

The social control of young women's clothing and bodies: A perspective of differences on racialization and sexualization

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Abstract

Public discourses and culturalist research often present patriarchal social control as the key element of minority youth's family relations. They focus on conflicts related to young women's sexual reputation when discussing Muslims and non-western minorities. Social control is often connected to honor-related violence and applied to assumptions of how young women are oppressed by their family members. In this article, we problematize such a connection and approach social control as a broad phenomenon that shapes social life and is exercised by several actors. The article elaborates a perspective of differences on social control, building on feminist theories of intersectionality and distinguishing between different dimensions of social control (formal/informal, public/private). This theoretical framework is then applied to the empirical analysis of different elements of social control related to young women's clothing and bodies. It is argued that the framework enables examination of the multifaceted dynamics of gendered, racialized and age-related social control without falling into the trap of culturalist knowledge production.

Keywords: ethnicity, gender, sexuality, racialization, intersectionality, social control, young women

Introduction

In the aftermath of increasing securitization of migration and heightened political focus on national 'core values', ongoing debates on issues related to 'immigrant families', patriarchal control and gendered violence have characterized the public sphere in many European countries (e.g. Lentin and Titley, 2011). Women's rights have become markers of liberal societies that construct their self-images through a contrast to allegedly illiberal others who are portrayed as patriarchal, traditional and undemocratic, commonly referring to non-western and/or Muslim minorities (Phillips and Saharso, 2008: 295; de los Reyes, Molina and Mulinari, 2002; Keskinen, 2009). Gail Lewis (2006: 89) has argued that, in such imaginaries, the category of the 'immigrant woman' serves as a symbol for everything that is not perceived to be European; yet, it is against this figure that claims about the civilized and modern nature of Europeanness are made. While such understandings have firm roots in Orientalism and colonialism, they are rearticulated in current political debates and media coverage of non-western and Muslim minorities. The racializing images of the 'oppressed Muslim woman' and the 'patriarchal immigrant family' also have widespread effects on the lives of women and girls who identify with these minorities (e.g. Andreassen and Ahmed-Andresen, 2014; Maira, 2009; Zempi and Chakraborty).

In the Nordic countries, where national identities are tied to top achievements in gender equality in international comparison and the state feminist tradition is well-established (Magnusson et al., 2008), the integration of migrants is increasingly seen as conformity to social norms and cultural values, often referring to family formations and gender relations (Olwig, 2011). The juxtaposition of allegedly gender equal majority families and patriarchal minority families has been especially visible in public discussions on honor-related violence

and other kinds of gendered violence in racialized minority families (Carbin, 2014; Keskinen, 2012a, 2012b). A commonly held definition of honor-related violence assumes that violence is culturally based and accepted by the minority community (Keskinen, 2009).

Concomitantly, assumptions of patriarchal gender relations and the social control of young people in minority families (directed especially at girls in order to safeguard their sexual reputation) have spread from the discussions on gendered violence to more general debates on the (perceived lack of) integration of migrants (e.g. de los Reyes et al., 2002; Keskinen, 2012b; Lentin and Titley, 2011). Moreover, in research, the phenomenon of social control is often envisioned as an elementary feature of culturalized forms of violence, such as honor-related violence or forced marriages (e.g. Mørck et al., 2011: 282–284; Schlytter et al., 2008; Wikan, 2002). In such views, social control is exercised by families and upheld by cultural norms shared by minority communities. Other studies have, however, shown that minority youth experience and respond to cultural transition in more complex and fluid ways than is acknowledged in mainstream discourses and culturalist interpretations (Bredal, 2006; Maira, 2009: 162–165).

In this article, we critically examine the above notions that present the racialized minority family as the core site of patriarchal social control or portray intergenerational conflict as the key element of the family relations of the minority youth. Instead, we develop a conceptual framework that addresses the multiple elements and sites of social control in young people's lives as well as their interconnections. The framework also allows for an examination of gendered and sexualized control that connects racialized minority youth's experiences to those of the majority youth; thus, it provides an alternative to the dichotomous understandings of the role of social control and sexual reputation in the lives of minority

young women, described above. Empirically, the article focuses on young women's negotiations concerning social control of their clothing and sexualized bodies.

We depart from an understanding that views social control as a broad phenomenon that shapes social lives in general and may also have positive dimensions. We are interested in how young women identifying with racialized minorities and majorities negotiate the norms and social boundaries of conduct in interaction with their parents, peers, other people in their social surroundings or authorities within institutional settings. We seek to place intergenerational conflicts in the broader context of social control and its different forms. Our aim is not to bypass the experiences of violence and force that are part of some young people's family lives but rather we suggest they are better understood in the wider context of social control.

By analyzing social control as a dynamic, intersectional and mundane experience we want to problematize the understandings of culture and ethnicity behind the notions of 'patriarchal families' that dominate discussions on racialized minority girls. In such notions, culture and ethnicity are often seen as fixed elements from the country of origin and viewed as straightforward explanations of social control or violence. Instead, we regard culture, race and ethnicity as complex and controversial phenomena that are constantly negotiated and contested among members of minority communities and the wider society.

The empirical data in the article consist of interviews with young women who identify with racialized minorities, as well as those who identify with the majority population in Finland. The article focuses on the perspective of the young women who identify with racialized

minorities from African, Asian, Middle-Eastern and post-socialist countries. The interviews of the majority Finnish girls¹ are used to shed light on the common trends of social control in the data and the interaction that crosses ethnicized and racialized boundaries.

The article first develops the perspective of differences on social control by linking it to earlier sociological and feminist theories. Thereafter the empirical data and the principles of analysis are introduced. The following three sections present the main findings of the analysis applying the perspective of differences on young women's use of the Muslim headscarf and the different meanings connected to sexualized female bodies. The concluding section summarizes the empirical findings and discusses the relevance of the approach introduced in this article to research on young people's social relations in multiethnic contexts.

A perspective of differences on social control

While acknowledging the manifold usages of the concept of social control in sociological and criminological theory, we use it with the aim of increasing understandings of the gendered and racialized features related to the management of norms, actions and social relations to (re)produce social order (cf. Innes, 2003: 5–6). Social control is often approached either as social processes, methods, and resources through which moral order is made possible or as ways for individuals to conform to norms and expectations (Cohen, 1985: 1–2; Janowitz, 1975). In analyzing young women's interviews, we take into account both of these perspectives: we analyze the means of control as well as the ways that young women relate to and negotiate with them.

In criminological approaches, in particular, social control is viewed simultaneously as a restrictive and rewarding/enabling force, notably when studying individuals' conformity to norms (e.g. Hirschi, 1969). These accounts have concerned mostly the so-called informal social control in everyday interaction (Innes, 2003: 151). More radical theory, by contrast, examines social control in negative terms, often emphasizing the coercive nature of state control or criminal/surveillance policies towards persons labelled as deviant, problematic, threatening or undesirable (Cohen, 1985; Deflem, 2015). Inspired by feminist scholars in the area of social control (e.g. Heidensohn, 2000), we view social control as including both of the above-mentioned elements: the consensual/enabling and the coercive/restrictive.

Earlier feminist studies have shown how women and girls are subject to different, even more intensive control than men and boys (e.g. Heidensohn, 2000; Lees, 1997), but have often neglected an intersectional perspective. We emphasize that social control is experienced differently depending on how people are positioned along the different axes of inequality, but also related to the kinds of meanings that gender, race, ethnicity, class and age receive in social action (cf. Crenshaw, 1993; Gill and Brah, 2013). Our understanding of intersectionality follows that of Paulina de los Reyes and Diana Mulinari (2005), who refer to processes in which historically and situationally produced power relations are formed in the interplay of gender, race, ethnicity and class on several interconnected levels: societal structures, cultural discourses, institutional practices and individual agency. We complement the theory of de los Reyes and Mulinari by adding close relationships to the interconnected levels. In order to understand the social control experienced by minority girls, it is necessary to situate these experiences in the wider context of racialized power relations in society, as well as analyze the situationally produced meanings that young people, parents, peers and

representatives of different institutions provide for responsible behavior, individual autonomy and social relations.

The range of social control can vary from relations in which negotiations and shifts of power constantly occur to relations in which the agency of those inhabiting less powerful positions is restricted, or even forcefully suppressed. The latter situation can be understood as ‘locked power relations’ (Keskinen, 2005: 44–47), in which there is no place for power shifts or negotiations, as in extreme forms of domestic violence. Such extreme forms are, however, only one form of social control and should not hinder us from seeing also the more consensual and enabling forms of social control.

Some sociological theorists have formulated general theories of social control by explicating its functions in society (e.g. Gibbs, 1981; Parsons, 1951), whereas other researchers have studied social control more as a micro-level interactive phenomenon (e.g. Mead, 1925). Our approach is located between these two polarities: we analyze social control as based on young people’s narratives on the norms, expectations and demands that they face in their everyday lives, but we also regard as important the cultural meanings and societal structures within which the everyday lives are situated. We introduce *a perspective of differences on social control* with which we analyze intersecting differences in the dynamics of social control exercised in families, communities and society. The perspective of differences refers here to the variations of social control that we conceptualize with reference to: (1) the intersectionality of gender, race, ethnicity, class and age; and (2) different forms of social control, to be discussed in detail in the following.

In Figure 1, later, we have distinguished four dimensions of social control. The division between formal and informal categories refers to the *means of social control*. By *formal* control we mean control based on explicit (sometimes written) rules and norms, such as legislation, dominant discourses, religious doctrines, or other broad societal norms. By *informal* social control we refer to expectations, rewards or sanctions formed in interaction. The distinction between public and private refers to the *contexts of control*, namely, spaces where social control is exercised. Social control can be used within the private sphere, such as within families or in the context of close friendships and other intimate relations, or in the public sphere, such as spaces open for everyone (streets, etc.) or public institutions (schools, etc.).

[Figure 1 approximately here]

These dimensions of social control can be distinguished at the analytical level whereas, on the empirical level, the dimensions often intertwine and are layered with one another:

- (1) *formal institutional control* is based on legislation, formal directives, guidelines, or other strong normative accounts or dominant discourses in public discussions;
- (2) *informal institutional control* in everyday life interaction (e.g. gossip, insulting, shaming, harassment, social rewards) which informs the individual about important customs and norms of the group, community or institutional context in question;
- (3) *normative control in close relationships* refers to explicit rules, norms, advice or sanctions stated by those in an authority position in close relationships, such as family members;

(4) *internalized control* refers to unconscious, routine and voluntary adherence to rules, based on values, beliefs, emotional ties or commitment to family members, relatives or friends.

The dimensions should be understood as continua, not as four separate spheres. The degrees of formality increase when moving from the right to the left in the Figure, as does the degree of public exposure when moving upwards in the Figure. Thus, peer-relations and local networks are situated between the intimate relationships and relations with institutional authorities, such as teachers. Moreover, control in close relationships can range from clearly stated norms to more informal ways of showing what kind of behavior is desirable.

Internalized control, again, develops over time and reflects, for example, previous discussions with family members and friends.

As the figure reveals, intersectionality is central to an analysis of social control. The examples we provide in the following show how this framework can make sense of social control in the lives of both racialized minority and majority youth.

Data and method

This article is based on interviews and discussions with 32 girls and young women in Finland. The data were collected in a research project that set out to critically examine research on social control in racialized minority families and to elaborate on understandings that would enable a more multifaceted view than the common focus on intergenerational conflicts and honor-related violence.

In the project, data on young people's views were gathered in two contexts. The first data set was collected in a multiethnic school in a middle-sized city in southern Finland. All students in the 9th class were approached at school asking for volunteers to be interviewed.

Approximately half of the students in the classes decided to participate in either individual or pair interviews, resulting in a total of 26 interviews. In this article, we focus on the interviews with the girls (N=23) in these data. The second data set was collected through the auspices of a local project organized to prevent honor-related violence in another middle-sized city in southern Finland. This data consist of four thematic group discussions with nine 13 to 19-year-old girls identifying with ethnicized and racialized minorities. Moreover, individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with three of the girls.

The material includes girls and young women with varying ethnic and racial identifications. Ten interviewees regarded themselves as (white) majority Finns. Thirteen stated that their family backgrounds related to countries such as Afghanistan, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Iraq, Congo, Kurdistan, Nepal, Romania, Russia, Somalia, Vietnam, and the former Yugoslavia. One of the interviewees identified with the Roma community in Finland. Some of these young interviewees had themselves migrated to Finland, but the majority had been born and raised in Finland.

The interview and discussion themes in both sets of data included: peer relations, school environment, residence area, experiences of racism, appearance/clothes/style, media consumption, family, dating/marriage and sex, and plans for the future. All of the sessions and interviews were recorded and transcribed.

Methodologically, the two data sets produce knowledge on the studied topic from somewhat different angles. The school interviews (data 1) provide a larger data set in relation to number of interviewees, but shorter inscriptions of each of the themes. The interviewees were only met once and most interviews were done in pairs. The group discussions and the following interviews (data 2) build on several meetings and an established trust towards the interviewer/group leader; thus, sensitive topics like racism were discussed more in this data. Together, the interviews provide a multifaceted picture of how social control is experienced and negotiated by young people in multiethnic environments. As researchers, both of us are located in many ways differently than the research participants – in respect of age, current class position and racialised/ethnicised belonging, we inhabit more powerful positions than the young, often working-class minority youth who were interviewed. However, we have earlier experiences of migration, minority positions, and working-class life, which provide some understanding of the hardships of the young people's lives. Most of all, having studied topics like social control, gendered violence, migration and racism for a long time we draw on that knowledge when trying to interpret the data.

In the following, we use the framework, presented in the previous section, to analyze the dynamics of social control in relation to young women's bodies and clothing. We have selected this focus since both public discussions and research tend to raise these topics as central when discussing the social control of ethnicized and racialized minority girls and young women. Moreover, in the interview material these themes encapsulate well the dynamics and complexity of the gendered, sexualized and racialized negotiations of social control.

To produce an analytical account we identified sections in the interviews in which either wearing the Muslim headscarf or the sexualisation of young women's bodies were discussed. Inside these thematic sections we paid attention to how relations to parents, peers (male peers in particular, in relation to embodied sexuality) and mediated realities were talked about, and we sought to interpret what dimensions of social control were visible in the young women's accounts and how they were talked about. The analytical conclusions were generated as a result of intensive cross-reading of the thematic sections and our interpretations of social control in different interviews. Whilst acknowledging the wider socio-cultural and structural aspects shaping the informants' accounts, in the following we want also to highlight their agency and active negotiations in diverse mundane situations and contexts of social control.

Using the Muslim headscarf: the intermingling of four forms of social control

Stories of patriarchal oppression and traditionalism characterize media and political discourses on the wearing of the headscarf or full coverage by Muslim women and girls (e.g. Andreassen and Ahmed-Andresen, 2014). Moreover, the headscarf is often regarded a sign of difference and non-belonging to the West (Duits and Van Zoonen, 2006: 7). Several European countries, such as France and Belgium, have introduced legislation banning the use of full coverage and, to some extent, the use of the headscarf (e.g. Maira, 2009: 164–173). Furthermore, in everyday contexts Muslim women's right to wear a headscarf or full coverage is questioned when insulting remarks are directed at them in the streets or, in an even more aggressive manner, their headscarves are torn off (Zempi and Chakraborti, 2014). Although no legislative initiatives have been planned in Finland, racializing and aggressive

debates characterize many online discussions (Keskinen, 2012a, 2012b) and racist attacks on the streets as well as other everyday environments have been reported by Muslim women.

While only some of the minority young women in our data wore a headscarf, the topic was discussed in several interviews. The four dimensions of social control that we identified earlier were visible in the stories in a layered and complex ways. First, we interpret young women's accounts of their use of headscarf as *internalized control* formed in active negotiation with *formal institutional control* defined by religious doctrines. Second, we explicate how the young women negotiated with *normative control* enacted by their parents and relatives; and third, we analyze the role of the headscarf in stories of *informal institutional control* at school and public places.

The *internalized control* in the informants' accounts was characterized by their free and rational choice to adhere to the norms adopted from religious doctrines. The young women emphasized that the decision to wear the headscarf was firmly in their own hands and that the decision was supported by their parents.

My dad and mom don't force us. They have said to us that you can do the same things as the Finnish young people do, if you want that. But then, we have our own thoughts, and we do not want that. They do not force us at all, like they do not tell that we should wear certain clothes or use a headscarf. When we came to Finland, my father said that I will not force you to do anything. You are free to choose since you know what is good and appropriate for you. (Afghan identified girl, 17 years)

Dismissing the racializing image of herself as a docile object of her parents' control, the interviewee in the excerpt explained that it was her own wish to follow the cultural and religious norms in how to dress. She described as a Muslim rule that certain parts of the female body, such as knees, elbows and hair, should not be seen by other men than those who are close relatives. The young women expressed their wish to adhere to the religious norms on gendered appearance since it was important for them personally. They regarded the norms as rational and providing basis for smooth gendered sociability, since the headscarf would enable them to be treated respectfully. Some mentioned that 'decent clothing' was also demanded of young men, although the norms concerning female clothing were seen be somewhat stricter than those guiding the male dress code.

There was a strong emphasis on agency in the stories of the interviewed young women; yet, social relations and contextual matters played an important role in how they negotiated around the use of the headscarf and dress in practice. For example, the young woman who had migrated from Afghanistan reflected on the relevance of where she lived and whose views to take into account. While she was living in Afghanistan, her uncle especially had pointed out that she needed to wear the headscarf and a long skirt. However, after moving to Finland she had stopped wearing the long skirt that she disliked and changed into jeans. Even her mother was wearing jeans nowadays, she said. Thus, her story shows how views and practices can change in different situations.

Most often the use of the hijab was a mundane and consensual issue for the interviewed young women, lacking any potential for conflicts with their parents. Yet, some of them told about their resistance towards the dress codes required by their parents which can be analyzed as resistance towards the parental normative control. These stories show how the views of the parents can also differ from one another, showing that there can exist two kinds of norms and controls within the family. A young woman, aged 15, whose parents had migrated from Afghanistan, challenged her father's views and thus opposed the *normative control in close relationships*, enacted by her father. Yet, at the same time, one can say that she conformed to normative control in close relationships, as expressed by her mother. At the time of conducting the interview, the disputes between the parents had led to divorce. Perhaps the situation is also reflected in the interviewee's strong opposition to her father's views.

My father is always telling me: don't do this, don't do that. Then he always goes on, he is a horrible Muslim, you know, he goes on telling don't do this, don't dress like that, he gets on my nerves. And it is also because my mom is not like that, and my other relatives aren't like that, they are more relaxed. But he is always a bit of an irritating tightass.

Okay. Does he order you how you can dress and use make up or...

Before he ordered but when I was like I will not obey you, I will not do it, fuck you and go away... sorry... and then he went away. And since that he has not stuck his nose into those issues.

Besides parental control, the young women's stories made visible how they negotiated and sought to find their own way in situationally changing forms of *informal institutional control*.

In their everyday environments there were different kinds of institutional contexts and thus also forms of social control. These provided possibilities for the young women's agency, but also required navigating between the norms of the parents and the peer group. For example, the young woman cited above said she usually wears the headscarf at school, but not when she goes to town.

Do you wear the headscarf at all?

Well I do, yes, when I go to school.

Sometimes?

No, nearly always when I go to school. In our school we have these Muslims, so I use [the headscarf] when I go to school, but when I go to for example the city centre, then mom says that I shouldn't wear the headscarf. Otherwise I'll look just like a granny or an old woman. (Cameroonian identified girl, aged 13)

The young woman wished to use the headscarf at school, in the presence of other Muslim students, since that made the social interaction smooth and the dress code was a way to claim membership in the group of Muslim peers at school. However, outside the school she followed her mother's opinion, which was that wearing the headscarf would give the impression of a 'granny'. Hence, the extract reveals how the views of the parents can be taken into account, even though they are not regarded as normative or as binding control.

In addition, the young women told about how the meanings of wearing the hijab could differ even depending on the day and the situation (cf. Beta, 2014; Walseth and Strandbo, 2014).

The young woman who had migrated from Afghanistan explained her use of the hijab by practicalities related to her appearance and by her occasional shyness: the headscarf was a means to hide her hairdo when she felt it was unsatisfactory. More than a sign of inherited religious or cultural traditions, the scarf meant for her taking a stand to normative peer expectations in different contexts, such as at school or while going out with friends – as well as to fashion trends which she also talked about (cf. Tarlo, 2007: 3).

And then when wearing hair extensions I got this idea. Like sometimes I don't wear the hair extensions and sometimes I just feel shy. [...] So I put my hair in a bundle and then just wear the headscarf, so it looks big like that [even without the hair extensions].

In young women's accounts, the school and other public places were seen as rather neutral sites of negotiated and situationally bound social control, but also as places for negative experiences related to informal institutional control and racism. Some told about their own experiences where an unknown person had tried to grab their headscarves. Others referred to stories they had heard about discrimination in the job market because of wearing the headscarf. Furthermore, especially the girls who went to schools in white majority neighborhoods said they had been called by the 'n-word' at school or when walking in the streets. Some of the girls had been subjected to racism because they wore headscarves, such as the following 13 years old interviewee who identified as Cameroonian:

When I was in the fifth class, I was bullied and called names a lot. I was shouted at with bad words, like nigger, and also the word lesbian was used. And because I have the headscarf, I was called baldhead.

The above example is revealing in how notions of race, religion, gender and sexuality intersect to form a specific kind of racialized informal institutional control. A young girl categorized as non-white and wearing a headscarf can be negatively labelled in ways that have complex gendered and racist connotations: as a representative of non-normative sexuality (lesbian) and, at the same time, as someone who does not fit into the expected gender category (baldhead).

Sexualized female bodies and shaming in multiethnic peer-relations: between (in)formal institutional control and internalized control

The social control of women's and girls' bodies through sexual reputation has been a concern for feminist research for several decades (e.g. Honkatukia, 1999; Lees, 1997), but in recent years a division has emerged between research that examines, on one hand, the effects of sexual norms on racialized minority women and girls (e.g. Mørck et al., 2011; Schlytter et al., 2008; Wikan, 2002) and, on the other hand, the effects of new technologies and social media on the sexualization and sexual harassment on young women's lives (e.g. Crofts et al., 2015; Rentchler, 2014). The first-mentioned research tradition focuses on questions of ethnicity and culture (of the racialized minorities), while the latter tradition seldom discusses matters related to ethnicity and race. Our data show, however, that the minority girls' lives are not compartmentalized in the home and the minority community that the first-mentioned tradition emphasizes. Rather, these girls' lives are characterized by everyday interaction within multi-ethnic peer-groups and several kinds of media encounters and exposures. The forms of social control and the responses of the girls are also much more varied than the culturalist tradition suggests.

The gender relations in multiethnic peer groups at school and residential areas create sites of *informal institutional control*, in which the bodies of the girls are under objectification and evaluation. At the same time, the awareness of being judged by their bodily sexualized characteristics makes the girls sometimes resort to *internalized control* when they seek to avoid clothing or behavior that would lead to being the target of negative gossiping and insulting comments. This applies both to the racialized minority girls that our article focuses on *and* the white majority Finnish girls with whom they go to school. It is also evident that the sexualization of the girls' bodies and the harassment that some of them mention cross ethnicized and racialized boundaries: the interviewees described actions by boys and men with different kinds of minority and majority identifications.

Many of the interviewed girls referred to the ways boys in their class, or friends of their brothers, talked about the girls' bodies, providing sexual remarks and judgements. The girls were not usually openly targeted by such comments; yet, they were well aware of how boys talk with each other about young women's bodies:

Well, do you think boys talk about gir... do the boys comment on the appearance of the girls?

R2: [whispers] ass and tits

R1: Yeah

Ass and tits?

R1: Yes

Are they saying this directly to you?

R2: No

R1: They talk about it among the boys ... sometimes for example if I have been with them ... like if they are guys I know, then they are like 'ooh look at her, look at this chick, look at her ass what an amazing' ... then I'm like standing next to [R2 laughs]: OK, so? (R1=Roma and R2=Iraqi identified girls, 15 years)

It's usually like about appearance ... like wow that chick had a great ass or something like that... and then you have to listen to such things.. (Majority Finnish identified girl, 15 years)

In the excerpts above, the girls used nearly exactly the same words to describe the comments by boys with whom they are familiar. It shows that there is a shared language of discussing the sexualized female body, recognized by all members of the peer group in school and the residential area where it is located. In rather similar ways, the interviewees also mentioned their awkward position when having to listen to such objectifying talk of other young women's bodies. While both excerpts speak of the internalization of this kind of social control, at least in the sense that one becomes aware of the 'male gaze' (Lees, 1997) and being targeted by it, the girls actively position themselves towards such views and can also question the relevance of them, as the first excerpt evidences.

It is nevertheless not so simple to challenge the sexualized images of the female body and the discourses upholding them. Many of the interviewed girls, with different ethnicized and racialized identifications, were openly critical of the 'double standard' that stigmatizes young women for going out with many boys or having several sexual partners whereas young men gain a reputation as the successful 'player' when engaging in similar practices (cf.

Honkatukia, 1999; Lees, 1997). Yet, the peer relations at school and the residential area are also sites in which the bodies and sexual reputation of the girls are scrutinized, not only by boys, but also by other girls. Several interviewees told us about a girl in their school whose naked body was shown in photos distributed through mobile phones to a wide range of young people at the school. The girl whose photos were circulated was referred to as a majority Finn by the interviewees and, it seems, she was the victim of ‘revenge porn’, a vindictive ex-boyfriend who started the process (Crofts et al., 2015). The distributed photos became a warning sign for all girls in the school of what could happen to them, if they posed nude in front of the camera, even with somebody they fully trusted.

This example of strong, informal, institutional control in peer groups at school shows how easily a girl (with any kinds of ethnicised/racialised identification) can become stigmatized as a whore and be shamed in front of the peer group in a society where sexuality is used to shame women. The strong effect of informal institutional control relies on the existing *formal institutional control*, namely, dominant discourses circulating in Finnish society. According to the interviewees, even the targeted girl’s friends were calling her names and making negative remarks about her behavior. This occurred across ethnicised and racialised divisions. Simultaneously, this incident evidences how important internalized control is in leading (other) girls to seek to avoid such situations (cf. Honkatukia, 1999).

R1: ... when I came to this school, I didn’t know anybody here, nobody, but it didn’t take long until Nandita showed me this photo, look, there’s the chick naked and I was like: what kind of a place is this?

OK, oops...

R2: Then everybody came to the changing room and was like, hey girl, are you in this photo. And like that.

To this girl?

R2: Yeah, like in front of everyone ...

R1: ... and probably most people still have it on their mobile, well I certainly don't.

(R1=Roma and R2=Iraqi identified girls, 15 years)

Media encounters and intergenerational relations: negotiating (in)formal institutional control and normative control in close relationships

Most of the young women also shared experiences of sexualized media encounters and being controlled in their clothing and makeup, irrespective of their ethnicized and racialized identifications. They actively negotiated the meanings of normative heterosexual body images they encountered in music videos, advertisements and films, what we refer to as *formal institutional control*. The young women were also trying to find ways to relate to the sexualized messages they were sometimes exposed to on social media, as well as navigating between self-control and resisting their parents' good intentions to protect them from what the parents figured to be the 'dangerous hyper-sexualized world' outside the 'safe home'. Thus, the girls were negotiating with the expectations of their parents and other adults, what we call *normative control in close relationships*.

The encounters with mediatized images of the female body centred around being thin and looking good, that is using time and effort to resemble the normative white heterosexual feminine body ideals. A Kosovan-identified girl, aged 15, responded:

How do you feel when watching TV and films and the Internet, if you see like a good-looking woman or man, would you like to be similar?

Yeah ... sometimes your self-confidence like disappears, when you look at so many thin and pretty, such tall girls you feel like ... Yeah but yeah.

In addition to the mismatch between thin, tall feminine ideals and the variety of lived bodies, the girls who identified with racialized minorities also needed to grapple with the exclusionary effects of normative whiteness in feminine ideals. Their bodies did not fit into the normative ideals, the criteria of which were defined on racialized premises.

The interviewees found some media images of women overly sexualized and heteronormative, which made them want to distance themselves from those kinds of femininities. Not only were the expectations of sexually available young women present in music videos and films, but also in social media encounters. For example, when the girls added their photos to their Instagram accounts they could receive messages from unknown men who sent pornographic images of themselves to the girls.

While these experiences seem to be rather common for many girls and some have established clear strategies to get rid of the disturbing strangers, the exposures also bore racialized traits. The sexualization of ethnic and racial otherness, with a long history in colonial and Orientalist encounters, was also part of the social media encounters the interviewed girls participated in:

No but, I want to say that, ... so many guys ask, like the first thing when they get in contact with somebody, they directly ask for photos. And the first thing is a nude photo. Like the first thing!

Does that only apply for Finnish guys?

Only Finnish guys! I've spoken with so many foreigners, but when you talk [on the Internet] with Finns they just like, can you send me a nude photo. I'm like, fuck off!

(Kosovan identified girl, 15 years)

At the same time as the girls struggled to find ways to navigate in the heterosexual landscapes of the media and peer-relations, their parents also held up certain norms of proper feminine behavior. While many of the parents seemed to have an agenda of protecting their daughters and trying to prevent unwelcome approaches by young or older men, the girls we interviewed did not always agree with their parents' worries. Parents seemed to exercise *normative control in close relationships* especially regarding the (majority and minority) girls' use of 'too revealing clothes', such as shirts showing too much breast or other parts of the body. While we do not want to claim that this kind of social control occurs in exactly similar ways across the ethnicized and racialized boundaries, the data show that the concern and attempts to control young women's dress from being too openly sexually coded is widespread:

What about clothes then, do your parents care about what you wear?

R2: Well usually I decide myself but I can't wear too low necklines.

OK, and what about you?

R1: For me too, not too low necklines.

Well, who says something about it, mom or dad?

R1: Well, it's more often dad.

Yeah, what about your family?

R2: For me as well, usually dad.

(R1=Kurdish and R2=majority Finnish identified girls, 15 years)

Some young women were more or less openly rebellious towards their parents' control of the clothing the girls should wear. In these families, there was an ongoing negotiation of where the boundaries of acceptable behaviour and clothing should be placed.

How would you define your style, or clothing?

Very beautiful, but I would like to dress up a bit more sexy. But...

Are your parents against it or the school?

My mom is like eek don't dress in such a sexy way, otherwise boys will look at you.

But mom that's the point! (Afghan identified girl, 15 years)

Conclusions

In this article, we have introduced a perspective of differences on social control and argued that, instead of focusing on a narrow aspect of young minority women's experiences of social control that portrays minority families as patriarchal, researchers should examine the wide range of dynamics, meanings and effects of social control. As a tool for such analysis we have developed a conceptual model capturing different dimensions of social control exercised at the intersections of gender, race, ethnicity, religion and age.

With this framework we have analyzed young women's experiences of social control in terms of: (1) wearing of the Muslim headscarf; and (2) meanings of the sexualized female body in

relation to peer-groups, mediatized encounters and parental control. Both themes exemplify the diverse ways female bodies are regulated through (hetero)sexuality. At one level, our observations are in line with earlier research on how young women are required to balance on the 'decency continuum': neither should they deny sexuality by hiding it, nor should they reveal too much (Honkatukia, 1999). Our analysis, however, adds to this discussion by documenting proliferations and manifestations of social control across ethnicized and racialized boundaries. We summarize the main findings of our analysis below, before moving to discuss the implications of our approach to the scientific knowledge production in general.

With regard to the *use of Muslim women's headscarves*, two main observations can be made. First, the young minority women's reasoning concerning their use of the hijab can be interpreted as *internalized control* which consists of active negotiation between their own and their parents' wishes and the norms of formal institutional control, mainly religious doctrines. Those wearing the headscarf presented this as a voluntary and rational choice to secure peaceful, every-day, gender relations. They denied any kind of force exerted on their choice, neither stemming from parental orders nor religious or cultural doctrines. Eagerness to claim one's independence in sartorial choices as well as active negotiation of religious dress practices in relation to the fashion and consumer culture have been documented especially among younger minority women (Duits and van Zoonen, 2006: 11; Lewis, 2013). These claims and young women's agency are important counter-arguments against the racializing public discourse which often presents them as merely suppressed by their patriarchal families.

Second, in their every-day lives, wide range of situational aspects and experiences related to *informal institutional control* – notably regulation of the inclusion in peer groups – shape the racialized young women’s decisions on when and where to wear the headscarf (cf. Tarlo, 2007).

Navigating through the changing normativities and forms of control can cause tensions and conflicts in social relations. More than these, however, our data provided descriptions of smooth negotiation and consensual outcomes between situationally differing expectations. One dimension of informal institutional control, however, formed an exception to this: wearing a headscarf was sometimes met with everyday racism by the young women in our sample (Essed, 1991; Honkatukia & Suurpää, 2014), ranging from ambivalent gestures and discriminatory practices to verbal and physical harassment, including attempts to snatch their scarfs. Such racist control is an elementary part of growing up as a young minority woman in Finland, but it should be noticed that the young women’s experiences were varied in relation to the frequency and effects of such events.

Regarding the *sexualization of female bodies*, the main results we draw from our analysis are the following: First, young women across ethnicized and racialized boundaries are well aware that their bodies are being objects of young men’s sexualizing practices in peer groups. This knowledge is internalized via the girls’ own experiences of sexual harassment, but also through ‘warning examples’, that is stories of what has happened to other girls. Despite being critical towards such forms of *(in)formal institutional control*, this knowledge is nevertheless worked out by the young women to form *internalized control*, leading to avoidance of activities that might be regarded as too openly sexual. These requirements apply to girls

across ethnicized and racialized boundaries. At the same time, the male gaze can have racializing, and even racist, features as experienced by minority girls; they are objectified not only because of their gender but also in relation to their ethnicized and racialized backgrounds.

Second, in the mediatized and technologized everyday realities the young women routinely encounter visualized images of normative heterosexual bodies in music videos, fashion advertisements and social media. Despite being able to critically evaluate these images, at some level the young women relate to them as normative models of femininity. These models often represent normative whiteness, thus positioning young racialized women at the margins or in inferior positions. We have interpreted these imageries as one form of *formal institutional control* that affect young women's everyday decisions concerning their outward appearance. An important element in young women's *internalized control* is also their negotiations with *normative control in close relationships* in the form of their parents' stipulations. Young women both agree to, and contest, their parents' aims to control their appearance.

The perspective of differences on social control introduced in this article is as an alternative to narrow understandings of gendered social control that equalize social control with honor-related violence and intergenerational conflicts, and thus risk feeding into racist and postcolonial discourses that characterize many discussions on ethnicized and racialized minority families. We argue that, with the help of the perspective of differences, researchers can analyze the multifaceted dynamics of gendered, racialized and age-related social control,

including practices that can be discussed as honor-related violence; and yet, resist falling into the trap of racializing and culturalist knowledge production.

Distinguishing between the different dimensions of social control, we have identified four forms of social control: formal, and informal, institutional control, normative control in close relationships and internalized control. Through empirical analysis on young women's everyday life experiences and choices in multiethnic contexts, we have shown how these dimensions are layered with one another to form specific and situationally bound constellations involving individual agency, family relations, peer relations, and institutional authorities. Such an analysis makes visible, on the one hand, the supportive and inclusive aspects of social control; on the other, restrictive forms of it and their complex entanglements. Both commonalities and differences can be observed across ethnicized and racialized boundaries. As our analysis reveals, the concrete manifestations of social control cannot be 'known' beforehand but should always be carefully explored and sensitively interpreted in their immediate contexts.

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Notes

¹ We use the terms 'girls' and 'young women' interchangeably in the article. A majority of the interviewees are girls aged 13–15 years, but some are young women in their late teens.