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In research on family democracy there has been a tradition to focus on parents as leaders setting up the family climate. This dissertation challenged this perspective and it was argued that youths' characteristics could be thought of as the seeds of family democracy. Results showed that youths behaviors and characteristics have to be taken into account if the democratic working of the family is to be fully understood. Within families, it was found that younger siblings' perceptions of family democracy changed as a consequence of an older sibling's earlier democracy compromising behavior. Also, parental openness to communication, youth openness to communication, and parental bad treatment all were found to be separate components of family democracy and as such prospectively linked to adolescents' perceptions of the democratic climate in their own families. Further, these three components could be used to identify stable family configurations which differed with respect to adolescents' internal and external adjustment. Moreover, changes over-time within families in parental openness to communication, youth openness to communication, and parental bad treatment were associated with changes in youths' perceptions of having influence in family matters and other features of parent–child relations. On the whole, these findings support a family systems approach to the issue of democratic family functioning. Clearly, young people are human agents with the capacity to interpret and react to their own reality. They are certainly both the harvest and the seeds of democratic family functioning.