

# Porto





Images from the Photovoice workshops in Porto.

# The **LIFE** **WORLDS** of Birth Cohorts



This book is part of the Wellcome Trust funded project 'The Biosocial Lives of Birth Cohorts' and the exhibition 'The Life Worlds of Birth Cohorts' which examines the everyday lived processes and practices that shape participants' lives across four cohorts in the global north and south. In 2024–2025 and using a method called 'photovoice' we invited a total of 21 intergenerational parent and adult child pairs of participants from the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children in Bristol, UK; the Generation R study in Rotterdam, the Netherlands; the Pelotas Cohort Study in Pelotas, Brazil; and the Generation 21 study in Porto, Portugal to take pictures of their lives, and then to discuss these in small focus groups.

This book focuses on the images and narratives of participants from the Generation 21 Study in Porto, Portugal. The Generation 21 birth cohort study was created in 2005 recruiting 8647 participants and their families from public health hospitals in Porto. It continues to be the only birth cohort study in Portugal. Across eight themes identified by participants in our workshop this book provides a visual and narrative immersion into their life worlds. It explores how their lives are both shaped by their involvement in the cohort study but also often exceed it, revealing what is important to them and the details that inform their lives.

We invite you to explore more of the photographs, and the cohort studies on our website:

[birthcohortlifeworlds.com](http://birthcohortlifeworlds.com)



- Mother participant



“ This was where it all began, with my son’s birth, and where we met the Generation 21 students, with whom we agreed to participate in this project.

- Mother participant

## Cohort Participation



“ I think, at least, I’m speaking for myself: I liked it. I know I’ve been part of a study, following the growth of this generation, which is completely different from the previous generation. We’re much more exposed to technology, which makes everything easier for us. I think it’s super interesting to study this. My mom knows, I like going to G21 because it’s very interesting to know the results, do the exams and everything, see if I’m okay. In the end its always interesting, even the tests they do there are fun and gave me a sense of control.

- Participant



“ The third photo, I took of my sunglasses, I really like sunglasses too.. I have a really big collection, quite big actually.

- Participant

“ These are some concerts I went to with my siblings, who are always the people I go with .. we have parties there.

- Participant



## Identity



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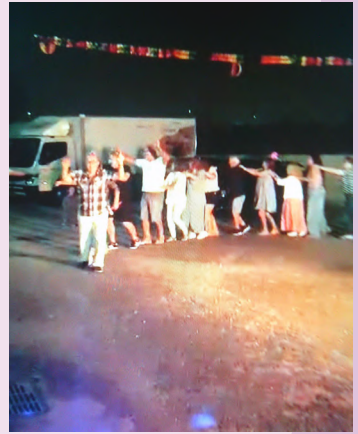
This one was hairstyling because we were preparing for a party with the fairy theme and I thought it was funny to take their picture doing the hairstyle. I thought it was really cute.

- Participant



We're much more tested than they are, but we're the producers of the first free generation of young people in Portugal. We went from a dictatorship to complete social freedom. Our parents grew up in a dictatorship, they couldn't talk about anything, and they passed that on to us. We're the product of that fear.

- Mother participant



This was at the São João Festival. There's our family, friends enjoying it and having fun, we are close our family; most have been living there for 30 years. The kids grew up there, were born there, grew up there. So, we're always together when we can, when we have time.

- Mother participant



Next is the gym. It was one of my resolutions last year: to take better care of myself. I decided that when I get older I don't want to be limited due to a lack of care for my body. So, I started exercising regularly, to reach retirement active and capable of facing whatever life brings.

- Mother participant



I found my skateboard and decided to take a photo because it brought back good memories.

- Participant



## Navigating Life Transitions

“ The next photos were taken in the same place. Once again, they show my concern for the environment. It’s a technology I find fascinating, and I’m always amazed when I pass by one of those columns , because they symbolize human development. Besides, our country has so much to offer in that area, and I think it’s one of the few good things done politically. Whenever I pass by those columns, I feel the same: they’re extraordinary.

– Mother participant



## [ + ] Lived Environments

“ The second image is what I see from my window every day when I wake up. That’s where I get my energy in the morning, and at the end of the day, when the neighbors walk by, when couples are dating, when there’s life in motion. It’s the landscape I’m lucky enough to encounter daily, when waking up and going to bed.

– Mother participant



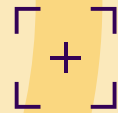
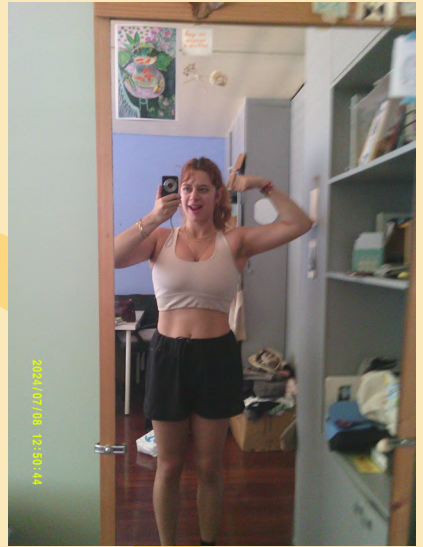
“ I have something, in my community, that’s very important, there is a little house with books, where anyone who wants can go get a book to read and drop off books. I see that a lot of people go get books and sit on that bench to read. I think for me it’s a sign of life, of culture, of a city’s development.

– Mother participant

“

And this is me. Before I went to the gym, then I was all set up. That talk to myself in the mirror like you're going to train well today, you're going to make the effort

– Participant



## Physical and Mental Well-being

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I also have photos more connected to silence and introspection. I'm in a phase where I need that: nature, walks, shadows, images that speak for themselves.

– Mother participant



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The photo has a memory, things I have from childhood. I have a lot of things, and there's this magic that my mother gave me including a doll, which my daughter's friends ended up breaking. I only kept the dress and the shoes. But I was so attached to it, because I didn't have a doll, I always brought it with me until I got married. Next to it, there's a little gift, my husband gave to me when we started dating.

- Mother participant

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This photo, we were very much as a family. It was when Portugal played. My daughter is there. My husband. My sister-in-law also spends some time with us. Our dog, who couldn't be missing. And my son's girlfriend. I have an older son. I'm not a big fan of football. But we make a point, as parents, to have these moments with them. To bring them together. Because we're spending less time with them. So, we take advantage of these moments of excitement to be together.

- Mother participant



## Intergenerational Connections



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That generation really lives with their phones. They wake up with their phones, and they're glued to their phones. That's it. Their struggle is very phone dependent.

- Mother participant

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There's a family dinner,  
when my aunt came  
from France.

- Participant



Food



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This one was while on holiday that  
was my breakfast every single day,  
that food and everybody ate that  
food. So I thought it was funny to  
record because that is basically a  
mark of that holiday. It was the first  
thing I ate in the morning and the last  
thing I ate at night

- Participant

“

Cooking came up there,  
because I love cooking,  
especially cakes,

- Participant





## (Re)Imagining Family



“ We decided to have a picnic on the beach and go see the sunset. I was capturing my friends in different natural moments.

– Participant



“

This is a moment I have with my friends. We're essential to each other. We've been friends for many years. We're a very small group. But we get together at least once a month, we must meet up to talk, to chat. We work in the same field, in different parts of the country. But what we talk about stays there. So, it's almost like a psychological therapy, those friends of mine...I think it's an important moment in my life.

– Mother participant

“ The last photo was of a place I used to frequent a lot, with a person who was special to me and now isn't there anymore. We always went to the city park to spend time. We lay there on the grass talking.

– Participant



We are very grateful to our funders the Wellcome Trust, and for the support of our host institution UCL. We also extend our thanks to all the participating cohorts, including the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children (ALSPAC) in Bristol, Generation 21 in Porto, Generation R in Rotterdam, and the Pelotas Cohort Study in Pelotas. Our appreciation also extends to all the participants who took part in our interviews and photovoice activities and generously shared their lives and experiences with us.

Further information about the project, visit [birthcohortlifeworlds.com](https://birthcohortlifeworlds.com)

