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Bloomsbury Education and Childhood Studies Article Template

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Article topic	Ethnicity and Race
Country	Finland
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Glossary terms

Minoritization. Minoritization refers to the social processes of categorizing parts of the population, based on their ethnicity, race and/or migration history as ethnic or racial minorities and therefore as implicitly inferior to the ethnic majority, or the majoritized population. Unlike the seemingly objective term "ethnic minority", minoritization draws attention to power relations and relationality in defining positions of ethnic and racial minorities and majorities. Finland does not collect population data on ethnicity or race (only on nationalities, countries of birth and first languages) and therefore statistical information exists mainly on migrant groups. Finland has, however, a number of long-established ethnic minorities (e.g., the Roma and the Sámi). Young people from all of these groups are referred here as having a minoritized ethnic background.

The Sámi. The Sámi is the only indigenous people in the European Union. *Sápmi,* the Sámi homeland region, covers areas not only in Finland but in Norway, Sweden, and Russia, and therefore analyses of the Sámi experiences is hard to reconcile with methodological nationalism that assumes one nation-state (Finland) as a self-evident starting point of examination. According to The Sámi Parliament (Sámediggi), there are approximately 10 000 Sámi in Finland. The Sámi have experienced centuries of assimilationist politics, due to which the Sámi languages are endangered and only a small minority of the Sámi practice their traditional livelihood. The Sámi people's right to maintain and develop Sámi languages and culture was added in the Finnish Constitution in 1995, and the Sámi have linguistic and cultural self-government in their homeland region.

Racialisation. Parallel to minoritization, racialisation is a social process where a person's racial background and their position in the racial hierarchy is noted and given significance in a particular

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context (e.g., Garner 2010). Like the concept of minoritization, the concept of racialisation is used for highlighting the social processes and inequal power relations in defining 'race' and racial positions.

Text of the article

1. The effect of race and ethnicity on the social lives of young people:

Race and ethnicity shape, together with other intersecting social differences, significantly the lives and educational trajectories of young people. In terms of socioeconomic positions, un- and underemployment, low-income levels and dense living conditions are more common in families with minoritized backgrounds (e.g., Kauppinen & Castaneda 2012; Ahtiainen et al. 2020), which shapes everyday lives of young people in these families. Several vulnerabilities related to health and wellbeing have been found to be more common among young people with minoritized backgrounds than among the population of the same age in general: for instance, they experience more often loneliness, anxieties, bullying, emotional and physical violence, and communication problems with their parents (e.g., Halme et al. 2017; Ahtiainen et al. 2020).

Racism has been found to be a pervasive part of young people's lives in all living spheres, including school and leisure (Rastas 2007; Souto 2011). Racialisation and racism may also be reflected in family and intergenerational relationships of minoritized groups: young people may for instance be inclined to protect their parents from negative emotions, which has influence on possibilities of disclosing experiences of racism to them (Peltola 2018).

In terms of education, despite being a highly heterogenous group, young people with minoritized backgrounds finish upper secondary (or higher) studies more infrequently, drop out of their studies more frequently and educate themselves in academic professions more infrequently than their white Finnish peers (e.g., Teräs & Kilpi-Jakonen 2013; Larja et al. 2015). Educational trajectories of young people from immigrant backgrounds have been found to be especially disjointed (Kilpi-Jakonen 2014). The Roma have historically been excluded from education and systematically subjected to assimilation, and they continue to encounter structural discrimination and racism and suffer from particularly uncertain educational trajectories as well (e.g., Helakorpi 2020). The comparatively underprivileged position of minoritized young people in education is related to myriad of issues; however, a key phenomenon is that White Finnishness continues to be normalized in the educational system (Juva 2019), and young people with minoritized backgrounds face racism and othering in school contexts (e.g., Kurki 2019; Souto 2011).

The Finnish state policies have been described as being grounded on colourblind universalism (Keskinen 2018), which in itself upholds the white norm and racism. While neonationalist and racist activism has featured in physical, political and digital spaces in Finland in 2000s, also antiracist activism has gained a stronger foothold than previously (ibid.; Seikkula 2020). Addressing issues related to race, racialisation and racism in schools continues to be lacking. To a limited extent, schools offer 'multicultural education', but it has found to work in superficial or even othering ways, leaving white Finnish outside of its focus and lacking content related to racism and anti-racism. (Alemanji 2016; Holm & Mansikka 2013.)

2. Trends in youth race relations

During the last two decades, several studies on the significance of race and ethnicity in young people's peer relations have been conducted in Finland. A number of studies (e.g., Aaltonen et al. 2011; Haikkola 2012; Kivijärvi 2015) has shown that the narrowly defined category of 'Finnishness'

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has forced minoritized young people to search for alternative group identities. While Finnishness refers often to the (white) ethno-national belonging in an exclusive way, minoritized young people have found to foster identities that may refer to their background countries or ethnicities but may also be more open to ethnic and cultural diversity. For instance, for some young people, identifying as 'foreigners' has been a way to challenge their marginal position by defining themselves as cosmopolitan and performing solidarities across ethnic or racial demarcations. Consequently, several studies have indicated how minoritized youth have established highly diverse peer networks even though facing difficulties in befriending with their white Finnish peers (e.g., Honkatukia & Suurpää 2014; Tolonen 2019).

In a bulk of research literature and dominant public discourse in Finland, young people's ethnic and racial group-identities and relations have been conceptualised with categories related to immigration (e.g., Kurki 2019), and vocabularies acknowledging the experiences of race, racialisation and racism have been missing in Finland. However, with increasing awareness of racialisation and racism as phenomena, a change will probably be witnessed in the coming years. During the last decade, an intensified debate on the significance of racial categories and identities, colonial history of Finland, and whiteness have taken place, instigated largely by young activists referring to themselves as brown, black or people of colour, and intensified with the rise of movements such as Black Lives Matter in Finland as well. Overall, minoritized young people and young adults have been able to take a more visible position in public discussions.

3. Indigenous youth

With the history of discrimination and assimilation politics, the ability to maintain Sámi languages and culture remains a major concern for the Sámi, despite their constitutional rights.
More than 60 per cent of the Sámi children and young people live outside the Sámi homeland region, and only half of the Sámi population in general speak Sámi languages as their first language. Outside the Sámi homeland region, a part of Sámi young people is left without Sámi language teaching altogether, and the existing teaching is sporadic and of varying quality, due to lack Sámi teachers among other reasons. Sámi language youth and leisure services have not been developed outside of the Sámi native region. (Ruotsala & Lehtola 2017; Keskitalo & Sarivaara 2021.) There are still Sámi young people engaged with reindeer husbandry, but they experience their future as extremely uncertain, since the prospects of the livelihood are precarious (Joona & Keskitalo 2021). One fourth of Sámi young people living outside the Sámi native region report experiences of discrimination based on their Sámi background (Laiti-Hedemäki et al. 2019, 238). The discrimination experiences of the Sámi more broadly have been found to be affective and connected with the history of assimilation (Huuki & Juutilainen 2016).

4. The influence of adults and peers on the development of attitudes and prejudice:

The attitudes of young generation towards ethnic or racial diversity have been a public interest for years in Finland. Consequently, the national *Youth Barometer* has included survey items on the matter since 2005. Since then, the attitudes of 15–29-year-olds have become more positive toward socialising with people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. However, despite the positive trend, and independent of the year of the survey, a rather stable group, approximately ten percent of respondents, of young people holding highly reserved attitudes has been identified. Boys and young men identifying with the ethnic Finnish majority, holding few educational degrees, and

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reporting few contacts across ethnic or racial boundaries are overrepresented in this sub-group (e.g., Myllyniemi 2017, 75–76).

In youth studies and in various fields of psychology, youth is widely recognized as a period of reorganization of social relations and expansion of the circle of significant others beyond the immediate family sphere. For many young people, in addition to parental influence, the influence of peers for their attitudes and behaviour is significant. According to a study drawing from social psychology (Mähönen et al. 2010), both normative parental and peer pressure – that is, perceived pressure from family and friends to hold positive attitudes towards 'immigrants' – are associated with explicit attitudes (reported in surveys) but less with implicit attitudes (probed with reaction tests). Consequently, perceived normative pressure can thus dissociate implicit and explicit attitudes form each other. For instance, external pressure for holding positive attitudes toward ethnic or racial diversity can be manifested in expressed attitudes without changing implicit prejudices. Research-based anti-prejudice interventions that may be carried out for instance in schools are being explored; however, the current findings show that the interventions do not necessarily change the young people's attitudes, that their results may be different among minoritized and majoritized young people, and that complex matters related to the context, facilitators, teachers' roles and engagement, and the school as an institution have an influence on interventions' effect (Mäkinen et al. 2019; Mäkinen et al. 2021).

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