuntaesteisten ulottuville alakertaan. Apulaisoikeuskansleri Antti Ökon huhtikuisen päätöksen mukaan palvelujen saantimahdollisuus ei vastaa rakennusasetuksen pykälän 85a tarkoittamaa vammaisten oikeutta käyttää julkisen rakennuksen kaikkia tiloja.

Kaupungintalon suunnittelua arvosteltaessa kaupungininsinööri Lindholm lupasi kantaa yläkerrokseen haluavat liikuntaesteiset. Torstaisella vierailullaan vammaiset vaativat hänet lupaukseetaan tilille.

Kolmen pyörätuolin kantamisen jälkeen Lindholm oli edelleen sitä mieltä, että kaupungintalossa ei hissiä tarvita.

"Kauniaisten oloja ajatellen kaupungintalossa ei käy niin paljon liikuntavammaisia, että hissi olisi välttämätön. Se on korvattavissa erikoispalveluin", Lindholm perusteli.

Hissin asentaminen rakenteineen olisi maksanut Lindholmin mukaan noin 200 000 markkaa. Kaupungintalon rakennuskustannuksiksi arvioitiin aikanaan 7,5 miljoonaa, mutta summa on alitettu 1,5 miljoonalla.

Suunnittelua terveiden ehdoilla

Vammaisyhdistysten yhteistyötoimikunnan puheenjohtajan Raimo Lappalaisen mielestä on väärin arvioida hissin kalleutta vertaamalla sitä pyörätuolilla liikkuvien kaupunkilaisten määrään.

"Monen liikuntaesteisen vamma ei näy päälle päin. Hissiä tarvitsisivat astmaatikot, sepelvaltimotauteja sairastavat, huonokuntoiset vanhukset", Lappalainen sanoi.

Vammaisten mielestä julkisia tiloja ja ympäristöä suunnitellaan liiaksi terveiden keskivertoihmisten ehdoilla. Lappalaisen mukaan Suomessa on kuitenkin noin puolisen miljoonaa pysyvästi liikuntaesteistä, joiden huomioon ottaminen suunnittelussa maksaisi vähemmän kuin puutteiden korvaamiseen tarvittavat erikoispalvelut tai muutokset jälkeenpäin.

Kauniaisten kaupungintalo osoitti vierailijoiden mielestä jälleen kerran, että vammaisten muistaminenkin voi epäonnistua, jos heidän tarpeitaan ei todella tunneta. Esimerkiksi terveen mielestä matala kynnys voi olla liikaa pyörätuolille.

"Kamreerin luokse ainakin pääsee, mutta vain jos pyörät ovat tarpeeksi isot ja tuoli etupyörävetoinen", veistelivät pyörätuolilla vierailleet kokeiltuaan huonekynnyksiä.

"Valkeampaa tämä on kuin pistekirjoituksen lukeminen", totesi Raimo Lappalainen tutkiessaan toimistohuoneiden nimikilpiä. Kohokirjaimet ovat liian tiheässä, jotta niistä saisi selvää.

Yleisöpalvelutiski osoittautui pyörätuolille liian korkeaksi. Kaupungininsinööri Arne Lindholmin mukaan ne ovat sopivat terveelle, jaloillaan seisovalle nimenkirjoittajalle.

Figure 4
"Wheelchairs use back door: The disabled inspected the Kauniainen town hall", a newspaper article depicting the Kauniainen townhall protest. *Helsingin Sanomat* 6.10.1978.
SOURCE: MEDIA MUSEUM AND ARCHIVES MERKKI, HELSINGIN SANOMAT ARCHIVE

In 1978, Threshold, along with a coalition of local disabled people's groups and organizations, filed an official complaint with the Chancellor of Justice, stating that the new townhall building in Kauniainen failed to fulfill accessibility requirements (see also Leppälä, 2014, pp. 224–225). The Chancellor's office rejected the complaint, stating that an adequate effort had been made. The Kauniainen municipality, along with the architect Kurt Moberg, asserted that all parties had strived to adhere to

the building legislation and accessibility guidelines (TK 1/1979, pp. 13–14; HS 6/10/1978, p. 15). The dispute attracted media attention in the biggest national newspaper; on 6 October 1978, *Helsingin Sanomat* published a story about the protest at the Kauniainen townhall. The article described how a group of disability rights activists – five of whom were using wheelchairs – made a protest visit to the newly finished building. As stairs led up to the primary entrance, the activists entered the building through the back door, and needed to traverse a high existing threshold. During the visit, the activists examined and gave critical comments to the press about the architectural inaccessibility of the building.

The Kauniainen townhall dispute became one of the most publicly visible actions of the Threshold association at that time, and the action and the coverage it received not only made public their legislative pleas, but also evinced a form of accessibility activism based on lived experience, as previously discussed. The protest, as witnessed by the press, promoted the disability rights activists' struggle for accessibility to a wider public. It also remains a case that was recorded, however sparsely, in architectural history.[16] The dispute thus proves to be a rather distinct entry point to disability history in architectural history research.

16 The dispute is mentioned in the Kauniainen townhall building history survey (Schalin et al., 2018, p. 28)

4. Discussion: Mutual history of accessibility, disability rights activism, and welfare state architecture

Since the 1970s and the 1980s, architectural accessibility has further progressed in Finland as an aspect of the built environment that is regulated by legislation, spatial standards, and design guidelines – and advanced by professionals. At the same time, the history of accessibility has remained an uncharted topic within architectural history research in the Nordic countries, and it has seldom been perceived as historically intertwined with the social struggle of the disability rights movement. Through engaging with the Threshold association's archive, this research has attempted to introduce and incorporate the architectural activism of the early Finnish disability rights movement into architectural history.

The scope of the research is limited in terms of analysing the wider impacts of Threshold's discourse and activism. Moreover, as previously stated, accessibility was a topic already actively being discussed from the 1960s onwards by more established Finnish disability organizations as well. As this research has focussed on the Threshold association's archive, it was not possible to thoroughly engage with the broader context of accessibility discourse and its historical trajectories, including the disability politics of the period that were pursued by both officials and disability organizations. The discourses and trajectories of this context remain a topic for further research. Furthermore, although disability studies have been a central influence on disability-oriented research

and historical inquiry in architecture – and as such, have influenced this research indirectly through previous research – the focus of this article has only allowed for a cursory discussion of important literature within disability studies. Notwithstanding these limitations deriving from the focus of the research, the article aims to offer novel insights into the disability history of Finnish architecture.

By contributing to the project of access-knowledge, the Threshold association sustained an engaged critical architectural discourse that centred accessibility, echoed and interpreted the political objectives of the early disability rights movement, and produced original spatial thinking and agency. Its accessibility activism was based on an understanding of the correlation between architectural access and the human rights of the marginalized disabled minority. With reference to understanding "architecture as a spatial configuration of politics" (Lohtaja, 2022), a historical analysis of Threshold's accessibility activism reinforces accessibility – alongside spatial design in general – as a (disability) political issue. While recent practices, research, and developments in architectural accessibility (such as inclusive design and Universal Design) have been moving away from disability politics, the archival examination of Threshold's activism depicts a contrasting view, as it links the commitment of disability rights to a variety of processes, norms, institutions, and practices in architecture. To motivate this and further research, I propose that turning to the history of the disability rights movement is valuable in comprehending architectural accessibility and its history.

The new accessibility legislation of 1973 marked a shift in how users with disabilities were to be taken into consideration in architecture, despite changes in the material environment remaining slow. The perspective of the disabled user, which also bears the experiences of a misfit (as the concept is explained by Garland-Thomson), was essential to Threshold's architectural agency. Threshold's accessibility activism highlighted disabled users both by making them visible – emphasizing their rights and demands – and by utilizing their user knowledge to position them as spatial experts. As such, the history of this activism can be read as a depiction not only of user-led spatial thinking, but also of subversive understandings of the user in architecture, critically broadening the understanding of the user.

Threshold did not have an agenda to *build*, but their broad discursive architectural agency ranged from reviewing detailed design solutions (such as the width of a doorway) to lobbying for a progressive national building legislation. Many times, accessibility activism involved submitting complaints, and it encountered friction, critique of, and objections to accessibility from those it targeted. While there are instances of the discourse pointing to individual building projects, the overall view nonetheless suggests that architecture was discussed as part of a wider

spectrum of dynamics and processes. In this rather broad landscape of knowledge, Threshold outlined objectives of architectural accessibility, interweaving, for instance, design expertise, architects' attitudes, human rights, legislation, design education, official policies, and budgeting. This critical discourse interlaced the objective of accessibility with a wide variety of architectural developments and conditions of the time. The supposed marginality of Threshold's activism can therefore be rejected, and the archive could instead be interpreted as a holistic, critical, and human rights-oriented political record of the architectural conditions of the 1970s and the 1980s.

Furthermore, it is worthwhile to situate Threshold's architectural agency in the looming historical trajectory of the construction of the welfare state, in the intersections of disability politics and architecture. Threshold's activism highlighted the spatio-social rights of the disabled minority in the welfare state and aimed to push development towards better acknowledging the conditions and needed accommodations of disabled people. The historical analysis of this discourse has brought to light aspects of the previously understudied interconnectedness between welfare state architecture and disability politics. This research has thus also strived to provide an entry point to further recognition of and research on accessibility and disability in the architectural historiography of the late-twentieth-century Nordic welfare states.

5. Conclusions

Through analysing the Threshold association's archive from the years 1973 to 1982, the research highlights the architectural discourse and agency of the early disability rights movement in Finland and initiates an inquiry of disability history into the architectural conditions of the developing Nordic welfare state of the 1970s and the 1980s. The key findings from the analysis of Threshold's activism show that the association's architectural thinking interpreted accessibility and barriers in the built environment as an issue of disability politics and human rights. The association emphasized the concept of disabled user-centred accessibility expertise and recognized the impact of designers' knowledge and policies not only on architectural accessibility, but also on disability equity. In these diverse ways, Threshold mediated disabled users' critical objectives to the accessibility discourse, thereby contributing to the formulation of the ideals of architectural accessibility in Finland during the enshrining of accessibility legislation. In addition to this, the article contributes to Nordic architectural research and architectural history by underscoring the political dimensions of accessibility history.

Acknowledgments

The author would like to thank the the Threshold association and the

Finnish Labour Archives for their dedicated work, all the readers of drafts of the article for their constructive comments, and the two anonymous reviewers for their valuable feedback. The article manuscript received proofreading and language advice from Katie Lenanton. The author is responsible for all remaining errors.

Funding

The research was funded by the Emil Aaltonen Foundation, Finnish Concordia Fund, Kone Foundation, and Faculty of Social Sciences at Tampere University.

References

Archival sources

The Finnish Labour Archives, Helsinki: The Threshold association archive

- Annual reports 1973–1982 [abbreviated AR]
- Minutes of board meetings 1973–1982 [abbreviated MoM]
- Sent letters 1973–1981, 1981–1982
- Press clippings 1974–1979, 1980–1982
- Tampere regional committee: annual reports 1980–1982
- Jyväskylä regional committee: annual reports 1977, 1980–1982
- Turku regional committee: annual reports 1980–1982; study guide 1980; advocacy correspondence 1980–1983; incoming letters 1980, 1982
- Slideshow, dated 1984

Magazines and newspaper articles

The following articles of the *Tiedotuskynnys* magazine [abbreviated TK], volumes 1975–1982, listed here chronologically:

Könkkölä, K. (1975). Pääkirjoitus. *Tiedotuskynnys* (1), 3–4.

Könkkölä, K. (1976). Pääkirjoitus. *Tiedotuskynnys* (3), 2.

Könkkölä, K. (1977). Raportti USA: sta. *Tiedotuskynnys* (1), 5–10.

Könkkölä, K. (1977). Kerätään nyt voimamme yhteen... *Tiedotuskynnys* (1), 11–16.

Elomaa, M. (1977). Ketä varten suunnitellaan? *Tiedotuskynnys* (1), 17–23.

Sjövall, G. (1978). Helsingin työväenopistolla on oma pyörätuoli. *Tiedotuskynnys* (1), 2.

(1978). Kootut katkelmat. *Tiedotuskynnys* (1), 12–13.

Könkkölä, K. (1978). Kootut katkelmat. *Tiedotuskynnys* (2), 16.

Braf, P.–G. (1978). Rakennettu ympäristömme: suunniteltu vammaiset huomioon ottaen vai kaikille? *Tiedotuskynnys* (3), 5–6.

Könkkölä, K. (1979). Pääkirjoitus. *Tiedotuskynnys* (1), 3.

(1979). Kantelu Kauniaisten kaupungintalosta. *Tiedotuskynnys* (1), 13–14.

(1979). Liite: Suomen rakentamismääräyskokoelma – määräykset ja ohjeet 1978 F1: Yleisön käyttöön tarkoitettujen tilojen suunnittelu liikuntaesteisille soveltuviksi. *Tiedotuskynnys* (1), 15–21.

Vesterinen, A. (1979). Vammaisystävällinen henki TT:ssä / Missä Vermon vammaisystävällisyys? *Tiedotuskynnys* (1), 22.

Gripenwaldt, K. (1979). Kulttuuri ja liikuntaesteiset. *Tiedotuskynnys* (2–3), 23–24.

Könkkölä, K. (1979) Kunta kaikille. *Tiedotuskynnys* (2–3), 28–30.

Sjövall, G. (1979). Ylitimme kynnyksen: Tapiolan Sokos. *Tiedotuskynnys* (2–3), 34–35.

Braf, P.–G. (1978). Vi steg över tröskeln: M/S Turella. *Tiedotuskynnys* (2–3), 35–36.

MH [pseudonym] (1979). Ylitimme kynnyksen: Siilinjärven kuntoutumiskeskus. *Tiedotuskynnys* (4), 25.

Jokelainen, T. (1979) Liikuntaesteiden ja palvelujen kartoituksesta vammaisen kannalta. *Tiedotuskynnys* (5), 14–15.

Yks savolainen [pseudonym] 1979. Esteitä vammaisille. *Tiedotuskynnys* (5), 19–21.

Könkkölä, K. (1980). Asetuksen vastainen kunnantalo? *Tiedotuskynnys* (5), 8–9.

Palosuo, M. (1980). Ylitimme kynnyksen ... eduskuntaan. *Tiedotuskynnys* (5), 20–21.

Vesterinen, A. (1981). Asuntomessut Kuopiossa 11.7.-10.8.1980. *Tiedotuskynnys* (1–2), 34.

Kynnys (1981). Ihmisellä on oikeus olla vammainen – vammaisella on oikeus olla ihminen. *Tiedotuskynnys* (3), 14–16.

Kynnys [edit. Mourujärvi, L.] (1981). Ihmisellä on oikeus olla vammainen – vammaisella on oikeus olla ihminen. *Tiedotuskynnys* (3), 14–16.

Saarnivaara, L. (1981). Vammaiset työolosuhteet. *Tiedotuskynnys* (5), 17–18.

Other newspaper and journal articles

Kontkanen, A. (1995). Historian lehtien havinaa: Tiedotuskynnyksen lapsuus ja nuoruusvuodet. *Kynnys*, 26–32.

(1978, October 6). Pyörätuolit takaovesta. *Helsingin Sanomat* [abbreviated HS], 15.

(1974, September 27). Vammaisten opiskelu törmää kynnyksiin. *Helsingin Sanomat*, 20.

Literature

Andersson, J. E. (2016). Improved Swedish accessibility hindered by a housing imbroglio. *Nordic Journal of Architectural Research*, 2(2), 9–31.

Asetus rakennusasetuksen muuttamisesta 791/1973, 85a§. [Decree Amending the Building Decree 791/1973, addition 85a§.] https://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/alkup/1973/19730791

Baar, M. (2022). Seeking inclusion through redefining expertise: The changing spatial contours of disability activism in the long 1970s. *European Review of History = Revue Européene d'histoire*, 29(3), 452–468. https://doi.org/10.1080/13507486.2021.2019685

Barnes, C. (2020). Understanding the social model of disability: Past, present and future. In N. Watson and S. Vehmas (Eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Disability Studies*, 2nd edn. (pp. 14–31). Routledge.

Bergman, S. (1998). Naisliikehdinnän moninaisuus: "uusi" suomalainen naisliike yhteiskunnallisena liikkeenä. In M. Siisiäinen & K. Ilmonen (Eds.), *Uudet ja vanhat liikkeet* (pp. 165–186). Vastapaino.

Best, K. L., Mortenson, W. B., Lauzière-Fitzgerald, Z., & Smith, E. M. (2022). Language matters! The long-standing debate between identity-first language and person first language. *Assistive Technology*, 34(2), 127–128. https://doi.org/10.1080/10400435.2022.2058315

Blackie, D., & Kuuliala, J. (2021). Katsaus vammaisuuden historian tutkimukseen. *Historiallinen Aikakauskirja*, 119(2), 156–164.

Boys, J. (2014). *Doing disability differently: An alternative handbook on architecture, dis/ability and designing for everyday life*. Routledge.

Braf, P.-G., & Pardon, W. M. (1984). *Vammaiset ja fyysinen ympäristö: Selvitys ongelmien inventointivaiheesta*. Kynnys.

Burns, S. P., Mendonca, R. J., & Smith, R. O. (2023). Accessibility of public buildings in the United States: A cross-sectional survey. *Disability & Society*, 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2023.2239996

von Busch, O., & af Ekström, H. (2021). The Distribution of Abilities: Disability, Dissent, and Design Activism by the Gothenburg Cooperative for Independent Living. In J. Traganou (Ed.) *Design and Political Dissent* (pp. 65–78). Routledge.

Danforth, S. (2018). Becoming the Rolling Quads: Disability Politics at the University of California, Berkeley, in the 1960s. *History of Education Quarterly*, 58(4), 506–536. https://doi.org/10.1017/heq.2018.29

Erdtman, E., Rassmus-Gröhn, K., & Hedvall, P.-O. (2021). Universal Design as Guiding, Striving and Unifying: A Qualitative Study about How Universal Design is Understood, Practised and Realised in Contemporary Sweden. *Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research*: *SJDR*, 23(1), 158–168. https://doi.org/10.16993/sjdr.770

Galan, I. G. (2023). Unlearning Ableism: Design Knowledge, Contested Models, and the Experience of Disability in 1970s Berkeley. *Journal of Design History*, 36(1), 73–92. https://doi.org/10.1093/jdh/epac018

García Lantarón, H. (2016). Universal design integrated in architecture: A proposal for housing the elderly. *Nordic Journal of Architectural Research*, 28(2), 111–137.

Garland-Thomson, R. (2011). Misfits: A Feminist Materialist Disability Concept. *Hypatia*, 26(3), 591–609. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1527-2001.2011.01206.x

Gissen, D. (2023). *The Architecture of Disability: Buildings, Cities, and Landscapes beyond Access*. University of Minnesota Press.

Gosseye, J. (2019). A Short History of Silence: The Epistemological Politics of Architectural Historiography. In J. Gosseye, N. Stead, and D. van der Plaat (Eds.), *Speaking of Buildings: Oral History in Architectural Research* (pp. 9–23). Princeton Architectural Press.

Grangaard, S., Ryhl, C., Skjulhaug, M., Frandsen, A. K., Bech-Danielsen, C., Granvik, M., & Vartola, A. (2016). Universal design in architecture—Editors' notes. *Nordic Journal of Architectural Research,* 28(2), 5–8.

Grigas, A. (2023). Ghost Archives of Socialist Modernism in Lithuania: Unsolicited Accounting of Centralised Planning Institutes' Project Documentation. In *Architecture Archives of the Future* (pp. 155–162). Jaap Bakema Study Centre.

Groen, L. (2023). In Search of Architecture in Non-Architectural Archives: Learning from the Archive of the Swiss National Bank. In *Architecture Archives of the Future* (pp. 255–260). Jaap Bakema Study Centre.

Guffey, E. (2017). *Designing Disability. Symbols, Space, and Society*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Guffey, E. (2020). The Ideologies of Designing for Disability. In B. Williamson and E. Guffey (Eds.), *Making Disability Modern. Design Histories* (pp. 101–112). Bloomsbury Publishing.

Guffey, E. (Ed.) (2023). *After Universal Design. The Disability Design Revolution*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Hamraie, A. (2017) *Building access: Universal design and the politics of disability*. University of Minnesota Press.

Ilmonen, K. (1998). Uudet ja vanhat yhteiskunnalliset liikkeet. In M. Siisiäinen & K. Ilmonen (Eds.), *Uudet ja vanhat liikkeet* (pp. 15–42). Vastapaino.

Kajita, M. (2016). Accessibility and social inclusion. *Nordic Journal of Architectural Research*, 28(2), 83–109.

Kinnunen, J. (2015). Ideat, identiteetti ja integraatio: Suomalaisen vammaisliikkeen äänitorvi Tiedotuskynnys 1975–1978 [Master's thesis]. University of Helsinki.

Koivisto, M., & Katsui, H. (2021). "Meitä on uhattu vainota ja tahdotaan hävittää kenties sukupuuttoon"—Viittomakielisen yhteisön keskustelut kuurojen välisistä avioliitoista ja avioliittolaista kuuromykkäinlehdissä vuosina 1896–1930. *Historiallinen Aikakauskirja*, 119(2), 180–194.

Koivukoski, A. (2020) Universalismista massaräätälöintiin. Suomalainen esteettömyyspolitiikka 1970-luvulta 2020-luvulle normien ja norminpurkutalkoiden ristitulessa. Tapausesimerkkinä Helsinki. [Master's thesis]. University of Helsinki.

Konttinen, E. (1998). Uusien liikkeiden tuleminen subjektiviteetin puolustamisen kulttuuri ilmastossa. In M. Siisiäinen & K. Ilmonen (Eds.), *Uudet ja vanhat liikkeet* (pp. 165–186). Vastapaino.

Kummala, P. (2023). Johdanto. In P. Kummala (Ed.), *Murrosten vuosikymmen. Arki, aatteet ja arkkitehtuuri 1970-luvun Suomessa* (pp. 22–33). Arkkitehtuurimuseo.

Könkkölä, K. (1988). Vammaisliike kansallisella ja kansainvälisellä tasolla. In *Ihmisen tie: matkalla Anneli Vesterisen kanssa* (pp. 27–30). Kynnys.

Laitinen, M., & Saraste, H. (2014). *Elämän kynnyksellä: Vammaisliikkeen synty*. Into.

Leppälä, H. (2014). Vammaisuus hyvinvointivaltiossa. Invalideiksi, vajaamielisiksi tai kehitysvammaisiksi määriteltyjen kansalaisasema suomalaisessa vammaispolitiikassa 1940-luvun taitteesta vuoteen 1987. [Doctoral dissertation]. University of Turku.

Lohtaja, A. (2022). Architecture as spatial configuration of politics. [Doctoral dissertation]. University of Jyväskylä.

Mao, X., & Chen, L. (2022). "To go, or not to go, that is the question": Perceived inaccessibility among individuals with disabilities in Shanghai. *Disability & Society*, 37(10), 1659–1677. https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2021.1899897

Maula, J. (1992). Arkkitehdit ja kaupunkirakentaminen 1960–1970-luvuilla. In P. Korvenmaa (Ed.), *Arkkitehdin työ. Suomen arkkitehtiliitto 1892–1992* (pp. 178–193). SAFA / Rakennustieto.

McKinney, V., & Amosun, S. L. (2020). Impact of lived experiences of people with disabilities in the built environment in South Africa. *African Journal of Disability*, 9(1), 1–11. https://doi.org/10.4102/ajod.v9i0.518

Mukala, J. (2023a). Milloin 1970-luku alkoi ja loppui? In P. Kummala (Ed.), *Murrosten vuosikymmen. Arki, aatteet ja arkkitehtuuri 1970-luvun Suomessa* (pp. 34–35). Arkkitehtuurimuseo.

Mukala, J. (2023b). Rationalismin valtakausi ja murros uuteen. In P. Kummala (Ed.), *Murrosten vuosikymmen. Arki, aatteet ja arkkitehtuuri 1970-luvun Suomessa* (pp. 121–151). Arkkitehtuurimuseo.

Müller, L., Wojahn, D., Sandström, I., & Hedvall, P.-O. (2022). Planning for human diversity: Design patterns of Universal Design. *Nordic Journal of Architectural Research*, 2022(2), 75–99.

Mähönen, H., & Remes, J. (1998). *Omin voimin yhteistoimin: Invalidiliitto ry 60 vuotta*. Invatieto.

Official Statistics of Finland [OSF]. (2024). Buildings and free-time residences [Online publication]. Statistics Finland. https://stat.fi/en/statistics/rakke

Pritchard, E. (2016). The spatial experiences of dwarfs within public spaces. *Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research*, 18(3), 191–199. https://doi.org/10.1080/15017419.2015.1063542

Rusak, M. (2023). Archives of the ordinary: On the archive of research. In *Architecture Archives of the Future* (pp. 85–92). Jaap Bakema Study Centre.

Ryhl, C., & Frandsen, A. K. (2016). A

new professional master in universal design in the built environment. *Nordic Journal of Architectural Research*, 2016(2), 163–179.

Sanaksenaho, S. (1976). *Suunnittele ja rakenna kaikille. Ohjeita liikunta- ja toimintaesteiden poistamiseksi*. Invalidiliitto.

Saraste, H., & Könkkölä, K. (2010). *Huoneekseni tuli maailma* (2nd ed.). W. Söderström.

Savola, K. (2023). Disrespectful thoughts about design: Social, political and environmental values in Finnish design, 1960–1980 [Doctoral dissertation]. Aalto ARTS Books.

Schalin, M. (2018). *Kauniaisten kaupungintalon rakennushistorian selvitys*. Kati Salonen ja Mona Schalin Arkkitehdit oy.

Siisiäinen, M. (1996). Yhteiskunnalliset liikkeet, yhdistykset ja hyvinvointivaltio. In A.-L. Matthies, U. Kotakari, & M. Nylund (Eds.), *Välittävät verkostot* (pp. 33–48). Vastapaino.

Siisiäinen, M. (1998). Uusien ja vanhojen liikkeiden keinovalikoimat. In M. Siisiäinen & K. Ilmonen (Eds.), *Uudet ja vanhat liikkeet* (pp. 165–186). Vastapaino.

Tieteen termipankki. (7.2.2025). Uskontotiede:toimijuus. https://tieteentermipankki.fi/wiki/Uskontotiede:toimijuus

Turunen, A. (2023). Lähiösuunnittelu sukupuolten tasa-arvon esteenä. Yhdistys 9 ja vaatimukset asumisen uudistamisesta 1960-luvulla. *Historiallinen Aikakauskirja,* 121(4), 380–392.

Tyvelä, H. (2019). Kirsti Nordin and Association 9: Feminist architectural practice and the turning point of the welfare state in Finland. In *Architecture and Democracy 1965–1989: Urban Renewal, Populism and the Welfare State* (pp. 98–103). Jaap Bakema Study Centre.

Tyvelä, H. (2023). Hoivan arkkitehtuuria hyvinvointivaltiossa. *Arkkitehti* (2), 20–26.

Van der Linden, V., Dong, H., & Heylighen, A. (2016). From accessibility to experience: Opportunities for inclusive design in architectural practice. *Nordic Journal of Architectural Research*, 2016(2), 33–55.

Vartola, A. (2023). Korkeampia arvoja etsimässä. Muuttuvien merkitysten ja monimutkaistuvien suunnitteluongelmien 1970-luku. In P. Kummala (Ed.), *Murrosten vuosikymmen. Arki, aatteet ja arkkitehtuuri 1970-luvun Suomessa* (pp. 218–234). Arkkitehtuurimuseo.

Watson, N., & Vehmas, S. (2020). Disability studies: Into the multidisciplinary future. In N. Watson and S. Vehmas (Eds.) *Routledge Handbook of Disability Studies* (2nd ed.) (pp. 3–13). Routledge.

Williamson, B. (2019) *Accessible America: A history of disability and design*. New York University Press.

Williamson, B., & Guffey, E. (Eds.) (2020). *Making Disability Modern: Design Histories*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Yhdyskuntasuunnittelutoimikunta. (1965). *Ohjeita liikuntaesteiden poistamiseksi*. Suomen Siviili- ja Asevelvollisuusinvaliidien Liitto r.y.

(1977). *Liikuntaesteinen rakennetussa ympäristössä: Ongelmat ja parantamiskeinot*. Suomen CP-liitto; Invalidiliitto; Sokeain keskusliitto.

(1963). *Ohjeita pyörätuolia käyttävien invalidien asuntojen suunnittelijoille*. Suomen Siviili- ja Asevelvollisuusinvaliidien Liitto.

Biographical information

Marja Rautaharju
Doctoral Programme in History
Faculty of Social Sciences
Tampere University
Address: Kanslerinrinne 1, PL 200, 33014
Tampereen yliopisto, Finland
E-mail: marja.rautaharju@tuni.fi

Marja Rautaharju is a Helsinki-based architect (Aalto University 2017) and a doctoral researcher in history at Tampere University. Her ongoing interdisciplinary article-based doctoral dissertation analyses the shaping of accessibility expertise in Finland in the 1970s, focusing on the overlapping contexts of the early career of architect Maija Könkkölä (1947–2012).